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# **Willing and Idealising**

An Investigation into Schopenhauer's and  
Nietzsche's Philosophies of Value and Life

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# List of Abbreviations

Unless otherwise stated, I have used the following translations of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's texts.

## Schopenhauer

FR Schopenhauer, A. (1903). On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason. In K. Hillebrand (Trans.), *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reasons and on the Will in Nature; Two Essays* (pp. 1-190). London: George Bell and Sons.

FW Schopenhauer, A. (2009): *Prise Essay on the Freedom of the Will*. In C. Janaway (Trans. & Ed.), *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics* (pp. 31-112). NY: Cambridge University Press.

OBM Schopenhauer, A. (2009) *Prise Essay on the Basis of Morals*. In Janaway, C. (Trans & Ed.), *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics* (pp. 113-257). NY: Cambridge University Press.

WR Schopenhauer, A. (2010). *The World as Will and Representation: Volume 1*. Norman, J., Welchman, A. & Janaway, C. (Trans. & Eds.). NY: Cambridge University Press.

WRII Schopenhauer, A. (1958). *The World as Will and Representation: Volume 2*. Payne, E.F.J. (Trans.). NY: Dover Publications.

## Nietzsche

A Nietzsche, F. (2005). *Antichrist*. In A. Ridley (Ed.) & J. Norman (Ed. and Trans.). *The Antichrist, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings* (pp. 1-68). Cambridge University Press.

BGE Nietzsche, F. (2002). *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. R.P. Hortsman (Ed.) & J. Norman (Trans. & Ed.). NY: Cambridge University Press.

BT Nietzsche, F. (1999). *The Birth of Tragedy*. In R. Guess (Ed.) & R. Speirs (Trans. & Ed.). *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings* (pp. 1-116). Cambridge University Press.

CW Nietzsche, F. (2005). *Case of Wagner: A Musician's Problem*. In A. Ridley (Ed.) & J. Norman (Ed. and Trans.). *The Antichrist, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings* (pp. 231-262). Cambridge University Press.

D Nietzsche, F. (1997). *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*. M. Clark & B. Leiter (Eds.), R.J. Hollingdale (Trans.). Cambridge University Press.

EH Nietzsche, F. (2005). *Ecce Homo*. In A. Ridley (Ed.) & J. Norman (Ed. and Trans.). *The Antichrist, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings* (pp. 69-152). Cambridge University Press.

GM Nietzsche, F. (1997). *On the Genealogy of Morality*. K. Ansell-Pearson (Ed.) & C. Diethe (Trans.). Cambridge University Press.

GS Nietzsche, F. (2001). *The Gay Science*. B. Williams (Ed.), J. Nauckhoff (Trans.) & A. Del Caro (Trans.). Cambridge University Press.

HHI Nietzsche, F. (1996). *Human, All Too Human: Volume I*. In R.J. Hollingdale (Trans.), R. Schacht (Intro.), *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits* (pp. 1-206). Cambridge University Press.

HHII Nietzsche, F. (1996). *Human, All Too Human: Volume II*. In R.J. Hollingdale (Trans.), R. Schacht (Intro.), *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits* (pp. 207-300). Cambridge University Press.

UM Nietzsche, F. (1997). *Untimely Meditations*. D. Breazeale (Ed.) & R.J. Hollingdale (Trans.). Cambridge University Press

NCW Nietzsche, F. (2005). *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*. In A. Ridley (Ed.) & J. Norman (Ed. & Trans.). *The Antichrist, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings* (pp. 263-282). Cambridge University Press.

TI Nietzsche, F. (2005). *Twilight of the Idols; or How to Philosophise with a Hammer*. In A. Ridley (Ed.) & J. Norman (Ed. and Trans.). *The Antichrist, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings* (pp. 153-229). Cambridge University Press.

WLN Nietzsche, F. (2003). *Writings from the Late Notebooks*. R. Bittner (Ed.) & K. Sturge (Trans.). Cambridge University Press.

WP Nietzsche, F. (1967). *The Will to Power*. W. Kauffman (Ed. & Trans) & R.J. Hollingdale (Trans.). NY: Vintage Books.



Z Nietzsche, F. (2006). *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. R. Pippin (Ed.) & A. Del Caro (Ed. & Trans.). NY: Cambridge University Press.



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# Introduction

## 1

The broad objective of this thesis is to restore the significance of Schopenhauer's philosophy to the evolution of Nietzsche's thoughts. The philosophical commentary on Nietzsche focuses mostly on his objections to Schopenhauer's metaphysics and pessimism, but generally ignores the fundamental philosophical agreements between them. With the notable exception of Janaway's (2007) influential analysis of Nietzsche's *GM*, which offers a brief commentary. I aim to show that there are significant philosophical agreements between them that are crucial for our understanding of Nietzsche's philosophical interests and focus on certain topics. I will argue that they agree on fundamental concepts and distinctions, e.g., the will-body identity, but disagree over the explanatory and evaluative framework we should derive from these concepts and distinctions. This is because both have different criteria for explaining phenomena like agency, morality, aesthetic contemplation and ascetic resignation. Furthermore, they disagree on the philosophical method that sets the limits of their respective explanatory and evaluative frameworks. For Schopenhauer, the method that is apposite for explaining phenomena is transcendental idealism and the limits it sets through our first-person experience. Nietzsche prefers an alternative method, namely, what he calls 'historical philosophising' in combination with his so-called drive psychology. I aim to demonstrate that both philosophical methods are rooted in the so-called will-body identity, which we find in Schopenhauer.

The narrower objective of the thesis focuses on their philosophy of value, specifically, their ethics and aesthetics: their views on selflessness and compassion, but also disinterestedness and objectivity. I decided to extend the thesis to other topics such as their respective analysis of agency and ascetic resignation ('ascetic ideal', in Nietzsche's case). My reason for doing so is that they are core areas of both contention *and* agreement between them, which inform not only their ethical and aesthetic views, but also shed light on their distinct philosophical methods. Analysing the previous allows us to recognise what underpins Nietzsche's interest in agency or selfhood, morality, the arts and the ascetic ideal.

Nietzsche substantially deviates from Schopenhauer's views on agency following his critique of the concept of the 'will' as apposite for comprehending the insights inherent to the will-body identity, but his interest and focus on 'agency' and its explanatory value is

actually rooted in Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will. Nietzsche accepts the insight of the will-body identity, but he derives a different explanatory and evaluative framework from that insight, which is premised on his use of the concept of the 'drive' as a replacement of the 'will'.

By offering an extensive analysis of the two thinkers in a broader selection of topics, I aim to provide readers with a picture that demonstrates the ways in which their reasons, distinctions and evaluations intertwine and diverge. To achieve this and where appropriate, I introduce terminology and-or translations for disambiguating concepts or ironing out inconsistencies. Each concept I introduce is based on their propositions and distinctions. Likewise, I aim to challenge common assumptions or doxies about Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's philosophy, e.g., the touted claim that Schopenhauer's philosophy is pessimistic, which Atwell aptly summarises as follows:

"The double-sided world [i.e., the world as will and as representation] is the striving of the will to become conscious of itself so that, recoiling in horror at its inner, self-divisive nature, it *may* annul itself and thereby its self-affirmation, and then reach salvation." (Atwell 1995, 28; my emphasis)

Though Atwell is rightly cautious to state that it 'may' annul itself, many commentators throw such caution to the wind and argue that self-cognition of the will's efficacy leads to 'salvation' or ascetic resignation. To challenge this doxy, I utilise the so-called 'double-cognition' of the body as 'will' and 'representation' (or as 'object') and the 'will-body identity' to propose the 'correlation theory of cognition'. The correlation theory of cognition constitutes the foundations of Schopenhauer's philosophy and epistemology. It sets a clear boundary around what we can know and how we can (re)act. Using the correlation theory of cognition and key textual evidence, I will argue that we have good grounds for resisting the conclusion that 'self-cognition' of the will leads to or causes ascetic resignation such that we can claim that his philosophy is 'pessimistic'.

The correlation theory of cognition also changes how we make sense of key concepts such as disinterestedness, compassion, selflessness and objectivity. These concepts do not link to ascetic resignation in the way we initially assume when we construe his philosophy as 'pessimistic'. To aid readers in recognising the previous, I suggest that we distinguish Schopenhauer the 'individual', who may be a 'pessimist', from the proposition that his 'philosophy' is pessimistic. His philosophy can resist the charge of pessimism in subtle, but fundamental ways. It can show that pessimism is an aspect of individuals and so *their* will, which, in turn, can explain why the world *itself* appears as not worth much, albeit *to them*. In short, 'pessimism' is the subjective correlate of the world that appears to us in a pessimistic light. It compels us to focus on those features of it such as the suffering of others or our own and, in turn, to conflate that suffering with the character of the world *itself*. It also engenders actions in us that further entrench the previous character. Our pessimism colours our experience of the *whole* world and, in turn, limits on our actions. Accordingly, it is not our cognition of the world as it is *in itself* that leads to pessimism. It is the projection

of our own pessimism onto the world that limits our actions in it and, in turn, leads us to perceive the world as not worth much. The world's *character* is a mirror of *our* will.

The difference between Schopenhauer the individual and his philosophy likewise shows the *intimate* relationship between the two thinkers that informs Nietzsche's philosophical interest, focus and method. It shows why Nietzsche focuses on agency, morality, the ascetic ideal and the arts, but also his general approach to philosophical problems as well as his skepticism with respect to the so-called thing in itself and the purity of 'truth'. I will argue we can characterise Nietzsche's approach to philosophical problems as stemming from the perspective of an individual or individuality, i.e., our *personal* needs, drives and so on. Even his analysis of communities, morality and the so-called 'herd' shows the stamp and seal of 'individuality', as I will aim to demonstrate. Nietzsche acquires his approach from objections to Schopenhauer's philosophy, but equally from fundamental philosophical agreement, which we rarely notice. We can appreciate this agreement more easily if we note the intimate relationship between them as from Nietzsche's point of view.

In his early writings, Nietzsche describes Schopenhauer as his 'educator', which he defines in the following way:

"Your true educators and formative teachers reveal to you that the *true, original meaning and basic stuff of your nature* is something completely incapable of being educated or formed and is in any case something difficult of access, bound and paralysed; your educators can be only your liberators." (UM, 'Schopenhauer', 1; my emphasis)

Notice that the above indirectly refers to Schopenhauer's claims about willing and instruction:

"What someone truly wills, the striving from his innermost essence and the goal he pursues accordingly – this is something we could never alter with external influences such as instruction: otherwise we could recreate him. Seneca makes the apposite remark: '*velle non discitur*'[willing cannot be taught]; which shows that he preferred the truth over his fellow Stoics, who said that virtue can be taught." (WR, 320-321)

Nietzsche, then, employs Schopenhauer's passage to inform his definition of a true educator. Note how the above definition compares with Nietzsche's subsequent description of his encounter with Schopenhauer and, specifically, the role Schopenhauer played in his life:

"It was in this condition of *need, distress and desire* that I came to know Schopenhauer. I am one of those readers of Schopenhauer who when they have read one page of him know for certain they will go on to read all the pages and will pay heed to every word he ever said. I *trusted* him at once and my trust is the same now as it was nine years ago." (UM, 'Schopenhauer', 2' my emphasis)

This early description of Schopenhauer's influence, which is markedly more intimate and personal than we would expect from a philosophical opponent, substantially informs and

guides my analysis. It guides my approach to their philosophical relationship, but also to them as individual thinkers in their own right and with their own philosophies. I aim to show that Nietzsche construes philosophical problems, inquiries and interests as stemming from something personal or individual, similar to the above description of his reasons for ‘coming to know’ and ‘trusting’ Schopenhauer. This interest in the individual is not unique to Nietzsche, but stems from Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will.

In sum, the thesis aims to assess the philosophical agreements and disagreements between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche’s views on ethics and aesthetics; specifically, on how they define and evaluate concepts like disinterestedness and objectivity, likewise selflessness and compassion. After recognising that focusing solely on their ethical and aesthetic propositions detracts attention from the fundamental agreements between them, I extend the scope of my assessment. This extension aims to provide a clearer framework for identifying the subtle, but fundamental agreements between them, which, in turn, gives us a clearer view of their ethical and aesthetic differences. However, the drawback of this approach is that it substantially broadens the thesis in content and focus. Below, I offer an overview of my journey into each philosopher and a brief summary of the various chapters, starting with Schopenhauer.

## 2

While reading into Schopenhauer’s ethics and aesthetics, I came across a disharmony between his various accounts of the ‘pure subject of cognition’, which led me to inquire into what he means by the ‘objectivity’ of a cognition. On the one hand, the pure subject of cognition perceives ‘things’ (including her ‘body’) as a representation and thus as ‘foreign’ to her (cf. *WR*, 124). On the other hand and during aesthetic contemplation, the pure subject of cognition collapses the distinction between herself and the object when she perceives its Idea. She no longer perceives it as ‘foreign’ (cf. *WR*, 201-2). Accordingly, the pure subject of cognition sometimes perceives things as ‘foreign’, but likewise as similar to her will and so as familiar to her as is her own willing, striving and so on. I sought to resolve this disharmony because of its implications for Schopenhauer’s aesthetics, which is invaluable for laying out clearly what he means by aesthetic contemplation.

The above disharmony in his account of the pure subject of cognition encouraged me to take a step back and re-read Schopenhauer’s *WR*. I followed his suggestion that we should read it as ‘the unfolding of a single thought [*ein einzige Gedanke*]’ (*WR*, 312). Accordingly, I read each book as though it was a part of the unfolding of a single thought. What was important for my research into his ethics was the single thought’s ability to explain Schopenhauer’s proposition that “from the same source that gives rise to all goodness, love, virtue and nobility there ultimately emerges also what I call the negation of the will to life” (*WR*, 405).

While reading closely and searching for the single thought, I noticed that the pure subject of cognition in books one and two of *WR* differ substantially from the pure subject of cognition in books three and four. I realised that their difference was due to the introduction of the concept of the ‘will’ and its role in Schopenhauer’s epistemology.



Schopenhauer uses the ‘will’ to render meaningful the ‘thing in itself’, which he derives from Kant who sometimes argues that it is merely a limiting concept and so not substantial, and, at other times, that it is substantial, but unknowable. Schopenhauer’s construes the ‘thing in itself’ not solely as a limiting concept, but as substantial. He aims to render it *meaningful* without overstepping Kant’s limits of possible cognition, however. In short, he sought to ‘access’ it without arguing that we can cognise something as it is *in itself*. I read him as offering as close an approximation of what something is *in itself* as is possible in accordance with the limits of cognition set out by Kant’s transcendental idealism. He attempts to do so by using our relationship to ourselves, i.e., our first-person experience, as the basis for this approximation. We can access the thing in itself from within without thereby claiming that we can ‘cognise’ it as an ‘object among other objects’ in the world, according to Schopenhauer. The ‘will-body identity’ and the so-called ‘double cognition’ demonstrate his unique and novel philosophical approach to the problems raised and left unanswered by Kant’s transcendental idealism. The previous led me to develop what I called the ‘correlation theory of cognition’, which, I will argue, is fundamental to his philosophy. I found that we can construe the ‘single thought’ variously, but settled for two variations: the ‘will-body identity’ and ‘correlation theory of cognition’.

Using the correlation theory of cognition, we can resolve the above ambiguity between the two accounts of the ‘pure subject of cognition’ starting with distinguishing between three cognitions of something: cognition of an ‘object’, of a ‘motive’ and an ‘Idea’. Noting Schopenhauer’s irregular uses of ‘*Objekt*’ and ‘*Gegestand*’, I coined the generic term of the ‘target’ of a cognition rather than the ‘object’ or ‘representation’. I chose ‘target’ for brevity and clarity, but also to emphasise the directionality of a cognition *parallel to* the directionality of the will or willing. To understand what he means by cognition of an object, a motive or an Idea, I argue, we should assess their respective ‘targets’, but also their subjective correlates. When we do so, we recognise that something appears as an ‘object’ only when we assume a particular subjective stance in relation to it; the same applies with respect to when it appears as a ‘motive’ or an ‘Idea’. Each one have their distinct subjective correlates. A core assumption of the correlation theory of cognition, then, is that the *same* target of cognition can, at different times and based on the subjective stance we take in relation to it, appear as an object, a motive or an Idea. We perceive the same *thing* in each instance, but the *nature* of our perception and thus how *it appears* changes in relation to changes in us, i.e., our subjectivity or the subjective correlate. The previous changes have implications with respect to the actions we *can* take in relation to something. In other words, how something appears places or removes a limit on our possible actions in relation to it.

Finally, I found that the ‘source of goodness, love etc.’ is disinterestedness and its cognitive modus, namely, aesthetic contemplation. The previous stems from our projecting the ‘will’ on the target of our cognition and, in turn, on the world itself. I then focused on explaining how it can be possible for someone to be ‘disinterested’ and still (re)act in relation to something.

In sum, the concept of the ‘will’ plays a pervasive role in Schopenhauer’s philosophy, but we have to first construe it as derivable from the first-person experience of

willing something. The previous experience is difficult to ‘conceptualise’ without, at the same time, losing sight of the fact that it is a first-person experience. I construe it as the event that shows the will-body identity and thus the bridge between the (first-person) subjective world of thoughts (wishes, desires etc.) and the (third-person) objective world of actions (objects, events etc.). The philosophical commentary generally reflects the previous, but it often misses the nuanced and distinct roles that the will plays in his explanation of certain phenomena, which inform us about his concepts and resolve apparently contradictory propositions such as the ‘intellect’s *effect* on the will’. Consequently, I used the ‘will-body identity, the correlation theory of cognition and the different uses of the will as the conceptual framework that resolves Schopenhauer’s apparently contradictory or inconsistent propositions. I would summarise my reading of Schopenhauer’s philosophy as an attempt to unfold the essential role that the previous conceptual framework plays in his philosophy and how it disambiguates his ethical and aesthetic propositions.

Below, I give a slightly more detailed overview of the various chapters in Schopenhauer’s section and their arguments, which could be useful as an outline for how I derived the conceptual framework and used it to resolve various inconsistencies and disambiguate certain core concepts.

1. *The will, the Intellect and the Meaningful World-View*. In this chapter, I provide an overview of the foundations of Schopenhauer’s epistemology. I assess why and how he introduces the concept of the ‘will’ using the so-called double cognition and I analyse what Atwell aptly calls the ‘will-body identity thesis’. I also introduce the correlation theory of cognition and argue that the ‘pure subject of cognition’ still assumes the ‘willing stance’ on things. Accordingly, the so-called ‘pure’ subject’s ‘purity’ here is dubious, especially, if it yields cognition of an ‘object’.
2. *Self-cognition and the Correlation Theory of Cognition*. In this chapter, I lay out in detail what I call the correlation theory of cognition and develop the distinctions and propositions from the previous chapter. I define it as the theory that there is a by-fit relationship between the ‘subject’ and the ‘object’ of a cognition. I also suggest a distinction between the ‘object’ and the ‘target’ of a cognition to clarify how Schopenhauer conceives the difference between the cognition of an ‘object’, a ‘motive’ or an ‘Idea’. These types of cognition have their own corresponding subjective correlate, which are, respectively, the ‘impure subject of cognition’ (or what I call the ‘willing stance’), the ‘willing subject’ (or the ‘individual’)
3. *Aesthetic Contemplation and the Projection of Willing*. I argue that the correlation theory of cognition permits a novel understanding of aesthetic contemplation that distinguishes it from ordinary cognition and reflection of an object or a motive. Aesthetic contemplation is a type of cognition, which we can comprehend as the by-fit relationship between assuming a disinterested stance on something and cognising it as an ‘Idea’, or, more clearly, cognising *its* Idea.

4. *The Objective Picture and the Schopenhauerian Idea*. This chapter aims to give a detailed analysis of the objective side of aesthetic contemplation. I assess what he means by cognition of an Idea by juxtaposing it to cognition of an ‘object’ and ‘motive’. I attempt to give a novel view of what he means by ‘perceiving the target independent from its relations to other targets of cognition’. I argue that, after he introduces of the concept of the ‘will’, what he means by an ‘Idea’ rests on our perceiving the target as the representation of willing, striving and so on. In short, it rests on what I call the ‘projection of willing’ whose basis is the double cognition of the body as will and as an object among objects. Likewise, I critically evaluate the status of the ‘Schopenhauerian Idea’ in light of alternative readings. I argue against the Platonic and Kantian readings of the Ideas.
5. *The Willing Stance and the Disinterested Individual*. Following from the previous, this chapter assesses the subjective side of aesthetic contemplation by juxtaposing the ‘willing stance’—which is the subjective correlate of ordinary cognition (i.e., of an object or a motive)—to ‘disinterestedness’ or the ‘disinterested stance’. After Schopenhauer introduces the ‘will’, the ‘pure subject of cognition’ changes its *meaning* to reflect disinterestedness or our assuming a disinterested stance on the target of our cognition. I construe the latter as the ‘genuinely’ pure subject of cognition to emphasise that projection of willing onto the world offers us a more veracious cognition of its target, than cognition of an object or a motive. The same occurs with cognition of the world itself, which, after introducing the will, he construes as a representation of willing, striving and so on. Finally, I evaluate my proposed reading of disinterestedness in light of other readings.
6. *Aesthetic Contemplation from the Viewpoint of the Artist and the Spectator*. I assess whether or not Schopenhauer’s account of aesthetic contemplation supports a distinction between the arts and aesthetics. I propose an insight into Schopenhauer’s ‘philosophy of art’ by distinguishing artists based on their respective aims. I distinguish artists *tout court* from ‘aesthetic’ artists. Aesthetic artists aim to incite aesthetic contemplation and therefore cognition of an Idea in their spectators, whereas non-aesthetic artists have different aims or prioritise different aspects of the arts. Finally, I suggest Schopenhauer’s philosophy of art leaves us with two conflicting demands of aesthetic artists, which may be irreconcilable.
7. *The Beautiful, the Sublime and the ‘Felt Consciousness’*. In this chapter, I argue that we should comprehend beauty and sublimity as ‘properties’ or ‘features’ of ‘objects’ that incite aesthetic contemplation. I object to the proposition that beauty and sublimity are features of something on which we aesthetic contemplate, i.e., features of ‘Ideas’. According to Schopenhauer, beauty and sublimity are prerequisites of aesthetic contemplation and not consequences of aesthetically contemplating on something. I derive the previous from an analysis of his conflicting remarks on ‘aesthetic pleasure’. I argue that an account of aesthetic pleasure is derivable from his views on our pleasure in beauty. This account has the benefit of being consistent with his general account of pleasure. Thus, I argue that aesthetic pleasure is still alleviation of pain or suffering; it

works ‘against the back drop’ of a thwarted will and so it presupposes the will. The difference between aesthetic and non-aesthetic pleasure is that the former alleviates pain or suffering by redirecting our attention from our suffering and the (personal) will underpinning it to something else, not by our actions or by attaining the object of our will. We derive aesthetic pleasure from projecting the will onto something, but projection is pleasing to us because it distracts us from our own woe. Finally, I consider how this theory applies to sublimity and discuss the intimate relationship between sublimity, aesthetic contemplation and what he calls the ‘felt consciousness’. The felt consciousness, I suggest, is a bridge between his aesthetics and ethics.

8. *Motives and Mainsprings*. This chapter aims to make smoother the transition from aesthetics to ethics by arguing that there is a distinction between a ‘motive’ (*Motiv*) and a ‘mainspring’ (*Triebfeder*) of action. Common translations of *Triebfeder* as ‘incentive’ can be misleading by not taking into account the distinction between the will and the intellect in Schopenhauer’s philosophy based on his correlation theory of cognition. We have epistemic access to our mainsprings only in reflection over an action and its corresponding motive, because, while we act, we identify with our mainsprings and so merely experience their reflection in the motive. Thus, we only have indirect cognition of a mainspring, but we directly cognise our ‘motives’, since they are the objects impelling us to act.
9. *Wellbeing, Woe and the Pleasure in Willing Something*. In this chapter, I clarify and nuance the distinction between wellbeing and woe by assessing his claim that wellbeing and woe mean—respectively—in ‘accordance’ and ‘discordance’ with a will. I use this chapter to prepare the ground for a subsequent overview and definition of the various mainsprings of action by arguing that willing is directional and thus positive in the sense that it aims *for* something. I utilise a distinction between one’s state and one’s aim to argue that his various mainsprings suggest that we can conceive of a pleasure in willing *itself* as distinct from a pleasure in accordance with a ‘specific aim of the will (or a specific mainspring)’. Consequently, we can construe pleasure in willing itself as underpinning the differences in mainsprings.
10. *The Mainsprings of our Actions*. This chapter aims to nuance and further refine the definition of the concept of a ‘mainspring’ of action. Likewise, it breakdown the various mainsprings that Schopenhauer discusses in his works. I assess some possible objections to the definitions I offer and defend the proposition that the will is always positive. I also argue that we can derive his negative conception of willing, i.e., “all *willing* springs from need, and thus from lack, and thus from suffering” (WR, 219), from the positive conception of *what* the will aims *for*. We can distinguish between the bodily ‘state’ which urging us to act and the action’s ‘aim’; the aim characterises the act of will proper, which is always positive in that it aims *for* something rather than against it. I construe the act of will as the movement of reaching *for* something, which explains or underpins our *reacting to* or *against* something that ‘blocks’ this reaching.
11. *The Will to Life*. The analysis of the concept of the ‘will to life’ and its epistemological limits is, in my view, the most important part of Schopenhauer’s metaphysics. I argue

the concept rests wholly on epistemic foundations and its purpose is to provide a meaningful view of the ‘will’ in the ‘metaphysical sense’. However, there is also an ambiguity and potential impasse between the fact that the will to life is a cognition, but nothing in particular corresponds to it, which would legitimate extending the concept as his does, i.e., to make sense of motivation, stimulation and causation. I despair over not being able to further disambiguate the concept, but I utilise it throughout to reveal an overlooked distinction between the ‘will to life’ and the will. The distinction is crucial for resolving some conceptual knots around the relationship between his views on ethics, asceticism and metaphysics.

12. *The Difference between Selflessness and Compassion (Mitleid)*. In this chapter, I suggest a possible reading of Schopenhauer’s proposition in *OBM* that compassion [*Mitleid*] is the basis of morally worthy actions. I assess how moral actions are possible in the first place by utilising a distinction between sympathy and empathy, which shows that compassion stems from the change in our cognition stemming from aesthetic contemplation. Our assuming the disinterested stance in relation to someone allows us to empathise with her without this necessarily leading to compassionate action, but we could not possibly act compassionately or feel it for her without empathising with her. Disinterestedness enables compassion, but it does not guarantee it, since it also enables malice and asceticism, both of which require perceiving something or someone as willing, striving etc., which is the minimal condition of identifying with her and her situation. Likewise, I critically assess a misreading of Schopenhauer’s proposition that compassion rests on identifying with the recipient and her woe, which I find in Cartwright’s objection and his alternative suggestion to Schopenhauer’s claim that we ‘feel someone’s pain *in their body*’.
13. *The Metaphysical Egoism Objection*. This chapter demonstrates the so-called metaphysical egoism objection as described by various commentators; I opt for Julian Young’s reading as an example. I suggest that there are two possible interpretations of it, which I call the ‘categorical’ and the ‘motivational’ interpretation. The categorical interpretation suggests that Schopenhauer fails to demonstrate how compassion genuinely differs from egoism considered metaphysically, which means we can construe compassion as a kind of egoism. The motivational interpretation suggests that the metaphysical identity between agent and the recipient does not guarantee compassion, because she can likewise act egoistically based on this identity. After rejecting the ‘motivational’ interpretation based on what I discussed previously about the limited role of disinterestedness in compassion, I argue that the categorical interpretation requires assessment and a response. I conclude the categorical interpretation makes two errors. Firstly, it misapplies Schopenhauer’s two uses of ‘will’, because it fails to recognise these uses. One use refers to the ‘individual’, whereas the other refers to the ‘will to life’; one use is individuated or individual whereas the other is metaphysical. The second error is a misunderstanding of the distinction between the ‘will to life’ as the urge to do something and the ‘mainspring’ of an action.

14. *Compassion and Egoism: A Response to the Metaphysical Egoism Objection.* In this chapter, I suggest a response to the categorical interpretation by arguing we cannot, in principle, conflate compassion with egoism. We can distinguish the will to life from a mainspring that stems from it. Instead, we should read his claim about ‘seeing through the *principium individuationis*’ (*PI*) as representing our overcoming egoism without implying what follows from this overcoming, whether morality follows through compassion, or immorality through malice or even ascetic resignation through the asceticism (the mainspring). Though he often suggests that morality and ascetic resignation follow from seeing through the *PI*, we cannot overlook how malice is also rooted in the same cognition. I argue that seeing through the *PI* is our assuming a disinterested stance on something such that we can perceive it as willing, striving and so on.
15. *The Conscience and Self-Knowledge.* Here, I argue that Schopenhauer views the conscience as inextricably linked to self-knowledge, but they are not synonyms. The former stems from how we *respond* to the latter. We can distinguish various ‘responses’ to our self-knowledge and thus treat self-knowledge as the cognition of something, i.e., cognition of an object. In responding to our self-knowledge, we assume the willing stance and thus perceive ourselves as an object first and then a motive. We construct this ‘object’ from our various actions and their motives using the faculty of reason based on the will-body identity. I call the object of self-knowledge our self-image, for brevity. Our response to our self-image and so how the previous motivates us, determines whether we have a conscience or not. We can have various responses to our self-image, however, some of which are not ‘conscientious’. Our conscience is thus *one* response to our self-image among others. I substantiate the previous propositions by a detailed analysis of how he distinguishes ‘remorse’ from ‘guilt’, but likewise ‘direct’ from ‘indirect’ (dis)approval of conscience.
16. *Schopenhauer’s Objection to Kant on the Conscience and the Impasse of Self-knowledge.* I argue that we can find a basis for Schopenhauer’s distinction between the conscience and self-knowledge in his objections to Kant’s account of the conscience. Schopenhauer argues that Kant failed to distinguish our deliberation about any course of action from our conscience. For Schopenhauer, our conscience reflects the voice of morality, whose source is the mainspring of compassion; it is our compassion reacting to our self-image based on an action we undertook or based on an action we resolve to undertake. The latter uses our memory of a previous similar action(s) as its criterion for evaluating the impending action. Finally, I suggest that there is an impasse in Schopenhauer’s views on self-knowledge, which we recognise in the following two conflicting proposition. First, the intellect cannot possibly change the will and, second, self-knowledge of the will can lead to the negation of the will to life, i.e., ascetic resignation.
17. *The Paradox of Ascetic Resignation and Schopenhauer’s Error.* In this last chapter of the Schopenhauer section, I analyse the impasse in self-knowledge and argue that negation of the will to life reveals a paradox in Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will. I start by defining ascetic resignation using a distinction between negation of the will to life and

self-negation. I support this distinction by arguing that guilt and negation of the will to life are different responses with correspondingly different targets and mainsprings. I also critically assess Reginster's reading of ascetic resignation, which suggests that ascetic resignation is indifference with respect to our desires engendered by an expectation about the nature of desiring itself, which we derive from aesthetic contemplation. The expectation is that we never fulfill our desiring itself, because it will always lead to suffering. The intellect's activity explains ascetic resignation: it 'focuses' us on features that are inhospitable to our will. I argue that Reginster overlooks a passage in Schopenhauer, which shows that the previous expectation and its corresponding indifference can also produce affirmation of the will to life. Likewise, he overlooks the role of the will in the intellect's *focusing* on a particular feature of the world, because he conflates ordinary reflection with aesthetic contemplation. When we reflect on something, the will *distinguishes* and *selects* the features we *focus* on. The previous is different from the free play of the intellect in aesthetic contemplation, which allows us to identify with and focus *wholly* on a target of our cognition at the expense of our will and the self-consciousness underpinning its activity. Accordingly, we can reflect on our aesthetic contemplation and *infer* something about our will from it, but we must not conflate the previous reflection and its *inferences* with aesthetic contemplation itself. Correspondingly, I argue that we should distinguish the 'reflective' objectivity of ordinary cognition from the 'aesthetic' objectivity of aesthetic contemplation. Given the previous, I argue that ascetic resignation *itself* is paradoxical, because it reflects an activity of the will, namely, one of its mainspring, but not the activity of the intellect on the will. I defend the previous by arguing that there is a difference between 'satisfaction' and 'complete' satisfaction. Our aiming for 'complete' satisfaction is not inherent to the 'will to life' *itself*, but is, paradoxically, *one* way in which the will to life expresses itself, i.e., it is a mainspring of action. Thus, *aiming* for *complete* satisfaction results from ascetic resignation or represents one of its early stages; it does not *cause* it. The intellect *reflects* the will, it does not *change* it. It offers self-knowledge, but it cannot possibly respond to this knowledge independent from the will and thus its mainsprings.<sup>1</sup> Lastly, I conclude by demonstrating a crucial error Schopenhauer makes in linking the artistic genre of tragedy to negation of the will to life.

### 3

The affirmation of passing away *and destruction* that is crucial for a Dionysian philosophy, saying yes to opposition and war, *becoming* along with a radical rejection

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<sup>1</sup> I leave open the conditions under which the intellect provides us with self-knowledge, that is, what impels our intellect to make an *object* of our will in the first place, because it did not concern Schopenhauer directly, but he addresses it mostly indirectly through his conception of 'aesthetic pleasure'. Nietzsche did consider these conditions, however. They arguably inform his philosophical method of addressing hard cases and phenomena by assessing the conditions under which these phenomena and-or concepts emerge.

of the very concept of ‘being’—all these are more closely related to me than anything else people have thought so far.” (*EH*, ‘BT’, 3)

The above passage from Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo* has been my map into Nietzsche’s philosophy and *Weltanschauung*. There are three key philosophical areas implicit to it, which, I believe, define his philosophical interests. Firstly, his focus on life’s ‘value’ and its construal as a problem, that is, the problem of pessimism, which he argues is addressed by the assessments of philosophers, but also the creative activities of artists. Secondly, his ethical evaluation of willing, egoism and their cognates, which he construed as undermined by the dominant morality of his day. Thirdly, his philosophical method or approach to philosophical problems, which he constructs from his training as a philologist, albeit also from his philosophical interests in German idealism, especially, Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will. The previous areas interested both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, but they had diametrically opposed evaluations and approaches to them. As a preliminary to a more detailed discussion in the main body of the text, I offer a broad overview of my reading of Nietzsche that underscores what, I will argue, is his indebtedness to Schopenhauer’s philosophy.

Nietzsche’s ‘affirmation of passing away and destruction’ accentuates a difference between himself and Schopenhauer, whose views on death oppose this affirmation. Recall that, after quoting a famous passage from Calderon’s *Life is a Dream*<sup>2</sup>, Schopenhauer asks, “how could it [being born] not be an *offence*, given that it is followed by death in accordance with an eternal law” (*WR*, 381; my emphasis). Schopenhauer’s evaluation of death as an *offence* conceals the subjective correlate underscoring our construing death as an offence, i.e., as something negative or as a wrong, for which we have to repent. Only the will to life that expresses itself *as an individual*, i.e., egoistically, could underpin this negative evaluation of the ‘eternal law’ and lead to a depreciation of life.

Likewise, Nietzsche’s saying ‘yes to opposition and war’ evidences a radical departure from his educator, who construes opposition and war as the “highest expression of *egoism*” and “struggle between *individuals*” (*WR*, 359; my emphasis). They are both objective correlates of egoism, which Schopenhauer blames for the profoundest suffering of humankind and even the suffering inherent to life itself, when he later construes egoism as following necessarily from the affirmation of the will to life and thus preservation of the body. He champions compassion, which he construes as the natural ground of morality, for its ability to suppress and mitigate the negative consequences of egoism.

Furthermore, Nietzsche’s views on “the family failing of all philosophers” (*HHI* 2)—their ‘lack of historical sense’—is implicit to his ‘saying yes to becoming’ and ‘radical

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<sup>2</sup> The quote is from the following a statement by Sigmund in Act I: “Oh, what a miserable, unlucky wretch am I! Please explain to me, heavens, given the way you treat me, what crime I committed against you with my birth; although if I was born, my crime is clear, and the severity of your sentence has sufficient cause, for birth itself is man’s greatest crime. But I would just like to know, to ease my distress—leaving aside, heavens, the crime of birth—what else I did to merit further punishment. Weren’t others born as well? And if so, what privileges were they granted that I’ve never enjoyed?” (Calderon 2004, 93).



rejection of the very concept of being'. They demonstrate his objections to those explanations of natural phenomena that appeal exclusively to what he calls 'metaphysics'. Schopenhauer understands philosophy's task, or the philosophical relevance of being and becoming, in a different and opposed manner:

"[W]e feel that people are infinitely remote from a philosophical knowledge of the world when they imagine that its essence can somehow (however delicately concealed) be grasped *historically*. Yet this is the case with anyone whose views of the intrinsic essence of the world include a *becoming* or a having-become or becoming-becoming, anyone who attributes the slightest significance to the concepts of earlier or later, and consequently, who implicitly or explicitly looks for and locates a beginning and an endpoint for the world together with a path between them, along which the philosophising individual can recognise his own location. In most cases, such *historical philosophising* produces a cosmogony... [S]uch historical philosophy, whatever airs it gives itself, acts as if Kant never existed, and treats *time* as a determination of things in themselves, thus remaining in what Kant called appearance (as opposed to the thing in itself), or what Plato called that which becomes and never is (as opposed to what is and never becomes), or finally what the Indians call the web of *māyā*." (WR, 299f)

The above reveals Schopenhauer's most ardent philosophical aim, i.e., to substantiate and render meaningful the 'thing in itself', which Nietzsche describes as the "vain urge to be the unriddler of the world" (GS 99). Nietzsche's evaluation of being and becoming demonstrates a key philosophical departure from Schopenhauer in terms of their respective conceptual frameworks and thereby what counts as an explanation of something. According to Nietzsche, we have insufficient knowledge of any target of our cognition, we likewise do not possess an 'organ' for this knowledge, which would thereby permit us to distinguish its reality from its appearance, on which depends the concept of the 'thing in itself' (cf. GS 354; HHI 16; WLN 2[149], 5[14]). I will argue the previous objections rest on Nietzsche's distinctive philosophical method or conceptual framework, which aims to render irrelevant the distinction between the thing in itself and its appearance (cf. HHI 10).

We would be remiss to ignore the differences and disagreements between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in aesthetics, ethics and their respective philosophical methods, but the philosophical commentary regularly discloses and discusses them. What we rarely discuss is Nietzsche's appraisal of Schopenhauer as his educator and continued trust of him after rejecting his method, evaluations, explanations and even his conceptual framework. I aim to attend to their philosophical disagreement *and* Nietzsche's reasons for appraising Schopenhauer in spite of their many disagreements. These reasons, I will argue, stem from the fact that their agreement is fundamental and philosophical. This agreement plays a central role in Nietzsche's philosophy and Weltanschauung, but we rarely notice it or adequately appreciate it.

Attempting to compare Nietzsche and Schopenhauer's philosophies in a clear and detailed manner, which does justice to differences and fundamental agreements between

them, but respects their individual viewpoints, proves difficult. Their different styles of writing and presentation, which are as different as their evaluations, only compounds the difficulty. However, recent Anglophone philosophical commentary on Nietzsche's philosophy can be useful for guiding our assessment with respect to resolving this difficulty. For example, Gardner's (2009) argument that there is a 'lack of fit' in Nietzsche's views on agency and selfhood has offered me an important platform for rethinking Nietzsche's fundamental concept of the 'drive' through its relationship to self-conscious thought. It has permitted me to assess Nietzsche's core philosophical concepts, which here I approach from his objections to Schopenhauer's account of the 'will', 'self-knowledge' and 'deliberation'. Likewise, this platform has allowed me to account for his appraisal and trust of Schopenhauer as his educator. It led me to notice and propose an alternative solution to Gardner's 'lack of fit', which differs from the current solutions and shows their limitations. Accordingly, I approach Nietzsche's thoughts from their foundations: his conception of the drives and consciousness. From the previous, I determine his descriptive and normative views on morality, aesthetic contemplation and reflection, but also his views on ideals.

We often take the influence of Schopenhauer's philosophy on Nietzsche as undeniable, but our approach to this influence is often as from Nietzsche's objections to it. We know these objections inform Nietzsche's *Weltanschauung*, but we rarely comment on the fundamental philosophical agreements between them, which, I will argue, are more informative. We can condense the previous philosophical agreement to two interrelated concepts rooted in Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will:

- A) The 'will-body' identity.
- B) Immanence and ontological monism.

Schopenhauer and Nietzsche derive differing philosophical methods and conceptual frameworks on the basis of the above concepts and their insights, which, in turn, leads them to different explanations of phenomena. Their views on aesthetics, ethics, philosophical method, conceptual framework and distinct writing style conceal this fundamental agreement between them. The previous, in turn, leads the Anglophone philosophical commentary on Schopenhauer and Nietzsche to focus generally on their differences in respect to the above areas. For example, Nietzsche's preference over the concept of the 'drive' stems from his critique of Schopenhauer's use of the concept of the 'will', but does not stem from his rejection of the insight inherent to the will-body identity. Nietzsche argues that he is more consistent with respect to the will-body identity than his educator who seemingly wavered when it came to his normative views. Schopenhauer emphasises the first-person perspective of *willing*, i.e., self-conscious willing, to disambiguate the will-body identity. He derives a conceptual framework from it that leads him to overextend the limited concept of self-conscious willing to apply it to non-conscious things. Nietzsche emphasises the third-person perspective of the *body* and its vicissitudes, instead. The previous leads him to use the concept of the 'drive' as a replacement of the obsolete concept of the 'will'. The 'drive(s)', he argues, is more consistent with the insight inherent to the will-body identity. Furthermore, transcendental idealism is the philosophical method that guarantees

immanence and ontological monism, for Schopenhauer, whereas for Nietzsche, we require a revisionist, naturalist and unique method, for which proposes the compound of his drive psychology and so-called ‘historical philosophising’ (cf. *HHI* 2).<sup>3</sup> Therefore, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer disagree in various ways, but their disagreements are rooted in agreement on the will-body identity and their philosophical commitment to immanence and ontological monism. What each one makes of the will-body identity and what they derive from it, shapes their philosophy and *Weltanschauung*. Nietzsche argues he is more consistent with the will-body identity as well as his commitment to ontological monism and immanence than his educator was, who seemingly wavers in his aesthetics, ethics and ascetic resignation.

I defend two core propositions with respect to Nietzsche’s philosophy and *Weltanschauung* independent from his relationship to Schopenhauer. First, there is an identity relationship between our ‘self-conscious thoughts’ and ‘drives’, which I use to defend an alternative solution to the ‘lack of fit’. Second, he grounds this identity on his revisionist and naturalist account of self-conscious agency stemming from his distinct and unique philosophical method and conceptual framework. I attempt to disambiguate this philosophical method and conceptual framework by introducing what I call the ‘conceptual link’, which stems from two propositions he uses to describe his method. The propositions I have in mind are, a) what he calls the ‘chemistry of concepts and sensations’ (*HHI* 1), which he argues explain phenomena without appealing to metaphysics or metaphysical entities, and b) the so-called ‘evolution’<sup>4</sup> of something, which he argues is crucial to understanding the origin and development of things that underscores the chemistry in a). I argue his method and framework lead him to posit a revisionist and naturalist account of ‘consciousness’ (and its cognates). Thus, consciousness is a drive among other drives or represents the activity of a drive(s) in the trenches with the other drives, which he explains by appealing to the concept or process of ‘internalisation’ (cf. *GM II*, 16; *D* 301; *TI*, ‘Skirmishes’, 23, 47). Thus, Nietzsche’s explanations and descriptions of phenomena are rooted in a unique and distinctive philosophical method and conceptual framework. The previous differs from his evaluation of the phenomena in question and thus from his normative philosophical viewpoint in an important way, as I attempt to show in the main body of the text.

Nietzsche utilises his philosophical method beyond his alternative account of consciousness. He also defends a revisionist and naturalist account of ‘morality’, which, he argues, emerges from contractual relationships between individuals living in a community. Similarly, self-conscious agency and deliberation are activities that ‘emerge’ from

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<sup>3</sup> Nietzsche initial training in Philology and his interest in classics no doubt contributes greatly to the evaluation and formulation of this unique method, but I was unable to explore this contribution here.

<sup>4</sup> Nietzsche’s conception of the ‘evolution’ of something is broad in its application, for example, in his early writing, he lists the following: the evolution of ‘organisms’, ‘concepts’, ‘art and its genres’, ‘reason’, ‘morality’, ‘philosophical science’ and ‘culture’ (cf. *HHI* 10, 11, 43, 158, 215, 221, 261). I will argue the previous remains rooted fundamentally in the will-body identity and his commitment to ontological monism and immanence. Thus, what applies to individual actions and drives applies collective human activities and culture, according to Nietzsche.

somewhere, according to him; so, they are explicable in terms of the drives, their relations and their development or evolution. His critique of morality reveals his use of his revisionist account of consciousness and self-conscious agency, which, I will argue, are attempts to *attune* and *prepare* his readers for a broader evaluative task. This task starts with an inquiry into morality's entrenched role in our lives. He construes it as a drive among other drives and then demonstrates its effects on our 'health'. I strive to disambiguate this evaluative task by assessing what underpins his writing style and rhetoric, how he challenges his readers' conscience and affects them using his propositions, questions and irony. Nevertheless, there is a difference between his attunement and his subsequent evaluation or normative claims about that to which we attune, which, I suggest, we should identify to avoid a misleading conflation. This conflation leads us to miss a fundamental aspect of Nietzsche's thoughts: his distinctive method of evaluation. What is distinctive about it is his introduction of the individual's perspective (or the perspective of individuality) into moral considerations using seemingly morally neutral concepts like 'life', 'willing' and 'health'. This method of evaluation, I argue, culminates in his attempts to *harmonise* our communal life with our individuality using the creative and life-affirming activities of so-called 'sovereign individuals' (or sovereign individuality).

In sum, Nietzsche's propositions stem from a particular philosophical method and approach, which offers a revisionist and naturalist account and explanation of phenomena. This method is indebted to the fundamentals of Schopenhauer's philosophy, which explains his sustained appraisal of Schopenhauer and trust in him as his educator. Nietzsche's *Weltanschauung* is not solely based on his objections, replacements and alternative evaluations to Schopenhauer, but also his distinctive aim to harmonise individuality with communal life. This harmonisation starts by demonstrating the damaging constraints that communal life places on individuality and its effects on health, but it then suggests an alternative way of managing those constraints and mitigating their damaging effects via what he calls 'sovereign individuality'.

Below, I offer a detailed overview of various chapters in Nietzsche's section, which shows how I derive his unique explanatory and evaluative method, but also how I use it to disambiguate fundamental concepts and even resolve the lack of fit.

1. *Nietzschean Agency: Conscious Thought and the Drives*. In this first chapter of Nietzsche's section, I inquire into the foundations of his philosophy and so his concept of the drive [*Trieb*]. I suggest that drives play a similar role in Nietzsche as the mainsprings play in Schopenhauer: they complete the objective picture of the world by accounting for the *interest* that we take in something. They likewise explain why something in the world (also the world itself) appears differently to us at different times. Construing drives as dispositions is as unclear as the concept of a drive, however. Thus, I assess four attempted definitions of the drives by the philosophical commentary. I argue these definitions reveal a split between two readings. First, drives are basic units of effort or movement. Second, drives are tendencies operating on self-conscious, rational agents with the aim of engendering their characteristic action or behavior. These

two readings correspond to different pictures of Nietzschean agency, both of which carry certain ontological commitments or presuppositions.

2. *The Lack of Fit and the Two Commitments.* I expand on the picture of Nietzschean agency that emerges by assessing what Gardner (2009) calls the ‘lack of fit’ between Nietzsche’s theoretical claims about selfhood as reducible to drive relations and his practical claims about the sovereign individual’s self-knowledge and self-mastery. I distinguish between two solutions to the lack of fit resulting from the two pictures of agency that emerged in the previous chapter: the ‘transcendentalist’ and ‘epiphenomenalist’ solution. Both make apposite and important claims about Nietzschean agency, but fail to resolve the lack of fit for different—albeit fundamentally related—reasons. I summarise these reasons under two commitments, which, I argue, Nietzsche aims to avoid. The first I call the ‘conscious identity’ commitment, which posits a relationship of identity between the unity of the ‘I’ and the unity of agency. The second is the ‘subjectivity’ commitment, which defends the claim that the ‘I’ is a simple and irreducible unity without a third-person representation.
3. *The Nuanced Solutions to the Lack of Fit.* In this chapter, I assess two nuanced solutions to the lack of fit. I construe them as the ‘interaction theory’ and the ‘repository theory’ of Nietzschean agency. Both are sophisticated extensions of the transcendentalist and the epiphenomenalist readings. Accordingly, they struggle to prevent the lack of fit from resurfacing. The interaction theory struggles to explain the basis on which there is an interaction between the ‘I’ and the ‘drives’ without inflating Nietzsche’s ontology and so shifting the burden of explaining the lack of fit. The repository theory struggles to explain how a repository of drives can ‘stand over and above’ itself without appealing to the subjectivity commitment and invoking the homunculi problem.
4. *Towards an Alternative Solution to the Lack of Fit.* I summarise the two different pictures of Nietzschean agency and their limitations with respect to resolving the lack of fit. I argue that they disagree on how to make sense of the sovereign individual’s ‘self-mastery’, which they construe as ‘control’ over and-or ‘ownership’ of the drives. For both pictures, the drives are ‘mechanical’ and there is *some* interaction between the agent and her drives, which leads both of them to reintroduce inadvertently what I call the third-person phantom. I propose an alternative approach and solution, which rejects the interaction theory of the ‘I’-drive relationship. My alternative solution construes the relationship as two distinct perspectives on the same thing or event and so posits an identity relationship between the ‘I’ and the drives. I am grateful to May’s (2009) account of ‘self-mastery’ as ‘hierarchy’ for leading me to the identity relationship. To defend my alternative solution to the lack of fit which aims to avoid the homunculi problem, I search for the foundations of Nietzsche’s Weltanschauung and philosophical method, which, I argue, stem from Schopenhauer’s influence.
5. *Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and the Will-Body Identity.* I look at the textual evidence suggesting that Nietzsche accepts Schopenhauer’s will-body identity thesis and the limits the latter places on the meaningfulness of the objective picture. Nietzsche derives something different from the will-body identity than Schopenhauer did, however, which

means that he explains differently the meaningfulness of the objective picture. To navigate effectively through their agreements and disagreements, I distinguish the ‘will-body’ identity from the ‘I-action’ (or individual-action) identity. We can construe the will-body identity as the precondition of agency itself: it explains on what basis we are *causally efficacious*. The ‘I-action’ identity is a precondition of individuality, however, and so it explains on what basis we are free, responsible agents. I argue that the differences between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on the preconditions of agency and individuality are twofold and related. Firstly, they disagree about starting with the first-person experience of willing. The previous leads Nietzsche to prefer the concept of the ‘drive’ instead of the ‘will’ to avoid appealing to unities without a third-person representation. Secondly, they disagree over the role of deliberation in individuality.

6. *Nietzsche on Individuality and Generality following the Will-Body Identity*. In this chapter, I look at Nietzsche’s objections to Schopenhauer’s views on individuality and generality, but also demonstrate the basis on which he constructs his revisionist and naturalist account out of those objections. Nietzsche takes the body and its multiplicity as his starting point for making sense of the will-body identity and deriving a philosophical method and conceptual framework from it, contra Schopenhauer who starts with the first-person experience of willing. Willing is a multiplicity (of ‘drives’), for Nietzsche: it is an activity of the *whole* body and its parts working together, not the result of one part of the body in opposition to or as distinct from the other parts. This activity of the whole body (or the drives) appears as an action or an affect. For brevity, I suggest a tripartite distinction mapping out the generic and individual activities of the whole body. First, our actions themselves represent *who one is* as an individual. Second, our feelings represent experiences we inherit from our ancestors and our own previous experiences. Third, our so-called ‘herd instincts’ as represented in custom, which we acquire from communal life and which represent common values and actions we learn from our community’s authority figures.
7. *Nietzsche’s Reversal: Individuality, Deliberation and our Self-image*. This chapter analyses in detail Nietzsche’s revisionist and naturalist account of the individuality and generality of our actions. I argue he reverses Schopenhauer’s claim that deliberation makes our actions individual by juxtaposing their different conceptions of a self-image and self-knowledge. Nietzsche has a naturalist and revisionist conception of deliberation and argues that it is explicable in terms of the drives. We can distinguish its activity from the activities of the other drives by recognising its association with consciousness and self-conscious thought, which indicates the introduction of a self-image to our actions. Deliberation is a drive relation expressed in assuming another’s perspective on ourselves prior to acting; it makes our actions appear generic by forcing us to assume another’s perspective. This perspective partakes in and shapes our actions, which he explains genealogically. It represents a *need* for authority which we inherit from our ancestors. Thus, Nietzsche’s conception of the generality and individuality of our actions is limited. To recognise what grounds this limited account and how he supports it, we have to address and lay out his distinct philosophical method.

8. *Nietzsche's Method, the 'Conceptual Link' and the Origin of Self-conscious Agency.* In this chapter, I focus on demonstrating Nietzsche's philosophical method. This method is composed of two elements: a) his drive psychology and b) what he calls 'historical philosophising'. His drive psychology replaces Schopenhauer's concept of the 'will' without undermining the will-body identity. His turn to history or historical reasoning represents his recognition of the limits of Schopenhauer's explanation of phenomena. This turn to history most likely demonstrates the influence of his philological training on his philosophical thought. I introduce a new concept to clarify how the previous two elements entwine to constitute his philosophical method, which I will call the 'conceptual link'. I derive the conceptual link from a close reading of what he calls the 'chemistry of concepts and sensation' (*HHI* 1). I use the previous to assess how he explains the superfluity of 'consciousness' after arguing that it demonstrates a problem. I chose to apply his method to consciousness because it is the fundamental feature of self-conscious agency. His account of consciousness is genealogical. He argues that it arose from the so-called 'need to communicate', which he describes as a 'terrible must', and the emergence of language, which he construes as ascribing a 'communication symbol' (i.e., a word, a gesture etc.) to the target of our awareness. The need to communicate, however, emerges from communal life and the pressures associated with establishing a community and maintaining it. Therefore, there is what I call a 'conceptual link' between consciousness, communication, language and communal life, which he explains through historical philosophising and using his drive psychology, which is rooted in the will-body identity.
9. *Self-conscious Agency and the Origin of Morality.* In this chapter, I focus on arguably the most important part of Nietzsche's analysis, i.e., his account of how morality partakes in our lives and actions. He requires this account to explain how the actions legislated by Judeo-Christian morality (by appealing to God, the incorporeal soul and an afterlife) are possible in a mechanical world (which rejects the legitimacy of appealing to the previous concepts). How are such actions possible following rejecting the metaphysical or ontological pictures underpinning the belief in God, the incorporeal soul and an afterlife, some of which marginally cohere with the mechanical world? I argue he does so by building upon the conceptual link. Morality emerges from relations between individuals in a community, albeit at a specific stage in its development. Communities themselves emerge from an act of willpower by individuals that establish command-obedience relations with other individuals to form a 'rank order' of values and actions premised on strength and violence. The need to communicate, language, consciousness and so on emerge from these relationships. From the previous emerges what I call 'contractual relationships' and their typical rank order of values and actions premised on debts, contracts, obligations, responsibility and so on. He explains the emergence of contractual relationships using his drive psychology and by appealing to the so-called 'internalisation of man'. According to this theory, we internalise command-obedience relationships through the memory of pain and violence stemming from living in communities whose rank order is determined by relationships premised on strength,

violence and the infliction of pain. Internalising those relationships, in turn, makes possible contractual relationships, which characterises obedience without a command. Morality stems from contractual relationship and represents a further stage in the development of a community and the process of internalisation that characterises it. Fundamentally, and this is where I argue we find Nietzsche's definition, morality opposes what is individual and represents the interests of a community. It commits to maintaining, defending and championing the rank order of values and actions characterising a particular community. It represents the 'herd perspective', which *conceptually links* to deliberation, our self-image and self-conscious agency such that we cannot have self-conscious thoughts and actions without our equally entertaining a morality or moral value, which is often our community's rank order of actions and values. I support the previous claims by analysing Nietzsche's example of the 'pale criminal' in Z.

10. *Nietzsche's Evaluation of Morality: Egoism and the Sovereign Individual.* I take Nietzsche's views on morality a step further by assessing his evaluation of morality. I argue we can construe his genealogical analysis as aiming to *attune* readers to his Weltanschauung in preparation for his evaluation of morality, which is as revisionist as his descriptive, genealogical account of morality. Morality requires non-moral evaluation, according to Nietzsche, but this evaluation *cannot* be immoral. He rejects the moral method of evaluating, because it can, at best, only suggest another morality Y instead of X, which bypasses the critique of morality and fails to recognise what he identifies as the 'harmful' effects of morality *itself*, rather than the harmful effects of a particular morality. In short, Nietzsche seeks a higher authority than morality or one on an equal footing to it with a view to developing a distinct evaluation of morality. I attempt to make sense of his distinct evaluation by unearthing the propositions underpinning his rhetoric and writing style. The latter reveal that he firstly introduces another perspective than the herd perspective into our reflections over moral matters and commitments to moral principles. We can derive this method from his definition of morality as opposing individuality. The perspective he aims to introduce has to oppose the herd perspective *and* have equal (or higher) value to it. The individual perspective satisfies both criteria, while the concept of 'health' makes possible the introduction of the previous perspective into our reflections over moral matters. He encourages readers to take seriously the concept of 'health' in moral deliberation, because, or so he claims, 'health' is both morally neutral and determined by *who* one is as a whole, which includes one's individuality. Through his of the individual perspective into moral deliberations via the concept of health, he prepares his readers for a non-moral evaluation of morality. The previous leads him to argue for what I construe as another stage in the process of internalisation, which transcends what he calls the 'morality of custom' [*Sittlichkeit der Sitte*], namely, what we construe as 'sovereign individuality'. I clarify this stage using his example of Goethe and I argue that he describes it as unifying or harmonising the herd with the individual perspective in us.



11. *The Bridge: An Alternative Solution to the Lack of Fit.* In this chapter, I offer my alternative solution to the lack of fit, which aims to point us in the right direction for identifying the guiding thread that will reveal his conceptual framework and Weltanschauung. I ground my solution on the limits he places on causal explanations and so-called mechanical picture, which he builds from Schopenhauer's objections to causal explanations. Nietzsche limits the application of causality by arguing that *causally* explaining the (self-conscious) thought-action relationship risks circular reasoning, because causality is based on a 'belief' or 'faith' in 'conscious willing' or in the fact that 'willing suffices for action'. The limitations he places on causal explanations lead him to argue that we should first observe and analyse what happens when we 'will something' before we commit to a conception of willing and what follows from it and, in turn, to a conception of 'causality'. Therefore, his aim is revisionist. Following his analysis of what happens when we will something, he argues that willing is an 'activity' that is discernible in both the first-person and third-person perspectives. I argue that this activity works as a bridge by demonstrating an identity relationship between the self-conscious 'I' and the drives (or their 'total state'). The 'I' and the 'total state of the drives' are two different perspectives on the same activity of overpowering, overcoming etc., which we perceive as 'acting upon (or reacting to) something'. Therefore, our actions fall on the same spectrum as thoughts, decisions, desires, wishes and so on. Similarly, our actions fall on the same spectrum as micro-movements, drive relations, their 'total state' and so on. The thought-action relation or 'I'-drive relation is one of identity, which depicts two distinct ways of apprehending our willing, acting and so on. It is nothing over and above or distinct from this willing, acting and so on.
12. *Nietzsche on Objectivity and Aesthetic Contemplation.* Here I assess how Nietzsche's views on aesthetic contemplation and objectivity differ from Schopenhauer's account, which, I argue, conflates aesthetic contemplation with objectivity. Schopenhauer defends a veridical account of aesthetic contemplation by arguing that 'focusing on something' in aesthetic contemplation means that we are 'interested wholly in what it is *in itself*'. Nietzsche rejects the previous and distinguishes aesthetic contemplation from objective reflection by arguing that there are many different reasons for (or interests in) focusing wholly on something. These reasons and interests correspond to different rank orders of drives. Equally, aesthetic contemplation and objective reflection are both active rather than passive. Aesthetic contemplation is 'creative', whereas objective reflection is not, because it aims at veracity. Nietzsche's objections to Schopenhauer's account of genius and her 'excesses' reveal the basis on which he builds his phenomenology of aesthetic contemplation, which, as Reginster (2014) rightly argues, conceives the artist as a creator. Nietzsche construes the 'excesses' of genius as *Rausch*, albeit he also construes *Rausch* as the physiological counterpart to what he calls the 'act of idealising', which he associates with the act of making something beautiful or sublime, i.e., ascribing aesthetic properties to things or picking out and focusing on those properties and thereby individuating them. *Rausch* and idealisation are two

perspectives on the same activity, similar to the 'I' and the 'total state' of the drives. He also offers a different conception of objectivity, which revises Schopenhauer's veridical account of 'purity' and the 'mirror'. He does not explain objectivity in terms of the relationship between the will and the intellect, or apply it to aesthetic contemplation, like Schopenhauer did. His account of objectivity is limited: we have a *drive* for knowledge that is in the trenches with the other drives and so forms relationships with them prior to discharging in an action. In short, our drive for knowledge can take higher or lower positions in the rank order of drives, but it cannot be 'pure' or 'isolate' itself from the other drives, like we saw with the 'I', the 'soul' or the 'will'. In short, our drive for knowledge does not guarantee its success, and certainly not in the so-called 'metaphysical' sense that would then allow us to meaningfully assume a distinction between a thing in itself and its appearance.

13. *The Morality of Mitleid<sup>5</sup> and the Ascetic Ideal*. In the final chapter, I analyse the basis for his claim that *Mitleid* is a great 'danger to mankind'. I argue we can understand this danger in light of Nietzsche's objections to Schopenhauer's approach to morality. I undertake the previous by defending two related propositions Nietzsche makes about *Mitleid*. Firstly, his warnings of the dangers of *Mitleid* do not aim at *Mitleid itself*, i.e., compassion, pity and their cognates, but at our 'evaluation' of them. They aim at the 'morality' or the 'moralisation' of *Mitleid*. I argue we can infer from the previous that what applies to *Mitleid*, applies to anything we value as highly as we do something we construe as morally valuable, or that we value as highly as meriting the status of the ground of moral values, actions and propositions. Secondly, his warning over high evaluations of something reveal that his concerns aim at ideals or the ascetic ideal. Following May's (1999) reading of the ascetic ideal, I argue values relate to the ascetic ideal if they possess the properties of 'parasitism' and 'completeness'. It is unclear whether these properties pertain to all ideals or only of the ascetic ideal, since there is reason and textual evidence to suggest both. Nonetheless, the morality of *Mitleid* (or the *high value* we ascribe to *Mitleid*) relates to the ascetic ideal by exhibiting these properties. The point Nietzsche makes, then, is about the evaluative framework underpinning morality, which demonstrates its association to the ascetic ideal by possessing the properties of completeness and parasitism. Next, I assess his analysis of the potential opponents to the ascetic ideal, namely, science and art. I argue he rejects both for different reasons. He rejects science because according to its evaluative framework it places a characteristically high value on the 'truth', which makes it vulnerable to assuming the properties of completeness and parasitism. He argues art is more effective at opposing the ascetic ideal, because its evaluative framework champions 'lies' and 'deception'. I make sense of the previous by distinguishing lies

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<sup>5</sup> I leave *Mitleid* untranslated to avoid the debate in the commentary about whether Schopenhauer defends 'compassion' and Nietzsche attacks 'pity', which would mean they are talking past each other. The point I aim to make is not about compassion and-or pity, but about morality and its relationship to the ascetic ideal. I chose to refer to *Mitleid*, because the emotion plays a significant role in morality for both thinkers.

and deceptions from ‘falsehoods’ and so distinguishing the evaluative framework underpinning science from that underpinning the arts. Artists are also prone to what he calls ‘changing valuations’, which makes them vulnerable to ‘corruption’ by the ascetic ideal, e.g., Wagner’s case. Moreover, given their proneness to ‘changing valuations’, artists lack the *will* to commit to and enforce any ideal irrespective of whether or not they created it. They exhibit features that are invaluable for (sovereign) individuals who genuinely overcome and replace ideals, but artists fall short of *being* those individuals. Finally, I close the chapter with the proposition that Nietzsche did not fully work out an alternative to the ascetic ideal or an alternative ethics. He leaves us with questions, objections, critiques, evaluations, methods and pieces of an ideal or an ethics. In many respects, his project remains incomplete, but full of fruitful revisions and steps in a particular direction, underpinned by a clear concern over the status of individuals and individuality in community. Thus, I understand Nietzsche as aiming to restore the value of *individuals*, that is, to find a harmonious role for individuality in communal life.



# 1 Schopenhauer on Self-Cognition, Disinterestedness and Compassion

Schopenhauer begins the first book of his main work with his famous Idealist statement that “the world is my representation” (WR, 23) and that “this holds true for every living, cognitive being” (WR, 23), i.e., for beings who have sense organs and a brain. What distinguishes humans from animals is that humans make concepts out of their experiences and perceptions, whereas animals only possess an intuitive, non-conceptual relationship to their perceptions and experiences. In short, one being has both intuitive and abstract representations, whereas the other is bound to intuitive representations. Moreover, only human beings recognise that, for them, the world exists only in relation to their own cognition. A human being’s conceptual capacities allow her to have self-conscious access to her participation in the world. This self-conscious access allows her to do something animals cannot do, which becomes the theme of Schopenhauer’s aesthetics and ethics.

In this section, I will argue that Schopenhauer *rarely* deviates from the above propositions. Some of the inconsistencies we find in his aesthetics and ethics are often a misapplication of the conceptual framework underpinning these propositions. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Schopenhauer *never* deviates from this framework. I will assess one such deviation, which I believe is in his account of ascetic resignation, but equally his views on the artistic genre of tragedy. I will start by clarifying his conceptual tools, i.e., the will and the intellect. I will likewise assess how they relate to one another based on his so-called will-body identity and what I will call the ‘correlation theory of cognition’. Subsequently, I will defend an alternative reading of the ‘thing (or object) in itself’ in Schopenhauer whose implications extend to the core of his ethics and aesthetics. The latter implications will constitute the theme of the various chapters in this section.

## 1.1 The Will, the Intellect and the Meaningful World-View

The intellect's role is to represent the world in preparation for us *to will something* in it. In other words, the intellect is *instrumental* to willing something. The world of objects, object-relations and natural forces, which the intellect represents, reflects its *instrumentality* to the will by providing a world in which we can (re)act through the cognition of something we *can* will, namely, an 'object'. This kind of cognition of the world finds its limit in what Schopenhauer calls the 'Principle of Sufficient Reason' (PSR). He does not stop at the PSR, however. He aims to show that the PSR is *not* the limit of the world *itself*, but the limit of one *kind* of cognition (or experience) of the world, which he describes as follows:

“...only after the reader has fully recognised (by means of this essay) what the principle of sufficient reason is and *means*, where it is valid and where it is not, the fact that it is not prior to all things and the whole world does not exist only in consequence of and according to this principle, as something like its correlate; only after the reader has fully recognised that this principle is really nothing more than the form in which an object (which is always conditioned by the subject) of whatever sort it may be, is always cognised, so long as the subject is a cognising individual” (WR, Pref. 1<sup>st</sup> ed.: 7; my emphasis)

The subject-object correlation is foundational to our experiences or cognition. However, the PSR is distinct from this correlation in an important way. Its validity extends as far as the cognising 'individual'. In other words, the PSR is the limit of a cognition whose subjective correlate is *individuality*. Thus, the PSR is not the absolute limit of cognition, but the limit of one kind of cognition, namely, that of an object for a willing subject or for an individual. Consequently, we can have a cognition of the world not limited to the PSR, according to Schopenhauer. Let us clarify this proposition.

The fundamental claim is that the subject-object correlation is inherent to any cognition. Even given this different cognition of something, which is *not* cognition of an object (or motive), we cannot possibly have a cognition of something (or experience anything) without the subject-object correlation:

“This form is more universal than any other form, more universal than time, space and causality, which, in fact, presuppose it.” (WR, 3)

In short, the proposition seems to be that we can have cognition of the world that is different from the one instrumental to our individuality and willing, for Schopenhauer. Nevertheless, we cannot possibly *cognise* something without reference to the subject of the cognition. Every cognition is still the *representation* of 'something by someone'. Even this different kind of cognition adheres to the minimal requirement of a cognition of something. However, it is not, strictly speaking, the cognition of an 'object', nor that of a 'motive', but it is *still*

the cognition of ‘something by someone’ (more on this below). Thus, for Schopenhauer, a different subject-object correlation yields a different cognition or experience; it is not the experience of a different world, but a different *experience* or *cognition* of *this* world. To make sense of these contentious claims I begin by asking what, according to Schopenhauer, is a ‘cognition’, a ‘representation’ or an ‘experience’?

Schopenhauer distinguishes between two functions of the intellect that cooperate to provide the cognition of something: ‘understanding’ (*Verstand*) and ‘reason’ (*Vernunft*). The understanding is the ‘intuitive’ function and reason is the ‘abstract’ function, both of which correspond to different representations. Intuitive representations are perceptions in general that “encompass the entire visible world or the whole of experience” (*WR*, 27), e.g. perception of an apple, a cup or a dog, whose universal forms of space, time and causality constitute “the ground of being” (*WR*, 28) and underpin the manner of their appearance.<sup>6</sup> We cannot perceive nor conceive of anything without its having some root in the intuitive representation from which it then acquires its ‘meaning or significance’. The world we cognise begins with our being *affected* by something that the intellect then traces to some particular location at a particular time through the understanding and its application of causality. He summarises the previous in the following manner:

“The first and simplest manifestation of the understanding which, in addition, is always present, is the intuition of the actual world, and this is absolutely nothing other than cognition of the cause based on the effect. Consequently, all intuition is intellectual. Nonetheless we might never reach this if we were not immediately acquainted with some effect that could serve as a starting point: but there are in fact such effects on the animal body. To this extent, such bodies are the *immediate objects* of the subject: they mediate the intuition of all other objects.” (*WR*, 32)

Thus, we have cognition of a world in which we can (re)act based on our bodily affections, which he also calls “merely data” (*WR*, 33) and denotes the activity of something on us via our body.

An ‘abstract’ representation, which is a product of the faculty of reason, is “a representation of a representation” (*WR*, 64), which he likewise calls a concept (*Begriff*). Some animals are cognitive, i.e., they have a way of representing the world, but only humans additionally possess reason and reflection. He construes these additional capacities as,

“...a mirroring, something derived from intuitive cognition, although it has assumed a nature and constitution fundamentally different from such cognition and is ignorant of its forms...” (*WR*, 59)

We have a capacity for mirroring the world through concepts, which permit discursive judgments and, in turn, communication of our experiences with other human beings for

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<sup>6</sup> He construes the understanding as the primary sub-function of the intellect because it is shared with, and inherent to, other cognitive beings, i.e. animals.

coordinated action. Concepts form relations with one another that appear different from their intuitive counterparts (i.e., the ‘perception’ of an apple as juxtaposed to the ‘concept’ apple), but they are *meaningless* without any connection to their intuitive representations:

“Although concepts are fundamentally different from intuitive representations, they nevertheless stand in a necessary relation to them; without this relation, concepts would be nothing, and so this relation constitutes their whole essence and existence. Reflection is necessarily a copy or repetition of the original intuitive world, although a copy of a very special kind in a completely heterogeneous material. Concepts may therefore be quite aptly termed representations of representations.” (WR, 63)

The relation between an intuition and a concept is that between ground and its consequent, according to Schopenhauer. Concepts arise out of intuitions or percepts, but acquire a life and order of their own by forming relations with other concepts. Nevertheless, the meaning or the significance of a concept remains attached to the intuition, which the listener uses to *make sense* of it:

“Just because words communicate mere universal concepts which are absolutely different from the representations of perception, all the hearers will of course receive the same *concepts* during the narration of an event, for example. But if subsequently they wish to make the event clear to themselves, each will sketch in his imagination a different *picture* or *image* of it, and this differs considerably from the correct picture that only the eyewitness has.” (WRII, 67)

We can infer from Schopenhauer’s claims that the more intuitive something is the more *directly* meaningful it is to us. The previous inference is, I will argue, crucial to why he puts the ‘will’ at the heart of his philosophy.

In sum, one of Schopenhauer’s conceptual tools is the ‘intellect’, whose main role is to provide us with the cognition of a world in which we can (re)act, or with a cognition of something *enabling* action. It achieves this by applying its forms to immediate bodily changes (or sensations) that serve as raw data preceding an intuitive representation. The previous leads to the cognition of ‘something’ (an object) for ‘someone’ (a subject). From this intuitive representation we can construct what he calls ‘abstract representations’ or ‘concepts’, which assume a life of their own independent from their root in intuition through the relations they form with each other. Nevertheless, the key proposition I would like to take forward here is that ‘concepts’ only have *meaning* by their reference to some ‘intuitive’ representation.<sup>7</sup>

Note that, for him, the starting point of the process that yields the cognition of a world in which we can (re)act is immediate awareness of bodily changes, that is, “pure

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<sup>7</sup> I want to avoid a discussion of Schopenhauer’s implicit philosophy of language, but note there is considerable room for arguing that he possesses a ‘reference’ theory of meaning. Meaning, for Schopenhauer, would be the reference of the word or sentence, and the reference is the intuitive representation (something with spatiotemporal coordinates).



sensations” (*WR*, 41). Sensations are immediate, whereas the PSR mediates them to provide a perception:

“Now, as far as it is the starting-point, i.e. the mediator, for our perception of all other objects, I have called the bodily organism, in the first edition of the present work, the *Immediate Object*; this, however, must not be taken in a strictly literal sense. For although our bodily sensations are all apprehended directly, still this immediate apprehension does not yet make our body itself perceptible to us as an object; on the contrary, up to this point all remains subjective, that is to say, sensation. From this sensation certainly proceeds the perception of all other objects as the causes of such sensations, and these causes then present themselves to us as objects; but it is not so with the body itself, which only supplies sensations to consciousness. It is only indirectly that we know even this body objectively, i.e. as an object, by its presenting itself, like all other objects, as the recognised cause of a subjectively given effect and precisely on this account objectively in our Understanding, or brain (which is the same).” (*FR*, §22, 99)

The intellect works with our immediate bodily sensations<sup>8</sup> to give perception of ‘something for someone’. Bodily sensations then are ‘least like’ a representation or the closest we can get to the other side of a representation, i.e., the thing itself. Sensations are the limits of the subject-object correlation. What is *least like* a representation, he claims, will show us what our world is other than a representation.

Schopenhauer’s approach in the first book of *WR* (but likewise in *FR* as we see above) is from what I will call a ‘speculative perspective’, which we can see as the abstract aspect of our experiences removed from their reference in intuition. Consequently, he construes sensations as falling under ‘representations’; he treats them as ‘immediate representations’ or ‘immediate objects’, which he readily acknowledges that it is ‘too one-sided’ (cf. *WR*, 24). Nevertheless, he abandons this one-sided view after he introduces the other aspect of our experiences and conceptual tool, i.e., the will.<sup>9</sup>

Schopenhauer is not clear about whether a ‘sensation’ is just a representation or also something else. I will argue that the reason for his lack of clarity is that his ‘correlation theory’ of cognition permits us to see them as both a ‘representation’ *and* ‘something else’. Construed as from the ‘speculative perspective’ they are ‘representations’. After he has

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<sup>8</sup> Construed from another standpoint, which must be defended and argued for, they are the closest we can get to the thing in itself, albeit mediated by one form of the PSR, i.e., time. The person, for him, is the sensing being that comprehends and acts on the basis of perceptions and reflections constructed out of the pure material of the body that are its sensations or affections, which are the same thing seen from different standpoints. Schopenhauer intends sensations to fall equally on both camps of the will and representation since he uses them as a bridge from one to the other. There are passages in Schopenhauer’s theory of aesthetics that likewise indicate this line of thought, where he argues for a distinction in degree and intensity between sensations that engender perception and those sensations (or affects) that arouse the will and lead to some (re)action (*WRII*, 368-370). I have not pressed this further and have stayed with his understanding that time is the only condition of our cognition of the thing in itself, or the last veil, as he understands it (*WRII*, 197-8).

<sup>9</sup> We can find a similar line of thought regarding ‘sensations’, but with more arguments and textual support in Atwell (1995, 32-52).

made the association between the ‘will’ and the ‘thing in *itself*’ using the will-body identity, they are *modifications* of the will. Nonetheless, the distinction between the two is one of different perspectives on the same thing premised on our standpoint. It becomes clear as we proceed and after the elucidation of the will that, initially, following his Kantian roots, he views sensations as the most ‘direct’ or ‘concrete’ representations: as the ground of the cognition of an ‘object’. After he has expounded and introduced us to the distinct encounter with the body as ‘will’, he modifies his approach to *making sense* of sensations. This change in approach demonstrates how he moves further from his Kantian influences onto a novel world-view and corresponding philosophy. He later construes them as ‘modifications’ (or ‘affections’) of the will whose *identical object* is the body, albeit seen as *an object*. Therefore, he advances two perspectives on ‘sensations’, whose starting and focal point are the body. The body is a kind of sensation *seen as* a representation (i.e., an ‘immediate object’), albeit, in addition, it is the host and medium of all others sensations, movements and full-fledged actions. The body, in the second sense, is the locus for our interactions with other *supposedly* external and-or foreign objects. It is the seat of self-hood and of agency.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, we can say that, from one standpoint, sensations are the limits of the intellect, which, being *its* limit, means they are equally representations. They are not *wholly* representations, however, because they also suggest something beyond the limit of a representation, i.e., the *thing in itself*, which is where the will (or willing) enters the picture.

Schopenhauer introduces the concept of the will in the second book of *WR* and does so by voicing a concern over the inadequacy of ‘the speculative perspective’ on things and the world, which yields cognition of ‘objects’. He begins by bringing to our attention the subjective correlate of the world filled with objects, object-relations, the natural laws governing those relations and the forces of nature underpinning those laws. The subjective correlate of the previous, which I will call the ‘objective picture’ for brevity, is what he calls the ‘pure subject of cognition’, whose one-sidedness he condemns:

“In this First Book we consider the world from this side alone, namely in so far as it is representation. However, the inner reluctance with which anyone accepts that the world is merely their representation – even though the acceptance is inescapable – shows that, irrespective of its truth, this aspect is one-sided and hence the result of some arbitrary abstraction.” (*WR*, 24)

The objective picture may not be false, but it does not tell us anything about the significance or meaning (*Bedeutung*)<sup>11</sup> of what appears *to us*. We often explain the ‘objective picture’ by

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<sup>10</sup> For further elucidations of the previous, see (*WRII*, 367).

<sup>11</sup> Although I have primarily followed Janaway’s translation, I believe translating ‘*Bedeutung*’ as ‘meaning’ does not fully capture what Schopenhauer aims at based on the distinction between the intellect and the will. My worry is we risk confusing his sense of ‘meaning’ here with the ‘meaning’ ascribed to language or utterances. Translating it as ‘significance’, which is Payne’s translation, is more useful for elucidating a key distinction of his philosophy of the will, which we would miss if we approach it as from linguistic utterances. It is not meaning in the linguistic sense that concerns him, but significance in the sense of ‘sparking our interest’, or in the ‘evaluative sense’, or in

appealing to the operations of an unknown quantity we call ‘matter’. However, cognition of ‘matter’ is a result of sensations traced to some *cause* deemed as having ‘X’ spatiotemporal coordinates:

“This amounts to saying that for matter, its being is its acting; and it is inconceivable that matter has any other being. Only by acting can it fill space and time: its action on the immediate object (which is itself matter) is a condition for intuition, and matter can exist only in intuition. We can know the result of one material object acting upon another only if the second object now has a different effect on the immediate object than it did before – indeed the effect is nothing more than this. The whole being of matter therefore lies in cause and effect: for matter, its being is its acting.” (WR, 29)

The application of causality and spatiotemporal coordinates on our affects rests on our distinguishing between what is ‘of us’ (or within us) and what is not ‘of us’ (or what is of ‘other than us’ or without us). Consequently, since the ground of a cognition is the subject-object correlation, the objective picture begins with the application of the subject-object correlation before we trace sensations to causes and thus before we have the cognition of something. Put differently, the cognition of *an object for a subject* begins with our assuming the stance of an *individual* affected by something deemed as outside of her. The basis of what we perceive as ‘matter’ or a ‘material thing’, which we construe as the operation of

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the ‘sufficient for action’ sense. What the will adds to a representation is the object’s significance or relevance *to us*, which makes it a motive or motivates us. If *Bedeutung* or ‘meaning’ in Janaway’s translation is understood in the evaluative or purposive sense, i.e., the ‘why’ and ‘what for’ of a representation, then it comes closer to capturing Schopenhauer’s distinction between the two aspects of the world and the individual (intellect and will), and why he calls the ‘will’ the ‘essence’ of the representation. The ‘will’ paves the way for a value-laden or a purpose-laden view of the world not premised on, but rather elucidating the significance of the causal order we perceive; the latter which, on its own, is devoid of significance (or meaning). Further, translating it as somewhere between meaning and significance also explains the claim that representations without ‘will’ lack *Bedeutung*; they are empty or incomplete. Representations have, on their own, a ‘what’ without a ‘why’. Willing has both a ‘what’ and ‘why’, because to will is to will something. Furthermore, what we will changes its appearance from our *seeing it as an object* to our *seeing it as a motive*. The ‘what’ of the representation turns into its ‘why’ after we introduce ‘the will’ into the objective picture. In other words, the representation turns into a ‘motive’ when it relates to our will. For example, the body with hair, skin, flesh, organs and bones we *see as* our beloved when we introduce the will or when we will something in it. The significance of the object we call a body changes when we will something in it. Thus, it changes appearance in accordance with our will. Furthermore, the usefulness of this translation is also recognisable in his metaphor of the “ghostly phantasm” (WR, 123). Representations would have no significance in our lives, they would be empty and action as well as value (we can say life itself in the way we experience it) would not ensue, if the will was absent from the picture. Without that which he denotes as the ‘will’, there would be no life, as we know it. *Bedeutung* in Schopenhauer’s use seemingly sits at the boundary between the will and the intellect; it implies both, but it primarily denotes the will and its effect on our cognition. For example, apples are fruits and members of the kingdom Plantae and thus objects of perception relating to other objects in different ways. Apples are also nourishing and taste a specific way to certain individuals; for some of us they are *worth* picking, distributing and eating, for others they are not because of differences in taste or allergies. Notice how the picture of the apple changes according to the perspective we take on it, i.e., according to the subjective correlate. Apples are not *only* the perception of an object relative to another, they also move and affect us in certain ways. For Schopenhauer, the speculative intellectual stance on apples does *not* determine the *Bedeutung* (meaning or significance) of apples; only the willing stance does. Our *willing something* determines the *Bedeutung* of that ‘something’, *for us*. Perceptions have no *Bedeutung* if we do not presuppose the ‘will’ or ‘willing’. From here on, I will use ‘meaning’ and ‘significance’ interchangeably, albeit I intend neither to refer to a linguistic conception of ‘meaning’.

some “natural force [*Naturkraft*]” (WR, 121), is, when presented in this way, a “*qualitas occulta*” (WR, 106). His objection to this approach is summarised as follows:

“The operation of occult qualities is tacitly assumed although no enlightenment is expected on that score, since people had intended to build upon them, not beneath them. This sort of thing, as we have said, cannot work. But apart from this, such structures are always built on air. What use are explanations that in the end lead back to something just as unfamiliar as the initial problem had been?” (WR, 150)

We have no genuine insight into these natural forces when we approach them from the perspective of the pure subject; they are meaningless *to us*. Let us then see what, he thinks, is required to make natural forces meaningful; also, why he thinks they are meaningless.

We remember that, for Schopenhauer, the world is *our* representation and we arrive at this insight as pure subjects of cognition. We are driven to question and wonder what the world is ‘in itself’, what it might be ‘independent from *us*’, what it might be like beyond the limits of the intellect, when we recognise that natural forces are entirely mysterious to us independent from their effects in an object. We wonder about the ‘something X’ that affects us and that constitutes the raw data for intuitive representation of something. Our inquiry into that ‘something X’ too-often leads us to posit something wholly devoid of ‘significance’ *to us* such as an ‘object in itself’, which he calls ‘dogmatic realism’ and bemoans its claiming to,

“...separate the representation from the object (even though they are one and the same) by treating the representation as the effect of the object. This involves assuming the existence of a cause that is completely distinct from the representation, an object in itself that is independent of the subject. But this is totally inconceivable because, as an object, it would *always presuppose a subject* and hence *is only ever the representation of a subject*... To insist that objects exist outside the representation of a subject – and to insist that actual objects have a being distinct from their acting – these demands are completely meaningless and contradictory.” (WR, 35; my emphasis)

To posit something outside of our cognition such an ‘object in itself’, or even a ‘force in itself’ etc., is to posit something like an experience (i.e., an object or a force) outside of an experiencing subject, which is a meaningless and contradictory enterprise. We approach it wrong, according to Schopenhauer. We try to make that ‘something X’ (cf. WR, 23-4), or ‘thing in itself’, an object of cognition and then posit *it* as outside of our experience and the limits of our cognition. By doing so, we either deny or affirm its existence, but both are wrong because they strive to *represent* that which cannot possibly be a ‘representation’. We cannot cognise it directly, because it requires us to go beyond the subject-object correlation, which is impossible. In trying to think about what lies *behind* matter or what a natural force is *independent* from its effects on something that we perceive by virtue of *its* effect on us, we grasp only *its* shell. We acquire a concept without its correlate intuitive representation, namely, a concept without reference.

There is, for Schopenhauer, another way to approach our metaphysical inquiry into the thing in itself and thus vent the wonder *driving* this inquiry. This other way is not via the pure subject of cognition, its objective picture and the stance of the individual that underpins it. This other way goes to the bottom of the objective picture, namely, to the pure sensations, which are ‘least like’ a representation. Thus, he uses our sensations as his starting point for this renewed inquiry, which finally leads him to the will.

The limits of the PSR are unfruitful, but they are nevertheless informative over what it *means* to be an ‘object’, which paves the way for making the concept of the ‘thing in itself’ significant in another way. The PSR deprives the ‘thing in itself’ of significance, but it also shows us the conditions for significance by its negation. To perceive an ‘object’ is *not* to perceive something significant, because we would then perceive a motive or something that motivates us, i.e., a *delicious* apple. The best we can say about the significance of an object is that it *permits, enables* and-or *underpins* motivation. An object is the sort of thing that *can* be a motive or that *can* be significant to us. The degree of its *affection* is what determines how *significant* it is to us. In other words, objects are the conceptual or perceptual correlates of motives. They coincide with motives in that this object X (e.g. an apple) at time Y *can* be motive X\* (e.g., a *delicious* apple) at another time Z. However, to perceive X *as an object* is different from perceiving X\* *as a motive*. It is only in the latter sense that it has significance. In other words, it is when we *will* that we no longer perceive something *as an object among objects*, but as what we are ‘looking for’ or what we ‘need’.

In sum, the world and its objects are *my* representations, so whatever *I* cognise cannot possibly be a ‘thing in itself’. We cannot complete the one-sided objective picture of the world through the cognition of an ‘object’. To cognise something is to stand in some relation to it and so for us to become conscious of anything we must be affected by something, which entails that we are not cognising it as it ‘in itself’. Our inquiry into the ‘thing in itself’ leaves us dissatisfied by leading us back to the recognition we were initially trying to overcome, namely, that the world is nothing but ‘*my* representation’. I cannot overcome my relation to a target of cognition such that I can cognise it is as it is *in itself*. Schopenhauer summarises the above as follows:

“...we are not satisfied with knowing that we have representations, that they are such and such, and that they are joined according to this or that law whose general expression is always the principle of sufficient reason. We want to know the meaning [*Bedeutung*] of those representations: we ask if this world is nothing more than representation; in which case it would have to pass over us like an insubstantial dream or a ghostly phantasm [*Luftgebilde*], not worth our notice; or in fact whether it is something else, something more, and if so, what this could be.” (WR, 123)

What drives our inquiry into the ‘true’ or real ‘nature’ of the world, viz., into what the world might be independent from us, which he calls “the *need for metaphysics* that is peculiar to man alone” (WRII, 160), is our dissatisfaction with the recognition that the world is nothing other than *our* representation. Our inquiry comes to a halt following the recognition that all we can conclude about the world is ‘*we* are inseparably related to it’. What, then, does he

hope to show when he claims that “only the will is *thing in itself*” (WR, 135)? What can this statement mean in light of the above?

We recognise that there is always a position or a perspective from which the world appears as it does to us; *we* are the inseparable correlates of the world. We forget to ask the pertinent question arising from our positing a world filled with objects, underpinned by a ‘thing in itself’ or ‘natural force’, namely, to *whom* does the world appear as it does? If we cannot overcome the subjective correlate of our cognition, then we should *embrace it*. The question we should ask is why do we *need* to be ‘pure subjects of cognition’? What is it that we *want* when we perceive the world as filled with objects? Put another way, what *drives* the inquiry that leaves us with the objective picture? Can we trust the assumption that what drives us is *pure* cognition or a sort of *naive* curiosity? When we focus entirely on an external object—also when we treat our body as *an object* among objects—we make an error akin to a psychological denial over the position or the perspective from which we cognise it *as an object*. Even pure subjects of cognition perceive the world as the representation of something by someone. The objective picture is *her* representation; *she* has not succeeded in plucking *her* eyes out such that *her* perception is without some perceiver. Nevertheless, Schopenhauer concedes, her failure to pluck her eyes out reveals to her what she sought all along, i.e., what *drives her* when she perceives a world filled with objects. This becomes apparent whenever we direct our attention from the external *object* to ourselves, as we *must* in certain mundane moments, e.g., when we are hungry. We notice in such moments that what was driving our inquiry was reason separated from its *significant* or *meaningful* counterpart, i.e., intuition whose root is the body, which is also the focal point of our ‘willing’.

The objective picture lacks significance because we *removed* the precondition of significance: the will. Furthermore, we fail to demonstrate what the objective world is *other than* ‘*our* representation’, because it is how it appears to the ‘pure’ subject of cognition, not how it is *in itself*. We have not overcome the subjective correlate to arrive at the world as it is ‘in itself’, but have merely taken away what makes anything significant to us. Thus, there is a difference between the objective picture, which is devoid of significance and premised on suppression of our individual and narrow perspective (*our* individuals needs, interests etc.) and a *significant* world *tainted* by that perspective. We incline to construe the previous two pictures as *antinomies*. Schopenhauer, however, construes them as equivalents and has a subtle argument for doing so.

The objective picture is true, but lacks significance. What is missing? Schopenhauer wants an alternative way to make it significant without appealing to such mysterious powers or faculties of mind, which evade demonstration. His way, he contends, is easy to demonstrate. He proposes reason *and* ‘something else’, albeit not reason on its own through some mysterious corresponding faculty. We already have the concept of the ‘thing in itself’ from Kant, but do not have its corresponding percept, which will then make it meaningful. The pinnacle of the objective picture is the ‘thing in itself’, which is meaningless, so our task is to find what corresponds to the ‘thing in itself’ on the other side, i.e., the pinnacle of meaningfulness.

The strategy, then, is to recognise what happens when we find something meaningful and apply it to everything else we perceive and so *fill* our concept of the thing itself. This ‘something else’ explains why *some* objects of cognition invite our focus effortlessly whereas others do not. What makes a cognitive object meaningful and how does it ordinarily appear to us? What makes an object X stand out from Y? Why do we focus more *intently* on X than Y? Why does X stimulate us and Y does not? Why is it that, sometimes, object X becomes our *whole world* by how it invites our attention, whereas object Y is just another in a world filled with them? This difference in attention, which our *reactions* to something that affects us (and so become a *motive*) aptly reveal, is key to understanding the meaningfulness or significance of something.

We think we are assuming a *purely* objective stance on the world, i.e., independent from its subjective correlate, when we assume the posture of a pure subject of cognition, but we are in denial, according to Schopenhauer. All cognitions (intuitive or abstract) have their subjective correlates. The objective picture’s subjective correlate is the ‘pure’ subject of cognition, but there are other subjective correlates. Recognising this and resigning ourselves to it allows us to gain insight into what the world is *other than our* representation. The latter insight is that “‘the world is my will’” (WR, 24).

Schopenhauer devotes considerable attention to the above insight, but only after he argued that, the ‘thing in itself’ is without meaning or significance. In his own words:

“For the world is, on the one side, completely *representation*, just as it is, on the other side, completely *will*. However, a reality that would be neither of these, but rather an object in itself (and unfortunately this is what Kant’s thing in itself has surreptitiously degenerated into) is a fantastic absurdity [*erträumtes Unding*] and to assume such a thing is a philosophical will-o’-the wisp.” (WR, 25)

To dispel this absurdity, he argues, we must remember the position from which the world appears as filled with objects, including the so-called ‘object in itself’. We should reflect on and direct our attention to the only place left after we have exhausted our reflection of things ‘outside of us’, namely, to ourselves. There is something compromising, if not intellectually damning, about a so-called ‘pure’ subject of cognition, which Schopenhauer calls “a winged cherub’s head without a body” (WR, 124). Assuming the perspective of a ‘pure’ subject of cognition yields a meaningless objective picture. It does so because we have forgotten the *subjective correlate* of the cognition of any object, which is sensation or the affection of our body. The target of our cognition is *an object*, because only an object can become a motive for the will; they enable willing.

As so-called pure subjects of cognition, we perceive something meaningless because we have not yet found what will *satisfy* or relieve us, but we nonetheless represent something in such a way as to *permit* willing or to be capable of relieving us. In short, we *seek relief*. The subjective correlate of sensations underpinning cognition of an object is individuality; our seeking without finding something to will. Thus, the subjective correlate of the objective picture, namely, the so-called ‘pure’ subject of cognition, is still an *individual*. How, then, do we distinguish ‘individuality’ from the ‘will’? By virtue of its preoccupation with

individuality, Schopenhauer contends, the ‘pure’ subject of cognition is the less turbulent or a weakly affected equivalent of willing, which is as *rooted* in the world as is full-fledged willing.<sup>12</sup> The difference between them is in the *degree* of affection or sensation, rather than in the *kind* of affection or sensation.

What is an individual, for Schopenhauer, and what does it mean to be “rooted in this world” (WR, 124)? Individuality is construed as a ‘special relation’ to one of the objects we cognise:

“The subject of cognition is an individual precisely because of this special relation with the one body that, aside from all this, is only *a representation like any other.*” (WR, 128; my emphasis)

The ‘one body’ he refers to is our own body. The ‘special relation’ is our *identity* with it, which we notice when we act upon or react to something:

“Willing and doing are different only for reflection: in actuality they are one. Every true, genuine and immediate act of will is instantly and immediately also the *appearance* of an act of the body.” (WR, 125; my emphasis)

The special relationship is two-fold. We relate to our body as *identical* with our will *and* as the focal point or ground of our experience of something. Our body is ‘an immediate object’ and we *see it as* an object. However, it is likewise identical with our *will* and so it is *our* will.

The difference between our willing and cognising then, for Schopenhauer, is that in willing we perceive an *identity* relationship between the will and a movement of the body, *not* a *causal* relationship. Causality applies only to the objective picture and what lies within its framework. It does not apply to its edges and beyond, i.e., to its subjective correlate or the subject-object correlation itself. Its subjective correlate is the ‘pure’ subject of cognition whose experience of the body is as an immediate object forming causal relationships with other objects in the world. The ‘pure’ subject of cognition perceives bodily stimuli as an *effect* whose *cause* is an external object. In willing, she experiences these stimuli as action inducing and so her relationship to her body changes. For example, she wants an apple and reaches for it, but she does not think (or even perceive) the apple as *causing* her to want and reach for it. Only when she does not will something does she perceive a *causal* relationship between her body and some object in the world. Yet, her ‘not willing’ something can be misleading because, as will become more apparent below, the ‘pure’ subject of cognition is still preoccupied with *willing* by seeing herself as an *individual*.

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<sup>12</sup> Schopenhauer’s conception of individuality is conditional on the body and its affection, irrespective of its strength. If something *affected* us, then we are individuals for Schopenhauer. Some affections lead to cognition of an object for a subject, whereas others lead to embodied reactions characterised as pleasure and pain. Thus, when “no stimulation disturbs the will, this simply delivers to the understanding the data that become intuition. But any stronger or atypical affection of the sense organs causes pain, i.e. is contrary to the will, and so these organs are also part of the will’s objecthood” (WR, 126). The same is the case with what is in accordance with the will, however, which causes pleasure (as we will see below).



In willing, the experience of our body changes entirely and likewise our experience of the world. Schopenhauer summarises the experience of the body when we will something in the following way:

“An act of the will and an act of the body are not two different states cognised objectively, linked together in a causal chain, they do not stand in a relation of cause and effect; they are one and the same thing, only given in two entirely different ways: in one case immediately and in the other case to the understanding in intuition. An action of the body [*Aktion des Leibes*] is nothing but an objectified act of will, i.e. an act of will that has entered intuition.” (WR, 124-5)

He is moreover clear in arguing that we cannot apply causality to the subject-object correlation, but we can apply it to our body perceived *as an object* (i.e., immediate object) and its relationship to another object. The reason for this is that we cannot *literally* perceive a *subject*, but must ‘project’ subjectivity (or the will) on an object and so *perceive it as* the representation or mirror of a subject or willing thing (more on this below). Accordingly, we must not let our perceiving our body as an object lead us to postulate a relationship that does not exist, according to Schopenhauer:

“We must, however, guard against the gross misunderstanding of supposing that because intuition is mediated by cognition of causality there must therefore be a cause / effect relation between subject and object, whereas in fact such a relation only ever exists between the immediate and the mediate object, i.e. between objects...what cannot be emphasised enough is that in terms of the principle of sufficient reason there is no relation at all between subject and object.” (WR, 34; my emphasis)

We are individuals when something affects us irrespective of the ‘strength’ of that affection. A *weak* affection or stimulation prepares cognition of the world by providing the data for the understanding to apply causality to it, which leads to cognition of an object for a subject. This cognition of an object (for a subject) is the basis on which our intellect represents the picture of the world in which we can (re)act. A *strong* affection, however, directly leads us to willing or (re)acting through the sensation of pleasure or pain.

Causal relations presuppose something ‘A’ acting on something ‘B’ underpinned by a natural force, but the previous also presupposes a perceiving subject weakly affected by A and B. The will-body relationship is an *identity* relationship.<sup>13</sup> We may *perceive* the will ‘causing’ an effect on the objects of the world through the body, but we have to guard against the misunderstanding inherent to the claim that the will *causes* something on the body. We can perceive our will *causing* an effect on our body, but in doing so we are willing something on a *part* of our body, which we perceive as *an object* or *motive*. ‘What we will’ we represent as an object or motive. Consequently, to will anything located in our body we must *identify*

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<sup>13</sup> For more on the relationship between what I call the ‘causal’ and ‘identity’ relationship, and why Schopenhauer relies on one over the other, see Koßler (2008, 230-250). Koßler’s reading offers a wealth of insight into Schopenhauer’s philosophical manoeuvres at the intersection between metaphysics, aesthetics and ethics.

with another part of the body, i.e., the part that *acts* upon the part we perceive as an object. The part through which we act is identical to our will. This identity relationship does not permit application of causality. Thus, in ‘willing something’, we *identify* with something in the world through which we act upon something else. Our willing something is, we can say, our *bridge* to the world as opposed to our *cause* of it or even *its* cause of us.

In willing something we have *caused* something to happen in the world through our action and its target of, not ‘caused’ the action itself or the target itself. Our will *is* the action. Our experience of our body when we are acting differs from our experience of it as *causing* something. The world *appears* different when *we* will something or have *found something to will*. We can recognise the previous difference through the identity relationship between our willing and the changes in the object we perceive, which makes the object appear different from all others; it is no longer *seen as* an object. To will something means *both* to identify with something in the world *and* to cause something to happen in it. We recognise this dual-aspect of our experience only when we will something, however. Pure subjects of cognition fail to recognise it, because they have not yet found something to will, but they still perceive a world permitting or enabling willing by the cognition of an ‘object’. Thus, a pure subject of cognition sometimes confuses the cognition of an object for perceiving something as it is in itself, i.e., an object in itself.

In sum, the world appears full of meaning or significance when we will something in it, and in doing so can we notice that the world is both will and representation. As a pure subjects of cognition we *identify* with something that either *causes* an effect on something else or perceives causal relationships in things. As willing subjects we have found what we were looking for or what is valuable to us *in that moment*. When we will something, that with which we identify we do not perceive as an object among other objects forming causal relations with them, but as our will. What we *aim* our will towards we *see as* an object or motive, not the means (or the object) by which we aim towards it. In most cases, and by default (though not always, as I will aim to demonstrate below), we identify with *our body* because we can only will something (or seek something to will, i.e., cognise) through our body.

The general claim is that in approaching the world *as individuals* who will something, we make our world appear meaningful. If we direct our attention to the position from which our world appears full of objects and object-relations etc., then we recognise that we perceive an object as opposed to ‘something else’, because we assume the position of an individual who seeks for something to will. The pure subject of cognition is affected *weakly* by something. This is why it might be more accurate to construe it as an ‘impure subject of cognition’. In perceiving *an object*, we assume the stance of an unaffected individual and so we are not *genuinely* pure subjects of cognition; we still perceive a world permitting willing. In other words, by clinging to our individuality—which is mirrored by our focusing on and cognising an ‘individual’ object or a network of such individuals relating with one another—we are still *looking for something to will*, or for something that will affect us strongly enough to bring about an action, pleasure and-or pain. We can clarify the previous by describing the stance as a kind of ‘readiness to act’, which permeates us. It makes what we cognise—a

particular object or world filled with objects—appear as the kind of thing that *permits* action upon it. Objects, in other words, are the *kinds* of things permitting or enabling action upon them. This insight *grounds* Schopenhauer’s conception of individuality, which presupposes willing by working through the body and by having the body affected *weakly*. I think we can more easily acquire this insight over about readiness to act as pure subjects of cognition if we juxtapose perceiving something as an ‘object’ to perceiving it as an organism, or as a human being; notice what happens to our freedom to act upon it in each case. Accordingly, we perceive the world filled with objects when, and only when, we seek something to will (or to do) in it, which I will call assuming ‘the willing stance’ on it, for brevity. This ‘willing stance’ means a ‘readiness to act’ upon something.

Atwell’s reading of what he calls Schopenhauer’s ‘will-body identity thesis’ is a useful reference point for further clarifications on the above arguments, themes and philosophical manoeuvres.<sup>14</sup> What I want to focus on here, however, is that the objective picture has the ‘willing stance’ on something as its *subjective correlate*; alternatively, its subjective correlate is our *searching* for ‘something to will’. The world appears as filled with objects, because we approach it as *individuals* searching for something to will. We would *not* perceive an object at all unless this perception had individuality as its subjective correlate and so the willing stance. The impure subject of cognition is individual by being the weakly affected counterpart of the willing subject, both of whom are different expressions of the willing stance. Therefore, there is a *by-fit* relationship between our willing something or our seeking something to will and the objective picture. This must be the case, for Schopenhauer, or else our body would only appear as *an object* in the strictest sense and not as ‘immediate object’. Our relationship to our body is *distinct in kind* from our relationship to an object perceived as a foreign body in so far as it does *not* become part our body or is *not* incorporated into it. Schopenhauer capitalises on the previous distinction and its implications.

Schopenhauer recognises that the objective picture finds its limits in the PSR, but, even if this picture is correct or true, it is incomplete owing to its being meaningless. He describes the limits of the objective picture starting with the scientific inquiry into objects, object-relations and natural forces in the following way:

“But if we devote ourselves to this teaching [morphology and aetiology in mechanics, physics, chemistry and physiology] we soon realise that the information we are looking for does not belong to aetiology any more than it belongs to morphology. The latter presents us with an infinite variety of innumerable forms that are clearly related through an unmistakable family resemblance; these are representations that will forever remain foreign to us if we approach them along this path; looking at them only in this way, they stand before us like hieroglyphs we do not comprehend.” (WR, 121)

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<sup>14</sup> See Atwell (1990, 27-30) and Atwell (1995, 81-91). For more on the will-body identity and the act of will see Koßler (2012, 194-195).

The picture has at its summit a set of unknown (and unknowable) forces, but not agents with interests and motives that can change things. The latter, which is the ethical and aesthetic complement to the objective picture, is recognisable only when we *will* something. Though it is ‘true’ that we are *also* a locus of forces (or we can be seen as a locus of forces), this truth is merely the objective correlate of one perspective on us, which we associate with the third-person perspective, where we perceive our body as an *immediate object*. The latter perspective, for Schopenhauer, is that of an individual who seeks something *to will* and has assumed a *readiness to act*. Perceiving the body as a locus of forces as opposed to a willing individual (*appearing* as a locus of forces) means the perceiving subject assumes a narrow perspective of searching for something to will. From this narrow perspective, she is unable to grasp *what it means* to be a locus of forces ‘from within’. She can only perceive that *this* set of forces X, which remain mysterious (in what they are *and* what they feel like independent from their effects on the objects we perceive), along with external conditions (Y), lead body B to act in some way or undergo changes (Z). Notice, that none of this is exhaustive of our experience of acting and reacting to something and it is meaningless. The perspective supporting the objective picture—irrespective of its truth or ‘objectivity’—does not complete nor does it encapsulate our first-person experience. Thus, a cognition can be true *and* meaningless. The perception of an object or natural force (if the latter perception is possible, which Schopenhauer doubts<sup>15</sup>) is different from an affection and-or our willing something.

If the objective picture fully accounted for our experience of the world, including our experience of ourselves, then there would only be a difference in *degree* between our experience of a chair and that of our arm or tongue. The difference between our bodily parts and the chair would amount to a difference of spatiotemporal co-ordinates and of causal relations between two or more objects. We would not be “rooted” (WR, 124) in the world and so uniquely identify with something, but be consistently uprooted from it. We are *rooted* in the world we experience, however. Some objects of cognition affect us and we experience this affection in a way that we cannot reduce our relation to our body to spatiotemporal and causal relations. He construes this ‘rootedness’ as ‘individuality’<sup>16</sup>, which is encapsulated by an evaluative or motivational stance—i.e., a willing stance—on things. I have suggested that we should construe the latter as a kind of readiness to act. What we ordinarily encounter in our first-person experience as our ‘will’, which refers to our interest in something, makes things significant or meaningful. It shows that there is an *identity* relationship between our

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<sup>15</sup> He tells us that we do not perceive natural forces directly; they cannot be objects of cognition. All that we “could ever know is this natural law, these conditions, this emergence at a particular time and place. The force that is itself expressed, the inner essence of the appearances that emerge according to these laws will remain an eternal mystery to it, something as entirely foreign and unfamiliar in the simplest phenomenon as in the most complicated... Consequently, even the best aetiological explanation of the whole of nature would really be nothing more than a catalogue of inexplicable forces and an authoritative specification of the rule according to which they emerge, succeed one another, and displace one another in space and time: but it must always leave unexplained the inner essence of the forces that thus appear, and content itself with appearances and their arrangement” (WR, 121-2).

<sup>16</sup> Not to be confused with egoism, though one of the consequences and expressions of our individuality is egoism.

will and *one* object in the world (i.e., our body) and it shows that there is more to the world than causal relationships between objects. Identifying with something in the world makes the world appear meaningful. The act of identification and the *recognition* of something as meaningful are correlates, according to Schopenhauer.

I will assess one of Schopenhauer's philosophically rich defenses of the will-body identity that aptly shows us the difference between the causal and the 'identity' relationship to our own body. I will use the distinction between deliberating and willing to do so. Our deliberation is a process of reflection over the possible actions we can take given some circumstance and its supposed parameters. These 'possible actions' can swirl around in our thoughts *ad infinitum* without ever resulting in a bodily movement. If we were bound only to the objective picture and were *purely* cognitive beings uprooted from the world we perceive, then, if an action did somehow ensue, it would appear as object 'A' moving relative to another one 'B'. There would be no evaluation and no genuine bodily affect that corresponds to it; likewise, we would not identify with A or B. We should be inclined to ask if it was a *genuine* action at all. It would appear as something moving and as something else being moved by it. This would be tantamount to telling an imaginary story and considering all the various ways some object O *can* undergo changes X, Y, Z...N, but not 'O undergoes X because O *desires* X (or Y)'; nor even a description in retrospect, e.g., 'O underwent X because it *wanted* Y'. The concept of 'desire' or 'want' is explanatory only through the introduction of willing and the different perspective that follows it. Our deliberation process would be a transition from one *possible* change of state(s) in an object to another without 'willing' and what pertains to it: the first-person perspective of acting, desiring etc. We would be detached bystanders or separated observers of our body and its changes, we could not even call it 'our' body.

In sum, there are two ways our body is cognised. First, as a 'representation', namely, an object like any other with spatiotemporal and causal relations. Second, as 'will' and so as our sense of self and agency premised on an identity relationship with our body. What is different in the latter is that we identify with something in the world and thereby experience that 'things' differently to anything else. Nevertheless, what connects them is 'sensation', i.e., that the same or 'one' body is affected, either weakly, which leads to the pure subject of cognition or strongly which leads to the willing subject. Schopenhauer uses these cognitions to formulate his correlation theory of cognition. There is an equally useful clarification of his correlation theory of cognition in 'Prise Essay on the Freedom of the Will' (FW), which I will analyse below to expand and hopefully clarify the above.

## 1.2 Self-Cognition and the Correlation Theory of Cognition

In FW, Schopenhauer distinguishes between ‘consciousness of one’s *own self*, i.e., self-consciousness’ and ‘consciousness of *other things*’ (cf. FW, 37). Self-consciousness, he claims is preoccupied with the ‘will’ or ‘willing’. When we become self-conscious, we do so as ‘willing something’ (cf. FW, 38), which is exemplified in an act of will. We become self-conscious when we *will* something or when something *affects* us. The ‘consciousness of other things’, however, is preoccupied with what is independent, distinct or outside of us. These two kinds of cognition are *interdependent*: they are two directions of focus inherent to any cognition of something. We become self-conscious *when* something *affects* us, albeit the degree of its affection, i.e., its strength, determines how it does so and, in turn, how that which affected us appears. Accordingly, we would not be able to cognise anything unless something affects us *to some degree*. Whatever we direct our attention towards we perceive as *distinct* or *separate* from us, and so cognition of anything at all has the subject-object correlation as a minimum requirement, for Schopenhauer.

The above describes Schopenhauer’s correlation theory of cognition. He fleshes out the theory in different ways, however. In the passage below, for example, he employs different terminology, but offers the same insight as above:

“But the object [*Objekt*] as such always presupposes the subject as its necessary correlate: so the subject always remains outside the jurisdiction of the principle of sufficient reason. The dispute over the reality of the external world is in fact based on this improper extension of the validity of the principle of sufficient reason to the subject: given this mistake, the dispute could make no sense, even on its own terms... To insist that objects exist outside the representation of a subject – and to insist that actual objects have a being distinct from their acting – these demands are completely meaningless and contradictory.” (WR, 35)

For any cognition of something, there are two inseparable and irreducible components, which constitute a relationship of fit. For everything we become cognizant of there is equally *some* place or position from which we become cognizant of it, which we cannot separate or remove from our cognition. The two fit hand-in-glove such that we cannot cognise something without *correspondingly* cognising ourselves in relation to it.

Schopenhauer advances his correlation theory of cognition to correct what he identified as the misguided readings and conceptions of Kant’s ‘thing in itself’. He aimed to defend the proposition that the thing in itself “can never be an object [*Objekt*], because an object [*Objekt*] is only its appearance and not what it really is” (WR, 135). The limits of both directions of consciousness, i.e., the furthest we can go from the ‘representation’ (or the closest we can arrive to the ‘thing in itself’), is the same limit as that of any cognition. The PSR determines both. Their limit is the ‘most immediate’ or the ‘least objectified’

representation, namely, what appears least like a *determinant* object. What appears least like a determinant object with respect to self-cognition is our *body*, which he likewise calls the *immediate object*. As we saw in the previous section, however, in certain moments, we experience our body as something unlike an object, i.e., as (synonymous with our) *will*.

The “most immediate cognition” (WR, 127) is arrived at in both directions of consciousness as two roads leading to the same junction. One of these roads leads us to our ‘acts of will’ in time, which we cognise as movements of the body. The other road leads to natural forces, which we perceive as the *effects* of unknown or an unknowable *thing in itself*. The root of these effects is the sensations of our body, which captures his version of transcendental idealism. The key proposition is that their root is our body, which appears to us as either an immediate object or as (synonymous with) our will. The difference between the two directions is that the former represents a causal world-view, whereas the latter world-view is based on ‘(acts of) will’. Schopenhauer construed the latter as metaphysically primary since it is *least like* a representation, more like the ‘thing itself’. Consequently, will ‘sheds light’ on (or makes meaningful) causality by applying the identity relationship between the will and the object through which the will has a real effect on things, namely, one’s body:

“To the extent that I really cognise my will as an *object*, I cognise it as a body: but this brings me back again to the first class of representations described in that essay, that of real objects. In what follows, we will increasingly realise that this first class of representations can be explained and unriddled only through the *fourth* class described there, which no longer really confront the subject as object. Accordingly, we will realise that we need to use the law of motivation governing that fourth class in order to understand the inner essence of the law of causation (valid in the first class) and what takes place according to this law.” (WR, 126-7; my emphasis)

The will and body are two different ways of looking at the *same thing*. In *willing something*, we experience an identity relationship between the two limits of the two directions of consciousness, whereas previously we recognised an interdependent relationship between them. Accordingly, our body (as an ‘immediate object’ with spatiotemporal and causal relations to other ‘objects’) and its vicissitudes is *the same as* our acts of will. The difference between the will and our body is in the way it appears to us given how things affect us, not in the *thing itself*; the distinction between our will and body is not metaphysical, but phenomenological. What we perceive as causal relations between (two or more) distinct things, we sometimes perceive as an identity relationship.

To illustrate what Schopenhauer has in mind with the above consider the following metaphor. Imagine a bottle on a desk positioned such that its commercial label directly faces you. Now, imagine you alter your position to see it from the back of the label. The bottle now seems as if it has *no label at all*, nor even a ‘front’. The bottle *itself* has not changed in the interval, only your perspective and thus its ‘effect’ or ‘action’ upon you. You know it is and remains a bottle; it has not become something else in the interval. Your standpoint on it has changed and thus its appearance *to you*. By directing your focus wholly outwards, and

so forgetting the position from which you are perceiving something, you see the *roots* of objects as ‘natural forces’ for life-less objects, ‘life-forces’ for plants, ‘instincts’ for animals and finally ‘characters’ for humans. The previous, for Schopenhauer, are pinnacles of a *meaningless* world-view and-or constitute the limits of the objective picture. They are meaningless because they do not *affect* us to a requisite degree to *spark* the precondition for meaningfulness, i.e., the will. We *perceive* them *as objects* because they permit or enable action upon them; we perceive them as the *kinds of things* upon which we *can* act. The previous propositions reveal another reason why the objective picture is meaningless, but also allow an argument for how we can make it meaningful without losing its *objectivity*.

A look at how Schopenhauer distinguishes ‘objects’ from ‘motives’ gives us further insight into what makes ‘objects’ meaningful and paves the way for the argument supporting the objective, but meaningful world-view. If an object *motivated* us, then it would produce a sensation of pleasure or pain, which leads us to perceive it *as a motive* in Schopenhauer’s technical sense:

“So what does it mean to will something? It means: the act of will, which itself is at first only an object of self-consciousness, arises on the occasion of something that belongs to consciousness *of other things*, thus something that is an object for the cognitive faculty, an object that, in this relation, is called a *motive* and at the same time is the material of the act of will, in the sense that the act of will is directed towards it, i.e. aims at some alteration in it, or reacts to it. The whole being of the act of will consists in this *reaction*.” (FW, 40)

Accordingly, objects of cognition that relate to our will (i.e., to our urges, needs and aims) *strongly* affect us or impress upon us; in so doing, they are perceived as ‘motives’. The same is not the case for ostensibly *weaker* sensations and impressions giving rise to cognition of *an object*. Nonetheless, a weaker impression is the basis for any cognition, including that of a motive. Schopenhauer puts it in the following way:

“But it is quite wrong to call pain and pleasure representations: they are nothing of the sort, but rather immediate affections of the will in its appearance, the body: a forced, momentary willing or not-willing of the impression the body is undergoing. There are only a few, specific impressions on the body that can be immediately considered as mere representations and are thus exceptions to what has just been said; these impressions do not stimulate the will and it is only through them that the body becomes an immediate object of cognition, because, as an intuition in understanding, the body is mediated just like all other objects. What I have in mind are the *affections of the purely objective senses*: sight, hearing and touch, and only to the extent that these organs are affected in ways that are specific, natural and fitting for each of them. This involves such an exceptionally *weak stimulation* to the enhanced and specifically modified sensibility of these parts that it does not affect the will; and since no stimulation disturbs the will, this simply delivers to the understanding the data that become intuition. But *any stronger or atypical affection of the sense organs* causes pain,



i.e. is contrary to the will, and so these organs are also part of the will's objecthood."  
(WR, 126-7; my emphasis)

The 'will', for him, is what our character appears as to us *from within*, which gives an insight into what 'character' *means*. The assumption is that 'to will something' is more meaningful than referring to what we will as our 'character'. What makes the concept of someone's 'character' meaningful is our construing it as identical to someone's will. Something similar is the case with the inner and outer experiences of plants and their 'life-force', or inanimate objects and their 'natural forces', or animals and their 'instincts'. Given that we do not have direct access to the first-person experience of something external to us such that we can flesh out what these *forces*, *instincts* and *characters* mean, then, to make these concepts meaningful, we have to *project* our sense of willing onto them. The projection of willing is, I argue, central to the meaningful world-view he defends and to his philosophy as a whole. Furthermore, it is useful for explaining his core views in aesthetics, morality and ascetic resignation, as we will see below.

Consciousness is always 'about something': it is 'intentional'. Self-consciousness and the consciousness of other things aim at something or are 'about something'. So, they minimally refer to an 'object', i.e., they fall within the domain of 'objects'. In Schopenhauer's terms, consciousness of anything at all adheres to *some* form of the PSR and (minimally) adheres to the subject-object correlation, which is its foundational form. We reach the limit of consciousness in each direction with 'that which is least like a representation'. For self-consciousness, the limit is an 'affect' or an 'act of will'. For consciousness of other things, it is a 'sensation', which is a weaker affection that is required for cognition of anything, including 'cognition' of our own body. Our sensations and affects *appear* to be different, but, for Schopenhauer, they are the same 'thing' seen as from two different standpoints. Their difference is merely in degree of affection, i.e., the *strength* of their affection and thus relation to our will. According to him, one direction 'sheds light' on the 'inner essence' of the objects of our cognition, which appear to us as,

"...an infinite variety of innumerable forms that are clearly related through an unmistakable family resemblance; these are representations that will forever remain foreign to us if we approach them along this path; looking at them only in this way, they stand before us like hieroglyphs we do not comprehend." (WR, 121)

The above hieroglyphs refer to what we correspondingly call a 'natural force', a 'life-force', an 'instinct', a 'drive', an 'impulse', a 'character' and so on. The previous is incomplete since the cognition it yields is *meaningless*. In sum, the pinnacle of both directions is the cognition of the 'inner essence' of something from two distinct perspectives, which leads to two different appearances of the same thing. Only self-consciousness and what we do with it makes the 'inner essence' of something 'meaningful', because this refers directly to the basis of meaningfulness, i.e., the will and its cognates.

In addition, the target of self-consciousness (i.e., our will) is directly recognisable or known, whereas the external object that is its target we know indirectly by comparison. For

Schopenhauer, we can trace the meaningless cognition of an object, including the immediate object that is our body, back to the most meaningful ‘thing’ we experience, i.e., the will, in the following way:

“So when we trace the concept of *force* back to that of *will* we are only tracing an unknown back to something infinitely better known, indeed, to the only thing that we have actual, immediate and absolute knowledge of, and we have very greatly extended our cognition. If on the other hand, we subsume the concept of *will* under that of *force*, as people used to do; then we relinquish the only immediate cognition we have of the inner essence of the world by sinking it under a concept abstracted from appearance – a concept which, for that reason, would never let us escape from appearances.” (WR, 137)

Unfortunately<sup>17</sup>, he does not defend the proposition that ‘the will is what is best known’, but construes it as a brute fact, of sorts:

“On the other hand, by its nature it can never be demonstrated, i.e. derived as mediate cognition from some other immediate source, precisely because it is itself the most immediate cognition there is... It is an entirely distinctive mode of cognition and this is precisely why its truth cannot really be placed into one of the four rubrics I used to classify all truths in the essay *On the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, §§29ff., those rubrics being logical, empirical, transcendental and metalogical.” (WR, 127)

He advises his readers to take ‘willing’ as its own category and thus as constituting its own *kind* of ‘thing’ using the will-body identity as a basis for establishing this category.

The ‘object’ of self-consciousness is the *will*, or more precisely, the ‘I will’ that accompanies all actions and affections. Schopenhauer cautions about trying to make the ‘I will’ itself an object of cognition, however. He argues that doing so would lead us to immediately cognise the ‘I will’ *as if* it is outside of us or distinct from us, and therefore it would appear as *partially* conditioned by the PSR:

“For even in self-consciousness, the I is not absolutely simple, but consists of a knower (intellect) and a known (will); the former is not known and the latter is not knowing, although the two flow together into the consciousness of an I. But on this very account, this I is not *intimate* with itself through and through, does not shine through so to speak, but is opaque, and therefore remains a riddle to itself... In consequence of the form of time which still adheres to it, everyone knows his *will* only in its successive individual *acts*, not as a whole, in and by itself.” (WRII, 197)

We cannot cognise the ‘I’ stripped from *all forms* of the PSR. The ‘I will’ adheres to the forms of ‘time’ and the subject-object correlation, and thus offers us a *thin* self-cognition (WRII, 196). When we cognise something, we direct our attention to it and so treat it as if it

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<sup>17</sup> I say unfortunately because Nietzsche attacks this proposition after he recognises it, as we will see below.

is outside or separate from us. Accordingly, what might be called the ‘directionality of consciousness’ does not permit us to be *conscious* of something without *some* form of the PSR. Put another way, in willing we always will *something*. So, we cannot *cognise* our will without our firstly making an ‘object’ of it. We do not grasp the object of self-consciousness as it is *in itself*, because we have to make it an ‘object’ of cognition to grasp it.

Furthermore, the relationship between the ‘I will’ and our body is *not* causal, but one of identity; their difference is only apparent, not real, which he summarises as follows:

“It is clear from what has been said that by far the greatest part of our consciousness as a whole is not *self-consciousness*, but *consciousness of other things*, or our cognitive faculty. This faculty, with all its powers, is directed outwards and is the arena (and even, from the standpoint of a more profound investigation, the condition) of the real external world, towards which it first relates itself in intuitive apprehension, and, later, as if ruminating, works up what it has gained in this way into concepts, in the endless combination of which, accomplished with the help of words, *thinking* consists. – Therefore only what we have left after removing this, by far the largest part of our overall consciousness, would be *self-consciousness*.” (FW, 37-8)

Self-consciousness refers to bodily vicissitudes, which he also calls “simply movements” (FW, 38). If we stripped from the ‘I’ all that pertains to the PSR, then we would be left with just ‘will’, which we can no longer construe as an ‘object’ of cognition. It is dubious if there is a cognition of anything at all in the previous instance, because nothing like ‘a will’ can ever be an object of cognition, i.e., something to which we can point. We can only point to an *object*, which, by projecting willing on it, we can conceive of (or perceive) as mirroring or representing a will. Therefore, we cannot perceive a will, but we can perceive a willing *thing*, which requires us first to project willing on it.

Self-consciousness stripped of all forms of the PSR amounts to ‘an act of identification’ without *something* to identify with. Nevertheless, this is not how we ordinarily experience self-consciousness and its so-called preoccupation with willing. When we will something, we *do* identify with something in the world. Ordinarily, this ‘something’ is our body. This is why will and representation are inseparable correlates. Without representation, our will is *blind*, it cannot *identify* with anything in the real world and so it cannot move anything in it. Without will, our representations lack direction or movement. Nonetheless, we identify with something when we *will* something else and, ordinarily, the former is what *appears as* our body to the impure subject of cognition. Put differently, when we are *unaffected* or *weakly* impressed upon by something, the body ordinarily expressing our will appears *as an object*. In sum, the PSR fully mediates the cognition of the body when we assume the standpoint of impure subjects of cognition. When we are willing something, however, only *time* mediates, which is another way of saying we experience our willing one act at a time. If we try to *cognise* what the ‘I will’ refers to, then we merely reintroduce the

PSR and the cognition of an object.<sup>18</sup> The best insight we can attain from the previous is the identity relationship between our ‘willing in time’ and the ‘object we call our body’.

In sum, self-consciousness is preoccupied with willing; it demonstrates that we are *what we will* and that we are constantly willing. In short, we are *something* (or *someone*) if and when we will something. Likewise, with respect to the will’s more elusive counterpart, we are something or someone to the extent we are *looking for* something to will, which was the preoccupation of the impure subject of cognition. Self-consciousness on its own does not tell us what the object of our will is, but that *we are* the ‘will’. To have ‘an object for the will’ we require the consciousness of other things. Our body—or a part of it to be precise—*can* be something we will only if we first perceive it ‘as if it is an object’ and so as if we see it as something ‘distinct and separate from us’. The ‘I will’ is an act of identification and so it demonstrates the identity relationship rather than the causal relationship between the will and the body or a part of it:

“Everyone will soon become aware, on observing his own self-consciousness, that its object is at all times his own willing.” (FW, 38)

The above passage can be misleading because it discusses the ‘object’ of self-consciousness. The sense of ‘object’ in reference to the ‘object’ of self-consciousness (or cognition) is different from the ‘object’ in reference to the ‘object’ of our will.<sup>19</sup> We can demonstrate these different senses if we clarify the concept of being-an-object [*Objektseyn*].<sup>20</sup> We can distinguish ‘objects’ in the *broad* sense from ‘objects’ in the *narrow* sense. The broad sense refers to the subject matter or target of our cognition (or willing), i.e., to the ‘something X’ we focus on or towards which we direct our attention. This sense does not imply the *kind* of relationship *we* as a subject of cognition have to it, but merely demonstrates that we have *some* relationship to something. We can likewise call it the abstract sense of the term ‘object’ or the ‘target’ of cognition. The narrow sense of ‘object’ refers to the *kind* of relationship we have to it and tracks that relationship. Consequently, something we cognise is an ‘object’

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<sup>18</sup> A useful consideration and discussion on Schopenhauer’s conception of the self-conscious ‘I’ refer to Reginster (2009: 99-102).

<sup>19</sup> Something analogous is the case with what we call the ‘object’ of aesthetic contemplation, as we will see below.

<sup>20</sup> I am grateful to Bart Vandenabeele for pressing me to clarify this distinction. One suggestion made by Vandenabeele is to look at the difference between *Objekt* and *Gegenstand* in Schopenhauer’s usage. I found that Schopenhauer too often uses the two terms interchangeably. For example, he claims, “a child learns to have intuitions by comparing the impressions of the same object [*Objekt*] received by the various senses; how in fact this is the only thing that sheds light on so many sensory phenomena such as seeing a single image with two eyes; or the experience of double vision when squinting or when viewing objects [*Gegenstände*] at different distances from the eye in a single glance” (WR, 33). It is hard to distinguish one use from another in the previous passage. Yet, there are other passages where the case for a difference is on firmer footing: “it would therefore be absurd to demand that they be established through experience (if by this is meant the real world outside of us, itself an intuitive representation) or brought before the eyes or the imagination like objects [*Objekte*] of intuition. Concepts can only be thought, not intuited, and only the effects that people bring about through concepts are objects [*Gegenstände*] of experience proper” (WR, 62). It is difficult to expect terminological consistency from Schopenhauer at this level of analysis, so I settled for letting go of this expectation. I decided to suggest a distinction between ‘object’ in the broad and the narrow sense premised on other distinctions and arguments he makes in an attempt to fill this analytic gap in his thoughts.

in the narrow sense if we relate to it in such way that it *can* be a target for our will (i.e., it can *yield* a motive or *permit* motivation). We *perceive it as* an ‘object’ if it is such that we can utilise it towards an end we may have or we look for. Those objects with which we identify, do *not* permit action upon them for some independent interest (including our own interest). The ‘object’ in the narrow sense has the status of a tool in a toolbox. Nevertheless, in both senses we take an interest ‘in something’, but the *kind* of interest in it differs. The difference between the two senses of ‘object’ does not rest *solely* on the target of cognition, nor *solely* on the stance we assume *correlative to* it, but on the *correlation* itself. In short, it rests on the relationship between *us* (or whatever stance we take) and *the target*. The subject-object correlation is a by-fit relationship, not a causal or hierarchical relationship. Hereafter, for clarity and brevity, I will use ‘object’ to refer only to the narrow sense of ‘being-an-object’ and ‘target’ to refer to the broad sense.

Schopenhauer is clear about the above by claiming the will and the body *appear* as separate, but this is not in acts of will, which are *identical* to bodily movement rather than *causing* this movement. Without our body *and* the ‘object’ we perceive as a motive, which incites (re)action through it, we cannot conceive of willing:

“If a human being wills, then he wills something: his act of will is in every case directed towards an object and can be conceived only in relation to one.” (FW, 40)

The ‘I will’ is an act of *identification* rather than a full-fledged cognition; it does not tell us ‘what’ we are, but ‘that’ we are something. The ‘I will’ is our *bridge* to the objective world. Only cognition of something that is other-than-I or separate from us tells us *what* we are. The ‘I will’ shows us what I will call *our* ‘identical object’, but it still shows us (or it seeks) an ‘object’. As we will see in subsequent sections, the previous has implications about ‘what we are’ by changing our perception of the world from its being confound to one filled with objects to one filled with ‘willing’ (things) that appear *as objects* when we do *not* will them or when we do not will something in relation to them.

Schopenhauer’s correlation theory of cognition flies in the face of dualistic theories of the mind-body relation, notably stemming from some readings of Descartes’ philosophy. Willing something and reflecting on the bodily actions that correspond to our willing shows that our body mirrors our will. It is not something foreign or distinct from us whose movement is *caused* by something else, which we call ‘our will’, even though it does appear as such in certain moments. He summarises the previous in the following manner:

“...we find in any case that all those movements of the will, that alternation of willing and not-willing which, in its constant ebb and flow, makes up the sole object of self-consciousness” (FW, 39)

These movements and alterations we can call our affects, which are either agreeable or disagreeable, i.e., pleasurable or painful, or as propensities towards or away from a target of cognition. He defines pleasure and pain (or ‘to and from’) in the following manner:

“...the essence of all these affections consists in their entering self-consciousness as something in accordance with the will or as something contrary to it” (FW, 39)

“Willing and doing are different only for reflection: in actuality they are one. Every true, genuine and immediate act of will is instantly and immediately also the appearance of an act of the body: correspondingly, any effect on the body is instantly and immediately an effect on the will as well: it is called pain when it is contrary to the will; and it is called comfort or pleasure when it is in accordance with the will. The gradations of the two are very different.” (WR, 126)

What characterises self-consciousness is its direction; it is towards *us*. The pain and pleasure referred to in the above quote is not ‘pain’ aimed at ‘the loss over a recently departed relative’ or the ‘pleasure’ of laughter aimed ‘at a friend’s joke’. They are what pain and pleasure *feel like* independent from their cognitive object or target, but rather in their relation *to us*. Their targets allow us to classify the different affections and their degrees, but likewise to compare them. What *can* differ is the intensity of each affect correlative to its target. We cannot reflect on this difference in intensity unless we used different targets in making the comparison. We need targets for *any* comparison to occur and so for differences to emerge. Thus, the difference is in the ‘target’ and not the ‘affect’. We use these differences in target to speak *as if* there are differences in affect, but in comparing these targets using our reason, we conflate our affects with their targets and then speak as if there is a difference in affects themselves. In short, to recognise differences in degree of pain or pleasure and to distinguish one affect from another, we have to appeal to different targets that incited pain or pleasure, which we then use to make a comparison. What differentiates *this* pain from *that* pain is *not* the ‘affect’ of pain, but the ‘target’ we associate with it. Metaphysically speaking, the only difference in our affects is in whether the will is active or not and whether it moves toward something or away from something.

The ‘act of will’ provides us with a clue about the bridge between a meaningless objective world and us. Schopenhauer summarises it in the following way:

“Thus the feeling present in self-consciousness, ‘I can do what I will’, accompanies us constantly, but testifies merely that the resolves or decisive acts of our will, despite springing from the dark depths of our insides, will make the transition into the world of intuition [*anschauliche Welt*] because our body, like everything else, belongs to that world. This consciousness forms the *bridge* between inner world and outer world, which otherwise would remain divided by a bottomless chasm, since in the latter there could be mere intuitions independent of us in every sense, as objects, and in the former nothing but ineffectual and merely felt acts of will.” (FW, 43; my emphasis)

This identity between our will and body, which he construes as the ‘I will’ of self-consciousness finding its expression in bodily movement, is most salient in the *ownership* and *originality* we have over our actions:

“...that ‘I will’ that accompanies all our actions and upon the consciousness of the originality and independence through which they are *our* actions” (FW, 49)

We identify with our actions, and by extension our body, in a way we do not with another target of cognition. Consider, e.g., the juxtaposition between two distinct movements in the objective world, both of which we perceive, but seem different. Juxtapose our perception of two magnets drawn to each other with our decision (whether reflective or unreflective) over a circumstance and the ensuing bodily movement following it. These two cognitions are distinct *not only* in their composition, but also in their *relation, closeness* and *significance* or *meaningfulness* to us. Thus, how we comprehend the will’s relationship to the world is what will give us a meaningful grasp of the so-called ‘thing in itself’.

To illustrate the above point about the distinction between objects let us employ a different and subtler example. Consider our perception of a video clip showing us throwing a ball at a wall. Next, juxtapose the previous clip with our actually throwing the ball at the same wall. The event and our experience of it in the moment of action is different from its cognition *post hoc*, whether that cognition is through the clip or in memory. The two *refer* to the same event, however. They merely differ in their respective experience of that event, which, Schopenhauer claims, we should construe as a difference in *affection*. In *perceiving* ourselves throwing something, we do not undergo the same experience as we do when we are actually throwing it, but this difference in experience, is for him, merely one of degree in affection. Our will (and so our body) are *wholly in it* in the act of throwing in a way they are not when we subsequently perceive that act through another medium, for example, the screen or memory. The difference in experience and affection lingers irrespective of our referring to *the same event*. Also, in both circumstances, we *identify* with our will through our body, albeit we experience this identification *differently* because of a difference in the *degree* of our affection.

We identify with our actions in such a way that is not immediately apparent in *reflection*. This identification is derived from the ‘I will’ in self-consciousness, but it can appear differently at different times, which, for those of us who espouse mind-body dualism, is sufficient to demonstrate that there is no identity between the ‘I will’ and the body. Schopenhauer argues that we cannot lose this connection to our will and accuses the impure subject of cognition of disingenuous purity. The impure subject of cognition is an *unaffected* or *weakly* impressed upon subject of willing or individual. In other words, the impure subject of cognition seeks ‘something to will’; she has not found that which affects her enough to incite her to action. She perceives her body *as if* it is external to her and so as if it is an object among objects. Equally, she cognises it differently from any other object, i.e., as the focal point of any cognition and action. If we remember to not confound the difference in appearance with a difference in ‘thing’ and so stay true to his correlation theory of cognition, then Schopenhauer’s objection to the impure subject of cognition is more accessible. In fact, we *preserve* the identification with our body when we focus on objects in the objective world and so when we assume the position of impure subjects of cognition. When we assume the previous stance, we are not *as affected* by the objects of our cognition as we are when *willing*

*something*. Yet, we should not confuse this ‘weakness in affection’, which is necessary for cognition of an object, for the pure cognition of something. Schopenhauer’s account of aesthetic contemplation will be immensely useful for clarifying how to avoid the previous confusion, to which we return below.

In sum, the impure subject of cognition perceives the world as filled with objects that are *fair game* for her will; she searches for something *to will*. She assumes the ‘willing stance’ in relation to things. Only when we will, or search for something to will, does the world *appear* as filled with objects. We perceive the targets of cognition as objects because of their connection to our will and not in spite of it. We preserve this connection to the will because of the weaker affection underpinning all cognition of an object. The connection appears lost in some moments because we are not *as affected* by *this* object as when we came across one that *does motivate* us and thereby becomes a motive. The following propositions summarise Schopenhauer’s correlation theory of cognition:

- 1) We identify with our will or willing through self-consciousness: the ‘I’ or ‘I will’.
- 2) Our will expresses itself through our body and its vicissitudes.
- 3) We identify with our body as the one object that represents or mirrors our will since our willing something always corresponds to a bodily action or vicissitude.
- 4) The will and body appear different because of our standpoint, not because they are different *things* that somehow interact with one another. In fact, our will and body are identical.
- 5) We perceive our body as an object among other objects that causally interacts with other objects rather than our will (i.e., ourselves), because we are in that moment *unaffected* by what we are cognising that is thus seen as an object.

Our body then is the *identical* object to our willing, not the effect whose cause is our will, which we see as another ‘thing’. We can experience our body both as our will and as an object, which is the double cognition (WR, 128) to which Schopenhauer refers. The affective strength of the target of cognition determines whether we see it as an object (and our body as an immediate object), or we see it as a motive (and our bodily movements as acts of will). In sum, we are will *and* body, for Schopenhauer, but they are *not* different things interacting with each other. They are the same thing *seen as* from two perspectives *underpinned* by a difference in affection.

### 1.3 Aesthetic Contemplation and the Projection of Willing

Schopenhauer’s correlation theory of cognition is the bedrock of his philosophy. I will argue he uses it to offer a novel account of aesthetic contemplation. The theory provides the insight



that, in aesthetic contemplation, it is not *only* the target of cognition that appears different, but the world itself. I received the support for this proposition from the following passage:

“For at the moment when, torn free from willing, we surrender ourselves to pure, will-less cognition, we enter *into another world*, as it were, where everything that moves our will and agitates us so powerfully no longer exists.” (WR, 221; my emphasis)

I understand the above as the proposition that those immersed in aesthetic contemplation perceive and evaluate the world differently to those immersed in the ordinary tumult of their personal urges and needs. In aesthetic contemplation, we experience the same correlation between the subject and the object as we do in any cognition. Thus, there is an ‘object’ *and* a correlative ‘subject’ to aesthetic contemplation. Koßler likewise rightly emphasises the subjective and objective correlates of aesthetic contemplation:

““Pure” subject of cognition does *not* mean a subject without object. This is Schopenhauer’s foundation of transcendental idealism that subject and object are *correlatives*.” (Koßler 2012, 194; my emphasis)

The sense of ‘object’ in reference to the ‘object of aesthetic contemplation’ is different from the ‘object’ of non-aesthetic cognition. We should construe the ‘Idea’ not as the ‘object’ of aesthetic contemplation, but as its ‘target’, to avoid the confusion. In addition, we should be cautious *not* to construe the ‘subject’ of aesthetic contemplation as a ‘willing individual’.

There is not *only one kind* of interest we take in the targets of cognition. When we take an ‘interest’ in something, we do not always seek to utilise it towards a personal or impersonal end; we are not limited to only perceiving something upon which we can act and utilise towards some end independent from the thing itself. There are other kinds of interest, which are not reducible to the previous. Schopenhauer’s account of disinterestedness, i.e., the ‘disinterested subject’, represents one such distinct interest in something. The correlation of theory of cognition implies that changing our interest in something also changes how it appears *to us*.

We can recognise the novelty of the ‘disinterested subject’ if we construe it using the correlation theory of cognition, which suggests that how something appears alters in accordance with the subjective correlate of the cognition or the standpoint that we assume on it. The so-called ‘subjective correlate’ coincides with *how* the target of cognition *affects* us, however. Therefore, *some* targets of cognition (e.g., something beautiful) affect us in such a way as to alter our interest in them. Nevertheless, according to Schopenhauer, unless our interest in something changes, our *perception* of it will not, no matter how effective the thing is said to be (or supposedly is) *for other people*. In short, the relationship between the appearance of something and the stance adopted on it is interdependent or mutual.

The correlation theory of cognition also shows that what gives the target *meaning* is not focusing on it alone, but the stance or position from which we focus on it. What will make the objective picture of the world meaningful is recognition that we are more than a ‘representing’ subject; we will something (or are looking for something to will) in the world. The impure subject of cognition perceives the world as foreign, empty, and detached, i.e.,

as an object among objects. Conversely, ‘willing something’ makes it appear meaningful *to her* in some moment because an object she perceives becomes a motive while at the same time she now identifies with the so-called immediate object, namely, her body. The impure subject of cognition was not *purely* cognising all along, but was *vehemently searching for something* to will. In other words, she cannot possibly perceive *an object* unless she assumes the willing stance, which is a sort of readiness to act. If the world appears meaningless to her, then she is in denial over its meaning, because in that moment she is not *reacting* to, or *strongly affected* by, something. The objective picture *appears* meaningless, because she has not *hitherto* found something to will among all the objects she perceives. Nevertheless, she searches for it. We recognise her search, because she perceives the targets of cognition as *objects*, i.e., as the sorts of things she *can* will. When she *does* react, her perception of the target is still the perception *an object*, of something that permits willing and thus allows her use it towards some end or other independent from the thing itself, but one that affects her *more* than others. There is a distinction in degree between two sensations. Firstly, the *weak* sensation that produces cognition of an object, which is the subjective correlate of an intuition (i.e. the basis of perceptions and the concepts that arise from them<sup>21</sup>). Secondly, the more *powerful* or *destabilising* sensation that is the subjective correlate of an apple when we are *hungry* or *desire* it. The second sensation is a *motive* [*Motiv*].<sup>22</sup> In short, the objective picture of the world is a precondition for willing and is inextricably linked to it. Objects are the kind of targets of cognition that *can be* motives for our will, or that *can* motivate us even if they are currently motivating us. There is another and different *target* of cognition, which does not fit this distinction, however. This target does not permit willing (or utilising) in the same way.

Schopenhauer’s correlation theory of cognition leads to an even more crucial insight than the above. What we perceive can have significance or meaning in a manner that is not encapsulated by ‘objects’ and their more *affective* siblings or counterparts, namely, motives.

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<sup>21</sup> For Schopenhauer, concepts (abstract representation) necessarily find their root in a percept (intuitive representation), which he summarises in the following manner: “the whole essence of an abstract representation lies in just one single thing: its relation to another representation, its cognitive ground. Now to start with, this ground can be another concept, i.e. another abstract representation; and even this concept can itself have another such abstract cognitive ground. But not forever: in the end, the series of cognitive grounds must terminate with a concept that has its ground in intuitive cognition. For the world of reflection as a whole is based on the intuitive world as its cognitive ground” (WR, 64).

<sup>22</sup> Schopenhauer intimates this relation between a sensation that yields cognition of an object and one that yields cognition of a ‘motive’ clearly in his discussion of the relation between light and beauty. The presuppositions that underpin it he lays out in the will-body identity. He claims: “just as a human being is dark and vehement impulse [*Drang*] of willing (signified by the pole of the genitals as the focal point of willing) and at the same time eternal, free, serene [*heiter*] subject of pure cognition (signified by the pole of the brain), similarly and corresponding to this contrast, the sun is a source of both light, the condition for the most perfect type of cognition, and for precisely this reason the most joyful [*erfreulichste*] of things, – and heat, the primary condition for all life, i.e. of all appearance of the will on its higher levels. Thus, what heat is for the will, light is for cognition” (WR, 227). A further intimation of the same claim is also found earlier where he discusses cognition of the body as an ‘immediate object’: “this involves such an exceptionally weak stimulation to the enhanced and specifically modified sensibility of these parts that it does not affect the will; and since no stimulation disturbs the will, this simply delivers to the understanding the data that become intuition. But any stronger or atypical affection of the sense organs causes pain, i.e. is contrary to the will, and so these organs are also part of the will’s objecthood” (WR, 126).

This *other kind* of significance is recognisable in aesthetic contemplation and it is reflected the cognition of an ‘Idea’. Purportedly, there is a difference in *kind* between an object or a motive and an ‘Idea’, but there is a conceptual problem with this proposition. If the ‘will’ is what gives meaning to the target of cognition, then aesthetic contemplators equally ‘will something’. Otherwise, the so-called ‘Ideas’ that contemplators purportedly perceive are as *meaningless* as the concept of an ‘object *in itself*’. In short, the will must play some role in aesthetic contemplation if it is to yield cognition of something *meaningful*. Put another way, we must identify with something during aesthetic contemplation, otherwise our cognition is meaningless and the Idea does not *mean* anything.

The proposition that disinterested subjects are actually *interested* is one that we have to swallow. It is easier to do so if, much like we argued with the two conceptions of ‘object’, there is a broader and a narrower sense of the ‘will’. The aesthetic contemplator’s ‘will’ is broad. It refers to the necessary correlate of *meaning*; it does not suggest what we *personally* will. Aesthetic contemplation aims for the target’s *own* will and corresponding meaning. If the previous claim is conceptually tenable, then we can jettison the claim that Ideas are *distinct in kind* from objects and motives. To achieve this reasonably, we have to flesh out what their difference hinges on. The following questions will guide my inquiry into the difference between an Idea, an object and-or a motive. What does the difference between ‘Ideas’ and ‘objects’ and ‘motives’ hinge on? How different is the ‘willing individual’ from the ‘disinterested individual’, and what underpins their difference? Can we argue that the disinterested individual is ‘willing differently’ rather than ‘not willing’ at all, which is the conventional reading of Schopenhauer’s aesthetics?

Construing the Ideas as the cognition of *something* as a ‘pure subject of cognition’ misleads us in subtle ways. One way is by leading us to conceive of the Ideas as ‘entities’ or ‘things’, which introduces a perspective to aesthetic contemplation that yields objects and motives. Yet, for Schopenhauer, an Idea is not a ‘motive’ nor an ‘object’. Something’s Idea is as ‘meaningful’ as a motive *and* as ‘objective’ as an object. What makes Ideas meaningful is our willing something, but *not* in the sense of yielding an object and motive. I will defend the following three propositions:

- 1) The Ideas are *not* entities; they are different ways of perceiving any entity.
- 2) The (genuine) pure subject of cognition is different from the unaffected or weakly willing subject, i.e., the *impure* subject of cognition.
- 3) Aesthetic contemplation yields something meaningful if we project the will onto the target of our cognition, rather than ‘not will’ or ‘suspend the will’.

Aesthetic contemplators still *will something*, but not the same way as the willing and weakly affected individual. The previous propositions become clearer as we show the difference between the subject-object correlation of ordinary (or non-aesthetic) cognition and aesthetic contemplation. To help us towards the previous end we should bear in mind the following two correlates:

- A) Willing (or weakly affected) Individual – motive (or object)

- a. The ‘motive (or object)’ is an object both in the broad and narrow sense.
- B) ‘Disinterested’ Individual – Idea
  - b. The ‘Idea’ is an object in the broad sense of referring to the target of cognition.

‘A’ refers to ‘non-aesthetic cognition’ and ‘B’ refers to ‘aesthetic contemplation’. Both constitute the subject-object correlation foundational to ‘cognition of something’, but refer to different kinds of cognitions. The ‘Idea’ and the ‘object’ are both targets of our cognition and so fall on the objective side of the subject-object correlation. Each suggests a different *relation* between the subject and object (or between ‘self-consciousness’ and ‘consciousness of other things’, or between the ‘will’ and its ‘motives’). I will aim to make this difference meaningful and to demonstrate the propositions on which they rest. We can summarise it by what I will call the ‘projection of the will or willing’ onto the target of cognition. Thus, I begin by juxtaposing the ‘Idea’ to the ‘object’ whilst defending the proposition that ‘projecting willing’ on something is what makes the Idea *meaningful* independent from the PSR and the willing stance on which it rests. I will flesh out the previous starting with the objective correlate, i.e., the *Idea*, which he construes as the “most *adequate objecthood* of the will” (WR, 197). Afterward, I assess the subjective correlate of aesthetic contemplation, i.e., “the pure, will-less, timeless subject of cognition” (WR, 223) by juxtaposing it to the ‘ordinary, non-aesthetic (or willing) subject or willing individual’.

## 1.4 The Objective Picture and the Schopenhauerian Ideas

Aesthetic contemplation is a kind of cognition. It consists of *something* cognised (i.e., the ‘Idea’) and its inseparable subjective correlate (i.e., the ‘*pure*, will-less, painless, timeless *subject of cognition*’). To avoid confusing the pure subject of cognition with the unaffected or weakly affected individual I will call the subjective correlate of the Idea the ‘disinterested subject’. This indicates that, according to his correlation theory of cognition, the Ideas are also representations or targets of cognition. We should not confuse the Ideas with ‘objects’, however, which would render it as meaningless the object ‘in itself’. To construe an Idea as an object is not the conclusion Schopenhauer aims for, or his entire philosophical project rests on the very error he aimed to avoid, namely, that our only experience of the world is as filled with objects, some of which motivate us.

What makes the ‘Schopenhauerian’ Idea *meaningful*? The previous question will guide my inquiry. I start by first assessing the difference between ordinary cognition of an object limited by the PSR and aesthetic contemplation of an Idea.

The targets of aesthetic contemplation are not *objects* in the way a stone or a dog is *an object*, but a different way we can perceive stones and objects. Relations between objects find their root in natural forces, which are not objects, but we cognise them because of their *expression* in objects and their changes. The target of ordinary (non-aesthetic) cognition is

an *object* among objects with spatiotemporal and causal relations underpinned by the various natural forces. The *kind* of cognition that yields objects is wholly within the PSR, which acquires its meaning from our assuming the ‘willing stance’. In other words, it is meaningful to the extent that we are unaffected or weakly affected individuals, at any given moment. Considered wholly from the objective correlate, a target of cognition is *an object* because of its spatiotemporal and causal relations with other targets of cognition.

By contrast, the objective correlate of aesthetic contemplation, or ‘Idea’, is distinct from the object in one way: we no longer cognise the target of cognition as relating to other objects, but as what it is ‘in and of itself’. Absent the insight stemming from the will-body identity, this proposition is meaningless. What kind of cognition do we have if we isolate or remove the target of cognition from its ‘relations’ to other targets of cognition? We cannot possibly subtract all of the effects of other objects on it and still be left with something resembling cognition of *an object*. Consequently, it is misleading to argue that we can (or that we should) separate the target from its relations to other targets *and still* argue that we have the cognition of *an object*. We can argue that we do *not* perceive an object, but an Idea. Ideas pose a different challenge, however. How do we make sense of an Idea without appealing to the objective picture and so without confusing them with objects? In short, how do we make the proposition that ‘aesthetic contemplation involves cognition of an Idea’ meaningful without appealing to objects? This is a key challenge to Schopenhauer’s account of aesthetics, which, I will argue, he can overcome.

According to Schopenhauer, in aesthetic contemplation, the *effects* of other objects on the target of cognition do not constitute or partake in its identity. We do not *identify* the stone or the dog with its relations to other objects, i.e., to water or a cat. The relations *sink* to the background of our cognition and fall out of focus when we aesthetically contemplate on it. The previous does not entail that the relations to other objects no longer exist or that we perceive another ‘object’ or ‘thing’ entirely, which we call the ‘Idea’. By confounding the two senses of ‘object’, we misconstrue the Idea as an ‘object’ rather than as a ‘target’ of cognition, which is more appropriate for preserving the difference between non-aesthetic cognition and aesthetic contemplation.

I will argue that the Idea represents what the target *wills to be*. We project the will on it. We try—and perhaps frustratingly fail—to perceive what it *wills to be*. It is still the same target of cognition, albeit the nature of our perception has changed from an object or a motive to the ‘Idea’. The ‘dog’ that was the object of cognition is *not* replaced by another ‘thing’, which we now call the ‘Idea’ of the dog. We perceive the *same* dog, but in a different manner, which, as Vandenabeele rightly claims, “enables us to become alive to usually unnoticed significant features” (Vandenabeele 2012A, 59). We become attentive to the dog *not as an object*, but as something that is ‘willing’, ‘striving’, ‘struggling’ and so on.

In aesthetic contemplation we apply to the target of cognition the same relationship we have to our *own* body, namely, its double cognition as will [*Wille*] and representation [*Vorstellung*]. The previous *grounds* his conception of aesthetic contemplation:

“We now clearly understand our double cognition of the essence and operation of our own body, a cognition that we are given in two completely different ways; and we will go on to use this cognition as a key to the essence of every appearance in nature; and when it comes to objects other than our own body, objects that have not been given to us in this double manner but only as representations in our consciousness, *we will judge them on the analogy with our body, assuming* that, since they are on the one hand representations just like the body and are in this respect homogeneous with it, then on the other hand, what remains after disregarding their existence as representation of a subject must have the same inner essence as what we call *will*.” (WR, 129; my emphasis)

What makes the Idea meaningful is that we no longer perceive the target of cognition *as an object*, but as ‘willing’, ‘striving’ and so on. We construe the target of cognition as having a similar relationship to *its* body that we do to our body. We make an inference by ‘analogy’ using the faculty of reason, which allows us to project ‘willing’ onto the target of our cognition. We cannot perceive the will directly, so we require the faculty of imagination to perceive it indirectly. Schopenhauer clarifies this further in the following passage:

“...every individual is on the one hand the cognitive subject, i.e. the complementary condition for the possibility of the whole objective world, and on the other hand a single appearance of the will, which is precisely what objectifies itself in every thing. But this duality of our essence does not remain in a self-subsisting unity: otherwise we would be able to be aware of ourselves in ourselves and independent of the objects of cognition and willing: but this is absolutely impossible” (WR, 304; footnote)

Only when we will something do we become self-conscious, according to Schopenhauer. It is only through self-consciousness that the target of cognition acquires its significance and meaning [*Bedeutung*]. The same is true with respect to our will: we do not perceive it as the target is *in itself*, but as it appears in individual acts of will and thus bodily actions over time. Schopenhauer does not overstep the Kantian limits of cognition, but substantially stretches them. Moreover, his hasty rhetoric on the will being the ‘thing in itself’ can be misleading, but not if we consider the identity relationship between willing and bodily movement. What he calls the ‘will’ is a cognition and so accords with the subject-object correlation:

“I do not have cognition of my will as a whole, in its unity, in perfect accordance with its essence; rather I cognise it only in its individual acts, which is to say in time, time being the form in which my body (like every other object) appears: this is why the body is the condition of *cognition* of my will.” (WR, 126; my emphasis)

We do not have direct cognitive access to ‘our will as a whole’, but indirectly through our individual acts of will over time, which we then unify using the faculty of reason. We have direct cognitive access to the identity relationship between our will and body, but this is not *cognition* of ‘the will’. The identity relationship does not permit us to argue that our will is *an object*, because we only cognise objects through their relationship to other objects. When we will something, we relate to our body in a manner different to any other object. An act

of will is not an inference from the will to the body, neither is it a cognition of a causal relation between willing and bodily movement, but an identity relationship between the will and the ‘object through which it expresses itself’, viz., the body, which then makes it *our* body.

We do *not* make an inference from our will to our body, but we do make an inference from our ‘act of will’ to our character. This inference reflects a change in our perspective, however. We have moved from the first-person to a third-person perspective on ourselves. Reason unifies the pieces into a *whole* picture, while imagination makes it *meaningful*. If we perceived our ‘acts of will’ only as representations (or objects), then our life would unfold like a movie, whose director is a strange unknown thing X. When we attempt to *cognise* the will, we make an ‘object’ of it. Additionally, when we project the will on the target of our cognition, we make an inference and thus see the target as a representation or the objective outcome of willing, striving etc. Accordingly, in aesthetic contemplation, we use our distinct relationship to our body as the basis for an inference from analogy that allows us to make a cognitive leap: we assume that a target *appears as an object*, but ‘in itself’ *it wills as we do*.

Wicks rightly reads the Ideas as based on an “*idealising act of the imagination*” (Wicks 2008, 98), but we cannot ignore the fundamental role of reason in aesthetic contemplation. We require imagination for intuitive representation and thus the ‘perception’ of an Idea, but we require reason to make the inference from *our* relationship to *our* body to the target of cognition having this *same* relationship to *its* body. Imagination, then, works in combination with reason to yield cognition of the Ideas as opposed to reason working alone, which yields (at best) an ‘an object *in itself*’. Wicks is also right to construe an Idea as *ideal*, but we should clarify that it is not *our* ideal for the object, or one taken from any perspective other than the target’s own. By projecting willing on the target, we assume that it has a perspective (i.e., a will) *of its own*. This makes meaningful Schopenhauer’s claim that aesthetic contemplation yields “this object’s *clearest image*” (WR, 202; my emphasis), but it does so not in the way we might initially expect.<sup>23</sup>

In aesthetic contemplation, we project willing on a target of cognition. This changes our perception of it *qualitatively*, not quantitatively. We still perceive the *same thing* without addition or subtraction. We do not perceive something ‘else’, or something ‘more’, when we aesthetically contemplate on the dog; we perceive the dog *differently*. We do not lose the connection to the target of cognition in aesthetic contemplation, but there is a *qualitative* change that does not entail or presuppose a change in ‘the dog itself’ *independent* from us. Another person may still perceive ‘just another dog’ while we aesthetically contemplate on it and thus perceive it as willing, striving and so on.

In sum, we use our relationship to our body as grounds for an analogy between the target of cognition and *its* will. We know our body relates to various objects in the objective world. We project this same relationship on *the dog*. Our body is apparently different to the

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<sup>23</sup> Perhaps construing it as the target’s clearest image as opposed to the object’s clearest image can help us avoid a persistent confusion between aesthetic contemplation and ordinary cognition of objects, which plagues many readings.

dog, however. Why is that so? What makes our body so different? Is it another object(s) and our body's relationship to it? 'What we are' is just as much a result of our *will* and therefore our responses to objects as it is a result of their *effect* on us. In (re)acting, we recognise that we also *will* and participate in determining our body's limits; we co-determine the limits of the effects of other objects on us. Our body is both our will *and* the effects of objects on it. It is *more* than its causal and-or spatiotemporal relations to other objects and so, by analogy, we infer the same about the dog's relationship to *its* body.

What can the difference between my body and the dog rely on (and if we want to say more about them than their spatiotemporal and causal relations can tell us) other than that we actually *will differently*; we *respond differently* to the effects of objects on us? Our focus moves away from its relations to other objects and their effects, i.e., away from the cognition of it *as an object* with such and such (relational) properties. We focus on the relationship between 'how it appears now' and 'what it *wills* to appear as'. Accordingly, cognition of an Idea is cognition of something as *it strives to appear* or as *it would appear* if nothing strove in opposition to it. It is the previous aim to cognise the target's will, which *drives* our focus and thereby makes our cognition *meaningful*. Its relations to other objects remains, but these relations change in their quality and significance: they have no significance for our aesthetic contemplation and subjective stance that correlates to it. It is also in *this* sense that an 'Idea' is the *counterpart* of a 'concept', for Schopenhauer (more on this below).

Schopenhauer grounds aesthetic contemplation on cognition enabled by a projection of our first-person experience of willing something onto the world, which is at the heart of his philosophy:

"...we must learn to understand nature from ourselves, not ourselves from nature. What is directly known to us must give us the explanation of what is only indirectly known, not conversely" (*WR II*, 196)

Nonetheless, he is careful to make clear that 'will' does *not* only apply to 'human willing':

"...anyone incapable of broadening the concept in the way we require will remain in a state of perpetual misunderstanding, using the word *will* to mean just the one species that has borne the name so far, the will that is accompanied by cognition and is expressed exclusively in accordance with motives – and indeed only through abstract motives, under the guidance of reason" (*WR*, 136)

He seeks to offer a different, more meaningful way of comprehending the changes in the objects of cognition. The projection of willing underpinning aesthetic contemplation is not the projection of our 'individual self' or what is specific to human willing, but the unique relationship we have to our body in (re)acting. Our body is the *bridge* from ourselves to the objective world. We project onto the target of cognition this same bridge, i.e., its body and willing are as *identical* as our body and will. The previous allows us to perceive it as pushing and pulling 'something' or striving after 'something' or overpowering something and so on. We take a stance on it *as if it also wills*.



Aesthetic contemplation differs from other cognitions by our perceiving things as ‘striving’, ‘struggling’ etc. Schopenhauerian Ideas are based on our perceiving (or our trying to perceive) the target ‘as it strives to be or become’ or as it ‘would be if nothing was striving in opposition to it’. The following passages support the above propositions:

“Everywhere in nature we see conflict, we see struggle, we see victory changing hands; later we will recognise this more clearly as the internal rupture [*deren Abbild er ist*] that is essential to the will. Each level of the will’s objectivation is in conflict with the others over matter, space and time... In fact, this conflict is itself only the revelation of the internal rupture that is essential to the will.” (WR, 171-2)

“A more perfect Idea will result from such a victory over several lower Ideas or objectivations of the will; and by absorbing an analogue of higher power from each of the Ideas it overpowers, it will gain an entirely new character: the will is objectified in a new and clearer fashion... No victory without a struggle: since the higher Idea or objectivation of the will can come forward only by overpowering the lower Ideas, it encounters resistance on their part. Even when the lower Ideas are quickly brought into submission, they nonetheless keep striving to express their essence in a complete and self-sufficient manner.” (WR, 173)

“It can thus also be said that each organism presents the Idea that it is modelled on, but only after discounting the part of its force used for overpowering the lower Ideas that compete with it for matter. Jacob Böhme seems to have thought of this when he says somewhere that all human and animal bodies, indeed all plants, are really half dead. Now an organism will be a more or less perfect expression of its Idea in proportion to its success in overpowering the natural forces that express the lower levels of the objecthood of the will; that is, it will be closer to or further from the *ideal* that is the mark of beauty in the species.” (WR, 171)

In aesthetic contemplation, we do not perceive the target *as an object*, but as the ‘result of its successful or unsuccessful *struggle*’. Prior to our projecting willing on it, we perceive it in terms of its spatiotemporal and causal relations in accordance with certain rules or laws, i.e., a consistency in its appearance, which is premised on the expression of a meaningless natural force. To perceive something as striving, struggling, overpowering etc. requires us to project willing on it. Thus, Schopenhauerian Ideas relate to one another differently than how objects and motives relate; they relate in terms of overpowering, striving, struggling in opposition to something and so on. The latter terms pertain to willing and its expression, not to objects, object-relations and natural forces. They fall outside the frame of the objective picture.

The juxtaposition between the cognition of an object and aesthetic contemplation of an Idea is obscurely summarised in the following passage, which I will try to clarify further:

“Without the object, without the representation, I am not a cognising subject but rather mere blind will; and similarly, without me as the subject of cognition, the thing

cognised is not an object but rather mere will, blind urge. In itself, i.e. outside of representation, this will is one and the same thing as my own will: only in the world as representation, whose form is always minimally that of subject and object, are we separate from each other as the cognising individual and the individual cognised. As soon as cognition, the world of representation, is suppressed, absolutely nothing is left but mere will, blind urge. The fact that it retains its objecthood and becomes representation presupposes at once both subject and object: but the fact that this objecthood is the pure, complete and adequate objecthood of the will presupposes the object as Idea, free from the forms of the principle of sufficient reason, and the subject as pure subject of cognition, free from individuality and servitude to the will.” (WR, 203)

The Idea is the purest, clearest and most complete cognition we can have of something, but it is still a cognition of something. It is *not* the cognition of an object or of another *entity* (e.g., a metaphysical entity) to which the target relates; both of the previous conceptions of the Ideas yield ‘objects’, not ‘Ideas’ and so fail to track the fundamental difference between them. There is no ‘*entity*’ or ‘*thing*’ conceivable outside of the will and its representation in cognition. Our ability to cognise something as a representation of willing, striving etc. finds its ground in the double cognition of the body. The relationship we have to the target of our cognition when perceiving its Idea is as if *it* ‘wills’ (overpowers, strives, struggles etc.). We project willing onto the world to saturate it with meaning or significance *to us* in an entirely different way than its being a potential motive for our will, i.e., its being ‘an object’.

Schopenhauerian Ideas are *neither* Platonic Forms<sup>24</sup> nor quite the Kantian ‘thing in itself’. Recall, that the ‘thing in itself’ is a *meaningless* concept, for Schopenhauer. We make it meaningful by ‘projecting willing’ onto the target of cognition. His account accords with what Kant argued were the limits of possible experience while aiming for Plato’s insight into the ‘thing in itself’.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, he seeks to sit between Plato and Kant. The following passage, which merits quoting in full, summarises his reasons for doing so:

“This is because, just as Kant claimed, the thing in itself is supposed to be free of all the forms that are attached to cognition as such: and (as will be shown in the appendix) Kant was simply mistaken in failing to consider being-an-object-for-a-subject as one of these forms, and indeed before all others, since precisely this is the first and most universal form of all appearance, i.e. representation; he *should therefore have explicitly denied that his thing in itself was an object*, as this would have saved him from that great inconsistency, an inconsistency that was discovered quite early. By contrast, *the*

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<sup>24</sup> Though, he does show ambivalence with respect to whether or not his Ideas are just Platonic Forms; he sometimes claims that he does not intend them in Plato’s sense, e.g., “given our view, we cannot agree with Plato” (WR, 236); also, “many of his [Plato’s] examples and descriptions of Ideas are applicable only to concepts” (WR, 259). At other times, he claims, “the *Ideas*, in my sense, which agrees with the original Platonic meaning, of this grossly misused word” (WRII, 364). It seems that in the supplementary essays he settles for the claim that his conception of the Ideas represents a different reading of Plato’s Ideas, which he believes is closer to Plato’s ‘original meaning’.

<sup>25</sup> The supplementary essays are clear about the Kantian limits of his philosophy (cf. WRII, 197-8).

*Platonic Idea is necessarily an object, something cognised, a representation and, for precisely this reason (but for only this reason), distinct from the thing in itself. It has merely shed the subordinate forms of appearance (which are all comprehended under the principle of sufficient reason) – or rather it has not yet entered into these forms; but it has retained the first and most general form, that of representation in general, of being an object for a subject.” (WR, 197; my emphasis)*

He wants Plato’s metaphysical insights and the proposed truth-value of the Ideas to accord with Kant’s epistemic boundaries, i.e., his conditions for possible experience. He settled for an account that renders meaningful Kant’s ‘thing in itself’. It is thus misleading to construe the Schopenhauerian Ideas as the ‘concepts of reason’ translated into intuition (i.e., made perceptible), or metaphysical ‘entities’ (i.e., objects in a different realm). Schopenhauerian Ideas have Plato’s truth-value, but reside within Kant’s epistemic boundaries and limits of possible experience.

An important distinction between ‘Ideas’ and ‘concepts’ is that they correlate to the different ‘stances’ we take on a target of cognition. One stance yields the ‘representation’ of willing, striving etc., whereas the other yields ‘an object’ for (some) will. For example, with respect to the ‘particularity’ of the target of cognition, the aesthetic contemplator has a ‘qualitatively distinct’ sense of the target than the person assuming the willing stance. In assuming the willing stance, we perceive the target’s particularity within the framework of a *possible* object for willing, if not a full-fledged motive. Thus, an Object O is ‘particular’ by virtue of its relationship to other objects, i.e., to Ob, Oz... On. It has what we can call ‘relative or relational particularity’. This yields a cognition that distinguishes objects from each other by their *functionality*; Ob is ‘particular’ because it is ‘functionally distinct’ from Oz. Although, any object O is part of the same whole characterised by its usefulness with respect to a task (purpose, aim etc.). Oz is particular by serving a different *function* within a whole determined solely by the functionality of something, either *for us*, or an *independent will*. Notable examples of the previous ‘independent will’ are ‘Nature’ or ‘God’. Ob still relates to Oz and others before relating to an independent will by its *conception* of serving a ‘function’; often this independent will is our *own*, which we then project onto nature or onto God. This is the *same* ‘particularity’ that hammers have in relation to screwdrivers or chisels in the ‘tool-box’, that is, as fit for *some* use that the worker (or the *legislator*, or the *owner* of the ‘wider whole that is the box’) can put it to. This functional particularity of an object differs qualitatively from the ‘particularity’ of the Idea.

Aesthetic contemplation *revises* our conception of particularity by changing its meaning, not by denying its existence or by positing an alternative existence, i.e., some realm of ‘Ideas’. Particularity seen through aesthetic contemplation refers to the same target of cognition, i.e., the stone, the flower or the person, but the significance of each changes. It changes from an object whose significance derives from the will of the cognising subject, to the target having its own significance based on *its* willing. The previous is guaranteed by the double cognition of the body and the projection of willing it enables.

The claim that an Idea is ‘another object’ representing itself through Ox, e.g., a perfect ‘tool’ without a wielder, is as misleading and as meaningless as the ‘object in itself’,

which Schopenhauer calls “a philosophical will-o’-the wisp” (WR, 25). Accordingly, the Schopenhauerian Idea is not *an object* in this sense, but it is nonetheless a target of cognition. In aesthetic contemplation, we perceive the result of a struggle between opposing wills, which result we call Ideas. Notice, however, that nothing about a world filled with objects relating spatiotemporally, causally and natural forces implies ‘willing’, ‘striving’ or even a ‘struggle’. To perceive anything like a struggle, or to make meaningful what we construe as the *outcome* or *representation* of a struggle (i.e., the Ideas), we must project the first-person experience of *willing something* on objects of cognition. The projection of willing transforms entirely our worldview.

There is a core objection to the Schopenhauerian Ideas in the philosophical literature that is focused on the claim that aesthetic contemplation is *not* concerned with the target’s ‘particularity’, but with the ‘Idea’ of which the object is an ‘instantiation’. This objection voices the worry that the object’s ‘particularity’ is rendered ‘irrelevant’ or ‘transcended’ by aesthetic contemplation, because the ‘Idea’ is construed as universal whereas the so-called ‘object’ of aesthetic contemplation is not. This objection is clearly formulated by Soll who argues:

“...the object of an aesthetic experience is not made up of individuals, distinguished by their locations in space and time, but by the a-spatial and a-temporal *Ideas* or *Platonic Forms*, the eternal, unchanging species or types of things that all individuals exemplify.” (Soll 1998, 93)

Soll’s reading construes the relationship between the Idea and the target as an ontological relationship. In other words, he makes sense of the Ideas using the objective picture, which is what Schopenhauer tries to avoid. It brings back the PSR and yields cognition of *an object* (or motive) rather than an ‘Idea’, which, in turn, fails to track their difference. Schopenhauer could have called the ‘Idea’ an object if he did not aim to differentiate it from objects and motives.

Soll’s reading wrongly posits two distinct ‘things’: physical objects and metaphysical Ideas, which relate to one another. He does not construe them as different ways of looking at something. Hamlyn, on the other hand, avoided this confusion by rightly recognising that:

“Schopenhauer is less concerned with the ontological status of the Ideas than with their logical character as representations. Hence, when he says that the grades of the objectification of the will are Ideas in Plato’s sense, we are not meant to ask whether in that case they exist in another world or whatever.” (Hamlyn 1980, 112)

With respect to Hamlyn’s suggestion, however, we have to clarify what we mean by the ‘logical’ status of something while guarding against overly rational conceptions of the Ideas. Is the relationship between the Idea and its target one of two *distinct things* relating logically? We have neither offered any insight nor made sense of the Ideas by speaking of two distinct *things*. The insight of the claim that it is ‘two distinct cognitions of the same thing’ is more useful, because it preserves an identity relationship between the Idea and the target, which allows us to juxtapose it to the object. The Idea is the same target not perceived as an object.

Other readings appeal to the objective picture to make sense of the Schopenhauerian Ideas by construing them as ‘concepts’. These readings argue an Idea is a universal ‘thing’ in juxtaposition to a particular ‘thing’; they form a relationship of subsumption. The object *Ox* is subsumed under the ‘Idea’ of *O*.<sup>26</sup> We remember that the relationship he posits between the Idea and the object is one of *identity*. Also, he construes the Idea as the particular object’s ‘clearest image’. Hamlyn rightly points out that the relationship between the target and its Idea is not *synonymous* to that between a ‘particular’ and its ‘universal’ type or kind. Hamlyn’s reading implies the identity relationship between them without fully fleshing it out, however:

“Grades of the objectification of the will are not just *kinds* either, if that term suggests something that is merely universal in character and simply instantiated in a number of particulars — a mere class. There remains a gulf between particulars and grades of objectification of the will, just because the will has nothing to do with plurality. The grade of the will’s objectivity which is the oak is *the* oak; not the class of oaks, but the prototype oak which no single oak tree in the world may quite match or live up to. It is an ideal entity, something that is both token and type.” (Hamlyn 1980, 106)

The Ideas are universal, albeit in another sense, because the conception of universality under aesthetic contemplation changes form that under ordinary reflection or cognition of objects. We cannot construe the universality of an Idea through the objective picture because we then lose its individuality, i.e., that there is nothing else like it. The universality of an Idea rests on the insight that what we perceive as an object is also a representation of its inherent willing, striving and so on. The Idea is a product of reason *and* imagination in combination, so its universality cannot be something that applies only to reason and its concepts. Aesthetic contemplation requires the use of reason for projection of willing and imagination for us to have an intuitive representation of willing from a viewpoint we cannot directly access. What is universal about an Idea is what is universal about a ‘willing thing’. Our perspective on and the meaning of ‘universality’ (‘individuality’, ‘particularity’ etc.) change the moment we construe the relationship between the ‘concept’ and its particular ‘instantiation’ through aesthetic contemplation.

We cannot fault readings that are tempted to make sense of the Idea using what obtains only in the objective picture, which reintroduces a perspective that loses sight of the Idea. Schopenhauer’s abstruse descriptions of the Ideas mislead us. Let us take the following passages as examples of how his claims mislead us:

“The Idea is unity shattered into multiplicity through the temporal and spatial form of our intuitive apprehension; the *concept* on the other hand is unity reassembled from

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<sup>26</sup> This reading of the ‘Ideas’ is prolific in the literature, see, e.g., Gardiner (1963, 205-7 & 213-4); Vandenabeele (2011, 51-3); Vandenabeele (2012B); Atwell (1995, 148-150); Magee (1983, 165); Janaway (1989, 9-10) and Wicks (2005, 130).

plurality by means of the abstraction of our reason: it can be designated as unity after the fact, and the Idea as unity before the fact.” (WR, 261)

“...there are *two inseparable components* of the aesthetic way of looking at things: cognition of the object, not as a particular thing but rather as a Platonic *Idea*, i.e. as a permanent form of this whole genus of things; and then the self-consciousness of the one who has this cognition, not as an individual, but as *pure, will-less subject of cognition*.” (WR, 219)

“Every individual at once represents its species; accordingly, we now apprehend the universal in beings. What we know in such a way are the *Ideas* of things; but from these there now speaks a higher wisdom than that which knows of mere relations.” (WR II, 372)

The above passages do not tell us what makes an Idea meaningful. It tries to compare the Ideas to concepts and misleadingly invites us to make Ideas meaningful using what is furthest from an Idea, i.e., the objective correlate of the willing stance. Yet, he is likewise adamant to prevent a ‘conceptual’ apprehension of the Ideas, which he found dissatisfactory about Plato’s account of the Forms:

“... it is not the individual thing, the object of our common apprehension, nor is it the concept, the object of rational thought and science. Although Idea and concept have something in common, namely the fact that as unities both stand for [*vertreten*] a multiplicity of actual things... I certainly do not mean to say that Plato had a clear conception of this distinction: in fact, many of his examples and descriptions of Ideas are applicable only to concepts.” (WR, 259-60)

What, I believe, he is aiming to demonstrate is that ‘concepts’ acquire a different *meaning* when we aesthetically contemplate; it revises our perspective on objects *and* concepts. Ideas are *counterparts* of concepts. They are what concepts *look like* when we are aesthetically contemplating on something. However, to *conceptualise* aesthetic contemplation is to make it fit with a world-view that yields objects, concepts and motives, i.e., the objective picture. Therefore, we miss what is *unique* about aesthetic contemplation by the previous approach. Passages like the following are helpful for an insight into the difference between Ideas and concepts:

“...the distinction between concept and Idea can be expressed figuratively by saying: concepts are like dead receptacles; what we place inside actually lies next to each other, and we cannot take out more (through analytic judgments) than we have put in (through synthetic reflection): in those who have grasped them, on the other hand, Ideas develop representations that are novel with respect to concepts sharing the same name: the Idea is like a living and developing organism endowed with generative powers, an organism that can produce things that were not already packaged up inside it.” (WR, 261)

Aesthetic contemplation individuates the target of cognition in a different manner than the ‘relative or relational individuality’ that is its conceptual counterpart. It picks out the same target, but perceives and conceives it differently.

It is important to note that the Idea is a striving independent from its ‘success’ *hitherto*. Its striving shows *both* what the target has achieved so far and what it aims to look like. We can make this meaningful by construing the Idea as how a target *wills* to appear.

The Idea, then, is the result of another way of looking at something, not our ‘looking at something else’. Another useful passage that further nuances these differences is one that distinguishes concepts from melodies:

“This is because melodies are to a certain extent like universal concepts, being abstractions from reality. Reality, and hence the world of specific things, provides what is intuitive, what is particular and individual, the specific case both for the universality of concepts as well as for the universality of melodies, although these two universalities are opposed in a certain respect: concepts contain simply the very first forms abstracted from intuition, the outer shells that have been stripped off things, as it were, and are thus wholly authentic *abstracta*; music on the other hand provides the innermost kernel, prior to all form – the heart of things.” (WR, 291)

Schopenhauer’s key claim is that Ideas and concepts are counterparts whose difference does *not* rest on different objects that relate, but different ways of looking at the same object and its relations.

Following the same method of trying to make sense of the Schopenhauerian Ideas using the objective picture, commentators argue that we can construe the Ideas as perceiving the object’s ‘significance’, which is found in something *other than* its ‘individuality’. In aesthetic contemplation, they argue, we are not concerned with its ‘individual significance’, but its “universal significance”.<sup>27</sup> This reading is not wrong, but, again, we should construe ‘universal significance’ under aesthetic contemplation and avoid the objective picture. The Idea-target relation is not a concept-object or type-token relation, but an identity relationship between the will and its representation in a target of cognition, which we otherwise perceive as an object. By speaking about the universal significance of something, we are tempted to comprehend the Idea-target relation as ‘an object subsumed under a *concept*’ and perceive things through the PSR, which yields the meaningless objective picture.

If we follow the above reading, then, something has aesthetic value by virtue of its relation to a universal thing called an ‘Idea’, which the object of cognition is distinct from by failing to correspond to it. The object of our aesthetic contemplation is irrelevant, for this reading. What matters is ‘Nature’, ‘God’, ‘the species’, or ‘the thing-in-itself’, because the Idea is distinct from any individual we perceive. We can take our pick from the previous, because nobody has perceived them, but we are still inclined to argue that one or another serves as the conceptual ground for the multiplicity of objects and individuals we perceive.

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<sup>27</sup> See Wicks (2005, 98); (Vandenabeele 2011, 53) and Young (2005, 130-1).

Aesthetic contemplation under this reading shows the ‘intention’ or ‘effect’ of something other than the target of cognition. Notice also that this reading ascribes a *causal-relationship* between the target and its Idea. The ascription of causal relationships beyond their remit misleads our readings by yielding something *meaningless*. The reading I defend argues that aesthetic contemplation represents a difference in *our* cognition of the *same thing* premised on a change *in us*, not a difference in things without a correlative change in us.<sup>28</sup>

Other readings argue it is paradoxical to claim that by aesthetically contemplating on an artwork we do not perceive the particular object that is its subject matter, but “a mysterious entity that eludes ordinary perception”<sup>29</sup>. The previous suggests that as we move from ordinary cognition (of objects and motives) into aesthetic contemplation we somehow lose sight of the object *entirely* and are now concerned with what the object does not quite live up to. This objection is correct, but only if we read it in a loose sense, because it risks overshooting its mark. How can it transition into our perceiving something else without the loss of reference? In aesthetic contemplation, the ‘individual target of our cognition’ is not lost; it does not come out of focus. What is lost or comes out of focus is our perceiving it *as an object*. Our focus is fully devoted to *it*, not to something else. The previous is evident in the gradual transition from the world filled with *objects* into the world of *Ideas*. At no point in the gradual transition does Schopenhauer contend that we lose sight or we no longer focus on what we previously perceived as an object. This gradual transition shows up most clearly in the following passage, which merits quoting in full:

“...the apprehension of the relations that things have *to one another* takes place only *indirectly* in the service of the will. It therefore forms the transition to the *purely* objective knowledge that is entirely independent of the will; it is scientific knowledge, the latter being artistic knowledge. Thus, if many and varied relations of an object are immediately apprehended, its peculiar and proper nature then appears from these more and more distinctly, and *is thus gradually constructed out of mere relations, although it itself is entirely different from them*. With this method of apprehension, *the subjection of the intellect to the will at the same time becomes more and more indirect and limited...* The Idea is the root point of all these relations, and thus the complete and perfect *phenomenon*, or, as I have expressed it in the text, the adequate objectivity of the will at this stage of its phenomenal appearance... Hence, as I have said, the Ideas still do not reveal the being-in-itself of things, but only *their objective character*, and thus always only the phenomenon. And *we should not understand even this character, if the inner essence of things were not otherwise known to us, at least obscurely and in feeling*. Thus this essence itself cannot be understood from the Ideas, and in general not through any merely *objective* knowledge; therefore it would remain

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<sup>28</sup> For more on this and how it differs from Kant’s aesthetic ‘ideas’ see Vandenabeele (2012B, 225-6).

<sup>29</sup> Gardiner (1968, 207). See also, Soll, (1998, 97-8).



eternally a secret, unless we had access to it from an entirely different side.” (*WRII*, 363-4; some emphasis is mine)

The concept is that which is ‘constructed out of mere relations’, whilst the Ideas reveal the ‘essence’ or ‘character’ of that which appears in this relational light.<sup>30</sup> We remember that ‘essence’ or ‘character’ are meaningless without our projecting the first-person experience of ‘willing’ on them. We can summarise the previous by arguing that he makes the Ideas *meaningful* by projecting the will on concepts of reason; e.g., the ‘concept’ species becomes the ‘Idea’ when we transition from the pure subject of cognition (and so the willing stance) to the disinterested subject. In doing so, we no longer see construe the species as causally (or conceptually) related to the individual (or particular object) through which it is supposed to express itself, but as identical with the individual. We perceive an individual as constantly trying to perfect or to actualise itself.

Some commentators suggest removing the Ideas from Schopenhauer’s philosophy due to their confusing status in his ontology.<sup>31</sup> What is mistaken in such suggestions and the criticisms that underpin them is that their arguments begin from the premise that an ‘Idea’ is an *entity* or *thing*, which is what leads them to question their ontological status in the first place. We can settle this dispute about the ontological status of the Ideas by arguing that an Idea has the *same* ontological status as the *object* or the *concept* that is its counterpart in the objective picture. We do not cognise two distinct things called an ‘Idea’ and its ‘object’, but have two distinct cognitions of the same thing. Young rightly intimates that Schopenhauer does not construe the Ideas as *things*, but as a kind of perception of something:

“‘Idea’ is, in his aesthetic theory, a mere *façon de parler*, a merely nominal object. The best way of putting his view is to say that what is special about the artist is not that he perceives the Idea *instead* of the individual, but rather perceives the individual *as Idea*.” (Young 2005, 131)

Our cognition of an Idea is a cognition of ‘the individual’, not some ontological entity that is ‘somehow’ distinct, but which we ‘somehow’ *perceive* in ‘this’ individual. Our perception of things has shifted during aesthetic contemplation, but we do not lose the connection with the target of cognition. Young, however, overshoots the mark when he claims the following:

“It is not something separate from the individual that the artist sees, but rather ‘the universal *in* the particular’ (*WRII*, 379; my emphasis).” (Young 2005, 131)

Arguing that we perceive ‘the universal *in* the particular’ is not wrong, but this pushes us into an obscure position that makes the problem return through the backdoor. What sense can we make of perceiving ‘universals in particulars’ if that meaning is not conceptual? To be sure, cognising Ideas has conceptual *implications*, e.g., about our account of ‘objectivity’, but these must be *initially* suspended so we can arrive at the genuine meaning of the Idea

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<sup>30</sup> For more on this ‘gradual transition’ see Koßler (2012, 201-3).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Magee (1983, 238-240).

and the insights underpinning it. The Idea is not conceptual, but the counterpart of concepts as from another worldview. What we should inquire into is how we can ‘conceptualise’ the claim that in aesthetically contemplating on something we do not perceive *an object* with X properties, but a living, developing ‘thing’? Making a concept of *something* means making *an object* of it first and re-introducing the objective picture. If an Idea is a target’s will, then making a ‘concept’ of it entails defeating the purpose of perceiving it as the representation of willing.

In sum, many criticisms aimed at Schopenhauer’s account of aesthetic contemplation rest on the confusion over what he means by the ‘Idea’ of something. This confusion arises from trying to make cognition of Ideas conceptually tenable. The only thing conceptually tenable about it is that it does not defy *all* of Kant’s requirements for being an experience in general. It preserves what Schopenhauer saw as the backbone of a cognition: the subject-object correlation. Cognition of an Idea struggles to be commensurate with the ordinary cognition of objects and motives. The PSR treats targets of cognition *as objects* for us to get our hands on and shape in accordance with *our* (or *some* independent) purpose; it treats them as *vehicles* for some purpose. In the revised sense of aesthetic contemplation I defend here, we perceive what the target itself *wills* to appear as *to us*.

## 1.5 The Willing Stance and the ‘Disinterested Individual’

In a similar fashion to the previous chapter, I will juxtapose ordinary ‘subjectivity’ with ‘aesthetic’ subjectivity to give the subjective correlate of aesthetic contemplation. Firstly, I will briefly summarise the objective correlate of aesthetic contemplation. The target of our ordinary, non-aesthetic cognition is perceived as ‘an object’, which is the affectively weaker version of a motive. The target of aesthetic contemplation is perceived as an Idea, however, whose meaning I fleshed out in terms of perceiving the target as ‘a willing thing’. This requires projection of the will on it using the double cognition or the will-body identity as a premise for this projection. Let us now look at and juxtapose the subjective correlate of non-aesthetic cognition and aesthetic contemplation, respectively.

We perceive something *as an object*, according to Schopenhauer, when we ‘seek for something to will’, but are hitherto weakly affected by the targets of cognition, which is not enough to drive us or to spark our will. The target of cognition is seen *as an object* when we assume the purposive and action-oriented stance on it; *our aims* are what ordinarily makes the target *meaningful* to us. Objects stand out (if they stand out at all) from the background *as desirable* or *fit for purpose* (or not) by their accordance or discordance with our will. The subjective correlate of cognition of an object is, thus, *prima facie*, *self-interest*. Accordingly, the *needier* we are, the more we search for something to will or for what we actually will, the more objects and object-relations we perceive as *possible* motives or actual motives for

our will. Self-interest seemingly ground the cognition of *objects*, i.e., of something as ‘fit to be utilised’ towards some end. The willing that is seemingly suspended or suppressed during aesthetic contemplation is egoism.<sup>32</sup> I will contest this claim in the current chapter.

When we perceive the world as filled with objects, object-relations etc., we take an interest in them or we are seeking something interesting to us. Yet, only some of them appear meaningful and grab our attention correlative to how they advance our purposes, whereas the others represent our need for meaning (or our searching for something to will) by their appearance as objects. They promise pleasure, or aid us in avoiding or getting rid of pain. Aesthetic contemplation, Schopenhauer argues, occurs in the absence of any relation to our will, however:

“As soon as any relation between even that purely intuitive object and our own will, our own person, re-enters our consciousness, the magic is over: we fall back into cognition governed by the principle of sufficient reason, we no longer recognise the Idea but only the particular thing, the link in a chain to which we too belong.” (*WR*, 222)

The above suggests that self-interest is what opposes aesthetic contemplation, but, although this is true, the claim is incomplete and misleading for reasons that emerge if we take into account the impure subject of cognition. Recall, that the impure subject of cognition relates to the will in an indirect manner. Given the previous, we can argue that self-interest is neither the *only* interest opposing aesthetic contemplation, nor the *only* interest we should suspend to rise up to the subjective correlate of an Idea. Compare the above claims with the following in a passage from the supplementary essays, which are more precise in their description of what we suspend for the sake of aesthetic contemplation:

“...we regard houses, ships, machines, and the like with the idea of their purpose and their 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... In this way the consideration will gain in accuracy and extent, but remains the same as regards its quality and nature... In most cases and as a rule, everyone is abandoned to this method of consideration... But if, by way of exception, it happens that we experience a momentary enhancement of the intensity of our intuitive intelligence, we at once see things with entirely different eyes, for we now apprehend them no longer according to their relations, but according to what they are in and by themselves.” (*WR II*, 372)

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<sup>32</sup> Schopenhauer construes egoism as the obsession with our own body and its continued existence or enhancement (cf. *OBM*, 190-1).

The above passage suggests that what is suspended is purposive cognition *itself* as opposed to our own purpose, which I construe as our forgoing the willing stance. His conception of ‘interest’, then, is broader than ‘self-interest’, but logically includes the latter.

Schopenhauer cannot coherently argue that only self-interest is what we suspend in aesthetic contemplation, because he later argues that aesthetic contemplation is linked to *both* morality (which ‘suspends egoism’) and to ascetic resignation (which ‘suspends *all* mainsprings [*Triebfedern*]’). Can the so-called ‘willing’ that is suspended then be willing in an extended sense, namely, purposive cognition or what I call the willing stance? Notice, however, that the previous cannot describe aesthetic contemplation, because it applies to ascetic resignation. We know that aesthetic contemplation *can* lead us to ascetic resignation, but *not necessarily*. Aesthetic contemplation can invoke two different responses, what he calls affirmation or negation of the will to life:

“The will affirms itself, which means that while in its objectivity (i.e. in the world and life) its own essence is given to it completely and distinctly as representation, this cognition is no impediment to its willing; rather, consciously, deliberately, and with cognition, it wills the life that it thus recognises as such, just as it did as a blind urge before it had this cognition. – The opposite of this, the negation of the will to life, is manifest when willing comes to an end with that cognition. The particular, known appearances no longer act as motives for willing, but instead, cognition of the essence of the world (which mirrors the will) – cognition that has arisen by grasping the Ideas – becomes a tranquilliser of the will and the will freely abolishes itself.” (WR, 311)

In aesthetic contemplation the change in us can “be regarded as an act of self-denial” (WRII, 367), but *self*-denial is different from the negation of the will to life of ascetic resignation. The ‘will’ we suspend in aesthetic contemplation is broader than egoism, but not as broad as to entail negation of the will to life. What we project on the target of cognition is broader than our *personal* will, but not broad enough to entail negation of *all* willing, i.e., *as broad as* ascetic resignation.<sup>33</sup>

We require a distinction between aesthetic contemplation and ascetic resignation, which allows Schopenhauer sufficient conceptual room to *link* the two without confounding them. During our aesthetic contemplation of something, we suspend the willing stance<sup>34</sup>, for a moment, we do not suspend the cognition of a *purpose* or a *willing in the extended sense*, namely, as bearers of a *meaningful* cognition of the world. We project the will onto the target such that its *own* independent will becomes the aim of our attention and focus; we identify

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<sup>33</sup> Ascetic resignation comes as *one reaction* (i.e. a negation) stemming from this broader sense of willing with its own target, i.e., *life itself*, as it appears through bodily vicissitudes.

<sup>34</sup> I use the willing and purposive stance interchangeably, because both concern our willing something (directly or indirectly). There may be room for a distinction between them, however. The willing stance refers to our personal will and is therefore the subjective correlate of ‘motives’, whereas the purposive stance refers to scientific inquiry and is the subjective correlate of ‘objects’ independent from personal willing. One yields ‘motives’ and the other yields ‘objects’. As we saw in the previous sections, objects are the kinds of things that permit willing, i.e., the affectively weaker counterparts of ‘motives’.

with the target in that moment. We perceive it as *willing* in its own right. Ascetic resignation suspends all willing including the individual target's own, however. The latter is a response to a cognition whose target is life or living itself, not an *individual thing* or Idea (more on this in ensuing sections). In short, cognition of Ideas is *relational*. It represents a relationship between 'the target' and 'us'. Whereas, ascetic resignation represents a relationship between *us* and *life* or *living itself*. The previous difference is subtle, but potentially can be helpful for untying an unyielding conceptual knot.

When we become self-conscious during ordinary cognition that yields objects and motives we do so as willing something; we adopt a readiness to act. In short, there is a by-fit relationship between the readiness to act and perception of an *object* or *motive*, which makes possible perception of the target as fit for a purpose independent from it and its own purpose. It permits the comparative reasoning that is characteristic of cognition that yields objects and concepts, which is distinct from the use of reason that yields Ideas. The 'willing stance' and its 'object' are inseparable correlates constitutive of a view of things which is a framework for comparative reasoning or reflection on something. The subjective correlate of the Idea and its particular use of reason differ from the previous, however.

Aesthetic contemplation does not cognise the object *as an object* fit for the purpose of something *other than* itself, i.e., something external to it, which always leads to its purpose for some willing subject independent from the target. We do not cognise the house in accordance with its purpose for the owner, which might be to sell it, rent it or reside in it; or the builder which might be to construct it; or the resident which might be to reside in it and so on with any interest independent from the house's own. Nevertheless, the previous introduces a conceptual problem, which we can summarise by the following question: what sense do we make of the proposition that we strive to perceive the houses' own 'interest' or 'will'. In short: how can artefacts have independent *interests*? What he seemingly means is that we do not perceive the house as stone organised for our needs, but as representing the outcome of a *struggle* between "gravity, cohesion, rigidity, hardness, these universal qualities of stone" (WR, 239).<sup>35</sup> The 'Idea' of the house represents the perfect organisation of (or relations between) the many strivings that objectify as *stones*. In short, our interest is in what is possible with a bit of stone for the sake of the strivings it represents. We want to see just what a bit of stone can appear as if we remove as many of its limitations as we can without losing sight of the fact that we are interested wholly in the stone. We seek what 'it strives to appear as to us' after we recognise that it not only strives, but does so in opposition to other striving things that limit it. We want to perceive the 'perfect organisation of stone' possible *for us* in accordance with the limits of our intellect, but, according to Schopenhauer, *not for our* interest or the interest of an alternative spectator or legislator (i.e., Nature, God etc.). We are not aiming to perceive the perfect building for *living in* or *selling* and so on.

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<sup>35</sup> Schopenhauer focuses mostly on "the struggle between gravity and rigidity" and claims that this is "the only aesthetic content of fine architecture" (WR, 239). Yet, he also makes a more general claim about the aesthetic appreciation or content of artefacts, i.e., that they "serve to express Ideas: only it is not the Idea of the artefact that speaks from them, but rather the Idea of the material that has been given this artificial form" (WR, 236).

Our (aesthetic) interest *revises* our perception of both ‘perfection’ and ‘perfect building’ by “leaving aside its utilitarian function” (WR, 239).

In sum, aesthetic contemplation suspends *everyone’s* self-interest in the target except for the target’s interest and so that its will can consume our attention; this suspension of self-interest in the wider sense saturates our view of things. If its interest is not applicable to the target, because it is not a ‘human being’ (nor ‘egoism’ because it is not an ‘animal’), then we seek to perceive its striving, struggling, overpowering and so on. Accordingly, there is a *conditional*, not a *bi-conditional*, relationship between the willing stance and egoism. To suspend our purposive stance *necessarily* entails suspending egoism, but to suspend egoism does *not necessarily* entail suspending the purposive stance. We can at any moment *project* egoism onto an object that is distinct from the target and therefore claim an apparent altruism on our *personal* behalf. In other words, we can vicariously enjoy and participate in egoism while claiming to be *personally* selflessness in respect to the target. In so doing, we do not aesthetically contemplate on the target, but use it to will something *for ourselves* indirectly.

This revised conception of aesthetic interest underpinning aesthetic contemplation is, I think, sustained by the will-body identity. The extended sense of willing Schopenhauer misleadingly calls ‘will-less’ or ‘disinterested’, is still a kind of willing and thereby interest we take in something. The sense of willing and interest is broader than can be ascribed to egoism. What kind of ‘interest’ can we have in something when we aim to perceive what *it* strives to become rather than what it appears as to us? The partial answer to the previous is that we suspend egoism, but this is not helpful because even if we suspend egoism we are not thereby exempt from vicariously experiencing it and the willing stance that underpins it. We can project our egoism onto Nature, God etc. as we identify to any other willing thing *independent from* the target of our aesthetic contemplation. What we have to explain is why, during aesthetic contemplation, the target is the centre of our attention while all else pales before it. Yet, we do not *see it as* satisfying our needs personal directly or indirectly.<sup>36</sup>

Our ordinary interest in the object always yields cognition of something correlative to some will independent from the target, for Schopenhauer. We are ordinarily interested in a target of cognition in relation to the purpose it serves *for us* or *another individual*, which yields perception of *an object* or *motive*. Our seeking to perceive the target’s *own purpose* is the subjective correlate of aesthetic contemplation. What drives *this* cognition in light of the fact that, for Schopenhauer, we have suspended the will or are ‘disinterested’? We find an answer to the previous in Daniel Came’s reading, who rightly argues that “to be disinterested does not mean to fail to be interested” (Came 2009, 95) and that, for Schopenhauer,

“My attitude towards an object is disinterested, if and only if, in attending to it, I focus only on the object and not any relations that obtain between the object and anything apart from the object itself. Disinterestedness is therefore an attitude of reflective

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<sup>36</sup> A ‘direct’ need is of course our seeing it as an motive, while an indirect one would be our seeing it as an object or as the product of something else, i.e., God or Nature, with which we identify and through which we nourish our egoism vicariously.

disengagement from all considerations of utility, which considers only what the object is ‘in itself’.” (Came 2009, 95)

Came makes an equally important observation that Schopenhauer’s conception of ‘disinterestedness’ is “reflective disengagement from all considerations of utility” (Came 2009, 95), although we should ask what we can mean by ‘reflective’. Surely, ‘suspending considerations of utility’ does not *only* refer to the target’s “relation to our will” (Came 2009, 96), i.e., how *we* seek to utilise it. It refers to *any* will that might consider the target’s utility independently from the target’s interest, driving, striving, will and so on. We suspend a consideration into how anyone or anything else would *utilise* it. Therefore, we need to go further than the suspension of egoism.

Came is right that aesthetic contemplation suspends all considerations of utility, but, according to Schopenhauer, the object ‘in itself’ is meaningless *for us*. What meaning can we ascribe to a so-called ‘object in itself’ when to perceive it *as an object* means to take the willing stance on it and therefore bypass aesthetic contemplation? How can be *interested* in something seemingly ‘useless’? How do we make sense of the strange fact that something ostensibly “useless and unprofitable” (*WR II*, 388) interests us so much that we strive to preserve the objects we believe facilitate it (i.e., artworks)? Its interests to us, I have argued here, is different, because we do not perceive it *as an object* at all, but as the ‘objective’ outcome or the representation of willing, striving, overpowering and so on. It interests us because we have projected *interest* on it and are preoccupied with *its* interest. In other words, it interests us because we identify with it. Koßler is right in claiming that:

“...the only way to perceive things not in relation to the [sic] own interest is to contemplate them as creating their relations to other things and to the perceiver by themselves.” (Koßler 2012, 200)

Yet, we have to be clear that the interest is broader than our self-interest.

If we want insight into the meaning of a representation or object, for Schopenhauer, including the ‘thing-in-itself’, which Kant mistakenly called ‘an object’, then we have to either ‘will something in it’, ‘look for something to will’, or project *willing* on it. The latter permits us to perceive it as the result of willing, striving etc. with which we then identify as we ordinarily do with our body when we will something:

“... we ask if this world is nothing more than representation; in which case it would have to pass over us like an insubstantial dream or a ghostly phantasm, not worth our notice; or in fact whether it is something else, something more, and if so, what this could be... But none of this is the case: rather the subject of cognition, appearing as an individual, is given the solution to the riddle [*Räthsel*]: and this solution is *will*. This and this alone gives him the key to his own appearance, reveals to him the meaning and shows him the inner workings of his essence, his deeds, his movements.” (*WR*, 123-4)

When we ostensibly recognise the object's absence of utility in aesthetic contemplation, but find that we are still interested in it, then we are projecting the will-body identity on it and so identify with it. We make it meaningful in a different manner that, accordingly, yields a different conception of 'utility'. We do not ask *how* we can make *it* useful, but what would be useful *to it* and *for it*. The previous is not encapsulated by the 'disengagement from *all* considerations of utility', which leaves us with the problem Schopenhauer aims to avoid, namely, the meaninglessness of the 'thing (or object) in itself'.

Disinterestedness, for Schopenhauer, is suspending the kind of interest in it that leads us to perceiving something *as an object*. This requires more than suspending our individual will. Some philosophical commentators on his aesthetics overlook the previous, however. Denham, for example, argues that in aesthetic contemplation we are,

"...liberated only from a specific species of will, leaving behind or transcending a certain ordinary species of activity, viz. the fulfilment of individual and egocentric aims and desires." (Denham 2014, 176)

She qualifies her claim by adding that Schopenhauer intends 'silencing of the will' in,

"... a very specific and limited sense of that phrase: it is not all modes of willing but only, as it were, egocentric willing that is dissipated in aesthetic experience." (Denham 2014, 179)

We remember, however, that the 'will' Schopenhauer argues we suspend during aesthetic contemplation intends to capture the *purposive* or *willing stance*, which aims to utilise the target towards an end *other than its own* and yields cognition of *an object*. We can perceive an artwork *as an object*, but aesthetic contemplation and appreciation of an artwork yields more than perception of an object.<sup>37</sup> Aesthetic contemplation has meaning if we perceive an Idea, which is no longer perceiving *an object*, but what the target of cognition *wills* (to appear as *to us*).

In sum, cognising a target's '*individual will*' is the cornerstone of Schopenhauer's account of 'aesthetic contemplation'. To acquire an insight into what it means, I contended that we should take him at his word. Our priority should not be how he fits with Kant's and-or Plato's doctrines on the Ideas, but how he differs from them and comes to his own. Plato's metaphysics of the Forms and Kant's limits of experience in general that rationalises Ideas can be misleading. I suggested an alternative approach to the Schopenhauerian Ideas. My approach presupposes aesthetic contemplation is the cognition of *something* premised on his correlation theory of cognition, which accords with Kant's limits of possible experience,

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<sup>37</sup> For Schopenhauer, an artwork is a target of cognition that *can be* utilised towards some end like any other target of cognition; we can see it as an object if we assume the purposive or willing stance on it. He puts it in the following terms: "the goal of all the other arts is to arouse cognition of these Ideas through the presentation of particular things (artworks themselves are always such things) – something that is possible only given a corresponding alteration in the subject of cognition" (WR, 284). To perceive the artwork as aiming to facilitate cognition of an Idea, as opposed to its being something whose purpose is to be consumed by us, requires a *necessary* change in us, according to Schopenhauer.



but it also shows why Ideas are more veracious than concepts. Aesthetic contemplation is not cognition of *an object*, an *entity* or a *concept*, but of an *Idea*. To make Ideas meaningful, we project willing (i.e. the will-body identity we experience in willing something) onto the target of cognition. This projection makes possible an entirely different world-view. Thus, it changes the nature of our perception without changing the target of perception. It makes us identify with a target and drives us aim to perceive *its will*, which accounts for the reality or objectivity ascribed to the Ideas in the Platonic sense. In aesthetic contemplation, then, we are ‘disinterested’ in the sense of being *interested* in *its* ‘will’ rather than in acting upon it for a ‘will’ independent from it. The *Idea* is not (and cannot possibly) be separated from the target, or its subjective correlate, which is suspension of the purposive or willing stance and the introduction of a new, ‘disinterested’ stance. We should reject the conception of Schopenhauerian Ideas as ‘things’. They are so-called ‘adequate objectifications of the will’, or as I suggest in trying to offer a less cryptic insight: they are the ‘ideal outcome or result’ of the target’s willing, striving, overpowering and so on.

## 1.6 Aesthetic Contemplation from the Viewpoint of the Artist and the Spectator

Schopenhauer’s views on aesthetic contemplation construe the Idea and the disinterested subject as correlates of the same world-view. Yet, there is also the individual who facilitates the aesthetic experience for others using a special class of objects we call ‘artworks’, i.e., the artist. Schopenhauer construes the artist as someone with the specific aim of facilitating aesthetic contemplation. Passages like the following suggest that *all* artists aim to arouse cognition of the Ideas:

“...the goal of all the other arts is to arouse cognition of these Ideas through the presentation of particular things [*Dinge*] (artworks themselves are always such things) – something that is possible only given a corresponding alteration in the subject of cognition.” (WR, 284)

Likewise, consider his conclusion about music in relation to other artistic mediums and its implications over the artist’s aim:

“Therefore, unlike the other arts, music is in no way a copy of the Ideas; instead, it is a *copy of the will itself*, whose objecthood the Ideas are as well...” (WR, 285)

Nevertheless, I think we should avoid the theoretical trap of claiming that all artists have *one* aim, which is not only difficult to verify, but likewise misleading over the nature of an artwork or artefact and its status as an ‘object’ or ‘thing’.

Artists can have different aims with respect to their artworks, which are not reducible to the aim of facilitating aesthetic contemplation, i.e., cognition of Ideas. Schopenhauer also makes the claim that an artwork is a ‘thing’. This gives him enough room to permit the claim that not *all* artists *aim* to facilitate cognition of the Ideas. Even if we accept the claim that artists aim to facilitate cognition of the Ideas, this is not enough to support the assumption that artworks are *copies* of the Ideas (more on this below). Kossler also rightly clarifies that,

“...the artist cannot communicate the Idea simply by replicating it in the work of art. Or, in other words, what the artist produces voluntarily in time, space and matter cannot be an actual reproduction of the Idea. Instead works of art are able to call forth aesthetic contemplation in us or to get the Idea to come to us more easily.” (Kossler 2012, 203)

Artists are individuals that produce objects we call ‘artworks’. We can construe the previous as ‘creatively distorted’ versions of their ordinary counterparts; sometimes this creativity can be a matter of context, i.e., pulling the object out of one context and putting it in another, which alters the way we perceive it. These creative distortions *aim* at something, however. They aim to offer another perspective on the target or the artwork’s subject matter. Nothing about the previous tells us what *use* is made of the creativity, however. Therefore, the ends towards which an artist puts his creative distortions and changes in perspective can be as varied as he pleases.

For clarity, we should construe the artist in Schopenhauer’s sense as an ‘aesthetically motivated (or inspired)’ artist, which we can also call the ‘aesthetic artist’ for brevity. I will argue here that Schopenhauer’s account of aesthetic contemplation shows what is ‘aesthetic’ about an artist’s activities and works, not what is ‘artistic’. The correlate of the Idea is the ‘disinterested’ individual and so the aesthetic artist is *not only* disinterested, but also enters into a relationship with her audience when she aims to incite aesthetic contemplation in them using her artwork. The aesthetic artist takes an interest in her audience as much as (and in certain cases more than) she does in ensuring the ‘Idea’ is copied in the artwork. She aims to create an artwork with her audience in mind.

Schopenhauer construes aesthetic artists as aiming to facilitate the world-view of the disinterested subject for others using her artwork. He is implicitly aware that artists produce objects called artworks or artefacts, but also aware that the artist intends to create more than an *object*. Artworks have as many aims as the individuals who not only use their imagination and reason to produce them, but also the audiences that enjoy them. This accords with his correlation theory of cognition whereby a ‘thing’ can have as many aims as a spectator or a creator would project on it. Reason (or so-called reflectiveness) and imagination (creativity) are essential components of the arts. Some artists use them to distort the target of perception for *their sake*. Consequently, their artwork is not aesthetically inspired.

We have already distinguished artists *tout court* from ‘aesthetically inspired artists’, or the *aesthetic artist*, for brevity. We can also distinguish the spectator *tout court* from the ‘aesthetically interested’ spectator or ‘disinterested’ spectator. In short, we can distinguish

between two aims that fit both the production and appreciation of an artwork: an aesthetic and a non-aesthetic aim.

All artists use a distinct class of objects (i.e., artworks) to tweak our perception of something and thereby show us new and-or different ways of thinking about or perceiving something. Aesthetic artists are interested in showing us that there is a way of seeing a target that reveals what it *frustratingly strives* to appear as or to become. If an aesthetic artist is to succeed in facilitating cognition of an Idea in her spectator, then she has to do more than aesthetically contemplate on the subject matter and copy that onto the artwork. Let us flesh out and defend the previous proposition.

In his discussion of genius Schopenhauer considers the “disposition” (cf. WR, 220) required not only for aesthetic contemplation, but also the works it inspires. In the previous, we find a subtle distinction between ‘creativity’ and ‘inspiration’. What the artist requires to aesthetically contemplate on something is distinct from what she later uses to *facilitate* aesthetic contemplation.<sup>38</sup> He praises aesthetic artists for their ability to facilitate aesthetic contemplation using their artworks, but he likewise claims that they do so because they are capable of something that is not required for aesthetic contemplation itself, but for creativity or for producing an artwork:

“...sustaining this mode of cognition much longer and to a much higher degree, allowing him to maintain the clarity of mind needed to repeat what he has thus cognised in an *intentional* work, this repetition being the work of art itself. In the work of art he communicates the Idea he has grasped to others.” (WR, 218; my emphasis)

Aesthetic artists effortlessly grasp the Ideas, because, in doing so, they suspend the willing stance. To facilitate cognition of the Idea *for others* requires *effort*, however, and so the artist has to assume the purposive stance once again to realise it.

Schopenhauer seemingly struggled to represent the above ‘effort’ in his discussion of the artist and genius. The distinction is vague and can risk confounding the aesthetic artist with the artist *tout court*. This is because the effort encapsulates persons apt in their creative distortions of a target of cognition irrespective of their *aim* with those creative distortions. An aesthetic artist is supposedly acting *intentionally* in her creation of an artwork. This intentional activity or effort means she *wills something* and so she is not just projecting the will onto things. Accordingly, there is a difference between the ‘intentional activity’, which is what artists *tout court* engage in irrespective of their aims, and the specific ‘intentional activity’ of aesthetic artists who aim to incite aesthetic contemplation in their audience. The previous distinction demonstrates what is novel about Schopenhauer’s aesthetics and its potential contribution to the philosophy of art.

Unfortunately, Schopenhauer praises an artist for her creativity itself and this is apt to mislead us, or is at least unhelpful in demonstrating the difference between the creativity of an aesthetic artist and that of other artists. His praises ostensibly aim at what is required

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<sup>38</sup> For a very useful discussion on this point, see (Kossler 2012, 201-3).

to facilitate aesthetic contemplation, which he construes as ‘imagination’. Yet, he is silent over the fact that imagination and creativity it permits are *common* to *all* artists irrespective of their artwork’s aim:

“Moreover, actual objects are almost always very deficient exemplars of the Idea presented in them: hence the genius needs *imagination* in order to see in things not what nature actually created, but rather what it was trying unsuccessfully to create, a failure due to that struggle between its forms that we discussed in the previous Book.”  
(WR, 210; my emphasis)

The above does not tell us why we should praise the aesthetic artist any more than another artist who uses her imagination, but has a different aim. This is because he directs his praises at something artists possess irrespective of their aim, namely, imagination or creativity. We know aesthetic artists require imagination to see things as they are ‘striving to become’ rather than as they appear *to us* now, which we discussed in the previous section. We know also that imagination is a core component of projecting the first-person experience of willing on a target of cognition. Yet, imagination is likewise required by any artist and person who creatively distorts things to produce something whose aim is *not* cognition of an Idea. Non-aesthetic artists also use imagination to *distort* the target. Thus, the products of imagination do not *necessarily* stem from ‘aesthetic’ interests, i.e., ‘disinterestedness’. Imagination need not involve a projection of willing on the target of cognition, that is, disinterestedness need not *drive* our imagination.

Schopenhauer argues that the ability to facilitate aesthetic contemplation is “acquired, it is the *technical* aspect of art” (WR, 219; my emphasis), but this requires explanation since, this technical aspect is characteristic of *all* artists irrespective of whether or not their aim is aesthetic or non-aesthetic. In other words, why are we obligated to esteem aesthetic artists more than non-aesthetic artists if the reasons for our esteem apply to both aesthetic and non-aesthetic artists? Although Schopenhauer does not do enough to elucidate the previous, I think there are ways to find an answer consistent with his propositions or at least passages that flirt with an answer.

We can begin by drawing a distinction between an aesthetic artist’s ability to facilitate aesthetic contemplation for her audience and her audience’s ability to contemplate aesthetically. We can find a clue about why an aesthetic artist merits more esteem than other artists in Schopenhauer’s arguments about the audience’s burden with respect to aesthetic appreciation. Schopenhauer places a burden on her audience for aesthetic contemplation by claiming that it is only possible following “a corresponding alteration in the subject of cognition” (WR, 284). The aesthetic artist who wants to facilitate cognition of the Ideas, then, has to take this burden *himself* because his aim is to facilitate aesthetic contemplation. He has to *affect* her audience’s subjective correlate such that they can rise up to the cognition of an Idea. In other words, he has to be apt at leading audiences to *suspend* the purposive or willing stance, without their losing interest in the artwork. Accordingly, he has to lead them to give up their personal interest, but also suspend their impersonal interest. This is because an impersonal interest permits the vicarious enjoyment of one’s personal interest. In short,

the aesthetic artist aims for ‘disinterestedness’, i.e., the subjective correlate of aesthetic contemplation, as much as (and sometimes more than) she aims to ‘copy’ the Ideas in her artwork. Conversely, non-aesthetic artists rely on something the audience has in abundance and by default: the willing stance and so their self-interest. Non-aesthetic artists only have to distort something in such a way that it reflects someone’s personal or impersonal interest, whereas aesthetic artists have to distort it in such a way that it leads them to suspend both.

Schopenhauer can use the above differences in burden and demand as reasons for praising or esteeming more highly aesthetic artists. Nevertheless, though the aesthetic artists have more to deliberate on in producing artworks, we should reject the claim that the burden of aesthetic contemplation resides wholly on the audience. If it is true, then it would entail that aesthetic artists are engaged in a self-defeating enterprise. Why would an artist bother creating artworks that facilitate cognition of an Idea if that cognition was *wholly* premised on the audience’s willingness or ability? It is equally self-defeating for an aesthetic artist to address herself to audiences seeking to perceive in something what they desire or perceive what indirectly relates to their desires. What we require is a middle ground between the efforts of an aesthetic artist and those of her audience. Schopenhauer’s supplementary essays echo this middle ground:

“Thus the *work of art* so greatly facilitates the apprehension of the Ideas in which aesthetic enjoyment consists; and this is due *not merely* to the fact that art presents things more clearly and characteristically by emphasising the essential and eliminating the inessential, but just as much to the fact that *the absolute silence of the will*, required for the purely objective apprehension of the true nature of things, is attained with the greatest certainty.” (*WRII*, 370; some emphasis is mine)

To render the audience ‘disinterested’ is constitutive of the aesthetic artist’s aim and should be reflected in her artwork. Likewise, given his correlation theory of cognition, this aim must be complemented by the audience having the capacity and willingness to suspend personal and impersonal interests.

In sum, the above suggests three central propositions. First, an aesthetic artist aims to *create* ‘things’ or ‘objects’ (i.e., artworks and-or artefacts) that more adequately represent the Ideas than do their ‘ordinary’ counterparts. Second, aesthetic artists can do so because they can sustain aesthetic contemplation of something longer than other people can. Third, aesthetic artists achieve the previous under the constraints of their chosen artistic medium and do so by virtue of their considerable training and mastery in this medium, which requires effort, intentional activity and thus ‘willing’. Additionally, creativity is constitutive of all artists irrespective of their aim. I will nuance these propositions slightly before moving on.

There is a difference between what is required to have some experience and what is required to facilitate that experience in others. Schopenhauer is aware of this distinction and argues that aesthetic artists require something *other than* cognition of an Idea to achieve their aims. They require a *willful* activity of *imagination* and *reflectiveness*. Yet, the former are common to *all* artists. An artist’s skills and requirements do not distinguish artists from one another. The *aim* of their artwork serves as the basis for the previous distinction. The

requirements and achievements of creativity differ from those of inspiration. Accordingly, a tripartite distinction emerges from the above considerations. Firstly, all artists are creative, but not all artists are inspired. Correspondingly, not all inspired artists are *aesthetically* inspired. There is a difference between creativity, inspiration and aesthetic contemplation.

Schopenhauer was privy to the above tripartite distinction, but he did not do enough to flesh out its significance to the distinction between art and aesthetics. For example, he describes ‘imagination’ as an artist’s ‘instrument’, which suggests that the artist can put it to use towards alternative ends:

“But if our perception were always tied to the real presence of things, its material would be entirely under the dominion of chance, which rarely produces things at the right time, seldom arranges them appropriately, and often presents them to us in very defective copies. For this reason *imagination* is needed, in order to complete, arrange, amplify, fix, retain, and repeat at pleasure all the significant pictures of life, according as the aims of a profoundly penetrating knowledge and of the significant work by which it is to be communicated may require. On this rests the high value of imagination as an indispensable instrument of genius.” (*WR II*, 378-9)

The aesthetic artwork aims to facilitate aesthetic contemplation, but this does not *necessarily entail* that an artwork is the *exact copy* or *imitation* of the artist’s aesthetic contemplation of something. She does not recreate her experiences without considering her audience’s viewpoint. In short, the artwork is *not* a copy of what the artist herself *perceives*; or, contrary to the proposition Schopenhauer defends, the artist would not require the *subjective* change necessary for aesthetic contemplation. Instead, the aesthetic artist would assume *all* people see, think and feel *exactly* what she sees, thinks and feels. His correlation theory of cognition and account of the individual differences in character cannot support the previous claim.

What the aesthetic artist requires from the target of her cognition such that it incites aesthetic contemplation in her is *not* the same as what her audience will require. She must account for their subjective correlate when she produces an artwork and not focus on her *own*. She must account for their *need* to suspend the willing stance so that they can perceive a ‘willing thing’, not an object or a motive. She must not project herself onto them. She has to *tailor* her artwork to them, many of whom will come from different lifestyles, concerns and interests. Hence, in every artwork aiming at aesthetic contemplation we should find the artist’s attempts to *seduce*<sup>39</sup>, *entice*, *invite*, *overwhelm* or *force* her audience away from the purposive stance that stifles their aesthetic contemplation. She does it through her awareness of her audiences’ common inclinations, or through her finger on the *zeitgeist*’s pulse, so to speak. Schopenhauer’s candidate for this ability of aesthetic artists, which becomes clearer

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<sup>39</sup> My use of the concept ‘seduction’ is broad: I mean to refer to the behaviour that leads us away from our interest, or from what is ordinary or proper, towards an end we may not (initially) agree with because of those interests and concerns. In this sense, the artist has the difficult task of convincing us we are, in a sense, ‘wrong’ in perceiving something how we ordinarily do.

past the misleading talk about perceiving universals in particulars, is ‘reflectiveness’. The artist *reproduces* her experiences in reflection and channels them via an artistic medium:

“It is this *reflectiveness* that enables the painter to reproduce faithfully on canvas the nature he has before his eyes, and the poet accurately to call up again by means of abstract concepts the perceptive present by expressing it, and thus bringing it to distinct consciousness; likewise to express in words everything that others merely feel.” (WR II, 382)

The aesthetic artist then uses her chosen medium to *affect* his audience and *reproduce*, or try to reproduce, her first-person experience *in them*, not to *copy* her first-person experience through her artistic medium. Schopenhauer should have been clearer about what role considerations of another’s perspective play in the aesthetic artist’s creative activity. The artist’s works are not diary entries. They are her struggle to reflect to others what she perceives conscious of the fact that other people differ from her. The combination we will find reflected in an aesthetic artist’s artwork is between the artist’s experience, the artistic medium through which she communicates it and her audience’s perspective on that experience; she has to consider all three. This means the reflectiveness of aesthetic artists is strikingly richer in cognitive content and value than Schopenhauer demonstrated.

A further conceptual problem arises about Schopenhauer’s use of reflectiveness, however. It fails to track and thereby distinguish aesthetic from non-aesthetic *aims*. Similar to imagination, reflectiveness is a facet of artists irrespective of their aim. For example, propaganda can demonstrate the use of both imagination and reflectiveness. Accordingly, imagination and reflectiveness are not aim-specific enough to show that disinterestedness *drives* the artist who employs them. We should thereby distinguish between aesthetic and non-aesthetic *uses* of reflectiveness *and* imagination. The aesthetic use is for reproducing cognition of the Ideas in *others* through artworks. Other artists can use them towards different ends, e.g., cognition of an object or motive. The artist requires a distinct use of imagination and reflection to provide her audience with an impression of the target of cognition without copying the ‘object’ or ‘impression’. It is unfortunate that Schopenhauer did not sufficiently dwell on these distinctions, but the foundations for them are present in his philosophy and correlation theory of cognition.

Furthermore, it is misleading to suggest an artist is in the business of projecting her own experience. Yet, it is also right to suggest that there is a constant tension in the aesthetic artist between her urge to project herself and her urge to maintain a *grasp* on her spectator’s sentiments and dispositions such that her work more effectively addresses *them* and *their viewpoint*. Likewise, we should distinguish artists who address their spectator’s needs to ‘gain their favor’ from the artists who do so to ‘facilitate aesthetic contemplation’. In other words, we can distinguish the ‘aesthetic experience’ from ‘popularity’. An aesthetic artist must use her audiences’ needs to lead them to suspend the urge to take the willing stance in relation to something. Thus, she must respect the necessary subjective *change* required for someone to aesthetically appreciate something; it is a change that may be easy for *her*, but not necessarily for others. She can use ‘beauty’ to *seduce entice, invite* etc. her audience into

aesthetic contemplation, or, she can use ‘sublimity’ to *shock, overwhelm, force* them etc. into it (more on the beautiful and the sublime in the next section).

We mentioned the artist’s relationship to aesthetic contemplation, but we should complement it with some remarks on the aesthetic appreciation of works as juxtaposed to other forms of appreciation. We can *appreciate* any target of cognition for different reasons and in different ways. We can also *utilise* it for different reasons and in different ways. Schopenhauer focuses on the ‘aesthetic’ appreciation of an artwork in *juxtaposition* to ‘other kinds’ of appreciation. Other kinds of appreciation do not require the world-view that underpins aesthetic contemplation. They do not perceive the target as the representation of ‘willing, striving, and so on’. He focuses exclusively on aesthetic appreciation, but he does not give us a reason why non-aesthetic appreciations cannot enhance an *overall* experience or enjoyment of the arts. Our overall experience in an art exhibition can have both aesthetic *and* non-aesthetic moments. Aesthetic moments should reflect their distinctness or their difference from non-aesthetic moments, in retrospect or reflection at least, but they should not distract from the overall experience. For example, there is a difference between having a ‘good time’ at an art exhibition and having an aesthetic experience while we are there, but the previous should not diminish the *overall value* of non-aesthetic moments for the *whole* experience. The approach to the arts and their appreciation he advances ignores the fact that the aesthetic experience may not be as special or unique as implied by the romantic language he uses to describe it. Aesthetic contemplation does not “obliterate”<sup>40</sup> or transcend all other experiences. We transition from aesthetic to non-aesthetic moments, sometimes effortlessly. An aesthetic moment is *in the trenches* with other moments, however. It can mix with them in such a way as to lead us to forget what it is that made it aesthetic, just as we can distinguish red from blue, while mixing them gives us purple. If we do not reflect on purple and its composition, then we do not notice the mixture of blue and red. In sum, if the aesthetic part of our whole experience is *its own kind*, then it should be distinguishable from another part even though the two sometimes mix in the impression we have of a whole experience.

Schopenhauer distinguishes aesthetic from non-aesthetic experiences by arguing that during our aesthetic contemplation we perceive the target as the representation of ‘willing, striving and so on’. An *overall* engagement with artworks can consist of aesthetic and non-aesthetic moments; it must do so if the artwork is to be preserved, curated and-or traded. The previous likewise motivates an artist to evaluate highly her audience’s viewpoint. The effort she puts into understanding her audience to incite aesthetic contemplation plays a crucial role in the *overall* value, enjoyment and preservation of artworks. However, we should distinguish the willing stance on an artwork that makes it a *valuable* object, from the aesthetic contemplation of it and its equivalent or corresponding value, namely, the *aesthetic* value of an artwork. Schopenhauer did not dwell on this distinction or adequately bring out. I will try to flesh it out below by staying as faithful as possible to his conceptual tools.

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<sup>40</sup> Soll (1998, 99) wrongly attributes this conception of the aesthetic experience to Schopenhauer.



Perceiving the artwork *as an object* renders us unable to appreciate it *aesthetically*. Even if we know object O has property X and X is ‘aesthetic’, by our perceiving it *as an object* with property X, we are no longer aesthetically contemplating on it. The same is the case if we argue that O has ‘aesthetic value’ Z. The *concept* of something’s ‘aesthetic value or property’ misleads us, because to have this concept in the first place, our approach to the target of cognition must move from the *aesthetic* to the *conceptual*. Aesthetic contemplation is incommensurate with ordinary, non-aesthetic reflection or cognition. We are fully under the PSR and the objective picture when we treat things as objects or concepts. Accordingly, there is a difference between the *concept* of ‘aesthetic value’ or ‘aesthetic property’ and the ‘aesthetic value’ or *viewpoint* on something. Let us flesh this out.

The confusion between aesthetic appreciation of an artwork and *reflection* over its ‘value’ is very common with philosophers who conflate an object’s value *as such* with its ‘aesthetic’ value. Philosophers are guilty of reflecting on aesthetics by approaching artworks or treating their subject matter *as an object* of thought, or a *concept* that requires clarification, definition and analysis. This is a mistake Schopenhauer was prone to making following his eagerness to show the ‘universality’ and ‘objectivity’ obtained by aesthetic contemplation especially as he compares them to that obtained by concepts. In doing so, he forgets the central proposition that aesthetic contemplation revises our world-view entirely. In aesthetic contemplation, we do not perceive objects with properties, but the representations of willing, striving and so on. Approaching the arts through concepts leads us to ‘reflect on’ rather than ‘contemplate on’ something. It leads us to treating artworks as *objects* with a set of properties and construing their aesthetic value as a property. Reflectiveness is *instrumental* to aesthetic artists, but it does not play the same role in aesthetic contemplation as it does in other forms of reflection. Reflectiveness is what makes an artist’s activity ‘artistic’, but not ‘aesthetic’. Accordingly, aesthetic value is not something objects possesses among other possessions, it represents an entirely different way we approach a target of cognition.

Construing the artwork as an object with a set of properties means we fail to track the difference between *having* an aesthetic experience and *talking* about it, or conceptually analysing it. Philosophers talk about and analyse their aesthetic experiences, but seemingly struggle to demonstrate what is aesthetic about that experience. They place so much weight on analysis that they risk losing the target of that analysis. In the case under discussion, we lose the target by treating it *as an object* with a set of properties. We do not recognise that the aesthetic experience itself is distinct from its *concept*. Our reflection over an aesthetic experience risks reintroducing the meaningless objective picture Schopenhauer to it.

Schopenhauer laid the foundations for avoiding the vacuity that gnaws at an analysis of aesthetics. He did so by claiming that what makes a world of objects *meaningful* is the will and that willing is different from (purely) perceiving or (purely) conceiving. The aesthetic value of the arts is not comprehensible if we approach them through what applies to objects and their properties. What makes an inquiry and analysis of aesthetics meaningful, for him, is treating its subject matter as the representation of ‘willing, striving and so on’. Analysing ‘aesthetic properties’ of something entails construing the target *as an object*, which undermines what is aesthetic about it at its root. We are no longer aesthetically

contemplating on it and so we lose its 'Idea'; this is similar to losing sand through a sieve leaving us with useless rocks and pebbles.

A distinction and corresponding example between a wine maker and trader can prove useful to elucidating the insight I am trying to highlight. The maker and trader can be one person or they can be a team of people. Let us assume they are one person. The wine maker (and trader) *labels* her wine as having some aesthetic value 'X'. She argues that she determined X by the wine's ability to incite aesthetic contemplation in other people by *juxtaposition* to other wines. I assume that for multiple wines to have varying values, then we are obliged to assume she compares between them in relation to a rule or standard. For example, wine W<sup>1</sup> has Y set of properties, while W<sup>2</sup> either lacks Y or has Y\* instead. W<sup>1</sup> has aesthetic value X and X is the set of properties Y; X is missing in W<sup>2</sup> (because, let us say, W<sup>2</sup> has properties Y\* = Y + A, or properties Y\* = Y - B, which means that W<sup>2</sup> does not meet X). As a *trader*, she is advised to label and analyse her wines in this way for brevity and haste in mobility, i.e., for 'practical' purposes pertaining to trade. How can she distinguish their value in this way, however? How can she claim that *this* wine is more apt for inciting aesthetic contemplation than *that* one? What is implied by the ascription of 'aesthetic value' X to W<sup>1</sup>, or by arguing W<sup>1</sup> has property X, is either that she has *tasted* it and is using her memory; or she has taken a survey of others' tastes and she is using the survey as her yardstick for her subsequent evaluation and the labelling process. This has led her to conclude that W<sup>1</sup> is better for facilitating aesthetic contemplation than W<sup>2</sup>. She has compared them and given W<sup>1</sup> a label *referring to* its aptness for facilitating aesthetic contemplation. This labeling process leads to a rank order of wines, each with its own properties determined comparatively. Accordingly, the value of each wine is determined in relation to their (comparative) *aptness* for facilitating aesthetic contemplation. Notice, however, that she could not possibly ascribe *equal* value to each wine; surely, not all of them are or will be as successful comparatively and certainly not for all people at all times. Different people will taste and evaluate her work from different perspectives and interests. Given that she aims to facilitate aesthetic contemplation for others, she is impelled to put aside *her own* evaluation and place emphasis on her audiences' evaluations.

The above unwittingly introduces her audiences' *individualities* and with it their self-interest. Her method wrongly assumes that audiences are inherently 'disinterested' in their evaluations and feedback. Even if each wine has succeeded in bringing about the aesthetic experience in her or her audience at one point as represented by the survey (which, we also assume was rightly conducted and its conclusions rest on adequate premises), she differs from her audience and they differ from each other. Another audience may evaluate her wine in a 'general' rather than 'aesthetic' manner and so undermine the aim to *facilitate* aesthetic contemplation. In short, the aesthetic experience is fragile.

The emphasis on her audience's feedback over the success or failure of the aesthetic experience permits an evaluation premised on personal or impersonal interest, rather than disinterestedness. The previous, in turn, permits the entry of something *corrosive* to the crux of the aesthetic experience: cognition of an Idea. The point of aesthetics is to suspend the willing stance. Consequently, there is an antinomy between the aesthetic and the purposive

activities of artists, i.e., between the aesthetic artist's aim to incite aesthetic contemplation and the willful activity (reflectiveness and imagination) she has to engage in to realise her aim. The two confront one another at the intersection between artistic inspiration, artistic creativity and what we can call 'the market of the arts', for brevity. An artist finds herself within the social sphere when she enters the market of the arts. She shares her works with others and risks their aesthetic integrity.

In trading an artwork our wine maker is not approaching it nor appreciating it aesthetically. She is selling a *valuable* object to someone interested in purchasing 'valuable objects'. We see 'aesthetic' value as the token of its general value when we trade it. We construe it as an object and its value as one of its properties. We confuse the 'general' value for the 'aesthetic' value of something and thus fail to track the difference between a *general* and an *aesthetic* evaluation of something. We can call the 'general value (or evaluation)' of something its *monetary value* (or evaluation) for clarity, brevity and to reflect the market of the arts.

In other words, aesthetic contemplation has its own *kind* of value and method of evaluation, which treats targets of cognition as Ideas. Whereas, monetary value treats targets as objects. If we allow 'aesthetic value' to be subsumed under a 'general value', which requires comparing things and seeing something *as an object*, then we stray from aesthetic contemplation and therefrom the aesthetic experience. We treat 'aesthetic value' hitherto as a token of the 'general value' of something. The proposition that aesthetic value has something in common with or can be subsumed under 'general value' is not *wrong* or *false*. My aim is not to debunk the monetary value of artworks, or show that it is impossible to analyse aesthetic value in monetary terms. Rather, I aim to show that there is an antinomy between two methods of evaluating something, which stems from the aesthetic artists aim to incite aesthetic contemplation in others and what she actually does to realise that aim. If we champion a general evaluation of artworks, then we fail to track what is *specific* about aesthetics and its own method of evaluating things; we fail to notice that generalisations of this nature *corrode* aesthetics and aesthetic value.

In sum, the aesthetic artist is constrained by her aim to facilitate cognition of the Ideas for others through her artwork and the actions this aim sanctions. In treating artworks as a *commodity*, as she must in order to achieve her aim of communicating her Idea to others, she risks others construing it *as an object*, which aptly demonstrates this antimony. There is an unyielding difficulty in demonstrating this insight, but I will try to summarise it as best I can through the following propositions:

1. The target of aesthetic contemplation is an Idea, not an object (or motive etc.).
2. Ideas are (ideal) representations of willing, striving etc., not objects or concepts.
3. An aesthetic artist aims to show her audience the target's Idea using her artistic medium.
4. The aesthetic value of something is not determined comparatively because we can only compare what we perceive through the PSR (i.e., what is an object in the fullest sense, including motives).

5. It is misleading to say that something has *more* aesthetic value *than* something else. Schopenhauer is non-committal over the comparative ‘artistic’ value of something, but *has* to argue there is no such thing as the comparative ‘aesthetic’ value of something.
6. *Everything* has aesthetic value because everything is willing, striving and so on. In other words, everything we can aesthetically contemplate on is *an Idea*.
7. Only aesthetically contemplating on something reveals its aesthetic value, or tracks what is aesthetic about our evaluation.

It is important to note that artworks are what artists and-or their audiences *will it to be* when they engage with it, which is not and certainly need not be ‘aesthetic’ at all times. Let me try to elaborate before we move on.

There is an antinomy between aesthetic and practical value, for Schopenhauer, which can have ruinous consequences for aesthetic contemplation and aesthetic appreciation. The *melancholy tone* of his expression when he offers implicit examples of this antinomy is not accidental, but goes to the core of his aesthetics. The fragility of the cognition underpinning aesthetic contemplation when juxtaposed to other kinds of cognition is a central feature of his aesthetics:

“To be useless and unprofitable is one of the characteristics of the works of genius; it is their patent of nobility. All other human works exist only for the maintenance or relief of our existence; only those here discussed do not; they *alone exist for their own sake, and are to be regarded in this sense* as the flower or the net profit of existence. Our heart is therefore gladdened at the enjoyment of them, for we rise out of the heavy earthly atmosphere of need and want. Moreover, analogous to this, *we rarely see the beautiful united with the useful*. Tall and fine trees bear no fruit; fruit trees are small, ugly, and stunted. The double garden rose is not fruitful, but the small, wild, almost scentless rose is. The most beautiful buildings are not the useful ones; a temple is not a dwelling-house. A person of high, rare mental gifts, compelled to attend to a merely useful piece of business for which the most ordinary person would be fitted, is like a valuable vase decorated with the most beautiful painting, which is used as a kitchen-pot; and *to compare useful men with men of genius is like comparing bricks with diamonds.*” (WRII, 388; my emphasis)

As we will notice in our subsequent analysis of Schopenhauer’s account of beauty and the sublime, his *psychological* observations of our participation in aesthetics are likewise full of insight. The purposive stance with respect to an artwork *changes* our appreciation of it. Someone who by a stroke of bad luck is bound to only have an aesthetic world-view, which is incommensurate with common and social experience, would ask the wine trader, “did you ask *this* wine if it wanted to be sold?” When we approach something aesthetically we do so *as if it wills in its own right*; it has an independent value and purpose. In aesthetically contemplating on it, we perceive and enable its will, but if we are bound to only approaching the world in this way, then we veer towards insanity or poor psychological health, which Schopenhauer was aware of and demonstrated in his discussion of genius:

“Finally, they are inclined to monologues and in general can exhibit many weaknesses that actually verge on madness. It has been frequently noted that genius and madness are two sides of the same coin and blend into each other, and poetic enthusiasm has even been called a type of madness: Horace calls it ‘amiable madness’ (*Odes*, III, 4), and Wieland ‘sweet madness’ at the beginning of *Oberon*. Even Aristotle, according to a passage in Seneca (*On Tranquility of the Mind*, 15, 16) said: ‘There is no great genius without an admixture of madness.’ ... Indeed, I do not want to fail to mention that I have known people of decisive although certainly not outstanding intellectual superiority who at the same time betrayed a faint tinge of insanity.” (WR, 213-214)

A genius *perceives as willing* what we ordinarily perceive as *an object fit for some purpose* or as having *a function*. They perceive a beautiful flower *dancing* in the wind where we see something we can pull from the ground to give to our beloved to compensate for having forgotten her birthday.

I hope the above assessment has been useful to demonstrate a key difference between aesthetic evaluation and a general evaluation; also, how easy it is to confound the two given our best intentions to the contrary. I argued the aesthetic artist aims to facilitate aesthetic contemplation using her artwork. She aims to show us that what we ordinarily perceive as an object fit for purpose we can likewise see as the representation of a willing, striving and so on. Ultimately, she aims to show the target’s individual purpose, which is *not* to serve or be subordinate to our purpose or someone else’s. In this view, an artwork is not *just* an object that serves the purpose of facilitating aesthetic contemplation, but, should also be treated as a window into an Idea, which, for Schopenhauer, is akin to a,

“...living and developing organism endowed with generative powers, an organism that can produce things that were not already packaged up inside it” (WR, 261)

Treating an artwork as an object whose purpose is to facilitate aesthetic contemplation for others is a temptation that can be corrosive to aesthetic contemplation. Next, I will assess his views on beauty, the sublime and the so-called felt consciousness.

## **1.7 The Beautiful, the Sublime and the ‘Felt Consciousness’**

We can approach Schopenhauer’s propositions on the role that beauty and the sublime play in aesthetics using the following questions: which objects of our cognition are such that they incite us to project willing on them? Why do some objects *stand out* differently than others? Furthermore, why do they seem more apt than others for cognition of an Idea? Why do they

more readily *facilitate* or *compel*<sup>41</sup> aesthetic contemplation? I am to demonstrate the basis on which some targets of cognition *seduce* or *entice* us, while others *tear* or *overwhelm* us to give up our willing stance and take a disinterested stance on them.

Beauty and the sublime (or sublimity) are properties of objects compelling aesthetic contemplation. According to Schopenhauer's correlation theory of cognition, these properties would amount to nothing without the subjective change in us that brings them to the foreground of our cognition. Without this change, the particular object would fail to incite aesthetic contemplation and so it would not *appear as* beautiful or sublime. In this chapter, I will focus on assessing two conflicting propositions inherent to Schopenhauer views on beauty and sublimity. The propositions I have in mind are the following:

- A) Aesthetic contemplation is our devoting our focus entirely to the target of cognition and "in such moments our needs are as alien to us as they are to the objects" (WR, 223).
- B) Aesthetic contemplation is "highly gratifying [*erfreulich*]" (WR, 224) and produces an aesthetic pleasure, which he also describes as 'delight' [*Freude*], 'enjoyment' [*Ergötzen*] or 'pleasure' [*Wohlgefalle*].

The above reveals a conceptual knot, which we can summarise via the following question: how can something bearing no identifiable relationship to our *needs* (or aims) *please* us (delight us etc.)? Aesthetic pleasure is a bodily sensation, but, recall, that the body is the *identical* object of the *will*. If something pleases us (or delights us etc.), and pleasure is a bodily phenomenon, then the will *somehow relates* to 'aesthetic' pleasure (or delight). If the will *relates* to aesthetic pleasure, however, then so do our needs. If our needs relate to aesthetic pleasure, then, we have reintroduced the willing or purposive stance and thus lost the disinterestedness of aesthetic contemplation. There is a conceptual knot in his account of aesthetic pleasure, which risks undermining his account of aesthetic contemplation.

My focus here will be on the psychological coherence of Schopenhauer's views on aesthetic pleasure. I will assess this coherence within the limits of his correlation theory of cognition. I will argue that what explains our aesthetic pleasure is not disinterestedness or the Ideas, but something else. My reason is that both presuppose absence of self-consciousness. Without self-consciousness, we cannot be conscious of our *feelings* and thus, in aesthetic contemplation, our focus is completely on the target. Our focus is entirely on something *seen as* outside of us with which we identify and so perceive as a representation of willing, striving and so on. We attribute the feelings we experience during our aesthetic contemplation to the target of cognition, rather than to ourselves. A psychologically tenable explanation of aesthetic pleasure that works within the limits of his philosophy should begin with this inherent juxtaposition between the willing stance and the disinterestedness that

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<sup>41</sup> I struggled to find an appropriate word to use for how the beautiful object affects us. I settled for words that Schopenhauer himself used in describing the effect of a beautiful object: "But one thing is more beautiful than another when it *facilitates* that purely objective contemplation, meeting it halfway and indeed *compelling* it to take place, in which case we call the thing very beautiful." (WR, 235; my emphasis).

characterises aesthetic contemplation. This is because pleasure in something requires our assuming the willing stance, i.e., our having an aim or goal aside from identifying with the target of our cognition by projecting willing on it (more on this below). Therefore, ‘pleasure’ relates the target to our will. The same is true for ‘aesthetic’ pleasure.

I will argue that aesthetic pleasure represents the movement *from* the willing stance *into* the disinterestedness of aesthetic contemplation; it represents what happens as we make ourselves disinterested. This movement *explains* the unusual *feeling* he calls ‘aesthetic pleasure’. Aesthetic contemplation *pleases* us by virtue of its contrast to or against the backdrop of the willing (or purposive) stance. The pleasure felt upon our entry into aesthetic contemplation is easier to notice retrospectively or in *reflection* than it is during aesthetic contemplation itself. Aesthetic contemplation leads us to focus *wholly* on the target, which happens at the expense of the self-consciousness we require to recognise its relationship to our will and, in turn, our experience of pleasure and pain. We notice aesthetic pleasure when we *reflect* on our aesthetic contemplation of something more readily than we do while we are aesthetically contemplating. However, we should *not* confuse our reflecting on aesthetic contemplation with our aesthetically contemplating on something. Reflection can mislead us as to what exactly *pleases us* about entering into aesthetic contemplation since it permits *confounding* the purposive stance with disinterestedness. There is reflection (or reason) in aesthetic contemplation, but what drives it is different from what often and ordinarily drives our reflection, i.e., the willing stance. We may recognise pleasure more easily in retrospect or in reflection, because the willing stance we assume in reflection *is* what characterises self-consciousness, which relates the target of cognition to our will and makes possible our feelings of pleasure and pain. Moreover, what *explains* aesthetic pleasure is not synonymous with what incites it (more on this below).

We can begin to make sense of aesthetic pleasure by distinguishing what *facilitates* our aesthetic contemplation from aesthetic contemplation *itself*. The beautiful, the sublime and the aesthetic pleasure that follow their recognition *precede* aesthetic contemplation *itself*, which is not apparent when we *reflect* on aesthetic contemplation. When we reflect on aesthetic contemplation of something, we perceive no difference between our cognition of an Idea and its target *causing* pleasure. When *reflecting* over our experiences, we can miss the subtle change in the *subjective correlate* of that reflection, which comes hand-in-glove with it, because we treat the whole experience as an object and so adopt the willing stance in relation to it. In the current instance, we treat our ‘aesthetic contemplation’ as the *object* that *caused* our pleasure, which is wrong. The difference between *reflecting on* aesthetic contemplation and aesthetically contemplating on something is fundamental. In aesthetic contemplation, we have suspended the relationship to *our will* or have projected willing onto the target, so we cannot experience pleasure during it because we are not self-conscious. What, then, *pleases* us about aesthetic contemplation and the aesthetic experience? How can focusing entirely on something be pleasing without, minimally, a) our being self-conscious and b) its relating to our needs? This is the impasse that requires explanation.

We can summarise the above impasse using the following questions: how can we experience ‘pleasure’ after we suspend self-consciousness, i.e., when we do not identify

with our urges and needs, which is a precondition of feelings of pleasure and pain. How and why does focusing wholly on the target of cognition—which we perceive as distinct from us and outside of us—*please us*?

To be sure, I do not mean to suggest that the impasse undermines the proposition that ‘aesthetic contemplation *pleases us*’, but that we need to explain how and why it should do so. I will argue that aesthetic contemplation itself is *not* (and cannot possibly be) *pleasing* of its own accord. The question is, *why* and *how* it can be pleasing given that we do *not* focus on or identify with ourselves, but suspend the precondition for this focus and the pleasure it makes possible, i.e., the willing stance. I will defend the proposition that we find aesthetic contemplation pleasing against the backdrop or by virtue of its *contrast* to the willing stance. To show this, I will juxtapose ordinary pleasure to its beautiful and sublime counterparts. Accordingly, I hope to remain consistent with Schopenhauer’s claim that “opposites shed light on each other” (WR, 232), in this case, opposite forms of pleasure will hopefully shed light on each other.

Something about some objects of cognition *compel* us to perceive them differently in a fundamental sense, i.e., not *as objects*. Schopenhauer comprehends cognition of an object as arising from our approaching something as “suitable for the service of the will, as well as for science” (WR, 219), which is what I called the willing or purposive stance. This ‘something’ that compels us to aesthetic contemplation leads us to dub objects as beautiful or sublime, which, thus, implies that beauty and sublimity are, in fact, *properties* of objects. I will aim to convince the reader that what *explains* pleasure in aesthetic contemplation is not aesthetic contemplation itself, but its relationship to the purposive or willing stance. This proposition is contentious, but I believe we have to ascribe to it to render aesthetic pleasure intelligible and coherent with the rest of his philosophy. I will begin with a consideration into pleasure in the beautiful, before moving on to the sublime.

Some targets of cognition are *fitter* for aesthetic contemplation than others and we dub them beautiful or sublime to the degree that they accord with this fitness in their distinct ways; or, as Schopenhauer claims, they meet us “*halfway*” (WR, 225) to it. The beautiful and sublime, then, are cognitions of something that *incite* us to *forgo* the willing (or purposive) stance in their distinct ways. There is, however, a further strain in our ability to distinguish beauty from sublimity because of his seeing only a distinction in degree between them, as Vandenabeele aptly recognises:

“How can Schopenhauer distinguish qualitatively between the beautiful and the sublime? This question has become more urgent due to the just signalled [sic] problems concerning the freedom of the intellect and the aesthetic *self*.”  
(Vandenabeele 2003, 93)

I will contribute to the above consideration by suggesting that we should start by clarifying and making coherent his views on ‘aesthetic pleasure’. I will begin by scrutinising the object we *see as* beautiful and its subjective correlate in juxtaposition to that we *see as* desirable. I distinguish the ‘desirable’ from the ‘beautiful’ in Schopenhauer’s sense whilst aiming to show why the beautiful object is not *the same as* its Idea. I will argue that we find and call



beautiful that which *leads us to* cognise *its* Idea, not the Idea *itself*. Cognition of its Idea helps us distinguish *beauty* from *desirability* and their corresponding pleasures.

Cognition of the beautiful, as any cognition of something given Schopenhauer's theory, has both a subjective and an objective correlate as implied by the following passage:

“By virtue of the demonstrated intellectual nature of perception, the sight of beautiful objects, a beautiful view for example, is also a *phenomenon of the brain*. Therefore its purity and perfection depend not merely on the *object*, but also on the quality and constitution of the brain, that is on its form and size, the fineness of its texture, and the stimulation of its activity through the energy of the pulse of the brain-arteries.” (WR II, 24)

Let us begin with the objective correlate before proceeding to the subjective correlate of the beautiful. Schopenhauer characterises the objective correlate of beauty as those objects that,

“...turn readily into representatives of their Ideas by virtue of their intricate and at the same time clear and determinate form, which constitutes beauty in the objective sense.” (WR, 225)

There are two conflicting claims about beauty, however. Firstly, the objective correlate of beauty is the object that by virtue of its properties<sup>42</sup> is more apt for facilitating cognition of *its* Idea than *other* objects.<sup>43</sup> The ‘beautiful’ object is more effective (than its counterparts) at inciting aesthetic contemplation as opposed to stimulating our desire. Secondly, beauty itself is the cognition of something's Idea, therefore, *every thing* on which we aesthetically contemplate is beautiful:

“Since on the one hand, every existing thing can be considered purely objectively and apart from all relation, and since on the other hand, the will appears in every thing on some level of its objecthood, making the thing an expression of an Idea; so it follows that everything is *beautiful*.” (WR, 234)

Notice the two mutually exclusive propositions about the objective and subjective correlates of beauty, or the relation between aesthetic contemplation and the perception of something beautiful:

1. Everything is beautiful because what we find beautiful is the target of our aesthetic contemplation, i.e., the target's Idea.
2. Some things are more beautiful than others because they adhere to the so-called objective ‘properties’ of beauty.

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<sup>42</sup> Schopenhauer contentiously lists these properties as, “the very clear, pure and determinate relation between its parts (a relation that is saturated with significance); it reveals its Idea perfectly because it completely unites all the possible expressions of its species” (WR, 235).

<sup>43</sup> I call it an object because we are discussing the limits of ordinary cognition *before* we enter into aesthetic contemplation of something wherein the object becomes an Idea.

The above claims may not be false even if they seem incoherent when presented in this way. Nevertheless, we require considerable effort to understand how *every object* can be beautiful, while at the same time we find *some* objects are *more* beautiful than others.

We can make the above propositions intelligible and coherent using his theory of the individual differences in willing. For Schopenhauer, some of us are more apt at using our reason and imagination towards perceiving an Idea, or are more prone to disinterestedness than others. Some enter into aesthetic contemplation *more easily* than others, who will likely require the object to facilitate and promote it, as Schopenhauer suggests in the following passage:

“An artist’s inner mental strength can achieve this much entirely on its own: but the purely objective frame of mind can be facilitated and promoted from the outside by the right sort of objects, by the richness of beautiful nature that invites intuition of them, and indeed does so insistently.” (WR, 221)

I will focus on something more pressing in Schopenhauer’s aesthetics than these concerns, but I refer to them here only to point to the considerable room for debate that is available to us on the topic of aesthetic properties of objects. I construe ‘aesthetic pleasure’ as a more pressing issue for his philosophy, however. This is because it complicates his conception of the will and has further implications for his ethical views.

We remember that cognising the Idea is possible if we perceive the target as willing, striving etc. By extension, a beautiful object, whether it is natural or an artwork, and because it is more apt to bring about aesthetic contemplation is *closer to what it strives or wills to be* than other objects of its species or kind.<sup>44</sup> This exhausts the objective correlate of beauty. The subjective correlate, however, is more difficult to elucidate and it is where we find the impasse.

The subjective correlate of beauty is our finding it *hard to will* something in the object or through it (as required for motivation) or we find it *hard to perceive* it as an object in the first place (as required for scientific inquiry). Cognition of something beautiful correlates to a *readiness* or *aptness* to forgo the willing and purposive stance on it. Schopenhauer argues that the previous is a capacity we all share:

“Yet this capacity must reside in all people to a different and lesser degree; otherwise, they would be no more able to enjoy works of art than to produce them, and would be absolutely insensitive to beauty and sublimity – in fact these words would be meaningless for them. We must therefore assume that this faculty is present in everyone (unless perhaps there are some who are entirely incapable of aesthetic

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<sup>44</sup> When we speak of the artwork then it is its subject matter (what the artwork is about or refers to) that is closer to what it strives to be in and of itself.

pleasure), and that everyone can have cognition of the Ideas of things in the particular things and in so doing momentarily put aside their own personality.” (WR, 218)

This capacity makes possible our ‘aesthetic pleasure’. The beautiful thing takes our attention away from our *own* purpose but, according to Schopenhauer, it *also* takes it away from the purposive stance that makes targets of cognition appear *as an object* ‘fit to be utilised’ by an independent, external interest in the first place. It can start with taking away our *own* interest before it takes away the willing stance itself, but we cannot will something without assuming the willing stance that makes the target of cognition appear as an *object fit* to be utilised in the first place. Aesthetic contemplation of something forgoes the willing stance and renders our cognition ‘pure’, i.e., without any interest in the target as from another perspective than its own. Schopenhauer puts it in the following way:

“...the *purely* objective frame of mind can be facilitated and promoted from the outside by the right sort of objects, by the richness of beautiful nature that invites intuition of them, and indeed does so insistently. Whenever nature suddenly rises to meet our gaze, it almost always succeeds, if only for a few moments, in snatching us away from subjectivity, from our slavery to the will, and transporting us into the state of pure cognition.” (WR, 221; my emphasis)

I emphasise ‘purely’ objective, because aesthetic contemplation, in Schopenhauer’s sense, forgoes the mode of cognition underpinning motivation *and* scientific inquiry; it forgoes,

“...the mode of cognition bound up with the principle of sufficient reason, which is the only mode suitable for the service of the will, *as well as for science*.” (WR, 219; my emphasis)

Beauty brings about a kind of pleasure in us we can call ‘aesthetic pleasure’ by ‘snatching us away from’ the purposive stance (not *just* our *own* self). What we find beautiful is the object’s aptness for ‘snatching us away from’ the purposive stance.

Nevertheless, ‘snatching us away’ can be misleading when we try to make sense of the “obliging character [*dieses Entgegenkommen*]” (WR, 225) of beauty and Schopenhauer’s keen psychological observations on it. It would be clearer if we described the phenomenon as ‘seducing’<sup>45</sup> or as ‘enticing’ us away, which complements what he construed as the “act of self-deception” (WR, 222) that is inherent to aesthetic contemplation incited by beauty:

“Finally, it is also the blessing of a will-less intuition that, through an act of self-deception, it casts such a wonderful spell over things in the past or far away, presenting them to us in a so much rosier light.” (WR, 222)

This self-deception is distinct from the “figments of the imagination” whose subjective correlate is the “day-dreamer” (WR, 210). Daydreams are *not* products of aesthetic

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<sup>45</sup> Here we should not read seduction in the sexual sense, but in the broader sense of inviting us away from our own interests and concerns into some other interest or concern.

contemplation, since they stem from the purposive stance. Equally, the pleasure we get from daydreams is distinct from the pleasure in beauty, though both require imagination and even a degree of self-deception, albeit based on differing subjective correlates.

The pleasures of a daydream result from the imagined object's relation to some independent purpose or interest, usually our personal interest. While daydreaming, we imagine *only* what accords with an interest independent from that of the object of cognition. We focus on *some* of its features or properties, ignoring others that could give us an entirely different perception of it. Our perceiving and conceiving it as *an object* with properties is representative of the use that we make of our imagination and reflection in daydreams. We usually shed light on features that *please us* (or those features relating to our will) while ignoring those that displease us (or those that do not relate to our will); we focus on those features that are useful to us or someone else over those that are not. The pleasure in beauty does not discriminate *in the same way*, i.e., by highlighting features relevant *to us* at the expense of *other* features that are not. The beautiful object *pleases us* independently from our effort *to make it* pleasing. We savor it *whole* without addition or subtraction, so to speak. Its radiance and presence overwhelms us without *stimulating* us. We do not feel the *urge* to change it to make it bearable or useful to us. A figment of imagination does *not* seduce or entice us into cognition of an Idea, nor does it lead us to *savor* the target of cognition wholly. Daydreaming urges us to shape and make it fit into something stimulating or even pleasing to us.<sup>46</sup>

The feeling we experience in the presence of something beautiful is as of something obliging to us *independent* from our effort to render it so. Aesthetic pleasure in beauty is inherently *receptive*, according to Schopenhauer, even if, as we will see, it is *inseparable* from a frustrated or thwarted personal effort. The personal effort is unrelated to the aesthetic experience itself in terms of its content, however, and it can be of any kind or extent and have anything whatsoever as its object or motive. This peculiar link to our thwarted effort explains *why* beauty is pleasing to us. Let me elaborate.

Before moving on, I will distinguish the self-deception of aesthetic contemplation from the self-deception of a figment of imagination. The latter is *driven* by our *personal needs*. The former *work against* the backdrop of our needs, specifically the thwarting of our will. This is, I think, the best way to construe Schopenhauer's account of aesthetic pleasure in relation to his philosophy of the will.

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<sup>46</sup> We should note that if we *strove* to cognise the target's Idea for bringing about pleasure in beauty; or if we *purposefully strove* to make it beautiful such that we can bring enjoy the unique pleasure in beauty, then we would grasp only a figment of our imagination. What drives us here is the desire for pleasure through the target, not the urge to perceive *its perfection*, which is what makes something show its beauty to us and therefrom incite aesthetic pleasure as we contemplate it aesthetically. We do not *make* something beautiful, for Schopenhauer. We bring out its beauty by contemplating on it. An aesthetic artist can only recreate this beauty by first taking into account the need for her audience to aesthetically contemplate on it, i.e., to have the same urge to perceive *its* perfection as the artist does. Beauty *invites* us into cognition of an object's perfection.

The figments of imagination *distort* the target to *reflect* our personal interest in it. For example, the sexually interested person will *sexualise* the object by focusing on and being activated or stimulated by the particular features he finds sexually appealing (or the features suggestive of enabling sexual behaviour) at the expense of other features. This is likewise true of those driven by other interests and agendas, e.g., a political agenda will lead someone to *politicise* the object. The distortion of objects that please us because they *fit with* what we *seek* or *need* have our personal interest or an interest independent from the target's as their subjective correlate. Whereas aesthetic contemplation incited by beauty is by comparison receptive, effortless or passive in respect to the target as it is without addition or subtraction; in the absence of any *effort* on our part to render it 'something' or to render it 'beautiful'—which for Schopenhauer is a contradiction in terms. The Idea reflects the target *itself* (or this is what motivates aesthetic contemplation on something), it does not reflect our (or someone else's) *needs*. In aesthetic contemplation, we identify with the target instead of striving to find something in it that accords with *some interest* independent from it, even if our interest was so-called 'aesthetic'. A beautiful object makes this identification easier by appearing both obliging *and* useless.

Our personal needs do not *drive* aesthetic contemplation, but rather *contrast* it. Both aesthetic contemplation and daydreaming provide an escape from the *inherent* frustrations with our personal *needs* and *purpose* in different ways. The self-deception of daydreaming distorts a target of cognition *for our sake*, thus giving us an outlet for our frustrations that accord with our needs. This is a kind of escape from reality driven by a personal need which is then reflected in what we imagine; in this case, we do not escape the pressure exerted by our needs, but use our imagination to change the state of affairs in the world that do not fit with those needs. We exchange the target of our needs from something real, which requires *effort* to obtain, with something imagined that requires comparatively less effort, but that is also less effective in fulfilling those needs. Accordingly, the self-deception of daydreaming consists of our escaping from our current state of affairs for the sake of a more pleasant and satisfying views on things, which accord with our needs. In this instance, 'what we will' drives our imagination, which is not what happens in aesthetic contemplation.

The self-deception of aesthetic contemplation is *not* an escape from our state of affairs. It is a break with our narrow view of things underpinned by our needs, which are limited to *objectifying* a target into something permitting use for our needs, and which gives us one version or perspective on that state of affairs. Both achieve the *same* result of distracting us amid our frustrations, but their means of doing so differ. Equally, both produce pleasure amid our frustrations, but their means of doing so differ. In daydreaming, we use imagination towards satisfaction for a *specific* need. In aesthetic contemplation, on the other hand, we use imagination towards a different end than satisfaction of a need. Nevertheless, aesthetic contemplation offers the same result, i.e., pleasure amid our frustrations. Can the 'distraction' from our frustrations *explain* how beauty can be pleasing to us? Schopenhauer's negative conception of pleasure accords with this explanation, but let us further elaborate on the differences between these two distractions before moving on. I will call one of these the 'ordinary' pleasure in something and the other 'aesthetic' pleasure.

Ordinary pleasure for Schopenhauer presupposes (or is preceded by) a lack, i.e., suffering (more on this below). The basis of this pleasure is the promise that acting in one way or another will *remove* a suffering, which drives us to pursue a target of will (or perceive a motive for action):

“All willing springs from need, and thus from lack, and thus from suffering. Fulfillment brings this to an end; but for every wish that is fulfilled, at least ten are left denied: moreover, desire [*Begehren*] lasts a long time and demands go on forever; fulfillment is brief and sparsely meted out.” (WR, 219)

In ordinary pleasure, a pleasurable sensation arises from *willful* action following perception of a motive; the latter, we recall, is the more *affective* counterpart of an object. Aesthetic contemplation, however, starts when we suspend the purposive stance that makes possible willful action. The pleasure we feel in aesthetic contemplation is not explicable by *effort* of *this* sort. Nevertheless, Schopenhauer’s account of pleasure does not permit us to experience (or at least demonstrate how we can have) pleasure if we *do not will something*. We cannot feel pleasure if this ‘lack’, which is a condition of pleasure, is *not* ‘a lack of something’. It cannot possibly be a lack of something, because we do not will anything in the target during aesthetic contemplation, however. How, then, can we feel pleasure without the inclination or movement of our will in relation to the target? Even if we grant that something beautiful brings about a *kind of pleasure* as a fact that requires explanation, this pleasure must bear *some* relation to our will (i.e., relate to *something* lacking).

It is true, at least in relation to his claims, that aesthetic pleasure in beauty cannot arise from our having *attained* what we will, because the purposive stance is suspended the moment the beautiful thing has succeeded in *seducing* or *enticing* us. Something about its ‘enticing’ us away from our purpose is pleasurable to us, however. This pleasure is different from other pleasures and the best we can make of this difference is that we feel it *at the absence of* attaining what we will or being conscious of it. In other words, our *not making it* pleasing to us is what pleases us. If all pleasure relates to a lack, then aesthetic pleasure also relates to a lack. Its relation to a lack, however, must be different from one that yields the kind of pleasure following cognition of an object or following the pursuit of a motive. Our lack and the suffering that underpins it presupposes willing and thus, by extension, aesthetic pleasure must likewise relate to the will and suffering in some way. The suffering he forbids for aesthetic pleasure is that which leads us to overcome it by *attaining* what we will. We can overcome our suffering in different ways, however. We can overcome it by devoting our attention and thus focusing entirely on the target of our cognition and by fulfilling some motive or by attaining the object of a need. We can overcome it by a kind of self-deception and so by ‘ignoring’ or ‘forgetting’ ourselves and our needs.

Aesthetic pleasure arises from a change of focus from what we will to something else. Removal of the object of our will from our attention explains aesthetic pleasure. This is not the same as the enjoyment of an imagined attainment of the object of our will as with daydreaming. Daydreaming is pleasing to us by our attaining what we want, in imagination; whereas the pleasure of beauty that drives us into aesthetic contemplation comes from our

*not having to* attain it. We experience aesthetic pleasure via a *psychological denial* of sorts. We shift our focus from the suffering inherent to a purposive attitude on something and this pleases us by its contrast to the purposive stance underpinning our suffering or frustration. It is a momentary denial based on our conscious attention and its *redirection*. In other words, we feel pleasure resulting from our *not* focusing on suffering; i.e., it is akin to a narcotic. It is pleasing through relief. This preoccupation with something other than our needs alleviates us through a shift of focus from our suffering to something unrelated to it. By entering into aesthetic contemplation, we do not *deal* with the cause of our suffering. We take our focus away from the medium through which the cause operates, i.e., the willing stance. Put another way, the absence of self-consciousness that characterises aesthetic contemplation alleviates us by a shift of attention. Therefore, aesthetic pleasure is explicable as *against the backdrop* of suffering by offering us the kind of solution to it that suspends it from focus or redirects our attention to other things.<sup>47</sup> Aesthetic pleasure bears a relation to the will, but an indirect relation, i.e., not the kind of relation that yields objects and motives. Accordingly, for beauty to please us aesthetically, we *require* a thwarted or a frustrated will, but not to *willfully* overcome this thwarting and frustration.

In entering aesthetic contemplation, we shift our focus from the suffering inherent to our taking a purposive stance on something and devote our attention wholly to something else, i.e., something with which we now identify after we have projected willing on it. It is a shift of focus due to the object which incites it that pleases us, not aesthetic contemplation *itself*. We do not recognise anything happening in our body as we aesthetically contemplate on something because we temporarily suspend self-consciousness and focus wholly on the target of cognition. Consequently, it is misleading to claim that aesthetic contemplation *itself* is what pleases us. The entry into aesthetic contemplation pleases us, because we move away from the subjective correlate underpinning suffering and willing. In sum, we should distinguish what we feel when we aesthetically contemplate on something from how it feels when some object *seduces, entices, forces* or *overwhelms* us into aesthetic contemplation.

The pleasure dissipates quickly after entry into aesthetic contemplation because the latter presupposes suspension of the willing stance. The ‘things’ that *please* us and *incite* aesthetic contemplation we deem *beautiful*, but they are pleasing because they relieve us, not because we aesthetically contemplate them. The pleasure is like *relief* from a *burden*. There is no *pleasure* in aesthetic contemplation itself, because we are not willing anything related to our needs, nor do we take the purposive stance required for the recognition of something that promises pleasure. Yet, *entry into* aesthetic contemplation (or the subsequent reflection over it) can be pleasing, but it is so against the backdrop of our willing or because

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<sup>47</sup> There are reasons to reject my reading here on the grounds of textual evidence. Schopenhauer seems to conceive of the happiness that we experience freed from the will, and if we are to construe happiness as a kind of pleasure, then I am not permitted to hold that aesthetic pleasure works against the backdrop of suffering. This is because, he contends in a later passage: “... pure cognition free from the will, which is in point of fact the only real happiness that is *not preceded* by suffering or need or necessarily followed by remorse, suffering, emptiness or weariness: but this happiness can fill only isolated moments, not the whole of life.” (WR, 347; my emphasis). I suppose this claim permits considerable debate, but I leave it to the side for now.

it indirectly relates to our will. The *escape* or *diversion* aesthetic contemplation provides (or provided) from our frustrations or suffering is why it pleases us. We no longer *worry*. In the presence of beauty, albeit for a moment, we forget about the ‘due diligence’ we are obligated to do for the potential merger which can reshape the economic fabric of a whole nation. We are nervous as we think about the possible outcome of our efforts, but, as we turn our attention to van Gogh’s ‘The Starry Night’, it is as if the outcome sinks away from our awareness and the perfect depiction of the evening’s mood through a master’s use of color and brush strokes fills our attention. This change in attention pleases against the backdrop of (or by contrast to) our nervousness over something else that is unrelated; this pleasure is *aesthetic* because what causes it is obliging to us without effort on our part. It is aesthetic because it happens by virtue of suspending our effort. We forget our needs for a moment, we redirect our attention away from ourselves onto the target of cognition and this *pleases* us.

My contribution to the philosophical commentary and debate<sup>48</sup> on Schopenhauer’s account of ‘aesthetic pleasure’ is to make his claims consistent with his philosophy of the will, albeit at the expense of taking away a romantic element of aesthetic pleasure, i.e., as offering us some *real* salvation from our ordinary, *willful* lives. Likewise, I strove to make his account psychologically tenable. Beauty offers us an alternative source of pleasure premised on the momentary break from our focusing on our aims or what *interests us* about the target, which presupposes our assuming the purposive stance on it.

Schopenhauer’s own psychological observations support my suggestion. Notice, for example, how he describes the purely objective state of mind and its usefulness to his life:

“Every state or condition, every person, every scene of life, needs to be apprehended only *purely* objectively, and made the object of a description or sketch, whether with brush or with words, in order to appear interesting, delightful, and enviable. However, if one is in it, if one is oneself it, then (as is often said) may the devil endure it ... There was a period in the years of my youth when I was constantly at pains to see myself and my actions from outside, and to picture them to myself; probably in order to make them enjoyable to me.” (*WRII*, 372; my emphasis)

Compare the above with the following about how this state of mind is pleasing to us, but now he construes the pleasure as not *concerning* us:

“Everything is beautiful only so long as it does not *concern* us. (Here it is not a case of the passion of love, but of aesthetic enjoyment.) Life is *never* beautiful, but only the pictures of it, namely in the transfiguring mirror of art or of poetry, particularly in youth, when we do not yet know it.” (*WRII*, 374; some emphasis is mine)

Our personal suffering underpins the pleasure we feel when we perceive beauty. Aesthetic contemplation distracts us from our suffering and this distraction pleases us. The suffering

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<sup>48</sup> For more on this debate see Denham (2014).



can be *indirectly* related to our will through some ‘default’ aim or purpose, e.g., the lot of ‘humanity’ or ‘life itself’, which *our* lot and *our* life logically relate to. In sum, what explains ordinary pleasure is overcoming suffering by willful action; whereas aesthetic pleasure is our overcoming suffering *indirectly*. Aesthetic pleasure operates against the backdrop of our suffering by suspending or by distracting us from our urge to act and the attention to our suffering that corresponds to this urge.

A benefit of this conception of aesthetic pleasure is that the frustration we are distracted from can be of any kind and extent. Schopenhauer is not as optimistic about aesthetic pleasure as I suggest, however, because he contends that we need *more* than just frustration to rise above our personal urges to contemplate the *perfection* of something else:

“Therefore everyone who reads the poem or contemplates the work of art must of course contribute from his own resources towards bringing that wisdom to light. Consequently, he grasps only so much of the work as his capacity and culture allow, just as every sailor in a deep sea lets down the sounding-lead as far as the length of its line will reach.” (*WRH*, 407)

Even so, we can refine his claim by distinguishing what *pleases us* about aesthetic contemplation from what is *required* for aesthetic contemplation. Aesthetic pleasure is still an embodied phenomenon, and due to the will-body identity, is determined by our willing or proceeds from some bodily *change* and thus a relation to the will. I argued that aesthetic pleasure arises in response to (or in contrast to or against the backdrop of) our *own will*. It responds differently to the *lack* that underpins our suffering than a response that yields objects or motives. We are aesthetically pleased because the shift of focus from *our* will onto *another’s* willing, striving etc. and *its* perfection. I should add that we do not *perceive* the target’s particular desire or striving at any given moment, but we perceive what it *strives* to be or become, i.e., *its* ideal.<sup>49</sup> We acquire an image of its *perfection*, which Schopenhauer obscurely associates with peering into its ‘essence’. Peering into its essence *pleases us* because it distracts us from something unrelated to its essence. The suffering it distracts us from can be anything whatsoever; it can be as broad as the *urge to act* itself. Given that it is this broad and open, we find it difficult to notice the source of its pleasure; it seems as if our peering into the target’s essence (or our seeing its perfection) is what pleases us independent from all other considerations. This is misleading and does not explain aesthetic pleasure, however.

Further observations that Schopenhauer makes about aesthetic contemplation are supportive of the above conception of aesthetic pleasure as inherently related to distraction from a personal urge or aim driven by our frustrations in relation to them. The momentary shift of focus from the object of an aim is akin to a pleasurable denial or self-deception, but it can only be pleasurable if, to some extent, we are suffering. Schopenhauer’s psychological

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<sup>49</sup> I am thankful to Bart Vandenabeele for pressing me to clarify this claim.

observations champion aesthetic pleasure as a kind of *therapy* for the suffering we feel from our urges and aims<sup>50</sup>,

“We can avoid all the suffering that comes from objects in the present just as well as we can avoid it from those that are remote as soon as we raise ourselves to viewing them in a purely objective way, thus creating the *illusion* that these objects alone are present and we are not: then, as pure subject of cognition, we are rid of our suffering selves and fully one with the objects, and in such moments our needs are as alien to us as they are to the objects.” (WR, 223; my emphasis)

The above alienation from our needs, arising from an “illusion” (ibid.) or an “act of self-deception” (WR, 222), brings about a pleasure *based* on (and thus presupposing) suffering. In the supplementary essays, he makes a similar observation about the therapeutic value of aesthetic contemplation:

“There was a period in the years of my youth when I was constantly *at pains* to see myself and my actions from outside, and to picture them to myself; probably in order to make them *enjoyable* to me.” (WR II, 372; my emphasis)

Notice that his being ‘at pains’ to see them from the outside to make them ‘enjoyable’ implies he was motivated by the suffering associated with seeing ‘himself’ (from within). Consider also his observations on the ‘essence’ of song as constituting a tension between the extreme or ‘stressful’ willing and the serene or ‘peaceful’ will-less cognition, the latter which is presumably pleasing. He describes the effects of aesthetic contemplation in the following way. We should especially notice his claim about their constituting a ‘contrast’, which I argue is the basis of aesthetic pleasure or it is what *explains* this pleasure:

“It is the subject of the will, i.e. one’s own willing, that fills the consciousness of the singer, often as a liberated, satisfied willing (joy), but even more often as a frustrated willing (sorrow), always as affect, passion, as an excited state of mind. Besides this however and together with it, the sight of nature around him makes the singer aware of himself as the subject of pure, will-less cognition, whose imperturbable, blissful peace now forms a *contrast* with the pressure of ever-restricted, always needy willing: *the sensation of this contrast*, of this back-and-forth, is what the song as a whole really expresses and what in general constitutes the lyrical state. In this state, pure cognition draw towards us, as it were, to deliver us from willing and the *stress* of willing: we follow, but only for a moment: we are always torn back again from peaceful contemplation by willing, by the memory of our personal aims.” (WR, 276-7; my emphasis)

The “sensation of this contrast” (ibid.), I believe, characterises the aesthetic pleasure we experience in beauty. Aesthetic pleasure presupposes suffering and by extension relates to

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<sup>50</sup> Soll is right to read Schopenhauer’s views on aesthetic pleasure as a kind of “palliative” (cf. Soll 1998: 83).

our will in a manner that we often overlook. Nevertheless, how aesthetic pleasure relates to willing is *not* ordinary. It is the pleasure—or more correctly, the relief—that comes with psychological denial, or with our shifting our focus or conscious attention away from the root of our suffering and our devoting it to something else, in this case, the target of our cognition. What explains the pleasurable sensation is that looking away from our suffering distracts us from *its effect* on us.

Following the above maneuvers and observations about aesthetic pleasure and its relation to ordinary life, he construes the effects of the beautiful and its correlate pleasure as,

“...the liberation of cognition from service to the will, forgetting oneself as an individual, and the elevation of consciousness to the pure, will-less, timeless subject of cognition, independent of all relations.” (WR, 223)

For Schopenhauer, we *must* suffer from ourselves, from our life and our projects, or from the *urge* for a project, or to think of the world as being the instrument of some project, before we can feel *pleasure* of the aesthetic variety. The beautiful object is like a Siren who gently, seductively, sweetly and enticingly calls us to abandon our efforts for a brief moment and so that we can glimpse into (her) perfection. This perfection is not that corresponding to *our own* effort, but the *effort* as it appears (in its perfection) through another, that is, through her. To our surprise, we realise that *she*—the Siren that is the object seen in its *beauty*—motions to us that the target of our cognition is perfect as *it* is—perfect precisely *without* our effort. We recognise that what made it imperfect in the first place is our intervention into its efforts *for our own purpose or interest*. We are pleased to see that it is perfect independent from *our effort* to render it so. Our effortlessness is pleasing in its own right and of its own accord. Aesthetic pleasure comes from the realisation that we need not exert any effort at all. Yet, the pleasure is nothing without our bodily demands, pressures and urges. Beauty incites a pleasurable feeling that follows the redirection of our focus away from the urge to exert an effort on something. Thus, pace Soll, aesthetic pleasure is best associated with a kind of relief or palliative.

Let us now consider the sublime starting first with illustrating the difference between ‘pleasure in beauty’ and ‘pleasure in sublimity’. The beautiful and sublime in Schopenhauer have the same effect on us by inciting aesthetic contemplation, which he describes in the following terms:

“...the feeling of the sublime is the same as the feeling of the beautiful in its most important respect, namely pure cognition free from the will and the cognition that necessarily appears along with this, of the Ideas that stand outside of all relations determined by the principle of sufficient reason.” (WR, 226-7)

Unfortunately, he does not dwell enough on the difference between pleasure in beauty and that in sublimity to flesh out their difference in feeling. The difference he refers to, however, is how the sublime object appears to us:

“The feeling of the sublime is distinct from the feeling of the beautiful only by virtue of an additional element, namely an elevation above the relationship – *recognised as hostile* – between the object contemplated and the will in general.” (WR, 227; my emphasis)

I focus on the phrase ‘recognised as hostile’, which is his attempt to characterise the hostility of sublime objects in juxtaposition to the obligingness of beauty. According to this passage, the sublime differs by virtue of its elevating us into aesthetic contemplation by the target’s *hostility* or *grandeur* in relation to human willing. I will further assess what he means by the *hostility* of the sublime object to better illustrate the difference between the beautiful and the sublime. This, I believe, will offer us an insight into their differences in feeling and their corresponding aesthetic pleasure.

We can clarify Schopenhauer’s views on sublimity by juxtaposing ‘sublime’ hostility to ‘ordinary’ hostility. The following quote helps us lay out this juxtaposition and his conception of it:

“As soon as any relation between even that purely intuitive object and our own will, our own person, re-enters our consciousness, the magic is over: we fall back into cognition governed by the principle of sufficient reason, we no longer recognise the Idea but only the particular thing, the link in a chain to which we too belong, and we are once again given over to all our misery.” (WR, 222)

We notice in the above quote a tension between self-consciousness and cognition of other things, i.e., something deemed as external and distinct from us. Cognition of other things characterises objectivity and yields the objective picture we referred to previously. This cognition *leads* to aesthetic contemplation if we project willing on the target of cognition, which allows us to perceive it as a willing thing or an ‘Idea’ in Schopenhauer’s sense. We can call the latter its *aesthetic objectivity*.<sup>51</sup> Self-consciousness, however, moves in another direction. In becoming self-conscious, we no longer focus *solely* on the target of cognition, but rather distort it to fit an aim or purpose distinct or independent from it. This shift of focus from an external target to ourselves occurs as we take a purposive stance on the target and perceive it as (at least) *an object*. We subordinate the object to *our* will, our frustrations, desires and hopes, but *not necessarily* so, since we *can* subordinate it to another will and so vicariously enjoy egoism. Ordinary hostility commits us to cognising it as threatening *to us*, directly or indirectly (or vicariously).

Sublime hostility is different. It begins with our assuming the purposive stance and so something we are logically included in, but is broader than we are or broader than our individuality. It begins with humanity as represented in the limitations of our body. The

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<sup>51</sup> Schopenhauer has not clearly worked out the distinction between aesthetic and ordinary objectivity, just as I have not been able to work it out fully on his terms. I will put this forward as a matter for debate. In any case, I will argue that he praises aesthetic objectivity for being complete and permits us to make sense of his ethics and ascetic resignation.

sublime object is threatening to any human being or humanity itself, and only threatening to *us* by logical extension. For the sublime tension to start, then, we require a perspective on things that is broader than our individuality, which we can construe as objective in the limited sense. It is the kind of objectivity scientists have when they begin their study and investigation into a human body from *this* body X (or some group of bodies Y) and X's (or Y's) limitations. It begins with, for example, perception of a human being's body and *its* operations as opposed to George's body. In short, scientists often construe George's body (or a collection of individual bodies) as representative of a 'human body'. However, they have to acknowledge the limitations of their viewpoint, i.e., that George's body is logically included in the concept of a human body as a token of its type, not as representing the type. Consequently, and according to Schopenhauer's view, the sublime can only begin if we construe our limitations as exemplified in our body and its efforts not as our *own*, but as the same as those of any other human being. Alternatively, we at least conceive it as partially representing the limitations of any 'human being or body'. The sublime begins with self-conscious recognition of the limitations of a human body and thus human willing; only by logical extension does this include our individual limitations.

For us to begin experiencing the sublime tension, according to Schopenhauer, we *must* cognise the target in light of human nature, human interests and-or humanity as this is represented in the limitations of our body and efforts. The major premise is that when we are self-conscious we *redirect* our focus away from the object back to our individual will or body. Such self-conscious moments—especially when the target appears *hostile*—often lead to *personal* anxiety. There are instances, however, where we become self-conscious after an encounter with a hostile target of cognition, which does *not* lead to us personal anxiety (cf. *WR*, 226), but to the *sublime tension*. Some objects can bring us anxiety whereas others bring about the sublime tension. How does Schopenhauer distinguish them? Their difference, he claims, lies in the perspective from which we approach a hostile target. We perceive it either in light of our individual interest whereby we deem it dangerous *to us*, or in light of human interests as reflected in our body and its limitations. The latter makes possible the sublime tension. Thus, the sublime tension begins by our assuming the perspective of humanity or a 'human being', which is the subjective correlate of the sublime experience. The objective correlate of the sublime is an object perceived as *more* hostile than human beings are capable of overcoming or larger than human beings can utilise or conceptualise.

As with beauty, some objects are *fitter* than others to incite the sublime tension in us, but the tension itself is based as much on the stance we take in relation it as on its effect on us. Schopenhauer breaks with beauty in his discussion of the sublime, however, because we require more to experience the sublime tension than for beauty. Beauty does not require us to perceive the target as from the perspective of humanity. Similarly, the beautiful object permits self-deception, whereas the sublime object is preceded by "perceiving and acknowledging" (*WR*, 225) the target's *hostile* relation to human willing. Our limitations do not deceive us when we experience the sublime. He puts it in the following terms:

“This elevation must not only be achieved *consciously*, it must also be sustained and is therefore accompanied by a constant recollection of the will, although *not of a particular, individual willing*, such as fear or desire, but rather of *human willing in general*, to the extent that it is *universally expressed through its objecthood, the human body*. If a real, particular act of will were to enter consciousness through some actual personal distress or danger from the object, then the individual will that was actually moved in this way would quickly gain the upper hand, the tranquility of contemplation would be rendered impossible, and the impression of the sublime would be lost, since it would give way to anxiety, in which the individual’s attempts to save himself would supersede any other thought.” (WR, 226; my emphasis)

The subjective correlate to the sublime is humanity and not our individual will. Cancer can be an example of something hostile to humanity by showing the limitations of our immune system. It can cause anxiety in us. We can worry about its growth within us. It can also lead us to the sublime tension and incite aesthetic contemplation following the sublime tension as opposed to anxiety. It can make us anxious because *we* (or someone *close to us*) may contract it. It incites the *sublime tension* in us only after we recognise our collective efforts have hitherto been unable to prevent its power over human beings. What is sublime about cancer is that it is threatening to us *and* we recognise our collective limitations in relation to it. Accordingly, there are two ways we can resign to the possibility of cancer, and each one, according to Schopenhauer, suggests a different feeling and corresponding use of reflection and imagination. Firstly, we can resign to the *possibility* of its growing within us and get on with our day by shifting our attention to aiming to secure our children’s future, rather than worry about what *might* happen to us. Secondly, we can resign—or “surrender” (WR: 226), as he puts it—to its possibility in another way, i.e., by aesthetic contemplation and the felt consciousness it is premised on.

In sum, assuming the perspective of humanity on the target of our cognition is a precondition of the sublime tension. The presence of something threatening to our body, which we conceive as representing the limitations of all human bodies, not exclusively our *individual* limitations, prompts the sublime tension. Therefore, the ‘sublime tension’ differs from ‘anxiety’ by the stance we take on the target of our cognition. Something that renders us anxious can *also* incite the sublime tension provided we shift our perspective on it, which is what his so-called sublime character is so apt at doing.<sup>52</sup>

Schopenhauer construes the difference between the beautiful and the sublime objects that incite aesthetic contemplation in the following way:

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<sup>52</sup> The passage I have in mind is one describing the sublime character’s transformation of ordinary experiences of hostility and enmity. Schopenhauer argues: “Consequently, such a character will regard human beings purely objectively, and not in terms of whatever relations they might have to his will: for instance, he will observe their failings, even their hatred and injustice towards him, but without being himself moved to hatred; he will look upon their happiness without feeling envy; he will recognise their good qualities without wanting to be more closely associated with them; he will perceive the beauty of women without desiring them. His personal happiness and unhappiness will not affect him strongly, rather he will be such as Hamlet described Horatio” (WR, 231).

“Whether the state of pure, will-less cognition that is presupposed and required by all aesthetic contemplation came about *as if on its own and without resistance*, invited and drawn forward by the object, with the will simply disappearing from consciousness; or whether this state was first achieved only through *a free and conscious elevation* above the will – and the contemplated object has an unfavourable and hostile relation to this will, which would annul contemplation if we gave ourselves over to it; – this is the difference between the beautiful and the sublime.” (WR, 233; my emphasis)

The sublime object *elevates* us into aesthetic contemplation following our resistance to the tension it incites in us. This resistance does lapse into anxiety, which drives us to eject ourselves from the situation (or to change our thoughts over it) by focusing on something, i.e., a pressing, unrelated task. Our resistance to it follows a direct confrontation with the object, albeit in a different manner. We *settle* the sublime tension through aesthetic contemplation, but an intermediate step is missing here. How do we move from identifying with humanity—and so by logical extension identifying with ourselves—in our relation to the target of our cognition, to identifying with something *other than* us? What underpins this leap in identification? My contention is that Schopenhauer aims to have his concept of the ‘felt consciousness’ account for this leap.

Given the different feeling, object and subjective correlate that precedes the sublime tension, it follows that the aesthetic pleasure of the sublime is likewise different. What does this difference hinge on? We experience an aesthetic pleasure in the sublime following a settling of the sublime tension during aesthetic contemplation. As we saw with beauty, the movement *into* aesthetic contemplation is what we find pleasing to us against the backdrop of our suffering and thus thwarted willing. The aesthetic pleasure in beauty is a pleasurable relief; it gives us an alternative satisfaction to those efforts through the change of focus from ourselves to the target. This resembles that relief we experience when we realise things are obliging to us *without our effort* to make them obliging. There is a similar *relief* felt when we *settle* the sublime tension by entering into aesthetic contemplation through the ‘felt consciousness’, but it is different from the relief we experience in the presence of beauty. I will flesh out this difference before I assess how the ‘felt consciousness’ features in our identifying with humanity to identifying with the (hostile) target of cognition as required for aesthetic contemplation.

The relief of the sublime tension is not against the backdrop of (or by contrast to) our *personal* concerns. Escaping from personal hostility is not what concerns the sublime experience. Furthermore, unlike beauty, the relief does not result from *removing* what we find burdensome, but resembles a feeling that follows after we have escaped from danger or threat. The sublime object is more *hostile* than we can *possibly* overcome, or *grander* than we can possibly conceptualise (or utilise) following a *collective* effort. This invokes an unsettling feeling in us distinct from that generated by a thwarted individual effort. There is a sense of ‘hopelessness’ with respect to our actions in the sublime not captured by the feeling associated with beauty, according to Schopenhauer’s view. Although, the fact that our individual efforts are logically included in the collective efforts and limitations of humanity explains why we feel *anything in the first place*. What distinguishes anxiety from

a sublime tension is not that we feel unsettled *tout court*, because both are unsettling. Rather, it is unsettling because it shows us a *limitation*, which can lapse into anxiety if it reflects us *personally*.

Schopenhauer's correlation theory of cognition allows us to distinguish pleasure in the sublime from that in beauty through not *only* their respective objects, but also the stance we take in correlation to them. He begins by characterising the object prior to aesthetic contemplation as either obliging or hostile, enticing or forceful. The sublime aesthetic pleasure is a kind of relief on the *spectrum* of what we feel when we escape a dangerous situation<sup>53</sup>, as Vandenabeele puts it:

“The sublime delight is negative pleasure, “the sensation which accompanies the removal of pain or danger.” It is pleasure, one can say, that is connected with the removal of pain or the escape from danger or threat.” (Vandenabeele 2003, 95)

The difference between escaping a danger through our efforts and feeling aesthetic pleasure following a settled sublime tension is that we do not *willfully* divert a hostile object; instead, we *rise to* aesthetic contemplation and neutralise its effect on us. We do not move out of the way of the object, so to speak, but rise up to meet it by our focusing entirely on it and nothing else. The sublime incites aesthetic contemplation through its characteristic shift of focus from ourselves (as threatened, feeble and limited humans) to aesthetic contemplation of it. Put metaphorically, we pull the rug from underneath this tension. We remove its subjective correlate, and, in a sense, we welcome death (at least in effigy) armed with the recognition that we are *more than this body* and its limitations. In such moments, we recognise that even the hostile object is, as we are, an objectivation of the will, i.e., it too wills something. What makes *us* special is our ability to recognise this whereas the hostile object obviously does not and is seemingly unable to withdraw its effort and hostility toward us. Human beings alone have the “felt consciousness” (WR, 230) that there is no fundamental difference between us and other things in life: we are *all the will to life* and can identify with all targets of our cognition in such way that is not open to other (blindly) willing things.

In sum, I propose that we can explain what is *pleasing* about aesthetic contemplation, in Schopenhauer's sense, by analysing what he calls the ‘contrast’ (cf. WR, 221 & 227) between the purposive and aesthetic stance on a target of cognition. The pleasures in beauty and sublimity do not reside on aesthetic contemplation itself, but on how this contrasts (and so relates to) ordinary cognition of an object as from the purposive stance, whether that stance is personal or impersonal, individual or human. We recognised this contrast in the beautiful through thwarted personal efforts or frustrations, but also in the sublime through

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<sup>53</sup> Schopenhauer's claim can undermine this characterisation of the sublime pleasure as a kind of relief from danger in his discussion of tragedy. The pleasure in tragedy, he contends, belongs to “that of the sublime; it is, in fact, the highest degree of this feeling” (WR II, 433). He proceeds to propose that this pleasure is, “analogous to that of the dynamically sublime, since, like this, it raises us above the will and its interest, and puts us in such a mood that we find pleasure in the sight of what directly opposes the will” (ibid.). More on tragedy and the opposition to the will in the closing section.



the limitations of humanity as reflected in our body. Schopenhauer's account of aesthetic pleasure takes the previous contrast as an explanatory feature *not* of our *pleasure* in aesthetic contemplation *itself*, but in the objects that 'entice' or 'elevate' us into it. Schopenhauer's description of the genius' views on life, happiness and suffering supports my proposition:

"The pleasure of all beautiful things, the *consolation* that art affords, the *enthusiasm* that allows the artist to *forget* the difficulties of life, this one advantage the genius possesses over other people and the only thing that *compensates him for his suffering* (which is increased in proportion to his clarity of consciousness) and also for his desolate solitude among a race so different from him, – all this is due to the fact that, as we will continue to show, the in-itself of life, the will, existence itself, is a constant suffering, partly miserable, partly horrible; on the other hand, the same thing as representation alone, purely intuited, or repeated in art, free from pain, affords a meaningful spectacle." (WR, 295; my emphasis)

Notice the psychological underpinnings and prerequisites of a genius' view of the world: it allows him to 'forget' and to be 'compensated for his suffering'. These descriptions are not idiosyncratic, but point to the value for life of aesthetic contemplation, which, I suspect, inspired Nietzsche's propositions and criticisms of Schopenhauer's aesthetics. Yet, we should distinguish the value of aesthetic contemplation itself from its value for life or living. Aesthetic contemplation, as far as Schopenhauer's account permits, has its own conception of value that *breaks* with the purposive stance. Furthermore, he was seemingly aware of the previous distinction since he later claims that, from this perspective on the world, some of us self-consciously *affirm* and others *negate* the will to life (more on this below).

Schopenhauer unhelpfully construes the sublime as "unsettling" (WR, 230) and its distinctive pleasure as "settled" (ibid). The movement from an unsettling feeling to feeling settled by an entry into aesthetic contemplation is supposed to characterise "aesthetic delight" (WR, 224). We can find a useful conception of the previous in Vandenberg (2003, 94-95) who suggests that we can construe aesthetic pleasure in the sublime à la Burke, namely, as a form of "delight" (Vandenberg 2003, 95). We should distinguish 'delight' from 'aesthetic delight', however. My reasons are that, whether or not he is wrong for doing so, Schopenhauer associates the sublime feeling with what he calls a 'tragic mood' (cf. WR, 228) or with 'seriousness', which does not permit strict association with enjoyment. It seems psychologically untenable to associate something dangerous or threatening, which *elevates us into* aesthetic contemplation, with a 'delightful' feeling implying enjoyment. The previous does not mean that aesthetic contemplation is not delightful, but that we need to explain in virtue of what we find what is threatening *also* 'delightful'. The sublime tension *itself* cannot be delightful. What seems delightful to us is aesthetic contemplation *as from* the purposive stance and thus in reflection. Let me elaborate.

Recall that the sublime tension *incites* aesthetic contemplation and so is distinct from it. There is a difference between our description of the sublime tension and our description of what it *incites* in us, i.e., aesthetic contemplation. Aesthetic contemplation is delightful in reflection, which entails our assuming a different stance and we are now taking about the

whole experience rather than its aesthetic features. We treat the whole experience as a *thing*, an object or concept, which we analyse and evaluate. To describe what we feel ‘when we *reflect* on aesthetic contemplation’ as synonymous to what we feel ‘when we are *uplifted* into aesthetic contemplation by something else’ can be misleading. What we feel when we ‘reflect’ on aesthetic contemplation is distinct from what aesthetic contemplation ‘feels like’. Accordingly, aesthetic contemplation, our reflecting on it and the sublime tension that *incites* aesthetic contemplation in us are distinct experiences and feelings. We may find aesthetic contemplation delightful when we reflect on it, but we do experience the same delight *in the midst of it*, nor experience delight in the presence of a sublime object and the sublime tension. We do not experience delight in the presence of objects *inciting* aesthetic contemplation, but we can find delightful our *entry into* aesthetic contemplation from the effect of a hostile object on us.

There is a tripartite distinction between the sublime feeling *itself*, our reflective evaluation of it and aesthetic contemplation. First then, there is what it feels like to move from feeling *unsettled* by what seems threatening or hostile to humanity into being *settled* into aesthetic contemplation. We attain this through recognition of an identity between ‘us’ and ‘the target’ as willing things, i.e., projection of willing or the felt consciousness. This leads us to devote our focus to the target of cognition and so perceive its *Idea*. Second, there is our evaluation of aesthetic contemplation in reflection, which makes the experience ‘delightful’. It is delightful in virtue of how we evaluate it as from a different perspective, however. In reflecting on aesthetic contemplation, we assume an entirely different stance on the target. In doing so, we are not concerned with the sublime anymore, but with the *whole experience* and what it signifies *for us*. The latter feeling does not describe what the sublime consists in. Thus, there is a difference between the experience itself (i.e., how to characterise it) and what we make of the experience *after* or *before the fact*, which is in reflection and from a different perspective entirely.<sup>54</sup> It is not false to claim that we find the *whole experience* (i.e., our movement from cognition of some hostile object, to experiencing the sublime tension, and then enter into aesthetic contemplation) *delightful*, but I do not think we acquire insight into aesthetic pleasure in this way. Our entry into aesthetic contemplation is seen best as a relief that accompanies an escape from danger.

It is likewise misleading, at least for comprehending Schopenhauer’s account of the sublime, to associate it too closely with the aesthetic pleasure in beauty. Beauty is pleasurable through providing an alternative satisfaction to a thwarted or frustrated *personal* effort. The previous is not what contrasts the sublime, however. We feel the sublime in the absence of our *personal* perspective from the outset. We try to maintain the perspective of humanity and its limitations, which is the subjective correlate of the sublime tension and its

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<sup>54</sup> This distinction is also, I think rightly, recognised and employed by Denham (2014) who defines it as “it is one thing to describe an experience type; it is another to justify its power and significance” (Denham 2014, 176). In the same paper, she qualifies the previous as the difference between ‘what an experience consists in’ and ‘our evaluation of it’ (cf. Denham 2014, 188).

precondition. Schopenhauer was privy to this, but he did not do enough to elucidate it, as is noticeable in the following passage:

“Our dependency, our struggle with hostile nature, our will which is broken in this struggle, these now come vividly before our eyes: but as long as our personal troubles do not gain the upper hand and we remain in a state of aesthetic contemplation, the pure subject of cognition peers through that struggle of nature, through that image of the broken will, and calmly, in a manner both unperturbed and unconcerned grasps the Ideas in those very objects that are threatening and terrible to the will. The feeling of the sublime *lies in precisely this contrast*.” (WR, 229; my emphasis)

We struggle to keep our personal satisfaction out of consciousness. We severed our personal satisfaction at the outset to experience a ‘sublime tension’ rather than ‘anxiety’ in the presence of something hostile or dangerous. Schopenhauer puts it in the following way:

“This elevation must not only be achieved consciously, it must also be sustained and is therefore accompanied by a constant recollection of the will, although not of a particular, individual willing, such as fear or desire, but rather of human willing in general, to the extent that it is universally expressed through its objecthood, the human body. If a real, particular act of will were to enter consciousness through some actual personal distress or danger from the object, then the individual will that was actually moved in this way would quickly gain the upper hand, the tranquility of contemplation would be rendered impossible, and the impression of the sublime would be lost, since it would give way to anxiety, in which the individual’s attempts to save himself would supersede any other thought.” (WR, 226)

Unlike beauty, our personal concerns do not contrast the sublime because they would lapse us into anxiety and therefore bypass the sublime experience entirely by failing to incite a sublime tension. Our anxiety would mean that we assumed the purposive stance towards the hostile target and would resolve it differently than by entry into aesthetic contemplation. For example, we can resolve to *avoid* cancer by adopting a healthier lifestyle, or we can resolve to focus on something that we believe is more pressing in this moment than the possibility of cancer at another moment. The difference between anxiety and the sublime tension permits him to argue that the sublime is not therapeutic. Furthermore, it does not rest on an “act of self-deception” (WR, 222), which we saw with beauty. There is no self-deception in cognising something more powerful than humanity (which the limitations of our body reflects) that ‘threatens’ or is ‘hostile to’ its existence. The pleasure of beauty is distinct from the sublime in the previous sense, but both are a kind of relief and diversion. Beauty pleases us by diverting us from frustration. The sublime pleases us by diverting us from the painful recognition of our ‘human’ limitations.

The sublime tension can at any moment lapse into anxiety and lose the sublime impression without entering into aesthetic contemplation, but aesthetic contemplation arises from this tension like the first shoot from a seed. It does so after we *identify* with something larger than humanity and larger than the object that threatens our human existence, i.e., *the*

*will to life*. I think the previous captures what Schopenhauer means by the felt consciousness. The sublime tension represents what it *feels like* to overcome our human limitations by redirecting our focus from ourselves to the target of our cognition. The sublime tension rises to the point where we dissociate from humanity entirely and assume a new subjective correlate, i.e., disinterestedness. We now identify with the target of our cognition, which changes the relation we had to the object underpinning its appearance as *hostile*. We move from ‘object’ to ‘Idea’ through the ‘felt consciousness’, namely, via a subjective change in us. The previous change *pleases* us.

The aesthetic contemplation caused by the sublime experience presupposes a different act of identification and thus a different kind of self-consciousness, i.e., we identify with something *other than* our body and ourselves. This *forces* us to abandon purposive cognition for aesthetic contemplation. The sublime tension, then, requires *effort* to identify with humanity and thus perceive an object in lieu of humanity’s concerns, interests and limitations.<sup>55</sup> We hold onto this identification with humanity, which spawns the sublime tension that settles by our entry into aesthetic contemplation. The subjective correlate to the sublime tension is not disinterestedness, but humanity as represented by our body and its limitations. Likewise, the objective correlate of the sublime is not *an Idea*, but *an object* we deem threatening or disproportionately larger than humanity. Consequently, the Ideas are not the objective correlates of beauty and sublimity; they are objects that are closer to representing their Ideas and so meet us halfway to aesthetic contemplation, whose objective correlate alone *is* the Idea.

There is an obscure and problematic claim in Schopenhauer’s account of the sublime, which I will assess before moving on, namely, that the,

“...state of pure cognition is gained only by means of a *conscious* and violent tearing free from relationships between the same object and the will...” (WR, 226; my emphasis)

We can recognise this obscurity when we compare the beautiful and the sublime means of entering into aesthetic contemplation. The beautiful renders us receptive and represents an effortless and passive transition from purposive cognition to aesthetic contemplation. The sublime is an active and violent transition implying effort, however. Guyer (1996, 114-7) and Vandenabeele (2003, 91-3) point out that this implies a different, more intellectual conception of *effort*<sup>56</sup> in Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will, which suggests a different

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<sup>55</sup> Though Schopenhauer seems to favor a discussion of the human embodied existence as opposed to any other in his explanation, it seems plausible and unproblematic to extend it further. The embodied existence in relation to which an object or circumstance is deemed to be threatening can represent any embodied existence, whether it is human or phytoplankton. The sublime can be the Idea of an object threatening to *all willing*. Schopenhauer seems to prefer identifying the will that is threatened with human willing as opposed to all willing, presumably, because he aims to associate it with the genre of ‘tragedy’. It is still peculiar that he focused on human willing, but I suppose it is easier for us (i.e. his readers) to consider things from the perspective of *our* species and its interests than from the perspective of another species.

<sup>56</sup> In the following chapters, I will call this a mainspring of action: a willing like any other generating specific bodily vicissitudes and actions. Finally, it can even represent a character, i.e. the ascetic character.

conception of willing. I will assess what this kind of effort might be when I discuss ascetic resignation, but some preliminary remarks merit their place here to demonstrate the link between his aesthetics and ethics.

The effort Schopenhauer speaks of must be embodied and, thus, given the will-body identity it must also be a kind of willing. Our urges and needs announce themselves immediately (cf. *WR*, 134) or have the “right of prior occupancy” (*OBM*, 204). The sublime tension, however, presupposes that we assume the perspective of humanity, first. Some degree of effort is required to overcome or to suppress our initial urges and needs to perceive things *as from* the perspective of humanity. Furthermore, we can perceive things from some perspective *other than* our own, which suggests a *partial overcoming* of personal concerns, urges and needs. The perspective on things Schopenhauer has in mind is ‘objective’, i.e., the scientific or philosophical viewpoint on something; this perspective seemingly *enables* the sublime tension.<sup>57</sup> The effort he refers to is a struggle against our *personal* needs. Thus, the effort to maintain an impersonal perspective on the hostile target is required to avoid our lapsing into anxiety. We experience the sublime following a *conscious effort* to sustain the perspective of humanity. Yet, aesthetic contemplation *itself* is *effortless*. The metaphor that suggests itself is a wave that rises to its peak and falls back into the calm, tranquil ocean. In experiencing the sublime tension, we are like the wave that rises as high as possible before then falling into the tranquil, endless ocean of aesthetic contemplation. We ameliorate the sublime tension through the felt consciousness that throws us into aesthetic contemplation. We notice the significance of the sublime experience to his ethics emerging from the previous assessment. This conscious effort against our needs and urges leads us to identify with something other than ourselves.

The above is a willful effort in the fullest sense, however, as Neill rightly points out:

“... the subject must deliberately – by an act of will – in some sense disregard the perceived (if only as potential) threat. To describe this in terms of the subject’s “forcibly tear[ing] himself from his will,” as Schopenhauer does at one point, is misleading, for disregarding the threatening aspect of the object cannot in itself produce will - lessness.” (Neill 2012, 209)

The effort *appears* cognitive, but it is also embodied. First, it is an effort to *suspend* action or having to take action on something, but this does not mean that we suspend the willing stance. We struggle with our personal needs, which *colour* the object. Second, this effort is cognitive in the sense that we do not *only* suspend personal action. We adopt the perspective of humanity, which gives a *different*, more impersonal relationship to the object. We conceive of ourselves as representing humanity and perceive the object therefrom. Thus, the effort to focus on and relate to something as from the perspective of humanity is an *embodied effort* that suppresses or suspends our individual urges and needs. Presumably, we *cannot*

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<sup>57</sup> However, we should add a caveat that such a perspective can arise from ascetic practices premised on religious precepts as well as scientific and philosophical precepts.

do the previous *deliberately* to experience the sublime tension, but we cannot experience the sublime tension without this effort.

Neill is also right to construe the above phase in the sublime tension as a “condition of (its) possibility” (Neill 2009, 208). The phase he describes is the sublime experience, however, not aesthetic contemplation. We should distinguish the sublime tension from that which it settles into, i.e., aesthetic contemplation. Perceiving something *as sublime*, that is, as having a hostile relationship to human willing *incites* aesthetic contemplation, whose subjective correlate is disinterestedness as opposed to human interests. The perspective of humanity underpins a *sublime tension* and its resolution through the felt consciousness, which reflects a *new identification* and thus a subjective change in us. It *forces* us to abandon all ‘willful’ cognition by projecting willing onto the target. I have tried to clarify this new identification with the target as our projecting willing onto it, which permits us to see it as willing, striving etc. (e.g., cognition of an Idea). For Schopenhauer, we project willing on the world so that we can construe *it* as permeated by willing, striving and so on. Remarkably, his claim is that the world *itself* is ‘willing’.<sup>58</sup>

If we struggle and succeed in maintaining the cognition of the threatening or disproportionately large object as from the perspective of humanity, then we will feel a ‘sublime tension’ rise up from the recognition of *humanity’s* relative insignificance, which we resolve through a new self-consciousness that surpasses both our *individual* perspective and that of *humanity*. Schopenhauer describes this new kind of self-consciousness in the following manner:

“...rising up against such a spectre of our own nothingness, against such a slanderous impossibility, is our immediate consciousness that all these worlds really exist only in our representation, only as modifications of the eternal subject of pure cognition, which is what we find ourselves to be as soon as we forget our individuality, and which is the necessary, the conditioning bearer and support of all worlds and all times.” (WR, 230)

It is in the sense of ‘larger than humanity’ that we should comprehend this immediate consciousness, which rises up against ‘*our* own nothingness’. The ‘our’ denotes the human. We ‘forget our individuality’ as a precondition to the sublime experience. Anxiety drives us

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<sup>58</sup> Schopenhauer’s metaphysics sounds similar to Spinoza’s pantheism. He refers to Spinoza explicitly when he argues for projecting the will on objects to make the changes and-or movements we cognise in them meaningful: “Spinoza says (Letter 62) that if a stone thrown flying through the air were conscious it would think it was flying of its own will. I only add that the stone would be right. Projectile thrust plays the same role for it that motive does for me; and what in the case of the stone appears as cohesion, gravity, persistence in the assumed state is, in its inner essence, just what I recognise in myself as will, and what the stone would also recognise as will if it were to attain cognition too. In this passage Spinoza focuses on the necessity with which the stone flies and rightly wants to apply it to the necessity in a person’s individual act of will. I, on the other hand, think that the inner essence presupposed by all real necessity (i.e. effects of causes) is what gives necessity its *meaning* and *validity* in the first place. It is called character in the case of people and quality in the case of stones, but it is the same in both. Where it is known immediately it is called will; it has its weakest degree of manifestation, of objecthood, in stones, and its strongest in humans.” (WR, 151; my emphasis).

to avoid the sublime and therefore nip in the bud the ‘felt consciousness’ that *can* stem from it and *lead us* to aesthetic contemplation. With anxiety, we shift our focus toward our personal needs.

The felt consciousness that precedes our rising up to aesthetic contemplation via the sublime tension refers to a new kind of self-consciousness, wherein we find, I believe, the bridge to his views on ethics and ascetic resignation. Self-cognition of the will, ethics and asceticism follow from aesthetic contemplation. The felt consciousness allows us to identify with *more* than our individual self or with a ‘self’ *seen as distinct* and *separate* from a target of cognition. We identify with *life itself* or *the will to life*, as Schopenhauer calls it. The felt consciousness, for him, is a kind of *unio mystica* with willing itself, which, in turn, opens the door to aesthetic contemplation and cognition of an Idea. The response to the *tension* between a human being and some hostile (or immense) object or circumstance that threatens all human beings (which has the status of a ‘motive’), provided we do not lapse into *anxiety*, finds its pinnacle in,

“...the felt consciousness that we are, in some sense (that only philosophy makes clear), one with the world, and thus not brought down, but rather elevated, by its immensity.” (WR, 230)

The sublime facilitates a different and new act of identification not limited to our individuality, nor to an extended conception of that individuality, i.e., humanity. We find ourselves no longer *preoccupied* with, nor limited to, the preservation and enhancement of our body and-or species. We identify with living itself or the will to life, and put ourselves in a position to respond to something *as from* this perspective. The sublime tension we feel in recognising the insurmountable threats to human existence and the inevitable nothingness of this existence motivates us to dissociate from humanity and the willing stance. From this identification arises a response Schopenhauer describes as the *negation* of the will to life, but, as we will see below, this identification can also give rise to *affirmation* of the will to life. The previous is where I believe we find the toughest conceptual knot in his philosophy.

## 1.8 Motives and ‘Mainsprings’

“Cognition is the *medium of motives*, and its influence – not on the *will itself*, but on the emergence of the will into actions” (WR, 323; my emphasis)

So far, I have argued that Schopenhauer uses his correlation theory of cognition and will-body identity to underpin his account of the aesthetic experience, which rests on what I have called the projection of willing onto the target of our cognition. The projection of willing qualitatively changes our perception of the target. It is no longer perceived as an object—which permits willful action and scientific inquiry—but as the representation of willing,

striving etc. in its own right. I argue in the current chapter that there is an implicit distinction between the motives and the mainsprings of an action, which, I believe, forms the bedrock of his ethics. My aim is to demonstrate how he transitions from his aesthetics to his ethics and the role the will-body identity and projection of willing play in this transition. He does so, I argue, using a unique and rich account of motivation, which we can elucidate by using the correlation theory of cognition, the will-body identity and the projection of willing.

We saw previously that aesthetic contemplation is a cognition of something not as it relates to our will, nor as it relates to some will independent from the target. We do not perceive the target as an object among objects, but as an Idea, which I argued is, at least, our trying to cognise it as the representation of willing, striving and so on. The change in cognition that typifies aesthetic contemplation is, I believe, central to Schopenhauer's ethics, specifically, the moral value he ascribes to compassion and the value of ascetic resignation. Recall that the central insight of his account of aesthetic contemplation is the disinterestedness of the aesthetic contemplator and the so-called 'felt-consciousness'. The latter, I argued, represents a new kind of self-consciousness and so a new identification. We recall that self-consciousness is the same as adopting the willing stance, or, put simply, we become self-conscious when 'we will something'. In aesthetically contemplating on something, we recognise that we can and do use cognition to *identify* with something *other than* ourselves, i.e., our body. To do this, however, we have to first assume the stance of 'disinterested' subjects of cognition, or project willing on the target of cognition. I will argue that, for him, we are able to do more than just passively identify with the targets of our cognition, but act based on this new identification. We can act for the sake of something *other than* our body and so contrary to our immediate self-interest by assuming the stance of disinterested subjects of cognition. This insight is central for a detailed account of his views on selflessness (*Uneigennützigkeit*), compassion (*Mitleid*) and ascetic resignation. For now, I will distinguish between mainsprings and motives and attempt to show what this distinction hinges on.

First, let us assess what Schopenhauer construes as the motive (*Motiv*) of an action. A motive is an intuitive or abstract representation that *moves* with the will; it is a cognition that impels us to (re)act because it fits with our aims or needs. Recall that this requires us to take the willing stance, so we, at least, perceive the target of cognition as an object, i.e., as the kind of thing that permits action upon it or to use it towards some (independent) end. A motive requires us to perceive the world as filled with objects and object-relations, i.e., the objective picture. For example, the perception of a cup standing out from the background moves me by either making me deliberate over whether I want to make more tea or have some water instead. Correspondingly, it can move me immediately to reach for the tea following my perception of it. The object becomes a motive the moment we *see it as* something we can possibly act upon; it partakes in our deliberation process or it immediately impels us to action without the mediation of reflection and the deliberation process. In both cases, the cognition of something moves us and, it is crucial to add that we cannot *possibly* move towards or away from *nothing*:



“Every will is the will to something, it has an object, a goal of its willing...” (WR, 187)

“If a human being *wills*, then he wills something: his act of will is in every case directed towards an object and can be conceived only in relation to one.” (FW, 40)

Willing, for human beings, requires the ‘cognition of something’. Actions follow cognition *of something*. The cognition is a motive for action when a target—whether it is abstract or intuitive—results in action. A target of cognition becomes a ‘motive’ when we *see it as* a possible avenue for action and when it leads to an action.

Schopenhauer’s conception of motivation is not limited to motives, however. He distinguishes between different *kinds* of motives by introducing another concept. In the Anglophone commentary on his philosophy, we translate this new concept as the ‘incentive’ of an action. Schopenhauer often uses the word *Triebfeder*, but also uses other words to refer to it. He uses extensively ‘*Triebfeder*’ in ‘The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics’ where he gives it a substantive status in his action-theory. I will suggest that its popular translation as ‘incentive’, as we find in, for example, Cartwright and Erdmann (2010), Janaway (2009) and Payne (1995), is misleading, because it overlooks a distinction between cognition and the will central to his philosophy. Motives and ‘incentives’ are, for the most part, translated and interpreted as synonyms, which has led many to confound two philosophically rich concepts that can help unravel crucial insights. We find this confounding in Taylor’s (1999) arguments against his reading of Schopenhauer’s views on compassion and in Cartwright’s reading of compassion in Schopenhauer (cf. 1984, 93-4; 1988, 561; 1999, 268-270).

A motive is a cognition and thus it is a product of the intellect, which represents the target as a possible avenue for action. We contrast the previous to an ‘object’, which is something upon which we *can* act, but it is not yet a motive. Minimally then, we perceive the target as an object among objects and so assume a purposive stance on it before we perceive it as a motive for action. The motive is that towards which we aim our actions. The same is not the case for *Triebfeder*, which we can likewise translate as the ‘impulse’, ‘driving force’, or ‘mainspring’ of an action. We can define this as the ‘ground’ of our actions, which explains the object’s *effectiveness* on us, i.e., what makes it something that *motivates*. We have plural or many mainsprings because the same object X can motivate us in different ways. The key claim is that if a cognition is a motive or has what I will call ‘motivational efficacy’, then this presupposes we aim for or take an interest in (at least a part of) it. As we saw previously, however, we can take various kinds of interests in something.

A target’s effectiveness is *not* something it possesses *in itself* independent from our will, because different individuals can be motivated in different ways by different things. Equally, different individuals can be motivated in different ways by the same thing, whereas the same individual can be motivated differently by the same thing at different times. Schopenhauer’s correlation theory of cognition upholds the claim that there is a by-fit relationship between the will (need, aim etc.) and cognition of something seen as a motive. Even if we presuppose that two different agents can possess the *same* cognition, their

responses to it can and often do differ, which means that how it appears to them will likewise differ. Their difference cannot possibly reside on the object of cognition (i.e., an apple), but on their different wills. The effectiveness of a cognition, which makes it a motive, finds its ground in the will or interest, i.e., some need, project or aim. The driving force or mainspring of the action is its ground, i.e., what explains the efficacy of the object that moved us. The motive is the object upon which we (re)act. The mainspring of our action is the will. Why does he introduce *Triebfeder* when ‘will’ seems to suffice? I will argue that Schopenhauer used his correlation theory of cognition to distinguish between different aspects of the will, or different kinds of willing. Mainsprings (*Triebfedern*) serve to highlight this distinction.

A key feature of the mainsprings of our actions is that although they precede actions and thus serve as their ground, they nonetheless become recognisable and open to reflection *after* the action has taken place.<sup>59</sup> For example, my motive may be to help George, but what drives my action is my *care* for him, or conversely, that I want to gain his favor and hold my action as credit. In both instances we notice that something different represents my action; the appropriate concept for this difference is lacking here. We can call it disposition, attitude, stance or an evaluation of George, but we are essentially missing something in each one. Schopenhauer settles for ‘mainspring’ [*Triebfeder*]. What we try to capture is that both are representative of different general aims, wills or constituents of our character. Notice, however, that neither of these ‘aims’ are suggested by the mere cognition of George’s plight, which is the motive of my action. They represent different interests I have and thus refer to my will, rather than the object deemed as separate or distinct from me and upon which I act. Nonetheless, we can self-consciously recognise what we aim for only a posteriori, or using an action (or affect) we have undertaken as our reference point. Schopenhauer’s distinction between a deed and a wish likewise emphasises the previous:

“The only matter for self-consciousness is the act of will, together with its absolute mastery over members of the body, which is really meant by ‘what I will’. And it is only the use of this mastery, i.e. *the deed*, that first stamps it, even for self-consciousness, as an act of will. For as long as it is in process of becoming it is called a *wish*, when ready, a *decision*; but its being this is proven to self-consciousness only by the *deed*: for until that it is alterable... [An agent] can wish opposed things, but will only one of them: and even to self-consciousness only the deed first reveals which one it is.” (FW, 42)

Either valuing George as an individual in his own right drives me or I aim to exploit him as I would any other object. Only the action demonstrates the more prominent constituent of my character or will. Another distinction he draws is between what ‘I’ *think* I can do and what I *genuinely* will. Only what I do (or have done) represents my will:

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<sup>59</sup> He puts it in the following manner: “This specially and individually determined constitution of the will, because of which the reaction to the same motives is a different one in each human being, makes up what we call his *character*, and indeed, since it is known not *a priori* but through experience, his *empirical character*” (FW, 68).

“In each one of us, even the best of human beings, there rise up impure, mean, wicked thoughts and wishes either from external occasion, from aroused affect or from internal annoyance: but he is not morally responsible for these and should not let them weigh on his conscience. For they display merely what *the human being in general*, not what *he* who is thinking them, would be capable of doing.” (*OBM*, 168)

For Schopenhauer then, we are not what we think, but what we do. We recognise who or what we are (i.e., gain self-knowledge) by reflecting over what we have done, not by what we wished or thought about doing. By reflecting on our actions and their motives and thus unifying them through the faculty of reason, we can acquire a picture of the fundamental mainsprings of our actions. I can be moved by perception of George as someone who has his own will with whom I identify or as someone I can exploit for my (or someone else’s) ends. The previous represents different stances on George; they are disinterestedness or the purposive stance. Moreover, how George *appears* is different given the stance we take on him: either as ‘willing’ or as an ‘object among objects’, as no different to anything or anyone else.

We find the same distinction between *Motiv* and *Triebfeder* also in correlate concepts, which Schopenhauer uses such as *Instinkt* (instinct), *Trieb* (drive) and *Antrieb* (impulse). Each one refers to the ‘will’ independent from cognition, but they play a substantial role in making a cognition *motivating* or *effective*. They also play a substantial role in explaining the effectiveness of a cognition as conditions for the possibility of this effectiveness. Thus, we should not confuse mainsprings for motives, which are the recognisable instantiations of the former in the objects of our cognition:

“...the motive also acts only on the assumption of an inner impulse, that is to say, of a definite disposition or quality of the will, called its *character*. The motive in each case gives this only a decided direction; individualises it for the concrete case” (*WRII*, 342).

“...only on the presupposition that such a will is present and, in the particular case, that it is of a certain constitution, do the causes directed towards it, here called motives, have an effect” (*FW*, 68)

*Triebfeder* then concerns *the will* not the cognition that fits with what we will. We can only recognise what we will (i.e., make the will a target of our cognition or reflection) using our actions and their motives as the basis for this recognition or self-cognition. Self-knowledge requires us to ‘make an object’ of ourselves, i.e., to perceive ourselves as something distinct and separate from us. To recognise that our action is an instantiation of willing, as opposed to a mechanical response to an object, it is, I believe, preferable to translate *Triebfeder* as a ‘driving force’, ‘impulse’ or ‘mainspring’<sup>60</sup> of an action and not its ‘incentive’.

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<sup>60</sup> I will use all three interchangeably to refer to the same thing: the constituent of our character that lends efficacy to our cognitions.

I will elaborate on the above distinction before I move on. A ‘mainspring’ is distinct from a ‘motive’ in that the former is a rational categorisation of the different interests that we take in the targets of our cognition; these interests arise in particular cases as (abstract or intuitive) motives for action. The logical difference between them is that one is broader in scope than the other. Since our motives are instantiations of our mainsprings as reflected in the objects of our cognition, the latter are broader in scope.<sup>61</sup> The mainspring of our action explains why we acted or responded to cognition X and not Y, but likewise why we respond in manner Xa and not Xb, where both are equally possible. We can say that a mainspring is a condition for the possibility of an action (or an *affection*) correlative to the cognition of something (an object). We can have epistemic access to our mainsprings, i.e., by reflecting on our actions and their motives. Our mainsprings are constructs of the faculty of reason following the will-body identity and the intellect-will distinction. We do not have *immediate epistemic access* to a mainspring, but we *identify* with it if and only if we (re)act to something. Therefore, it is only possible to acquire self-knowledge and a recognition of our mainsprings by assessing what motivated us to act and we use that as a model. We have no cognition of our ‘mainsprings’, ‘impulses’ or ‘driving forces’, but only of their expression in an action. Using the will-body identity, we can reconstruct a *picture* of our mainsprings and how they hang together, which Schopenhauer calls our ‘empirical character’. We can call this our ‘self-image’ for brevity. Accordingly, our self-image is a construct based on our actions and motives, which we unify using the faculty of reason like pieces of a puzzle or picture.<sup>62</sup>

In addition, it is important to bear in mind that motives are *objects* in the world, e.g. an apple or George’s dilemma. The mainspring of an action captures *why*, if at all, object X and not Y motivated us. A mainspring does not *relate* to an object as a motive does. The mainspring is the cognition of the will via its effects on objects, i.e., he also calls this self-cognition. Mainsprings are how the will expresses itself through its identical object, i.e., the body. Unlike a motive, mainsprings are inferences from the cognition of an object (including one’s action and motives) to the particular quality of the *will* underpinning it.

Determining our mainsprings requires the will-body identity and thus a different stance on our (or someone else’s) actions than the willing stance. We act in the first place because of a mainspring, but we do not always have self-conscious access to the fact that, in this moment, our action expresses mainspring X and not Y. At any moment, we know what motives lead us to act, but not the mainsprings of those motives. We encounter motives

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<sup>61</sup> There is equally an epistemic difference between the two that I hope will become clearer as we proceed.

<sup>62</sup> The relevant passage for the previous is the following: “I do not have cognition of my will as a whole, in its unity, in perfect accordance with its essence; rather I cognise it only in its individual acts” (WR, 126). The passage continues by claiming he has, “presented the identity of the will and the body only provisionally; but this identity... can only be established by raising immediate consciousness, concrete cognition, to rational knowledge or transferring it to abstract cognition. On the other hand, by its nature it can never be demonstrated, i.e. derived as mediate cognition from some other immediate source, precisely because it is itself the most immediate cognition there is; if we do not grasp it as such and keep hold of it we will wait in vain to get it back again somehow in a mediate way, as derived cognition” (WR, 127).

*prior* to or *instantaneously* with our responses to something. To *know* the mainsprings of an action requires us to contemplate on our or someone else's actions. It is for this reason that we do not have the same *epistemic* relationship to our mainsprings that we do to motives, even though we identify with them upon an (re)action.<sup>63</sup> We can reflect on and recognise our mainsprings only after the action (or the bodily response) has taken place; prior to that, we identify with them and (re)act. We *live* our mainsprings, so they *precede* our recognition. To recognise them, we must take a different stance on our actions. Therefore, our character is distinct from our will by being 'us' seen as from another perspective. Our character is not a direct cognition of the will, but its *construct* or *representation* according to the faculty of reason that unifies a picture consisting of our motives and actions based on the will-body identity.

Schopenhauer warns us to be cautious of an error often made in the inference from the motive and the action to the mainspring. The inference should be in accordance with the limits of cognition in general; otherwise, we would have to concede that the inference is no more than a meaningless product of pure reason. The previous are the limits of Kant's transcendental idealism, which Schopenhauer defends while slightly altering and finally summarising under the PSR. Exceeding the limits of possible cognition can lead us to false inferences and self-deception, according to Schopenhauer. For example, we can act out of an *apparently* altruistic motive, e.g., helping George, whilst the mainspring of our action is, in fact, egoism. He gives us the example of someone who performs 'good' deeds in life by complying or abiding by a moral code grounded on a creationist world-view (*OBM*, 195). The mainspring of her action, and thus her compliance with the moral code, stems from the prospect of personal salvation and eternal life in heaven. The prospect of heavenly life is what lends *efficacy* to the moral code and thereby leads her to comply with that code; her actions and reasons are egoistic. This is not immediately recognisable to her or third-person observers of her actions. She reasons that her love of God drives her actions, without noticing that her love rests on her personal prospects of salvation. If we gave her a thought-experiment or even a fact that undermined or removed the possibility of her salvation and heavenly afterlife, then she would change her reasons and actions. Consequently, the limits of cognition forbid positive statements about what something is *in itself* and so independent from *our* cognition, that is, the being in itself of something as distinct from its being known (cf. *WR II*, 198). If she adhered to those limits in her reasons and actions, then the efficacy of the moral code and her compliance with it would be undermined. She would no longer be as driven to comply with it as before or her grounds for compliance would diminish. This shows that she was not altruistically driven: she did not care for the recipient's wellbeing, but indirectly for her own.

Notice, however, that the act of helping someone in the above example is the same irrespective of its mainspring. The action is the same irrespective of whether she helped him

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<sup>63</sup> To put the previous simply: we do not always know what we are doing. We can act habitually or spontaneously, or unreflectively, but, in all cases, it is we who are acting based on some aim or end.

out of compliance to a moral code or because she cared for him for his sake. This shows the elusiveness of the distinction between the motive and the mainspring of an action. We can act to help another while driven by a *personal* benefit in heaven, i.e., we trade a short-term interest for a long-term gain. To explain our care for the recipient we require an insight into aesthetic contemplation: that what we see as an object for the will is also the representation of willing, striving etc in its own right. We need to be able to identify with something other than ourselves. Thus, for Schopenhauer, we cannot *possibly* have compassion for him unless we assume the disinterestedness stance in relation to him, i.e., unless we see him as ‘willing’ in his own right (more on this below).

According to Schopenhauer, the egoistic agent will always find another opportunity, reason and world-view that allows her to express her egoism. She can change the target of her egoism, or she may be less inclined to hide her egoism behind world-views that permit her to help George *for her sake* while claiming that she does it because she cares for him. We can encourage her to be honest about herself, but we cannot change her.

In sum, different mainsprings can drive our actions even if the actions themselves appear the same. However, without an action, we cannot possibly *know* what anyone wills and so *know* the constituents of their character that are the mainsprings. Actions do not make mainsprings transparent, but without an action on (or so a response to) something we cannot possibly have a reference point from which to construct the self-image that is necessary for grounding and fleshing out the concept of character and of a mainspring.<sup>64</sup>

The following questions, which I will take up in the next section, will nuance the distinction between mainsprings and motives. How, in Schopenhauer’s sense, does a target of cognition move us? We know that we respond to something when we take an interest in it, but *what* do we take an interest in and why? Furthermore, what are the different kinds of interest we take in something? What part of the cognition has relevance *for us* and so makes it a motive or that motivates us in the first place and for what reason?

## 1.9 Wellbeing, Woe and the Pleasure in Willing Something

“Now the essence of a human being consists in the fact that his will strives, is satisfied, and strives anew, and so on and on, and in fact his happiness and wellbeing

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<sup>64</sup> It is important to bear in mind that Schopenhauer is describing and distinguishing two parts of our experiences that ordinarily come together under the so-called act of will. We never encounter an action or affect without a mainspring, nor do we encounter an action without an object or object-relation that triggered it. The real separation of the two is impossible for cognitive beings like us. His distinction and analysis of their differences is conceptual and an attempt to advance self-knowledge or offer an insight into the grounds of our actions. The will and intellect are intertwined and co-operative in our daily lives.

are nothing more than the rapid progress of this transition from desire to satisfaction and from this to a new desire, since the absence of satisfaction is suffering and the absence of a new desire is empty longing, languor, boredom” (WR, 287)

Schopenhauer’s concept of the mainspring of our actions as distinct from our motives is a product of our reason grounded on the will-body identity and the aesthetic contemplation it enables. We have different mainsprings because we take different kinds of interest in things. Let us assess an example of how our ‘interest’ cannot be reduced to self-interest.

When we ask an agent, ‘why did you drink that glass of orange juice?’ She might answer, ‘because I was thirsty’ or ‘because I desired it over an alcoholic beverage or water’. We may ask about other actions, too, for example, ‘why did you help George?’ She might answer ‘because I wanted to’ or ‘because I care about him’. In a way, all answers to such question are the same, i.e., that her actions’ ultimate ground is her will (some desire, want etc. which she possesses). What *explains* her actions is the ‘thirst’ or ‘desire’, i.e., the *change* in her, not the ‘object’ (or ‘target’ of her actions) independent from her. The object we react to and our thirst constitute a by-fit relationship, which Schopenhauer summarises using his correlation theory of cognition. He explains what we mean when we claim that we ‘*do* what we *will*’, or ‘*drink* because we are *thirsty*’, or ‘*choose* orange juice rather than alcohol or water because we *desire* orange juice’, in the following manner:

“If a human being *wills*, then he wills something: his act of will is in every case directed towards an object and can be conceived only in relation to one. So what does it mean to will something? It means: the act of will, which itself is at first only an object of self-consciousness, arises on the occasion of something that belongs to consciousness *of other things*, thus something that is an object for the cognitive faculty, an object that, in this relation, is called a *motive* and at the same time is the material of the act of will, in the sense that the act of will is directed towards it, i.e. aims at some alteration in it, or reacts to it. The whole being of the act of will consists in this *reaction*.” (FW, 40)

In this relation of willing to the motive (i.e., the object), Schopenhauer finds room for the concept of a mainspring. The ‘I will’ of self-consciousness is vacuous and tells us what we already know, i.e., that we identify with ourselves and this identity is expressed in an act of will in response to some target of cognition. The target of the will and corresponding action taken together are more informative than the ‘I will or I want’ responses to our inquiry into what drives an action. The ground of *why* we did what we did is seemingly the exclamation that we *will* something *itself* without any supplementary explanation or reason. We seem to be content with claiming that we do something because we want it or we desire it, but no further information about the relationship between our desire, our action and the motive is given by the previous. Our inquiry ends with the claim that we want something because we want it, which tells us nothing about its *desirability* independent from our wants, but it does imply it. There is, for Schopenhauer, more to an action than that we identify with it by way of some desire or will.

It is true that it is *us* who desires some X and that it is not X itself that is *desirable* independent from us, i.e., from its subjective correlate. Nothing is desirable *in itself*, for him, and, moreover, this claim is meaningless. Something is only desirable in relation to *some* desire (of which there are others) and this desire is of *some* agent (of which there are others, with different desires). For example, water is desirable to someone thirsty, food to someone hungry. In sum, the desirability of objects leaves two mutually exclusive propositions:

- 1) *Our* desiring it.
- 2) *Its* being desirable *in itself*.

They are mutually exclusive because there would be no meaningful concept of ‘our’ (or a ‘sense of self’) unless there was at least *some* desirable object that was *not* desirable in itself. A condition of individuality and selfhood is that there are at least *some* differences in desire. In ordinary discourse, however, these two propositions seemingly describe the same thing in different ways, which is recognisable when we question agents about the grounds or the reasons for their actions. Schopenhauer recognises a difference between them, however, which underpins his conception of the will and its mainsprings. This difference is that *our* being someone who desires it rather than the object *itself* being desirable *in itself* is useful for preserving a fundamental distinction. That distinction is between ‘how our will relates to something’ (which makes it appear as it does) and ‘what that thing is *in itself* independent from us’. What motivates us about objects always bears some relation to *our* will. The proposition that something motivates us purely *for itself*, or in virtue *of itself*, if we mean this in the literal sense that whenever we perceive it we drop all other interests and concerns for *its* pursuit, then, this is a dubious proposition. The target of cognition appears as a motive when we will something in it or when we will it to be something *for us*. The same target of cognition can appear as though it represents willing, striving etc. when we no longer will something in it or will it ‘to be something’ for us.

Aesthetic contemplation supports the above. Disinterestedness is a *kind* of interest we take in the target, i.e., an interest in its striving or its ideal representation (i.e., its Idea). Equally, aesthetic pleasure is still a kind of pleasure; suffering precedes it. Furthermore, *desiring* something as from the perspective of *disinterested* subjects is not the same as desiring the ‘object’ *for itself* or *in itself*, which is meaningless. The concept of an ‘object in itself’ or disinterestedness in the sense of ‘not interested’, or the desirable ‘in itself’ irrespective of *our* desire, are all nonsensical concepts. When we aesthetically contemplate on something, it seizes to be an object because we changed our interest in it. Our motives change when we perceive something differently, but it does not necessarily change so much that it allows us to argue that nothing motivates or interests us. In sum, nothing is desirable *in itself*; things are desirable only in virtue of *someone’s* desire. This paints what might seem as a relativistic picture, but I think this is a misleading characterisation. We may construe it as *correlativity*, because although how something *appears* changes in accordance with our interest, the thing itself does not: it remains the same throughout by its reference.

To make sense of the concept of a mainspring, however, we should consider what is implicit to his claims about how urges relate to one another. His propositions imply that a



thirsty person cannot fail to experience water as a motive (i.e., as drinkable) along with the *urge* to drink it, irrespective of whether or not that urge is acted upon. Drinking water takes the foreground of his attention and only another urge (i.e., will) can supersede it. He may forgo his urge to drink to help someone who is in danger, but not fail to experience the urge. Urges relate to one another only and their relation is reflected in how motives relate and in how they *affect* us. The relations between urges differ from the relations between the urge and its corresponding motive (or object), however. How motives relate is *not* synonymous to how our *urges* relate, even though the former are reflections of the latter in the objects of our cognition. Furthermore, we cannot apply causality to relations between urges, because *affection* (or *sensation*) is a *precondition* for the application of causality that yields cognition of an object. Relations between our urges are predominantly preconscious, i.e., they precede our experience of an object and motive. Moreover, we err in attempting to comprehend how urges relate in terms of how objects (or motives) relate to one another, i.e., causally, because our urges precede and enable the application of causality.

I omit that my contentions will considerably stretch Schopenhauer's distinctions; my reasons for doing so will become apparent as we proceed. I will voice some of them now so we have a way into what follows. I think stretching him like this will help us better to make sense of the transition from his aesthetics to his ethics.

Schopenhauer's views on motivation propose the following insight: our urges do not relate causally. The claim that an object's being desirable *in itself* is nonsensical supplements the previous insight. I will work with the example of 'wanting orange juice' to make sense of the previous and demonstrate what this different relationship might be. Let us begin by making the bold claim that we do not want to drink orange juice because it is desirable *itself*. If orange juice *itself* were desirable, then we would want it every time we perceived it, irrespective of the circumstances. We want orange juice because of the *fluctuations* of our urges underpinned by the given ground of our character, as Schopenhauer calls it. Our urge to drink orange juice inseparably relates to our thirst, which is context-dependent and thus subject to fluctuations based on its relationship to other urges. Sometimes we are not very thirsty or have had so much orange juice that its mere mention disgusts us. Sometimes the motive to save someone's life supersedes our thirst. What is common in these instances is that we do not want the orange juice because of *itself*, but because of some *correlative change* in us, which we often fail to track in ordinary discourse. A change of state in us precedes an action we take upon something, but this change of state also partially explains why and how something motivates us. If some change of state in us ensured that something motivates us, then it represents our *aim* for a further change. For example, thirst precedes the urge to drink a glass of orange juice and its aim is satiety or, as he might say in a typically dramatic tone, the end of the suffering that is thirst. What, for him, are 'thirst' and 'satiety'? This is where his new terminology, namely, wellbeing (*Wohl*) and woe (*Wehe*), begins to do some work.

Whatever is a motive relates to wellbeing and woe. They characterise our will's relation to some target of cognition that *motivates* us. Something *motivates* us if it (promises to) bring about *change* Y in us, but it also presupposes that change X in us has occurred such that the promise of X's transition into Y is effective or motivating. He construes the previous

states as wellbeing and woe. He associates one's feelings, emotions, reflective choices and actions with their relationship to wellbeing and woe:

“What moves the will is solely wellbeing and woe as such, and taken in the widest sense of the word; just as conversely wellbeing and woe means ‘in accordance with a will, or against it’. Thus every motive must have a relation to wellbeing and woe.”  
(*OBM*, 198)

Wellbeing corresponds to what accords with our will and woe corresponds to what discords with it. A ‘will to something’ makes meaningful wellbeing and woe.<sup>65</sup> He leaves open how the ‘will’ and ‘something’ substantiate. Following projection of willing, we can identify with many different things and thus have different wills and corresponding motives, which means how wellbeing and woe relate to them in each case will differ.

There is a perplexity inherent to the above, which we recognise more clearly after we illustrate his battery of mainsprings, but I will try to bring forward some very preliminary remarks here. If wellbeing is a state that corresponds to the success of our willing, or to circumstances deemed to be in accordance with a will, then how do we apprehend the ascetic mainspring's aim to bring about an agent's own woe, or even malice's aim to bring about another's woe irrespective of one's own wellbeing. Before a more elaborate assessment of the various mainsprings, a comment merits its place to nuance our discussion of wellbeing and woe. Schopenhauer construes these two terms as having an extended application, but he fell short of demonstrating this application to us. In other words, what wellbeing and woe *mean* for ‘egoism’ (or to an egoist) is different from what they mean for another mainspring, i.e., ‘compassion’ (or to the compassionate). The circumstances making us feel wellbeing and woe differ for compassion as juxtaposed to egoism. To make better sense of the previous difference, he should have introduced another distinction, namely, between the ‘successful application of the will’ (willing *as such*, i.e., successfully willing something) and the ‘successful attainment of our aims’ or ‘hitting the target with our action’ (i.e. successfully realising an end based on a particular mainspring). The former is broader than the latter. When we hit the target with an action we experience wellbeing if the action is successful in generating the particular outcome we aimed for; we feel woe when we fail to do so. The successful application of the will itself incites wellbeing by the circumstances being such that we *can* act in the first place, i.e., by whether or not we perceived a motive in the first

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<sup>65</sup> Schopenhauer defends this claim by arguing that every one of our choices and actions rests on the will, “I can do what I will: I can, *if I will*, give all that I have to the poor and so become one of them myself – if I *will* ! But I cannot *will* it, because the opposing motives have much too much power over me for me to be able to. By contrast, if I had another character, and indeed to the extent that I was a saint, then I would be able to will it; but then I would not be able to avoid willing it, and so would have to do it” (*FW*, 74). ‘Character’ refers to what the will appears as through the will-body identity. It refers to the empirical representation of the will, and thus a difference in character is another way of saying a difference in will, which is, in turn, a difference in the whole body and its corresponding urges. He further adds, “all these affections consists in their entering self-consciousness as something in accordance with the will or as something contrary to it” (*FW*, 39).

place irrespective of whether or not we acted upon it successfully. Thus, there are two types of wellbeing (and woe) concurrent with our actions.

For brevity, then, we can distinguish willing *itself* from a mainspring of an action or a constituent of the will. This distinction is subtle, but we recognise it when we notice that wellbeing can correspond to *any successful* action independent from its aim or its realisation. We experience wellbeing in the very *attempt* to attain something independently from our successfully attaining it. Both successful execution of *an* action and successful *attainment* or *realisation* of its aim produce wellbeing (and woe). We experience them in willing *itself*, *not only* from realising the aim or from hitting the target with an action.<sup>66</sup> We experience an urge to act or do something that is inherent to our urges and their discharge in goal-oriented activities, which brings us some ‘relief from suffering (boredom, lagour etc.)’ or wellbeing.

Let me elaborate on the above somewhat. To make this distinction psychologically tenable we can assess the *illusions* of satisfaction we are prone to when we find satisfaction difficult, which we touched upon briefly in the analysis of daydreams. Consider, e.g, a tired, thirsty traveler finding himself in the desert. He may know about optical illusions and mirages, but he knows nothing more than what he perceives about the topography he is in. The intensity of his thirst coupled with his lack of knowledge of the topography invokes an optical illusion of an oasis. He charges after it, focusing on the possibility of drinking and experiences wellbeing. We can explain this feeling as we explained aesthetic pleasure, i.e., as an alleviant. He feels it against the backdrop of his thirst (woe) and it works by redirecting his focus or conscious attention and efforts in the fixed direction of the oasis. This activity takes his attention away from his thirst into the motive whose successful outcome in action promises satiety. The successful exercise of our will brings with it a wellbeing independent from any specific aim, but we must not confuse this *by-product* of successfully acting with our realising the aim of our action. The latter stems from one of the mainspring, while the former has to do with *willing itself* and thus is inherent to any mainspring.

The mainsprings are preoccupied with the success and failure of some *particular* aim, not with doing something, anything whatsoever. At least, that is how we can distinguish different mainsprings over and beyond their broadly satisfying the urge to act. The urge to act concerns willing *itself*. It is necessary for the possibility of having aims in the first place and explains why we can have different aims or why willing can enable different patterns of activity. Thus, a mainspring is a particular direction through which the basic ‘urge to act or do something’ (willing itself or the will to life) finds its expression.

Each mainspring corresponds to *some* aim and has a by-fit relationship with a target of cognition.<sup>67</sup> Willing *itself* makes possible having *some* aim and having conflicting aims. In short, we have an inherent urge to act and attain pleasure from acting itself independent

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<sup>66</sup> This is a conclusion of Schopenhauer’s account often overlooked by the philosophical literature, but not by Nietzsche who made a great deal of the claim that there is pleasure in willing itself, even if it is grounded on pain or suffering (cf. GM III, 28). It seems that in some respects Nietzsche was a better reader and student of Schopenhauer and his philosophy than Schopenhauer himself.

<sup>67</sup> More on this below where I offer a potential definition of a mainspring in Schopenhauer’s philosophy.

from its direction or target. This *urge to act* underpins or accompanies our motives. It makes sense of what he means by affirmation of the will, which he describes in the following way:

“*The affirmation of the will* is the constant willing itself, undisturbed by any cognition, as it fills the lives of human beings in general...The basic theme of all the various acts of will is the satisfaction of needs that are inseparable from the healthy existence of the body, are already expressed in it, and can be reduced to the preservation of the individual and the propagation of the species. But indirectly, this enables a great variety of motives to gain control over the will and to produce the most diverse acts of will. Each of these is only a specimen or example of the will that appears here in general: what sort of specimen this is, what form the motive might take and impart to the satisfaction of needs – this is not essential. That willing in general occurs, and its degree of intensity, these are the issues here...For most human beings, this is what life is all about: they will, they know what they will, and they strive after it with enough success to protect them from despair and enough failure to keep them from boredom and its effects. A certain *cheerfulness* or at least *composure* emerges from this, which is not really changed by wealth or poverty:” (WR, 353; my emphasis)

The ‘cheerfulness’ or ‘composure’ he refers to above I associate with the wellbeing we feel when we succeed in willing or doing something. Affirmation of the will (or willing itself) explains conflicting aims, because they all *satisfy* this original and unyielding urge to act, albeit they do so in different ways.

Let us consider some objections to the above propositions. One objection we can put forward is that *some* cognition can only be ‘in accordance’ or ‘in discordance’ with our will, which implies that it is the ‘object’ that imparts efficacy on us or *moves* us, not our imparting efficacy on it or our perceiving it as efficacious due to our constitution. This grasps one side of the subject-object correlation (or will-motive correlation), however. Furthermore, it does not *explain* this efficacy or tell us why something X is efficacious while Y is not. It merely lists what is efficacious and what is not and it treats that efficacy as self-standing or independent from our contribution to it and the conditions under which we contribute to it. The following passage reveals his strategy for explaining the motivational efficacy of our cognitions:

“Only motives can affect the will externally. But they can never alter the will itself, because their power is based on the presupposition that the will is precisely what it is. All that they can do is to alter the direction of its striving, i.e. get the will to use a different path to search for the thing that it invariably seeks” (WR, 321)

A motive’s ‘power’, seemingly meaning its motivational efficacy, presupposes a definitive aim (or will). We should construe the phrase ‘alter the will’ in this passage as altering the aim, not changing the motive (i.e., the object). Let us consider an example to illustrate this point. If we aim ‘to own a television’, all that a motive or cognition can provide is the means of doing so. It gives us the objects or object-relations that must pertain to realise our aim to ‘own a television’. It can determine whether I *can* purchase it, or ask a friend for a disposable

one, or steal one. Nevertheless, the cognition *alone* cannot possibly *change my will* to own a television. If the aim to do something is set, that is, if it is an act of will, then, his correlation theory of cognition suggests that only another *aim* can change it, not another object. Where it seems to us that another object changed our will, this object correlates to another aim that we possess and that the latter took precedence or superseded it. For example, assuming that we realise we cannot purchase a television and our friend does not have a spare one, we may be motivated to steal it. We can supersede the motive to steal by a motive to provide for our family or to preserve our freedom under the law. What seems like our letting go of an aim and constituent of our will is one aim superseding another, however.

It is crucial to remember that aims (or mainsprings) relate differently to one another than they relate to their objects (or motives), but also to how objects relate to one another. An object enables us to express and thus realise our aims. Objects have a wholly subordinate or passive role. This is what Schopenhauer seems to capture when he argues that “external influence can never get the will to will something genuinely different from what it has willed before” (WR, 321). The experience of a change in our will presupposes another direction of the will that supersedes it in priority or ‘power’. Therefore, the change in will cannot come from the objects of cognition. Objects occasion these changes, but do not determine them.<sup>68</sup> Changes to our willing happen from within and are reflected on the objects of our cognition.

The fact that different agents do not respond to an object O in the same way supports Schopenhauer’s claim that our will imparts efficacy on O, rather than O being efficacious in and of itself. Likewise, an agent A does *not* respond to O in the same manner at all times. If O’s efficacy derives from O *itself*, then different agents would respond to O in the same manner irrespective of time and place. It is true that O *causes* a response in us, but we should recall that the stance we assume in applying causality is the impure subject cognition. Thus, causality is not a pure explanation of events, but presupposes a subjective correlate and thus a reference point: the willing subject who perceives a world as enabling his will. Without O we cannot possibly respond to anything, because the avenue for action that cognition of an object enables would be lacking. However, what *explains* our responding to O instead of O\* has to do with *us*, not O. This is left out from our causal account of the relationship between O and A, because its so-called explanation starts and ends with how A and O relate. Thus, to make sense of individual differences in responses to something, but also the *motivational efficacy* of O at different times for A, we must commit to the claim that only the *will* imparts motivational efficacy, which leads us to perceive any O as a motive M. If we notice a change in the motivational efficacy of O at some time, then O has not changed; we have, instead. Alternatively, we can argue a change in the structure of our mainsprings has occurred at the *interval* between the current motivational efficacy of O and its previous lack.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Even this change in *us* Schopenhauer is suspicious of, as we will see below.

<sup>69</sup> For more on this point see Kossler (2008).

What, then, are wellbeing and woe apart from their explaining the mainspring of an action? They have their own objective and subjective correlates.<sup>70</sup> In self-consciousness, we experience them as inclinations for or against something. In consciousness of other things, they are bodily states corresponding to electro-chemical variations *caused* by our body being in the presence of some objects at some particular time and in relation to certain conditions. We recognise them via our first-person experience of willing something, which determines their *identical* and *intentional* object. Their identical object is the bodily state corresponding to our acts of will (affects, urges, actions etc.), whereas their intentional object is the target. We should not confuse the intentional object for what *caused* us to act or *incited* an action, however. Schopenhauer did not distinguish ‘intentional’ from ‘causal’ objects. Nonetheless, his example of the ways people can be led astray by superstition implies it:

“Even if the will has already taken its definite and unalterable course in the form of a character, and willing itself infallibly occurs on the occasion of a motive, error can falsify its expressions. This is because delusive motives similar to the real ones can slip in and suppress them; so for instance when superstition imposes imaginary motives that compel someone to adopt a course of action entirely opposed to what his will would otherwise adopt under the circumstances: Agamemnon kills his daughter, a miser distributes alms out of pure egoism in the hope of one day being paid back a hundredfold, etc.” (WR, 177)

Reason permits agents to act deliberately, but likewise to act on something not immediately or directly present in the circumstances. The causal object we can construe as a trigger or a spark of the action, but we should distinguish it from its destination, endpoint or aim. This distinction is similar to that between the efficient and the final cause laid out by Aristotle<sup>71</sup>, but the concept of cause when we are discussing Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will and the correlation theory of cognition can be misleading, because the will’s relationship to its object is not causal. The will’s relationship to the object of cognition is a by-fit relationship, whereas the object’s relationship to the immediate object that is our body is causal, because our body is our will seen as from the perspective of the impure subject of cognition.

We should thus distinguish between two parts of any motive, which Schopenhauer did not do so explicitly. Firstly, there is what *causes* our body to move or act, which is only *seen as* a cause from the perspective of the impure subject of cognition and thus is limited to the objective picture. Secondly, there is what we are *moving* towards, i.e., the aim or target of a bodily movement, which occasions when we will something (directly or indirectly), which is the intentional object. The latter can be part of what *caused* our body to move or (re)act,

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<sup>70</sup> Finally, he argues that all objects of our experience are both representation and will, whether or not they move us. I have left this step and its discussion for consideration in relation to his metaphysics. My aim here is to give an epistemological account of the driving forces or mainsprings of our actions in preparation for an understanding of his account of compassion and morality.

<sup>71</sup> Aristotle (1999: Bk. V, Ch. 2).

but not necessarily. The cause is always in the current circumstances we find ourselves in, but the circumstances we are in are not *necessarily* the target of our will. In short, we do not always aim for what causes us to react. Consider, for example, how we feel when we hear a story from a friend about a date he went on with his girlfriend, which makes us miss *our* partner. The *cause* of our response is our friend's story, the target is *our* partner who is *not* directly involved in the story.<sup>72</sup> What permits us to think of our partner and so react to our friend's story through a change in state is presumably the abstract concept of 'girlfriend' or 'date', which, in turn, became a *motive* for us. The abstract concept created a bridge between *his* story about *his* girlfriend and *our* partner, which is the target of our will. Unlike motives, wellbeing and woe are not objects *causing* changes in us, or *targets* of the will. The 'cause' and 'target' are objects in the world we *see as* separate or distinct from us.<sup>73</sup> Wellbeing and woe are inherent to us. They represent how we relate to causal and intentional objects.

Wellbeing and woe are not objects or *representations* the way an external object is a representation, e.g., a stone, but are modifications of our will. We can say they are identical objects or represent changes in the identical object of the will, i.e., our body. Schopenhauer puts it as follows, although the terms he uses in this passage are 'pleasure' and 'pain',

“But it is quite wrong to call pain and pleasure representations: they are nothing of the sort, but rather immediate affections of the will in its appearance, the body: a forced, momentary willing or not-willing of the impression the body is undergoing. There are only a few, specific impressions on the body that can be immediately considered as mere representations and are thus exceptions to what has just been said; these impressions do not stimulate the will and it is only through them that the body becomes an immediate object of cognition, because, as an intuition in understanding, the body is mediated just like all other objects.” (WR, 125)

Pain and pleasure (or wellbeing and woe) are *affects for* and *against* something. We *identify* with wellbeing and woe in a manner that we do *not* with other objects, which includes those objects that motivate us. He defines them as “final ends” (OBM, 198) of our actions, which presumably means they are fundamental reasons or grounds for acting. When we perceive them as bodily vicissitudes or states, then we do so as from another perspective and thus we treat them as objects in the world, which we can pursue. However, we can only ever pursue them if they somehow relate to wellbeing and woe. Recall that the motivational efficacy of

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<sup>72</sup> We can argue that just my friend's mention of his girlfriend constitutes that my girlfriend is indirectly a part of the cognition or object that caused the bodily vicissitude in me. There is an argument and consideration available to us here regarding how the causal aspect of any cognition relates to the driven or wilful aspect, but I cannot consider it at length here. There is room for a distinction, even if one in degree, e.g., of the token-type variety. Our friend spoke about the same type, i.e., girlfriend, but a different token, i.e., *his* girlfriend, though it reminded me of *my* girlfriend since I am also in a relationship. For the sake of clarity, however, it is important for us to separate the causal from the intentional object of the will, and we ought to consider them separately if our interest is in determining the direction of the will or the agent's aim. The identical object of the will is distinct from the previous two, however, and is, I believe, important for making sense of wellbeing and woe and their status in his philosophy. Coincidentally, we find a very similar distinction in Wittgenstein (cf. 1953, §476).

<sup>73</sup> This picture becomes somewhat complicated when we consider the ascetic mainspring and ascetic resignation.

objects *corresponds to* the particular change in us characterised as experiencing wellbeing and woe, but this efficacy is distinct from the particular object since all objects that motivate follow the same pattern of corresponding to a particular change, i.e., to wellbeing and woe. Motives reflect our aiming for wellbeing and woe, but are *not* wellbeing and woe, even if we are able to turn wellbeing and woe into objects of cognition using the will-body identity.

Our body is an object among objects and thus, by extension, wellbeing and woe are cognisable *as objects*, i.e., bodily changes. We can only cognise our body as an object among objects if we assume the stance of a weakly affected subject of willing (cf. *WR*, 126). We can say wellbeing and woe have their objective correlates, but not that they *are* objects of cognition, like a stone or a duck, because the identical or immediate object that is our body differs from other objects. They have an irreducible closeness to us, or, to put it differently, we *identify* with them in a way that we do *not* with other objects in the world.

We cannot claim motives *are* wellbeing and woe, but that *if* something *motivates* us, then it “has a relation to wellbeing and woe” (*OBM*, 198) by promising, minimally, the successful execution or discharge of the will. This discharge is always in a specific direction or possesses a specific aim and thus requires an act of identification with *something in the world* through which it expresses itself. Likewise, inherent to every act of will is the ‘final end’ of *willing itself*, which is simply the urge to act. Even if the object we aim for and that motivates us is wellbeing or woe *as such*, that is, if we aim for woe directly, not indirectly through an external object or activity, then this must have its intentional object (i.e. the body) and relate to wellbeing and woe.<sup>74</sup> Our body *corresponds to* our will. Wellbeing is a bodily state *seen as an object* or object-relation; so, we can will ‘wellbeing’ as we do any object and thus treat it as a motive. Nevertheless, in doing so, the motive that is wellbeing (i.e., a particular bodily state) must have a relationship to a mainspring, i.e., be driven by egoism, compassion etc., and so relate to wellbeing and woe.

Let us use an example to illustrate how wellbeing and woe feature in our actions. I am hungry and the sandwich in front of me strikes me as a motive. I can construe my hunger as a part of the causal process, i.e., as part of objects relating causally to one another and so see my hunger as representing a particular bodily state. For example, the sandwich *caused* consumption and consumption *caused* nourishment, each one is an object or object-relation, and they represent different bodily states. We cannot *separate* what made the sandwich efficacious from the object that is the body and the state that preceded consumption, i.e., from hunger. Equally, we cannot separate the previous from the ensuing state corresponding to nourishment. The action entails both an object (seen as a motive) and an aim. However, for any particular mainspring and its corresponding motive, only *one* of the two bodily states (i.e., hunger or nourishment) describes the mainspring or contributes to its characterisation. If cognition of a sandwich incites consumption, then what we aim for with the action and

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<sup>74</sup> I will argue that Schopenhauer describes and defines the mainsprings of our actions in this manner, i.e. as aiming for either the wellbeing or woe of ‘some’ recipient (whether that recipient is us or another with whom we identify).



what characterises the mainspring is the subsequent not the preceding bodily state. Hunger motivates, but it does not reveal our aim and so the mainspring of our subsequent action. A preceding state of hunger (i.e., woe) is as the bow whose string is extended or tensed; it prepares the arrow for release whose target is hitherto undetermined aside from the urge to act itself.<sup>75</sup> In short, our hunger does not guarantee consumption, but it does guarantee some particular action or discharge, only any discharge whatsoever. The target alone tells us what we *aim* for given our state (e.g., hunger) and so what characterises the particular direction of our will. Accordingly, the state that follows a *successful* execution of the action via the attainment of its aim (e.g., wellbeing following our consumption or nourishment) shows the action's *aim* and thereby allows us to recognise its mainspring.<sup>76</sup> We use the change of state and specifically the latter state to characterise the mainspring of our action.<sup>77</sup>

The will is always directional: it aims at something in the world to change it against the backdrop of changes noticeable in its identical object, i.e., the body. The aim is not the preceding state; otherwise, no change would be needed because we would already be where we aimed to be. The subsequent bodily state reflects the mainspring of an action (more on this below). Hungry people who consume something *aim* for nourishment, not for hunger. The cessation of hunger is identical to aiming for nourishment, if not its pleonasm. Hunger motivates us, but it does not tell us what particular object we strive for to satiate ourselves. The distinction between what *motivates* and what *drives* is crucial. There is 'pleasure' in the release from hunger (i.e., the release of the tensed string, which is pleasure in *willing itself* and thus in goal-oriented action) and 'pleasure' after our hitting the target with the action. Schopenhauer did not make this distinction, but it is immensely useful for ironing out some conceptual difficulties found in his description of the mainsprings of our actions juxtaposed to his views on willing itself. Moreover, this distinction accords with his philosophy of the will and correlation theory of cognition.

Given the above, are we not tempted to categorise all of our motives in terms of their relationship to *our* wellbeing and woe as agents? Does Schopenhauer defend a motivational monism of the egoistic sort?<sup>78</sup> I will argue his distinctions and claims encourage us to resist this conclusion, which would lead us to construe willing *itself* as egoistic or that we can explain all actions as aiming for *our own* wellbeing. Not all actions aim for the continued existence or welfare of *our* body. We can aim for another agent's wellbeing and so support another with *her* aims or to promote the successful execution of *her* willing. We can even aim for *our* woe (i.e. to sabotage *our* aims). Recognition of another's woe sometimes drives

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<sup>75</sup> Schopenhauer uses the following analogy for the same relation I am considering: "By the way, this might be the place to note an odd likeness: the relation between desire and deed has a completely accidental but nonetheless exact analogy in the relation between electrical accumulation and electrical discharge" (WR, 327).

<sup>76</sup> Remember that we should distinguish between the pleasures that follow all successful executions of the will from the will's particular aim manifest as the mainspring of our action. The claim that we seek pleasure (or seek to avoid pain) fails to grasp the previous distinction.

<sup>77</sup> It is crucial to note here that this aim need not be self-conscious or self-reflective, and perhaps the concept of aim leads us astray here even though I believe it is the best way we can understand what he means by the extended concept of the 'will' (*Wille*).

<sup>78</sup> For more on motivational monism see Cartwright (2008).

us to aim for *our* woe or it drives us to promote *her* wellbeing. The previous undermine the proposition that our only mainspring is egoism or that we can reduce willing *itself* to egoism. His analysis of the basis of morals rests on our overcoming egoism, which he calls “the great mystery of ethics” (*OBM*, 201), is a further example why we cannot reduce willing to egoism.

We can conclude, then, that wellbeing and woe reveal how a mainspring drives us correlative to its motives. Motives are motivationally efficacious objects and mainsprings are constituents of our will. Motives *cause* movements of the body, not the will. Rather, they occasion or activate the will, which then expresses itself in bodily movement. Mainsprings explain the motivational efficacy of objects that *caused* bodily movement. Between motives and mainsprings are wellbeing and woe, which distinguish moving ‘towards’ something or ‘away from’ it. They are modifications of our will that relate to particular objects and thus explain their motivational efficacy. We can perceive them as objects because of the will-body identity, but something motivates us because it facilitates a change in us characterised by wellbeing or woe.

## 1.10 The Mainsprings of our Actions

Schopenhauer does not offer an explicit definition of a ‘mainspring’ (*Triebfeder*). The above reflections come at a cost of substantially stretching his claims, but I strove to stay as close to his distinctions (and what is implicit to them) as I could. For the most part, I worked with his primary distinction between the will and the intellect, his correlation theory of cognition, the will-body identity and the individual differences in willing. In this section, I will suggest a definition of the various mainsprings of our actions using what we have discussed so far.

A mainspring is a constituent of the will that characterises the different *aims*, not the *causes* of our actions. We can distinguish three aspects of our various mainsprings, which contribute to their definition. First, the ‘recipient’ of the action. Second, the aim of the action based on how the recipient’s wellbeing and woe relate to the action. Third, the target of the action or that upon which we act, which reflects the previous features.

Consider the following example couple of examples to illustrate how we can apply the above to determine someone’s mainspring. George turned down the volume to the television after recognising his spouse Nancy had fallen asleep. The motive to turn down the volume arose in circumstances where a) there is a loud television and b) Nancy is asleep. The recipient of the *action* is Nancy. Whereas, the *target* of his action is the loud television. His aim was to promote Nancy’s wellbeing. Notice that he does not perceive Nancy as an *object*, but as a person who *needs* sleep. He identifies with her and her needs. In that moment, he forgot about himself and his interests of enjoying the television. In short, projection of willing on her *enabled* him to act for *her sake*, i.e., to promote *her* wellbeing. Let us consider

another example: Nancy eats the last piece of cake at breakfast. The circumstances of being one piece left over represents a motive for consumption that led to her eating it. The action's recipient was herself. Its target was the last piece of cake and her aim was to promote her own wellbeing.

Notice in both cases that the mainspring is not the motive (i.e., the object that *caused* the bodily movement), nor the action itself, but in how *both* relate to the action's recipient. Often we focus only on the object or on the action and so conflate the *relationship* between the agent and the object(s) by making our conception either too agent-centered or too object-centered.

Let us consider an example of how we may go wrong and how we can clear up any confusions. I want to help Joe pass his exam because I know the difficult circumstances that have befallen him. The mainspring of my action is *not* apparent in the motive 'to help him', or in the action. Nevertheless, my action and motive imply the mainspring of my action. As third-person observers of actions, we may be inclined to project an aim on my action. In the previous case, we project a compassionate aim on my action to help Joe. Nevertheless, my mainsprings are not transparent or accessible to third-person observers. Unbeknownst to those inclined to construe my action as altruistic, I helped Joe knowing his character and expecting his indebtedness to me: I helped him to gain his favour. Alleviating Joe's suffering did not *drive* my action. However, his suffering did *cause* me to help him and *motivated* me, but on different grounds and so based on different aims.

We should not allow the examples I presented above to mislead us, however. We do not *necessarily* have self-conscious access to the mainsprings of our actions as I assume. We should distinguish our self-conscious access to our mainsprings from our acting based on a mainspring. I may have a self-interest in Joe faring well because I want to gain his favor in return for my help and *this* drives me to help him. His suffering, which is the target of my action, provided my mainspring with an opportunity to express itself. Schopenhauer puts it in the following manner:

“But Malebranche is right: every natural cause is only an occasional cause, it only gives the occasion, the opportunity for the appearance of that one and indivisible will that is the in-itself of all things and whose gradual objectivation is this whole visible world. The cause only brings about the emergence of the will, allows it to become visible at this place, in this time. To this extent, the emergence is dependent on the cause; but the entirety of appearance, its inner essence, is not: this essence is the will itself, which the principle of sufficient reason does not apply to, and which is, accordingly, groundless. No thing in the world has a cause of its existence *per se* and in general; rather, there is only a cause for it to be precisely here and precisely now.”  
(WR, 162)

In other words, what appears as my acting for his wellbeing when I help him is, in fact, my aiming to promote my wellbeing, which I conceal in the act that shows I care about Joe for *his sake*. I will likely *deny* that egoism drove me and deceive a third-person observer. I may even be ignorant of my own selfishness and boast of how caring I am. I later discover that I

am indignant over his refusal to help me when I request it. I expect him to reciprocate, which shows that my *own* wellbeing drove me all along.

Schopenhauer contends that our character is composed of all the mainsprings. This permits him to claim that agents do not lack a mainspring, but that they are often more prone to one (or a few) over others. There is a priority between our mainsprings that defines our character and makes us *individuals*. Our mainsprings are not fully *transparent* to us because we are always acting and reasoning in accordance with them, rather than reflecting on them. Moreover, we cannot possibly fail to act in accordance with our mainsprings; without them, we would no longer be the individuals that we are. This proposition underpins his pessimism about the change in willing, but, as we see with ascetic resignation, he does not and cannot give up all hope in this change (more on this below). Nevertheless, self-deception or errors in self-cognition are possible, as we saw previously with the example of someone who loses their belief in an afterlife and over God's decree. Where we *cannot* err, however, is in the recognition that there is a *recurrence* in our actions. This recurrence can partially shed light on the mainsprings of our actions. He calls this our 'empirical character':

“Just as the same theme can be presented in a hundred variations, so too the same character can be presented in a hundred very different life histories. But as different as the external influences may be, the empirical character that expresses itself in the course of a life must, however it turns out, objectify the intelligible character precisely, since it adapts its objectivation to the given material of factual circumstances.” (WR, 183f)

For example, I consistently help people in need without expecting reciprocity irrespective of the context or person, which leads me and other people to recognise not only that I have compassion, but that I am a compassionate person. If I perform *one* compassionate action out of a thousand egoistic ones, even if compassion *did* drive my action that one time, it is *insufficient* to determine that I am compassionate or that it defined my *character*. It shows that part of my battery of mainsprings is compassion, but everyone is composed of all the mainsprings, according to him. In *my* case, compassion expresses itself rarely whereas for another it does so more often. Someone's character or temperament is a wider concept not encapsulated by one or two actions, but determined by the connected history of her actions, according to Schopenhauer.

Compassion is one of my mainsprings, it can sometimes drive me in some moments, but these moments do *not* determine my character.<sup>79</sup> It is likely that I made a cognitive error and thus did not act out of compassion at all; or maybe I did act out of compassion and I

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<sup>79</sup> This constitutes the distinction between empirical and intelligible character; the former concerns what I am likely to or most often motivated to do, whereas the latter what I can *possibly* be motivated to do given the object or circumstance.

latter *feel* regret when I reflect on it due to the dominance of my egoism.<sup>80</sup> For example, when I reflect on how I helped her and did not seek or expect recompense, I realise I missed a chance to gain her favour; or I allowed *her* to gain an upper hand by luring me into acting for her sake ‘for nothing’. Compassion is a constituent of our will, but it can lack the priority in relation to other mainsprings to constitute a compassionate character. Therefore, there is a difference between our constituent parts and our character. Mainsprings are common to everyone, that is, we all have the same battery of mainsprings. How these mainsprings hang together or relate to one another and so are expressed in actions over time is what distinguishes *us* from other human beings. Schopenhauer uses the distinction between the intelligible and empirical character to flesh out the previous. The former is purely formal and given *a priori*, whereas the latter we recognise *a posteriori* by the relationship between our original ‘temperament’ and the ‘circumstances’ in which we find ourselves.<sup>81</sup>

In considering the mainsprings of our actions, we are no longer concerned with the objects of our actions, but with the fundamental constituents of our will or individuality, which is what makes objects *efficacious* in the first place. We are not concerned with the circumstances in which we are going to act, but with the aims towards which we are prone to acting given some circumstance. There are, for him, four recognisable mainsprings. Three are explicitly described in *OBM*, the fourth<sup>82</sup> is implicit to his thoughts on asceticism and negation of the will to life.

Schopenhauer tells us that for the most part, the concern for our *own* wellbeing drives us, and only by derivation are we also concerned for our own woe. This does not mean that wellbeing is positive and woe is negative. On the contrary, he argues that our woe is primary and hence announces itself. Our aim to alleviate our woe reflects our egoism. When we try to alleviate our own suffering, we aim to promote our own wellbeing. For example, *our* state of woe *motivates* us to alleviate it (i.e., presents itself as an object that motives us to react negatively towards it by moving away from it) under the presupposition that we *aim* for our wellbeing, i.e., we are driven by egoism. The alleviation of *our own* woe corresponds to our aiming for our wellbeing. We only try to alleviate *our* woe if we aim for our own wellbeing.

The above distinction between one’s ‘state’ and ‘aim’ also helps nuance how motives differ from mainsprings. The motive concerns the agent’s ‘state’ in relation to our particular circumstances, whereas the mainspring concerns the agent’s ‘aim’ independently from the circumstances; it concerns his movement from *this* state into *that*. We should remember that the distinction is conceptual, however; it shows the source of an action as distinct from the

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<sup>80</sup> Someone who operates in adherence to a religious doctrine that motivates her through the promise of punishment and reward in the afterlife seems to encapsulate this case. He puts it in the following manner: “furthermore, it can still be objected against any good action that issued solely from religious convictions that it was not disinterested, but rather occurred out of concern for reward and punishment, and consequently has no purely moral worth” (*OBM*, 223). See also, (*WR*, 395f).

<sup>81</sup> The previous has implications for his views on virtue. Virtue in Schopenhauer’s philosophy represents the priority of a mainspring given a circumstance, but it likewise assumes a basic hierarchical order of our mainsprings, which he calls ‘temperament’. The virtuous character, in its formal or descriptive sense, is a specific organisation of mainsprings that consistently manifests in certain circumstance as this or that action.

<sup>82</sup> See Cartwright (2012, 27) for a discussion on the mainspring responsible for asceticism.

circumstances under which it arises. In our ordinary experiences, our states and aims come together and any distinction between them seems unrecognisable. Note, e.g., how we are likely to respond to thirst. Often, we unreflectively reach for the glass of water. Notice how we respond to another person's suffering with our own suffering. Reflection can still be part of the process leading to action, but it changes nothing about what drives it. For example, we can respond to the discomfort of hunger by deliberating on whether we will have pasta or a sandwich, or if we should skip lunch entirely lest we miss an impending deadline and the anxiety associated with doing so. The previous shows two states of woe in relation to two different circumstances and object. The decision over the course of action to undertake shows us 'who we are' (or 'what we aim for'). The latter are always *positive*. In other words, we base our choice to respond to the woe of *hunger* over that of our *anxiety* over the deadline in the aim *to promote our own wellbeing*. We may *choose* to respond to the deadline because missing it will inconvenience more than just ourselves, or we choose the deadline because we compromise our future needs by risking the loss of our job. Notice, then, that we can have the same circumstances and motives, i.e., to alleviate our woe (whether it is hunger or anxiety), but different mainsprings. Consequently, we need the recipient to characterise the mainspring of an action, too. If the woe is something someone else is subject to, then we can identify with her and aim to alleviate it for *her sake*. Alternatively, we can perceive her suffering as an opportunity to promote our good chances in a heavenly afterlife, or because we expect her to feel indebted to us. Let us assess and define the mainsprings he lays out.

Schopenhauer argues the mainspring that aims to promote our *own* wellbeing, i.e., egoism (*Selbstsucht*), is our strongest. Egoism imparts efficacy on motives that promise the agent's *own* wellbeing. By derivation from the previous, it imparts efficacy on motives that promise the agent's own woe, i.e., threaten to negate our individual will or body. In egoism, we identify with our 'individual' will. Egoism is not only inherent to humans, but all living creatures, according to him:

“The chief and fundamental incentive (*Triebfeder*) in a human being, as in an animal, is *egoism*, i.e. the urge to existence and wellbeing.” (*OBM*, 190)

By the 'urge to existence and wellbeing', he means an individual's existence and wellbeing. Human and animal egoism differ only by virtue of the distinctly human faculty of reason and reflection; human beings are *self-interested*. Preoccupation with our will characterises self-interest (*Eigennutz*) and egoism. We can define it as follows:

*Egoism*: An action stems from egoism if and only if a) the recipient is the agent herself and, b) the action aims to promote her own wellbeing.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> This relates to her woe as a consequence and derivation from the former and so as a logical correlate, i.e. only on the presupposition of aiming at her own wellbeing can we explain why she is moved to alleviate her current state of woe.

Egoism is the original and primary mainspring of our constitution, which he also construes as the “first simple affirmation of the will to life” (WR, 360) and “simply the affirmation of one’s own body” (ibid.). All living beings must, to a degree and thus by their very existence affirm their own body, because the continued existence of the body presupposes an action aiming to and succeeding in preserving it. He construes it as the basic and original striving of the will *as such*: it aims at the continued existence of the individual. If we identify with our will in this way and are recipients of our actions aiming to promote wellbeing, then they spring from egoism. For example, egoistically motivated agents run upon hearing a wolf’s howl, because the wolf’s possible attack impedes the pursuit of their wellbeing. He describes it in the following manner:

“...he knows with complete certainty that this very self that is important above all else, this microcosm, of which the macrocosm, or his whole world, appears as the mere modification or accident, must be extinguished in death, which for him is thus synonymous with the extinction of the world.” (OBM, 191)

“...the human being unconditionally wills to preserve his existence, wills it unconditionally free from pains, including also from all lack and privation, wills every pleasure of which he is capable, and even seeks where possible to develop new capacities for pleasure.” (OBM, 190)

The clearest characterisation of egoism is in terms of what we aim for, which allows us to link between egoism and the foundation of willing *itself* (or the ‘will to life’).<sup>84</sup>

The above describes a constituent of our will (or character) whose defining feature is that objects promising our own wellbeing *motivate* us. Hence, to make sense of the above, it is useful to bear in mind the distinction between motives, mainsprings and character. A motive is the cognition that invites a particular course of action. A mainspring is how we organise and demarcate motives through their recipient (with whom we identify) and how the intentional object relates to a recipient’s wellbeing and woe, which shows what we aim for with our actions. Our character is a hierarchical composition of the various mainsprings.

The second mainspring Schopenhauer describes is ‘malice’, under which he groups spitefulness (*Gehässigkeit*), *Schadenfreude*<sup>85</sup>, envy, cruelty and illwill (*Uebelwollen*). He distinguishes them as follows: “envy and *Schadenfreude* are in themselves merely theoretical: practically they become malice and cruelty” (OBM, 194). What each have in common is that they harbor illwill towards another individual. Since we primarily concern

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<sup>84</sup> The following passage further shows the relationship between egoism and the will to life, “thus, every cognising individual is in fact – and finds himself to be – the entire will to life, the in-itself of the world itself, the condition that completes the world as representation, and consequently a microcosm equal in value to the macrocosm”. He continues a few lines further down, “this outlook is *egoism*, which is essential to everything in nature” (WR, 358).

<sup>85</sup> Enjoyment of another’s woe.

with the perspective of action, I call it ‘malice’ as opposed to ‘Schadenfreude’. I will suggest the following definition:

*Malice*: An action stems from malice if and only if a) its recipient is another agent, and b) it aims to promote the recipient’s woe.<sup>86</sup>

An agent driven by malice harbors illwill towards another and aims at their woe; he aims to negate (or sabotage) either a specific aim a recipient may have or, in extreme cases, he aims to negate (or sabotage) the recipient entirely (i.e., her individual existence). Notice that for us to act maliciously, we must conceive of the recipient as willing, striving and so on. Malice is contrary to egoism where another’s woe, i.e., another’s failure to attain some end, can at most be a means to our wellbeing, but not an end *in itself*. Thus, we should distinguish the following:

- A) The pleasure a malicious agent feels at another’s woe after successful execution of an action *aiming* at another’s woe.
- B) The pleasure she feels when she succeeds in realising another’s woe.
- C) Her aiming at her *own* wellbeing.

The pleasure in A results from the successful execution of an action aiming to bring about another’s woe irrespective of the realisation of the aim. This pleasure, as we said previously, follows all willing independent from the aim of the action. What characterises the particular mainspring is *its* aim, not the byproduct of *all* aim-oriented action. The pleasure in B arises from the realisation of the aim to bring about another’s woe and is *constitutive* of malice. B may be *instrumental* to egoism, which gives us the pleasure in C, but it is not intrinsic to it. Notice then that there is a subtle but crucial difference between egoism and malice, which rests on their aim, not necessarily the action *itself*. The same action can be both egoistic and malicious; as third-person observers or bystanders, we may not notice a difference without access to an agent’s aims, however.

Though there is a difference in aim between egoism and malice, Schopenhauer still envisages a relationship between them:

“Ill-will arises in large measure from the unavoidable collisions of egoism that occur at every step. It is also provoked objectively too, by the sight of the vices, failings, weaknesses, follies, deficiencies and imperfections of all kinds which to a greater or lesser extent everyone displays to others at least sometimes.” (OBM, 193)

Our day-to-day contact with other people and the clashes of egoism are, according to him, a fertile ground of illwill and envy, but the latter arises from the recognition of a mismatch between our limitations and another’s. Malice is distinct from egoism in that it bears no essential relationship to the agent’s own wellbeing; a malicious agent is uninterested in his

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<sup>86</sup> This relates to the wellbeing of the recipient as a derivation of the former, in other words, as far as the recipient’s wellbeing is a hindrance to b).



own wellbeing. To test the relationship between our egoism and malice we have to introduce a self-interested motive to our deliberation. If the self-interested motive does not stop the action, then malice *drove* it. We *cannot* deter a malicious agent from poisoning or murdering another by pointing out that they risk life imprisonment.

The third mainspring that Schopenhauer lists is compassion (*Mitleid*) or sympathy (*Theilnahme*). Compassion, he contends, is the only moral mainspring whose actions possess genuine moral worth or that serve as an indicator of a moral character.<sup>87</sup> His description of compassion takes under consideration a distinct capacity for abstract cognition and so, as with egoism and self-interest, he construes human beings as ‘disinterested’.<sup>88</sup> I will suggest the following definition of compassion:

*Compassion:* An action stems from compassion if and only if a) its recipient is another agent, and b) it aims to promote the recipient’s wellbeing.<sup>89</sup>

An agent driven by compassion or sympathy aims to promote another’s wellbeing.<sup>90</sup> The actions driven by compassion aim to promote another’s wellbeing, which we can construe as aiming to alleviate another’s woe. Nevertheless, there is no logical difference between the previous two aims.

There is a fourth mainspring that Schopenhauer implicitly demonstrates, which I will briefly mention. He contends that this mainspring arises only in those few agents who have recognised the source of woe in the world and associated it with the will to life and so with the fundamental role of individuality and egoism in it. Upon this recognition, such agents aim to terminate willing and engage in the actions whose mainspring I will call asceticism, which I will define as follows:

*Asceticism:* An action stems from asceticism if and only if a) its recipient is oneself and b) it aims to promote one’s own woe.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> We can translate *Mitleid* literally as ‘suffering-with’, or ‘with-pain (sorrow)’.

<sup>88</sup> He tells us with respect to selflessness, “compassion is apparent in our heartfelt participation in the friend’s wellbeing and woe, and the selfless sacrifices made on account of the latter” (*WR*: 403). Also, “compassion, which has been proved as *the sole source of disinterested actions and consequently as the true basis of morality*” (*OBM*: 232).

<sup>89</sup> This relates to the recipient’s woe as a logical correlate of B. For more on the problem of suffering and negative motivation see Janaway (1999, 318-343), and Soll (2012, 300-313).

<sup>90</sup> Schopenhauer says a lot more about compassion and its relation to morality and asceticism, but also its relation to malice and disinterestedness. I discuss these relations rigorously where I expound Schopenhauer’s criteria for moral worth.

<sup>91</sup> The way this relates to wellbeing is by derivation from the former, namely, that wellbeing inhibits b). The case of asceticism is more complicated than I have initially laid out here, and this complication will become apparent as we proceed to consider the will to life in the next section. The question of which will or body we identify with when we act from asceticism is not straightforward, and so I will leave this discussion for the section on asceticism below.

An agent driven by asceticism aims to promote her *own woe*. This, Schopenhauer argues, is a movement of the will towards negation or abolition of the will to life.<sup>92</sup> In recognising that another's suffering stems from her 'urge to do something', namely, from the will to life, the ascetic agent aims to negate it by promoting its opposite. She aims to inhibit her urges independent from their recipient by striving against and negating all motives that incite her to *some* action. It primarily aims at egoism because this is the strongest of all the mainsprings by its aiming to preserve one's bodily existence, but it is not limited to this. Asceticism aims to negate the will to life, which includes both compassionate and malicious actions.

Notice that apart from egoism, which is identifying with our own will and body, the other mainsprings imply that we do *not* identify with our own body, but we can identify with other people's bodies and their needs; we can aim for *their* wellbeing or woe. The difference in identification would be impossible without our ability to aesthetically contemplate; even the vague and elusive asceticism is impossible without it. It allows us to perceive as willing in their own right (or agents) what we previously construed as objects for our own will or an independent will through which we vicariously enjoyed egoism. In short, we have to first perceive a target of cognition as willing, striving etc. such that we can aim for *its* wellbeing or woe. Only something with aims, values and ends, can we identify with and can be subject to wellbeing and woe. Only based on the previous (or following our projection of willing) can we act on another's behalf, for another's sake (or against it).

I will briefly consider some objections to the above definitions of the mainsprings before I proceed. We can object that the above descriptions of compassion and egoism are un-Schopenhauerian by not taking into account his conception of happiness as synonymous with the removal of suffering or pain. I will aim to show that he can preserve his synonymy between happiness and the removal of suffering *and* claim that egoistic agents have the original aim of promoting their own wellbeing; but similarly, that compassionate agents have the original aim of promoting another's wellbeing.

Firstly, we ought to remember that we are investigating how the will works without bringing to bear any *particular* object; so, we are trying to characterise the will's operations with the bare minimum from the objective world. Consequently, wellbeing and woe for Schopenhauer mean 'in accordance' and 'in discordance' with a will. This description states nothing about the particular intentional object of the will, it only lays claim to *any* particular object's *relationship* to any particular will.

Secondly, we should distinguish between mainsprings *positively*. Aiming for a lack, privation, failure or woe in some will, i.e., malice and asceticism are distinct from those that aim for pleasure, abundance, success or wellbeing, i.e., egoism and compassion. We can construe them as actions enabling and disabling some will. In both cases, they aim for a state of affairs correlative to the interests of some will; they are concerned with the success

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<sup>92</sup> He defines it in the following manner, "I have often used the expression *asceticism*, and I understand by it, in the narrow sense, this *deliberate* breaking of the will by forgoing what is pleasant and seeking out what is unpleasant, choosing a lifestyle of penitence and self-castigation for the constant mortification of the will" (WR, 419).

or failure of *some* will. Their difference lies only in the target of their aim. Accordingly, we need not necessarily construe the *original* will in a negative manner, as operating negatively or reactively. Even if we characterise it negatively, we succeed only in showing the other side of a logical equivalence. In so doing, we do not increase our knowledge of what willing is or consists in. What Schopenhauer is trying to show when he contends that compassion is the alleviation of woe is to indicate the object-relations that have to pertain for someone to be motivated to act in a compassionate manner, not to characterise the aim of compassion, which is positive.

To defend the above, we ought to employ the distinction between the agent's 'state' and 'aim', and take care to avoid a confusion. For example, the recognition of the state of woe in another *moves us* to alleviate it, precisely *because* we aim for her wellbeing. The state of woe is first in the causal process and its effect is an action aiming to promote wellbeing. Though woe may take precedence in the causal process leading to the action whose aim is wellbeing, and so logically entails its alleviation, it is obvious that we do not *aim* for woe. It is absurd for us to aim to alleviate that which we aim. Similarly, it is uninformative or a pleonasm if we claim that we are motivated to alleviate woe. Surely, what we aim for when we alleviate woe is its opposite, wellbeing, or what is in accordance with the will.

To avoid unnecessary confusions we ought to characterise the will in terms of what it positively aims for as opposed to what it aims to avoid. We ought to do this in relation to how we transition between states, which shows the direction our will. To claim that we aim at the alleviation of woe is an indirect way of saying that we aim to promote wellbeing. There is, we can say, a *logical* not a *motivational* difference between the alleviation of woe and the promotion of wellbeing. Promotion of wellbeing remains constant, whereas the alleviation of woe only tells us how it is instantiated objectively; how it appears in relation to an object or object-relation. Lacking something motivates us. It kindles the flame that is our will, but only our aim and so our subsequent state characterises the will. It would have been better if he stated that an object is that on which we focus when we are in a particular state. The object does not tell us why we focus on it. What motivates us bears *some* relationship to our aim, but to recognise what kind of relationship it is, we require the action or response that it incited. The state-aim distinction can help make his categorisation of the mainsprings of our actions easier to follow. It is unfortunate Schopenhauer did not consider it as part of his conceptual tools, because it works coherently with his correlation theory of cognition.

In sum, according to Schopenhauer, what drives our actions (or what explains an omission of action) relates to certain modifications of our body, which delineate the original aims of our will. A mainspring is an original aim and direction of the will that makes objects *efficacious* and determines whether it promises wellbeing or woe. All human actions can be traced to the various mainsprings, which, for him, can likewise *jointly* operate. Furthermore, all human beings are constituted by the mainspring:

“The three fundamental ethical incentives (*Grundtriebfedern*) of human beings, egoism, malice, compassion, are present in each one in different and incredibly diverse proportions.” (*OBM*, 238)

The consistency of one mainspring over the others represents our character. Consequently, he claims: “only egoistic motives will have power over an egoistic character” (ibid.). He concludes that we cannot educate people on how to be, but realign their cognition to better correlate with their willing, which has implications for his views on morality:

“On the contrary, all that we are able to do is to enlighten the *head*, to correct *insight*, to bring the human being to a more correct apprehension of what is objectively present, of the true circumstances of life. But in doing this nothing further is achieved than the constitution of his will laying itself open to view more consistently, clearly and decisively, expressing itself unfalsified.” (OBM, 240)

Cognition can affect how we act by providing an inadequate and falsified representation of the circumstances, either through omission of parts of those circumstance or by someone’s rhetoric, which engenders a falsified motive. Alternatively, cognition can show us a clear representation that permits our will to express itself clearly and wholly. Therefore, we can enhance and refine cognition of things, not change one’s character, which is predominantly unalterable.<sup>93</sup> We can offer a better relationship between the intellect and will, and so clearer self-expression through the correct knowledge of the world and self-knowledge.

The above shows that there is a symmetry and harmony in Schopenhauer’s thoughts on the will’s mainsprings facilitated by the will-intellect distinction and correlation theory of cognition.<sup>94</sup> Prior to assessing compassion and self-knowledge in his philosophy, I will introduce and elaborate on a distinction between the mainsprings and the ‘will to life’. The latter plays a central role, but it has likewise engendered varied and deep confusions in the philosophical commentary on his thoughts, which I also discuss below.

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<sup>93</sup> I say ‘predominantly’, because he seemingly argues that we have the freedom to affirm or deny the will; some individuals can attain a state of grace through abolishing the will to life. It is uncertain to what degree this abolition too rests on the will and so on one’s character, because of his introduction of asceticism as a mainspring and thus a constituent of the will. This state of grace constitutes a change in the will to some extent, but we are unsure about what motivates us towards it other than the *will itself*. I call it unusual because the state itself is not wellbeing since there is no willing, but also not woe even if woe somehow ‘causes’ grace. Nevertheless, he argues that grace can come from our promoting our own woe. He suggests that it comes from *intense suffering*, “...proximity of death and hopelessness is not absolutely necessary for such a reformation (*Läuterung*) through suffering. Even without it, great misfortune and pain can lead to the violent obtrusion of cognition of the conflict of the will to life with itself, and the nothingness of all striving becoming evident.” (WR, 421)

<sup>94</sup> Schopenhauer claims the following about his philosophy: “A system of thoughts must always have an architectonic coherence, i.e. a coherence in which one part always supports another without the second supporting the first, so the foundation stone will ultimately support all the parts without itself being supported by any of them, and the summit will be supported without itself supporting anything” (WR, 5).

## 1.11 The Will to Life

Schopenhauer defines the ‘will to life’ at the start of the fourth book of WR. The passage I have in mind is the following, admittedly convoluted one, which merits quoting in full:

“Regarded simply in itself, the will is just a blind and inexorable impulse, devoid of cognition; this is how we have seen it appear in inorganic and vegetative nature and their laws, as well as in the vegetative aspect of our own lives. With the emergence of the world as representation (which has developed to serve the will) the will obtains cognition of its willing and what it wills: namely, nothing other than this world, life, precisely as it exists. That is why we called the appearing world the mirror of the will, its objecthood: and since what the will wills is always life, precisely because life is nothing but the presentation of that willing for representation, it is a mere pleonasm and amounts to the same thing if, instead of simply saying ‘the will’, we say ‘the will to life’.” (WR, 301)

The faculty of reason, which is specific to the human intellect and whose primary purpose is to service the will with cognition of something upon which it can act, permits human beings to acquire insight into the willing of both organic and inorganic objects. This insight rests on the projection of willing inherent to aesthetic contemplation, which allows us to perceive a target of cognition as a willing thing rather than an object or motive for the will. I will try to bring our attention to an overlooked ambiguity in his use of the ‘will’ (*Wille*). This ambiguity is between the following references to the will:

- A) The will of *individual* things (e.g., a human being, a stone, a plant and an animal or even the Ideas of each one of these).
- B) The will ‘regarded simply in itself’ or, as he also clarifies, the will “free of every form of cognition” (WR, 153).

The above are different uses of the ‘will’ that often lead to confusions. I discuss one of these confusions in the coming sections, but, for now, let us closely analyse what these different uses of ‘the will’ might be.

Schopenhauer sometimes use the concept of ‘will’ to denote our mainsprings, but likewise to refer to the strivings of inorganic objects, or to the impulses in plant, or even to animals’ instincts. We should also include the various *Ideas* as tokens of this use of the will, since he takes the will to be “the *thing in itself*, and the *Idea* to be the immediate objecthood of that will on a specific level” (WR, 192). We might call the previous the ‘individuated use’ of ‘will’ or ‘individual will’, for brevity.

The ‘individual’ will requires a distinction between one thing and another, which thereby entails *cognition* of something and the PSR. It presupposes a multiplicity of things, which includes its application to our mainsprings. In other words, there is a ‘mainspring of action’ if and only if we presuppose cognition of something and, equally, *other mainsprings* in juxtaposition to it. Furthermore, there is no such thing as a plant unless there are other

things we can juxtapose them to and on which we base our distinction; the same is the case with any 'individual' thing. Something (or someone) is individual by virtue of its juxtaposition to something (or someone) else, which we *perceive* as individual. Accordingly, whatever we claim about an individual will presupposes a distinction and juxtaposition between one '*thing*' and another, which grounds its individuality.

This typifies 'individuation', which he also calls the '*principium individuationis*' (PI) or 'objecthood of the will':

"We know that multiplicity in general is necessarily conditioned by time and space and is thinkable only through them; in this respect, we call them the *principium individuationis*. But we have recognised time and space as forms of the principle of sufficient reason, a principle that expresses all our *a priori* cognition. However, as we discussed earlier, this only affects whether things can be cognised, it does not affect the things themselves, i.e. it is only the form of our cognition, not a property of the thing in itself; as such, the thing in itself is free of every form of cognition, even the most general, that of being an object for a subject, i.e. it is something wholly and completely distinct from representation." (WR, 152-3)

The will conceived as individual is thus fundamentally relational or presupposes relations, which, in turn, presupposes the cognition of something, anything whatsoever by someone. Accordingly, what we cognise is individuated and the most objective cognition we can have of something is its *Idea*, which is also relational.

At other times, however, he uses the 'will' to denote movement, change or action of any kind irrespective of its direction or the object that moves. The faculty of reason, which "allows us to survey the whole in the abstract" (WR, 301), allows us to project the will in this way. Nevertheless, reason is not enough to yield anything remotely as *meaningful* as our will and so we correspondingly rely on imagination to render this concept meaningful. The following passage summarises the above:

"Once we have seen all this it will not take any great stretch of the imagination to recognise (despite its distance from our own essence) the very same thing that in us pursues its goal illuminated by cognition while here, in the weakest of its appearances, it is blind, dull, one-sided and unalterable in its striving. Nonetheless, because it is everywhere one and the same, – just as the first light of dawn shares the name sunlight with the bright rays of noon, – it must be called *will* here as well as there, a name signifying the being in itself of every thing in the world and the sole kernel of every appearance." (WR, 143)

We can call this the 'metaphysical or general use' of the will or 'metaphysical will', for brevity. He applies this use to any target of cognition undergoing change or moving. This is likewise the same use of 'will' we find in what he later calls the 'will to life':

"That is why we called the appearing world the mirror of the will, its objecthood: and since what the will wills is always life, precisely because life is nothing but the presentation of that willing for representation, it is a mere pleonasm and amounts to

the same thing if, instead of simply saying ‘the will’, we say ‘the will to life’.” (WR, 301)

There is an impasse between the ‘individual’ and ‘metaphysical’ will, however, which is apparent when we inquire into the conceptual status of the ‘will to life’. If the only kind of cognition we can have is cognition of something, then what is the will to life other than a construct of reason that abstractly unifies distinct cognitions (or objectivations) of the will?

To answer the above and thereby make Schopenhauer’s ‘will to life’ meaningful and coherent we should recall that his metaphysics has a natural basis. He does not confuse the metaphysical for the supernatural or immaterial. The will to life is metaphysical in the following senses:

- A) It *accompanies* all movements irrespective of their form or direction, which we thus project onto a target of cognition.
- B) We do not *perceive* the will to life, but only the movements to which it corresponds, which we base on the first-person experience of a movement of our own body.

The will to life appears as ‘deliberate’ or ‘motivated’ movement in human beings and *some* animals, but it is *not* limited to deliberation or motivation alone; it encapsulates ‘stimulation’ and ‘causality’, too. Thus, deliberation, motivation, stimulation and causality are seemingly expressions of the so-called ‘will to life’. It is a blanket term that he applies to all perceptible changes in the targets of our cognition. Yet, recall that we only cognise an individual thing, so what is the corresponding cognitive target of the ‘will to life’? What is the ‘individual thing’ to which the will to life corresponds?

Furthermore, why did Schopenhauer introduce the ‘will to life’ to shed light on the significance of movements and the changes in the targets of cognition when the ‘individual will’ is seemingly enough? Why is the apparently groundless proposition that ‘a target of cognition X undergoes change Y because this is what X wills and all willing is groundless’ satisfactory? As far as my reading permits, Schopenhauer does not answer this question. It is also surprising he introduces this term at all when we consider the following claims:

“According to all we have said, when the will is illuminated by cognition it always knows what it wills here, what it wills now; but never what it wills in general: every particular act has a goal; but the whole of willing has none: just as every particular appearance of nature is determined by a sufficient cause to enter at this place, in this time, but the force manifesting itself in general in the appearance does not have a cause, because such a force is a level of appearance of the thing in itself, of the groundless will.” (WR, 189)

Schopenhauer risks reducing his insight that ‘the will’ and ‘will to life’ are equivalents to a tautology. We notice this tautology clearly in the following clarification, which argues that the will to life is the objective correlate or ‘mirror’ of the will as *thing in itself*:

“Since the will is the thing in itself, the inner content, the essential aspect of the world, while life, the visible world, appearance, is only the mirror of the will; life will be as

inseparable from the will as a shadow from its body. And where there is will, there will be life and world as well. So for the will to life, life is a certainty, and as long as we are filled with life-will, we do not need to worry about our existence, even in the face of death.” (WR, 301)

The will to life, then, is the self-conscious recognition of the identity between willing and life. Does the previous proposition advance our insight in any way, however? The ‘will to life’ refers to what we cannot possibly make a target of cognition, i.e., the thing in itself. The ‘will to life’ refers to the ‘metaphysical will’, which is what we cannot possibly make an object of cognition, because *nothing* corresponds to it in the objective world; except, as he would claim, the world *itself*, but this is also unhelpful. What sense do we make of these concepts of the world itself or the will to life or the will (or willing) *as such*?

To begin making sense of the ‘will to life’, we should recall what he claims about ‘concepts’, or the so-called products of reason:

“...the whole essence of an abstract representation lies in just one single thing: its relation to another representation, its cognitive ground. Now to start with, this ground can be another concept, i.e. another abstract representation; and even this concept can itself have another such abstract cognitive ground. But not forever: in the end, the series of cognitive grounds must terminate with a concept that has its ground in intuitive cognition. For the world of reflection as a whole is based on the intuitive world as its cognitive ground. The class of abstract representations is therefore distinguished from other classes in this way: in other classes, the principle of sufficient reason always demands some relation to another representation of the *same* class; but in the case of abstract representations, it ultimately demands a relation to a representation from *another* class.” (WR, 64)

Assuming that the ‘will to life’ is a concept of reason, which “continually allows us to survey the whole in the abstract” (WR, 301), how do we render it meaningful? Given the above claim about concepts of reason, it must refer to something we have an intuitive cognition of from which we extend its application in scope.

We remember that Schopenhauer initially introduces the *will* to shed light on morphology and aetiology. His dissatisfaction with the scientific approach to metaphysical concerns with ‘what there is’ (or what is ultimately real) led him to postulate the ‘will’ as this meaningful ground:

“But if we devote ourselves to this teaching [morphology and aetiology in mechanics, physics, chemistry and physiology] we soon realise that the information we are looking for does not belong to aetiology any more than it belongs to morphology. The latter presents us with an infinite variety of innumerable forms that are clearly related through an unmistakable family resemblance; these are representations that will forever remain foreign to us if we approach them along this path; looking at them only in this way, they stand before us like hieroglyphs we do not comprehend.” (WR, 121)



The best these ‘paths’ offers us regarding what is true or real is an unknown albeit relatively stable quality denoted by the concept of a natural force and its ostensibly mathematical conditions of appearance in accordance with fixed rules. These are dissatisfactory for illustrating the significance or meaningfulness of these forces, however. These forces, he contends, ‘remain foreign to us’: they are ‘hieroglyphs we do not comprehend’. His aim, then, is to make natural forces, which allegedly *explain* the consistent activities, operations and relations between objects in the objective world more *familiar* and so to determine their meaning or significance (*Bedeutung*) to us. To arrive at the latter, we must project something of ourselves.

We compromise our scientific *objectivity* by creating an *unbridgeable* gap between ‘the target of our cognition’ and ‘ourselves’. It prevents us from having complete cognition of it as it is *in itself* or as it is independent from its use(s) to us. To do this we need to project willing and-or a sense of goal-directedness on the target. He recognises that ‘will’ is not enough for the meaning he wants, because willing is *directional*; it aims at something, it has a target(s). There is apparently more to the target of cognition than what aesthetic contemplation yields. What more than the previous can he propose that will accord with the limits of cognition? He introduces the ‘will to life’, which, presented this way, seems a mere tautology. I will attempt to propose something about the will to life that is in accordance with his philosophy, but that is also more meaningful than this tautology. In any case, I omit that this is stretching his claims and that a detailed debate on the exact status of the will to life or the metaphysical use of the ‘will’ is pressing.

Schopenhauer’s characterisation of the metaphysical will as the will to life is an attempt to find the intentional object of willing *as such* without distinguishing one object from another (i.e., without an appeal to the PI or PSR). The intentional object of willing *as such* must not be an object in the strict sense, e.g., a stone or an event. It is something as far from a *particular* object or an event as is possible for cognition. It must be broad enough to avoid the distinction between one thing and another and thus avoid conflating it for the individual will. However, it must also be narrow enough to be meaningful and thus refer to something. This seems like a conceptual impossibility. Based on his views on aesthetic contemplation, we know he intends the ‘felt consciousness’ to do the work he needs to make meaningful the will to life. Let us flesh this concept out, however.

Schopenhauer moved from the inside out in his attempt to render natural forces *meaningful* for us, here we see him doing something similar to render the willing that apparently permeates all targets of cognition meaningful by proposing its general *direction* or *intentional* object. He does not suggest the intentional object of an individual target of cognition, but the intentional object of the *need to cognise* or *do* anything at all. He achieves this by projecting something characteristic of human agents. We can find this ‘something’, I think, in our actions and the ‘sense of self’ associated with the actions we undertake when they are intentional or aim at something we *see as* a motive. We should not confuse the latter for projection of one mainspring (e.g. egoism, compassion etc.), but projection of our ‘urge’ to act or do something, which we can see as a precondition of the differences in mainsprings.

Schopenhauer's metaphysical concerns then begin with our *personal* purposes in life, but it culminates in the same purposiveness and significance of life taken as a whole in accordance with our cognitive limits. He recognises that the significance of an object of our cognition always appears with a correlate movement or alteration in our body.<sup>95</sup> This means that our sense of self (or our being anything at all instead of nothing) invests in movements of the body and thus in actions. Our sense of self does not invest in any *specific* aim, but in aiming itself and so in doing something, anything whatsoever. Consequently, the will to life is the urge to have an aim, i.e., the urge *to do something*; it is the urge to *direct* our focus towards something, anything whatsoever with a view to acting upon it.

In sum, we can distinguish two kinds of claims featuring the 'will', in Schopenhauer. We have, on the one hand, claims made about an individuated will, which presupposes a distinction and a relation between individual 'things'. On the other hand, there are claims made about the metaphysical will, which concerns the *urge* to do something, anything whatsoever. The latter serves as the precondition of change or movement. Schopenhauer construes all targets of our cognition as instantiations of the urge to do something appearing under the PSR. Thus, the PI is the PSR seen through aesthetic contemplation. All motivation (mainsprings), stimulation (stimuli) and causation (causes) relate to the *will to life*, so, we can describe them in relation to it. The will to life is not one *kind* of motivation distinct from another, however. It is the urge, the spark, or *oomph* accompanying *all* movement or change.

This double application of the will also generates confusions in the commentary and interpretations of his philosophy.<sup>96</sup> We confuse these different uses of the will because we cannot distinguish moments where he refers to an individual will, which is set up in relation to another will, from moments where he refers to the metaphysical will or the will to life. The difference between these two uses is in their scope: one use is broader than the other, but both refer to different expressions of *the same thing*, i.e., movement or change. Although all individual things that strive *also* experience (or identify) with the will to life, we acquire no insight into their individuality if we construe them as tokens or instantiations of the will to life and leave it at that. The individual will aims at *this* kind of life, which makes sense only in juxtaposition to *that* kind of life. In short, it always presupposes *this* in juxtaposition to *that*; i.e., it is relational.

The individual will and its *identical* object (i.e. the body and its mainsprings for human beings, the forces of 'rigidity' and 'gravity' for stones, 'life-impulses' for plants and 'instincts' for animals) are relational. According to Schopenhauer, we all *identify* with the will to life, but this differs from the claim that *we* or *I* (as George or Mike, Suzy or Janice) *are* the will to life. Individuality requires us to distinguish ourselves from something else; the claim that we *are* the 'will to life' does not capture this distinction and so it is, at best, a

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<sup>95</sup> *Wille* denotes both the reflective and unreflective instances of embodied motivation. Thus, Schopenhauer has in mind the object-directedness that characterises our bodily vicissitudes and impulses, rather than any one impulse or direction.

<sup>96</sup> One confusion is apparent in what the philosophical commentary calls the 'metaphysical egoism objection'. I will assess the limits and merits of this objection in a subsequent section.

precondition of individuality. The will to life blankets over anything that changes, moves or experiences urges. It is more accurate to argue that we *experience* the will to life, or we are instantiations of it, rather than saying that we *are* the will to life. The latter would entail our inevitable cessation as the individuals that we are; it would mean our death. Therefore, as individuals, we can speak about life itself and speak about the will to a *kind* of life, but we *cannot* say that we *are* the will to life without making a fundamental mistake in expression that spawns confusions.

The two uses of the will in his philosophy help us avoid a confusion that leads us to comprehend the will to life as someone's or something's *property*. When we speak of *my* or *Jane's* will to life, we make a fundamental error and confuse the two uses of the will. There is no such *thing* as 'the will to life'. *I* am who *I* am, just as *Jane* is who *she* is, not because of the will to life, but because of what *I* and *she* will; we both experience the urge to do something and we put it towards different ends and at different times such that this urge *objectivates* or *individuates* as different *things* or *people*. There are no different *wills to life* even if, as the 'individuals' that we are, we will different things at different times, which we must to be individuals *in the first place*. We share the *urge to do something* with all other targets of cognition, but what makes us *individuals* is not the urge to do something, but its target or direction, i.e., our actions. The main difference between the two uses of the will is that the one is individuated (me, it, us or them) and the other is a blanket term.

The two distinct uses on the will often leads us to confounding an individual or our individual urges, i.e., a mainspring (compassion, egoism, malice etc.), with how we make these changes meaningful in the objective sense<sup>97</sup>, whether they are our bodily changes or of our target of cognition *seen as* separate and distinct from us. There is thus a difference in degree and complexity between motivation, stimulation and causation, for Schopenhauer. I will argue below that our motivations and their corresponding actions either enhance or thwart, enable or disable the *will to life*. The previous is the only way we can begin to explain the role each mainspring plays in life and how the will to life features in our actions. The will to life *itself* is not one motivation, stimulation, or causation distinct from another, nor can it be *identical* with any one of them taken individually.

The will to life is also a limited concept. We can recognise this limit if we take the two uses of the will together while bearing in mind their differences. They permit us to understand what he means by the following admittedly vague and misleading description of the will to life:

“... it becomes evident that I have rightly declared the *will-to-live* to be that which is incapable of further explanation, but is the basis of every explanation; and that, far from being an empty-sounding word, like the Absolute, the infinite, the idea, and

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<sup>97</sup> What I mean by 'the objective sense' is his linking of the will to life with the aesthetic view of the world. After the distinct encounter with the felt consciousness, which is clearest in his discussion of the sublime and which impels us to inquire into the significance, meaning or value of life *as such* independent of this or that form of life.

other similar expressions, it is the most real thing we know, in fact the kernel of reality itself.” (*WR II*, 351)

Notice that he construes the will to life as ‘the basis of every explanation’ and as ‘the most real thing we know’. The fact that he says ‘we know’ as opposed ‘there is’, which implies epistemic limitations is not arbitrary. He is aware that calling the forces of nature ‘will’ and claiming that all willing that permeates nature aims at life is nothing other than a projection, i.e., *our* projection. Only by this introspective route can we have a meaningful grasp of the thing in itself. Our projection lets us familiarise with the ‘foreign’ or ‘hieroglyphic’ natural forces underpinning the natural order of events in the world. What applies to the ‘will to life’ and what applies to the ‘individual will’ differ, but he does not make this difference sufficiently clear. Nevertheless, the following shows the epistemic and metaphysical status of the will to life:

“...being-known of itself contradicts being-in-itself, and everything that is known is as such only phenomenon. But the possibility of this question shows that the thing-in-itself, which we know (*erkennen*) most immediately in the will, may have, entirely outside all possible phenomenon, determinations, qualities, and modes of existence which for us are absolutely unknowable and incomprehensible, and which then remain as the inner nature of the thing-in-itself, when this, as explained in the fourth book, has freely abolished itself as *will*, has thus stepped out of the phenomenon entirely, and as regards our knowledge, that is to say as regards the world of phenomena, has passed over into empty nothingness. If the will were positively and absolutely the thing-in-itself, then this nothing would be absolute, instead of which it expressly appears to us there only as a relative nothing.” (*WR II*, 198)

The will to life then is the most approximate ‘knowledge’ of the direction of life, i.e., the movement and changes we cognise. Life as we *experience* it limits our ‘knowledge’ of the direction of life itself.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, the will to life is a by-product of the most genuinely objective stance we can take following the recognition that we are both willing *and*, by our identity with our body, likewise an object among objects. Schopenhauer gave the aesthetic world-view a higher truth-value than the scientific world-view. If we can *explain* anything at all in a meaningful manner, he argues, we do so through the will to life, which is the *limit* of the meaningfulness of the concepts of reason, specifically, the thing in itself. Anything

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<sup>98</sup> An anthropomorphism of the will as thing in itself happens here that he believes cannot be escaped if we are to say or determine anything about the significance of the thing in itself. Consider what he says about theoretical egoism: “since our knowledge will always be bound up with and limited by our individuality, everyone can necessarily *be* only one thing while *having cognition* of everything else; and in fact, this limitation of cognition is what gives rise to the need for philosophy” (*WR*, 129). Therefore, some projection onto nature, people and objects, i.e., our experience of the world is inescapable. In Schopenhauer’s defence, this projection need not, and certainly must not, be our projecting onto the world of one kind of motivation distinct from another. It can be and I argue it is projection of what for us is a precondition of all motivation, it constitutes the bridge between ourselves and the world. This precondition is that to feel the urge to act individuates us and so is equivalent to being someone and-or something instead of nothing at all.

outside these limits will remain foreign and incomprehensible to us or they will be a relative “nothing” (WR, 437). Similarly, the meaning of anything outside of these limits would be dubious and remain dubious *for us*; it is likewise dubious that we will be able think about (or direct our attention towards) what lies outside these limits. Individuals who negate the will to life are incommensurable with our world-view and thus incomprehensible to us. We cannot understand them and evaluate their way of life; it is essentially meaningless to us.

In sum, the ‘will to life’ is an epistemic concept that differs from the (individual) ‘will’ in scope; it is a blanket term aiming to render meaningful the changes we perceive in the targets of our cognition. Next, I will assess the difference between selflessness and compassion with the aim of demonstrating what he takes to be the ground of morally worthy actions.

## 1.12 The Difference between Selflessness and Compassion (*Mitleid*)

Schopenhauer’s search for the sole moral mainspring is the central concern of *OBM*. This search begins with an analysis of what he characterises as the main moral phenomena, i.e., actions of freely willed justice and genuine loving kindness. Before proceeding to analyse what grounds morally worthy actions, I will discuss a crucial distinction that underpins this analysis, which has significant bearing on his views on morality.

Schopenhauer distinguishes the moral worth from the legal soundness of any action. Thus, morality is distinct from the law of the land, which he also refers to as a ‘community’ or ‘state’ (cf. WR, 363). What makes an action morally worthy differs from what makes it legally sound. The mainspring of an action and therefore an agent’s character and-or virtue play a central and defining role in the moral evaluation of an action. We cannot reduce the moral worth of an action to whether or not the agent acted in accordance or in discordance with the law or her (dis)obedience to custom, according to him. The reason he gives is that the law focuses on the immediate consequences to the recipient of an action, ignoring the action’s aim, which plays a central role in our moral evaluation of it.<sup>99</sup> Morality, he claims,

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<sup>99</sup> To further nuance the difference between morality and legislation consider what he says about the state’s relationship to the unlawful agent’s disposition: “the state takes absolutely no notice of the will or the disposition merely as such; it only cares about the *deed*... (whether it be attempted or executed), because the correlate of doing, on the other side, is *suffering*: so the deed, the event, is the only thing that the state takes to be real: the disposition, the intention is investigated only to the extent that it can shed light on the meaning of the deed. Thus the state does not forbid anyone from thinking incessantly about murdering and poisoning someone as long as it is sure that fear of the sword and the wheel will keep this will constantly in check.” (WR, 370-1).

focuses on what drove or underpinned the action; it is more concerned with our character.<sup>100</sup> Legislation attempts to limit and thus demotivate the socially harmful effects of an action, but is (or in principle should be) silent over what drives an action. Thus, the circumstances and the customs of a community<sup>101</sup> determine the socially harmful effects of an action, but what is common in each case is that they are neutral in their evaluation of the mainsprings of an action independent from its effect.<sup>102</sup> For example, legislation is not against egoism or in principle against any mainspring. It is against the harmful effects and so consequences of any action, whose basis can be any mainspring.<sup>103</sup> By contrast, morality is concerned only with the character of agents and so the meaning or significance of their action. Accordingly, morality cannot coherently take a similarly neutral perspective on a mainspring as we saw with the state. Morality evaluates all of mainsprings because it represents one mainspring's superiority over others. We can argue that he construed morality as a positive 'ideal' to which we commit. Nevertheless, morality is concerned with the mainspring of an action and legislation focuses on its consequences. Legislation governs actions *themselves* independent from their mainspring, whereas morality governs the mainsprings of an action. The two can and do overlap, but Schopenhauer is concerned less with the overlaps than with showing how they differ fundamentally.

Schopenhauer's introduction of the maxims for morally worthy actions aims to show us how to *recognise* or *distinguish* morally worthy actions from their counterparts. These maxims are not normative principles for generating morally worthy actions; they are not rules of thumb we can use when deliberating on and choosing how we should act. They are criteria that help us recognise the mainspring of an action with the aim of distinguishing morality worthy from morally unworthy actions. The moral relevance of any action rests on what it tells us about an agent's character, rather than the performance of it or her ability to perform it and its consequences, which is the fundamental concern of legislation.

From the outset, Schopenhauer tells us that the moral mainspring is compassion (*Mitleid*), which is in keeping with his views on morality as an 'ideal'. He supports his ideal by utilising our intuitions on the grounds of certain actions. He begins with negative criteria that aim to distinguish an action of moral worth from its opposite. He aims to demonstrate

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<sup>100</sup> The following passage is exemplary of his account of morality: "the object under consideration for *morality*, the only thing morality takes to be real, is the will, the disposition... accordingly, it will condemn one who wills in this [wrong] way as unjust from its seat of judgement" (WR, 370).

<sup>101</sup> The following passages exemplify Schopenhauer's views on the relationship between morality and legislation: "legislation, will borrow from morality this chapter containing the doctrine of right and use it for its own purpose; this is the chapter that discusses the inner meaning of right and wrong and also determines the precise boundary between them" (WR, 371). See also: "Positive legislation is thus an application of the reverse side of the purely moral doctrine of right. This application can take place in the light of the distinctive conditions and circumstances of a particular people" (WR, 373). Morality then determines the boundaries between right and wrong and the state makes sure that nobody crosses them and makes sure to punish those that do.

<sup>102</sup> Consider the following quote regarding non-harmful egoistic motivation: "if we could think of someone *doing* wrong in a way that did not involve another party *being* wronged, the state, to be consistent, could not prohibit such a deed" (WR, 370).

<sup>103</sup> Consider what he claims about the state's relationship to egoism: "the state, in endeavouring to further the common good, is not directed against egoism but only against the detrimental effects of egoism" (WR, 372).

how we can arrive at what is morally worthy from the negation of what is not or cannot possibly be using our intuitions as the guiding threads. He expresses the previous clearly in what he claims are the two morally exemplary kinds of actions, i.e., freely willed justice and genuine loving kindness. He uses these actions as intuitive anchors.

My approach will be to clarify Schopenhauer's strategy of appealing to intuitions by analysing his claims in terms of the criteria for morally worthy actions. An action is morally worthy if and only if A) the motive that underpins it was *not* self-interested:

“...the discovery of a self-interested motive entirely removes the moral worth of an action if it was the only motive, and reduces it if it had an accessory effect...” (*OBM*, 197)

If the action is egoistic, then it cannot be morally worthy. Furthermore, if egoism partook in the action, then the action's moral worth is 'reduced'. Nevertheless, we should distinguish the mainspring of actions from the action's self-reference or its being *our* action, which is pertinent with respect to comprehending what makes an action egoistic. We have *ownership* over our actions, which is *not* reducible to our action's aim. Therefore, our identifying with our actions does not imply that its aim is self-interested or egoistic. More importantly, we should distinguish 'taking an interest' in something from being self-interested. Interest in a target of cognition is the logical correlate of an agential action or a response to something. As we saw previously, we take different kinds of interest on something, which correspond to different aims. Therefore, morally worthy actions arise from a 'selfless' *and* 'interested' mainspring.

Note from A above that the mainspring of malice satisfies it. Nevertheless, intuition suggests that malice cannot be moral. Once again, Schopenhauer arrives at his rejection of malice by elimination and utilising our intuitions. In addition to condition A, our actions are morally worthy if and only if B) they promote another's wellbeing. He defends the previous as follows, which suggests a deduction, but is in fact an extension of his appeal to intuitions:

“It could indeed be objected that actions of pure malice and cruelty are also not self-interested: however, it is plain to see that these cannot be meant here, since they are the opposite of the actions under discussion.” (*OBM*, 197)

Given that both malice and compassion are selfless or un-egoistic, based on A, we can argue that both are morally worthy. However, there is an implicit distinction between the moral worth and the moral relevance of an action. Malice does not accord with our intuitions and fails to be the ground of freely willed justice and genuine loving kindness; it lacks moral worth. Nonetheless, it is morally relevant and more relevant than egoism. Malice is immoral, i.e., it is both selfless *and* morally reprehensible. Selflessness, then, seemingly defines moral relevance, but it is insufficient to account for morally worthy actions in juxtaposition to morally worthless or reprehensible ones. Egoism is morally worthless, but it is not, like malice, morally reprehensible. Egoism is morally 'worthless' or 'amoral' in that it renders actions morally neutral, whereas malice is morally 'reprehensible' or 'immoral' in that it fundamentally opposes morality. We have instances where egoism promotes another's

wellbeing, but as a byproduct of promoting one's own wellbeing, but malice cannot possibly promote another's wellbeing.

In sum, Schopenhauer's criteria focus entirely on determining the 'mainspring' of those action(s) we intuitively deem as morally worthy, i.e., freely willed justice and genuine loving kindness. Morality is not concerned with an action's consequences to the recipient, but with what drives it, which he also construes as the ground. Criteria A and B are jointly sufficient for representing the ground or source of freely willed justice and genuine loving kindness, which he construes as tokens of morally worthy actions.

Since egoism and malice cannot possibly be the moral mainsprings, then the options available to Schopenhauer from his battery of mainsprings are asceticism and compassion. He mentions asceticism's relationship to morality in *OBM*:

"If there really are genuine moral motives against suicide, then they lie very deep and are not to be reached with the plumb line of the usual ethics in any case; they belong rather to a higher mode of consideration than is appropriate even to the standpoint of the present essay." (*OBM*, 132)

In the footnote to this passage, he claims that these grounds are 'ascetic', which implies a confusion of asceticism with morality; he then refers his readers to the fourth book of his *WR*. He was not as explicit in his analysis of the relationship between moral and ascetic actions, but he did remark on the transition from 'virtue' to 'asceticism', which shows he accepts a distinction between morality and asceticism:

"The phenomenon in which this is revealed is the transition from virtue to *asceticism*. Specifically, he is no longer satisfied with loving others as himself and doing as much for them as for himself; instead, he has conceived a loathing for the essence that is expressed as his own appearance, the will to life, the kernel and essence of that world he recognises as a miserable place." (*WR*, 407)

Schopenhauer distinguishes compassion from asceticism, but he seemingly also construes them as part of a continuum, which shows in his conception of them as a transition and through the operative phrase of 'no longer *satisfied*'. Nevertheless, this 'continuum' and 'satisfaction' suggest a particular direction and thus it confounds the two mainsprings. This misleads us and demonstrates Schopenhauer's ambivalence over the relationship between morality and asceticism (more on this in later chapters).

Schopenhauer characterises asceticism as negation of the will to life, i.e., it aims to promote the agent's own woe using her body as its intentional object. If promoting the recipient's wellbeing entails promoting our own woe, then asceticism can generate morally worthy actions. Asceticism can incite a 'seemingly' moral action if the action *entails* the agent's woe. Notice, however, that we do not ordinarily aim to promote our own woe when we act out of freely willed justice or genuine loving kindness. Instead, we focus on *her* wellbeing and woe, not on its implications for our *own* wellbeing and woe. Accordingly, our intuitions suggest that ascetic actions *cannot* possibly have genuine moral worth. Ascetic actions are morally neutral. In sum, asceticism cannot be the source of morally worthy



actions because it fails to accord fully with B. It can indirectly generate the ‘semblance’ of morally worthy actions, i.e., it can ‘apparently’ accord with B under specific circumstances. This façade can also arise from egoism through legislation, which, e.g., financially rewards ‘charitable donations’, or from religious dogma through its edicts, which we confuse a duty to god with alleviating another’s woe. Asceticism and egoism are morally neutral or worthless, while malice is morally reprehensible. The mainspring from his battery that remains is compassion (*Mitleid*).

Recall that he defines compassion as the mainspring whose recipient is another agent and whose aim is to promote his or her wellbeing. Schopenhauer now has to show how freely willed justice and genuine loving kindness correlate with compassion. He starts with an intricate analysis of the mainspring prior to demonstrating how freely willed justice and loving kindness stem from it. He asks:

“...how is it at all possible for the wellbeing and woe of another to move my will immediately, i.e. in just the way that only my own otherwise does, that is, for it to become my motive directly, and further to become it even to such a degree that I give it more or less preference over my own wellbeing and woe, which is otherwise the sole source of my motives?” (*OBM*, 200)

He distinguishes compassion from egoism, which he claims is the most dominant mainspring owing to our embodiment. Compassion excludes the agent’s *own* interest and so is selfless, but it also extends to showing preference for the recipient’s wellbeing. How is this possible?

Though I hesitate to employ the following distinction, because Schopenhauer did not, it is nevertheless useful for a better comprehension of how he distinguishes compassion from the other mainsprings. The distinction I have in mind is between empathy and sympathy.<sup>104</sup> We can define empathy in the following way:

*Empathy*: Identifying with the recipient’s plight, which requires cognition (abstract or intuitive) of the recipient’s being in some state, i.e., of wellbeing or woe, but it goes further into the recognition of the *significance* or *meaning* of her being in *that* state.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> I introduce this distinction on the basis of the idea in Schopenhauer that our willing requires cognition of an object and so cognition precedes the operations of the will: “to be effective, a motive does not just need to be present, it must be recognised” (*WR*, 321). Nevertheless, the motive has its efficacy only based on the presupposition of the will’s being what it is. This is why empathy does not tell us anything about the will, because it is mere cognition or recognition of the recipient’s state without delineating how that state drives us or motivates us. Conversely, sympathy *does* tell us about the will because it motivates us in a specific direction; it presupposes an aim and-or disposition in relation to the recipient’s state. See Blum (1980) and Darwall (1998) for more on the distinction between sympathy and empathy.

<sup>105</sup> Consider the following discussion by Schopenhauer, which suggests that some projection of willing is required for us to have empathy. He claims, “for the relationship between (for instance) egoism and compassion to emerge in any given person, it is not enough for that person to possess wealth and see others in need; he must also *know* what wealth can do both for himself and for others; the suffering of others must not only present itself, he must

Empathy is the recognition of a state in another individual along with a recognition of its *significance* or *meaning* to them. The previous is insufficient for characterising his account of a compassionate response, because recognising another is suffering and its significance to him is insufficient to suggest that the agent aims to alleviate it. An agent can empathise with another while, at the same time, be malicious. Identifying with another's plight then is the same as recognising it. We make an object of the recipient's suffering *and* its *significance* to him. Therefrom, we can respond to it in various ways; each one of our mainsprings can turn it into a motive. Accordingly, although "our sympathy *rests* on an identification" (*OBM*, 202; my emphasis) with the recipient, this identification is *not* enough to imply compassion. Empathy is necessary, but insufficient for sympathy or compassion. The agent's response to this recognition determines which mainspring turned it into a motive. Sympathy, then, differs from empathy and captures compassion more clearly and we can define it as follows:

*Sympathy*: A response to one's empathy that acts *in accordance with* the recipient's will, which is best characterised as our aiming to promote her wellbeing.

Sympathy rests on empathy, but is distinct from it by our aiming to promote the recipient's *individual* wellbeing. The agent refers to the recipient's state for feedback regarding the success or failure of actions aiming at her wellbeing. He adjusts his actions in accordance with how she receives the action (or how it affects her), i.e., whether or not it succeeded in bringing about her wellbeing or alleviating her woe.

Compassion is not simply an identification with the recipient's plight, which is its 'intentional' object, not its 'identical' object. In addition, we remember that our actions have *moral* relevance not by virtue of their consequences, but because they are an access-point to our will or character (more on this below). Thus, one's actions determine whether the agent was acting out of compassion based on whether or not he aimed to promote the recipient's wellbeing.

So far, Schopenhauer has described moral actions, but has not asked how they are possible in the first place? How can a person's circumstances and experiences be a motive for me in the way he describes? How can I act upon her circumstances as if they were my circumstances and experiences? In compassion, we identify with another individual's will and act on *her* behalf, or we value her just as much as we would otherwise value ourselves when driven by egoism:

"Obviously only by that other's becoming the ultimate end of my will, just as I myself otherwise am: by the fact that I will his wellbeing and do not will his woe, and that I do so quite immediately, as immediately as I otherwise do only my own." (*OBM*, 200)

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also *know* what suffering is, as well as enjoyment" (*WR*, 321; my emphasis). The emphasis on 'knowing' suggests Schopenhauer expects empathic agents to be able to recognise the significance of that state to the recipient, and so a projection of willing is a necessary component of empathy.

We remember that the will is essentially moved by (the promise of) wellbeing and-or woe. In addition, it is for the most part characterised by the dominance of egoism given its close affiliation with the will to life of which it is the most basic and original expression (more on this below). Insofar as a person is alive, we can assume that egoism plays a role in her life. This role must be central enough for the basic bodily functions and needs that preserve her existence. An egoistic agent affirms her own existence as represented by her body and its urges. In compassion, we sometimes overlook our wellbeing. Another person's state (who is fundamentally *distinct* from us), i.e., her goals and aims, and ultimately the body through which they appear and exert their influence on the objective world, become my motives as they would if it were my own body. I identify with the recipient's motives and thereby adopt *her* egoism, as I would otherwise do with my own. I cater to *her* individual needs and aims. This requires explanation. Schopenhauer, I argue, has enough conceptual room to explain it using the insights inherent to his account of aesthetic contemplation and the cognition that facilitates it.

One of the consequence of taking a disinterested stance on something is that we aim to perceive its *individual* will, which enables us to attune to it. Recall, that disinterestedness requires us to *suspend* the willing stance such that we can project willing onto the target of our cognition. Therefrom, we become tools or means for her will; we become a means to her end.<sup>106</sup> His aesthetics holds the key to his morality, which is clearer in *WR* and *WRII* than in his detailed discussion on morality in *OBM*.<sup>107</sup> In aesthetic contemplation of something, we take an interest in it for *its own sake* because we see it as willing, striving etc., in addition to seeing it as an object among objects. To perceive something or someone not *only* as an object, but additionally as willing, striving etc. just as we are, is fundamental to morality. The previous allows us to take an interest in her by identifying with her, at least doing so long enough to act on her behalf *for her sake*. In taking an interest in her, we adopt *her* goals and aims. Notice, however, that we suspend both our interest *and* recognise *her* individual interest before we can begin acting on *her behalf and for her sake*.

When we claim that compassion overcomes egoism, we mean that we have identified with the recipient and that our will to life, i.e., the urge to do something, expresses itself as affirmation of the recipient's individual will. We should not confuse overcoming egoism for overcoming the will to life or argue that the will to life and egoism are synonyms. In compassion, two *physically* and thus *empirically* distinct bodies identify with one another, which rests on the agent recognising the recipient's woe and aiming to act for her benefit and the continued existence of her body. She has her own *individual* aims independent and

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<sup>106</sup> The metaphor of the tool should not mislead us by suggesting that the recipient of compassion perceives its agent as an object among objects. Though the recipient *can* and sometimes *does* perceive the compassionate agent in this manner, this is not necessarily always the case. It depends on whether or not the recipient herself can contemplate aesthetically on the world, i.e., she can see the targets of her cognition not as objects among objects, but as willing things. The sense of genuine gratitude would stem from the previous.

<sup>107</sup> The reason for this difference in clarity may be due to the condition of anonymity that the Royal Danish Society of Scientific Studies placed on his essay.

distinct from the compassionate agent's aims. Her individuality is a condition of there being separate bodies and so wills *in the first place*. Furthermore, the previous individuality is what grounds a distinction between compassion and egoism. Therefore, compassion only makes sense if we preserve the difference between the agent and recipient, i.e., if they really are (or are perceived as being) different individuals (more on this below).<sup>108</sup>

In sum, Schopenhauer should have fleshed out two conditions of our compassionate actions:

- A) They rest on identifying and recognising the recipient's suffering and its *meaning* to her.
- B) The agent's *response* to this recognition is crucial for identifying and distinguishing compassion from the other mainsprings, because malice and asceticism also require us to perceive things as willing, striving and so on.

Note that A is a minimal participation in the recipient's state, which allows us to recognise its significance to her without determining our subsequent response to it. The moral agent then must be *capable* of empathy as a precondition. He has to recognise that the target of his cognition is not only an object, but that it wills like he does. In Schopenhauer's lexicon, he has to 'see through the *principium individuationis*'. What he aims to capture with 'seeing through the PI' is one's capacity for empathy. Without the cognition that typifies aesthetic contemplation, we would be incapable of recognising that the objects of cognition are not *just* there to be utilised, but willing things.

Condition B brings to light something the philosophical commentary on his thoughts often overlooks. The actions Schopenhauer labelled as 'morally worthy' are *one* response to recognising another's suffering and its significance to her; this response distinguishes compassion from the other mainsprings. Moreover, it shows that the cognition that typifies aesthetic contemplation does not lead to morally worthy actions of its own accord, but it *permits, enables* or *makes possible* such actions. An agent with an aesthetic world-view still has available to him the other mainsprings from which he can respond. Therefore, cognition is *impotent*: it can open doors, but it cannot *drive* us to go through them; only 'the will' *drives* (more on this below).<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Some preliminary remarks. Compassion, we can say, is the mirror image of egoism and relates to it conceptually, i.e., that they are both affirmations of the will to life. Compassion is akin to a *vicarious* affirmation of the will to life, but not vicarious 'egoism'. The will to life refers to the urge to act or do something and egoism is an affirmation of the will to life. Compassionate actions likewise *affirm* the will to life, however. They affirm another's individual will as it appears through *her* body and its states. It is a kind of *motivational synchronicity* with another and is the only mainspring that *both* overcomes egoism (it is selfless) *and* it aims at the recipient's wellbeing, which makes it a genuine candidate for the source of the moral phenomena and-or actions, i.e., freely willed justice and genuine loving kindness.

<sup>109</sup> I am deviating somewhat from Schopenhauer's central claim that the intellect transcends or liberates itself from the will here, but I hope to defend my reasons for doing so when I assess his views on ascetic resignation (more on this below).

Let us take a common objection to Schopenhauer's account of compassion, which demonstrates how the above distinction between empathy and sympathy can resolve some conceptual difficulties in his account of compassion.

Cartwright argues that Schopenhauer's claim that compassionate agents participate immediately in the recipient's suffering implies the extraordinary experience of feeling the recipient's pain in *her* body. We would be more consistent, he argues, if we construe this participation in her suffering as an 'imaginative' participation:

"I believe that we should reformulate Schopenhauer's conception of compassion by understanding (iii) not as that A participates immediately in B's suffering but as (iii): A participates imaginatively in B's suffering." (Cartwright 2008, 303)

Cartwright's suggestion can be misleading, because it implies that compassionate agents cannot respond *immediately* or *unreflectively* to the recipient's plight. However, he is right to emphasise the role of imagination in compassion, but we should distinguish two uses of imagination:

- A) The reflective use.
- B) The unreflectively use.

With respect to A, Cartwright's suggestion is that agents cannot respond immediately to help another while acting from compassion. In other words, George has to 'imagine' that *her* bodily state 'X' is what he experiences as suffering 'Y'. Compassion places a cognitive demand. It requires an inference, which presupposes considerable 'reflection' or cognitive labour.

Construing the compassionate agent's participation in suffering as 'imaginative' in juxtaposition to (or with a view to replacing an) 'immediate' participation, entails we make an inference from the observation of something on the recipient's body (e.g., some gesture) to its implication about her first-person experience. The previous implies that reflection and inferences are taking place. If we understand Cartwright's suggestion as distinguishing 'immediate' from 'imaginative' participation through such inferences and reflections, then when agents respond immediately to another who suffers entails the agent cannot be acting out of compassion. This casts doubt on those compassionate actions leaving no time for inferences or reflection; for example, in moments where someone is in danger and we react immediately means we are not acting out of compassion. Although I do not think Cartwright aims to reject the immediacy of compassionate actions, his suggestion still presupposes it. Furthermore, I do not believe this view of compassion offers an insight into Schopenhauer's views on compassion. Cartwright's view introduces a conceptual knot that we can untie by arguing that we should comprehend the use of imagination in the case of compassion is *a priori*. We use reason and imagination to project willing onto the target of our cognition *prior to* and *so that* we can perceive it as a willing thing. Thus, an alternative explanation of this 'immediacy' is available to us, which salvages Cartwright's suspicion about an error in Schopenhauer's claims and preserves Cartwright's appeal to imagination, albeit by way of a different use of imagination than he seemingly suggests.

As we saw previously, the aesthetic world-view underpinning the compassionate response is not an inference from the objective picture, but a suspension of the willing stance that is the subjective correlate of this picture. The move from egoism (the subject of willing) to selflessness (disinterestedness) requires an inference using the will-body identity, i.e., projection of willing on the target of cognition. We do not project our ego when we make this inference or *infer* that our ego is the *same as* another's. We do not project *ourselves* on things. We project the relationship of identity we *experience* with our body, i.e., the will-body identity. We project the fact that our body moves only when we *will* something, that is, we project the fact that we have desires, urges, aims, projects etc. and that these typify our bodily movements. This permits us to act compassionately towards them, but it does not *necessitate* us to do so; selflessness can permit asceticism and malice too. We recognise the identity between our will and body and project it on the objects of our cognition. We do not do this *for* compassion, but to break free from the chains of an egoistic world-view saturated with objects that are fair game for willing.

Once we make the cognitive (i.e., reflective and imaginative) leap from egoism to selflessness, we do not need to make it every time we encounter an object, but just assume a particular stance towards them. Compare, for example, this stance with what happens when we direct our attention from our lover to a stranger. We take a qualitatively different *stance* towards the stranger than we do to our lover. In ordinary cases, we may be defensive and suspicious of a stranger as juxtaposed to our lover. We do not make the inference every time that, right now, we are no longer attentive to our lover, but to a stranger—we just perceive a stranger and all that comes with it. We do not have to tell ourselves this person is now *not* our lover, or 'imagine' that we now perceive a stranger; we immediately respond differently to them because we assume a different stance in relation to them. This stance is immediate and bodily, which is reflected in our subsequent thoughts and actions. Something *similar* to the previous happens when we notice that someone is suffering.<sup>110</sup>

To be sure, we can agree with the major premise that *recognising* that someone is suffering rests on an inference, but if this premise will lead us to an account of compassion inclusive of our immediate responses, then we have to make the further claim that we sometimes make un-self-conscious inferences. The grammar of our language forbids us to claim that we made an inference when we unreflectively responded to events or changes in the state of affairs or in persons. If we commit ourselves to a conception of un-self-conscious inferences, then we can account for why we immediately respond to her suffering while also

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<sup>110</sup> For more on the immediate response of compassion see Taylor (1999, 83) who argues that the compassionate response to someone's suffering is a 'primitive' response that does not require any inference; though Taylor also reads Schopenhauer, wrongly in my view, as claiming that compassion requires some inference about the recipient's suffering before we can have compassion for them. Both Taylor and Cartwright do not recognise the difference between a motive and a mainspring in Schopenhauer, which may explain why they believe compassion requires an inference and cannot be immediate. Compassion is not a motive, but a mainspring of action and so it is a primitive response depending on the strength of the agent's egoism compared to their compassion. Schopenhauer's conception of 'loving-kindness' represents this immediacy. Both Taylor and Cartwright would have an easier time with their reading using what I called the projection of willing and what underpins it.

imaginatively participating in it. It seems that Schopenhauer did commit to this kind of inference through his conception of aesthetic contemplation and again through his remarks on the immediacy of loving-kindness. We can argue, then, that we make an *inference* about there being a suffering agent as opposed an object among objects, but we are not self-consciously aware of this in all instances when we recognise that someone is suffering. We perceive objects as willing things without the cognitive labour we require to suspend egoism long enough to project willing via imagination and reason. The reason is that compassion is its own mainspring unrelated to egoism even if they are both affirmations of the will to life. Consequently, we cannot always construe the difference between perceiving someone as an object fit for an independent purpose and perceiving him or her as willing as a *self-conscious* inference from the perception of an object to that of willing, striving and so on.

We can argue that there are un-self-conscious inferences to satisfy the skeptic, but at a cost because he can ask: why speak of un-self-conscious inferences when every inference we know or can assess is conscious and reflective? Placing our theoretical hopes on un-self-conscious inferences is unnecessary and misleading, albeit it typifies the Kantian philosophy Schopenhauer espoused. Schopenhauer's account of the aesthetic stance, i.e., projecting the will-body identity on the targets of our cognition, offers a different perception of them and this leads us to perceiving the world itself differently. To *perceive* the target as willing is not to infer anything from the object to the willing it represents using our imagination; it is not to imagine a person in place of the object in front of us. It means *perceiving the whole world* differently, i.e., as driving, striving and alive; it consists in an entirely different world-view, which we cannot adequately reduce to the objective picture.

I suspect that Cartwright's aim with the suggestion is *not* to commit us to an un-self-conscious inferences, but to preserve the distinction between the agent and the recipient's individualities and respective states in compassionating with someone. If I am correct in reading him this way, then he rightly presses Schopenhauer to be clear on this point. He is right to argue that we do not *literally* feel *his* pain *in his body*. Nevertheless, we have to allow that we feel *his* pain and not *our own*. All that an *imaginative* reconstruction of his pain can offer us is a *memory* of our own pain in place of *his* pain regardless of the difference between him and us. We want to claim that it is *his* pain we feel, not our own. This is because we simply do not literally have the same plight he does and perhaps never did. Nonetheless, we still *identify* with it in that moment. Accordingly, we need an account that permits us to feel *his* pain rather than our pain, but not feel *his* pain *in his body*. We want to feel *his* pain in *our* body. There is room for such an account in accordance with Schopenhauer's propositions, which can dispel Cartwright's worry about people feeling another's suffering in their body, but still resist the proposition that seems to undermine immediate compassionate feelings and actions. Schopenhauer's aesthetics helps in that regard.

Recall that egoism is a preoccupation with our own body and individuality; another's body is not and cannot possibly be our own. Furthermore, if their body *were* our own in any sense, then the distinction between egoism and compassion would collapse. A distinction between oneself and the recipient is a *precondition* of *both* compassion and egoism, because we require different bodies to distinguish the different preoccupations and concerns inherent

to compassion and egoism. Also, recall that the disinterestedness underpinning cognition of something as willing, striving etc., stems from our perceiving the target's 'Idea'. We do not forget that *we* are the ones taking a disinterested stance on the target, or that *we* perceive it as it strives to be. Individuality and willing are the same, but as we saw in previous chapters, disinterestedness does not forgo the subject-target correlation, but the individual-object (or individual-motive) correlation. We do not confuse ourselves with the target, but suspend the willing stance in relation to it. The object's 'will' bubbles up to the top of our focus and becomes its target. Thus, we preserve a subject-target correlation in aesthetic contemplation and maintain the difference between the individual target of cognition and *us*. Similarly, we cannot feel compassion if we confuse *his* suffering for our own, nor do we have to make the same conscious *inference* about his suffering at all times.<sup>111</sup>

Schopenhauer's claims can mislead, however. He sometimes claims that compassion requires one to make "less of a distinction than everyone else between himself and others" (*OBM*, 249). Though it is important to recognise the difference between compassion and egoism, it is also important to recognise that without the difference between the agent and the recipient there can be nothing we call egoism or compassion. She acts for another's sake as she would act for herself, but it is wrong to infer from the previous that, in doing so, she is egoistic *in some way*. We must be cautious about what Schopenhauer attempts to capture about the compassionate agent's identification with the recipient with claims such as the following:

"...this presupposes that I have identified myself to a certain extent with the other, and consequently that the barrier between I and not-I is removed for the moment: only then does the other's business, *his* need, *his* distress, *his* suffering immediately become mine" (*OBM*, 218; my emphasis)

We are always conscious of his suffering being *his*, even when we identify with it and act on his behalf. The morally worthy agent does not *only* recognise, immediately or through deliberation (reflection or memory), that the recipient feels or undergoes something similar in *significance* to what she herself has felt before, or *can* feel at some stage. She aims to promote *his* wellbeing and sometimes does so at the expense of her *own* wellbeing, which entails a fundamental break with egoism.<sup>112</sup> The reason to consider such a break is that in such instances the egoist finds the strongest motive to *act*. If egoism were his dominant or *only* mainspring, then this break would be impossible. He immerses himself in the recipient and her plight, as he immerses himself in aesthetic contemplation; he forgets his egoism, but not his self-reference (more on this below where we reconsider the metaphysical egoism objection).

Next and before moving on, we should briefly assess Schopenhauer's defence of the proposition that compassion is the *only* source of freely willed justice and genuine loving

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<sup>111</sup> For more on these issues see Cartwright (2008 & 2012).

<sup>112</sup> Schopenhauer desperately tries to show us that this phenomenon is possible and indeed actual with the story of Arnold von Winkelried (cf. *OBM*, 196).



kindness. He begins by considering *how* another's plight motivates us. His answer is twofold. Either by placing a block to egoistic tendencies motivated by the recognition of the harm an egoistic action would bring another, or by our actively helping another following our 'immediate participation' in her suffering. The former he construes as freely willed justice and the latter as genuine loving kindness, from which, he argues, arises the principle that helps us identify a compassionate action: "harm no one; rather help everyone to the extent that you can" (*OBM*, 162).

Schopenhauer sees freely willed justice as "showing the first degree of effectiveness of this genuine and natural moral incentive (*Triebfeder*)" (*OBM*, 204). For him, injustice drives us by our nature as embodied beings burdened with the immediate and basic aim of preserving or enhancing our body. Egoism holds the "right of prior occupancy" (*OBM*, 204). Though compassion is a mainspring of action and therefore a constituent or objectivation of the will to life, it struggles with egoistic urges. In freely willed justice, compassion operates negatively, by holding back or prohibiting our egoism. Consequently, in the first degree of its effectiveness, compassion operates negatively. It suppresses actions that inflict (directly or indirectly) suffering on another person. If egoism drove us to suppress an action of this sort, then it would stem from the motive of avoiding (legal) punishment, rather than the fact that our action inflicted suffering on another. Recall, that alleviating her woe is logically the same as aiming to promote her wellbeing. Similarly, suppressing actions that inflict suffering on another derives from compassion. It is due to the previous that he construes suppression of this sort as 'freely willed' justice. We do not suspend an action based on its consequences to ourselves, but on its consequences to the recipient. We stop ourselves from harming another person by identifying with her and *not* wanting to inflict suffering on her; it shows the extent to which we can pursue self-interested ends *without* inflicting suffering on another. Actions that excludes this identification with a recipient and do not evaluate her suffering in the same way lack moral worth.<sup>113</sup>

Schopenhauer construes genuine loving kindness as the "second level at which the suffering of others immediately becomes my motive in itself and as such" (*OBM*, 216). It differs from freely willed justice by "the positive character of the actions that issue from it, in that now compassion does not merely hold me back from injuring the other but actually drives me on to help him" (*ibid.*). The second part of the above maxim represents this feature of genuine loving kindness: 'help everyone to the extent that you can'. It proceeds from the same recognition and possesses the same aim as justice. It differs from justice, however, by overcoming egoism not through self-conscious reflection over how our actions might inflict suffering on a recipient, but by instigating the appropriate action to alleviate the suffering we recognise irrespective of whether or not we inflicted it. Compassionate agents do not help another because they seek their indebtedness or out of guilt. They do not help another

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<sup>113</sup> Presumably for Schopenhauer the malicious person would still identify with the recipient, and certainly must in certain forms of malice that are not physical, but psychological and-or emotional. The latter forms of malice require the agent to a certain extent to empathise with the recipient to know that *these* words, gestures or thoughts can and will harm him more than others.

person in hope that if they help enough people, they might have a better chance in a heavenly afterlife, or because their peers will esteem them more highly and so on.

We notice that Schopenhauer's epistemological distinction between the will and the intellect is present throughout his thoughts; it is central to his analysis of the mainspring of morally worthy actions. I assessed his thoughts on how to distinguish the morally worthy character from other characters and introduced a distinction that nuances these differences. I also assessed morality's relationship to legislation, which the difference in mainsprings underpins. Next, I will analyse an objection to his proposition that 'compassion' is the basis of morality, which hinges on how compassion relates to his metaphysics of the will.

## 1.13 The Metaphysical Egoism Objection

The Anglophone commentary on Schopenhauer's account of compassion focuses on how it relates to his metaphysics of the will. I will avoid an in-depth discussion of the state of affairs in the philosophical commentary on this topic. I will focus instead on whether or not Schopenhauer can answer what I will call the metaphysical egoism objection without sacrificing the conceptual coherence of his metaphysics of the will. I believe he can by approaching the objection using the distinction between an 'individual will' and the 'will to life'. Similarly, careful assessment of a distinction between compassion and negation of the will to life helps offer a robust response to the objection, which I assess in the next chapter. First, let us lay out the metaphysical egoism objection.

The objection argues that Schopenhauer's metaphysical explanation of compassion leads him to the unwarranted proposition that compassion phenomenally overcomes, but metaphysically preserves egoism.<sup>114</sup> Julian Young describes the objection in the following way:

"As the discussion proceeds, however, it becomes clear that, after all, the altruist *does* act for the sake of his own interest, the only difference between him and the egoist being that he acts for the sake of the interests of his *metaphysical* rather than his empirical self. So, as we might put it, the empirical altruist turns out to be a metaphysical egoist. And given that egoism excludes 'moral worth', it is entirely

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<sup>114</sup> See for example, Gardiner (1967, 276-7) who contends that identification with recipient based on a recognition of the metaphysical identity between agent and recipient, as a requirement for our having compassion, supports the idea that egoism can explain compassion and that the latter has no privileged explanatory power. Young (2005, 182) coined the term 'metaphysical egoist' and construes compassion as phenomenally alleviating the recipient's woe for the recipient's sake while the aim is to promote the wellbeing of one's metaphysical self. Hamlyn (1980, 145) construes compassion as an enlarged form of egoism. For a response to the previous and a more detailed discussion of the objection see also Cartwright (2008 & 2012).

unclear why his moral status should be any different from that of the common-or-garden egoist.” (Young 2005, 182-3)

According to the objection, then, a compassionate agent is a metaphysical egoist because of the metaphysical identity between the agent and the recipient of her compassionate action. I will argue that there is a misleading reading of the will underpinning the metaphysical egoism objection. First, I will clarify the objection’s aim by distinguishing two possible interpretations of it. Second, I will defend the claim that compassion is its own mainspring that overcomes egoism. Therefore, we cannot *reduce* compassion to egoism or understand it in its terms.

The two possible interpretations of the metaphysical egoism objection are as follows: the first I call the *categorical* interpretation and the second the *motivational* interpretation. The categorical interpretation argues that his explanation fails to show how a compassionate agent genuinely overcomes egoism to merit construing compassion as its own mainspring of action. If one’s ‘metaphysical self’ drives her to help another, because she recognised her ‘metaphysical self’ in the recipient, then it is plainly wrong to argue compassion explains the action independent from egoism. Thus, Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of the will ensures that compassion has no explanatory value independent from egoism. Compassionate actions can be reduced to egoism, i.e., they are metaphysically egoistic ones. Therefore, compassion is a token of metaphysical egoism.

The motivational interpretation states that an agent who recognises the metaphysical identity between herself and the recipient may still be motivated to act egoistically, even though she *can likewise* act to promote the recipient’s wellbeing. In short, recognising our *metaphysical identity* with someone does not *necessarily* drive us to promote her wellbeing. However, the mere presence, apart from the effect of a compassionate motive presupposes the ‘felt consciousness’ of this identity, as Schopenhauer argues:

“The magnitude of the world, which we used to find unsettling, is now settled securely within ourselves: our dependence on it is nullified by its dependence on us. – Yet we do not reflect on all this straight away; instead it appears only as the felt consciousness that we are, in some sense (that only philosophy makes clear), one with the world, and thus not brought down, but rather elevated, by its immensity.” (WR, 230)

If we are moved to act on the recipient’s behalf for her sake, then we are in a sense elevated by the recognition of the identity between us, even though we do not necessarily have to act on her behalf as a result of recognising this identity. The motivational interpretation, then, places a *conditional* relationship between the *compassionate* action and the metaphysical identity between the recipient and us. This means that someone who does not recognise this identity could not *possibly* be in a position to overcome his colossal and all-encompassing egoism for long enough to even perceive a motive in promoting another’s wellbeing without receiving something in return. An individual who *does* recognise this identity, however, is not *necessarily motivated* to act compassionately. Recall, that both asceticism and malice are such that they presuppose the felt consciousness. Nevertheless, only as a consequences of

recognising this identity is the agent *capable* of noticing compassionate motives, even if they are too weak to overcome his egoism. In other words, the felt consciousness works as an open door or an invitation into another room of the house of motives that is our life and will, but as with any invitation, it only succeeds in motivating us if we, as individuals, *want* or *will* it. Compassion is *not* open to or an option for individuals who do not recognise this metaphysical identity. She lacks the empathy required to generate compassionate motives, which are a precondition of compassion.

If we intend the motivational interpretation to serve as the objection, then, though it is correct, it is also unwarranted. Schopenhauer was aware that the recognition of an identity between the recipient and ourselves enables without necessitating compassion. The previous does not necessarily lead us to overcoming our egoism, nor does it necessarily lead us to the negation of the will to life. The following passage is an example of the previous proposition and shows Schopenhauer's awareness of the motivational limits of the 'felt consciousness':

"The will affirms itself, which means that while in its objectivity (i.e. in the world and life) its own essence is given to it completely and distinctly as representation, this cognition is no impediment to its willing; rather, consciously, deliberately, and with cognition, it wills the life that it thus recognises as such, just as it did as a blind urge before it had this cognition." (WR, 311)<sup>115</sup>

The motivational interpretation of the objection repeats Schopenhauer's claims and so fails to qualify as an objection. I will focus on the categorical interpretation instead.

If we intend the categorical interpretation of the objection, then will Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will have enough conceptual room to avert compassion's reduction to a species of egoism? If we take the concept of metaphysical egoism literally, then I will argue that it constitutes an error in our understanding and misapplication of his terms, rather than a philosophical inconsistency on his part.

A compassionate agent who overcomes egoism does so based on his recognising an identity between the recipient and himself, but this identity does not *necessarily* lead him to overcome egoism; it merely enables him to perceive other, non-egoistic motives. The reason is that without his identifying with someone as he does in aesthetic contemplation he cannot *possibly* find a way out of egoism. The agent would be bound to perceive others as objects and thus potential motives, rather than as willing things. He has to perceive the recipient as willing *like* himself, namely, as someone with a body, subjected to urges or impulses, and as fundamentally experiencing an urge to do something, anything whatsoever, which is what the will to life amounts to. If he is to feel compassion or perceive *compassionate* motives, then he has to identify with the recipient, but this does not guarantee that he will act out of compassion. Hence, compassion is conditionally (rather than bi-conditionally) reliant on identifying with the recipient.

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<sup>115</sup> For more on this topic see Schopenhauer's discussion on eternal justice (WR, 377-83). See also an insightful paper by Gemes & Janaway (cf. 2012, 283-6), who rightly argue that there are "two kinds of affirmation for Schopenhauer, reflective and unreflective" (Gemes & Janaway 2012, 284).

I will defend the above by showing two errors of the categorical interpretation. First, there is a misapplication of the distinction between the individual and metaphysical use of the will. We can call this the *misapplication error*. Second, there is a misconception of the relationship between a mainspring (of which there are four) and the will to life. We can call this the *will to life error*. These two errors will aim to demonstrate that what we construe as metaphysical egoism constitutes a contradiction in terms. Furthermore, it misunderstands Schopenhauer's metaphysical explanation of compassion.

The misapplication error arises from an incorrect understanding of Schopenhauer's two uses of the 'will'. We are not always sure whether he speaks about an individual will, i.e., *this* mainspring in juxtaposition to another, or about the precondition of individuation or objectivation underpinning all mainsprings of action, i.e., the will to life. All mainsprings and their corresponding motives relate to the will to life, but the will to life *itself*, is not *one* mainspring in juxtaposition to another. Therefore, it is misleading to refer to an individual's 'will to life'. We notice this clearly in Atwell's reading:

"The pitying agent denies or renounces the will to life as belonging exclusively to himself or herself (he or she abandons egoism, which is the normal incentive for human beings) and "identifies" with the will to life in other animate (and suffering) creatures. For the pitying agent any known suffering is taken on as his or her suffering, hence he or she works toward eliminating it wherever it occurs. This agent therefore renounces only the will to life in himself or herself, that is, this agent renounces the selfish will, and does so only in the sense of regarding any suffering on a par with his or her suffering. Again, then, this agent adopts what might be called the "objective" or "impartial" will to life; but he or she continues to affirm life as such." (Atwell 1995, 155-6)

Atwell is not wrong in his intuition that there is a difference between the will to life and egoism, also in claiming that the agent identifies with the recipient. Where he errs is that he associates the will to life with egoism and argues that the agent 'renounces only the will to life in himself'. The previous conflates Schopenhauer's two uses of the will, i.e., the metaphysical and the individual. Below, I will discuss the fundamental difference between compassion, egoism and the will to life as a response to the metaphysical egoism objection.

If we individuate the will to life, then and only then can we recognise differences in persons, i.e., in individual wills. The previous, in turn, allows us to recognise differences in mainsprings *and* to have different mainsprings. It leads us to identify with something *other than* ourselves, which is the basis on which we overcome the preoccupation with our body and will. The difference between egoism and other mainsprings, fundamentally, rests on the ability to perceive ourselves as both a willing thing and an object among objects, which we subsequently project onto the targets of our cognition, which ordinarily appear as objects among objects. This projection paves the way for the other mainsprings, that is, for malice, compassion and even asceticism.

Unlike the motivational interpretation of the metaphysical egoism objection, the categorical interpretation and the conflation grounding it are not accidental. Schopenhauer's

claims often confuse his readers by seemingly linking agents' recognition that the recipient is willing, striving etc. with negation of the will to life. Let us look at some passages where the previous link is implied and notice how easily they perplex us over the broadness of use of the 'will':

**A:** "... love, whose origin and essence we know to involve seeing through the *principium individuationis*, leads to redemption, namely the complete abandonment of the will to life, i.e. all willing." (WR, 401)

**B:** "... the same source that gives rise to all goodness, love, virtue and nobility there ultimately emerges also what I call the negation of the will to life." (WR, 405)

Notice that 'A' associates the will to life with 'all willing' rather than *one kind* of willing. In 'B', he implies that the root of all goodness, love etc. (apparently compassion) *gives rise* to negation of the will to life (apparently asceticism). We know that, according to his views, the root of goodness, love etc. is compassion, which now supposedly gives rise to another mainspring, which is its own negation. The above claims seemingly contradict, but I suggest there is another way we can read them that can avoid the apparent contradiction.

Firstly, the source of goodness, love etc. to which Schopenhauer refers in the above passage is not compassion. It is the recognition that the recipient and we, as agents, are both willing; the recipient is not an object among objects, but willing, striving etc. like we are. This is what 'seeing through the PI' means. As I argued above, however, seeing through the PI is *not* limited to inciting compassion, which is the genuine source of goodness, love etc., but is also a precondition of the other mainsprings. It refers to our ability to identify with a target of cognition. Therefore, seeing through the PI makes possible our compassion *and* the other mainsprings, too. If we do not perceive the recipient as willing, striving etc. (albeit differently to us) as opposed to another object among objects, then there would be neither a reason nor a basis for us to aim for his wellbeing *as if it was our own* or to aim for his woe. We would be too preoccupied with either looking for ways to utilise him or ignore him. Schopenhauer does not refer to compassion when he claims that the same source that gives rise to goodness likewise leads to negation of the will to life, but he misleads his readers when he claims that 'seeing through the PI' is the root of goodness etc. (more on this below).

Secondly, the same identification supposedly gives rise to the negation of the will to life, but we must not confuse this for the negation of a particular instantiation of willing, i.e., death of the individual. It is rather the loss or the depression of *the urge to do something* irrespective of the deed (more on this below). Not even compassion, which we can construe as being an object for a recipient's will, can drive us after we have negated the will to life. Consequently, there is a lack of clarity in Schopenhauer's expressions that leads readers to confound the *recognition* of an identity between us and the target of cognition with the *aim to negate* this urge.

To avoid the confusions, we can distinguish individual willing from the metaphysical will. We can separate claims concerning relations between our mainsprings, which implies individuation and juxtaposition, from claims made about willing *itself* independent of how

it appears through some person, action, object or motive. The will to life is not *one will* in juxtaposition to another, but the precondition for individuals and mainsprings. I argue that we should construe it as the *urge to do something, anything whatsoever*, which enables us to take various and differing actions in relation to various and differing circumstances. The affirmation or negation of the urge to do something exhausts the *metaphysical* significance of any mainspring we possess (more on this below).<sup>116</sup>

Through the distinction between what pertains to *all aims* and what pertains to *one aim* in juxtaposition to another, we may clarify Schopenhauer's account of the relationship between compassion and egoism and so respond to the metaphysical egoism objection. We know *how* compassion and egoism relate to the will to life, i.e., they are different expressions of the urge to do something. We know our mainsprings differ from one another *only* when juxtaposed to each other. Notice, however, that we do not know what this difference consists in if we read them as affirmations of the will to life. We require something more than their being affirmations of the will to life to define and differentiate them. In short, affirmation of the will to life is a second-order response to the distinct kinds of first-order mainsprings we possess, which differ based on their first-order relations. With these distinctions in mind, we can proceed to seeing how a different approach to the relationship between egoism and compassion can resolve the conceptual challenge of the metaphysical egoism objection.

## 1.14 Compassion and Egoism: A Response to the Metaphysical Egoism Objection

A response to the metaphysical egoism objection requires us to assess Schopenhauer's views on egoism based on his distinct uses of the will, i.e., the individual and metaphysical. I will attempt this assessment by starting with how egoism relates to the metaphysical use of the will. A well-known and frequently-quoted description of egoism he gives us is the following:

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<sup>116</sup> Recall, however, that the option to affirm or negate the will to life is not available to the will devoid of cognition, which appears as a blind and inexorable impulse, but only to cognitive beings with reason and reflection. This is because we can recognise all things identify with the will to life, i.e., with the blind inexorable impulse impelling or urging all things to do something, anything whatsoever. It permits this same impulse to no longer be blind, but acquire the self-image on which it acts as it does on anything else and continues to realise this urge through identification with another thing. In other words, through us, the will to life acquires self-knowledge and can subsequently respond to itself (i.e. negate or affirm itself) where it once was only able to affirm itself in its pursuit of something deemed as distinct from and external to us. The recognition that all beings, objects and forces are the will to life, i.e., that they are subject to the urge to do something and so to express (i.e., objectivate) themselves through actions of any kind, makes possible two responses: affirmation or negation. Using the individual use of the will, we can see that this constitutes our (personal) will and its relationship to life, whereas using the metaphysical use, it constitutes the limits of all urges in life, i.e., the urge to do anything at all.

“This egoism, both in an animal and in a human being, is linked in the most precise way with his innermost core and essence, and indeed is properly identical with it. So all his actions, as a rule, spring from egoism and the explanation of any given action is always to be sought in it first of all; and likewise the calculation of all means by which one attempts to steer a human being towards any goal is also entirely grounded upon it.” (*OBM*, 190)

The above characterisation is misleading because it implies an identity relationship between egoism and one’s ‘innermost core and essence’. Recall that egoism is one mainspring among four others. In the same book, he defines it as the mainspring whose aim is to promote the agent’s wellbeing (cf. *OBM*, 190-1). There are other mainsprings, which we cannot reduce to egoism, but which nonetheless bear some relationship to the will to life, i.e., the urge to do something or ‘his innermost core and essence’. Accordingly, the above passage conflates egoism with the will to life and this misleads his readers and undermines his metaphysics of the will.

His description of egoism in *WR* differs from the above passage and reflects how it relates to the will to life more clearly and coherently in relation to his metaphysics of the will. In *WR*, he construes egoism as follows:

“... [T]he first simple affirmation of the will to life is simply the *affirmation of one’s own body*, i.e. the presentation of the will through acts in time, to the extent that the body is already the spatial presentation of the same will through its form and purposiveness, and no further. This affirmation reveals itself as the preservation of the body through the use of its own forces... Now the will presents a *self-affirmation* of the particular body in countless coexisting individuals, and because they are all characterised by egoism, the will very easily exceeds this affirmation in any given individual and becomes a *negation* of the same will as it appears in other individuals. The will of the first individual violates the boundaries of the other individual’s affirmation of will.” (*WR*, 360; some emphasis is mine)

Egoism is the affirmation of ‘one’s own body’, not *any* ‘body’ or bodies. Notice, also, that he argues the ‘will’ (i.e., the will to life) affirms itself in ‘countless coexisting individuals’, which, by their existence as individuals, affirm their own bodies. In short, each individual affirms his or her own body, in one form or other and at some time or other; every individual is egoistic to some extent. What I derive from the above is that what distinguishes one individual from another is *not* the will to life, but the *individual* will (i.e., the body) and its representation through acts of will (i.e., actions) over time. The previous becomes clearer when, as we will shortly see, we notice that we can affirm the *will to life* in ways that do not necessarily entail affirming *our own body*. Therefore, we should distinguish the affirmation of one’s own body or self-affirmation from an affirmation of the will to life.

In *OBM*, Schopenhauer seemingly suggests that the will to life itself is egoistic, but a careful reading of other passages suggest otherwise. For example, his views on egoism in *WR*, reveal that what is egoistic in purposive action is not the will to life, but the body in which it instantiates and the aim to promote its wellbeing by its own efforts. Egoism is core



to our embodiment, individuality and existence. Only someone who possesses a body acts purposefully. Moreover, only someone who promotes her own (body's) wellbeing exists at all. However, we cannot reduce all urges to egoism or even argue that all urges spring from it without contradiction; conflating egoism with the will to life promotes this contradiction. There is likewise a conceptual limitation here. The urge to do something cannot possibly be egoistic; only the *aim* of the urge to do something can be egoistic.

Schopenhauer's hasty rhetoric about egoism in *OBM* misleads us with respect to his metaphysical conception of egoism and compassion. We *affirm* the will to life in different ways, some of which are not egoistic, because they do not *aim* to promote one's *own body*. What distinguishes them from egoism is the aim, not the fact that they *affirm* the will to life, i.e., that they express the urge to do something. Thus, egoism is *one* type 'affirmation of the will to life' or self-affirmation. The will to life merely expresses the motivational bedrock of any action, which always expresses the urge to do something, anything whatsoever.

We are alive to the degree that we cater to ourselves through our own body and thus are concerned with its welfare, i.e., to the degree that we affirm ourselves, but we are not limited to this affirmation alone. According to Schopenhauer, we can affirm the will to life in different ways than self-affirmation, because the will to life and our 'self' are different things. The will to life is the *urge to do something*, whereas egoism is the *urge to promote one's own body* or promote our self. Note that the latter presupposes individuation, which is not present in the former.<sup>117</sup>

We experience an urge to do something when we identify with others through the will to life to which we are both subject because we *both* experience an urge to do something. Yet, this does not mean that if we identify with others in this way and act on their behalf, we act egoistically in the *so-called* 'metaphysical sense'. This is equivalent to saying nothing or a contradiction in terms. There is a subtle difference between *affirmation* of the will to life and egoism. Egoism is an urge *with an aim* that requires us to distinguish ourselves from another. The will to life is a precondition of all urges irrespective of their aim and thus does not permit or require any distinction. Let us nuance the previous proposition by showing the how egoism differs from the other mainsprings starting with compassion. There are two propositions we can make about egoism, compassion and the will to life:

- 1) Like egoism, compassion is an *affirmation* of the will to life.
- 2) Compassion overcomes egoism, however, which makes it a separate motivational category, i.e., it is its own mainspring.

If compassion moves our body, i.e., if it generates unique actions, then it too is a constituent of the will. If the will to life represents any action irrespective of its aim, we can characterise compassion in terms of how it relates to the will to life. It cannot be the negation of the will

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<sup>117</sup> Consider his discussion on the relationship between the will to life and suicide, which, he contends, is an affirmation of the will to life which negates the body whence an action arises (*WR*, 384-6). Equally, there are other modifications of the will or bodily urges, which are not concerned with affirmation of one's own body: compassion is one of them, but also the mysterious urge responsible for asceticism.

to life, because it would entail no urge and so no action whatsoever, or, more correctly, the *aim* to stifle our urges and action. In fact, compassion affirms the will to life because it is an urge *to do something*. What kind of an affirmation is it and how do we distinguish it from others? Can we construe it in terms of egoism?

If we define egoism as Schopenhauer defines it in *WR*, namely, as the ‘*first simple* affirmation of the will to life’ (my emphasis), or affirmation of one’s own body, or an urge to promote our own body, then we cannot construe compassion as a kind of egoism. In short, affirmation of the will to life is *not* the affirmation of one’s metaphysical ego.<sup>118</sup> We refer to nothing when we speak of our ‘metaphysical ego’. It is a contradiction in terms and it conflates having an urge in the first place with having an urge *with* a specific target or aim. Compassion is an affirmation of the will to life using the recipient’s individual body. Thus, it is an affirmation of *some* body, but not of *our own* body. Compassion allows us to express the will to life by identifying with somebody else, i.e., their individuality and *their* body, its urges and wellbeing. We present ourselves as the *willing* tools or a means for the recipient’s individuality.<sup>119</sup> Compassionate agents do not and cannot possibly act egoistically; also, the will to life is not a ‘thing’ or ‘body’, but a precondition of embodiment and thing-hood.

Schopenhauer’s leap from the felt consciousness in his aesthetics to its significance for morality and ascetic resignation is what, I believe, makes us conflate the will to life with *one* of its mainsprings or affirmations. It is in carelessly hyperbolic claims of the following sort that we find the germ facilitating the conflation between the will to life and egoism:

“...instead of ‘affirmation of the will’, we could also say ‘affirmation of the body’.

The basic theme of all the various acts of will is the satisfaction of needs that are inseparable from the healthy existence of the body, are already expressed in it, and can be reduced to the preservation of the individual and the propagation of the species.” (*WR*, 353)

The compassionate agent *acts* with the aim to preserve *some* body, but it is misleading to suggest she is egoistic. She is the one responsible for the action, but her aim is not to promote *her own welfare*. In aiming to help someone and by being concerned for his welfare, she suspends her *own wellbeing*. Compassion is still an affirmation of the will to life, but not her self-affirmation, because she still aims to benefit *somebody*, namely, it is still an urge to do something and thus an affirmation of the will to life. An action’s mainspring depends on its aim. Consequently, metaphysically, egoism and compassion are different parts of the same whole, but they are not identical. Both compassion and egoism would lose their meaning

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<sup>118</sup> Remember that the concept of an ego only makes sense in distinction to an object seen as a non-ego, a distinction that is forbidden as concerns the metaphysical will. See also Cartwright (2008, 298) on this point.

<sup>119</sup> This may be hard to swallow for those of us inclined to a religious or esoteric conception of compassion. In compassionating, we support the recipient’s egoism and thus we become *willing tools* towards his individual ends. Schopenhauer was not referring to compassion in discussing the religious and esoteric dimension of his thoughts, which we saw as the effects of grace and ascetic resignation; he was referring to the negation of the will to life, or the mainspring of asceticism, which differs fundamentally from compassion.

and-or significance if we saw them as identical, but, when we consider them metaphysically, we do not express their identity so much as their being different parts of the same whole.

Compassion overcomes our concern with our own body and thus our individual will, but it does not overcome the will to life. To forgo the distinction between one's own body and another's and then attempt to carry self-interest into the metaphysical is to abandon *both* compassion and egoism and reduce them to absurdities. In short, it is an error in category to allow one expression of the will to life to be synonymous with it. Without the distinction between one thing another, there cannot be a concept of 'self'. Likewise, without a concept of self, there cannot be 'self-concern'. In turn, without self-concern we cannot make sense of being 'concerned for another'. To lose the distinction between one person and another is to lose all of our mainsprings. Here we should guard from conflating self-concern with self-reference. Forgoing our self-concern is not equivalent to forgoing our self-reference or our identity with our actions. It is always 'I' and not someone else who performs *my* actions; so, I preserve the distinction between myself and the recipient by recognising that *I* act for *his* sake on his behalf. Hamlyn, for example, misleadingly argues that Schopenhauer is in some way committed to linking "compassion with an enlarged form of egoism" (Hamlyn 1908, 145). If we apply Hamlyn's suggestion to Schopenhauer's conception of egoism, while utilising Schopenhauer's two uses of the will or avoid conflating them, then we have the following account of what compassion *means*. According to Hamlyn, the compassionate agent acts on another's behalf because both of them constitute a sense of self construed in opposition to a third party that both perceive as foreign and therefore as an object correlative to their *shared* will (purpose, aim etc.) and *shared* individuality. The previous must be the case, because egoism only makes sense if we have the *same aim* to promote the *same body* with which we both identity. Furthermore, the fact that there is some 'body' with which we both identity makes sense only in juxtaposition to another body or object we both recognise and perceive as being in accordance or discordance with our shared aim to promote the same body, i.e., we both perceive it as an 'object among objects'.

In sum, though self-reference and the urge to do something which underpins it are constitutive of both egoistic and compassionate actions, there is nonetheless a *motivational difference* between them. This difference is based on the 'body', which is the *recipient* of the action. Compassion does *not* and *cannot possibly* arise from negation of the will to life. It overcomes the first simple affirmation of the will to life, i.e., affirmation of one's own body. Consequently, compassion is *affirmation* of the will to life by aiming to promote someone else's body.

The second and related error stems from the proposition that one mainspring is such that it characterise all the others, i.e., that we can reduce all mainsprings to some *version* of one. This error stems from misunderstanding and misapplying Schopenhauer's distinct uses of the will, but we should omit that some of his comments do not help. He is often eager to demonstrate how negation of the will to life is possible, why it is desirable and how it relates to the recognition that objects of cognition are willing, striving etc. like we will, strive and so on. We should omit that Schopenhauer seems intent on showing that a compassionate action is partial to egoism in a loose and extended sense. Compassion still promotes egoism,

but the previous does not mean that we are *acting egoistically*. Our partiality is not to the *agent*, but the *recipient*. Compassionate agents act on behalf of the *recipient's* egoism. A motivational synchronicity occurs between the agent and recipient, which is partial to the recipient's 'ego'. The compassionate agent *plugs into* the recipient's individual will, so to speak. Although there is personal overcoming of egoism in compassion, there is *not* by this token an overcoming of egoism *in all senses*. We promote some *body*, which means we are still acting in someone's *benefit* and thus affirms individuality or individuation. We do not *abolish* egoism when we act morally, but our actions do not serve us and so we cannot say that our moral actions are egoistic.

Another source of the conflation between the two uses of the will is Schopenhauer's contention that the compassionate agent "realises it is he himself that now appears to him" as the recipient. Another proposition is that the compassionate agent "recognises his own essence in itself in someone else's appearance" (*OBM*, 255). Compare the previous with the following: "the good character lives in an external world homogeneous with his essence: others for him are not not-I, but are 'I once more'" (*OBM*, 254). Equally likely to confuse is the perplexing proposition that compassion is grounded on "*one* individual's immediately recognising himself, his own true essence, in the *other*" (*OBM*, 253). Therefore, Cartwright rightly objects and argues there is a problem with claims that purportedly point to the extraordinary experiences, such as those opining that it is,

"...precisely *in his* person, not in ours, that we feel the pain, to our distress. We suffer *with* him, thus *in* him: we feel his pain as *his*, and do not imagine that it is ours" (*OBM*, 203)

Cartwright's suggestion is that Schopenhauer cannot possibly mean the above literally and so favors an interpretation of these sentences as metaphorical (cf. Cartwright 2008, 298). I agree that Schopenhauer's comments are unfortunately misleading and do not do enough to show how his purported metaphysical basis for compassion relates to the rest of his thoughts on it, notably his psychological views and distinctions between the various mainsprings. I would add that he was aware of the difficulty of doing so and explicitly stated it (cf. *OBM*, 246-248). Our 'true essence' is our urge to do something, not any one of our mainsprings, i.e., egoism, compassion and so on. I argue that conflating the individual and metaphysical will mislead us. Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine whether the conflation was his own or if we misread him, because some of his comments facilitate it, whereas his philosophical distinctions ensure we have a way to avoid it.

The 'I once more' (or 'self') we recognise in another person cannot refer to our individual will, for then it is patently a contradiction. To recognise oneself in the first place requires the distinction between the recipient and us on whose basis we can see *anything* as an object among objects, but also as willing, striving and so on. The 'I once more' (or 'self') refers to the will to life, but the will to life cannot possibly be any individual. Recall that the 'I' is preoccupied with willing and its affirmation in whatever form. What he tries to capture with 'willing' is the agent's identity with her action, or her "sense of self" as Reginster (cf. 2009, 99) aptly puts it. I argued that we should construe this as the urge to do something,

which is a precondition of individuality without denoting *what* makes us individual. We should distinguish this ‘urge to do something’ accompanying all actions from our action’s aim, which determines what makes us individual. Our ‘sense of self’ is inherent to any action, because it represents the urge to act itself. The objective correlate of the previous is the cognition of ‘something’ as an object and its subjective correlate is our identifying with something. We identify with our own body when egoism drives us, or with another body when malice and compassion drives us. Nevertheless, for us to act in the first place, we have to perceive something as an object, first, and a motive, second. Even malice and compassion must adhere to the previous, although they do not cognise the recipient as an object, but the *circumstances* the recipient finds herself in or her plight, as an *object* and so a *motive*. Malice aims to promote her plight and compassion aims to alleviate it.

There is a distinction between one’s sense of self and the mainspring of our action. Our ‘sense of self’ emerges in juxtaposition to something distinct from us, which we see as an object fit for purpose without defining it. Whereas, egoism, compassion, malice and asceticism have their characteristic purposes. In performing an action, we identify with it as its *performers*, i.e., as our own action. Schopenhauer puts it in the following way:

“The greatest concentration of subjectivity consists in the *act of will* proper, and in this therefore we have the clearest consciousness of our own selves” (*WR II*, 368)

Given that compassion and egoism are acts of will, we become *conscious of our own selves* through them. What distinguishes an act of will from another is its *aim* and not the fact that through it we become self-conscious. Recall that acts of will are inseparable from bodily movement. Thus, the claim that an act of will gives us the ‘clearest consciousness of our own selves’ means that when we are acting or experiencing an urge to act, we are conscious of the fact that *we* are the performers or authors of the action. For Schopenhauer, all of our actions are deliberate and based on thoughtfulness to some extent (cf. *WR*, 326f), which accentuates the self-consciousness accompanying them. When I act egoistically, it is *I* who acts. Likewise, when I act compassionately, it is *I* who acts. Nevertheless, my aim with the action and what determines its success or failure differs in each case. In the case of egoism, promoting my own body or individuality determines its success or failure. In compassion, it is promotion of another’s body or individuality. Therefore, we identify with our actions and urges to act and some are *not* egoistic. We do not define our mainsprings by our identity with our actions and urges, but by their different aims.

In light of the above, how do we explain that we *always* identify with our body via our actions, but are *not* always motivated to promote our body? We recognise an *identity* between ourselves and the recipient premised on the will to life. We perceive her as someone who is willing, striving and so on. In other words, we assume that she also undergoes an urge to act and is conscious of the identity between her ‘self’ and her actions. The projection of willing onto the target of cognition, which constitutes aesthetic contemplation, underpins one’s ability to identify with oneself or another, but not always aim to promote oneself. We perceive the recipient like us ‘in our heart of hearts’, someone who *also* wills. The will-body identity shows us that we are *a* body and thus an object among objects. The recognition of

our objecthood through our identity with our body enables the recognition of another's being a willing thing; it allows us to make the *leap* out of egoism.

All actions that we undertake refer to *ourselves* by being modifications of our body. Our actions have *self-reference*. However, we can distinguish acts of will from one another by their aim. In compassionating with others, for example, we are fully aware that we aim to preserve *their* body or that we synchronise with *their* aims. Schopenhauer's metaphysics strives to explain how we can possibly synchronise with another's aims if we are *inherently* different people. His explanation is the *will to life* or the urge to do something. Although we are different individuals, we are not different in our willing or striving to promote ourselves or in willing our *own* perfection. The previous identity between us has implications for how we approach others, as we saw with morality, but also the world or life itself, as we will see below.

Given the above, can we argue that Schopenhauer successfully offers a metaphysical explanation of compassion? The will to life—which he perhaps misleadingly calls the aim or direction of the will as *thing in itself*—is a limit of our cognition. We can construe it as *transcendental* to our urges and actions and thus metaphysical in this sense. The will to life is the basis of all explanations we can possibly provide for the significance or the meaning of an event, action or change in the world. The recognition that my body is an object among objects and it is that through which my will expresses itself permits a question. What if other things have the *same* relationship to *their* body as *I* have to mine? What if *this* object is willing and what I see is *its* body and so *its* bridge to the objective world? Some objects we perceive are, seemingly, not as different to my body as others; what if *they* will something as *I* will something. This bridge between my will and body allows me (by a small stretch of my reason and imagination) to construct a further bridge between my will and another's using *their* body, which I had hitherto construed as an object among objects such that I could enable my own will. This allows me to be interested in another person not only as an object for the promotion of my *own* body, but as an individual in her own right.

In sum, the misapplication of Schopenhauer's concept of the 'will', which too often is facilitated by his own comments, forms the basis of the metaphysical egoism objection. Atwell likewise recognises the previous, but does not show the errors whence it arises. He initially argues that we cannot conflate the will to life and egoism in his discussion of the alms-giver looking into the beggar's heart:

“...what he finds is simply the will-to-live. For this, and nothing else (so far as one can know), is the thing-in-itself. This means that what he actually finds is egoism—a drive to perpetuate itself, an impulse to continue existing (no matter what the cost for others), an insatiable, hungry, self-devouring force.” (Atwell 1990, 122)

Atwell correctly rejects the possibility of the alms-giver recognising the will to life (cf. Atwell 1990, 123), but I will argue that the alms-giver does not literally *see* egoism. Indeed, we are as little able to recognise the will to life as we are able to recognise 'egoism'. We cannot make the will (or its mainsprings) an *object* of cognition. We can have access to it using our imagination and reflection. What we recognise in the recipient when we look into

them is not the *will to life*, but the recipient herself as an individual motivated to act by some bodily impulse. In short, we see someone with urges, desires, impulses etc., or we see a person, like us. We infer from the previous that she experiences the will to life and is acting from a mainspring. If by looking into her we saw the will to life or egoism, we would not be looking at *her* at all, but something broader: life (or living) *itself* or one of the ways it expresses itself. We can argue that we perceive a movement, which we associate with the urge to do something that objectivates in actions by a particular body, but not that we perceive the ‘will to life’ or ‘egoism’. Recognising we are an object among objects and a willing subject *enables* us to project willing onto something, but not to literally see the *will to life* or one of its mainsprings. Without recognising our objecthood, we would have no bridge between us and the objects of our cognition. We would have no way out of egoism. We would have no way of construing things as more than *just* an object. Nevertheless, we should distinguish that which enables something from that which drives it: a door *permits* entry, but it does not necessarily *cause* us to enter.

What I want to look at now in closing is the link between ‘overcoming egoism’ and ‘the negation of the will to life’, which is ascetic resignation. Our overcoming egoism permits the negation of the will to life, which, he claims, comes as an effect “of grace, as if from the outside” (WR: 435). Nevertheless, overcoming egoism can also lead to other kinds of affirmation of the will to life.

Schopenhauer was either too eager to resound a *moral warning* or express his deeply personal *yearning* to elucidate the fundamental differences between the three ways we *can* and actually *do* overcome egoism. What each have in common is negative: they do not aim to promote one’s *own* body.

The first I will mention is malice, but there is an interesting and more controversial version of it which appears in Schopenhauer’s views on revenge. Revenge can arise even after we recognise an identity between ourselves and the target of cognition. This is different to revenge based on egoism, however. He begins to elucidate this unusual species of revenge in the following way:

“We sometimes see a man so profoundly infuriated by a great injustice he has experienced, or perhaps only witnessed, that he deliberately and irretrievably dedicates his whole life to taking revenge on the person who committed the atrocity.”  
(WR, 385)

Martyrdom can be candidate for representing these actions. For our purposes, however, we have to demonstrate the motivational difference between ‘egoistic revenge’ and the above, which we may call ‘selfless revenge’. Egoistic revenge differs from the latter by its aiming to re-assert our individuality, i.e., we take revenge to promote ourselves. However, there is a kind of revenge driven by a different mainspring. The best candidate for the mainspring that explains this is malice, because compassion does not permit infliction of suffering on

another and asceticism does not permit affirmation of the will to life.<sup>120</sup> Consumed by malice, some agents may aim to harm another without concern for their self-preservation. In addition, for this distinct kind of revenge, they do not harm for the sake of hurting itself or the *pleasure* of hurting another. They ignore their injury or death, equally their pleasure is in the act itself. They identify with something *other than* their individuality (but likewise other than another individual) when they perform the action. Schopenhauer describes it as follows:

“It seems to me that the indignation that would drive a man so far beyond the boundary of any self-love springs from the deepest consciousness that he is himself the entire will to life (a will that appears in all beings through all times) and that the most distant future belongs to him in the same way the present does, and thus cannot be a matter of indifference. Affirming this will, he nonetheless demands that the drama which is a presentation of its essence never exhibit such a terrible injustice again.” (WR, 385)

This kind of malice is uncommon because the pleasure an agent acquires from it, i.e., the conditions for its success or failure, are not someone’s pain irrespective of who that person may be. The pain of a *particular* person determines its success or failure, because of what that person and her actions signify for the affirmation of the will to life. The person on whom the agent seeks to inflict suffering is detrimental to life *itself*. His action aims to benefit the will to life. It is neither egoism nor compassion that drives him, but life *itself*, because the recipient of the action is not a particular agent even if the target is in a symbolic sense. Also, it cannot be asceticism, because its recipient is not the agent himself. The agent aims to deter others who might aspire to the same *unjust* action at another time irrespective of who might endure the injustice. Accordingly, there is an unusual affirmation of the will to life that also overcomes egoism in uncommon malice. It is uncommon because of the difference between

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<sup>120</sup> Another way we could possibly construe this uncommon malice is as an extreme form of righteousness, which ignores one’s own self. Though it is difficult to separate this peculiar kind of malice from common malice, which aims to hurt another for its own sake as a reaction of harm done to the agent, we must try all the same. The ‘malice’ Schopenhauer has in mind here, i.e., the one that pursues another’s injury based on the felt consciousness, is not necessarily based on the harm done to the agent whether imagined or otherwise. It is also wrong to construe this uncommon malice (and its common counterpart) as reducible to egoism. The difference between malice and egoism is that one treats the individual as a willing thing, not as an object fit for purpose. Malice is *only possible* if we construe another as a willing thing. In the absence of this recognition, the action would be egoistic. Both common and uncommon malice perceive the target as a willing thing. Equally, both are responses to an injustice or harm the agent has recognised. Common and uncommon malice are distinct by their aim: one aims to hurt for the sake of pleasure in hurting, while another aims to hurt *for the sake of* the will to life. We can think of the malice of martyrs, or soldiers, or revolutionaries, who give up their life to deal harm to another for the sake of something larger than both combined. Our ordinary moral attitude towards common malice makes it difficult to consider that a malicious attitude in the uncommon sense can be beneficial to more than the person who is feeling it and acts on its basis; such a difficulty comes from our overeager attempt to project egoistic motivation onto a malicious person. For Schopenhauer, we must separate them. I think more research and debate can go on Schopenhauer’s conception of revenge, malice and their relation to the affirmation (or negation) of the will to life. This research and debate can, I believe, be useful to understanding how his aesthetics relates to his ethics and both to ascetic resignation.



taking pleasure in hurting another and taking revenge on behalf of all individuals or of life itself. I have called it ‘selfless’ revenge, in the strictest sense of the term, for brevity.

The second overcoming of egoism is compassion, where we overcome egoism, but continue to affirm the will to life. The aim to promote another’s wellbeing we can construe as an *indirect* affirmation of the will to life. I discussed at length the reasons why compassion affirms the will to life, so I move on to third and final overcoming of egoism.

The last overcoming of egoism is through the cessation of the urge to do something. I think Schopenhauer construes the previous as the final state or outcome of asceticism. The mainspring of asceticism does not just overcome egoism, which we can do while preserving the affirmation of the will to life. It is *one kind of* overcoming of egoism. When we act from ascetic motives, we do not *identify* with ourselves or other people and their individuality, or even with a general or broader concept such as humanity, but apparently with the will to life *itself*. Asceticism overcomes egoism through the loss or the depression of the urge to do something. We experience this depression irrespective of our action’s aim, i.e., irrespective of whether the motive was egoistic, compassionate or malicious. Asceticism aims to depress willing itself by continually obstructing or thwarting our urge to act itself.

In sum, when we present Schopenhauer’s thoughts in the above manner, we notice compassion cannot possibly be a kind of egoism. The metaphysical objection is misguided and rests on a contradiction in terms or a conflation of the will to life and its mainsprings. Cartwright (2008, 144) was right to show that Schopenhauer’s comments on compassion are conceptually problematic and to pave the way for the objections. These objections arise from our wrongly construing an individual will (a person or mainspring) and the will to life (the urge to do something) as indistinguishable, however. The error lies on our reading, but, admittedly, Schopenhauer often facilitates this error by his lack of clarity in some passages or by overdoing his rhetoric. Opposition between compassion and egoism has *motivational* relevance, but if we consider them metaphysically, they are simply urges to do something. They are affirmations of the will to life. There is no metaphysical distinction between myself and another person sufficient to make coherent the claim that there is such a thing as ‘metaphysical egoism’. However, there is a difference between experiencing an urge to do something and the moments where this urge is absent. Compassion and egoism are urges to do something and thus affirmation of the will to life, which shows only *how they relate* to a second-order response. The same is not available in the reverse without error, that is, we cannot explain all motivation based on egoism or compassion. How can the will to life *itself*—not seen as a *thing*, but as the urge to do something—*be* egoistic or compassionate? What can possibly distinguish itself from the will to life without including or presupposing it? Egoism and compassion only make sense after we distinguish one thing from another, i.e., following the *PI* and thus the *PSR*. The will to life *appears* as egoistic or compassionate in an *individual’s* urges following her relation to *another* individual. The will to life cannot possibly be *only* ‘egoistic’ or *only* ‘compassionate’. Its only opposition is the absence of any urge to do something, which we can construe as a demotivation found in those individuals who do *not will*, not even another’s wellbeing.

We notice, then, that there is a difference between compassion and negation of the will to life. We also notice that selflessness arises from our recognising our embodiment, our being an object among objects, which underpins the identity relationship ourselves and other people, including sentient beings and finally the objective world itself. The previous recognition, Schopenhauer argues, enables the negation of the will to life, which I argued we should construe as loss of motivation, depression of willing or an absence of the urge to do something. We experience no urge to act at all and thus perceive nothing as aim-worthy and action-worthy. Nevertheless, he engenders conceptual knots by arguing that negation of the will to life *also* appears as a mainspring for action. How does the absence of an urge fit with the mainspring that is asceticism? How does depression fit with the *aim* to become depressed? How is it possible for us to *aim* for the end of all *aiming*? How can we perform actions aiming to subdue the urge to do something? I will suggest some answers to these puzzling questions, which rely on the difference between the mainspring of an action in terms of its *aims* and the *means* by which we realise that aim. Before I assess his account of ascetic resignation and the conceptual knots arising from it, I will analyse the distinction between the conscience and self-knowledge, which are preparatory to the previous account.

## 1.15 The Conscience and Self-knowledge

Schopenhauer's views on the conscience are linked to his views on self-knowledge of the will. As we will see below, these views support the proposition that the moral mainspring, i.e., compassion, is a 'fact of consciousness' and so a constituent of the will. Once again, he uses his distinction between the will and intellect to detail his views on the conscience.

Our conscience is rooted in the role of self-consciousness in our actions, i.e., in the identity between 'ourselves' and 'our acts of will'. The latter's objective representations are our actions (or deliberate bodily vicissitudes). Becoming self-conscious entails identifying with something as *our* or *us*, which often means identifying with our own body by default. Our conscience goes further, however. What underpins our conscience enables us to adopt various attitudes towards ourselves and thus respond in different ways to our own body. The previous entails that we will something on our own body and so no longer treat it as *wholly* identical to us (our will), but as an object among objects, as something in the world to which we can respond or upon which we can act. The previous is enabled by self-knowledge.

Self-knowledge rests on identifying with our body and its vicissitudes, but it requires a different perspective on ourselves than the first-person perspective of self-consciousness. Self-knowledge is a product of reason, which unifies our actions and motives into a picture, which Schopenhauer calls our (empirical) character and which consists of the mainsprings and their arrangement in us. Self-knowledge is a picture of *ourselves* and thus it is not *wholly* ourselves nor something *wholly* foreign or distinct from us. We preserve the relationship of

identity we require for it to be a picture of *ourselves*, but we also know that it is not *actually* and *fully* ourselves. We perceive ourselves *as an object*; we construe our body as the identical and causal object, but in doing so we adopt the stance of the pure subject of cognition.

Our embodiment demonstrates that we are “an object among objects, and must obey the laws of objects” (WR, 25). This embodiment is reflected to us by our bodily vicissitudes, i.e., our moods, feelings, emotions and actions. Nevertheless, these vicissitudes are linked to the objects that incite them. Using the previous link, we construct a picture of our *overall* willing or ‘character’. Conscience is a commentary, evaluation or response to this character. Accordingly, his views on the conscience intertwine with Schopenhauer’s account of self-knowledge:

“...conscience is in fact just acquaintance with one’s own self, arising out of one’s own actions and growing ever more intimate” (OBM, 175)

Our conscience is a *response* to the image of ourselves or the self-image we construct from the history of our actions and their mainsprings. I will examine the distinctions he uses to illustrate his views on conscience starting with remorse and guilt. I will likewise assess the distinction between *indirect* and *direct* (dis)approval of conscience. Before this examination, I will briefly examine his objections to the *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae* to illustrate that Schopenhauer was a compatibilist.

We experience our conscience as an (dis)approval of our actions correlative to what they reveal about our character. We have a sense of responsibility and ownership over our actions that runs through self-knowledge: we identify with our actions, we consider them to be our *own*. They make us the individuals we are.<sup>121</sup> We often construe the ownership and responsibility over our actions as showing that our actions show the *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*. Schopenhauer rejects the previous arguing that it commits us to the claim that our actions arise *ex nihilo*, i.e., without reference to their object and so motive, which has a causal effect on us. His correlation theory of cognition argues that motives have an effect on us based on our being the individuals we are, i.e., based on our character. According to the *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*, our actions are somehow independent from any external influence, i.e., from the cognitive object or circumstance that *motivates* us, but also from our own character. According to Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will and correlation theory of cognition, our actions have *some* object that incites them whereas our will (i.e., who we are as individuals) *makes* them efficacious, which yields *motives*. We cannot possibly (re)act to anything without reacting to ‘something’ which we see as action-permitting or action-worthy, i.e., an object. Where an object is missing, we imagine it. We always *will something*. Our will enters into an irreducible relationship with its correlative object, which we cannot wave away. Consequently, he rejects both the *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae* and fatalism.

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<sup>121</sup> We saw previously that this is simply the limit of self-consciousness for Schopenhauer, whose most immediate expression is the individual’s cognition of his or her identification with the will and so her body based on her acts of will which are identical to bodily action.

We *falsely* believe in the arbitrary genesis of our actions separated from an external object, which presents itself as an object and thus as distinct or separate from us, which we then evaluate or perceive as action-worthy. Our emotions, affects and moods in relation to an object represents its worthiness. Our actions are part of the objective world and thus we establish causal relations with other objects. We seemingly operate on the same necessity as we purportedly perceive among other objects, but this does not mean our actions are *not* free in another sense, namely, that they are not *individual*. Schopenhauer's conception of freedom is that of individuality in juxtaposition to generality, rather than the ability to act differently than how we previously acted without thereby being a different person entirely. We are free by virtue of our individuality, but not by our *ability* to act out of character or act as if out of nothing or nowhere. We may not know our character fully, but we never act out of character, according to Schopenhauer. Thus, when it seems as if we acted out of character, it is most likely that our cognition of ourselves or self-image was wrong or incomplete.

The complexity of our body and thus the conditions for the generation or prediction of these changes is immense compared to other laws of nature, but this difficulty does not imply *impossibility*. We are part of the objective world or in the trenches with it and the other objects of our cognition. What applies to them applies also to us. The *ground* of our actions is our character, which expresses itself through bodily movement, affection or a full-fledged action pending a sufficient reason, namely, a motive, but it could not possibly express itself independently from any object or motive. A motive operates on *us* as an object does another object in which it produces an effect, because of the will body identity. Some object X could not possibly produce *this* or *that* effect on us unless we are such that we can be effected by X. 'Who' and 'what' we are 'makes possible' *this* or *that* response. Therefore, he preserves responsibility by appealing to our individuality or our character, rather than the fact that we could have acted otherwise.

We are free to do what we will, because 'what we will' is what we are. We cannot *possibly* be free to do what is contrary to our will or to who we are, because we cannot will what is *not in accordance* with who we are without this supposed contrary willing declaring itself as another constituent of our will or part of who we are. We are what we will, for him, and so we are responsible for the actions that stem from us. If we *seemingly will* something that is contrary to *us*, then the contradiction lies not in *our willing*, but in what we perceive *as us*, i.e., our self-image. Our will never contradicts itself. A mistaken self-image leads to apparently contradictory actions by virtue of our possessing flawed self-knowledge and so, in such moments, we are *driven* to reform our self-image rather than our will. In sum, if we 'will something', then we commit to an aim and the object which is its instantiation or its correlate, which then appears as a motive. For us to act *contrary* to our aims, it presupposes an alternative aim, equally our own and arising from *us*, which means that to act contrary to our aims is *impossible*. Schopenhauer is revisionist about responsibility and individuality in his rejection of the *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*, which states that actions arise *ex nihilo*.

Our conscience, Schopenhauer argues, is concerned with an action: "our actions are the theme of conscience" (*OBM*, 242). This is because they are recognisable and indubitable instantiations of our character. They are cognitive bridges to the rule(s) or principle(s) on

whose basis we respond to the world, i.e., our mainsprings. A question arises about guilt in relation to the previous, however. If we do not ground guilt on the belief that we could have acted otherwise (or not acted at all), because we were *free* or *not compelled* to act in some way, then on what do we ground it? Schopenhauer suggests the following: guilt rests on recognising our character through our actions. We ground it on the *knowledge* that we cannot possibly act otherwise, which sounds counterintuitive. We feel guilty because we could have acted otherwise, but *only* if we were different people. We are not and cannot possibly be different, so we cannot have acted otherwise and this is what our guilt expresses (more on this below).

Schopenhauer contests with the problem posed by what he calls the ‘consciousness of freedom’ that accompanies our actions, which he described as follows:

“Our actions are accompanied by a consciousness of independence and originality, through which we recognise them as our work, and everyone with unerring certainty feels himself as the real doer of his deeds and morally responsible for them. But now, since responsibility presupposes a possibility of having acted otherwise, and thus freedom in some way or other, so in the consciousness of responsibility there lies mediately also that of freedom.” (*OBM*, 173)

His solution to the problem is to use the Kantian distinction between appearance and thing in itself. As the ‘thing in itself’, we are free, but as ‘appearance (or representation)’ we are bound by natural laws. We are free to the extent that we can ‘think a different character for ourselves’, but we cannot *possibly be* a different character because that is *fixed* by what we will and thus by who we are. We can only act in accordance with who we are. Accordingly, we feel guilty not because we *know* we *could* have acted otherwise, but because we *know* we *would* have acted otherwise if we *could*. There is a hopelessness and resignation to our guilty feelings, which often we do not notice. We could have acted otherwise if we were a different person; so, our feelings of guilt demonstrates the failure of the *aim* to be other than who we are. It reminds us that we are who we are and what we will is identical to who we are.

Let me elaborate on the above admittedly nuanced and unusual conception using a few examples and distinctions beginning with an analysis of the distinction between remorse and guilt. This will elaborate on the two distinct relations we have to our actions and show that he only takes one to be the genuine concern of the (dis)approval of conscience. Remorse and guilt are different responses to our actions resting on a subtle distinction between them. This distinction informs us about his views on the conscience.

Remorse or regret, Schopenhauer tells us, is a disapproval arising from a recognition that an action does not accord with what we will: we acted erroneously because of erroneous representations of our circumstances, not because of our will. He describes it as follows:

“*Remorse* never comes from alterations in the will (which would be impossible) but rather from the fact that cognition has altered. I must continue to will the essential and real aspect of what I have willed previously, because I am myself this will lying outside time and alteration.” (*WR*, 322)

Let us take an example. Imagine Jack grows suspicious of his wife after seeing her converse at length with a handsome man at a party while oblivious of everyone around her including her husband. This leads Jack to question the handsome man's intentions. Upon recognising that his accusations stem from inadequate understanding of the reasons behind his wife's immersed conversation with the handsome man, he feels remorse or regret. He realises that his actions stemmed not from his being jealous, but an incomplete cognition which sparked his 'defensiveness'. He sought stop her from becoming ensnared by the manipulative, superficial advances of another man. He knows that his jealousy, even if it is a constituent of his character, was not driving him in that moment. His defensiveness arose from his erroneous representation of the circumstances that *appeared as* jealousy, when, in fact, he was driven by a concern for her welfare. Jack imagined her being seduced and driven to do something that she would later regret, and wished to alleviate her of this pain. The trust he demonstrated to her explanations and reasons reveals to him his loving disposition, i.e., that he was concerned for her welfare all along. Therefore, he showed remorse by correcting his actions and so by not pursuing his suspicion any further.

Let us take another example. Juliet purchases a dress she has coveted for quite some time from a multinational clothes store. She wears it at a fundraising event for charity that her best friend is hosting. In the event, she converses with a lovely couple who work for an international charity based in Thailand; they have previously worked in China, Indonesia, India and Malaysia. They tell her about the effects of 'Western' trade and investment in the previous countries, about the children making products for multinational companies that charge comparably more than what they spend to make them. They check her dress's label and point out to her that it is likely such a product. In turn, Juliet feels remorse for having bought it. She recognises that she had no idea about the trading habits of multinational companies and their exploitation of cheap labour to maximise profits. Now that she is aware of it, she readjusts her commitments. According to Schopenhauer, the previous readjustment is her realigning her cognition with her will. She resolves to not contribute to exploiting people to maximise profits for a small group of other people.

For Schopenhauer, then, remorse is a response to the recognition that our action was out of sync with our character. It arose from an erroneous or incomplete representation of the circumstances upon which we acted:

"I can never regret what I have willed, although I can regret what I have done, because I was led by false conceptions to do something what was out of keeping with my will. The insight that comes from correcting our cognition is *remorse*." (WR, 322)

The regretful agent who acts in 'discordance with his will' does so by an error in cognition. Remorse attends to the action because it was in *discordance* with our will by misrepresenting the circumstances in which we acted. We cannot possibly regret what we do not know or what we do not want to change. What remorse is urging us to change is not our character—that is impossible—but our cognition. The discordance between the action and the aim, e.g., as Jack realised that he overreacted and misjudged the situation, or as Juliet realised that she was ignorant of common trading practices of some multi-national companies. Consequently,

disapproval of an action realigns our cognition with our character; remorse is a *fleeting* act of conscience.

Guilt, which Schopenhauer calls ‘anxiety or anguish of conscience’, fundamentally differs from remorse. The following passage highlights the basis for this difference between the two:

“Thus remorse always proceeds from recognition that has been corrected, not from a change of will, which would be impossible. The anguish of conscience over what has been done is nothing like remorse; it is the pain of recognising yourself as such, i.e. as will. It is squarely based on the certainty that you still have the same will. If the will were altered and the anguish of conscience were just remorse, then it would be abolished: the past could no longer cause any anxiety, since it would present the expression of a will that was no longer that of the person experiencing remorse.” (WR, 323)

What separates remorse from guilt, however, is not clear in all cases, certainly not as clear as the above passage shows. An agent with the right kind of cognition, i.e., recognition that the will to life is inherent to all things, which leads to ascetic resignation experiences guilt and remorse differently. An ascetic agent can feel guilt for actions that only merit remorse, because he recognises that *all* actions stem from the will to life.<sup>122</sup> To use the previous example, unlike Jack, an ascetic feels guilty for loving his wife, since he sees his love as an expression of the will to life. Schopenhauer describes the ascetic agent’s character in the following manner:

“Anyone who has reached this point will continue to sense a tendency for all sorts of willing, since he is still an animated body and concrete appearance of the will: but he intentionally suppresses this by compelling himself not to do anything he really wants to do, and instead doing everything he does not want to, even when this serves no further purpose other than to mortify the will. Since he himself negates the will that appears in his own person, he will not resist it when someone else does the same to him, i.e. does him wrong; that is why he welcomes every bit of suffering that comes to him from the outside, through chance or by someone’s malicious actions, every harm, every injury, every disgrace, every insult: he receives them cheerfully, as an opportunity for assuring himself that he no longer affirms the will; rather, he cheerfully sides with everyone hostile to the expression of the will that is his own person.” (WR, 408-9)

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<sup>122</sup> See, e.g., how Schopenhauer describes the over-sensitivity to the will of the resigned even if we take their actions to be accidental, in that they are premised on an error in cognition not premised on their *individual* will. There is seemingly no such thing as an accident for those resigned to identifying with the will to life: “someone who has maimed or killed another without the slightest intention and quite accidentally, laments this sin his whole life long with a feeling that seems related to guilt, and also experiences from others a peculiar kind of discredit as a person of sin (unfortunate human being)” (FW, 79).

Guilt remains with the agent long after the action and continues to invoke its disapproval. Moreover, much like remorse, guilt has the action in reflection as its starting point, and so attends to its *relationship* to our character: “guilt does not lie in willing but rather in willing accompanied by cognition” (WR, 181). The difference between the two emotions is not the cognition, but how the cognition *relates* to the will, i.e., in how *we* respond to our self-image. The remorseful conscience disapproves the action because it *discords* with our character. Guilt attends to our character via our cognition; it disapproves our character. Guilt then is a disapproval of ourselves, not of our actions.

A guilty conscience follows the recognition that actions result from our will. It does *not* arise from a cognitive error we made over the state of affairs in the world. Our ignorance, our being tricked and-or our being misled in some way does not explain guilt. Consequently, guilt and remorse concern the relationship between an action and character, but *differ* in the responses stemming from that relationship. A remorseful conscience disapproves of actions based on our character, whereas the guilty conscience disapproves of our character (i.e. the mainspring of the action) because of an action.

Let us look at an example of guilt to refine the difference between remorse and guilt. Heather feels guilty for sleeping with her boyfriend’s best friend. She has been attracted to him for a long time, but had suppressed and so not acted upon her attraction until now. She feels guilty after she recognises she has felt attracted to him for a long time and had merely suppressed the urge to act upon it. She was not misled by intoxication or by his manipulative advances. On the contrary, she *willed* to sleep with him from the moment she met him, but *tried* not to act upon it. The guilty person feels anguish or anxiety of conscience over the action because it reveals that the action arose from her character. The action is not a mistake based on her misconceiving or misperceiving the circumstances.

There is a universal principle underlying our conscience that groups the differences in response. Whether it is remorseful, guilty or rewarding, our conscience is concerned with the actions we performed and how they relate to our character and thus with its mainspring. Its approvals or disapprovals are concerned with our character, not our action independent from it. Remorse is an approval of our character following the disapproval of an error in cognition that led us to act seemingly ‘out of character’.

The *identity relationship* between our actions and our character permits us to create a ‘self-image’, on which we can act using its objective correlate or identical object, i.e., our body. Our body, then, becomes the target or motive of our actions. Both remorse and guilt show how our conscience is concerned with our character through our actions in different ways and for different reasons. In remorse, we *realign* our cognition with our character after dissatisfaction with what we did. In guilt, we are dissatisfied with who we are. Both are *not* concerned with actions independent from our character; certainly not through some kind of freedom that contends our actions arise *ex nihilo*. Self-knowledge is central to a response by our conscience, because to exert any *influence* at all, conscience requires and presupposes an ‘object’ of cognition. The previous object is our self-image. Therefore, we cannot have a conscience without self-knowledge, i.e., without making an object of our will: “conscience



is in fact just acquaintance with one's own self, arising out of one's own actions and growing ever more intimate" (*OBM*, 175).<sup>123</sup>

The second distinction he employs, which elaborates his views on the conscience, is between the direct and indirect (dis)approval of conscience. Our conscience can *only* voice its (dis)approval after performance of an action: it "properly does not speak until afterwards" (*OBM*, 168). Where it *seems to us* that our conscience disapproves of our action prior to our undertaking it, so disapproves of the motive arising in deliberation, it does so indirectly by the intervention of memory. Reflection of over a similar action(s) that we have undertaken intervenes. Consequently, indirect approval of conscience, which presupposes deliberation, likewise rests on our self-image:

"Before the deed it [our conscience] can at most speak indirectly, that is through the mediation of reflection, which holds before it the memory of previous cases where similar deeds have been subject to the disapproval of conscience." (*OBM*, 168)<sup>124</sup>

He introduces the distinction between direct and indirect (dis)approval of conscience to show that our conscience is concerned with what we have done, not with what we might do. The actions we have actually undertaken are the *cognitive objects* of our conscience, because it is only through them that we can have a self-image from which to enable a response based on that self-image. In other words, we require a self-image to be able to respond to ourselves, but we also require an action to formulate that self-image.

In sum, our conscience has our character as its target, but the action as its object. We unify actions into a self-image composed of various mainsprings. Schopenhauer avoids the assumption that the voice of conscience shows that actions arise *ex nihilo*. He emphasises the relationship between our conscience and self-knowledge. Our conscience relies on our self-image, which we construct out of our actions. In turn, our actions arise from the effect of motives, which are motivationally efficacious objects which borrow their efficacy from what we will or who we are. Thus, our actions are the starting and focal point of the voice of conscience, but its target is our self-image or character:

"Everyone comes to know himself, just like others, empirically in his deeds, and only *they* weigh on the *conscience*. For they alone are not problematic, like thoughts, but on the contrary are *certain*, stay there unchangeably, and are not merely thought but *known*." (*OBM*, 168)

The emphasis here is on what we 'know' and what is 'certain' about ourselves, which then becomes the target of the voice of conscience. Self-consciousness gives us an immediate

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<sup>123</sup> See also: "this closer acquaintance, growing ever more intimate, is properly what we call *conscience*, which for that reason is voiced *directly* only *after* the action, *prior* to it at most only *indirectly*" (*FW*, 107).

<sup>124</sup> Compare the previous with: "[the] conscience is conditioned by reason simply because it is only by means of the latter that a clear and coherent recollection is possible. It is in the nature of the matter that conscience speaks only *afterwards*, which is why it is also called *verdict-giving* conscience. *Beforehand* it can speak only in a non-genuine way, that is indirectly, as reflection infers from the memory of similar cases to the future disapproval of a merely projected deed" (*OBM*, 243).

acquaintance with ourselves, but this is minimal. Its limit is our identifying with our willing and body. Using our actions, we acquire a self-image, which he calls the empirical character. The cognitive access to our willing in self-knowledge is not minimal; it is not the ‘I will’ or ‘I will X’. Our cognitive access to ourselves is akin to ‘I will X’ and X suggests I am a Y-type of person’, or, ‘I will X because I am a Y-type person’. Thus, the voice of conscience responds to the fact that we are a particular type of person, for example, a selfless and caring person, or a callous or self-centered person. Our type reflects the dominance or priority of a particular mainspring.

According to Schopenhauer, actions are like “the cachet in a thousand seals” (*OBM*, 173), each is a *mirror* revealing to us the constituents of our will. Self-knowledge produces a self-image and our *conscience* is a subsequent response to this self-image. According to him, conscience is the “acquaintance with ourselves that becomes ever more complete, the ever growing *protocol of deeds*, is *conscience*” (*OBM*, 242). The concept of ‘protocol’ here refers to our fundamental aims or mainsprings. Thus, our conscience is concerned with the action because it expresses who we are, not because it reflects that we could have acted or can act otherwise:

“Although the reproaches of conscience immediately and ostensibly concern what we *have done*, they really and fundamentally concern what we *are*, about which our deeds simply provide conclusive testimony, relating to our character as symptoms do to a disease.” (*OBM*, 241)

We cannot have a conscience without a degree of self-knowledge, or have self-knowledge without this engendering an evaluative and affective response, which is either negative or affirmative. In some cases, we find people who hurt their body due to what they recognise about themselves through their actions.

The primary difference between self-knowledge and the conscience is that the latter is *taking action on ourselves*; it is a way of *regulating* or *shaping ourselves*. Self-knowledge is what makes the previous possible without actually ‘determining’ how we respond, shape or regulate ourselves. We cannot predict how people will react to their self-image, but we *can* claim that without a self-image the person cannot possibly react to himself.

The final comments Schopenhauer makes on the conscience is about its criteria for approval or disapproval, i.e., the basis on which our conscience (dis)approves of our actions. He states that our conscience is the “ever growing protocol of deeds” (*ibid.*) without actually and explicitly telling us what this protocol is. In other words, what is the maxim or principle through which we respond to our self-image? We know that with remorse our conscience disapproves the relationship between our cognition and the will over which the will has final verdict by realigning our cognition. The same relationship is not clear with guilt, however. Guilt presupposes a *negation* of at least a constituent of our will or a *negative* response to our self-image. However, only *our will* can respond to *our* self-image. Is disapproval of our self-image *also* by our will? We notice an impasse here, but before we show this impasse, let us consider what the above ‘protocol’ of deeds is, according to him.

Schopenhauer states that our conscience evaluates our actions relative to their moral worth. It evaluates our action according to the degree to which compassion was its dominant mainspring. He argues morality and the voice of conscience as interlinked. He even uses the voice of conscience as first-person evidence of moral worth:

“...a wholly internal and hence less evident sign of actions of moral worth, there is the fact that they leave behind a certain satisfaction with ourselves, which is called the approval of conscience; just as for their part the actions opposed to them, those of injustice and unkindness, even more those of malice and cruelty, receive an opposite internal self-judgment” (*OBM*, 197)

Likewise, in a later passage he calls the conscience an “ethical fact of consciousness” (*OBM*, 243). He supports this claim by arguing that conscience begins with our actions as opposed to our thoughts and inclinations because our actions show what we *will do* whereas our thoughts and inclinations show what “*the human being in general*” (*OBM*, 168) is *capable* of doing. Our actions then *individuate* us. He grounds the previous on a distinction between the agent’s individual character and the character of humanity. Our character is only certain and sealed in our actions. Although we are composed of all of the mainsprings that are part of humanity, only the most dominant is testimony to what *we will* and exemplifies who or what *we are*. Nevertheless, we have to consider the fact that some of those actions incite the self-dissatisfaction of guilt, which he explains as follows:

“...when we think over our actions, there occasionally comes over us a dissatisfaction with ourselves of a particular kind, having the peculiarity that it concerns not the consequence, but the action itself, and does not rest on *egoistic* grounds like all the others where we regret the imprudence of our doings, since here we are discontent precisely because we have acted *too* egoistically, *too* considerately towards our own wellbeing, *too* little towards that of others, or have even made our end the *woe* of others for its own sake, without any advantage to ourselves. That this is what we are discontent with ourselves about, and that we can grieve over sufferings that we have not *undergone* but rather *caused* – this is the naked fact, and no one will deny it.” (*OBM*, 172)

He construes the disapproving conscience as arising from a recognition that our actions are *too* egoistic or malicious. These ‘gradations of actions’ reveal an interaction between our mainsprings in deliberation. Thus, conscience expresses the voice of morality as presumably a matter of fact.

We should distinguish acting ‘compassionately’ from acting ‘conscientiously’, however. We can imagine a person who cannot reflect on herself and so lacks a self-image, but who feels compassion for others and acts on it. The previous person *lacks* a conscience because she has no self-knowledge and she is unable to formulate a self-image, but she does not lack the mainspring of compassion and thus the aim to *promote another’s wellbeing*. She can act morally without *knowing* she is moral. Our conscience results from our self-image. When we state that ‘someone lacks a conscience’, we mean that she does not feel remorse

or guilt over her acting out of another mainspring than compassion. Accordingly, his views are consistent with the common sense conception of our conscience.

In principle, we can have other responses to our self-image. There are cases where, according to Schopenhauer, the “regret and anxiety that many a person feels over what he has done is often at bottom nothing other than fear of what can happen to him in return” (*OBM*, 186). Such cases represent what he calls a “spurious” (*OBM*, 186) conscience; the agent still reacts to his self-image and thus it seems as if he has a conscience, but the ground of his response is not compassion, but *another* mainspring. Consequently, what makes the response to our self-image an act of conscience is the moral mainspring of compassion; its absence reflects a spurious conscience, but is still a response to our self-image.

We can evaluate our self-image based on a non-moral mainspring and thus ‘lack a conscience’ or have a ‘spurious’ conscience. We can be mistaken over the *reasons* for our self-dissatisfaction—perhaps because we hold dogmatic beliefs—but we cannot mistake our *self-dissatisfaction* or fail to recognise that we are dissatisfied with ourselves. Schopenhauer tells us, in an admittedly convoluted manner, that:

“When someone appeals to dogmas in doing good deeds, we must distinguish whether these dogmas are the *true motives* or whether, as I said above, they are nothing more than an ostensible account that the person uses to try to satisfy his own reason concerning a deed that emanates from a completely different source. He does the deed because he is *good*, but does not know how to explain it properly because he is no philosopher; still, he would like to have something to think.” (*WR*, 396: some emphasis is mine)

He distinguishes between one’s interpretation of an action and the ‘true motive’<sup>125</sup> (i.e., the mainspring) of the action. We can ‘lack a conscience’, which means we respond to what we recognise based on another mainspring than compassion, but we can likewise ‘misinterpret’ what occurs when we respond to what we recognise about ourselves. Accordingly, there is a difference between responding differently to our self-image and our misinterpreting our responses to that self-image. For example, John may interpret his guilt over having hurt his sister Susie as his punishment from God for having sinned and thus for being a sinner. He does *not* feel guilty because he fears for his soul in the afterlife. He feels guilty because he believes he is a sinner for having hurt a child of God, whom he loves deeply. According to Schopenhauer, John is mistaken in his interpretation, i.e., in his reasons for his guilt, but he cannot *possibly* mistake the fact that he is dissatisfied with himself. He knows that he hurt the person he loves and that he is the kind of person who hurts those he loves, which leads him to disapprove of himself. John’s guilt *arose* from compassion, but he misinterprets his

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<sup>125</sup> It would have been clearer here if Schopenhauer consistently used the notion of *Triebfeder* as opposed to ‘true’ motive. However, since *Triebfeder* is a term he employed later, primarily in *OBM*, it makes sense that he operated on this distinction as opposed to the tripartite distinction I explored here between a cognition, a motive and a mainspring. Nevertheless, what he intends to capture with the notion of true motive is precisely the driving force or mainspring of the action as an attempt to avoid the problems regarding self-deception.

guilt through his misguided and dogmatic world-view. John has an erroneous world-view, not an erroneous self-image. Likewise, his response to his self-image is also not erroneous. His world-view stems from religious dogma, i.e., that Susie is a child of God whom he loves and that God punishes sinners through guilt.

Schopenhauer can offer John a naturalistic interpretation of his guilt that accords with the limits of our cognition, but he cannot change John's self-dissatisfaction and the moral sensitivity underpinning it. John's moral sensitivity *reflects* a mainspring of action, which is triggered by his self-image. His self-image incites him as any other cognition of an object incites him. Our conscience is a response to perceiving ourselves as an object among objects, which entails that we make a *motive* of ourselves using our self-image. According to the previous, we can envisage people whose compassion is so feeble they can only have glimpses of it without actually responding to it.

In sum, the intellect alone is insufficient to generate morally worthy attitudes and actions, but it does enable us to reflect and act upon ourselves in response to our actions and their mainsprings. Before we proceed to his views on ascetic resignation, I will assess the impasse in self-knowledge that emerges from the above, which will lay the ground for my reading of his views on ascetic resignation.

## **1.16 Schopenhauer's Objection to Kant on the Conscience and the Impasse of Self-knowledge**

There is an impasse in Schopenhauer's conception of guilt, which we can notice when we analyse it in light of his philosophy of the will. Guilt is self-dissatisfaction aimed at what we recognise about our character; its target is our self-image. According to his correlation theory of cognition, however, all responses to any target of cognition stem from the will or presuppose its activity. Even the self-dissatisfaction of guilt is a response by the will and so our character. Our will *evaluates* our self-image and so renders it efficacious. If our response to our self-image stems from our will, then the evaluation must always be affirmative. If all responses arise from the will, then a response to its self-image must also arise from the will and *should* always be affirmative. The claim that the will negates itself without an addition from something external to it is conceptually problematic.

The above impasse threatens his account of the conscience. If the will uses *itself* as a criterion for its response to its self-image, then this must surely always result in the self-affirmation or approval of our self-image. If our conscience requires a self-image generated by self-knowledge, and the response to this self-image stems from that of which it is a self-image, i.e., the will, then why would it negate itself? Why would an egoistic or malicious character, who reflects his egoism and malice back to himself through his self-image, ever

be dissatisfied or disapproving of his egoism or malice? Why would he approve of it? How can *predominantly* egoistic agents disapprove of a reflection of their egoism?

Schopenhauer leaves himself some conceptual room to wiggle out of the impasse by arguing that we are composed of more than one mainspring. Compassion *drives* disapproval of conscience, in such instances. Yet, even if he can conceptually circumvent the impasse in this way, the problem appears again in a different light. If the individual whose compassion is apparently *too weak* to drive her to a compassionate action in the first place, then *how* can she subsequently be in any position to disapprove her egoism. If compassion has somehow won over her egoism, then it entails her character has somehow *changed* in the process. The previous undermines his propositions about the inalterability of someone's character. Thus, he struggles to render coherent the following conflicting claims:

- A) Our character is unalterable.
- B) Agents undergo a transformation from egoism into benevolence through guilt.

Yet, he nevertheless holds both of the above propositions as true:

**A:** "Our character is to be seen as the temporal unfolding of an extra-temporal and thus indivisible and unalterable act of will, or an intelligible character; and this act irrevocably determines everything essential, i.e. the ethical content of how we conduct our lives, which must express itself as such in its appearance, the empirical character." (WR, 328)

**B:** "In real life, we see that unfortunate people who have to drink to the dregs the greatest amounts of suffering and face a shameful, violent and often miserable death on the scaffold, fully lucid but deprived of all hope, are quite often transformed in this way... Nonetheless, they are guilty and evil to a considerable degree. But after complete hopelessness has set in, we see many of them transformed in the way we have described. Now they exhibit genuine goodness and purity of mind, true horror at any deed that is the least bit evil or uncaring... In fact, their sufferings and death ultimately become precious to them, because the negation of the will to life has emerged." (WR, 420)

We can attempt to resolve this impasse by fleshing out a distinction that he alludes to in his objection to Kant's account of the conscience. This distinction is evident in his objections of the "juridical-dramatic form" (OBM, 171) of Kant's conception of conscience.

Schopenhauer tells us that Kant's account of the conscience confuses "deliberation about every practical situation" (OBM, 171) with the conscience. What Kant understands as 'conscience', according to Schopenhauer, is the following:

"[A] much more universal form which deliberation about every practical situation easily assumes, and which chiefly arises from the conflict of opposing motives that occurs in most such cases; reflective reason successively examines the weight of these motives, and in this it makes no difference whether these motives are moral or egoistic

in kind, and whether it concerns a deliberation about what is still to be done or a rumination about what has already been carried out” (*OBM*, 171)

This so-called ‘juridical–dramatic form’ captures the deliberation or reflective operations of our intellect about our actions, not our conscience. We may respond to our deliberations—or to a memory of past actions—in a manner that fits and is consistent with the initial driving force of our action. This is not what we ordinarily understand as our voice of conscience, however. Thus, Schopenhauer objects to Kant’s characterisation on empirical grounds. Kant failed to capture what a conscience means. Kant’s suggestion is morally neutral. Conscience differs from deliberation in that it cannot possibly be morally neutral, however. Kant’s characterisation gives egoism a fortress; it permits us to construe our conscience as a *morally neutral* phenomenon operating on potentially amoral maxims. The (dis)approval of conscience is not neutral, however. It is the voice of morality; it reflects *one* mainspring and maxim. Its criterion for approval is the degree to which compassion *drove* our action, for Schopenhauer. Kant’s proposal does not define the conscience at all, but, at best, it captures the initial mainspring and so what generated the action. The same mainspring responds to the action we undertook based on whether or not we succeeded in realising its aim. Thus, Kant’s account allows conscience to be both compassionate and egoistic simultaneously.

Deliberation differs from the conscience not only by virtue of its mainspring, but likewise by virtue of the target of the (dis)approval. Deliberation aims at the right action relative to its mainspring. Our conscience, on the other hand, aims at the right mainspring given some action. Although, like deliberation, our conscience can presuppose a conflict of motives, the conflict is not in relation to what course of action we should take presupposing different motives based on only *one* mainspring. Rather, our conscience reflects a conflict of motives underpinned by the interaction between *two* or *more* mainsprings. Therefore, the conflict of motives we encounter in our conscience *represents* a conflict of mainsprings, whereas the conflict of motives in deliberation can represent different motives arising from the same mainspring.

A striking difference between Kant’s suggestion and Schopenhauer’s is in the *target* of conscience. The target of the (dis)approval of conscience is someone’s self-image, for Schopenhauer. For Kant, on the other hand, one’s conscience responds to the action in relation to its *aim*. Schopenhauer’s account of conscience distinguishes it from deliberation, which is captured in the following propositions:

- A) Its target is our self-image constructed from our actions.
- B) Its response is based on one mainspring, i.e., compassion.
- C) Its conflict of motives is not between different actions given *one* mainspring, but represents an interaction between different mainsprings.

None of this helps with the impasse, however. He argues that conscience represents how compassion turns our self-image into a motive and that self-knowledge is not sufficient for generating morally worthy actions. His distinction between the ‘conscience’ and ‘spurious conscience’ shows this. There are moments where an agent will respond by approving the

self-image which merely reflects her egoism or malice. Her self-image is another object of cognition and so her responses to it are as diverse as her responses to any object of cognition.

The impasse is not limited to his account of the conscience, however. It has an extensive reach and becomes more apparent in what occurs when an individual gains the correct insight or cognition of things, i.e., when they attain self-knowledge not based on the dogmatic world-view. Self-knowledge uses the will-body identity to yield a self-image, but our self-image alone is *insufficient* to account for an agent's conscience and incite a response premised on compassion. One's temperament may be egoistic or malicious. We are unable change that temperament by means of the intellect, according to Schopenhauer:

“...all that we are able to do is to enlighten the head, to correct insight, to bring the human being to a more correct apprehension of what is objectively present, of the true circumstances of life. But in doing this nothing further is achieved than the constitution of his will laying itself open to view more consistently, clearly and decisively, expressing itself unfalsified.” (*OBM*, 240)

The agent can align her cognition with her willing, i.e., she can attain self-knowledge and knowledge of the world, which allows her to harmonise her self-image with her world-view. His concept of ‘acquired character’ (cf. *WR*, 329-331) is an apt representation of an agent who acts based on a harmony between her self-image and world-view. This harmony alone does not determine whether or not she has an affirmative or negative attitude with respect to herself, however. Her ‘acquired character’ is as much a product of her will as it is of the harmony between her self-cognition and cognition of the world. The previous accords with his definitions, but his proposition that the intellect *tranquilises* the will undermines it. How can the intellect operate without the given ground of the will, which alone makes a motive of the targets of cognition and accounts for their efficacy and our responses? The intellect cannot operate without the will, but then the proposition that our intellect *tranquilises* the will requires an explanation.

Affirmation or negation of the will does *not* rest on cognition of something, but must respond to such a cognition given his correlation theory of cognition: no willing without its corresponding object and no object without its subjective correlate. No amount of telling or showing someone how bad they are, how sinful, evil or cruel they are, can transform them into benevolent, loving persons. Such a transformation *presupposes* a benevolent, loving part of their will that is already present within them and is sufficiently strong to influence and supersede other mainsprings. Schopenhauer suggests that negation of the will to life, which “arrives suddenly, as if flying in from outside” (*WR*, 432), is such a transformation. Moreover, he argues that the intellect or reason incites it. In some moments, he explains it differently. He claims that it is *not only* a consequence of the intellect, but of the “innermost *relation* of cognition to willing in human beings” (*WR*, 432; my emphasis). He later links it to mystical practices. Likewise, he offers a non-religious interpretation of what he calls the “*effect of divine grace*” (*WR*, 432). I will attempt to salvage the coherence of his philosophy, or at least make sense of his claims, by introducing an overlooked distinction between the negation of the ‘individual’ (i.e., individual will or mainspring) and the negation of the *will*



*to life*. Although, as we will see by assessing his views on ascetic resignation below, the conceptual knot creeps up again.

We can negate an individual mainspring, e.g., our egoism. Recall, e.g., that three of our mainsprings overcome egoism and our individuality. We cannot reduce negation of the will to life to any one of them, however, as we will see in the next chapter. Nonetheless, we should distinguish self-affirmation and self-negation from affirmation and negation of the *will to life*. Both rest on self-knowledge and presuppose a self-image, but there is a difference between them. We overlook this difference if we read Schopenhauer's philosophy without heeding his varied uses of the 'will'. His philosophy allows reflective agents to judge and respond to life *itself*, not only to *ourselves*. Thus, our affective responses are not limited to our individuality or our character.

Recall that the 'felt consciousness' allows us to recognise that we and everything we perceive experience the will to life, i.e., something like the urge to do something, anything whatsoever. Moreover, that we can identify with it. The 'will to life' does not refer to an individual will or any particular mainspring, but to the metaphysical will, in Schopenhauer's sense. The assumption is that by identifying with the will to life we can respond to ourselves as if we are responding to the will to life *itself*. Schopenhauer describes it in the following manner:

"...the will affirms itself, which means that while in its objectivity (i.e. in the world and life) its own essence is given to it completely and distinctly as representation, this cognition is no impediment to its willing; rather, consciously, deliberately, and with cognition, it wills the life that it thus recognises as such, just as it did as a blind urge before it had this cognition." (WR, 311)

He adds to the previous that the negation of the will arises precisely from *the same* cognition:

"...the opposite of this, the *negation of the will to life*, is manifest when willing comes to an end with that cognition. The particular, known appearances no longer act as *motives* for willing, but instead, cognition of the essence of the world (which mirrors the will) – cognition that has arisen by grasping the *Ideas* – becomes a *tranquilliser* of the will and the will freely abolishes itself." (WR, 311)

There are conceptual problems with the above propositions that I will assess at length in the following chapter, but for now, I mention it in passing to aid our understanding of the extent and reach of the impasse of self-knowledge.

We can make a general claim about the relationship between cognition and the will, which can help make sense of his account of self-knowledge and what follows from it. This claim is that *all* affects, attitudes or actions whose target is self-knowledge and which then becomes a motive, must, like all motives, be rooted in the will and so be construed as based on one of the mainsprings. All cognition does is provide *our will* with an object upon which it can act. Cognition can also provide the will with its *objective* correlate, i.e., its self-image.

Given what we have said about Schopenhauer's correlation theory of cognition, it would seem that any given cognition of an object C, could result to two *opposed* responses

to C upon which it becomes a motive. Given the previous two opposed responses to C, it is impossible that this *opposition* is rooted in C even if we perceive C as *causing* our response. C cannot perform two opposed operations in two different circumstances on the same agent without *some* change occurring from one circumstance that is not present in the next. C does not imply this change: it merely reflects our identity with the will to life. Therefore, it must reside in the agent herself or her will. If multiple responses are possible given C, then the *response* to C stems from the will, not from C.

We can go further than the above and argue that any knowledge K, presupposing the veracity of the cognition C that underpins K, *also* suggests two possible responses to K. We can argue that K *caused* the response, but the response cannot possibly *arise from* K. It arises from how K *relates to* the will, but this means it rests *wholly* on the will. Our responses arise from our character, which is composed of mainsprings; they arise from how K relates to our *ends* and *aims*. They depend on the previous ends and aims. Yet, if this is the case, then what does Schopenhauer mean when he implicitly tells us that our conscience *grows out* of self-knowledge:

“Both cases show the *magnitude* of the *distinction* we make *between ourselves and others*. It is on this distinction that the degrees of morality or immorality, i.e. of justice and loving kindness and also their opposite, ultimately rest. As the memory of actions significant in this regard becomes ever richer, it completes more and more the picture of our character, our true acquaintance with ourselves. But out of this *grows* satisfaction or dissatisfaction with what we *are*, i.e. to what extent egoism, malice or compassion have predominated, i.e. to what extent the distinction we have made between our own person and the rest has been greater or smaller.” (OBM, 242; some emphasis is mine)

Schopenhauer is once again vague and ambivalent about the central role of knowledge or the intellect with respect to the will. He does little to elucidate how the above ever-growing acquaintance with ourselves, which offers us a more complete picture of our ourselves, also leads to the conscience when it can just as easily lead to the spurious conscience, that is, an attitude towards our self-image that affirms egoism because of our egoism? Surely, he does not mean self-knowledge leads to conscience independent from our character, for then we have a contradiction, or we settle for holding true that something arises out of nothing. This is because K cannot possibly produce two *opposed* responses to itself *on its own basis* and so without addition or subtraction to it from elsewhere. It is impossible for K to lead to not-K without something included in the picture that is not-K.

If the ground of our (dis)approval of ourselves *is ourselves*, then our self-image achieves a clearer and more unified relationship between our actions and aims. It cannot possibly tranquilise the will as Schopenhauer argues, i.e., as the intellect’s effect or anarchy over the will, which requires us to conceive of the intellect as somehow *separate* from the will. We can allow the previous at the cost of changing our conception of the will from encompassing *all* bodily responses to encompassing *some* or *most*. As we will see below, going down this road means conflating the individual and metaphysical use of will. I believe

it is important that we reject this change in conception of the will for the sake of coherence in Schopenhauer's philosophy. I will stick to what I see as a more accurate conception of the will as encompassing all *affective* responses, which is aptly summarised by the following passage:

“Only motives can affect the will externally. But they can never alter the will itself, because their power is based on the presupposition that the will is precisely what it is. All that they can do is to alter the direction of its striving, i.e. get the will to use a different path to search for the thing that it invariably seeks.” (WR, 321)

In sum, the ‘will’ cannot possibly be tranquilised unless it in *wills* to be tranquilised. His distinctions and definitions seemingly reach their explanatory apex in the above. He settles for an account of freedom of the will as a *thing in itself* to explain what could possibly enable the will's transformation. Consider the following example as a clarification of the previous.

Having hitherto advanced a predominantly egoistic lifestyle due to the dominance of my egoism, I recognise that I can identify with other people and recognise the suffering my actions have inflicted upon them. This leads me to undergo a change in the strength or priority of my compassion. My compassion extends beyond the people who benefit me and shows up when their benefit to me is outweighed by their disadvantage. Can the mainsprings that compose my character change *solely* through my recognition or K, however? Am I free in *this* sense, i.e., through my cognition and intellect alone, or is some *effort* required to underpin the change in me? Schopenhauer's answer in some instances is that I am free through my cognition alone, but in other instances he says that this is impossible. If I undergo this change, it is not by virtue of self-conscious resolve, but by something already present in me, which my self-image activates, namely, my compassion. This means that what is already a part of me has gained in strength or priority while another has diminished by comparison. The previous accords with his conception of this transformation (cf. WR, 420f). No cognitive object and thus no account of something based on the PSR can explain the latter transformation in us, however. According to him, it represents the freedom of the will as *thing in itself*. We should not confuse this conception of freedom for the freedom arising from identifying with my actions in self-consciousness that generates the confusion of the *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*. The freedom he defends has both an object it responds to (i.e. our self-image) and a ground for that response (our mainsprings and will), unlike the *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*.

Without self-knowledge and so without a self-image, we could not experience nor undergo any changes in disposition. If we were not self-conscious or capable of *perceiving* ourselves as from without, i.e., as an object among other objects, then we would *endlessly* continue to do as we always do: act blindly. The freedom he has in mind is ascetic resignation is what he calls a ‘contradiction in appearance’, but it reflects a change in us. It reflects a change in the hierarchical order of our mainsprings or temperament. They cannot possibly arise out of nothing. According to Schopenhauer, we can change ourselves using our body. Freedom lies in our ability to make an object of ourselves, but that is not enough to render us free. Moreover, since for every object there is a correlative subject, the correlate

of a conscientious or moral change in us is a rise in the priority or strength of compassion. Nevertheless, we should point out that his distinctions do not reject the possibility of undergoing other transformations, ones that are perhaps less conscientious, but also based on our self-image. The priority or strength of our compassion makes us conscientious. We would lack a conscience if we lacked an adequately strong compassion, but we would not *necessarily* lack self-knowledge if we did not respond compassionately to our self-image.

In sum, the proposition that self-knowledge alters the will demonstrates an impasse with an extensive reach in Schopenhauer's philosophy. On the one hand, he claims that cognition *cannot* change the will, and, on the other hand, knowledge *somehow* tranquilises the will. He shows a vast ambivalence towards this impasse. We can argue that the previous echoes Kant's ambivalence over the moral value of self-knowledge, which we identify from the famous passage: "only the decent into the hell of self-knowledge can pave the way to godliness" (Kant 1991, 236). Schopenhauer struggles to explain its possibility through his conceptual framework. It appears that he struggled to steer away from some key aspects of Kant's moral insights while being consistent in his objections to Kant's conception of the conscience.

I argued above that we should interpret Schopenhauer's views on conscience as *caused* by self-knowledge, but as the latter being *insufficient* to ground it. The *fundamental* difference in individuals serves as a *sufficient ground* for its causal efficacy. The differences in individuals is fundamental to his philosophy, but again reveals the impasse. He seems to ground individuality on the intellect as opposed to the will:

"...desire only expresses the character of the species, as in animals, and not the individual, i.e. it merely signifies what *human beings in general*, not the *individual* who experiences this desire, would be able to do. Because it is already a human action, the deed always requires a certain amount of deliberation, and because people are generally in control of their reason, which is to say they are thoughtful, i.e. they make decisions according to well-considered, abstract motives, only the action is the expression of the intelligible maxim of their acting, the result of their innermost willing." (WR, 326f)

He uses the will in the human sense to ground our affective responses in some cases, while in others he claims that we cannot possibly arrive at virtue or holiness by anything we do or will; it graces us, instead. The previous leads him to associate willing with egoism:

"We see, namely, that genuine virtue and holiness of mind do not first arise from deliberate free choice (works) but rather from cognition (faith)... Works come from motives and deliberate decisions, and if this was what led to blessedness, then however we look at it, virtue would never be anything except a prudent, methodical, far-seeing egoism." (WR, 434)

Nevertheless, he also argues that there is such a thing as our deliberately inflicting pain on ourselves to attain this grace through ascetic practices:

“I have often used the expression asceticism, and I understand by it, in the narrow sense, this deliberate breaking of the will by forgoing what is pleasant and seeking out what is unpleasant, choosing a lifestyle of penitence and self-castigation for the constant mortification of the will.” (WR, 419)

The above claims render Schopenhauer’s conceptions incoherent. The alleged tranquilising effect of cognition on the will, which suggests that either the will ‘freely negated itself’ or the intellect ‘calmed’ the will, essentially blurs the boundary between the intellect and will. We cannot determine which is passive and which is active. The previous blurring does not necessarily contradict his philosophy and metaphysical monism, because it contends that there is no ontological difference between the intellect and the will. Nevertheless, it places us at the limits of the explanatory power of the previous difference. Its ability to explain our experiences comes at a standstill when we notice that the will acts contrary to its nature. I will assess these themes at length below. Likewise, I hope they become increasingly clearer in Nietzsche’s objections and alternative conception of agency and the will.

The following passage adequately summarises the above in his own words and it merits quoting in full:

“As the memory of actions significant in this regard becomes ever richer, it completes more and more the picture of our character, our true acquaintance with ourselves. But out of this grows satisfaction or dissatisfaction with what we *are*, i.e. to what extent egoism, malice or compassion have predominated, i.e. to what extent the distinction we have made between our own person and the rest has been greater or smaller. By the same yardstick we also judge others, whose character we come to know just as empirically as our own, only more incompletely: here there appear as praise, acclaim, respect or blame, indignation and contempt, that which in our self-judgment manifested itself as satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which can go as far as anxiety of conscience.” (OBM, 242)

Self-knowledge arising from reflection over our actions and mainsprings enables responses to it. These responses are an exercise of our will *on ourselves*: we *aim* our actions at our own body. Aside from the above impasse, his views on self-knowledge show that the identical object to our will can *also* serve as the intentional object (and thus become a motive).

In sum, the will constantly moves, even when it negates itself, which *coincidentally contradicts* the claim the intellect *tranquilises* it. I assess the previous contradiction below.

## 1.17 The Paradox of Ascetic Resignation and Schopenhauer’s Error

“[T]he world is the self-cognition of the will.” (WR, 437)

Previously, we analysed Schopenhauer's apprehension of the relationship between the will and the intellect. Specifically, the relationship between knowledge K and our response to K. We recognised that, for him, there are two possible affective responses to K: affirmation or negation. He describes what I called 'K' previously as follows, which merits quoting in full:

"But if this seeing through the *principium individuationis*, this immediate cognition of the identity of the will in all of its appearances, is present at a high degree of clarity, then it will at once show an even greater influence on the will. If the veil of *maya*, the *principium individuationis*, is lifted from a human being's eyes to such an extent that he no longer makes the egoistic distinction between his person and that of others, but rather takes as much interest in the sufferings of other individuals as he does in his own, and is not only exceedingly charitable but is actually prepared to sacrifice his own individual as soon as several others can be saved by doing so, then it clearly follows that such a human being, who recognises himself, his innermost and true self in all beings, must also regard the endless suffering of all living things as his own, and take upon himself the pain of the whole world. No suffering is foreign to him anymore. All the miseries of others that he sees and is so rarely in a position to alleviate, all the misery he learns about indirectly or in fact only knows to be possible, all these affect his spirit as if they were his own. He no longer bears in mind the changing wellbeing and woe of his own person, as is the case with the human being still trapped in egoism; as he sees through the *principium individuationis*, everything is equally close to him. He recognises the whole, comprehends its essence, and finds that it is constantly passing away, caught up in vain strivings, inner conflict, and perpetual suffering. Wherever he looks, he sees the sufferings of humanity, the sufferings of the animal kingdom, and a fleeting, fading world. But this is now all just as close to him as only *his* own person is to the egoist." (WR, 405-6)

Some response to a given cognition is inevitable, especially when its target is our own will as represented by our self-image. In the above passage, K represents something about *our* will, but it does so by logical extension: what is true about *all* living things (or life itself) is also true about *us* as one living thing among many. Therefore, what pertains to the objective world also pertains to us through our body.

Here, I will consider a conceptual problem that is not resolved by the distinct uses of the will. This problem emerges from his views on ascetic resignation. We can recognise the previous conceptual problem if we ask how the negation of the will to life is possible in the first place. I will leave open whether Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will can resolve the impasse or explain the possibility of ascetic resignation. I will argue that he can explain the *self*-dissatisfaction that is guilt, but struggles to explain the depression of willing that typifies ascetic resignation. However, embarking on this inquiry is important for delineating the limits of his philosophy of the will.

Schopenhauer's conception of ascetic resignation struggles with a similar impasse as the one we noticed in guilt. Like guilt, some self-knowledge incites ascetic resignation,

but the knowledge here is of the will itself, which means the will to life. The self-knowledge of the will tranquilises it:

“The will affirms itself, which means that while in its objectivity (i.e. in the world and life) its own essence is given to it completely and distinctly as representation... The opposite of this, the *negation of the will to life*, is manifest when willing comes to an end with *that cognition*.” (WR, 311; second emphasis is mine)

The subjective correlate of this knowledge is not an individual’s will; it does not mirror an individual’s will, but the will to life. Schopenhauer believes only human beings can have a purely objective knowledge of the world such that the previous can be enabled:

“...a human being is the most perfect appearance of the will, whose existence (as we showed in the Second Book) requires illumination by such a high degree of cognition, that a fully adequate repetition of the essence of the world under the form of representation becomes possible in this cognition; and this, as we learned in the Third Book, is the apprehension of the Ideas, the pure mirror of the world. Thus, in human beings the will can achieve full self-consciousness, clear and exhaustive cognition of its own essence as it is mirrored in the whole world... At the very end of our discussion it will also be established that, since the will relates it to itself, the same cognition makes possible an abolition and self-negation of the will in its most perfect appearance...” (WR, 314)

His use of ‘the will’ in the above passage is not individual, but metaphysical. It refers to the will to life. In other words, this *pure* objective knowledge ‘K’ that incites both affirmation and negation is the *same* irrespective of the individual, because the subjective correlate of K is the *pure subject of cognition*. K can incite two *conflicting responses* in us: affirmation or negation. How can K incite conflicting responses without *some* addition or subtraction (or some difference from somewhere) that explains this conflict? We remember that something cannot arise out of nothing, just as something (X) cannot possibly give rise to its opposite (–X). The claim that purely objective knowledge leads to conflicting subjective responses is the conceptual problem we face.

I will assess Schopenhauer’s claim that the same objective representation leads to affirmation or negation of the will to life. To pave the way for this assessment, however, I will firstly elucidate what he means by ascetic resignation and what he thinks *causes* it.

In certain passages, Schopenhauer states that ascetic resignation is *not* a consequence of our actions or resolve. It “begins with cognition” and it “cannot be forced by any intention or resolution”: it “arrives suddenly, as if flying in from outside” (WR, 432). This and similar passages lead commentators to wonder how ascetic resignation can possibly stem from knowledge and not *the will*. We know that the will accounts for all changes including our response to a cognition. Therefore, the claim that cognition *causes* something independently from the will undermines his philosophy. Furthermore, he contends that after we experience the depression of willing that is the negation of the will to life, we must *struggle* to preserve or maintain it:

“...we must not think that, after cognition has become a tranquilliser of the will and given rise to the negation of the will to life, it will never falter and that it can be relied upon like inherited property. Rather, it must constantly be regained by steady struggle.” (WR, 418)

According to the above, we maintain the state of ascetic resignation via *deliberate actions* aiming at our own woe, which characterises the mainspring of asceticism. He echoes the previous in the following definition of asceticism:

“I have often used the expression *asceticism*, and I understand by it, in the narrow sense, this *deliberate breaking* of the will by forgoing what is pleasant and seeking out what is unpleasant, choosing a lifestyle of penitence and self-castigation for the constant mortification of the will.” (WR, 419)

He expands on this ‘deliberate breaking of the will’ by stating that there is an instrumental value to personal suffering. Personal suffering can lead to ascetic resignation, which he also calls the “redemption from life and from suffering” (WR, 424):

“Indeed, we can assume that most people can only come to it in this way, and that it is the personal *experience* of suffering – not just the *recognition* of suffering – that most frequently leads to a full resignation, often not until the presence of death. Only a very few people find it enough to begin with pure cognition which, seeing through the *principium individuationis*, first produces the most perfect goodness of disposition and universal human kindness, ultimately enabling them to recognise all the suffering in the world as their own, thus bringing about the negation of the will.” (WR, 419)

Thus, there are two apparently conflicting remarks. First, purely objective knowledge *causes* negation of the will to life or ascetic resignation. Second, we must maintain the state of ascetic resignation by struggling with our urge to do something, which inevitably flares up because we are alive. In certain passages, he construes ascetic resignation as voluntary and, again, this only adds to our conceptual woes:

“The will begins turning away from life: it shrinks from each of the pleasures in which it sees life being affirmed. A human being achieves the state of *voluntary* renunciation, resignation, true composure, and complete will-lessness.” (WR, 406)

This struggle has implications about his conception of ‘the will’. Whence the *urge* to *end* all urges? How can we make sense of such an urge?

At times, Schopenhauer construes these apparently conflicting remarks as different *paths* leading to the same destination. He invites us to understand them metaphorically. He does not construe them as philosophical propositions that have implications about his views. Consider the following passage as an example of the previous:

“In the final part of my presentation, I will show how love, whose origin and essence we know to involve seeing through the *principium individuationis*, leads to redemption, namely the complete abandonment of the will to life, i.e. all willing, but



also how *another path*, a path which, though not as smooth, is more frequently travelled, can bring a human being there. But before coming to this final theme I will first discuss and explain a paradoxical claim, not because it is paradoxical but because it is true and is part of the complete thought I am presenting.” (WR, 401; some emphasis is mine)

He describes as ‘two paths’ what I suggest that we should read as ‘conflicting claims’. The first path suggests that our *seeing through* the PI leads to ascetic resignation, which means ‘cognition’ incites it. The second path—though he does not explicitly state it in the above passage—argues that ‘personal suffering’ and torment (under which he places deliberate, ascetic practices of self-torment) incites ascetic resignation. The first path represents the effect of cognition, while the second path represents the effects of a perpetually thwarted will, whether that thwarting is deliberate or not. He summarises it in the following manner:

“The difference that we have presented by means of two paths is whether this recognition is called into existence by suffering that is merely and purely *cognised*, and which is freely approached by our seeing through the *principium individuationis*, or whether, on the other hand, recognition comes from one’s own immediate *feeling* of suffering. True salvation, redemption from life and from suffering, is unthinkable without the complete negation of the will.” (WR, 424)

Are we satisfied with the metaphorical concept of a ‘path’ for explaining the negation of the will to life? How do these ‘paths’ cohere with his philosophy of the will? We should probe and analyse his thoughts further before settling for the metaphorical reading, which would have us accept them as true even if they conflict. I will not construe them as ‘paths’ here. I will treat them as philosophical propositions with philosophical implications.

These apparently conflicting propositions suggest that cognition both *is* and *is not* enough for ascetic resignation. Schopenhauer proposes a metaphysical explanation, which argues that we should read it as representing fundamental ethical differences in character. K’s sufficiency for ascetic resignation represents a *fundamental difference* in individuals, but according to his philosophy, the difference in individuals is a pleonasm for the differences in willing. By extension, whether or not K is enough to incite ascetic resignation rests on the will. If K plays no role in it, then it must be the will, which leaves us with the proposition that what does the negating is *the same as* what it negates.

Schopenhauer cannot move us past the impasse with by circumventing it using his views on the individual differences in character. In addition, recall that the knowledge which incites ascetic resignation requires us to assume the stance of pure subjects of cognition and so we suspend our individual will as a precondition for acquiring this knowledge. We are at the summit of his will-intellect distinction here. We would not be wrong in suggesting that we reach the peak of its explanatory power precisely here. He is silent over the conceptual implications of this limit, however, except offering a vague summary, which is as follows:

“Now as we have seen, the *self-abolition* of the will begins with cognition, but cognition and insight as such are independent of free choice; consequently, that

negation of the will, that entrance into freedom cannot be forced by any intention or resolution, but rather emerges from the innermost relation of cognition to willing in human beings, and thus arrives suddenly, as if flying in from outside.” (WR, 432)

The *same* cognition of the miseries of life can *somehow* lead to *affirmation* of the will to life, which makes the picture even more confusing for us. I will argue that in spite of the impasse, his propositions on resignation can be consistent with his philosophy of the will, but with a caveat: we have to ignore the errors he makes in relating ascetic resignation and the artistic genre of tragedy. Let me try to elucidate the previous starting with distinguishing guilt from ascetic resignation and showing why something analogous to guilt cannot be what resolves the impasse.

Previously we saw that self-knowledge gives Schopenhauer room to reject fatalism. It allows alterations in the organisation of our mainsprings and so character. Self-knowledge does not *determine* these alterations, but it nonetheless makes them *possible*; it enables them. What we recognise about ourselves does not determine character changes, but without our recognising something about ourselves, such a change would be *impossible*. Previously, we distinguished all possible responses to self-knowledge from the conscientious response of compassion. Nevertheless, all responses to our self-image stem from turning the identical object of the will, i.e., the body and its actions, into motives. What we did not discuss, which fits with the current inquiry, is the difference between self-negation based on one’s *self*-image and the negation of *the will to life* that is ascetic resignation.

Recall that the target of our guilt is our individual will by way of our self-image, not the will to life. Our guilt presupposes that we harbor a resolve to *be* someone else or to have a *different* character, but we recognise that we cannot. Schopenhauer intimates the previous in the following passage:

“I can do what I will: I can, *if I will*, give all that I have to the poor and so become one of them myself – if I *will*! But I cannot *will* it, because the opposing motives have much too much power over me for me to be able to.” (FW, 64)

Her guilt aims at herself and presupposes a struggle between opposed mainsprings. Can we avoid the impasse of the negation of the will to life by arguing that ascetic resignation also represents a struggle between mainsprings? He seems to suggest something along the lines of such a struggle:

“...we must not think that, after cognition has become a tranquilliser of the will and given rise to the negation of the will to life, it will never falter and that it can be relied upon like inherited property. Rather, it must constantly be regained by steady struggle.” (WR, 418)

Can we see the ‘steady struggle to maintain resignation’ to which he refers as one between opposed mainsprings? Alternatively, should we expect him to resign to the claim that there are actions aiming at inaction or a mainspring that generates actions aiming at inaction? We know the negation of the will to life cannot be the same as guilt, because their targets are

*not the same*. Guilt negates the individual or character, while ascetic resignation negates the will to life. Correspondingly, negating the *individual we are* presupposes we have an urge to *be another individual or character*, which is not the same as negating the urge to be anybody or to do anything at all. Thus, Schopenhauer claims that ascetic resignation is not “alteration but rather a complete abolition of the character” (WR, 431). If we construe negation of the will to life as a mainspring of action, then it paradoxically aims at *not willing*; it is an urge impelling us to *not-feel* the urge to do something, anything whatsoever.

We can make sense of self-dissatisfaction using the will to life by claiming that guilty responses reveal a desire to be someone else. Guilt, then, does not negate the will to life, but affirms it by virtue of the desire to be someone else, to still do *something*, albeit differently. Deliberation premised on guilt involves considerations over whether to perform action X or Y, because each suggests something different about our character. We feel guilty over what we did because this represents our failure to be a different person, a person who would not do what we did. By definition, there is no desire to be another person in ascetic resignation, however. There is no urge to perform one action as opposed to another, which would imply the urge to be someone else. Asceticism aims at no action whatsoever or at the abolition of anything resembling a character. The will to life that underpins our sense of self is lacking in asceticism. Recall the definition of asceticism:

*Asceticism*: An action stems from asceticism if and only if a) its recipient is the agent herself, and b) its aim is to promote her woe.<sup>126</sup>

Asceticism aims to promote our *own* woe, which implies stifling egoism, but we know it is not limited to egoism. If it aims to promote one’s own woe, and if woe only makes sense in relation to *some* will, then it aims to stifle our actions irrespective of their target or aim. Its aim is *not* to engender one action as opposed to another, or focus on one target rather than another, or even to be a different person. Asceticism aims to forgo the urge to act in the first place. It aims to stifle the will to life irrespective of the mainspring in which it affirms itself. Therefore, we cannot use guilt to explain negation of the will to life. The conceptual problem lingers. Moreover, it becomes worse following his claims about the instrumental value of *deliberate* suffering for ascetic resignation. Notwithstanding it flies in the face of the effect of grace, how can someone generate actions that aim to stifle her will without these actions also being consequences of her willing, which undermines her aim to stifle it? Deliberate suffering thus *fails* to realise negation of the will to life by aiming to realise it.

In sum, the target of ascetic resignation is not an individual person. Ascetic resignation is not self-dissatisfaction; it bypasses the urge to do something and thus to be an individual. Its target is *life* or *living itself* as represented by the will to life, i.e., the urge to do something. It represents the desire to forgo the urge to be anyone or to do anything. The guilty individual is thus at odds with (and devalues) herself, whereas the ascetic is at odds with (and devalues)

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<sup>126</sup> We remember that woe is something that is in discordance with a will; it relates to wellbeing by being a derivation of the former, namely, that wellbeing inhibits b).

life and willing itself. He does not want to be someone; he simply does not want to be. This represents more than a resolve to die or to commit suicide, which according to Schopenhauer represent an affirmation of the will to life. The suffering that he believes *causes* us to commit suicide *can* be an initial step towards negation of the will to life provided we respond to it differently than to commit suicide (cf. *WR*, 426). There is a species of suicide that represents the negation of the will to life, but it is not an ‘act’ of suicide. He construes it as follows:

“When death finally arrives to dissolve the appearance of that will whose essence had already died here long ago through *voluntary self-negation*, with the exception of the feeble remnant that appeared as the vitality of this body, this death is highly welcome and will be received cheerfully as a longed-for redemption. Death, in this case, does not just bring an end to appearance, as in other cases; rather, the essence itself is abolished, that essence that led only a feeble existence in and through appearance; and this last, brittle bond has now been broken too. When someone comes to an end in this manner, the world comes to an end at the same time.” (*WR*, 409; my emphasis)

This distinct species of suicide is voluntary death by the absence of any urge, like the flame that suddenly stops burning (cf. *WR*, 428f). The difference between them is that one dies by *willing* death because they cannot attain something in life, while the other dies by *not willing* anything at all in life. The ascetic does not want *life* in any form it comes, whereas the guilty wish they were a different, more compassionate person.

The paradox we face is that what is negated also does the negating: the agent thwarts her will when it arises, but this means her will thwarted itself, which is paradoxical. Can we settle for the claim that the intellect incites ascetic resignation, instead? I assess and evaluate Reginster’s reading of ascetic resignation, which broadly defends the previous.

Reginster’s reading of Schopenhauer’s views on ascetic resignation begin with a distinction between two types of resignation: ‘ordinary’ and ‘complete’ (Reginster 2009, 105). ‘Ordinary’ resignation forgoes the object of our desire following the recognition that the desire is beyond our reach. With ordinary resignation, then, we renounce the object (or the target) of our desire. The previous allows us to pursue something else in place of what we renounced; it *replaces* the object of desire. Conversely, ‘complete’ resignation requires us to become indifferent to the fulfilment of our desire and therefore renounces the desire itself rather than replacing its object. It forsakes the desire itself by becoming indifferent to its satisfaction in a manner that is distinct from what Reginster calls ‘stoical indifference’ or ‘rational control’:

“Complete resignation, by contrast, requires not only that I renounce pursuing a desire, but also that I become indifferent to whether or not it is satisfied, and this amounts to renouncing the desire itself. For after all, to have a desire is precisely not to be indifferent to whether or not it will be satisfied.” (Reginster 2009, 105)

The two types of resignation differ by virtue of what is renounced, not recognition that our desire is beyond our reach or that it *cannot* be fulfilled. Schopenhauer’s ascetic resignation

is what Reginster calls ‘complete’ resignation: it is indifference towards the satisfaction of our desire, which, Reginster claims, is synonymous to our forgoing the desire itself.

Reginster suggests that ascetic resignation is indifference towards the satisfaction of our desires after we recognise our inability to fulfil them. Why or how does recognising our inability to fulfil a particular desire lead to ‘complete’ resignation from desiring? Reginster admits that, in a sense, our indifference to some desire is not the same as its cessation or the cessation of all desiring:

“For even though I no longer deliberate and decide on which among my desires I ought to pursue, I remain troubled by those desires and affected by their frustration... Accordingly, if complete resignation is to put an end to this trouble, it must amount to more than a breakdown of my agency. It must produce what Schopenhauer describes as a complete ‘indifference’ to whether or not my desires get satisfied, and this is equivalent to the elimination of these desires themselves.” (Reginster 2009, 107)

He rightly points out that Schopenhauer’s ascetic resignation aims to capture cessation from desiring. According to Reginster, we can explain the previous by how expectations affect our experiences:

“Representations of ‘merely possible satisfaction’ affect our actual susceptibility to pleasure and pain by shaping our expectations. In general terms, the view is that our susceptibility to pleasure and pain will decrease if either the pleasure or the pain is expected, and increase if either is unexpected.” (Reginster 2009, 107)

The recognition that necessary to every desire is the impossibility of its fulfilment—and by extension the inevitability of suffering—creates an expectation in us, which makes us *indifferent* to its fulfilment. This indifference is synonymous to our ceasing to experience a desire, argues Reginster. Accordingly, his reading suggests that the intellect *causes* ascetic resignation by engendering an indifference with respect to whether we fulfil a desire or not.

I will argue that Schopenhauer must offer a different explanation, because he contends that we find the same expectation, and by extension the same indifference, in agents who affirm the will to life. Knowledge of the impossibility of fulfilment does not *only* lead to the negation of the will to life, but can also lead to its affirmation or an unimpeded and continued pursuit of our desires:

“The will affirms itself, which means that while in its objectivity (i.e. in the world and life) its own essence is given to it completely and distinctly as representation, this cognition is no impediment to its willing; rather, consciously, deliberately, and with cognition, it wills the life that it thus recognises as such, just as it did as a blind urge before it had this cognition. – The opposite of this, the *negation of the will to life*, is manifest when willing comes to an end with that cognition. The particular, known appearances no longer act as *motives* for willing, but instead, cognition of the essence of the world (which mirrors the will) – cognition that has arisen by grasping the *Ideas* – becomes a *tranquilliser* of the will and the will freely abolishes itself.” (WR, 311)

The same knowledge K or the ‘expectation’ that produces resignation likewise produces affirmation of the will to life. The previous brings us back to our initial impasse: how is it possible that K can both abolish our agency *and* rejuvenate it? We have not made sufficient headway into understanding the coherence of the negation of the will to life, because we are confusing it with indifference, which likewise characterises self-conscious affirmation of the will to life. This confusion arises from our overestimating the role of knowledge (and the intellect) on the will, that is, its role *independent* from (or irrespective of) the will.

In his paper, however, Reginster focuses more on elucidating the so-called ‘paradox of reflection’ rather than making sense of negation of the will to life, so I cannot stretch his propositions too far. His insights into the paradox of reflection and their limitations can be useful for making headway towards offering a coherent account of ascetic resignation that overcomes the impasse. He describes the paradox of reflection in the following way:

“On the one hand, reflection allows me to gain the necessary knowledge of the world and its miseries by making me take a pure, objective stance toward it and contemplate it as it were ‘from the outside’, as something ‘foreign’ to me, in which I am ‘not actively involved at all’, and so which cannot affect me... On the other hand, if this reflective knowledge of the world and its miseries is supposed to induce resignation in me, then it must affect me (or my will), which means that I must experience myself as actively involved in the world I know in this manner. For unless I came to recognise that the miseries I contemplate are also my own, such contemplation could not affect my will and elicit resignation.” (Reginster 2009, 114)

Aesthetic contemplation leads to the recognition that our desires find no *final* satisfaction and that *they* are the roots of our suffering. If we suspend our personal interest in aesthetic contemplation, however, then how can its content and the free play of the intellect inherent to it affect us? If knowledge about something affects our desires, then it presupposes that we are *interested* in its target. This interest, Reginster claims, is *prima facie* unproblematic because to will something is to seek satisfaction or attainment of an end.

Reginster claims we can provisionally begin to make sense of the phenomenon in question by assessing the possible ways the intellect and will relate, focusing specifically on how the intellect can *affect* the will. He highlights two ways. Firstly, the intellect affects the will by *focusing* on a specific aspect of our experience. Secondly, it can affect it using the *content* of that cognition. He favours the first for explaining how the intellect partakes in ascetic resignation. The intellect affects our will by making us ‘focus’ on specific features of the world that are of *interest* to our will, one such feature is the world’s being *inhospitable* to our aims:

“Schopenhauer claims to uncover is that the world is essentially inhospitable to the complete satisfaction of the will—an insight to which one is presumably driven by an interest in the will’s satisfaction. Since this sort of knowledge is supposed to have influence on the will, we might surmise that the knowledge of the impossibility of a complete satisfaction of the will would compel the agent to postpone it indefinitely, that is to say, to produce his resignation.” (Reginster 2009, 115-6)

The solution is that our striving for fulfillment explains why knowledge of the impossibility of final fulfillment impedes our will. We have an interest in the world's hospitality to our aims and so the recognition that the world is *not* hospitable affects our will. Seemingly then, some sort of disappointment precedes ascetic resignation and even explains it.

I believe Reginster's solution, though plausible, falls short of capturing the negation of the will to life following the insights inherent to aesthetic contemplation. It falls short because he does not do enough to distinguish reflection from aesthetic contemplation. He construes aesthetic contemplation as a reflection that perceives its target as 'foreign'. This is an unusual definition, because the felt consciousness required for aesthetic contemplation allows us to *see as familiar* precisely what we *saw as foreign* (or unsettling) under ordinary cognition or reflection. Let me elaborate.

Recall that, according to Schopenhauer, the sublime tension presupposes reflecting on the world as from the perspective of humanity. Aesthetic contemplation is different from *this* reflection, because it *also* suspends the perspective of humanity following the *felt consciousness*. Also, negation of the will to life *sometimes* follows aesthetic contemplation and sometimes it does not. Reginster's reading helps us recognise the role of *reflection* in ascetic resignation, but this is not *the same as* aesthetic contemplation and the insights that stem from it. He seems implicitly aware of the difference between reflection and aesthetic contemplation, but does not flesh it out:

"Schopenhauer indeed places two apparently conflicting demands on reflection. On the one hand, reflection allows me to gain the necessary knowledge of the world and its miseries by making me take a pure, objective stance toward it and contemplate it as it were 'from the outside', as something 'foreign' to me, in which I am 'not actively involved at all', and so which cannot affect me... On the other hand, if this reflective knowledge of the world and its miseries is supposed to induce resignation in me, then it must affect me (or my will), which means that I must experience myself as actively involved in the world I know in this manner. For unless I came to recognise that the miseries I contemplate are also my own, such contemplation could not affect my will and elicit resignation." (Reginster 2009, 114)

The conflicting demands of reflection to which he refers represent distinct types of cognitive engagement with something. The first is aesthetic contemplation of something, whose target we perceive as the *representations* of willing, striving and so on. The second is reflection on something, whose target we perceive or conceive as an object among objects, rather than a motive. His confusion of the two, however, most likely mirrors Schopenhauer's lack of clarity over the relationship between reflection and aesthetic contemplation. In any case, I believe the claim that a clear and accurate description of aesthetic contemplation involves choosing between understanding it as a diversion or as reflection is false. My reason is that both diversion and reflection are involved in aesthetic contemplation, which is apparent in Schopenhauer's correlation theory of cognition.

Schopenhauer's correlation theory of cognition gives us an account of aesthetic contemplation, which is both 'objective' and 'will-less', or objective *because* it is will-less.

In aesthetic contemplation, we suspend the purposive stance on the target of cognition that makes us see it as *an object*. We see it as a mirror of willing. Reginster's reading misses this conception of aesthetic contemplation by construing it as synonymous with taking a stance that makes the target of our cognition "foreign" (Reginster 2009, 110). According to this reading, then, aesthetic contemplation renders the target of cognition into an *object among objects*, which is what, according to Schopenhauer it means to see something as 'foreign' or as 'hieroglyphic'. This and similar readings of aesthetic contemplation are misleading for two reasons.

Firstly, they undermine Schopenhauer's core aim of rendering the objective world 'meaningful' or 'familiar'. The content of the objective picture appears as 'hieroglyphic' or 'foreign', for Schopenhauer. This is the world as perceived by us when we assume the stance of impure subjects of cognition. He aimed to make the objective world meaningful, while preserving its objectivity and so he wanted the world to appear meaningful without having to appeal to our egoism in doing so. Accordingly, he wanted to offer a *non-egoistic*, but still *meaningful*, world-view. He thought the 'felt consciousness' offered us such a world-view because it shows us the means by which we adopt a 'disinterested' stance on something. Far from making us perceive a foreign or hieroglyphic world, aesthetic contemplation makes us as *familiar* with the world and its objects as we *possibly* can be. He describes it as follows:

"The magnitude of the world, which we used to find unsettling, is now settled securely within ourselves: our dependence on it is nullified by its dependence on us. – Yet we do not reflect on all this straight away; instead it appears only as the felt consciousness that we are, in some sense (that only philosophy makes clear), one with the world, and thus not brought down, but rather elevated, by its immensity. It is the felt consciousness of what the *Upanishads* of the *Vedas* repeatedly express in so many ways, but most exquisitely in that dictum already cited above: 'I am all these creations taken together, and there is no other being besides me' (*Oupnek'hat*, Vol. 1, p. 122). This is an elevation above one's own individuality, the feeling of the sublime." (WR, 230)

The 'felt consciousness' settles the sublime tension by inciting aesthetic contemplation. It does *not* lead us to perceive the target in its relation to us *as individuals* (or as humans). We project willing on it and thus *identify* with it. The previous is not a *consequence* of aesthetic contemplation, but its *precondition*. It is what makes it possible. We cannot begin perceiving something *as an Idea* without first *projecting willing* on it. Readings that construe the targets of aesthetic contemplation as 'foreign' miss the distinction between ordinary, will-based objectivity (of the impure subject of cognition) and aesthetic objectivity (of the disinterested subject of cognition).<sup>127</sup>

Secondly, failing to distinguish reflection from aesthetic contemplation means we misconstrue what actually brings about negation of the will to life. This misunderstanding

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<sup>127</sup> Schopenhauer offers an interesting discussion on aesthetic objectivity (cf. *WR II*, 381-2).



comes from a subtle distinction between an impure subject of cognition and the disinterested stance; the latter is genuinely pure, according to Schopenhauer. Recall that he mockingly describes the impure subject of cognition as “a winged cherub’s head without a body” (WR, 124) who perceives the world as filled with objects, object-relations and natural forces. The objective picture appears *foreign* to her, because nothing *motivates* or strongly affects her. Yet, the impure subject of cognition is not genuinely pure because she still perceives *objects*, which are conditions for the possibility of motives. Put another way, they are the kinds of targets of cognition that *permit* someone to utilise them. Consequently, the ‘winged cherub’s head without a body’, to continue the metaphor, still *yearns* for a *body*. Schopenhauer rejects the *objectivity* of the impure subject of cognition while suggesting an alternative objectivity, which is more ‘familiar’ or ‘friendly’, i.e., more *meaningful*. The suspension of willing underpinning aesthetic contemplation is not synonymous to the objectivity of the ‘uprooted’ and impure subject of cognition. He offers another conception of objectivity, which rests on our assuming the *disinterested* stance and thus project willing on the world that the impure subject of cognition experiences as *foreign*.

In sum, the subjective correlate of the objective picture is suspension of our *personal* interests, which means our assuming the stance of *impure* subjects of cognition. This is not the suspension of all interest, however. The impure subject searches for something to will as evidenced by her perceiving the world as filled with *objects* that permit willing. There is a difference between taking an ‘impersonal’ stance and taking a ‘disinterested’ stance on something. Aesthetic contemplation does not involve the suspension of our *own will* in favor of another will, which is not our own, i.e., another agent aiming to utilise the target. Rather, aesthetic contemplation involves *projection of willing* onto the target, which thereby makes us genuinely pure subjects of cognition. We suspend the *kind of willing* whose objective correlate is the cognition of something as an object.

Suspending our interests defines ‘objectivity’, but there are two kinds of ‘objectivity’ correlated by two kinds of suspensions of the will, according to Schopenhauer. We can call them ‘complete’ (or pure) and ‘incomplete’ (impure) objectivity, for brevity. Incomplete objectivity characterises the world-view of the *impure* subject of cognition who is *not willing* anything directly, but indirectly by her search for something to will. Complete objectivity designates the kind of cognition we associate with aesthetic contemplation and its correlate world view.

Aesthetic contemplation is a stance on the world as filled with things that mirror the will, both the object’s individual will and the will to life. Schopenhauer apparently misleads his readers over his account of aesthetic contemplation in certain passages, however, as evidenced by the following:

“...there floats before the mind of the genius, in its objective apprehension, the phenomenon of the world as something *foreign* to him, as an object of contemplation, expelling his willing from consciousness” (WR II, 387, my emphasis)

This passage on genius is misleading when we pluck it out of its context, however. Here he is using it to juxtapose the subject of cognition with the willing subject. He does not compare

the impure subject of cognition, the genius and the aesthetic contemplator. There is reason to suggest that the previous comparison is implicit to his thoughts and even inevitable if we track his distinctions and stay consistent with them. Compare the above passage with the following on the limitations of the impure subject of cognition. If we follow this description, then the limitations of genius are synonymous to those of the impure subject of cognition, because both perceive the world as *foreign*:

“To the pure subject of cognition as such, this body is a representation like any other, an object among objects: to this extent, the subject is familiar with its movements and its actions in the same way he is familiar with the alterations that take place in other objects of intuition; and these movements would be just as *foreign* and *incomprehensible* as these other objects if their meaning were not *unriddled in an entirely different way*.” (WR, 124, my emphasis)

The genius and the impure subject of cognition have the same limitation: their world appears *foreign* to them. In addition, if their world is limited to *appearing foreign*, then so does their body and its actions. This is not the world-view of the aesthetic contemplator, however. The latter is elevated following the felt consciousness, which makes the world as familiar as her own will.

A world that appears *foreign* can *more readily* appear as filled with such things that are mysteriously obliging (beautiful) or powerfully and overwhelmingly hostile (sublime) to us, albeit not necessarily. The world is *more open to* appearing beautiful or sublime when it appears as *foreign* to us.<sup>128</sup> The previous is implicit to Schopenhauer’s claim that there is sometimes a smooth transition from the impure to the disinterested subject of cognition, or a gradual movement from the ‘subjection to the will’ in ordinary reflection to the ‘projection of willing’ in aesthetic contemplation:

“Clearly the apprehension of the relations that things have to *one another* takes place only *indirectly* in the service of the will. It therefore forms the transition to the *purely* objective knowledge that is *entirely independent* of the will; it is scientific knowledge, the latter being artistic knowledge. Thus, if many and varied relations of an object are immediately apprehended, its peculiar and proper nature then appears from these more and more distinctly, and is thus gradually constructed out of mere relations, although it itself is entirely different from them. With this method of apprehension, the subjection of the intellect to the will at the same time becomes more and more indirect and limited.” (WR II, 363; some emphasis is mine)

Notice that he construes ordinary reflection as working *indirectly* in the service of the will. Ordinary reflection represents things in light of their relative existence, i.e., as objects. The

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<sup>128</sup> I believe a closer look at his account of the logic of motivation can prove very insightful for making sense of why it is that the world that appears most foreign is also the one that will most likely present a beautiful and-or a sublime object that then incites aesthetic contemplation. Yet, it is important to distinguish aesthetic contemplation itself from what we require to enter it.

impure subject of cognition (and the genius who is not yet the disinterested subject) is still closer to aesthetic contemplation than the subject of willing. In this reading, the genius is the prerequisite of aesthetic contemplation and not quite an aesthetic contemplator herself. Thus, reflection has its own kind of diversion from willing, which falls short of aesthetic contemplation, because it is still indirectly (or vicariously) based on willing by virtue of her perceiving a world that enables the will, i.e., a world filled with objects.

Following this elaboration, let us return to Reginster's solution and evaluate whether it helps to resolve the impasse that follows the proposition that the intellect *causes* ascetic resignation. Reginster's reading suggests that our intellect brings about ascetic resignation by focusing on the features of the world that represent its being inhospitable to our will. This suggestion will not do for our purposes, because any *focusing* of cognition results from willing. If aesthetic contemplation is *genuinely* disinterested, then Reginster's suggestion is not apt for explaining the movement from aesthetic contemplation to ascetic resignation. Reflection cannot bring about ascetic resignation because the goal-directedness of reflection (which includes its focus) is a consequence of willing or represents its activity. The following passage demonstrates the difference between cognition *focused* on those features relevant to the will (as Reginster defines it) and our aesthetic contemplation:

"In abstract employment of the mind, the will is also ruler. According to its intentions, the will *imparts direction* to the employment of the mind, and also *fixes the attention*; therefore this is always associated with some *exertion*; but such *exertion presupposes activity of the will*." (WR II, 369; my emphasis)

The *focus* of the intellect Reginster describes shows that it is *driven* and so related to willing in the narrow sense of what is of interest to *us* as opposed the target of cognition, on which we have projected the will. Additionally, he argues, this 'objectivity' is not as *complete* as its aesthetic counterpart:

"Therefore *complete objectivity* of consciousness does not occur with this kind of mental activity in the same way as it accompanies, as its condition, *aesthetic contemplation*, i.e., a *knowledge of the Ideas*." (WR II, 369; my emphasis)

Even if we give free reign to the intellect to project the will on things such that it stumbles upon the world's inherent inhospitality to willing, this alone does not explain why we *focus* on something that is significant to *our* will while we assume a 'disinterested' stance, which focuses us wholly on the target instead. We must come out of aesthetic contemplation for this focus to occur and thus we fall from the disinterested stance. It is possible, if not inevitable, for us to come out of aesthetic contemplation when we recognise some truth about the world or life that relates to our interests, but aesthetic contemplation does not *cause* this. The reasons are two-fold. Firstly, we can come out of aesthetic contemplation and end up with affirmation or negation of the will to life, which suggests something interjects aesthetic contemplation and suspends it, which we must factor into our causal explanation. I will argue that our will is responsible for the previous and becomes part of the explanation. In addition, it is unclear why the *urge* to do something, *focuses* on something

that disables it. Self-deception, ignorance or forgetfulness are *preferable* or more *appropriate* for what is *inherently driven* to do something.

Reginster is right to highlight that what *drives* our focus is concern with ‘satisfying our aims’. It is because we want to satisfy our aims that we focus on the world’s inhospitality to those aims. However, he is wrong to comprehend this focus as synonymous with aesthetic contemplation. We should also ask why our will does not *force* the intellect to forget such that it can continue willing if willing is its chief concern. Why does it not *force* the intellect to *focus* on something else, instead? Why does it not lead the intellect to daydream instead (cf. *WR*, 210)? If we are inherently interested in satisfying our urges, then we would prohibit *focusing* on thoughts that lead us to forgoing all urges. Something is amiss in our conception.

Knowledge of the world being inhospitable only produces resignation *if and only if* we positively aimed for *complete* satisfaction. Someone striving for the fulfillment of *some* aim is not the same as the person concerned with *complete* fulfillment of *all* aims. Why would someone who is committed to fulfilment aim to block the possibility of fulfillment by being preoccupied with *complete* fulfillment? Complete fulfillment is *equivalent* to the end of fulfilment: it blocks the possibility of future fulfillment. Consequently, the paradox resides in negation of the will to life itself, not in aesthetic contemplation or in reflection. What is *driving* our focus when we reflect on an aesthetic experience we had that then leads to resignation is the *will to resign* from living. This is where the paradox lies. Our reflection merely *reflects* the activation of this will. The *will* to end all willing is driving our focus, not, as Reginster claims, satisfaction of an aim which we recognise is beyond our reach.

When we respond to the recognition of the impossibility of complete fulfillment by resigning, then this mirrors our striving for *complete* fulfilment. It reflects our *not* wanting to go through the motions of fulfillment and so our not wanting to be fulfilled. The previous, strangely enough, presupposes that we have no aims, *in the first place*. It is apparent that Schopenhauer’s will-intellect distinction breaks down when he tries to explain the previous phenomenon. Yet, he seems to settle for the claim that reflecting on aesthetic contemplation *mirrors our own* will, which is what we experience as ascetic resignation or as affirmation of the will to life. To analyse the negation of the will to life we must begin from aesthetic contemplation and the felt consciousness, not abstract reflection through concepts under the PSR.

The recognition that the world is inherently inhospitable to *complete* satisfaction of our willing can be both a conceptual claim about the world under the PSR and a claim about it following aesthetic contemplation. Schopenhauer is cautious to argue that not all forms of reflection can be objective, because they are ‘driven by *some* will’ and its satisfaction at the expense of something perceived as an object. We can make rational claims about the world’s inhospitality to complete satisfaction of our will or we can recognise its inhospitality in aesthetic contemplation. What aesthetic contemplation shows, and what becomes clear in reflection after the fact, is that the world is inhospitable to *complete* satisfaction: the ‘wheel of Ixion’ never stands still (cf. *WR*, 220). The will to life is fundamental and indestructible for an individual, also to living and willing itself. We are nothing *special* in relation to life; *everything* we perceive goes through what we go through in its own way, to its own degree

and in its own form. We are a piece of that which churns the never-ending cycle of suffering and pleasure that is our world. However, in affirming or in negating the will to life based on the previous insight, the intellect is no longer *free* as when we aesthetically contemplate on something.

The negation (or affirmation) of the will to life *mirrors* our individual will. It explains the focus Reginster sees as inherent to what leads to ascetic resignation. Our individual will *responds* to insights gained from the free-play of the intellect in our aesthetic contemplation; it *drives* ascetic resignation. If ascetic resignation blocks the *possibility* of fulfilment, and our will fixes on that which blocks this possibility and depresses itself, then a constituent of our will *corresponds* to it. This resolves the paradox with a trade-off, however. Focusing on what blocks fulfilment is only possible if our individual will is not *only* egoistic or affirms the will to life. It cannot *possibly* be if ascetic resignation is real, because then we would have to explain why our will would fix our attention on the inhospitality of the world to *complete* satisfaction and *disable* willing through it. Why does it not *force* the intellect to ignore K or forget it altogether; or settle for the self-deception akin to daydreaming? Recall, also, that complete satisfaction means no more satisfaction. Moreover, if egoism *drove* the previous fixation on K and given that K is *inhospitable* to *complete* satisfaction, then why do we not *rejoice* over the fact that we will never be *completely* satisfied?

When we *reflect* on aesthetic contemplation, which showed us our identity with what churns the world and all that appears in it, we *always* do so through how our will relates to K. We have assumed the willing stance and sank back into the urge to act along with all of its mainsprings. This can happen *immediately* after aesthetic contemplation has passed, but our *response* to it makes an *object* of the insights in aesthetic contemplation. Thus, aesthetic contemplation shows us the world is inhospitable to *complete* satisfaction and bypasses our *individual* relationship to this cognition—we are not negating the will to life in aesthetic contemplation, nor affirming it, but redirecting it, projecting it onto the world or life itself. Ascetic resignation follows the previous; it begins when the latter *ends*. Recall that aesthetic contemplation suspends our individual will by projecting willing on the target of cognition. Reflection on aesthetic contemplation is *post hoc* and so the will *drives* it from the outset.

I will suggest an alternative approach to the conceptual problem posed by ascetic resignation. I will propose that reflecting on aesthetic contemplation and thus responding by ascetic resignation *mirrors* our own will to resign; it does not *cause* it. In reflection, we perceive exactly what and how we will. Reflection does not *cause* us to will differently. Therefore, what explains ascetic resignation is simply *nothing*; ascetic resignation is part of our *individual* will and so a ground of explanation.

Recall that there is a difference between our resolving to attain *some* end (or realise *some* will) and our resolving for *complete* satisfaction, i.e., to realise all possible aims. This difference shows us something about recognising the impossibility of complete satisfaction, i.e., it permits both affirmation and negation of the will to life. It can either enable or disable our urge to do something. No amount of thwarting of a particular effort towards *some* end can drive us to abandon *all possible* efforts towards *all possible* ends. It can move us to *change the object* or *direction* of our effort, or even change our approach to its attainment,

but not remove the urge to exert *some* effort in *some* way. A thwarting of *some* effort can incite anxiety of conscience and self-dissatisfaction, whose object is our character, both of which point to the urge to be someone else. However, it does not necessarily lead to the urge to forgo living and willing itself. Admittedly, we need more than thwarting of a particular effort towards a specific end to explain our relinquishing *all* effort towards *all* ends.

Ascetic resignation is not a response to the recognition of our inability to attain *some* end. It is a response to the recognition about the nature of *all* ends, which enables or activates something present, but dormant in us. Nonetheless, we can only take an *individual* interest in it so that it affects our *own* efforts and urges *after* the recognition. Our own will guides us to *reflect* on the recognition in aesthetic contemplation and to *respond* to it one way rather than another. Reflection *derives* something from aesthetic contemplation relating to *our* life and efforts. Recognition that we cannot be *completely* satisfied leads us to a loss of resolve because we have a *resolve*, positive in its own right, to be *completely* satisfied. Accordingly, we have an *inherent* urge to end *all* urges, which is the paradox Schopenhauer's philosophy struggles to explain.

In sum, aesthetic contemplation cannot possibly cause ascetic resignation or even an affirmation of the will to life, because both are possible following its insight about willing. Both are possible *after* we recognise the world's inhospitality to *complete* satisfaction. It can enable *some* agents, but it also disables others. Some of us affirm the will to life based on the insight of aesthetic contemplation, which Schopenhauer describes as follows:

"The will affirms itself, which means that while in its objectivity (i.e. in the world and life) its own essence is given to it completely and distinctly as representation, this cognition is no impediment to its willing; rather, consciously, deliberately, and with cognition, it wills the life that it thus recognises as such, just as it did as a blind urge before it had this cognition." (WR, 311)

We rejoice over the recognition that life keeps moving and never rests. In the same passage, he claims:

"The opposite of this, the *negation of the will to life*, is manifest when willing comes to an end with that cognition. The particular, known appearances no longer act as *motives* for willing, but instead, cognition of the essence of the world (which mirrors the will) – cognition that has arisen by grasping the *Ideas* – becomes a *tranquilliser* of the will and the will freely abolishes itself." (WR, 311)

The difference between the *two* possible responses by the will to life follow the "cognition that has arisen by grasping the *Ideas*" (WR, 311), but he does not explain them. He does not seem committed to explaining them, but to state that what follows represents a fundamental difference in characters. Some people who grasp the Ideas and recognise the will to life permeating everything respond through ascetic resignation. Following the same cognition, others respond through a rejuvenation and *conscious* conviction, which now is in the place of their hitherto blind urges, that life *itself* and, by extension, *their own* life with all of its urges and projects is *worth* it.

The *same* recognition about the *impossibility of complete* satisfaction can bring about both affirmation and negation of the will to life. Those who affirm the will to life continue with their aims even though they recognise that each one leads back to a never-ending urge to do something (boredom), or to the inevitable thwarting of their will (suffering). The same cognition drives one individual to continue willing as before and another to be demotivated or disinclined to do anything whatsoever. Why does K lead to polar opposite responses? My suggestion is Schopenhauer has no explanation for either affirmation or negation except that each *mirrors* our individual will or represents distinct mainsprings. The world *appears to us* as unworthy of living and willing when we have already resigned. In reflection following the recognition that the world is inhospitable to our aims, we notice something arise from us *in response* to it, something deeply *personal* that demonstrates *our* relationship to living. Schopenhauer hints at this in his discussion of tragedy:

“At this sight we feel ourselves urged to turn our will away from life, to give up willing and loving life. But precisely in this way we become aware that there is still left in us something different that we cannot possibly know positively, but only negatively, as that which does *not* will life.” (WRII, 433)

Reflection mirrors our individual will, it does not change it. The *recognition* that the world is inhospitable to complete satisfaction can also bring about affirmation of the will to life; it can *enable* willing, just as it can disable it. The affirmer rejoices over the thought that no matter what she does, no project completely will satisfy her. She rejoices over the fact that never will she be completely satisfied. The world and life appear as worthy to her after she reflects on its inhospitality to complete satisfaction. She ‘resolves to do something’ repeatedly without end. She enjoys willing itself; she is indifferent to boredom and suffering for this reason alone. She *expects* that she will be bored and suffer, because she knows both are essential ingredients of satisfaction; they are prerequisites of satisfaction and she enjoys it above all. She welcomes boredom and suffering as promises of future satisfaction. She does not seek *complete* satisfaction, knowing that to seek *complete* satisfaction is to want to end *all* satisfaction, because the *precondition* of satisfaction is dissatisfaction, i.e., boredom and suffering.

The recognition that life is willing and that it never stops willing only incites ascetic resignation in us if we already resolve to resign. The response to recognising that the world is inhospitable to complete satisfaction mirrors our individual will. It is misleading to claim that K causes resignation without explaining why some people, far from resigning, affirm the will to life following K. In reflection, we become aware *of something* or *self-aware*. That some people do not feel the urge to do anything is undeniable, but Schopenhauer explains this by stating that the previous is a constituent of the will, which K activates. The previous is consistent with his correlation theory of cognition, but it amounts to saying that some individuals *will* to negate the will to life. The previous sounds more like a description than an explanation, however.

Soll’s reading of Schopenhauer’s conception of desire and aesthetic contemplation comes close to showing how reflection merely mirrors the will, but it falls short. He is right

to point out that conceiving of ordinary desire as not giving lasting satisfaction because it does not bring desiring to an end *unwarrantedly* presupposes *all* desires aim to bring *desiring itself* to an end (cf. Soll 1998, 85-6). Soll's objections are correct; however, the correlation theory suggests that there is an *original* will, i.e., a constituent of the will and so a mainspring of action that is positive in its own right, which corresponds to negation of the will to life. Consequently, there is a *desire* for the end of desiring, but not that *all* desires aim for the end of desiring. Soll wrongly reads Schopenhauer as claiming *all* desires possess the *illusory* intrinsic aim of *complete* satisfaction. Recall that the same recognition leading us to negate the will to life also leads us to affirm it. Where Soll's reading errs is in failing to distinguish motives from mainsprings and to see the correlation theory of cognition underpinning it.

Schopenhauer conceives of the 'illusion' inherent to desire not to lie in the *desire* or *desiring itself*. The illusion lies in what is presupposed by individuals who desire something (anything whatsoever) that will bring about *complete* satisfaction. Put another way, some agents desire something that brings all desiring to an end; others desire something apt for *their* satisfaction. The previous represent two different mainsprings. What is illusory, then, is the possibility of *complete* or *final* satisfaction, not any satisfaction at all, not even *desire itself*. Notice in the following quote that the constant attempt to fulfill *all* of our desires cannot possibly bring all desiring to an end; the claim is not that all desires strive for 'total' or 'complete' satisfaction, however:

“But even *final satisfaction itself* is only illusory: the fulfilled wish quickly gives way to a new one: the former is known to be a mistake, the latter is not yet known to be one.” (WR, 219; my emphasis).

Notice two important propositions in the above passage. First, the final satisfaction itself is the illusion, because of its *method* of attainment, i.e., willful action, not because of its *aim*. Second, we recognise that an already-fulfilled desire did not bring about final satisfaction, whilst some new desire *may bring it about* and we cannot know for sure until after fulfilling it. The illusion, for him, lies in the coexistence of both propositions. The second proposition seemingly suggests that the *intrinsic aim* of any desire is to end all desiring, but that is not so. He does not suggest a candidate for all desires; rather, he assumes that we possess *some* desire *to end all* desires. Following the assumption, he claims, it is illusory to expect a new desire to make it happen when the previous one did not. In short, any desire we can think of and then fulfill *cannot* bring about *final satisfaction*. This is the illusion: no amount of *effort*, or *effort* in a different direction, can bring desiring to an end. Effort is an extension of *willing* and presupposes its activity. It is an *indirect* affirmation of the will to life. Consequently, for individuals who harbor the desire to end all desiring—not anyone who desires something—this effort itself is the problem.

There is a tempting reading of Schopenhauer's ascetic resignation that argues that to bring desiring to an end (i.e., negate the will to life), we should aesthetically contemplate, not *will*. He seems to suggest the previous when he claims:



“...the will to life is the sole metaphysical entity or thing in itself, where it exists, no violence can break it; the only thing violence can do is to destroy its appearance in a particular place, at a particular time. The will to life itself cannot be suppressed by anything except cognition. That is why the only path to salvation is for the will to appear without restraints, so that it can recognise its own essence in this appearance. Only as a result of this recognition can the will abolish itself and in so doing put an end to suffering too, since suffering is inseparable from the will’s appearance.” (WR, 427)

Seemingly, we can achieve ‘final’ or ‘complete’ satisfaction by aesthetically contemplating without end. We attain ‘final’ satisfaction by gazing out into the world absent an urge to do something, except to aesthetically contemplate. The effort following our *desiring* something, some object or project that *ends* all desiring, does not incite ascetic resignation. Although this reading is tempting, it does not explain *why* aesthetic contemplation *both* enables *and* disables the will to life. The will to life can just as likely affirm as it can negative itself after it recognises ‘its own essence in this appearance’. It perceives the apparent horror it brings on itself and even after it recognises that the world is inhospitable to ‘complete’ satisfaction, it continues to affirm itself.

Schopenhauer does *hint* at another explanation of negation of the will to life, which, I will argue, leads him to make potentially irreconcilable errors. In the supplementary essays where he discusses the artistic genre of tragedy, he claims that the tragic arts aim to arouse ascetic resignation:

“...to turn away the will from life remains the true tendency of tragedy, the ultimate purpose of the intentional presentation of the sufferings of mankind” (WRII, 435)

The above purpose ascribed to the *artistic* genre of tragedy is ethical rather than aesthetic, however, which leads to two fundamental errors. The first error is in the proposition that tragedy does *not* aim to incite a sublime tension and so facilitate aesthetic contemplation, which would be consistent with his views on the aesthetic value of the arts. Instead, its aim is to produce *one* possible response to aesthetic contemplation, i.e., ascetic resignation. The first error skips aesthetic contemplation, which permits both affirmation and negation. Thus, the proposition is that tragedy aims for ascetic resignation and not aesthetic contemplation, which substantially undermines his aesthetics.

The second error is Schopenhauer’s explanation of the pleasure in tragedy and how the will relates to it. He construes ascetic resignation *not* as depression of willing, or absence of an urge to do something, but as the commitment or the hope for *another kind of life* that is *wholly inconceivable to us*:

“Just as the chord of the seventh demands the fundamental chord; just as a red colour demands green, and even produces it in the eye; so every tragedy demands an existence of an entirely different kind, a different world, the knowledge of which can always be given to us only indirectly, as here by such a demand” (WRII, 433).

There is a conceptual problem with the above claim aptly summarised by the question: what other kind of life can there be apart from the will to life and its affirmation, its suffering and inhospitality? What can another kind of *life* be independent from the *urge to do something in it*? Therefore, he compromises his philosophy of the will, his correlation theory of cognition and his conception of the will to life by his views on the pleasure in tragedy. The following comments on tragedy's *effect* on us and its relationship to ascetic resignation elucidate this error:

“Thus in the depth of his being the consciousness is then stirred that for a different kind of willing there must be a different kind of existence also. For if this were not so, if this rising above all the aims and good things of life, this turning away from life and its temptations, and the turning, already to be found here, to an existence of a different kind, although wholly inconceivable to us, were not the tendency of tragedy, then how would it be possible generally for the presentation of the terrible side of life, brought before our eyes in the most glaring light, to be capable of affecting us so beneficially, and of affording us an exalted pleasure?” (*WR II*, 433)

What different kind of willing can there be? It is counterintuitive to argue displaying life's miseries to us will *please* us. Ensnared by the recognition that far from bringing vicarious enjoyment of suffering and linking this enjoyment to what we recognise about life itself, tragedy extraordinarily afford us an *exalted pleasure*. Recall his definition of pleasure is that something accords with our will, which means that we must will something for anything to *please us*; the converse is the case for *displeasure* or suffering, which he defines as something discordant with our will. If we supposedly recognise that ‘nothing is worth willing in *this life*’ through tragedy, then why should this *please* us? How else can this pleasure be possible other than by showing us that if we *willed* differently, then we would *live* in a different world? His explanation of pleasure in tragedy seemingly makes his error irredeemable.<sup>129</sup>

Schopenhauer completes his analysis of ascetic resignation with the proposition that we are seduced into it because we already will another kind of life, i.e., one without misery. In short, he construes negation of the will to life as affirmation of another *kind* of life. The reason he seemed inclined to make this suggestion is that there is something counterintuitive in negation of the will to life; it represents a *will* or a mainspring of action, i.e., asceticism. He seemingly applies the fundamental proposition that “where there is will, there will be life and world as well” (*WR*, 301) to the previous. Thus, tragedy pleases us and is ‘beneficial’ to us because we *will* a different life. But, what does the previous mean other than that we aim for different things? What is aiming other than ‘some kind of willing’? Finally, what is willing if not an affirmation of the will to life and how do we arrive at this other world to which aspire? His answer is ‘by not willing anything at all in *this* life or by a *deliberate* and

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<sup>129</sup> For a more detailed analysis of Schopenhauer's account of tragedy and the pleasure we experience in the tragic arts than I can offer here see Shapshay (2012).

*resolved* depression of our efforts'. Schopenhauer makes a muddle of his views on the arts, the will to life and ascetic resignation with his views on tragedy.

Irrespective of the above muddle, he does make *some* consistent claims about ascetic resignation, i.e., that reflection has not, strictly speaking, affected the will *of its own accord*. Rather, ascetic resignation represents our will's relationship and thus reaction to cognition. That we *reflected* and *focused* on something is a consequence of the will's relationship to it. The intellect remains the tool of *the will*. It may *seem* otherwise, at times, but we can be sure the *will* still *drives* and *directs*. The intellect mirrors the will and thus 'represents' its activity. Where he is most coherent is in making clear that another response is possible following a recognition of the terrible side of life. This other response is affirmation of the will to life, whose subjective correlate I will call the life-affirmer for brevity. As a final offer of clarity, I embody the life-affirmer and voice his response to the insight of aesthetic contemplation.

The life-affirmer loves to do something. The felt consciousness of his identity with the will to life makes him prolific at creating *new* ends towards which he can exercise his resolve. Whether he does so egoistically, compassionately or maliciously, it does not matter. The intellect's free-play does not affect his will even when it stumbles upon the recognition that he will never attain 'complete' satisfaction. He rejoices over the recognition that though he—as an individual—will eventually perish, the *vehement* resolve that is a precondition of his individuality survives his death. Thus, he rejoices that what underpins his resolve is eternal. The so-called 'felt consciousness' shows him that it permeates *everything* and so it vehemently re-emerges as another body at another other time under different circumstances. The difference is in the objects, the particular aims, and the projects *in relation* to different circumstances. It is not in the will to life. He is *who* he is because of the circumstances he is in, i.e., because of his relations to other things or people. He rejoices most of all when he recognises that he will never be *completely satisfied*. Why would he want to be completely satisfied? What could this entail except not being able to resolve towards anything and thereby pass up the opportunity for satisfaction? He would longer be able to enjoy the rejuvenated will that springs from boredom and-or suffering, that exciting *new* project that sparks him and promises him satisfaction. He wants *satisfaction* and shudders at the mere mention or thought of complete satisfaction. He does *not* resolve to an end all *satisfaction* as the life-negator does by striving for complete satisfaction. The life-affirmer loves the urge for new projects and aims with which to *struggle* out of his suffering and boredom and thus be *elevated* over both. His solution to his suffering is the constant creation of new projects. He does not seek the *one* project that ends *all* suffering and boredom. The thought that his individuality and his body through which it expresses itself are *not* special *exalts* him. He is an object among other objects. He knows that what embodies here and now as *him* will embody as *another* and continue to embody *as something* forever:

"So for the will to life, life is a certainty, and as long as we are filled with life-will, we do not need to worry about our existence, even in the face of death. It is true we see the individual come into being and pass away: but the individual is only

appearance, it exists only for cognition that is caught up in the principle of sufficient reason, the *principium individuationis*.” (WR, 301)

What is death to the life-affirmer who has returned from aesthetic contemplation with a rejuvenated will to life? Notice how, unlike the life-negator, he rejoices in the recognition that he cannot be *completely* satisfied. It exalts him. He yearns for the pursuit of *this* new project, *that* new aim, and *these* new possibilities that mean springing out of boredom and suffering. He sees boredom and suffering as prerequisites of *something new*; they promise new projects for his resolve. They whisper promises of exultant happiness in *willing*. They *make room* for new projects and satisfaction. The life-affirmer *positively* and *self-reflectively* wills satisfaction *without end* where the life-negator positively and self-reflectively wills *complete* satisfaction, i.e., to end willing by ending its precondition: suffering and boredom. The life-affirmer would not dream of forgoing boredom or suffering. The life-affirmer affirms the inevitable dance that is life or living, the will or willing, with what Schopenhauer calls, “full self-consciousness” (WR, 314), which to *some* appears as a tug-of-war.<sup>130</sup>

The crucial philosophical point here is that the same recognition that leads to ascetic resignation can facilitate affirmation of the will to life. The best we can say on the basis of Schopenhauer’s conceptual tools about why one or the other appears in some individual is that they are simply original constituents of the will that dominate now in *this* and now in *that* individual. This is the same as saying that nothing can explain it. Whether we undergo affirmation or negation of the will to life after we reflect on aesthetic contemplation is down to individual differences.

Schopenhauer’s correlation theory of cognition limits his ability to resolve the impasse in ascetic resignation. Next, I will assess Nietzsche’s alternative attempt at such an explanation. For our current purposes, we should distinguish ascetic resignation from moral motivation. Selflessness, or overcoming egoism, does not *equate* or *necessarily lead* to the negation of the will to life. The latter is our overcoming all purposive cognition, including our identification with the recipient’s purpose underpinning morally worthy actions. The *possibility* of both rests with aesthetic contemplation. We can *selflessly* affirm the will to life, which takes the shape of not *only* aiming to continue our *individual* existence, but also act for the sake of something or someone *other than* us. Only through recognising that we are objects among objects *and* that objects are not *just* objects, but likewise represent willing, striving etc., can the negation (or self-abolition) of the will to life be possible. Accordingly, the disinterestedness that underpins aesthetic contemplation makes negation of the will to life *possible*, but it does not *determine* or *cause* it. Disinterestedness is the spark that ignites the flame of ascetic resignation, but the material that the flame consumes, i.e., the individual, determines whether the spark will be successful or not. Perhaps the previous suggestion can shed light on the following admittedly obscure passage in Schopenhauer:

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<sup>130</sup> For more on affirmation and negation see Gemes & Janaway (2012).

“Now as we have seen, the *self-abolition* of the will begins with cognition, but cognition and insight as such are independent of free choice [*Willkür*]; consequently, that negation of the will, that entrance into freedom cannot be forced by any intention or resolution, but rather emerges from the innermost relation of cognition to willing in human beings, and thus arrives suddenly, as if flying in from outside.” (WR, 432)

What brought about resignation is not our *effort* to bring it about, however. Rather, the asceticism that is already inside us is elevated to the forefront, which we cannot conceive as distinct from being *a kind of effort*, i.e., as a constituent of our individual will. The paradox of ascetic resignation may be inherent to his philosophy and a limit of his conceptual tools.



## 2 Nietzsche on Agency, Morality and the Ascetic Ideal

Previously, I critically assessed Schopenhauer's conception of aesthetic contemplation, his views on the moral value of compassion and his claims about the role of self-knowledge in agency and ascetic resignation. Our 'human' experience is composed of two *ostensibly* albeit not *fundamentally* distinct aspects, i.e., the intellect and will, according to him. We do not encounter these two aspects separately, but there is a clear difference in their respective contributions to our experience. The will is responsible for affective orientation and actions; the intellect provides us with a target to which we can respond and a perspective on the world that correlates to our will and is thus determined by its interests. The intellect offers a target for the will, whereas the will determines which of the countless targets of cognition are *worthy* of striving towards or away from.

We notice that how the will and the intellect relate changes after he introduces his account of aesthetic contemplation. The subjective correlate of aesthetic contemplation is disinterestedness; when we take a disinterested stance in relation to something, we project the will onto a target of our cognition. This projection underpins our perceiving it as an Idea rather than *an object*.<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, his psychological analysis of beauty and the sublime demonstrates that an *indirect* relationship to willing *motivates* aesthetic contemplation. The aesthetic pleasure we feel over *some* objects that thus *incite* aesthetic contemplation shows that their value for the will is in distracting us from our personal projects and aims, which are sources of our suffering. The satisfaction we feel in the presence of beauty borrows its motivation from a *thwarted will*. In other words, aesthetic pleasure in beauty is an auxiliary pleasure resting on dissatisfaction with our projects and aims. The sublime, however, is our encounter with the limits of the satisfaction of human needs, which he construes as operating on and presupposing the suppression of our individual will. Yet, it relates to human willing

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<sup>131</sup> Previously, we distinguished the *object* of a cognition from our cognising something *as an object*. The former is the aim of the cognition in general independent from what it aims at. I argued that the 'target' serves better than the 'object' in capturing the previous. Whereas perceiving something as an object concerns *one kind* of cognition among others. Perceiving the target of cognition *as an object* means that we assume the willing stance in relation to it, i.e., we are readying ourselves to act upon it.

by extension, so even the pleasure in the sublime is (indirectly) against the backdrop of *our* personal limitations. The previous relation by extension explains the pleasure we feel as the sublime tension *settles* into aesthetic contemplation. Therefore, the beautiful and the sublime are *properties* of objects. We ascribe them to an object based on its ability and manner by which it *incites* aesthetic contemplation. They do not coincide with or follow from aesthetic contemplation, but *cause* it.

Schopenhauer's psychological analysis of the disinterested individual as from the perspective of her relationship to her individual life is nuanced and rich. It considers what could motivate someone to project the will onto an object of cognition. He argues that there are prerequisites with respect to our personal lives that encourages us to project willing onto something. We require frustration with our projects and aims, i.e., a thwarted will. These are preconditions of 'aesthetic contemplation', so they should not be confused for aesthetic contemplation *itself*. They are the causal and the motivational factors involved in bringing about (and, for aesthetic artists, facilitating) aesthetic contemplation.

Aesthetic contemplation does not *abolish* the will, but projects it onto the target of cognition. In aesthetically contemplating, we feel no discernible urge for action on the target itself, but rather we identify with it and thereby *perceive* it as willing, striving and so on. We identify with it in the same way that we identify with our body. By analogy we are receptive to it and its movements as the follower in a dance is receptive to the leader's movements. Consequently, aesthetic contemplation is will-less in the sense that our *personal* will is not what permeates and distorts our cognition of the target, but likewise with respect to any will independent from the target. It is still a cognition, however. We reason that *it* wills and use our imagination to perceive it as a willing thing or willing something. This conception can help us make sense of Schopenhauer's purportedly smooth transition and harmony between aesthetics and ethics, which is the supposed hallmark of his philosophy of the will.

We saw that Schopenhauer's views on morality rest on the agent's ability to suspend her egoism enough to *recognise* another as a person, i.e., as willing something, as opposed to an object permitting use. He construed this perception as a prerequisite of morality in that we are moral or immoral, morally praiseworthy or morally reprehensible, in relation to our ability to perceive someone as willing something. Absent the recognition of someone as willing something, i.e., as someone with wishes, desires etc., we are at best morally neutral or incapable of moral reason. Without it, we fall *outside* the sphere of moral worth, but also of moral reprehensibility, because malice also requires the recognition that the *objects* of our cognition are *representations* of a willing thing.

Schopenhauer's correlation theory of cognition likewise allows him to argue that the intellect can recognise the *identical* object of the will and formulate a self-image. In other words, human reason can be a means for the *will* (both the individual and metaphysical) to acquire self-cognition, that is, to make an object of itself and so perceive its *identical* object in the world. For the individual will, this identical object is one's body and our actions over time, whereas for the will to life, this identical object is the world itself and any movement we perceive in it. After this recognition of its identity with the world itself and everything in it, the will to life can strive in an enlightened manner by acting upon and so responding



to its self-image, which peaks in its affirmation or negation.<sup>132</sup> These responses to the self-image would not have been possible without the faculty of reason that “allows us to survey the whole in the abstract” (WR, 301).

We will notice in the current section that many of the distinctions, arguments and themes that preoccupied Schopenhauer, Nietzsche picks up and considers as from a different perspective. For example, he accepts Schopenhauer’s ontological monism and immanence, which is inherent to his philosophy of the will and will-body identity. However, Nietzsche derives a different and unique philosophical method from them, which I will characterise by two key concepts. First, he favours the concept of the ‘drive’ over the will; he employs his drive psychology to explain phenomena. Second, he favours a historical account or explanation of phenomena after rejecting metaphysical and logical accounts. I will aim to clarify how the two concepts relate by introducing what I will call the ‘conceptual link’. I will argue that Nietzsche is revisionist with respect to agency, morality, objectivity and aesthetic contemplation.

I will also propose that Nietzsche’s central theme is ‘ideals’, specifically, the ‘ascetic ideal’ and its effect on our lives as individuals. He inherits his focus on the ‘ascetic ideal’ from Schopenhauer; specifically, Schopenhauer’s positive evaluation of the negation of the will to life. This concern permeates three key areas of Nietzsche’s philosophy, which I will focus on. These areas are the possibility of ‘self-conscious agency’, the limits of ‘morality’ and the role of ‘aesthetic contemplation in the arts’. He construes the ascetic ideal as a framework for making sense of actions and aims, but also for evaluating them in a manner that permits “of no other interpretation, no other goal” (GM III, 23). We cannot question its truth-value, its legitimacy or put any limits on it, since doing so would entail our suspending or transgressing the ideal itself, rather than building upon it. It is due to the previous that he construes it rhetorically as a “fixed idea” (GM II, 3). His approach and critique of the ascetic ideal is with respect to its *value for life*, not its truth-value or moral value. He has an entirely different approach for comprehending and critiquing ideals, which is as from the perspective of life or living. The meaning of the ‘value for life’ is not clear and in many respects remains incomplete both as a result of my analysis, but likewise because I think Nietzsche himself did not fully work it out. I will attempt to disambiguate it at least in part by looking at the perspective from which he approaches life and living, which, I argue, is the individual’s

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<sup>132</sup> “Thus, in human beings the will can achieve full (völligen) self-consciousness, clear and exhaustive cognition of its own essence as it is mirrored in the *whole* world” (WR, 314; my emphasis). A better translation of ‘völligen’ would be ‘complete’ as opposed to ‘full’, because it allows us to stay consistent with his project of offering us a complete picture. Schopenhauer associates complete self-consciousness (*völligen Selbstbewußtseyn*) with what I construed as self-knowledge. The target of self-consciousness, i.e., the ‘I’ or ‘I will’, though a part of the complete picture of our experiences, is nevertheless incomplete on its own by virtue of its one-sided perception of the world. The picture is completed by the identical object that is the objective correlate of the ‘I will’ and the actions that ensue from our willing something. The picture is extended to the objects we perceive as external to us, which we used to perceive as fit for a purpose independent from their own purpose, and predominantly for our purpose (as individuals or humanity) in relation to them. This, I believe, is what Schopenhauer means by “the *one* eye of the world” (WR, 221) or what he alternatively calls “the eternal eye of the world” (WR, 308).

perspective. I aim to explain what this perspective amounts to, what motivates his turn to it most notably in the evaluative part of his philosophy and how far reaching it is. I will argue that this perspective is crucial for revealing his *Weltanschauung*.

It behoves us as philosophical commentators on Nietzsche to not only consider if there is a *guiding thread* to his thoughts that allows access to the grounds for his evaluations, objections and his account of certain phenomena, but equally to strive to bring this guiding thread<sup>133</sup> to light. My strategy will be to focus on where he departs from Schopenhauer, his educator and biggest philosophical influence.

As is common with attempts to find a unified and coherent thread in Nietzsche's thoughts, his writing style and the unfortunate fact that he does not provide adequate and straightforward definitions of his terms, which has immensely impeded my efforts. Some of the definitions he does attempt change with the text, approach and arguments he makes, which makes it considerably harder to hook onto a sense of consistency. We often wander without a sufficient foothold and path into his thoughts and resort to inferring a definition from his uses, which also change. I approach his thoughts and so attempt to find a better foothold by using Schopenhauer's philosophy as a backdrop. I strive to establish a useful juxtaposition between them on key concepts and distinctions. I aim to identify the important areas or themes where they agree and disagree, but also to assess their reasons for doing so. I assess Nietzsche's critique of Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will and the world-view underpinning it. I focus on the ethical and aesthetic themes of Schopenhauer's philosophy, but to make their agreements and their differences in those areas clearer, I will likewise seek what underpins those differences, i.e., their respective conceptions of the 'will', 'agency', 'self-knowledge' (or 'self-consciousness') and 'morality'. Firstly, I will assess Nietzsche's views on agency and self-knowledge in light of recent philosophical commentary. Secondly, I will analyse his descriptive account and subsequent evaluation of morality. Thirdly, and in summary of the previous views and arguments, I will suggest an alternative solution to what the philosophical commentary construe as the 'lack of fit' in his thoughts on agency. Fourthly, I assess Nietzsche's objections to Schopenhauer's view of aesthetic contemplation and argue that Nietzsche has a novel account of aesthetic contemplation that he calls *Rausch* or the 'act of idealising'. Finally, I assess why Nietzsche claims that compassion [*Mitleid*] is a 'great danger to mankind' by looking at the grounds he gives for the pernicious relationship between 'morality' and the 'ascetic ideal'. I will demonstrate that he leaves open the possibility of an opposing ideal to the ascetic ideal and thus for an alternative ethics or morality.

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<sup>133</sup> By a guiding thread here, I do not mean to suggest that there is one position or argument in Nietzsche that makes everything he says on a particular topic, or on any topic, intelligible or coherent. A thinker like Nietzsche is actively against this coherence. We can nonetheless aim to look for what unites or brings his thoughts together to give at least a vague picture of the world-view that motivates his conceptions and evaluations. This vague picture is what I aim for and how I understand the guiding thread.

## 2.1 Nietzschean Agency: Conscious Thought and the Drives

For a robust understanding of the relationship between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's philosophies, I will assess Nietzsche's conceptual tools with respect to agency and the will. Like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche likewise recognises that there is no fundamental difference between one's will and body: "body am I through and through, and nothing besides; and soul is just a word for something in the body" (Z, 'Despisers', 23). His conception of agency stems from his reading of Schopenhauer's will-body identity thesis. However, I will argue that what he makes of the thesis differs from Schopenhauer. First, and as a preliminary, we recall the broad and pervasive role that the will-body identity thesis plays in Schopenhauer's philosophy.

The world, for Schopenhauer, would be a strange place if we did not experience it (or at least a part of it) as something(s) we take an *interest* in, are *committed* to and so *value*. The picture of the world in terms of objects, object relations, natural forces and causal relations, which is what the sciences of his day provided, does not capture our evaluations (or our evaluating stance in relation to it). Our taking an interest in something is fundamental, but unaccounted for by the so-called objective picture. The concept 'force' was supposed to fill the lacuna in the objective picture by being the driving principle behind any change or event; we also used it to describe our interests, evaluations and so on. Nevertheless, 'force' stood before us as something unfamiliar and devoid of meaning or significance. Thus, even if our interests are describable in terms of forces, they are by no means *reducible* to such forces and the object-relations they obtain, because this reduction would fail to capture the *meaning* or *significance* afforded to the objects that interest us, but also to their appearance when they do interest us. If the object picture cannot account for this meaningfulness, then how do we make sense of the fact that there is something peculiar about us—which we associate with 'taking an interest' in something—that has no objective representation? Taking an interest is *fundamentally* distinct from a world filled with objects, object-relations and forces.

Apart from objects, object-relations and forces, we likewise will or are willing *these* objects, object-relations and forces; our will is the *unacknowledged* correlate to the scientific picture of the world. For us to make sense of the will's relationship to that picture there must be a *bridge* between the will and the objective world. He argues that we can recognise this bridge by reflecting on what he calls an 'act of will' and recognising that its immediate object is our bodily movement or action. Some bodily movements follow immediately the so-called 'act of will'. In fact, they are equivalents. Put another way, there is an irreducible *correlation* between our taking an interest in something and a bodily movement or change, and a change in how the objects and the world itself appears. This allows us to postulate an *identity* between our will (interests, evaluations etc.) and the bodily changes we undergo or experience. On this basis, we can analyse our will by analysing our body and thus acquire self-knowledge. It permits us to respond to, take action upon and-or change ourselves using

our bodily changes, which allows to respond to ourselves using our own body. Disabling our will allows us to recognise the meaning of willing *as such*, i.e., the will to life, and finally to respond to it through affirmation or negation.

What does Nietzsche make of the above? To answer this question, I will begin by assessing how he conceives of our ‘taking an *interest* in something’. How he analyses taking an interest in something, responding to it and evaluating it. What picture of agency, seen as a source of our actions, responses and evaluations, does Nietzsche offer?

In a similar manner to Schopenhauer who uses the concept ‘mainspring’ (*Triebfeder*) for his analysis of agency and selfhood, Nietzsche uses the concept of a drive (*Trieb*) for the same purposes. Although, we should point out that the two concepts are not synonymous. The concept of a mainspring is broader in scope and application than the concept of a drive. The Anglophone commentary on Nietzsche’s thoughts offers some useful, albeit differing definitions and readings of the concept ‘drive’. Most commentators often construe ‘drives’ as ‘dispositions’, but not much more by way of a definition is given. However, ‘dispositions’ are as unclear as the ‘drives’. Some commentators suggest something other than disposition. Here I will assess four useful and clearer attempts to define a drive than ‘disposition’; these are by Richardson (1996), Conway (1997), Janaway (2009) and Katsafanas (2013A). I will assess the merits of their definitions and the differences between them before moving on to what I think is a more useful approach to Nietzschean drives, which helps us better to define the concept of a drive.

The first definition of a drive I assess is Richardson (1996), who uses it to elucidate the concept of the ‘will to power’, which he argues characterises Nietzsche’s ontology. According to Richardson’s reading:

“...just as scientists speak of a variety of drives or forces, so Nietzsche takes the units of will to power to be deeply diverse in their types, differentiated by their distinctive efforts or tendencies. The sex drive, for example, is one pattern of activity aiming at its own network of ends—perhaps these are centered on seduction or coupling or orgasm—whereas the drive to eat aims at a very different network.” (Richardson 1996, 21)

The definition Richardson proposes is that a drive is an effort exerted towards some ‘pattern’ of activity aiming at some ‘network’ of ends. What distinguishes one drive from another is the “*internal ends*” (ibid.) or internal network of ends. The essential or the ‘highest end’ of these networks is what Nietzsche calls ‘power’. Inherent to every drive is the ‘will to power’. We can summarise his definition as follows:

**D1:** A drive is an effort exerted towards some pattern of activity aiming at an internal network of ends whose overarching aim is power, or, presumably, the repetition of this activity towards as many ends as possible. Drives are units of the will to power.

In other words, drives are units of the will to power, which strive to optimise, realise and prioritise their internal network of ends in relation to other drives and their own networks.

Conway's (1997) definition distinguishes two commonly related terms Nietzsche employs, i.e., 'drive' and 'instinct' (*Instinkt*). According to Conway's reading, Nietzsche's use of drives and instincts until 1888 are 'intensionally equivalent'; they refer to "the primal, unconscious vitality that human beings share (and discharge) in common with all other members of the animal kingdom" (Conway 1997, 30). However, after 1888, they are "no longer intensionally equivalent" (Conway 1997, 30). The concept of the drive remains unchanged, whilst instincts refer to "any specific organisation of the drives and impulses, as determined by the dominant mores of the particular people or epoch in question" (Conway 1997, 31). We can summarise his readings as follows:

**D2:** Drives are the basic units of discharge and effort. Instincts are specific organisations of the drives determined by the values of a particular people or epoch.

Therefore, according to Conway's reading, Nietzsche uses two distinct concepts: 'instincts' and 'drives'. An instinct is an organisation of drives in accordance with a people or epoch, whereas drives are the ontologically basic units of discharge and effort.

The definition of drives proposed by Janaway distinguishes affects from drives and argues that Nietzsche employs two concepts towards his analysis of agency:

"...we might hypothesise that a *drive* is a relatively stable tendency to active behaviour of some kind, while an *affect*, put very roughly, is what it feels like when a drive is active inside oneself. Affects, as we have seen, are glossed as inclinations and aversions or for and againsts. An affect would then be a positive or negative feeling that occurs in response to the success or failure of a particular drive in its striving, or in response to the confluence of the activities of more than one drive within oneself" (Janaway 2009, 55; my emphasis)

In a later paper he qualifies his definition and emphasises the notion of 'relatively stable', because there are passages in Nietzsche suggesting that "drives can come into existence, or at any rate something that was at some time not a drive in some individual can come to be a drive for that individual" (Janaway 2012, 190). He likewise adds that Nietzsche construes our drives as largely out of our conscious or rational control; they dispose us towards some activity:

"... a drive is a relatively enduring disposition of which the agent may be ignorant, but which, even when the agent has some awareness of it, operates in a manner outside the agent's full rational or conscious control, and which disposes the agent to evaluate things in ways that give rise to certain kinds of behaviour." (Janaway 2012, 187)

We can summarise Janaway's proposed definition of Nietzschean drives in the following manner:

**D3:** Drives are relatively stable tendencies towards active behavior that operate independent of the agent's rational or conscious control; whilst affects are conscious feelings of 'for' or 'against' something that indicates an activity of the drives.

The final definition of ‘drives’ I will consider is offered by Katsafanas, who likewise operates with the distinction introduced by Janaway between ‘drives’ and what we may call ‘the self-conscious I’ or what Katsafanas calls “reflective agency” (Katsafanas 2013A, 748). Prima facie, he agrees with the general propositions that drives are *inherently* related to our actions and that they can be construed as dispositions or tendencies, but he rightly cautions about construing drives as dispositions, which “offer[s] no real explanation of the agential language Nietzsche uses when he appeals to drives” (Katsafanas 2013A, 732). According to Katsafanas, we require a more nuanced account of the drives to demonstrate *how* they dispose us by elaborating on the concept of a ‘disposition’. He summarises the previous in the following manner:

“In short, an instinct<sup>134</sup> might operate purely mechanically, by producing a series of behaviors; or it might operate at one remove, by producing internal states, such as emotions, desires, and urges, which then strongly dispose the organism to pursue some end.” (Katsafanas 2013A, 738)

The operations of an instinct or drive in the latter sense, he claims, is more significant for Nietzsche’s account of agency, because they capture how drives affect *reflective agents*, i.e., agents with conscious thoughts. Consequently, Drives are “dispositions that generate evaluative orientations” (Katsafanas 2013A, 745). We can summarise his definition in the following manner:

**D4:** Drives are dispositions towards some action or response that operate on reflective agents, or agents with self-conscious thought, by inducing an evaluative orientation toward some object or circumstance; or by *influencing* her perception or conception of the object or circumstance.

There is a common thread permeating the above definitions, which, I believe, leads us to a split in the commentary. I pose this split by asking the following question: How do we arrive at the complex, ordered and self-consciously organised activity that characterises human agency from the basic quanta of an urge to act that is the drive? Some commentators say that we arrive at it through the role of consciousness or the self-conscious ‘I’. Others argue that the ordering happens by itself. It is in the nature of drives tending in distinct directions to organise into the unified wholes that are self-conscious agents.

Richardson<sup>135</sup> and Conway, for example, claim that the complex whole that is the human agent arises independently from our conscious control. In Richardson’s reading,

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<sup>134</sup> Here we must highlight that he finds the relevance of the distinction between ‘drive’ and ‘instinct’ advanced by Conway’s reading as marginal to his argument and uses the two terms interchangeably (Katsafanas 2013A, 725, footnote).

<sup>135</sup> At least in his early characterisation he claims, “[w]e should imagine the person, then, as such a unit, though one vastly more complex, because it is a synthesis of many parts, which are themselves syntheses of simpler parts; the different organs of the body, or rather their functionings, are such lower-order complexes. Thus a person is formed of a vast network of power balances, struck at a hierarchy of levels” (Richardson 1996, 47). His approach

human agents are organisations of power relations between drives (cf. Richardson 1996, 45 & Richardson 2009, 134-5). For Conway, human agency results from *unconscious* processes of structuring drives, which occur via social interactions. Our instincts are the direct traces of this organisation and find their root in a people or time.

D1 and D2 defend an apparent *leap over an abyss* from disparate micro-movements<sup>136</sup> in distinct directions to self-conscious agents and actions. D1 holds that this leap occurs through an internal principle (will to power and self-overcoming). D2 claims that ‘society’ organises and makes possible this leap. D2 does not factor into the picture the fact that a society is composed of drives that constitute the various individuals or persons in it. Society is the sum of its parts, so we cannot think of it as independent from them. The suggestions, then, leave us at a loss as to what explains how and why drives organise in such a way as to yield agents. We do not resolve this problem of organisation at the individual level or at the level of a community. Moreover, we have hitherto not given any reason why there should be any order at all between these disparate micro-movements that compose us. D1 is more promising by postulating an internal principle constitutive of all these micro-movements, which operates independently from their directions and brings them together to form an organised whole in favor of their own respective ends. This principle is the ‘will to power’ and its internal end of self-overcoming as argued by Richardson (1996, 26), but likewise usefully elaborated by Reginster (2006, 124-147). The insight here is that the will to power internally organises drives so they can pursue together and thus in greater strength what they *already* pursue individually, i.e., power.

We notice a different conception of the drives in D3 and D4. They agree that drives play a key role in Nietzsche’s account of human agency, but they also strive to defend the independence of the self-conscious ‘I’ from ‘unconscious’ drives. Janaway claims that the previous independence and interaction is crucial for Nietzsche’s account of the sovereign individual. Katsafanas argues that it is crucial for Nietzsche’s views on freedom, reflective choice and “genuine agency” (cf. Katsafanas 2011, 111-3). Nietzsche’s views postulate or, at least, must accept that there is an interaction between two different ‘things’, which explains how we arrive at an organised whole from relatively stable micro-movements. Thus, the question of how we get from micro-movements to conscious agents is a non-issue, for Nietzsche, since they interact from the start. The previous commits Nietzsche to claiming

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changes somewhat in a later paper, which takes into account Nietzsche’s views on agential freedom and the sovereign individual as *somehow* distinct from the drives in the above sense: “although, as I have said, drives are Nietzsche’s principal explainers, they are not his sole explainers” (Richardson 2009, 137). In the same paper and passage, he argues agency can be seen as a drive: “agency is indeed a kind of drive itself, which I think is one reason Nietzsche sometimes denies that there can be any self or agent... [T]he very act of reflecting and choosing involves a self-misconception: even as it refers to itself as ‘I’ and ‘self’ and ‘free’, it gets itself wrong” (Richardson 2009, 137-8). Richardson rightly touches upon a crucial tension and split in Nietzsche between his conception of a drive and the self-conscious ‘I’. His suggestion does not do enough to show why drives are *not* his sole explainers, however. The proposition that the self-conscious ‘I’ is a kind of drive in the trenches with other drives, but *somehow* not actually a drive is misleading. I will suggest and defend a different approach to resolving this tension and split.

<sup>136</sup> I am using word ‘micro-movement’ rhetorically here to refer to movements and events *within* our body that aim to become actions, i.e., movements of the *whole* body.

that there is a *fundamental* difference between drives and self-conscious thought that cannot be explained by (nor reduced to) drives or drive relations.

In the next chapter, I assess the fuller Nietzschean picture(s) of agency that emerges from the above definitions and their limitations.

## 2.2 The Lack of Fit and the Two Commitments

The above definitions of Nietzsche's concept of the 'drive' reveals a split in the Anglophone philosophical literature on Nietzschean agency. Gardner's paper on the so-called dominant 'naturalistic' reading of Nietzschean selfhood or self-conscious 'I', clearly shows this split.

Gardner coined the 'lack of fit' (Gardner 2009, 7) to describe a conceptual problem with respect to 'naturalistic' readings of Nietzschean agency, which characterises the basis of the split in Nietzschean agency. I agree with Gardner on the 'lack of fit' and I will aim to show that it pervades all readings of Nietzschean agency. Furthermore, I will argue that the 'lack of fit' is entrenched in how some commentators define the concept of the 'drive' itself.

The 'lack of fit', according to Gardner's reading, is between Nietzsche's theoretical claims about the third-person perspective of selfhood and his practical claims on the sovereign individual, specifically, the latter's first-person experience of willing. They often lead to the following two conflicting propositions:

1. There is a complex multiplicity of drives brought into unity by hierarchical power relations responsible for our responses and full-fledged agential actions.
2. The sovereign individual demonstrates a simple unity that controls and owns her responses and actions and thus, by extension, her drives.<sup>137</sup>

How can a multiplicity of drives towards different ends organised hierarchically by power relations lead to the seemingly simple unity and self-mastery that characterises sovereign individuality? There are two proposed answers to the previous question and so two solutions to the lack of fit.

The first 'bites the bullet' and debunks the causal efficacy of the self-conscious 'I' by arguing that Nietzsche does not require it to explain agential actions. We can call this broadly—and with the unfortunate consequence of considerable albeit unavoidable violence to the nuances of the claims and arguments for it—the 'naturalist' or 'epiphenomenalist'

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<sup>137</sup> See, for example, Gardner 2009; Gemes 2009 & Ridley 2009.



reading<sup>138</sup> and solution to the lack of fit. The reading can be summarised using the following propositions alongside 1 and 2 above:

3. There is a distinction between simplicity and unity. The ‘I’ is unified, but its unity is in terms of a synthesis of disparate parts that is a process and matter of achievement, not simple or given.

4. The unity of the self-conscious ‘I’ is falsely construed as simple or irreducible; this undermines the role of the manifold of drives in our actions. The apparent ownership and control we practice in the first-person perspective is just a synthetic relationship between drives that, a) based on a strong reading is ‘causal’<sup>139</sup>, or b) based on a weak reading is ‘normative’<sup>140</sup>.

The main argument from the epiphenomenalist reading follows an interpretation of an early passage in Nietzsche, which rejects the proposition that the ‘I’ occupies any privileged status or position independent from the drives. Our awareness of a drive’s activity presupposes the activity of another drive with which the previous interacts, according to Nietzsche:

“...that one *desires* to combat the vehemence of a drive at all, however, does not stand within our own power; nor does the choice of any particular method; nor does the success or failure of this method. What is clearly the case is that in this entire procedure our intellect is only the blind instrument of *another drive* which is a *rival* of the drive whose vehemence is tormenting us: whether it be the drive to restfulness, or the fear of disgrace and other evil consequences, or love. While ‘we’ believe we are complaining about the vehemence of a drive, at bottom it is one drive *which is complaining about another*; that is to say: for us to become aware that we are suffering from the *vehemence* of a drive presupposes the existence of another equally vehement or even more vehement drive, and that a *struggle* is in prospect in which our intellect is going to have to take sides.” (D 109)

Such passages seem to demonstrate that self-consciousness has a wholly subordinate role in Nietzschean agency. We take an interest in the various aspects of, or objects in, the world based on the activity of our drives. We become self-conscious of something in us because of the activity of another drive(s). To be conscious of something (also self-conscious) means our drives are activated. Therefore, according to this reading, Nietzsche does *not* commit to the proposition that there is something ‘over and above’ the ‘drives’ that interacts with them and unifies them to give cognition of something or to bring about any action. Furthermore,

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<sup>138</sup> This solution to the problem of the lack of fit and approach to Nietzschean selfhood and the drives is found in Anderson (2006 & 2012), Clark & Dudrick (2009), Constancio (2011), Cox (1999), Gemes (2009), Leiter (2001 & 2009), Richardson (1995 & 2009) & Welshon (2004, 152-156).

<sup>139</sup> Leiter (2009 & 2012) specifically and in certain passages Gemes (2009, 48).

<sup>140</sup> See especially Anderson (2012, 229) and Richardson (1996 & 2009), but also in certain respects Davis-Acampora (2013m 102-8; 159-164).

this ‘something’ is not the *simple* unity implied by the self-conscious ‘I’. According to the epiphenomenalist readings, the ‘I’ is either an illusion, it does not exist or it is the outcome of preconscious processes we call drives.

There are two limitations to the epiphenomenalist reading. Firstly, it does not provide an argument that explains why in some passages Nietzsche discusses a relationship between ‘drives’ and ‘us’, presumably implying the ‘I’ and our first-person experience.<sup>141</sup> Secondly, it renders superfluous first-person agency. It cannot explain why one relates to oneself and speaks to others about oneself in ‘I’-terms. Furthermore, Nietzsche’s practical exemplar is committed to using the ‘I’ in her first-person experience of the world.<sup>142</sup> These difficulties limit the above reading. Gardner and Janaway are main proponents of this critical position and defenders of what I will call the ‘transcendental’ reading of Nietzschean agency. They suggest the following two propositions as potential replacements of propositions 3 and 4 above and they propose as a transcendental solution to the ‘lack of fit’:

**3\*.** Relations between drives do not account for the unity of first-person agency. This unity grounds the practice of first-person agency, which we attribute to the self-conscious ‘I’.

**4\*.** Given that it is inherent to first-person practical agency, the self-conscious ‘I’ is distinct from the third-person drives and is ineliminable.

It is certainly true that first-person agency requires the ‘I’ and so long as we practice first-person agency, then we cannot eliminate it. One cannot *fully* construe or relate to oneself as a set of drives, but one can conceive of oneself as possessing or owning a set of drives. Ownership or possession presupposes an interaction between drives and the ‘I’ construed as distinct *kinds*, which Nietzsche’s theoretical remarks resist.

Gardner and Janaway argue that we can *causally* explain agential action by appealing to drives, but also not undermine the role of the ‘I’ in first-person practical agency. For example, John bought flowers and asked Julie on a date because his sexual drives (coupled with other drives) were active in her presence. In short, his drives *caused* him to buy flowers and ask her on a date. John’s self-conception, which is necessary for first-person practical agency, is not in terms of drives, however. John conceives of the events as *he* is buying flowers and *he* is asking Julie out, *not* a set of drives. Consequently, John’s attribution of his affects and actions *to himself* as opposed to drive relations is not explicable in terms of ‘the drives’. It constitutes John’s act of self-identification.

The above conception of how John’s relates to himself and comprehends his actions and their reasons seems intuitive, but it can also be misleading. One does not *own* one’s drives as one owns a set of marbles that one can distribute *at will*. Nevertheless, that John identifies with his action and their reasons in the first place is something we cannot do away

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<sup>141</sup> See Janaway (2009, 56-60).

<sup>142</sup> See Gardner (2009, 11-13).

with. John can identify with his drives, but not have control over them: his drives may overpower him. Moreover, he may be both aware and express to others that his own drives overpower him. We can distinguish our identifying with our drives from our making a claim about ‘ownership, control or possession’ of the drives with which we identify. Accordingly, we can distinguish a relationship of identity with our drives from possession or ownership of our drives (more on this below).

There is more to self-mastery than mere identification with our drives, but likewise first-person practical agency and the use of the ‘I’ that is the precondition of it. I will argue that even if we commit Nietzsche to the claim that he requires the ‘I’ and its role in self-conscious agency to resolve the lack of fit, we need not commit him to making sense of the relationship between the drives and the ‘I’ as ‘ownership’ or ‘possession’. We require a solution to the ‘lack of fit’ that resists the commitment to construing the ‘I’ and the drives as distinct *kinds* that somehow interact. Likewise, we require a solution that respects the proposition that there is some relationship between the self-conscious ‘I’ and the drives, such that Nietzsche’s practical claims and his exemplar to make sense.

Nietzsche has to accept the ‘I’ is central to first-person agency. He cannot reject the fact that there is *some relation* between the drives and the ‘I’. What relation he has in mind or to which he must commit himself is not always clear, either in Nietzsche himself or the philosophical commentary. Is it ‘ownership’, which commits him to an entity or thing that stands above or is distinct from the drives that constitute the person. Is it a relationship of identity, which avoids the previous commitment, but struggles to explain the privileged status of the ‘I’? Gardner and Janaway are not always clear about which conception of the relationship they have in mind when they suggest he is committed to the ‘I’ of first-person agency. I will defend the identity relationship (more on this below) and suggest that we should avoid discussion of ‘ownership’ or ‘conscious control’ over our drives, because we risk understanding the previous in terms of there being a place or position outside the drives from which the sovereign individual assumes this ownership or control. In short, we should preserve the immanence of Nietzsche’s thoughts by *not* introducing a new ‘concept’ distinct in kind (or in location) from the drives.

The split in the literature on Nietzschean agency then seemingly entails two positions on the relationship between the drives and self-consciousness. On the one hand, we have a rejection of the role of the ‘I’ in agency, which leads us to construe it as epiphenomenal. On the other hand, we have a valorisation of the ‘I’ as having a privileged status, represented by first-person practical agency and the sovereign individual. This status is not debunked by our construing the ‘I’ as *causally inert*. Therefore, the important question arises: which of the two positions on the drives and their relationship to the self-conscious ‘I’ is correct, according to Nietzsche’s view?<sup>143</sup> I will argue both views are right in that they bring out different features of his thoughts, but both are wrong for leaving him with an undesirable

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<sup>143</sup> I agree with Katsafanas (2013B, 4, footnote) here that the best approach to reading Nietzsche is to seek the argument or position that makes some of his central themes, arguments and concerns intelligible.

and incoherent picture of agency. The picture is dualistic and commits him to affirm the existence of something with no third-person representation, i.e., 'I', which I will call the 'phantom'. This picture emerges from what we can see as two implicit commitments shared by both views, which I will elucidate in hope of motivating us to abandon what we can construe as the 'interactive' approach or comprehension of the 'I'-'drive' relationship.

We recognise the first commitment represented in Gardner's proposal, who argues that the self-conscious 'I' *grounds* the unity of the self.<sup>144</sup> We also recognise it in Leiter's proposition that "*qua* conscious self or 'agent', the person takes no active part in the process" (Leiter 2009: 125) leading up to the 'agential' action. I will call this the 'conscious identity commitment'.

Gardner's proposal is not entirely clear, however. If his proposition is that the self-conscious 'I' grounds the first-person experience of practical agency, then his challenge to Nietzsche is correct. If he suggests that the self-conscious 'I' grounds agency *itself* because it captures the source of our actions, or the 'I' refers to the relationship between an agent's will and their corresponding action, then the challenge misses the point. Nietzsche's critique is illuminating because we do not *know* ourselves or we do not have the mastery over our actions and urges that we claim we do and that we imply by our use of the 'I' in first-person practical agency. In short, the unity of the self-conscious 'I' overstates the control we have over our actions. What we say we will do (or we say we value) is not always expressed in our actions (cf. *BGE* 17 & 19). We likewise err in what we *assume* drives us (cf. *HH* Pref. 1). Let us take an example. Julie may think of herself as an altruistic and generous person who will help a friend in need and she does. Later, however, she experiences a situation where she is in need, but the same friend does not help her. She responds with anger and scornfully reminds him of the time she helped him. She reflects on the situation and her response bewilders her. She wonders if she is in fact egoistic and hitherto has been wrong about herself, because only egoism could motivate her subsequent expectation of reciprocity and anger over its lack. Nietzsche offers similar examples of the errors and deceptions of our first-person experience (cf. *GM* Pref., 1; *HH*, Pref., 3; *TI* 'Errors') and highlights the limitations of our self-conscious access to the totality of our activities, drives, motivations and their geneses (cf. *D* 115).

Nietzsche is making the following point: if we can err about our motivations and our self-image, then we cannot assume the unity of the 'I' is the ground of agency. Although, we have to admit that the 'I' is indispensable and constitutive of first-person practical agency. As such, there is a difference between what actually *drives* our actions and what we *think* drives them. First-person practical agency is too fallible to rely on for grounding the correlation between a thought, wish, will etc. and an action, which he demands of sovereign individuals, i.e., his practical exemplar.

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<sup>144</sup> See also Anderson (2012, 213), for a similar objection to Gardner's reading.

The conscious identity commitment incorrectly establishes an identity relationship between the unity of the ‘I’ and the unity of agency. Nietzsche construe the latter as an attribute of a special few individuals, rather than the majority.<sup>145</sup> We *think* we are unified self-conscious agents and that we act in accordance with this self-conscious unity. We think that our actions infallibly mirror the *unity* of our self-image. Yet, we experience cases and moments of acting in discordance with that self-image, which debunks the latter assumption. Here we should avoid the absurd proposition that since we are not conscious of the processes of our kidney or liver or other vital organs that we do not *identify* with those organs or, that they do *not* play a role in our actions and choices. In short, self-deception is a central theme in Nietzsche’s analysis of our first-person experience and his conception of first-person agency as we practice it (more on this below).

Nietzsche’s account of ‘genuine’ self-conscious agency does not ascribe to the premise that the unity of the self-conscious ‘I’ is *synonymous* with genuine self-conscious agency; or that the unity of the self-conscious ‘I’ *imposes* on our actions simply by virtue of our use of the ‘I’ when we think or speak about ourselves. First-person practical agency, which is characterised by our use of the ‘I’ and our conceiving ourselves as self-conscious subjects, is necessary, but insufficient for ‘genuine’ self-conscious agency. His sovereign individual exemplifies the latter, since they requires *more* than the ability to speak and think in terms of the ‘I’ to be genuinely ‘sovereign’. Does an account that argues ‘genuine self-conscious agency’ is the *effect* or *result* of an interaction between the third-person drives sidestep the conscious identity commitment? Does it offer an alternative solution to the lack of fit? Let us look at such an account and assess its ability to side-step the conscious identity commitment.

In Leiter’s reading, we preserve the identity between ‘self’ and ‘self-consciousness’ by rejecting the causal role of the conscious ‘I’ with respect to our actions, but not rejecting the existence of the ‘I’ or by replacing it with something else. To make the previous clear, let us juxtapose the following two propositions on Nietzschean agency according to Leiter’s reading:

A: “There is, as it were, no “self” in “self-mastery”: that is, no conscious “self” who contributes anything to the process. “Self-mastery” is merely an effect of the interplay of certain unconscious drives, drives over which the conscious self exercises no control.” (Leiter 2009, 125)

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<sup>145</sup> Katsafanas (2011) argues that conscious thought and reflection are necessary for distinguishing between ordinary and genuine agency. He contends that the relationship “between drives and other parts of the individual”, i.e., “self-conscious thought” (2011, 103) characterises Nietzschean agential unity. The lack of fit problem shows us that Nietzsche cannot explain how self-conscious thought can work given our third-person identity with drives, however. The claim that the agent is not only a set of drives, but also has other parts, bypasses the problem of the lack of fit, but does not *resolve* it. It merely moves its burden elsewhere. We now require a story that explains the interaction between drives and self-conscious thought, just as we required one for the ‘I’ as a faculty of consciousness and the drives as unconscious urges or passions. It is unfortunate that Katsafanas did not explore a solution to it (cf. 2011, 113, footnote).

**B:** “A ‘person’ is an arena in which the struggle of drive (type-facts) is played out; how they play out determines what he believes, what he values, what he becomes. But, qua conscious self or “agent”, the person takes no active part in the process.” (Leiter 2009, 125)

Notice the conflict in the above two distinct propositions. We have, in ‘A’, the claim that there is no *conscious* self. In ‘B’, however, there seemingly is a ‘conscious self’, but it takes no active part in the processes determining our actions. Leiter conflates agency with self-consciousness or with the self-conscious ‘I’. ‘A’ conflicts with ‘B’ since the so-called ‘self’ *presumably* exists and it conscious, but it is not (causally) efficacious. In other words, there is a phantom we call a ‘self’ that is *causally* inert or *ineffective*. ‘A’ places Leiter at the heart of the conscious identity commitment by rejecting the self after associating it with the ‘self-conscious ‘I’’, but not suggesting a replacement for it in his deterministic picture. In ‘B’, however, his reading moves to the second commitment, which though related to the first commitment, slightly differs from it (more on this below). Leiter debunks the causal efficacy of the ‘I’, but he does not reject its existence or provide us with a deterministic alternative for it. The self-conscious ‘I’ exists, but he construes it as a passive conduit for our thoughts, beliefs and values, which wholly stem from our drives.

The second commitment follows from the first by contending that the unity of self-conscious ‘I’ is distinct from ‘the drives’. The latter cannot explain this simple unity, i.e., it is irreducible and ineliminable. The unity of the ‘I’ is inherent to self-conscious agency, but separated from third-person propositions about it. I call this the ‘subjectivity commitment’. Using this commitment to resolve the lack of fit leads us to shifting the burden of the lack of fit. We can elucidate this shift of burden using the following question. How can drives *constitute* something, but this thing be *inexplicable* in drive terms? Alternatively, how can something possibly interact with the drives without simultaneously being the same as or a similar *kind of thing* as the drives, i.e., a drive or drive relation?

The subjectivity commitment leaves Nietzsche with the following impasse, namely, that all agential actions are constituted by (or result from) something indiscernible in the third-person, while, simultaneously, this thing *is* accessible in our first-person experience of agency. Leiter rejects the claim that the ‘I’ *causes* our actions, but he contends that it exists as a passive and inactive conduit for the multiplicity of drives, which alone determine what *we* think, believe, value and so on. Notice that distinguishing the ‘I’ from the drives in this way commits us to the existence of something distinct *in kind* from the drives, which bloats Nietzsche’s ontology or commits him to the very dualistic picture he aims to avoid.

Both attempted solutions of the lack of fit and their respective readings leave Nietzsche’s claims with an ontology committed to a third-person *phantom* since there is no such *thing* as an ‘I’ in the third-person experience of human beings and their actions. We perceive a body with organs, electro-chemical variations and bodily movements. One of the readings defends the fundamental role of the ‘I’ in practical agency, while the other debunks it and remains either non-committal about its existence or construes it as a passive conduit for drive relations. Let us look at more nuanced versions of the above solutions, which, I

will argue, also struggle with these two commitments and leave us with an incoherent or an undesirable picture of Nietzschean agency.

## 2.3 The Nuanced Solutions to the Lack of Fit

There are more nuanced proposed solutions to the lack of fit than we assessed above. I will address one solution that leans on the ‘transcendental’ reading and another that leans on the ‘epiphenomenal’ reading in the current chapter.

The transcendental reading claims that Nietzsche has to commit to the existence of the self-conscious ‘I’ inherent to first-person practical agency to avoid elimination of self-conscious agency and to make sense of his practical exemplar, i.e., the sovereign individual. There is a nuanced version of this reading defended by Katsafanas, who claims that the self-conscious ‘I’ is *causally efficacious* with respect to our actions by interacting with our drives. I will call this the ‘interaction theory’, for brevity.

Katsafanas notes what he calls the homunculi problem in Nietzsche’s account of agency. Nietzsche’s reliance on the ‘drives’ and their activity to explain the activity of an ‘agent’ leads him to the homunculi problem (cf. Katsafanas 2014A). To avoid the problem, he has to distinguish ‘drives’ from other parts of an agent and explain, “[w]hat can it mean to say that drives evaluate and interpret?” (Katsafanas 2013A, 732). Therefore, the previous accentuates the problem of what *relationship* obtains between ‘consciousness’ and ‘drives’. According to Katsafanas, we can characterise Nietzsche’s views on agency as a relationship “between drives and other parts of the individual” (Katsafanas 2011, 103). These are parts are “self-conscious thought[s]” (ibid.). Katsafanas rightly argues that we require an account of the relationship between consciousness and the drives that avoids the homunculi problem, but the part-whole picture he proposes opens up another problem, which I will turn below.

Katsafanas is aware that positing an *interaction* between consciousness and the drives leads to a conceptual problem plaguing dualistic pictures of agency (cf. Katsafanas 2011, 113, footnote), but he does not do enough to assess whether or not Nietzsche can avoid it and how he could do so. We have to question the assumption that the self-conscious ‘I’ *interacts* with the drives in any sense whatsoever can be a solution to the homunculi problem or the lack of fit. This is because it bloats Nietzsche’s ontology. The commitments we noted previously demonstrate how splitting the agent into parts composed of drives and ‘something else’ is problematic. This approach engenders a third-person phantom. Arguing for the independent status to consciousness in relation to the drives leads to the previous phantom. We should aim to explain self-conscious agency in terms of the drives without reducing the role of the self-conscious ‘I’ in first-person agency.

Another approach proposed by Katsafanas accentuates the problem, we can make sense of Nietzsche’s objections to consciousness differently, i.e., as aiming at the conception

of consciousness as a *faculty*. Nietzsche does not reject the ‘existence’ or the ‘efficacy’ of consciousness *itself* (cf. Katsafanas 2005, 12), rather he proposes a revisionist conception of consciousness as operating on the drives from its own independent standpoint, i.e., by the use of conceptual content. Consciousness is a property of the mental that affects the drives or enters into a causal relationship with them. The previous renders us unable to account for passages stating that when we ‘think’ we ‘deliberate’ or ‘choose’, our drives are opposed to one another (cf. *D* 109; *GS* 333). The claim that we are composed of other parts in addition to the drives is not enough to prove that this other part is causally efficacious or it occupies its own independent standpoint. In short, consciousness may be causally efficacious, but is it so independent from the drives? Nietzsche often claims that consciousness or conscious thought is “*only a certain behaviour of the drives towards one another*” (*GS* 333), which is not captured by the distinction. There can be no thought for Nietzsche without a change in the drives, which *constitute* us (cf. *BGE* 3). Accordingly, if Nietzsche can explain conscious thought in terms of some drive-activity, then consciousness is reducible to the drives or it is a drive relation; so, we can construe consciousness as *causally inert*, because whatever efficacy it has, it does so in virtue of the drives. This is not the conclusion that Katsafanas aims to reach; he reads Nietzsche as committed to the causal efficacy of conscious thought. His reading forces Nietzsche to rethink his fundamental claim that “body am I through and through, and nothing besides; and soul is just a word for something on the body” (*Z*, ‘Despisers’, 23). What is the body other than a collection of cells and organs operating on electro-chemical reactions that result in relatively stable behaviours we call ‘drives’? Where in the chain from cell to drive do we put conscious thought, deliberation or reflection? Can we construe them as activities of and so as integral parts of the chain such that we do not bloat his ontology?

Furthermore, if we construe consciousness as a property of mental states responsible for conceptual content, which is distinct from non-conceptual drives, then we shift the burden of the lack of fit rather than resolve it. We now require a story demonstrating how a *property* of mental states can interact with the basic unit responsible for action (i.e. drives) without, in some way, being on the same level as this unit (that is, the same *ontologically*). ‘Conscious’ mental states are causally efficacious, as Katsafanas argues, but how can these mental states possibly generate an action without thereby being *seen as* a drive or as drive-like? Either these conscious mental states are consequences of the drives and drive relations (as Leiter argues) or they represent another unit that generates actions *in addition* to the drives. The latter units have their own characteristic behaviour in juxtaposition to the drives, which bloats Nietzsche’s ontology. Likewise, they must have a drive-independent aim that we can attribute to them if we are to distinguish them adequately from the ‘drives’ or ‘drive relations’. In other words, what does conscious thought aim for, such that it makes it as distinct from the drives as to merit its own category? If self-conscious thought is *not* a drive, or a faculty, or even a ‘thing’ or ‘object’, then how can it *effect* or *mutually interact* with the drives without also being “in the trenches with the drives” (Richardson 2009, 137), i.e., without being a drive itself? To construe it as a part of the agent among other parts, or as a property of mental states, shifts the burden by committing Nietzsche to an inflated ontology.



In sum, consciousness may be a property of mental states, but what we mean by ‘mental’ is as unclear as the ‘mental status’ of the ‘drives’. Are drives a property of mental states, and if so, why do we not construe consciousness as a *kind* of drive or drive relation and jettison the distinction between consciousness and the drives?

Katsafanas rejects Leiter’s solution, but he is not clear on whether Nietzsche should or can commit to an inflated ontology. Nietzsche is certainly committed to a *relationship* between self-conscious thought and the drives, but to construe this relationship as *causal co-efficacy* is premature and misleading, since it bloats Nietzsche’s ontology. I think we should avoid the false dilemma that either consciousness exists and is thereby causally efficacious, or it exists as an epiphenomenon, i.e., it is a phantom. I will argue that consciousness exists, albeit it is not a ‘thing’ distinct from drives and Nietzsche did not construe it as such. Thus, Katsafanas’s reading does not resolve the lack of fit since it holds on to a kind of interaction that commits Nietzsche to ontological *dualism* between conscious thought and the drives. I will argue that Nietzsche has an unrecognised story about the apparent interaction that avoids bloating his ontology. Before moving on, I will look at a nuanced version of the epiphenomenalist reading.

There are likewise nuanced versions of the epiphenomenalist reading that attempt to resolve the lack of fit by preserving the role for the self-conscious ‘I’, but in a limited sense. They aim to explain conscious agency by appealing to drives. I will assess Anderson’s (2012) reading, which argues that we should reject the Humean ‘bundle theory’ conception of Nietzschean selfhood:

“The Nietzschean self is therefore not merely a Humean ‘bundle’ of intrinsically unrelated and ‘distinct existences’, nor even a mere ‘stage’ upon which they enter and exit for one-off causal interactions.” (Anderson 2012, 223)

He argues that we can read the Nietzschean conception of the ‘self’ as the “repository self” (Anderson 2012, 224), or the “minimal self” (ibid.), which I will construe as the ‘repository theory’, for brevity:

“Instead, Nietzsche’s conception of the relations between drives and affects forces the posit of a thicker notion of the self, existing as a *repository* of recruitable drives or affects” (Anderson 2012, 223)

What exactly is this repository self and how does it differ from Leiter’s conception of the ‘arena’ or ‘conduit’? Similarly, how does it differ from Katsafanas’ conception of the self as another ‘part’ of the individual or of the ‘mental’? Equally, how does Anderson’s picture propose to resolve the ‘lack of it’? The following propositions point us towards his proposed solution:

- A) The *minimal* or *repository* self is a “diachronic, *structured whole* within which enduring drives and affects” (Anderson 2012, 224) “organise themselves for the purposes of recruiting one another” (Anderson 2012, 226).

- B) The repository self is “something over and above its constituent drives and affects” (Anderson 2012, 228) with the capacity to “take up attitudes (including evaluative attitudes) towards the world and also towards itself and its drives and affects” (ibid.)

We recognise in A and B the same tension that plagued the lack of fit: the self is a whole composed of parts that *mutually* organise and ‘recruit’ one another. This *internally organised whole* somehow stands ‘over and above’ the parts of which it is composed, especially when it takes ‘attitudes’ towards itself and the world. If the drives and affects organise themselves into a whole, then whatever attitude is taken up is necessarily “built out of” (Anderson 2012, 224) the drives, because Nietzsche does not permit us to postulate anything “fundamentally different in kind” (Anderson 2012, 225) from the drives. Accordingly, the self-organising drives are themselves doing the ‘evaluating’ in B, because, by A, the self is built out of and so simply is the ‘self-organised whole’ composed of drives. The repository theory flirts with the circular reasoning.

The best way to recognise the conceptual problem in Anderson’s suggestion is by inquiring into the following. Who (or what) is doing the recruiting from this repository of ‘recruitable’ drives? Is it the drives themselves that recruit one another, or does ‘something else’ recruit them? What conception of ‘recruiting’ can we apply at the sub-personal level of drives that avoids the homunculi problem Katsafanas described? Using self-conscious agential language to characterise sub-agential interactions that somehow accounts for self-conscious agency flirts with circular reasoning. It forces us to postulate some ‘self’ above the drives, which we cannot postulate given the constraints placed upon us by the claim that *everything* is a ‘drive’ or ‘drive relation’. At the sub-personal level, we are no longer talking about micro-agents that perform what only full-fledged agents can perform, i.e., ‘recruit’, ‘struggle’, ‘have a perspective’, ‘stand over and above’ and so on.<sup>146</sup> Sub-agential events can explain agential behavior, but to avoid circular reasoning, we should not characterise sub-agential events in agential terms. Katsafanas’ solution avoids circular reasoning, but at the cost of bloating Nietzsche’s ontology and thus undermining his strongest claims against dualistic conceptions of selfhood and agency.

If we take propositions A and B together, then we commit to construing drives as miniature ‘self-conscious’ agents, which brings up the homunculi problem.<sup>147</sup> We can avoid this problem by contending that there is no such thing as conscious thought in the sense that “I separately endorse it [the action or activity], or intend it, or judge it to be good” (Anderson

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<sup>146</sup> Richardson puts this very aptly: “[s]o when he says that a drive ‘aims’ at certain ends, ‘views’ the world in a consequent way, and ‘experiences’ certain values within it, none of this is supposed to entail that the drive is conscious. “For we could think, feel, will, and remember, and we could also ‘act’ in every sense of that word, and yet none of all this would have to ‘enter our consciousness’” [GS 354]” (Richardson 1996, 38).

<sup>147</sup> See Katsafanas (2014A) for a detailed discussion and criticism of the homunculi problem in the Nietzschean drives. I agree with him that we must avoid applying agential concepts to drive relations to avoid circular reasoning. However, I disagree with him that the solution is to posit another and distinct ‘part’ of the agent, a conscious part, that the drives *interact* with; and that moreover this part explains Nietzsche’s own statements that drives interpret, value, think etc.

2012, 225). ‘I’ do not endorse it, but the ‘self-organised’ process or activity endorses itself. There is no standing ‘over and above’ such an activity. Likewise, there is no such ability or event of ‘standing back’ from the drives. This construes agents as relations between the very things from which they are supposed to stand back. I do not think Anderson’s reading aims to conclude the previous or to ascribe it to Nietzschean agency. However, if his position strives to debunk the ‘I’ and if he construes genuine self-conscious agency as resulting from a self-organised repository of drives, then I do not see how he can avoid it.<sup>148</sup> Nevertheless, if we go with the previous, then we lose what we were trying to explain: self-conscious agency and the self-conscious thoughts upon which it relies. The previous reintroduces the subjectivity commitment.

In sum, we notice that both the interaction theory and the repository theory struggle to prevent the subtle resurfacing of the lack of fit in different ways. If, as Katsafanas argues, we inflate the concept of ‘consciousness’ to its being a part of the agent in an attempt to defend the causal efficacy of deliberation independent from the drives, then we end up with postulating a phantom to explain the interaction. Alternatively, if we go with Anderson’s suggestion and deflate the self-conscious ‘I’ to a *repository* composed of self-organised parts, which avoids the conscious identity commitment, then we remove what we sought to account for, i.e., self-conscious thought and action. The previous attempt does not avoid the subjectivity commitment, however.

In the next chapter, I will argue that it is possible to formulate an alternative account of the relationship between the drives and the self-conscious ‘I’ that offers a different and more robust solution to the lack of fit. This solution is more apt to avoid the limitations and commitments I noted as stemming from other readings.

## 2.4 Towards an Alternative Solution to the Lack of Fit

Generally, there are two attempts at solving the problem of how, according to Nietzsche, do we get from a multiplicity of micro-movements to the self-conscious agent, which we deem ‘responsible’ and ‘free’. One attempt argues that consciousness is distinct from the drives and interacts with them, which bloats Nietzsche’s ontology by distinguishing two *things* that

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<sup>148</sup> It is dubious whether Anderson needs to undermine the proposition that we ‘stand back from the drives’, however. His reading can construe it as corresponding to an activity of the drives themselves and thus paint a *drive picture* of what we experience in the first-person as ‘self-conscious agency’: his position then would be revisionist as opposed to debunking. However, once again, I am not sure whether Anderson wants to take his reading in this direction. Irrespective of these theoretical problems and shortcomings in resolving the lack of fit, Anderson is right to argue that we require an account of agency that allows Nietzsche both a descriptive and a normative account of selfhood (cf. Anderson 2012, 229-231), which is crucial for Nietzsche’s conception of the sovereign individual. I have benefited greatly from Anderson’s reading in formulating my proposed alternative solution to the lack of fit.

*causally* interact. The other argues that there is nothing distinct from the drives, or, if there is something distinct from the drives, then it does not partake in our actions. In other words, there is no interaction, least of all a causal interaction between consciousness and the drives. By its rejection of the interaction theory, the second attempt unjustifiably overshoots the mark by rejecting the distinction itself, which leaves us with the undesirable consequence of reading Nietzsche as rejecting first-person agency.

The key requirement for the transcendental reading is seemingly that Nietzsche demonstrates how his drive psychology does *not* eliminate first-person agency and so ignore its practical necessity or value. It is unclear whether the elimination to which they refer is of the *use* of the 'I' in first-person agency, which refers to how we relate to our resolve and corresponding actions, or to the elimination of the *unity* of the 'I' after we transfer that unity to our resolve and actions, which refers to conscious 'ownership' or 'control' of the drives. The previous is a core limitation of the transcendental reading, which we cannot overcome, because the reading construes the self-conscious 'I' as having a more substantial role than that of a mere practical convenience or necessity. The reading appeals to one's first-person experience to ground its substantial role. If we permit the reduction of the self-conscious 'I' to a mere *practice*, namely, to a behaviour, then nothing prevents us from construing it as a drive (or drive relation), which allows us to salvage consistency and so avoid bloating his ontology. However, in so doing, we would remove the privileged status of self-conscious thought in agential action and so, seemingly, risk undermining the concept of 'freedom' via 'conscious control' or 'responsibility' via 'conscious ownership' that define self-conscious agency. Accordingly, if self-conscious thought is another drive (or a drive relation), then we risk the position that we are fettered and irresponsible individuals feigning freedom and responsibility.<sup>149</sup> Transcendentalists resist this conclusion and argue that Nietzsche must allow conceptual room for the sovereign individual whom they construe as a self-conscious, responsible agent who has the ability to promise because he 'wills', and even wills because he masters himself and his destiny. In other words, he is free. What are self-mastery, self-knowledge, conscience and freedom, i.e., the key characteristics of sovereign individuality, without self-conscious thought and thus the self-conscious 'I'? A machine that follows an algorithmic function consistently without fail is some paces away from being the free and responsible agent or the self-conscious master of its destiny or nature. Therefore, Nietzsche should preserve the role and distinct, if not 'privileged', status of self-conscious thoughts and the so of the 'I' in relation to the drives as a minimal requirement of conscious agency.

The epiphenomenalist reading and attempted solution responds by noticing a central point that Nietzsche raises about sovereign individuality. He calls the sovereign individual's conscience "an instinct, his dominant instinct" (*GM* II, 2). If the sovereign individual is a multiplicity of drives, but practises a first-person unity that is distinct from the drives, which supposedly implies ownership or control of the drives, then the 'I' exists. If her 'conscience'

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<sup>149</sup> Of course, this conclusion presupposes that we defend a mechanical reading of the drives, but we leave that to one side for now because the mechanical reading of the drives; more on this below.

is an ‘instinct’, then the ‘I’ is an epiphenomenon. If Nietzsche did intend to argue for the I’s privileged status with respect to agential unity and action, and intended this to be distinct from the drives, then why did he call the defining feature of sovereign individuality an *instinct*? The epiphenomenalist reading attempts to offer an account of Nietzschean agency in terms of drives to preserve consistency with respect to Nietzsche’s claims. Armed with textual evidence of his rejection of the ‘I’ and his construal of affects and actions in drive-terms, as well as recognising that we cannot offer an account that allows us to preserve the privilege status of the self-conscious ‘I’, epiphenomenalists settle for the proposition that the ‘I’ is an epiphenomenon.

Both accounts, I will argue, are wrong for the same reason: both make the claim that the self-conscious ‘I’ is distinct from the drives, but likewise a ‘thing’. Both then attempt to explain an interaction between them. They construe the drives as mechanical or as operating in a mechanical way. Therefore, they construe self-mastery not as mastery over our promises to do something and so following through with what we promise, but as mastery *over our mechanical drives*. In short, both readings posit an interaction between the ‘I’ and the drives as an interaction between *two distinct things*. One reading defends it, while the other reading, seeing that it is indefensible, rejects it outright or reduces the ‘I’ to an epiphenomenon and so undermines self-conscious agency and responsibility. Both attempts to resolve the lack of fit mislead us in different ways, but seemingly for the same reason.

Both readings rightly argue that Nietzsche is committed to a *relationship* between the ‘I’ and the drives. Nonetheless, we need *not* construe this relationship as an interaction between two distinct ‘things’. The relationship is *not* one of ownership or control, because this necessitates a distinction between two ‘things’, which bloats Nietzsche’s ontology. It commits him to a third-person phantom in the manner of Kant, who in the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason famously claimed that:

“...if the critique has not erred in teaching that the object should be taken in a *twofold meaning*, namely as appearance or as thing in itself; if its deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding is correct, and hence the principle of causality applies only to things taken in the first sense, namely insofar as they are objects of experience, while things in the second meaning are not subject to it; then just the same will is thought of in the appearance (in visible actions) as necessarily subject to the law of nature and to this extent not free, while yet on the other hand it is thought of as belonging to a thing in itself as not subject to that and hence free, without any contradiction hereby occurring.” (Kant 1998, 116)

For Kant, we can have a transcendental conception of the agent as free and independent from her experience. If we attempt to make her an object of experience, however, then we conceive her as subject to the same physical laws as any other object of our experience. This led Kant to claim that her freedom and independence was a condition for the possibility of experience. Apparently, the previous need not lead to a contradiction, because of the double meaning of all objects: as *an object* for some experiencing subject through the categories of

the understanding and as *a thing in itself*. The agent is only free as a *thing in itself* and not as an *object of experience* for an experiencing subject.

Nietzsche rejects the legitimacy of positing a thing in itself independent from our experiences. In doing so, he also opposes Schopenhauer, who construes the thing in itself as substantial. Kant, however, was unclear over how substantial it is as a concept. Nietzsche seems less concerned about positing a thing in itself as a limiting concept whose relationship to experience is negative, because it would render it empty of significance<sup>150</sup>:

“Perhaps we shall then recognise that the thing in itself is worthy of Homeric laughter: that it appeared to be so much, indeed everything, and is actually empty, that is to say empty of significance.” (*HHI* 16)

Nevertheless, his objection to Kant was that the above posit actually has ‘empirical effects’ or ‘consequences’, for which we have to account. The thing in itself was more than a mere limiting concept for Kant, at least in respect to his practical philosophy, because he gave it the *meaning* or *significance* reserved for moral actions, which the ‘thing in itself’ supposedly underpins:

“Your insight into *how such things as moral judgements could ever have come into existence* would spoil these emotional words for you, as other emotional words, for example, ‘sin’, ‘salvation of the soul’, and ‘redemption’ have been spoiled for you. And now don't bring up the categorical imperative, my friend! The term tickles my ear and makes me laugh despite your very serious presence. I am reminded of old Kant, who helped himself to (*erschlichen*) the ‘thing in itself’ — another very ridiculous thing! — and was punished for this when the ‘categorical imperative’ crept into (*beschlichen*) his heart and made him stray back to ‘God’, ‘soul’, ‘freedom’, ‘immortality’, like a fox who strays back into his cage.” (*GS* 335)

Accordingly, we should be careful not to confuse Nietzsche’s transcendental position on agency, if he had one, with his acceptance of the Kantian conception of agency, which thus includes the moral consequences of that conception. There are other and equally legitimate transcendental positions on agency, which Nietzsche could have also picked from and even aimed his objections, including Schopenhauer’s transcendental conception.

Whether Nietzsche’s propositions permit a transcendental conception of agency without adopting the Kantian conception wholesale or not, (including a Kantian account of moral agency) is a question beyond the scope of this thesis. For a detailed and useful analysis of how Nietzsche relates to Kant see Hill (2003), who rightly emphasises the differences between the two thinkers on selfhood:

“...whereas Kant believes that behind the merely synthetic unity of the apperceiving self, there is a noumenal self, Nietzsche claims that there is no such thing. There is

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<sup>150</sup> Recall, that this was Schopenhauer’s objection to the thing itself and his solution was to render it meaningful by using our first person experience of willing something.

only the body. A genuine substance must not be adjectival on any other substance or attribute and it must not be composed of parts. The body is composed of parts. Thus there is no substantial self, either ‘here’ or ‘elsewhere’. This, Nietzsche takes it, represents a critical advance beyond Kant’s position, and depends crucially upon his rejection of things-in-themselves.” (Hill 2003, 181)

Nietzsche does not allow a third-person phantom that *somehow* has a third-person effect of bringing about actions in the world. Both attempted solutions lead us to this phantom since both are committed to it: one defends it and the other rejects it.

There is an alternative solution available to Nietzsche and thus an alternative reading available to us, however. We can abandon a conception of the interaction as an interaction between two distinct *things*, but do not have to abandon conceiving a *relationship* between them. I will aim to flesh out this alternative and the distinction between an ‘interaction’ and ‘relationship’ below.

I was given a clue towards this alternative solution by Simon May’s informative remarks on the relationship between freedom and the sovereign individual. May claims that:

“These concepts—of a drive, of a value, and of particular cognitive perspectives—cannot therefore be separated. A drive always values and cognises; a value always expresses a drive (or drives); and cognition always occurs from the perspective of a value, a perspective which involves adopting or being receptive to a particular way of seeing the world. (May 2009, 90)

The above quote, on its own, flirts with the homunculi problem that Katsafanas highlighted. However, if we juxtapose the above with the following one on the next page, then a clearer picture emerges that, I believe, sidesteps the homunculi problem. May argues further that:

“Successful hierarchy is therefore not the result of something else called ‘free will’; it is free will.” (May 2009, 91)

We can discern two propositions from the above, which I will take forward in defence of what I will call the ‘identity’ relationship, which I propose as an alternative to a *co-efficacy* and-or *control* relationship, which reintroduce the ‘interaction’ theory and the problems that are associated with it. First, we cannot *separate* ontologically the concepts Nietzsche uses to describe or speak about selfhood and then argue he describes two ‘things’ that are distinct in kind. Second, we should not construe the self as *resulting from* drives or their interactions, i.e., the self is not their ‘consequence’ or their ‘effect’. The self is *identical* to the drives and their interactions.

May acknowledges the first claim, but I am unsure of whether or not he inclines to defending the identity relationship inherent to the second claim. He contends that:

“Hierarchy is a matter of commanding and obeying—of one’s drives becoming organised in such a way that one is able to commit oneself to projects that matter to one. It is the sort of command that, say, the concert pianist seeks through years of practice—not just the command that enables him to achieve speed, precision,

evenness, and rich tonal variety, but also the command—at once over body, emotion, sensibility, and conception—that enables his musical values, and the *Weltanschauung* that they in turn embody, to be expressed in his playing. (May 2009, 90-1)

May's reading argues that Nietzschean agency requires both mastery of one's circumstances (or of objects) and self-mastery. He sees self-mastery as a "[largely unconscious] practice of commanding and obeying within oneself" (May 2009, 92). Equally, he construes successful hierarchy as the result of an "organising 'idea'" (ibid.), but is this commanding idea *also* unconscious? There is an apparent conflict between the following two claims:

- A) Hierarchy is the practice of commanding and obeying within oneself and operating in accordance with an organising 'idea'.
- B) This practice is unconscious.

How can we *unconsciously* command something within ourselves and operate in accordance with an organising 'idea'? Although we are unsure about the conscious status of such an organising 'idea', we can be sure that the agential language we ascribe to any sub-conscious parts or operations is problematic and often leads to circular reasoning. We cannot abandon the proposition that 'ideas', 'commanding' and 'obedience' are properties ascribable only to self-conscious agents, rather than to 'unconscious' parts of agents.

The proposition that an agent's values, thoughts and actions are the *direct* result of (or even synonymous to) an unconscious process will have problems telling us why there is consciousness in the first place, or even what it is in relation to these 'unconscious' drives? Nietzsche himself asks this question, albeit, rhetorically: "*to what end* does consciousness exist at all when it is basically superfluous?" (GS 354). It is more coherent to claim that, if we are nothing but these drive relations and that consciousness exists, then the latter is on equal footing with and thus a drive or drive relation in *its own right*. Nietzsche implicates this when he claims that consciousness develops out of a "need to communicate" (GS 354), but also, "the development of language and the development of consciousness (*not* of reason but strictly of the way in which we become conscious of reason) go hand in hand" (ibid). I will carefully analyse the previous propositions in proceeding chapters where I will likewise try to substantiate what I call the 'identity' relationship.

May is right to reject the claim that 'freedom is *the result* of a free will' and from this claim, I believe, we can derive the 'identity' relationship. However, it is unfortunate that he did not *also* reject the claim that freedom is something to which we are fated (or not) by the unconscious relations between drives. For Nietzsche, we *are* these drives and nothing other than the drives.

In sum, our attempts to analyse the role of consciousness in agential actions need not lead us to postulate something distinct in kind from the drives, i.e., a third-person phantom. Claiming that consciousness plays no role in the hierarchal organisation of drives leads us to undermine its role in agency and conclude that it is superfluous or *there is no such thing*. By construing it as a *need*, Nietzsche avoids this conclusion. Consciousness exists, but we have to change our conception of it and its limits. He provides a different and so a revisionist



conception of consciousness through what he calls the ‘need to communicate’. This different conception is, as Katsafanas rightly contends, that consciousness is not synonymous with ‘awareness’, but *a kind of* awareness, i.e., I will argue, the *linguistic* kind. We are conscious only of what we can put into words and can communicate; the previous serves as a token of the particular mental state we call the ‘conscious’ mental state. Accordingly, the claim that successful hierarchy is the result of an unconscious process means that we *cannot put the process into words*, not necessarily that we are *not aware* of it. The successful hierarchy *is* us, i.e., we *identify* with it.<sup>151</sup> Having the ability to put what we experience into words does not mean we are *unaware* of what we cannot put into words; being unconscious of something is, for Nietzsche, our being aware of it *in a specific way*, i.e., at least, non-linguistically. We are conscious of an affect if we can *name* it, and it is this latter relation to our affects that, I will argue, gives us grounds for an argument about the ‘identity’ relationship between the self-conscious ‘I’ and the drives. Therefore, agency can be a feature of both conscious and unconscious beings, but this only makes sense based on a necessary revision of how we understand ‘consciousness’.

The above two claims by May, taken together, are pivotal for the alternative solution to the lack of fit that I will defend. My guiding questions are as follows. How can the concept of the ‘drive’ hang with that of ‘consciousness’ (or the self-conscious ‘I’) while avoiding a homunculi problem? How do drive relations constitute agency, self-mastery and ‘freedom of the will’? We require a coherent story of the relationship between the ‘I’ and the drives, that allows us to make sense of the claim that freedom *is* ‘the successful hierarchy of drives’ without debunking the role of deliberate, self-conscious action in this freedom. This account is available to Nietzsche. Rather than construing the ‘I’ as a conscious ‘spokesman’ of the drives, he should construe it as *identical* to the hierarchy of drives. To lay the ground for the alternative solution, I will argue that we require an insight into what Nietzsche learned and adopted from his predecessor, Schopenhauer.

## 2.5 Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and the Will-Body Identity

The alternative solution to the lack of fit I aim to defend begins with the proposition that Nietzschean agency and selfhood is grounded on an *identity* relationship between the ‘self-conscious I’ and ‘the drives’. The difference between them is that of two perspectives on the same *thing* or *activity*, not two (or more) things or activities that are *distinct in kind* and/or that (somehow) interact.

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<sup>151</sup> Consider his claims on self-consciousness in D 115, “*we are none of us that which we appear to be in accordance with the states for which alone we have consciousness and words, and consequently praise and blame; those cruder outbursts of which alone we are aware make us misunderstand ourselves*”.

Here, I will strive to convince the reader that Nietzsche works with an ‘ontological monism’ and a commitment to ‘immanence’ whose root we find in Schopenhauer’s will-body identity and that Nietzsche implicitly grounds his conception of agency and selfhood on this will-body identity. Furthermore, I will aim to show that Nietzsche does not deviate from this thesis and that he derives something different from it than Schopenhauer. I will argue that he favoured the will-body identity because it avoids a third-person *phantom*, the homunculi problem and the bloated ontology plaguing the solutions to the lack of fit I looked at previously.

There is a lot of textual support for Nietzsche’s commitment to ontological monism and immanence. For example, he claims that ““Will” can naturally have effects only on “will” – and not on “matter” (not on “nerves” for instance –)” (*BGE* 36). He contends that “thinking is only a relation between these drives” (*BGE* 36) and that:

“Just as the act of birth makes no difference to the overall course of heredity, neither is “consciousness” *opposed* to instinct in any decisive sense—most of a philosopher’s conscious thought is secretly directed and forced into determinate channels by the instincts.” (*BGE* 3)

The above claims render dubious the *opposition* between conscious thought and the drives. If the drives are *distinct in kind* from conscious thought, then their interaction is impossible, for Nietzsche. He rejects the ‘interaction theory’ that contends that conscious thought and drives are distinct *things* that somehow interact without a demonstrable common ground for their interaction, which would make sense of the interaction. Nevertheless, we have to make sense of ‘conscious agency’, i.e., of the ‘motivational effectiveness’ of conscious thoughts, deliberations, language and so on. Nietzsche cannot possibly avoid the fact that conscious thoughts partake in our actions or that the self-conscious ‘I’ is inherent to our first-person experience of agential action. Equally, he cannot avoid or explain away the fact that at least *some* I-thoughts lead to action. Explaining the previous in his terms will be the theme of the other chapters. Presently, I will focus on his ontological commitments and general approach to the relationship between the ‘I’ and the ‘drives’.

Nietzsche searches for a stable and coherent ontological ground for his account of agency in what he calls “the conscience of method” (*BGE* 36) or “moral of method” (*ibid.*), namely, that we should:

“...understand the mechanistic world as belonging to the same plane of reality as our affects themselves –, as a primitive form of the world of affect, where everything is contained in a powerful unity before branching off and organising itself in the organic process... as a kind of life of the drives, where all the organic functions (self-regulation, assimilation, nutrition, excretion, and metabolism) are still synthetically bound together – as a *pre-form* of life” (*BGE* 36)

The above claim is strikingly similar to Schopenhauer’s rejection of the world-view of the impure subject of cognition; the objective picture that underpins aetiology and morphology, which, in his view is *meaningless* or without *significance*. We notice in willing something

that the target changes its appearance from an object to a motive. He thinks we can go further than perceiving the world as saturated by objects and motives to perceiving willing things by projecting willing on things, which makes the world *meaningful* without sacrificing its objectivity. Nietzsche's claim in the above passage is that at least *some* objects from our third-person perspective on the world (i.e., the objective picture) *correlate* to our first-person experience of *some* affection (or desire). We should perceive our body and its processes and then the world itself, which we view mechanistically, as belonging to 'the same plane of reality' as our body and affects. The apparently mechanistic world, our body and its affects are in the trenches with one another. This proposition underpins Nietzsche's conception of conscious agency, but note its Schopenhauerian foundations. Thus, Nietzsche agrees with Schopenhauer that if we are to make the objective world meaningful—or, as Nietzsche says, 'explain' it rather than 'describe' it and its events—then we must approach it in the previous manner. I have understood the philosophical significance of the previous as his commitment to ontological monism and immanence. Does Nietzsche just paraphrase his predecessor, however, or does he have his own, original theory that is premised on his own conception of ontological monism and immanence? I will argue that he substantially deviates from Schopenhauer and comes to his own.

We remember that Schopenhauer's conception of the will's relation to natural forces was as of two distinct perspectives on the same *activity* whose identity became apparent in acts of will. In other words, the will is a natural force and vice versa. The 'will' represents our first-person experience of what we perceive as a natural force; it shows that we *identify* with natural forces. In fact, the 'will' *appears* as a natural force when we assume the stance of impure subjects of cognition, i.e., the willing stance on something. To the impure subject of cognition, the 'will' operates like any other natural force: it has conditions for appearance *x* at time *t* in relation to objects and circumstances *y*. It appears as the movement of an object or complex of objects we call the 'body'. The body also *roots* us in the objective world, however, which, in turn, explains *why* and *how* we are able to bring about changes in it. If our will did *not* move our body, and our body did *not* bring about a change in the objective world, then we could reasonably conclude that our will is illusory. When we will something (i.e., *genuinely* will something and not 'wish', 'fancy', 'think', 'imagine' etc.), it correlates to a bodily action or movement. The will-body identity roots us in the world. This rootedness explains *our* causal efficacy. Thus, the will-body identity is, in this sense, a *precondition* of agency.

Our will is part of the *causal* nexus and adheres to the law of necessity as any other object in the objective world where natural forces appear according to certain conditions, but we are required to *perceive it as* a 'force', first. To *perceive it as* a force requires us to assume the willing stance on it and thus to approach it as impure subjects of cognition. Due to the previous, we notice that one's will is open to analysis and its actions can be determined to the same degree of precision as the effects of any other natural force or collection of forces, assuming the correct and precise apparatus. This assumes that actions are predetermined, which threatens agency by debunking its two central features, i.e., freedom and responsibility. Debunking moral concepts such as freedom and responsibility leaves a

moral vacuum, too. Schopenhauer resolved to fill the vacuum by revising his account of freedom and responsibility within the confines of the will-body identity and the ontological monism and immanence he derived from it. Thus, ‘freedom of the will’ means *acting in accordance* with what we will, i.e., in accordance with *who* and *what* we are, rather than being capable of acting otherwise. Recall that he rejected the *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae* conception of freedom. In other words, we are free when we will something, but we can also *appear* fated to be whom and what we are when we take the willing stance on ourselves. We can perceive ourselves as a cluster of forces operating differently in different moments in relation to the differing circumstances, or as possessing a ‘character’ that is constituted by a hierarchy of ‘mainsprings’. The previous are *meaningless* if we do not *project* the will on them or perceive them as its representations, however. Our character *makes sense* only when we understand it as another way of referring to our ‘will’. Thus, the difference between ‘will’ and ‘natural force’ rests on our perspective or stance. They are *not* distinct in kind or different *things*.

Nietzsche makes an ostensibly similar claim about the first-person perspective’s relationship to the third-person ‘mechanistic’ world. Like Schopenhauer, he had his own reservations about the objective picture of world, which he calls the ‘mechanistic world’. This world-view, Nietzsche claims, cannot *explain* everything. It cannot give us an *insight* into every single aspect of our experience:

“Thus, a ‘scientific’ interpretation of the world, as you understand it, might still be one of the *stupidest* of all possible interpretations of the world, i.e. one of those most lacking in *significance*. This to the ear and conscience of Mr Mechanic, who nowadays likes to pass as a philosopher and insists that mechanics is the doctrine of the first and final laws on which existence may be built, as on a ground floor. But an essentially mechanistic world would be an essentially *meaningless* world! Suppose one judged the *value* of a piece of music according to how much of it could be counted, calculated, and expressed in formulas—how absurd such a ‘scientific’ evaluation of music would be! What would one have comprehended, understood, recognised? Nothing, really nothing of what is ‘music’ in it!” (GS 373; some emphasis is mine)

“We should not erroneously *objectify* “cause” and “effect” like the natural scientists do (and whoever else thinks naturalistically these days –) in accordance with the dominant mechanistic stupidity which would have the cause push and shove until it “effects” something; we should use “cause” and “effect” only as pure *concepts*, which is to say as *conventional* fictions for the purpose of description and communication, *not* explanation. In the “in-itself” there is nothing like “causal association,”

“necessity,” or “psychological un-freedom.” There, the “effect” does *not* follow “from the cause,” there is no rule of “law.” (BGE 21; some emphasis is mine)<sup>152</sup>

Like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche suggests that we need to *project* on the objective picture. In fact, he goes further than Schopenhauer did by construing *some* ‘projection’ as inevitable. Unlike Schopenhauer, whom he criticised for choosing to project the ‘will’ on the objective world, Nietzsche prefers to use the concept of ‘drive’, but also sometimes ‘affect’, which is the first-person experience of the activity of drives. Nevertheless, in a similar move to Schopenhauer, he construes *meaning* or *significance* as derivable from drives, affects and actions. Accordingly, Nietzsche uses the concept of a ‘drive’ as his alternative to what his predecessor construed as the ‘will’. However, the ‘drives’ have the same role in his philosophy as the ‘will’ did in Schopenhauer’s philosophy. The ‘drives’ aim to fill the gaps in the objective picture. Schopenhauer construes the gap in the world’s *meaningfulness*, whereas Nietzsche argued the gap was in the *explanation*, specifically, of certain phenomena and actions. It is likely that Nietzsche avoids appealing to ‘meaning’, because he accepts that we are able to ‘meaningfully’ describe events in the world while failing to *explain* them. Nevertheless, the world’s significance or the significance of our picture of the world was a core theme and concern of both thinkers.

Nietzsche then agrees with Schopenhauer on the limits of the objective picture of the world, but his approach to it is different. It is not in terms of meaning, but explanation. The concepts we use to *colour* the world and supposedly *explain* phenomena are our inventions or conventions, i.e., they are our *mirrors*. In short, these concepts inevitably lead back *to us*, rather than to a human-independent ‘truth’ or ‘perspective’, as the following quotes suggest:

“The specifically qualitative aspect for example of every chemical process, still appears to be a ‘miracle’, as does every locomotion; no one has ‘explained’ the push. And how could we explain! We are operating only with things that do not exist—with lines, surfaces, bodies, atoms, divisible times, divisible spaces. How is explanation to be at all possible when we first turn everything into a picture—our picture! It is enough to view science as an attempt to humanise things as faithfully as possible; we learn to describe ourselves more and more precisely as we describe things and their succession.” (GS 112)

“Know yourself is the whole of science. — Only when he has attained a final knowledge of all things will man have come to know himself. For things are only the boundaries of man.” (D 48)

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<sup>152</sup> Compare this passage with the following: “[m]echanistic view’: wants nothing but quantities, yet force is to be found in quality; mechanistic theory can thus only describe processes, not explain them.” (WLN 2[76]). Also: “[t]hus, in order to sustain the mechanistic theory of the world, we always have to include a proviso about the use we are making of two fictions: the concept of motion (taken from the language of our senses) and the concept of the atom = unity (originating in our psychological ‘experience’). Its prerequisites are a *sensual prejudice* and a *psychological prejudice*” (WLN 14[79]).

“They took the concept of being from the concept of the I, they posited ‘things’ as *beings in their own image*, on the basis of their concept of I as cause. Is it any wonder that what they rediscovered in things later is only *what they had put into them in the first place*? —Even the ‘thing’, to say it again, the concept of a thing, is just a reflex of the belief in the I as cause . . . And even your atom, my dear Mr Mechanist and Mr Physicist, how many errors, how much rudimentary psychology is left in your atom!” (TI, ‘Errors’, 3; some emphasis is mine)

Nietzsche’s proposition is that we habitually use our first-person experiences to *explain* phenomena and events whereas his predecessor argued that our first-person experience is what makes those phenomena and events *meaningful*. How these two propositions relate to his conception of conscious agency will become clearer as we proceed. For the sake of this discussion on the will-body identity, however, we should note that the previous provides a counterweight to dominant epiphenomenalist readings of Nietzschean agency. Note that he does not *reject* the existence of the self-conscious ‘I’ in favour of some reductionary or eliminativist mechanistic or deterministic conception of agency. Rather, as will also become clearer below, the *explanatory power* of mechanistic conceptions we offer as a replacement rests on our first-experience of ‘*driving* for (or towards) something’, which stems from willing and so the self-conscious ‘I’. Causal conceptions and their use of ‘lines’, ‘atoms’, ‘bodies’ etc. have explanatory power in virtue of the first-person experience of ‘driving’ or ‘willing’ and the unity of the ‘I’ that is a characteristic feature of conscious willing. Thus, epiphenomenalist readings are doomed to failure in trying to reduce or eliminate the ‘I’, because they require it to ‘make sense of’ or ‘explain’ the mechanistic concept or posit they argue the ‘I’ can be reduced to or in favour of which it can be eliminated.<sup>153</sup>

In sum, Nietzsche adopts the will-body identity as a conceptual framework stemming from Schopenhauer and what he uses to complete his view of and objection to the objective picture of the world, which he calls the ‘mechanistic world’. Here, I will focus primarily on the use he makes of the identity in agency and so on one aspect of this identity, i.e., the act of will or agential action. The latter is a specific action of the body. Accordingly, there is a distinction between the ‘will’ and the ‘I’. In other words, there is a difference between some vicissitude of the body (e.g., some reflex), which is denoted by the concept of the ‘will’, and an ‘agential’ action, which is denoted by the ‘I’. Schopenhauer does not clearly make the same distinction, but his defence of the role of deliberation in agency or the individuality of deliberate actions implies it. The distinction moves from an ontological reflection on agency to their respective conceptions of genuine or distinctly human agency. In other words, the distinction moves from how it is *possible* for a *will* to bring about changes in the objective world into discussing what makes it *our* will, i.e., what makes us *individuals*. In short, what permits us to claim that what we do is free, responsible or unique? What permits us to claim that what we do is attributable to *us*? The aim for both thinkers was to move from one to the other without losing the ontological monism and immanence.

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<sup>153</sup> More on this in chapter 2.11.

The will-body identity underpins agency and so it is its *precondition*, but it does not tell us what makes *us* the agents *we* are or the individuals we are, or what makes us free, responsible or unique. The will-body identity is something we have in common with all human beings and with any living, striving thing in nature, including what we perceive as natural forces. Thus, our ‘individuality’ consists of more than the fact that our will and body are identical. The implication is that there are some vicissitudes of our body—or some kinds of willing or driving—that are *individual* and some that are *generic*. I will first assess Schopenhauer’s account of individuality, first, before discussing Nietzsche’s, which, I will argue, stems from his objections to Schopenhauer’s account.

Schopenhauer distinguishes between what ‘I’ (as an individual) can do and what ‘any human being’ is (generally) capable of doing. The passage that details this distinction and demonstrates his conception of ‘individuality’ is the following:

“In each one of us, even the best of human beings, there rise up impure, mean, wicked thoughts and wishes either from external occasion, from aroused affect or from internal annoyance: but he is not morally responsible for these and should not let them weigh on his conscience. For they display merely what *the human being in general*, not what *he* who is thinking them, would be capable of doing. For in his case there stand opposed to them other motives that merely do not enter consciousness at that moment simultaneously with the others, so that they could never become deeds: thus they are like an outvoted minority in a decision-making assembly.” (OBM, 168)

The distinction between what ‘I think’ (what ‘I *think* I will’) and what ‘I will’ is grounded on the will-body identity. Individuality, for Schopenhauer, is not *synonymous* with our body taken *as a whole*, nor synonymous with its multifarious vicissitudes. Some bodily processes are generic, i.e., *all* human beings undergo them irrespective of *who* they are. These generic aspects explain on what grounds we are able to bring about an effect or change something in the objection world and so in virtue of what we are a part of the objective picture and its causal nexus. Nonetheless, these generic aspects do *not* distinguish human beings from one another or distinguish *us* from another individual. Our conception of agency should track not only what makes *all* human beings agents in the broad sense, but likewise what makes a particular human being the individual that *she* is. For Schopenhauer, a *part* of us makes us individual: the *intellect*, whose objective correlate is the brain. In short, we are individuals and distinguish ourselves from *others* (people and objects) through our intellect. Yet, other human beings and animals also possess an intellect without acting as individually as us. Accordingly, it must be some *specific function* of the intellect that accounts for individuality.

We should add that, for Schopenhauer, the intellect could not engender an action on its own, without contribution from the will. We can *endlessly* think, wish, promise etc. and do so without *actually* following through, i.e., without acting upon our thoughts, wishes and so on. Recall that an *action* represents our individuality: it is the objective correlate of our individual will. What we *think*, *wish* or *fancy*, what we *say* or *promise* or even what we say we will do not represent our individual will, but certainly not when they fail to correspond to an action. Schopenhauer puts it in the following manner:

“By means of his capacity for thought the human being can make present to himself the motives whose influence on his will he senses, in any order he likes, in alternation and repeatedly, to hold them before his will, which is called *reflecting*: he is able to deliberate, and because of this ability has a much greater *choice* than is possible for an animal. Because of this he is indeed *relatively free*, that is, free from the immediate compulsion of objects *present in intuition* affecting his will as motives, to which the animal as such is subjected: he, by contrast, determines himself independently of present objects, according to thoughts which are *his motives*.” (FW, 57)<sup>154</sup>

For him, it is the rational or reflective rather than the intuitive part of our intellect that makes us *individuals* in juxtaposition to animals, but also explains why we are not drone-like units of our species. All human beings reflect and so reflection itself is insufficient to distinguish one human being from another such that this can underpin our individuality. To account for this, Schopenhauer introduces self-knowledge, which is one feature of reflection:

“This closer acquaintance, growing ever more intimate, is properly what we call *conscience*, which for that reason is voiced *directly* only *after* the action, *prior* to it at most only *indirectly*, when it is brought into the picture in deliberation as something occurring in the future, perhaps by way of reflection and retrospection upon similar cases over which it has already made itself clear.” (FW, 107)

What we *do* or undertake in relation to our deliberation based on reflection is a token of the human will and distinguishes us from animals. What makes us *individuals* and distinguishes us from other human beings is acting based on our self-image. We can mechanically (re)act, but if we reflect on ourselves using our actions as grounds for our reflection, then we acquire a self-image and act *as individuals*. Our self-image enables us to be free and responsible, for Schopenhauer. Introducing our self-image our deliberations makes us *individuals*. Recall that our self-image is an ‘objective’ representation of our individual will using our actions as their ‘object’. In sum, for Schopenhauer, our individuality is ‘self-conscious thought’ that *corresponds* or *leads to* action.

I will suggest that we can distinguish the ‘will-body’ identity from the ‘individual-action’ identity, which can clarify the above. The individual-action identity we can construe also construe as the ‘I’-action identity for brevity. The previous only shows that the ‘I’ refers to *us* as individuals in juxtaposition to something or someone else. The ‘will-body’ identity is broader than the ‘individual-action’ identity. The will-body identity is the *identity* between *any* act of will (sensation, affect etc.) and its corresponding bodily vicissitude. Whereas the

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<sup>154</sup> See also: “[t]he capacity for deliberation that arises through that freedom in fact produces nothing other than the frequently troubling *conflict of motives*, over which indecision presides, and whose battle ground is the entire mind and consciousness of the human being. For he repeatedly allows the motives to try their force upon his will in competition with one another, whereby the will gets into the same state that a body is in when different forces work in different directions – until finally the decidedly strongest motive beats the others off the field and determines the will, an outcome that is called a resolve, and that occurs with full *necessity* as the result of the conflict” (FW, 58).



‘individual’ is a *specific kind* of bodily movement. In other words, it is a kind of ‘will’ or ‘willing’. For Schopenhauer, individuality results from *deliberate* action. We are individuals to the extent that we deliberately will something after we have entertained our self-image in relation to it, as the following suggests:

“...only the *decision* and not merely the desire is a valid token of a person’s character, both for himself and for others. But the decision only becomes certain through the action, both for himself as for others... desire only expresses the character of the species, as in animals, and not the individual, i.e. it merely signifies what *human beings in general*, not the *individual* who experiences this desire, would be able to do. Because it is already a human action, the deed always requires a certain amount of *deliberation*, and because people are generally in control of their reason, which is to say they are *thoughtful*, i.e. they make decisions according to well-considered, abstract motives, only the action is the expression of the intelligible maxim of their acting, the result of their innermost willing.” (WR, 326f; some of the emphasis is mine)

As individuals, we are distinct from other human beings by virtue of our deliberate actions and self-image. All actions are third-person bridges to the will. An action itself is a bodily modification like any other, so what makes a specific action *individual* is acting *thoughtfully* and taking into account our self-image. He includes self-knowledge in thoughtful action, but he is not always clear on this point. Self-knowledge is distinct from self-consciousness by being ‘abstract’ or a function of reason rather than intuition; it stems from unification of dissimilar actions over time, which yields a self-image. The previous culminates in what he calls our ‘acquired character’, which he describes in the following manner:

“This is nothing other than the greatest possible familiarity with our own individuality: it is the abstract and therefore clear knowledge of the invariable qualities of our own empirical character, of the dimensions and directions of our mental and physical abilities, and thus of the total strengths and weaknesses of our own individuality. This enables us to organise the unalterable role of our own person in a thoughtful and methodical manner (a role that we had previously acted out naturally, without any rules) and under the direction of solid concepts, we can also fill gaps in it left by whims or weaknesses. We have now put the ways of acting that are necessitated by our individual natures into clear and conscious maxims, maxims that are always present to us. We follow these maxims as deliberately as if they had been learned, without ever being led astray by a present impression or the fleeting influence of mood, without being hindered by the bitterness or sweetness of some particular thing that we meet along our way, without hesitating, without wavering, without inconsistency.” (WR, 331f)

The intellect is necessary for our relative freedom and individuality with respect to other members of our species, but also for transcending the will to life. It permits us to no longer act *blindly*, so to speak. Accordingly, the will-body identity is a precondition of *agency*, but deliberation using our self-image is a precondition of *individuality*, for Schopenhauer.

We should clarify that the will-body identity grounds the individual-action identity and so when we pose it this way the latter does not defy ontological monism and immanence. For Schopenhauer, the will-intellect distinction is epistemological rather than ontological. They are *not* two distinct *things* or *objects*, but two distinct modes of the same thing, i.e., the will. Thus, the intellect is not separate or ‘distinct in kind’ from the will, but an extension of the will, i.e., a kind of willing. The ontological conception of the intellect that he commits to, but did not explicitly define, is that the intellect is the ‘will to individuality’, ‘separation’ and ‘multiplicity’. It is unsurprising that he construes the PSR and the PI as the same *thing*<sup>155</sup> when we reflect on the previous, or that he thinks the PI accounts for ‘individuality’:

“Since the will is the thing in itself, the inner content, the essential aspect of the world, while life, the visible world, appearance, is only the mirror of the will; life will be as inseparable from the will as a shadow from its body. And where there is will, there will be life and world as well. So for the will to life, life is a certainty, and as long as we are filled with life-will, we do not need to worry about our existence, even in the face of death. It is true we see the individual come into being and pass away: but the individual is only appearance, it exists only for cognition that is caught up in the principle of sufficient reason, the *principium individuationis*. Certainly, for this kind of cognition, the individual receives life as a gift, emerges out of nothing, and then suffers the loss of this gift through death, returning back into nothing.” (WR, 301)

Individuality is an illusion, for him, whereas the will to life, which he does not identify with any particular individual, is the *oomph* that makes possible individuation and individuality. The ‘oomph’ alone is what is most real, for him. As we will shortly see through Nietzsche’s objections, Schopenhauer is not as consistent in preserving the above ontological monism and immanence as we initially expect from his distinctions.

Nietzsche understood and derived something different from the will-body identity in terms of method and understanding of individuality than Schopenhauer. We argued that Nietzsche’s conception of self-conscious agency does not assume that the ‘I’ is a distinct kind of thing interacting with (or supervening on) the drives, but challenges this assumption. Consider what he says about ‘consciousness’, i.e., the defining feature of the intellect, in the following passage:

“Thus, consciousness is properly tyrannised—and not least by one’s pride in it! One thinks it constitutes the *kernel* of man, what is abiding, eternal, ultimate, most original in him! One takes consciousness to be a given determinate magnitude! One denies its growth and intermittences! Sees it as ‘the unity of the organism’! This ridiculous overestimation and misapprehension of consciousness has the very useful consequence that an all-too-rapid development of consciousness was prevented.

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<sup>155</sup> The PSR and the PI are two distinct perspectives on the same thing. Even the impure subject of cognition assumes a stance on the world *as an individual* looking for what to will and is thus in the thrall of the PI.

Since they thought they already possessed it, human beings did not take much trouble to acquire it—and things are no different today!” (GS 11)<sup>156</sup>

He has a distinct conception of ‘consciousness’ than Schopenhauer, who committed to the Idealist doctrine that ‘consciousness’ is that in virtue of which we comprehend the world. In short, the ‘self-conscious subject’ is the focal point or limit of a possible experience. Its foundational form—the subject-object correlation—is a fixed point whose analysis is futile, because the intellect and thus the self-conscious subject enacts this analysis. Nietzsche does not arrive at the same conclusion, however. He has a different and revisionist conception of ‘consciousness’, which will become clearer in ensuing chapters.

In sum, both philosophers aim to complement the objective picture, but each has a different way of doing so. Nevertheless, it is clear that both aim to complement the objective picture for aesthetic and ethical reasons. Nietzsche wants a relationship between ‘self-conscious ‘I’ and ‘the drives’ which preserves *individuality*. The objective picture sees us as functional parts in a generic whole, which has aesthetic and ethical consequences by taking from us what makes us individual. Schopenhauer flirted with the previous idea by arguing about the ways in which the species expresses itself through our urges and therefore distorts our individuality.

Schopenhauer’s will-body identity plays a central role in Nietzschean agency. Both thinkers use the identity for a conception of individuality, but their conclusions differ. I will strive to demonstrate that ‘deliberation’, ‘consciousness’ and the ‘I’ play a central role in Nietzschean agency, but not the role Schopenhauer ascribes to them or the role defended by the philosophical commentary on Nietzschean agency. Nietzsche has a revisionist account of consciousness, which stems from his rejecting the metaphysical or ontological prejudices he finds in most philosophical conceptions of it, as he highlights in the following passage:

“First of all, we must also put an end to that other and more disastrous atomism, the one Christianity has taught best and longest, the *atomism of the soul*. Let this expression signify the belief that the soul is something indestructible, eternal, indivisible, that it is a monad, an *atomon*: *this* belief must be thrown out of science! Between you and me, there is absolutely no need to give up “the soul” itself, and relinquish one of the oldest and most venerable hypotheses – as often happens with naturalists: given their clumsiness, they barely need to touch “the soul” to lose it. But the path lies open for new versions and sophistications of the soul hypothesis – and concepts like the “mortal soul” and the “soul as subject-multiplicity” and the “soul as a society constructed out of drives and affects” want henceforth to have civil rights in the realm of science.” (BGE 12)

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<sup>156</sup> We should compare this passage with what he says in GS 354. See also Constâncio (2011) for an informative discussion on this topic.

The ‘I’, for Nietzsche, refers to our individuality, but not exclusively to a ‘conscious *thing*’ or ‘incorporeal soul’. It is limited to referring to what is ‘individual’ in juxtaposition to what is ‘generic’ about us.<sup>157</sup> The will is *identical* to the body. Therefore, the body—ranging from organ to limb—*mirrors* the will. There is *nothing* in the first-person perspective which is ontologically distinct from what we perceive in the third-person perspective as our body, actions and so on. For Nietzsche, “we cannot get down or up to any “reality” except the reality of our drives (since thinking is only a relation between these drives)” (*BGE* 36). The ‘drive’ is the ontological concept on whose basis he analyses phenomena and thus fills the gaps in the objective picture, but note that it plays a revisionist, not a reductionist role.

Nietzsche does not construe individuality based on incorporeal atomism, which he construes as an objectionable and unintended consequence of Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will. He agrees with Schopenhauer about the will-body identity and thus with his foundations, but disagrees with him over how to analyse this identity; also, what conceptual tools and philosophical method we can derive from it. Schopenhauer’s distinction between the will and intellect led him to conceive of an interaction between them, which brought to the conceptual table the phantoms associated with that interaction. This is clear in his ethics and aesthetics, where he construes the intellect as *interacting* with and *affecting* the will.

The ‘I think X’ or ‘I will X’, for Schopenhauer, represents our *individual* will rather than the will as *thing in itself*, namely, the will to life and body *as a whole*. This representation succeeds if and only if the ‘I’ think or ‘I’ will etc. *corresponds to* bodily action. We can ‘think’ and claim that we ‘will’ many things, but only those thoughts and claims that result in bodily action represent our individuality. There is a difference between the ‘will’ and the ‘I’, which we can characterise in terms of their respective scope. The ‘will’ is broader in scope than the ‘I’. It tracks what is common to all motivation, i.e., it demonstrates the *bridge* between the objective world and our thoughts and inclinations in relation to it. Without it, there would be no basis on which our thoughts and inclinations could be ‘effective’ in (or ‘affect’) the objective world, i.e., bring about changes in it, or even interact with it. In short, the will is the body because we need a body to be causally efficacious, in the first place. The will-body identity, then, makes agency possible, but it fails to distinguish individuals from one another and so it fails to show our freedom and responsibility. For clarity, we can make the following distinction between the two conceptions to pick out their differences in scope:

- A) The **will-body identity** refers to the *identity* between the first-person and the third-person perspectives on motivation and action. It shows our ontological limits and constitutes the basis on which *we* can (re)act in first the place.
- B) The **‘I’-action** or **individual-action identity** refers to what motivates *individuals* in juxtaposition to other individuals, or what it means to be an individual or to have a *self* in the first place. It constitutes the basis on which *we* (re)act as individuals.

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<sup>157</sup> We should distinguish the ‘I’ from the *self-conscious* ‘I’ for the time being. The reason for this distinction will become apparent below where we consider Nietzschean individuality.

‘A’ is the broad conception that shows us the ontological basis of agency. We can have an effect on the objective world (i.e., we are agents of the changes we recognise and can refer to) because our will is *identical* to our body. Our body is a *bridge* between the objective world and our apparently subjective inclinations, thoughts and reasons. ‘B’, however, refers to a narrower conception of agency, namely, individuality. We can construe the latter as our freedom and responsibility, or our sense of self. Nietzsche and Schopenhauer worked with both ‘A’ and ‘B’, but had differing conceptions, approaches and explanations for both.

Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer, wants to base his conception of individuality on the will-body identity, but this identity is insufficient to account for it. For Schopenhauer, the intellect’s role is what accounts for our individuality, specifically, its faculty of reason that unifies our actions and yields a self-image that then partakes in our deliberation process. Our self-image explains our individuality, responsibility and so on.

Why and how does Nietzsche object to the above? One of his objections aims at Schopenhauer’s concept of the will, which he contends is too ‘intellectual’. The following passages highlight the previous:

“... “immediate certainties,” such as “I think,” or the “I will” that was Schopenhauer’s superstition: just as if knowledge had been given an object here to seize, stark naked, as a “thing-in-itself,” and no falsification took place from either the side of the subject or the side of the object.” (BGE 16)

“Schopenhauer would have us believe that the will is the only thing that is really familiar, familiar through and through, familiar without pluses or minuses. But I have always thought that, here too, Schopenhauer was only doing what philosophers always tend to do: adopting and exaggerating a popular prejudice.” (BGE 19)

“With his assumption that only that which wills exists, Schopenhauer enthroned a primordial mythology; he seems never to have attempted an analysis of the will because like everyone else he believed in the simplicity and immediacy of all willing...” (GS 127)

These passages can be misleading about what Nietzsche rejects or what he accepts when we approach them individually, but taking them together show the emergence of a relatively clear picture. I will suggest that the above passages indirectly address the following passage from Schopenhauer:

“Finally, the cognition I have of my will, although it is immediate, cannot be separated from that of my body. I do not have cognition of my will as a whole, in its unity, in perfect accordance with its essence; rather I cognise it only in its individual acts, which is to say in time, time being the form in which my body (like every other object) appears: this is why the body is the condition of cognition of my will. Consequently, I cannot truly imagine my will without my body.” (WR, 126)

Nietzsche does not find objectionable all the propositions in the above passage, however. There are two propositions to which, I think, he objects. Firstly, the will as *thing in itself* is ‘unified’, but cognition of something through the PSR (and thus the PI) makes it *appear* otherwise. Secondly, *cognition* of the will as thing in itself is through its dissimilar acts of will in time appearing as bodily vicissitudes or actions in relation to differing circumstances. The first proposition is therefore ontological and the second is epistemological.

Schopenhauer construed the will as ‘unified’ and he argued that the intellect was responsible for the perspectival illusion of divisibility and individuation via the projection of a causal order onto a world of objects. This causal order rests on the effect of something seen as external to us on our body. He construed matter as based on bodily sensations that we trace to the activity of something on us.<sup>158</sup> In short, the so-called unity in essence of the will *as thing in itself* is juxtaposed to the illusory divisibility in appearance of an individual will, which appears *as actions over time* and which we can only unify post hoc through the intellect’s faculty of reason.

For Nietzschean agency, I will focus on what he found objectionable in the above propositions in light of his commitment to the will-body identity. His objections do not concern the proposition that as an agent “I cannot truly imagine my will without my body” (WR, 126), but Schopenhauer’s views on the will as thing in itself and the role of the intellect in individuality.

Nietzsche’s objections to Schopenhauer’s conception of the will aim at the role he gave to the intellect. He objects to Schopenhauer’s analysis of the sense of freedom and responsibility we experience with the respect to our actions. The key representation of this concern was Schopenhauer’s claim about the supposed *inalterability* of our character, as the following passage demonstrates:

“...Schopenhauer's celebrated doctrines of the primacy of the will over the intellect, of the unalterability [sic] of the character and of the negativity of pleasure - all of which are, in the sense in which he understands them, errors... even Schopenhauer's 'will' has, in the hands of its originator through the philosopher's rage for generalisation turned out to be a disaster for science: for this will has been turned into a metaphor when it is asserted that all things in nature possess will...” (HHII 5)

Notice that his concern was with “the sense in which he [Schopenhauer] understands them” or “in the hands of its originator”, not in *all* senses of the concepts and their relation. He

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<sup>158</sup> See, for example: “[T]o recognise the entire essence of matter as such, it is enough to recognise the form of the principle of sufficient reason governing the content of the forms of space and time, what makes them perceptible, i.e. matter, that is to say, the law of causality: matter is, in its entirety, nothing other than causality, which is immediately apparent to anyone who thinks about it. This amounts to saying that for matter, its being is its acting: and it is inconceivable that matter has any other being. Only by acting can it fill space and time: its action on the immediate object (which is itself matter) is a condition for intuition, and matter can exist only in intuition. We can know the result of one material object acting upon another only if the second object now has a different effect on the immediate object than it did before – indeed the effect is nothing more than this. The whole being of matter therefore lies in cause and effect: for matter, its being is its acting” (WR, 29).

accepts the will-body identity and the primacy of the will over the intellect, but modifies substantially his conception of the 'will' and 'intellect'. What he objects to is not that we *identify* with our actions, but the *independent* status or efficacy of the intellect from the body or the intellect's efficacy independent from *the drives*.

Schopenhauer is clear in avoiding the conclusion that the intellect has an independent effect on the body, but misleadingly speaks as though it does in his metaphysics, aesthetics and ethics. He projects the unity of the 'I' onto the will as thing itself while ignoring the multiplicity of the body, which is the other side of the will-body identity and which mirrors the will. He argues that only if abstract cognition motivates us (i.e., is seen as a motive and leads to a bodily action) can we claim that it stems from our individuality and is therefore a token of our freedom and responsibility. The intellect is impotent on its own.

Nietzsche nuances the will-body identity by speaking of drives, rather than the will. He construes the will as intellectualised under Schopenhauer's conception because of Schopenhauer's so-called 'rage for generalisation' (more on this below) and commitment to philosophical Idealism. He does distinguish agential actions from mechanical functions of our body, which incite certain reactions, however. Our agential actions are individual, whereas mechanical bodily functions are generic; the previous are structures and processes common to the other members of our species. The intellect is *not* what makes us individual and distinguishes *us* from the previous, however. He argues that our actions reveal who and what we are and so they are individual irrespective of the role of the intellect or deliberation in them, which includes the role of our self-image in deliberation. They are individual for different reasons than deliberation. Nietzsche offers a different account of and reason for the individuality of our actions.

In sum, Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauer's account of the 'I'-action identity, but he accepts the 'will-body' identity. The following passages evidence the previous clearly:

"Essential to start from the body and use it as a guiding thread. It is the far richer phenomenon, and can be observed more distinctly. Belief in the body is better established than belief in the mind. (WLN 40[15])

If our 'I' is our only *being*, on the basis of which we make everything *be* or understand it to *be*, fine! Then it becomes very fair to doubt whether there isn't a perspectival *illusion* here - the illusory unity in which, as in a horizon, everything converges. Along the guiding thread of the body we find a tremendous *multiplicity*; it is methodologically permissible to use the more easily studied, the *richer* phenomenon as a guiding thread to understand the poorer one. (WLN 2[91])

What Nietzsche makes of the will-body identity differs from his predecessor. According to Nietzsche, Schopenhauer's accounts of the *will* and *individuality* are illegitimate projections of the *unity* of the self-conscious 'I' onto our body and actions; they ignore the other side of the will-body identity. Our individual will is 'unified' or a 'unity' *in itself*, for Schopenhauer; it appears as disparate bodily actions over time due to the limitations of our intellect. In short, the intellect makes the unified will as thing in itself *appear as* divisible, i.e., a body

with processes and parts. In the same manner, the will is a unity that appears as disparate ‘actions’ (i.e., acts of will) over time by virtue of our intellect’s limitations. Divisibility is the intellect’s illusion; it is the ‘veil of Maya’, for Schopenhauer. Nietzsche suggests that we should completely *reverse* the claim that the will as thing in itself is a *unity* and that divisibility of the will is the ‘illusion’. The *unity* of the will (as thing in itself) is the illusion, for Nietzsche. He compares the latter illusion with the apparent convergence of the horizon into one ‘focal point’. This focal point is precisely what we cannot transcend, according to Schopenhauer, namely, the subject-object correlation.

Nietzsche has a compelling reason for rejecting the *unity* of the will as thing in itself and a different understanding of this focal point. In accordance with ontological monism and immanence we can comprehend the will-body identity and so complement the objective picture based on the multiplicity of the body. Nietzsche inverts Schopenhauer’s proposition. Both the will-body identity *and* the individual-action identity represent a multiplicity. What, then, grounds the claim that both the ‘will’ and ‘individuality’ are unities? Nietzsche argues that Schopenhauer unjustifiably takes the unity of the self-conscious ‘I’ as decisive without giving a sufficient reason for doing so except that the ‘I’ is the closest and most accessible to us. He unjustifiably uses the unity of the self-conscious ‘I’ as his departure or reference point in understanding the multifarious operations of our body in light of the will-body identity. He takes our first-person experience of the world as decisive or as his starting point for understanding the objective picture. Let us elaborate on why Nietzsche construes the previous starting point as illegitimate.

Why should we model the objective world (or make it meaningful) based on the *unity* of the self-conscious ‘I’ when its objective correlate represents a multiplicity? We can also model it on the diverse actions we perceive without implying they *necessarily* represent a unified, metaphysical ‘thing’, i.e., a thing in itself. Nietzsche doubts Schopenhauer’s right to the claim that we *know* our actions and thus *ourselves* without any margin for (or degree of) error, as he demonstrates in the following passage:

“Actions are *never* what they appear to us to be! We have expended so much labour on learning that external things are not as they appear to us to be—very well! the case is the same with the inner world!” (D 116)

Compare the above with the following:

“Schopenhauer would have us believe that the will is the only thing that is really familiar, familiar through and through, familiar without pluses or minuses. But I have always thought that, here too, Schopenhauer was only doing what philosophers always tend to do: adopting and exaggerating a *popular prejudice*. Willing strikes me as, above all, something *complicated*, something unified only in a word – and this single word contains the popular prejudice that has overruled whatever minimal precautions philosophers might take.” (BGE 19)

He charges Schopenhauer for projecting the *unity* of self-consciousness or the ‘I’ onto the will and our actions. The claim that the will as thing in itself is ‘unified’ or that individuality



and actions represent something unified is a baseless assumption representing a misleading observation of the process or activity of willing something (more on this below).

Schopenhauer confuses what Nietzsche calls the grammatical unity of the 'I' for the unity of the will or individual (as a *thing in itself*), which we cannot perceive and thus verify. Nietzsche favours a conception of the will composed of a multiplicity (of affects, thoughts and drives) that coincide only in action (more on this below). We are wrong to assume that the will is 'unified' when our body and thus the will's *mirror* shows us the exact opposite. We should rely on the 'richer phenomenon' that is 'observed more distinctly'. In sum, Nietzsche starts with the 'apparent' multiplicity of the body and assumes that the will is also a multiplicity where his predecessor began with the supposedly 'real' *unity* of the will as *thing in itself*. Nietzsche saw the latter as a groundless projection of the self-conscious unity of the 'I'. In ensuing chapters, we will notice that he conceives the self-conscious 'I' as something relatively new and late in the development of our species, rather than that on which we comprehend everything else, which sounds counterintuitive.

Nietzsche criticises the claim that 'individuality' and 'multiplicity' are illusions and models the will based on what we perceive about the body, not the body based on what we experience in self-conscious 'willing', i.e., based on the self-conscious unity of the 'I'. The self-conscious unity of the 'I' is not the starting point of his conceptual paradigm. In sum, just as Nietzsche invites us to understand willing itself based on the body, he invites us to understand individuality based on our actions as a specific modification of the entire body.

Following the 'individual-action' identity, Nietzsche suggests that our actions themselves are the most "personal, unique and boundlessly individual" (GS 354) aspects of our experience. They represent our individuality, but do so for different reasons than his predecessor argues. His reasons are twofold. Firstly, consciousness is not a *thing* and it does *not* represent the unity of the organism that we are (cf. GS 11). Secondly, we should construe consciousness as arising from a *need* (i.e., a drive) that the organism had prior to becoming *conscious* of something, which includes its inevitably becoming *self-conscious*. He grounds these claims on what seemingly was becoming a matter of fact in his time, namely, that an organism can operate in a *purposeful* manner without demonstrating that it is *conscious* and/or *self-conscious*:

"For we could think, feel, will, remember, and also 'act' in every sense of the term, and yet none of all this would have to 'enter our consciousness' (as one says figuratively). All of life would be possible without, as it were, seeing itself in the mirror; and still today, the predominant part of our lives actually unfolds without this mirroring — of course also our thinking, feeling, and willing lives, insulting as it may sound to an older philosopher. *To what end* does consciousness exist at all when it is basically superfluous? If one is willing to hear my answer and its possibly extravagant conjecture, it seems to me that the subtlety and strength of consciousness is always related to a person's (or animal's) *ability to communicate*; and the ability to communicate, in turn, to the *need to communicate*." (GS 354)

Individuality is identical with our actions, but like our disparate actions, our individuality is not necessarily a ‘unity’, a ‘whole’, something ‘indivisible’ or ‘inalterable’. Equally, the organism’s ‘consciousness’ does not necessarily *cause* its unity. The properties of ‘unity’, ‘wholeness’, ‘indivisibility’ and ‘inalterability’ are errors based on our grammar, which we project onto the objective picture. To understand the previous errors we need a genealogical analysis, which Schopenhauer did not access because of his commitment to transcendental idealism. Language, for Nietzsche, is a precondition for communication between members of a community within a species (more on this below). Consequently, its grammatical propositions are not *truths* about a so-called *thing in itself*, i.e., metaphysical truths. If we can perform an action without being self-conscious, then we cannot associate the ‘unity of consciousness’ or of ‘self-conscious thought’ with ‘agential unity’.

Consciousness is unnecessary and insufficient for agency; it is not even necessary for ‘individuality’, according to Nietzsche. Individuality represents what distinguishes us from others. We can distinguish one individual from another without appealing to ‘metaphysical’ or ‘self-conscious’ unities. Animals can perform actions that *individuate* them and which appear unified, without actually being self-conscious. Accordingly, individuality is *not the correspondence* between deliberate, self-conscious thought and action, for Nietzsche, but something else entirely.

Nietzsche sought a conception of individuality based on the body as a whole, not on the unity of ‘self-conscious thought’ and so on the activity of one of its part. Moreover, his account of the individual-action identity begins from the body side of the identity. Our body is a bridge to the objective world and the cornerstone of motivation; without the body, we cannot be agents of change, so it should take priority in our apprehending what makes us agents, individuals and, finally, what makes us ‘self-conscious agents’. Nietzsche puts it in the following way:

“And in the end, if belief in the body is only the result of an inference supposing it were a false inference, as the idealists claim: is not the credibility of the mind itself cast into doubt by its being the *cause* of such false inferences? Supposing *multiplicity, and space and time and motion and whatever else may be the presuppositions of a belief in corporeality* were errors, what mistrust of the mind would be aroused by the thing that induced us to reach such suppositions! Enough: for the time being, belief in the body is still a stronger belief than belief in the mind; and anyone who wants to undermine it will most thoroughly be undermining – belief in the *authority* of the mind as well! (WLN 36[36]; my emphasis)

What we ‘will’ or ‘claim about ourselves’ must be accountable to bodily modifications, that is, it must be mirrored in our actions. He aimed to replace the ‘I’ as *spoken*, with the ‘I’ as *done* or *embodied*. He directs his reader’s attention to the ‘I’ as we *enact it* or as we *translate* it into actions. Thus, he uses our body and actions as his point of reference and departure:

““I” you say and are proud of this word. But what is greater is that in which you do not want to believe – your body and its great reason. It does not say I, but *does I*.” (Z, ‘Despisers’, 23)

Nietzsche's proposition is simple: what we 'claim' about our values and actions should be *coherent* with what we actually do. The first-person must have its third-person correlate such that we can avoid appealing to illusions or phantoms. If our wishes, fancies, desires and promises, i.e., our *claims* about 'willing(s)' are genuine representations of our individuality, then they should correspond to an action. Therefore, we should model the individual-action identity on the will-body identity, not deviate from it.

Nietzsche uses the body *as a whole* along with its manifold processes and vicissitudes as his departure point into his inquiry on agency, rather than the operation of one of its parts, i.e., the brain. If our body consists of a multiplicity of micro-movements and it *mirrors* the will, then the will is also a multiplicity. The will consists of relations between different parts that push and pull in different directions. Moreover, if the multiplicity of our actions over time in relation to different circumstances mirrors our *individual* will, then *individuality* is also a multiplicity. Nietzsche is more consistent in adhering to the will-body identity than Schopenhauer, who deviates from the identity in various ways, as we saw with his views on ascetic resignation and tragedy.

We should stress that Nietzsche does not reject the claim that actions are individual or that we make sense of individuality using our actions. What he rejects is Schopenhauer's claim that our actions represent a unified, unalterable whole that *appears divisible* because of our intellect's limits. He objects to the implicit claims in passages such as the following:

"Our character is to be seen as the temporal unfolding of an extra-temporal and thus indivisible and unalterable act of will, or an intelligible character; and this act irrevocably determines everything essential, i.e. the ethical content of how we conduct our lives, which must express itself as such in its appearance, the empirical character." (WR, 328)

Nietzsche construes the proposition that 'our life is the mirror of a unified and unalterable predetermined act of will'—which, for Schopenhauer is presumably the act of procreation—as unfounded and prejudicial. We cannot cognise the intelligible will in its unity, according to Schopenhauer. It follows, then, that the unity of the will as thing in itself is an assumption, at best. Furthermore, he denies the significance of the intelligible will (and thing in itself)<sup>159</sup> and later argues that it may not even exist<sup>160</sup>. However, he also states that the same lack of significance applies to its opposite, namely, the 'apparent' will.<sup>161</sup>

Nietzsche, then, rejects the by-fit relationship between the intelligible and empirical character that led Schopenhauer to the proposition that character is 'fixed' or 'inalterable':

"One can dispose of one's drives like a gardener and, though few know it, cultivate the shoots of anger, pity, curiosity, vanity as productively and profitably as a beautiful

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<sup>159</sup> Cf. *HHI* 16 & 29; see also *GS* 335.

<sup>160</sup> Cf. *BGE* 16; see also *EH*, 'Books', 4.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. *TI*, 'Fable'.

fruit tree on a trellis... All this we are at liberty to do: but how many know we are at liberty to do it? Do the majority not *believe* in *themselves* as in complete *fully-developed facts*? Have the great philosophers not put their seal on this prejudice with the doctrine of the unchangeability of character?" (D 560)<sup>162</sup>

It is important to notice that he does not say consciousness or self-conscious thought in opposition to 'unconscious' drives accounts for this 'liberty' over our character. Although we initially incline to project 'conscious agency' on the 'we' in the above passage, I think we ought to resist the inclination to give Nietzsche room to convince us about his revisionist conception of self-conscious agency. The 'we' need not require him to accept the conscious identity commitment, but it does require *some* conception of individuality, even if it does not rest on self-conscious thought and does not appeal to unities. In addition, his conception of 'liberty' in the above passage is not reducible to the opposition between self-conscious thought and 'unconscious' drives (more on this below). I will argue that Nietzsche operates with a different conception of agency and individuality, which escapes the philosophical commentary because we often assume a particular conception of it from the outset, that is, we assume a self-conscious conception based on the unity of the 'I'. Nietzsche's objections to Schopenhauer suggest that he has another approach in mind.

To avoid confusion and before I elaborate in the coming chapters, I will juxtapose the above aphorism with the following:

"While 'we' believe we are complaining about the vehemence of a drive, at bottom it is one drive *which is complaining about another*; that is to say: for us to become aware that we are suffering from the *vehemence* of a drive presupposes the existence of another equally vehement or even more vehement drive, and that a *struggle* is in prospect in which our intellect is going to have to take sides." (D 109)

The 'we' *seemingly* refers to 'unified, unalterable self-conscious subjects of 'I' thoughts', but he is eager to debunk this conception without rejecting the fact that we have self-conscious thoughts. Without the existence of a multiplicity of micro-movements pushing us in different directions, we cannot *possibly* experience a complaint over *this* or *that* direction. Our 'complaints' correspond to, or are representations of, an opposition or conflict between *different* 'drives'. The 'desire' for liberty from a drive, e.g., our drive to *change ourselves*, is part of who and what we are, which indicates a struggle between opposing drives. When we complain about a drive, we complain about something *we* want to do, but perhaps *know* or *feel* that *we should not*, because it compromises something else *we* want to do just as much, if not more than what we should do. If we pursue X, then we impede Y and we want to do both, which, in turn, opens us up to an internal conflict or struggle. This opposition does not make sense based on Schopenhauer's conception of the will as a unity, since such conflicts

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<sup>162</sup> We can compare this quote with the claim Nietzsche makes about the self as an object of artistic creation made possible by historical analysis both of our own culture and heritage, but also of our own personal history. This permits us, he claims, to construe ourselves as necessary, but also as alterable (cf. *HHI* 274 & 276).

are resolved in advance by the act of procreation and because we are unified and inalterable. The latter propositions bred many impasses in Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will.

If our body mirrors the will and it evidences a multiplicity of micro-movements, then the proposition that *we* are an 'inalterable unity' independent from what we can perceive in the body is a prejudice. Thus, we often postulate the existence of phantoms in making sense of our body and our actions, which Nietzsche avidly seeks to avoid:

"When the natural consequences of an action are not 'natural' any more but instead are attributed to spectral, superstitious concepts, to 'God', to 'spirit', to the 'soul', as exclusively 'moral' consequences, as reward, punishment, warning, as a lesson, then the presuppositions of knowledge have been destroyed, - and this is the greatest crime against humanity." (A 49)

He used the will-body identity to debunk various prejudices about individuality.<sup>163</sup> These prejudices are a common target for Nietzsche's objections:

"But we must go further still and declare war – a ruthless fight to the finish – on the "*atomistic need*" that, like the more famous "*metaphysical need*," still leads a dangerous afterlife in regions where nobody would think to look. First of all, we must also put an end to that other and more disastrous atomism, the one Christianity has taught best and longest, the *atomism of the soul*. Let this expression signify the belief that the soul is something indestructible, eternal, indivisible, that it is a monad, an *atomon*: *this belief must be thrown out of science!*" (BGE 12; some emphasis is mine)

Nietzsche has some version of individuality and so of the 'I', but he also (sometimes) rejects the 'I' by construing it as "a fairy tale, a fiction, a play on words: it has stopped thinking, feeling, and willing altogether" (TI, 'Errors', 3). By construing it as a fairy-tale, does he also reject individuality? Nietzsche has a conception of individuality that aims to overcome the objections he raises to Schopenhauer (more on this below).

We should add in Schopenhauer's defence that implicit to his claim is that we are composed of various mainsprings. He qualifies this proposition by adding that an individual is *composed* of *all* the mainsprings, which composition is so structured as to yield what he calls our 'temperament'.<sup>164</sup> The concept of 'temperament' is admittedly vague, but what is

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<sup>163</sup> Consider, e.g., what he says about Schopenhauer's metaphysics: "But in our century, too, Schopenhauer's metaphysics demonstrates that even now the scientific spirit is not yet sufficiently strong: so that, although all the dogmas of Christianity have long since been demolished, the whole medieval Christian conception of the world and of the nature of man could in Schopenhauer's teaching celebrate a resurrection" (HHI 26). A little further in the same passage and in spite of his criticism of the Schopenhauer's metaphysics, he praises Schopenhauer from another angle: "One of the greatest, indeed quite invaluable advantages we derive from Schopenhauer is that through him our sensibilities are for a time compelled to return to older ways of contemplating the world and mankind that once held sway which we would otherwise have no easy access to" (ibid.). Nietzsche did not reject his predecessor wholesale, but sought to make his philosophy consistent and overcome its limitations.

<sup>164</sup> There is room for debate on Schopenhauer's conception of temperament and its relationship to the intelligible character. Consider the following quote: "[t]his more profound recognition – which is no longer caught in the

clear is that it is essentially a unity, inalterable and predetermined as a fixed ‘quantity’ and/or ‘arrangement’:

“...a person’s suffering or wellbeing would not be determined externally at all, but instead it would be a function of that pre-set amount or arrangement. It certainly might increase or decrease at different times due to physical constitution, but overall it would remain the same and be nothing other than what is called temperament, or more precisely, as Plato expressed it in the first book of the *Republic*, the degree to which someone might be ευκολος or δυσκολος, i.e. of an easy or difficult nature.” (WR, 342)

Nietzsche rejects the above by claiming that we can change ourselves, but this change is not because of the activity of some unified, inalterable, fixed quantity imposing its unity on a multiplicity. Rather, ‘changing ourselves’ is the result of an interaction and thus a resolution between various parts in the multiplicity that we are, which do not necessarily represent any overarching, metaphysical ‘unity’. Changes in character result from resolutions between the opposed or conflicting ‘drives’ we identify with. We can acquire drives and forgo them; we change ourselves through the struggle and opposition between our drives (cf. D 109).

In sum, Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauer’s claim that the ‘will’ and ‘individuality’ are inalterable unities and that their representation as multiplicities is an illusion. According to Nietzsche, Schopenhauer’s view risks construing all changes we experience, also *our own* pain, as resting on an illusion of the intellect, which may explain why he asserted that ascetic resignation is *the* solution to living in an illusory and inherently dissatisfactory world.

In the next chapter, I assess Nietzsche’s conceptions of individuality and generality, which rest on the will-body identity and his objections to Schopenhauerian individuality.

## 2.6 Nietzsche on Individuality and Generality following the Will-Body Identity

In this chapter, I aim to show the basis for Nietzsche’s revision of individuality and generality. Moreover, I will aim to clarify that his rejection of the role of the self-conscious ‘I’ in agency is not a rejection of individuality, but the causal efficacy of the self-conscious ‘I’ as if it is *independent* from the drives. He rejects the causal efficacy of a ‘thing’ called ‘consciousness’ or ‘mind’:

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*principium individuationis* and which gives rise to all virtue and magnanimity – no longer *fosters* a temperament disposed to retribution, a fact to which Christian ethics bears witness, since this ethics blankly forbids evil to be repaid with evil and leaves eternal justice to the realm of the thing in itself, which is different from the realm of appearance. (‘Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay,’ Romans 12:19.)” (WR, 385). How can we ‘foster’ a temperament if it is grounded on something outside of space and time (outside the conditions for ‘fostering’), i.e., on the intelligible character? I cannot venture into this question here due to its marginal relevance.

“There are no mental causes whatsoever! All the would-be empirical evidence for this goes to hell! *That’s* what follows! — And we really botched this ‘empiricism’ — we used it to *create* the world as a world of causes, wills, and minds. The oldest and most enduring psychology was at work here, doing absolutely nothing but this: it considered all events to be deeds, all deeds to be the result of a will, the world became a multitude of doers, a doer (‘subject’) pushed its way under all events. People projected their three ‘inner facts’ out of themselves and onto the world — the facts they believed in most fervently, the will, the mind, and the I. They took the concept of being from the concept of the I, they posited ‘things’ as beings in their own image, on the basis of their concept of I as cause. Is it any wonder that what they rediscovered in things later is only *what they had put into them in the first place?*” (TI, ‘Errors’, 3)

He agrees with Schopenhauer’s proposition that our body mirrors the will; also, that *some* bodily vicissitudes are ‘generic’ and others are ‘individual’. However, unlike Schopenhauer, he claims that the body should be the starting point for our understanding of the generic and the individual aspects of us, rather than the unified self-conscious ‘I’ or the ‘I will’ of our first-person experience of willing and acting:

“In every era people have believed better in the body as our most certain being, in short as our ego, than in the mind (or the ‘soul’ - or the subject, as the language of schoolmen now prefers to term it). It has never occurred to anyone to think of his stomach as an alien stomach, perhaps a divine one; but as for regarding his thoughts as ‘inspired’, his valuations as ‘prompted by a God’, his instincts as mysterious activity: for this tendency and taste of man there are testimonies from all the ages of mankind... for the time being, belief in the body is still a stronger belief than belief in the mind; and anyone who wants to undermine it will most thoroughly be undermining – belief in the authority of the mind as well! ” (WLN 36[36])

“But the awakened, the knowing one says: body am I through and through, and nothing besides; and soul is just a word for something on the body. The body is a great reason, a multiplicity with one sense, a war and a peace, one herd and one shepherd. Your small reason, what you call “spirit” is also a tool of your body, my brother, a small work - and plaything of your great reason. “I” you say and are proud of this word. But what is greater is that in which you do not want to believe – your body and its great reason. It does not say I, but *does* I.” (Z, ‘Despisers’, 23)

Nietzsche accepts the will-body identity and individual-action identity, but he rejects the conception that entails the separation of the ‘will’ (or the ‘self’) from the body and so the break with ontological monism and immanence. The ‘will’ and our ‘individuality’ are modifications of the body like any other; it must be so if the will has any ‘authority’, as he rhetorically puts it in the above passage, or ‘causal efficacy’, as we may clarify. In short, just as there is no ‘will’ independent from its representation in the body and its vicissitudes, there is no ‘I’ or ‘I will’ or ‘self’ or ‘individual’ independent from the action that corresponds to it. At no moment does something independent, which we call ‘mind’, ‘conscious thought’,

‘intellect’, or the ‘I’, enter the picture. The latter concepts are—or in principle should be—construed in terms of (and explained by) the will-body identity, not by the interjection of an incorporeal or ineffable thing we call ‘soul’ or ‘mind’ supervening on the ‘body’. The body is not a mechanical husk filled by something ethereal like the soul.

Even if we accept that Nietzsche rejects the independent causal efficacy of the ‘will’, the ‘I’ or the ‘mind’, then, as Gardner and Janaway rightly remark, he has to account for the fact that we *do* have ‘I’-thoughts and make ‘I’-claims. Likewise, he has to explain the fact that *some* thoughts and claims correspond to an action of the body. Furthermore, we use the ‘I’ to refer to ourselves in juxtaposition to something else (including other people) and so he must explain why we conceive ourselves as the unified self-conscious subjects of ‘I’-thoughts. To what do the concepts of the ‘will’, the ‘I’ or the ‘mind’ refer? Do they play any role in his philosophy or do we dismiss them as misleading and superfluous? I will argue that they play a key role, but he revises their conception in accordance with his commitment to ontological monism and immanence, which he derives from the will-body identity.

Nietzsche is neither sceptical about individuality nor did he reject it. He is revisionist about how to distinguish the individual from the generic after committing to and so in light of the will-body identity. He construes the ‘individual’ not as *one part of the body*, which we associate with an incorporeal mind (*Geist*) supervening on the body and its multifarious processes, but in terms of *the whole body* or as an *activity* of the *whole body*. Agential actions are a modification of the whole body or *activity* of the whole body, not *a part* of it. Therefore, agential actions represent *relations* between the various parts of the *whole* body, not *one part* of the body independent from the others that acts or legislates to the whole body, e.g., the brain *independently* acting or legislating to the rest of the body.<sup>165</sup>

Some readings of Nietzschean agency commit to construing humans as generic (or as drone-like) members of their species, which entails that human beings are ‘irresponsible’ and ‘unfree’. Other readings construe the Nietzschean agent as an individual, independent or distinct from her species. These readings consistently fall short of recognising the subtle ways Nietzsche tries to marry these two conceptions. He conceives human beings as both ‘members of a species’ *and* ‘individuals in their own right’, but for different reasons and in different ways than his predecessor. His account of agency precedes the thinking, evaluating and reasoning of the self-conscious ‘I’. He aims to assess what ‘conscious agency’ is or it

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<sup>165</sup> Consider the following claim: “[b]elow every thought lies an affect. *Every thought*, every feeling, every will is *not* born of one particular drive but is a *total state*, a whole surface of the whole consciousness, and results from how the power of *all* the drives that constitute us is fixed at that moment - thus, the power of the drive that dominates just now as well as of the drives obeying or resisting it. The next thought is a sign of how the total power situation has now shifted again.” (WLN 1 [61]). Admittedly the figurative concepts such as ‘above’, ‘below’ and ‘surface’ are misleading by implying that ‘consciousness’ or becoming conscious of something is the same as having awareness of something, for Nietzsche. This is misleading because he often construes our becoming conscious with being able to communicate or signify our states, aims and actions to other people through concepts and words (cf. GS 354); see also Katsafanas (2011). What we should consider is the claim that our thoughts, feelings and will is never really one particular drive, but a combination of all of our drives (more on this an ensuing chapter).



amounts to and, more importantly, from where it emerges (cf. *GS* 354; *BGE* 16; *D* 123 & 301). The astonishing proposition that stems from Nietzsche's objections to Schopenhauer's account is that 'individuality' is not *inherent* to self-conscious thought or the self-conscious 'I'. He pulls apart concepts like 'agency', 'reason', 'consciousness' (or self-consciousness). Likewise, as we will see more clearly below, his historical method or genealogical analysis of philosophical problems and concepts is the bedrock of this account.<sup>166</sup>

To assess the passages where Nietzsche distinguishes the individual from the generic parts of us, I will employ a distinction he adopts from Schopenhauer, which he revises. Recall that Schopenhauer distinguishes between 'some thought about what we will' and 'its corresponding action'. The former shows what human beings *in general* are capable of doing, whereas the latter shows what the individual does or is capable of doing (cf. *OBM*, 168). Nietzsche agrees with Schopenhauer that actions reveal *who* we are, but clarifies that our actions do not necessarily arise from what we *as individuals* think, desire, will and so on. Our actions *can* reveal that we did not act according to our 'individuality'. Consequently, there is a distinction between our 'identifying' with our actions and the 'individuality' of an action. In one sense, then, *we* are the ones who act or acted in some moment and manner, i.e., we are *individuals* in the sense that we identify with an action:

“No man has ever done anything that was done wholly for others and with no personal motivation whatever; how, indeed, should a man be *able* to do something that had no reference to himself, that is to say lacked all inner compulsion (which would have its basis in a personal need)? How could the ego act without the ego?” (*HHI* 133)

Everything we do stems from who we are or from what drives us. However, what is *driving* our actions, deliberations and reasons in some moment does not *necessarily* accord with who we are *as individuals*. In short, an action always stems from *us*, but it does not necessarily represent what is *individual* about us. It is possible that we inherit an action from elsewhere, which we now confuse for what is 'individual' about us, according to Nietzsche:

“All actions may be traced back to evaluations, all evaluations are either *original* or *adopted* — the latter being by far the most common. Why do we adopt them? From fear — that is to say, we consider it more advisable to pretend they are our own — and accustom ourself to this pretence, so that at length it becomes our own nature. Original evaluation: that is to say, to assess a thing according to the extent to which it pleases or displeases us alone and no one else — something excessively rare! — But must our evaluation of another, in which there lies the motive for our generally availing ourselves of *his* evaluation, at least not proceed from *us*, be our *own*

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<sup>166</sup> I submit at the outset that the thoughts herein have caused me great grief. I am unsatisfied with their presentation and analytic depth. Unfortunately, because of my constraints, I have to be satisfied with the ensuing discussion, presentation and analysis. I hope that, at least, the passages I refer to, the readings I suggest and the arguments I make can inspire a more thorough analysis and debate on these topics and approach. What I want to direct our attention to as the most important part of my discussion and reading is that Nietzsche attempts a revisionist account of the concepts under consideration.

determination? Yes, but we arrive at it as *children*, and rarely learn to change our view; most of us are our whole lives long the fools of the way we acquired in childhood of judging our neighbours (their minds, rank, morality, whether they are exemplary or reprehensible) and of finding it necessary to pay homage to their evaluations.” (D 104)

Our actions indeed reveal who and what we are, as Schopenhauer rightly suggests, but what they can also reveal is not what we ourselves *as individuals* will, reason, think and so on. It can also represent our ‘obedience’ to something distinct or independent from *us* with which we confuse ourselves:

“Whatever they may think and say about their ‘egoism’, the great majority nonetheless do nothing for their ego their whole life long: what they do is done for the phantom of their ego which has formed itself in the heads of those around them and has been communicated to them; — as a consequence they all of them dwell in a fog of impersonal, semi-personal opinions, and arbitrary, as it were poetical evaluations, the one for ever in the head of someone else, and the head of this someone else again in the heads of others: a strange world of phantasms...” (D 105)

The same is the case with respect to our *feelings*. Our feelings do not *necessarily* demonstrate our individuality:

“To trust one’s feelings—means to give more obedience to one’s grandfather and grandmother and their grandparents than to the gods which are in *us*: our reason and our experience.” (D 35)<sup>167</sup>

We are individuals, he contends, because of *our* reason and *our* experience. We are not so because of what we feel in relation to something (in the broad sense), or because of our actions alone. The previous can correspond to evaluations that are *not our own*, but inherited or acquired. In short, for Nietzsche, we have *inherited* feelings and actions. I will call the previous the *generic* aspects of us. We have ‘generic’ drives (ones in common with other human beings and-or animals), but also individual (unique) drives. Accordingly, he seems to construe individuality as uniqueness.

Our actions are something *we* do, but they can also be something we *inherit* (cf. D 199). The latter can be something we learn from other people when growing up or we inherit it from our ancestors based on how they reasoned and what they did in relation to *their* circumstances. Likewise, the latter actions are partly based on what our ancestors’ ancestors reasoned and did etc. down a genealogical chain:<sup>168</sup>

“For when the habit of some distinguishing action is *inherited*, the thought that lies behind it is not inherited with it (thoughts are not hereditary, only feelings): and

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<sup>167</sup> See also (HHI 612) and “in both cases we are *drawing a conclusion*: the instincts are filled to the brink with accumulated premises” (TI, ‘Skirmishes’, 20).

<sup>168</sup> For more on how our feeling relate to our ancestors see also Janaway (2003, 268-270).

provided it is not again reproduced by education, even the second generation fails to experience any pleasure in cruelty in connection with it, but only pleasure in the habit as such. *This* pleasure, however, is the first stage of the ‘good’.” (D 30)

Nietzsche’s conception of individuality is not reducible to the distinction between thoughts and actions, as Schopenhauer argued, or between our feelings and actions. He goes further than Schopenhauer by distinguishing *individual* feelings and actions that are in accordance with *our* reason and experience from feelings and actions we *inherit*, i.e., from our ancestors, our social interactions and by our obedience to authority (or custom) and so on.

Nietzsche’s conception of individuality is thus opposed to Schopenhauer’s in several ways. He rejects the claim that our thoughts about doing something are modifications of *humanity* (i.e. the human Idea) whereas our actions are modifications of our *individuality* (i.e., the individual’s Idea). He agrees that our actions *reveal* our individuality, but modifies it by claiming that they can also reveal that we lack individuality or that we are not unique. We can lack individuality, but we always *identify* with our actions. Accordingly, we should not confuse identification with individuality. Feelings are not ‘general’ in Schopenhauer’s sense; we do not feel what human beings in general are capable of doing. Instead, the limits of the generality of our feelings is what our ancestors did or had to do. Our feelings indicate how *they* responded to *their* circumstances and thus how *they* flourished, which we inherit.<sup>169</sup> Nietzsche’s conception of the ‘generality’ of our feelings is thus narrower and more limited in scope than the metaphysical or essentialist generality Schopenhauer defends, i.e., that our feelings represents humanity’s Idea or its *ideal representation*. Nietzsche has a revisionist conception of generality.

Nietzschean individuality is also narrower and limited. He construes it as originality or uniqueness, which is juxtaposed to what is generic. There is a passage where he seems to flirt with the ‘Idea of humanity’ and its expression in us, however, which we should briefly address:

“Of course, ‘individuals’, as peoples and philosophers have understood them so far, are a mistake: individuals are nothing in themselves, they are not atoms, they are not ‘links in the chain’, they are not just legacies of a bygone era—each individual is the entire single line of humanity up through himself.” (TI, ‘Skirmishes’, 33)

The above is unsurprising given his commitment to how our ancestors feature in what we do and so in what drives us. He rejects Schopenhauer’s juxtaposition between the Idea of humanity and our *individual* Idea, but not the claim that our ancestors feature in our thoughts, feelings and actions.<sup>170</sup> In addition, scrutinising their differing viewpoints on the conception

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<sup>169</sup> For more on how Nietzsche applies his narrower conception of generality see the following passages: D 30, 33, 35, 102, 110, 247; GS 349, 358, 377; WS 41, 181, 212; BGE 200, 264; WLN 34[67], 35[20], 1[21].

<sup>170</sup> Cf. “Thus, every human being is a particularly determined and characteristic appearance of the will, and can even be viewed as his or her own individual Idea” (WR, 156-7).

of generality shows that the ‘single line’ Nietzsche refers to is *not* exempt from change; it is not a *fixed* or a *predetermined* line. Irrespective of his flirtation with the Idea of humanity, Nietzsche’s conception of it is as though it is ‘in time’. Accordingly, this ‘line’ is as subject to change(s) as anything else that is in time. Humanity itself is ‘becoming something’ and it can succeed or fail in what it is becoming or even change the direction of its becoming.<sup>171</sup>

Nietzsche bemoans the so-called “philosopher’s rage for generalisation” (*HHII* 5), which he identifies in Schopenhauer’s philosophy. What is ‘generic’ about our feelings is limited to *our* ancestors; they represent what *we* inherit. He naturalises Schopenhauer’s distinction between ‘feelings (or thoughts)’ and ‘actions’. Feelings are the inherited actions of those who brought *us* into life. They do not result from metaphysical substrata appearing as this or that thing or event in the physical world. They do not result from the unfolding of a unified and *fixed* will and its equally unified and *fixed* ideal. Furthermore, we inherit our ancestors’ feelings and their corresponding action-tendencies (i.e., we inherit affects), not what our ancestors *reasoned* and *experienced*. These feelings represent *their* responses to *their* circumstances, which do not correspond to *our own* and which might not necessarily make much sense to us now given our circumstances. Thus, we *feel* what was *individual* about our ancestors; they represent our ancestor’s individuality.<sup>172</sup> We do not have direct access to their individuality, because we are not and cannot possibly be in the same circumstances as they were in when they acted and reasoned in some manner. The previous encapsulates Nietzsche’s narrow and naturalised revision of ‘generality’. Our ‘reasons’ for feeling X rather than Y extend to our ancestors’s individual experiences and no further. However, he recognises that the previous is *not* the generality often sought by philosophers, even if, for him, it is what philosophers can arrive at without committing to a dualism that bloats their ontology and introduces a third-person phantom.

In sum, Nietzsche’s revisionist conception of what is generic about us undercuts the ‘philosopher’s rage for generalisation’: our ancestors ‘contribute’ to our individuality, but we should distinguish their contribution from what is *genuinely individual* about us. The latter is what he calls *our own* reason and experience, which is admittedly vague.

Nietzsche does not stop at offering his own conception of generality, however, but aims to find the root or source of the philosopher’s ‘generality’. He argues that philosophers are ‘seduced’ by language and grammar. We find his core argument against the ‘objectivity’ or ‘disinterestedness’ of philosophical reason and thought as understood by philosophers in the following passage:

“I have gradually come to realise what every great philosophy so far has been: a confession of faith on the part of its author, and a type of involuntary and unself-conscious memoir; in short, that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every

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<sup>171</sup> Cf. *TI*, ‘Errors’, 8; see also *GS* 109.

<sup>172</sup> Passages such as the following are very revelatory: “the unresolved dissonances between the characters and dispositions of the parents continue to resound in the nature of the child and constitute the history of his inner sufferings” (*HHI* 379).

philosophy constitute the true living seed from which the whole plant has always grown. Actually, to explain how the strangest metaphysical claims of a philosopher really come about, it is always good (and wise) to begin by asking: what morality is it (is *he* –) getting at? Consequently, I do not believe that a “drive for knowledge” is the father of philosophy, but rather that another drive, here as elsewhere, used knowledge (and mis-knowledge!) merely as a tool. But anyone who looks at people’s basic drives, to see how far they may have played their little game right here as *inspiring* geniuses (or daemons or sprites –), will find that they all practiced philosophy at some point, – and that every single one of them would be only too pleased to present *itself* as the ultimate purpose of existence and as rightful *master* of all the other drives. Because every drive craves mastery, and *this* leads it to try philosophising.” (*BGE* 6)

He offers a genealogical account of the ‘metaphysical generality’ sought by philosophers, who *claim* that their generality is metaphysical in scope. What they offer at best, according to Nietzsche, is an extension of something individual. Their ‘metaphysical generality’ represents the “physiological requirements for the preservation of a particular type of life” (*BGE* 3; also, *BGE* 13; *GM III*, 7 & *GM I*, 13). Another revealing passage with respect to the philosopher’s generality and its limits is the following:

“And perhaps the time is very near when we will realise again and again just *what* actually served as the cornerstone of those sublime and unconditional philosophical edifices that the dogmatists used to build – some piece of folk superstition from time immemorial (like the soul-superstition that still causes trouble as the superstition of the subject or I), some word-play perhaps, a seduction of grammar or an over-eager generalisation from facts that are really very local, very personal, very human-all-too-human.” (*BGE* Pref.)

According to him, these philosophers project their *own* reasons or experiences—including *inherited* reasons and experiences—on metaphysical substrata such as the *thing in itself* or ‘reality’. Philosophers do not possess a special faculty for ‘knowledge’ or ‘truth’; in fact, nobody possesses such a faculty, according to him:

“We simply have no organ for *knowing*, for ‘truth’: we ‘know’ (or believe or imagine) exactly as much as is *useful* to the human herd, to the species: and even what is here called ‘usefulness’ is finally also just a belief, a fiction, and perhaps just that supremely fatal stupidity of which we some day will perish.” (*GS* 354)

The above ‘usefulness’ does not live up to the *universality*, *objectivity* and *disinterestedness* that some philosophers boast of and seek to support their propositions, however. They seek metaphysical grounds for moral claims. They seek what underpins morality or what makes possible moral actions, i.e., agency and responsibility. The same is the case with moralists who ground their moral claims on ‘God’ or ‘nature’. What they offer is something narrow and individual. The concept of usefulness is also limited in scope and exclusive to actions proved useful ‘historically’ and useful to ‘some’. Accordingly, we cannot settle the concept

of ‘usefulness’ as some philosophers argue it can or should be settled, i.e., by grounding it metaphysically. He suggests the following as reasons:

“Even the most harmful person may actually be the most useful when it comes to the preservation of the species; for he nurtures in himself or through his effects on others drives without which humanity would long since have become feeble or rotten. Hatred, delight in the misfortunes of others, the lust to rob and rule, and whatever else is called evil: all belong to the amazing economy of the preservation of the species, an economy which is certainly costly, wasteful, and on the whole most foolish—but still *proven* to have preserved our race so far. I no longer know whether you, my dear fellow man and neighbour, are even *capable* of living in a way which is damaging to the species, i.e. ‘unreasonably’ and ‘badly’... Pursue your best or your worst desires, and above all, perish! In both cases you are probably still in some way a promoter and benefactor of humanity and are thus entitled to your eulogists — as well as to your mockers.” (GS 1)

In short, according to Nietzsche, the general claims of some philosophers and moralists do not extend metaphysically. They are projections of narrower, individual experiences. Even those conceptions of agency, responsibility etc. underpinning their claims are projections (cf. BGE 21) within a historical context and from a certain viewpoint. We find him making similar claims when rejecting Spinoza’s propositions on motivation and self-preservation:

“It is symptomatic that certain philosophers, such as the consumptive Spinoza, took and indeed had to take just the so-called self-preservation instinct to be decisive: — they were simply people in distress.” (GS 349)

He does not limit this claim to philosophers, however, but extends it to natural scientists of his day:

“That today's natural sciences have become so entangled with the Spinozistic dogma (most recently and crudely in Darwinism with its incredibly one-sided doctrine of 'the struggle for existence' —) is probably due to the descent of most natural scientists: in this regard they belong to 'the people', their ancestors were poor and lowly folks who knew all too intimately the difficulty of scraping by. English Darwinism exudes something like the stuffy air of English overpopulation, like the small people's smell of indigence and overcrowding.” (GS 349)

There is room for debate over Nietzsche rejecting generalisations of the above sort while at the same time offering his own:

“As a natural scientist, however, one should get out of one's human corner; and in nature, it is not distress which *rules*, but rather abundance, squandering — even to the point of absurdity. The struggle for survival is only an *exception*, a temporary restriction of the will to life; the great and small struggle revolves everywhere around preponderance, around growth and expansion, around power and in accordance with the will to power, which is simply the will to life.” (GS 349)

We ought to critically assess his rejection of the philosopher's rage for generalisation. We can argue that the previous is what he himself advances with his proposition that the 'will to life' *is* the 'will to power', that is, he replaces Schopenhauer's proposition with his own. What permits him to claim that we can legitimately subsume all actions under the aim of 'power'? What does it mean to claim that power is the final aim of our actions? Moreover, there are passages where he admits that he makes his own projection and generalisation, and even apologises for it:

“When I think of the desire to do something, how it continually tickles and goads the millions of young Europeans who cannot endure boredom and themselves, I realise that they must have a yearning to suffer something in order to make their suffering a likely reason for action, for deeds... Were these distress-addicts to feel within themselves the power to do themselves good from within, to do something for themselves, they would know how to create their very own distress. Their inventions could then become more refined and their satisfactions sound like good music, while they now fill the world with their clamour about distress, and consequently, all too often with the *feeling of distress!* They do not know what to do with themselves — and so they paint the unhappiness of others on the wall; they always need others! And continually other others! — Pardon me, my friends, I have ventured to paint my *happiness* on the wall.” (GS 56)<sup>173</sup>

Likewise, we should bear in mind that he does not reject the possibility of disinterestedness or objectivity in *some* 'scholars' or 'scientists' who approach their discipline as their 'job', 'duty' or 'profession' (more on this below). What he seems to reject is the proposition that 'philosophers' can be 'disinterested' in the way they aim or claim to be:

“Of course: with scholars, the truly scientific people, things might be different — “better” if you will —, with them, there might really be something like a drive for knowledge, some independent little clockwork mechanism that, once well wound, ticks bravely away *without* essentially involving the rest of the scholar's drives. For this reason, the scholar's real “interests” usually lie somewhere else entirely, with the family, or earning money, or in politics; in fact, it is almost a matter of indifference whether his little engine is put to work in this or that field of research, and whether the “promising” young worker turns himself into a good philologist or fungus expert or chemist: — it doesn't *signify* anything about him that he becomes one thing or the other. In contrast, there is absolutely nothing impersonal about the philosopher; and in particular his morals bear decided and decisive witness to *who he is* — which means, in what order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand with respect to each other.” (BGE 6)

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<sup>173</sup> See also: “[g]ranting, this is only an interpretation too — and you will be eager enough to make this objection? — well then, so much the better” (BGE 22).

The answers to the above questions and the in-depth assessment required to offer a coherent picture addressing the themes therein are beyond the scope of the thesis. I point them out to the reader for the interest of future analysis and I suggest them as a basis for debate on the merits of the propositions and arguments.

In sum, Nietzsche rejects conceptions of ‘generality’ that extend metaphysically, but also offers his own conception of generality. His core proposition is that we can only speak of *our* reasons for acting; the ‘our’ includes those reasons we *inherit* from ancestors, parents and authorities. We *can* project the previous on a metaphysical substratum or morality, but we illegitimately project narrow experiences and reasons onto something broader in scope, which thereby *infringes* on other, different, albeit equally narrower reasons and experiences. We project our experiences and reasons on other people. He does not stop there, however, but assesses what might permit philosophers or moralists to make such projections. What *facilitates* these extended metaphysical or universal claims and therefore makes possible this *infringement* on other people? Where does the ‘rage for generalisation’ come from and what supports it? I suggest the following propositions as answers, which are implicit to his drive psychology:

- A) We are driven to generalise as philosophers do because of the will to power, which he construes variously as ‘mastery over something’ (*GM* II, 12) or as ‘becoming master of something’ (*WLN* 2[148]).<sup>174</sup>
- B) Morality and philosophy are enabled exclusively by language, which express what he variously calls ‘custom’ (*D* 9), ‘herd-instinct’ (*GS* 149), the ‘need for meaning, purpose and will’ (*GM* III, 28) and so on (more on this below).

The ‘will to power’ and the manner in which we give vent to it, namely, using ‘language’, are central elements of Nietzsche’s assessment of moral and philosophical propositions. According to his drive psychology, ‘will to power’ is *inherent* to every drive and so, by extension, individual. Its discharge through moral or (philosophical) authority is something we inherit from our ancestors and education, i.e., from customs. Consequently, philosophers and moralists infringe on other individuals *based* on their will to power or overpowering whose particular expression they inherit. They exercise this urge through philosophical or moral authority, which the use of language and the effects of custom underpin.

Our ancestors acquired the *need* for (moral or philosophical) authority by living in communities under the pressures of command-obedience relationships, which typified

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<sup>174</sup> Other descriptions of the will to power he uses are: as ‘preponderance, growth and expansion’ (*GS* 349); as a ‘tyrannical drive’ (*BGE* 9); to ‘play master’ (*BGE* 198); to ‘grow, spread, grab, win dominance’ (*BGE* 259); as ‘an instinct for growth, for endurance, for the accumulation of force’ (*A* 6); as an ‘unexhausted begetting’, ‘will to be master’ or as ‘overcoming’ (*Z*, ‘Self-Overcoming’), as an ‘insatiable craving to manifest power; or to employ, exercise power, as a creative drive etc. (*WLN* 36[31]); as ‘self-heightening and strengthening’ (*WLN* 5[63]); to ‘imprint upon’ (*WLN* 7 [54]); to ‘violate and to defend oneself against being violated’ (*WLN* 14[79]). Reginster’s illuminating reading of the ‘will to power’ as a self-standing desire for ‘effective agency’ offers us an interesting first-person account of what Nietzsche is aiming to capture (cf. Reginster 2013).



communal life at those early stages (cf. *D* 9). People living in a community perpetuate this need by their use of language and their cooperation with other members of their community, which constitutes custom. We all possess the *need* for authority, which interacts with other needs and, in some cases, discharges as propositions regarding the ‘good’, the ‘true’, and the ‘beautiful’ (or ‘sublime’); each one infringes on another person’s life and activities. In other words, it discharges in actions and projects relevant for (and valuable or threatening to) the community. The bases of these actions and projects are an agent’s *individual* reasons and experiences. The ‘values’ typifying a morality (a core aspect of communal life) aim to *shape* the effort of members of a community (more on this below), but individual members determined the values we associate with a morality, i.e., the ‘do’ and ‘do not’ or the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ (or ‘evil’), which characterises a morality. The same occurs with respect to what is ‘true’ (Philosophy and Science), ‘real’ (Metaphysics) etc., each typifies different aspects of our communal life.

In short, according to Nietzsche, common endeavours infringing on other individuals are always set up and maintained by those for whom these endeavours are the condition for existence and under which they flourish:

“Every animal, including the *bête philosophe*, instinctively strives for an optimum of favourable conditions in which to fully release his power and achieve his maximum of power-sensation; every animal abhors equally instinctively, with an acute sense of smell that is 'higher than all reason', any kind of disturbance and hindrance that blocks or could block his path to the optimum (- it is not his path to 'happiness' I am talking about, but the path to power, action, the mightiest deeds, and in most cases, actually, his path to misery.” (*GM*, III 7)

Philosophers and moralists *will something*, perceive a world *permitting willing* and aim to make this world accessible to their will. The philosopher’s rage for generalisation, namely, her search for ‘objectivity’ and the ‘disinterested’ judgments emerging from the former, are her means of realising *her* conditions for existence and flourishing. What distinguishes the philosopher (or moralist) from other individuals is not *that* she projects her conditions for existence on something she believes will supervene on other individual’s efforts, but *what* she projects, in what manner and how successful she is in doing so. Therefore, a philosopher is *essentially* akin to others in that she wills something, but she differs in *what* she wills and how. Philosophers, then, pursue:

“...an optimum condition of the highest and boldest intellectuality [*Geistigkeit*], - he does not deny ‘existence’ by doing so, but rather affirms his existence and only his existence, and possibly does this to the point where he is not far from making the outrageous wish: *pereat mundus, fiat philosophia, fiat philosophus, fiam!* [Let the world perish, but let philosophy exist, let the philosopher exist, let me exist].” (*GM* III, 7)

What distinguishes *one* individual’s values from another’s is their respective reasons and experiences, not always their projecting on something broader in scope than themselves.

Nietzsche's concern over our common endeavours do not aim at the fact that we project individual experiences and reasons onto concepts that extend beyond individuality; he construes the previous as another way the 'will to power' expresses or discharges, albeit in individuals living in communities.<sup>175</sup> His concerns lie elsewhere, as we will see below.

The above analysis of 'individuality' and 'generality' demonstrates that Nietzsche envisages a tri-partite distinction with respect what is individual and generic about us and our actions, which is something like the following:

- A) Our actions, which represent ourselves, but not necessarily our individuality.
- B) Our 'feelings', which represent our inherited judgments, evaluations and drives.
- C) Our 'herd instincts', which represent the values of our community or our common endeavours and is one kind of inherited drive; he also calls it the 'herd perspective' (cf. GS 354).

Our 'feelings' and 'actions' are the individual parts of our reason and experience; they *can* represent what is individual about us, but also what we inherit and internalise by living in communities. Our actions represent what we do and who we are, i.e., we *identify* with them, but they do not necessarily represent what makes us *individual*. Our community's values are the most generic aspects of our reason and experience and are set up to oppose individuality. These values apply to all members of a community irrespective of the feelings or actions of any individual member. They are general in the previous sense, for him, which is appealing to philosophers and moralists as *their* sources of power. In sum, the various aspects of us *interact* to give the picture of an agent who has 'individual', 'inherited' and 'common' parts (or drives).

There is more to Nietzsche's conception of the relationship between the individual and the generic than I can assess here. I will analyse his ambiguous use of 'individuality', because it relates to his conception of sovereign individuality and the 'lack of fit', however. Sometimes, individuality refers to the 'originality' of our drives and at other times to our 'identity' with our drives. I recognise three options premised on this distinction between 'originality' and 'identification' against the backdrop of his tripartite distinction:

- 1) A person's 'individuality' tracks those drives that represent his originality, excluding all other 'inherited' drives.
- 2) A person's 'individuality' tracks those drives that represent his originality *and* those drives he inherits from his ancestor's, but excludes the 'herd instincts'.
- 3) A person's 'individuality' tracks all drives.

Nietzsche uses all three at different times, which will become apparent below. Yet, he uses 1 and 2 more often than 3. Leaving aside this ambiguity, I will focus on how he believes the

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<sup>175</sup> As we will see in a following chapter, he voices the dangerous consequences (or effects) to individuality of *one* such projection. He comprehends this 'danger' in terms of an individual's 'health' and, by extension, the health of a community. He objects to the 'ascetic ideal', but, as we will see, he seems to object to any ideal that fancies itself as the *only* or the *highest* ideal.

so-called 'herd perspective' partakes in our actions with the aim of showing why 'morality' is an integral part of our lives and that we have a *need* for it.

In sum, Nietzsche aims for an alternative conception of individuality, which is *not* reducible to self-interest. He complements the previous with an alternative conception of generality. He rejects the claim that morality is generic in the sense of applying to something broader than the conditions for existence and flourishing of some *type*, of which there are many. Whatever values or reasons we pluck out of our experience (and lack of experience) and whatever we project onto something broader or more 'common' will not meet the strong demands of 'objectivity', 'disinterestedness' etc. (cf. *GM* III, 12) that is the preoccupation of many philosopher's and moralists. Consequently, in every morality we find the narrow reasons and experiences of 'individuals' whom projected onto others, onto the world and even onto reality. He encourages his readers to take a closer look at themselves when assessing their moral values; to look under their "moral disguise" (*GS* 352). As Janaway rightly claims: "Nietzsche affects the reader as he pursues his philosophical aims" (Janaway 2007, 3). We can go further and claim that his revaluation of values aims to affect us using *our* moral values and prejudices; he creates a tension between the values of our community and individuality, or 'self' (more on this below). He does so, I will argue, to reveal the self-interest inherent to our adhering to the moral values of our community, which are contrary to our expectations and are certainly so if those values are 'selflessness', 'disinterestedness', 'compassion', 'objectivity' and so on in the philosopher's or moralist's sense. We adhere to those values *motivated* by self-interest, but likewise at the expense of our 'individuality'. He dissects our reasons and shows the incompatibility between what we think about ourselves, what we do and what drives us. He challenges our *faith* in moral values, which prevents us from questioning them because of the fear we experience at every attempt; our faith ruthlessly pits us *against* our individuality and thus perpetuates a discord within us. Some philosophers have been prolonging and promoting this discord due to a false, unscientific and ahistorical analysis of moral sentiments, values and actions:

"...the errors of the greatest philosophers usually have their point of departure in a false explanation of certain human actions and sensations; how on the basis of an erroneous analysis, for example that of the so-called unegoistic actions, a false ethics is erected, religion and mythological monsters are then in turn called upon to buttress it, and the shadow of these dismal spirits in the end falls across even physics and the entire perception of the world... 'Moral man', he says, 'stands no closer to the intelligible (metaphysical) world than does physical man'. This proposition, hardened and sharpened beneath the hammer-blow of historical knowledge, may perhaps at some future time serve as the axe which is laid at the root of the 'metaphysical need' of man - whether as *more* of a blessing than a curse to the general wellbeing, who can say? - but in any event as a proposition with the weightiest consequences; at once fruitful and fearful and looking out upon the world with that Janus-face possessed by all great perceptions." (*HHI* 37)

He challenge us to live in accordance with our individual values and expectations in *this life*, i.e., to reconcile our inherited with our individual parts. He encourages his readers *not* to sacrifice our individuality for some supposed freedom in another life, world or time that *transcends* this life. Even the distinction between the individual and generic aspects itself represents his strategy of aiming to affect us using our moral precepts.

There is a tension and struggle between the generic and individual aspects of us, in Nietzsche's view. This tension is inescapable because of our participation in communal life. Moreover, it can be ruinous for some of us and productive for others. It can spawn *new* moral values that are in accordance with a new image of the moral exemplar of a community (more on this below). The sovereign individual represents someone who transcends without negating her self-interest; she transcends the shackles to her individuality, which are her community's customs or values. She pursues values over which she claims responsibility *not only for herself* at the expense or in opposition to her community, or in opposition to her own 'herd instincts', but also *for* her community and thus inclusive of others and her herd instincts (more on this below).

Nietzsche recognises that our conception of individuality should distinguish us from others *and* from a general conception of human beings as bodies with mechanical functions, organs, electro-chemical processes and interactions, which was becoming the dominant paradigm of his time. The distinction between 'actions', 'feelings' and 'moral values' underpins his conception of individuality and generality. For Schopenhauer, the intellect makes possible our freedom through its abstract function and deliberation; it permits us to suppress our self-interest, perform noble and moral acts of compassion and so negate the will to life. Deliberation does not engender action on its own, however; it is *necessary*, but *insufficient* for determining what makes us individuals.<sup>176</sup> The distinctly human, namely, the free and responsible agency we enjoy is a correspondence between deliberation and action, for Schopenhauer.<sup>177</sup> Nietzsche accepts the emphasis on the identity between our self and actions, but he rejects the role of deliberation in determining the individuality of our action. If deliberation requires a decisive *stamp* by the will and thus the body, then why did Schopenhauer place a strong emphasis on deliberation as that which explains individuality? If deliberation is not enough to engender the action, then why did he employ it to distinguish what is generic from what is individual about us? Schopenhauer falls in the trap of construing the body and its urges as *foreign* to 'individuals' or as obstacles that we have to overcome in reaching for our 'highest freedom'. Furthermore, if the whole body's interjection through an affect is what makes our 'wishes, thoughts' etc. *decisive* such that they engender an action, then why does he give the intellect a central role in individuality? If the decisive factor for our individual intentions, wishes, thoughts etc. is the action, then

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<sup>176</sup> This picture is more complicated than I have illustrated here because an act of will was paradoxically at the basis of ascetic resignation, for Schopenhauer, but he did not construe this as a *deliberate* act of will.

<sup>177</sup> Here we should note that what he construed as the highest form of freedom, i.e. freedom from the will to life, or from the gnawing urge to do something, is a consequence of the relation between the intellect and will, but it is not *caused* by the intellect, or better put, the intellect does not *independently* engender it (cf. *WR*, 432).

what do we gain by knowing what we intend to do before we do it? ‘Knowing’ our intentions in advance seems an unnecessary extension of the action, for Nietzsche. The body could operate just as well without our intellect having to represent the different possible avenues for action (i.e., the various motives) prior to the action. This objection accords with Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will, because the will is ‘fixed’ and ‘inalterable’. In short, our actions stem from relations between mainsprings and ‘preconscious’ processes, because our motives correlate to one mainspring or another as a precondition of action. The picture of individuality and genuine agency Schopenhauer defends suggests that deliberation has its own ‘oomph’ independent from the body, which contradicts his correlation theory of cognition. These propositions represent an ambiguous and at times very perplexing trend in Schopenhauer’s philosophy; the apparently independent efficacy of deliberation lands him into conceptual trouble.

Nietzsche has an alternative and revisionist approach to individuality, self-conscious agency, responsibility and freedom using the above tripartite distinction. He offers another conception of deliberation and its role in agential actions by reversing Schopenhauer’s proposition that deliberation makes our actions ‘individual’. The intellect makes our actions appear ‘generic’, according to Nietzsche. It *distorts* what is individual about us, because it emerges from and therefore represents the ‘herd perspective’. He bemoans Schopenhauer’s inability or reluctance to recognise the core role that morality and the so-called ‘seductions of language’ play in his philosophy of the *will* at its foundations, i.e., his conception of individuality and the so-called ‘struggle’ between the intellect and the will. He also bemoans Schopenhauer’s ‘lack of historical sense’ (cf. *BGE* 204), which apparently prohibits him from perceiving the changes our moral values undergo over time, which undermines his claim that there is a metaphysical basis for the morality of compassion. Schopenhauer, then, confounds *one* moral principle (of which there are many) for *the only* moral principle or for the basis of morals.

In the next chapter, I will assess Nietzsche’s account of deliberation and its role in our actions. I argue that his conception of individuality inverts Schopenhauer’s proposition that deliberation makes us individual, responsible and free. Likewise, I analyse Nietzsche’s proposition that ‘deliberation’ makes our actions *appear* and, over time, *become* ‘generic’.

## 2.7 Nietzsche’s Reversal: Individuality, Deliberation and our Self-image

So far, I argued Nietzsche adopts Schopenhauer’s will-body identity, but rejects his point of departure, which is the first-person perspective of willing. The first-person perspective is misleading with respect to the individual-action identity. When we take the ‘I’ of our first-person experience as our starting point, we appeal to ‘unities’ that are without a third-person

representation, which constitutes his objection to Schopenhauer's conception of the will. The third-person perspective of the body and its vicissitudes has more explanatory value, for Nietzsche. The will is *not* inherently unified and the body's multiplicity is *not* an illusion of the intellect. Our will is a 'multiplicity' *like* the body and its modifications. The body *mirrors* the will. To avoid appealing to a 'unity' without a third-person representation such as the 'will' (or 'I will'), Nietzsche uses the concept of the 'drive', which mirrors the multiplicity of the body, but still refers to something with first-person content. Likewise, he accepts the individual-action identity, but modifies it by changing his conception of individuality, which he describes in terms of drives.

Both thinkers argue that the objective correlate of 'individuality' is our actions (or our omissions), but they differ on what makes our actions 'individual'. For Schopenhauer, a deliberate action represents what is individual about us. For Nietzsche, our action itself is "incomparably and utterly personal, unique, and boundlessly individual" (GS 354). As we saw previously, however, our actions can actually represent something inherited, generic and impersonal. They can represent something we mimic or acquire from others like our parents or authority figures within our community (cf. D 26). They can represent a custom such as saying 'thank you' or a 'handshake' after an exchange. Accordingly, he requires a different, revised and nuance account of what exactly makes our actions 'individual'.

Nietzsche's account begins by distinguishing our individual from generic features, as we saw previously. He designates each one differently in different works and sometimes even in aphorisms within the same work. For example, with respect what is 'generic', he refers to 'custom' (D 16; HHI 96; HHII 89), or 'morality' (D 3), or 'authority' (D 9), or the 'herd' (also, the 'herd perspective', 'herd instincts' and so on) (cf. GS 116). Each one refers to what is generic about an action, reason, affect, drive and so on. He juxtaposes the previous to what he variously designates as 'individuality' (D 529), 'sense of self' (GS 117), 'real ego' (D 105), or 'the individual' (cf. HHI, 286; BGE 188 & 201). The closest he comes to a definition of what is generic and what is individual is through the following juxtaposition:

"Every *individual* action, every *individual* mode of thought arouses dread... Under the dominion of the morality of custom, *originality* of every kind has acquired a bad conscience; the sky above the best men is for this reason to this very moment gloomier than it need be." (D 9; my emphasis)

Nietzsche's approach to making sense of individuality is by arguing that our generic and individual features oppose each other, rather than constituting a pre-established harmony. The pre-established harmony, we recall, is central to Schopenhauer's conception of the will in the metaphysical sense. Nietzsche's conception of 'individuality' refers to 'originality' or 'uniqueness' and what expresses our uniqueness (or its lack thereof) is our actions, which, as we saw previously can also express something generic or customary. There is an impasse or ambiguity in the previous, which I will attempt to resolve using the tripartite distinction.

First, our actions are individual because we are a *combination* of our parents; we have a more diverse set of inherited drives premised on their combined individuality. We may include our parents' parents in this combination and so on. Second, though we *inherit* some

drives, we do not inherit those circumstantial pressures that gave rise to the action and then *hardenned* into a relatively stable behaviour we call a drive. Our *own* circumstantial pressures and conditions for existence permit an individual response and thus new targets or expressions for inherited drives. Furthermore, our circumstantial pressures and conditions permit the creation of new drives by a *synthesis* (cf. Richardson 1996, 44-52) of inherited drives, or the loss of inherited drives. Third, we constantly drive towards some action (cf. *GMI*, 13), which entails a need to overcome the resistances to our actions we may encounter. These resistances often impel us to suspend, delay or forgo our actions and drives (cf. *D* 109). In short, they permit us to *change* ourselves.<sup>178</sup>

For Schopenhauer, deliberation allows us to transcend our species constraints and the ‘will to life’. The intellect—specifically ‘deliberation’ and the ‘self-image’ stemming from its abstract function, which unifies dissimilar acts of will into a unified picture he calls our ‘empirical character’—makes us individuals. If our actions are *stamps* of the unified, fixed and inalterable will, then deliberation is an unnecessary extension of the action and will. What does ‘picturing what we are going to do before we do it’ contribute to this fixed, inalterable and metaphysical unity? Why does picturing what we are going to do in advance of the deed make a difference to our decision to do it? Can Schopenhauer coherently argue that deliberation makes us ‘change our mind’ over what we *will* do without jettisoning his conception of the will as fixed and inalterable? His conception of the will limits his account of deliberation by forbidding him from using it as he does in his aesthetics and ethics.

Nietzsche inverts Schopenhauer’s conception of individuality. Deliberation and our self-image make our already unique and original actions *appear* generic, for Nietzsche. Yet, his explanation of this generality differs from Schopenhauer’s essentialist and metaphysical approach.

There is nothing distinct from (or other-than) the drive-to-X, according to Nietzsche. Deliberation is a relation or conflict between drives whose resolution determines whether we ‘X’ or ‘not-X’. He commits to ontological monism and immanence and follows through by making sense of each concept and event in terms of its relationship to our drives. Schopenhauer likewise commits to ontological monism and immanence, but he apparently abandons it in his aesthetics and ethics by arguing the intellect controls the will in rare cases. The intellect can lead the will to negate itself. This negation is *not* willed: it “*emerges* from the innermost relation of cognition to willing in human beings, and thus *arrives suddenly*, as if flying in from outside” (*WR*, 432; my emphasis). As we will see, Nietzsche revises the proposition that the ‘intellect controls the will via our self-image’ by revising his conception of the ‘intellect’, its ‘control’ and even our ‘self-image’.

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<sup>178</sup> The textual evidence for these claims is limited, because Nietzsche did not focus on the conceptual coherence of his propositions. So, I cautiously omit that I stretch his claims somewhat, but I hope to have shown that I do so using his tripartite distinction. Nevertheless, I believe a critical consideration for the sake of clarity and rigor could prove useful here. In this chapter, I will focus on the extent of the opposition between the individual and the generic (or herd, morality etc.), however.

For both Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, deliberation does not *only* mean considering what possible actions we can take in relation to a circumstance, but includes a picture of *us* acting or ‘X-ing’. This picture is inherent to the decision-making process. We do not only deliberate on ‘how we *can* act’, but also what *we look like* when we do ‘X’ or ‘Y’. We take into account how we ‘appear’ when we do something. We consider what the action *implies* about us or our ‘character’. Accordingly, there is more to deliberation than our picturing the possible avenues for action prior to acting. However, for Nietzsche, there is also more to it than our picturing ourselves acting. If the previous were true and the basis for an action is a drive, then we can act without deliberating on our actions prior to undertaking them. We need not reflect on our actions (or ourselves), but act in accordance with the drives because our drives (and their relations) are *identical* to the action.

If we assume the self-conscious ‘I’ is distinct in kind from the drives and impinges on them, then committing to the will-body identity seemingly entails that we do not need the self-conscious ‘I’ to explain an action. Our drives can *unconsciously* determine the relevant action in each case without our first having to become ‘conscious’ of it. We can act without *self-consciously* deliberating on an action. Does the previous entail that Nietzsche rejects outright the role of ‘deliberation’ and ‘self-conscious thought’ in our actions? I will show that he does *not*. He has a different conception of deliberation and its role in actions.

For Schopenhauer, our self-image is an integral part of our individuality, culminating in the ‘acquired character’. For Nietzsche, however, it demonstrates the participation of an atypical *drive* whose root is how ‘other people’—i.e., *their* perspective—partakes in our actions. Our self-image represents the participation of a drive in the trenches with the other drives. He describes this drive as ‘habituation to authority’ (*HHI* 89), ‘obedience to custom or tradition’ (*B* 9), ‘obedience towards a law’ (*HHI* 96), ‘innate need to obey’ (*BGE* 199), or ‘herd instinct of obedience’ (*BGE* 199). For the sake of attuning us to my alternative solution to the lack of it, I focus on *how* this drive fits with his tripartite distinction. It can be either ‘individual’ or ‘inherited’. We can develop it from *our* experiences and reasons, or it can be a ‘feeling’ we acquire from our ancestors through our parents, or it can represent the values of our community, such as a custom or common endeavour. I will argue that it is *inherited*, but we have two conceptions of inheritance: our ancestors and our community and its values. I will aim to show that it is a combination of both.

Nietzsche describes this inherited drive most clearly in the following passage, where he also juxtaposes it to individuality by remarking how it effects our self-conception:

“We have an interest in the good opinion of others, firstly because it is useful to us, then because we want to give them pleasure (children their parents, pupils their teacher, and benevolent people all other people in general). Only where the good opinion of others is important to someone quite apart from advantage or the desire to give pleasure do we speak of vanity... As a rule, the individual wants through the opinion of others to confirm the opinion he has of himself and to ratify himself in his own eyes; but our mighty *habituation to authority*—a habituation that is as old as mankind itself—also impels many to rely on authority for their belief in themselves, that



is to say to acquire it only at the hands of others: they trust the judgement of others more than they do their own.” (*HHI* 89; my emphasis)

Deliberation is inseparable from a *self-image* and represents the *need* to introduce this image to our actions. He describes our self-image as placing a mirror in front of us before we undertake a course of action (cf. *GS* 354 & *D* 301). This implies that we take a perspective on our actions that is *not* our own. What is crucial for my purposes is that it represents the activity of a drive; the participation in our actions of what Nietzsche describes as the drive ‘to obey something that commands’ (cf. *D* 9). Let me elaborate.

Schopenhauer and Nietzsche differ in their conceptions of our self-image in two respects. First, for Schopenhauer, our self-image is a *pure* representation of ‘what we will’ based on what we did previously; our interests or someone else’s interests do not *distort* this self-image. Since any response to our self-image is by our individual will (or mainsprings), our actions following it are individual and distorted by our various interests, however. Thus, our self-image is ‘pure’ whereas our ‘response’ to it is not and cannot possibly be. Second, the perspective underpinning our self-image is *our own* and not someone else’s.

Nietzsche rejects both of the above propositions and argues there is a fundamental epistemic boundary between ‘who we are’, i.e., our ‘individuality’, and ‘what we *can know* about who we are’. The emphasis, then, is on the ‘purity’ or ‘limits’ of self-knowledge. The following passages detail his views on the previous:

“Actions are *never* what they appear to us to be! We have expended so much labor on learning that external things are not as they appear to us to be—very well! the case is the same with the inner world! Moral actions are in reality ‘something other than that’—more we cannot say: and all actions are essentially unknown.” (*D* 116)

“...as one observes or recollects any action, it is and remains impenetrable; that our opinions about ‘good’ and ‘noble’ and ‘great’ can never be proven true by our actions because every act is unknowable; that our opinions, valuations, and tables of what is good are certainly some of the most powerful levers in the machinery of our actions, but that in each case, the law of its mechanism is unprovable.” (*GS* 335)

“Just as in the celestial realm, the track of one planet will sometimes be determined by two suns; just as, in certain cases, suns of different colors will shine on a single planet with red light one moment and green light the next, and then strike it again, inundating it with many colors all at once: in the same way, thanks to the complex mechanics of *our* “starry skies,” we modern men are determined by a *diversity* of morals; our actions shine with different colors in turn, they are rarely unambiguous, – and it happens often enough that we perform *multi-colored* actions.” (*BGE* 215)

“Today, when we immoralists, at least, suspect that the decisive value is conferred by what is specifically *unintentional* about an action, and that all its intentionality, everything about it that can be seen, known, or raised to “conscious awareness,” only belongs to its surface and skin – which, like every skin, reveals something but

*conceals* even more? In short, we believe that the intention is only a sign and symptom that first needs to be interpreted, and that, moreover, it is a sign that means too many things and consequently means almost nothing by itself.” (BGE 32)

There is a distinction and even a tension between ‘what we do’ and ‘how we *comprehend* or *evaluate* our deeds’, which made Nietzsche critical of how self-conscious thought features in individuality. What we know about who we are (i.e., self-knowledge) stems from what we make of our actions, but the self-image arising from reflecting on those actions is already shaped by our various interests, values and needs. In short, our drives distort our self-image and these drives are not necessarily *individual*; in fact, the *need* for a self-image itself is an inherited drive set up in opposition to individuality from the outset (more on this below). In certain passages, he even argues that “we remain strange to ourselves *out of necessity*” (GM Pref., 1, my emphasis; see also D 115 & 539). It is pertinent to inquire into his conception of ‘knowledge’, however. What limits does he place on ‘knowledge’? Adequate answers to these questions are beyond the scope of the thesis, but I will suggest some preliminary remarks because they inform on his views on individuality.

Nietzsche’s conceptual tools imply that self-knowledge *ideally* yields a self-image showing what drives us. By implication, what he rejects is that we have knowledge of our drives as they are *in themselves*, that is, independent from their targets and activities at any particular moment. To know our drives as they are *in themselves* is a hopeless endeavour, because we are already *interested* in something when we strive for self-knowledge and this debunks the ‘purity’ or independent authority of that knowledge. Our interests and thus, by extension, our drives partake in the acquisition of self-knowledge and the formulation of a self-image. Something *drives* us to seek and obtain self-knowledge, which we must factor into any analysis of the self-image that is the product of this drive to self-knowledge.<sup>179</sup> In short, something *drives us* to know ourselves, which we cannot separate from what we recognise about ourselves. This drive(s) *distorts* self-knowledge and so he rejects its purity. Does this mean that he rejects the possibility of self-knowledge? I will argue no. We can still have self-knowledge, but at the expense of lowering our expectations and standards in respect to that knowledge. Self-knowledge means knowing ourselves in a ‘specific light’. We know ourselves correlative to *some* drive(s) or *hierarchy* of drives (or drive relations).

Nietzsche rejects the conditions Schopenhauer placed on knowledge, namely, as the cognition of something not *distorted* by the will. To ‘know’ ourselves independent from our drives commits us to a conception of knowledge *not* as an activity in which we engage, i.e., something *we are doing* or obtain through effort (cf. BGE 45). It commits us to conceiving knowledge as a kind of inspiration or a vision that comes instantly and effortlessly. It can even commit us to construing it as a privilege bestowed upon us from somewhere outside of us and independent from our effort. This flies in the face of our experience of obtaining an insight or of arriving at any conclusion, which require *some* effort and presuppose *some*

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<sup>179</sup> Nietzsche analysis of the scholar is useful towards showing why pure self-knowledge is impossible and that what we know about ourselves is shaped by our ‘drives’ to accord with their characteristic behaviours (BGE 6).

preliminary activity on our part. The previous effort and activity, in turn, presuppose our drives. Accordingly, our drives underpin our effort to attain knowledge, including self-knowledge; they *distort* both. We cannot *possibly* possess ‘pure’, will-less or ‘disinterested’ knowledge, according to Nietzsche, at least not in the way Schopenhauer comprehended it.

We should remark that this is not the position Schopenhauer held over ‘knowledge’ due to his correlation theory of cognition. We recall that, according to Schopenhauer, to be ‘disinterested’ means to project the will on the target of our cognition, i.e., to *identify* with it. What he calls ‘disinterested’ knowledge represents an *interest* in the target. Where I think the two differ is in the proposition that projection of the will gives us what Schopenhauer calls the ‘target’s clearest image’. Nietzsche rejects the claim that projection of the will on the target of cognition gives us a sort of veracity (more on this below).

In sum, what underpins our quest for self-knowledge and so explains our *interest* in acquiring self-knowledge can be *any* drive(s) or *drive relation*, according to Nietzsche. The core proposition showing his views on the limits of ‘knowledge’ is the following: the *drives* (not ‘something else’) underpins (self-) knowledge. This prevents us from possessing a pure or clear image of the target, including if the target is ourselves. Therefore, he works with a different conception of ‘pure’ objectivity than his predecessor. The following passage shows his views on the limits of ‘knowledge’:

“We simply have no organ for *knowing*, for ‘truth’: we ‘know’ (or believe or imagine) exactly as much as is *useful* to the human herd, to the species: and even what is here called ‘usefulness’ is finally also just a belief, a fiction, and perhaps just that supremely fatal stupidity of which we some day will perish.” (GS 354)

Seemingly, then, Nietzsche does not reject the possibility of knowledge, but examines the *interest* we take in it and how that interest shapes it. This ‘interest’ leads him to reject the possibility of ‘pure’ knowledge and argue for an alternative conception: our interests (and thus our drives) distort our knowledge. This distortion occurs at the root of cognition; so becoming conscious of something *itself* involves distortion (more on this below).

To return to our discussion on deliberation and our self-image, Nietzsche’s rejection of Schopenhauer’s claim that our self-image represents *our* perspective on our own actions requires extensive analysis. We can formulate the major premise of his rejection via the following question: why do we *need* to reflect on *ourselves* prior to acting in the first place? Why does our self-image matter to our actions? We do not *need* self-consciousness to act, according to him. The fact that our self-conscious thoughts participate in our deliberations and actions, when we do *not* need them to act, is what requires explanation:

“The problem of consciousness (or rather, of becoming conscious of something) first confronts us when we begin to realise how much we can do without it; and now we are brought to this initial realisation by physiology and natural history (which have thus required two hundred years to catch up with *Leibniz’s* precocious suspicion). For we could think, feel, will, remember, and also ‘act’ in every sense of the term, and yet none of all this would have to ‘enter our consciousness’ (as one says figuratively). All of life would be possible without, as it were, seeing itself in the mirror; and still

today, the predominant part of our lives actually unfolds without this mirroring—of course also our thinking, feeling, and willing lives, insulting as it may sound to an older philosopher. *To what end* does consciousness exist at all when it is basically superfluous?” (GS 354)

If we can actually decide and even act without seeing ourselves “in the mirror” (GS 354), then what explains self-conscious thoughts and actions? What explains our ‘overestimation’ of consciousness with respect to the organism (cf. GS 11)? If the activity (or aim) Z was the *only* factor driving my deliberation, which also leads me to action X, then I do not need to consider ‘what I might ‘look like’ if I did X as opposed to Y’ in relation to Z. For example, if I deliberate on the aim (i.e., drive or will) to acquire a television independent from other considerations, then only its acquisition would matter to my deliberations. Any deliberations on how to acquire a television, *ceteris paribus*, do not *need* to take into account ‘how I appear’ in acquiring it unless my ‘appearance’ played some role in the *end* of acquiring it. Equally, if my ‘appearance’ *did* matter, but only *to me*, as Schopenhauer claims, then the difference between the following options is down to how *I* want to appear *to myself*: ‘stealing someone’s television’, ‘purchasing it after saving money’, ‘seeking a disposable one from another person’ and so on. The previous is paradoxical, however, since how I want to appear to myself is satisfied by Z, i.e., the fact that I want to acquire a television. Nietzsche accepts that our appearance partakes in deliberation, but for different reasons and in a different way than Schopenhauer suggests, because he had a different conception of consciousness.

Nietzsche’s conception of ‘consciousness’ is not as a ‘thing’ or as a ‘substance’ that is incommensurate with the ‘physical’ world and that it supervenes on that world. Likewise, the previous is not the conception Schopenhauer can legitimately defend, but he seemingly flirts with it in his views on ascetic resignation. Nietzsche gives an account of consciousness commensurate with the ‘physical’ world using the will-body identity and by offering a genealogical account of it. He traces the roots of consciousness to something ‘preconscious’, i.e., drives. His genealogical account of ‘consciousness’ aims to show that it represents the activity of a drive or drive relation. This genealogical account stems from two propositions entrenched in the will-body identity. First, ‘how we appear’ (i.e., our self-image) affects our actions and represents the activity of a drive(s) or drive relation. Second, ‘how we appear’ matters to us, but the perspective they underpin is *not* our own, but *other people’s* perspective on us.

After he rejects ‘pure’ knowledge, Nietzsche construes our self-image as the activity of a *drive* or *drive relation*. Something *drives* us to formulate a self-image, which is thus in the trenches with our other drives. He argues this drive finds its *root* in (or represents the activity of) our ‘*obedience* to authority’, which he also calls our “habituation to authority—a habituation that is as old as mankind itself” (HHI 89 & 96). In GM, he argues that we can trace it to the most rudimentary forms of society. Seemingly, his major premise and so his departure from Schopenhauer is his construing self-conscious agency as the introduction of the *drive* for a self-image into the drive complex. This drive is not mysterious, miraculous

or ‘other-worldly’. He explains it genealogically by appealing to the ‘*internalisation of man*’ (*GM II*, 16; my emphasis).<sup>180</sup>

In championing deliberation’s role in determining our individuality, Schopenhauer does not note that we add to the decision making process not *our* perspective on *our* actions, but *another’s* perspective. Deliberation is not our choosing the most fitting action in relation to our will based on our self-image, since this choice does not require self-conscious thought and so a self-image. Even if our self-image is our becoming familiar with our will using our actions, as he claims, then nothing explains our *need* to do so. We need this explanation after we take into account the fact that we can (re)act *without* self-consciousness. A mechanism with a sufficiently complex algorithm could function in accordance with its programming and realise its outcome in relation to certain conditions or within certain parameters. These mechanisms are not *self-conscious* agents, however, and we cannot confuse them for self-conscious agents. What makes us *self-conscious* agents, in Nietzsche’s view, is how other people’s perspective on us interjects our deliberations and thus affects our actions, but this perspective does not make us individual. Accordingly, he *defines* deliberation as a drive or drive relation (cf. *GS* 333) or as representing the activity of a drive in the trenches with other drives.

We saw previously that the third-person perspective, which makes possible our self-image, led Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will to an impasse. Nietzsche overcomes this impasse by arguing that the third-person perspective on ourselves is *not* our own, although we *do* sometimes confuse it for our own and explains what accounts for this confusion. His predecessor was a culprit of this confusion, according to Nietzsche. Deliberation introduces ‘how we appear to other people’, which shows the activity of an inherited, unyielding drive or a *need* for ‘authority’ or ‘command’ (cf. *D* 9). This inherited drive excludes our individual perspective at the outset and by definition; in fact, it set up to oppose our individuality.

Let us pose some key questions that shed light on the insight in Nietzsche’s account of deliberation. Why must we consider ‘what would we look like if we did *this* instead of *that*’? To *whom* would we ‘appear as *doing something*’ when we do X instead of Y? Why would a self-image matter to *us* or our needs (i.e., for food or a television), which underpin our actions or determine the best course of action? In short, why does it matter if I steal a television (if I could do so easily and get away with it), or if I look for one at a scrapyard, or if I purchase one, or if I ask someone to offer me their spare one? Why should ‘*how* I look as I go about attaining an end’ feature into the decision-making process in a way that (sometimes) affects the end *itself*? In deliberating on a course of action, why do I have to picture *myself* acting, rather than the *consequences* of my actions? He puts these questions and their corresponding concerns in the following, admittedly more eloquent manner:

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<sup>180</sup> The concepts that Nietzsche often uses for this unusual kind drive that is part of our deliberation is ‘vanity’ or ‘pride’, but likewise ‘shame’. In other occasions, he distinguishes between vanity and pride. For a look into how he uses these concepts see especially (*HHI* 89 & *WS* 181; see also *D* 301, 394 & 403; *HHI* 82, 107, 141, 162, 457, 545, 574 & 583; *HHII* 50; *WS* 31; *BGE* 261; *TI*, ‘Skirmishes’, 19 & 47).

“Your judgement, ‘that is right’ has a prehistory in your drives, inclinations, aversions, experiences, and what you have failed to experience; you have to ask, ‘*how* did it emerge there?’ and then also, ‘*what* is really impelling me to listen to it?’ You can listen to its commands like a good soldier who heeds the command of his officer. Or like a woman who loves the one who commands. Or like a flatterer and coward who fears the commander. Or like a fool who obeys because he can think of no objection. In short, there are a hundred ways to listen to your conscience. But *that* you hear this or that judgment as the words of conscience, i.e. *that* you feel something to be right may have its cause in your never having thought much about yourself and in your blindly having accepted what has been labeled *right* since your childhood; or in the fact that fulfilling your duties has so far brought you bread and honors—and you consider it right because it appears to you as *your own* ‘condition of existence’ (and that you have a *right* to existence seems irrefutable to you). For all that, the *firmness* of your moral judgment could be evidence of your personal wretchedness, of lack of a personality; your ‘moral strength’ might have its source in your stubbornness—or in your inability to envisage new ideals.” (GS 335)

Schopenhauer is silent on these points, because he construes the will as a fixed, inalterable unity. The only genuine change to the will he identifies is negation of the will to life based on the subjective correlate of aesthetic contemplation. Schopenhauer lacks the conceptual tools or their refinement to answer the above questions. Nietzsche’s concept of the ‘drive’, however, is flexible enough to go further. It permits him to claim that deliberation is a drive relation that it differs from other drive relations by the introduction of a new drive into the drive complex; one that represents other people’s perspective on our actions. He describes it as the ‘*need* for authority’ or ‘our *habituation* to authority’, which he traces to the most rudimentary form of communal life.

In sum, deliberation is a drive relation, for Nietzsche. Moreover, the self-conscious ‘I’ we attribute to self-conscious agency represents the activity of a drive in the trenches with other drives. In the next chapter, I look at the origins of the self-conscious ‘I’, which he proposes as his solution to the problem of the superfluity of consciousness. This origin is crucial, because it forms the bedrock of his views on self-conscious agency, morality and his objections to the ascetic ideal.

## 2.8 Nietzsche’s Method, the ‘Conceptual Link’ and the Origin of Self-conscious Agency

In the previous chapter, I assessed Nietzsche’s conception of deliberation and our self-image in lieu of his rejection of Schopenhauer’s account of individuality. The following three propositions summarise the grounds for his rejection. First, our actions are not *necessarily*

‘individual’ because they can express ‘customs’ and so the common actions of a community. Nevertheless, only our actions reveal our individuality (or its lack thereof). Second, what distinguishes deliberate actions from their counterparts is the introduction of our self-image to the deliberation process. He construes our self-image as taking into account the so-called ‘herd perspective’ on our actions. The herd perspective opposes individuality, in principle. Third, deliberation is a drive relation and our self-image represents the activity of a drive in the trenches with the other drives. The latter shows Nietzsche’s adherence to the will-body identity, but we still have work to do to explain how it fits with his adherence to ontological monism and immanence such that it can avoid the so-called phantom.

In this chapter, I will expand on Nietzsche’s account of self-conscious agency by assessing the arguments he formulates with respect to its origin, which will, in turn, explain why he construes our self-image and the self-conscious ‘I’ as (representing the activity of) a drive. I will also introduce a concept that I think helps us recognise an important element of Nietzsche’s methodology and approach to philosophical problems, or to explaining hard phenomena like self-conscious agency and ascetic resignation. This element is what he calls ‘historical philosophising’, which he analyses using his drive psychology.

Nietzsche makes several claims about historical philosophising in his early work, which are crucial for making sense of his solution to the problem of the ‘superfluity of consciousness’. I chose this as my entry point into his methodology, because consciousness is the defining feature of self-conscious agency.

Nietzsche’s methodology begins by setting the foundations for a distinction between what he calls the ‘historical’ approach to philosophical problems and the ‘metaphysical’ approach, which he identifies as the preoccupation of the philosophers of his day. The latter was presumably also Schopenhauer’s approach. He aims to demonstrate the value of what he calls ‘historical philosophising’ with regard to philosophical questions and problems by assessing the *origin* of the phenomena and concepts that feature in the construction of those questions and problems. He distinguishes the two approaches as follows:

“Almost all the problems of philosophy once again pose the same form of question as they did two thousand years ago: how can something originate in its opposite... *Metaphysical philosophy* has hitherto surmounted this difficulty by denying that the one originates in the other and assuming for the more highly valued thing a miraculous source in the very kernel and being of the ‘thing in itself’. *Historical philosophy*, on the other hand, which can no longer be separated from natural science, the youngest of all philosophical methods, has discovered in individual cases (and this will probably be the result in every case) that there are no opposites, except in the customary exaggeration of popular or metaphysical interpretations, and that a mistake in reasoning lies at the bottom of this antithesis... All we require, and what can be given us only now the individual sciences have attained their present level, is a *chemistry* of the moral, religious and aesthetic conceptions and sensations, likewise of all the agitations we experience within ourselves in cultural and social intercourse, and indeed even when we are alone...” (*HHI* 1; some emphasis is mine)

Nietzsche treats philosophical problems pertaining to origins via ‘historical philosophising’, which in the philosophical commentary we often construe as his genealogy or genealogical analysis. What I want to suggest here is that this approach to philosophical problems is built on his rejection of the metaphysical or ‘ontological’ opposition between seemingly ‘distinct’ things, not his rejection of metaphysics or ontology *tout court*. Nietzsche’s approach has its own metaphysical and ontological commitments, as we saw with his acceptance of the will-body identity. He even explicitly voices his ontological commitments in his late notebooks:

“*My intention* to show the absolute homogeneity in all that happens and the application of the moral distinction as only *perspectivally conditioned*; to show how everything that is morally praised is *the same in essence* as everything immoral and how, like every development of morality, it was only made possible by immoral means and for immoral ends...” (WLN 10[154]; some emphasis is mine)

His genealogical method aims to compensate for what he identifies as a prevalent theoretical deficiency of the philosophers of his day, which he describes as follows:

“*Lack of historical sense* is the family failing of all philosophers; many, without being aware of it, even take the most recent manifestation of man, such as has arisen under the impress of certain religions, even certain political events, as the fixed form from which one has to start out. They will not learn that *man has become*, that *the faculty of cognition has become*; while some of them would have it that the whole world is spun out of this faculty of cognition... But *everything has become*: there are *no eternal facts*, just as there are no absolute truths. Consequently what is needed from now on is *historical philosophising*, and with it the virtue of modesty.” (HHI 2; some emphasis is mine)

In other words, ‘historical philosophising’ is his proposed alternative to the ‘rage for generalisation’ we saw previously. His concerns over philosophical method are not limited to his early writings, however. We find them also in his later work:

“[Y]ou have to respect the good spirits which preside in these historians of morality! But it is unfortunately a fact that *historical spirit itself is lacking* in them, they have been left in the lurch by all the good spirits of history itself! As is now established philosophical practice, they all think in a way that is essentially unhistorical; this can’t be doubted. The idiocy of their moral genealogy is revealed at the outset when it is a question of conveying the descent of the concept and judgment of ‘good’.” (GM I, 2; my emphasis)

Historical philosophising characterises his treatment of philosophical problems. What this method amounts to, why he prefers it and how it differs from other philosophical methods is not always clear. Unfortunately, I cannot analyse in sufficient detail the merits and limits of this method or his reasons for preferring it. Instead, I will focus on his use of it with respect to the concepts central to this thesis. First, I assess his use of it to offer a revisionist account of self-conscious agency; this will be the focus of the following few chapters, which



will pivot on the new term and concept I will shortly introduce, i.e., the ‘conceptual link’. Second, I will assess how his method has its own ontological commitments, which will be the topic of the chapter in which I present my alternative solution to the lack of fit.

Nietzsche recognises a limitation in the philosophical analyses and assessments of his day with respect to hard cases or phenomena, especially with respect to the assessment of the origin of moral values in light of the natural (or mechanical) world, i.e., the objective picture. The dominant philosophical method of his time, according to him, lacked what he calls a ‘historical sense’: an understanding of how the phenomena and the concepts we use to comprehend them *become, grow and undergo changes over time*. He aims to overcome this apparent limitation while maintaining the inherent aim for the truth. What is relevant for my purposes is his use of this method to explain self-conscious agency.

A central feature of this method is the claim that begins by postulating a so-called “*chemistry of the moral, religious and aesthetic conceptions and sensations*” (HHI 1). There are two reasons for my focusing on this claim. Firstly, I think the concept of a ‘chemistry’ demonstrates his broader views on agency, which includes self-conscious agency, but also his approach to phenomena in general, i.e., as complexes or wholes composed of parts. In short, he has a revisionist conception of self-conscious agency as a complex or a compound of drives, which replaces the dominant view of self-conscious agency as the operation or the interjection of one *kind* of substance or thing on another kind. Second, it shows why ‘consciousness’ is a drive or drive relation. Historical philosophising, or so he conjectures, offers us a plausible and alternative conception of consciousness as an *inherited* drive, rather than as a ‘thing’ or ‘substance’. Self-conscious agency represents the activity of such a drive in its relations with other drives. He explains the origin of this drive by appealing to the so-called ‘internationalisation of man’ (cf. GM II, 16). Before we analyse the latter, however, I assess what he means by the ‘*chemistry of concepts and sensations*’ using other passages in his work and why he thinks we should approach this chemistry historically and therefore as something that has become.

Nietzsche reveals what he means by a ‘chemistry’ in a passage where he discusses how we should analyse hard cases or phenomena like ‘holiness’ and ‘asceticism’. He argues that we should construe them as having *multiple* causes, that is, to treat them as possessing separable, but *entwined* parts:

“The first general probability one arrives at when reflecting on holiness and asceticism is that its nature is a *complex* one: for almost everywhere, within the physical world as well as in the moral, the supposedly marvellous has successfully been traced back to the complex, to the multiply caused. Let us therefore venture first

to isolate individual drives in the soul of the saint and ascetic and then conclude by thinking of them *entwined* together.” (*HHI* 136; some emphasis is mine)<sup>181</sup>

Those he identifies as philosophers and moralists are apparently inclined to construe hard cases like character (presumably meaning actions and values) of ascetics as “inexplicable altogether unnatural, supernatural, miraculous” (*HHI* 136). There is a precondition to his method, however, which shows us his general approach to philosophy. This precondition is to conceive one’s character (but also any phenomenon) as a complex or compound, which undergoes changes over time.<sup>182</sup> In the philosophical commentary, we often construe this complex as composed of heterogeneous parts (or ‘things’); we defend a distinction in kind between the (self-conscious) ‘I’ and (unconscious) drives. His ‘historical philosophising’ aims to avoid appealing to ontological dualism by proposing that we construe a phenomenon as a complex that becomes. Our philosophical task is to analyse, speculate or investigate the reasons and conditions under which this complex became and how it might change given a change in those reasons and conditions.

Nietzsche’s own ontological commitments lead him to treat phenomena as composed of parts (‘drives’) that *entwine* to form a whole, not individual ‘things’ that are distinct in kind that somehow interact. The method of historical philosophising and so assessing the reasons and conditions under which drives entwine over time allows him to preserve his commitment to ontological monism and immanence. Likewise it allows him to explain these phenomena and hard cases in a different, revisionist manner, which escapes the difficulties he saw as plaguing the metaphysicians of his day. The ascetic character, for example, is a *complex of drives*, which we can separate conceptually, even though we are obligated to treat as *entwined* or a ‘unity’ that has *become*. This unity originates or emerges from somewhere, i.e., some relations among things or given some conditions that actually exist or existed at some time. It grows and develops in different ways over time, given different conditions and circumstances. The previous views on the ascetic character apply equally to his views on self-conscious agency: it constitutes his approach to philosophical problems and typifies his philosophical method.

What Nietzsche makes of the separate, individual parts of the human character, i.e., his thoughts on their interaction and emergence is, I believe, where his philosophical method reveals its uniqueness. He conceives of the human character as a complex or compound of *drives*, not *things*. He deems the concept of a ‘drive’ (and drive relations) as sufficient for

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<sup>181</sup> See also his characterisation of ‘English psychologists’: “[t]hese English psychologists - just what do they want... what is it that actually drives these psychologists in precisely *this* direction all the time... a bit of everything, a bit of meanness, a bit of gloominess, a bit of anti-Christianity, a bit of a thrill and need for pepper?” (*GM I*, 1). There are other passages wherein Nietzsche points to a similar comprehension and understanding of human agency and actions as complex or a compound of drives (see, e.g., *HHI* 14 & 252; *GS* 7, 21, 111, 113 & 333; *D* 38, 115, 119, 422, & 560; *TI*, ‘Skirmishes’, 45; *EH*, ‘Zarathustra’, 6; *BGE* 6, 12, 19, 20, 36, 201 & 215).

<sup>182</sup> Clark (2015) also rightly recognises this method in Nietzsche: “I have tried to show that much of Nietzsche’s work on morality involves prying apart central components of our concept of morality and showing how these strands came together in the course of human history” (Clark 2015, 40). This method is Nietzsche’s philosophical method.

explaining the seemingly inexplicable and miraculous phenomena pertaining to actions and values in relation to those phenomena. His conception of self-conscious agency likewise proceeds from positing a complex of drives and explains this complex through historical philosophising. Based on the latter method, self-conscious agency is not *distinct in kind* from unselfconscious agency, but an offshoot of it. Thus, we can explain the *apparent* superfluity of consciousness without appealing to the intervention or emergence of imaginary entities, extraordinary causes or phantoms, which forces us to conclude that the actual phenomenon in question is ‘marvellous, inexplicable and-or miraculous’. Self-conscious agency is the emergence of a new *drive* into the complex of drives that we are. This new drive represents a smooth transition from unselfconscious bodily movement to self-conscious agency, which does not commit him to the introduction of a new substance, but a new drive.

Nietzsche’s genealogical account of consciousness is a prerequisite step to making sense of what he means by self-conscious agency. In elucidating the previous, I will take my bearings from his claim that consciousness makes our actions appear “shallow, thin, relatively stupid, general, a sign, a herd-mark” (GS 354). Previously, I argued that his main objection to consciousness is that it appears ‘superfluous’ by comparison to an organism’s bodily functions and movements. This does not refute the existence of consciousness or its participation in our actions, but marks a step towards a revisionist account of consciousness. In other words, *that* consciousness *does* participates in our actions—even though it *appears* superfluous following our best theories about the movements of bodies in spacetime and the laws that govern those movements—is what requires explanation. The explanation he offers is genealogical. It begins by demonstrating that there is what I will call a ‘conceptual link’ between ‘consciousness’ and ‘communication’. He distinguishes the various parts inherent to becoming conscious of something and then proceeds to analyse them historically using his drive psychology. He aims to show *how* the previous parts *became* individually and then entwined into the complex whole that is the phenomenon in question.

Self-conscious agency is not the operation of one ‘thing’ on another ‘thing’, but a *chemistry* or *compound* of things linked conceptually. We can analyse and explain their link in terms of the emergence of the part in question and how the phenomenon in question became out of relations between the emerging parts. The aim, then, is to analyse and explain relations between the parts of a whole historically, rather than confining ourselves to logical or metaphysical analyses and explanations of the previous part-whole relationships. He aims to achieve this by appealing to ‘drives’, but he likewise speaks of ‘perspectives’, ‘instincts’, ‘sensations’, and so on, leaving open whether or not he intends us to comprehend each one as an extension of the drives. Nevertheless, the essential tenet of this method is to treat a phenomenon in question as a *whole* composed of parts that entwine. We can distinguish the parts using conceptual analysis and then apply his method of historical philosophising and drive psychology to explain how they emerged and entwined to produce the complex whole that is the phenomenon in question.

There is a ‘conceptual link’ between consciousness and communication, according to Nietzsche. The conceptual link captures the proposition that the previous two concepts demonstrate an irreducible relation in that we cannot conceive of one without the other. His

understanding of their relation is not metaphysical or ontological, but in terms of ‘ability’ or ‘need’, i.e., in terms of his drive psychology. He puts it as follows:

“...it seems to me that the subtlety and strength of consciousness is always related to a person’s (or animal’s) *ability to communicate*; and the ability to communicate, in turn, to the *need to communicate*. The latter should not to be taken to mean that precisely that individual who is a master at expressing his needs and at making them understood must also be the most dependent on others in his needs... where need and distress have for a long time forced people to communicate, to understand each other swiftly and subtly, there finally exists a surplus of this power and art of expression, a faculty, so to speak, which has slowly accumulated and now waits for an heir to spend it lavishly... Assuming this observation is correct, I may go on to conjecture that *consciousness in general has developed only under the pressure of the need to communicate*; that at the outset, consciousness was necessary, was useful, only between persons (particularly between those who commanded and those who obeyed); and that it has developed only in proportion to that usefulness. Consciousness is really just a net connecting one person with another—only in this capacity did it have to develop; the solitary and predatory person would not have needed it.” (GS 354)

His observation is that consciousness and communication are ‘conceptually linked’, but his account of this ‘link’ is revisionist in that he comprehends it through his drive psychology, not ontologically or metaphysically. According to his theory, consciousness arose from the *need to communicate*, i.e., from preconscious drives. Living under circumstantial pressures that require coordinated action for one reason or another sharpened the *need to communicate* and, in turn, our consciousness and its abilities.

Next, Nietzsche introduces language into the above conceptual link, which typifies the behaviours that we undertake when ‘communicating’ with others; see the following:

“For, once again: man, like every living creature, is constantly thinking but does not *know* it; the thinking which becomes *conscious* is only the smallest part of it, let’s say the shallowest, worst part—for only that conscious thinking *takes place in words, that is, in communication symbols*; and this fact discloses the origin of consciousness. In short, the development of language and the development of consciousness (*not* of reason but strictly of the way in which we become conscious of reason) go hand in hand. One might add that not only language serves as a bridge between persons, but also look, touch, and gesture; without our becoming conscious of our sense impressions, our power to fix them and as it were place them outside of ourselves, has increased in proportion to the need to convey them *to others* by means of signs. The sign-inventing person is also the one who becomes ever more acutely conscious of himself; for only as a social animal did man learn to become conscious of himself—he is still doing it, and he is doing it more and more.” (GS 354; some emphasis is mine)

“Language began at a time when psychology was in its most rudimentary form: we enter into a crudely fetishistic mindset when we call into consciousness the basic presuppositions of the metaphysics of language — in the vernacular: the presuppositions of reason. It sees doers and deeds all over: it believes that will has causal efficacy: it believes in the ‘I’, in the I as being, in the I as substance, and it projects this belief in the I-substance onto all things — this is how it creates the concept of ‘thing’ in the first place...” (*TI*, ‘Reason’, 5)

He extends the conceptual link from consciousness and communication into language, but language is just a vehicle for communication, for him. What is significant for our purposes is that the previous concepts are features of communal life or living and that he does not appeal to miraculous occurrences, incorporeal substances, phantoms or imaginary entities that somehow interject on the physical or mechanical world. Consciousness originates from a ‘need’ or terrible ‘must’, i.e., it originates in something preconscious or unconscious, as the following passage suggests:

“That our actions, thoughts, feelings, and movements—at least some of them—even enter into consciousness is the result of a *terrible ‘must’* which has ruled over man for a long time: as the most endangered animal, he *needed* help and protection, he needed his equals; he had to express his neediness and be able to make himself understood—and to do so, he first needed ‘consciousness’, i.e. even to ‘know’ what distressed him, to ‘know’ how he felt, to ‘know’ what he thought.” (*GS* 354; some emphasis is mine)

Communication is conceptually linked to becoming conscious of something, but developed out of the *need* to communicate. A person’s becoming conscious of something arose out of her need to communicate; the previous need accounts for the ‘emergence’ of consciousness as it does *now* for its ‘growth’ or ‘refinement’. Notice that he makes sense of the conceptual link by referring to or even positing certain circumstantial pressures or events and how an individual(s) manages them. The proposition that consciousness did not develop in the so-called ‘solitary’ or ‘predatory’ person (cf. *GS* 354) because she did not need it is misleading, however. It implies that certain persons, i.e., someone with certain drives, remain essentially unconscious. Predatory or solitary persons played a fundamental role in the emergence and growth of consciousness and he offers two reasons that demonstrate that key role, which he analyses elsewhere. First, he distinguishes consciousness from awareness or attentiveness. Second, he distinguishes the origin of something from its final purpose or usefulness. Let us look at the first reason before we discuss the second.

Nietzsche construes consciousness as a *property* of thought, not as a synonym for thought: he distinguishes between conscious and unconscious thoughts. We can elucidate this distinction using the implicit distinction between ‘consciousness’ and ‘awareness’. There is a difference between ‘being *aware* of something’ and ‘*knowing what* we are aware of’, which we can suggest as a candidate for distinguishing conscious from unconscious thoughts. For example, I can be *aware* of a pain I have and even localise it by directing my attention to it without ‘knowing what’ my pain is about. I can direct my attention towards my right rib cage and be *aware* of a pain localised there without *knowing* the pain is *my*

*body's* response to a biochemical event in my liver. I can attend to something without ascribing the appropriate 'communication symbol(s)' to it, as he puts it. I can be aware that *I* am in pain, not that *my body* is receiving stimuli relayed to my brain via neurotransmitters travelling on my spinal column as a result of a biochemical event in my liver. I *know* the third-person correlate of my pain (i.e., its mirror) is something occurring in my liver, but I can also be *aware* of my liver without possessing the previous 'knowledge' and thus without possession the communication symbol of 'liver', 'brain', 'spinal column' and so on. Accordingly, directing my attention to something is different from my 'knowing what' that thing is. According to him, I am (self) conscious as a result of knowing what something is and I can only know by first ascribing a communication symbol, i.e., a concept or word.

Nietzsche construes *knowing* (and its cognates) as conceptually linked to ascription of a 'communication symbol' (or a concept) to a target of my awareness, which he explains historically using his drive psychology. We *learn* or *acquire* communication symbols under the pressures of communal life. Thus, the acquisition and the application of communication symbols characterises my becoming *conscious* of something and it constitutes the difference between conscious and unconscious thoughts.

In sum, 'becoming conscious of something' involves *knowing* what it is that we direct our attention towards; it minimally involves my *aiming* at this knowledge. We ascribe a concept or communication symbol to the target of our awareness to become *conscious* of it and so as a precondition for knowledge. According to Nietzsche's genealogical account, awareness of something *precedes* 'knowing what' it is. Knowledge occurs through concepts, words or what he calls 'communication symbols', which we acquire over time by living in communities. Awareness does not place the *same* burden on us. We can direct our attention to things without requiring the ascription of a communication symbol by our drives fixing upon something.<sup>183</sup> In short, the drives exhibit unconscious features. They represent actions or behaviours that do not proceed from ascribing a communication symbol to something we are aware of, but bypass this ascription. For example, to *know* my pain is located in the 'liver' (or to have basic knowledge of anatomy), I have to first ascribe the communication symbol of 'liver' to a target of awareness and do so correctly; the conditions for correctness are set 'socially', i.e., by my participation in communal life. I have to first ensure that the communication symbol 'liver' *sticks* to *the* liver rather than to something else; this 'sticking' is part of a social or a communal process. We can explain this process psychologically, which, following his commitments, it means likewise explaining it physiologically. We can explain it in terms of our interests and actions, i.e., our *drives*. The concepts on whose ascription to something our 'becoming conscious of it' depends cannot *possibly* exist without the drives for the following—though by no means exhaustive—reasons:

- A) We would *not* direct our attention to anything in the first place without our interests and thus our drives.

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<sup>183</sup> For more 'consciousness' and 'conceptual content' in Nietzsche, see Katsafanas (2005).

- B) We would not *focus* on it long enough to *designate* it by a communication symbol, in the first place, without our interests and thus our drives.
- C) We would not have *that* communication symbol X *stick* to it and it alone against the constant pressure to replace it, without our interests and thus our drives.

Our drives have *priority* over consciousness for *explaining* our experiences, because our awareness *precedes* the ascription and ‘sticking’ of a communication symbol to the targets of our awareness, on which our ‘becoming conscious of something’ depends. We fix a communication symbol on the things that *interest* us; the targets or activities corresponding to our drives. In short, our ‘interests’ *precede* conscious thought. The previous leads him to argue that our drives explain why we ascribe a communication symbol to something, which, in turn, explains the emergence of consciousness.

Nietzsche makes another supposition in his account of the emergence or origin of consciousness. To *know* that some pain represents an occurrence on ‘my body’ requires me to assume a perspective on myself other than the first-person perspective:

“One might add that not only language serves as a bridge between persons, but also look, touch, and gesture; without our becoming conscious of our sense impressions, our power to fix them and as it were place them *outside of ourselves*, has increased in proportion to the need to convey them *to others* by means of signs. The sign-inventing person is also the one who becomes ever more acutely conscious of himself; for only as a social animal did man learn to become conscious of himself—he is still doing it, and he is doing it more and more.” (GS 354; some emphasis is mine)

The proposition that we place our sense impressions ‘outside of ourselves’ presumably means that we construe them as consequences of the stimulation of our organs, which, in turn, we see as objects among other external objects, i.e., Schopenhauer’s objective picture. Our self-conception as a body that interacts with other bodies or things finds its root in the *need* to communicate, Nietzsche argues. The will-body identity, which represents the insight of self-consciousness, is *not* miraculous or inexplicable. Contra Schopenhauer, who deems it as the “miracle *par excellence*”, Nietzsche argues that we can explain it as a complex that *becomes*. He breaks the complex up into its individual parts and analyses them historically; he considers their origin using his drive psychology:

“My idea is clearly that consciousness actually belongs not to man’s existence as an individual but rather to the community and herd-aspects of his nature; that accordingly, it is finely developed only in relation to its usefulness to community or herd; and that consequently each of us, even with the best will in the world to *understand* ourselves as individually as possible, ‘to know ourselves’, will always bring to consciousness precisely that in ourselves which is ‘non-individual’, that which is ‘average’; that due to the nature of consciousness — to the ‘genius of the species’ governing it — our thoughts themselves are continually as it were *outvoted* and translated back into the herd perspective.” (GS 354)

The conceptual link between the ‘herd perspective’ and becoming conscious of something, i.e., the need for communication and ascription of communication symbols to the targets of awareness, implies that consciousness arose from communal life and thus its characteristic features and pressures.

In sum, there is a difference between ‘*directing* our attention to something’ and our ‘*knowing* what we are direct our attention towards’, which he explains genealogically. This makes sense of the claim that the solitary or predatory person does not *need* consciousness. It is true that a solitary person can attend to something and (re)act without *having to* ascribe a communication symbol to the target of her awareness. Nevertheless, he must explain why she *did* acquire it all the same. I think he has a way of convincing his readers of the previous using his distinction between the emergence (or origin) of something and its usefulness or final purpose therefrom. Unlike those who *need* to communicate to survive, i.e., those who need it for adaptive, passive or reactive reasons, the solitary person *ascribed* and then later *appropriated* the communication symbols for wholly active reasons, i.e., to overpower, command, overcome, dominate, master and so on.

Although the so-called solitary person did not *need* consciousness, because he did not need to communicate, Nietzsche can explain how she was nonetheless instrumental in the acquisition of consciousness and how she acquires it for herself, all the same. To elucidate the previous, we have to turn our attention to his distinction between the *origin* of something and its final purpose or usefulness:

“[T]he origin of the emergence of a thing and its ultimate usefulness, its practical application and incorporation into a system of ends, are *toto coelo* separate; that anything in existence, having somehow come about, is continually interpreted anew, requisitioned anew, transformed and redirected to a new purpose by a power superior to it; that everything that occurs in the organic world consists of *overpowering*, *dominating*, and in their turn, overpowering and dominating consist of re-interpretation, adjustment, in the process of which their former ‘meaning’ [*Sinn*] and ‘purpose’ must necessarily be obscured or completely obliterated. No matter how perfectly you have understood the *usefulness* of any physiological organ (or legal institution, social custom, political usage, art form or religious rite), you have not yet thereby grasped how it emerged... every purpose and use is just a sign that the will to power has achieved mastery over something less powerful... the whole history of a ‘thing’, an organ, a tradition can to this extent be a continuous chain of signs, continually revealing new interpretations and adaptations, the causes of which need not be connected even amongst themselves, but rather sometimes just follow and replace one another at random.” (*GM* II, 16)

The emergence of consciousness is not restricted to people who *needed* to communicate ‘to survive’. Consciousness can also emerge in those who do not *need* it to survive or overcome circumstantial pressures. In short, ‘adaptation’ is a limited concept that does not capture *all* the distinct ways that something can emerge. Thus, adaptation is not the only explanation available to us when trying to explain the emergence of something.



Solitary persons can acquire consciousness for *different reasons* and thus put it towards different ends than survival. The end that Nietzsche has in mind is that of *power* in the active sense. It is possible that the solitary and predatory person engendered the circumstantial pressures encountered by the individuals who *had to adapt* to communal life or encountered the *need* to communicate. Accordingly, the predatory persons can explain the preconditions for the emergence of consciousness. His genealogical analysis of what he calls the most rudimentary forms of community, i.e., the original ‘state’ formations, claims that predatory persons played a fundamental role in their formation.

In Nietzsche view, the *need* to communicate stems from our ancestors being *forced* into living in communities and forced to accord to the command-obedience relationships of these early communities. Presumably, this meant not contesting the leader and so physically stronger member(s) of the community. Their transgressions from the community (and so their going against the leaders) resulted in severe retribution or punishment, which he construes as the infliction of ‘pain’ (cf. *GM II*, 4). The previous underpins the ‘terrible must’ and sets the conditions in place for the emergence, growth and reliance on ‘consciousness’. Some of the conditions he identifies are as follows:

- A) Imprinting of memory by inflicting pain (cf. *GM II*, 3).
- B) Sharpening the need to communicate and need for reason(s) (cf. *GS* 354 & *GM II*, 16).
- C) Internalising cruelty or the instincts for freedom (*GM II*, 16).

I will analyse further these conjectures on the origin of the community in the next chapter where I assess morality’s role in self-conscious agency. For now, however, I will focus on the supposition that the conditions for consciousness, i.e., the circumstances wherein the need to communicate flourished, did not arise from nowhere. Furthermore, these conditions were not arbitrary or idiosyncratic natural occurrences to which we passively adapted. They arose from the active and expansive will to power of human beings.

Consciousness emerges against the backdrop of certain conditions and pressures that can be ‘uncomfortable and unpleasant’ to ‘more elderly ears’ (cf. *GM II*, 12), according to Nietzsche. We often understand the emergence of something by postulating circumstantial pressures and concluding that ‘adaptation’ brought about the behaviour, custom or organ. With respect to consciousness, these pressures sharpened the need to communicate and so gave rise to the organ that represents consciousness in the organism, for example, the brain or a specific function of it. Consciousness arose for the sake of survival or so the common naturalist theories proclaim. Nietzsche rejects the proposition that ‘survival’ is the *modus operandi* or driving force of nature that then *explains* the emergence of anything. Rather, the so-called *kernel* of nature, which we must use to make sense of the emergence or origin of something, is what he calls the ‘will to power’. Adaptation is thus a by-product of the ‘will to power’.

Nietzsche rejects the general approach to historical philosophy and insight into the emergence of something that relies on ‘adaptation’, but note that, once again, his approach is revisionist. It does not reject ‘adaptation’ itself as a phenomenon to which we point and

about which we conjecture, but suggests a different conception of the phenomenon. His reason for arguing that adaptation is a by-product of the ‘will to power’ is that—contra to the theories to which he objects—he construes the *will* as inherently active and not passive or reactive:

“The democratic idiosyncrasy of being against everything that dominates and wants to dominate... the pressure of this idiosyncrasy forces ‘adaptation’ into the foreground, which is a second-rate activity, just a reactivity, indeed life itself has been defined as an increasingly efficient inner adaptation to external circumstances (Herbert Spencer). But this is to misunderstand the essence of life, its *will to power*, we overlook the prime importance that the spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, re-interpreting, re-directing and formative forces have, which ‘adaptation’ follows only when they have had their effect; in the organism itself, the dominant role of these highest functionaries, in whom the lifewill is active and manifests itself, is denied.”  
(*GM II*, 12)

The preconditions for the emergence of consciousness stem from an act of will proper, i.e., *overpowering, dominating, mastering* and so on. In short, the conditions that sharpened the *need* to communicate are contemporaneous with forming a community, which happened by an expansive act of will and so through the discharge of willpower, i.e., the ‘will to power’. Self-conscious agency follows from what makes a community possible. It follows from that which organises people. This organisation brings about the preconditions for *sharpening* the *need* to communicate, which precedes self-conscious thought. Thus, we should not put the cart before the horse in assessing the emergence of consciousness. The *need* to communicate arises from circumstantial pressures, but we cannot ignore the emergence of the previous pressures themselves or argue that they arise arbitrarily or are idiosyncratic. These pressures did not arise *ex nihilo*. They are rooted in *acts of will*: in the overpowering, dominating etc. of something or someone by something or someone else. Adaptation *follows from* or derives from these acts of will. The circumstantial pressures that permit adaptation are themselves consequences of acts of will.

Nietzsche’s proposal then is that a community—and the pressures and adaptations associated with it—stem from the *will to power* embodied in individuals who *engender* the preconditions for that community, i.e., they organise people into groups. These individuals also bring about the conditions for ‘maintaining’ the previous organisation, as he suggests in the following:

“[T]he shaping of a population, which had up till now been unrestrained and shapeless, into a fixed form, as happened at the beginning with an act of violence, could only be concluded with acts of violence, - that consequently the oldest ‘state’ emerged as a terrible tyranny, as a repressive and ruthless machinery, and continued working until the raw material of people and semi-animals had been finally not just kneaded and made compliant, but *shaped*... Whoever can command, whoever is a ‘master’ by nature, whoever appears violent in deed and gesture - what is he going to care about contracts! Such beings cannot be reckoned with, they come like fate,

without cause, reason, consideration or pretext, they appear just like lightning appears, too terrible, sudden, convincing and ‘other’ even to be hated. What they do is to *create* and *imprint* forms *instinctively*, they are the most *involuntary*, *unconscious* artists there are: - where they appear, soon something new arises, a structure of domination [*Herrschaftis-Gebilde*] that *lives*... They do not know what guilt, responsibility, consideration are, these born organisers; they are ruled by that terrible inner artist’ egoism which has a brazen countenance and sees itself justified to all eternity by the ‘work’, like the mother in her child.” (*GM II*, 17; some emphasis is mine)

We should attend to Nietzsche’s description of the progenitors’ character. The adverbs and adjectives he uses to describe them are revealing: they ‘can command’, they are ‘master by nature’, they are ‘violent in deed and gesture’, they are ‘like fate’, they are ‘sudden’, they ‘create and imprint forms instinctively’, and they experience ‘no guilt, responsibility or consideration’.<sup>184</sup> The origin of consciousness is *an act of will* proper. It stems from an *unconscious* urge to overpower, dominate, overcome and so on. Nevertheless, he also warns against construing this character’s actions as a *reaction* to resistance or as an *adaptation* to circumstantial pressures. He describes the creative character as *active*, rather than reactive: the will “grows spontaneously” (*GM I*, 10) in them. An overwhelming irritability impelling an outlet seems to assail them, in Nietzsche’s view. The previous individuals actively seek something on which they can *imprint*, *form*, *overpower*, *overcome*, *master* and so on.

In sum, there is a ‘conceptual link’ between consciousness, communication and language, according to Nietzsche. He separates consciousness into its constituent parts and then traces its root to the most rudimentary form of community, where members experience a *need* to communicate for coordinated action against the backdrop of certain circumstantial pressures. He nuances this genealogical account by tracing this need to the *formation* of a community, whose *root*, or so he claims, was an act of will, i.e., an overpowering, mastering, dominating and so on. Accordingly, the acts of will of violent individuals, which form and shape a community, i.e., the progenitors of a community who organise people into groups, engendered circumstantial pressures that invoked and sharpened the need to communicate. They were responsible for that ‘terrible must’ (cf. *GS* 354) to which he refers.

In the next chapter, I assess his introduction of morality to the conceptual link, which plays an arguably more substantial role in his philosophy. This element is more pertinent to the conceptual link and sheds more light on his account of individuality and self-conscious agency. Likewise, it sheds more light on how solitary and predatory persons underwent the circumstantial pressures of their own invention; those *same* pressures that they engendered to shape communities out of individuals.

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<sup>184</sup> Compare these descriptions with the nobles in the first essay: they have “a desire to overthrow, crush, become master, to be a thirst for enemies, resistance and triumphs” (*GM I*, 13; see also *GM I*, 11).

## 2.9 Self-conscious Agency and the Origin of Morality

In the previous chapter, I assessed Nietzsche's views on the origin of consciousness and I argued that there is a conceptual link between consciousness, language and communication, which we should comprehend using his distinctive method of 'historical philosophising'. He argues that consciousness arises from the need to communicate and thus represents the internalisation of communal life, which I will define and refine in this chapter. Moreover, communal life arose from an *act of will*, which plays an irreducible role in explaining the emergence of the circumstantial pressures responsible for the emergence of consciousness. The previous also explains how solitary and predatory persons partake in the emergence of consciousness without necessarily needing to communicate. I will assess how Nietzsche's genealogical analysis goes further than the emergence of consciousness. I will show that he introduces morality or moral responsibility into the conceptual link between consciousness, communication and language. I begin by identifying the relevant passages demonstrating the previous addition to the conceptual link and then assess what he derives from it about self-conscious agency.

Nietzsche introduces 'morality' into the conceptual link between consciousness, language and communication by demonstrating the explanatory limits and thus the value of our linguistic grasp of the world and experiences. As we saw previously, language grows out of and represents the need to communicate, so it is perspective limited what is common or communal, i.e., to what we can *communicate* about our experiences, rather than extending fully to our experiences *themselves* as a whole:

"Language and the prejudices upon which language is based are a manifold hindrance to us when we want to explain inner processes and drives: because of the fact, for example, that words really exist only for *superlative* degrees of these processes and drives; and where words are lacking, we are accustomed to abandon exact observation because exact thinking there becomes painful; indeed, in earlier times one involuntarily concluded that where the realm of words ceased the realm of existence ceased also. Anger, hatred, love, pity, desire, knowledge, joy, pain—all are names for *extreme* states: the milder, middle degrees, not to speak of the lower degrees which are continually in play, elude us, and yet it is they which weave the web of our character and our destiny." (D 115)<sup>185</sup>

In the above passage, he suggests that the limits of language are *synonymous* to those of conscious thought. Later in the same passage, however, he adds that the limits of conscious

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<sup>185</sup> Compare this quote to the following: "due to the nature of animal consciousness, the world of which we can become *conscious is merely a surface- and sign-world*, a world turned into generalities and thereby debased to its lowest common denominator, — that everything which enters consciousness thereby becomes shallow, thin, relatively stupid, general, a sign, a herd-mark; that all becoming conscious involves a vast and thorough corruption, falsification, superficialisation, and generalisation" (GS 354).

thought and the limits of language are concomitant with the limits of *responsibility*. In other words, there is a conceptual link between consciousness, communication, language, and responsibility:

“*We are none of us* that which we appear to be in accordance with the states for which alone we have consciousness and words, and consequently *praise and blame...*” (D 115; some emphasis is mine)

We are morally praiseworthy or blameworthy, for Nietzsche, not for who we *actually* are, which is essentially unknowable, but for who we ‘appear’ to be. Compare the above claim about the limits of responsibility with the following about the limits of self-knowledge:

“No one who judges, ‘in this case everyone would have to act like this’ has yet taken five steps towards self-knowledge. For he would then know that there neither are nor can be actions that are all the same; that every act ever performed was done in an altogether unique and unrepeatable way, and that this will be equally true of every future act; that all prescriptions of action (even the most inward and subtle rules of all moralities so far) relate only to their rough exterior; that these prescriptions may yield an appearance of sameness, *but only just an appearance*; that as one observes or recollects *any* action, it is and remains impenetrable; that our opinions about ‘good’ and ‘noble’ and ‘great’ can never be *proven true* by our actions because every act is unknowable; that our opinions, valuations, and tables of what is good are certainly some of the most powerful levers in the machinery of our actions, but that in each case, the law of its mechanism is unprovable.” (GS 335)

Compare the above passage with the following prescription:

“Let us therefore *limit* ourselves to the purification of our opinions and value judgements and to the *creation of tables of what is good that are new and all our own*: let us stop brooding over the ‘moral value of our actions’! Yes, my friends, it is time to feel nauseous about some people’s moral chatter about others. Sitting in moral judgement should offend our taste. Let us leave such chatter and such bad taste to those who have nothing to do but drag the past a few steps further through time and who never live in the present — that is, to the many, the great majority!” (GS 335)

Seemingly, he envisages a sense of responsibility based on the first-person perspective, thus on one’s individual experience. To understand the significance of morality in self-conscious agency, we should juxtapose it to his so-called “history of the origins of responsibility” (GM II, 2).

Nietzsche breaks down the concept of responsibility into its constituent parts and applies his method of historical philosophising to offer an account of it. He does not give a clear presentation of these parts, and perhaps we should not expect such a presentation from him, but his descriptions are nevertheless illuminating in their own right:

“[M]an must first have learnt to distinguish between what happens by accident and what by design, to think causally, to view the future as the present and anticipate it,

to grasp with certainty what is end and what is means, in all, to be able to calculate, compute - and before he can do this, man himself will really have to become *reliable, regular, necessary*, even in his own *self-image*, so that he, as someone making a promise is, is answerable for his own *future!*" (*GM II*, 1; some emphasis is mine)

Responsibility requires us to assume a perspective on the world and on ourselves, which is synonymous to the objective picture. Unlike Schopenhauer, however, Nietzsche suggests a historical understanding of the objective picture as something that has *become* and therefore as emerging from somewhere. He naturalises the explanation of 'objective picture' of the world along with its subjective correlate, i.e., the impure subject of cognition, and does so using his drive psychology. Note that the objective picture requires us *to become objective ourselves*, first, according to Nietzsche. The individual has to view herself objectively, as a precondition for her viewing the world objectively or for her attaining the objective picture. Schopenhauer comprehends the objective picture in terms of the correlativity between the subject and the object (or target) of cognition; so, he does not conceive the subject as having become 'objective' herself or as having become 'pure' by a series of events, pressures and her responses to them. Thus, he appeals to logic and metaphysics to explain the correlativity. Nietzsche suggests a genealogical explanation. Our self-image has to change *before* our worldview changes. This change makes possible the projection of ourselves onto the targets of our awareness. In other words, we have to first become objective before we can project 'objecthood' on the target, which yields the 'objective (or mechanical) picture'. Therefore, making ourselves 'objective' is a *precondition* of perceiving an objective world, according to Nietzsche. Moreover, these preconditions also explain how we can *change ourselves* using our self-image (more on this below). Nevertheless, the main proposition is that there are preconditions to our acquiring a self-image, in the first place, which he aims to reveal.

A precondition of our self-image is, as we saw previously, our assuming another's perspective on our actions. Using Nietzsche's philosophical method, then, we can recognise that the previous perspective conceptually links to consciousness, communication, language and morality. He calls it the 'herd perspective' and argues that 'historical philosophising' reveals how a human being becomes *accustomed* to it or acquires it by virtue of communal life. We do not *just* possess it, which is tantamount to claiming that it comes from nowhere. Likewise, he does not construe it as the 'miracle par excellence', which was Schopenhauer's conception. We acquire it, according to Nietzsche:

"That particular task of breeding an animal with the prerogative to promise includes, as we have already understood, as *precondition* and *preparation*, the more immediate task of first making man to a certain degree necessary, uniform, a peer amongst peers, orderly and consequently predictable. The immense amount of labour involved in what I have called the 'morality of custom', the actual labour of man on himself during the longest epoch of the human race, his whole *prehistoric* labour, is explained and justified on a grand scale, in spite of the hardness, tyranny, stupidity and idiocy it also contained, by this fact: with the help of the morality of custom and the social straitjacket, man was *made* truly predictable." (*GM II*, 2; some emphasis is mine)

Other passages support the proposition that there is a conceptual link between the so-called ‘herd perspective’, morality and responsibility:

“You are willing to assume responsibility for everything! Except, that is, for your dreams! What miserable weakness, what lack of consistent courage! Nothing is *more* your own than your dreams! Nothing *more* your own work! Content, form, duration, performer, spectator — in these comedies you are all of this yourself! From this I conclude that the great majority of mankind must be conscious of having abominable dreams. If it were otherwise, how greatly this nocturnal poetising would have been exploited for the enhancement of human arrogance!” (D 128)<sup>186</sup>

He identifies a *conflict* between our individual perspective and the herd perspective. In most cases, the herd perspective wins the conflict and succeeds in suppressing our individuality and the drives that underpin it.

We notice how the above conflict plays out in the so-called ‘egoism’ of the majority, who construe their ‘ego’ as representing their ‘individuality’, but often confuse individuality for what they *consciously* think of themselves, which is a generic representation of who and what they are, according to Nietzsche:

“Whatever they may think and say about their ‘egoism’, the great majority nonetheless do nothing for their ego their whole life long: what they do is done for the phantom of their ego which has formed itself in the heads of those around them and has been communicated to them; — as a consequence they all of them dwell in a fog of impersonal, semi-personal opinions, and arbitrary, as it were poetical evaluations, the one for ever in the head of someone else, and the head of this someone else again in the heads of others: a strange world of phantasms — which at the same time knows how to put on so sober an appearance!” (D 105)

In accordance with his rejection of our claims to self-knowledge, he also rejects the claim that most of us practice genuine ‘egoism’, which, in the same passage, he describes in the following manner:

“This fog of habits and opinions lives and grows almost independently of the people it envelops; it is in this fog that there lies the tremendous effect of general judgments about ‘man’ — all these people, unknown to themselves, believe in the bloodless abstraction ‘man’, that is to say, in a fiction; and every alteration effected to this abstraction by the judgments of individual powerful figures (such as princes and philosophers) produces an extraordinary and grossly disproportionate effect on the great majority — all because no individual among this majority is capable of setting up a real ego, accessible to him and fathomed by him, in opposition to the general pale fiction and thereby annihilating it.” (D 105)

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<sup>186</sup> Compare this passage with the following: (D 116; BGE 21; WLN 10[83]).

He recognises an *opposition* or *conflict* between our individuality and the herd perspective, which conceptually links to communication, language, consciousness, morality and responsibility. Where does this *need* or *imperative* to outweigh the herd perspective over our individuality come from? Why *must* we assume the ‘herd perspective’, at all? What grounds the *need* to ‘see ourselves as from without’? Why *must* we consider another’s perspective on our actions, especially prior to our acting as we saw with deliberation and self-conscious agency? Why *must* we allow it to dictate the limits of what we may think, reason or discuss? Why do we allow it to distort our individuality and actions? He aims to answer this question historically, of course. Where does this *need* originate; under what conditions and pressures did it emerge? What are the *drives* that underpin its emergence? He rejects Schopenhauer’s supposition and the impasses that plagued it. He objects to the claim it originates in the *will*’s fundamental and immutable relation to itself. Where, then, does it originate?

Nietzsche links the above to morality and construes it in terms of its juxtaposition to individuality. Morality is the battleground between an individual and her community and it represents the interests of a community. It opposes the ‘individual’ interests of its members:

“Wherever we encounter a morality, we find an evaluation and ranking of human drives and actions. These evaluations and rankings are always the expression of the needs of a community and herd: that which *benefits it the most* — and second most, and third most — is also the highest standard of value for all individuals. With morality *the individual is instructed to be a function of the herd and to ascribe value to himself only as a function.*” (GS 116; my emphasis)

Other passages show the same account of morality as *opposing* individuality or subsuming it under its ends:

“The reproach of conscience is weak in even the most conscientious people compared to the feeling: ‘This or that is against the morals (die gute Sitte) of your society. Even the strongest person still fears a cold look or a sneer on the face of those among whom and for whom he has been brought up. What is he really afraid of? Growing solitary! This is the argument that refutes even the best arguments for a person or a cause.’” (GS 50)

“Since the conditions for preserving one community have been very different from those of another community, there have been very different moralities; and in view of essential changes in herds and communities, states and societies that are yet to come, one can prophesy that there will yet be very divergent moralities. Morality is herd-instinct in the individual.” (GS 116)



The so-called ‘herd instinct’ is our internalising<sup>187</sup> the community’s ‘evaluation and ranking of human drives and actions’ of which the individual is a member (more on this below). His claim is that our community’s values and perspective (i.e., its interests) *oppose* individuality and that they are entrenched in self-conscious thought.

What Nietzsche calls our *individual* drives are often in tension or in conflict with our ‘herd instincts’, i.e., the internalised ‘herd’ or so-called ‘herd perspective’. We internalise our community’s values:

“To be a self, to estimate oneself according to one’s own measure and weight—that was contrary to taste in those days. The inclination to this would have been considered madness, for every misery and every fear were associated with being alone (*Alleinsein*). Back then, ‘free will’ had bad conscience as its closest neighbour. The more unfreely one acted, the more the herd instinct and not the sense of self spoke through the action, the more moral one considered oneself. In those days, everything that hurt the herd, whether the individual had willed it or not, gave the individual pangs of conscience—and his neighbour as well; indeed, the whole herd!” (*GS* 117)<sup>188</sup>

His conception of ‘free will’ is representative of his conception of individuality: freedom of will is our acting in accordance with *our* reason and experience; it means *transcending* the moral values of our community. I will argue in the next chapter that by ‘transcending’ moral values, he does not mean negating or rejecting morality or moral values outright. He means the weaker or moderate proposition of moral reform or critique of morality. While striving for ‘freedom’, however, we experience an *internal* resistance or reproach of conscience (cf. *GS* 50) and *external* resistance(s) in the form of our cohabitants or the penal system (cf. *GS* 117), which are significant to our analysis. His ‘sovereign’ individual is free from both:

“...the morality of custom, an autonomous, supra-ethical individual (because ‘autonomous’ and ‘ethical’ are mutually exclusive) in short, we find a man with his own, independent, enduring will, whose prerogative it is to promise... The ‘free’ man, the possessor of an enduring, unbreakable will, thus has his own standard of value: in the possession of such a will...this rare freedom and power over himself and his destiny, has... become an instinct, his dominant instinct: - what will he call his dominant instinct, assuming that he needs a word for it? No doubt about the answer: this sovereign human being calls it his conscience. . .” (*GM II*, 2)

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<sup>187</sup> More research into Nietzsche’s conception of ‘internalisation’ could help disambiguate this central concept. It was first introduced in *GM*, but passages from other works likewise describe the internalisation of an independent authority, and then argue that this constitutes the basis of our conscience and need for morality. Human beings, for Nietzsche, internalise the need for an independent authority (or standard) by virtue of their prehistory—a need he associates with the herd instinct, which we express by our having to take into account our self-image in deliberating on a course of action or by our sense of responsibility as opposed to mere identity with our actions. The concept of an independent authority is an integral part of our self-conception, i.e. the self-conscious ‘I’, which means the herd instinct in us has become active and is partaking in our actions.

<sup>188</sup> See also (*HHI* 243).

Notice that Nietzschean ‘individuality’ is not reducible to *self-interest*, or morality reducible to selflessness. Morality represents the interests of the progenitors and thus the leaders of a community. To be a ‘sovereign individual’ is *not* to act in accordance with our self-interest, i.e., for the sake of self-preservation (more on these claims below). The latter would mean that we should *not* act in discordance with our community’s evaluations, because it is the larger power that threatens our existence or flourishing. Therefore, it is in accordance with self-interest to *suppress* or *oppose* our individuality, namely, to *prevent* ourselves from acting in such a way that suggests ‘immorality’. Self-interest drives *conformity* to moral values, which oppose our individuality. With the previous, we are in a better position to notice the origin of the herd perspective and how it *links conceptually* to consciousness, language, responsibility, but also to morality.

Nietzsche’s assessment of the origin of the herd perspective starts with psychological observations about the limits of language and conscious thought, but it does not stop there. He notices a psychological association between ‘pain’ and ‘attempting to overstep the limits of what we are able to express linguistically’, i.e., in words and presumably communication symbols:

“[W]here words are lacking, we are accustomed to abandon exact observation because exact thinking there becomes painful; indeed, in earlier times one involuntarily concluded that where the realm of words ceased the realm of existence ceased also...” (D 115)

Conscious thought compels and thus binds us to what is communicable to *other people*, i.e., words, signs or ‘communication symbols’: pain motivates this compulsion. This compulsion is not in accordance with our *individual* interests, but it might be in accordance with our *self-interest*, because the agent who inflicts the pain (or promises to do so) is stronger than the individual. The interest of a community or *our* interest as *members* of a community, but not our ‘individual’ interests underpin the previous. In fact, the pain we experience when we try to overstep its limits is set up to *oppose* ‘individuality’ and thus ‘individual’ interests. Before we proceed, I assess Nietzsche’s approach to responsibility and morality in juxtaposition to Schopenhauer to show the divergence in their approaches and reasons, but also accentuate their distinct philosophical methods.

Schopenhauer construes actions as stemming from an imperceptible *thing in itself*, of which we have no ‘complete’ or ‘pure’ representation and which he calls the ‘will’. Our cognition of it is always through the PSR whose fundamental form is the subject-object correlation. This leads him to distinguish between the ‘thing in itself’ (intelligible character) from its ‘appearance’ (empirical character). We perceive the effect of an *imperceptible* thing that appears as perceptible actions in a causal order and as subordinate to causal relations, as *our* will. We reassemble these actions using the faculty of reason and so construct a self-image. Note that his account also permits us to argue that the imperceptible ‘thing’ *causes* our actions or—as he claims when he later introduces his ethical viewpoint—it is *responsible* for their appearance. He rejects the application of causality to the will-body identity, but he likewise takes seriously the claim that we are within the causal order like any other object

we perceive. He also takes seriously the claim that moral responsibility lies ultimately with the will *as thing in itself* for begetting the world itself *and* us, by extension. We are subject to *its* laws and necessity.

Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauer's approach to causality and necessity. He replaces it with a genealogical approach and conception of causality and necessity, which sets their explanatory limits. In short, he naturalises them in his sense of the term, which we find in the following passage:

"We should not erroneously *objectify* "cause" and "effect" like the natural scientists do (and whoever else thinks naturalistically these days—) in accordance with the dominant mechanistic stupidity which would have the cause push and shove until it "effects" something; we should use "cause" and "effect" only as pure *concepts*, which is to say as conventional fictions for the purpose of description and communication, *not* explanation." (BGE 21)

He ascribes a use to the concept of 'causality', namely, 'description' or 'communication' of phenomena rather than their *explanation*. By using 'communication' as the primary purpose of a causal account, he refers to the conceptual link whose root is the herd perspective. Thus, there is an implicit distinction between *what we do* and how we *rationalise, conceptualise, describe* and thereby *communicate* our deeds. Causal accounts are limited to what we can communicate. He also naturalises Schopenhauer's distinction between the 'intelligible' and 'empirical' character and replaces it with 'what we *as individuals* aim for' and 'how we *appear* to others in performing the correlative action to our individual aims'. The latter's role in our actions characterises self-conscious agency, for Nietzsche. Schopenhauer's distinction between the *urge to do something* and the *cognition of an object* or *motive* that corresponds to that urge does not capture this conflict or opposition between 'what we *as individuals* aim for' and 'how we *appear* when we perform the correlative action to our aims'. According to Nietzsche, the *need* to communicate opposes individual needs, which may be incommunicable or, as we will see shortly, even 'immoral'.

Nietzsche strives to avoid the conclusion that the opposition is between our self-conscious thoughts and the drives (or between reason and passion), which leads us to argue that the former are distinct kinds. According to his ontological monism and immanence, conscious thought *represents* the activity of a drive(s) or drive relation. To explain how we can ascribe the property of 'conscious' to a 'drive' he breaks apart consciousness into its individual parts and enacts his method of historical philosophising. This method shows that consciousness is not ontologically unique with respect to the organism: it refers to certain actions or behaviours conceptually linked to communication, language and so on, which he explains genealogically. Consciousness is rooted in the drives and stays rooted in them. His genealogical analysis leads him to the most rudimentary form of a community, its assembly and the means by which its leaders maintained it. Its origin, however, is an act of will or an alternative outlet for the will to power.

More research, critical assessment and debate can go into the above conceptual link between language, communication, self-conscious thought and morality; certainly more

than I can provide.<sup>189</sup> An assessment of these themes and maybe even the approach I suggest can prove invaluable for arriving at a clearer picture of Nietzsche's *Weltanschauung*. This assessment is beyond the scope of my thesis, however. I will focus instead on his conception of individuality, morality, objectivity and self-conscious agency against the backdrop of Schopenhauer's conceptions. I hope this will inspire us sufficiently to pave the way for a more thorough analysis of these themes and concepts.

Thus far, I assessed his conception of the origins of consciousness. Now, I will assess how self-conscious agency fits with this renewed version of the conceptual link. I will focus specifically on the relation between responsibility, morality and self-conscious agency.

Like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche argues, "we can think many, many more things than we can *do* or *experience*" (*D* 125).<sup>190</sup> Our conscious thoughts over our actions or conscious reasons for acting are distinct from the action itself, but not for the same reasons that his predecessor suggested. According to Nietzsche, 'conscious thoughts' *distort* individuality. If conscious thoughts *affect* an action, then they are set up to oppose our individuality. They achieve their distortion and opposition using our *self-image*; he summarises it as follows:

"... there neither are nor can be actions that are all the same; that every act ever performed was done in an altogether unique and unrepeatable way, and that this will be equally true of every future act; that all prescriptions of action (even the most inward and subtle rules of all moralities so far) relate only to their rough exterior; that these prescriptions may yield an appearance of sameness, *but only just an appearance*; that as one observes or recollects *any* action, it is and remains impenetrable; that our opinions about 'good' and 'noble' and 'great' can never be *proven true* by our actions because every act is unknowable; that our opinions, valuations, and tables of what is

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<sup>189</sup> A text that considers some of these themes at length is Constâncio and Branco (2012). See also Constâncio, 'On Consciousness: Nietzsche's departure from Schopenhauer' (2011). In developing his views on consciousness, we ought to note that 'communication' is not limited to language and so to *words* or *letters*. It extends to any *signs* we use to refer to something. We should consider his concept of 'sign' as extending to all forms of communication, as the following passage suggest: "not only language serves as a bridge between persons, but also look, touch, and gesture; without our becoming conscious of our sense impressions, our power to fix them and as it were place them outside of ourselves, has increased in proportion to the need to convey them *to others* by means of signs. The sign-inventing person is also the one who becomes ever more acutely conscious of himself; for only as a social animal did man learn to become conscious of himself—he is still doing it, and he is doing it more and more" (*GS* 354; see also *HHI* 216). Nietzsche's distinction between a sign and a word is a distinction between a broader and narrower vehicle for communication—what he also calls the 'bridge between persons'—makes his claims about the role of morality in our lives more all-encompassing. It is not *only* what we *think* about ourselves in words that he targets for criticism, but also *how* we do so and *that* we *picture* ourselves in the first place.

<sup>190</sup> See also: "[t]he problem of consciousness (or rather, of becoming conscious of something) first confronts us when we begin to realise how much we can do without it; and now we are brought to this initial realisation by physiology and natural history (which have thus required two hundred years to catch up with *Leibniz's* precocious suspicion). For we could think, feel, will, remember, and also 'act' in every sense of the term, and yet none of all this would have to 'enter our consciousness' (as one says figuratively)" (*GS* 354).

good are certainly some of the most powerful levers in the machinery of our actions, but that in each case, the law of its mechanism is unprovable. (*GS* 335)<sup>191</sup>

Contra epiphenomenalist-eliminativist readings, conscious thought *does* partake in our actions. The conceptual link suggests that the ‘herd perspective’ underpins it: our “opinions about ‘good’ and ‘noble’ and ‘great’” are, he claims, “powerful levers in the machinery of our actions” (*GS* 335). What we consciously think of ourselves and thus how our actions ‘appear’ makes a substantial difference to the actions that we undertake.

The opposition Nietzsche sets up is *not* between conscious thoughts and the drive complex, but between *two* or *more* drives. He identifies the ‘drive’ towards our individual ends (or individual drives) and the ‘drive’ to communicate our ends to other individuals and members of our community (i.e., the herd instincts or herd perspective), along with what is implied or follows this communication. Consciousness or becoming conscious of something is a drive or it represents the activity of a drive, i.e., the drive to communicate. It introduces a self-image distorted or shaped by our community’s *needs* and *values* to the ‘machinery of our actions’. Accordingly, it undermines *our* reasons and experiences. Individuality does not arise from self-conscious thought and we cannot attribute it to self-conscious thought. Our experience and reason, which he calls “the gods which are in *us*” (*D* 35) constitute our individuality. They refer to actions *we can* and *do* undertake in relation to the circumstances *we* are in and thus in accordance with *our* understanding of them, but also to our will to power and its limits (cf. *HH Pref.*, 6). Let us look at the textual evidence that offers an insight into and disambiguates these claims.

In certain passages, Nietzsche introduces what calls the ‘image of the action’ in a discussion on his views on responsibility. The ‘*image* of the action’ refers to how the action appears to the third-person onlooker, i.e., the herd perspective; it refers to our self-image. Furthermore, it represents how our community’s values partake in the ‘machinery’ of our actions; it does so by impelling us to assess whether or not our action depicts a moral or an immoral character and so how our cohabitants might or will *react* to it. He describes it as follows:

“But *thought* is one thing, and *deed* another, and *the image of a deed* yet another. The wheel of motive does not roll between them. An *image* made this pale human pale. He was *equal to his deed* when he committed it, but *he could not bear its image once he had done it*. From then on he always saw himself as the doer of one deed. I call this madness: the exception reversed itself to the essence. A streak in the dirt stops a hen cold; the stroke he executed stopped his poor reason cold – madness *after* the deed I call this.” (*Z*, ‘Criminal’, 26; my emphasis)

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<sup>191</sup> See also: “[a]ctions are *never* what they appear to us to be! We have expended so much labour on learning that external things are not as they appear to us to be — very well! the case is the same with the inner world! Moral actions are in reality ‘something other than that’ — more we cannot say: and all actions are essentially unknown” (*D* 116).

The ‘image of the action’ does not mean our reason for acting or the action itself; it refers to how our action ‘*appears*’ as from a perspective *other than* our own. In the same passage, he describes the other side of this relation, which sheds further light on the ‘image’:

“Listen, you judges! There is still another madness, and it is before the deed. Oh, you did not crawl deeply enough into this soul! Thus speaks the red judge: “Why did this criminal kill? He wanted to rob.” But I say to you: his soul wanted blood, not robbery. He thirsted for the bliss of the knife! But his poor reason *did not comprehend* this madness and it persuaded him. “What does blood matter?” it said. “Don’t you at least want to commit robbery in the process? Take revenge?” And so he listened to his poor reason, like lead its speech lay upon him – and he robbed as he murdered. He did not want to be *ashamed* of his madness. And now the lead of his guilt lies on him again, and again his poor reason is so stiff, so paralysed, so heavy.” (Z, ‘Criminal’: 26; my emphasis)

His introducing ‘shame’ into his picture of self-conscious agency is not idiosyncratic to the above point and example, but, I will argue, fundamental to his views on the moral features of self-conscious agency. Let us elaborate on the above.

To aid us with recognising the above, recall how Schopenhauer thinks our self-image partakes in our actions. He recognises its role in our conscience; specifically, in the remorse or guilt we experience over what we have done, which thus becomes a motive *against* future actions. The memory of past actions can potentially become a motive for future actions, for Schopenhauer. Nietzsche accepts the premise that memory of past actions *affects* our future actions, but he has a different explanation of it.

Nietzsche breaks down ‘shame’ into its constituent parts and analyses it similarly to what he does with consciousness. I will follow this strategy and approach to philosophical problems throughout my reading of his propositions and arguments. I will draw a tripartite distinction based on the above to demonstrate his genealogical account of shame. Firstly, the claim that we are ‘equal’ to our actions purportedly means we identify with them *as our own*. Moreover, he clarifies elsewhere that our actions refer to a *need* we have even if the need is not *individual*, i.e., ‘unique’ or ‘original’. Compare ‘being equal to our actions’ with the following passage:

“No man has ever done anything that was done wholly for others and with no personal motivation whatever; how, indeed, should a man be *able* to do something that had *no reference to himself*, that is to say lacked all inner compulsion (which would have its basis in a personal need)? How could the ego act without the ego?” (HHI 133; some emphasis is mine)

We are ‘equal’ to our actions means we ‘identify’ with them and recognise them as *ours*; they refer exclusively to us as opposed to someone or something else. This differs from our ‘thoughts’ even if the target of a thought is an action we undertook. Nietzsche distinguishes thoughts from actions presumably using the supposition that not *all* thoughts correspond or lead to an action: ‘we can think more than we can do’ (cf. D 125). He also distinguishes two

kinds of ‘thoughts’. First, thought refers to immediate appraisals of circumstances or things, i.e., aversions or inclinations aimed at something. These thoughts do *not* require us to ascribe a ‘communication symbol’ to the target; they are *not* conscious. Secondly, ‘thoughts’ can also refer to *conscious* thoughts and so follow from ascription of a ‘communication symbol’ or ‘concept’ to the target. In short, conscious thoughts represent what we are able or driven to communicate about something; they represent what we are able or driven to communicate about ourselves in relation to something.

Following what we said about the conceptual link, we can construe conscious thoughts as our introducing the *herd perspective* to our thoughts and actions. The difference between them is therefore their ‘communicability’. In sum, we can respond to a circumstance or thing in two ways, according to Nietzsche:

- A) We can respond immediately without ascribing a communication symbol to targets of awareness.
- B) The herd perspective can *mediate* or *partake in* our response, which means ascribing a communication symbol to them.

The above distinction between two kinds of thoughts often leads us to conclude that B represents a distinct kind of activity from the drives that we *cannot* explain in terms of the drives. I endeavoured to demonstrate that Nietzsche rejects this conclusion, in principle and in accordance with his ontological commitments. Likewise, I tried to show that B represents an ‘acquired’ activity explicable in terms of drives. The *affect* that follows ‘how we appear in doing something’—e.g., the feeling of ‘shame’—implies the activity of a drive, which we inherit from our ancestors and the pain they endured when adjusting to and learning to thrive in communal life. We feel the pain they felt when they acted against a community’s interests or conversely the pleasure they felt when they benefitted their community. Nevertheless, ‘contrary to or in accordance with their *masters*’ is a more apt description of the grounds on which our ancestors felt this pleasure and pain, according to his genealogical perspective. It describes the agents who inflicted this pain on our ancestors or who bestowed them with freedoms and rights (i.e., the powers), which were not enjoyed by others.

In comparing Nietzsche and Schopenhauer’s approaches to guilt, we notice that Schopenhauer overlooks an important consideration that may be useful for resolving his impasse in ascetic resignation. We can portray this consideration via the following question: if the *will* responds to its *own* self-image and makes a motive of its *own* past actions, then what accounts for the guilt we feel over what *we will*? To make sense of guilt in accordance with Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will, we have to presuppose another part of the will that aims at its own negation, that is, the *will to be someone else*. Schopenhauer construes guilt as representing dissatisfaction with our character following our self-knowledge. We recognise that ‘we are what we will’ and are fated to will it *indefinitely*. From this recognition grows (somehow) the dissatisfaction and self-negation that typifies guilt. Schopenhauer struggles to explain where this dissatisfaction comes from or what grounds it, using his philosophy of the will without paradox. Such an explanation is beyond the limited scope of his concepts, because he construes the will (and one’s *temperament*) as fixed quantities that

permit no change. The will-body identity is the “miracle *par excellence*” (WR, 126) that we cannot explain by appealing to something *other than* this identity. He sometimes construes it as *self-abolition* of the will and not its abolition by the intellect or by something else. The previous confuses his readers about the distinction between the will and intellect. Nietzsche, however, believes that adherence to ontological monism and immanence entails that it can only emerge from the ‘will’, but revises the concept ‘will’ to refer to a complex of competing drives. Following his revised conception, he argues that genealogical analysis explains this ‘*will to be someone else*’.

Schopenhauer’s ‘rage for generalisation’ and thus his ‘metaphysical need’ prevents him from considering a genealogical explanation of conscience and what sorts of actions, attitudes and moods arise from it, i.e., guilt, remorse, pride, shame, responsibility and so on. The core element of this genealogical account is the introduction of a new concept, which aims to demonstrate how actionsthat arise from circumstantial pressures or from the internal pressures of the will to power, *become drives over time*. He calls it the ‘internalisation of man’. The clearest definition of it I found is as follows:

“All instincts which are not discharged outwardly *turn inwards*—this is what I call the *internalisation* of man: with it there now evolves in man what will later be called his ‘soul’. The whole inner world, originally stretched thinly as though between two layers of skin, was expanded and extended itself and gained depth, breadth and height in proportion to the degree that the external discharge of man’s instincts was *obstructed*. Those terrible bulwarks with which state organisations protected themselves against the old instincts of freedom - punishments are a primary instance of this kind of bulwark - had the result that all those instincts of the wild, free, roving man were turned backwards, *against man himself*. Animosity, cruelty, the pleasure of pursuing, raiding, changing and destroying—all this was pitted against the person who had such instincts...” (GM II, 16)

In earlier passages, he describes the above as the process whereby *action becomes a custom* and lastly *a drive*, which an individual’s offspring or a community’s successors presumably inherit:

“In conditions obtaining before the existence of the state the individual can act harshly and cruelly for the purpose of *frightening* other creatures: to secure his existence through such fear-inspiring tests of his power. Thus does the man of violence, of power, the original founder of states, act when he subjugates the weaker. His right to do so is the same as the state now relegates to itself; or rather, there exists no right that can prevent this from happening. The *ground for any kind of morality* can then be prepared only when a greater individual or a collective individuality, for example society, the state, subjugates all other individuals, that is to say draws them out of their isolation and orders them within a collective. Morality is preceded by *compulsion*, indeed it is for a time itself still compulsion, to which one accommodates oneself for the avoidance of what one regards as unpleasurable. Later it becomes custom, later still voluntary obedience, finally almost instinct: then, like all that has



for a long time been habitual and natural, it is associated with pleasure—and is now called *virtue*.” (HHI 99; some emphasis is mine)

He speculates that, at some point, human beings were what he calls ‘semi-animals’. These ‘semi-animals’ were organised *forcibly* into a state or community by stronger individuals who were prone to outbursts of will to power, which drove them to imprint themselves on something or someone else. This *forced* organisation made possible the emergence of the state and finally consciousness, but also the so-called ‘bad conscience’.<sup>192</sup>

The ‘bad conscience’ is Nietzsche’s revised conception the self-negating parts of our conscience, namely, our shame, remorse, guilt and even ascetic resignation (or negation of the will to life). His account of it is genealogical. It emerges from circumstantial pressures:

“It must have been no different for these *semi-animals*, happily adapted to the wilderness, war, the wandering life and adventure than it was for the sea animals when they were forced to either become land animals or perish - at one go, all instincts were devalued and ‘suspended’. Now they had to walk on their feet and ‘carry themselves’, whereas they had been carried by the water up till then: a terrible heaviness bore down on them. They felt they were clumsy at performing the simplest task, they did not have their familiar guide any more for this new, unknown world, those regulating impulses that unconsciously led them to safety - the poor things were reduced to relying on *thinking, inference, calculation, and the connecting of cause with effect*, that is, to relying on their ‘*consciousness*’, that most impoverished and error-prone *organ*! I do not think there has ever been such a feeling of misery on earth, such a leaden discomfort, - and meanwhile, the old instincts had not suddenly ceased to make their demands! But it was difficult and seldom possible to give in to them: they mainly had to seek new and as it were underground gratifications.” (GM II, 16; my emphasis)

‘Internalisation’ is the process by which we acquire new drives from those actions we are *forced* or *urged* to undertake due to circumstantial pressures and-or our inherent and active will to power. My focus henceforth will be on whether or not internalisation can explain how we acquire the herd perspective.

Nietzsche’s supposition is that communal life brought with it limitations or resistances to our ancestors’ individual drives. Some of their drives represented the inherited actions of their nomadic lives prior to *becoming* organised into a community. These were contrary to their community and endangered its maintenance, flourishing or survival. Their individual actions gave rise to conflicts that required resolution to preserve the community and ensure that it flourished. These conflicts were resolved in the *interest* of the community, excluding the ‘individual’ interests of the conflicting parties. As we will see below, his conception of a community’s ‘interest’ is more nuanced than the previous.

Our ancestors underwent a process that meant they were *forced* into communal life. Part of adjusting into this life entailed forgoing some of their actions and thus blocking their

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<sup>192</sup> For more on Nietzsche’s concept of ‘bad conscience’ see Risse (2001).

drives. If they did not forgo these actions and learned to *discharge* those drives in a different manner, i.e., sought alternative outlets for them, they risked the infliction of pain, the loss of their property (or their life) or the loss of their place in the community and the benefits it afforded (cf. *GM II*, 3-5). The previous painful consequences of their individual actions were demonstrated regularly to them. They served as *signs* representing what follows if and when one acted contrary to the community and its interests. Thus, there emerged a psychological association between doing ‘X’ and ‘feeling pain’.

Nietzsche, then, speculates that an ‘interest’ in opposing one’s individual drives was “burnt in” (*GM II*, 3), or certain psychological associations led them to redirect *some* of their drives to other targets and activities:

“‘How do you give a memory to the animal, man? How do you impress something upon this partly dull, partly idiotic, inattentive mind, this personification of forgetfulness, so that it will stick?’... ‘A thing must be burnt in so that it stays in the memory: only something that continues to hurt stays in the memory’ - that is a proposition from the oldest (and unfortunately the longest-lived) psychology on earth... When man decided he had to make a memory for himself, it never happened without blood, torments and sacrifices: the most horrifying sacrifices and forfeits (the sacrifice of the first-born belongs here), the most disgusting mutilations (for example, castration), the cruellest rituals of all religious cults (and all religions are, at their most fundamental, systems of cruelty) - all this has its origin in that particular instinct which discovered that pain was the most powerful aid to mnemonics.” (*GM II*, 3)

Adjusting to their community entailed undergoing the process of acquiring memory, which, as we see by his description, happened through enduring pain or violence. He is also quick to point out this memory’s relationship to asceticism:

“[T]he whole of asceticism belongs here: a few ideas have to be made ineradicable, ubiquitous, unforgettable, ‘fixed’, in order to hypnotise the whole nervous and intellectual system through these ‘fixed ideas’ - and ascetic procedures and lifestyles are a method of freeing those ideas from competition with all other ideas, of making them ‘unforgettable’.” (*GM II*, 3)

It is not too farfetched to suggest that such statements further demonstrate the direction he takes in revising Schopenhauer’s conceptions and in overcoming his impasses.

The community, then, *praised* the ‘good’ and *punished*—inflicted pain or torment on—the ‘bad’. Our ancestors internalised this process of praise and punishment—or, as we will shortly see, command and obedience—but what they internalised was not *only* a process of praising and punishing, but equally *what* the community—meaning its leaders—praised as good and punished as bad. They internalised the *targets* that the leaders denoted as ‘good’ and ‘bad’ as well as the activity of praising and punishing. What they praised and punished was *not* ‘good’ and ‘bad’ *for the individual*, but (presumably) *for the community*. It was what the community *assumed* was good and bad *for it*, which formed the content of punishment and praise, i.e., what determined its values and what it identified with as *its* conditions for

existence or flourishing. We should not assume that old communities operated with some abstract conception of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ *for all*, that is, that they had egalitarian conceptions of a community’s interests. They did not determine what was to count as ‘good’ and ‘bad’ in accordance with the interests of its members, which it first construed as an aggregate of individuals. ‘Good’ and ‘bad’ was not *democratically* determined, according to Nietzsche. What then determined its values?

Nietzsche’s claim is that the so-called ‘noble’ or ‘despotic’ individuals *imprinted* themselves and set the foundation of a community, *its* values and the system through which they praised and punished individual members. These despotic individuals also set in place the conditions needed to preserve the previous values. ‘Good’ and ‘bad’ for the community represented what was in accordance with the noble, ruling or despotic individual(s) who set themselves up as superior in rank and maintained their superiority by strength, conquest, the preferential treatment of some members and the infliction of pain on others. Thus, they commanded through acts of violence and through an in-group systems of punishment and reward. These initial communities, along with their values, were *copies* of the conditions for existence or flourishing of the warring, noble, ruling, violent and despotic ‘semi-animals’ that founded them. Accordingly, the origin of a community is this imprinting of oneself on something, including imprinting on others, as is the *origin* of morality. Nietzsche construes a morality as an extension of a community’s values:

“Man, in whatever situation he may find himself, needs a kind of valuation by means of which he justifies, i.e., *self-glorifies*, his actions, intentions and states towards himself and, especially, towards his surroundings. Every natural morality is the expression of one kind of man’s satisfaction with himself: and if one needs praise, one also needs a *corresponding* table of values according the highest esteem to those actions of which we are most capable, in which our real *strength* expresses itself. Where we are strongest is where we wish to be seen and honoured.” (WLN 35[17])

“Morality is the doctrine of the order of men’s rank, and consequently also of the significance of their actions and works *for* this order of rank: thus, the doctrine of human valuations in respect of everything human. Most moral philosophers only present the order of rank that rules *now*; on the one hand lack of historical sense, on the other they are themselves ruled by the morality which teaches that what is at present is eternally valid. The unconditional importance, the blind self-centredness, with which every morality treats itself wants there not to be *many* moralities, it wants no comparison and no criticism, but rather unconditional belief in itself.” (WLN 35[5])

Individuals create, preserve and internalise a community’s values, which derive from the actions of those who organised it, shaped it and maintained it. Morality is the *internalisation* of the rank order of values of a community. The following passage reveals further the origin of morality, i.e., its creators, organisers and rulers:

“Instead it has been ‘the good’ themselves, meaning the noble, the mighty, the high-placed and the high-minded, who saw and judged themselves and their actions as

good, I mean first-rate, in contrast to everything lowly, low-minded, common and plebeian. It was from this *pathos of distance* that they first claimed the right to create values and give these values names: usefulness was none of their concern! The standpoint of usefulness is as alien and inappropriate as it can be to such a heated eruption of the highest rank-ordering and rank-defining value judgments: this is the point where feeling reaches the opposite of the low temperatures needed for any calculation of prudence or reckoning of usefulness, - and not just for once, for one exceptional moment, but permanently. The pathos of nobility and distance, as I said, the continuing and predominant feeling of complete and fundamental superiority of a higher ruling kind in relation to a lower kind, to those 'below' - *that* is the origin of the antithesis 'good' and 'bad'. (The seigniorial privilege of giving names even allows us to conceive of the origin of language itself as a manifestation of the power of the rulers: they say 'this is so and so', they set their seal on everything and every occurrence with a sound and thereby take possession of it, as it were)." (*GM I*, 2)

Equally, he makes the same proposition, but without the same rhetorical or descriptive terms like 'nobles', 'rulers', 'might' etc. in his earlier work:

"...morality is nothing other (therefore *no more!*) than obedience to customs, of whatever kind they may be; customs, however, are the *traditional* way of behaving and evaluating... Judged by the standard of these conditions, if an action is performed *not* because tradition commands it but for other motives (because of its usefulness to the individual, for example), even indeed for precisely the motives which once founded the tradition, it is called immoral and is felt to be so by him who performed it: for it was not performed in obedience to tradition. What is tradition? A higher authority which one obeys, not because it commands what is *useful* to us, but because it *commands*." (*D 9*)

Morality is rooted in our ancestors' first internalising the command-obedience relationship underpinning a community and then being able to obey with the need for a command. The community's values represent the *individual* interests of despotic, founding, commanding, ruling, mastering, organising and maintaining individuals, which are then transferred into a morality. He puts it in the following way:

"...the oldest 'state' emerged as a terrible tyranny, as a repressive and ruthless machinery, and continued working until the raw material of people and semi-animals had been finally not just kneaded and made compliant, but *shaped*. I used the word 'state': it is obvious who is meant by this - some pack of blond beasts of prey, a conqueror and master race, which, organised on a war footing, and with the power to organise, unscrupulously lays its dreadful paws on a populace which, though it might be vastly greater in number, is still shapeless and shifting. In this way, the 'state' began on earth: I think I have dispensed with the fantasy which has it begin with a 'contract'. Whoever can command, whoever is a 'master' by nature, whoever appears violent in deed and gesture - what is he going to care about contracts!" (*GM II*, 17)

The origin of a community is found in command-obedience relationships: the ‘punishment’, ‘violence’, ‘war’, ‘force’, ‘command’, ‘shaping’, ‘imprinting’ etc. on something (or someone) that characterises such relationships. The enforcement of compliance on those who are currently unable (or unwilling) to comply characterises the foundations *and* even the means of preservation of these rudimentary communities. Thus, morality represents the community’s interest, albeit it is a ‘late fruit’ of the latter.

Using the conceptual link, we notice how and why Nietzsche speculates that the ‘enforcement of compliance’ in the early forms of a community is likewise what gave rise to communication, coordinated action, language, self-conscious thought and self-conscious agency. In addition, it gave rise to responsibility and morality in the way we—meaning the Europeans of his day—had begun to understand it, namely, as acting in accordance with the compassion rooted in our nature as demonstrated by the benevolent principles which guide our conscience.

In sum, once the community is established, the ruling or despotic individuals who shaped it had to maintain it, which they succeeded using psychological associations between infliction of pain and some actions. The previous forced individual members to redirect their drives *inwardly*, which *enabled* the herd perspective and what stems from it: consciousness, deliberation, a self-image and so on. He describes it as follows:

“The worse man’s memory has been, the more dreadful his customs have appeared; in particular, the harshness of the penal law gives a measure of how much trouble it had in conquering forgetfulness, and *preserving* a few primitive requirements of social life in the minds of these slaves of the mood and desire of the moment.” (*GM II*, 3)

“Those terrible bulwarks with which state organisations protected themselves against the old instincts of freedom - punishments are a primary instance of this kind of bulwark - had the result that all those instincts of the wild, free, roving man were turned backwards, against man himself. Animosity, *cruelty, the pleasure of pursuing, raiding, changing and destroying* - all this was pitted against the person who had such instincts: that is the origin of ‘bad conscience’.” (*GM II*, 16; my emphasis)

One such action, which an individual had to avoid for his community’s sake, is the one we recognise in our current communal lives: violent, physical aggression aimed at another member of a community. The community did not forbid aggression *itself*, but the aggression that stemmed from one’s *individual* interest. They forbade some members from hurting other members of a community for their *own interest* and punished those who did. Nevertheless, it permitted some of its members to perform violent acts and thus discharge their aggression, albeit in accordance with the community’s interests or the customary ways of violating other members. The previous represents the emergence of a cleft between the community and the individual. This cleft typifies his ongoing objections to morality and its consequences to our lives, which he describes in the following manner:

“Every individual action, every individual mode of thought arouses *dread*; it is impossible to compute what precisely the rarer, choicer, more original spirits in the

whole course of history have had to suffer through being felt as evil and dangerous, indeed through feeling *themselves to be so*. Under the dominion of the morality of custom, originality of every kind has acquired a bad conscience; the sky above the best men is for this reason to this very moment gloomier than it need be.” (D 9; some emphasis is mine)

The above ‘dread’ represents the activity of a drive whose origin is what our ancestors underwent before they finally internalised their customs; before they finally learned to obey *willingly* after they were *forced* to obey via infliction of pain. When an individual internalises *forced* obedience to custom, she then associates *her own* aggression—*prior to* enacting it as violent actions—with the *reciprocity* of violence by someone or something else (e.g., ‘God’, ‘state’, the ‘law’, the ‘masters’ etc.). She *blocks* an impending aggressive action after she recognises or becomes conscious of it. What motivates her to do this is the memory of past actions and therefore the pain she endured after having acted in a specific way. Instead, she now discharges the aggression on *herself* in anticipation of the pain she will endure if she aims it at another. Let us use one of Nietzsche’s examples to elucidate the previous, which is admittedly difficult to follow.

Nietzsche’s proposition is that our ancestors associated the *urge to hurt* something with hurt itself, i.e., with pain. They felt pain with every urge to hurt something that sprung after they became ‘conscious’ of the urge to hurt against or contrary to the customary ways of hurting that typifies their community. Effectively, this means they redirected their ‘urge to hurt something’ to the *source* of their urges, i.e., to themselves and so to their body. They hurt themselves after they became *conscious* of the urge to hurt something or someone. They may not recognise they hurt themselves to *avoid* the hurt meted out by their community if they discharged their aggression on one of its members for their *individual* interest. What they are doing once they internalise the command-obedience relationship may be simply re-enacting or replaying this relationship within themselves. They *copied* their relationship to their masters and, then, did to themselves what their masters did to them after discharging their urge to hurt something or someone ‘wrongly’, meaning aiming it at their masters or in opposition to them. Nietzsche was not clear on the previous, but I think his propositions imply it. How do the previous speculations relate to his account of self-conscious agency? To demonstrate this relationship we have to relate the above to the ‘conceptual link’. To do so effectively, I briefly return to his tripartite distinction.

Nietzsche’s views on agency can be broken down into the relationship between three distinct concepts: the ‘action itself’, the ‘thought about the action’ and the ‘image of the action’. We should read the ‘thought about the action’ as the inclination to act in a specific manner, which represents an activity and so a relation between drives. The ‘image of the action’ refers to how an action *appears* as from the herd perspective. To demonstrate how the previous fits with our discussion on self-conscious agency, I will analyse his example of the so-called ‘pale criminal’:

“Listen, you judges! There is still another madness, and it is before the deed. Oh, you did not crawl deeply enough into this soul! Thus speaks the red judge: “Why did this

criminal kill? He wanted to rob.” But I say to you: his soul wanted blood, not robbery. He thirsted for the bliss of the knife! But his poor reason did not comprehend this madness and it persuaded him. “What does blood matter?” it said. “Don’t you at least want to commit robbery in the process? Take revenge?” And so he listened to his poor reason, like lead its speech lay upon him - and he robbed as he murdered. He did not want to be *ashamed* of his madness. And now the lead of his guilt lies on him again, and again his poor reason is so stiff, so paralysed, so heavy. If only he could shake his head, then his burden would roll off - but who could shake this head?” (Z, ‘Criminal’: 26; my emphasis)

The *affect* of ‘shame’ plays a substantial role in Nietzsche’s comprehension of how morality features in our actions, especially after its basis in God, the afterlife and the free will, have become untenable to him. The previous constitutes his revisionist account of the foundations of morality and the grounds for its continued effect on us. He identifies the drive that shame represents and, subsequently, inquires into its origin. His supposition follows the principle that actions represent or they refer to a ‘personal need’, that is, they represent the activity or the existence of a drive (cf. *HHI* 133).

Notice in the above passage that the ‘pale criminal’ decides to rob his victim *after* he experiences the urge to murder her. He *changes* his initial action by blocking the drive that impels him to murder her; he blocks it long enough to consider the action ‘to rob’ her. What, then, impels the criminal to change his urge to murder by performing a seemingly senseless action in light of this urge to murder? He sought to *ameliorate* his *shame* after recognising he feels ‘bliss at the knife’, which presumably means he ‘enjoys killing’. The pale criminal performs a senseless action with respect to his urge to kill to ameliorate his *shame* over his enjoyment of killing. He ‘thirsted for the bliss of the knife’, but he is ashamed of it. Why would he be ashamed of something that he wants to do? Shame is *linked conceptually* to a perspective on ourselves that is *not* our own, that is, it does not stem from our ‘individuality’. It stems from how we *appear* by virtue our actions and urges. It represents the activity of the herd perspective and herd instincts in our deliberations. He is ashamed of partaking in the ‘madness’ or ‘immorality’ attached to individuals who feel ‘blissful’ when murdering another. Consequently, he *complements* his urge to kill with an action that *appears* to third-person observers or to the bystanders as something *other than* the immorality or madness of killing for joy. By doing so, he made it possible for others to perceive and conceive of his action not as aiming to *murder*, but as aiming *to rob*. He permits others to construe his murder as ‘accidental’ to his urges, not as fundamental to them. His shame over recognising that he finds pleasure in killing *underpins* his decision to rob the individual he wants *to kill*. He robs her to *rationalise* or *justify* his urge to kill. Yet, the previous is not strictly limited to how others perceive him, because after he internalises the herd perspective, he can assume that perspective is his own and confuse it for his own. Accordingly, to prevent ‘himself’ from recognising that he *de facto* finds bliss in killing, or to ameliorate the painful feeling of shame at recognising his apparent bloodlust, he resorts to self-deception.

Nietzsche’s drive psychology construes the pale criminal actions and self-deceptions as as reflecting how competing drives resolve their conflict: the drive to kill competes with

the drive to appear moral or sane. The *affect* of shame represents the competition between the previous two drives.<sup>193</sup> However, the drive that explains why he is ashamed of what he wants to do is conceptually linked to the herd perspective.

Why should the pale criminal be interested in ‘how he appears’ if the *primary* perspective on his actions that is of any consequence to him is his own, i.e., the perspective of someone who finds killing blissful? He seemingly would not. Yet, ‘how he appears’, that is, his self-image, *does* concern him enough to alter his action, but it does not reflect *his* own perspective on his actions. It reflects another’s perspective on him. Accordingly, we can ask why is another’s perspective an integral part of his own, such that he even confuses it for his own perspective, especially when he ‘rationalises’ his urges. Why does this perspective harbour such authority over his own perspective as an individual?

The central claim is that shame represents the herd perspective that has become herd instinct in him. Nietzsche explains the previous using his concept of ‘internalisation’: the pain associated with doing something against one’s community (or masters) was *burnt into* the pale criminal’s ancestors, which he inherited and which has become instinct in him, i.e., the herd instinct. His ancestors endured considerable pain prior to acquiring the memory of pain, which finally permitted them to block and redirect drives associated with the actions whose reactions by the masters were the infliction of ‘pain’. Where they failed to redirect a drive to external objects, they redirected it toward themselves; they aimed them at their own bodies. Consequently, his analysis of guilt is more nuanced and far richer in psychological content and insight than is Schopenhauer’s, but at the expense of being highly speculative. His account requires more effort to defend.

The affect of ‘shame’<sup>194</sup> (also vanity and pride) is a recurring aspect of Nietzsche’s account of morality and self-conscious agency. The focus of the philosophical commentary on this emotion in Nietzsche is insufficient, in my view. Its significance to him is clear when he voices his concern over how morality affects us as individuals, albeit he focuses primarily on the ascetic ideal that underpins the particular morality in question:

“The heavens darkened over man in direct proportion to the increase in his feeling *shame* at being man... - I mean the sickly mollicoddling and sermonising, by means of which the animal ‘man’ is finally taught to be *ashamed* of all his instincts.” (*GM II*, 7; my emphasis)

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<sup>193</sup> Nietzsche has an alternative approach to how our self-conception affects our actions and choices that is less on the side of the criminal, but still self-deceptive. See for example, “How many actions have been done, not because they were chosen as the most rational, but because when they occurred to us they in some way tickled our vanity and ambition, so that we stuck with them and blindly carried them out! In this way they increase our belief in our own character and our good conscience, and thus in general our *strength*: while the choice of the most rational course keeps alive scepticism towards us and to this extent a feeling of weakness” (*D* 301).

<sup>194</sup> There are three aphorisms in *GS* where Nietzsche asks himself three questions, i.e., ‘what is humane?’, ‘whom do you call bad?’ and ‘what represents freedom?’, and for each one he gives an answer with respect to ‘shame’ (cf. *GS* 273-5). Shame is a central, but underappreciated aspect of Nietzsche’s normative views on agency and ethics. For more on ‘shame’ see especially the following passages (*HHI*, 81 & 100; *HHII*, 69; *D* 364, 366 & 539; *GS* 76, 77 & 359; *BGE* 40 & 65; *NCW* 239; *WLN* 10[33], 10[45], 10[47], 10[53] & 10 [145]).



Compare the above with what he says about the so-called ‘healthy’ who are subjected to the pangs of conscience based on the morality of compassion and the ascetic ideal:

“Doubtless if they succeeded in shoving their own misery, in fact all misery, on to the conscience of the happy: so that the latter eventually start to be *ashamed* of their happiness and perhaps say to one another: ‘It’s a disgrace to be happy! There is too much misery!’” (*GM III*, 14; my emphasis).

His critique of morality targets its effect on individuality. Human beings *internalise* the values of a community through the psychological associations engendered by the infliction of pain. Using their body as a target, they now re-enact what they underwent while becoming accustomed to communal life. Internalisation, then, is the movement from an action based on its circumstantial pressures, to a custom and finally a drive. Later, the agent confuses her community’s interest for her *individual* interest.

Our self-image stems from and represents our community’s interest, but only if we continue to be passively obedient to it, according to Nietzsche:

“Whatever they may think and say about their ‘egoism’, the great majority nonetheless do nothing for their ego their whole life long: what they do is done for the phantom of their ego which has formed itself in the heads of those around them and has been communicated to them; — as a consequence they all of them dwell in a fog of impersonal, semi-personal opinions, and arbitrary, as it were poetical evaluations, the one for ever in the head of someone else, and the head of this someone else again in the heads of others: a strange world of phantasms — which at the same time knows how to put on so sober an appearance! This fog of habits and opinions lives and grows almost independently of the people it envelops; it is in this fog that there lies the tremendous effect of general judgments about ‘man’—all these people, unknown to themselves, believe in the bloodless abstraction ‘man’, that is to say, in a fiction.” (*D* 105)

One example of this is our identifying with a profession. Note that not all *rationalisations* or *justifications* of events or actions are in accordance with the interests of our community. We do not always passively accept the dictates underpinning the shame (or the pride) we feel with respect to our self-image. We can question these dictates, analyse them, overcome them and finally replace them (more on this below). Nevertheless, our *conscious* rationalisations and justifications always fall within the domain of our community’s interests. Accordingly, what we replace them with will concern our community by definition and from the outset. They cannot be exclusively individual. Recall that conscious justifications or reasons are ones we can *communicate*, i.e., can express in words, concepts, ‘signs’ and ‘images’:

“In short, the development of language and the development of consciousness (*not* of reason but strictly of the way in which we become conscious of reason) go hand in hand. One might add that not only language serves as a bridge between persons, but also look, touch, and gesture; without our becoming conscious of our sense impressions, our power to fix them and as it were place them outside of ourselves,

has increased in proportion to the need to convey them *to others* by means of signs. The sign-inventing person is also the one who becomes ever more acutely conscious of himself; for only as a *social* animal did man learn to become conscious of himself — he is still doing it, and he is doing it more and more.” (GS 354; some emphasis is mine)

Nietzsche envisages *other kinds* of reasons and justifications than those concerned with turning a target into a *sign* for others. To what does he juxtapose conscious or communicable reasons and justifications? Does he believe that we can simply do away with the effect of conscious thought on our actions of the kind he has described, i.e., the moral kind? To answer this question, I think we have to look at his views on the ‘sovereign individual’ and his alternative for morality, which I will address in the subsequent chapter. For now, I will nuance the conceptual link between morality, consciousness and self-conscious agency.

According to Nietzsche, the ‘image of a madman’—which makes the pale criminal *ashamed* of his urge to kill—is the conscious (‘moral’, ‘communicable’ etc.) rationalisation or justification of his actions. In short, self-conscious thought represents the activity of the herd perspective via the herd instinct, which introduces a self-image to his deliberation and reflection over his actions. This self-image enables him to evaluate his actions according to the interests of his community. The previous evaluation is not *only* of his actions after he has undertaken them, however. The pale criminal changes his course of action by deciding to rob in addition to killing, which refers to what Nietzsche construes as ‘madness before the deed’. In cases where an agent shows ‘madness before the deed’, his evaluation is of his *urge* to do something, rather than the action itself after the fact.

For self-conscious thoughts to *affect* our actions, they must be in the trenches with the drives or represent the activity of something drive-like or a drive relation. Nietzsche is obstinate in pointing out this proposition to us, but in a characteristically unclear manner, which makes a coherent analysis on our part rather difficult:

“Assuming that our world of desires and passions is the only thing “given” as real, that we cannot get down or up to any “reality” except the reality of our drives (since thinking is only a relation between these drives) – aren’t we allowed to make the attempt and pose the question as to whether something like this “given” isn’t enough to render the so-called mechanistic (and thus material) world comprehensible as well?” (BGE 36)

He qualifies his assumption by rejecting Schopenhauer and Berkeley’s views on the relation between the reality of our affects and the world that we perceive, before finally adding:

“In the end, we are not only allowed to make such an attempt: the conscience of *method* demands it. Multiple varieties of causation should not be postulated until the attempt to make do with a single one has been taken as far as it will go (– *ad absurdum*, if you will). This is a moral of method that cannot be escaped these days; – it follows “from the definition,” as a mathematician would say.” (BGE 36)

Our self-image, then, is “in the trenches with the drives” as Richardson (2009, 137) rightly claims. This entails that it too is *a drive*, or that it at least represents the activity of drives or drive relations. Shame implies that the agent’s self-image has *activated* a drive(s) or that it represents such a drive. We cannot possibly be *ashamed* before *our* perspective, but only as a result of a perspective on us that is *not* and cannot be possibly be *the same as* the drive or drive relations whence the action arose.

Nietzsche states that the pale criminal’s shame is due to his actions *appearing* ‘mad’. To whom does the action appear mad, however? Can it appear mad to *him*? If so, then why would his *own* urge—with which he identifies, because, according to Nietzsche, we identify with our actions and thus drives by definition—appear ‘mad’ to him, namely, the originator and possessor of this urge? His urge to kill appears mad as from a perspective *other than* his own, i.e., the herd perspective. The pale criminal *accredits* this perspective and confuses it for his own because the madness associated with it represents something *punishable*. In other words, the madness is psychologically associated with a forthcoming pain; his *shame* over his urge to kill represents the internalisation of punishment. The pain associated with this punishment produced a memory in him that psychologically associated that particular action with pain. The memory is activated and partakes in his decision-making process via his self-image, i.e., by portraying how he ‘appears’ to others in performing some action.

It is tempting to argue that the pale criminal feels shame because his urge (or action) *itself* is shameful, but I think we are obligated to avoid the previous when reading Nietzsche. The urge to kill cannot *possibly* be shameful *in itself*. The concept of ‘shameful *in itself*’ is psychologically and empirically untenable and forces us to accept that something arises *ex nihilo*. We can conceive of a time and place where individuals perceive the urge to kill as something that is actually worthy of pride. Some community at some time in human history has celebrated this urge and its corresponding activity, according to him. There have been examples of its customary and acceptable discharge, e.g., in some Roman coliseum or war. Accordingly, the proposition that the pale criminal’s shame expresses the drive to ‘avoid experiencing hurt *in return*’ is more explanatory than the concept of something shameful *in itself*. It explains his ensuing decision to enact something relatively surplus to requirement or an irrelevant act of robbery on top of his urge to kill. His subsequent decision to rob aims to diminish the pain, but, essentially, it involves the redirection of his initial urge by altering its intentional object. His self-image pushes and pulls in a different direction than the action based on his urge to kill. His shame stems from the fear of punishment psychologically associated with disobedience to his community, which is expressed in how his self-image partakes in his deliberations and actions.<sup>195</sup>

In sum, the ‘herd perspective’ is a drive(s) in the trenches with our other drives or it represents the activity of a drive(s). We recognise it by analysing how our self-image *affects* our actions. The pale criminal assumes the herd perspective *as his own* and reacts to it *as if*

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<sup>195</sup> We can possibly include the consequences of this punishment to his capacity to discharge his other drives. Other drives will have contributed to preventing the action or redirecting it in some way for the sake of their own discharge. I will look more closely at the relationship between drives, actions and the ‘I’ below.

*it is his own*. Nonetheless, this perspective represents how his actions *appear to others*, i.e., to the herd perspective. The herd perspective interjects his decision-making process through his self-image. It redirects his urge to kill by changing the *intentional* object of its activity: to rob his victim as he murders her. Nietzsche construes our self-image variously: e.g., our ‘ego’, ‘the opinion of ourselves’, ‘conscience’, ‘vanity’ etc. We can compare his analysis of the pale criminal’s madness with his analysis of the pale criminal’s attitude towards himself earlier in the same passage:

““My ego is something that shall be overcome: my ego is to me *the great contempt for mankind*,” so speak these eyes. That he condemned himself was his highest moment: do not allow the sublime one to return to his baseness! There is no redemption for one who suffers so from himself, unless it were the quick death.” (Z, ‘Criminal’: 26; my emphasis)<sup>196</sup>

Compare his conception of the pale criminal’s ‘ego’ or ‘self-image’ with an earlier passage that discusses our ‘opinion’ of ourselves:

“*We are none of us* that which we appear to be in accordance with the states for which alone we have consciousness and words, and consequently praise and blame; those cruder outbursts of which alone we are aware make us *misunderstand* ourselves, we draw a conclusion on the basis of data in which the exceptions outweigh the rule, we misread ourselves in this apparently most intelligible of handwriting on the nature of our self. *Our opinion of ourself*, however, which we have arrived at by this erroneous path, the so-called ‘ego’, is thenceforth a fellow worker in the construction of our character and our destiny.” (D 115)

He argues that ‘what we consciously think of ourselves’ is likewise ‘what is *general* or can be made generic about us’. Our *conscious* evaluations are generic even if their target is our individuality. Nevertheless, there are limits to the extension of these generalisations.<sup>197</sup> They extend to other people or a community, i.e., to their perspective as represented in their values and precepts, which are narrower than humanity, but still opposed to us as *individuals*.

We are accustomed to a world-view whose limits are determined by language, for Nietzsche. This world-view represents a perspective on things and ourselves that shapes us by evaluating us and our actions in relation to interests *other than* our interests *as individuals*. We are accustomed to not drifting too far from this perspective due to the pain our ancestors endured, internalised and finally we inherited both through them and through the institutions they erected in place to preserve those interests and ensure that internalisation continued. The previous explains the psychological link between *not* being able to put something into words and feeling pain:

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<sup>196</sup> Nietzsche’s analysis of the pale criminal can be juxtaposed to what he says about health and sickness with respect to the criminal more broadly (cf. D 202 & TI, ‘Skirmishes’, 45).

<sup>197</sup> One noteworthy limit is evident in his scepticism over the ground of concepts like humanity (cf. D 108 & 303).

“Language and the prejudices upon which language is based are a manifold hindrance to us when we want to explain inner processes and drives: because of the fact, for example, that *words* really exist only for *superlative* degrees of these processes and drives; and where words are lacking, we are *accustomed* to abandon exact observation because exact thinking there becomes *painful*; indeed, in earlier times one involuntarily concluded that where the realm of words ceased the realm of existence ceased also.” (*D* 115; some emphasis is mine)

What grounds Nietzsche’s speculation that we *feel* pain, which deters us from self-conscious thought when we try to think about something for which we have no words? The activity of a drive(s) alone accounts for why we direct our attention to something, including directing it to something for which we have no words. Why do we feel *pain* when we become aware of the existence of one of our own *drives* based on the activity of another drive? He explains this ‘pain’ through ‘historical philosophising’. There is a psychological association between ‘being in the presence of something unfamiliar, novel or different’ and feeling ‘pain’.<sup>198</sup> We internalised a process of experiencing pain with respect to the unfamiliar, the novel etc.; its origin is in our becoming accustomed to communal life. The development of communal life and language occur side-by-side, according to Nietzsche; language is a branch in the stem representing the perspective and interests of a community and even communal life itself. It represents *its* interest over our interests as *individuals*.

Nietzsche avoids what he calls the ‘philosopher’s rage for generalisation’ by arguing that our actions and self-conscious thoughts represent activities of the bodily as a whole. They originate in a drive that represents the circumstantial pressures our ancestors overcame to survive and flourish along with the means by which they did so.<sup>199</sup> Accordingly, he revises the opposition between self-conscious thought and the drives (cf. *BGE* 2) by claiming the former is an activity of the drives themselves (cf. *BGE* 36). ‘Consciousness’ is indeed a property of ‘thought’, but this property arises from our habituation to communal life, which he derives from a genealogical analysis of the conceptual link. He construes the opposition between self-conscious thought and the drives as an opposition between *drives* themselves. Next, I will briefly go through what I observe to be the steps of his genealogical analysis as clearly as I can, before I proceed. My hope is that it will provide a relatively clearer picture of the steps and direction of his thoughts than I could provide previously. However, I omit that this picture requires much scrutiny and debate, certainly more than I will provide here.

The most rudimentary community arose from the command-obedience relationships and the rank order this formed between individuals premised on strength. This ‘rank order’

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<sup>198</sup> There are many passages where Nietzsche analyses the conceptual link between individuality, conscious thought and pain. See for example (*HHI* 18, 104, 107 & 142; *HHII* 311; *D* 9, 11, 15, 18, 30, 38, 107, 109, 114, 187 & 429; *GS* 50, 116-7, 149, 296, 318, 335, 347 & 380; *BGE* 188, 199 & 230).

<sup>199</sup> Nietzsche construes survival as a weaker degree or form of the urge to flourish: “above all, a living thing wants to *discharge* its strength – life itself is will to power –: self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent *consequences* of this. – In short, here as elsewhere, watch out for *superfluous* teleological principles! – such as the drive for preservation (which we owe to Spinoza’s inconsistency –). This is demanded by method, which must essentially be the economy of principles” (*BGE* 13).

(cf. *GM I*, 2 & 11) was established and maintained by violence and the infliction of pain and fear. These relationships later transitioned to creditor-debtor or contractual relationships (cf. *GM II*, 8), which he observes from how ‘compromise’ *conceptually links* to ‘obligation’ (or debt etc.). In turn, obligations (debts etc.) *conceptually links* to pain (harm, loss etc.). The transition happened when compromise had to be struck between the ‘individuals’ that were relatively equal in power, but could not decide upon an end to their quarrelling such that the victor emerged and the ‘rank order’ was restored (cf. *D 112*). The passage I found that details this transition from ‘command-obedience relationship’ to ‘contractual relationship’ is the one where he assesses the concept of *equilibrium* and its role in ‘justice’ and the ‘law’:

“The community is originally the organisation of the weak for the production of an *equilibrium* with powers that threaten it with danger. An organisation to produce preponderance would be more advisable if the community could thereby become strong enough to *destroy* the threatening power once and for all: and if it were a matter of a single powerful depredator this would certainly be *attempted*... *Equilibrium* is thus a very important concept for the oldest theory of law and morality; equilibrium is the basis of justice.” (WS 22)<sup>200</sup>

Out of command-obedience relationship emerged contractual relationships. What explains the transition from command-obedience to contractual relationship—or, to put it differently, from ‘pain’ to ‘custom’—is initially a quarrel between two (or more) individuals (or groups) relatively equal in strength. The memory of pain (injury, loss etc.) arose from such quarrels and *motivated* the transition. We can compare the above passage with this one:

“...the germinating sensation of barter, contract, debt, right, duty, compensation was simply transferred from the most rudimentary form of the legal rights of persons to the most crude and elementary social units (in their relations with similar units), together with the habit of comparing power with power, of measuring, of calculating. Now the eye was focused in this direction in any case: and with the ponderous consistency characteristic of the ancients’ way of thinking, which, though difficult to get started, never deviated once it was moving, man soon arrived at the great generalisation: ‘Every thing has its price: everything can be compensated for’ the oldest, most naive canon of morals relating to justice, the beginning of all ‘good naturedness’, ‘equity’, all ‘good will’, all ‘objectivity’ on earth. Justice at this first level is the good will, between those who are roughly equal, to come to terms with each other, to ‘come to an understanding’ again by means of a settlement - and, in connection with those who are less powerful, to force them to reach a settlement amongst themselves.” (*GM II*, 8)

There is thus a transition from the rank order of strength, to that of ‘custom’, ‘duty’, ‘debt’, ‘promise’ and so on. He does not explain this transition by appealing to new ‘substances’

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<sup>200</sup> See also WS 190.

or ‘things’, which are distinct in kind from previous substances or things. He construes the transition as the emergence of a new drive through the process of internalisation.

The violence humans endured in rudimentary communities *motivates* internalisation and so makes possible the transition from command-obedience relationships to contractual relationships, along with the corresponding difference in ‘rank order’ to each relationship. He describes it as follows:

“...we must certainly seek the actual effect of punishment primarily in the sharpening of intelligence, in a lengthening of the memory, in a will to be more cautious, less trusting, to go about things more circumspectly from now on, in the recognition that one was, once and for all, too weak for many things, in a sort of improvement of self-assessment. What can largely be achieved by punishment, in man or beast, is the increase of fear, the intensification of intelligence, the mastering of desires: punishment tames man in this way but does not make him ‘better’, - we would be more justified in asserting the opposite.” (*GM II*, 15)

We can understand this transition as the *emergence* of the ‘herd perspective’ in members of a quasi-stable communities. The members internalise the command-obedience relationships between the master and slave, or between ruler and subject; they play out this relationship within themselves *without* the master’s direct, violent and thus punishing intervention. This internalisation makes an agent do something based on the *memory* of pain associated with *not* doing it, or, given that Nietzsche has an active conception of the will, based on the pain that comes from ‘not refraining’ from doing it.<sup>201</sup> Accordingly, this is how that limited sense of self and responsibility that are preconditions of morality arose.

Command-obedience relationships establish rudimentary communities *and* maintain them through a rank order premised on violence and strength. Over time, these relationships became *internalised* and thus contractual relationships emerged, which were maintained by ‘custom’, ‘duty’, ‘debt’ etc. and were enforced by legal punishment. Both are hierarchical, but how that hierarchy obtains differs in each case. Pain and one’s urge to avoid it *motivates* the actions representing one’s ‘obedience’ to one’s masters, rulers etc. After the emergence of contractual relationships, the rulers, masters etc. became one’s ‘customs’, ‘duties’ etc. In short, ‘customs’ or ‘duties’ motivated through the *memory* of pain following disobedience. Internalising actions that arose from the command-obedience relations means doing X or refraining from Y *without* the direct intervention, i.e., without the *overpowering* hand of the stronger, more violent individuals who established and maintained the community by using violence and strength. The customs, duties etc. maintained and underpinned the new rank

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<sup>201</sup> See for example how he describes early versions of punishment: “[t]hroughout most of human history, punishment has not been meted out because the miscreant was held responsible for his act, therefore it was not assumed that the guilty party alone should be punished: - but rather, as parents still punish their children, it was out of anger over some wrong that had been suffered, directed at the perpetrator, - but this anger was held in check and modified by the idea that every injury has its equivalent which can be paid in compensation, if only through the pain of the person who injures” (*GM II*, 4).

order, but the *memory* of pain following disobedience of the masters *motivated* the actions that reflect obedience to customs, duties and so on.

Following the above transition from the hierarchical relationship based on strength to one based on custom, a community preserves its rank order with minimal intervention, i.e., without (or comparatively little and infrequent) actual infliction of pain on its members. The individual *internalises* their masters' commands and assumes the 'herd perspective' by acting by obedience to 'custom', 'duty', 'debt' etc. rather than by obeying his masters. The masters shift from an individual or group to our psychologically associating them and their actions with customs, duties and so on. Accordingly, command-obedience relationships are *not* replaced by a new *kind* of relationship, i.e., something distinct in *kind*. Rather, they become subtler and harder to recognise over time (cf. WS 114), because their target of our obedience has changed by virtue of the ongoing process of internalisation. They become *habits* and finally *drives*. Nonetheless, there are still *some* traces of this transition, which is clear in the fear, pain and shame we experience when we try to overstep the limits that our language and customs place on us, i.e., when we attempt to act 'individually'.

Initially, then, individuals feel the *urge* to X or refrain from Y *based on* the pain they endured when they acted otherwise (cf. *GM II*, 3-7; *D* 3, 9 & 107-8). Once they *internalise* this process, they acquire the *memory* of pain, which becomes sufficient to urge them to X and refrain from Y without the actual infliction of pain. In addition, they experience certain benefits with respect to their individuality and freedom by comparison to others, which they receive by being part of the group of X-ers and so by virtue of their partaking in the actions of their masters. These benefits and freedoms partake in enforcing further their actions and creating further psychological associations between their 'self-image' and their 'obedience to custom':

"You live in a community, you enjoy the benefits of a community (oh, what benefits! sometimes we underestimate them today), you live a sheltered, protected life in peace and trust, without any worry of suffering certain kinds of harm and hostility to which the man outside, the 'man without peace', is exposed - a German understands what 'misery', *elend* [literally 'other country' i.e. banishment, exile], originally means -, you make pledges and take on obligations to the community with just that harm and hostility in mind." (*GM II*, 9)

Once we internalise X-ing, we act based on the *memory* of pain (violence, harm etc.) which we endured from our not-X-ing or based on our Y-ing rather than X-ing. This explains continuing to X without the *need* for infliction of pain upon us by someone else to force us to X. We can comprehend the previous in a less daunting and affective manner, e.g., as our no longer needing the intervention of others to perform an action. After a while, and once it becomes *habit*, so to speak, we can perform it on our own with minimal intervention from another.

In Nietzsche's view, there is a *psychological link* between those command-obedience relationships based on pain, (violence, harm etc.) and the contractual relationships based on 'custom', 'debt', 'duty' etc., which is motivated by the *memory* of pain (violence, harm etc.).



He explains this link through his method of historical philosophising, but let us assess where morality fits in this picture.

The transition from one stage to the next by the process of internalisation resulted in the emergence of ‘common’ actions and values. Individuals begun performing ‘common’ actions and adhering to ‘common’ values, *motivated* by a memory of violence, harm or pain and so on. Nietzsche construes the previous as showing the emergence or origin of morality. It demonstrates the most rudimentary form of morality:

“This is, for example, already the case with the *chief proposition*: morality is nothing other (therefore *no more!*) than obedience to customs, of whatever kind they may be; customs, however, are the *traditional* way of behaving and evaluating. In things in which no tradition commands there is no morality; and the less life is determined by tradition, the smaller the circle of morality... What is tradition? A higher authority which one obeys, not because it commands what is *useful* to us, but because it *commands*. —What distinguishes this feeling in the presence of tradition from the feeling of fear in general? It is fear in the presence of a higher intellect which here commands, of an incomprehensible, indefinite power, of something more than personal — there is *superstition* in this fear.” (D 9)

He uses different concepts to describe this transition, e.g., ‘spiritualisation’ or ‘sublimation’, but, in my observation, these are distinct in degree from ‘internalisation’. We can construe them as later stages in the process of internalisation, but not as representing a wholly new process. They describe the process of blocking an urge through pain, acquiring a memory of that pain, which then urges us to seek alternative outlets or discharges for it.

The emergence of the ‘herd perspective’ is conceptually linked to the emergence of ‘contractual’ relationships. Prior to such contractual relationships, individuals related based on strength, violence and the ‘rank order’ arising from violent relationships. Internalising command-obedience relationships means an individual commands *herself* to do X and to refrain from Y. Nietzsche explains the previous by appealing to the memory of pain, which *motivates* her to block, suppress and redirect her drives. People therefrom begun relating by ‘measuring’, ‘evaluating’, ‘trading’, ‘customs’, ‘punishment’ (no longer by ‘overpowering’, ‘violating’, ‘hurting’ etc.) and so on. From contractual relationships emerged a limited sense of responsibility, which we associate with self-consciousness; punishment for disobedience *enforced* it and the benefits of being part of the in-group *enhanced* it. The infliction of pain, injury and loss based on breaking contractual relationships—rather than offending, violating and challenging their masters—requires a limited sense of responsibility, sense of self and self-consciousness, which Nietzsche calls our ‘conscience’. Therefrom emerged the ‘bad’ conscience, which he describes in the following manner:

“Those terrible bulwarks with which state organisations protected themselves against the old instincts of freedom - punishments are a primary instance of this kind of bulwark - had the result that all those instincts of the wild, free, roving man were turned backwards, against man himself. Animosity, cruelty, the pleasure of pursuing, raiding, changing and destroying - all this was pitted against the person who had such

instincts: that is the origin of ‘bad conscience’. Lacking external enemies and obstacles, and forced into the oppressive narrowness and conformity of custom, man impatiently ripped himself apart, persecuted himself, gnawed at himself, gave himself no peace and abused himself, this animal who battered himself raw on the bars of his cage and who is supposed to be ‘tamed’; man, full of emptiness and torn apart with homesickness for the desert, has had to create from within himself an adventure, a torture-chamber, an unsafe and hazardous wilderness - this fool, this prisoner consumed with longing and despair, became the inventor of ‘bad conscience’.” (*GM II*, 16)

Our conscience becomes ‘bad’ when we cannot find an alternative discharge for our blocked individual drives. This meant that we had to discharge blocked drives—which he describes above as ‘cruelty’, ‘animosity’ etc.—*inwardly*. We use our body as the target upon which to discharge blocked drives because it was not encapsulated by our community’s rank order of values. In short, the more and longer we suppress or attempt to redirect our drives (i.e., the longer we prevent them from finding an external discharge motivated by the pain of doing so or the memory after having done so) the more likely we are to redirect them to ourselves.

Nietzsche does not introduce any new concepts to distinguish the internalisation that made possible the emergence of bad conscience from contractual relationships. We can see how the bad conscience is a further stage in the process of internalisation by juxtaposing it to what he calls the ‘good’ or ‘clear’ conscience (more on this below). In the early stage, one blocks or redirects individual drives to acquire and so prioritise ‘common’ actions over individual actions in accordance with the ‘rank order’ dictated and enforced by the masters of the community. This engendered a limited sense of responsibility. In later stages and in individual cases, however, these blocked drives find an outlet or discharge on the individual herself using her body as a target. The limited sense of responsibility and so the individual’s ability to assume the ‘herd perspective’ makes possible this discharge. I think Nietzsche’s reason for not introducing a new concept to explain the previous is that the latter stages effectively describe the blocking of individual drives *motivated* by pain (or *memory* of pain) and the search for an alternative outlet based on the drives’ continued activity and urge for discharge. Consequently, one initially blocks and redirects individual drives and later finds an outlet for them on oneself, assuming an external outlet is wanting. Let us assess how he purports to explain the previous transition by assessing the differences between the ‘good’ (or ‘clear’) and the ‘bad’ conscience.

A ‘good’ conscience is distinct *in degree* from a bad conscience; the difference is not in what *drives* us, but in its ‘target’. Individuals find different outlets for blocked individual drives, which, in turn, determines whether their conscience is ‘good’ (‘clear’) or ‘bad’. The ‘good’ or ‘clear’ conscience finds an ‘external’ outlet presumably through a custom, societal function or a profession etc., which outlet accords with one’s contractual relationships and thus ‘morality’. Likewise, I suspect that the emotions he associates with having a ‘good’ or ‘clear’ conscience would be ‘pride’ and its cognates. Bad conscience did not emerge in these individuals, but in those who were *unable* to find an alternative and external discharge that

accorded with their community. It emerged in individuals who had to turn *fully* inward and discharge their drives on themselves. He describes it as follows:

“The active, aggressive, over-reaching man is still a hundred paces nearer to justice than the man who reacts; he simply does not need to place a false and prejudiced interpretation on the object of his attention, like the man who reacts does, has to do. In fact, this explains why the aggressive person, as the stronger, more courageous, nobler man, has always had a *clearer* eye, a *better* conscience on his side: on the other hand it is easy to guess who has the invention of ‘bad conscience’ on his conscience, - the man of *ressentiment*! Finally, just cast your eye around in history: in what sphere, up till now, has the whole treatment of justice, and the actual need for justice, resided? With men who react, perhaps? Not in the least: but with the active, the strong, the spontaneous and the aggressive.” (*GM II*, 11)

The difference between the ‘clear’, ‘better’, or ‘good’ conscience and ‘bad’ conscience is not the constraints of communal life or blocked individual drives, but how one copes with them, how one discharges one’s blocked individual drives. Those with a ‘bad conscience’ find an *internal* outlet for their blocked drives; they discharge on themselves. Nonetheless, both *types* of ‘conscience’ emerge from internalising command-obedience relationships. The good conscience impels one to conform to one’s community and thus act in accordance with ‘common’ values, norms and customs. The bad conscience actively resists or reacts to a community’s values, norms and customs, which explains his introduction of *ressentiment* to describe individuals in whom emerges ‘bad’ conscience. The process of ‘internalisation’ is the same in each case, even if it exhibits different stages or turns. It is important to note that he sometimes uses different terms to designate this process, for example, ‘sublimation’ or ‘spiritualisation’<sup>202</sup>. These effectively describe the blocking, redirecting and the seeking of an alternative outlet or a discharge for ‘individual’ drives.<sup>203</sup>

Contractual relationships underpin and enable the emergence of ‘bad’ conscience. In other words, ‘bad’ conscience *conceptually links* to contractual relationships and their by-products such as ‘indebtedness’, but also ‘duty’, ‘obligation’, ‘responsibility’, ‘shame’ (as we saw with the pale criminal) and so on. It is one outcome of blocking people’s drives for the sake of organising them into communities and thus maintaining that community through contractual relationships rather than violence, strength and thus direct intervention into the members’ actions and lives. The defining feature of ‘bad’ conscience is our redirecting and

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<sup>202</sup> Some passages that show Nietzsche’s use of ‘sublimation’ are as follows, (*HHI* 1, 107 & 261; *WS* 181; *D* 4, 202 & 248; *GS* 357; *BGE* 58, 189; *WLN* 7[3] & 14[111]; *GM II*, 7 & 10; *GM III*, 27). Some passage detailing his use of ‘spiritualisation’ are as follows: (cf. *D* 60; *GS* 3; *A* 20; *TI*, ‘Morality’, 1, 3; *BGE* 198, 219, 229, 252 & 271).

<sup>203</sup> I suspect that with further scrutiny, we can distinguish these terms based on their reference to different stages. They could also show Nietzsche’s attempt to redefine, revise and offer alternatives to concepts such as ‘spirit’ or ‘spirituality’ and ‘sublime’ or ‘sublimity’. I was unable to explore the previous considerations further due to the limitations of the thesis.

discharging blocked drives on *ourselves*, whereas its precondition is acquisition of a limited sense of self or self-image and responsibility:

“This *instinct of freedom*, forcibly made latent - we have already seen how - this instinct of freedom forced back, repressed, incarcerated within itself and finally able to discharge and unleash itself only against itself: that, and that alone, is *bad conscience* in its beginnings. (*GM II*, 17)<sup>204</sup>

‘Bad’ conscience is a species of ‘responsibility’ whereby an agent discharges those blocked drives representing actions deemed ‘uncustomary’, ‘uncommon’, ‘immoral’, or ‘against the community’s interest’ etc., on her *body* using her self-image. The memory of pain and the continued activity of the blocked drives motivate her to discharge them on herself. There is more to the relationship between the ‘clear’ or ‘good’, ‘bad’ and ‘guilty’ conscience than I can assess at length here.<sup>205</sup> What is crucial for my purposes is that agents can only possess a ‘bad’ conscience if they first possess a self-image.

In sum, we internalise command-obedience relationships through pain and violence, which makes possible contractual relationships. We preserve those contractual relationships through the same method by which we formed them, i.e., the infliction of violence, injury, and loss, which we now construe as punishment for forgoing the contract. This punishment further imprints the *memory* of pain and entrenches the value of preserving the contractual relationships, which leads to ‘custom’, ‘duty’, ‘morality’, ‘profession’ and so on. These contractual relationships mean we acquire a herd perspective on our actions, a limited sense of responsibility and self-image, which partakes in our decision-making process via self-conscious thought. As the internalisation process progresses, we acquire the *need* for such a self-image as a precondition of communal life and thus to guarantee our ability to accord with customs, debts, obligations and so on. For clarity, we can comprehend the need for a self-image as an extension of the herd perspective and morality. The need for a self-image conceptually links morality (cf. *GS* 347; *GM II*, 16-18) by showing how we evaluate an action according to something *other than* our individuality. Moreover, the need for morality is most salient in those individuals whose self-image becomes desirable *in itself* (cf. *D* 90 & 115; *BGE* 199).

The above is not a definitive picture of the conceptual link between communal life, language, conscious thought, self-conscious agency and morality in Nietzsche. Nonetheless, I hope it will at least inspire an analysis and closer assessment of these propositions, themes and approach. An aspect of his approach I regret not exploring at length is his analysis of how *ressentiment* relates to the ‘bad’ conscience and how bad conscience relates to the guilty

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<sup>204</sup> What Nietzsche means by the ‘instinct of freedom’ is explained in the next passage, “*instinct for freedom* (put into my language: the will to power)” (*GM II*, 18). I believe we would not be wrong to argue that, according to Nietzsche, it is the same *will* that directs individuals to establish command-obedience relationships, then contractual relationships and in turn leads them the ‘bad’ conscience. It represents his commitment to ontological monism and immanence.

<sup>205</sup> For an alternative analysis on Nietzsche’s concept of the ‘bad conscience’, but likewise on how he relates it to ‘guilt’, see Janaway (2007).

conscience. What I attempt to demonstrate is that he explains our community's role in our actions genealogically: he traces its origin to command-obedience relationships. Moreover, morality begins with a conflict between 'individual interests' that develop into the 'interests of a community' after an individual internalised the command-obedience relationships. The 'internalisation of man', which he conceptually links to the 'soul' (cf. *GM II*, 16), is thus a by-product of the previous conflicts, which gives rise to what he calls the 'herd perspective' and, finally, 'herd instinct(s)'. The latter shape our actions using our self-image, but *enforce* and *motivate* us like the command-obedience relationship does: i.e., through pain, albeit its *memory*. Moreover, they operate in a similar manner as a command-obedience relationship: they *enforce* one action at the expense of another action. Nevertheless, 'pain' is the operative or motivating factor behind obedience and what follows from it; it enforces actions deemed as 'common' at the expense of (or in opposition to) 'individual' actions.

I will summarise Nietzsche's genealogical analysis of the transition from the action (and so drive), to obedience, to custom and finally to morality based on our conscience via the process of internalisation and thus the emergence of a new drive as follows:

- 1) His theory begins by postulating individuals who form semi-organised populations or groups based on partially stable command-obedience relationships, which are organised by strength and violence along with and the 'rank order' arising from this organisation (cf. *GM I*, 5 & *GM II*, 17).
- 2) The blocking of drives by stronger individuals who violently shape and organise others into 'states' through the infliction of pain aim initially at disobedience over a command (cf. *GM II*, 17). This infliction entrenched a despotic rule and its 'rank order', which meant that a limited number of individuals were able to discharge their drives freely and permit this free discharge for others. Their permission was given in accordance with what we can describe as an in-group mentality (cf. *GM I*, 2) and so a mutual recognition of value and authority. This seemingly captures what Nietzsche means by the 'pathos of distance' of 'nobles' (cf. *GM I*, 2 & 11).
- 3) One's *obedience* to authority is a precondition for the emergence of contractual relationships. The *memory* of pain that stems from forcing individuals to obey enables contractual relationships, but it also underpins obedience at the expense of individual drives, with comparatively less intervention from without.
- 4) The maintenance of a community through customs etc. is enforced by punishment, which psychologically underpins concepts like 'debt', 'duty' etc. (cf. *D 9*). This punishment further imprints obedience to authority. Following contractual relationships, our obedience changes its target from despotic leaders to customs etc. Members of communities now relate through contractual relationships, rather than an in-group mentality, which follows despotic rank order. Contractual relationships allows the discharge of blocked drives in accordance with custom etc., rather than the master's permission. It begun with despots' permission and then transitioned to functions of the state or community: 'duty', 'profession' etc. (cf. *GM II*, 3 & 7).
- 5) The permission to discharge blocked drives according custom likewise constitutes the basis on which the 'herd perspective' emerges in *opposition* to 'individuality'. It

typifies what Nietzsche calls ‘voluntary obedience’ (cf. *HHI* 99). We forgo our individuality to discharge blocked individual drives in obedience to masters etc., initially, and in obedience to our ‘function’, ‘duty’, ‘office’ etc.

- 6) The final step I identify in his genealogical analysis is ‘internalisation’ of voluntary obedience, which leads us to acts based solely on our ‘conscience’. In earlier texts, he construed this phenomenon as ‘virtue’ (cf. *HHI* 99) and ‘vanity’ (cf. *HHI* 89). We *forget* that what partakes in deliberations is not our *individual* perspective, but the *herd perspective*, and that ‘our’ conscience represent the herd. Thus, we conflate the herd perspective with our individual perspective.
- 7) Finally, we should note that self-conscious thought emerges from infliction of pain by individuals that violently shape others into communities. The memory of pain motivates self-conscious thought and gives it *priority* in actions and deliberations. The priority grows as one’s obedience to customs emerges and continues growing. Fundamentally, the previous are rooted in *obedience* and the *memory* of pain that underpins it.

To comprehend how the above proceeds from one stage to the next, we must take seriously his philosophical method as an alternative to metaphysics and logic for assessing morality; specifically, for assessing how morality partakes in our actions and reasons. He calls for this analysis most notably in *GM* (cf. *GM I*, 17 note). I tried to point us in this direction here, but I omit my dissatisfaction with the above presentation, the depth of its analysis and even the potential coherence of my many propositions. Nevertheless, I hope my reflections are a step in the right direction for, at least, assessing Nietzsche’s views on morality and self-conscious agency, but also for shedding light on his philosophical method. In the next chapter, I will assess his view on morality more directly and utilise what we learned in the current chapter to suggest what I think his normative views on morality consist of.

## 2.10 Nietzsche’s Evaluation of Morality: Egoism and the Sovereign Individual

“Your judgement, ‘that is right’ has a prehistory in your drives, inclinations, aversions, experiences, and what you have failed to experience; you have to ask, ‘how did it emerge there?’ and then also, ‘what is really impelling me to listen to it?’” (*GS* 335)

In this chapter, I will focus on unpacking the above quote, which, I think, shows Nietzsche’s evaluation or critique of morality. As the quote implies, his critique of morality, which he construes as seeing “morality as a problem” (*GS* 345), has two different inquiries and methods, which I will attempt to demonstrate here.

We saw previously that Nietzsche inquires into the origin of morality or our moral propositions, which constitutes the descriptive part of his critique. He attempts to attune his readers to his evaluation of morality using the previous method. He construes this evaluation as a ‘new demand’ that arises from insight into the origin of morality. The two methods, then, are a) ‘attunement’ through genealogical analysis of morality and the naturalisation of it and its propositions, and b) the evaluation of morality, which is the ‘new demand’. He describes this ‘new demand’ in the following manner:

“So let us give voice to this *new demand*: we need a critique of moral values, *the value of these values should itself, for once, be examined* - and so we need to know about the conditions and circumstances under which the values grew up, developed and changed (morality as result, as symptom, as mask, as tartuffery, as sickness, as misunderstanding; but also morality as cause remedy, stimulant, inhibition, poison), since we have neither had this knowledge up till now nor even desired it. People have taken the *value* of these ‘values’ as given, as factual, as beyond all questioning; up till now, nobody has had the remotest doubt or hesitation in placing higher value on ‘the good man’ than on ‘the evil’, higher value in the sense of advancement, benefit and prosperity for man in general (and this includes man’s future).” (*GM Pref.*, 6)

He gives a naturalised conception of morality using his method of historical philosophising, but his aim is to attune and prepare his readers for the task of evaluating morality. Recall that he posits a conceptual link between communal life, consciousness, self-conscious agency and morality, which he analyses and explains genealogically. Each part of the link emerges out of the other under certain circumstantial pressures and our ancestors’ responses to them. Morality originates in contractual relationships that emerge in rudimentary communities whose rank order shifts from relations between individual members premised on strength and violence to relations premised on laws, duty, customs and so on. Contractual relationships require a limited sense of *responsibility* and ‘sense of self’, which communities enforced by inflicting pain as punishment for breaking with one’s responsibilities and so on. He explains the previous by appealing to psychological associations between the infliction of pain and forgoing ‘responsibility’ (and equally the *memory* of that pain one experiences when they forgo it). The psychological association between forgoing a responsibility to the masters and their inflicting pain on us transfers from the masters to *morality*, which yields *moral* responsibility.

He also uses genealogical analysis to make sense of what he calls the philosophers’ ‘rage for generalisation’ or ‘metaphysical need’. This ‘rage’ usually impels philosophers to posit theories explaining moral values and actions either by appealing to distinct ontological ‘kinds’ (substances, things etc.) or entrench moral values and actions into ‘reality’ (or the ‘truth’) without critically evaluating them and thus offering a reason for our accepting them. He criticises the unreflective agreement over what counts as ‘moral’ or ‘morally right’:

“As strange as it may sound, the problem of morality itself has been *missing* from every “science of morals” so far: there was no suspicion that anything was really a problem. Viewed properly, the “grounding of morals” (as philosophers called it, as

they demanded it of themselves) was only an erudite form of good *faith* in the dominant morality, a new way of *expressing* it; as such, it was itself already situated within the terms of a certain morality. In the last analysis, it even constitutes a type of *denial* that these morals *can* be regarded as a problem. But, in any event, it is the opposite of an examination, dissection, interrogation, vivisection of precisely this article of *faith*.” (BGE 186; some emphasis is mine)

The method he bemoans does not ‘critique’ morality (cf. BGE 186), but entirely bypasses this critique. It entrenches moral propositions and thus makes a critique of morality more difficult. Such approaches are not ‘critical’ of morality, but affirmative of it without even comprehending the reasons for doing so. Likewise, these methods represent an activity of drives on the part of philosophers themselves. Recognising the previous, Nietzsche claims, is key to any ‘treatment’ of ‘morality as a problem’. Morality is not concerned with the ‘true’ and ‘false’ (‘real’ or ‘illusory’) propositions, but with actions resulting from drives. Although we can discern the particular morality that typifies a community’s rank order, the fundamental claim is that no moral proposition is eternally legitimate or binding within a community:

“Truly, I say to you: good and evil that would be everlasting—there is no such thing! They must overcome themselves out of themselves again and again.” (Z, ‘Self-Overcoming’, 90; my emphasis)

Nevertheless, he implores his readers not to confound his rejection of the legitimacy of some moral proposition or theory (namely, entrenching morality in ‘truth’ or ‘reality’) for his evaluation of the explanandum, i.e., a particular morality or moral proposition. They are two separate considerations that follow from treating morality as a ‘problem’. He puts it in the following manner:

“The mistake of the more subtle among them is that they uncover and criticise the possibly foolish opinions of a people about their morality, or of humanity about all human morality — opinions about its origin, its religious sanction, the myth of the free will and such things — and then think they have criticised the morality itself. But the value of the injunction ‘Thou Shalt’ is still fundamentally different from and independent of such opinions about it and the weeds of error that may have overgrown it — just as surely as the value of a medication for someone sick is totally independent of whether he thinks about medicine scientifically or the way an old woman thinks about it. A morality could even have grown out of an error, and the realisation of this fact would not as much as touch the problem of its value” (GS 345)<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> For a complimentary passage, see (D 44). See also how Nietzsche construes the philosopher’s approach to moral matters: “I leave to one side the actual fight of the philosophers against the feeling of lethargy, which always has taken place at the same time - it is interesting enough, but too absurd, too trivial in practice, too prone to gathering cobwebs and loafing around, as when pain is supposed to be proved to be an error, using the naive



What *explains* morality is not the same as what *evaluates* it. He uses genealogical analysis to attune his readers' thoughts about morality and so what explains the fact that we perform those actions we dub moral. His *evaluation* of morality follows a different route and method, however. It relies on his genealogical attunement, but it is not synonymous to it. I will aim to demonstrate how he utilises his genealogical analysis towards his evaluation of morality using a stage in the process of internalisation. I construe the previous stage as what he calls the 'sovereign individual'.

What Nietzsche's evaluation consists of is difficult to pinpoint, but we can identify a method he uses in criticising moral values that demonstrates a general approach and points us in the right direction. We find his general approach in a change in perspective on morality and its propositions. I am grateful to Janaway's reading for aiding me in identifying this perspective, especially, his emphasis on Nietzsche's style of writing, which he describes as follows:

"To treat Nietzsche's ways of writing—explicitly or implicitly—as mere modes of presentation, detachable in principle from some elusive set of propositions in which his philosophy might be thought to consist, is to miss a great part of Nietzsche's real importance to philosophy. Nietzsche simply does not behave as a conventional philosopher. He is not averse to putting forward hypotheses—candidates for acceptance as true—or even to presenting an argument sometimes where necessary. But more often than not he uses a wide range of rhetorical effects that appear to persuade, coax, or tempt the reader by quite other means, or to play with our attitudes to an extent that pushes us to the brink of bafflement. Nietzsche's way of writing addresses our affects, feelings, or emotions. It provokes sympathies, antipathies, and ambivalences that lie in the modern psyche below the level of rational decision and impersonal argument. I argue that this is not some gratuitous exercise in 'style' that could be edited out of Nietzsche's thought." (Janaway 2009, 4)

I benefitted greatly from Janaway's suggestion that we cannot separate Nietzsche's writing style from his approach to philosophy. Likewise, he rightly claims that his style plays an indispensable role in his evaluation of morality:

"[F]or Nietzsche to have proceeded as the paradigmatic philosopher, excluding personal emotions from the investigation, seeking to persuade by impersonal rational considerations alone, would in his eyes have risked failure to grasp the true nature of our values and loss of an opportunity to call them into question. Without the rhetorical provocations, without the revelation of what we find gruesome, shaming,

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premise that pain would have to vanish as soon as the error it contains is recognised – but lo and behold! it refused to vanish . . ." (*GM III*, 17). In short, morality is not concerned with matters of truth or reality even though it utilises those matters towards its 'moral' ends or the end of overpowering by subsuming things under its system of ends, for Nietzsche.

embarrassing, comforting, and heart-warming, we would neither comprehend nor be able to revalue our current values.” (Janaway 2009, 4)

However, I think there are propositions underpinning his style and approach to morality even though we cannot separate them from his evaluation of morality. To show the previous, I will inquire into Nietzsche’s positive evaluation of morality. What can morality be or what *should* it be in hope of arriving at these propositions. To succeed in this, I will assume that Nietzsche has a method that informs his rhetoric and style. This method must be based on certain reasons and have certain aims, otherwise we must conclude that his style and rhetoric are just a poetic or artistic exercise, at best, or an attempt to be contrarian for the sake of it, at worst.

Nietzsche probes his readers’ conscience and challenges their self-knowledge (cf. *D* 18). He does so by revealing or engendering an opposition between their virtues or values (cf. *GS* 21). Likewise, he challenges his readers’ *reasons* for ascribing to a virtue or value (cf. *HHII* 91). He encourages them to reflect on their *individual* reasons for ‘accepting’ as true some moral judgment or proposition without critically reflecting on it. One assumption of the previous method is that, hitherto, we have not critically reflected on and evaluated our moral judgements or even morality itself. If we translate the previous into his drive psychology and thus construe it in accordance with his attunement, then we can comprehend our ‘faith’ in moral values as the herd instinct(s) dominating the rank order of drives that constitute our character. We often approach morality solely as from the *herd* perspective, but given that morality conceptually links to the herd perspective, we have to assume a perspective *other than* the herd perspective to be able to evaluate morality. Furthermore, this perspective has to be one of *equal value to us* as the herd perspective. Only then are we able to reasonably *challenge* our rank order of values. It is important to note also that we can only succeed in evaluating morality internally, i.e., by recourse to individual interests, wishes, desires and so drives. Thus, he makes possible an evaluation of it by probing his readers’ conscience and by encouraging them to reintroduce their individual perspective into their rationalisations, justifications and deliberations.

Nietzsche’s critique of morality starts by reintroducing our *individual* perspective into moral judgments and propositions. The previous engenders a tension in his readers between ‘what they *actually* desire’ and ‘what they want<sup>207</sup> to *appear as* desiring’. The clearest example of this that I found is in the following passage:

“But *that* you hear this or that judgement as the words of conscience, i.e. *that* you feel something to be right may have its cause in your never having thought much about yourself and in your blindly having accepted what has been labelled *right* since your childhood; or in the fact that fulfilling your duties has so far brought you bread and honours — and you consider it right because it appears to you as *your own* ‘condition

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<sup>207</sup> Although, that we ‘want’ to appear as desiring something, given what we discussed previously, i.e., given the conceptual link, ‘wanting to *appear as* something’ derives from what he calls the ‘terrible must’ (cf. *GS* 354). It conceptually links to our habituation to communal life and the circumstantial pressures associated with it.

of existence' (and that you have a *right* to existence seems irrefutable to you)." (GS 335)

Notice that he distinguishes the *thought* 'X is right' from what *drives* us to accept the proposition that 'X is right' (or 'moral'). He implores his readers' to reflect on what 'drives' them to accept 'X' is right or what underpins their ascribing a truth-value to 'X is right'. A 'blind obedience' or 'self-interest' may be driving them to accept it as true and so to act in accordance with it. They may ascribe to a moral value based on a lack of self-knowledge, but not necessarily a lack of knowledge about what is right. In pointing to 'what is right' we identify what is 'right' *now* and not what is 'right' *as such*, for Nietzsche. We correctly claim that 'X is right' (or 'moral'), but the criteria for correctness, in this instance, are that we identify what is 'right' (or 'moral') *in a limited scope of time and place*. Thus, we identify what *we* accept as 'right' *now*, without identifying a reason(s) for its being right now or for our accepting it as 'right', in the first place.

To identify a 'reason' requires us to become critical with respect to what we accept as right and treats as an article of faith. It also requires us to juxtapose this article of faith to another and place them on equal footing. Accordingly, he encourages and challenges his readers to consider *their* reasons for ascribing to a moral value or proposition and assess its consequences (or effects) on *their* lives. He implores them to reflect on their moral values as from their *individual* perspective *in addition* to the herd perspective, which has dominated their reflections on morality hitherto and even conflated the two perspectives (cf. D 105). They may be ascribing to a morality without knowing or considering *why* they do so, but to be capable of enacting this consideration, they need a perspective *other than* that which dominates morality. This means challenging the 'herd perspective' and the moral values and propositions to which they ascribe based on that perspective. It is due to the dominance of the herd perspective that we cannot begin evaluating our morality and its propositions, some of which may not be as *valuable* as they seem. As we will see below, this shift in perspective is the first step and not the conclusion to Nietzsche's task of evaluating morality.

In sum, Nietzsche's evaluation of morality begins from the following descriptive proposition: 'morality *opposes* individuality, in principle'. This proposition demonstrates the perspective that he requires to make possible the evaluation morality: the one perspective morality is set up to oppose. He inquires into what sorts of individuals suffer under the hammer of the 'herd perspective' and on what grounds.

The above does not entail that Nietzsche rejects all morality, however. As Ansell-Pearson rightly contends, Nietzsche is *not* "advocating the overcoming of all possible forms of morality" (Ansell-Pearson 2011, 197). Furthermore, he does not avow the *opposite* of morality, i.e., immorality or amorality. However, there is textual evidence that supports the conclusion that he avows immorality, to which we should respond. See, e.g., the following passage:

"I am by far the most terrible human being who has ever existed; this does not mean that I will not be the most charitable. I know the joy of *destruction* to a degree proportionate to my *strength* for destruction, — In both cases I obey my Dionysian

nature, which does not know how to separate doing no from saying yes. I am the first *immoralist*: which makes me the *destroyer par excellence*. (EH, 'Destiny', 2) <sup>208</sup>

Nevertheless, there is also considerable textual evidence suggesting he rejects immorality:

"I also deny immorality: *not* that countless people feel themselves to be immoral, but there is any *true* reason so to feel. It goes without saying that I do not deny — unless I am a fool — that many actions called immoral ought to be avoided and resisted, or that many called moral ought to be done and encouraged — but I think the one should be encouraged and the other avoided for *other reasons than hitherto*. We have to *learn to think differently* — in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more *to feel differently*." (D 103)

Similarly, he explains the apparent contradiction between the previous two passages by arguing that he resigns to the fact that his analysis of morality will lead to his being labelled 'immoral'. What he aims for, however, is not to propound immorality, but to 'dissect' morality, which I have construed as his attempt to attune to and prepare his readers for his evaluation of morality:

"Because they *dissect* morality, moralists must now be content to be upbraided as immoralists. But he who wants to dissect has to kill; yet only for the sake of better knowledge, better judgement, better living; not so that all the world shall start dissecting." (WS 19; my emphasis)

Moreover, when he explains why he accepts the label 'immoralist', he defines 'immorality' as follows:

"My word *immoralist* essentially entails two negations. First, I am negating a type of person who has been considered highest so far, the *good*, the *benevolent*, the *charitable*; second, I am negating a type of morality that has attained dominance and validity in the form of morality as such, — decadence morality or, to put it plainly, *Christian* morality. The second opposition may be considered decisive, since in general I see the overestimation of goodness and benevolence as a consequence of decadence, as a symptom of weakness, as incompatible with an ascending and affirmative life: negation and *destruction* are conditions of affirmation." (EH, 'Destiny', 4)

He rejects 'a type' of morality, which declares itself as 'morality *as such*' (EH, 'Destiny', 3; BGE 202; TI, 'Skirmishes', 32) and it is on the premise of this rejection alone that he accepts the label of an immoralist. He is not an immoralist *as such*, but he will seem as an immoralist to the particular morality that champions itself as morality *as such*. Therefore, he resigns to

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<sup>208</sup> See also (D Pref. 4; HH Pref., 1; WS 19; GS 346; EH, 'Untimely', 2; EH, 'Destiny', 3, 6; TI, 'Arrows', 36; TI, 'Morality', 6; TI, 'Errors', 7).

the fact that individuals who ascribe to such a morality and thus accept its claim over being morality *as such* will perceive him as ‘immoral’.

Nietzsche’s immorality is a complex topic, which the proposition that he rejects morality *as such* does not clarify. Clark rightly claims that making sense of Nietzsche’s immorality forces us to make sense of his concept of morality first (cf. Clark 2015, 28), which, she—correctly, in my view—construes as referring to those “codes for evaluating human beings and their conduct” (Clark 2015, 25). Clark’s definition accords with my reading of Nietzsche’s genealogical analysis of morality as representing the community’s rank order of values. I argued that it emerges from contractual relationships, which replaced command-obedience relationships premised on strength, but its psychological associations and genealogical origins remain rooted the violence inherent to the first relationships, albeit by means of memory. Nonetheless, it reflects the *rank order* that emerges from a group of ‘individuals’. Accordingly, its ‘codes’ represent what distinguished or preserved the group from violent or peaceful encroachment by other groups or individuals:

“Morality is the doctrine of the order of men’s rank, and consequently also of the significance of their actions and works *for* this order of rank: thus, the doctrine of human valuations in respect of everything human. Most moral philosophers only present the order of rank that rules *now*; on the one hand lack of historical sense, on the other they are themselves ruled by the morality which teaches that what is at present is eternally valid.” (WLN 35[5])

What determines the ‘codes for evaluating human beings and their conduct’ is the ‘rank order’ of a particular community. Moral imperatives reflect what individuals of higher rank imprinted upon a community.<sup>209</sup> The two propositions that remain constant in his descriptive analysis of morality is that it a) refers to some community’s ‘rank order’ and b) it *opposes* ‘individuality’. Nietzsche is not an immoralist in the sense that he advocates the overcoming of *all* morality. The question of ‘what morality does he espouse’ is, therefore, pertinent.

It is often accepted by the philosophical commentary that his primary objections to morality aim at the morality of *Mitleid* and its affinity for the ascetic ideal. I will argue here that his objections are not limited to a particular morality, but aim at morality *itself* in the way we understand it as from the dominance of the herd perspective. To understand his objections to morality, we have to note the grounds for his objections and so the perspective from which he enacts them. All moralities demonstrate a propensity for the ‘ascetic ideal’, for Nietzsche, because they dictate or punish actions based on (the *memory* of) pain. To flesh out the previous proposition and demonstrate what grounds it we should turn to an important passage where he discusses the *effects* of construing actions as ‘blameworthy’. First, he argues that construing ‘egoism’ as blameworthy or reprehensible *harms* us:

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<sup>209</sup> Nietzsche likewise understands morality as the outcome of oppositions between individuals whom are roughly equal in strength and whom could not settle their dispute. A third party finally settle the dispute through a *compromise* of mutual opposition to their respective individuality out which emerge a rank order based on contractual relationships (cf. WS 190).

“Surely the creed concerning the reprehensibility of egoism, preached so stubbornly and with so much conviction, has on the whole *harmed* egoism (to the advantage of, as I will repeat a hundred times, the herd instincts!)—above all, by depriving egoism of its good conscience and telling us to seek in it the true source of all unhappiness. ‘Your selfishness is the reason your life is miserable (*Unheil*)’—that was preached for millennia and, as I said, harmed selfishness and deprived it of much spirit, much cheerfulness, much inventiveness, much beauty; it made selfishness stupid and ugly and poisoned it!” (GS 328; my emphasis)

Nevertheless, a little further in the same passage, we find that the same ‘harm’ applies to construing ‘stupidity’ as ‘reprehensible’ or ‘blameworthy’:

“Ancient philosophy, by contrast, taught a quite different main source of misery (*Unheil*): from Socrates onwards these thinkers never tired of preaching, ‘Your thoughtlessness and stupidity, your way of living according to the rule, your subordination to the opinion of your neighbour is the reason why you so seldom achieve happiness—we thinkers are, as thinkers, the happiest.’ Let us not decide here whether this sermon against stupidity had better reasons on its side than the sermon against selfishness; what is certain, however, is that it deprived stupidity of its good conscience—these philosophers *harmed* stupidity.” (GS 328)

To understand the above connection between morality, the ascetic ideal and how both ‘harm’ us, we should, once again, turn to his genealogical analysis and attune ourselves to what he means by ‘misery’ and ‘harm’ in the above passage. I cannot offer a detailed understanding of his insights into this misery and harm, but I will aim to point us in the right direction. He construes this ‘misery’ variously, i.e., as ‘bad conscience’ (GM II, 17), a ‘physiological feeling of obstruction’, ‘lethargy’ (cf. GM III, 16) ‘depression’ (GM III, 18). Given that his approach to phenomena is fundamentally through his drive psychology, the previous are affects, which represent the activity of drives or drive relations. Consequently, we should consider to which drives or drive relations he refers.

My proposition is that the above ‘misery’ represents the activity of those drives that we *block* as a trade-off for communal life: the drives that are inimical to communal life or go against the rank order characterising our community. The affect is, therefore, by-product of communal life and the constraints on our actions and urges that comes with it. He argues that it has various ‘sources’ or ‘causes’ (cf. GM III, 16), but he identifies one and focuses on how communities manage it. The latter focus is as a result of his commitment to the will-body identity, which entails that all *affects* represent the activity of a drive(s), which seeks discharge or is being blocked. Therefore, someone who ‘suffers’ has a blocked drive that seeks discharge. They seek an alleviation through action, but the language Nietzsche uses to describe the means by which a sufferer seeks alleviation is revealing in another respect:

“For every sufferer instinctively looks for a cause of his distress; more exactly, for a culprit, even more precisely for a *guilty* culprit who is receptive to distress, - in short, for a living being upon whom he can release his emotions, actually or in effigy, on

some pretext or other: because the release of emotions is the greatest attempt at relief, or should I say, at *anaesthetising* on the part of the sufferer, his involuntarily longed for narcotic against pain of any kind.” (*GM III*, 15)

One’s affects represent the activity of drives, which correspond to an action, but the kind of action suggested by the sufferer in question is a ‘social’ or ‘moral’ one. The above sufferer alleviates her distress on ‘someone’ or a ‘living thing’, which reveals a conflict between the herd perspective and the individual perspective and their respective rank order. The previous implies that the blocked drive in question that impels discharge is actually blocked by social or communal life and seeks discharge in accordance with the community’s rank order, i.e., it seeks discharge on the ‘guilty’.

Communal life impels us to block or redirect certain drives in accordance with the community’s rank order of values. Nevertheless, it also manages our need to discharge their blocked drives. Morality is *one* of the ways it manages the need to discharge blocked drives, for Nietzsche. Recall that morality emerges from the contractual relationships in accordance with customs, obligations, debts, etc., so, it is an extension of that community and its rank order. It represents this ‘rank order’ and so impels individuals to block drives in accordance with it. Moreover, it motivates individuals using the memory of pain and thus anticipation of punishment rather than the direct infliction of pain that motivates custom, obligations and so on. Accordingly, we undergo an unavoidable *trade-off* with communal life and, in turn, with morality, which plays a key role in compelling us to block and redirect certain drives.

Living in a community and ascribing to its morality entails blocking some drives and seeking outlets for them in accordance with its rank order. If we are unable to find such an outlet and cannot forgo these drives outright, then they continue impelling discharge: they push and pull towards their characteristic activity and intervene on other drives. Nietzsche’s example of the person who suffers from some illness demonstrates the previous. However, blocked drives *can* and often *do* lead us to redirect them towards ourselves, i.e., to discharge them inwardly. This inward discharge can happen for different reasons, but the primary reason he identifies is the moral *authority* of ascetic priests and their use of that authority to redirect ‘bad conscience’ etc. inwardly:

“But his shepherd, the ascetic priest, says to him, ‘Quite right, my sheep! Somebody must be to blame: but you yourself are this somebody, you yourself alone are to blame for it, you yourself alone are to blame for yourself’ . . .” (*GM III*, 15)

The above demonstrates how we transition from the ‘bad conscience’, i.e., blocking our drives as a trade-off with communal life, to the ‘guilty conscience’, i.e., redirecting blocked drives *inwardly*. What I want to suggest is that the previous redirection of blocked drives constitutes the root of the ‘ascetic ideal’, but it is not synonymous with it. Moreover, we can construe ‘blaming’ our *other* actions *for* our bad conscience (misery etc.) as another expression this ideal. We can discharge a blocked drive *at ourselves* by redirecting it at our other drives, which happens by the guidance of moral authority. The latter construes our other drives and their corresponding actions as ‘sources of our misery’. What *motivates* us

to accept that authority is what he calls the ‘*obedience to custom*’ (*D 9*), which transfers first from our masters to contracts and obligations and then from contracts to moral authorities of a community, e.g., priests. This ‘obedience’ emerges from habituation to communal life and is rooted in the memory of pain associated with going against the command, direction or propositions of an ‘authority’. The pain stems from our disobeying a ‘command’ in the early stages of our habituation to communal life.

For clarity, blocked drives do not *necessarily* lead to our discharging them inwardly. We can temporarily suspend, redirect and change the target of our drives in accordance with a community’s rank order of values. He describes the previous the “innocent means” (*GM III*, 19) of managing our bad conscience. Nevertheless, by ‘blaming’ our ‘misery’ on other drives, e.g., blaming stupidity or egoism etc. for our ‘misery’, we discharge the blocked drives representing that misery inwardly by redirecting them at our other drives, namely, at ourselves. He calls the previous the “‘guilty’ means” (*GM III*, 19) of managing our bad conscience (misery etc.). When we decry that some drive is morally reprehensible (i.e., ‘blameworthy’ for our ‘misery’) or accept such decrees on grounds of ‘faith’ (or ‘obedience’) on a moral authority, then we redirect blocked drives to the ‘blameworthy’ drives. This has the undesirable outcome of blocking the latter drives while discharging the former. In so doing, we discharge initially blocked drives on ourselves and unwittingly *add* to our misery while we give the initial drive an outlet. We give an outlet to one drive(s) at the expense of another, which engenders pressure for a new discharge for the new drive and thus produces a new misery.

Nietzsche cautions his readers over specific methods of managing ‘bad conscience’. Likewise, he cautions over making an *ideal* of discharging blocked (antisocial) drives on ourselves, which enhances our ‘bad conscience’ by making it desirable or morally worthy. The ‘ascetic ideal’ is this ‘inward discharge of blocked drives’ *turned into* something ‘morally worthy’, which typifies a community’s rank order. In short, the inward discharge of blocked drives can turn into *a morality*. Let me expand on the previous and clarify some of the propositions with a view to showing how they link to his evaluation of morality.

Ansell-Pearson’s observation that Nietzsche practices a ‘moral therapy’ (cf. Ansell-Pearson 2011, 182) as opposed to offering a moral theory has been instrumental to my reading of Nietzsche’s evaluation of morality. Contra Ansell-Pearson’s suggestion, however, I will argue that Nietzsche’s ‘moral therapy’ is not limited to his thoughts in *Daybreak*, but demonstrates his evaluative approach to morality throughout his works. It reveals his evaluation of morality, why he sees an evaluation of it as pressing and what he aims to achieve through it. The previous hinge on the concept of ‘health’ closely associated with what Ansell-Pearson’s suggestion of ‘moral therapy’.

In later works, Nietzsche raises concerns over how morality affects an individual’s ‘health’ or the so-called ‘healthy’ (cf. *GM III*, 14-17 & 22). We can compare his remarks on health and the healthy with the ‘decadence’ he construes as the basis of ‘*some* moralities’ (cf. *A 6*; *EH*, ‘Tragedy’, 2; *EH*, ‘Daybreak’, 2; *TI*, ‘Skirmishes’, 35). Although he notes how past ages coped with the effects of morality on ‘health’ by managing ‘bad conscience’ more



effectively (cf. *GM II*, 23), he does not commit to an alternative morality: to some healthier or less ‘decadent’ morality (cf. *GM II*, 24).

Ansell-Pearson also makes a crucial observation about Nietzsche’s moral task that reveals Nietzsche’s reasons for *not* suggesting an alternative to morality. The negative side of his reason is that moral imperatives risk leading to the ascetic ideal, as we saw previously. There is likewise a positive side to his reasons, however. Although he does not suggest an alternative ‘morality’, he does suggest an alternative way of dealing with the problems that morality addresses, such as, bad conscience. In short, Nietzsche is, once again, suggesting a revisionist approach. Let us expand on the previous.

According to Ansell-Pearson, Nietzsche seeks to “restore a good conscience to egoism and encourage his readers to practice a care of self” (Ansell-Pearson 2011, 197) in *Daybreak*. Recall that his descriptive analysis of morality as operating through our ‘herd instincts’, suggests that the herd instincts can distort our ‘ego’ (cf. *D* 105 & *GS* 354), which, in turn, can distort egoism and likewise the practice of the care of ‘self’. Moreover, how he comprehends his moral task in *Daybreak* is broader than Ansell-Pearson’s suggestion allows and more revealing with respect to his revisionist method of dealing with morality:

“My task, preparing for humanity’s moment of highest self-examination, a *great noon* when it will look back and look out, when it will escape from the domination of chance and priests and, for the first time, pose the question ‘why?’, the question ‘what for?’ *as a whole* —, this task follows necessarily from the insight that humanity has *not* put itself on the correct path, that it has absolutely *no* divine governance, that instead, the instinct of negation, of corruption, the decadence-instinct, has been seductively at work, and precisely under humanity’s holiest value concepts. The question of the origin of moral values is a question of the *first rank* for me because it determines the future of humanity.” (*EH*, ‘Daybreak’, 2)

Nietzsche aims to restore ‘good conscience’ in a broader and different sense than espousing ‘modest egoism’ or ‘practicing a care of self’ (cf. Ansell-Pearson 2011, 199). Nevertheless, Ansell-Pearson’s reading of Nietzsche as *aiming* to restore good conscience to ‘egoism’ and ‘care of self’ is not wrong *as such*. Ansell-Pearson’s reading of *Daybreak* largely agrees with Nietzsche’s understanding of it. He states that in “*Daybreak* I first took up the fight against the morality of ‘unselfing’” (*EH*, ‘Daybreak’, 2).

I will argue that Nietzsche’s revaluation of egoism is a preparatory step in the direction of restoring ‘good conscience’ in a broader sense and that his fight against the morality of ‘unselfing’ is not *solely* against *Mitleid*, but against the ascetic ideal. *Daybreak* is a first step in that direction. Thus, Ansell-Pearson rightly emphasises the resorting good conscience to egoism as central to Nietzsche’s moral therapy, but I think we are obligated to go further than this limited proposition to understand his evaluation of morality. Ansell-Pearson’s proposition is instrumental to his method, but not its *telos*. To notice how ‘restoring a good conscience *to egoism*’ is instrumental to Nietzsche’s evaluation of morality, we should firstly distinguish ‘egoism’ from ‘individuality’, and both from ‘*sovereign individuality*’.

We discussed previously Nietzsche's distinction between egoism and individuality, but not his distinction between 'egoism' and 'sovereign individuality'. The following passage, which rejects of Schopenhauer's conception of the 'will to life', reveals the grounds for the latter distinction:

"Indeed, the one who shot at truth with the words 'will to existence' did not hit it: this will – does not exist! For, what *is not* cannot will; but what is in existence, how could this still will to exist! Only where life is, is there also will; but not will to life, instead – thus I teach you – will to power! *Much is esteemed more highly by life than life itself*; yet out of esteeming itself speaks – the will to power!" (Z, 'Self-Overcoming', 90; some emphasis is mine)

The 'self' is not *fixed*. It is subject to change or becoming, also *overcoming*. The 'self' the sovereign individual 'takes care of' is what she *respectively overcomes* or *creates* beyond (cf. Z, 'Despisers', 24). To take care of something that *changes* (or that we are *driven* to change) leads to a paradox.

Ansell-Pearson rightly emphasises the role of 'experimentation' in Nietzsche (cf. Ansell-Pearson 2011, 183), but we must understand 'experimentation' in light of his views on the changeability of the 'self'. The latter constitutes a central objection to Schopenhauer. Experimentation surpasses the impetus of self-preservation: experimentation *threatens* the 'self'. Our pursuit of 'sovereign individuality' can be *ruinous* to the 'self', because it implies *creativity* or *overcoming*, which include creativity with respect to the self or self-overcoming (cf. Z, 'Prologue', 3-6).

I suggest that Nietzsche aims to restore a good conscience to egoism for different and broader reasons than Ansell-Pearson suggests. His suggestion is a preparatory and thus a necessary step, but Nietzsche's true aim is to *loosen* morality's hold on individuality with the aim of liberating those characteristics applicable to his practical exemplar (cf. GS 107) and, in turn, permit a genuine evaluation of morality. Only individuals who 'transcend' morality are capable of Nietzsche's evaluative task and these individuals are 'egoistic', but in a difference sense than we can grasp by the impetus for 'self-preservation', a moral view of 'egoism' or by its associated 'care of self'. Nietzsche defines sovereign individuals as possessing an *artist's egoism* (more on this below). His early concerns with 'egoism' are *preparatory* steps for his moral task and, as we saw previously, serve as an attempt to challenge the dominance of the morality of *Mitleid*, but he does not stop there. He aims to prepare us for *transcending* morality such that we can be capable of genuine critique and scrutiny over its propositions and precepts. We can argue that egoism is a necessary, albeit also an insufficient part of Nietzsche's moral task or his evaluation of morality.

Nietzsche's sovereign individual, his moral exemplar, has a so-called *artist's egoism*; he strives for *creativity* and *overcoming*. The latter two transcend egoism and its cognates. Other properties he uses to describe sovereign individuality are 'responsibility' (cf. BGE 21, 210 & 272), 'belief in oneself' (HHI 261), 'self-respect' (BGE 261), the 'prerogative to promise' (GM II, 1), also '(self) mastery', a 'strong will', an 'artist's egoism'. The following

passage reveals the characteristics that he believes an agent requires for undertaking his evaluation of morality:

“Whoever can command, whoever is a ‘master’ by nature, whoever appears violent in deed and gesture—what is he going to care about contracts! Such beings cannot be reckoned with, they come like fate, without cause, reason, consideration or pretext, they appear just like lightning appears, too terrible, sudden, convincing and ‘other’ even to be hated. What they do is to create and imprint forms instinctively, they are the most involuntary, unconscious artists there are: — where they appear, soon something new arises, a structure of domination [*Herrschaftis-Gebilde*] that *lives*, in which parts and functions are differentiated and related to one another, in which there is absolutely no room for anything that does not first acquire ‘meaning’ with regard to the whole. *They* do not know what guilt, responsibility, consideration are, these born organisers; they are ruled by that terrible inner artist’s egoism which has a brazen countenance and sees itself justified to all eternity by the ‘work’ like the mother in her child.” (*GM II*, 17)

We cannot describe sovereign individuality as a kind of virtuosity in egoism or egoism with a ‘good conscience’, even though sovereign individuals *are* egoistic. Not all egoists have ‘(self) mastery’, a ‘strong will’ etc., but all *sovereign individuals*—who have ‘(self) mastery’, ‘strong will’—are egoistic. There is a part-whole relationship between egoism and the sovereign individual. His analysis of King Viçvāmitra’s, who apparently aimed to build a ‘new heaven’ (cf. *D 113 & GM III*, 10), offers insight into the difference between ‘sovereign individuality’ and ‘egoism’.

We can compare King Viçvāmitra’s case with the ‘*pathos of distance*’ of warrior-like or ‘noble’ individuals, whom he credits for forming communities and so laying the ground for morality (cf. *GM I*, 2; *GM II*, 17). Compare the above passage to the following:

“Every smallest step in the field of free thought, of a life shaped personally, has always had to be fought for with spiritual and bodily tortures: not only the step forward, no! the step itself, movement, change of any kind has needed its innumerable *martyrs* through all the long path-seeking and *foundation-laying* millennia which, to be sure, are not what one has in mind when one uses the expression ‘world history’—that ludicrously tiny portion of human existence...” (cf. *D 18*; my emphasis)

Moreover, we should not comprehend his objections to the morality of *Mitleid*, which he calls the ‘slave’ morality, as implying that it did not emerge from *strong willed* individuals, i.e., sovereign individuals. The morality of *Mitleid* aims to preserve and affirm a *type*. It represents a *rank order* of values set up and maintained by ‘strong willed’ individuals. The ‘priestly’ reversion of values using the slaves’ revolt driven by *ressentiment* represents an act of ‘strong will’:

“This type of man needs to believe in an unbiased ‘subject’ with freedom of choice, because he has an instinct of *self*-preservation and *self*-affirmation in which every lie is sanctified.” (*GM I*, 13; my emphasis)

In short, even the morality of *Mitleid* “occurs when *ressentiment* itself turns *creative* and *gives birth* to values” (*GM I*, 10; some emphasis is mine). Even the morality of the so-called ‘weak’ stems from the strong will and the creative actions of so-called ‘priestly *aristocracy*’ or a ‘clerical *caste*’, which he credits with the actions of setting a new *rank order* of values. The following compliments the above passage:

“For an ascetic life is a self-contradiction: here an unparalleled *ressentiment* rules, that of an unfulfilled instinct and *power-will that wants to be master*, not over something in life, but over life itself and its deepest, strongest, most profound conditions; here, an attempt is made to use power to block the sources of the power; here, the green eye of spite turns on physiological growth itself, in particular the manifestation of this in beauty and joy; while satisfaction is *looked for* and found in failure, decay, pain, misfortune, ugliness, voluntary deprivation, destruction of selfhood, self-flagellation and self-sacrifice.” (*GM III*, 11; some emphasis is mine)

The opposition between egoism and compassion can thus be misleading when we try to make sense of Nietzsche’s evaluation of morality, because he makes positive cases for both, but for different reasons than what might be called ‘*moral* reasons’. His reasons are with respect to *health* and so reveal his reintroduction and use of the individual’s perspective.

Given the above, we can distinguish ‘self-affirmation’ from ‘affirmation of life’. Egoism is the broader concept and refers to ‘self-affirmation’. An Egoist can *affirm herself* while *negating life*, as Nietzsche’s analysis of the priestly inversion of values suggests (cf. *GM I*, 13). Correspondingly, an egoist can *negate herself* while *affirming life*, which we note by his claims on ‘self-overcoming’ (*Z*, ‘Self-Overcoming’, 90) and the ‘artist’s egoism’ of state-builders.<sup>210</sup> He does not explicitly make the previous distinctions, but his conception of different types of ‘egoism’, some of which *negate* life and others *affirm* life make these distinctions apposite, if not necessary. Accordingly, we can argue that he aims to restore a good conscience with respect to *life* and not *one specific action* or *set of actions in life*, which may explain why he hesitates about offering an alternative, ‘healthier’ morality. The concept of health is too individual to settle on ‘moral’ (and so universal) grounds, according to him. Restoring a good conscience to life means transcending morality’s shackles such that we can be in a position to comprehend and evaluate its role in our lives in a *non-moral*, but not anti-moral way.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> There is a case to be made about making sense of self-overcoming in terms of his drive psychology, specifically, in terms of Nietzsche’s concept of the will to power. In a sense, then, we can construe the above as Nietzsche’s attempt to reconcile the demands of the will to power with those of morality or communal life; we have internalised and inherited the latter demands and now we have to cope with and integrate them into our lives. For an interesting and compelling account of the relationship between affirmation of life and self-overcoming, albeit with a specific focus on art, see Reginster (2014).

<sup>211</sup> A useful passage in this regard and that details his account of a good conscience is the following: “‘saying yes to life, even in its strangest and harshest problems; the will to life rejoicing in its own inexhaustibility through the *sacrifice* of its highest types—that is what I called Dionysian, *that* is the bridge I found to the psychology of the *tragic* poet. *Not* to escape horror and pity, not to cleanse yourself of a dangerous affect by violent discharge—as

Nietzsche shows caution over moral imperatives because they risk pitting our drives against one another, which thereby undermines his project of genuinely evaluating morality. The previous, I believe, leads him to construe the ascetic ideal and finally morality itself as from the perspective of individuality and health. A passage that shows his disinclination to offer his own moral imperative (or ideal) is the following:

“‘Is an ideal set up or destroyed here?’ you might ask me . . . But have you ever asked yourselves properly how costly the setting up of every ideal on earth has been? How much reality always had to be vilified and misunderstood in the process, how many lies had to be sanctified, how much conscience had to be troubled, how much ‘god’ had to be sacrificed every time? If a shrine is to be set up, a shrine has to be destroyed: that is the law - show me an example where this does not apply! . . . We moderns have inherited millennia of conscience-vivisection and animal-torture inflicted on ourselves: we have had most practice in it, are perhaps artists in the field... For too long, man has viewed his natural inclinations with an ‘evil eye’, so that they finally came to be intertwined with ‘bad conscience’ in him.’ (GM II, 24)

Ansell-Pearson rightly contends that Nietzsche “does not intend to lay down precepts for everyone” (Ansell-Pearson 2011, 197), but we can go further using the unavoidable *trade-off* with communal life and morality that Nietzsche describes. We can argue that he intends *not* to offer an alternative morality. Though we can decide *how to manage* the previous trade-off, we cannot decide *not* to manage it. His broader evaluative task lays the ground for the individuals who *can* determine other, more effective ways of managing ‘bad conscience’, as he suggests in the following passage:

“A reverse experiment should be possible *in principle* - but who has sufficient strength? - by this, I mean an intertwining of bad conscience with *perverse* inclinations, all those other-worldly aspirations, alien to the senses, the instincts, to nature, to animals, in short all the ideals which up to now have been hostile to life and have defamed the world... For that purpose, we would need *another sort of spirit* than those we are likely to encounter in this age: spirits who are strengthened by wars and victories, for whom conquest, adventure, danger and even pain have actually become a necessity; they would also need to be acclimatised to thinner air higher up, to winter treks, ice and mountains in every sense, they would need a sort of sublime nastiness [Bosheit] itself, a final, very self-assured willfulness [sic] of insight which belongs to great health, in brief and unfortunately, they would need precisely this *great health!* . . .” (GM II, 24; some emphasis is mine)

Leaving aside Nietzsche’s proposed experiment, I think we should focus on the ‘spirit’ required by those tasked with performing it. His moral therapy strives to nurture this spirit in his readers with the aim of preparing them for opening morality up to genuine scrutiny

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Aristotle thought—: but rather, over and above all horror and pity, so that *you yourself may be* the eternal joy in becoming, —the joy that includes even the eternal *joy in negating* . . .” (TI, ‘Ancients’, 5).

and critique. We cannot reduce Nietzsche's broader evaluation of morality to the imperative to cultivate some *specific* drive or set of drives, because it would endanger other drives and lead to the ascetic ideal, by another route. His analysis of the consequences of blaming 'egoism' and 'stupidity' reveals to us the sort of 'spirit' he tries to cultivate by its negation. When we construe our 'egoism' or 'stupidity' blameworthy, we *harm* their 'cheerfulness', 'inventiveness', 'spirit' and 'beauty' (cf. *GS* 328), according to him. I will argue that these concepts *signify* the *sublimation* or *overcoming* of 'egoism' or 'stupidity', which becomes clearer when we construe them through his drive psychology.

In sum, we can explain the above in two steps. Firstly, he changes our perspective from the 'herd' to the 'individual'. Secondly, he evaluates actions not in 'moral' terms, that is, he does not espouse individuality and its correlate actions, which would bring us back to the herd perspective he aims to critique. He focuses on an individual's 'health', instead.

Nietzsche's concept of 'health' is not easy to pinpoint, but two propositions stand out that help us make sense of his use of the concept.<sup>212</sup> Firstly, we cannot determine or propose a universally valid concept for which objects or activities are healthy or unhealthy; what is 'healthy' for one individual can be 'unhealthy' for another (cf. *HHI* 286). I construe the previous as his attempt to prevent the 'herd perspective' intervening to provide a 'moral', rather than a 'medical' conception of 'health'. Secondly, he describes 'health' or 'becoming healthy' as *unity* among drives, which reflects the agent's ability (re)act effectively (cf. *WLN* 14[157]). Therefore, health is the ability to (re)act effectively, which, in turn, represents the unity of our drives.

There is more to his conception of 'health' than I can assess here.<sup>213</sup> A thorough analysis of 'health' and his extensive use of it can help us make sense of his evaluation of morality and it can show his revisionist approach to moral problems or, alternatively, the problems that we task morality with managing. As a preliminary, I want to emphasise that his conception of health is *as from* an individuality's perspective or includes this perspective, rather than strictly the moral or herd perspective. Accordingly, health becomes a legitimate, if not the main concern of those who aim to genuinely evaluate morality, i.e., as from a non-moral standpoint. Health must include the individual's perspective or account for someone's individuality (i.e., their diverse 'drives', but also how blocking these drives and-or pitting against one another affects us), because we can only know whether or not a person is healthy by assessing *them*, rather than by reverting or appealing to some moral or universal concept. Health, then, works as his middle ground, which allows him to 'dissect' morality not from *another* moral viewpoint and not by espousing immorality. It is the concept that legitimates

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<sup>212</sup> See, e.g., the following passages that explicitly or implicitly purport to offer something like a definition of health or attempt to demonstrate his use of it (*WLN* 2[97], 14 [157] & 18[11]; *A* 51; *EH*, 'Wise', 2; *EH*, 'Zarathustra', 1 & 2; *BGE* 154; *HH Pref.* 4; *HHI* 224, 286; *HHII* 356; *GS* 120 & 382; *D* 202). I am indebted to Reginster's reading of Nietzsche's critique of morality, which suggests that Nietzsche is less concerned with the 'truth-value' of a morality or some moral proposition than with what might be called its 'medical' value (cf. Reginster 2013). The emphasis on health or healthy is a central, but often overlooked feature of Nietzsche's critique of morality.

<sup>213</sup> For a summary of these two propositions on 'health', see (*GS* 120).

a critique of morality by offering a potential challenger to the dominant herd perspective and its internalisation.

Making drives ‘blameworthy’ risks preventing us from sublimating or overcoming them, according to Nietzsche. Whether or not this ‘blame’ is an explicit or implicit aspect of morality and its imperatives, is of little consequence. What matters is redirecting blocked drives *inwardly*. His aim to restore good conscience takes into account the consequences of *any* morality and *any* moral imperative. He does not advocate ‘individuality’ at the expense of the ‘herd perspective’, but *in spite of* the herd instincts. He strives to loosen morality’s hold on *individuals*, not to espouse individuality at the expense of the herd. Thus, restoring a good conscience *to egoism* is a preparatory step, because morality *opposes* individuality, in principle, according to him, but not the apotheosis of his critique.

My reading of Nietzsche’s broader evaluation of morality hinges on the herd perspective’s status in his drive psychology; he construes it as a drive, drive relation and as represented by the activity of the ‘herd instincts’. One’s herd instincts require discharge like any other drive(s), including those drives a morality *opposes*. Accordingly, he encourages his reader to *unify* her various and conflicting drives and construes this unification as having a *single project* (cf. GS 8, 39 & 190) or ‘wholeness’ (more on this below). Sovereign individuals should aspire to “own up to their *physis* and to heed its demands down to its subtlest tones” (GS 39); these subtlest tones include the ‘herd instincts’ and, in turn, the herd perspective that underpins them.

In sum, Nietzsche’s evaluation of morality utilises his genealogical account to attune us to how morality *affects* our ability to discharge our drives. He legitimates the assessment required for the previous by looking at how it affects one’s ‘health’, which he construes as wholly determined by our individuality in such a way that includes our herd instincts. It is misleading to construe him as espousing ‘individuality’ at the expense of the ‘herd perspective’, because this would lead him to contend that redirecting our ‘bad conscience’ to ‘herd instincts’ is the right way to restore someone’s health. For example, in the case of the morality of *Mitleid*, opposing *Mitleid* by espousing the moral value of egoism will harm and prevent *Mitleid*’s overcoming. It would harm our ability to unify *Mitleid* with our other drives and dent our capacity for social interactions or sociability. Furthermore, if we read Nietzsche as simply negating (*some*) morality to espouse individuality, this would bypass his “*critique of moral values*” (GM Pref., 6) by turning individuality into a new moral *value* or *ideal*. He resists the previous by arguing that his moral exemplar *transcends* morality.

One of Nietzsche’s central objections to morality aims at the propensity of moral imperatives to appear as permanent and universal, i.e., incapable of (or even resistant to) criticism, which means they function as ‘ideals’ (more on this in the closing chapter). His objections to the ascetic ideal are not on ‘moral’ grounds, however, but on grounds of its effect on an individual’s ‘health’. The latter, as we saw, stems from his reintroducing the individual’s perspective into his critique; the standpoint of individuality and its cognate ‘health’ *also* allows him to argue for ‘praiseworthy’ by-products of blocking drives and redirecting them inwardly. To identify the previous praiseworthy by-products, we have to

firstly distinguish an ascetic ‘action’ from an ascetic ‘ideal’; ‘ascetic’ denotes the inward redirection and discharge of blocked drives.

There is a difference between discharging blocked drives inwardly and construing this discharge as ‘morally worthy’ or an ‘ideal’. The latter means turning an ascetic action into a moral imperative, i.e., into praiseworthy *as from* the herd perspective. In short, it means including ascetic actions into a ‘rank order’ that characterise our community and its corresponding morality. The ascetic action is solely our discharging the drive responsible for our ‘misery’ (bad conscience etc.) inwardly without turning it into a ‘privilege’ or into ‘something praiseworthy’. Nietzsche identifies the positive some outcomes of redirecting bad conscience etc. inwardly, but nothing positive about making an *ideal* of it. The inward discharge of bad conscience is instrumental to what he construes as *self-discipline* or *self-mastery*, which are features of sovereign individuality. They are prerequisites of a so-called ‘prerogative to promise’ (or ‘responsibility’), which characterises sovereign individuality, but also key features of that individual’s creativity and self-overcoming.

Self-mastery plays a key role in Nietzsche’s conception of sovereign individuality. I will also argue that it plays a key role in his broader evaluation of morality, which is evident after we relate them to ascetic actions. To notice how self-mastery relates to ascetic actions we have to, once again, refer to his attunement and so his genealogical analysis of morality. This shows the conditions under which ‘self-mastery’ emerged. Habituation to communal life is a precondition of self-mastery. Recall that despots *mastered* our ancestors, before our ancestors mastered themselves. They first learned *obedience* through the pain their masters inflicted upon them when *commanding* them to act in a manner *opposed* to their individuality or freedom (cf. D 9 & GM II, 18).<sup>214</sup> They achieved self-mastery by internalising obedience and acquiring the herd perspective, *first*. The herd perspective and actions it impels, we can recall, are *motivated* by the *memory* of pain. Tus, they learned to behave in accordance with custom *without* having someone enforce this behaviour directly by inflicting pain on them. They learned to master themselves using their self-image; the memory of pain *motivated* this self-mastery. In short, they learned self-mastery after despots *mastered* them through the process of ‘internalisation’. He demonstrates the previous clearly in GM, where he discusses the origin of moral responsibility:

“In order to have that degree of control over the future, man must first have learnt to distinguish between what happens by accident and what by design, to think causally, to view the future as the present and anticipate it, to grasp with certainty what is end and what is means, in all, to be able to calculate, compute - and before he can do this, *man himself will really have to become reliable, regular, necessary, even in his own self-image*, so that he, as someone making a promise is, is answerable for his own *future!*” (GM II, 1; some emphasis is mine)

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<sup>214</sup> The means by which we acquired self-mastery has also proved costly by driving many individuals mad, according to Nietzsche (cf. D 14).



The process of making someone ‘reliable, regular, necessary’ etc. happens by a persistent infliction of pain, which generates memory and, in turn, a new behaviour or habit; violent, despotic individuals who organise states (cf. *GM II*, 17) are the progenitors of the previous reliability. The memory of pain made our ancestors act in accordance with custom, but also paved the way for sovereign individuality. The latter, however, means transcending customs and behaving in accordance with our self-image or ‘conscience’.

In other words, *memory* is a precondition for the self-image that characterises the responsibility and the prerogative to promise he attributes to the sovereign individual, for Nietzsche:

“‘A thing must be burnt in so that it stays in the memory: only something that continues to hurt stays in the memory’ - that is a proposition from the oldest (and unfortunately the longest-lived) psychology on earth... When man decided he had to make a memory for himself, it never happened without blood, torments and sacrifices: the most horrifying sacrifices and forfeits (the sacrifice of the first-born belongs here), the most disgusting mutilations (for example, castration), the cruelest rituals of all religious cults (and all religions are, at their most fundamental, systems of cruelty) - all this has its origin in that particular instinct which discovered that pain was the most powerful aid to mnemonics. In a certain sense, the whole of asceticism belongs here: a few ideas have to be made ineradicable, ubiquitous, unforgettable, ‘fixed’, in order to hypnotise the whole nervous and intellectual system through these ‘fixed ideas’ - and ascetic procedures and lifestyles are a method of freeing those ideas from competition with all other ideas, of making them ‘unforgettable’.” (*GM II*, 3)

The reason Nietzsche gives for the pain we encounter when we direct our conscious thought to the *individual* or *unfamiliar* (cf. *D* 115) is located in our moral history, i.e., in what our ancestors had to endure as a *trade-off* for the benefits of living in a community. Additionally, this is what now we are enduring through our institutions, morality and ‘blind obedience’, which we inherit from what our ancestors underwent.

What our ancestors endured allowed us to inherit responsibility, which is a central *requirement* of a communal life based on contracts, debts, obligations etc. This responsibility taught us self-mastery, which now permits us to transcend the harmful costs of contracts, debts, obligations etc. and have ‘freedom’ in Nietzsche’s sense. His critique of morality implies we have to first throw off the yoke of this teaching and thereby become sovereign, responsible, free and individual, in his sense. We can utilise self-mastery towards something other than the obedience to custom once we learn to *harmonise* or *unify* that obedience with our other drives: we should aim for health, not moral virtue. We have to do so to avoid the ascetic ideal and the effects on our health that follows our *blind* obedience to morality.

In sum, self-mastery is only possible using our self-image, which emerges from our habituation to communal life. It partakes in the decision-making process by altering the *intentional* object of a drive(s) and thus redirecting the original drives we block as a trade-off for communal life. Hitherto, the customs of our community rather than our individuality have shaped and dominated our self-image and dictated to us how we should redirect our

originally blocked drives. Contrary to Schopenhauer, our self-image does not *necessarily* make us individual. It is not an access point to reality from an illusory world whose illusion is determined by the limits of our intellect. According to Nietzsche, it is a “fellow worker in the construction of our character and our destiny” (D 115). It affects our actions and partakes in our inherent urge to overcome and self-overcome. Finally, or so his propositions imply, we *need* our self-image and morality. They are drives we cannot relinquish without relinquishing communal life itself or without the costly internal conflict that will eventually lead many of us to suffering and ruin.

We remember that the pale criminal’s shame arose from his *rationalising* his actions and not just from his ‘thoughts’. It is what he consciously makes of his actions and not his ‘intention’ to act in some way or his ‘thoughts’ about having acted some way, which makes him *ashamed* before his action. Nietzsche puts it in the following manner:

“Whoever grows ill now is befallen by the evil that is evil *now*; he wants to hurt with that which makes him hurt. But there have been other ages and another evil and good. Once doubt was evil and the will to self. Back then sick people became heretics and witches: *as* heretics and witches they suffered and wanted to cause suffering. But this does not want to get to your ears: it harms your *good people*, you say to me. But what matter your good people to me! There is much about your good people that makes me disgusted, and verily not their evil. I wish they had a madness from which they would perish, like this pale criminal! Indeed, I wish their madness were called truth or loyalty or justice – but they have their virtue in order to live long and in pitiful contentment.” (Z, ‘Criminal’: 27; my emphasis)

Notice the following two propositions. Firstly, ‘whoever grows ill now is befallen by the evil that is evil *now*’. Secondly, ‘there have been other ages and another evil and good’. He commits to plurality of moral evaluations of action, which I interpret as the proposition that moral values are *transient*. He agrees with Schopenhauer that our conscience *represents* the morality to which ‘we’ ascribe, but he rejects the proposition that the basis of morality itself is *Mitleid*. Rather, the Europeans of his day morally evaluated their actions based on the agent’s compassion, selflessness and so on:

“...popular superstition of Christian Europe which people keep repeating so naively to this day, that what is characteristic of morality is selflessness, self-denial, self-sacrifice, or sympathy (*Mitgefühl*) and compassion (*Mitleiden*)” (GS 345)

Although Nietzsche accepts the above as a *fact* about how the Europeans of his day morally evaluate an action, he rejects that we can justifiably elevate their evaluations to a *principle* that transcends a historical context, which is what Schopenhauer aims to do by arguing that compassion is the *basis* of morality itself. The criterion for determining the moral worth of an action at a particular moment in time is *not derived sub specie aeternitatis*, for Nietzsche, but as from our *current* Judeo-Christian values that have dominated historically and become custom. These values arose from particular circumstances and pressures, but also from a particular community’s responses to those pressures and circumstances.

Our Judeo-Christian values are not eternal or eternally binding. They emerge from what he calls the “*slaves’ revolt in morality*” (*GM I*, 7). They evidence one among different ways a community can respond to the ‘oppression’ (the misery, depression, lethargy, bad conscience etc.) of its members. The proposition that Europeans of his day morally evaluate actions in relation to how *Mitleid* features in them is a matter of fact pertaining to historical context and so represents transient moral precepts. It does not transcend such a context and it is not a matter of fact about an eternally binding moral precept. There have been other moral perspectives and precepts in history and there will be others, which means different criteria for how we morally evaluate people’s actions.

Moreover, Nietzsche argues that the moral yardstick of *Mitleid* evidences Europe’s break with its European moral history, which he supports by referring to philosophers and their views on its value:

“This predilection for and overvaluation of compassion [*Mitleid*] that modern philosophers show is, in fact, something new: up till now, philosophers were agreed as to the worthlessness of compassion. I need only mention Plato, Spinoza, La Rochefoucauld and Kant, four minds as different from one another as it is possible to be, but united on one point: their low opinion of compassion.” (*GM Pref.*, 5)

It is also misleading and hasty to argue that he aims primarily at Christian *morality*, because he acknowledges that even *within* Christian morality itself there have been different ideals, perspectives and-or imperatives:

“Even during the era of Græco-Roman splendour...the simplicity and vanity of Christian agitators - we call them Church Fathers - dared to decree: ‘*we have our own classical literature, we don’t need that of the Greeks*’, and so saying, they proudly pointed to books of legends, letters of the apostles and apologetic little tracts, rather similar to the way the English ‘Salvation Army’ today fights Shakespeare and other ‘heathens’ with similar literature. I do not like the New Testament, you have worked that out by now...The Old Testament - well, that is something quite different: every respect for the Old Testament! I find in it great men, heroic landscape and something of utmost rarity on earth, the incomparable naïvety of the strong heart; even more, I find a people. In contrast, in the New Testament I find nothing but petty sectarian groupings, nothing but rococo of the soul, nothing but arabesques, crannies and oddities, nothing but the air of the conventicle, not to forget the occasional breath of bucolic sugariness which belongs to the epoch (and to the Roman province) and is neither Jewish nor Hellenistic.” (*GM III*, 22)

He construes Christianity as laying the ground for morally praising the ‘bad conscience’, which is what spawned the ‘ascetic ideal’. It redirected one’s blocked drives inwardly by making one’s body their target, but it did not stop there. It turned ‘redirecting blocked drives inwardly’ into something morally praiseworthy, that is, into a moral imperative. In typically prophetic moments, he sees a change in moral values and standards for Europeans:

“...without a doubt, from now on, morality will be destroyed by the will to truth’s becoming-conscious-of-itself: that great drama in a hundred acts reserved for Europe in the next two centuries, the most terrible, most questionable drama but perhaps also the one most rich in hope . . .” (*GM III*, 27)

We should distinguish the *need* for morality from the *object* or *target* of that need. Most importantly, we should not confuse the *need* for morality for the need for some particular morality, for example, the morality of *Mitleid*, thus excluding others. Moral philosophers fail to distinguish the *need* for morality from the legitimacy of *a particular* morality or set of moral values, which renders their attempts to offer anything like a first step towards a critique of morality dubious. They make a common mistake, which he describes as follows:

“Their usual mistaken premise is that they affirm some consensus among peoples, at least among tame peoples, concerning certain moral principles, and then conclude that these principles must be unconditionally binding also for you and me—or, conversely, they see that among different peoples moral valuations are *necessarily* different and infer from this that *no* morality is binding—both of which are equally childish.” (*GS* 345)

The *need* for morality is untouched by any arguments for or against *one* set of moral values, since, according to the conceptual link we discussed, the means by which we *reflect* on (and the basis on which we argue about) moral matters is conscious thought and language. Both lead us to entertain and therefore legitimate the herd perspective. Therefore, we can shift the intentional object or target of our *need* for morality without changing the *need* itself:

“For that is how man is: an article of faith could be refuted to him a thousand times; as long as he needed it, he would consider it ‘true’ again and again, in accordance with that famous ‘proof of strength’ of which the Bible speaks.” (*GS* 347)

Moral philosophers, then, commonly strive to take a photograph of the moral state of affairs in *some* time and attempt to reproduce its content *ad infinitum*, both in affirming and negating it; what drives them is the *need* for morality. This need shows itself both in affirming a set of moral values X or in negating X.

Nietzsche proposes a different strategy for dealing with the *transience* of our moral values as juxtaposed to the apparent *permanence* of our *need* for morality, i.e., the sovereign individual, who shows creativity with respect to moral values. Restoring this creativity requires us to acknowledge two approaches to moral matters as represented by two types of individuals, however. The following passage reveals what those individuals are, which he calls them ‘believers’ and ‘free spirits’:

“Faith is always most desired and most urgently needed where will is lacking; for will, as the affect of command, is the decisive mark of sovereignty and strength. That is, the less someone knows how to command, the more urgently does he desire someone who commands, who commands severely—a god, prince, the social order, doctor, father confessor, dogma, or party conscience... Once a human being arrives

at the basic conviction that he *must* be commanded, he becomes ‘a believer’; conversely, one could conceive of a delight and power of self-determination, a *freedom* of the will, in which the spirit takes leave of all faith and every wish for certainty, practised as it is in maintaining itself on light ropes and possibilities and dancing even beside abysses. Such a spirit would be the *free spirit* par excellence.” (GS 247)

We can cope with the need for morality by acknowledging that some individuals among us create, project and preserve moral values, while others seek to accord to them. Essentially, our moral values represent *our* will, *our* actions, *our* works and *our* achievements. Nietzsche, firstly, attunes us to the previous using his genealogical analysis and, secondly, strives to restore our ‘good conscience’ with respect to creativity in moral matters. He aims to restore it for both the so-called ‘believers’ *and* the ‘free spirits’. Accordingly, he shifts the ground of moral propositions from something outside the moral agent (i.e., the ‘masters’, the ‘herd’, the ‘community’, ‘custom or duty’, ‘God’, ‘virtue’, ‘nature’ etc.) to the individual and thus the moral agent *herself*. The following quotes demonstrate this strategy and aim:

“You shall learn to grasp the necessary injustice in every For and Against, injustice as inseparable from life, life itself as conditioned by the sense of perspective and its injustice. You shall above all see with your own eyes where injustice is always at its greatest: where life has developed at its smallest, narrowest, neediest, most incipient and yet cannot avoid taking itself as the goal and measure of things and for the sake of its own preservation secretly and meanly and ceaselessly crumbling away and calling into question the higher, greater, richer - you shall see with your own eyes the problem of order of rank, and how power and right and spaciousness of perspective grow into the heights together. You shall' - enough: from now on the free spirit knows what ‘you shall’ he has obeyed, and he also knows what he now can, what only now he - may do . . .” (HH Pref., 6)

“Let us therefore limit ourselves to the purification of our opinions and value judgments and to the creation of tables of what is good that are new and all our own: let us stop brooding over the ‘moral value of our actions’! Yes, my friends, it is time to feel nauseous about some people's moral chatter about others. Sitting in moral judgment should offend our taste. Let us leave such chatter and such bad taste to those who have nothing to do but drag the past a few steps further through time and who never live in the present — that is, to the many, the great majority! We, however, want to become who we are — human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves!” (GS 335)

“To *recommend* a goal to mankind is something quite different: the goal is then thought of as something which *lies in our own discretion*; supposing the recommendation appealed to mankind, it could in pursuit of it also *impose* upon itself a moral law, likewise at its own discretion. But up to now the moral law has been supposed to stand *above* our own likes and dislikes: one did not want actually to

*impose* this law upon oneself, one wanted to *take* it from somewhere or *discover* it somewhere or *have it commanded to one* from somewhere.” (D 108)

“Away from these fable songs I steered you when I taught you: ‘The will is a creator.’ All ‘it was’ is a fragment, a riddle, a grisly accident – until the creating will says to it: ‘But I will it thus! I shall will it thus!’” (Z, ‘Redemption’, 112)

“But men are capable of *consciously* resolving to evolve themselves to a new culture, whereas formerly they did so unconsciously and fortuitously: they can now *create* better conditions for the propagation of men and for their nutrition, education and instruction, manage the earth as a whole economically, balance and employ the powers of men in general.” (HHI 24; my emphasis)

Morality can potentially hinder individuality (cf. D 107) in favour of the herd perspective and have ‘harmful’ consequences, but the same applies if we proposed a morality that espouses individuality, albeit with respect to the drives representing the herd perspective or our herd instincts. He proposes a balancing act by treating the herd perspective as drives requiring discharge, but cautions us not to undermine our *need* for morality. He encourages readers to *strive* to unify, harmonise and co-operate with their need for morality (cf. GS 39 & 290), albeit in conjunction with rather than at the exclusion of their individuality. I have understood the previous as espousing ‘health’.

We should *create* a ‘self-image’ (cf. HHII 366), take responsibility for it (HH Pref. 6; D 105) and promote it, according to Nietzsche. He encourages a special few to undertake the responsibility for creating their *own* rank order of values through their actions, rather than waiting to have a rank order imposed on them from without. The previous, however, requires him to encourage the non-privileged to learn from and follow them, which we rarely notice. The core aspect of his attunement is to lead his readers to recognise that they have inherited the moral values to which they ascribe. They are remnants representing the actions and values of the individuals who preceded them, which they often support by an *uncritical* commitment to them. This uncritical and unreflective support comes at the risk of being a detriment of *individuality* and *health*, but likewise to our species, which he evidences in the following passage:

“Even the most harmful person may actually be the most useful when it comes to the preservation of the species; for he nurtures in himself or through his effects on others drives without which humanity would long since have become feeble or rotten. Hatred, delight in the misfortunes of others, the lust to rob and rule, and whatever else is called evil: all belong to the amazing economy of the preservation of the species, an economy which is certainly costly, wasteful, and on the whole most foolish — but still *proven* to have preserved our race so far.” (GS 1)

The pursuit of our individual ends are not *necessarily* opposed to the interest of our species. The opposition is between morality (or the herd) and individuality, not between the species and the individual. The individual is *necessarily* included within the species, irrespective of

whether or not she is included in her ‘herd’: “each individual is *the entire single line of humanity* up through himself” (*TI*, ‘Skirmishes’, 33; my emphases). His proposition is that we should cultivate a good conscience with respect to creating our *own* values, which need not be opposed (or reactions) to our current morality and its values. Many will inevitably experience the inclination to defend and champion our current moral values, not undertake to create their *own* values, but they should do so by including their individual perspective into their reflections over why they defend them. They can only achieve that after the critical and non-moral reflection over those values he proposes. Let us look more closely at what exactly he proposes by assessing his famous and, in my view, important example of Goethe.

Nietzschean sovereign individuality means taking ‘responsibility’, but, of course, he means this in a revised sense. He construes it in the sense of having:

“...an enduring, unbreakable will, thus has his own standard of value: in the possession of such a will: viewing others from his own standpoint, he respects or despises; and just as he will necessarily respect his peers, the strong and the reliable (those with the prerogative to promise)... so he will necessarily be ready to kick the febrile whippets who promise without that prerogative, and will save the rod for the liar who breaks his word in the very moment it passes his lips.” (*GM II*, 2)

His analysis of Goethe demonstrates how sovereign individuals *transcend* morality *without negating* it. It demonstrates what he aims to attain by loosening morality’s hold on egoism and individuality, but also what he aims at with his avowal of ‘sovereign individuality’<sup>215</sup>:

“What he wanted was *totality*; he fought against the separation of reason, sensibility, feeling, will (— preached in the most forbiddingly scholastic way by *Kant*, Goethe’s antipode), he disciplined himself to wholeness, he *created* himself ... In the middle of an age inclined to unreality, Goethe was a convinced realist: he said yes to everything related to him, — his greatest experience was of that *ens realissimum* [the most real thing] that went by the name of Napoleon. Goethe conceived of a strong, highly educated, self-respecting human being, skilled in all things physical and able to keep himself in check, who could dare to allow himself the entire expanse and wealth of naturalness, who is strong enough for this freedom; a person who is tolerant out of strength and not weakness because he knows how to take advantage of things that would destroy an average nature; a person lacking all prohibitions except for *weakness*, whether it is called a vice or a virtue...” (*TI*, ‘Skirmishes’, 49)

He praises Goethe for the courage of going *beyond* his age after describing it as inclined to unreality.<sup>216</sup> He then describes Goethe as seemingly *opposed* to his age or as a ‘convinced

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<sup>215</sup> For more of Goethe’s influence on Nietzsche see Del Caro (1989). For more on the relationship between Goethe, health, agency and morality see Risse (2007, 78-80).

<sup>216</sup> Nietzsche makes clear what he understands by going beyond one’s age and his own relationship to it in the following passage: “[w]hat does a philosopher demand of himself, first and last? To overcome his age, to become

realist'. The previous can be misleading if we read it as Goethe *reacting* to his age, *for his own sake* or *interest*. If he created himself simply *for himself, his interest* and *pleasure*, then he would resemble the pale criminal, a hermit or be immoral. The previous did not drive Goethe, who disciplined himself into 'wholeness'.

Nietzsche praises Goethe's self-discipline while clarifying that it demonstrates his commitment to the self-image of "a strong, highly educated, self-respecting *human being*, skilled in all things physical and able to keep himself in check" (*TI*, 'Skirmishes', 49; my emphasis). Recall, there is a conceptual link between one's self-image and self-discipline or self-mastery. Our self-image is an expression of the herd perspective, however, and so it conceptually links to the herd perspective. Goethe changed the intentional object of his *need* for morality. He did not block that need. He conceived of a 'human being' and resolved to *become* that human being. He did not conceive *of himself* without juxtaposition to others. What we 'conceive', 'know', 'consciously' decide necessarily has moral consequences. In other words, it is broader than our *self*, in principle (cf. *GS* 354-5).<sup>217</sup> The previous claim is true even if our actions are *apparently for ourselves* and *on ourselves*.

In sum, Nietzsche's conception of sovereign individuality is developmental; it shows a particular stage in our moral development, which he aptly summarises as follows:

"What is essential and invaluable about every morality is that it is a long compulsion... Everything there is, or was, of freedom, subtlety, boldness, dance, or masterly assurance on earth, whether in thinking itself, or in ruling, or in speaking and persuading, in artistic just as in ethical practices, has only developed by virtue of the "tyranny of such arbitrary laws." ... I will say it again: what seems to be essential "in heaven and on earth" is that there be *obedience* in one direction for a long time. In the long term, this always brings and has brought about something that makes life on earth worth living – for instance: virtue, art, music, dance, reason, intellect – something that transfigures, something refined, fantastic, and divine... Slavery, in both the crude and refined senses of the term, seems to be the indispensable means of disciplining and breeding even the spirit... "You should obey someone, anyone, and for a long time: *or else* you will deteriorate and lose all respect for yourself" – this seems to me to be the moral imperative of nature, which is clearly neither

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'timeless'... In fact the thing I have been most deeply occupied with is the problem of decadence, — I have had my reasons for this. 'Good and evil' is just a variant of this problem. Anyone who has kept an eye open for signs of decline understands morality as well, — understands what is hiding under its holiest names and value-formulas: *impoverished* life, the will to the end, the great exhaustion. Morality *negates* life . . . I needed a particular form of self-discipline for a task like this: — to take sides *against* everything sick in myself, including Wagner, including Schopenhauer, including the whole of modern 'humaneness'. — A profound alienation, a profoundly cold and sober attitude towards everything timely, time-bound: to want more than anything else an eye like *Zarathustra's*, an eye that looks out over the whole fact of humanity from a tremendous distance, — that looks *down* over it . . . Would any sacrifice be too much for a goal like this? Any 'self-overcoming'! Any 'self-denial'!" (*CW Pref.*, 233).

<sup>217</sup> See, (*WLN* 34[46], 34[124], 35[35], 37[4], 38[1], 40[21], 40[27], 40[28], 40[38], 41[11], 1[28], 5[22], 5[65], 5[68], 7[63], 11[113], 14[122]; *BGE* 16,-17, 20, 23; *TI*, 'Errors', 5; *D* 107, 133, 564; *HII*, 228, 608; *HHI*, 90; *GS* 21).



“categorical,” as the old Kant demanded it to be (hence the “or else” –), nor directed to the individual (what does nature care about the individual!), but rather to peoples, races, ages, classes, and above all to the whole “human” animal, to *the* human.” (BGE 188)

Goethe is an example of a particular stage in our moral development. When we arrive at that stage, we aim to set a *new* moral ideal by amending and building upon the ideal of *our* age. Moreover, we learn to assume responsibility for realising this ideal. We *overcome* rather than *oppose* the morality of our time. In Goethe’s case, the morality of the time ostensibly espoused ‘selflessness’, ‘self-denial’ and ‘unreality’, which he *transcended*. He disciplined himself to represent moral values that other individuals could *likewise* aspire to.<sup>218</sup> Goethe’s self-discipline would possess no moral significance or would be immoral without his *self-image* of a *whole* ‘human being’. His actions represent what a human being *can* be, not what only Goethe can be. Accordingly, he strove to be a ‘strong, highly educated, self-respecting human being’, not to be ‘himself’. He *harmonised* his individual drives and herd instincts by *creating* a ‘self’ using his self-image and, thus, by assuming responsibility for realising this self-image through actions and works.<sup>219</sup> Goethe, then, strove unwittingly for ‘health’. His harmony culminated in someone who contributed to his community and morality, not in someone who reacted to or opposed them. ‘Wholeness’—in the remarkable co-existence and cooperation between ‘individuality’ and the ‘herd’—typifies Nietzsche’s sovereign individual. She transcends and so replaces *her* morality, not *all* morality; she contributes to it critically and creatively.

Nietzsche gave morality the status of a *need* or *drive* that requires discharge and so integration into our lives. The herd perspective plays a fundamental and inescapable role as “some of the most powerful levers in the machinery of our actions” (GS 335). He implores readers to recognise that human beings *create their own* moral values:

“My ego taught me a new pride, I teach it to mankind: no longer bury your head in the sand of heavenly things, but bear it freely instead, an earthly head that creates a meaning for the earth! I teach mankind a new will: to *want* the path that *human beings* have travelled *blindly*, to pronounce it good and no longer sneak to the side of it like the sick and the dying-out.” (Z, ‘Hinterworldly’, 21; some of the emphasis is mine)

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<sup>218</sup> We often find Nietzsche placing himself on the latter camp of people who seek to set moral trends (cf. BGE 32 & 226; TI, ‘Arrows’, 36; TI, ‘Anti-Nature’, 3 & 6; TI, ‘Errors’, 7).

<sup>219</sup> I am indebted to Katsafanas’ analysis of the relationship between Nietzsche and Schiller’s account of agency for the concept of ‘harmony’: “Nietzsche, with Schiller, conceives a harmony between the various aspects of the soul” (Katsafanas 2011, 102). I agree with him that unity in terms of harmony describes Nietzsche’s conception of agency. Nevertheless, the independent causal efficacy of conscious thought requires us to conceive of this ‘harmony’ based on the effectiveness of something distinct from the drives, which we call ‘self-conscious thought’. It tempts us to posit a phantom, which Nietzsche must avoid to make good on his commitment to ontological monism and immanence. He can do so by conceiving ‘self-conscious thought’ as a *drive* or as representing the activity of a *drive(s)*. The latter has been the approach to Nietzschean agency I have attempted to defend using what he calls historical philosophising.

The new values they create need not be reactions, threatening or even opposed to the ‘herd perspective’, but contribute to it (cf. *D* 107-8). This developmental account of sovereign individuality entails she creates her *own* ‘moral’ values by mastering and overcoming her community and so its moral values, not by opposing or reacting to them. Thus, sovereign individuality is a stage in the habituation to communal life, not a break with or an opposition to this process:

“Let us place ourselves, on the other hand, at *the end of this immense process* where the tree actually bears fruit, where society and its morality of custom finally reveal what they were simply *the means to*: we then find the *sovereign individual* as the ripest fruit on its tree, like only to itself, having freed itself from the morality of custom, an autonomous, supra-ethical individual (because ‘autonomous’ and ‘ethical’ are mutually exclusive), in short, we find a man with his own, independent, enduring will, whose *prerogative it is to promise*—and in him a proud consciousness quivering in every muscle of *what* he has finally achieved and incorporated, an actual awareness of power and freedom, a feeling that man in general has reached completion.” (*GM II*, 2; some emphasis is mine)

The sovereign individual is not free in the sense of *free from* the community’s values, but free by *mastering* and finally *overcoming* those values. Her good conscience with respect to creating new values shows both her freedom *and* her mastery over those values. She can only conceive of *what* a ‘human being’ can strive to *become* and assume responsibility for it after she *masters* those values. Afterwards, she uses that mastery to *discipline herself* to become it.

The above demonstrates my reading of Nietzsche’s evaluation of morality, which, I strove to keep consistent with his genealogical analysis and the will-body identity. Nietzsche is clear about the basis of his evaluation: the need to reintroduce the individual perspective to our deliberations, rationalisations and actions. He encourages us to evaluate morality as from a ‘medical’ point of view and so take seriously its effect on our ‘health’. Nevertheless, he is not as clear about what he suggests should replace Judeo-Christian morality or morality itself, after he argues that they are ‘unhealthy’ or ‘decadent’. Instead, he suggests assessing morality’s effect on health and espousing his sovereign individual, which he champions as a model for *transcending* morality. Using Ansell-Pearson’s helpful suggestions and reading, I argued Nietzsche’s normative proposition is that we should cultivate a good conscience with respect to moral creativity and experimentation. Thus, he leaves us with a model for how to proceed and the reasons for doing so without showing us the limits of its application.

In the next chapter, I will propose my alternative solution the lack of fit, which aims to offer a theoretical ground for what we have been discussing so far.

## 2.11 The Bridge: An Alternative Solution to the Lack of Fit

Recall that the ‘lack fit’ of Nietzschean agency is between the following:

- A) His conception of persons and actions as representations of drives.
- B) His description of practical agency as free, responsible, having control and ownership over the drives.

In this chapter, I will propose my alternative solution to the ‘lack of fit’, which, I will argue, helps resolve it without producing what we recognised previously as the ‘phantom’ in the third person perspective and without bloating his ontology.

Nietzsche’s conception of the will-body identity challenges the mind-body dualism. I will argue that he rejects atomism or materialistic reductivism, as well. These ontologies struggle to coherently explain the *causal efficacy* of the self-conscious ‘I’ or self-conscious thought and deliberation. I will show the grounds on which he rejects these explanations as I defend my reading of what I think is Nietzsche’s partially worked-out explanation of the causal efficacy of the self-conscious ‘I’. I will call the previous the ‘bridge’. I will start with his rejection of Schopenhauer’s account of the causal efficacy of the self-conscious ‘I’ to lay the ground for both his alternative, revisionist account and show his reasons for rejecting other explanations.

Nietzsche objects to Schopenhauer’s account of the *causal* efficacy of the intellect, but accepts his will-body identity. Recall that Schopenhauer limits causal explanations of events, however. He construes them as the intellect’s representation and the intellect is the will’s ‘slave’ (for the most part). The will’s relation to the world is not causal, but *identical*; only the will is ‘real’ or ‘effective’ and so ultimately ‘responsible’ for how the world appears to us. The ‘apparent’ world, i.e., the world we perceive is the will’s *mirror*. Therefore, we perceive what is (or what can be) in our *interest* and that interest is based on the mainsprings of our actions and how these hang together. The world itself is wholly will, not will *and* intellect, which means he ascribes to some form of ontological monism.

Schopenhauer has good grounds for construing the intellect as *a kind of will*, but, in his ethics and aesthetics, he flirts with a dualism or opposition between the intellect and the will at the expense of forgoing the consistency of his philosophy. The consequences of this approach are recognisable in the paradoxes plaguing his views on ascetic resignation. What did Nietzsche make of the previous?

In less quarrelsome moments, Nietzsche champions Schopenhauer’s philosophy, but he rages against the effects of Schopenhauer’s personality on that philosophy:

“Schopenhauer’s mystical embarrassments and evasions in those places where the factual thinker let himself be seduced and corrupted by *the vain urge* to be the unriddler of the world...these and other such *excesses* and *vices* of the philosopher are always what is accepted first of all and made into *a matter of faith*—for *vices* and

*excesses* are the easiest to imitate and require no extensive preparatory practice.” (GS 99; some emphasis is mine)

The reference to a ‘vain urge’ in the above passage is not accidental or rhetorical, but refers to a *drive*. It refers to the internalisation of the ‘herd perspective’ and so to Schopenhauer’s herd instincts, which, we recall, appears as our ‘self-image’ in deliberation. Schopenhauer *wants* the intellect to have a *real effect*, but he does so at his philosophy’s expense. He wants it to bring about an action whose driving force is purely ‘intellectual’. He did not settle for construing the intellect’s *apparent* effect on the world and that it is ‘apparent’ because the intellect is another part of the will. Rather, he sought to show how the intellect can have a miraculous effect on the world wholly independent from the *insatiable* will and it does so by changing or thwarting the will. He wants the intellect to *oppose* the will, but ignores the proposition that this *real effect* is another kind of *willing* or *will*, i.e., the ascetic kind, which would preserve the consistency of his philosophy. Although, he even flirts with the previous proposition, which is evident in his views on tragedy. What *seems* like the effect of the intellect on the will represents the effect of another kind of will and, in turn, another kind of world. He argues tragedy makes us conscious of something within us that attunes us to the following thought: “for a different kind of willing there must be a different kind of existence also” (WR II, 435). In the supplementary essays, he is also adamant to stress the intellect is secondary to the will or metaphysically dependent on the will:

“Accordingly with me the intellect belongs to the mere phenomenon, and therefore shares its fate; the will, on the contrary, is tied to no special organ, but is everywhere present, is everywhere that which really moves and forms, and consequently conditions, the whole organism. In fact, the will constitutes the metaphysical substratum of the whole phenomenon, and thus is not, like the intellect, a *posterius*, but the *prius*, of the phenomenon; the phenomenon depends on it, not it on the phenomenon. The body, however, is reduced even to a mere representation, since it is only the way in which the will exhibits itself in the perception of the intellect or brain.” (WR II, 270)

If we accept the above passage as delineating his ontological principle and so it determines the limits of what there is, then, coherently, he can only settle for the intellect’s ‘apparent’ effect on our actions and the world. The ‘intellect’ has *no real effect* at all. At bottom, it is a different kind (or direction) of the will that expresses itself through the changes in the world we ascribe to the intellect. In short, only the will is *effective*. What he calls negation of the will to life is another kind of affirmation of the will to life, or an affirmation of another kind of life premised on a different kind of *willing*, but it is still willing. His philosophy can only achieve the latter, at best. He is not clear on this point, however, and Nietzsche apparently notices it. He argues that Schopenhauer’s personality—and, specifically, his romanticism—distorted his ontological principles and deviated him from the foundations of his philosophy.

Nietzsche aims for an alternative, non-dualistic conception of self-conscious agency that will account for the deceptions (or self-deceptions) inherent to aesthetics and ethics that

Schopenhauer's philosophy revealed. It is important to note from the outset that Nietzsche's commitment to avoiding a dualistic ontology does *not* mean he commits to a reductionist or causal-mechanistic account of self-conscious agency. He rejects readings that construe self-conscious thoughts as *causally* determined by drive relations and that these relations are also causal. As we saw, the previous reading commits him to a conception of drives as 'entities', 'quantities' or 'things' rather than 'urges' or 'movements' *toward something*. Drives are not 'things'. We cannot understand them according to concepts or in terms of relations which obtain between things. Let us assess why he does not conceive the drives as 'things' and their relations as relations between things, e.g., as causal or mechanical relations.

Nietzsche is skeptical over causal explanations, because of the explanatory value of causal relations with respect to *some* phenomena, i.e., self-conscious agency. His skepticism stems from what he perceives as the explanatory backdrop or the ground of causal relations, which he identifies as a *belief* or *faith* in self-conscious agency or conscious willing. Causal accounts of events, i.e., *X caused Y*, requires the belief that '(self-conscious) willing suffices for action', according to him. This belief or faith is a precondition of the explanatory value of causal 'explanations':

“People have always believed that they knew what a cause was: but how did we get this knowledge — or, more precisely, how did we get this belief that we have knowledge? From the famous realm of ‘inner facts’, none of which has ever proven factual. We believed that our acts of will were causally efficacious; we thought that here, at least, we had caught causality in *the act*. Nobody doubted that consciousness was the place to look for all the *antecedentia* of an act, its causes, and that you would be able to *find* these causes there as well—under the rubric of ‘motives’: otherwise the action could hardly be considered free, and nobody could really be held responsible for it. Finally, who could deny that thoughts have causes? that the ‘I’ is what causes thoughts? . . . Of all these three ‘inner facts’ that together seem to guarantee causation, the first and most convincing is that of *will as causal agent*; the conception of a consciousness (‘mind’) as cause, and then that of the I (the ‘subject’) as cause are just latecomers that appeared once causality of the will was established as given, as *empirical* . . .” (TI, ‘Errors’, 3)

Causality ‘explains’ because we *already believe* (or have *faith*) in conscious agency. The proposition ‘*X caused Y*’ is *meaningful* or acquires *significance* from the first-person insight into what it means to *will* X and then *do* it. Accordingly, we have first-person insight into being ‘responsible’ for something, i.e., some event or action, which underpins our belief or faith in causality and the objective or mechanistic picture stemming from it. Responsibility and causality are inextricably and conceptually linked, according to Nietzsche; his account of the explanatory value we ascribe to causal relations is, therefore, genealogical.

Previously, I analysed his revisionist account of responsibility, which contends that we acquire a *limited* sense of responsibility under the circumstantial pressures of communal life from which emerged a limited sense of self. Using the previous, we can argue there is a conceptual link between causality, responsibility and the first-person experience of willing

something. The previous conceptual link underpins his arguments about what limits causal explanations. Here, I will focus on the limits of ‘causal explanations’ with respect to self-conscious agency and thus the (self-conscious) thought-action relationship without moving to other phenomena we comprehend or explain causally, which would send me far afield.

We model causal accounts on our first-person experience of *willing*, for Nietzsche. His objections to causal accounts aim at their explanatory limits, which he contends is self-conscious agency. We cannot apply causality to explain self-conscious agency, because, by doing so we risk circular reasoning. We *causally* explain what we use as a precondition for causal explanations, namely, that in virtue of which ‘causality’ has explanatory value. His objections to ‘causal explanations’ of the will are not new, however. Schopenhauer makes a similar objection in discussing the limits of scientific explanations:

“All the branches of science that deal primarily with knowledge of cause and effect are true aetiologies: these teach us how *one* state of matter necessarily gives rise to another determinate state according to an infallible rule: how one determinate alteration necessarily conditions and gives rise to another: and this account is what we call an *explanation*.” (WR, 121)

This approach does not render meaningful the ‘necessary rise’ of ‘another determinate state’, or the reasons for the relationship between the two states, according to Schopenhauer:

“But this does not shed any light at all on the inner essence of any of these appearances: this inner essence is called a *natural force*, and lies outside of the ambit of aetiological explanation; what aetiology calls a *natural law* is the unchanging constancy with which such a force expresses itself, whenever its known conditions are present... These explanations consist in specifying faithfully and with mathematical precision how, where and when each force expresses itself, and tracing each appearance that mechanics comes across back to natural forces... Consequently, even the best aetiological explanation of the whole of nature would really be nothing more than a catalogue of inexplicable forces and an authoritative specification of the rule according to which they emerge, succeed one another, and displace one another in space and time: but it must always leave unexplained the inner essence of the forces that thus appear, and content itself with appearances and their arrangement.” (WR, 121-2)

We require another approach to grasp what it *means* for ‘state X’ to ‘*necessarily* give rise’ to ‘state Y’. Schopenhauer found this meaningfulness (or significance) in ‘willing’. In his view, the concept of necessity acquires meaningfulness (or significance), i.e., that in virtue of which it has explanatory value (in Nietzsche’s view), from the first-person experience of willing.

Nietzsche agrees with Schopenhauer that causal accounts cannot *explain* our self-conscious agential actions. They tell us X ‘brought about’ Y, without *explaining* what this ‘bringing about’ means. As we saw, Schopenhauer argues that willing serves an explanatory role; it completes the objective picture. Nietzsche disagrees that ‘willing’ is best suited for

the explanation, however. ‘Willing’ is too intellectual; so, he uses the concept of the ‘drive’ instead. He sought this concept to have the same purpose of ‘explaining’, ‘completing’ or making ‘meaningful’ the objective picture.

When we suggest that self-conscious thoughts *cause* actions, we do not *explain* the relationship between thoughts and actions, but rely on it to make sense of that relationship. We *use* a belief or faith in self-conscious willing when we should explain the basis for this belief or faith. The previous is self-defeating. Nietzsche puts it as follows:

“We call it ‘explanation’, but ‘description’ is what distinguishes us from older stages of knowledge and science. We are better at describing—we explain just as little as all our predecessors. We have uncovered a diverse succession where the naive man and investigator of older cultures saw only two different things, ‘cause’ and ‘effect’, as they said; we have perfected the picture of becoming but haven’t got over, got behind the picture. The series of ‘causes’ faces us much more completely in each case; we reason, ‘this and that must precede for that to follow’—but we haven’t thereby *understood* anything. The specifically qualitative aspect for example of every chemical process, still appears to be a ‘miracle’, as does every locomotion; no one has ‘explained’ the push.” (GS 113)<sup>220</sup>

Though he seeks to limit the *explanatory* value of causal accounts of phenomena, i.e., self-conscious agency, Nietzsche still values causal accounts. Causal accounts are more useful than *moral* or *religious* accounts. Thus, causality has instrumental, but not explanatory value. They are instrumental for dispelling or demystifying<sup>221</sup> *imaginary entities* inherent to moral or religious ‘explanations’. They are especially apt for dispelling those accounts that argue self-conscious agency represents the causal efficacy of a non-empirical entity, whether that is God, ‘(free) will’ or the (self-conscious) ‘I’. Nonetheless, the previous dispelling does not necessarily amount to their offering an alternative or more useful explanation. The following passages reveal the imaginary entities he believes that causality demystifies or debunks, but also where it falls short:

“What lies farthest from this primeval stage of the logical is the notion of *causality*: even now, indeed, we believe at bottom that all sensations and actions are acts of free will; when the sentient individuum observes itself, it regards every sensation, every change, as something *isolated*, that is to say unconditioned, disconnected: it emerges out of us independently of anything earlier or later. We are hungry, but originally we

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<sup>220</sup> See also: “As Germans, we doubt with Kant the ultimate validity of the discoveries of the natural sciences and altogether of everything that *can* be known *causaliter*—what is *knowable* already seems to us of *less* value on that account” (GS 357).

<sup>221</sup> I agree with Ridley’s reading of Nietzsche’s relationship to scientific knowledge (cf. Ridley 2007A: 67 & 71-2). Nietzsche’s own conception of ‘science’ is unobvious. Since I am unable to venture into a debate about this here, I aim to speak only of his thoughts on the value and limitations of causal-mechanistic accounts of events in the world, focusing primarily on self-conscious agency. I imply, however, that many if not most scientific theories of phenomena or ‘scientific knowledge’, in Nietzsche’s view, preferred a causal-mechanistic model to other models.

do not think that the organism wants to sustain itself; this feeling seems to be asserting itself *without cause* or purpose, it isolates itself and considers itself *willful*.” (HHI 18)

“In the same measure as the sense for causality increases, the extent of the domain of morality decreases: for each time one has understood the necessary effects and has learned how to segregate them from all the accidental effects and incidental consequences (*post hoc*), one has destroyed a countless number of *imaginary causalities* hitherto believed in as the foundations of customs—the real world is much smaller than the imaginary—and each time a piece of anxiety and constraint has vanished from the world, each time too a piece of respect for the authority of custom: morality as a whole has suffered a diminution.” (D 10)

“In the “in-itself” there is nothing like “causal association,” “necessity,” or “psychological un-freedom.” There, the “effect” does *not* follow “from the cause,” there is no rule of “law.” *We* are the ones who invented causation, succession, for-each-other, relativity, compulsion, numbers, law, freedom, grounds, purpose; and if we project and inscribe this symbol world onto things as an “in-itself,” then this is the way we have always done things, namely *mythologically*.” (BGE 21)

“Even the ‘thing’, to say it again, the concept of a thing, is just a reflex of the belief in the I as cause... And even your atom, my dear Mr Mechanist and Mr Physicist, how many errors, how much rudimentary psychology is left in your atom! Not to mention the ‘thing-in-itself’, the *horrendum pudendum* of metaphysicians! The error of thinking that the mind caused reality!” (TI, ‘Errors’, 3)

Causal-mechanistic accounts of conscious agency are *not* radical enough for dispelling our *reliance* on the *causal efficacy* of the self-conscious ‘I’. They cannot *possibly* do so, because the first-person experience of willing is a precondition of causal explanations. The *belief* or *faith* in willing (or that willing suffices for action) is unyielding. He seeks another model, which avoids the circular reasoning under which a causal account of self-conscious agency is trapped.

Causal accounts attempting to debunk self-conscious agency by *not* appealing to free will, God, the self-conscious ‘I’ etc., do not succeed in ousting imaginary entities that plague moral or religious accounts. His reason is that they contain fundamental concepts whose explanatory value equally relies on *belief* in willing and its sufficiency for action. Typically, he construes the *belief* in the sufficiency of willing for action as a *need* and so as a drive that can (and does) spring up anywhere:

“As far as materialistic atomism goes: this is one of the most well-refuted things in existence...Copernicus convinced us to believe, contrary to all our senses, that the earth does not stand still, Boscovich taught us to renounce belief in the last bit of earth that did “stand still,” the belief in “matter,” in the “material,” in the residual piece of earth and clump of an atom: it was the greatest triumph over the senses that the world had ever known... But we must go further still and declare war – a ruthless fight to



the finish – on the “atomistic *need*” that, like the more famous “metaphysical *need*,” still leads a dangerous afterlife in regions where nobody would think to look. First of all, we must also put an end to that other and more disastrous atomism, the one Christianity has taught best and longest, the *atomism of the soul*.” (BGE 12; some emphasis is mine)

Causal-mechanistic accounts fail to debunk the efficacy of the self-conscious ‘I’ by adhering to the concept of a ‘thing’, ‘atom’ or ‘matter’. They indirectly commit to imaginary entities, and to the very things they aim to debunk, because concepts like ‘thing’, ‘atom’ etc. have explanatory value only through the ‘belief’ or the ‘faith’ in ‘willing suffices for action’. We think we can make something happen by *willing* it and project this belief onto the world, its events and our causal explanations of those events using concepts like ‘atoms’, ‘things’ and so on. In other words, in seeking the *cause* of a state of affairs X, we *project* onto the target of cognition our ordinarily seeking the X *responsible* for a change in *us*, which yields the mechanistic or objective picture. Thus, the proposition ‘everything happens because of the effectiveness of something else’ originates in (or is conceptually linked to) the proposition and corresponding belief that ‘someone is *responsible* for a change in me’, according to Nietzsche. The former has explanatory value by virtue of the latter, which we accustom to by living in communities.

According to Nietzsche, then, causality emerges out of a belief in the causal efficacy of the self-conscious ‘I’, which he explains genealogically. Causal-mechanistic accounts are useful for dispelling *some* imaginary entities (i.e., ‘God’ or ‘free will’), but they are still committed to a way of thinking that *creates* imaginary entities (such as matter, atom, thing etc.). We construe these entities as ‘causally efficacious’ in a subtler, more elusive manner:

“Language began at a time when psychology was in its most rudimentary form: we enter into a crudely fetishistic mindset when we call into consciousness the basic presuppositions of the metaphysics of language—in the vernacular: the presuppositions of *reason*. It sees doers and deeds all over: it believes that will has causal efficacy: it believes in the ‘I’, in the I as being, in the I as substance, and it *projects* this belief in the I-substance onto all things—this is how it *creates* the concept of ‘thing’ in the first place . . . Being is imagined into everything—*pushed under everything*—as a cause; the concept of ‘being’ is only derived from the concept of ‘I’ . . . In the beginning there was the great disaster of an error, the belief that the will is a thing with *causal efficacy*,—that will is a *faculty*... Even the Eleatics’ adversaries succumbed to the seduction of the Eleatic concept of being: Democritus, for instance, when he invented his *atom* . . . ‘Reason’ in language: oh, what a deceptive old woman this is! I am afraid that we have not got rid of God because we still have faith in grammar . . .” (TI, Reason in Philosophy, 5)<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> See also (GS 109) for the same stance against causal-mechanistic accounts, but also their opposite, which shows us he aims to revise our conceptions.

Causal-mechanistic accounts do not break with the so-called ‘assumptions of rudimentary psychology’. Accordingly, their alternative to the causal efficacy of the self-conscious ‘I’, i.e., *causal* relations between material ‘things’, permits the ‘I’ they attempt to debunk entry by the backdoor through the uncritical belief in ‘matter’, ‘atoms’ or ‘*things*’ etc. The latter belief derives from the same way of thinking that spawned the ‘I’, ‘God’ etc. and commits to what grounds them: the belief or faith that ‘willing suffices for action’.

Nietzsche seeks an account that radically breaks with the appeal to imaginary entities and he begins by rejecting the use of ‘causality’ to explain (at least) *some* phenomena: those that bestow explanatory value to something in the first place, i.e., ‘agency’. Causality cannot explain everything and has no metaphysical application; it is an anthropomorphic (cf. *GS* 109) or anthropocentric (cf. *WLN* 14[122]) account of phenomena. We should *not* underestimate the value of anthropocentric accounts, but we should likewise recognise their *explanatory* limits.

How, then, does Nietzsche explain self-conscious agency without appealing to imaginary entities? How does he explain the *apparent* causal efficacy of self-conscious thoughts? He commits to the proposition that the thought-action relationship is not causal. He rejects idealist conceptions of the causal efficacy of self-conscious thoughts; the world is *not* the ‘product’ of thoughts, perceptions, intuitions or ideas, i.e., the ‘intellect’. He puts it in the following manner:

“To study physiology with a good conscience, we must insist that the sense organs are *not* appearances in the way idealist philosophy uses that term: as such, they certainly could not be causes! Sensualism, therefore, at least as a regulative principle, if not as a heuristic principle. —What? and other people even say that the external world is the product of our organs? But then our body, as a piece of this external world, would really be the product of our organs! But then our organs themselves would really be—the product of our organs! This looks to me like a thorough *reductio ad absurdum*: given that the concept of a *causa sui* is something thoroughly absurd. So does it follow that the external world is *not* the product of our organs—?” (*BGE* 15)

This passage can be misleading, because it seemingly rejects idealism, but remains silent about the explanatory value of its opposite, i.e., physicalism or materialism, which implies that he rejects the former out of commitment to something like the latter. I will argue that he also rejects the opposite of idealism. He intends another point in the above passage, which becomes apparent if we juxtapose it to the following:

“We should not erroneously *objectify* “cause” and “effect” like the natural scientists do (and whoever else thinks naturalistically these days—) in accordance with the dominant mechanistic stupidity which would have the cause push and shove until it “effects” something; we should use “cause” and “effect” only as pure *concepts*, which is to say as conventional fictions for the purpose of description and communication, *not* explanation. In the “in-itself” there is nothing like “causal association,” “necessity,” or “psychological un-freedom.” There, the “effect” does *not* follow

“from the cause,” there is no rule of “law.” *We* are the ones who invented causation, succession, for-each-other, relativity, compulsion, numbers, law, freedom, grounds, purpose; and if we project and inscribe this symbol world onto things as an “in-itself,” then this is the way we have always done things, namely *mythologically*.” (BGE 21)

Note that his use of ‘push’ and ‘shove’ aims to link ‘*causing* something’ with the first-person experience of ‘*willing* something’. He limits the application of causality to phenomena that do not pertain to willing. Causality can ‘describe’ relations between objects. However, its *explanatory value* relies on an entirely different relationship than that which obtains between ‘objects’. Accounts ascribing *causal efficacy* to thoughts assume that thoughts *cause* actions without *demonstrating* that thoughts, rather than something else, *cause* actions. Likewise, the proposition that a bit of matter (or that relations between matter) *cause* actions (by first causing thoughts or otherwise) operates with the conception of causality relying on the same belief that ‘(self-conscious) thoughts *cause* actions’. He rejects both alternatives, because of his commitment to ontological monism and immanence. Casual relationships require us to posit two (or more) distinct things to conceive of a causal relationship, because nothing can *cause itself*:

“The *causa sui* is the best self-contradiction that has ever been conceived, a type of logical rape and abomination. But humanity’s excessive pride has got itself profoundly and horribly entangled with precisely this piece of nonsense... Suppose someone sees through the boorish naiveté of this famous concept of “free will” and manages to get it out of his mind; I would then ask him to carry his “enlightenment” a step further and to rid his mind of the reversal of this misconceived concept of “free will”: I mean the “un-free will,” which is basically an abuse of cause and effect.” (BGE 21)<sup>223</sup>

Causality does not apply to ‘willing’, which includes self-conscious agency, because causal relations commit to a distinction in ‘object’ or ‘thing’ between the cause and its effect. What he means by ‘objectifying’ cause and effect is precisely our positing two (or more) distinct ‘objects’ relating to one another, which relies on belief in the *sufficiency* of willing for action.

In sum, if we claim self-conscious thoughts *cause* actions, then we commit to a belief that a thought is a distinct *thing* from an action, which we are inclined to construe as distinct in kind. We forgo the possibility that it is a different degree of the *same kind of thing*, i.e., an action. Applying causality commits us to dualistic accounts, which risks reintroducing imaginary entities or phantoms by the backdoor. The accounts of self-conscious agency we analysed previously, both when they defended and debunked the causal efficacy of the self-conscious ‘I’, were plagued by such phantoms. Their attempts helped us summarise the lack

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<sup>223</sup> See for example, “mechanistic language is just a sign language for the *internal* factual world of quanta of will that struggle and overcome each other? all the presuppositions of mechanistic language - matter, atom, pressure and impact, gravity - are not ‘facts-in-themselves’ but interpretations aided by *psychological* fictions” (WLN 14[82]).

of fit through the following questions. How is self-conscious agency possible at all? Are self-conscious thoughts causally efficacious; do they *cause* actions? Are ‘thoughts’ thereby distinct kinds of ‘things’ from actions?

Nietzsche aims for an alternative and revisionist account of self-conscious agency. His alternative adopts a two-step process. Firstly, he limits the application of causality, i.e., he does not permit its applications to the thought-action relation. In other words, thoughts do not *cause* actions. Secondly, he revises the thought-action relation. His premise is that thoughts are on the ‘same plane of reality’ as the basic units for action, namely, as our drives and affects. Self-conscious thought represents the activity of a *kind of drive*, i.e., that drive whose particular activity is language or ‘communication’. Thus, he revises self-conscious agency by replacing causal accounts with an account based on the drives and drive relations.

I omit Nietzsche does not have a fully worked-out account, but he commits to what I call the ‘bridge’ between the first and third person perspective. This account begins by assessing his critique of the ‘I’ and ‘I’-thoughts evidenced in the following passages:

““When I dissect the process expressed in the proposition ‘I think,’ I get a whole set of bold claims that are difficult, perhaps impossible, to establish,—for instance, that I am the one who is thinking, that there must be something that is thinking in the first place, that thinking is an activity and the effect of a being who is considered the cause, that there is an ‘I,’ and finally, that it has already been determined what is meant by thinking,—that I know what thinking is. Because if I had not already made up my mind what thinking is, how could I tell whether what had just happened was not perhaps ‘willing’ or ‘feeling’? Enough: this ‘I think’ presupposes that I compare my present state with other states that I have seen in myself, in order to determine what it is: and because of this retrospective comparison with other types of ‘knowing,’ this present state has absolutely no ‘immediate certainty’ for me.”—” (BGE 16)

“I will not stop emphasising a tiny little fact that these superstitious men are loath to admit: that a thought comes when “it” wants, and not when “I” want. It is, therefore, a *falsification* of the facts to say that the subject “I” is the condition of the predicate “think.” It thinks: but to say the “it” is just that famous old “I”—well that is just an assumption or opinion, to put it mildly, and by no means an “immediate certainty.” In fact, there is already too much packed into the “it thinks”: even the “it” contains an *interpretation* of the process, and does not belong to the process itself. People are following *grammatical habits* here in drawing conclusions, reasoning that “thinking is an activity, behind every activity something is active, therefore—.” Following the same basic scheme, the older atomism looked behind every “force” that produces effects for that little lump of matter in which the force resides, and out of which the effects are produced, which is to say: the atom.” (BGE 17)

We can compare the above with the following claim that the ‘will’ is in need of ‘analysis’:

“With his assumption that only that which wills exists, Schopenhauer enthroned a primordial mythology; he seems never to have attempted an analysis of the will

because like everyone else he *believed* in the simplicity and immediacy of all willing—whereas willing is actually such a *well-practiced mechanism* that it almost escapes the observing eye. Against him I offer these propositions: first, in order for willing to come about, a representation of pleasure or displeasure is needed. Secondly, that a violent stimulus is experienced as pleasure or pain is a matter of the *interpreting* intellect, which, to be sure, generally works without our being conscious of it (*uns unbewußt*); and one and the same stimulus *can* be interpreted as pleasure or pain. Thirdly, only in intellectual beings do pleasure, pain, and will exist; the vast majority of organisms has nothing like it.” (GS 127; some emphasis is mine)

Notice he argues that conscious thought, willing and agency are not ‘simple’, but complex and in need of analysis; linguistic habits make them ‘simple’. His reference to grammatical *habits* is essential to understanding what I call the ‘bridge’.

Nietzsche’s concept of a drive is broad enough to avoid dualism, but narrow enough to demonstrate why self-conscious agency represents the activity of drives or drive relations. Recall that he does not comprehend the relationship between a *self-conscious* thought and action as between two distinct things that somehow interact, which, in turn, is what permits us to apply causality. The same is the case with understanding a relationship between self-conscious thoughts and (unconscious) drives. He construes the relationship between self-conscious thoughts and drives as one of identity, rather than *interaction*. Let us elaborate on this conception and introduce some textual evidence that supports it.

In the following passages, he expresses his views on the thought-action relation, but likewise on the strategy he adopts to resolve the lack of fit:

On the one hand, we are, under the circumstances, both the one who commands *and* the one who obeys, and as the obedient one we are familiar with the feelings of compulsion, force, pressure, resistance, and motion that generally start right after the act of willing. On the other hand, however, we are in the habit of ignoring and deceiving ourselves about this duality (*Zweiheit*) by means of the synthetic concept of the “I”. As a result, a whole chain of erroneous conclusions, and, consequently, false evaluations have become attached to the will, – to such an extent that the one who wills believes, in good faith, that willing *suffices* for action. (BGE 19)<sup>224</sup>

The interpretation of the above passage I will defend is unusual, but useful for my alternative solution to the lack of fit.<sup>225</sup> There is a lack of fit between his views on first-person practical agency and his third-person theoretical perspective on (self-conscious) agency. This lack of fit rests on our *use* of the ‘I’, however; our use of something that seems to *refer* to our body and actions, but has no third-person representation. Notice, however, that he does not object

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<sup>224</sup> It can be useful to compare this passage with the following: (WLN 38[8]).

<sup>225</sup> For an alternative analysis of this passage and its implications for morality see Lampert (2001, 49-50). For one that comes very close to the bridge but unfortunately does not avoid the homunculi problem see Clark & Dudrick (2012, 255-257).

to the *use* of the ‘I’, but to how it affects our conceptions of agency and selfhood, along with our self-conception or our self-image. It commits us to a conception of the (self-conscious) thought-action relation that spawns phantoms. By ‘will’, in the above passage, he means ‘conscious willing’, or self-conscious thoughts about what we aim to do, including our deliberation on a course of action.<sup>226</sup> He does not discuss the relationship between the ‘I’ and drives, but between our will and its corresponding actions. The relationship he analyses is between willing and acting, and how the use of the ‘I’ *affects* our conception of ‘willing’. I understand the previous as the claim that using the ‘I’ conceals the bridge between the first-person and third-person, which becomes apparent in analysing what follows after we will something. What follows is a *distinct* kind of activity that he describes it as a command-obedience relationship between two or more things. We observe the previous activity in the first-person and the third-person perspectives. It shows what I call the ‘bridge’.<sup>227</sup>

In the first-person, it is a command-obedience relation played out *within* the person, i.e., within *us*. When ‘I’ deliberate about undertaking an action or I am undecided about a course of action, or when ‘I’ struggle to maintain a course of action in light of a temptation, or when ‘I’ reason or resolve to attend to this as opposed to that, or when ‘I’ deviate from or forgo some course of action to undertake a new one. In each case *I* overcome my own temptation, *I* change the course of action, *I* feel the resistance when *I* want to act contrary to my values or aims, and *I* am overwhelmed by my temptation. There is just *me* in the first-person perspective of willing something, which reflects an identity relationship between what happens *within me*, what *I do* and *me*. In other words, what happens within me refers to *me*. It demonstrates my *identity* with what happens within me without suggesting anything more or anything other than this identity. *I* am the one who experiences changes in thoughts,

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<sup>226</sup> Katsafanas (2014B), rightly shows that Nietzsche transitions between various uses of the word will. Often, in the earlier period of his writing, he construes the will’s freedom in relation whether or not it is causally determined. In later writings, he alters his criterion and construes the will in terms of whether or not it can overcome some resistance (internal or external), which arises with respect to the willed activity, i.e., whether it is strong or weak. His later approach to the will shows us that Nietzsche has in mind an alternative account of agency. He requires a story that explains why and how “passion and reason are both efficacious” (Katsafanas 2014B, 209), however. This is because if we run with the separation of reason from the passions by virtue of their nature or activity, we end up with causal interaction between two distinct things that somehow do not meet on a common ground, which brings about the kind of phantom we tried to illustrate. This reveals a core philosophical problem, which he can escape through the bridge between the first-person and third-person perspectives. The bridge does not rely on causal interaction, but on correlation or identity. Also, if he argues for an understanding of the self that is no longer misleadingly construed as a subject of sorts (premised on grammar and language), but as an activity, then we have resolved the problem of interaction: there is no interaction. The ‘I’ and the drives are not different things, but two different perspectives or descriptions of the same thing, or better yet, they are the same activity of willing an end and following through in action.

<sup>227</sup> Nietzsche reasons based on the possibility and inevitability of a bridge between the two perspectives on other passages, as for example the following: “[k]now yourself” is the whole of science. – Only when he has attained a final knowledge of all things will man come to know himself. For things are only the boundaries of man” (*D* 48). He does not draw a boundary between the first-person and the third-person, but argues we can attain self-knowledge and self-mastery through the third-person perspective on ourselves and others (cf. *BGE* 32), namely, the herd perspective. Again, this is not the claim that our ‘true’ self lies in the third-person and so the first-person is superfluous, but that it is useful for self-mastery, i.e., for willing a course of action and following through (what is required for contractual relationships). His contention is that we do not necessarily find or perceive a self, but *will* a self (cf. *HHII* 366). See also *GS* 333 for more on Nietzsche’s commitment to what I am calling the bridge.

affects, urges etc. and *I* undertake an action based on the ‘content’ of my thoughts, affects etc. Notice that my mere use of the ‘I’ does not imply ownership or control, but identity.

Agency, whether it is self-conscious or not, represents a multiplicity that our theories should not ignore, according to Nietzsche. There is no *conscious, deliberate* willing or action without this multiplicity. Conscious or deliberate actions evidence a command-obedience relationship between two or more *units* we overlook, because of our *use* of the ‘I’ to *refer to* ourselves in our first-person experience of willing. Using the ‘I’ to refer to ourselves is a grammatical habit that conceals the multiplicity we are and experience, but, also, it conceals the command-obedience relationships underpinning this multiplicity. The use of the ‘I’ does not represent the operation (or causal efficacy) of another kind of substance or thing, which is independent from the multiplicity of thoughts, affects etc. and their command-obedience relations. Nietzsche’s reference to the ‘I’ as a grammatical *habit* or “unified only in a word” (*BGE* 19) means that it represents the activity of a drive or drive relation, namely, the herd perspective and herd instincts, which seems to operate independently from the other drives. Accordingly, the first person experience of the command-obedience relationship is as of between two or more avenues for action(s) or activities ‘*I*’ resolve to do, ‘*I*’ am inclined towards or ‘*I*’ value. However, the *I* is not what is operative or causally efficacious. The ‘*I*’ *represents* what is operative or efficacious; it identifies or tracks what is efficacious and, sometimes, *I* may not be efficacious, but my temptation is with which I identify after I have acted on its basis.

In the third-person perspective, however, we can construe the same phenomena listed above as command-obedience relations between drives and their rank order (*BGE* 6). This ‘rank order’ refers to the drives’ unity (or disunity); how they are fixed and thus aim at some action in relation to some circumstance. The third-person perspective alters our conception of agency by shifting the basic unit of resolve, but our reference to the *person* or *agent* does not. For example, when we are undecided about some course of action, this indecision *corresponds to* an unresolved conflict between our ‘drives’. Our deviation from a decision *corresponds to* a disruption of the initial rank order formerly settled about a course of action. Our hesitance or resistance with respect to an activity represents a drive(s) becoming active and opposing other drives by gaining a foothold in the rank order etc. What we experience *represents* a state of affairs in the drives; conscious thought is itself a drive or represents the activity of a drive, i.e., the herd perspective.

Closer analysis of the *activity* of resolving to undertake a course of action reveals a *bridge* between the first-person and the third-person perspective, which is the act of willing, overpowering, overcoming etc. *and* their corresponding action.<sup>228</sup> According to Nietzsche,

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<sup>228</sup> Welshon (2004, 152-156) rightly emphasises Nietzsche’s conception of the act of will or willing as useful for resolving the lack of fit. Conceiving of an interaction between consciousness and drives, as he argues, makes it difficult for Nietzsche to have a plausible and coherent solution. I read the passages where Nietzsche describes the interaction between the drives and consciousness as probative and critical of conceptions of agency that rest on the assumption that genuine agency is determined wholly by the self-conscious ‘I’. Accordingly, instead of an

we should analyse what follows our willing something, rather than analyse the relationship between the 'I' and drives. The latter leads us to assume an interactive relationship between before we have proved it, whereas the former commits us to describing what happens when we will something, which reveals the bridge. What, then, is 'willing', for him?

Far from being simple, "willing is actually such a *well-practised mechanism* that it *almost* escapes the observing eye" (GS 127; my emphasis), according to Nietzsche. Of course, he analyses this 'mechanism' genealogically. He breaks it down into its constituent parts and inquires how each part emerges from another over time. The major premise of his analysis of willing, however, is that willing (including self-conscious agency) is *drive-like* or a drive relation. Therefore, the opposition between the 'I' and the drives collapses under investigation and analysis of the act of will or what ensues when we will something. The self-conscious 'I' represents an activity of the *drives*; it demonstrates the introduction of the drive to express ourselves linguistically and so introduce the herd perspective into the drive complex. It is a grammatical habit we acquire from our communal life; he conceptually links this habit (and our use of language to express ourselves) to his account of consciousness as emerging from habituation to communal life, the pressures associated with this habituation and the internalisation of the herd perspective that characterises the previous. Willing, then, is an activity of the drives and so the 'I' represents the habit of addressing, presenting and-or expressing ourselves linguistically, i.e., it is itself a drive among the other drives.

It is also important to approach Nietzsche's propositions with extensive caution. The interplay between thoughts, affects etc., which characterises the deliberation process, does not represent *some drive* or a *set of drives*. It represents the *total state* of our drives at some moment. It shows how our drives *fix*, i.e., establish a rank order, upon a course of action:

"Every thought, every feeling, every will is not born of one particular drive but is a *total state*, a whole surface of the whole consciousness, and results from how the power of all the drives that constitute us is fixed at that moment—thus, the power of the drive that dominates just now as well as of the drives obeying or resisting it. The next thought is a sign of how the total power situation has now shifted again." (WLN 1[61])

We should compare the above passage with the following, which implies the same relation between conscious thoughts and the drives:

"The course of logical thoughts and inferences in our brains today corresponds to a process and battle of drives that taken separately are all very illogical and unjust; we usually experience only the *outcome* of the battle: that is how quickly and covertly this ancient mechanism runs its course in us." (GS 111; my emphasis)

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interaction between the 'I' and the drives, Nietzsche requires an interaction between the 'I' and the actions (in the first-person), or between drive relations and corresponding actions (in the third-person). Both of the previous refer to the same thing or activity, i.e., the act of will or the activity of willing, overpowering and so on.



What differentiates the self-conscious ‘I’ from the drives without committing us to construe the former as a distinct kind of ‘thing’ is the conception of conscious thought as an activity of what we can call the *social drive(s)*. Consciousness represents the drive to communicate, which is inherent to communal or social life. It introduces a self-image to our agency, which translates into actions attuned to another’s perspective on us. Consequently, *self-conscious* agency includes the drive for a self-image. If we did not *need* to communicate for survival or flourishing, then our drives would *fix* and an action would ensue without the interjection of a self-image, which mediates between the *total state* and the correlative action of this total state. In short, what we may also call the ‘social drive’ partakes in the rank order of drives and yields self-conscious agency. Our drives *can* fix and an action ensue without this self-image, however. If what I call the bridge characterises his conceptual framework, which resolves the lack of fit, then the self-conscious thoughts, which seemingly *cause* actions, actually *represent* the position or introduction of ‘social drive(s)’ in the rank order of drives.

Nietzsche uses the concept ‘drive’ as a substitute for explaining psychic phenomena and circumventing the imaginary entities that plague conceptions of self-conscious agency. He revises the conception of self-conscious agency and encourages us to analyse ‘I’-claims in relation to our actions. He does not aim to eliminate or debunk the ‘I’, but to demonstrate the dangers of construing the ‘I’ as a ‘thing’ with causal efficacy. Accordingly, he offers a revisionist account of the thought-action relation based on an analysis of willing, which he complements with a genealogical analysis of the self-conscious ‘I’.

Before moving on, I will assess an alternative suggestion for how to resolve the lack of fit, which differs from my suggestion of the bridge between first-person and third-person. Constâncio argues we can resolve the lack of fit by ascribing ‘perspectives’ to the drives, in accordance with what he calls the “continuum model” (Constâncio 2011, 21-26):

“...as perspectival valuations, the drives are always changing and adapting to their surroundings—so that at every moment the “total state” of the organism is a cluster of perspectival relations, not an aggregate of mechanical, causal relations among atomic parts” (Constâncio 2011, 23)

We can resolve the lack of fit by claiming there is continuity between the drives and a full-fledged self-conscious agent, which commits us to construing the drives as perspectival valuations of things or circumstances. I agree, in principle, with what Constâncio calls the ‘continuum model’, but I disagree with his application of the model.

Nietzsche aims for a so-called ‘continuum’ between the self-conscious ‘I’ and drives, because he conceives of no other way to comprehend the world than through our drives and affects: “the mechanistic world as belonging to *the same plane of reality as our affects* themselves—as a primitive form of the world of affects” (BGE 36; my emphasis). Constâncio rightly claims that Nietzsche rejects the causal interaction between the ‘I’ and the drives. Nietzsche’s rejection stems from his commitment to avoiding a kind of atomism that permits entry through the backdoor of the *belief* or the *faith* in the *causal efficacy* of the phantoms and imaginary entities that plagued religious and moral interpretations of certain phenomena. I read it as his rejection of the interaction theory between the ‘I’ and the drives.

Nevertheless, I disagree with the claim that Nietzsche replaces causal interactions between drives for ‘perspectival’ interactions; or that he aims to ascribe ‘perspectives’ to the drives. Ascribing a perspective to the ‘drives’ is misleading and introduces the homunculi problem, which Katsafanas (cf. Katsafanas 2014A, 4-8) rightly challenges Nietzsche to answer and suggests that he should avoid.

Constâncio’s proposition that we should construe conscious mental state as the ‘total state’ of the organism helps resolve the lack of fit and supports the solution I defend. We must make sense of this ‘total state’ of the drives cautiously, however. Not *each drive* has a ‘perspective’. The ‘total state’ of the drives and how this it *fixes* in some moment constitutes a perspective, which *we*, as agents, take on something. The ‘we’ refers to the agent and her first-person experience, which, I argue, *is* the total state of the drives and is revealed in her words, thoughts, reasons and actions.

Moreover, Nietzsche does not claim we should replace causal-mechanistic relations between drives with ‘perspectival’ relations, but with ‘power relations’.<sup>229</sup> This accords with my solution and it is more apt to avoid the homunculi problem, because it makes sense of power relations by appealing to genealogy. A drive(s) does not assume a perspective. Also, the *total state* of the drives does not *take* a perspective. The ‘total state’ *corresponds* to such a perspective, i.e., it is *identical* to it, which *we* as self-conscious agents or subjects of ‘I’ thoughts assume on something. Changing a perspective on something means the *total state* (or rank order) of drives has changed. A perspective represents our first-person experience, whereas the total state or rank order of drives represents a third-person perspective on us.

As from the first-person, a perspective changes when our *priorities* or *aims* in relation to something change. Our priorities or aims (i.e. our values) *correspond* to our drives. We must not project the unity of the ‘I’ onto a (single) drive and expect it to behave as a full-fledged agent composed of a complex or ‘chemistry’ of drives. Nevertheless, we commit to the previous when we argue that the drive(s) *assume* a perspective. A drive is not unified *in the same way* a self-conscious agent is *unified*, that is, as composed of many parts pushing and pulling in different directions. A self-conscious agent entertains a self-image and so he is aware that he assumes a perspective. What would ‘assuming a perspective’ be like

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<sup>229</sup> One of worry over suggesting ‘power’ instead of ‘perspectival’ or ‘causal’ relations is that the *only* conception of ‘power’ we have is political and saturated with agential language that risks the reintroduction of the homunculi problem through the backdoor. Katsafanas (cf. Katsafanas 2014A, 6-7) critically assesses this worry. It is inevitable that we will project something of our way of acquiring power onto power-relations between drives, and that we must do so for there to be a bridge between ‘ourselves’ and ‘the (objective) world’, i.e., projection makes the world *meaningful* to us. Nonetheless, we can avoid projecting what *individuates* or *distinguishes* human power relations from other power relations (e.g., between plants or between animals) by projecting something broader than what can only be ascribed to human beings and their characteristic form of power, which, for Nietzsche, is concerned with ‘order’ (cf. GS 109). I think we can achieve this if project the *oomph* inherent to our willing something and following his analysis of willing, which Nietzsche perhaps misleadingly construes as a *command-obedience* relationship, because the only experience of command-obedience relationships we have are likewise political. I believe there are grounds for understanding this appeal to command-obedience relationships genealogically, i.e., as his referring to the most rudimentary forms of community and the rank order that erected it and in turn preserved it. I wanted to assess the previous genealogical account of power-relations, but I was unable due to the limitations of my research.

without our *knowing* we are doing so, but also without *knowing* there is potentially *another* perspective we can take, even if we do not presently have access to it? Can we ascribe the previous ‘knowledge’ to a ‘drive’? The total state of our drives plays a fundamental role in what we do, think, value etc. by *corresponding to* a ‘perspective’. Our perspective is the *total state* of our drives and represents their power relations, that is, how they *fix* upon something in some moment, which cannot be a property of a particular drive or drive relation.

Nietzsche is careful not to overestimate the unity of the self-conscious ‘I’ with respect to the unity of the whole organism (cf. *GS* 11). The self-conscious ‘I’ is a linguistic or grammatical unity that *implies* the existence of drive-independent things or perspectives on something. However, there is no perspective distinct from the *correlation* between the self-conscious ‘I’ and the *total state* of our drives, for Nietzsche and his revisionist account.

Our drives *participate* in the formation of what we call a perspective by pushing or pulling us toward different targets and-or activities, i.e., through their relationship with other drives. The rank order of drives is how the complex fixes on a course of action and *correlates* to what we call a perspective. Moreover, it is misleading to claim that drives *adapt* to their surroundings for two reasons. First, it is only ‘I’ or persons who adapts to their surroundings; a rank order of drives ‘changes’ or ‘shifts’. Our surroundings affect our drives, but not as they affect ‘us’. Secondly, the rank order can also shift *independent from* the surroundings, given Nietzsche’s active conception of the will and so, by extension, its cognates. Recall his caution over of the concept of ‘adaptation’ when we apply it to describe willing or the drives and their relations. He describes adaptation as:

“...a second-rate activity, just a reactivity, indeed life itself has been defined as an increasingly efficient inner adaptation to external circumstances (Herbert Spencer). But this is to misunderstand the essence of life, its *will to power*, we overlook the prime importance that the spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, re-interpreting, re-directing and formative forces have, which ‘adaptation’ follows only when they have had their effect; in the organism itself, the dominant role of these highest functionaries, in whom the lifewill is active and manifests itself, is denied.” (*GM II*, 12)

The rank order of drives then *reorders* or *changes* based on external circumstances, but also what he construes as the urge to overcome (or self-overcome), namely, the *will to power*. Adaptation reflects the previous reordering or changing. What *explains* rather than *describes* the reordering or shift in the rank order of the drives is not ‘adaptation’, but the will to power. We ought to be cautious over what we mean when we claim some particular ‘drive’ *changes*, as Constâncio suggests. If such a change in a drive were possible, then how could we possibly recognise or determine its *change*? The claim that a drive changes, implies that drives *fix* upon any activity they may fleetingly desire or that might be required, rather than on the specific activity that *defines* them. It implies that a particular drive fixes upon any activity irrespective of its characteristic activity, which undercuts the definition of drives as stable tendencies towards a particular, active behavior.

Furthermore, even if a change in a particular drive 'X' has occurred, it would be impossible to identify X as having in some way changed to Y without assuming Y is a new drive entirely. In addition, it is impossible to know if X is still part of the drive complex, but is currently inactive or has lost its position in the rank order. In short, to defend the claim that drives change, we should first explain why the acquisition of a new drive is impossible. The previous undermines Nietzsche's concept of 'internalisation', which is the process that explains how we acquire new drives based on circumstantial pressures and the blocking of drives. Assuming that a drive *did* change, what can *possibly* stay the same when X turns into Y apart from the fact that Y is also *a drive*? Can we coherently argue that Y is a *new version* of X without first showing how it is still X, but with some different *outlet* for example? Moreover, the transition from X to Y does not support the claim that X no longer exists. How can we prove the non-existence of a drive? We can argue that X has moved down the rank order and so lost its priority, but what would the non-existence of a drive look like and how could we verify it? Given our overall ignorance of the drives (cf. *D* 119) it is safer to claim that a drive does *not* change, but that we acquire new drives or that an older drive has changed the *target* of its particular activity by combining with other drives. What *does* change, however, is the *total state* (i.e. the rank order or power relations between the drives). Even safer than the previous is the claim that *people* change *their* priorities or perspectives on things. Therefore, the individual and her perspective change, which *correlates to* a change in the rank order of her drives and not to a change in one or more of her particular drives.

Both the first-person and the third-person perspective contain the same activity we ascribe to agency or willing, whether it is self-conscious or not. The difference between the two is that of a perspective on *willing* something and its correlative action. It is a matter of perspective whether we construe 'willing something' as the identity between a 'thing' and its 'modifications' or between a 'multiplicity of things' and the 'rank order' emerging from it. We refer to the *same* thing, event or activity from different perspectives, neither of which is right or wrong, since both refer to the relationship between the basic *preferred* unit of will (be it the 'I' or the 'drive') and its correlative action or representation in a movement of the body. Nietzsche prefers the drives and their rank order over the 'I' (self-conscious thoughts, desires, values etc.) for analysing self-conscious agency and actions, but he still has to think of an action as a unified bodily movement or expression. His reason is that he aims to revise a rudimentary psychology that spawns *religious* and *moral* interpretations of phenomena, which operate on a belief in the causal efficacy of imaginary entities or phantoms. Likewise, he uses it to shed light on the ascetic ideal and thus life-negating morals underpinning these interpretations.

The lack of fit stems from attributing the unity of the 'I' inherent to first-person practical agency to its modifications, i.e., to its actions over time; or when we construe the previous unity as more than just a practice, but an actual 'thing' in the world that we search for. The lack of fit also arises when we do the reverse and eliminate the unity of the self-conscious 'I' for relations between drives without offering a coherent replacement for what it represents and thus construing the drives as mechanical or as subject to causal relations. Epiphenomenalist readings encounter parallel problems when they begin apply the unity of

a multiplicity to the first-person experience of agency. Consequently, eliminating the ‘I’ is results from the attempt to dissociate the two perspectives from their bridge, i.e., the *act of will* (or the activity of willing something) and what follows from it, i.e., its correlate action. This elimination is akin to claiming that inspection over its composition suggests a chair is *not* a chair at all, because what we perceive is an arrangement of subatomic motions. We should jettison all *talk* of chairs and *speak* only of some particular subatomic motion, which is patently absurd. That *this* chair ‘X’ is *this* composite of subatomic motions ‘Y’, so X is Y, is not threatened or debunked by referring to Y as X and vice versa. The same reasoning applies to the relation between the ‘I’ and the complex of drives. The ‘I’ as a practice of expressing ourselves in language is untouched by our understanding what we do, reason and resolve in different terms, i.e., as relations between the drives. Placing something under a microscope, whether it is an object or a person, need not lead to our having to replace the object or person entirely with a different, magnified description of it that loses sight of the fact that it is the same *object* or *person* which we placed under the microscope, not something else entirely. Also, we need not construe our practice of placing people under a microscope as somehow robbing them of their dignity, i.e., their sense of self, responsibility and agency. Nietzsche implores us to revise our conception of X only if what we recognise under the microscope (and thus about Y) does not accord with our conception of X, i.e., if we find a mismatch between X and Y. The microscope should take priority, for Nietzsche, because it is more apt at dispelling imaginary entities, which we habitually use to explain things. The microscope is only useful for dispelling such entities. We may revise our conception of X, but to eliminate or reduce X is needless and sometimes absurd; see, for example, his revision of the concept of the ‘soul’ for a representation of this strategy (cf. *BGE* 12).

Nietzsche evaluates agency based on how ‘I’-claims relate to their corresponding action(s), and not the ‘I’-claims themselves independent from such actions. He offers an account of conscious agency through analysis of what *we say we will* in relation to what we do. His introduction of the concept of a drive aims to entrench the previous. We can construe our actions as representing the activity of a drive or drive relation, however. We can likewise construe self-conscious agency as unity of the drives.<sup>230</sup> Where a self-conscious agent seems unresolved about his or her action, or conflicted, or apparently resolves to perform an action, but fails to execute it, then we can explain this by appealing to changes in her rank order of drives; her rank order is fleeting as opposed to persistent. Since we have no representation of a drive independent from its correlate activity or action, then only our actions reveal the fleeting or persistent unity of our rank order.

Nietzsche objects to the role of the ‘I’ in our actions in an attempt to debunk our assumptions about causality, which commit us to the proposition that phantoms interact with the world. How we analyse the will and so how we determine what kind of a will it is, i.e., strong or weak, self-conscious or unselfconscious, he no longer attempts to explain through

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<sup>230</sup> For a discussion on the relationship between the unity of drives and genuine agency see, Anderson (2006, 89-115), Gemes (2009, 33-50), May (2009, 89-106); Richardson (2013, 190).

‘I’-claims alone, because they are not premised on distinct things or independent ‘faculties’. ‘I’-claims alone that do *not* necessarily correlate to actions, they do not demonstrate genuine self-conscious agency, but could also show *acrasia*. Genuine self-conscious agency is our possessing a consistent relationship between our ‘I’-claims and correlate actions; it is self-knowledge (in his sense of knowing oneself in a *particular light*) and self-mastery (in his sense of wholeness or unifying our various drives through our self-image). A ‘strong will’ reflects an enduring rank order of drives. Equally, the ‘I’ refers to the *whole* self, but this reference does not *determine* its unity or disunity. Therefore, a strong will reflects a unity of the self in the relationship between our ‘I’-claims and actions. The same applies to the rank order of drives. The relations between the drives in the rank order is not necessarily unified or does not necessarily yield an enduring unity. It describes how to determine whether a will is strong or weak, according to his drive psychology.

There is a bridge between that perspective whose basic unit of will is the ‘I’ and the one whose basic unit is the drive. It is in willing a course of action that the will appears as an activity discernible in both perspectives. The bridge shows that he is not committed to construing an action as the modification of a unified subject that passes its inherent unity to the action or that *causes* unity in a multiplicity of drives. Unity is the result of an ‘activity’ that can and often does yield unified action; this activity is discernible in both perspectives. Moreover, it is not *necessarily* unified, certainly not in the enduring manner we are led to ‘believe’ or have ‘faith’ in based on what he calls the errors of language or seductions of grammar. Sovereign individuality *must* yield unified action in an enduring manner and it typifies his prescription for ‘genuine self-conscious agency’. However, most people cannot attain sovereign individuality. They remain “unified only in a word” (*BGE* 19). The key philosophical point, for him, is that unified action is not *caused* by the inherent unity of the ‘I’ or the drive complex: it is *identical* to an activity that can be described both in ‘I’-terms and in ‘drive’-terms. This activity evidences power relationships or command-obedience relationships between the ‘I’ and its ‘desires, wishes etc.’ or the ‘drives’. In short, the first-person and the third-person are different perspectives on the same activity; neither can claim metaphysical or epistemic superiority over the other.

What conception of the thought-action relation is Nietzsche advancing? His picture is not complete, but we can propose ways that he could complete it given some of his claims. The claim that conscious thoughts are *identical* to relations between drives, but correspond to the ‘total state’ (*WLN* 1[61]) of the drives, is useful. Elsewhere, he construes them as the ‘outcome’ (*GS* 111) of relations between drives, but this can be misleading by implying a causal relationship, which then forces us to construe the agent as the ‘I’ and the ‘I’ as an independent ‘thing’ from the drives. The interaction is *not* between an agent and her drives, but between her desires (thoughts, wishes etc.) *themselves* and, by extension, the drives. In short, he does not construe drives relations as *causal* or *perspectival*. Such conceptions are misleading and commit us to causally efficacious phantoms or imaginary entities. Conscious thoughts *correspond* to power relations between drives. The relationship between conscious thoughts (wishes, desires, etc.) and drives is one of *identity*. Conscious thoughts (wishes,

desires etc.) *correspond* to drive relations. They are not the *effects* or *products* of these drive relations.

Since I defend this solution to the lack of fit, what conception of the ‘drives’ am I ascribing to Nietzsche? Notwithstanding my admittedly interminable defence of the identity relationship between the ‘I’ and the drives, my conception of the drives mostly agrees with Janaway’s and Katsafanas’ definition: drives are stable tendencies toward active behaviour. I am cautious with respect to some of their adjacent and alternative propositions about the relationship between self-conscious thoughts and drives, however.

I am cautious about Janaway’s claim that drives operate outside a person’s *conscious control*, because of the implicit conception of ‘conscious control’ as *drive-independent*. If we follow Janaway’s definition of the drives, we commit to construing ‘conscious thoughts’ not only as *things*, but also as *distinct in kind* from the drives. The previous introduces an unwarranted dualistic conception of the ‘I’-drive relationship, which I think Nietzsche tries to avoid and so my account seeks consistency with his views on the will-body identity.

Likewise, I exercise caution over Katsafanas’ proposal that those drives which lead to immediate actions or to actions without the mediation of reflection, operate *mechanically*:

“In short, an instinct might operate purely mechanically, by producing a series of behaviors; or it might operate at one remove, by producing internal states, such as emotions, desires, and urges, which then strongly dispose the organism to pursue some end. The animal acting on these internal states may be aware of its progress toward the nest, its pursuit of its prey, and so forth. But it remains ignorant of something else: the purpose of the action, or the ultimate *end* at which its action is directed.” (Katsafanas 2013A: 738)

‘Mechanical activity’ means that something operates without the influence of reflection, deliberation and conscious thought. My concern over this characterisation of the drives (or instincts) is twofold. Firstly, it undermines Nietzsche’s will-body identity by making ‘consciousness’ and its modes, i.e., knowledge, reflection and deliberation as behaviours or operations *distinct in kind* from drives and drive relations. Secondly, it implies drives only ever operate *non-mechanically* when they undergo the trial and jury of the previous modes of consciousness.

My worry over the *mechanical* conception of the drives stems from my reading Nietzsche as aiming to resist casual descriptions of the ‘drive-action’ and ‘thought-action’ relation. Drives and their rank order do not *cause* actions in any sense. Drives are relatively stable tendencies toward active behaviour, and so their relationship to an action is one of *identity*; drives are a *kind of action*, or a basic unit of willing, but construed as from the third-person perspective, because they force our gaze to actions for determining what they are as opposed to reflection. Consequently, their relationship to action is logical, not causal. The immediacy we experience with respect to the action we resolve to undertake is *not* ‘causal’; we are not speaking about two distinct things that interact. This ‘immediacy’ represents the outcome of willing, overcoming, overpowering etc., whose activity we can construe in two ways: a) as *choosing* to do X instead of Y, or, b) as the rank order of drives *fixing upon* X

instead of Y. The first renders ‘causality’ meaningful for us; we project willing on the objective world to render its changes meaningful. We cannot apply causality to that which we use to *explain* causal relations or render causal relations *meaningful* without appealing to circular reasoning.

Nietzsche rejects a mechanical account of the drives, because it fails to provide an insight into conscious agency, but rather takes this agency for granted. It relies on a *faith* or a *belief* in the independent efficacy of consciousness. Thus, the mechanical conception does not do enough to avoid phantoms and imaginary entities. If ‘drives’ are the only explainers for an action, then what does it mean for an organism to ‘know’ the purpose of its activity and how does this ‘knowledge’ make any difference to that activity? Knowledge makes a difference if and only if it is on the same plane of reality as the drives and, so, if it represents the activity of a drive in the trenches with other drives. The previous typifies Nietzsche’s solution to the problem of the possibility of self-conscious agency, which he underpins by appealing to the will-body identity and the process of ‘internalisation’.

It is misleading to argue the relationship between the ‘I’ and the drives is one of *mutual efficacy*, because we conceive of this efficacy on causal terms. I think we can accept that *both are* (or that *both can be*) *efficacious*, but note that the conception of this efficacy as ‘mutual’, i.e., as efficacious on one another, leads us to conceive of some *causal interaction* between them. The interaction theory of the thought-drive relation is problematic, because it bloats Nietzsche’s ontology and overlooks the labour he expended on his genealogical analysis, but also the psychological nuance and depth of his explanation. Accordingly, I agree with Katsafanas that there is *some* relationship between ‘drives’ and so-called ‘internal states’. I also agree that conscious states are ‘efficacious’. I disagree that the relationship between the drives and conscious states is *causal*, however. The drives do not ‘produce’ or ‘effect’ conscious states. Correspondingly, conscious states do not *affect* the drives without actually being drives themselves or on an equal footing with the drives. Rather, conscious states represent the activity of an internalised *drive*, which mixes with and thereby relates to other drives in the rank order and *fixes* upon something, i.e., upon an activity. Self-conscious thoughts are *efficacious*, but for different reasons and in a different manner than Katsafanas proposes.

Nietzsche seeks to preserve the will-body identity foundational to his analysis of agency and so we should avoid the temptation to isolate drives from their rank order or *total state*. It is arbitrary, and perhaps for this reason impossible, for us to *isolate* one drive from another and thus suggest that *this* drive X produces *that* state or action Y. With considerable caution we can say *what* drive may be at the forefront of the rank order in some moment and thus commands our entire body along with the other drives. We cannot find drives isolated from their rank order and so their relations with other drives, however. We can *conceptually* isolate a part of the body or a drive from the complex,<sup>231</sup> but not commit to the *existence* of

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<sup>231</sup> Here we should look at parts of the body and our organs in the way that he inherited from Schopenhauer’s conception of them, as objectified *wills*, i.e. as drives; (cf. *TI*, ‘Errors’, 8).



such a thing as a drive independent from the body and its rank order. What would a drive that roams about freely and independently from the rest look like? A drive is *part* of the complex and in constant relations with other drives. Each change or activity of the part is a change or activity of the whole irrespective of the *magnitude* of the change or activity, which sometimes we may not be able to measure (cf. *D* 115). Thus, internal states correspond to the *rank order* of drives, drive relations and interactions, which means there is a relationship of identity between them.

Where it seems as if *some* drive X is impelling us towards *some* behaviour Y, it is a combination of all the drives and their rank order. The rank order may evidence the priority of drive X, but drives do not operate independently from the others. When a drive is at the forefront of a rank order, it changes the character of *the whole* by assuming a priority in relation to the other drives; it commands, overpowers the other drives.<sup>232</sup> Nevertheless, in doing so, the drive does not somehow lose its relation to the rest or isolate itself. We should consider what it would be like for a drive to act without the body and thus the other drives, which are constantly urging the whole in *some* direction or other. It is also useful to compare this with what it would be like for the brain or stomach to act without the kidney, the liver, the heart, which invariably support the *whole system* of which the brain is a relatively small part irrespective of how we evaluate it according to our anatomical sciences and practices. It is correspondingly useful to consider as from the first person perspective how strange it would be if, when we are hungry, we forgot everything else we want to do that have nothing to do with eating. Compare the previous with what happens to conscious thoughts when we are *literally* starving; notice that deep sleep that journeys us into death and that ensues such moments of extreme starvation.

The above conception is likewise more apt in making sense of Nietzsche's 'one taste' (cf. *GS* 290). It is the enduring or recurrent priority of *one* rank order of drives, which we may characterise as the recurrent priority of an aim, a project or set of values, which agents assume and accord with their actions. The relationship of *correspondence* or *identity* between the rank order of drives and self-conscious agents I defend has the benefit of resolving the lack of fit by *preserving* Nietzsche's insistence on taking seriously the 'same plane of reality' and 'conscience of method'. It sidesteps *interactions* between the 'I' and the drives, which commits us to construing them as two *distinct* things. We are, I believe, seduced into the interaction theory of the I-drive relationship by a misleading conception of the conscious-unconscious distinction, but also by the need to explain everything *causally*. Both of these are premised on language and grammar, which represent the priority of what Nietzsche calls the *need* to communicate and thus the herd perspective.

Agency, whether it is conscious or unconscious, is the relation between one's resolve and its corresponding action.<sup>233</sup> Harbours many resolves towards different ends makes

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<sup>232</sup> Nietzsche's adamant to prevent us from taking seriously any drive-independent or transcendent perspective, i.e., a perspective that somehow stands apart or outside the whole and the relations between each part in it, (cf. *TI*, Errors, 8; see also *GM III*, 12).

<sup>233</sup> For more on this conception of agency see Ridley (2007B, 212-217).

possessing an enduring and recurrent rank order of drives (i.e., sovereign individuality) difficult, but *not* impossible (cf. *BGE* 200). The previous difficulty is unnoticed and unappreciated if and when we approach actions as consequences of a unified self-conscious subject of I-thoughts; or if we construe them as the *effects* of relations between *things*, i.e., ‘atoms’ or ‘atomic’ motions. We can appreciate this difficulty more readily if we analyse conscious agency itself and consider what it involves. In doing so, we recognise that considerably more than what we *assumed* is required from us to *successfully* will a course of action in the presence of changing circumstances. What we call ‘self-conscious’ agency *accords* with ‘unconscious’ agency by being determined by and so conceivable in terms of the relationships between one’s resolve and one’s actions.

The difference we should pay attention to is that between a *strong* and *weak* will, and not between ‘willing’ and ‘not-willing’, according to Nietzsche. He sees ‘not-willing’ as synonymous to death, because, like Schopenhauer, he works with an extended conception of ‘willing’, which he explains by appealing to the will-body identity. Self-conscious agency can be weak-willed *or* strong-willed, because consciousness is just the introduction of the drive to communicate into the rank order of drives. This introduction need not *necessarily* lead to a ‘weak will’. Consequently, his concern is not over consciousness *itself*, but our overestimation of it, i.e., his concern is ‘moral’:

“One takes consciousness to be a given determinate magnitude! One denies its growth and intermittences! Sees it as ‘the unity of the organism’! This ridiculous overestimation and misapprehension of consciousness has the very useful consequence that an all-too-rapid development of consciousness was *prevented*.” (*GS* 11)

In conscious agency, the urge to entertain a self-image shapes our actions in the interest of the herd perspective, i.e., for the sake of communication and thus the *consequences* of such communication or its lack thereof, which for him are *moral*. Our self-image is how morality shapes our actions. Thus, the difference between conscious and unconscious agency is the priority we afford to the *drive to communicate* in the rank order by virtue of having to live with other people; this priority reflects the role of morality in our lives.

Previously, we illustrated that Nietzsche construes our self-image as representing the role of morality in our actions; self-conscious thought immediately places us within the moral sphere. This sphere is *inescapable* because we live in a social world. Many of us may *not* be inclined towards *social* interaction due to how it constricts our individual expression, i.e., how it impedes our other, individual and distinct, if not opposing, drives. Those of us who find ourselves disinclined towards society can do little about it. We have to live with others and its costs to our individuality. Therefore, he does not want to undermine or reject our needing or possessing a self-image, but assess and cooperate with it.

Before I turn to Nietzsche’s concern with the moral value of compassion and its relationship to the ascetic ideal, I will assess his views on aesthetics following his objections to Schopenhauer’s aesthetics. I will focus mainly on what he adopts from Schopenhauer’s views and what he leaves behind. My aim is to further cement the proposition that Nietzsche

believes ‘projection’ to be the cornerstone of the human intellectual involvement with the world. I will aim to demonstrate that he agrees with Schopenhauer’s aesthetics more than he often willingly admits or makes clear. Schopenhauer’s claim that aesthetic contemplation is a projection of *willing* onto the world is central to Nietzsche’s philosophy, too. Although, they disagree on how to conceive of this ‘projection, but likewise on the correct conception of willing and, in turn, the conception of aesthetic contemplation that follows from it.

## 2.12 Nietzsche on Objectivity and Aesthetic Contemplation

In this chapter, I assess Schopenhauer’s influence on Nietzsche’s aesthetics and the arts. I will argue that they agree on the conception of aesthetics and the arts as a human activity which distorts ‘natural’ objects, but disagree over how to construe aesthetic contemplation and objective reflection. Before I analyse their similarities and differences in detail, I will briefly summarise Schopenhauer’s aesthetics.

There is an implicit distinction between art and aesthetics, according to Schopenhauer. Art is a human activity whose product is a class of objects we call ‘artworks’ (or ‘artefacts’), which captures how human beings distort natural objects using their reason and imagination. We construe this activity as ‘creativity’, which is a *willful* activity, in Schopenhauer’s sense. An artist’s *aims* or *reasons* for distorting natural objects can vary, however. Their creativity can be variously inspired. Furthermore, a spectator’s experience and enjoyment of artworks can also vary irrespective of the artist’s inspiration. The two main inspirations for artworks, according to him, are aesthetic or non-aesthetic. Only aesthetic inspiration interests him.<sup>234</sup> Thus, his analysis of the arts concerns ‘aesthetic contemplation’ only and its particular form of creativity and inspiration.

Aesthetic contemplation is a kind of cognition of something, which I comprehended using the ‘correlation theory of cognition’. Ordinary cognition yields an object for a willing subject, but aesthetic contemplation yields cognition of something as a willing, striving etc. ‘thing’, i.e., a Schopenhauerian *Idea*. Aesthetic contemplation has *its* own ‘subjective correlate’, however. We cognise Ideas by assuming the disinterested stance in relation to a target of cognition. Disinterestedness does not entail the absence of interest or apathy (cf. Came 2009, 95), but a change in our interest *corresponding to* the projection of willing onto

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<sup>234</sup> Denham makes a similar remark: “[g]reat art can leave us cold. Such occasions are often mentioned as counterexamples to ‘aesthetic attitude’ theories, as evidence that even unequivocally great art can fail to elicit any distinctive form of psychological engagement. They are of no interest here, however, because they play no part in the positive phenomenologies of art offered by either Schopenhauer or Nietzsche: neither thinker has any interest in dispassionate, detached, or casual spectatorship. Their concern is with aesthetic creation and appreciation ‘proper’—namely, acts and experiences which are focused, fully attentive, and wholly involved... Neither thinker offers an explicit argument for demarcating the territory of the aesthetic in this way, but it is clearly assumed by most of what each has to say” (Denham 2014, 171).

the target. Thus, perceiving the target's Idea reflects a change in the nature of our cognition and interest. It represents the target's *ideal* representation and aesthetically inspired artists create artworks aiming to incite the previous 'change' in the spectator and thereby facilitate cognition of an Idea in them.

Aesthetic contemplation is also the only candidate for cognition of the target as it is *in itself*, according to Schopenhauer, because it provides us with its so-called 'clearest image'. It intimately relates to the target's 'truth' or 'reality', i.e., it is the closest possible cognition of what *it* is independent from the effects other things have on it, which we can have. Thus, the disinterested stance yields a veracious cognition of the target that better represents it at it is *in itself* compared to its counterpart cognitions. Those distorted objects we call artworks, which are inspired by aesthetic contemplation and thus *aim* to incite it in their spectators by making it appear 'sublime' or 'beautiful', are more veracious than their natural and-or non-aesthetic counterparts (cf. *WR*, 220 & *WR II*, 387).

Schopenhauer's psychological observations on aesthetics and so what *motivates* and-or *causes* us to project willing on the target of cognition was also a crucial element of his viewpoint. What drives aesthetic contemplation is 'suffering', i.e., a thwarted will.<sup>235</sup> What causes or motivates us (in Schopenhauer's sense) to project willing onto the target is twofold. Either the object is more suitable for representing its *Idea* (i.e., what *it* wills *as a whole*) than its counterparts are, or it is more threatening (or hostile) than human beings can overcome. The previous represent the two principal aesthetic properties of objects (whether they are natural or artificial), i.e., beauty and sublimity. His correlation theory of cognition does not allow us to separate what 'motivates' from what 'causes' aesthetic contemplation, however, because how a target *appears* reflects our subjective stance in relation to it. Therefore, motivation and causation are two distinct perspectives on the same event seen *as from* 'within' ('motivation') or *as from* 'without' ('causation'). The urge to do something explains *why* we perceive something as beautiful or sublime, i.e., why it motivates aesthetic contemplation. This urge explains *why* we project willing onto a target of cognition when we suffer. It offers us something to do and so a way to alleviate suffering or boredom by distraction or redirecting our focus to something else, i.e., something other than our situation and interest. These psychological observations suggest that aesthetic contemplation—but also artistic creativity itself—are different ways in which we vent the urge to do something, anything whatsoever.

In sum, Schopenhauer makes three fundamental propositions on aesthetics and arts. Firstly, aesthetic contemplation is more veracious than its counterpart cognitions; it provides

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<sup>235</sup> Following the distinction between art and aesthetics, we can argue that irrespective of the artist's inspiration, suffering is what *motivates* art. What distinguishes all artistic activities from the aesthetic kind of artistic activity is what we do following our suffering using our reason and imagination. Aesthetics leads us to project willing onto the target of cognition and thereby, for a moment, we forget our suffering by focusing on the target entirely while producing artworks unrelated to the suffering that motivated it. Non-aesthetically inspired creativity focuses on a target in light of its relation to our suffering and produces artworks directly or indirectly related to that suffering.

a ‘meaningful’ view of the world and so it has *veridical* value. Secondly, ‘suffering’ (i.e., a thwarted will) drives aesthetics and the arts by enabling an alternative ‘pleasure’ (i.e., or an alleviation of pain) and thus another way to vent the urge to do something. Thirdly, aesthetic contemplation has moral value and a value for life, because projecting the will allows us to act wholly for another’s sake.<sup>236</sup> The previous contributes to the negation of the will to life, which represents our ‘genuine freedom’ (cf. *WR*, 327-8), by revealing the necessity and the extent of suffering in the world and our inability to alleviate it. Thus, the kind of cognition that is aesthetic contemplation is the foundation of the evaluative aspect of Schopenhauer’s philosophy.

Nietzsche rejects two key components of Schopenhauer’s aesthetics. First, he rejects the proposition that the ‘will’ projected on the target is unproblematic, i.e., that it is ‘given’, ‘unified’ or ‘veridical’ (cf. *BGE* 16 & 19). As we saw previously, he argues for a different conception of ‘willing’. I will argue here that he utilises this conception to inform his views on aesthetics and the arts. Second, he rejects the claim that aesthetic contemplation yields a veracious cognition of the target. The ‘Idea’ does not reflect what *it* wills, but *what* or *how* the artist wills it to be. Schopenhauer’s psychological observations were invaluable to Nietzsche’s aesthetics, however. He agrees that the arts help *manage* suffering, but how they do so differ because of his approach through historical philosophising. Correspondingly, he accepts aesthetics can have *moral* value, but his account of ‘morality’ and the role aesthetics plays in it differ substantially from Schopenhauer.

Nietzsche’s approach to aesthetics and the arts undergoes changes throughout his work. For example, in *BT* he utilises Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will, his metaphysics and pessimism. He demonstrates Schopenhauer’s errors on the artistic genre of tragedy and sets the stage for a concept that resurfaces in later works, i.e., the *Dionysiac*. Moreover, his historical method and his views on ‘health’ in connection with creativity and myth are prominent in this early work (cf. *BT* 23). To make sense of his aesthetics, however, I think we are obligated to note and avoid the mistakes he concedes in *BT*. His philosophical and artistic influences, he argues, mislead him about the appropriate methodology, terminology and approach to the problems that he raises. In later work, he uses a different method, set of propositions, concepts and arguments for addressing the same problem of pessimism, value and health he raises in *BT*. His self-criticism in the ‘Preface’ to *BT* proved useful to me for making sense of the direction of his views on aesthetics and the arts, but also for how they fit with his broader evaluative aims. It is difficult to ignore passages such as the following:

“I find it an impossible book today. I declare that it is badly written, clumsy, embarrassing, with a rage for imagery and confused in its imagery, emotional, here and there sugary to the point of effeminacy, uneven in pace, lacking the will to logical

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<sup>236</sup> Denham rightly distinguishes Schopenhauer’s phenomenology of the aesthetic experience from his subsequent use and evaluation of that experience (cf. Denham 2014, 166; see specially her note on the same page). However, as we will see below, she is wrong to ascribe that same phenomenology to Nietzsche’s account of aesthetics. Also, she does show clearly enough how entrenched Schopenhauer’s metaphysics is in his phenomenological account of the aesthetic experience.

cleanliness, very convinced and therefore too arrogant to prove its assertions, mistrustful even of the *propriety* of proving things...an arrogant and wildly enthusiastic book which, from the outset, shuts itself off from the *profanum vulgus* of the ‘educated’ even more than from the ‘common people’...” (*BT Pref.*, 3)

“I now regret very much that I did not yet have the courage (or immodesty?) at that time to permit myself a *language of my very own* for such personal views and acts of daring, labouring instead to express strange and new evaluations in Schopenhauerian and Kantian formulations, things which fundamentally ran counter to both the spirit and taste of Kant and Schopenhauer... Setting aside all the premature hopes and the erroneous morals applied to the most contemporary things with which I ruined my first book, however, the great Dionysiac question it remains (with regard to music, too) as valid as ever: what would music be like if it were no longer Romantic in its origins, as German music is, but *Dionysiac*? (*BT Pref.*, 6)

Nietzsche’s declarations that he ‘ruined’ his first book are hard to ignore, because he rarely shows such an attitude towards his work. Also, we cannot ignore the concept of ‘Dionysiac’, which, as he claims in *EH*, characterises his entire philosophy:

“I have the right to understand myself as the first *tragic philosopher*—which is to say the most diametrically opposed antipode of a pessimistic philosopher. Nobody had ever turned the Dionysian into a philosophical pathos before: *tragic wisdom* was missing... The affirmation of passing away *and destruction* that is crucial for a Dionysian philosophy, saying yes to opposition and war, *becoming* along with a radical rejection of the very concept of ‘being’—all these are more closely related to me than anything else people have thought so far.” (*EH*, ‘BT’, 3)

The above quote guides my approach to Nietzsche’s philosophy; especially, the following claim: “saying yes to opposition and war, *becoming* along with a radical rejection of the very concept of ‘being’” (*EH*, BT, 3). I use the previous as the reference point for elucidating his philosophical aims and I continue to let this guide me now into his account of aesthetics and the arts.<sup>237</sup>

I will assess Nietzsche’s objections to Schopenhauer’s aesthetic contemplation and aesthetic objectivity using primarily his later writings. Similar to his views on morality, his aesthetics has a descriptive and evaluative component. Initially, he construes the activities and inspirations of artists in terms of the drives, i.e., Apolline and Dionysiac *drives*.<sup>238</sup> The

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<sup>237</sup> For more on BT, but also on how Nietzsche’s views relate to Schopenhauer’s metaphysics see, (Ridley 2007A, 9-33), (Young 1999, 25-57), (Nussbaum 1991), (Han-Pile 2006) and (Janaway 2007). For more recent analyses of *BT* see the collection of essays in Came (2014), to which I will also refer in the current chapter.

<sup>238</sup> See, for example: “[t]hese two very different drives (*Triebe*) exist side by side, mostly in open conflict, stimulating and provoking (*reisen*) one another to give birth to ever-new, more vigorous offspring in whom they perpetuate the conflict inherent in the opposition between them, an opposition only apparently bridged by the common term ‘art’ - until eventually, by a metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic ‘Will’, they appear paired and, in

descriptive component, then, attunes his readers using ‘historical philosophising’, before he suggests his evaluation of aesthetics and the arts, i.e., what he thinks the value of aesthetics and the arts consists in. I will focus on the descriptive component by critically assessing the differences between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche’s accounts of ‘aesthetic contemplation’ and ‘objectivity’. I will argue that the differences between them hinge on what it means to ‘idealise’ (or ‘transfigure’) the target of cognition. For Schopenhauer, ‘idealisation’ is an exercise in perceiving the most veridical representation of the target using the most veridical representation of ourselves by analogy. For Nietzsche, idealisation is a bodily state and thus an essentially creative exercise of the entire body. Let me elaborate on the previous.

Schopenhauer distinguishes aesthetic contemplation from reflection, but he likewise distinguishes ‘aesthetic’ objectivity from its non-aesthetic counterpart. Aesthetic objectivity conceives a target as willing, striving and so on, whereas non-aesthetic objectivity conceives it as something permitting our (or someone else’s) willing, i.e., it yields an object *for* a willing subject or one that permits willing. Therefore, aesthetic contemplation has veridical value, because its representation is as close to what the target is *in itself* as is possible given the limits of our intellect. I call this the ‘veridical account’ of aesthetic contemplation. I will argue that Nietzsche’s staunchest objections to Schopenhauer aim predominantly at this account of aesthetic contemplation.

The veridical account echoes in recent readings of Schopenhauer’s aesthetics. For example, Came’s reading of Schopenhauer’s aesthetics argues the following:

“...aesthetic and moral experience brings us much closer to the *reality* of things, to the *essence* of existence.” (Came 2009, 99; my emphasis)

See also, Denham’s reading of Schopenhauer’s aesthetic contemplation as a sort of aesthetic ‘attunement’, which shows an affinity for the veridical account by describing ‘attunement’ as follows:

“First, it is a state in which the subject ceases to consider how the target is causally or conceptually related to other things (regarding it ‘outside’ of the principle of sufficient reason). Secondly, it is a state in which the character and content of the subject’s first-personal experience is wholly determined by the target. And finally, in this state the subject ceases to be aware of himself as distinct from the object—he is no longer a subject of self-conscious thought nor (accordingly) self-directed agency.” (Denham 2014, 175)

Denham rightly distinguishes the description of an experience from the use or implications of that experience (cf. Denham 2014, 176). Hence, we incorrectly associate Schopenhauer’s phenomenology with his metaphysics (cf. Denham 2014, 166). His account is, indeed, rich

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this pairing, finally engender a work of art which is Dionysiac and Apolline in equal measure: Attic tragedy.” (*BT* 1, 14)

in phenomenological insight even though it is metaphysically flawed. Nevertheless, I think we will struggle to dissociate his phenomenological insights from the metaphysical or the veridical *implications* of his description and-or the descriptive terms on which these insights rely. We notice the reasons for the previous in her claim that aesthetic contemplation entails that our ‘first-personal experience is *wholly determined* by the target’ (my emphasis).<sup>239</sup> If we describe what Denham calls ‘aesthetic attunement’ as ‘wholly determined’ by the target, then we make substantial implications with respect to the veracity of the cognition. In short, we assume that veracity is a central feature of that experience. This does not only allow metaphysical propositions and considerations to reenter the phenomenological account via its description, but unwittingly supports a proposition that an aesthetic experience is more veridical than its counterpart experiences. The reason is that, unlike its counterparts, a target *wholly determines* the aesthetic experience, which puts aesthetics at the heart of metaphysical and epistemological concerns, but it also characterises the experience as wholly ‘passive’ or ‘receptive’ to the target. Furthermore, Schopenhauer implicitly distinguished arts from aesthetics. The arts themselves are not necessarily concerned with the veracity of a target’s representation in an artefact. An artefact *can* be concerned with the veracity of its subject matter, but whether or not it does so depends *wholly* on the artist’s inspiration and aims, not on the ‘target’ or the mere fact that it is an artefact. Nevertheless, Denham’s reading captures Schopenhauer’s conception of aesthetic contemplation and his account of the Ideas, but we have reason to argue that her reading falls short of capturing Nietzsche’s views on aesthetics and the arts. Nietzsche conceives of the aesthetic experience as a wholly active and creative engagement with the target of cognition; the aesthetic contemplator *wholly determines* the target’s representation, which includes what counts as its ‘ideal’ representation in an artwork or artefact.

In sum, the veridical account conflates the phenomenological description of our experience with the veridical implications of its subject matter. Schopenhauer conflates the target’s veracity with aesthetic contemplation, because he aims to associate it with morality and ascetic resignation; he aims to derive his evaluative framework from it. He achieves the previous by *grounding* the ‘Idea’ and its subjective correlate (i.e., ‘disinterestedness’) on

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<sup>239</sup> Denham’s reading likewise shows an ambiguity, which we can recognise when we inquire how it is possible for ‘objects’ to ‘wholly determine’ our first-personal experience while, simultaneously, “the distinction between the subject and the object is phenomenologically mitigated” (Denham 2014, 172). We cannot hold together these two propositions without losing sight of or abandoning the distinction between the phenomenological description and the veridical representation, which reintroduces metaphysical implications. The reason is that if, as she claims, a distinction between us and the object is ‘phenomenologically mitigated’, then we cease to perceive it *as an object*, which, in turn, means we do not ascribe to it properties we would ascribe to ‘objects’—our whole experience has changed in this instance. Therefore, once the distinction between subject and object is ‘mitigated’, the claim that the object ‘wholly determines’ our perception becomes meaningless. Denham is on the right track, but falls short because she uses metaphysical lexicon to describe the aesthetic experience while at the same time aiming to sidestep any metaphysical implications. Schopenhauer did not avoid the metaphysical implications (or veridical representation of a target of cognition) of his aesthetic experience. He conflated phenomenology with metaphysics and construed this conflation as the hallmark of his philosophy. He argued that through his philosophy of the will, we could make the world—especially scientific discoveries including metaphysical propositions—*meaningful* or *significant*.



*truth or reality*. This conflation is a hallmark of his philosophy, which aims to give us the ‘truest’, ‘clearest’ and ‘most meaningful’ world-view. We cannot ascribe this conflation to Nietzsche, because he has an active and creative account of aesthetic contemplation and the aesthetic experience.

Neither Schopenhauer nor Nietzsche believe we can possibly *know* what a target of cognition is *in itself*. For Schopenhauer, however, we *can* know what *we* are (in ourselves) and, by the faculty of imagination and reason, we can ‘project’ this knowledge on the target of cognition to acquire an approximate insight into *what it is in itself*, albeit in accordance with the limits of possible cognition. Nietzsche accepts that artists ‘project’ on the target of cognition, but his conception of the veracity or epistemic status of this projection differ from his predecessor. Furthermore, he has a different phenomenological account of the projection that avoids concerns over its veracity and epistemic status.

When we project ‘willing’ onto the target, we humanise or anthropomorphise it (cf. GS 109 & 112), according to Nietzsche. We do not cognise it as it is *in itself*; our projection does not constitute a veracious representation of it. We render it ‘meaningful’ *to us* and *for us*, not *in itself*. The target’s meaningfulness corresponds to *our* interest(s). He leaves open whether this ‘interest’ reflects our individuality, the herd, our species or some combination thereof. Nevertheless, nothing corresponds to an interest in the target as it is *in itself* and *for itself*, because no such interest exists. The ‘disinterestedness’ Schopenhauer describes is not an interest in the target *itself*, i.e., the subjective correlate of perceiving what it is *in itself* or what *it wills*, for Nietzsche. What *drives* the artist to proclaim she is disinterested is multiple, but what is common in each case is that it is unrelated to the target *itself*. Nietzsche lists the following interests, which clearly relate to the artist’s self-image: she may have an interest in appearing ‘holy’ (cf. EC, ‘Destiny’, 8), or ‘moral’ (cf. A 9), or ‘as belonging to a higher order of things’ (cf. A 12). In short, her interest is in the herd perspective, which, therefore, distorts her self-conception. Let me elaborate.

Nietzsche’s rejection of Schopenhauer’s account of aesthetic contemplation and the activity of artists requires us to attune to and introduce his distinct conception of willing, consciousness and the herd instincts, i.e., the *conceptual link*. I cannot provide an exhaustive picture of how aesthetics features in the conceptual link without further and more substantial deviation from the central topic. Moreover, he did not work out this relationship sufficiently or clearly enough by comparison to what we saw with his account of morality. Accordingly, my propositions principally rely on inferences from passages and arguments.<sup>240</sup>

Nietzsche has a distinct phenomenology of aesthetic contemplation and creativity, which we can recognise from his conception of ‘idealisation’ and the role of *Rausch* in it. A key step to making sense of this distinct phenomenology is to recognise the viewpoint from which he approaches aesthetics and the arts. As Reginster rightly claims, his viewpoint is that of the artist or creator:

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<sup>240</sup> I leave aside how the conceptual link between communal life, consciousness, language etc. features in his views on aesthetics and the arts. I will focus on his phenomenology of aesthetic contemplation. Nevertheless, my analysis implies *some* relationship to it, but I was unable to explore it at length here.

“Schopenhauer, Nietzsche remarks, ‘instead of envisaging the aesthetic problem from the point of view of the artist (the creator), considered art and the beautiful purely from that of the “spectator”’ (GM, III, 6; see Z, II, 15). The fundamental assumption of Schopenhauerian aesthetics is that the purpose of art is to induce a certain view of things.” (Reginster 2014, 24)

We cannot dissociate Schopenhauer’s views on aesthetic contemplation and its role in the arts from their implications with respect to the affirmation or negation of the will to life. My reason is that Schopenhauer sought to derive an overarching evaluative framework from his views on aesthetic contemplation. Accordingly, Reginster’s suggestion that, according to Schopenhauer, the arts aim only to provide a certain ‘view’ of things can be misleading, because that view borrows its relevance from whether or not it facilitates affirmation or negation of the will to life. Schopenhauer aims for a more direct relationship between the arts and the will to life as is evident by his views on tragedy and his psychological insights into the arts and aesthetics. I cannot address the previous at length; instead, I will focus on why and how Nietzsche avoids conflating the ‘veracity’ of a cognition (the ‘view of things’) with aesthetic contemplation. I will argue that he does so by having a different account of aesthetic contemplation and objectivity.

Came’s useful reading of Schopenhauer’s account of ‘disinterestedness’ helps us see how Nietzsche’s phenomenology of aesthetic contemplation differs from his predecessor’s, but also how it is built out of his objections to it. I do not think Came aims to demonstrate this difference and he does not defend it here, but his reading helps us reveal it through the claim that Nietzsche confuses disinterestedness with apathy:

“Schopenhauer defines disinterestedness as a state in which objects ‘stand in no relation to our will’... Nietzsche, at times, seems to understand this radical detachment as apathy. But to be disinterested does *not* mean to fail to be interested. My attitude towards an object is disinterested, if and only if, in attending to it, I focus only on the object and not any relations that obtain between the object and anything apart from the object itself. Disinterestedness is therefore an attitude of reflective disengagement from all considerations of utility, which considers only what the object is ‘in itself’.” (Came 2009, 95)

There are two propositions embedded in the above passage that demonstrate Schopenhauer conflates a phenomenological description with a metaphysical proposition or consideration about the cognition he describes. First, Came’s reading describes disinterestedness as one’s *focusing wholly* on the ‘object’ as the correct phenomenological account. Second, he *infers* from focusing wholly on the object (or the description of this focus) that it entails “reflective disengagement from all considerations of utility, which considers only what the object is ‘in itself’”. We can distinguish between ‘reflective disengagement from all considerations of utility’ and considering ‘what the object is *in itself*’ and so show a second inference implicit to his reading, but we need only assess the first inference for the point at hand. Accordingly, I will analyse the inference from ‘*focusing on something*’ to ‘considering what the object is

in itself', i.e., to its implications about the veracity of the cognition in light of Nietzsche's views.

Came's reading rightly shows that Schopenhauer conflates or, at least, does not seem to recognise a difference between the following propositions:

- A) Focusing wholly on something.
- B) Considering what it is 'in itself'.

I will argue that we cannot ascribe this conflation to Nietzsche, because he offers his own phenomenological account and analysis of focusing wholly on something as we do during our aesthetic contemplation. The previous account is unconcerned with what the target is in itself. Nietzsche's *Rausch* characterises A), which also demonstrates his account of aesthetic contemplation. It describes A) without entailing the second proposition, which ties aesthetic contemplation to the veracity of our cognition. The veracity of our cognition and aesthetic contemplation are separate considerations and interests, for Nietzsche. Accordingly, he does not reject the proposition that we can be disinterested and take an interest in something. He rejects the proposition that disinterestedness has implications with respect to the veracity of our cognition or that we are interested in what the target is 'in itself'. I will assess another reading of the relationship between Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's aesthetics to show the need for assessing again where Nietzsche departs from Schopenhauer.

Young's reading of Nietzsche's objections to Schopenhauer's disinterestedness takes the view that Nietzsche's aesthetics is closer to Schopenhauer's than he is willing to admit. According to Young, Nietzsche misreads 'disinterestedness':

"Nietzsche's objection to the disinterestedness theory is, it seems to me, a simple one: disinterested, will-less contemplation is not a state out of which anything is created. Yet art, the state which produces it, essentially *is* creative. Hence "objectivity, mirroring, suspended will" are "inartistic states" (WP 812). Art, in short, is not contemplation but *action*. Nietzsche's activist vocabulary for talking about artists - he refers to them as *creators, makers, doers, violators* and as *rapists* (TI, ix, 8) - continually emphasises this." (Young 1992, 121)

In defense of Schopenhauer's account, Young argues that Nietzsche failed to distinguish two phases in Schopenhauer's aesthetics: the contemplative and creative phase (cf. Young 1992, 122). Accordingly, Nietzsche focused on objecting to the contemplative and ignored how the previous informs the artist's creativity, which meant that he does not admit how his 'transfiguration' derives from Schopenhauerian 'disinterestedness'. Nietzsche's objections, then, are limited: they aim at the contemplative phase of the process ignoring the creative and that 'transfiguration' captures another phase in the artistic process phase:

"In describing aesthetic perception as disinterested Schopenhauer means that in the aesthetic state these normal categories of perception are suspended, thereby enabling us to become alive to usually unnoticed aspects and construals of objects: in

Nietzschean language, the object undergoes “transfiguration.” And this, surely, *is* essential to (good) art.” (Young 1992, 124)

Young’s reading is misleading, because he does not recognise the veridical considerations central to Schopenhauer’s account of the artistic process and specifically the contemplative phase. Nietzsche forgoes veridical considerations and formulates a new phenomenological account of aesthetic contemplation that aims to avoid them.

The ‘aspects and construals of objects’ that a contemplator ‘becomes alive to’ and to which Young refers, are wholly determined by the *target* (i.e., the Idea) in Schopenhauer’s case, as Denham rightly suggests. The target ‘wholly determines’ its ‘ideal representation’ and ‘perfection’, which the artist perceives during the contemplative phase and then *actively* turns into artefacts in the creative phase with the aim of communicating that perfection to others. Nietzsche rejects the previous on two grounds. First, he does not distinguish between the contemplative and creative phase of the artistic process. Second, a target cannot possibly ‘wholly determine’ these new ‘aspects and construals’, since the artist is active throughout the artist process. We suspend willing during aesthetic contemplation and project it on the target, according to Schopenhauer. We become genuinely pure subjects of cognition and so conduits for its ‘Idea’, which is a veridical concern alien to Nietzsche’s aesthetics. Young does not sufficiently portray the veridical concerns inherent to Schopenhauer’s description when formulating his reading of Nietzsche’s aesthetics and thus he misses a pertinent aspect of Nietzsche’s alternative and revisionist account. Although, we should omit that we notice Nietzsche’s departure from Schopenhauer’s views more clearly in his later works than in his earlier work, e.g., in *BT*.

In sum, Schopenhauer’s description of aesthetic contemplation invites assessments over the veracity of the cognition, because it borrows its *value* precisely from that veracity. In Nietzsche’s terms, Schopenhauer pays homage to ‘truth’ or shows his insurmountable ‘will to truth’. When he construes the Idea as a product of aesthetic contemplation and its veracity as its essential aspect, Schopenhauer champions truth over aesthetics. Truth and perfection are equivalents in Schopenhauer’s view, whereas the two are unrelated, according to Nietzsche. Nietzsche objects to the veracity of the Ideas and to the proposition that the subjective correlate of ‘*meaningful* truths’ is ‘disinterestedness’, in Schopenhauer’s sense.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> See, for example: “[w]herever people think that their pedigree gives them the right to contemplate Reality and gaze out into the distance . . . The idealist, like the priest, holds all the great concepts in his hand (- and not just his hand); he plays them with a sort of good-natured disdain for ‘understanding’, the ‘senses’, ‘honour’, ‘the good life’, ‘science’; he thinks that these sorts of things are *beneath* him, like so many pernicious, seductive forces over which ‘spirit’ hovers in its pure ‘for-itself’-ness: - as if humility, chastity, poverty (in a word: *holiness*) have not done life unspeakably more harm than any vices or horrors ever have... Pure spirit is a pure lie... As long as the priest is considered a *higher* type of person - this *professional* negater, slanderer, poisoner of life there will not be an answer to the question: What *is* truth? Truth has already been turned on its head when someone who consciously champions nothingness and negation passes for the representative of ‘truth’...” (A 8). Compare the previous passage with the following (A 14).

Do Nietzsche's objections to Schopenhauer's account of aesthetic contemplation entail that he is not concerned with the 'truth' or that he places a higher value on falsehoods? On the contrary, I will argue that Nietzsche distinguishes considerations regarding 'truth' from those regarding aesthetics and its defining features, which are creativity, beauty and the sublime.<sup>242</sup> His later writings construe the 'truth' as wholly unrelated to 'aesthetics'. He approaches the 'truth' as a 'problem of life' (or health) and argues that aesthetics can help 'manage' it, but not that truth is a decisive feature of aesthetics. What aesthetics manages is not the truth, but its *effect* on us and our life.<sup>243</sup> He rejects the proposition that the demands of aesthetics are synonymous with those of truth. Thus, there is a dissociation between truth and aesthetics, which, according to Nietzsche, is valuable *for life*.

We find Nietzsche's phenomenology of aesthetic contemplation in what he calls *Rausch*, which we often translate as 'intoxication' in the Anglophone commentary on his philosophy. However, his conception of *Rausch* changes from its outline in *BT* to his later work, such as *TI*. In *BT*, he construes *Rausch* as the defining characteristic of the Dionysiac drive in juxtaposition to the *dream* or *image* characterising the Apolline<sup>244</sup>:

"In order to gain a closer understanding of these two drives, let us think of them in the first place as the separate art-worlds of *dream* and *intoxication* [*Rausch*]." (*BT* 1, 14)

"[E]very artist is an 'imitator', and indeed either an Apolline dream-artist or a Dionysiac artist of intoxication or finally - as, for example, in Greek tragedy - an artist of both dream and intoxication at once." (*BT* 2, 19)

In his later work, *Rausch* is a characteristic of both Dionysian and Apolline drives, which reflects his aim to conceive of *Rausch* as a *precondition* of artistic creativity, i.e., an activity of all artistic drives, rather the defining characteristic of one artistic drive (or drive relation):

"The contrasting concepts of *Apollinian* and *Dionysian* that I introduced into aesthetics-what do they mean, as types of intoxication? – Apollinian intoxication stimulates the eye above all, so that it gets the power of vision... In the Dionysian state, on the other hand, the entire system of affects is excited and intensified: so that it discharges all its modes of expression at once, releasing the force of presentation, imitation, transfiguration, transformation, and all types of mimicry and play acting, all at the same time." (*TI*, 'Skirmishes', 10)

This change in Nietzsche's use of *Rausch* demonstrates he aims to overcome the limitations and errors he accepts with respect to his first book, which he acknowledges in later works:

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<sup>242</sup> I discuss the relationship between truth, art and science further in the next chapter where I analyse Nietzsche's views on *Mitleid* and the ascetic ideal.

<sup>243</sup> For an illuminating reading of Nietzsche's views on the relationship between 'aesthetics' and 'truth', see Janaway (2014).

<sup>244</sup> See likewise Young (1992, 125-6) on this change in conception.

“Perhaps it may be recalled, at least among my friends, that initially I approached the modern world with a few crude errors and overestimations and, in any case, with *hope*. I understood - on the basis of who knows what personal experiences? - the philosophical pessimism of the nineteenth century as a symptom of a higher force of thought, of a more victorious *fullness* of life than had been expressed in the philosophies of Hume, Kant, and Hegel, - this *tragic* insight struck me as the most beautiful luxury of our culture, its most precious, noblest, and most dangerous type of squandering; but still, in view of its over-richness, as its *permitted* luxury. Similarly, I explained Wagner’s music to myself as the expression of a Dionysian might of the soul: I believed that I heard in it the earthquake through which some pent-up primordial force is finally released - indifferent about whether it sets everything else which is called culture atremble. You see what I misjudged, you also see what I *gave* to Wagner and Schopenhauer - myself . . .” (NCW, ‘Antipodes’, 271)

He construes the relationship between *Rausch*, aesthetics and the arts differently in his later work. He construes it as a bodily state and precondition of aesthetic creativity. What remains the same and he builds on throughout his work is the proposition that artistic and aesthetic creativity are *inherently active*. What *seems as* passivity with respect to aesthetics and the arts reflects another kind of activity. When an artist claims she is a passive conduit for the target of cognition to impress *its* ideal representation on her, she engages in something akin to what we saw in the pale criminal after he recognises his *urge* to kill. She manages her ‘shame’ by rationalising it. She uses the moral value of ‘truth’ to ‘rationalise’ her non-moral (or immoral) *urge* to be ‘creative’ or ‘distort’ the target by striving to make it beautiful or sublime, *for her*. The high ‘moral’ value we afford to ‘truth’ and thus our construing it as an ‘ideal’ (more on this below), does not permit us to distort things as artists ordinarily do with natural objects; we morally berate pleasurable falsehoods or even superficial adornments of things. Nevertheless, what motivates the so-called ‘delusion’ of artists is the high value they afford (or think others afford) to truth. In Nietzsche’s attuned lexicon, the herd instinct takes precedence in their rank order of drives, which, in turn, distorts their self-conception of their aesthetic creativity.

To defend adequately the psychological explanations of the *artist’s delusion* (cf. GS 301) requires me to appeal to the conceptual link, which I cannot convincingly do at length here. I resign to making the negative proposition that we cannot read Nietzschean concepts such as ‘transfiguration’, ‘sublimation’ and ‘spiritualisation’ as rehashes of Schopenhauer’s aesthetic contemplation, that is, as ‘passive’ or ‘quasi-passive’ states following a suspension of our personal or impersonal interests. The artist’s creativity is the same as any other human activity, for Nietzsche: it reflects a drive(s) or drive relation(s), namely, the *total state* of the drives at some moment. This includes how artists comprehend their own creativity, that is, their self-conception as disinterested. Given that Nietzsche does *not* aim to explain the *focus* on the target inherent to aesthetic contemplation by appealing to truth, passivity, receptivity or veracity, how, then, does he explain the focus, which he does not reject and could not do so reasonably?

Nietzsche describes the *focus* inherent to aesthetic contemplation as an *active*, rather than *passive* engagement with a target of cognition.<sup>245</sup> The artist is *wholly active* in the artistic process. She projects her will and standards onto the target, but due to the value she affords to ‘truth’, ‘objectivity’ and ‘disinterestedness’, she often *misconstrues* her activity as a target *imprinting* or *acting upon* her. We can identify the nuances of the active account of aesthetic contemplation by assessing another component of it, which he calls ‘idealisation’. Analysis of ‘idealisation’ offers a good basis for comparing Schopenhauer and Nietzsche’s accounts of aesthetics. Schopenhauer’s views on the genius in the supplementary essays is useful as a point of departure for the comparison.

For Schopenhauer, geniuses are more susceptible to aesthetic contemplation because they approach things as an impure subject of cognition. Their approach means they are more susceptible to perceiving beauty and sublimity, which incite aesthetic contemplation. What is important for our aims is his phenomenological description of a genius’s activities, which runs as follows:

“Genius, however, consists in a wholly abnormal, actual *excess* of intellect, such as is not required for the service of any will. For this reason, the men of genuine works are a thousand times rarer than the man of deeds. It is just that *abnormal excess* of intellect, by virtue of which it obtains the decided preponderance, emancipates itself from the will, and, forgetful of its origin, is freely active from its own force and elasticity. It is from this that the creations of genius result.” (WRII, 388)

I want to direct our attention to is the conception of the ‘excess’ of the intellect. Elsewhere, he calls it ‘surplus’ (cf. WRII, 377). Compare this ‘excess’ with how he juxtaposes geniuses from practical men and the ‘passionate excitement’ of the former:

“What reasonableness, quiet composure, comprehensive survey, complete certainty and regularity of conduct are shown by the well-equipped normal man in comparison with the now *dreamy* and *brooding* absorption and now *passionate excitement* of the genius, whose inner affliction is the womb of immortal works!” (WRII, 389f)

Schopenhauer’s phenomenology of genius suggests they are ‘passionate’ individuals who have an excess in irritability and excitability. Their passion is matched by their refined and excessive intellect, which (somehow) takes over that passion and then makes them *inclined* to aesthetic contemplation over objective reflection in service to the will.

Nietzsche offers his own phenomenology of genius, which also takes into account its passionate nature. Nevertheless, he describes the ‘passion’ and ‘excesses’ of the genius differently. He argues that what typifies the genius is the state of *Rausch*, which is not a by-product of the agent’s ‘excessive’ intellect that is surplus to the requirements of the will and is somehow liberated from its service to the will. Rather, *Rausch* is synonymous to the act

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<sup>245</sup> For more on the distinction between passivity and activity in Nietzsche’s aesthetics see Young (1992, 119-126), also Soll (1998, 107-115).

of *idealisation* itself. It constitutes aesthetic contemplation proper and what follows from it. Nietzsche does not refer to two distinct states, but the same state as from two perspectives. *Rausch* is what *idealisation* looks like as from the third-person perspective of our body and its drives. Thus, his conception of idealisation is revisionist and it follows from the ‘bridge’, which we discussed previously.

Nietzsche’s conception of *idealisation* or *Rausch* differs from Schopenhauer’s in two central ways. Firstly, he rejects Schopenhauer’s veridical account of the Ideas that conflates aesthetic contemplation with the veracity of a cognition. He achieves this by distinguishing ‘objectivity’ from ‘aesthetic contemplation’ and arguing the latter is fundamentally *creative*. Furthermore, he construes both objectivity and aesthetic contemplation as active and wholly determined by the person herself, albeit their respective ‘activities’ are different. Secondly, he has a different account of what it means to focus wholly on something as we do during aesthetic contemplation. The preconditions of *focusing wholly* on something do not entail passivity, but a different kind of activity. What defines aesthetic contemplation and thereby distinguishes it from objective reflection is the artist’s ‘creativity’ and ‘choice’, according to Nietzsche.

Nietzsche’s description of *Rausch* as ‘idealisation’ in the following passage on the ‘psychology’ of the artist demonstrates his distinct conception of aesthetic contemplation:

“One physiological precondition is indispensable for there to be art or any sort of aesthetic action or vision: *intoxication* [*Rausch*]. Without intoxication to intensify the excitability of the whole machine, there can be no art. The essential thing about intoxication is the feeling of fullness and increasing strength. This feeling makes us release ourselves onto things, we *force* them to accept us, we violate them, - this process is called *idealising*. We can get rid of a prejudice here: contrary to common belief, idealisation does *not* consist in removing or *weeding out things that are small and incidental*. Much more decisive is an enormous drive to *force out* the main features so that everything else disappears in the process.” (*TI*, ‘Skirmishes’, 8; some emphasis is mine)

Notice Nietzsche’s indirect objection to Schopenhauer’s account of the artistic products of aesthetic contemplation, i.e., artwork, which, according to Schopenhauer, “presents things more clearly and characteristically by emphasising the essential and eliminating the inessential” (*WRII*, 370). According to Nietzsche, idealisation is *active* and *creative*. Equally, it accords with the higher explanatory value he places on the body for comprehending an activity of the intellect or mind. In short, idealisation is *synonymous* with the bodily state of *Rausch*, not an effect or a by-product of it. He construes the idealisation of the target inherent to aesthetic contemplation in terms of what occurs in our *whole body*, not what occurs in the ‘mind’ as distinct or as free from the ‘will’.

Furthermore, Nietzsche’s description does not any invite metaphysical implications or considerations: the ‘veracity’ of our cognition is not the issue. The act of idealisation is an activity that results from psychological *and* physiological preconditions. It yields cognition



of the target that urges the contemplator to impose herself on it and so it reflects her activity on it, rather than its activity on her or the target as it is in *itself*:

“Someone in this state has enough fullness to enrich everything: everything he sees, everything he wants, he sees swollen, driven, robust, overloaded with strength. Someone in this state *transforms things* until they reflect his own power, - until they are the *reflexes of his perfection*. This *need* to make perfect is – art. He even finds inherent pleasure in things that he himself is not; in art, people *enjoy themselves as perfection*.” (TI, ‘Skirmishes’, 9; some emphasis is mine)

Ideas do not represent the target’s ideal, but the artist’s ideal. Idealisation or transfiguration mean conforming *it* to *our* reality; we do not conform to *its* reality. We make the target fit *our* standards, values, norms and interests; the broadness of those values etc. depends on the *rank order* of drives and the position of the herd instincts in the order.<sup>246</sup> His assessment of beauty further intimate the previous definition and standpoint:

“People think that the world itself is overflowing with beauty, — *they forget* that they are its cause. They themselves have given the world its beauty — but oh! only a very human, all too human beauty... Fundamentally, humanity is reflected in all things, people find beauty in everything that throws their image back at them: the judgment ‘beautiful’ is the *vanity of their species*... Of course a sceptic might hear a suspicious little whisper in his ear: does the world really become beautiful just because it is seen that way by human beings, of all creatures? People have *humanised* it: that is all. But nothing, absolutely nothing, guarantees that *a human being* is the standard of beauty.” (TI, ‘Skirmishes’, 19)

Compare the above propositions with the following:

“Nothing is beautiful, only people are beautiful: all aesthetics is based on this naïvete, this is its *first* truth. Let us immediately add its second: the only thing ugly is a *degenerating* person, - this defines the realm of aesthetic judgment. - Physiologically, everything ugly weakens and depresses people... His feeling of power, his will to power, his courage, his pride - these sink with ugliness and rise with beauty... In both cases we are *drawing a conclusion*: the instincts are filled to the brink with accumulated premises. Ugliness is understood as a sign and symptom of degeneration... A *hatred* leaps up: what is it people hate when this happens? But there

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<sup>246</sup> Nietzsche has a limited conception of ‘idealisation’, which, we recall, fits with his claims on the limits of ‘knowledge’: “[it] is not the opposition between subject and object which concerns me here; I leave that distinction to those epistemologists who have got tangled up in the snares of grammar (of folk metaphysics). Even less am I concerned with the opposition between ‘thing in itself’ and appearance: for we ‘know’ far too little to even be entitled to *make* that distinction. We simply have no organ for *knowing*, for ‘truth’: we ‘know’ (or believe or imagine) exactly as much as is *useful* to the human herd, to the species: and even what is here called ‘usefulness’ is finally also just a belief, a fiction, and perhaps just that supremely fatal stupidity of which we some day will perish” (GS 354). The previous echo in the famous passage where he details his ‘perspectivism’ (cf. GM III, 12); for more on Nietzsche’s perspectivism and the limits of knowledge see Janaway (2007, 203-213).

is no doubt: the *decline of their type*. They hate out of the deepest instinct of their species; this is a hatred full of shudders, caution, depth, far-sightedness, - it is the most profound hatred there is. Art is *profound* for the sake of this hatred..." (TI, 'Skirmishes', 20)

Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauer's claim that we possess an insight into the target indirectly, i.e., through our first-person experience of willing something. We possess an *interest* that we project onto the target and thus 'anthropomorphise' it. We project how and what *we* will. We cannot use our 'will' as grounds for a concept that indirectly hooks onto the target as it is *in itself* when we are in the state of *Rausch* for two reasons. Firstly, we cannot possibly determine whether or not we got it right. We know the targets of cognition undergo changes, but we cannot possibly know whether or not those changes are 'willed' by it in the same (or in a similar) way as we will something.<sup>247</sup> Secondly, the state of *Rausch* impels us to violate, shape, mold and distort it. The 'Ideas', then, *reflect* our 'ideal', not *its* ideal impressed upon us after we assume some 'passive' or 'receptive' state of mind independent from the body.

Does the above mean that Nietzsche rejects the possibility of 'objectivity' or 'truth'? I will argue that he distinguishes 'objectivity' (i.e., 'objective reflection') from '(aesthetic) contemplation'.<sup>248</sup> Schopenhauer distinguishes 'aesthetic contemplation' from 'objective reflection' by ascribing the latter to the sciences and the former to the aesthetically inspired arts. Nietzsche's account of contemplation and objectivity are strikingly different, however.

Nietzsche attributes 'objectivity' to the sciences<sup>249</sup>, i.e., to so-called 'truly scientific people' or 'ideal scholars':

"Of course: with scholars, the truly scientific people, things might be different – "better" if you will –, with them, there might really be something like *a drive for knowledge*, some independent little clockwork mechanism that, once well wound, ticks bravely away *without* essentially involving the rest of the scholar's drives. For this reason, the scholar's real "interests" usually lie somewhere else entirely, with the family, or earning money, or in politics; in fact, it is almost a matter of indifference whether his little engine is put to work in this or that field of research, and whether the "promising" young worker turns himself into a good philologist or fungus expert or chemist: – it doesn't *signify* anything about him that he becomes one thing or the other. In contrast, there is absolutely nothing impersonal about the philosopher; and in particular his morals bear decided and decisive witness to *who he is* – which means,

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<sup>247</sup> Nietzsche's views on our knowledge of things *in themselves* become more complex once we factor in his rejections of the 'will' and unity of the self-conscious 'I', but the previous are not relevant to the current point.

<sup>248</sup> Nietzsche's term for contemplation, which is distinct from reflection, is the '*vita contemplativa*' (cf. *D* 42), or in his later work, he calls it '*vis contemplativa*' (cf. *GS* 301). There are two noteworthy aspects of this concept. First, he links it to the creativity and delusion that characterises an artist's self-reflection over her creative activity and philosophers' accounts of artistic creativity. Second, he distinguishes it from objectivity. I will focus on the latter aspect here. There is room for an account of this concept using the conceptual link, which would be similar in approach to the pale criminal, but it would send me far afield from the central focus of the chapter and thesis.

<sup>249</sup> For an illuminating reading of Nietzsche's views on science and objectivity see Gemes (2006). See likewise Clark (1998) for a detailed discussion on Schopenhauer's influence in Nietzsche's views on knowledge and truth.

in what order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand with respect to each other.” (BGE 6; some emphasis is mine)

Recall, that Schopenhauer argues that the objectivity of the sciences is not as meaningful or ‘pure’ as the objectivity of aesthetic contemplation. Nietzsche’s conception of objectivity is more limited. An agent can have a ‘drive for knowledge’ and so be ‘objective’ (i.e., a truth-seeker), but her objectivity will be limited to her area of inquiry and expertise, which she construes as her ‘profession’. Moreover, her drive for knowledge and thus her ‘profession’ do not determine her ‘real interests’. The truth-seeker has other areas of her life wherein she applies her efforts and wherein we find her ‘real interests’. These interests underpin and so, at least, partake in *driving* her pursuit for knowledge and her profession; they co-determine the limits of her objectivity. Nietzsche’s example of these real interests are ‘family, money or politics’. What is fundamental, however, is that they *indirectly* relate to her objectivity by partaking in *driving* her to be ‘a good philologist or fungus expert or chemist’ and so on. In other words, her profession does not signify anything about her personally, i.e., about her ‘real interests’. He construes her ‘profession’ and ‘objectivity’ as the activity of a ‘worker’, something she does ‘for a living’, so to speak.

We can infer from Nietzsche’s account that a truth-seeker’s real interests *can distort* her objectivity, because they have *motivational priority*. They are higher in her rank order of drives (and values) or can be at some moment in time. What is fundamental to his account of objectivity, however, is that it rejects the proposition that a truth-seeker can be *wholly* or *only* ‘objective’, i.e., what drives her necessarily transcends all other interests. Objectivity does not represent drives *wholly* independent from other drives. Her other drives continue to exert an influence. Accordingly, the proposition that a truth-seeker has no (other) interests except in the target of cognition itself, and thus in cognising it as it is *in itself*, is misleading. Nevertheless, he accepts a version of Schopenhauer’s disinterested spectator, but construes this spectator without the metaphysical baggage of Schopenhauer’s account.

We can compare the above with the following passage on the ‘drive for knowledge’ where, apparently, her real interests do *not* distort her objectivity, which is the closest<sup>250</sup> a truth-seeker can get to an independent ‘drive for knowledge’:

“The objective man who no longer swears or complains like the pessimist does, the *ideal* scholar who expresses the *scientific instinct* as it finally blossoms and blooms all the way (after things have gone partly or wholly wrong a thousand times over) – he is certainly one of the most expensive tools there is: but he belongs in the hands of someone more powerful. He is only a tool, we will say: he is a *mirror*, – he is not an “*end in himself*.” The objective man is really a mirror: he is used to subordinating

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<sup>250</sup> I say closest because, as we will see under closer scrutiny and analysis, the truth-seeker Nietzsche describes still possesses ‘real interests’, but they are not as pronounced and obvious as other individuals: “[h]e does not command; and neither does he destroy. “*Je ne méprise presque rien* [I despise *almost* nothing],” they say with Leibniz: *that presque should not be overlooked or underestimated*...he is a tool, a piece of slave (although, without a doubt, the most sublime type of slave) but *nothing in himself*, – *presque rien*” (BGE 207; some emphasis is mine).

himself in front of anything that wants to be known, without any other pleasure than that of knowing, of “mirroring forth” ... The objective person is a tool, an expensive measuring instrument and piece of mirror art that is easily injured and spoiled and should be honored and protected; but he is not a goal, not a departure or a fresh start, he is not the sort of complementary person in which the *rest* of existence justifies itself. He is not a conclusion – and still less a beginning, begetter or first cause; there is nothing tough, powerful or self-supporting that wants to dominate.” (BGE 207; some emphasis is mine)

A truth-seeker can be objective with respect to some particular inquiry and area of expertise, which characterises her profession, but not with respect to her life, which underpins and can sometimes distort her professional reasons and judgments. Her *interest* in the ‘profession’ may be unrelated to her *real interests*, but her real interests *can* intervene. If her real interests no longer intervene, for whatever reason, then she can be (seemingly) *wholly objective*; she becomes a mirror, reflecting the influence of something or someone else, possibly even the target’s influence. The reasons why a truth-seeker’s *real interests* no longer intervene is not a result of her ‘intellect’ being excessive or surplus to the will’s requirements, however. On the contrary, he provides the following reasons for the above case: ‘things have gone partly or wholly wrong a thousand times over’ with *her*, meaning in her personal life wherein we find her real interests. In the same passage, he explains what he means by the previous using his own psychological description or survey of the truth-seeker’s character and approach to personal matters, which merits quoting in full:

“He waits until something comes along and then spreads himself gently towards it, so that even light footsteps and the passing by of a ghostly being are not lost on his surface and skin. He has so thoroughly become a passageway and reflection of strange shapes and events, that whatever is left in him of a “person” strikes him as accidental, often arbitrary, and still more often as disruptive. It takes an effort for him to think back on “himself,” and he is not infrequently mistaken when he does. He easily confuses himself with others, he is wrong about his own basic needs, and this is the only respect in which he is crude and careless. Maybe his health is making him suffer, or the pettiness and provincial airs of a wife or a friend, or the lack of companions and company, – all right then, he makes himself think about his sufferings: but to no avail! His thoughts have already wandered off, towards *more general* issues, and by the next day he does not know how to help himself any more than he knew the day before. He has lost any serious engagement with the issue as well as the time to spend on it: he is cheerful, *not* for lack of needs but for lack of hands to grasp *his* neediness. The obliging manner in which he typically approaches things and experiences, the sunny and natural hospitality with which he accepts everything that comes at him, his type of thoughtless goodwill, of dangerous lack of concern for Yeses and Noes: oh, there are plenty of times when he has to pay for these virtues of his! – and being human, he all too easily becomes the *caput mortuum* [worthless residue] of these virtues.” (BGE 207)

The above examination of the truth-seeker implies that what (sometimes) *drives* her to be *objective* and thus leave aside her ‘real interests’ is her personal ‘problems’, ‘failures’ or ‘ill-health’, namely, a block (or a deficiency with respect) to realising her personal ends. What *motivates* her to leave aside her real interests is that she becomes ‘sick to death’ (cf. *BGE* 207) with them. What drives her objectivity in this instance, i.e., what makes her a ‘tool’, ‘piece of slave’, ‘mirror’ etc., is her ‘neediness’ against the backdrop of her failure to realise and cater to her ‘real interests’. She leaves aside her real interests, because she struggles to cater to them, but they do not thereby stop exerting their influence on her. Their influence continues, albeit in ever more subtle ways. What *drives* her to pursue objectivity and thereby to be a ‘tool’ or ‘mirror’ of something more powerful than her are *her needs themselves*. She uses her objectivity as a means to fulfil her needs through the more powerful individuals whose influence on her she mirrors and in whose power she indirectly partakes with the aim of realising her real interests.

Nevertheless, we can also argue that a truth-seeker need not *only* leave aside her real interests because of personal ‘problems’, ‘failures’ etc., i.e., as a distracting (or palliative) exercise or attempt to invite another, more powerful individual to ‘help’ with her problems. We can imagine individuals—as Nietzsche does with some artists and ideal philosophers—that are ‘sovereign’ and thus approach the truth and the arts from their sovereignty. These sovereign individuals deal effectively with their ‘real interests’ by harmonising and unifying them under a single project. Thus, they succeed in fulfilling their real interests and therefrom apply themselves to becoming experts and become wholly objective. In other words, we can imagine a truth-seeker whose ‘objectivity’ is an achievement that reflects her success in her life and so with respect to her real interests, not the result of failure or an alternative way of satisfying them.<sup>251</sup>

We can be objective and truth-seekers, but our objectivity and truth-seeking depend on our failures or successes with respect to our real interests or our personal life. We can be objective, but only if we meet certain conditions with respect to our life, for Nietzsche. Truth is an achievement that takes into account the truth-seeker’s other drives and their influence over her truth-seeking activity and its ‘objectivity’. Consequently, he revises objectivity by taking into account the difficulties that arise from the pursuit of genuine or pure objectivity. The high value we afford to objectivity can distort our self-image by leading us to rationalise our activities in accordance with the high value we ascribe to the truth and so at the expense of the truth we aim to obtain. Why does Nietzsche not simply defend a *limited* version of

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<sup>251</sup> What is particularly noteworthy about Nietzsche’s passage on the truth-seeker who is motivated by ‘personal failure’, is that she is a tool influenced by ‘powerful individual(s)’ and ‘other interests’ or a mirror reflecting more powerful individuals and other interests before whom she is ‘willing’, ‘obliging’, ‘subordinate’ etc. with respect to the target of her cognition. The previous characterises Nietzsche’s rejection of ‘pure objectivity’ and reflects his perspectivism (cf. *GM III*, 12). His reasons for why she is ‘willing’ towards something external from her and so a more powerful individual is that via her ‘willingness’ she hopes to realise her real interests *indirectly*. She hopes to utilise the powerful individual towards her personal ends; at least, this is how her real interests partake in her objectivity and seek to preserve their *motivational* priority. There are ways to relate the previous account to the conceptual link, but I will leave this relationship aside for now.

‘objectivity’ as apt for describing an equally limited version of aesthetic contemplation? Why does he not defend a conception that removes metaphysical or veridical baggage? Why does he argue that ‘aesthetic contemplation’ is fundamentally *not* ‘disinterested’, even in the limited sense? I will suggest an answer by distinguishing between ‘objective reflection’ and ‘aesthetic contemplation’. He rejects the application of objectivity to aesthetics and the arts. An aesthetically inspired artist is *not* ‘objective’ in any sense, for Nietzsche. Her claims to objectivity are, at best, a ‘delusion’ *driven* by the high value her community ascribes to ‘truth’ or its corresponding professions.

We can compare the products of *Rausch* to the ‘Ideas’. What Schopenhauer describes is not ‘aesthetic contemplation’ or a precondition of aesthetics and the arts, according to Nietzsche. Schopenhauer describes ‘objectivity’ in the sciences and then *wrongly* applies it to aesthetics and the arts to explain why we (should) value aesthetics and the arts as highly as we do the sciences. Nietzsche explains Schopenhauer’s account as merely reflecting the high value that he ascribes to truth, i.e., his ‘will to truth’, not the value of aesthetics and the arts. The idealisation inherent to aesthetics and the arts differs from the ‘ideal’ objectivity of scientific people or genuine scholars. What *drives* the philosopher, moralist and priest, is not *synonymous* with what drives the truth-seeker and artist; each relates differently to their target of their cognition.

Nietzsche conceives of *Rausch* as a precondition for aesthetics and the arts, which, he claims, invokes a distinct kind of activity to the disinterestedness Schopenhauer defends:

“Someone in this state has enough fullness to enrich everything: everything he sees, everything he wants, he sees swollen, driven, robust, overloaded with strength. Someone in this state *transforms* things until they *reflect his own power*, - until they are the reflexes of his perfection. This *need* to make perfect is - art. He even finds inherent pleasure in things that he himself is not; in art, people enjoy themselves as perfection.” (*TI*, ‘Skirmishes’, 9; some emphasis is mine)<sup>252</sup>

The product of our ‘need’ to make ‘perfect’ reflects *wholly us*, not *the target*. This does not mean he rejects the possibility of objective reflection, rather his proposition is that the only conception of ‘perfection’ we have, or we can possibly have, which *drives* our aesthetic and artistic creativity, is our perfection as an individual, a herd or species. What we perceive as ‘perfect’, ‘beautiful’ or ‘ideal’ is a reflection of *our* ‘perfection’, *our* ‘beauty’ and *our* ‘ideal’.

We can likewise imagine a non-aesthetic or ‘anti-artistic’ perspective on the target of cognition and its correlate ‘condition’ (in us), however. This perspective and its correlate condition opposes the *need* to make perfect, but it apparently also *stems from* that *need* itself. We can apprehend the previous as what he calls the ‘self-sublimation’ of the ‘need to make perfect’, which he describes in the following way:

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<sup>252</sup> Nietzsche’s proposition that we have a *need to make perfect* has implications with respect to the will-body identity and so we require an account of it that attune to Nietzsche’s *Weltanschauung*. The conceptual link can be useful in that regard; ‘consciousness’, the ‘herd perspective’ and ‘bad conscience’ are essential ingredients of it. I decided to sideline that approach and reading here due to my constraints.

“We could imagine the *opposite condition, a specific anti-artistry of the instinct*, - a way of being that impoverishes all things, dilutes them, makes them waste away. And in fact, history presents an abundance of anti-artists like this, the starvation victims of life who necessarily have to snatch things up, drain them dry, and make them *thinner*. This is the case with genuine Christians like Pascal: a Christian who is also an artist *just does not happen*... Don't try to be clever and throw Raphael or some other homoeopathic nineteenth-century Christian at me as a counter-example: Raphael said yes, Raphael *did* yes, which means that Raphael was no Christian...” (TI, ‘Skirmishes’, 9; some emphasis is mine)

The proposition, then, is that the artistic ‘instinct’ can discharge as its opposite, in certain cases; one’s *need* to make perfect can appear in *some* as the action of rendering *imperfect*. These individuals likely ‘construe’ the products of their particular expression of the need to make perfect *as perfect* or as a representation of perfection. Therefore, *Rausch* can invoke a different, non-aesthetic and non-artistic response in *some* individuals, but what is important for our purposes is that whatever it does invoke is unrelated to the target as it is *in itself*.

In Nietzsche’s view, Schopenhauer’s *passive* account of aesthetic contemplation and Wagner’s later works are an example of the previous expression of the need to make perfect appearing as the action of making imperfect. The following passage shows his views on Schopenhauer and Wagner’s aesthetics:

“Every art, every philosophy can be considered a cure and aid in the service of growing or declining life: it always presupposes suffering and sufferers. But there are two types of sufferers: first, those who suffer from a *superabundance* of life - they want a Dionysian art as well as a tragic outlook and insight into life - then, those who suffer from an *impoverishment* of life and demand quiet, stillness, calm seas *or else* intoxication, paroxysm, stupor from art and philosophy. Revenge against life itself - the most voluptuous type of intoxication for people who are impoverished in this way! . . . Wagner as well as Schopenhauer responds to the dual need of the latter type - they negate life, they slander it, and this makes them my antipodes.” (NCW, ‘Antipodes’, 271; see also GS 370)<sup>253</sup>

It is pertinent to ask why, for Nietzsche, the same ‘instinct’, ‘need’ or ‘suffering’ produces such distinct and opposed effects, cognitions, activities and products in different people. I cannot suggest an answer here because it requires me to introduce the conceptual link, but an answer to it will have to appeal to his drive psychology and to the individual’s rank order of drives.

Nietzsche’s views on ‘spirituality’ gives us further insight into his phenomenological account of contemplation. Likewise, it gives us an insight into his normative account of the genuine artist and ideal philosopher. I read ‘spirituality’ as an extension of ‘spiritualisation’,

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<sup>253</sup> These views on the dual-aspect of the effects of intoxication are not limited to his later work; we find them also in earlier work. See, for example: (D 50, 52, 188, 269, 329; GS 86, 89, 370).

but likewise as linked to what he calls ‘transfiguration’, ‘sublimation’ etc.; he describes it as follows:

“Learning to *see*—getting your eyes used to calm, to patience, to letting things come to you; postponing judgment, learning to encompass and take stock of an individual case from all sides. This is the *first* preliminary schooling for *spirituality*: *not* to react immediately to a stimulus, but instead to take control of the inhibiting, excluding instincts. Learning to *see*, as I understand it, is close to what an unphilosophical way of speaking calls a strong will: the essential thing here is precisely *not* ‘to will’, to be *able* to suspend the decision... A practical application of having learned to see: your learning process *in general* becomes slow, mistrustful, reluctant. You let foreign things, *new* things of every type, come towards you while assuming an initial air of calm hostility, — you pull your hand away from them. (*TI*, ‘Germans’, 6; some emphasis is mine)

He makes a subtle phenomenological distinction between Schopenhauer’s view of aesthetic contemplation and his own, by replacing ‘suspension of the will’, which Schopenhauer construes as the defining feature of aesthetic contemplation, with *self-control*. We initially suspend the urge to act (decide, will etc.) such that we can reflect on and evaluate the target from multiple perspectives, *not* to determine what the target is *in itself*. We permit various affects in relation to it while suspending our urge to act.<sup>254</sup> Each *affect* represents multiple interests, drives and drive relations; it represents a different *rank order of drives*, which we can have in relation to something and thus the different actions we can take upon it. What is aesthetic about our contemplation is *Rausch* (or act of idealisation) and the creativity that is its characteristic feature, however. In other words, it is what we choose as a result of this contemplation through self-control, which we then bring together in an artwork.

Nietzsche’s account of aesthetic contemplation is thus distinctive in two key ways. Firstly, ‘self-control’ does not *necessarily* render us *inactive*, *wholly receptive* or *yielding* in relation to the target of cognition. We do not demonstrate a *willingness* in relation to it such that we project willing on it and *identify* with it. Instead, we are *active* in suspending or in suppressing a decision and action, just as we are active in permitting our affects in relation to it and finally *choosing* one of those affects. This suspension of actions leads to what we may describe as the bodily swelling that is *Rausch*. Secondly, self-control during aesthetic contemplation is unrelated to the target’s veracity, but rather aims for creativity. It does *not* represent a veridical drive, but a creative drive that seeks to imprint itself upon things such that they more fully reflect the agent’s perfection. We *control* our urges and our actions for a representation that fits with as many interests and drives as possible before we make the decision and act upon it. Thus, if we remove the metaphysical baggage of Schopenhauer’s

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<sup>254</sup> See likewise: “by *spirit* I mean caution, patience, cunning, disguise, great self-control, and everything involved in mimicry (which includes much of what is called virtue)” (*TI*, ‘Skirmishes’, 14; my own emphasis).



account and the veridical implications he commits to, then we are left with something like the following description:

“Every characteristic absence of spirituality, every piece of common vulgarity, is due to an inability to resist a stimulus—you *have* to react, you follow every impulse. In many cases this sort of compulsion is already a pathology, a decline, a symptom of exhaustion,—almost everything that is crudely and unphilosophically designated a ‘vice’ is really just this physiological inability *not* to react. ...To keep all your doors wide open, to *lie on your stomach, prone and servile* before every little fact, to be constantly poised and ready to put yourself into — *plunge yourself into* — other things, in short, to espouse the *famous modern ‘objectivity’* — all this is in bad taste, it is *ignobility par excellence.*” (TI, ‘Germans’, 6; some emphasis is mine)

The key feature of disinterestedness stripped of its veridical implications is our inability to resist a stimulus and so our becoming ‘willing’ with respect to the target *driven by* and thus *based on* (as we saw above) the urge to act, i.e., our ‘real interests’. The previous reveals that we have not yet mastered our real interests enough to enable us to approach something genuinely objectively, in Nietzsche’s sense. We ‘yield’ to stimulation and our affections in relation to it. He construes the latter as immediate reactions of acknowledgement before the target as before something *wholly significant*. We exhibit a so-called *servile* stance towards it, which Nietzsche bemoans in Schopenhauer’s account.

We can link his objection to passive accounts with the following passage on artistic inspiration that offers insight into Nietzsche’s phenomenology of aesthetic contemplation. Likewise, it offers insight into the reasons why he rejects their application in aesthetics and the arts:

“Every artist knows how far removed this *feeling of letting go* is from his “most natural” state, the free ordering, placing, disposing and shaping in the moment of “inspiration” – he knows how strictly and subtly he obeys thousands of laws at this very moment, laws that defy conceptual formulation precisely because of their hardness and determinateness (compared with these laws, there is something floundering, multiple, and ambiguous about even the most solid concept –).” (BGE 188; my own emphasis)

The ‘feeling of letting go’ links to his phenomenological description of what he calls the ‘famous modern objectivity’, which he associates with Schopenhauerian disinterestedness. The essential feature of passive accounts of aesthetic contemplation is the representation of aesthetic contemplators as struggling with self-control, i.e., to suspend the will long enough to permit multiple affects and corresponding interests to offer different perspectives on the target. The contemplator succumbs to its stimulation; she struggles to control herself and so *yields* to it so that she can will something *indirectly* through it and at *its* expense. The active account of aesthetic contemplation that Nietzsche defends does not *yield* to the target in the previous way, or prematurely to any particular affect in relation to it. We allow many affects to represent their various perspectives; we ensure that our urge to act swells to the point of

*Rausch*, where we can no longer contain it.<sup>255</sup> In the latter and final moment, we *choose* a perspective and thus *discharge* our actions in the production of an artwork. We fix upon a rank order of drives and thus produce an artwork saturated by *that* rank order. In aesthetic contemplation, the ‘need to make perfect or idealise’, ‘to imprint upon something’ are at the forefront of that rank order, which we may construe as an aesthetic or artistic rank order.

The self-control that is a precondition of ‘contemplation’ in Nietzsche’s view has a striking resemblance to his perspectivism and thus his views on ‘future objectivity’:

“Finally, as knowers, let us not be ungrateful towards such resolute reversals of familiar perspectives and valuations with which the mind has raged against itself for far too long, apparently to wicked and useless effect: to see differently, and to *want* to see differently to that degree, is no small discipline and preparation of the intellect for its future ‘objectivity’... There is *only* a perspectival seeing, *only* a perspectival ‘knowing’; the *more* affects we are able to put into words about a thing, the *more* eyes, various eyes we are able to use for the same thing, the more complete will be our ‘concept’ of the thing, our ‘objectivity’.” (*GM III*, 12)

The above implies that Nietzsche has a descriptive and normative account of objectivity, which I cannot assess at length. Nonetheless, I think we can construe this future ‘objectivity’ as the truth-seeker’s ‘achievement’ with respect to her personal life. In other words, a person need not aspire to objectivity solely by virtue of some failure with respect to her personal life, but as an expression of self-mastery and self-control. Something analogous is the case with the aesthetically inspired artist. Nietzsche’s normative account of the truth-seeker and the artist leave aside her personal life and real interests, but only after having *mastered* them, i.e., unified or harmonised them.

In sum, Nietzsche’s accounts of objectivity and aesthetic contemplation have three components that fundamentally deviate from Schopenhauer. First, aesthetic contemplators and truth-seekers are wholly active before, during and after their aesthetic contemplation or objective reflection. Second, we should comprehend an artist’s activity in terms of the *whole* body and her drives, rather than as an activity of her ‘mind’ servicing exclusively the target of cognition as opposed to her own will, or as one drive operating independently from other drives. In short, his views accord with the will-body identity and the explanatory value of the body for demystifying seemingly ‘miraculous’ activities, phenomena and achievements of the mind independent from it. Third, we should not conflate an artist’s creativity with her aiming for a veracious representation of the target in her artworks; the two are unrelated. Our ‘focusing’ on the target of cognition represents an activity and so relations between *our* drives and interests, not the target’s effect on us. Even the so-called ‘drive for knowledge’ of the truth-seeker relates to her other drives; the success of her drive for knowledge depends on the success or failure with respect to her so-called ‘real interests’.

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<sup>255</sup> With respect to what counts as ‘premature’ here, consider Nietzsche’s description of the artist and philosopher as ‘pregnant’ (cf. *GM III*, 4 & 8).

In the next and final chapter, I will assess the relationship between the ascetic ideal and the morality of *Mitleid*. I will also assess the relationship between the arts, the sciences and morality when I inquire into Nietzsche's alternative to the ascetic ideal.

## 2.13 The Morality of *Mitleid* and the Ascetic Ideal

My focus in the current chapter will be on defending two central propositions to Nietzsche's criticism of *Mitleid*<sup>256</sup>. These propositions show how he conceives of *Mitleid*'s relationship to the 'ascetic ideal' and why he argues it signifies a "great danger to mankind" (*GM Pref.*, 5). I argue that Nietzsche's criticisms aim at the 'morality' of *Mitleid* or at construing *Mitleid* and its cognates, i.e., self-denial, self-sacrifice etc., as 'values *as such*'.<sup>257</sup> I will compare his approach to morality with Schopenhauer's approach, because I think the underlying aspect of his criticism of *Mitleid* aims at the extraordinary high value Schopenhauer ascribed to it.

Schopenhauer construes morality as something we cannot criticise without implying an immoral or morally worthless standpoint from which we enact our criticism. We can only *ground* morality by explaining its relationship to other, non-moral actions. He assesses what *drives* those actions we deem to be morally worthy without any doubt, which he argues are actions of freely willed justice and genuine loving kindness. *Mitleid* is the mainspring or the source of these actions. Furthermore, *Mitleid* is possible only for individuals that have seen through the *PI*, which allows them to overcome egoism and project their will-body identity on a target of cognition, perceive it as a willing, striving etc. thing and finally identify with it before acting on its behalf for its sake.

Nietzsche rejects theories arguing that morality is settled or that we can only ground moral values, rather than criticise them. Moreover, he rejects the assertion that there is some metaphysical ground for a morality or moral value. A morality or moral value is one among many others in history, which does not mean that his propositions are not exempt from any metaphysical implications. Rather, he strives to make his propositions consistent with what we may construe as 'moral pluralism' as from a historical point of view. His account implies a metaphysical standpoint, but he rejects those who appeal to propositions with no objective representation. Recall that he rejects the appeal to the 'causal efficacy' of 'things' we cannot perceive—such as, the 'self-conscious 'I'' or 'incorporeal soul'—to explain phenomena like

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<sup>256</sup> For an insight into the debate on Nietzsche's use of *Mitleid* as juxtaposed to Schopenhauer's use see Cartwright (1988), Leiter (2002, 56-8); for more on the distinction between pity and compassion in Nietzsche see von Tevenar (2007).

<sup>257</sup> We can translate '*Mitleid*' as 'compassion' or 'pity' in English, but I decided to leave it untranslated to avoid a debate over whether Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are talking past each other, because they are addressing two different emotions, attitudes and their corresponding actions. Whether we construe *Mitleid* as 'pity' or 'compassion' is only partially relevant to the point I aim to make, because I think Nietzsche would make similar arguments about anything we construe as 'valuable *as such*'.

‘selfhood’, ‘responsibility’ and ‘morality’. He offers a revisionist, historical account of the latter, which aims to be consistent with immanence and his view of ontological monism.

Nietzsche’s view of morality is genealogical; it arises from contractual relationships, which, in turn, emerge from command-obedience relationships premised on strength and violence. The infliction of pain characterising command-obedience relationships, over time, turns into a *memory* of inflicted pain, which he explains via the process of ‘internalisation’. The *memory* of inflicted pain *motivates* obedience to customs, obligations etc., but it likewise *explains* how contractual relationships emerge out of command-obedience relationships that are premised on strength and violence. The recurrence of violence inherent to the command-obedience relationships that created and preserved the community *entrenches* a memory of pain associated with disobeying a command. Thus, the memory of pain underpins obedience *without* violence and so without the direct intervention from the commanding individual or group. This obedience without direct intervention underpins contractual relationships. Thus, morality is a tacit contract represented in the actions we undertake as conditions for living within a particular community without the *need* for a command. We can call these our ‘herd actions’, for brevity and to adhere to Nietzsche’s lexicon. Herd actions represent the moral values of a particular community, which are context-dependent and can change according to the political state of affairs in that community.

In sum, for Schopenhauer, morality stems from the mainspring of *Mitleid* that we can access after we see through the *PI* using the will-body identity. Conversely, for Nietzsche, it is the *internalisation* of command-obedience relationships that then produces contractual relationships. Morality is a tacit contract of the community, which leads members to agree upon certain values and norms on pain of punishment (or the *memory* of punishment). The morality of *Mitleid* is one of many in history, but also one of many possible future moralities. Essentially, a particular morality reflects a community’s political state of affairs and *its* rank order of values, norms and, by extension, its ‘herd’ actions.

Using the above differences between the two, I will clarify Nietzsche’s objections to ‘*Mitleid*’ and its relationship to the ‘ascetic ideal’. I will suggest two propositions that typify these objections. Finally, I will use these propositions to argue that his objections to *Mitleid* aim at something other than *Mitleid* itself.

The first proposition is that Nietzsche distinguishes *Mitleid* the emotion (or attitude) aimed at others’ suffering and its corresponding action(s) from what he calls the ‘morality’ (or value) of *Mitleid*. He does not object to *Mitleid* itself or its ‘value’ in some circumstances, but, in fact, promotes it. See, for example, the following:

“Good-naturedness, friendliness, politeness of the heart are never-failing emanations of the unegoistic drive and have played a far greater role in the construction of culture than those much more celebrated expressions of it called pity [*Mitleid*], compassion

[*Barmherzigkeit*] and self-sacrifice. But usually they are neglected and undervalued...” (*HHI* 49)<sup>258</sup>

Notice that he focuses on the ‘value’ or the ‘neglect’ of *Mitleid* and its cognates. Notice also that he construes *Mitleid* and its cognates as activities or expressions of an ‘unegoistic drive’. The implication is that we can variously express this unegoistic drive, but also differently evaluate these various expressions. Moreover, we may construe these ‘various expressions’ as representations of power-relations between drives. They represent how drives fix into a *rank order* and engender some action or perspective. Consequently, how we express *Mitleid* represents its position in the rank order of drives, i.e., how they fix in relation to something. Compare the above with the following passage, which demonstrates that he is sympathetic to how *some* individuals express *Mitleid* and so how it features in *their* rank order:

“...a man who is naturally *master*, – if a man like this has pity [*Mitleid*], well then! *this* pity is worth something! But what good is the pity of the *sufferer*! Or particularly, the pity of *those who preach* it!” (*BGE* 293; some emphasis is mine)

We can compare the above with the following objection and corresponding warning he gives over what he calls the ‘*thirst* for *Mitleid*’:

“Observe children who weep and wail in order that they shall be pitied, and therefore wait for the moment when their condition will be noticed; live among invalids and the mentally afflicted and ask yourself whether their eloquent moaning and complaining, their displaying of misfortune, does not fundamentally have the objective of hurting those who are with them: the pity [*Mitleid*] which these then express is a consolation for the weak and suffering, inasmuch as it shows them that, all their weakness notwithstanding, they possess at any rate one power: the power to hurt. In this feeling of superiority of which the manifestation of pity makes him conscious, the unfortunate man gains a sort of pleasure; in the conceit of his imagination he is still of sufficient importance to cause affliction in the world. The thirst for pity is thus a thirst for self-enjoyment, and that at the expense of one’s fellow men; it displays man in the whole ruthlessness of his own dear self...” (*HHI* 50)

The difference between *Mitleid* itself and the so-called *thirst* for *Mitleid* is how it relates to other drives in the rank order. The drive in reference to the above passage that *Mitleid* clearly relates to is the ‘drive to overpower’ or ‘inflict pain on’ someone. Seemingly, by describing the different, objectionable and commendable expressions of *Mitleid*, Nietzsche focuses on the ‘value’ of *Mitleid* and thus its position in the ‘rank order’ of values and drives, not on its expression *as such* or on *Mitleid* itself, so to speak.

Nietzsche is not concerned with *Mitleid* itself, i.e., with acting for another’s welfare *as such*. The following passage reflects a similar concern over *Mitleid*’s position in the rank order of drives and values, not *Mitleid* itself:

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<sup>258</sup> We can also translate ‘*Barmherzigkeit*’ as ‘mercy’.

“Hedonism, pessimism, utilitarianism, eudamonianism: these are all ways of thinking that measure the value of things according to *pleasure* and *pain*, which is to say according to incidental states and trivialities. They are all foreground ways of thinking and naivetés, and nobody who is conscious of both *formative* powers and an artist’s conscience will fail to regard them with scorn as well as pity... *Our* pity is a higher, more far-sighted pity: – we see how humanity is becoming smaller, how *you* are making it smaller! – and there are moments when we look on *your* pity with indescribable alarm, when we fight this pity –, when we find your seriousness more dangerous than any sort of thoughtlessness... And that *your* pity is aimed at the “creature in humans,” at what needs to be molded, broken, forged, torn, burnt, seared and purified, – at what necessarily needs to *suffer* and *should* suffer? And *our* pity – don’t you realise who our *inverted* pity is aimed at when it fights against your pity as the worst of all pampering and weaknesses? – Pity *against* pity, then! [*Mitleid also gegen Mitleid!*] – But to say it again: there are problems that are higher than any problems of pleasure, pain, or pity; and any philosophy that stops with these is a piece of naiveté.” (BGE 225)

His objections to *Mitleid* aim at our construing it as worthy of pursuit or affording it a ‘high value’, so to speak.<sup>259</sup> How *Mitleid* relates to *other* drives reflects the high (or the low) value we afford to it and its corresponding actions by comparison to and thus to the disadvantage (or the benefit) of *other* drives and actions. Accordingly, his criticisms aim at the ‘morality’ that we construct from *Mitleid*, i.e., those actions we deem permissible or impermissible as a *trade-off* for communal life, not at *Mitleid* itself.

The second proposition is that *Mitleid* relates to the ‘ascetic ideal’ if and only if we evaluate it as ‘something to aspire to’, i.e., if we construe it as an ‘ideal’, which he construes as *one goal* or *will*. I will suggest that *Mitleid* itself (the emotion, attitude and corresponding actions) does not relate to the ascetic ideal and cannot possibly do so of its own accord. The ‘value’ we afford it, however, which is represented in the morality of *Mitleid*, does relate to it. To show the previous relation, I will assess what typifies the ascetic ideal.

The key characteristic of the ‘ascetic ideal’ is that the values and actions it champions do not permit evaluation. Simon May offers a clear and illuminating account of the previous in the following passage:

“The value-hierarchy of the ascetic conceptual form differs from ordinary rankings of values in two ways. First, the ascetic form structures one’s *whole* world—ethical, religious, aesthetic, and so on—and is therefore the axis on which all other values must be situated. To that extent, the hierarchy is regarded as fixed and sometimes, as we will see, as unconditioned. Second, in ascetic thought, the lower value-domain is

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<sup>259</sup> See also the following passages regarding the value of *Mitleid*: (HHI 92 & 103; WS 50).

not simply a lesser or an opposed value, but is *the* thing to be overcome or repudiated if the higher value is to be attained.” (May 1999, 28)

May describes the conceptual structure of the ascetic ideal in terms of what I will read as ‘complete’, which means it does not permit of addition or subtraction and it does not permit of evaluation, because it is that in virtue of which we evaluate anything. Additionally, it is ‘parasitic’ on other structures, values and methods of evaluation; it construes them as lower in rank and strives to utilise them toward its own ends. Is the conceptual structure that May describes limited to the ascetic ideal or is it the structure of *any* ideal, however?

There is an implicit distinction between any ‘ideal’ and the ‘ascetic ideal’, which I will stress for clarity over the scope of May’s definition of the ‘ascetic ideal’. The following passage shows Nietzsche’s use of this distinction:

“The ascetic ideal expresses a will: *where* is the opposing will, in which an *opposing ideal* might express itself? The ascetic ideal has *a goal*, - this being so general that all the interests of human existence appear petty and narrow when measured against it; it inexorably interprets epochs, peoples, man, all with reference to this one goal, it permits of no other interpretation, no other goal, and rejects, denies, affirms, confirms only with reference to *its* interpretation (- and was there ever a system of interpretation more fully thought through?); it does not subject itself to any power, in fact, it believes in its superiority over any power, in its unconditional *superiority of rank* over any other power, - it believes there is nothing on earth of any power that does not first have to receive a meaning, a right to existence, a value from it, as a tool to *its* work, as a way and means to *its* goal, to *one* goal... Where is the *counterpart* to this closed system of will, goal and interpretation? Why is the counterpart *lacking*? ... Where is the *other* ‘one goal’?” (GM III, 23)

Likewise, consider what he claims earlier about ‘ideals’ generally:

““Is an ideal set up or destroyed here?” you might ask me . . . But have you ever asked yourselves properly how costly the setting up of *every* ideal on earth has been? How much reality always had to be vilified and misunderstood in the process, how many lies had to be sanctified, how much conscience had to be troubled, how much ‘god’ had to be sacrificed every time? If a shrine is to be set up, a *shrine has to be destroyed*: that is the law - show me an example where this does not apply! . . .” (GM II, 24)

Notice that the major premise is that ‘every ideal on earth’ has been costly and not only the ascetic ideal. Later in the same passage, he proceeds to describe those costs.

It is unclear if Nietzsche aims to offer another ideal or laying the ground for a future ideal by espousing the characteristics, behaviors and values of those who set up ideals. Yet, the following passage, which merits quoting in full, offers a reason to read him as espousing the latter approach to ideals:

“A reverse experiment should be possible *in principle* - but who has sufficient strength? - by this, I mean an intertwining of bad conscience with *perverse*

inclinations, all those other-worldly aspirations, alien to the senses, the instincts, to nature, to animals, in short all the ideals which up to now have been hostile to life and have defamed the world. To whom should we turn with such hopes and claims today? ... For that purpose, we would need *another* sort of spirit than those we are likely to encounter in this age: spirits who are strengthened by wars and victories, for whom conquest, adventure, danger and even pain have actually become a necessity; they would also need to be acclimatised to thinner air higher up, to winter treks, ice and mountains in every sense, they would need a sort of sublime nastiness [*Bosheit*] itself, a final, very self-assured wilfulness of insight which belongs to great health, in brief and unfortunately, they would need precisely this *great health!* . . . Is this at all possible today? ... But some time, in a stronger age than this mouldy, self-doubting present day, he will have to come to us, the *redeeming* man of great love and contempt, the creative spirit who is pushed out of any position ‘outside’ or ‘beyond’ by his surging strength again and again, whose solitude will be misunderstood by the people as though it were flight *from* reality -: whereas it is just his way of being absorbed, buried and immersed in reality so that from it, when he emerges into the light again, he can return with the *redemption* of this reality: redeem it from the curse which its ideal has placed on it up till now. This man of the future will redeem us, not just from the ideal held up till now, but also from those things *which had to arise from it*, from the great nausea, the will to nothingness, from nihilism, that stroke of midday and of great decision that makes the will free again, which gives earth its purpose and man his hope again, this Antichrist and anti-nihilist, this conqueror of God and of nothingness - *he must come one day...*” (*GM II*, 24)

We cannot infer from the above whether our making the ‘will free again’ implies erecting another ideal in its place or it simply demonstrates his commitment to a pluralism of ideals and to the historical principle that shows that we regularly dispense with old ideals. What is clear, however, is that he seeks the character or individual that will ‘redeem’, i.e., transcend and replace the ascetic ideal, which shows he has his own conception of ‘redemption’. It is not redemption *from* this world and history, as Schopenhauer argues, but redemption *of this* world and *its* history. There is considerable room for debate on the above themes and their distinctions, but I cannot venture into them at length here. I will focus on whether or not we may find in Nietzsche an alternative to the ascetic ideal that shows a clear ethical position.

Some philosophical commentators argue that Nietzsche does suggest another ideal, which they construe as espousing moral or ethical values<sup>260</sup>. I think the previous conclusion

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<sup>260</sup> See, for example, Nussbaum’s (1994) reading of Nietzsche as aiming “to bring about a revival of Stoic values of self-command and self-formation within a post-Christian and post-Romantic context” (Nussbaum 1994, 140). I think we should distinguish between defending a particular set of values—e.g., Stoic values—and championing the conditions under which flourishes the individual or character that *creates* values. The first represents an ‘ideal’, whereas the second represents the preconditions of creativity with respect to ideals (more on this below). I read Nietzsche as aiming for the second and using the first to challenge the morality of *Mitleid* as a prerequisite step to challenging the ascetic ideal and finally for cultivating the individual required to create a new ideal. For reasons I



is premature even if the reasons for making it are substantiated by passages from Nietzsche's work. The above passage I have been analysing implies that he *aims* for another ideal, but it likewise implies that he has not determined what that ideal actually is or whether replacing one ideal with another aptly addresses his concerns over ideals themselves, which have been 'costly'. He leaves us with an ambiguity which poses a conceptual problem. It is unclear if the properties of the ascetic ideal, i.e., completeness and parasitism, represent the conceptual structure of all ideals or strictly the ascetic ideal. Are all ideals complete and parasitic? Do *all* wills entail completeness and parasitism with respect to other and so opposing wills (and-or ideals)?

In the previous chapter, I assessed his conception of 'idealising' something and how *Rausch* features in it, but I did not discuss the conceptual structure of ideals. I believe further insight into *Rausch* using his drive psychology and his use of the concept of 'health' are potential areas for further research into elucidating the opposing ideal and the conceptual structure of all ideals. He does describe the features of the redeeming individual who will be able to transcend the ascetic ideal, however. I will opt for the reading that Nietzsche aims to *cultivate* what he calls the 'spirit' or the 'great health' that will make the 'will free again', presumably free from the ascetic ideal, by overcoming and replacing it. I read his objections to the ascetic ideal as an expression of his attempt to cultivate the agent(s) who will critique, overcome and replace it, rather than offering another ideal. Thus, his approach is facilitating or therapeutic, rather than normative in the moral or ethical sense.

With the above in mind, I will analyse the various ideals he considers as potentially capable of replacing the ascetic ideal in *GM* and the reasons he gives for rejecting them. By doing so, I hope to offer insight into why Nietzsche construes the morality of *Mitleid* as an expression of the ascetic ideal, not of *Mitleid* itself. Finally, I hope to show that his concerns aim at morality *itself*, not any 'particular' morality.

Nietzsche analyses two potential opponents of the ascetic ideal. The first is 'science', which he rejects and argues that in many cases it represents the evolution of the ascetic ideal itself:

"Do not come to me with science when I am looking for the natural antagonist to the ascetic ideal, when I ask: 'Where is the opposing will in which its *opposing ideal* expresses itself?' Science is not nearly independent enough for that, in every respect it first needs a value-ideal, a value-creating power, in whose *service it can believe* in itself, - science itself never creates values. Its relationship to the ascetic ideal is certainly not yet inherently antagonistic; indeed, it is much more the case, in general, that it still represents the driving force in the inner evolution of that ideal." (*GM III*, 25)

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will defend below, it is misleading to argue Nietzsche's championing self-formation and command as his aiming to revive Stoic values and so avow Stoicism. In short, Nietzsche is not defending a Stoic ideal, but utilising Stoic values to challenge the morality of *Mitleid*, under which resides our current, established ideal, i.e., the ascetic ideal. Accordingly, Nietzsche construes Stoic values as instrumental, rather than intrinsic.

The ascription of ‘unconditional’ value to ‘knowledge’ and ‘truth’, which he construes as inherent to science, renders it *vulnerable* to the appeal of the ascetic ideal: it demonstrates the properties of completeness and parasitism that typify the ascetic ideal. He summarises his reasons for claiming that science does not oppose the ascetic ideal as follows:

“[T]he *compulsion* towards it, that unconditional will to truth, is *faith in the ascetic ideal itself*, even if, as an unconscious imperative, make no mistake about it, - it is the faith in a *metaphysical* value, a value *as such of truth* as vouched for and confirmed by that ideal alone (it stands and falls by that ideal).” (*GM III*, 24)

“Both of them, science and the ascetic ideal, are still on the same foundation - I have already explained -; that is to say, both overestimate truth (more correctly: they share the same faith that truth cannot be assessed or criticised), and this makes them both necessarily allies, - so that, if they must be fought, they can only be fought and called into question together. A depreciation of the value of the ascetic ideal inevitably brings about a depreciation of the value of science: one must keep one’s eyes open and prick up one’s ears for this in time!” (*GM III*, 25)<sup>261</sup>

Using his drive psychology, we may comprehend this ‘faith’ in ‘truth’ as another expression of the ascetic ideal. The ‘faith’ in truth shows the ascetic ideal becoming *parasitic* on those drives that correspond to scientific practices and values. The *unconditional* value we ascribe to the ‘truth’ reflects how scientific practices and their correlate drives relate to the ‘herd perspective’ that champions the ‘ascetic ideal’.

Science is also receptive to the ascetic ideal from another angle, however. His reason is that science requires an *ideal*, i.e., a ‘philosophy’, ‘faith’ and-or a ‘will’:

“[T]here is no ‘presuppositionless’ knowledge, the thought of such a thing is unthinkable, paralogical: a philosophy, a ‘faith’ always has to be there first, for knowledge to win from it a direction, a meaning, a limit, a method, a right to exist. (*GM III*, 24)

This ‘need’ for an ideal makes science vulnerable to the ascetic ideal, but, presumably, also open to other ideals. We know that science *driven* by the ascetic ideal *evaluates* ‘truth’ and ‘knowledge’ as highly as an article of faith. Assuming it exists, how will the *opposing* ideal

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<sup>261</sup> Compare this passage with the following: “[w]e see that science, too, rests on a faith; there is simply no ‘presuppositionless’ science. The question whether *truth* is necessary must get an answer in advance, the answer ‘yes’, and moreover this answer must be so firm that it takes the form of the statement, the belief, the conviction: ‘*Nothing is more necessary than truth*; and in relation to it, everything else has only secondary value.’ This unconditional will to truth — what is it? Is it the will not to let oneself be deceived? Is it the will *not to deceive*?...So, the faith in science, which after all undeniably exists, cannot owe its origin to such a calculus of utility; rather it must have originated *in spite of* the fact that the disutility and dangerousness of ‘the will to truth’ or ‘truth at any price’ is proved to it constantly. ‘At any price’: we understand this well enough once we have offered and slaughtered one faith after another on this altar! Consequently, ‘will to truth’ does *not* mean ‘I do not want to let myself be deceived’ but — there is no alternative — ‘I will not deceive, not even myself’; *and with that we stand on moral ground*.” (*GS* 344).

evaluate truth and knowledge? Will it *devalue* them by comparison? His analysis of the other potential opponent to the ascetic ideal answers the previous.

Nietzsche also analyses how ‘art’ relates to the ascetic ideal and whether or not it is in a better place to oppose and replace it. He argues art is ‘closer’ to opposing it, because an artist shows ‘good conscience’ with respect to ‘deception’ and because she sanctifies ‘lies’:

“Art, let me say at the outset, since I shall deal with this at length some day, - art, in which *lying* sanctifies itself and the *will to deception* has good conscience on its side, is much more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than science is: this was sensed instinctively by Plato, the greatest enemy of art Europe has yet produced. Plato *versus* Homer: that is complete, genuine antagonism - on the one hand, the sincerest ‘advocate of the beyond’, the great slanderer of life, on the other hand, its involuntary idolater, the *golden nature*.” (GM III, 25)

Does having a good conscience with respect to ‘deception’ and sanctifying ‘lies’ imply the agent does *not* evaluate ‘truth’ as highly as does science (driven by the ascetic ideal)? I think we may distinguish a ‘lie’ [*Lüge*] or ‘deception’ [*Täuschung*] from ‘falsehood’ [*Unwahrheit*], in the above passage. Truth and falsity constitutes the evaluative framework underpinning scientific discourse; falsehood opposes the truth [*Wahrheit*]. Based on the latter framework, agents can propose something which they *think* or *assume* to be true that turns out to be *false* following further scrutiny and investigation. Whereas a lie or a deception implies the agent is *conscious* of the ‘truth’ or that she is minimally conscious of ‘not possessing the truth’. Seemingly, then, she has an *interest* in *not* uttering the truth that she possesses or she has an *interest* in *not showing* to others that she does *not* possess the truth. She may have an interest in not demonstrating that she possesses it; she may be interested in inspiring a sense of the mysterious about her in other people’s eyes. Accordingly, she can exhibit *self-control* with respect to her drive for ‘knowledge’ and ‘truth’ and their expression through words, actions and-or works. She is able to exhibit this self-control, because the artistic framework differs from that framework which guides scientific practice and discourse; the artistic framework is, in certain respects, superior to the scientific framework.

The relationship between art, science and the ascetic ideal in Nietzsche is much more complex than my current assessment can cover. What seems *prima facie* noteworthy about his evaluation of ‘truth’, however, is that his seeming critique of science and high evaluation of lies and deception do not necessarily contradict or conflict. Espousing lies and deceptions do not necessarily entail devaluing the truth, because lies and deceptions can presuppose we possess the truth or at least knowledge that we do *not* possess it.

Furthermore, Nietzsche’s ascription of various ‘properties’ to truth or his pointing to the various ‘effects’ of truth on truth-seekers shows that our relationship to ‘truth’ is more complex than the simple opposition between truth and falsehood. Possessing the truth relies on the activity of truth-seeking by an agent who is composed of various drives and how they fix upon some activity. The following passage reveals the previous:

“I sincerely hope that the reverse is true, - that these analysts holding a microscope to the soul are actually brave, generous and proud animals, who know how to control their own pleasure and pain and have been taught to sacrifice desirability to truth, *every* truth, even a plain, bitter, ugly, foul, unchristian, immoral truth... Because there are such truths.” (*GM I*, 1)

Notice the various properties he ascribes to truth in the above passage, for example: ‘plain, bitter, ugly, foul, unchristian, immoral’, which shows that the activity of truth-seeking (and so our interest in the truth) is in the trenches with other drives, interests and activities. The value we ascribe to the truth expresses an activity of the drives as a whole. Accordingly, the drive(s) underpinning our truth-seeking forms power-relations with the other drives. There are some truths we have reason *not* to recognise, because of the strength and priority of other drives, interests and values. We can be demotivated in relation to acquiring or to accepting certain truths; we can even be in denial over them.

What is particularly noteworthy about the relationship between science and art is that art does not evaluate ‘falsity’ as *higher than* ‘truth’, but bypasses the evaluative framework inherent to scientific practice and discourse entirely. The arts exercise good conscience with respect to ‘deception’ and ‘lies’, both of which presuppose either that we possess the ‘truth’ or, minimally, we recognise that we do *not* possess it. Art preserves the truth by necessitating its grasp for the interest of better ‘lies’ and ‘deceptions’, i.e., better self-control in respect to engendering mystery, for example. Thus, the arts work with an entirely different evaluative framework than the sciences. They can preserve the value of the ‘truth’ without ascribing to the ascetic ideal where we have to sacrifice *everything* for the truth.

The relation between science and art is thus not mutually exclusive or contradictory, but complimentary. Artists avoid ‘idealising’ the truth, which is what we recognise in those scientists driven by the ascetic ideal, because scientists, according to Nietzsche, require an ideal. Artists have a different relationship to the ‘truth’ and ideals than scientists *driven* by the ascetic ideal, which does *not* necessarily lead them to *devalue* the truth. An artist changes her way of expressing the truth; she utilises lies, deceptions and an ability to invoke mystery in her interlocutors or audience. Accordingly, we should not construe artists as championing falsehoods, but as championing *life* and the creativity and adaptability inherent to it.

Nietzsche’s claim that art is *more fundamentally opposed* to the ascetic ideal than is science is not the same as the claim that art is *the* opposing ideal to the ascetic ideal. Artists are also *susceptible* to the ascetic ideal, according to him:

“Artistic servitude in the service of the ascetic ideal is thus the specific form of artistic *corruption*, unfortunately one of the most common: for nothing is more corruptible than an artist.” (*GM III*, 25)

He offers an insight into this ‘corruptibility’ of artists in his analysis of Wagner’s later work. Wagner’s obsession with Schopenhauer’s philosophy, aesthetic contemplation and the high value he affords to music made him receptive to the ascetic ideal. Schopenhauer construes the musician as having a direct access to the *thing in itself*. He allows musicians to entertain

the self-conception that their practice is closer to the truth than the other artistic genres and practices. Given the morality of the time and its high evaluation of truth, the previous meant that music had the highest possible value and, by extension, so did the musician (cf. *GM III*, 5). He summarises his views on the artist's relationship to the ascetic ideal in the following way:

“So what do ascetic ideals mean? In the case of an artist, we have concluded: *nothing at all!* . . . Or so many things that it is tantamount to nothing! . . . Let us put aside artists for the time being: their position in the world and *against* the world is far from sufficiently independent for their changing valuations *as such* to merit our attention! Down the ages, they have been the valets of a morality or philosophy or religion: quite apart from the fact that they were, unfortunately, often the all-too-glib courtiers of their hangers-on and patrons and sycophants with a nose for old or indeed up-and-coming forces. At the very least, they always need a defender, a support, an already established authority: artists never stand independently, being alone is against their deepest instincts.” (*GM III*, 5)

The ‘changing valuations’ that typifies an artist’s character explains her proneness to the ascetic ideal, but it also explains why she can successfully oppose the ideal, at least in certain moments and some respect. To understand the connection between changing valuations and creativity we should appeal to his drive psychology.

Values correspond to a rank order of drives and thus changing valuations correspond to changes in that rank order. Changing valuations explain the artist’s ‘corruptibility’, but also the possibility of ‘great health’ after corruption has occurred. What he concludes about artists is that we cannot rely on them to oppose and replace the ascetic ideal. However, their ‘creativity’ (and its changing valuations) is a key ingredient of the character that is capable, reliable and who will oppose and replace the ascetic ideal. He construes the artists’ value with respect to overcoming the ascetic ideal in terms of their commitment to life:

“[I]t should seem—and it does seem! —as if life aimed at semblance, i.e. *error, deception, simulation, blinding, self-blinding*, and when life on the largest scale has actually always shown itself to be on the side of the most unscrupulous *polytropoi*...” (*GS* 344; some emphasis is mine)

Their changing valuations makes them more capable of creating new things ‘to will’ and so laying the ground for new ‘ideals’, but without necessarily being able to *enforce* them. To enforce new ideals requires changing the political state of affairs of a community, according to him. Therefore, he values artists highly as from the standpoint of life, because they exhibit behaviours he sees as inherent to successful agents in life. However, they are not sufficiently shielded by their creativity from the thrall of the ascetic ideal.

Nietzsche demonstrates an ambivalence about the role of artists in their opposition to the ascetic ideal, but accepts art’s instrumental role through its creativity and the artist’s proneness to changing valuations. Creativity is instrumental to overcoming the ascetic ideal, but insufficient for replacing it. He does not suggest a ‘fundamental opponent’ to the ascetic

ideal. The closest opponent I could identify is a description of those individuals tasked with creating, expressing and defending this opposing ideal, which comes as a Nietzschean plea. Nevertheless, regarding the relationship between *Mitleid* and the ascetic ideal, his analysis shows that the ascetic ideal infringes upon *Mitleid*, its cognates and actions under the banner of ‘morality’. In closing, I will clarify why and how the ‘morality’ of *Mitleid* is an expression of the ascetic ideal by bringing together what we discussed so far.

Nietzsche’s rejection and warnings over the morality of *Mitleid* become clearer if, as Leiter remarks, we recognise it aims at Schopenhauer’s views on *Mitleid* and morality:

“Nietzsche’s well-known polemics against *Mitleid* as a moral ideal (e.g., HAH: 50, 103; D: 134; GS: 99; BGE: 201, 225) are clearly directed at Schopenhauer’s ethics. (This point is obscured in English by the fact that most translators of Schopenhauer render *Mitleid* as “compassion,” while most translators of Nietzsche render the same German word as “pity.”)” (Leiter 2002, 57)

Translating Nietzsche’s use of *Mitleid* as ‘pity’ and Schopenhauer’s use as ‘compassion’ obscures the fact that Nietzsche aims at Schopenhauer’s views on morality according to his philosophy of the will; the implication of this translation is that the two talk past each other. Nietzsche criticises the morality of *Mitleid*, not *Mitleid* itself, which means he objects to the high (or unconditional) value we ascribe to *Mitleid* compared to other affects. Some readings argue his objections stem from his defending some typically Nietzschean morality or moral ideal, for example, the *morality* of self-command.<sup>262</sup> These readings are compelling, albeit premature.

Nietzsche does make claims indicative of a normative theory and he makes normative propositions, but he resists construing them as expressing a particular morality or an ideal. He has a unique perspective on criticising moral values and ideals, namely, the non-moral perspective of individuality, health and life, which do not imply a replacement or a ‘better’ morality. Rather, he challenges his readers’ moral values or ideals by showing how, in fact, they commit to, realise or appreciate the values their morality or ideals oppose. He tries the previous without undermining their *need* for a morality or ideal, however, which implies he has a unique perspective on evaluating and criticising morality.<sup>263</sup>

Nietzsche’s objection to Schopenhauer’s views on morality demonstrate clearly why he fiercely opposes the morality of *Mitleid*. First, he objects to the proposition that ‘*Mitleid* grounds morality’. Schopenhauer’s approach to morality is as something whose ground we seek, which means the question ‘what is morally right or wrong’ does not arise, in the first place, because we know that morally worthy actions are those which express freely willed

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<sup>262</sup> See for example Nussbaum’s (1994) reading of Nietzsche’s objections to *Mitleid* as his attempt “to bring about a revival of Stoic values of self-command and self-formation within a post-Christian and post-Romantic context” (Nussbaum 1994, 140). Other commentators argue that Nietzsche ascribes to ‘virtue ethics’ (cf. Solomon 2001) or ‘perfectionism’ (cf. Hurka 2007).

<sup>263</sup> This unique perspective requires considerably more discussion and debate than I am able to offer. However, I believe the place to start is the concept of ‘health’ and his individualistic conception of it.

justice and genuine loving kindness. The will *grounds* everything, for him, and, in morality's case, a constituent of the will grounds morally worthy actions. What makes actions morally worthy is *Mitleid*. Second, our experiencing *Mitleid* for someone means we perceive her as 'willing, striving etc.' and we identify with her, which is the most veracious cognition of something we can have. Thus, *Mitleid* has both moral value *and* truth-value. Morality is not a 'principle' whose moral worth we can evaluate and juxtapose to others; it is what we use to determine moral worth and so generate moral principles. In short, *Mitleid* is 'complete' in two ways. First, it grounds morally worthy actions. Second, the cognition that underpins *Mitleid* (seeing through the PI, seeing something as 'willing' etc.) possesses the highest possible truth-value. Its truth-value also shows its 'parasitism'. The veracity of the cognition underpinning *Mitleid* is valued more highly than its counterpart cognitions. In other words, we value the veracity of cognising something as a 'willing' thing higher than the cognising it as an object, for example. The previous evaluation means that *Mitleid* is parasitic on *other* cognitions of something, which, in turn, makes it parasitic on the mainsprings underpinning them. The conceptual structure of the morality of *Mitleid* Schopenhauer defends is the same as the structure of the 'ascetic ideal' that May aptly described.<sup>264</sup> Construing *Mitleid* as the *ground* of morally worthy actions, as Schopenhauer did, creates a link between *Mitleid* and the ascetic ideal, which thus entangles moral value with truth-value. The previous places an extraordinarily high value on *Mitleid* at the expense of other mainsprings, actions and their cognates.

Nietzsche is skeptical of high evaluations *themselves*, rather than the high evaluation of a particular 'thing'. He grounds his skepticism on his method of historical philosophising. The following summarises his approach and expresses his worries about the high value we afford to things:

“[I]n accordance with their intellectual habit, men have *forgotten* the original purpose of so-called just and fair actions, and especially because children have for millennia been trained to admire and imitate such actions, it has gradually come to appear that a just action is an unegoistic one: but it is on this appearance that the high value accorded it depends; and this high value is, moreover, continually increasing, as all valuations do: for something highly valued is striven for, imitated, multiplied through sacrifice, and grows as the worth of the toil and zeal expended by each individual is added to the worth of the valued thing.” (HHI 93)

As Leiter rightly claims, Nietzsche's warnings about the morality of *Mitleid* aim at the 'pessimistic verdict' (Leiter 2002, 58) over life, i.e., at the 'negation of life', which typifies the 'will' of the ascetic ideal. This verdict transcends *Mitleid* and its corresponding actions and expresses itself in the *morality* of *Mitleid*. The previous reveals Nietzsche's skepticism about evaluating anything as highly as an 'ideal'. His scepticism is as from the standpoint of history and an individual's life and health. His reluctance to suggest an alternative to the

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<sup>264</sup> I will to leave aside whether this structure applies to all ideals or only to the ascetic ideal.

ascetic ideal and his conception of sovereign individuality as a preparatory step to a genuine critique of morality show that he did not arrive at his own ideal, but left us with the pieces to it. He left us with questions, pleas, objections and hopes, not answers or suggestions about what is worthy of willing or what ideal human beings should strive towards given that the 'ascetic ideal' had become and was destined to become untenable.<sup>265</sup>

I close by suggesting that Nietzsche leaves his readers with a direction of travel toward finding a way to harmonise the individual with the herd. He sought to find a place and role for individuality in communal life, but struggled to show how we can achieve that.

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<sup>265</sup> Included in the reasons for why he did not offer a substitute for the ascetic ideal is that he acknowledges its positive outcomes, which are not limited to self-control and sovereignty: "[p]riests make *everything* more dangerous, not just medicaments and healing arts but pride, revenge, acumen, debauchery, love, lust for power, virtue, sickness; - in any case, with some justification one could add that man first became an *interesting animal* on the foundation of this *essentially dangerous* form of human existence, the priest, and that the human soul became *deep* in the higher sense and turned *evil* for the first time - and of course, these are the two basic forms of man's superiority, hitherto, over other animals" (*GM I*, 6; compare the previous with *GM II*, 22). See also: "the old depression, heaviness and fatigue were thoroughly *overcome* by this system of procedures, life became *very* interesting again: awake, eternally awake, sleepless, glowing, burned out, exhausted and yet not tired, - this is how man, the 'sinner', looked when initiated into *these* mysteries" (*GM III*, 20).



## Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis was to defend two related propositions about the relationship between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's philosophies. First, our focusing primarily on their differing and opposed viewpoints on (and evaluations of) life, willing, aesthetics, morality and ascetic resignation ensures we ignore the fundamental agreements between them and the philosophical value of those agreements. Second, both agree about the will-body identity and both commit to immanence and ontological monism, but derive different conceptual frameworks from them. Schopenhauer derives the correlation theory of cognition. Nietzsche derives the drive psychology, but what we rarely notice in the philosophical commentary is how he tries to combine his drive psychology with 'historical philosophising' to yield a unique explanation of certain phenomena. Furthermore, this combination yields a revisionist way of addressing philosophical problems that arise in relation to phenomena such as self-consciousness, responsibility, morality, ascetic resignation and so on.

I presented Schopenhauer, first, before comparing him to Nietzsche after realising that there were inconsistencies in the dominant philosophical readings and commentary on Schopenhauer's philosophy. These inconsistencies obscured the relationship between them by focusing us on Nietzsche's objections to Schopenhauer's philosophy. This focus leads us to construe Schopenhauer's philosophy as promoting negation of the will to life, which is common especially in the Anglophone philosophical commentary on his philosophy. The previous limits our attempts to give an insight into the extent of Schopenhauer's influence on the maturity of Nietzsche's thoughts. To overcome the previous limitation, I focused on giving Schopenhauer's philosophy a chance by assessing it on its own merits and attempting to resolve any inconsistencies that arose internally, i.e., by appealing to its propositions and distinctions. I identified three propositions concealing inconsistencies, which I challenged by arguing that they are mostly premised on errors in our reading:

1. The will to life is egoistic.
2. Self-knowledge *causes* negation of the will to life.
3. Schopenhauer's philosophy is inherently pessimistic.

The correlation theory of cognition proved useful for challenging these propositions. The third of them was particularly helpful in revealing that the negation of the will to life does

not necessarily stem from his philosophy of the will. His conceptual framework cannot explain *why* the will to life negates itself, but it can coherently construe this negation as another mainspring of the will. It can explain certain attitudes and behaviours, which would otherwise remain inexplicable using the mainsprings of egoism, compassion and malice. The method of explanation that appeals to the will and its mainsprings shows its limitations in his comments on the relationship between tragedy and ascetic resignation, however.

Nietzsche aimed to overcome the above limitations by revising and naturalising the concept of the 'will', but also by arguing for what he calls 'historical philosophising', which complements his revised conception of the will as a complex of drives.

My reading and analysis of Schopenhauer is not complete, however. Further research may be required on the implicit distinction between the 'will' and the 'will to life'. Although I applied it extensively, I was unable to assess at length what underpins it. I argued that the will to life is his attempt to ground the meaningfulness of the movements and changes we perceive in 'objects' using our first-person experience of our own bodily movements and changes. The 'will to life' aims to characterise the directionality of the will as thing in itself. It refers to willing itself irrespective of its expression, i.e., the mainspring through which it 'objectivates'. I leave the reader with some questions I was unable to address fully, which might be useful for further philosophical discussion. If the will to life is a cognition and some *particular* bodily movement is always its objective correlate, then what permits us to extend its application to *all* 'changes' and 'movements' we perceive irrespective of who or what is changing and moving? In short, what permits us to use it as a blanket term for all movements and changes? What legitimates the seamless transition from the particular to the universal here? If the will to life captures the directionality of the will as thing in itself and so the cognition of 'something', then why do we not settle for the claim that it captures the directionality of the (individual) will, i.e., the particular target of cognition and its particular striving, rather than the 'general' striving of everything that we perceive irrespective of its individuality or particularity?

Moreover, I did not sufficiently assess Schopenhauer's conflicting views on tragedy, the arts and the negation of the will to life. Our understanding of his philosophy of the will would benefit greatly from an analysis and resolution of his conflicting propositions on this topic. He claims that tragedy "*demand*s an existence of an entirely different kind, a different world" (WR, 433; my emphasis), which contradicts his philosophical commitment to immanence. Related to the previous is his explanation of why we feel pleasure in tragedy: he states that "in the depth of his being the consciousness is then stirred that for a different kind of willing there must be *a different kind of existence*" (WR, 433; my emphasis). The previous propositions substantially muddle the distinction between the will, the will to life and the intellect. They likewise muddle his views on the relationship between aesthetics, the arts and ascetic resignation. His views on tragedy may prove to be the most fatal error of his philosophy of the will, but I was unable to demonstrate fully why I think so.

My reading and assessment of Nietzsche, on the other hand, aimed to arrive as close to his *Weltanschauung* as possible by seeking the guiding thread that offers an access to what grounds his objections, evaluations and accounts of phenomena. I approached the previous

in two ways. Firstly, I inquired into his fundamental concept of the ‘drive’ and found a split in the philosophical commentary between two accounts of the drives. Contra the previous split, I argued for a different, non-mechanical conception of the drives and thus a different conception of Nietzschean agency. Secondly, I defended the previous conceptions starting by demonstrating Schopenhauer’s influence at the philosophical foundations of Nietzsche’s thought. He developed a unique conceptual framework and philosophical method that builds upon and thus addresses the limitations of Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will. Nietzsche offers a revisionist account of agency and the will as well as a novel understanding of how morality partakes in our lives. Likewise, he offers another way of critiquing morality as well as a distinct phenomenology of the aesthetic experience, the excesses of genius, aesthetic contemplation and objectivity. Lastly, he proposes a new conception of the relation between the ‘high evaluation of something’ (e.g., compassion) and the ascetic ‘ideal’.

Despite my aims and analyses, my reading and assessment of Nietzsche was limited in presentation, philosophical depth and juxtaposition with other readings. There is thus considerable room for further research and debate on how to disambiguate his propositions, how to evaluate Nietzsche’s revisionist and naturalist conceptual framework and so how to compare my reading with that of other commentators. Below, I suggest some key concepts and areas that were incomplete and would benefit greatly from further research and debate.

Arguably the central concept requiring further disambiguation and debate is what Nietzsche calls ‘internalisation’. The definitions I recognised were as follows:

- A) Internalisation is the act of discharging one’s blocked drives inwardly.
- B) Internalisation means acquiring the ‘herd perspective’ and the ‘herd instinct’, i.e., acquiring a community’s rank order of values and actions, which then become a behaviour(s).

Nietzsche construes ‘internalisation’ as a process with various stages. The two definitions may reflect two different stages in the same process. It is also likely that he construes A as explaining how B comes about. I was unable to assess fully the merits and coherence of the ‘process’ view, or the view that A is the definition and B is its application. Further research into his conception of ‘internalisation’ would be immensely useful for building upon his conceptual framework. One way we can approach this research is by inquiring into whether or not internalisation is a process with various stages, a concept describing how we ‘acquire’ new drives, or even both. Another and perhaps complimentary approach is by juxtaposing internalisation to what he calls ‘sublimation’<sup>266</sup> and ‘spiritualisation’<sup>267</sup>, which seem to have similar connotations and may turn out to be pleonasms.

Likewise, there is room for further research and debate on the scope of the concept of ‘communication’ in Nietzsche, which is not limited to language in the sense of using *words*, but extends to any *signs* we might use to refer to something or to direct someone’s

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<sup>266</sup> See the following passages: (*HHI* 1, 107 & 261; *WS* 181; *D* 4, 202 & 248; *GS* 357; *BGE* 58, 189; *WLN* 7[3] & 14[111]; *GM II*, 7 & 10; *GM III*, 27).

<sup>267</sup> See the following: (*D* 60; *GS* 3; *A* 20; *TI*, ‘Morality’, 1, 3; *BGE* 198, 219, 229, 252 & 271).

attention to it. In short, his metaphorical definition of communication as a ‘bridge between people’ would benefit from further scrutiny:

“[N]ot only language serves as a bridge between persons, but also look, touch, and gesture; without our becoming conscious of our sense impressions, our power to fix them and as it were place them outside of ourselves, has increased in proportion to the need to convey them *to others* by means of signs. The sign-inventing person is also the one who becomes ever more acutely conscious of himself; for only as a social animal did man learn to become conscious of himself—he is still doing it, and he is doing it more and more” (GS 354; see also *HHI*, 216)

His distinction between signs and words seemingly implies a distinction between a broader and narrower vehicle for communication. These considerations have major implications for his views on the nature of consciousness, since he construes consciousness as requiring the ascription of a communication symbol. It would have implications for the philosophical commentary on Nietzsche’s philosophy, too, most notably for Katsafanas’ (2005) reading of consciousness as a mental state with conceptual content. Nietzsche may be operating with a *thinner* account of concepts than we initially assumed, which may not be linguistic in the sense of requiring the ascription of a ‘word’, but are nevertheless ‘communicable’ or aim to ‘communicate’. In short, consciousness is the internalisation of another’s perspective and deliberation means acting based on that perspective. Likewise, and following the conceptual link, this has implications for his account of the herd perspective, self-conscious agency and even his descriptive account of morality.

Nietzsche’s concept of ‘health’ is central to his evaluative views on morality and it requires further scrutiny than I could provide. I attempted a brief outline of it and suggested a potential definition. I also suggested how we might construe the use to which he puts it in his evaluation of morality. However, this attempt is incomprehensive or insufficient. Given that concept is so important, it is striking that there are mainly brief mentions of it in the philosophical commentary. I argued that ‘health’ typifies how he introduces the individual’s perspective into our moral deliberations, which are often dominated by the herd perspective. Likewise, health underpins his attempt to harmonise our herd and individual aspects and explains the sense in which ‘sovereign individuality’ is a developmental stage explicable through the process of internalisation. However, there is a pressing need for further debate and research into the concept; specifically, on how it relates to his drive psychology and so what health might look like as from the point of view of the drives and drive relations. Also, what it would look like from the first-person experience of willing and its relationship to individuality and so on. Another approach may be to inquire into why he thinks health is an ‘individual’ concept. What grounds his claim that what determines whether or not what we ‘consume’, ‘value’ or ‘do’ is healthy is wholly individual? Why can we not have a definition of health that applies to everyone, namely, a general concept or definition of health? Another approach might be to inquire into the relationship between affirmation of life and health.

Another area of further research is how the conceptual link (between communal life, communication, consciousness, language etc.) features in his views on aesthetics and the

arts. Can his account of what motivates aesthetic contemplation and creativity be construed in terms of the conceptual link? This would explain Nietzsche's objections to the conception of aesthetic contemplation as offering a veracious view of the target. For example, he may argue that the high value that we ascribe to 'truth' stems from the dominance of the herd instincts. He may explain an artist's erroneous and delusive account of her creative activities like he explained the pale criminal's decision to rob after killing. An artist conflates her creativity with divine inspiration (as he argues Wagner did). She conflates the demands of truth with those of aesthetics; so, she conflates the act of beautifying something or rendering it sublime with revealing its 'essence'. What explains this *conflation* is how her drive to creativity relates to her herd instinct(s), the latter introduces the high evaluation of the 'truth' into her creativity and thus distorts that creativity.

Finally, the distinction between an 'ideal as such' and the 'ascetic ideal' also merits closer scrutiny than I provided. One approach may be to determine how *Rausch* (and so the *act of idealisation*) relates to ideals. Likewise, on what basis can an ideal and *Rausch* be 'healthy' or affect our 'health'? The previous could demonstrate how *Rausch* and 'health' relate to his critique and alternative approach to morality and its treatment as a problem.

In sum, the thesis attempted to restore the significance of Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will to Nietzsche's views, notably in their aesthetics and ethics. It tried to show that the significance extends beyond their disagreements in ethics and aesthetics. The correlation theory of cognition made a key contribution to determining this significance by helping us resolve certain inconsistencies and by showing that pessimism is not a necessary feature of Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will. His foundational concept of the will-body identity and his philosophical commitments shaped Nietzsche's conceptual framework. The latter had a revisionist and naturalist project with respect to morality, the arts, objectivity, ideals and ascetic resignation, which was deeply influenced by Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will. Nevertheless, Nietzsche's advances on the descriptive front markedly undermine the clarity of his evaluative project. He leaves his readers with an aborted attempt at offering an alternative ethics or an (healthier) ideal that would replace the ascetic ideal.



# English Summary

## Willing and Idealising

### *An Investigation into Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's Philosophies of Value and Life*

The aim of this dissertation is to show the extent to which Nietzsche's philosophy of value and life is influenced by that of Schopenhauer, and how it can be better understood when this influence is recognised. The dissertation is split into two parts, the first of which is an investigation into Schopenhauer's philosophy and sets the foundations for the investigation into that of Nietzsche in the second part. Here, I offer a brief overview of what the investigation yielded and so what the reader may find in the thesis.

Schopenhauer's conceptions of aesthetic contemplation, the moral value of compassion and the role of self-knowledge in agency and ascetic resignation are the core topics of the research. According to Schopenhauer, our 'human' experience is composed of two *ostensibly* albeit not *fundamentally* distinct aspects: the intellect and the will. We do not encounter these two aspects separately, but there is a clear difference in their respective contributions to our experience. The will is responsible for our affective orientation and actions. The intellect provides us with a target we can respond to and so a perspective on the world that correlates to the will, but this target and perspective is determined by will's interests. In sum, the intellect offers a target for the will and the will determines which of the countless targets are *worthy* of striving towards or away from, or worthy of *identifying* with, as is the case with aesthetic contemplation.

How the will and the intellect relate changes after Schopenhauer introduces his account of aesthetic contemplation. The subjective correlate of aesthetic contemplation is disinterestedness. When we take a disinterested stance in relation to something, we project the will onto the target of cognition. This projection underpins our perceiving it as an Idea rather than *an object*. Moreover, Schopenhauer's psychological analysis of beauty and sublimity demonstrates that an *indirect* relationship to willing *motivates* aesthetic contemplation. The aesthetic pleasure we feel over *some* objects that thereby *incite* aesthetic contemplation shows that their value for the will is in distracting us from our personal projects and aims, which are sources of suffering.

Schopenhauer's psychological analysis of the aesthetic contemplator is nuanced and rich. It considers what could motivate someone to project the will onto things. He shows how frustration with our projects and aims, namely, a thwarted will, partakes in that projection. The preconditions of 'aesthetic contemplation' should not be confused for aesthetic contemplation *itself*, however. They are the causal or motivational factors, not the descriptive factors of aesthetic contemplation. Aesthetic contemplation is cognition of an Idea. Beauty and sublimity are properties of objects that meet us halfway to that cognition, but do so only following our receptivity to them, i.e., the right subjective correlate. In beauty, we are receptive because of our personal limitations. In the sublime, it is the limitations of humanity that make us receptive to the object, but they do so because we know that we are an extension of humanity and we use reason to construe our body as a token of humanity's type.

Aesthetic contemplation does not *abolish* the will, but projects it on the target of cognition. In aesthetically contemplating, we feel no urge to act on the target of our cognition, but this does not mean we feel no urge to act at all. We identify with the target and *perceive* it as willing, striving and so on. We feel an urge to act on its behalf and for its sake. By analogy, we are receptive to it and its movements as the follower in a dance is receptive to the leader's movements. Thus, aesthetic contemplation is will-less in the sense that our *personal* will is not what permeates and thus distorts our cognition of the target. It is still a cognition, however: we *perceive it* as willing, striving and so on. We use reason to recognise that *it* wills and we use imagination to *perceive it* as willing something. I present this conception to help make sense of Schopenhauer's purportedly smooth transition and harmony between aesthetics and ethics, which is supposedly the hallmark of his philosophy of the will.

Schopenhauer's views on morality rest on the agent's ability to suspend egoism enough to *recognise* another as willing something, i.e., as a person, rather than an object permitting use. The previous perception is a prerequisite of morality. We are moral or immoral, morally praiseworthy or morally reprehensible, in relation to our ability or inability to perceive someone as willing something like we will something. Absent this recognition of the person as willing something, i.e., as a something or someone with wishes, desires etc., we are at best morally neutral or incapable of moral reasoning. The sphere delineating moral worth or reprehensibility requires the recognition that the *object(s)* of our cognition *represents* a willing thing.

Finally, the correlation theory of cognition allows Schopenhauer to argue that the human intellect can recognise the *identical* object of the will and then formulate a self-image. Human reason is a means for the *will* to acquire self-cognition or make an object of itself, i.e., to perceive its *identical* object in the world. For the individual's will, this identical object is one's body and actions over time, whereas for the will to life, it is the world itself. Through the identical object, the will and the will to life can act in an enlightened manner: they can respond to their self-image. This response peaks in the affirmation or negation of



the will to life, which would not have been possible without the faculty of reason that, as Schopenhauer says, “allows us to survey the whole in the abstract”.

My interpretation of Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will serves as the foothold into the philosophical foundations of Nietzsche’s philosophy. It behoves us as philosophical commentators on Nietzsche to not only consider whether there is a *guiding thread* to his thoughts that gives access to the grounds for his evaluations, objections and his account of certain phenomena. As is common with attempts to find a unified and coherent thread in Nietzsche’s thoughts, his writing style and the unfortunate fact that he does not provide any adequate and straightforward definitions of his terms has immensely impeded my efforts. His terms change with the text, the approach he adopts and the argument he makes, which makes it considerably harder to hook onto a consistency. To overcome this challenge, I use Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will as a backdrop.

The fundamental entry point of my investigation into Nietzsche’s philosophy is his critique of Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will and the world-view underpinning it. I focus on the ethical and aesthetic themes of Schopenhauer’s philosophy, but to make the agreement and differences between the two thinkers clearer, I mainly consider their respective conceptions of the ‘will’, ‘agency’, ‘self-knowledge’ (or ‘self-consciousness’), ‘morality’ and ‘aesthetic contemplation’. Nietzsche picks up many distinctions, arguments and themes that preoccupied Schopenhauer, but assesses them from a different perspective. For example, he accepts ontological monism and immanence, also the will-body identity, which are basic tenets of Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will. However, he derives a different and unique philosophical method from them. First, he favours the concept of the ‘drive’ over that of the ‘will’. Second, he favours a historical explanation of phenomena, after rejecting the legitimacy of metaphysical and logical explanations. I clarify how these relate by introducing a concept I call the ‘conceptual link’. I conclude from the previous that Nietzsche’s account of agency, morality, aesthetic contemplation and objectivity are revisionist. Accordingly, he revises Schopenhauer’s account while aiming to preserve its philosophical foundations.

Nietzsche’s own theme is ‘ideals’—specifically, the ‘ascetic ideal’—and their effect on our lives as individuals. He inherits his focus on the ‘ascetic ideal’ from Schopenhauer, specifically, the latter’s positive evaluation of the negation of the will to life. This concern permeates three key areas of Nietzsche’s philosophy. These are, a) the possibility of self-conscious agency, b) the limits and evaluation of morality and c) the role of aesthetic contemplation in the arts. The ascetic ideal is a framework for making sense and evaluating one’s actions and aims in a manner permitting “of no other interpretation, no other goal” as Nietzsche says. We cannot question its truth-value, legitimacy, value or even set limits to it, since doing so would entail transgressing or suspending the ideal. It is due to this that he construes it rhetorically as a “fixed idea”, as Nietzsche described it. He critiques the ascetic ideal by assessing its *value for life*, not its truth-value or moral value. Thus, he has an entirely different approach for comprehending and critiquing ideals, which, I argue, we can

comprehend by making sense of what he means by 'health'. The meaning of the 'value for life' is not clear. I attempt to disambiguate it by assessing the perspective from which he approaches life and living. I aim to explain what this perspective amounts to, what motivates his turn to it most notably in the evaluative part of his philosophy and how far reaching it is. I argue that this perspective is crucial for revealing his *Weltanschauung*.

The main structure of my investigation into Nietzsche's philosophy is the following. First, I assess his views on agency and self-knowledge in light of the recent philosophical commentary. Second, I analyse his descriptive account and subsequent evaluation of morality. Third I propose an alternative solution to what we construe as the 'lack of fit'. Fourth, I assess his objections to Schopenhauer's account of aesthetic contemplation and objectivity. Lastly, I assess why he argues that compassion [*Mitleid*] is a "great danger to mankind" by looking at the grounds he gives for the pernicious relationship between 'morality' and the 'ascetic ideal'. I show that he leaves open the possibility of an opposing ideal to the ascetic ideal, and thereby for an alternative ethics. I believe his evaluative project was and remains incomplete.

# Nederlandse Samenvatting

## Willen en Idealiseren

*Een onderzoek naar de filosofieën van waarde en leven van Schopenhauer en Nietzsche*

Deze doctoraatsverhandeling heeft als doel aan te tonen in welke mate Nietzsches filosofie van waarde en leven beïnvloed is door deze van Schopenhauer, en hoe ze beter begrepen kan worden wanneer deze invloed erkend wordt. De verhandeling valt uiteen in twee delen, waarvan het eerste een onderzoek naar Schopenhauers filosofie is, en de fundering legt voor het onderzoek naar Nietzsches filosofie in het tweede deel. In wat volgt geef ik een kort overzicht van de resultaten van het onderzoek en van wat de lezer dus kan vinden in de verhandeling.

Schopenhauers opvatting over esthetische aanschouwing, de morele waarde van medelijden, en de rol van zelfkennis in handeling en ascetische berusting zijn de kernthema's van dit onderzoek. Onze 'menselijke' ervaring is volgens Schopenhauer samengesteld uit twee *aantoonbaar*, zij het niet *fundamenteel*, onderscheiden aspecten: het intellect en de wil. We treffen deze beide aspecten niet afzonderlijk aan, maar er is wel een duidelijk onderscheid tussen hun respectieve bijdragen tot onze ervaring. De wil is verantwoordelijk voor onze affectieve oriëntatie en handelingen. Het intellect levert ons een doelwit waaraan wij kunnen beantwoorden en daarmee een perspectief op de wereld dat deze correleert met de wil, maar dit doelwit en perspectief is bepaald door de belangen van de wil. Kortom: het intellect biedt een doelwit voor de wil, en de wil bepaalt welke van de talloze doelwitten het *waard* zijn om na te streven of weg van te streven, of waard zijn om mee te *identificeren*, zoals in het geval van esthetische aanschouwing.

Hoe de wil en het intellect zich tot elkaar verhouden, verandert nadat Schopenhauer zijn opvatting over esthetische aanschouwing introduceert. Het subjectieve correlaat van esthetische aanschouwing is belangeloosheid. Wanneer wij een belangeloos standpunt ten aanzien van iets innemen, projecteren wij de wil op het doelwit van cognitie. Deze projectie onderbouwt onze perceptie ervan als een Idee eerder dan als *een object*. Bovendien toont Schopenhauers psychologische analyse van het schone en het sublieme dat een *indirecte* verhouding tot het willen een esthetische aanschouwing  *motiveert*. Het esthetische genot dat

wij voelen bij *sommige* objecten die daarbij esthetische aanschouwing *opwekken* toont dat hun waarde voor de wil ons afleidt van onze persoonlijke projecten en doelstellingen, die bronnen van lijden zijn.

Schopenhauers psychologische analyse van de esthetische aanschouwer is genuanceerd en rijk. Ze neemt in aanmerking wat iemand zou kunnen motiveren om de wil op dingen te projecteren. Schopenhauer toont daarbij hoe frustratie bij onze projecten en doelstellingen, met name een verijdelde wil, participeert in die projectie. De voorwaarden van ‘esthetische aanschouwing’ mogen echter niet verward worden met de esthetische aanschouwing *zelf*. Zij zijn de causale of motivationele factoren, niet de descriptieve factoren van esthetische aanschouwing. Esthetische aanschouwing is cognitie van een Idee. Schoonheid en het sublieme zijn eigenschappen van objecten die ons halverwege tot die cognitie ontmoeten, maar dit enkel doen ten gevolge van onze ontvankelijkheid voor hen, d.w.z. ten gevolge van het juiste subjectieve correlaat. In het geval van schoonheid zijn wij ontvankelijk door onze persoonlijke beperkingen. In het geval van het sublieme zijn het de beperkingen van de menselijkheid die ons ontvankelijk maken voor het object, maar zij doen dit omdat wij weten dat wij een extensie van de menselijkheid zijn en omdat wij de rede gebruiken om ons lichaam op te vatten als een token van het type van de menselijkheid.

Esthetische aanschouwing *schaft* de wil niet *af*, maar projecteert het op het doelwit van cognitie. In esthetische aanschouwing voelen wij geen drang tot handelen naar het doelwit van onze cognitie, maar dit betekent niet dat we helemaal geen drang tot handelen voelen. We identificeren met het doelwit en *percipiëren* het als willend, strevend, ... We voelen een drang om ten behoeve en ter wille ervan te handelen. Bij analogie zijn wij er ontvankelijk voor, en voor de bewegingen ervan als de volger in een dans ontvankelijk is voor de bewegingen van de leider. Bijgevolg is esthetische aanschouwing wil-loos, in de zin dat onze *persoonlijke* wil niet is wat onze cognitie van het doelwit doordringt en vertekent. Het is echter nog steeds een cognitie: we *percipiëren* *het* als iets willend, strevend, enz... We maken gebruik van de rede om te erkennen dat *het* wil, en we maken gebruik van de verbeelding om het *percipiëren* als iets willend. Ik bied deze opvatting om bij te dragen tot een beter begrip van Schopenhauers vermeend vlotte overgang en harmonie tussen esthetica en ethiek, die verondersteld wordt het waarmerk van zijn filosofie van de wil te zijn.

Schopenhauers opvattingen over moraliteit zijn gebaseerd op het vermogen van de handelende om het egoïsme voldoende op te heffen om de ander te *erkennen* als iets willend, d.w.z. als een persoon, eerder dan als een object dat gebruik toestaat. Deze perceptie is een noodzakelijke voorwaarde voor moraliteit. We zijn moreel of immoreel, moreel prijzenswaardig of laakbaar in verhouding tot ons vermogen of onvermogen om iemand te percipiëren als iets willend op de manier waarop wij iets willen. In afwezigheid van deze erkenning van de persoon als iets willend, d.w.z. als een iets of iemand met wensen, verlangens, enz., zijn wij hoogstens moreel neutraal of niet in staat tot moreel redeneren. De sfeer die morele waarde of laakbaarheid aflijnt vereist de erkenning dat het/de *object(en)* van onze cognitie een willend ding *representeren*.

De correlatietheorie van cognitie laat Schopenhauer tot slot toe te beargumenteren dat het menselijke intellect het *identieke* object van de cognitie kan erkennen en daarop een zelfbeeld formuleren. De menselijke rede is een middel voor de *wil* om zelf-cognitie te verwerven of een object van zichzelf te maken, d.w.z. zijn *identieke* object in de wereld te percipiëren. Voor de wil van het individu is dit identieke object zijn lichaam en zijn handelingen doorheen de tijd, terwijl het voor de wil tot leven de wereld zelf is. Door het identieke object kan de wil en de wil tot leven op een verlichte wijze handelen: ze kunnen beantwoorden aan hun zelfbeeld. Dit antwoord culmineert in de affirmatie of negatie van de wil tot leven, die niet mogelijk zouden geweest zijn zonder het vermogen van de rede dat, zoals Schopenhauer stelt, “ons toestaat het geheel in het abstracte te overzien”.

Mijn interpretatie van Schopenhauers filosofie van de wil dient als steunpunt in de filosofische grondslagen van Nietzsches filosofie. Het betaamt ons als wijsgerige commentatoren van Nietzsche om niet enkel te overwegen of er in zijn denken een *leidraad* is die ons toegang verschaft tot de gronden van zijn evaluaties, tegenwerpingen en zijn opvatting over bepaalde fenomenen. Zoals gewoonlijk bij pogingen om een geünificeerd en coherent relaas te vinden in Nietzsches denken, werden mijn inspanningen enorm belemmerd door zijn schrijfstijl en het onfortuinlijke feit dat hij geen enkele adequate en duidelijke definitie van zijn termen verschaft. Zijn termen veranderen samen met elke tekst, elke benadering die hij aanneemt en elk argument dat hij levert, wat het substantieel moeilijker maakt om een consistentie vast te krijgen. Om deze uitdagingen tegemoet te treden maak ik gebruik van Schopenhauers filosofie van de wil als achtergrond.

Het fundamentele toegangspunt van mijn onderzoek naar Nietzsches filosofie is zijn kritiek op Schopenhauers filosofie van de wil en het wereldbeeld dat eraan ten basis ligt. Ik focus op de ethische en esthetische thema's van Schopenhauers filosofie, maar om de overeenkomsten en verschillen tussen beide denkers helderder te maken, behandel ik hoofdzakelijk hun respectieve opvattingen over de 'wil', 'handeling', 'zelfkennis' (of 'zelfbewustzijn') en 'moraliteit'. Nietzsche neemt vele onderscheiden, argumenten en thema's over waarom ook Schopenhauer bekommerd was, maar beoordeelt hen vanuit een ander perspectief. Zo aanvaardt hij bijvoorbeeld monisme en immanentie, alsook de wil-lichaam identiteit, die basisprincipes van Schopenhauers filosofie van de wil zijn. Desondanks leidt hij er een verschillende en unieke filosofische methode uit af. Ten eerste verkiest hij het concept van de 'drift' boven dat van de 'wil'. Ten tweede verkiest hij een historische verklaring van fenomenen, aangezien hij de geldigheid van metafysische en logische verklaring afwijst. Ik hield op hoe deze beide zich tot elkaar verhouden door een concept te introduceren dat ik de 'conceptuele schakel' noem. Ik besluit uit het voorgaande dat Nietzsches opvatting over handeling, moraliteit, esthetische aanschouwing en objectiviteit revisionistisch zijn. Dienovereenkomstig reviseert hij Schopenhauers opvatting, ook al tracht hij haar wijsgerige fundamenten te behouden.

Nietzsches eigen thema is 'idealen' – in het bijzonder, het 'ascetische ideaal' – en hun effect op ons leven als individu. Hij erft deze focus op het 'ascetische ideaal' van Schopenhauer, meer bepaald van diens positieve evaluatie van de negatie van de wil tot leven. Deze bekommernis doordringt drie kerndomeinen van Nietzsches filosofie. Dit zijn

a) de mogelijkheid van zelfbewuste handeling, b) de grenzen en evaluatie van moraliteit, c) de rol van esthetische aanschouwing in de kunsten. Het ascetische ideaal vormt een kader voor het begrijpen en het evalueren van onze handelingen en doelstellingen op een manier die, zoals Nietzsche stelt, ‘geen andere interpretatie, geen ander doel’ toestaat. We kunnen de waarheidswaarde, geldigheid of waarde ervan niet in vraag stellen, of er zelfs maar grenzen aan stellen, omdat dit een overtreding of opheffing van het ideaal zou impliceren. Het is ten gevolge hiervan dat Nietzsche het retorisch invult als een “idee-fixe”, zoals hij het beschrijft. Hij bekritiseert het ascetische ideaal door zijn *waarde voor het leven* in te schatten, niet zijn waarheidswaarde of morele waarde. Bijgevolg heeft hij een volledig verschillende benadering voor het begrijpen en het bekritisieren van idealen, die wij, zo beargumenteer ik, kunnen verstaan door duidelijk te maken wat hij bedoelt met ‘gezondheid’. De betekenis van ‘waarde voor het leven’ is niet duidelijk. Ik tracht deze te desambigueren door haar te beoordelen vanuit het perspectief van waaruit Nietzsche het leven en het levende benadert. Ik poog uit te leggen wat dit perspectief inhoudt, wat Nietzsches keuze ervoor, voornamelijk in het evaluatieve deel van zijn filosofie, motiveert, en hoe ingrijpend het is. Ik argumenteer dat dit perspectief cruciaal is om zijn *Weltanschauung* aan het licht te brengen.

De hoofdstructuur van mijn onderzoek naar Nietzsches filosofie is als volgt. Eerst beoordeel ik zijn opvattingen over handeling en zelfkennis in het licht van recente wijsgerige commentaar. In een tweede stap analyseer ik zijn descriptieve opvattingen en daaropvolgende evaluatie van moraliteit. In een derde bied ik een alternatieve oplossing voor datgene wat wij invullen als ‘lack of fit’. In een vierde stap evalueer ik zijn tegenwerpingen tegen Schopenhauers opvatting over esthetische aanschouwing en objectiviteit. Ten slotte ga ik na waarom hij beargumenteert dat medelijden [*Mitleid*] een “groot gevaar voor de mensheid” vormt, door te kijken naar de redenen die hij geeft voor de schadelijke verhouding tussen ‘moraliteit’ en het ‘ascetische ideaal’. Ik toon dat hij de mogelijkheid openlaat voor een ideaal dat tegengesteld is aan het ascetische, en daarmee dus ook voor een alternatieve ethiek. Ik geloof dat zijn evaluatieve project onvolledig was en gebleven is.

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