



## SCHOPENHAUER'S SYSTEM.

"Schopenhauer's System in its Philosophical Significance." By William Caldwell, M.A., D.Sc., Professor of Moral and Social Philosophy, North-Western University, U.S.A. (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons. 10s. 6d. net.).

[By R. B. HALDANE, M.P.]

This book is no introduction to the study of Schopenhauer. It will not assist the beginner. It contains no systematic exposition of the subject. It is arranged in a fashion which will occasion despair to the hasty reader. As a work of art it is not by any means above possible charges on the score both of manner and matter. But it is not the less a remarkable piece of work, one of the best that the American Universities, which are rapidly coming to the front in the teaching of philosophy, have yet given us. When Dr. Stirling published his "Secret of Hegel," Arnold Ruge exclaimed of it that it was "ein Buch das die Hegelsche Philosophie wirklich verdaunt hat." A similar pronouncement may safely be made of Professor Caldwell. He has not only digested but assimilated Schopenhauer's system. And yet he remains in good temper with the world, and, what is more remarkable, with other schools of German philosophy. The reason is not far to seek. Professor Caldwell has not fed on the doctrines of Schopenhauer alone. He has taken them with a due sense of their origin and of their position in relation to other phases of German development. He has comprehended completely that the systems of Hegel and Schopenhauer, while antithetic, are members of a great whole, which must be studied in its entirety if their meanings and limitations are to be understood.

Not the smallest of the services which Schopenhauer rendered to the world was to make plain the largeness of meaning that underlay the work of Kant. Kant had asked himself the great question as to the nature of the Ultimately Real—that in terms of which existence in every phase can be expressed, while it is itself irreducible, just because it forms the presupposition of all analysis. He found it in the work of thought grouping in the pure forms of Time and Space that which apart from the process had no

meaning, a raw material which Kant only assumed because he felt that to exist meant something more than to be thought, and that general conceptions could not exhaustively construct the riches of experience. Experience itself he broke up so that he limited what was real in experience to construction in Time and Space through twelve forms of thought, his famous categories. The result was that for him what could not be so accounted for and expressed was not real. Kant saw that this by itself was not a satisfactory or sufficient result. It ruled out of experience all design and all beauty, all such phenomena, for example, as the assumption, of which we cannot get rid, that there is such a thing as *life*—a relationship in which the organism conserves itself throughout the change of its material, and controls its parts towards a common end through the course of its development. And it ruled, too, out of experience the whole world of ethics and religion. Man as a moral agent could not be constructed through Kant's categories. But as he had a great sense of the reality, in some meaning of the term, of these other phases of our common experience, he attributed to them reality of a special kind. The world as we know it in Time and Space was for him real in the only sense of which Science, as the term is commonly understood, could take account. But to the world of teleological and aesthetic relationships he gave the attribute of *regulative* validity. That is to say, the understanding implies and assumes them, and they cannot be expelled as illusions. They are rather modes in which what is truly real, experience, is moulded and arranged for us by our minds—not merely individual illusions, for the conception of an individual mind is a mere derivative, coming a long way down, and could not itself be there excepting through these very regulative notions, but in this sense entering into the constitution of experience. Yet the real was not, in Kant's view, even so exhaustively explained. To account for such ideas as those of God, Freedom, and a Future Life, none of them intelligible in the light of a science limited in its view of reality through the twelve categories, he pronounced these to be Ideals of the Reason, necessarily there because placed there in the process of knowledge,

but from their nature incapable of being realised in experience—and able to offer, therefore, only a moral guarantee of their reality, a reality which obtained only in a world lying behind the system of experience.

Such was Kant's theory of the Universe. It had its advantages. It left Science supreme as against Ethics and Theology, and yet it limited the sphere and authority of Science. But it seemed to those who came immediately after the sage of Königsberg to have deprived what was not directly given in perception of all substantial significance. "They say," wrote Heine, comparing Kant to Robespierre, "that ghosts shiver with fear when they see before them the sword of an executioner. How much more must they tremble when Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason' is held up to them! For this Book was the sword with which the belief in God was executed in Germany." People used to think that the only step which could logically be taken in advance of Kant was that which Hegel took when he declared to the world that to attribute greater reality to the categories of Time and Space than to those of Judgment and the Ideals of Reason was to make an untenable distinction. Unquestionably the battery of criticism which Hegel brought to bear on the author of the "Critique" was a most formidable one. He showed that Kant, while proclaiming his Copernican discovery that Thought must make Things, since Things, as the Greeks and Hume had shown, could not make Thought, fell back into the old fallacy that knowledge could be looked on as a sort of process taking place between Things which existed antecedently to it. He pointed out that if we once come to the conclusion that Thought is the Real, in terms of which, in ultimate analysis, all else must be expressed, we must not blow hot and cold. And while saying this with our lips, try to break up Experience, the field of Thought, into something antecedent, in logic even, to itself. He showed that Kant's method was really that of the psychologists, useful for inquiring into the genesis in Time and Space of the particular self as *an object in experience*, but as useless for the purpose of an inquiry into the nature of experience itself as it would be to try to learn to swim before going into the water. Hegel found the supreme reality in thought itself; in

other words, in Experience, which could be analysed in logic but not constructed in time, because it was itself the presupposition of all construction, including that of the individual mind. All phases of experience he declared to be alike real, each in its place and stage, and all seeming conflict he declared to arise from a misunderstanding of the problem to be solved. For a time his authority was supreme. But men came to feel that to talk of the only reality as being Thought was to rob the world of its richness. Action, the sense of responsibility, Will, they began to think at least equally real with general conceptions and the "bloodless ballet" of the Hegelian categories. Whether they did or did not confound language with substance, and mistake the exaggerations of Hegelianism for the substance of Hegel's teaching is another question. Possibly Hegel might have agreed that Volition was as real as Intelligence when the meaning of the words had been defined. But the school of Hegel had done what men of second-rate minds are always apt to do—had erected abstract and paradoxical language into a dogma. Hegel died in 1831, and the revolt began after the great movement of 1848. Such thinkers as Lotze, accepting Kant's criticism of materialism and subjective idealism, yet refused to take the step which Hegel had taken. Of the dissentients the loudest and the most distinguished was Schopenhauer, whose hatred of Hegel—"jener plumpe Charlatan," as he did not scruple to call him—was unbounded. Schopenhauer went back to where Kant had left the problem. He agreed that what was real in experience was confined to what was *actual*—as opposed to a *possible*—of Time and Space. He agreed, as Kant had, that beyond experience there must be another world. But he did not, like Kant, attribute to it any merely regulative or ideal validity. On the contrary, he found in it the meaning and source of all reality. This was immediately and directly known, not transfigured by categories, as was the case with the material which Kant supposed to be worked up into experience, but in its purity, as Will. He said, not with Descartes and Hegel, "I think, and accordingly I am," but "I will, and accordingly I am." Will was for him the ultimate fact, that out of which all else took its origin. Imper-

sonal, blind, its striving at a stage assumed the form of understanding, and constructed the illusion—an illusion which yet relatively to the finite individual was real, and not to be got rid of—of experience, the world in Time and Space. In the course of this illusion, constructed as Kant had rightly taken experience to be constructed, arose the form of the finite individual, of self-consciousness. But the Real, of which this, like all else, was but a phase in the striving—the phase in which, as a fact, we find ourselves, and therefore cannot through mere knowledge escape from, was Will—timeless, spaceless, impersonal Will. Thus Schopenhauer takes a step beyond Kant. Instead of leaving the universe an enigma, so far as go all attempts of science to throw light on the reality that lies behind experience, he found this, not like Hegel in Thought, but in the direct consciousness of action, Will. The second lines of German thinking, those that to-day prevail in Germany over the lines of the Hegelian school, were so laid down by him; and the authority of Kant was, in part at least, restored. This is the achievement of Schopenhauer, and Mr. Caldwell brings it out admirably. He gave a new answer to the question—What is Reality? He placed it, not in Personality; for this, like Hegel, he saw to be essentially derivative or mediated; not in Thought, for this he pronounced to be inadequate to the richness of the world; but in Action—the spontaneity of that Will of which he held that we are directly conscious. Knowledge is for him a passing illusion—that “Veil of Maya” which hides the true nature of the Real: a state of unstable equilibrium in which the wise man will seek for no satisfaction. The individual is transitory, the possession and sport of the impersonal striving of the Will, which, manifesting itself under the form of all phenomena, including the species, is ever using him for its own purposes, while he deludes himself with the belief that he is acting freely and of his own motion. This is the root of Schopenhauer's pessimism. Individuality is an untruth, and all that exalts it into an object of life is therefore a lie. The pursuit of such an object is the pursuit of a will-o'-the-wisp, and can land us only in misery. “Our condition is so pitiable that complete non-existence is preferable to it.”

Only through the resignation of the Will to live through what lifts us out of our individuality, through art, through philosophy, through contemplation, can we escape. Buddhism, because its doctrines recognise this, he places above Christianity, with its mistaken insistence on the value of human personality. Art, in all its forms, and especially that of music, he regards as a valuable stage on the road to salvation—that perfect detachment which is the portal to Nirvana, because Art takes us behind the phenomena of immediate perception and brings us face to face with the reality of things, the impersonal power which makes sport of our lives, and which men and women can only overcome by raising themselves to indifference to the struggle.

Schopenhauer was no ordinary unbeliever. Witness such a passage as this:—

If the veil of Maya, the *principium individuationis*, is lifted from the eyes of man to such an extent that he no longer makes the egotistical distinction between his personality and that of others, but takes as much interest in the sufferings of other individuals as in his own, and is therefore not only benevolent in the highest degree, but ever ready to sacrifice his own individuality whenever such a sacrifice will save a number of other persons, then it clearly follows that such a man, who recognises in all beings his inmost and true self, must also regard the infinite suffering of all suffering as his own, and take upon himself the pain of the whole world. No suffering is any longer strange to him. All the miseries of others . . . work upon his mind like his own. . . . Since he sees through the *principium individuationis* all lies equally near him. He knows the whole, comprehends its nature, and finds that it consists in a constant passing away, vain striving, inward conflict, and continual suffering.

One is tempted to ask who is the real cynic of Germany—the man who deliberately expressed his contempt, as Schopenhauer did, for what is called German patriotism, but yet taught the world consistently throughout in language such as this; or the man who to-day in the name of his country deliberately refuses to listen to the cry of outraged humanity in the East? One sees why Goethe and Schopenhauer held the patriotism of their countrymen to be a poor affair when viewed in the light of eternity.

Schopenhauer has said neither the first nor the last word in philosophy. But in



metaphysics he raised a splendid protest against the neglect of the claim on which Kant had insisted, the claim of Action and what is ethical to equality with Thought in the search after the Real. He emerged with a system of profoundly religious pessimism in which the root-ideas of Buddhism and Christianity received a scientific rendering, and he brought to his work, just because for him literature and art meant as true a path to reality as abstract philosophy, a vigour and concreteness of apprehension which places him among the great masters of form and of language. We may not be able to follow him where he fain would lead us. We may look on him as presenting one side, and one side only. But no thinker of to-day dare neglect him. To Mr. Caldwell students of philosophy are under an obligation for making this clear beyond doubt.

*Syllabus.*

*E. H. R. 1915*

Gift of  
Col. . F. J. Payne



*SHAW FELLOWSHIP LECTURES, 1893*

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PHILOSOPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE

“Vitam impendere vero.”

—JUVENAL, iv. 91.

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## PHILOSOPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE

BY

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EDINBURGH AND LONDON  
MDCCCXCVI





TO  
EMERITUS PROFESSOR A. CAMPBELL FRASER,  
D.C.L., LL.D.,  
AND  
TO HIS SUCCESSOR IN THE CHAIR OF HAMILTON,  
PROFESSOR ANDREW SETH, LL.D.,

*This Volume is Dedicated*

WITH THE ESTEEM AND GRATITUDE OF  
AN OLD PUPIL AND FRIEND.



## P R E F A C E.

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THIS book is substantially the outcome of the public lectures delivered by me in the Logic class-room of the University of Edinburgh, in the months of October and November, 1893, at the close of my tenure of the Shaw Fellowship.

Following the precedent of previous holders of the Shaw Fellowship, Professor Sorley of Aberdeen and Professor Mackenzie of Cardiff, and also in accordance with the natural necessities of the evolution of the work in my own mind, I have departed altogether from the lecture form, and have presented my matter in the shape of several continuous philosophical essays. Some of these chapters may appear to be of undue length. As each, however, was intended to reflect to some extent the system of Schopenhauer as a whole, as well as to indicate his views upon the particular topic in question, it seemed undesirable to curtail too much. Taken together, they represent a series of attempts to suggest the significance of Schopenhauer's thought as an organic whole. The order of the series is partly natural and partly logical.

As to the justification for the volume, I desire the title to be partly explanatory. I have not directly attempted to give an exposition, or even an exposition and criticism, of Schopenhauer's philosophy. This has been done sufficiently well in many different ways by many English and foreign

writers. I have rather tried to connect Schopenhauer with some few broad lines of philosophical and general thought and — so far as I could — with some few broad principles of human nature. It seems to me that the time has come for this. My best hope for the book is that it may afford reflective matter to those who have, for any reason whatsoever, an interest in Schopenhauer. Nowadays it is almost impossible to escape being brought more or less under his influence. He has even got into the comic papers of most countries. While to a certain extent presupposing some elementary knowledge of Schopenhauer,<sup>1</sup> I have tried to give enough positive statement from and about him to render what I write intelligible to the ordinary reader.

I have tried to strike a mean in the matter of the connection of Schopenhauer's philosophy with his *personality*. I am inclined to resent the practice of attributing the exaggerations of his philosophy to his personality, when such attribution does not rest upon a broad perception of the philosophy of such a personality as Schopenhauer's. It is time the public should be prevented from being misled by much extravagant statement in this connection.<sup>2</sup>

The first chapter is general in its character, and suggests only the scope of Schopenhauer's significance and the spirit in which we ought to study his system. The next two chapters,

<sup>1</sup> Such knowledge, for example, as may be had from a recent article in the 'Westminster Review' (April 1895) by Mr E. Todhunter, or from Mr Bailey Saunders's excellent translations (published in very convenient form by Sonnenschein), or from such an essay as that by Professor E. Rod in 'Les Idées Morales du Temps Présent,' or from the "Britannica" article of Professor W. Wallace (or from my own in the ninth edition of 'Chambers's Encyclopædia'), or from Professor W. Wallace's book in the "Great Writers" Series, or from the instructive article of the late Mr E. Wallace in the 'Westminster Review' (No. 59, p. 388).

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.*, "No philosopher so readily explains himself as Schopenhauer. His philosophy was simply the formulation of his own special disease, the expression of his own ineffably petty and uncomfortable disposition. He was a small philosopher with a great literary gift."—"The Religion of a Literary Man,' by Richard le Gallienne. I select this quotation only on account of its recent character. Many others might be given.

I imagine, will demand a somewhat closer attention on the part of the reader than the first. They constitute an attempt to trace out the theoretical roots of Schopenhauer's philosophy.<sup>1</sup> The fourth chapter occupies itself with the practical bondage of life, from which art and ethics and religion are supposed by many people (and by Schopenhauer himself) to set us free. The following four chapters present the Schopenhauer that is known to the thought of the nineteenth century. Chapter ix. tries to show the fundamental philosophical character of Schopenhauer's thought. It takes up, incidentally, the threads of chapters ii. and iii., and interweaves them with the other chapters of the book and with the system as a whole. Chapter x. attempts some general positive statement about Schopenhauer. In it and in the Epilogue points are suggested which might form the material for further study and exposition. Before this, however, one would have to devote some attention to von Hartmann.

It was originally part of my intention to consider the general subject of pessimism as treated by both von Hartmann and Schopenhauer. In view of this I read to a fair extent into von Hartmann,<sup>2</sup> but soon concluded that Schopenhauer, in virtue of his greater originality and attractiveness, would alone afford enough scope for my first investigation. There are two things that are more satisfactory in von Hartmann than in Schopenhauer: first, his scholarship, and then the historical basis on which he tries to found pessimism. I am quite convinced that Schopenhauer and von Hartmann together represent one-half of modern philosophy. I say of *modern philosophy*, because for the purposes of general philosophy we still sit, and ought to continue to sit, at the feet of

<sup>1</sup> These chapters represent matter which I presented partly in two papers in 'Mind' (O.S., vol. xvi. p. 355; N.S., vol. ii. p. 188), and partly in class-room lectures in Cornell University, N.Y.

<sup>2</sup> See 'Mind' (N.S., vol. ii. p. 188) for a preliminary study of von Hartmann's theory of knowledge.

the Greeks. It is greatly to be regretted that Schopenhauer did not give more attention to Aristotle than he did. I hope at another time to be able to do greater justice to von Hartmann than I have been able to do in this volume.

I crave indulgence for the supreme liberty I have taken in often speaking for my author and in often perhaps identifying my exposition or criticism or philosophy with his name or his principles. If I have made him speak and appear to be significant, that is all I care about. I have not always fully worked out what I have suggested, but in this I feel justified by the nature of the task. There are, of course, many things<sup>1</sup> in Schopenhauer to which little reference has been made here, and some to which no reference at all has been made.

Nor have I tried to free Schopenhauer from the many charges of inconsistency which may be brought against him. Frauenstädt's infinite care in this direction, although of great service, seems to me to be often carried too far.

The manuscript and the proof-sheets of this work have been read by Professor James Seth, of the Chair of Moral Philosophy, Cornell University; all the proof-sheets by Mr Henry Barker, of Trinity College, Cambridge; a part of the manuscript and a part of the proof by Mr Robert P. Hardie, Lecturer on Ancient Philosophy, University of Edinburgh; a part of the proof by Mr Norman McLean, Fellow and Lecturer of Christ's College, Cambridge; and the revised parts of the proof, along with some whole chapters, by my colleague at Northwestern, Professor J. Scott Clark, of the Chair of English Language. All these gentlemen have rendered me important service by their suggestions. To other friends, also,

<sup>1</sup> Such are, for example, his views upon the psychology of pain, his views upon mathematics, his theory of colours and his optical researches, his opinions upon literature proper, the extent of his knowledge of Eastern religions, or his opinions upon Kant and Kant's works.



I feel indebted at this time: to some for an active interest in the book or in parts of it; and to some whose friendship has enabled me to understand much of what I have learned about both philosophy and life. In the latter regard I owe much to nearly ten years of intercourse with Professor Laurie of Edinburgh University, some of whose books (the ‘*Metaphysica*’ and the ‘*Ethica*’) long ago revealed to me something of the reality and the possibilities of a philosophy of the will.

I have endeavoured, by the use of the capital and in other ways, to call the attention of the reader to the difference between the term “Ideas” (the “Platonic Ideas”) and the term “ideas” (sense-phenomena, objects). The abbreviation “H. and K.,” in the footnotes, refers to the English translation of Schopenhauer’s ‘*World as Will and Idea*,’ by R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp (Trübner, 1888. 3 vols.) The edition of Schopenhauer I have used is the *sämmtliche Werke. Zweite Auflage. Neue Ausgabe. Leipzig. Brockhaus. 1888.*

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY,  
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# SCHOPENHAUER'S SYSTEM.

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## CHAPTER I.

### GENERAL VIEW OF SCHOPENHAUER'S SIGNIFICANCE.

“Die Zeit wird kommen, wo, wer nicht weiss, was ich über einen Gegenstand gesagt habe, sich als Ignoranten blossstellt.”<sup>1</sup>

“Whoever, I say, has with me gained this conviction . . . will recognise this will of which we are speaking not only in those phenomenal existences which exactly resemble his own, in men and animals as their inmost nature, but the course of reflection will lead him to recognise the force which germinates and vegetates in the plant, and indeed the force through which the crystal is formed, that by which the magnet turns to the north pole, the force whose shock he experiences from the contact of two different kinds of metal, the force which appears in the elective affinities of matter as repulsion and attraction, decomposition and combination, and, lastly, even gravitation, which acts so powerfully throughout matter, draws the stone to the earth and the earth to the sun,—all these, I say, he will recognise as different only in their phenomenal existence, but in their inner nature as identical, as that which is directly known to him so intimately and so much better than anything else, and which in its most distinct manifestation is called *will*.”<sup>2</sup>

THE philosophy of Schopenhauer has been for some years and is now in most civilised countries matter of public and private interest and surmise, ridicule, inquiry, and study. While this may not recommend the system to the pure

<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer an Frauenstadt, 10th Feb. 1856.

<sup>2</sup> Schopenhauer's *Welt als Wille*, &c., i. 131. Eng. transl. by Haldane and Kemp, i. 142.

philosopher, who is aware that for the last three-quarters of this century speculative philosophy may be said to have been in a period of decadence, the fact of widespread interest bespeaks for it a presumption that in it surely are to be found many elements appealing to many minds. In the following pages an attempt will be made to exhibit the extent of its breadth and its depth. Different lines of interpretation and criticism have been followed by different writers in explaining Schopenhauer, such as the study of the system through the personality of its author, or through his philosophical and political environment, or from the side of some of the great ultimate ideas of philosophy; and all of these have their justification. We shall be concerned with the general significance of the system, and hope to bring many of these lines incidentally to a focus. But if Schopenhauer is really a great philosopher, he will have something to say that applies to all time; and it is the possibility of this which determines our inquiry. We shall seek also to discover where we stand in philosophy after Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer prophesied his own immortality as a thinker, and said that his works would be read when those of Hegel and Fichte and other *dii majores* of philosophy would lie on the shelves of the scholar or of the seller of old books, and his words have come true. Why is he read?

Fichte said, as we know, that the kind of philosophy a man chooses depends on the kind of a man he is. This is true, but the significance of the assertion is not at first sight apparent. Granting that a man's philosophy—idealism or materialism, pessimism or optimism—depends on the kind of man he is, what does this prove about philosophy? Does philosophy simply follow temperament, and is it wholly a matter of temperament? Again, does a man's choice in general depend on the kind of man he is, and if so, is there any freedom of choice? Both these questions raise them-

selves naturally in the case of Schopenhauer's personality, and what is more vital (for a philosophy includes not only man but the world), in the case of his philosophy.<sup>1</sup> It will become evident from our author that it is not really a reproach to philosophy to say that it in a sense expresses temperament or character. Philosophy indeed cannot neglect the temperament of man, for the temperament of man is a reflex or a differentiation of his sense for reality, and may therefore actually give to philosophy some of its facts. Character, too, as an established disposition or state of the whole man, must reveal the various tendencies of man's psychical and organic life in a state either of harmony or of discord; and consequently the study of character will help us to know whether a given statement about the nature of the world is, or is not, such as to appeal and commend itself to human nature. It is perhaps possible, for example, through the study of temperament and character, to strike a balance between what Hume called the "easy and obvious"<sup>2</sup> way of philosophising and the "abstract and profound," and this too without degrading philosophy. Of course we might simply state it to be a fact that, from the standpoint of comparative psychology or anthropology, various systems of thought and belief have been expressive only of differences in the character and temperament of men, and might allow the logic of system-building to square itself with this fact. Any sense of humiliation which we experience from the reflection that it is unphilosophical for philosophy to follow temperament, arises out of the fact of our minds being still ruled by the old philosophical fallacy that reason is superior to emotion, or the *form* of thought to the *matter* of thought. One of the most instructive lessons we shall have to learn from Schopenhauer will have a bearing on this very question of the relation of reason to emotion, and of the formal or rational

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, chap. iv. p. 177 *et passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Inquiry concerning Human Understanding, section i.

aspects of things to their material or empirical aspects ; for his entire system lives and moves on the strength of such oppositions and on the controversies arising out of them. Indeed, the whole secret of the study of Schopenhauer lies in the effort that it compels us to make to study the value of the inferential conclusions of our intellectual faculties in face of the natural conclusions to which we are impelled by our natural instincts. The refrain of his philosophy throughout is that man is at bottom nothing but a horrible wild animal, and yet he recognises perfectly well at the same time that man will insist upon applying his intellect in a free speculative manner to the problem of the nature of reality.

Like many other philosophers, Schopenhauer is perfectly explicit on the point that the only thing that can properly be called knowledge is abstract conceptual knowledge. In this sense, he says, "the proper antithesis to knowing is feeling." He is so convinced that abstract conceptual knowledge is the only knowledge, that he is not inclined to attach any cognitive significance to any kind of feeling. "The word feeling has throughout a negative connotation—namely this, that something which is actually present to our consciousness is not a concept, not abstract knowledge of the reason." This is of course utterly false in point of fact, and we soon see that Schopenhauer's statement of fact is here largely coloured by his preconceived theory. What is really interesting and significant, however, in Schopenhauer is not what he says—his psychology has too many crudities to admit of being scientifically expounded—but what he does with what he says. The one kind of feeling in which we find Schopenhauer to be supremely interested is instinct, and all the difficulties of his philosophy arise from the fact that, in spite of his prejudice against feeling as irrational, he does find in instinct a kind of positive knowledge, which he through all his writing and thinking hurls up against the abstract or inferential know-



ledge of the understanding or the reason. The duty that falls to the interpreter of Schopenhauer's system is to extract the positive knowledge or consciousness that is contained in feeling, and to connect it with the positive knowledge or consciousness that is contained in the concept, or in reason. By so doing he will not only make a synthesis of the different elements in Schopenhauer's own system, but relate much of Schopenhauer's apparently negative work to the positive work of his predecessors and contemporaries in philosophy. Schopenhauer was himself unable to connect the philosophy of cognition with the philosophy of instinct or impulse, and this is one of the reasons why his system presents the appearance of being throughout a sort of *illusionism* in which the higher and lower phases of man's activity seem alternately to contend with and to cancel each other.

Of course if a philosophy includes not only man but the world, there ought to be some impersonal as well as personal elements in a philosophical system. That part of philosophy which is called metaphysic is, in idea at least, simply the most scientific statement possible of the nature of the world, what in German would be called *Der Inbegriff der Gesamtwissenschaft*, a methodised statement of the laws and principles of all knowledge and all science. We have to say "in idea" because, however earnest our purpose may be to study the world in an objective and impersonal way, experience seems to show that the slightest science and the "slightest philosophy" bring us back to man as at least the most characteristic object in the world. Plato and Aristotle and Kant all complete their enumeration of the points of view from which the world can be regarded, by an insistence on the idea of the good or the good for man; and this is in a sense a subjective or personal conception. It is because the philosophy of Hegel does not do this, but ends in the "Idea" in and for itself rather than in the idea of a good for man as

man, that the mind which has been imbued with the spirit of the Hegelian dialectic has to seek over again for some point of *rappor*t with the real world, with ostensible *terra firma*. Schopenhauer passes quite naturally from a merely critical study of the world of experience to a teleological study of the end of action, and the general outcome of his system is to substitute teleology for ontology, or to resolve ontology—the study of entities—into teleology—the study of purposes. To him, as one knows, the will is everything. It is in fact hard to find what might be called a purely objective study of the world. The nearest substitute for it must be sought among the Greeks; for with them it is not in such an anti-thesis as that of subject and object, the result of much head-sore travelling on the *via longa* of modern philosophy, that we find the highest categories of thought, and therefore the last fulcra of metaphysical thinking, but in the “one” and the “many” of Plato and the *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια* of Aristotle. But even the Greeks never completely eliminated the subjective aspects of philosophy from their systems. Aristotle, for example, in giving an analysis of moral freedom, found that, although human action seemed to a certain extent only a particular kind of phenomenal causation, man had yet to be regarded as more than a merely natural object, since he has a principle of causation in himself.<sup>1</sup> It is, after all, too, only because the Greeks had to envisage all the categories and distinctions of their thought in an objective way so as to suit the genius of their thought, that their writings seem to be less rent by the difficulties of dualism than those of most modern philosophers.

But if metaphysic be to a certain extent the systematisation of science, there ought to be somehow by this time a body of doctrine common to all philosophers about the ways in which

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Eth. Nic., iii. 3. . . . ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐν αὐτῷ εἶδότης τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα ἐν οἷς ἡ πρᾶξις.

man should regard the world, a recognition of the possible ways in which he does, and must, regard the universe in which he finds himself. Such a schematic construction of the world, or of the knowable world, would seem to represent the only possible philosophy. If it is objected that this is only the critical idea of philosophy, it must be confessed that it is. Another main lesson we shall have to learn from Schopenhauer is, that although Kant virtually exploded and exposed ontological dogmatism, dogmatism about the essence of the universe, for ever in philosophy, we have been very slow in learning his lesson; and that, in general, wherever philosophy has become dogmatic, it has ventured beyond the merely critical or reflective plane of thought on to the scientific or observational plane, and by so doing has virtually submitted itself to all the tests of inductive philosophy and historically recorded fact.

Schopenhauer's philosophy is a protest written "in large letters" against the idea that a complete knowledge of the essence of the world and the purpose of the world is to be found in reason alone. This negative aspect of his teaching is really the continuation or the drawing to a conclusion of the criticism of all speculative dogmatism instituted by Kant in the 'Criticism of Pure Reason.' Reason to Schopenhauer is passive in its nature and not active, and can only systematise the material brought to it by experience, so that the full meaning of reality can be known only in direct experience and not in the abstractions of mere thought. Doubtless he himself falls into a new dogmatism about the nature of the world, a dogmatism of the will instead of a dogmatism of the reason (*panthelism* instead of *panlogism*), and so lays himself open to the strictures of scientific observation, which has no difficulty in showing that there are other things in the world besides "willing" and "rushing" and "striving." Schopenhauer is, in fact, in some respects less successful in his positive than

in his negative philosophy, and we shall be throughout this volume less occupied with the attempt to treat the world as a phenomenon of the will, than with the attempt to show the significance of the line of thought which led to the substitution of will as a world-principle instead of reason. It may be justifiable to condemn a mere philosophy of the reason without doing violence to the fact that reason is of distinct service to us in the interpretation of experience, and our author will teach us this in spite of his own great inconsistency in the matter. And so far as the connection with Kant goes, we may learn from Schopenhauer that the dogmatism of criticism, the dogmatism about what we can with our unassisted faculties know about the nature of the world, is perhaps the only dogmatism that will stand the test of time. Philosophy begins in wonder, and philosophical criticism is simply wonder made conscious of itself, of its proper scope and its proper limitations.

But there is more in philosophy than pure metaphysic, or, at any rate, there have been included under metaphysic questions where temperament has more to show for itself than in the treatment of the world merely from the standpoint of the categories or the principles of the understanding. Kant, for example, included in philosophy the question, "What can I hope?" and the question, "What ought I to do?" as well as the question, "What can I know?" Now it would seem impossible to give an answer to the question, "What can I hope?" and still more to the question, "What ought I to do?" without considering the question, "What would I?" or "What do I wish?" In short, any supposed "end" that the system of things may have—for it is about the end of things that man emphatically asks, when he asks, "What can I hope?"—must be an end that embraces man and the feelings and nature which he finds himself to possess, must be an *end for man* as Aristotle said. Of course from a certain point of view it seems a

piece of assumption on the part of man to think that he has a right to hope for anything, as many men partly outside philosophy, like Carlyle, are never tired of reminding us. We must waive, however, just now, this contention, and think of the extent to which the feelings of man may conceivably enter into the computation of the philosopher in pronouncing his judgment upon the tendency or the end of things. It is immaterial for our purpose whether the doctrine of *teleology* (the name that philosophers give to this whole line of consideration) be regarded as falling inside or outside that strict body of doctrine which might be called metaphysic proper. There is at least a distinction between that part of philosophy which sets forth merely the reason or order that is in things, and that other part which attempts somehow to give man what has been aptly called a "synthesis of the world in terms of his emotions" and of his practical nature: "attempts to give," because a negative philosophy like pessimism or scepticism may teach that the world is essentially unsatisfactory to man, and thus end not by answering our question but by explaining it away, leaving us with scientific metaphysic, the metaphysic of the reason, as the only solid part of philosophy at all.

We may at least say that a philosophical teleology or metaphysic of ethics, in its answer to the question of the end of things and the real warrant of our hopes, must give us a kind of philosophy that is suited to all kinds of men, to the man of feeling and the ordinary man as well as to the man of reason and genius. As Schopenhauer somewhere says, it is a much more vital criticism of a man to say that he has a feeble heart although he has great mental powers, than to say his heart is good but his intellect is weak. Now it is a matter of literary history that German philosophy, from Leibnitz and Wolff to Kant and Hegel, gave to the ethical problem answers that were prevailingly, or almost exclusively, intellectual. The philosophy of that period, as a rule, made so little of the natural or direct

feelings of man that it almost seemed, like Spinoza, to "throw ethics out of ethics." It is an old error, indeed, of philosophy to make more of philosophic virtue than of civic virtue, to convert virtually the Stoic maxim "Follow Nature" into the maxim "Study Nature," and there have never been wanting those who have tried by all means in their power to convert into a positive cult the old error of seeking above all things wisdom. It is enough for man to *know*, to *understand*,—himself or anything else,—we are told; happiness somehow will follow that. The philosophy which Fichte sought to found on the main critical ideas of Kant is primarily a philosophy of action; but even he can hardly be said to have freed himself from a belief in the spontaneity and the all-sufficingness of reason, an idea which the Critical Philosophy used as an instrument or weapon, and did not test while yet seeking to test all other things with it. It is true that in reading Fichte one gets the impression that feeling is in a sense an embodiment of reason, as it is to Aristotle (*τὰ πάθη λόγοι ἐνυλοὶ*); but precisely because it is too much this, and because the man of genius or reason is regarded as superior after all to the man of action, we feel Fichte's analysis of action to be inadequate to the facts of life. His optimism, too, is not like that of the Christian religion, which first goes down into the "mire" of human nature before seeking to put it on the "rock" of strength and aspiration; it moves on such a high plane that it only appeals to the man "who is in a sense good already." It is one of the main merits of Schopenhauer to have challenged, and on the whole successfully challenged, this vaunted spontaneity of reason which was of course an integral part of Kant's philosophy, and a root-assumption of Hegel's from first to last. One is always reading in Hegel of "just letting pure reason go," float as it were into its own ether. As if "pure reason" carried everything with it! In the 'Phænomenology' we read that the "conception of philosophy is the idea that thinks

itself," and that the "object of philosophy is the notion in all the movements of its development," "that truth is the movement of truth in and for itself," and that "reason is to become all reality"; and all these phrases indicate what is perfectly well recognised to be the spirit of Hegel's whole philosophy. "The Idea freely lets itself go out of itself, while yet resting in itself, and remaining absolutely secure of itself."<sup>1</sup> As "pure reason" means in general to Schopenhauer pure nonsense, we may well pause at the outset over the conception of philosophy as to some extent necessarily an expression of temperament, or of natural feeling, or of character. In this conception there may be an element of truth.

The feelings play a tremendous part in Schopenhauer's system, and this certainly explains the human interest that attaches itself to his writings. People are in general far more ready to listen to a terrible lie or a great half-truth about their passions, than to careful reasoning about the nature of the intellect. To take an extreme instance, the case of the greatest feeling which man is supposed to have (an "affect" or feeling which is also an impulse or passion in the strictest sense), the feeling of love, Schopenhauer more than once expresses, as do M. Renan and others, the greatest surprise that philosophy has almost entirely neglected the study of the attraction of the sexes, which "shows itself," in his eyes, "next to the will to live" (which in fact it is according to him) "as the strongest and most active of all impulses. It claims continually quite half of the energies and thoughts of the younger half of mankind, and it is the ultimate aim of all human effort. It has an injurious influence on the most important affairs, and breaks up at any hour the most serious pursuits, setting occasionally the greatest heads into temporary confusion. It breaks up important relations, tears asunder the strongest bonds, takes sometimes life itself or health,

<sup>1</sup> Hegel. By Edward Caird, LL.D. (Blackwoods' Philosophical Classics), p. 197.

sometimes riches, rank, and happiness, as its offering, and makes even the honest unscrupulous, the faithful unfaithful, and in fact is on the whole a malevolent demon." It is not only, however, on the influence of sexual love that Schopenhauer writes at length in his system. All the feelings and impulses are made the subject-matter of his thought; so much so, indeed, that his system seems as much a pathology as a philosophy of human nature. He enlarges on the effect of fright, anger, emulation, joy, fear upon the intellect, maintaining that in general the intellect cannot work freely while these feelings are present to influence and to warp its decisions, and that a calm quiet judgment upon life, such as philosophy should aim at, is a matter of the very greatest difficulty. Such a judgment is difficult because it involves a solution of the question about the relation of the automatic and spontaneous and instinctive tendencies in man to his reflective and deliberative and rational tendencies. And the whole philosophy of this question lies open in Schopenhauer, partly solved and partly unsolved. We may say, of course, with the evolutionists, that the difficulty is largely one of our own making, because as a matter of fact reason itself is only an instinct, more complex perhaps than other instincts, but still an instinct whose workings we may scientifically describe and determine. This idea is expressed in Schopenhauer, and it involves the question of a purely naturalistic treatment of man being taken to be the final philosophy of human action. If, however, we regard reason as somehow superior to instinct and passion, as partly directive of them, we raise the question how that which is seemingly inevitable and automatic in its workings (passion and impulse) can be thought of as capable of being controlled from without. Ought man indeed to control passion and instinct, if these be the legacy which nature has left to him? Is not instinct after all more powerful than reason, and does it not cover a far larger area of life? Is not



instinct, according to Evolution, the organised experience of the past? Schopenhauer in short illustrates and expresses all the difficulties incident to the effort which the nineteenth century has had to make to correlate what was previously regarded to be characteristic of the animals with what was thought to be peculiar to man.

It is the service of Schopenhauer to have reversed the whole process of German philosophy, and to have looked at man from the side of irrational action and passion, things to which Kant's ethics and Hegel's system had done scant justice. No man ever felt more deeply or more consistently than Schopenhauer how thin and hollow and superficial any merely intellectual philosophy of life was. He saw what Vauvenargues meant when he said, "*Toutes les grandes pensées viennent du cœur.*" The idea that an organ, the brain,<sup>1</sup> which can "only work for a few hours at a stretch," and is dependent upon the "humours and tension of the nerves which constantly change with the hours, days, and years," should be regarded as equal to solving the riddle of the world, appeared to him ridiculous. He always insisted that the quality of knowledge was more important than its quantity, and that we should strive rather to "gain insight" than to add to our knowledge. If we were dependent on the amount of our knowledge, no man, he suggests, could judge of life until he had reached the end of it, and at that time the intellect or the brain could not be relied upon to interpret what had been experienced. A clear and pure and direct intuition into life, a whole sense for reality, always weighed with Schopenhauer far more than the greatest power of abstract thought. He admired, for example, Kant's power of abstract thought, but, like Heine, he could never think of Kant as a genius comparable to Plato or Buddha. Scholars

<sup>1</sup> It is essential in studying Schopenhauer to remember that "mind" and "brain" are convertible terms.

in like manner, he always maintained, learned from books, while the real genius read in the book of the world. Again, "God save us," he said once, in writing of his mother, "from women whose soul has shot up into mere intellect!"

While Schopenhauer had the fullest sympathy with the attitude of the wise man toward the ills and accidents of life as something merely inevitable—to be borne quietly, in fact—and for the mental rest which the insight of genius brings with it, he had a profound disbelief in and antipathy to the philosophy of the reason as being a cold and external way of looking at life. He is, strange to say, at once an iconoclast of speculative systems as such and a believer in genius-worship, tending, like his talented disciple Nietzsche,<sup>1</sup> to judge of a state or a people or an epoch by its capacity to be or not to be a foster-mother of great minds. Many men like Herder and Jacobi and Schiller and Goethe had felt the intensely formal and abstract character of the philosophy of Kant, but it was left to Schopenhauer to point out to philosophy the direction in which a theory of the emotions and activities of man could be sought. One of our hardest problems, however, will be just to reconcile Schopenhauer's teaching on instinct and passion, with his notorious belief in what he called genius and the pure insight of genius.

To take another example, all students of philosophy have in reading Kant found it very difficult to decide whether or not man is free when he does wrong. Wrong or passionate action is something that has really no place in Kant; it is action which is inexplicable just as it is in Plato, where man is "mastered by passion" when he does wrong, and where Socrates cannot see how one "can be knowingly bad."

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen: Schopenhauer als Erzieher*, s. 21 *et passim*. Schopenhauer often talks of the "secret awe" with which we ought to regard the work of genius. The contemplation of such work is to him (see chaps. v. and vi.) a step towards the emancipation of the mind.

It would certainly be a fine thing for the human race did evil and the bad play no part in a man's mental system, but the fact remains that society through the state punishes the evil-doer. Hegel, as we know, makes out the culprit to be free when he repents and accepts his punishment, but evades for the student the question about the freedom or necessity of the man's power of action before he is convicted. Hegel, that is, tends to a large extent to face questions of psychology and ethics from the standpoint of other sciences, such as jurisprudence and theology. In general Hegel works synthetically through man and the sciences, from the individual consciousness to the cosmic consciousness, from the merely natural to the spiritual, from the mere idea of a thing to the thing itself, from possibility to actuality, from the higher sciences to the lower, or from the lower sciences (*e.g.*, anthropology) to the higher (*e.g.*, psychology); and it is just because he seems to do this on the strength of the mere assumption, that of course philosophy must be different from science and must set forth only the universal element in things, without apparently having first done full justice to Kant's criticism of all the highest ideas of the reason, that one feels Hegel's general procedure to be pretty well "in the air." It was just this question why we should seek to pass so easily from one plane of thought to another, from matter say to spirit, that the human mind was beginning to ask at the commencement of this century—and Hegel seemed to be in the æther without ever having been seen to leave the earth, or to construct his balloon. A balloon too, as some one has said, is a "very fine thing, if one does not wish to go anywhere in particular." And we are never sure of our direction in Hegel; whether, indeed, he is working downwards from theology to metaphysics, or upwards from nature to spirit, or in a circle, whether analytically or synthetically.

It is no doubt intellectually satisfactory to think the world

downwards, or from the point of view of "the whole"; man had done so for two thousand years before Schopenhauer, he had had gods and heroes for his ancestors, and "trailed clouds of glory" after him, and the like. The nineteenth century began to look at the world from below upwards, and Schopenhauer was its philosophical mouthpiece. And Schopenhauer could never have done the work he did had he not been a man of titanic feeling as well as of titanic intellect. The irrational or daemonic element in Schopenhauer was as strong as the rational or regulative; and his experience of life was such as to bring the *non-rational* side of things prominently before his mind, and to make him seek an explanation of it. In the Kanto-Hegelian philosophy, as indeed in philosophy generally before Schopenhauer, evil and passion and the irrational had simply been marked with a minus quantity before it; and if Schopenhauer had not been a man who had more interest in the failures in life and nature than in the successes, in the bondage and necessity of man than in his liberty and freedom, he could not have done the work he did in philosophy. What we want to learn from Schopenhauer is not that it is as easy to read the world from below upwards as from above downwards, so that we may put Schopenhauer and Hegel together and state the world as "a sum that comes out in two ways"; but that both these ways of regarding the world are to a great extent partial, and that most philosophies indeed have been partial ways of viewing the world.

The personal element that one usually studies in the case of a philosopher is the extent to which he is influenced by the ideas of his time about man and the world. It is well known that nearly all the great philosophers have been men who were well acquainted with all the knowledge of their time, and that most great systems can be regarded as the highest theoretical expression of the ideas of an age on what

is knowable. Schopenhauer's system, like the rest, is certainly all this, and has its place in the history of human thought as the more or less unified or systematic expression of some of the leading tendencies of nineteenth-century thinking. Schopenhauer is the last of the great original speculative philosophers after Kant; and in studying his system, we study in a sense the attitude of speculative philosophy to the march of the critical and historical and scientific thought of our century. He is the natural man facing the idealism of art and philosophy—the natural man of whom Darwin and Haeckel and Spencer have written in the natural sciences, and Rousseau and the anarchists and socialists in the political sciences, and M. Zola and the realists in literature proper. The Idealism of art and philosophy and religion! That to Schopenhauer is a fact of the world just as much as the things about which physiology and zoology speak. It is in fact infinitely more, he thinks; and if philosophy cannot retain its hold on idealism while doing full justice to naturalism, then in his eyes it fails in its mission.

Schopenhauer's published works supply an extensive *répertoire* of art-criticism and of the philosophy of art and of the philosophy of religion and mysticism. He classifies the arts, and holds music to be the chief of all the arts, and to be in fact the best key to reality; and he finds in art and in religious quietism and mysticism the means of "overcoming the world." The natural man, as Schopenhauer sees him, is really antagonistic to all these things. He needs to be "born again" before he can appreciate them, and when he is "born again" he seeks, according to Schopenhauer, to escape as much as possible from the natural life which he feels to be in direct contradiction to the real life of the restored mind. The parallelism to Christianity is obviously very close, and it has to be confessed that however much Schopenhauer deprecates the idea of the mind that is truly

philosophical seeking for religious consolation, the metaphysical scheme which he gives to the world is in its final outcome a scheme of salvation. He believes that annihilation and not immortality is the only guerdon for man, and in this we certainly reach the limits of naturalism. Schopenhauer is a pessimist to the last, because the "light from Heaven" in the "pure intuitions" of art and of "perfect goodness" and of "perfect insight" is a light that "leads astray"; it is only a lurid flicker of light, a will-o'-the-wisp after all. He makes us think that art and religion take us out of life, and away from it, rather than more deeply and truly into it. How is it that these things fail Schopenhauer at the very point where they should help him?

Before Schopenhauer the current idea on the matter practically was, that the natural man or human beast had as little place in philosophy, had as little to do with it, as he had with the "kingdom of grace" of the theologians. The baptism of pure reason was virtually thought necessary to make man a fit student of philosophy, and Schelling indeed said so, advocating the need of a special faculty for philosophy. German philosophy had certainly forgotten that it was the reputed glory of Socrates to have brought philosophy down from heaven to earth and made her dwell in cities and market-places, and it was only through the appearance of a great original untamed force like Schopenhauer in the arena of philosophy that philosophy was called back from spinning metaphysical subtleties to an honest, positive, and laborious attempt to understand the actual world of natural birth and maturity and decay. Not that Schopenhauer himself was uninfluenced by the idea of the "flights of genius" (*Genieschwünge*) of the Romanticists and of Fichte and Schelling, but only that he insisted that philosophy should walk along the earth with the *bête humaine* before thinking of Pegasus-like flights in the air.

No doubt in saying this, one does in a sense suggest the reflection that, if Schopenhauer in the nineteenth century proposed a return to naturalism, or even placed philosophy at the point of view of naturalism, he was taking a backward instead of a forward step, since even Kant, not to mention his successors in German philosophy, may be said to have freed philosophy and man from the chains of the naturalism and superficial empiricism that almost conquered the world in the eighteenth century. Two or three things may be said in answer to this reflection. In the first place, the naturalism with which philosophy is confronted in Schopenhauer is the naturalism not of the eighteenth but of the nineteenth century, a naturalism whose real drift Schopenhauer divined before Comte and Darwin and Spencer had written. "Each individual effort of the will may be seen in the difference of organic form it brings about. The nature of the place, for example, in which its prey dwells determines the shape of an animal." He early accepted the idea of the descent of man's body from a lower organism, and seems to have speculated on the consequences of that theory, before others had faced the theory itself. "If Nature had only taken its last step to man from an elephant instead of from an ape, how different would man then have been! He would have been an intelligent elephant, or an intelligent dog, instead of an intelligent monkey."<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer, in point of fact, thrust upon philosophy the duty of squaring itself not with the atomistic, mechanical, physical naturalism of the eighteenth century, but with the organic, evolutionary, biological, and psychical naturalism of the nineteenth. It may be recognised at the end of this century that the whole genesis-philosophy of Evolution is a piece of unproved and unprovable dogmatism. Evolution refers to process, and not to origin. But whatever truth or untruth there lay in Evolution, Schopen-

<sup>1</sup> Aus Schopenhauer's handschrift. Nachlass, s. 348.

hauer was one of the first to be willing to go *jusqu'au bout* in the matter. We must remember that owing to the interest of the English mind in German idealism, after idealism had ceased to have an influence in Germany,—an interest fostered by Coleridge and Carlyle, and then by the Scottish and English Hegelian teachers of philosophy,—we have become blinded to the fact that Schopenhauer was a true successor of Kant, living and writing in the very years when Hegel was ascending and filling the philosophical horizon.

It is moreover largely owing to the fact that Hegel was the triumphant philosopher at once of the political restoration period and of the literary renaissance period in Germany, that the work of Schopenhauer on the more purely *universal* and *personal* (as opposed to the historical and impersonal<sup>1</sup>) aspects of the philosophical problem was so completely neglected by a patriotic and aspiring public. Say what one will about Hegel, he is pre-eminently the philosopher of the early restoration years of the nineteenth century; he gave thinking Germans what they seemed for a fatal moment to have lost in the revolution period. Professor A. Seth<sup>2</sup> says that it is the growing feeling of many students that Hegel's real Antæus-like strength lies in the ground of history. While one may not be altogether inclined to acquiesce in the feeling of those who entertain this opinion, in so far as they fail to take account of Hegel's unparalleled dialectic ability, the outcome of the opinion may be taken to mean that it is impossible to understand Hegel apart from history. Schopenhauer on the contrary faces the philosophical problem as having an interest

<sup>1</sup> By this it is meant that Schopenhauer's philosophy is occupied with the eternal question of how far the individual man can know the ultimate meaning of the world, and of how much meaning the world may have for him as an individual. Hegel's philosophy, on the contrary (fortunately for Hegel himself), gave men a complete justification of the history and policy of the German nation.

<sup>2</sup> From Kant to Hegel, p. 169.



for the individual independently of his place in history. Time, to Schopenhauer, was merely a form of our thinking; and to him the individual really confronted the world now with as pronounced a sense of wonder and mystery as he had on the morning of creation. The species "man" was to him an eternally new and an eternally old phenomenon, a timeless assertion of the will to live. The philosophy of history consequently had no meaning for him; he only cared, like John the Baptist, about the timeless nature of the world and of the individual. In nations as nations he had little interest, and even less in the Germany which after 1815 was only becoming something more than a mere aggregate of individual territories. Prussia he hated, and in his private life he lived aloof from all the struggles of the century, from all the efforts and aspirations of *la souveraine canaille*. Patriotism he held to be a spurious virtue resting on ignorance and prejudice;<sup>1</sup> and he had too little faith in average human nature to believe at all in democracy. And so, in his thought, it is only the destiny of the individual and of his knowledge, and the seemingly nugatory character of all that the mere individual can do, that give him food for reflection. "*Eadem sed aliter*" is all that he said about history. To have read Herodotus was quite enough in that regard.

The confusions then in Schopenhauer's philosophy (and his whole philosophy is a philosophy of confusionism or illusionism<sup>2</sup>) are the outcome of the attempt of the "ape and tiger" philosophy to break in upon the glorious inheritance of the idealised human person. He was once plunged for days into reflection over an interesting ape that had been brought to

<sup>1</sup> "Der Patriotismus, wenn er im Reiche der Wissenschaften sich geltend machen will, ein schmutziger Geselle ist, den man hinauswerfen soll. Denn was kann impertinenter sein, als da, wo das rein und allgemein Menschliche betrieben wird . . . seine Vorliebe für die Nation, welcher . . . u. s. w."—'Parerga,' Werke, vi. 523.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 5.

Frankfort: its eyes seemed to him like those of "the prophet" gazing over the "wilderness" into the "promised land" (man's mind). His system represents the birth-throes of the idea of evolution, at first stupidly thought to suggest a process that had happened in time (instead of a timeless process as in Aristotle and Heraclitus). A student needs to feel at once the awe of Kant for the "starry heaven above and the moral law within," and the surprise engendered by a lamp-light inspection of the similarity in structure between the brain of a man and that of an ape, to be in a sympathetic attitude for the study of Schopenhauer's philosophy. "Nothing is better calculated to lead us to a knowledge of the identity of what is essential in the characteristics of brutes and men than having to do somewhat with zoology and anatomy."

So far indeed is Schopenhauer from being a retrograde philosopher that he is a direct successor of Kant,—perhaps on an opposite line to that of Hegel,—continuing to study the real as a philosopher, not the real, it is true, of mere naturalism, but the real of nascent and all-conquering evolutionism. Hegel's philosophy is also a study in evolution; in fact it is an evolution, a metaphysical evolution. But it is one of the most serious problems in the history of philosophy to study Hegel's dialectic evolution in relation to what is ordinarily meant and scientifically meant by evolution. Von Hartmann rightly insists that much seeming evolution in Hegel is only an evolution of ideas in Hegel's brain.<sup>1</sup> All students of Hegel have felt this, and felt it most acutely at the moment when a proper understanding of science and nature seems obtainable, only if we have the courage to throw the lumber of his whole method off our shoulders. It would certainly be rash to hint that Schopenhauer clearly recognises the difference between metaphysical and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. von Hartmann, *Das philosophische Dreigestirn des neun. Jahrh.* (s. 609, Studien u. Aufsätze).

scientific or historical evolution. We have little interest in making out either philosopher to be less culpable than he seems to be, but we must try to see how, on a rough provisional acceptance of the evolutionary hypothesis, Schopenhauer's philosophy stands nearer both to science and to life than Hegel's absolute idealism.

Any one who is acquainted with the history of nineteenth-century thinking would say that one of its great characteristic achievements is to have shown nature to include both what was known previously as the natural and what was known previously as the supernatural. John Stuart Mill, standing at its centre and being for Englishmen one of the most typical minds of the century, thought of nature as including both phenomena and causes, both the world and God, as it were, nature and grace, phenomena and noumena. We all know how the noumenal or supra-sensuous world even in Kant seems to float in æther, just as it does in Plato, and never to be completely brought into real relation with the actual world with all its fulness of life and colour. Hegel, on the contrary, thought of himself as the modern Aristotle, giving us the concrete universal for the abstract universal, a new God of spirit for the dead mover of matter of eighteenth-century theism and materialism; but it is pretty generally agreed that his natural philosophy is one of forms and words rather than of real things and real forces. Schopenhauer simply thrust himself into the philosophical world, and by his unsparing iconoclasm, if by nothing else, drew attention to the possible reasons for his hostility to the philosophy of the mere idea and the merely supernatural.

This fact suggests the nature of the interest the mind naturally takes in Schopenhauer. We are first alarmed by his utterances about his predecessors and the bold realistic character of his own first principle; then we are charmed by the

extraordinary brilliance and richness of his utterances, and strangely interested in the study of his marvellous personality, combining as it does to a more wonderful extent than that of any other man who ever lived<sup>1</sup> the power for abstract speculation with an enormous vitality of force and feeling; and then finally we come to an objective study of the man and his philosophy as a great natural phenomenon in the history of modern culture.

Schopenhauer's own personality is one of the best examples that could be given of the fact that the primary thing about man is not his intellect but his personality—his endeavour, Goethe-like, to "experience" all things and to obtain the fullest life and the best kind of happiness. "*Ce n'est pas un philosophe comme les autres,*" said some one of him; "*c'est un philosophe qui a vu le monde.*" Schopenhauer knew his character perfectly well, and described it carefully and accurately; it was in the language of psychology about one-half choleric and one-half melancholic. As he put it, he belonged to the *δύσκολοι* and not to the *εύκολοι*, to those who had the severe or difficult mood of life and not to those who had the easy or light mood. The reading he gave of life was therefore a stern and severe one.

The characterisation, however, of Schopenhauer's perception of the miseries of life, as a direct consequence of the sensibility or the temperament he knew himself to be possessed of, is apt to become superficial. It rests upon mere truism. We shall be occupied throughout not with the man and the element of personal equation in his philosophy, but with the question of the grounds upon which an ultimate judgment about life may be conceived to rest. There are scores of sentences throughout Schopenhauer which show that he rose altogether beyond any personal estimate of life, whether his

<sup>1</sup> Gwinner makes out Schopenhauer's to be the strongest head of all the philosophers.

own or another's, even although he persisted in regarding life in terms of feeling and action rather than in terms of knowledge. "A healthy beggar is happier than a sick king," he insists. "The man of elevated character will regard men in a purely objective way, and not according to the relations they sustain to his own personal activity: he will for example take cognisance of their faults, of their hate even and injustice to himself, but without being on his side excited to hate them; he will be able to look on their good fortunes without envying them; he will recognise their good qualities without wishing for any closer relations with them; he will perceive the beauty of women without being drawn to them. His own personal happiness or unhappiness will not strongly affect him. . . . For he will see in his own course of life and its misfortunes, not so much his own personal lot as the lot of humanity, and so adopt the attitude *more of a spectator than a sufferer*." <sup>1</sup>

More of a spectator than of a sufferer! These words are characteristic of the being we have yet to study with Schopenhauer, the man who is emancipated from wrong views and feelings about life. But what is the meaning of Schopenhauer's persistently pessimistic estimate of life, in view of the fact that from a higher standpoint he is enabled to say, "The greatest thing in life is not he who conquers the world (*Welteroberer*) but he who overcomes it (*Weltüberwinder*)"? <sup>2</sup> Are we to choose the standpoint of the natural man or the emancipated man in drawing up our estimate of life? If of neither but of both, then what are we to say the world is as a matter of fact? What is to be our dogmatic position about the world as a whole? All that we can now realise is that perhaps both the dogmatism of pure reason and the dogmatism of pure passion (naturalism) are apt to turn out to be one-sided estimates of life.

Schopenhauer was always enough of a student to inquire,

<sup>1</sup> Die Welt, &c., Werke, ii. 244.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pp. 49 and 516.

in the order of ideas, first for a metaphysic of man and then for an ethic, making the latter to depend on the former, although strangely enough his personality and his system teach with perfect plainness that for man as man knowledge does not precede conduct, but conduct knowledge. The whole enigma of his philosophy, and the whole contradiction that his life was, depend on his mental effort to reconcile these two positions,—that of philosophy which says, first a metaphysic or theory and then action, and that of nature which says, first action and then theory. “It is with perfect right that the heart, this *primum mobile* of animal life, has been chosen and designated the symbol and the synonym of the will, which is the core of our phenomenal being, and this in distinction to the intellect, which is exactly just the same as the brain. . . . Heart and head describe the whole man. But the head is always the secondary and the derivative; for it is not the centre of the body but only its highest efflorescence. When a hero dies it is his heart that is embalmed and not his brain; but on the other hand people are willing enough to preserve the skull of poets and artists and philosophers.”<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere he says that in life the brain and the heart get “*more and more detached from each other*” as life goes on. This, as it stands, is an exaggerated assertion; the opposite in fact is nearer the truth, because as people grow older a harmony generally seems to establish itself between their conscious desires and their unconscious actions, between what they know and what they feel. It is chiefly only in the young, and in people of unstable character, that reason and instinct do not seem to be in perfect accord. Schopenhauer of course believed that we could attain to full salvation from human misery only by giving up willing and acting altogether, and by taking refuge in the higher kind of knowledge (artistic and religious contemplation), which is as far removed from

<sup>1</sup> Die Welt, &c., ii. 267, 268, *passim*.

willing and acting (from the *heart* therefore) as possible. To correlate, however, in our thought the workings of the head and the heart is the great problem in Schopenhauer. The difficulty really is: if philosophy has systematically put knowledge before conduct, while nature has done the reverse, what is to become of philosophy? If nature is really our teacher, what about reason, and rational thinking concerning the end of life?

Schopenhauer in early life insisted (he was set a-thinking by Gall and the philosophical physiology of the day) on a belief in two things: heredity and the practical identity of mind and body. He can hardly be made out to have fully understood the physiology and the psychology of heredity. Nor did he work out to any degree of completeness the relation of the fact of heredity to the question of moral freedom. But he always insisted that action was the result of two factors, *character* and *circumstances* or environment. It is an essential part of his doctrine that we cannot speak of a causal relation between a man's will and his bodily acts, as if the will were a thing by itself. It is really wrong, he thinks, to distinguish the will from actions: "will" is an established tendency to action, and is, in fact, the sum-total of actions, the organic or total self. To the idea of the identity of mind and body, Schopenhauer may be said to have held quite rigidly, if not always with perfect consistency, really believing, and saying a score of times, that the notion of an independent soul was a positive hindrance and bugbear in the way of a truly scientific psychology. "There is no soul," he wrote in a burst of enthusiasm after hearing Gall at Hamburg, "and no psychology: brain and bodily processes explain all that we call mental." Throughout his philosophy the organic body is simply "will" objectified, each particular volition having its particular organ or organs, the teeth and stomach being objectified hunger, the feet objectified haste, and so on.

We shall later encounter the issues at stake between the metaphysician, who objects to the intrusion into metaphysic of psychological ideas and categories, and the psychologist, who objects to the intrusion into psychology of metaphysical ideas and categories. We may learn from the facts which Schopenhauer's study of the human personality reveals, that neither the Cartesian nor the Kantian dualist, nor the Spinozistic nor the Hegelian monist, can be regarded as having set forth in a complete or actual way the relation of the mind to the body.<sup>1</sup>

It is needless here to enumerate and discuss the naturalistic philosophers whom Schopenhauer studied. Cabanis, Helvetius, and Diderot, and (later in his life) Burdach and Bichat, were some of the chief. His system got from this source its scientific aspect, which is another great reason for its modern interest. It moves all the time on that dismal fighting-ground, the border-land of religion (or philosophy) and science. The special problem of philosophy to him was to "unite the cosmical and the ethical order," to find "in nature a basis for man's conduct," and he believed that his principle of will gave the human mind what it wanted. It was his special boast that he "united, as no one else had done, Thales and Socrates," the philosophy of nature and that of man, and this not by starting either from the subject or the object, as former systems had done. All other systems, he thought, had tried to explain the subject from the object or the object from the subject by the principle of causation or sufficient reason, forgetting that such principles applied only to things as phenomena.

By placing the reality of human personality in will or in

<sup>1</sup> As a metaphysician Schopenhauer objects to the introduction of the psychological notion of an individual (empirical) self into the metaphysic of the will. See, *e.g.*, p. 395. From the point of view of psychology, however, we might object to Schopenhauer's seeming (see chap. iii.) to think that the self (or the will) is actually irrational (blind, unconscious, &c.), because it is difficult to comprehend or understand the self.



functional activity, Schopenhauer certainly puts himself in line with the teaching of evolution about man, both as to his past history and his possible destiny in the future. Physical evolution seems to teach that man has attained to his present position in the scale of being by boundless struggle and warfare; and that nature puts each individual at its start in life upon the vantage-ground fought out for it by all its predecessors, and gives it an organism whose *unconscious* tendencies, instincts, and impulses chronicle the laborious and largely *conscious* efforts of all its predecessors to conform to their environment and to attain the maximum of life both as to quality and to quantity. And as far as the future goes there does seem to be more hope for the individual if the reality of his being is placed essentially in volition rather than in knowledge. Knowledge is not an end in itself. And further it is essentially impersonal in its nature. The Averroists saw this when they professed to find in mere knowledge no sufficient ground for immortality; and Hegel's "Idea" too is essentially impersonal in its nature. But to *will* endlessly means to *aspire* endlessly, and if there is provision anywhere in the system of things for giving to man that which would not merely satisfy his intellect but also lift him on to a higher stage of life, we may then think of immortality as something that may fall to the lot of the individual who supremely desires it, and is supremely worthy of it.

Another noticeable effect of Schopenhauer's study of physical and natural science was his acceptance of the doctrine of Malebranche that all causes are occasional causes. "Malebranche is right in his theory of occasional causes (*causes occasionelles*)." This means that Schopenhauer held that the causal explanation of things, or ætiology, as he calls it (from *αἰτία*, a cause), was simply the referring of one phenomenon to another

phenomenon, and that therefore causal explanation was only partial explanation, valuable enough for the understanding of man who preserves his life by unravelling somehow the connections among things, but of no ultimate significance. "The ætiological explanation of things does nothing more than discover the natural laws according to which circumstances happen in time and space, showing for all cases what phenomena must necessarily appear just at that time and in that place. . . . But about the inner nature of any single phenomenon whatever we do not in this way attain to even the slightest decision."<sup>1</sup> A phenomenon is only completely explained, that is, by being assigned to its systematic place in the universe of which it forms a part; and as we can at best do this but partially, all causal explanation is in a sense inadequate and fortuitous, resting simply on our perception of the amount of reality which we at any one time happen to know. Of the world as a whole there is no explanation, and to ask for a *cause* of the universe is unmeaning; we can only try to say *what* the world is and how things in it have become what they are, not how the world itself has become what it is. "The absolute cannot be thought of as a first cause, for the simple reason that there is no such thing as a first cause." "Equally little can it be thought of as the absolutely necessary, because necessity only means being so and so for certain grounds, . . . and so the absolutely necessary is a *contradictio in adjecto*."<sup>2</sup>

Thus Schopenhauer holds with many other profound thinkers that scientific knowledge only serves to stave off our ignorance, and that it seems from the standpoint of science extremely doubtful whether there can indeed ever be such a thing as absolute or final knowledge. There *may* be, and there is, a *philosophy* of nature in addition to mere ætiology (or scientific

<sup>1</sup> Die Welt, &c., Werke, ii. 116.

<sup>2</sup> Ü. d. Universitäts-Philosophie, Werke, v. 199.

causal explanation), but what this philosophy is, is utterly inconceivable from the point of view of mere mechanical causation, which is all that science has to do with. The real value of this idea seems to lie just in the very fact of its suggesting that metaphysical knowledge must be something quite different from scientific knowledge. Metaphysical knowledge cannot consist in knowledge merely of causes and of entities. Schopenhauer practically teaches us that the key to the unity of a thing lies in the fact of its *function*, whether that is merely mechanical or to a certain extent organic. This is what his notion of will means. A philosophy of mere forces or causes only expresses the relation of the movement of some things to the movement of some other things. My body or the earth may be taken as a point of reference to which the movement of all other things is referred, but then it is at once apparent that the earth itself is in movement, and so is the sun in reference to other bodies, and so on *ad infinitum*. The saying of Archimedes, "Give me a fulcrum and I will move the world," is truly the *reductio ad absurdum* of a mechanical philosophy, for every point in the universe is really a point of reference in relation to which all the other things in the universe may be conceived to be in motion. A point to which all mere motion could be referred is strictly speaking an imaginary point. A merely ætiological or mechanical philosophy simply takes us from one cause to another antecedent cause, and so on *ad infinitum*. "Or, if I may use an absurd but more striking comparison, the philosophical investigator must always have the same feeling towards the complete ætiology of the whole of nature as a man who, without knowing how, has been brought into a company quite unknown to him, each member of which in turn presents another to him as his friend and his cousin, and therefore as quite well known, and yet the man himself, while at each introduction he expresses himself gratified, has always the question

on his lips, 'But how the deuce do I stand to the whole company?' " <sup>1</sup>

Then as to atoms and cells and monads and organisms,—the outcome of Schopenhauer's thought virtually is that only such organisms as seem to exist for themselves can be regarded as absolutely existing at all. All things move, and all animals to a certain extent may be said to *will*, but none of them attain anything for themselves. It is only man who seems to attain to *something* in his volition, to something for himself. Persons therefore are in a sense the only real existences, or at least all other organic beings are beings inferior to conscious persons. A conscious person is the highest outcome of nature. Schopenhauer naturally regarded the universe itself as the sole ultimate reality, and even the universe in his eyes is always as it were running away from itself, because volition to him means continually *going out of self* without ever returning to the self in any valid sense of the word. Metaphysical knowledge, however, has as little to do with mere entities as with mere causes. Any ordinary phenomenon "will do for" a *cause*, and anything, broadly speaking, is an "entity" or a sum of entities. Scientific knowledge in itself is not a search for final causes; it only enables us to explain one thing by reference to some other thing, or to some of its antecedents or some of its consequents. Only the ends or aims of conscious persons give us points of view for systematising the universe. Metaphysics therefore has to do with the ends or aims of conscious persons. After the scientific philosophy of the century we are coming to see that metaphysical knowledge is qualitatively different from scientific knowledge; it "goes beyond" mere physical knowledge as the name itself implies. It ought to start, in short, with what has been called the *summum bonum*, the highest good for man. All this arises by way of natural consequence from holding will to be the only ultimate

<sup>1</sup> Die Welt, &c., Werke, ii. 117; H. and K.'s transl., i. 127.

reality, seeing that will at its highest stage simply means, in the first instance, our volition.

Schopenhauer had the scientific tendency to try to see all things reduced to their *naturalia* or simplest natural elements; inorganic objects to atoms which attracted and repelled each other, and organic objects to the play of their fundamental organs. His supreme principle, will, is not will of the highest type, the rational self-determining will of the philosophers,—he believed that to be a hitherto unchallenged fiction, and it certainly is an extremely misleading phrase,—but will of the lowest type, impulse or instinct, the will which is more perfectly exemplified in animals than in man. This was so because Schopenhauer was not himself free from the scientific conception of philosophy that we have just referred to, the tendency, namely, to regard the last elements of things, the *ῥιζώματα πάντων*, in the language of Empedocles, as something beneath or prior to the existence of conscious persons. He had this tendency in spite of the fact that he accepted the teaching of Berkeley and Kant about the “object” being dependent upon the “subject,” about there being no world apart from consciousness or thought. Now if the essence of all things is will, the entities or things lower down in nature than human personality are not strictly speaking things in themselves at all, things that have an absolute existence apart from other things. Matter without form is nothing, and formed matter has significance only in relation to conscious persons.

If Schopenhauer had not been influenced by the idea that metaphysic or philosophy enables us in some way to speak about the simplest elements of organic as well as of physical matter, he would not have taken as his type of will the lowest phase of volition, animal instinct. We may, of course, learn to a certain extent what the higher phases of volition are from a study of the lower phases, just as we learn much about

organic nature from the study of inorganic nature. Indeed the study of instinct leads the mind naturally onwards to a study of reason and reasoned action. Nature can be understood only by reference to man, and instinct can be understood only by reference to its highest development in human volition. Schopenhauer thus put philosophy upon the path best calculated to yield a full understanding of man's nature. Kant had suggested that in the will of man was to be found somehow the key to the nature of things. But because the ethical reconstruction which he attempted in the 'Criticism of Practical Reason' seemed to be something which he was not theoretically entitled to make, the philosophical world could not take the hint for what it was really worth.

Schopenhauer's writings further exhibit the bluff realistic way of talking about man's life characteristic of the anatomy-room. His language largely corresponds to his conviction that all human beliefs and feelings can be systematised under the idea of the continuance and furtherance of the life of the world-will. He saw that normal mental life included the normal play of man's thousand and one organic activities, and that man's activity is so organised that, in studying it even from one point of view, one implicitly appeals to the total activity of which the one side in question is only an aspect. He felt convinced that man, as a natural organism or living being, could claim no exemption from the so-called laws of animate nature as to birth and maturity and decay, although he certainly would not have been rash enough to hold that man can *think* a transitory existence to be his only existence. We shall have to consider how far we can agree with him that *the mere reason* of man cannot be said to guarantee for man a more than phenomenal or transitional existence.<sup>1</sup> There had been an understanding among philosophers of his own day that, as Novalis said, while philosophy

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. viii. ; also p. 464, &c.

"could bake no bread," she could yet procure for us "God and freedom and immortality"; but Schopenhauer, like von Hartmann, ridicules the idea of any serious mind coming to philosophy with any expectation whatever about what it could possibly do. It is well known that as a young man he himself came to the study of the world with none of the traditional beliefs and spiritual inheritances common to the youth of Germany in his day. This is seen in his perfectly ingenuous willingness to accept completely any statement about the ultimate elements of man's life, which purported to be matter of fact; he was a physical realist from beginning to end of his thinking. One must be careful, too, when stating the results of his speculations in the stereotyped phraseology either of philosophy or theology to remember not only that Schopenhauer himself made little serious attempt to correlate his own thought with any other system in existence (save perhaps the Kantian philosophy), but that he did not care in the least to be *understood*. The majority of men were a mere *profanum vulgus* in his eyes, a *servile pecus* at once too ignorant and too sordid to care for fundamental knowledge, especially such fundamental knowledge as failed to justify established beliefs and customs, prejudice and practice. He had, too, the effrontery or the courage ("*si omnes patres sic, at ego non sic*") to believe that he wrote more for posterity than for contemporaries. And he really wrote about the "natural man" for "all time," saying perhaps the last word on that subject in philosophy.

Schopenhauer may be said to make people believe that the world is worse than they had taken it to be, rather than to make them feel that it can be reconciled with their highest desires, and this sense of disenchantment makes his system pleasing to the sour or morbid or sceptical mind. "Philosophy is no church and no religion. It represents that small

spot on the earth's surface, accessible only to the veriest few, where truth, that is everywhere hated and persecuted, is for once unwedded to any pressure and compulsion." In the very connection in which we are speaking, it is right to say that Schopenhauer gives man an impersonal immortality in impersonal will just as the Averroists gave him an impersonal immortality in impersonal reason; but one must never think that this statement (which is in its very nature a concession) at all represents the spirit of a philosophy whose essence is to make no concessions to any mind. Not that Schopenhauer's philosophy is purely positive in tone, or that his mind was indeed rationally free in the complete sense, but that his philosophy is a most serious and most honest attempt of what some people like to call the natural unassisted reason of man to solve the mystery of the world, without making compromises with existing philosophy or religion. The ontology of Schopenhauer is certainly more a cosmology than a theology, for he is primarily in search of a doctrine containing some statement as to the last elements of the natural world. Only we must remember that the very expression the "natural world" has come to be used as antithetical to something else (a spiritual world), although there is no real warrant for attaching any such limited signification to it. Schopenhauer is one of those to whom the natural is also supernatural,<sup>1</sup> and it is really the outcome of his doctrine that we must give up the search for an ontology and content ourselves with a teleology—not the teleology of a Paley or a Kant, but simply a practical philosophy or a philosophy of action.

Strictly speaking, the teaching of Schopenhauer closes with a negative solution of the problem of the nature of reality. He indeed maintains that the world is will, and will means for him force or impulse; but he still conceives of will in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the reference to J. S. Mill on p. 23.



primarily a negative way. He comes in the end to tell us what the world *is not*, and what the end of life *is not*. The closing sentences of his chief work are to the effect that this world, with all its "suns and milky ways, is really nothing," and that "before us there is certainly only nothingness." All that seemingly exists is in his view only illusory appearance. The reason for this has already been suggested. In saying that all things are will he had in his mind's eye the form of activity that we call instinct, and not volition in the highest sense of conscious purpose. A being that merely acts in accordance with instinct is no being at all in the highest sense; it does not know what it is doing or what it is realising. Schopenhauer thought of the world-will as largely instinctive and automatic (chiefly because that was what seemed to strike him in the biological way of looking at man), and therefore nugatory; it did not really know what it realised. A being that wills consciously is of course more real through its volition, because in its volition it knows that it attains to something which at one time it had not. But Schopenhauer did not see this truth or did not grasp its significance. It is perhaps better to say that he did not grasp its significance. He maintains that the very idea which conscious beings have of realising certain ends is an illusion: men do not realise that which they think they realise. And his teaching must be examined seriously, for the reason that he does at least show what men do not realise—namely, individual happiness or pleasure.

Though Schopenhauer's system has a strong materialistic colouring it is not materialism. It is rather animism or panpsychism (*pantheism*, in point of fact). His theory of life is essentially metaphysical: living beings are individuations of the will to live, the principles of individuation being

space and time.<sup>1</sup> Genus or species is to him at bottom a mere conceptual idea having no real existence; there are no such things, that is, as groups of beings definitely marked off in space and time from other beings which we might call *genera* or *species*. Different species are mere variable and varying objectifications of the one will-to-live.<sup>1</sup> And just as in modern biology it is difficult to say where the individuality of an organism begins, since all organisms are sums of organic units, each of which may in a sense be said to have individuality, and since, further, individuality is often a transitional phenomenon (as in animals that are groups of animals), so in Schopenhauer there is no discontinuity between one organism and another, and between all apparent organisms and the will of the world. Individuality is there only a form of the present, like the imaginary point where the rainbow rests on the particles of water that fall down a cataract. "The life of the individual is not enough for me," says the will, according to Schopenhauer. "I need the life of the species to endless time, for endless time is the form of my appearance." "All life is nothing but a continual change of matter under the steady persistence of form; this is what we mean by the transitoriness of the individual in the eternity of the species." Most thinkers are now prepared to admit that conscious existence for self or conscious personality is something that we do not find lower down in the biological scale than man. ("Sticks and stones" are hardly individuals or organic units at all; there is no question about *their* being final existences: they simply are not such.) But just because

<sup>1</sup> It must be difficult for the average reader to grasp what Schopenhauer means by *objectification* and *particularisation* and *individuation*. These expressions refer to his theory of the origin of the world of particular things and persons. In itself the will has neither individuality nor personality; these are merely *forms* that it seems to our intellect to assume when it becomes the *object* of our perception.

Schopenhauer, although in other respects a metaphysician (as to the external world depending upon our consciousness, for example), looked, as do most biologists, more at the instinctive and the automatic in man than at the conscious and deliberate, he did not see the full significance of the fact of conscious individuality in man. Man seemed to him a creature led and dominated by his instincts, and therefore a mere puppet in the hands of nature. Society too is to him at once the fiction that it is to the anarchist, and the questionable entity that it is to the biologist. Take away the bolts and the chains which confine men, he suggests, and you will soon see, as in revolution and in anarchy, what beasts men really are. A nation or a people, he thinks, is nothing; it is only the individuals therein that are real, and their existence is but of the moment.

We can appreciate the full force of these thoughts only when we come to study Schopenhauer's teaching about the "empirical character" and the evil or wayward and selfish will of the individual.<sup>1</sup> All things to Schopenhauer are objectifications or external manifestations of the will,—a highly metaphysical idea, the possible, sober, actual meaning of which we shall soon examine. Still for "the materialists" Schopenhauer has boundless contempt, the fellows with "no humanities, no culture, nothing but their syringe-ology and instruments." There is perhaps no philosopher to whom one could more easily refer a student offhand for a refutation of materialism than Schopenhauer. He sees in a nutshell the whole absurdity of trying to evolve a "subject" from an "object" which really presupposes an existing subject to start with. He accepts, as we shall see,<sup>2</sup> the Berkeleyan-Kantian analysis of the real in this regard. Materialism, as he says, always fills him with the "Olympian laughter of the gods."

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chaps. iv. and viii.

<sup>2</sup> In chap. ii.

If Schopenhauer himself is not always, as he thinks he is, on Olympus, he is certainly the giant trying to scale it.

It is often asked whether Schopenhauer was really a careful student of science. In the first place Schopenhauer's habits of mind, as has been remarked, were not those of the ordinary systematic investigator or strict thinker. He jotted down his thoughts not in a systematic order but aphoristically, just as ideas struck him, about things he saw or read. As Goethe has been called a *Gelegenheitsdichter*, so Schopenhauer has been called a *Gelegenheitsphilosoph*; he philosophises about life as a whole, but also about all the facts of life as they come before him. And what he had thus from time to time become convinced of or had seemed to perceive, he afterwards worked up in the study into some whole or system. The days of his devotion to science, again, were the days when science was not yet emancipated from *Naturphilosophie*—the construction of nature under some theoretically conceived first principle—when mechanical physics was giving place to speculative biology. His own philosophy is still a cosmogony.

Schopenhauer's conception of intelligence led him to believe in an intuitive perception of truth rather than in a reasoned apprehension of it. He would have approved of the "*intellectus sibi permissus*" of Bacon, and his whole philosophy rests on a hypothetical construction of the world, indicating undoubtedly a "leap" of the mind of man somehow beyond appearances into the core of reality, an attempt to say by way of speculation and "insight" what the physical world is. But though a cosmogonist, Schopenhauer never tried to think as exactly as even Lucretius, for example, did, about the way in which the apparent order of the world was maintained; nor did he know anything like the amount of physical science that Kant did. He approved of a quick perceptual divination of the meaning of nature, and speaks with

admiration of all scientific discoveries which seem to have been made by a happy blending of the perceptual and reflective powers on the part of the investigator. He speaks of Hooke and Newton and Lavoisier and Goethe in this regard, and his immediate friends and disciples have compared him—on the strength of some direct and indirect confession and contention on his part—to Lavoisier, as a sort of Lavoisier-philosopher who tried to simplify the various elements of the metaphysical philosophers. He compared the effort to understand the world with the attempt to read a manuscript written in a language the alphabet of which one does not know.

It must be admitted that this feeling which one has in reading Schopenhauer of a purely hypothetical instead of a scientific and verifiable construction of things, is not nearly so strong as in the case of von Hartmann, and also that Schopenhauer believed himself to have verified by the studies of thirty years his early conceived scheme of the world as an objectification of will. Still there is in him no complete and vigorous application of the inductive method which Bacon emphasised so strongly. There are a hundred gates to his system, he thinks, all leading to the central citadel of the will as the sole reality of things—which idea is also a fact of observation, he would add. This professed coincidence of indirect and direct proof is Schopenhauer's real position about his logical method. Just as animals by a kind of clairvoyance divine the ends which nature intends them to follow, so—he holds—through a kind of *aperçu* or intuitive divination does man obtain his deepest knowledge of the secret workings of nature. The intuitions of genius into nature surpass indeed in process and result the analytic method of the mere scientist, although in the end the method of genius and philosophy and the method of science and observation ought to lead to the same results.

It is somewhat difficult to allow for the various kinds of intuition that Schopenhauer supposes man to have. There are the intuitions of sense-perception, as to which Schopenhauer is essentially Kantian in his ideas, maintaining that such intuitions imply the machinery of the understanding. Then he sometimes attributes to the understanding itself a kind of intuitive power of discerning the causes of things. And lastly there are the intuitions of genius and art and of perfect goodness, and the intuition of the wise mind regarding life as a whole. All intuition is for him a sort of direct beholding of truth which is higher than logical processes, although perhaps involving these.<sup>1</sup>

This fondness of Schopenhauer for the supra-logical character of intuition and genius has its dangerous side.<sup>2</sup> The intuition is the expedient not so much of the philosopher as of the artist. A philosophical system, of course, is always in a certain sense the attempt to fix an ideal, and so comparable to the work of the artist. And perhaps no one in the twentieth century will write out a system of philosophy resting upon one ultimate principle—ultimate principles must be to a certain extent abstract—who has not the courage and faith of the artist. But when once we confess that a system of philosophy is largely an artistic creation, can we be any longer dogmatic or didactic in philosophy? This question is part of the refrain of Schopenhauer's philosophy. The "truth" in the notion that philosophy must be based on intuitions into nature is that philosophy must somehow learn the meaning of the world by taking up a passive and recipient attitude towards it, studying it not to conquer it with the "might of thought" but in order to conform its thought and feeling to things *as they are*. The meaning of the world will

<sup>1</sup> In chap. iii. will be found an account of the different kinds of knowledge Schopenhauer supposes man to possess.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chaps. v. and vi.

reveal itself to man if he study patiently everything that professes to be *in* the world and everything that professes to be *explanatory* of it. Schopenhauer has painted life as a tragedy; he had the intellectual ability and the artistic susceptibility to have painted it as something else if he had been born in a different age with a different temperament. But even more than in his insight and fine susceptibility of mind, his strength lay in his insistence on the necessity of a direct attitude to life on the part of the philosopher, and in his having recourse to observation as well as reflection. Hegel's thinking through, by "the might of thought," to the core of things is a pleasing fallacy. "Nature has neither kernel nor husk," as Goethe<sup>1</sup> puts it.

Schopenhauer, it may be repeated, arrived at the principle of will both by way of logic or dialectic and by way of observation. The former way we shall examine when dealing with his theory of knowledge; the latter we shall treat of throughout just as he himself did. We are supposed to find that the world is will by a sort of *cumulative proof*, by seeing it to be true of most ways of looking at the world and of most things in the world, and of the world as a whole. There is only one way to know what the world is, and that is observation. Of course it is equally certain that to state what the world is—to state what we see it to be, requires reflection. Schopenhauer's devotion to physical science is the proof that he did study the world directly; his being a *Gelegenheitsphilosoph* is a proof that he went about with his eyes open, roaming over things; his mastering Plato is a proof that he had the power of abstract thought and artistic insight; and his thorough mastery of Kant—he perceived the general drift of Kantism as well as Hegel did, and he knew the details of Kant's work better than most of his contemporaries—proves him to have been the student capable of prolonged, systematic, hard intellectual labour.

<sup>1</sup> 'Gott und Welt,' "Allerdings."

As to the influence of Plato upon Schopenhauer, we can quite well believe, as Professor Wallace puts it, that a youth whose belief at nineteen was that "there is a spirit world, where, separated from all appearances of the outer world, we can, in detachment and absolute repose, survey them from an exalted seat, however much our bodily part may be tossed in their storm,"<sup>1</sup> "was the sort of subject on whom the teacher of the theory of ideas would make a lasting impression." All through his life the belief in Plato's noumenal or ideal world probably represented to him the minimum amount of metaphysical belief which every sane person ought to have. The world of sense and of understanding ought, as compared with the really existent world, to appear merely phenomenal, visionary in fact, non-existent. It is easy to a certain extent to think of all men and things as "shadows." We shall see this in dealing with Idealism. "The creed of every just and good man," Schopenhauer says, is, "I believe in a metaphysic."

In philosophy Schopenhauer followed to the letter the advice of Schulze, his first tutor, to study almost exclusively two men, Plato and Kant. Plato may be said to have ever ruled his imagination, as Kant did his understanding; they were the alpha and the omega of his philosophical alphabet. It is useless to think of Schopenhauer's trying to learn philosophy from Hegel or from Hegel's philosophical compeers and predecessors; he never could have done so. When, at the age of twenty, he heard Fichte at Berlin in 1811 say "eloquent things about the 'other' (*i.e.*, about *nature* as different from the *self*), by the light of a lamp in November afternoons," the whole thing seemed to him to be hopelessly in the air. In the writings of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel he read statements about processes which purported to be objective events, but which never did happen, and never could have happened. There sometimes the self seemed to create the world, and sometimes the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Wallace, 'Life of Schopenhauer,' p. 63.



world to create the self: God was made to have difficulties and struggles and victories just like a human being, and His movements in general were put forward as something we could not only know, but ourselves determine and *compel* beforehand. It was this idea that really annoyed Schopenhauer just as it has annoyed so many. The Absolute with which these post-Kantians seemed to be dealing, and with whose movements they seemed to have an intimate acquaintance, did not appear to him to have been in the language of Kant "deduced" or explained at all.<sup>1</sup> It is generally confessed now that the objective dialectic which Hegel took to be God's unfolding of Himself is primarily nothing else than a description of the categories which the human mind has to use in interpreting reality. So much Schopenhauer must have seen on the mere inspection of Hegelianism. For the doctrine of the categories he preferred to turn to Kant, where he could get it at first hand.

There is, to be sure, a great deal more in Hegel than his 'Logic,' which he was certainly wrong in converting into an ontology. But what is more than mere dialectic in Hegel can be understood only by taking the view of philosophy already hinted at, as something more than the mere critical analysis of reality given in scientific metaphysic;—in a word, by considering the Hegelian system as having a place in the evolution of the thought of the nineteenth century. One may surely grant that it is impossible to say what the Hegelian system is without not merely a general knowledge of the *Zeit-Geist* at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but a pretty profound knowledge of the literary, philosophical and political aspirations of Germany during the period of the war of liberation. Here however Schopenhauer, as a post-Kantian, parts company with Hegel. If there was one thing, as we saw, for which Schopenhauer had no sense and perhaps no patience, that

<sup>1</sup> Chap. viii. discusses in detail some of the points of this paragraph.

was history and historical problems. If to appreciate Hegel meant an honest study of history, we need not wonder that Schopenhauer did not appreciate Hegel. Schopenhauer had the contempt for history that Plato had for poetry. We remember how Aristotle<sup>1</sup> distinctly said that poetry was more philosophical than and superior to history (*φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποιήσεις ἱστορίας*). In a later chapter we shall see what art in general meant to Schopenhauer. To say the very least, he cordially assents to Aristotle's dictum. He regarded even biography as superior to history; it showed the nature of man, while history only talked about external events and changes. "History . . . is a kind of knowledge, but it is no science. . . . History nowhere takes cognisance of the particular through the general; it is compelled to take hold of the particular as such, and then go creeping along the ground of experience, while the other sciences really float over experience. The sciences talk about groups of things, history of individuals." Philosophy, it is thus implied, is superior both to history and to science. Poetry, to Schopenhauer, is certainly far more important to the philosopher than history, for poetry presents him with types of men and with the typical aims and ideas of man. This is true of all the arts indeed, and to Schopenhauer the most universal of all the arts were poetry and music.<sup>2</sup>

In the eyes of Schopenhauer the problem of philosophy was to give an analysis of the world that would be valid for all time. He knew that Kant, like Plato, had tried this. To give such an analysis made a man a philosopher. He saw the negative consequences of the Kantian position that we know only phenomena. As is indicated above, this might be generalised into the statement that whatever philosophy pro-

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Poet.*, 9, 1451 b 6.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to the Hegelian philosophy, there are several specific things which Schopenhauer's contempt for history prevented him from understanding. Chaps. vi., vii., viii., ix. will exemplify.

fesses to do, it should not confine itself to the study of material forces and material entities. These things, as it were, are all merely "phenomenal" and "secondary," and the lesson of the world will not be found in them. He certainly saw that Kant's work was perfectly definite, but he did not see exactly what it was that Kant had done. Kant virtually dismissed the God of the eighteenth century from the objects of legitimate inquiry to the human mind, or at least the idea that God was a mere external thing or being, a mere mover of matter and a cause for which no prior cause could be alleged. Schopenhauer did not see that Fichte and Hegel had given up the inquiry after an external God and an external end of the world, and were seeking all this within the world—within man in fact. To that extent they had grasped the nineteenth-century idea of organism far better than he had, and were giving men an account of the world which they could appreciate. In his list of the categories Kant had given an analysis of reality for all time; but in his teleology he simply brought the thought of the eighteenth century to a conclusion, showing in general that we could not possibly know what external design an external God might have for the world.

Schopenhauer now took up the problem of teleology (which Kant had not solved, but a faulty statement of which Kant had dismissed as unworthy of philosophy), and insisted on giving an analysis of teleology that is somehow valid for all time. Hegel was working at a purely *formal* solution of the question of teleology—seeking merely to show how the mind "can *know* the world as realised purpose"; Schopenhauer wanted to give a *real* or material answer to the question, to tell man what he was actually striving for. To do this he found he had to reconsider the whole teaching of Kant about phenomena and things in themselves. Although Schopenhauer would indignantly disclaim any spiritual brotherhood with Fichte or Schelling, it remains true that his philo-

sophy of will inevitably connects him with Fichte, just as his philosophy of instinct and the unconscious inevitably connects him with Schelling. We shall have to consider how it was that a philosophy of volition led Schopenhauer to pessimism while it led Fichte to optimism; and how Schopenhauer could never see anything but a terrible conflict between the automatic and the spontaneous, between the sub-conscious and the conscious, between instinct and reason, while Schelling was able to connect in a manner the sub-conscious or the automatic in man with what is conscious and deliberate.<sup>1</sup>

To return to Schopenhauer's study of Plato. Schopenhauer always retained as a piece of his mental furniture the Platonic theory of ideas. He speaks of "Ideas" in the plural generally as Aristotle did, and the Ideas meant to him roughly the archetypes of the various species or kinds of existences that are found in nature. He is a realist in believing that the universal exists somehow before the things, although he goes so far with the nominalist as to hold that the boundary lines of what we call a class are imaginary or mental. In general, however, his version of the 'Theory of Ideas' is far removed from the puzzles of scholastic logic on the matter by being made to wear the dynamic character of his system. The "Ideas" represent to him the different forms of existence manifested in individual things and beings. There are the Ideas, for example, of the simple elementary forces of nature exhibited in the formation of ice, clouds, and so on, and then there are the Ideas of the different forms of material things, and finally the Ideas of the different species, including man, up to the Ideas which different men in a sense represent. In general, too, he constructed for himself from Plato the belief that our vision into the realm of things in themselves, into ultimate reality, is an affair of *insight* or imaginative and contemplative reason, and not of theoretical or discursive know-

<sup>1</sup> See portions of chaps. vi., vii., viii., and ix.

ledge, which latter is concerned solely with the causal relations or phenomenal connections of things.

This was all in its own way a bit of unproved assumption on the part of Schopenhauer, of a piece, in fact, with the doctrine of an "assertive" reason—a reason that could make positive assertions about the ultimate principle of things—by the Hegelians, after Kant had condemned such an idea. And Schopenhauer condemned it anew. But to doubt the existence of the Platonic Ideas meant to Schopenhauer to doubt of any sort of substratum to experience, which was absurd, since the world we know with our senses is only phenomenal appearance. We shall have to say at the close of our study whether this line of thought has any basis of solid fact beneath it.<sup>1</sup>

Platonism meant to Schopenhauer, too, the practical superiority of philosophic to ordinary virtue. The ordinary man could attain, as it were, to philosophic virtue only through the baptism of genius, through a vision of the Ideas. In the faces of Raphael's and Correggio's pictures, and in the lives of the mystics of all religions, Schopenhauer read a "sure and certain gospel." With the Platonic idea of philosophic virtue he associated the Buddhistic idea of perfect enlightenment and complete resignation and abandonment of the struggle of life. "The greatest and the most important and the most significant thing the world can show is not he who conquers the world, but he who overcomes it; and this is just the quiet unobserved course of life of a man in whom a knowledge of the vanity and nothingness of the whole struggle of life has arisen, and who accordingly gives up and denies that will which would fill everything and strives after everything."<sup>2</sup>

We suggested that in Schopenhauer's account of teleology

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 108, 235, 303.

<sup>2</sup> *Bejahung u. Verneinung des Willens*, Werke, ii. 456. Cf. p. 25, also chaps. vii. and viii.

was to be found a corrective to this erroneous notion of the insight and contemplation of the philosopher being taken to be the highest happiness, even although Schopenhauer himself represents the whole philosophy of genius-worship. It is true that his philosophy of will does bring us to and keep us more surely on the plane of the world we actually live in, than does the rational morality of metaphysicians generally; and this in spite of his own starting-point which, as is common in philosophy, is a search for the absolute or the thing in itself. We shall find a contradiction all along between Schopenhauer's metaphysics and his positive teaching; but it is the positive teaching which we shall try to extricate from the contradiction and to use as an engine of war against much of his own metaphysic (which he unconsciously took from the philosophers) and against much traditional metaphysic too.<sup>1</sup> Equally strong with Schopenhauer's feeling for Platonism was his perception that idealism needed to be thought out all over again—as T. H. Green afterwards suggested in England. To think of the Absolute as Idea seemed to him a very poor way of grasping the reality of the will of the universe—a characterisation of God that is quite out of keeping with the merely *regulative* or practical value assigned to reason by Kant.

It was, in general, into the noumenal world that Schopenhauer retired when he revolted from prevalent materialism. He was a foe of the merely naturalistic theology and crass realism and sensuous empiricism which developed out of the Hegelian Left. It was "all a mistake," he thought, the attempt to treat of noumenal things and religious truths of mystical import by the historic and realistic method; it was tantamount to reducing knowledge of these things to the level of the *understanding*, which, as Kant saw, knew only phenomena, instead of leaving them to be matter of purified insight. Schopenhauer's treatment of religious truths is far sounder in con-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. vi., and pp. 375, 434, 453.

ception than that of many writers of the historical or naturalistic school, who often seem to forget that the enumeration of the objects around which religious feelings have entwined themselves is something quite different from an account of the intuitive religious instinct itself. Schopenhauer had a deep and a real insight into spiritual things, and always insists on the necessity, in religious matters, of that spiritual receptivity of soul which is an essential ingredient in all faith. And so he scoffed at the limitations of the so-called rationalistic and historical method of treating religious ideas, —limitations which become very apparent when that method puts itself forward as the final way of dealing with religious conceptions.

The most distinctively logical influence over Schopenhauer, however, was Kant's teaching in the 'Criticism of Pure Reason.' Of course he could hardly have failed to apprehend the *critical idea*, and his theory of knowledge, set forth in his 'Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason,' is mainly a systematic development of Kant's teaching on first principles. But the results of the critical idea in Kant weighed far more with Schopenhauer than even the idea itself, and became to him matter of definite conviction. The criticisms that Schopenhauer felt inclined to make on Kant's theory of knowledge are of some importance. As we shall see, they forced philosophers to reconsider carefully the nature of what were called forms of knowledge. But by far the most important effects of Kant's influence over Schopenhauer are to be seen in the conclusions he drew from what he conceived to be the perfectly finished part of Kant's work. He regarded Kant to have established for ever the distinction between phenomena and noumena.

From Kant he learned that the science to which his mind naturally resorted as a sure account of man's life was a logi-

cally justifiable view of things—a view even to be emphasised; but that still there was in all knowledge and in all reality a conditioning *α*, or ultimate principle, which was itself the source of all necessity in the realm of phenomena and yet above the necessity of which it was the source. Herbert Spencer<sup>1</sup> represents this idea in our days, and is so far, with Schopenhauer, a literal follower of Kant. It was perhaps that most dangerous aspect of Kantism that Schopenhauer's mind laid hold of with all its intuitive force, in which the world is so much given over to "necessity" that it almost seems to be quite independent of the self or rational will—strong enough to resist it or even to threaten it. In this, his philosophy of science, he has many points of resemblance to F. A. Lange, who practically gives the world over to scientific materialism, and leaves us the realm of the unknown in which to construct the fairy palaces of art and religion.<sup>2</sup> Most people have felt the unreality of the Kantian proof of the freedom of the will, for the noumenal or supra-sensuous world in which it is said to exist seems so largely a matter of assertion over against the realm of nature, which seems perfectly determined and necessitated within itself. The idea of the noumenal world is the positive side of Kant which Schopenhauer accepts; and we need not explain the matter further just now. We see perfectly the tendency of Schopenhauer's mind; he learned what he wanted to learn in Kant—Platonism plus Phenomenalism: we emphasise the Platonism because Schopenhauer snatched it out of Kant with all the eagerness of a man who has found a "pearl of great price." He regarded Kant as having proved, at least indirectly, the existence of a world transcending the sense world; and the existence of such a world was a matter of feeling and conviction with him throughout life. If he

<sup>1</sup> First Principles, Part i. *et passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Geschichte des Materialismus, Bk. ii. Abschn. 4.



had been asked to describe his belief, he would have referred one to Plato for its further exhibition; if he had been asked for its grounds, he would have held they were in Kant.

But with this view of Kant Schopenhauer associated one or two of Kant's negative consequences, and insisted on these with more emphasis than many of the so-called Kantians themselves. He is the leader of those Kantians, like F. A. Lange and others, who insist that the unique contribution of Kant to philosophy is to be found in the 'Criticism of Pure Reason,' and that the limitations Kant drew up in regard to knowledge are the chief part of his work. He emphasised as strongly as he could the idea of the relativity of knowledge, holding that all knowledge was of phenomena, and that everything we talked of knowing was *co ipso* a conditioned thing. On Kant's principles, Schopenhauer always held, we do not *know* the "*thing in itself*," the supreme reality of the world, the entity which determines all other things, the absolute; that remains more a postulate or belief than an object of rational knowledge. Whether it was that by the force of his nature Schopenhauer felt that the supreme reality of the world or of human thought could not be matter of logical knowledge but only of mystical apprehension or faith,<sup>1</sup> or whether it was that he learned from Kant the impossibility of knowing the Absolute in a perfectly definite and rounded way, it is perhaps difficult to say. But it is needless to decide this. In any case, what Schopenhauer grew convinced of was this, that the knowledge which the three great post-Kantian philosophers alleged to be possible of the Absolute, or of God, or of the thing in itself, or of the kernel beneath the "husks" of phenomena, or of the inner nature of the world, or of the transcendent principle of things, was at bottom nothing but

<sup>1</sup> He never used the term *faith* quite in this connection, although he might have done so on the principle that it is through *will* that we know the meaning of the world. Such a reflection will be in order when we are studying Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion.

"wicked" verbiage: *verbiage*, because Kant had shown that knowledge applied only to phenomena, only to objects; and *wicked* verbiage, because these men ought to have learned Kant's lesson better, and not tried to ignore his true meaning, and to teach the public to do so. "In vain," he thinks, "does God give the world once in a thousand years or so a really great mind like that of Kant, if aspirants to philosophical honours, like Fichte and Schelling, are to be allowed to ignore or falsify his true meaning!" "Kant is a master-mind to whom all humanity is indebted for the discovery of never-to-be-forgotten truths. One of his chief merits is to have delivered us from Leibnitz and his subtleties; from pre-established harmonies, etc. . . . Kant has made philosophy serious, and I am keeping it so."<sup>1</sup> There is no *science* of God, we hear him angrily saying, thinking of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, and no schematic determination of the movements of the Absolute out of the mere idea, thinking of the 'Logic.' If these men and their utterances really presupposed some thousands of years of revelation, why did they not say so? Fichte wrote a 'Criticism of all Revelation' as if he could dispense with revelation. Hegel *assumed* revelation, but therein lies the mystery of his system. He still professed to get all his results by pure reason, and in the end he sublimates everything, God and man included, into the *Idea*.<sup>2</sup>

To be definite, we shall see that Schopenhauer found a significance which neither Fichte nor Schelling nor Hegel found, in the negative work of Kant, the rejection of everything which could be claimed to be dogmatic or definite *knowledge* about the essence of the world or of the thing in itself. It is necessary to emphasise the word *knowledge*, for knowledge means to Schopenhauer only the connecting of one

<sup>1</sup> Ü. d. Willen in d. Natur. Vorrede, Werke, iv. xxiii. ; Eng. transl. (Bohn), p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> Hegel's Idea differs from Schopenhauer's Platonic Idea.

thing with another causally as we do in science. If we hold that there is a higher kind of knowledge than that—the knowledge, say, that our total consciousness of things gives us—it must be said that Schopenhauer pointed this out, but that, as there is more in this than mere *reason* and *understanding*, he finds the word *knowledge* inadequate to describe it. Fichte tried to make the practical reason of Kant do by a *tour de force* what Kant himself could not make pure reason do, but there was a presumption against attributing to the practical reason a spontaneity which could not be claimed for the theoretical reason. Schelling invented a faculty, which he called *intellectual intuition*, to do what Kant had declared reason could not do; but a mere name could not, a century and a half after Locke's 'Essay,' be supposed to create a reality. "A reason which supplies material knowledge primarily out of its own resources, and conveys positive information transcending the sphere of possible experience; a reason which, in order to do this, must contain innate ideas,—is a pure fiction, invented by our professional philosophers and the product of the terror with which Kant's 'Criticism of Pure Reason' has inspired them."<sup>1</sup> Hegel made his "Absolute" play the double rôle of the artificer-deity of the eighteenth century, and of the organism or cell of the nineteenth; but he got rid of the logical objection raised by Kant to knowing the Unconditioned only by crediting the Absolute itself with a dialectic, which many critics perceived to be simply the tentative efforts the human mind itself makes in its search for truth.

Schopenhauer, like a true disciple of Bacon and Locke, simply gave up, at least in his intellectual philosophy, the belief in the absolute spontaneity of reason, and the belief in an essence of things or a thing in itself, which is merely "the subject of logical predicates," as in Hegel. The positive as well as the merely negative advantages of this we may

<sup>1</sup> Fourfold Root, &c.; Eng. transl. (Bohn's Library, 1889), p. 138.

perhaps see later.<sup>1</sup> But "leaving the gods in peace," as Schopenhauer suggests philosophy should, we shall probably find that, as far as the *human* self goes, Schopenhauer's analysis contains most of the elements with which his contemporaries or predecessors occupied themselves. The conception of the self as will is really tantamount to saying that man is organic activity, and in such organic activity consciousness and feeling are of course included.

It takes little meditation on the work of Schopenhauer and Schelling and Hegel to see that their descriptions of transcendental potencies may be easily translated into very plain prose statements about the various energies or activities the human personality exhibits in its efforts to understand the world and assert itself amid the flux of things. The self is in a sense the key-note to reality, and the system of Schopenhauer can easily be reduced to an attempt to attain that self-knowledge which, as far back as Socrates, was said to be the beginning and the end of wisdom. In the *purposes* of human beings are to be found the peculiar problems of philosophy as different from science. If science suggests that it knows how human persons are made,—out of atoms and cells, for example,—so that a cosmogony could take the place of philosophy, philosophy can always tell science that it knows not that of which it speaks. There are really *moral* grounds, too, if we will come to that (and we ought to, without shame), for resenting the boundless aggressiveness of the scientific spirit. The end of this century will perhaps see clearly that *science*, in becoming *dogmatic* about the human personality, has played the human race false, has in fact blinded it. Scientific philosophy is not philosophy. The very course of Schopenhauer's system shows this, for it destroys itself in the attempt to make a lower form of activity (instinct or passion) overturn alike the spiritual heritage of the individual and the ethical possibility of a

<sup>1</sup> See the conclusion of chap. iii.; also chaps. ix. and x.

perfect human society. There is much in the thought that the reality of the world and of the individual consists in will; but the will that should be selected for this honour is rational purpose and achievement, and not mere atomic attraction and repulsion, or mere organic reaction to what is called external stimulus.<sup>1</sup>

Schopenhauer's philosophy is of considerable significance from the point of view of the philosophy of religion. His treatment of religious feeling is as unique as is his treatment of feeling in general. We have indicated that his general philosophy results in a sort of illusionism, a systematically negative attitude towards life; but the interesting thing about Schopenhauer is that his thought was as far from stopping there as he himself was from observing what might be called a pessimistic or suicidal attitude toward life in his own person. He essays a treatment of the religious problem which looks like an attempt to *escape* from the consequences of illusionism or pessimism. And he succeeds in giving us some reasons for the illusory character of so much of our experience. Is this simply owing to the fact that in explaining the world he took the standpoint of the will rather than of the idea? And is it true that philosophy can dispense with religion?<sup>2</sup>

Schopenhauer's philosophy, in its highest reaches, becomes virtually a metaphysic of the redemption of the individual from his own misery and from that of the world. That there is a distinction in Schopenhauer between the misery of the individual and the misery of the world, will cause us to inquire, as has been partly hinted, whether, after all, Schopenhauer's philosophy is consistent pessimism, or whether as a matter of fact any philosophy can be consistently pessimistic. The tendency to transfer to the Absolute what are generally regarded as marks of human imperfection is not so pro-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chaps. ii., vii., and viii.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chaps. viii., ix., x. *passim*.

nounced in Schopenhauer as in von Hartmann, but it is to be traced in him, as it is in Schelling's later or so-called positive philosophy. It is perhaps easier to see certain things where they are written "in large letters," and thus if Hegel transferred to God certain intellectual struggles of the human mind in its search for truth, Schopenhauer may be regarded as having tried to transfer to God certain volitional struggles of the human will in its effort to attain to goodness and self-control.

Schopenhauer will teach us that Hegel's confidence in an "absolute knowledge" involves many erroneous ideas about knowledge; and from Schopenhauer's failures to manage successfully his own philosophy of will, we shall learn much about the inadequacy of his own ideas about goodness and the moral life. Many of these latter were substantially those of the philosophers in general, who all practically placed philosophic virtue or contemplation above civic virtue, or above that prosaic justice and fairness of ordinary life which would-be genius is too apt to depreciate. And so Schopenhauer's philosophy will be found to collapse when tested on the highest plane of human thought, just because he could not completely free himself from the influence of the very philosophy he had been all along attacking, the philosophy of the concept. He really taught throughout his system that the reason of man is only something that is subservient to his will, only a help to his living better; but when he came to the ultimate issues of his thought he relapsed into the old fallacy of *contemplation* being superior to action. There is a great truth in this idea, the idea that man can be virtuous only if he reform himself "from above," or from the standpoint of his highest ideas and his highest self. But a merely rational philosophy has never quite seen how to harmonise the idea of virtue with the actual will of mankind, nor could Schopenhauer see how to do it either.

There are other reasons why Schopenhauer's treatment of religion is important. It is essentially different from that of Kant and from rationalism generally, laying far more stress on the peculiarly religious feelings as elements in the solution of the religious problem. "*Belief* is like love; you cannot compel it." It is true that no one can know God without approaching God in the way in which God can alone be known. All this, however, had better be reserved for another place, where it will be treated in detail. It is enough here to have indicated the necessity of trying to estimate Schopenhauer's system from its highest and final point of view.

## CHAPTER II.

## SCHOPENHAUER AND IDEALISM.

“Ihr folget falscher Spur ;  
Denkt nicht, wir scherzen !  
Ist nicht der Kern der Natur  
Menschen im Herzen ?”

—GOETHE, *Gott und Welt*.

“‘The world is my idea’: this is a truth which holds good for everything that lives and knows, though man alone can bring it into reflective and abstract consciousness. If he really does this he has attained to philosophical wisdom. It then becomes clear and certain to him that what he knows is not a sun and an earth, but only an eye that sees a sun, a hand that feels an earth ; that the world which surrounds him is there only as idea—*i.e.*, only in relation to something else, the consciousness which is himself. If any truth can be asserted *a priori* it is this ; for it is the expression of the most general form of all possible and thinkable experience,—a form which is more general than time or space or causality, for they all presuppose it ; and each of these, which we have seen to be just so many modes of the principle of sufficient reason, is valid only for a particular class of ideas ; whereas the antithesis of object and subject is the common form of all these classes, is that form under which alone any idea of whatever kind it may be, abstract or intuitive, pure or empirical, is possible and thinkable. No truth, therefore, is more certain, more independent of all others, and less in need of proof than this, that all that exists for knowledge, and therefore this whole world, is only object in relation to subject, perception of a perceiver—in a word, idea.”<sup>1</sup>

It will be evident from what has been said in the preceding chapter that Schopenhauer’s philosophy, like most philosophies, is an attempt to overcome the dualism or the sense of dis-

<sup>1</sup> Die Welt als W., &c., Werke, ii. 3. H. and K., i. 3.



crepancy and contradiction which seems to characterise most of our thought about the world. There is the dualism, for example, between the natural man and the rational man, between philosophical idealism and philosophical realism, between scientific knowledge and religion and artistic insight, and so on, and to all this may Schopenhauer be conceived to address himself. What he more especially addresses himself to is that form of the dualism between the lower and the higher phases of consciousness which seems to be peculiar to the nineteenth century, with its insistence upon the idea of a natural development and genesis of all living beings.

To Schopenhauer the broadest opposition in the world is that between what he calls will and what he calls intellect. His meaning may be grasped by thinking of the way in which dogmatic materialism reduced everything in the world to two things called matter and force. To this it is rightly objected that it leaves consciousness out of account; if we are purely the result of natural forces, how is it that we can think ourselves to be such? Matter might, as Locke suggested, be "made by God" to think, but matter as matter does not think. There are then matter and the different natural forces on the one hand, and thought or consciousness on the other. But some physicists have maintained that matter itself may be reduced to force, and modern psycho-physics has suggested that consciousness may be regarded as only psychical force—a higher kind of force doubtless than the various forms of energy with which we are familiar, but still a force which may be determined both qualitatively and quantitatively. This thought helps us to appreciate the extreme generality of Schopenhauer's principle. His will is really any and all cosmic or psychic energy; he uses all the following expressions to give it content: will, wish, seeking, stirring, effort, impulse, force, push, inclination, passion, fearing, anger, hate, hope, excitation, pressure; and also compares it to

gravitation and attraction, and chemical force and plant force. Granting the existence of such a principle for the sake of argument, intellect is still unexplained, for there is something in intellect akin to "pure contemplation"—this is essential with Schopenhauer—something akin to the imaginative reason (*θεωρία*) Plato found in it. There is a great difference or opposition between mere force or energy and an idea. The world, in short, may be regarded as analysable into will or movement on the one hand, and intellect or contemplation on the other.<sup>1</sup>

Schopenhauer regards this dualism as quite different from and opposed to the dualism of Descartes. "In reality there is neither spirit nor matter, but rather a vast amount of nonsense and illusion in the world. The force of inertia in the stone is just as inexplicable as the thought in the brain of man, and we might on that ground attribute, say, a spirit to the stone. If you assume in every brain a spirit like a sort of *deus ex machinâ*, you ought to concede a spirit to every stone. If your dead and passive matter can strive in the form of inertia or attract in the form of electricity, repel and yield sparks, it can just as well think in the form of brain-stuff. In short, you can assign matter to any form of spirit, and spirit to any form of matter, from which it follows that the opposition is false. Thus the Cartesian division of all things into spirit and matter is not philosophically correct, but rather that into will and idea; and this division does not run parallel to the former at all. It spiritualises everything by analysing what is material in things into idea or presentation, and on the other hand reducing the essence of every

<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer may thus be said to give an equivalent for the scientific distinction between matter and force. If for "force" he is allowed to substitute "will," he might claim, as an idealist, the right to substitute for matter the word "idea," matter being to him as to J. S. Mill and to Berkeley simply the "permanent possibility of sensation," or, as he prefers to put it, simply the "object" or the "idea" of a "subject" or being which "perceives."

phenomenon into will.”<sup>1</sup> This spiritualisation of everything material of which Schopenhauer here talks is our point of departure in this chapter. All bodies and things and objects are to Schopenhauer at the very outset as to Berkeley ideas or phenomena, or presentations of a subject.

We shall in this chapter be occupied with the problem of philosophy as it presented itself to Schopenhauer, and with the way in which he commenced to think out his system, and in doing so we shall try to take the mean between a logical and a historical presentation of his thought. There is no such arrangement in his work as there is in the work of Kant and Hegel; there are simply the central thought and the “thousand and one” ways in which it is set forth. He had thought out the outlines of his system while still a young man, and he found that the experience of a lifetime tended only to make him amplify and illustrate and present more clearly, rather than modify, what he had given to the world in his youth.

We may understand the different aspects which Schopenhauer’s attempt to overcome the dualisms in experience assumes by thinking of the different philosophical sciences. In ethics, for instance, Schopenhauer practically treats of what Spinoza calls the bondage of man as opposed to the liberty of man—that is, man’s subjection, on the one hand, to the control of his natural feelings or passions, and of man’s freedom or emancipation, on the other, through some higher mental experience, such as “insight,” or “regeneration,” or “intellectual love.” In treating of Schopenhauer’s ethics we shall encounter the problem of pessimism in the strict sense, the contention that “all life is essentially unsatisfactory” and illusory. In metaphysic we shall find Schopenhauer occupied with that most natural aspect of what we broadly call dualism, the distinction between appearance and reality, between illusion and

<sup>1</sup> Schop., *Zur. Phil. u. W. d. Natur., Parerg., Werke*, vi. 110.

fact. All minds which have risen above unreflective realism, or the practical faith of common-sense, have felt the distinction between appearance and reality, and indeed are half inclined to side with the doctrine which teaches that what is apparent is essentially illusory, and that only what is hidden or concealed is real. Schopenhauer would regard a mind which had not attained to a sense of this distinction as not a "fit subject for philosophy," and so would his successor von Hartmann. And in dialectics we shall find Schopenhauer occupied with the distinction between *real* knowledge, or knowledge which has content, of which we are *immediately* conscious, and *formal* knowledge, or knowledge that has only an indirect and hypothetical relation to reality.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest presentation that Schopenhauer gave of his thought was in connection with dialectics or the theory of knowledge, in his graduating thesis entitled the 'Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason.' This was natural enough, as he was led into philosophy by Kant's 'Criticism of Pure Reason,' which is primarily a treatise on the theory of knowledge. We might begin the study of his thought by discussing the problem of this thesis. But there are objections to this—objections arising out of the special character of Schopenhauer's philosophy. Schopenhauer is not, as we saw, a philosopher of the pure idea; he did not believe that the pure idea dominated man's life, and it certainly did not dominate his own thinking and his own life. To begin with Schopenhauer's theory of knowledge would be to credit him by implication with a method and a technic he never possessed and never wished to possess. Then knowledge is not a primary thing with him but a secondary; he once or twice, in fact, calls it a tertiary thing, a phenomenon of the brain which is itself only a phenomenon of the body. And again, no sympathetic student of Schopenhauer's theory of knowledge

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, chap. iii. sec. iii.

could say that its results are really worked out from the pure standpoint of knowledge alone. It is not exactly that it shows bias, that it is a statement of the facts of knowledge in the interests of a system,—we shall see this in treating of it separately,<sup>1</sup>—but it is that Schopenhauer faced the problem of the nature of knowledge from the point of view of the whole Kantian philosophy, that his interest in the problem of knowledge was unconsciously controlled by his interest in the broader problem of philosophy as a whole. Knowledge to Schopenhauer was only *one* of the facts of life (this is a good thing to remember in reading him), although the problem of knowledge was to him the introduction to philosophy. He had been influenced by science before he was influenced by philosophy, and his thought shows signs of this—hence the valuable corrective influence it exercises over the mind that has been too deeply imbued with the teachings of the idealists. He cares far more about the objects of knowledge—the nature of the reality that knowledge *professes* to bring within our ken—than about the mere forms and processes of knowledge itself. He made, it is true, one or two important criticisms of Kant's treatment of the forms of knowledge, but he is always impatient to get from knowledge to reality. For our purposes, in short, the most significant aspects of Schopenhauer's theory of knowledge lie at the point where it runs into his general philosophy. We must therefore begin with the latter.

It is at once strange and true and natural that Schopenhauer begins in philosophy with *idealism* as a starting-point. It is strange, because his philosophy is undoubtedly in the main realistic and dynamic, and at least half materialistic, representing the substitution of physical for metaphysical entities. It is true, for his main book begins with the words "The world is my idea," and his theory of knowledge does

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. iii.

not occupy itself with the relation of ideas to fact, but with the relation of the different classes of mental representations (or ideas) to each other, it being the assumption that both what we call things and what we call ideas are mental representations, idealities in short. It is natural, because some kind of idealism is the natural resting-place of a mind which has broken with common-sense realism (by believing that what seems *real* is often only *apparent*) and is still unable to choose between the hypotheses of absolute idealism and Spinozistic pantheism and hypothetical idealism. Schopenhauer is always an idealist in the sense that he believes that reality is not always just what it seems to be. As we read him, we are at least undeceived about the "controlling position of the reality of common experience." "'The world is my idea': this is a truth which holds good for everything that lives and knows, though man alone can bring it into reflective and abstract consciousness."<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer thus assumes the truth of what is commonly called subjective idealism at the outset. To many this may seem folly, but subjective idealism is a very small thing indeed for Schopenhauer, the "merest piece of philosophical truism." "'The world is my idea' is, like the axioms of Euclid, a proposition which every one must recognise as true as soon as he understands it; although it is not a proposition that every one understands as soon as he hears it. To have brought this proposition to clear consciousness, and in it the problem of the relation of the ideal and the real—*i.e.*, of the world in the head to the world outside the head, together with the problem of moral freedom—is the distinctive feature of modern philosophy."<sup>2</sup>

Schopenhauer faces the problem of idealism under what he considers to be its two aspects, the *empirical* and the *transcendental*. In reality, he says, the only serious kind of

<sup>1</sup> See the quotation at the head of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> World as Will; H. and K., ii. 164. Werke, iii. 4.

idealism is the transcendental. Empirical idealism to him means any of the ordinary ways of looking at the reality of the so-called external world, by which its reality is shown to be only apparent and not absolute. Subjective idealism, for example, is only a variety of empirical idealism. Transcendental idealism is the theory that the world of the senses, although real enough for all practical purposes, has no existence on its own account, seeing that the only absolute reality in the world is the will and its "immediate" objectification (the world of the Platonic Ideas). Sometimes Schopenhauer talks as if the will existed before the Platonic Ideas, but the general trend of his system is to the effect that the "universal" (the will) and the "forms" of its manifestation (the Platonic Ideas) constitute the full reality of the universe.

It ought to be said that in Schopenhauer's thought subjective idealism passes very easily over into empirical or phenomenal idealism, and phenomenal idealism into transcendental idealism. Schopenhauer's own theory might be called, and is called by himself, either transcendental idealism or transcendental realism. It is transcendental because it places the reality of things in something that transcends the ordinary real; it is idealism because it regards ordinary things as phenomenal; it is realism because it offers a construction of the world from an ultimate principle (will) which (unlike the "Idea") is a real thing—the only real thing, in fact. Schopenhauer in this same connection talks of his philosophy as *immanent dogmatism*. "My system might be characterised immanent dogmatism, since its doctrines although dogmatic do not transcend the world of experience, but merely explain what the latter is by analysing it into its ultimate elements."<sup>1</sup> Although this description of his doctrine by himself seems to claim for it a realistic rather than a transcendental character, the fact remains that his

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Werke, v. 141: "Bemerk. ü. meine eigene Philosophie."

"will" is in the end just as transcendental as Spinoza's "substance"; it may be a more real kind of abstraction, but it is still an abstraction.

Each of these points of view will afford us material for study and criticism. In spite of the difficulties of transcendentalism, Schopenhauer's system offers most contributions to philosophy from this third point of view. As to empirical idealism, it is that which practically gives to Schopenhauer the problem of philosophy, and we see how most of his difficulties arise from his initial acceptance of the various positions of idealism about reality and about the different kinds of reality. He means by empirical idealism the theory that the world is partly phenomenon and partly thing in itself. The phenomenal world he calls the *world as idea* (the world that is revealed to us by our intellectual faculties), and the noumenal or supra-sensuous world he calls the *world as will* (the world that is revealed to us by our consciousness of effort and volition). The world we live in he takes to be a sort of plexus of the idea and the will.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty of his philosophy from this point of view arises from the fact (as he takes it to be) that we *know* the first world, the phenomenal world, the world of the intellect; but that we do *not know* the second, the world of the will, but only *realise* it somehow, feel it, will it.

Subjective idealism we shall in the first instance study as that which helped Schopenhauer on to ordinary dogmatic idealism, and then (but later in the volume), first, as the theoretical idealism which ever and again makes the reality of the whole world seem to depend upon the reality of the self, and is thus responsible for that aspect of Schopenhauer's philosophy in which it seems to be an ill-adjusted balance

<sup>1</sup> It is easy to put meaning into this conception if we simply remember that *events* and *thoughts*, unconscious happenings and conscious reflections, make up the world that we know and live in.



between subjective idealism and nihilism ; and secondly, as the true reason for the extreme selfishness attributed by Schopenhauer to the natural man.

Transcendental idealism is not quite such a partial philosophy as the first or the second kind of idealism ; it grades the world into different spheres of reality, and teaches us that a lower sphere of reality is always less real than a higher sphere, and that the highest grade of the assertion of the will is the highest kind of reality. The difficulty of Schopenhauer's philosophy is that all these three idealisms are woven into and through each other and the system, and that Schopenhauer himself drops now into the one and now into the other, and then again generalises perhaps on the strength of all three taken together. The whole system is a professed search after what is truly real, in the face of what is confessedly ideal or phenomenal.

I. It is the idea of introspection or self-consciousness that opens the door of philosophy to Schopenhauer, as it does to most other modern philosophers. In reading Schopenhauer one gets the impression that he really thought there was a manifest amount of residual fact about the doctrine of subjective idealism, whatever might be thought about the whole line of thought from Berkeley to Kant which had narrowed down the world to be merely a phenomenon of the self. By a long process of thought philosophers had resolved the world into what they called phenomenon or appearance, which, so far as its *matter* was concerned, consisted simply of sensations or perceptions of the subject, and, so far as its *form* was concerned, was the work of the elaborative or constructive activity of the intellect. The merest inspection of the "self," moreover, seemed to reveal to the observer, as it did to Hume, that the self was simply a bundle of mental states ; the consciousness of a mental state seemed to be the most immediately given

and the only incontestable fact of the universe. The idea of the conscious self, the "self with a mental representation," lay in Schopenhauer's mind behind the idea of "the world as phenomenon." It is with this notion that we find him busied at the outset, if we seek to analyse his philosophy into its simplest beginnings. And this is, as it were, the first plane of idealism, the incontestable amount of residual fact on which its edifice reposes. The simplest or the most ultimate thing in the world to Schopenhauer as an idealist is the "self with a mental representation." The philosophical student is supposed by Schopenhauer to be familiar with the line of thought which leads one to the Cartesian assertion, *Cogito ergo sum*. "We start neither from the object nor from the subject, but from the *idea* as the first fact of consciousness,"<sup>1</sup> says Schopenhauer. His philosophy is an attempt to analyse that fact of consciousness so as to set forth the whole world of thought and being as resting upon it. He began here and thus, although his philosophy and the line of thought it opens up cause the mind definitely to abandon this very one-sided way of thinking. Biology and experience are both against the tendency to regard the mere individual consciousness as the last element of fact in the universe. So too is Kant, who, as we know, was extremely annoyed at some interpretations of his system which assimilated it to subjective idealism. We may defend Schopenhauer by saying that of course philosophy may begin anywhere, and that the self is a very good starting-point; but he is not free from the fallacy of modern philosophy, the fallacy of taking the metaphysical truism that all things and all thoughts are ultimately things and thoughts for a knowing subject as equivalent to the proved statement that the self is first and foremost a being that *knows* and that presents "itself to itself" in knowledge or in self-knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> World as Will, H. and K., i. 44.

From the point of view of subjective idealism, however, there arose for Schopenhauer one or two problems. It is a strange fact that human nature has never been able to content itself with the view of the idealist about the self as primarily a being which "knows its own states." And this discontent is reflected in Schopenhauer. For him the ultimate datum of experience at the outset of his thinking is undoubtedly the self with the mental phenomenon or state; and his ultimate effort is to find out wherein the reality of such a self consists. His philosophy can be regarded as a search after the reality of the self. What turns out to be the root of the self will naturally be the root of everything else if the self is the most real of all things. There is this much reason for thinking of Schopenhauer's philosophy in connection with subjective idealism. It suffers, no doubt, from the connection. It suffers in the first instance the fate of ordinary solipsism. It meets with complete incredulity. The ordinary mind never has believed that the world is only an idea in the mind of the person who is for the time thinking. "No wonder," men feel, "Schopenhauer's system leads to pessimism; for if the world is only an 'idea in my mind,' or even in the mind of the human race or of God, it is for all practical purposes a world of illusion!" And it is true that the words "all is nugatory," "all is vain," "all is seeming," may be written as a text over every page of Schopenhauer's writings. The system retains to the end an illusory character which is bred of its erroneous initial acceptance of subjective idealism. Every aspect of Schopenhauer's system is a persistent aspect, and so the whole wears the aspect of being a web or tissue of confusions and contradictions. It has been thought "to mirror" all the features of, and all the confusions incident to, the "erroneous idealistic-Spinozistic philosophy."<sup>1</sup> We notice, however, not only the persistence of subjective idealism in Schopenhauer, but its

<sup>1</sup> Ueberweg, *History of Philos.*, ii. 256, notes.

breaking down altogether and its being transformed into what seemed to suggest itself to him as a substitute for it. In Schopenhauer the world as idea is resolved into the world as will, and this again is a fresh source of confusion. Neither the idea nor the will completely gains the victory in Schopenhauer so far as the main body of his work goes. The idea does prevail to this extent that a man who conquers the world in his thought is made out by Schopenhauer to conquer the world in reality. But then the will in turn becomes supreme, for it is said to be eternal, and the idea is said to represent only the world as it appears to the intellect.

There is some value in Schopenhauer's idea of the individual practically negating the world for himself in his thought. This will be seen when we deal with his views upon religion. But the negation of the personality in thought is not the negation of the personality in reality, because the reality of the personality consists in will. If the individual really ceased to will, the world practically would cease to exist for him. And there seems to be a certain argument by analogy in Schopenhauer in consequence of which the world seems to depend on the will of the individual, just as according to idealism the world is made to depend somehow on the idea of the individual. Anyhow, it is true that idealism in Schopenhauer leads to illusionism, and that illusionism leads to nihilism, and that idealism and illusionism and nihilism are hopelessly mixed together in Schopenhauer. The individual is at once the creature of the world-will, and yet able in his own personal will or intellect to negate and abolish the world.

From thinking of the subject or self as that to which phenomena appear, Schopenhauer went on to think of it as merely a "*form* of knowledge." This is a most fallacious and dangerous piece of dialectic. The philosopher, we may allow for the sake of argument, studies "knowledge," studies the world as a "known world." Now the form of know-

ledge, according to Schopenhauer, is "subject and object," a "category under which" knowledge or whatever is knowable "appears." Thus, from thinking of knowledge as showing us "phenomena," Schopenhauer fell into the error of thinking of *knowledge* and even of the *subject* or the *self* as phenomenal. That is, knowledge comes to be for him merely something that "appears," something "phenomenal," and with *knowledge* becoming a mere "phenomenon," the *subject* of knowledge, the self, became a mere phenomenon. There is no doubt that his system wears the appearance of a kind of universal illusionism (pan-illusionism) in which the "object" and the "subject" and "knowledge" all serve in turn as the mere "phenomena" of one another, and of the unknown thing (the will) which is at the root of everything. From this *pan-illusionism* Schopenhauer felt he must somehow escape. If knowledge seems to make everything phenomenal, the world must be something other than what mere knowledge reveals it to be. And the self too must be something other than mere "representation" or the mere power of mental "representation." What, then, is the world besides a phenomenon of the subject? And what is the self besides mere power of knowing or presenting things to us? Schopenhauer roundly accuses all philosophy which has used the self as a key to things (materialism absurdly tries to explain the self by things, and is therefore hardly a philosophy at all) of having used the knowing self, the intellectual self, the *Cogito*, as its principle of interpretation. The *knowing* self, he says, is not the key to reality, but rather the *willing* self. "We have just seen," he would say, "the illusionism into which we are apt to fall if we regard *knowledge* as the gate to the understanding of things: knowledge simply makes *everything seem a phenomenon of everything else*." Now, is not what Schopenhauer here asserts of most intellectual philosophy true? It would certainly be rash to deny it of much

post-Kantian philosophy. Both Schelling and Hegel in attempting to set forth the meaning of things deal chiefly with the knowing self; and in both these thinkers we are at times baffled with a kind of phenomenalism in which everything seems merely relative to everything else.

But Schopenhauer himself was wrong in thinking that the teaching of the idealists about the self was inevitable and ultimate. He did in a sense regard it as proved that knowledge or the faculty of representation was of the essence of the self, although he thought it to be his own duty to find out "something more" about the self—about its real nature as something more fundamental than its mere power of *knowing* things. It is true that speculation had to a large extent tended to make people think of the intellectual self as the only self. In so far as it had done so, Schopenhauer may be said to have recalled philosophy from the study of ideas to the study of actions. But the significance of his recall is not seen merely in the suggestion that there is volition as well as intellection in the self. Any one might have known that the expressions "subject" and "self" were not synonymous, but that the latter covers the former, and that instead of thinking of the subject or the self as a mere *form* of knowledge, we might rather think of "knowledge" as *one* of the forms or activities of the self (the complete subject). There is another thing that has to be remembered about the nature of the self. The self has not merely been called the *subject*; it has also been said to be simply *the human body*. Spinoza, for example, always thought of the self as meaning, to some extent, simply a particular body, or the *idea* of the body. Throughout his philosophy Schopenhauer argues just as much from the idea of the self as the body, as he does from the idea of the self as conscious mental representation. He is certainly, again, in virtue of this fact, an inconsistent idealist; but one of the things we desire throughout our study of Scho-

penhauer to insist upon is that *no mere idealism can ever be a consistent philosophy of reality*. There is always indeed a certain amount of idealism about the attempt to interpret the world from the standpoint of the self, whether the self is regarded as the body or as the intellect. That is, even if we say that we know things and animals only through our own body, or through what in us is akin to them, we are falling into an idealistic or hypothetical way of looking at reality. But to return. However the view of the self as the body is attained to, whether by resorting to common-sense or to science, it is still a relatively justifiable view of the matter; and it is a merit of Schopenhauer's philosophy that his account of things does not exclude the positive truth that may be found either in the idealist's view of the self (as the intellect) or in the materialist's view of the self (as the body).

We shall have to see how the view of the self as impulse or effort comprehends the relative truth of both idealism and materialism.<sup>1</sup> The idealist maintains that the essence of the self consists in self-consciousness, and the materialist, on the contrary, in the preservation of the individual organism or the transmission of its life to other organisms. Schopenhauer's philosophy enables us to a certain extent to correlate both views of the matter. He always talks of the intellect and the consciousness of man as merely an accompaniment of his total organic life. It is true he tends to think of bodily impulse as blind and unintelligent, and as totally different from consciousness; but his philosophy ends in a desperate attempt to make the higher "Ideas" of art and religion and ethics actually penetrate and transform the whole life of man. In the meantime, however, it is sufficient to state that Schopenhauer was not wrong in going beyond the view of the self as mere consciousness or "mental representation." Only he was wrong in retaining it even as the starting-point of philosophy.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chaps. v., vi., vii., viii.

The *cogito ergo sum* point of view about things is good enough to stimulate beginners in philosophy to reflection, but it should never be put forward by philosophers as representing *terra firma* either in psychology or in speculation. One has only to read the history of Romanticism in German literature, and some of Fichte's and Schelling's philosophising about the empty form of the self, to see how a merely formal view of the self and of its latent possibilities may end in the most capricious and unreal sort of thinking and writing. The bitterness and the rude force of Schopenhauer's tirades against metaphysical idealism are probably to be traced to the fact that he was deceived at the outset into believing it to be a really inevitable view of things for the philosophical mind. We shall suggest below that it is far from being that; and Schopenhauer teaches us this too, even although he himself began with that view.

It was natural enough for Schopenhauer to think that idealism represented the first lesson one has to learn in philosophy. Kant had made knowledge the prominent thing about the self in philosophy. *Apperception*, or the reference of any fact whatsoever (mental or physical) to one's total mental consciousness, came to be the leading idea in philosophy after Kant, and Schopenhauer learned philosophy from Kant. Apperception is in fact the greatest single idea in Kant's philosophy, and it has had more influence in psychology and philosophy than any other idea for the last hundred years. It was a powerful idea, because it represented an ultimate fact about the human mind, about the psychical constitution of any living being. In metaphysical language apperception means that nothing can be said to exist for the mind at all, or for any psychical subject, except in so far as that thing can enter into some vital relation to our consciousness. If the Hegelian philosophy has any ultimate hold upon the human mind, it has such a hold just for the



reason that it has proclaimed perhaps more strongly than any other body of thought, the fact *that nothing can be said to exist for man which does not somehow enter into vital, or living and internal, relations to his personality*. But then apperception has certain physiological and biological as well as psychical aspects. It is a physiological fact as well as a psychological fact. It represents the organic recognition by all animal beings possessed of higher nervous centres of what is called external stimulus or sensation, and the organic redistribution of psychical and physical energy which is consequent on such recognition. Wundt, for example, makes out will, so far as it is a power of control over the self emanating from within outwards, to be essentially a form of apperception.<sup>1</sup> Kant did not look at apperception in this comprehensive way. Yet this is exactly what we must try to do in studying Schopenhauer. For about fifty years after Kant—roughly speaking, from Kant's death to Schelling's death—it was chiefly the upper limits of apperception—consciousness and self-consciousness—that were studied by philosophers. The lower limits of apperception—organic reaction to stimulus and organic adaptation to environment—have been studied by psychologists and physiologists from about the early forties until the present time. One of the first influences in that direction was the philosophy of Herbart. Now Schopenhauer must have been familiar with all the discussion incident to the introduction of the idea of apperception into philosophy. It was his destiny, also, to compel philosophers to work out the idea not so much from the side of mental comprehen-

<sup>1</sup> *Physiologische Psychologie, passim*, and especially chap. xx. (in vol. ii.), *Der Wille*, e.g. s. 471, "dass die äussere Willenshandlung ihrem ursprünglichen Wesen nach nichts anderes ist als eine specielle Form der Apperception, u.s.w." The outcome of the investigations of Ribot and Schneider is substantially in agreement with Wundt. For an interesting and careful account of the different theories of volition from Herbart and Drobisch to Wundt and Münsterberg, see 'Die Lehre vom Willen in der neueren Psychologie,' by Dr O. Külpe, Leipzig, 1888.

sion and judgment—Kant had done that—as from the side of the motor impulse that is exemplified in volition, when volition arrives “at the object aimed at” (hits its mark, as it were)—that is to say, from the side of physiology and biology. But in spite of both these things the letter of his system shows that he himself thought of apperception primarily in an intellectual regard—*i.e.*, he thought of the self as the “power of having representations,” of representing things, or simply as the central point to which the “world as phenomenon” could be referred.

Still his mind could not rest satisfied with the idea of the self as only a being which knows or has representations, however important such an idea undoubtedly is for the purposes of metaphysic and logic. He could not think that the ultimate reality of the self (the self which was, according to the idealists, the confessed support of the whole world as phenomenon) lay simply in its power to “represent” things, to reveal phenomena or mental states to consciousness. If we say that the essence of things consists in being known, and that their reality is therefore a borrowed reality, dependent upon the reality of the self which knows them, may not the reality of the self, as merely that which *knows*, be also a borrowed reality? Knowing simply means being conscious of certain mental appearances, and appearances are in a sense illusory. Schopenhauer, that is, could not satisfy his mind with the results of idealism just because he believed that it meant reducing in this way the world into terms of mere knowledge—*i.e.*, into a sort of pan-phenomenalism. As a matter of fact, knowledge does not reduce the world into terms of mere knowledge, and this for reasons which Schopenhauer himself will point out to us, the chief of these being the fact that knowledge does not tell us much about things, save in so far as they *affect* our will. Schopenhauer was wrong in thinking that the knowing of things phenomenalised them

and rendered them illusory. No doubt if we allow our consciousness to dwell for any length of time on the thought of our mere knowledge of anything,—if we try to think of knowledge in and for itself,—we shall gradually experience the feeling that a veil of illusion (*Maya* according to both Schopenhauer and Buddhism) is spreading itself out over our whole mental horizon. But then knowledge is not a thing in itself,—not a thing, in fact, that we can study by itself. Knowledge is that part of our *sense* for reality which rises above the threshold of our consciousness. Our total organic and only half-conscious sense for reality is far greater and broader than our mere conceptual knowledge of reality. And such a sense makes us realise not only that our sole knowledge of things is our consciousness (implicit and explicit) of their relation to our activity (will), but also that the reality of things, like our own reality, consists in will. Hence the philosophy of will (thought out to its consequences) surmounts the difficulties not only of idealism, but also of the half-philosophy (*relativity*), which says that the reality of things consists in *their relation to*—us. It is the *will* side of things that we know: and the reality of things consists in will or function. But of this again.

Another problem that exercised Schopenhauer's mind in connection with the subject of idealism was to find a bridge between the subjective and objective elements in experience, between the self and the world. It may be said by way of comment on this, that the very fact of Schopenhauer's seeking a bridge between the subjective and the objective again proves that he was not a consistent idealist. The fact of his not being a consistent idealist frees us from the necessity of trying to state definitely what he understood by subjective idealism. By simply pointing out some of the difficulties into which subjective idealism led Schopenhauer, we of course

raise several presumptions against the truth of subjective idealism as an account of the facts of experience. Schopenhauer, however, was strong enough to free himself from the trammels of any one way of looking at the philosophical problem. His inconsistency, as it were, is a merit. It is, in fact, one of his great merits, that he cared so little about the mere surface consistency of his system. To resume—how can the subjective idealist account for the fact that we have the impression or the idea that we have a knowledge of things outside ourselves or outside our own bodies? Schopenhauer asks this. “The subjective and objective do not constitute a continuous whole. That of which we are immediately conscious is bounded by the skin, or rather by the extreme ends of the nerves which proceed from the cerebral system. Beyond this there lies a world of which we have no knowledge except through pictures in our head.”<sup>1</sup> As the *Vorstellung* or *mental* representation then (Locke’s “idea”) is the first fact of consciousness to Schopenhauer, he has to account for our belief that we know *external* reality, or for the fact that we think we know it. If we know only what is in the mind, how can we ever know, as we do know, what is alleged to be outside it? Two remarks need to be made about this.

In the first place (and this is a mere technical point), there are in Schopenhauer all the confusions incident to the attempt to pass from the isolated or particular sensation to things or to the world. These confusions are present in him in pretty much the same sort of way that they are present in Kant, and his attempts at their solution are pretty much the same as Kant’s attempts. This point may be allowed to rest with the mere statement that, strictly speaking, it is not true that the first thing in consciousness is the sensation or the mental representation. And even if Schopenhauer sometimes argues as if the isolated sensation were the first thing in con-

<sup>1</sup> *Welt als Wille*, ii. 12; *H. and K.*, ii. 173.

sciousness, his philosophy of will rests upon the fact that the earliest thing in consciousness is impulse—the mere *sensation-impulse* possibly, but still impulse (nascent volition). Organic sensations precede ideas in consciousness, and man is first and foremost a being who is striving after life; and in his struggle after life he does not begin with such a secondary thing as knowledge. Then, secondly, while it is true that in a metaphysical or ultimate regard the most important fact about man is simply knowledge, his power of “presenting himself to himself” in his thought, we must never interpret this proposition to mean that the first thing we have to grasp in philosophy is that the world is “only my idea.” The only way of getting over the apparently insurmountable difficulty of our attaining to a knowledge of what is objective, in spite of the fact that what we know is always subjective, is by insisting that the difficulty is unreal and imaginary: that it arises only out of a confusion (of which even Schopenhauer himself is partly guilty) between the metaphysical and the psychological point of view about consciousness or knowledge; and that our earliest acquaintance with reality—our introduction to the world of reality and circumstance—is not an affair of ideation or speculation but of volition and bodily experience. In impulse we know reality directly, for impulse is psychical and physical at one and the same time. It is the physical process or movement in impulse which gives us the sensation of reality—nay, which is reality.<sup>1</sup> Thus the first crude form in

<sup>1</sup> The phenomena of suggestion known to hypnotism are all explicable in view of the fact that, in so-called mental processes (ideation, desire, &c.), there is movement—motor or “spontaneous” movement. We are not warranted by experience in thinking of any sensory or intellectual apprehension of things without the motor or corporeal or life-preservative movement which is its indissoluble accompaniment. This sensory-motor activity, this energy, is the first and the broadest fact about human life as about all organised life. The first thing about man is that he is will or energy; and it is this will or energy which constitutes his reality (*Wirklichkeit*), as it does that of all living beings. “Daher sagt Aristoteles mit recht: *ὁ βίος ἐν τῇ κινήσει ἐστί.*”—Parerga—Von Dem, was Einer ist.

which Schopenhauer thought of the opposition between the self and the world does not represent the point of view from which his philosophy must be studied. It is of course still true that his rough acceptance of the doctrine of subjective idealism gave his philosophy from beginning to end the appearance of being simply an attempt to explain the outer world from the standpoint of our own subjective states or consciousness.

Schopenhauer's philosophy suffers from the fact that the dualism which he tried to solve was so pronounced at the outset. A thorough philosophy has no right to regard any apparent dualism in things as more than simply apparent, and Schopenhauer is to blame for attaching so much importance to the distinction between the subjective and the objective. He did so only because he started with the view of the idealist that the idea is the first thing in consciousness. He ought to have started with the presumption that the distinction between the subjective and the objective was not absolute but relative, being in fact a distinction *in* things or *in* the world and not something which entitles us to split up the world into two halves. His own philosophy causes us in the end to look at the distinction in a new and sounder way, in a living and dynamic instead of a dead and static way. Still, because he started from the notion that the idea was the first thing in consciousness, he himself fell naturally enough into the counter-error of believing that what *he* found out to be true of the self—will—was really the first thing in consciousness. Strictly speaking, neither the idea nor the will can be said to be the ultimate or the first thing in man's nature, but rather both of them together, and the idea as the parallel accompaniment to the will. This, however, is not our point just now. We are trying to see how the notion of the self as will frees us from some of the crudities and absurdities of idealism, and how it puts in our hands a better link of

connection between man and the world than the mere idea or mental representation.

Schopenhauer causes us to change our point of view in thinking of the mind. He causes us to look at it more objectively than had been the custom since the time of Descartes. Philosophy had contended that it was the essence of the mind to be treated subjectively, seeing that man was the only object in nature which was also a subject—*i.e.*, an *object for itself*. Schopenhauer urges in reply that minds are also, as a student of Aristotle's psychology might say, natural objects; and that we know only the form of the mind by treating it subjectively, and not the whole of the content. The content of the mind is just as essential to the mind as its form—subjectivity; and such phenomena as habit and impulse and reflex action have to be studied objectively even more than subjectively. We learn from Schopenhauer, then, that the difficulties of subjective idealism about a possible path to reality are largely unreal. That is, if the essence of the self is will, will can be found everywhere, being present in unconscious nature as well as in man. And we learn this from him in spite of the fact that he himself felt compelled to start from subjective idealism. It is his unfortunate provisional acceptance of subjective idealism which gives to his philosophy its transcendental character, and which makes it therefore as distasteful to many minds as the philosophy of Schelling, with all its purely speculative divinations of the heart of reality, and its talk about a special faculty for philosophical insight. There is in Schopenhauer the same tendency as in Schelling to disclose as the result of speculation or reflection or dialectic an ostensibly hidden meaning of things, a meaning which may seem even to contradict the testimony of our senses and understanding, and the same tendency to glory in the very element of contradiction necessarily inherent in a principle discovered in such a way, and

in the semblance of intellectual subtlety which its disclosure seems to argue. We experience, for example, a shock of surprise at being compelled by Schopenhauer rudely to extricate ourselves out of idealism,—to cease to believe what (as he puts it) all philosophy avows to be true of the world,—and to profess to find *terra firma* in a transcendental will, whose very existence we could not previously have suspected, as the reality both of the world and of ourselves. But Schopenhauer must be pardoned for the apparently illogical manner in which he seems to extricate himself from idealism. No man can make an absolutely fresh start in philosophy. Schopenhauer had to begin by using the philosophical ideas that were put into his hands by his predecessors and contemporaries; and these were notions about the forms of knowledge being the first things in the mind, and the world being phenomenon or idea. He had to use these notions as tools wherewith to dig his own philosophy of will out of the depths of the human personality and the physical universe. When once we have read his 'World as Will and Idea' right through, we see that we might begin in philosophy with the notion of the human personality as will, and that by so doing we should be taking a natural and healthy and objective view of the mind or the soul or the life-principle there is in all organised matter, as was suggested at the beginning of this paragraph.

II. The idealism, however, which Schopenhauer, on the whole, assumed to be true as a matter of fact about the world, was not so much mere subjective idealism as "ordinary" or "empirical" idealism, as he calls it, "phenomenological" idealism. This is the theory that the world as a whole is partly phenomenon and partly noumenon, partly appearance and partly thing in itself. "The fundamental point of view of idealism is that everything which exists for knowledge—that is, the whole perceptual world which spreads itself out in



time and space and is kept together by the *Principle of Sufficient Reason*—is only *object* in respect of the subject, only the perception of percipient beings, representation, idea, in fact. Its being, therefore, is in no sense absolute or independent, but only relative and dependent; it is, in short, only appearance and not the thing in itself.” We have suggested that it would be unfair to regard Schopenhauer as having tried to pass logically from subjective idealism to this empirical or ordinary idealism of which we are writing. A rough acceptance of the Cartesian-Metaphysical or the Humian-Psychological idealism may have enabled him to generalise the idealistic hypothesis as true of the world as a whole, but it was rather Berkeley and Kant together, in fact the whole of modern philosophy, which enabled him to take his stand on “ordinary” or “phenomenal” idealism as the first broad basis of fact for the philosopher. We shall see here again, as in the case of the idealistic difficulty about the self, that it was really Schopenhauer’s views upon knowledge rather than anything else which made him think the Idealistic position unassailable as a statement of fact about the world. That is, he held that in knowledge (the first thing for the philosopher, according to the ideas of his day) we are made aware not of things but only of phenomena, sense phenomena—“phenomenal appearances.” We cannot criticise just now this view of knowledge. It will occupy us shortly in the next chapter. It is intended that the *whole line of consideration opened up in this volume should cause us to substitute* a more real view of what knowledge is and does for man, in place of the view which the philosophy of idealism has helped to spread. Schopenhauer’s initial belief about reality was expressed in sentences like the following :—

“It is a fundamental philosophical truth that every object is conditioned throughout by the knowing subject, both materially in its objective existence, and formally in the

mode and the manner of its existence, and so is only mere appearance and not the thing in itself." "The appearance world (the world as representation, the objective world) has two poles: the pure knowing subject and pure formless matter." It was before all things evident to Schopenhauer that the world we know consists as a whole simply of phenomenon and not of thing in itself, and that we know only the phenomenal aspects and not the real aspects of things. "It is perfectly simple," he virtually says again and again. "Locke stripped the object of most of its qualities and transferred these to the subject, leaving it with the extended and the geometrical and the physical qualities, of which our perceptions are said to be at best merely the reflex. Then came Kant, who showed that causality was simply a principle of the understanding, and therefore took the greatest step in reducing the object to the subject." As Schopenhauer considered causality to be the essence of matter, Kant in his eyes took the greatest step of all modern philosophers. Putting Locke and Kant together, Schopenhauer gets to the result that both the matter and the form of thought are of subjective origin, both the qualities of material objects (the actual "whatness" of things) and the principles under which we interpret the connections between objects.

This idea of the world as partly phenomenon and partly thing in itself enables us to survey his thought as a whole. The intellectual side of things is to him merely phenomenal and phantasmal, merely ideal and not real; on the other hand, the volitional side of things is substantial and actual, real and not ideal. There is something healthy in this thought, and indeed Schopenhauer appeals to one because he teaches throughout all his writings that knowledge is a poor thing at best, a kind of indirect way of apprehending reality, and that in order really to understand things one must *feel* them, must to a certain extent *be* them, energise with them, or energise

with the great cosmic energy that we call the world-will. The *Weltseele* (that which philosophers pray to and beg to come into them and penetrate them<sup>1</sup>) is really the *Weltwille* in Schopenhauer's eyes—not a thing that can be merely *understood*, but something that must be *felt* and *lived*. As a matter of fact, the sanest philosophers have been men who have played an active part in life, and who have not merely tried to think things. Socrates and Leibnitz and David Hume and Pascal were men of this sort—for was not Socrates a soldier, and Leibnitz a diplomatist, just as Hume was a historian and a man of the world, and Pascal a reformer? In reading Schopenhauer we seem to realise the fact that a philosopher sees only that small part of the world which enters into his consciousness, and that our mere intellectual consciousness cannot take in the pulsating and evolving life of the whole world of nature and of history. The sub-conscious depths of our personality are far richer in content than the mere surface life which we know in consciousness; and these sub-conscious phases of our nature are far better studied in children and the lower animals than in people who have come to the stage of reflection. It is habit and impulse and effort which attract Schopenhauer's attention most in his observation of human nature.

Yet he never thinks of the ultimate meaning of things as any other than a *hidden* one. The student always finds him looking for the inner meaning of things, and showing a contempt for much that the vulgar and the uneducated say about life out of their sublime ignorance of the extent to which they are the mere slaves of the world-will. He really believes that only the philosopher and the man of science *understand* the world. He would of course seek to draw their attention to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Goethe, 'Eins und Alles':—

"Weltseele, komm, uns zu durchdringen!  
Dann mit dem Weltgeist," &c.

the things in life that are most important to generalise from, but would still contend that it is they and the men of genius, and not the vulgar, who understand life. Schopenhauer always writes as if there were much that is illusory in life, much that is not understood by the ordinary man, and as if the game of life were not always in favour of the man who appears to win or thinks that he wins it. He has that scorn for the thousand and one conventions of life which pleases the student of naturalism and realism. He goes as far as possible in proclaiming the biological and the physical facts of life to be the real essence and the real explanation of conduct. The metaphysic of life tends to become the physiology of life, and the measure of man is found in his brain and in his bodily organs; and the whole web of idealistic sentiment and association which the spirit of man has woven around his natural life seems to be a pleasing illusion, an invention of the world-will to secure the furtherance of its own ends and aims for man. A useful application, of course, is often given by Schopenhauer to the distinction between the illusory and the real, the apparent and the real. It seems natural, for instance, to desire to remodel or vitalise this imperfect world of sense and everyday reality, just because so much of it is phenomenal and nugatory and illusory. And accordingly the saint and the artist and the saviour of men all find their place in Schopenhauer's thought.

Read Schopenhauer where one will, one generally finds him making some use, good or bad, of the distinction between phenomenon and thing in itself. "He to whom men and all things have not at times appeared as mere phantoms or illusions has no capacity for philosophy." He is always trying to give a deep and broad and yet an inward and true analysis of reality. If the attempt to do this makes a man a philosopher, Schopenhauer is one. He has in him all the merits and all the defects of what Reid calls the "ideal system," and

these are to be found all over and all through his writings.<sup>1</sup> It is the incessant harping on this distinction which makes his system seem to have at once a real and an illusory hold on things—to contain at once so much that is true and so much that is painfully untrue—and which so fills it with illusion that the sympathetic student feels that nowhere in it does he come into contact with reality. “The Vedas and Puranas have no better simile than a dream *for the whole knowledge of the actual world*, which they call the web of Maya, and they use none more frequently. Plato often says that men live only in dream; the philosopher alone strives to awake himself. Pindar says (ii. n. 135): *σκιας ὄναρ ἀνθρώπου* (*umbrae somnium homo*); and Sophocles:—

‘Ὅρω γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὐδὲν ὄντας ἄλλο, πλὴν  
Εἶδωλ’ ὅσοι περ ζῶμεν, ἢ κουφὴν σκιαν.’

—AJAX, 125.

Beside which most worthily stands Shakespeare:—

‘We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on; and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.’

—‘Tempest,’ Act iv. sc. i.

Lastly, Calderon was so deeply impressed with this view of life, that he sought to embody it in a kind of metaphysical drama—‘Life a Dream.’<sup>2</sup>

“After these numerous quotations from the poets, perhaps I also may be allowed to express myself in a metaphor. *Life and dreams are leaves of the same book*. The systematic reading of this book is real life; but when the reading hours (that is the day) are over, we often continue idly to turn over the leaves and read a page here and there without method or connection, often one we have read before, sometimes one that is new to us; but always in the same book. Such an isolated page is indeed out of connection with the systematic study of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Werke, i. 20; H. and K., i. 21.

the book, but it does not seem so very different when we remember *that the whole continuous perusal begins and ends just as abruptly*, and may therefore be regarded as merely a larger single page.”<sup>1</sup>

We must not, however, allow ourselves to be deceived by the attractive character of ordinary idealism. Whether “phenomenological” idealism, with its opposition between the phenomenon and the thing in itself, is true or not, it leads, as has been said, to *illusionism*, just as subjective idealism does. If the world is partly phenomenon and partly thing in itself, we can never know exactly and certainly what is phenomenon and what is thing in itself. Then, again, idealism is *not proved*, as Schopenhauer thinks it is. It was only the presence in his mind of certain Kantian ideas about knowledge which made him think the teaching of idealism to be fact. And, lastly, idealism is not what Schopenhauer thinks it is, but something different.

As to the first point, in whatever form we encounter the opposition between *phenomenon* and *noumenon* in Schopenhauer, we are always confronted with the same sense of illusionism, and necessarily so. It was more from the Kantian than from the Cartesian dualism that Schopenhauer made his real start in philosophy. He was governed more by the distinction between phenomenon and thing in itself than by the distinction between the self and the world, although the latter distinction, as we have seen, is undoubtedly present in his system. Most students of Kant are perfectly well aware of the theoretical impossibility of finding any bridge between phenomenon and noumenon, for the simple reason that the *noumenon* is not a fact but a fiction, intelligible indeed as a fiction, and having a genesis and a history in Kant's

<sup>1</sup> Welt als Wille, i. 20, 21 ; H. and K., i. 21, 22 (the italics are mine). It will be observed that Schopenhauer rarely accentuates his Greek.

own thought, or even in human thought, but still a fiction.<sup>1</sup> It must, then, be conceded that Schopenhauer's whole philosophy, in so far as it attempts to find a noumenon or a thing in itself for the world, *is an imaginary solution of an imaginary difficulty*. Positively, of course, it is very much more—the substitution of a real and rational way of relating the self to the world, for an ideal and hypothetical way. Schopenhauer's will reveals to us in the main a certain side of things which other philosophers have overlooked in their account of the world. He says that *we do not know the "thing in itself" of the world by knowledge at all*; we arrive at it by another path,—we even “stumble” on it by “accident,” or by “stealth,” as it were (through the “back-door” of the willing self!). These two characteristics of will; its reality (as opposed to the ideality of such principles as “substance” and “idea” and “monad”) and its easily grasped significance—the fact that the plain man, who knows nothing about science or speculative philosophy, can become acquainted with the supreme reality of all things through the simple and verifiable process called volition—made Schopenhauer feel justified in claiming to be the only philosopher who had brought home to the human mind a really positive and verifiable philosophy. By willing and being, according to Schopenhauer, we learn the meaning or essence of the world. The practical value of this idea lies in its implicit advocacy of the need of our taking up a direct attitude towards the world if we are to know it at all or to understand it. Strictly, we never do *know the world*; we only *realise* it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See a paper by the author in ‘Mind’ (xvi. 373), where an endeavour is made to suggest in a technical way what exactly the thing in itself may be.

<sup>2</sup> It is not hereby implied that we realise the whole world in our corporeal or organic sense for things, because in that case an objector might be inclined to assert the opposite paradox—that we never do and never can realise the world, but that we can only know it. It is true that knowledge represents an exact as opposed to a confused sense of reality, and that exactitude (however limited in extent our exact knowledge may be) is for many reasons preferable to inexact-

Then there is a certain illusionism all through Schopenhauer's philosophy, arising from the very fact that will is, as he maintains, something that we cannot describe in terms of knowledge. He glorifies, as it were, this uniqueness of his first principle. From saying that we cannot know it, he tends to fall into the danger of saying that it is something—not merely *not knowable*, but something as different from knowledge as can well be imagined; something not merely not logical, but something *a-logical*, *irrational*, *blind*, *autonomous*, *irresponsible*, *free*. Naturally there is something illusory about the attempt to evolve a rational world from something that is purely irrational, from a will that is “altogether prior to and ‘above’ the intellect.” Readers of Schopenhauer know that the mind simply fails to attach any real or positive content to his blind will, which is supposed to be the central force and reality of the world. It is impossible to take him seriously when he says that the will somehow “strikes a light for itself in the brain of man or animals,” or to allow for a moment that this vague anvil-spark is enough to account

tude. All exact knowledge tends to banish ignoble fears about the unknown from the mind of man. Lucretius, *e.g.*, apprehended this idea, and gave sublime expression to it. But then, the very idea of knowledge is that it is simply the focusing of our attention within a somewhat narrowly defined field of observation. Even when we are attending to one or two objects, there is an outlying universe of which we have only a general or confused apprehension. We must never overlook this sense that we have of a greater sphere of reality than may be before us at one time. It is through thinking of the larger world and of the “larger sense” which we may have for reality that we keep in view the possibility of our having new sensations and new experiences. And again, even if we look within the sphere of exact observation or attention, we shall find that our knowledge is not so definite and absolute as it may appear to be. Within that sphere, too, we know only the relations that objects sustain to our experience and volition. The puzzles of philosophers (Zeno, Euclid of Megara, Pyrrho, Kant, &c.) about the smallest mathematical and physical units, about atoms and *minima divisibilia* and the like, show this. The very agnosticism which is the obverse of the confidence inspired by exact knowledge, bears its testimony to the fact that our ultimate attitude of mind toward the universe ought to be one of openness, receptivity, and trust, and not one of closed and definite conviction that we know all we can ever know.



for the intellect and the consciousness that are in the world. It is absurd to try to describe the world in terms of a principle which is essentially unknowable.

And, thirdly, there are in Schopenhauer all the fallacies incident to the very notion of the thing in itself. A "thing in itself," after all, can never connect itself naturally and logically with other things. How can the root of the world be known if the very essence of this root is to conceal itself? Thus once again, if idealism means that the world is phenomenon or appearance, it inevitably ends in contradiction; for if the world is said to be a phenomenon of the brain as the brain in turn is of something else, this means that we have two or three things to reckon with in our thought, the phenomenon, and the brain, and the third thing in question, the *x*, and so it would be untrue to say that we know *only* phenomena. The illusionism incident to this whole vein of thought is expressed in such a sentence as the following: "It is *Maya*, the veil of deceit, which obscures the eyes of mortals, and lets them see a world about which they can neither say that it exists nor that it does not exist; for it is like a dream, like the glittering of the sun on the sand which the traveller takes from afar to be water, or like the piece of rope that he throws on the ground and takes to be a snake."<sup>1</sup> If the world with which we are in contact is only phenomenon, everything becomes a dream. If the world is *only* phenomenon, how can we ever inquire of ourselves whether it may not after all be something more than this? Generally speaking, ordinary dogmatic idealism affects us pretty much as Berkeley's idealism affected David Hume—"it produces no conviction." If there is indeed a thing in itself, a thing whose essence is that it cannot be presented or known, then we can never lay hold of it by any method short of cutting our own heads off (losing or getting rid of our intellect altogether), seeing

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Werke, ii. 9.

that it is the intellect which always stands in the way of our really coming face to face with things. And to this position Schopenhauer actually comes in all that he says to the effect that we ought deliberately to give up the attempt to *know* the thing in itself. He comes to it also, we shall see, in his disparagement of the intellect in art and religion.

We cannot in our perplexity fall back on agnosticism, because agnosticism is not a satisfactory philosophy; the experience of life shows us this. Agnosticism may lead to mere empty Pyrrhonism, which is too thin and useless to be taken seriously; or it may lead to mysticism, which is not philosophy. Agnosticism generally does lead, in the case of those who profess it, to an airy empiricism in theory and practice, which substitutes brilliant or incisive utterances for reasoned beliefs and impressions and sensations for ideas and thoughts. The only possible attitude of the mind to the world, if we are bent on learning the meaning of things, is a direct one, and not a general paralysis before such self-created barriers as the imaginary and spurious distinction between phenomenon and noumenon. One has only to try to read Schelling's attempts to evolve a real world from the thing in itself to refuse to attach any meaning to the attempts of Schopenhauer to give a real description of the world in terms of the distinction between phenomena and the thing in itself. Hegel has taught us that these words have only a logical, or, as we should now say, an epistemological significance, and not an ontological one. Whatever Schopenhauer has to teach us, it is not along the line of his account of the world in terms of this distinction between phenomenon and noumenon. But of this enough. If idealism leads to illusionism at any one point, it is sufficient reason for giving it up as a complete philosophy of reality. Hegel, in his dialectic march, simply evaded the distinction between phenomenon and noumenon, regarding it as a pitfall. We may do the same.

A full examination of Schopenhauer's contention that both the matter and the form of thought are of subjective origin would involve the whole of modern philosophy. Results alone can be stated here, and these very summarily. In the first place, the forms of thought which, after Kant, were long supposed to be demonstrably subjective, are not really so. The various categories, such as "cause," "substance," "plurality," "number," "time," and "space," are both subjective and objective; they represent certain ways in which the self regards the world of its experience, or ways in which the world that we know and of which we form a part is actually constituted. Things are *really* causally connected with one another, and things *actually* are a plurality; and there *is* such a succession as "time" and such a mode of arrangement of things as spatial juxtaposition, and so on. Cause, substance, number, time, etc., are not mere conceptions which we invent for theoretical reasons in interpreting things. They all represent something that we can and do actually perceive, something therefore that is real. Things that we know are actually determined by, and causally act upon, each other, actually are in space and time, etc. If I am asked, "Is *space* a real thing?" I reply: Most certainly it is not; there is no such thing as space: there is only *spatial quality*, and even that is not a *thing in itself*, an aspect of things that we can separate from all the other aspects of things like colour and physical resistance, etc. Space is real enough, as the spatial quality of things; the world is not *in* space (as if *space* were greater than the *world*), but there is only one world, and it has spatial properties, which may be mathematically determined. It has also causal aspects, that is, physical energy; and it has also moral aspects, consisting in the relations that persons sustain to each other; and it has also æsthetical aspects, consisting in the various forms of natural and artistic beauty, and so on. The whole difficulty about the nature of the categories or the forms of

thought has arisen through thinking of the objective world and the subjective world as two separate things, which have got to be connected with each other. Now, as has been said, what "God has joined" let not man "put asunder." The subjective and the objective are really connected with each other, and interpenetrate each other in the world that we know; the world has—if we will put it so—both objective aspects and subjective aspects. A phenomenon like colour, for instance, is both objective and subjective, and this must be definitely recognised once and for all. The categories or the forms of thought are *real* aspects of things, *real* in the world that we know. And as we do not know any other world than the one in which we exist, the world is never for philosophical purposes to be thought of apart from the self or the subject or consciousness. If a person does not understand and accept this, the sooner he "learns Kant" the better.

It is needless to point out here that the question about the source of the categories, and about the way in which we come to know them, is quite different from the question of the real nature of the categories, or of the "forms of knowledge" as such. As a matter of fact, Schopenhauer himself, in his polemic against abstract conceptions, has helped to bring out the fact that the categories are percepts as well as concepts. To every perception—to the causal perception, for example, or to the perception of sequence—some real thing corresponds; or, rather, every perception represents a real aspect of things. The "real" contains both subjective and objective factors, and the Critical Philosophy has helped to bring this out. If any one asks what a fact like "colour" or "cause" is *apart from* the "subject" or the "self" or "consciousness," of course there is absolutely nothing to answer. The fact of colour, or the fact of cause, represents a synthesis of subjective and objective elements. The world we know is a world in which we may feel at home because it

is both spiritual and material at the same time. The matter that we know is matter which is bound up with the perceptions and the life of living beings. Both the primary and the secondary qualities of matter are qualities which are perceived by psychical beings. And then again, when we put what appears to be unorganised matter under the microscope, we frequently find it to consist of decayed organic or cellulated matter. Neither in psychology nor in histology is it possible or desirable to make an absolute separation between the physical and the psychical or between dead and living matter. Unorganised and organised matter, the objective and the subjective, are all indissolubly blended with each other through the whole range of reality. Anything that we really perceive, or experience, or are compelled to think about the world, is true of the world, is matter of fact—part of the world. Idealism did not prove, and never could prove, that the principles of reality, the forms under which we are compelled to, and actually do, view reality, are only in the mind. The forms of reality are as objective and really existent as anything else. At least there is no existent unformed matter. “Only in the mind,” too, is a nonsensical or contradictory expression. There is no mind apart from our experience of reality, and our *experience* of reality is in a sense just what we mean by reality; it is at least the highest aspect of reality—the point at which reality sums itself up and gives its highest expression of itself.

Schopenhauer's real reason for identifying himself at the outset with idealism was probably an epistemological one. It is to be found in certain ideas that he had about knowledge. He thought we could never get at reality because “between us and reality” there “always comes the brain” (or mind), which *ex hypothesi* always “idealises” things, reveals only their “effects on us” and not what they are “in themselves.” Now it is all very well, again, to grasp the truth that nothing

can be called a fact until it has been constituted as a "fact" for the experience of some conscious subject or other. "Reality," indeed, means what appeals to us or to some other conscious beings as real. But this is no reason for refusing to admit that we know "things." We do know them. They are what they appear to be to our consciousness. It is absurd to talk about things as they were "before they entered into" our consciousness, or "apart from" our consciousness, for the simple reason that there are no things "out of relation to consciousness," or more simply still, because this very expression means absolutely nothing. Idealism ought not to express itself by saying that things are only "in the mind," but rather by saying that the world is throughout a reality for consciousness — is in fact, whatever else it is, a spiritual world, a world in which psychical beings really exist as fundamental or ultimate constituent elements. To be sure, all is not made plain by this mere statement.<sup>1</sup> It is not, for instance, meant that we are conscious of the whole of reality, but only that what we do experience is reality; and that the real we do not yet know, will not and cannot be inconsistent with the reality that we do know. Schopenhauer was wrong in thinking that Kant's metaphysic necessarily led men back to that pseudo-philosophy that is called subjective or ordinary idealism. To say that "we cannot know things because between us and things there always comes the mind," represents a confusion between metaphysic and crude or dogmatic idealism. It is all very well to point out the subjective factor in things, but this does not mean that the whole of reality may be called subjective.

It is the dynamic character of Schopenhauer's philosophy which helps us out of the difficulty of ordinary as well as of subjective idealism. Instead of saying that our consciousness

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, chaps. v. and vi.

reveals to us only certain representations or perceptions or impressions of things, we ought to say that consciousness makes us aware of the relation which things sustain to our action. It will be found upon examination that all the perceptions of reality which animals and human beings have are simply the experiences which determine their action towards their environment.<sup>1</sup> Each being knows enough of reality to determine its own action in regard to reality, its own function in the system of things. And it will be found that the conceptions which man has about things may, as Schopenhauer suggested, be reduced to perceptions,<sup>2</sup> and consequently to the knowledge of things that is necessary and sufficient to him for the purposes of his life. Schopenhauer's philosophy causes us to relate the "representations" and the "impressions" and the "perceptions" of the idealists to the action of our will. He shows how all our knowledge simply helps us to determine our action, and so he gives knowledge its real place in the system of things. It may doubtless be urged that it is just as much a piece of idealism to say that all reality is related to our will, as to say that all reality is related to our intellect. Indeed it not only may be so; it is so. But then we have already suggested that the relations that things sustain to us *constitute the reality of the world*. We must not fight shy of admitting reality to be what it professes to be, and actually is. It would not be hard to show that even Berkeley identified reality with our practical experience. But Schopenhauer was the first to base a whole system of philosophy on this idea.

The reality that we know in sense perception is only so much of reality as affects our practical activity; as psychology teaches us, it represents that which furthers or opposes our activity. Every being knows about the world just what is in dynamic relation to his will and activity. A complete knowledge of the world could be obtained by summing or adding

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chap. iii.

together all the practical experiences of the various different living beings that inhabit the earth. Voltaire's fable of *Micro-megas* suggests this. Before Schopenhauer it was the fashion to think that all reality was related simply to our ideas about things, but he has caused us to see in all the breadth of its significance the fact that reality is that which is related to the will, to the evolution of man's life. He has given us, in spite of his pessimism, a hopeful view of reality; because he must be held to have taught that the evolution of man's life (since it is the evolution of the highest thing that we know in the world) is not merely the highest manifestation of an unknown reality, but the actual reality of things itself. Scientific knowledge simply unfolds to us in a more exact way than ordinary perception does the relation that things sustain to the movements of our bodies. All scientific knowledge serves to increase man's power over nature, in so far as it tells him more and more clearly what the conditions of human effort are. The knowledge that our brain gives of reality, so far from standing in the way of our effectively knowing things, discloses to us the actual reality of things, for in the last resort it simply tells us the relations that things sustain to our activity. Schopenhauer's acceptance, then, of the idealistic hypothesis must somehow be translated into the more real kind of idealism, which he himself has given us, the dynamic idealism, which is true of things, the idealism which teaches that the dynamic relations of things constitute their reality. In interpreting the dynamic relations that things sustain to each other, we must select a point of reference to which all the movement in the world may be referred. The point of reference which we may best select, and indeed the only one which we can select, is the movements of our bodies, or, in other words, the practical purposes of our lives.

III. In so far as we seem in all this to be merely attaining



to a more real kind of idealism about ordinary reality, there must, after all, be considerable reason for thinking that the true idealism has a pretty serious hold upon reality. The true idealism may be what Schopenhauer called the transcendental, and not the ordinary crude subjective idealism. And indeed, as he says, there is much misunderstanding about idealism. "In spite of all that one may say, nothing is so persistently and ever anew misunderstood as *idealism*, because it is interpreted to mean that one denies the *empirical* reality of the external world. Upon this rests the perpetual return to the appeal to common-sense, which appears in many forms and guises; for example, as an 'irresistible conviction' in the Scottish school, or as Jacobi's *faith* in the reality of the external world."<sup>1</sup> We may interpret these words of Schopenhauer to imply that he did not accept idealism in the crude and absurd sense, without, however, giving up our contention that many of the difficulties of his philosophy arose out of the fact that the terms in which he allowed himself to speak and think of idealism were often inaccurate and unreal. He ought to have given up the use of all such expressions as "the self with a single state," or the "forms of knowledge lying in the mind," etc. If idealism only means that reality is vitally related to human purposes and human life, all serious people are idealists. "In vain can rock, tree, brook, the blue heaven, sun, moon, and stars, be said to exist with absolutely no eye to perceive it all." As Du Bois-Reymond<sup>2</sup> reminds us, the Mosaic "There was light" is simply false, if we do not think of light as partly formed by the meeting of the objective and the subjective in some sensitive eye-spot—even of an "infusorium distinguishing for the first time clearness from darkness." All that can be seriously objected against the idealist's hypothesis is that:

<sup>1</sup> World as Will, &c.; H. and K., ii. 169.

<sup>2</sup> Die Grenzen des Naturerkennens, s. 17. Leipzig, 1884.

"The external world *by no means presents itself, as Jacobi declares, upon credit, and is accepted by us on trust or faith. It presents itself as that which it is, and it performs directly what it promises.*"<sup>1</sup>

The sentence last quoted is extremely important, and contains a profound insight into reality. Even Hegel might have written it. It reminds one indeed of the saying of Hegel that he who would know the mind must learn not to "fight shy of its special phenomena." It suggests that the true attitude we ought to take to reality is a direct one, an attitude of credence and not of distrust. Schopenhauer himself did not always remember this, although his philosophy of will by its very existence bears testimony to it. All is real that we experience to be real: "colour," "pleasure," "beauty,"—all these things represent some kind of reality, and we must take reality to be what it professes to be; colour and beauty are no less real because they are not like granite or gravitation, nor is an "idea" any the less a fact or reality because it is only a "mental" reality. There may be, in short, various "grades of reality" as Schopenhauer phrases it, and to the consideration of these we shall immediately proceed. The distinction between the phenomenon and the thing in itself has only a relative and not an ultimate significance. The world cannot be split up into sections which are not connected with each other and with the whole. The strange thing in Schopenhauer is that he knew this, as the quotation given above shows, and yet that he allowed himself to talk of a merely relative distinction in things as if it were a physical and real distinction. He talks of our "mind" or our "skull" or our "skin" being a "wall" between us and things. Out of this crude sort of idealism nothing can ever come but illusionism. Our "mind" and our "skull" and our "skin" and "things" are all *parts* of reality. No one of them is

<sup>1</sup> Die Welt, &c., Ergänzt., Werke, iii. 9; H. and K., ii. 169.

more real than the other. If it can be shown that our mind or our will actually sustains a more important relation to the rest of the world—than stones and plants and animals—then, of course, our will may be claimed to represent the highest aspect of reality, but not until this has been proved.

Schopenhauer's idea of will, as has been said once or twice, doubtless came to him partly by way of a hasty induction. Everything seemed to be in motion or in activity, and even the self seemed to consist of impulse and purpose. But a system can hardly be based upon mere observation unless that observation also contains some measure of scientific truth about things. If our "experience" of reality can really be reduced to mean simply the extent to which reality "affects our will" (our development), then will or purpose may indeed be said to be the supreme and the characteristic fact of the world. No one thing, of course, can exactly be said to be real on its own account. All things sustain dynamic relations to all other things. If this is what transcendental idealism means, there does not seem to be much serious objection to professing a general adherence to its principles. All things have a borrowed or an ideal kind of reality, in so far as their reality is not to be found altogether in themselves but in the relations that they sustain to other things and to conscious persons. This, we know, has become poetical as well as philosophical commonplace—

"Flower in the crannied wall," etc.

It is an outcome of Schopenhauer's positive teaching. But Schopenhauer teaches more than this in suggesting to us the reality to which all other reality may be considered relative, the will or the purpose of man. We shall see his meaning better to some extent in the chapter on the Bondage of Man.

Schopenhauer's idealism, then (the relativity of all things to

the will), comes to be the obverse of the idealism common to most followers of Kant, that all things are relative to our intellect. Even if no more than a complement to intellectual idealism it is still something of a discovery. But more than this, it has a reality which the other idealism had not. The human mind naturally grew tired and always does grow tired of a philosophy which says that the real<sup>1</sup> consists simply of intellectual relations, unified and correlated indeed by a mind, but still simply intellectual relations. It was always felt that "Gods and men are in very truth more than logical categories," yet this intuitive perception—it is a profound mistake for philosophy to neglect such perceptions, and Schopenhauer never neglects them—was rated simply as a common-sense remark which had nothing to do with philosophical truth. And so men went on holding one thing by way of intellectual conviction (that the real is largely ideal or mental) and another by way of practical persuasion (that the real furnished a positive limit to human activity). Now *reality* on Schopenhauer's principles—his subjective and ordinary idealism being both set aside as full of confusion and illusion—means, in the first instance, *function*. Things are real which organically affect each other, and which discharge some function or other in the universe. Things are real in so far as they operate upon each other. The human personality consequently is real in so far as it operates upon the rest of reality, and leaves its "footprints on the sands of time." If human beings, as it were, can carve their purposes into the centre of things they attain to reality. The intellect, according to Schopenhauer, shows us the relations that things sustain to our will. The intellect in the Kantian philosophers

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "We are thus apparently left face to face with a mind (thinking subject) which is the source of relations (categories), and a world which is constituted by relations; with a mind which is conscious of itself, and a world of which that mind may without metaphor be described as the creator."—"A Criticism of Current Idealistic Theories," by Arthur James Balfour. 'Mind,' Oct. 1893.

was only a plexus of forms—a kaleidoscopic entity; the intellect in Schopenhauer is a servant of the organism guiding the will in the pursuit of its ends. The intellect is real as the servant of the will, and real only as such. Like other things, it becomes transcendently “ideal” if it is regarded as being anything ultimate on its own account. It can always be shown that it only has an existence in relation to the will and the feelings and the body. It was not very strange that philosophers who had allowed themselves to overlook this got into so much difficulty. They devoted too much attention to the intellectual side of things. A reading of the world which has no bearing on human action should be discarded as unreal and partial.

But to return to the human organism, which is apparently the most real thing amid the world of things, the thing to which all other things seem relative. The purposes that can be read in the will of man are the highest purposes that seem to exist in things. So we may say that all other things are “ideal” in respect of the human personality—that is, that their reality falls short of it and only exists in relation to it. Of course Schopenhauer himself is a pantheist who regards all organisms and personalities as only functions of the one cosmic will. Individuality is to him an illusion. It is illusory as something that is vouched for, he thinks, only by the intellect. The intellect is that which breaks up things into individualities and separate existences. To this we have already objected. If human beings *appear to be* individual beings, there is every reason for holding that they are so. But the best guarantee for the attainment of real individuality by the human person is to be found in the fact that the will of the individual seems ever to be trying to attain to a greater or higher kind of reality than it at any one moment or at any one stage of its experience possesses. If the will is the reality of things, then it is to be expected that the human personality

must attain to the kind of reality which it seems to be seeking. And so, as far as the reality of the individual goes, Schopenhauer's teaching is more satisfactory than that of Hegel. In his intellectual philosophy he virtually denies the reality of human individuality, just as Hegel is bound to do. But elsewhere he has made us ask this more serious question about the reality of man: may not the reality at which man's will seems to be aiming be taken to be the true reality of the human person?<sup>1</sup> Is the existence of the individual something fully complete once for all, or is it a process of gradual realisation? Is it something that he now has or that he is trying to attain to? Kant thought that the moral individual was an end in himself, and that the universe was a moral kingdom in which every one person regarded every other person as a person and not as a mere thing. It is easy for intellectual philosophy to regard all the different consciousnesses in the world as phases of one consciousness, and so as at once real and transient. But ethics teaches us that the individual is *not so much real as destined to be real*.<sup>2</sup> We shall see the value of Schopenhauer's contention that morality has to do with the *will*. Man has not yet attained in the exercise of his will to the kind of reality of which he seems to be capable. Reality, in short, for man seems to lie ever before and onwards in new actions and in new volitions. Man never is, but is always trying to be. There is a certain amount of idealism which seems inevitable even about the human personality. Men who do not in their lives attain to the deeper purposes of manhood can hardly be said to be real. "He to whom all men and all things have not at times appeared as mere phantoms or illusions has no capacity for philosophy," says Schopenhauer. And of course no individual, for that part of it, exists alto-

<sup>1</sup> The chapters upon art and ethics and religion will treat of this question in more detail.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chap. vii.

gether for himself. His reality consists to some extent in the relations which he sustains to other people.

It is thus indeed perfectly natural to take an idealistic view of the personality of man. But if the reality of man is placed beyond his merely actual or present existence, wherein can it be said to consist? Shall we say in his purpose and in his will? If so, we shall come very close to the only ultimate meaning that can be read out of Schopenhauer. We must, as it were, find some reality on which the reality of all other things can be shown to depend. And so Schopenhauer is in a sense right in saying that the philosopher must always seek for a thing in itself. Only by a thing in itself we must not mean a thing which really exists by itself apart from all other things, but a thing on which the reality of everything else seems in some way to hang. "All philosophy, to be honest," says Schopenhauer, "must be idealistic." This can refer only to the dependent reality of the greater number of things. We must not, however, decide too hastily what, on Schopenhauer's principles, ought to be regarded as the ultimately real thing in the human person. We must first study Schopenhauer's philosophy of art and his philosophy of religion. We shall see how in his philosophy of art he tends to regard the "universals" or the "Ideas" as the most real things in the world. But we shall also there suggest that these "Ideas" cannot for one moment be thought of apart from the reality of human purpose and human life. The letter of Schopenhauer's system, no doubt, stands for the fact that all things, "Ideas" and human purposes alike, are unreal in face of the self-existent and eternal Will, which is the support and the reality of the world. But if we can somehow show that the cosmic will expresses itself most fully in the personality of man and in the purposes of man, we shall be warranted in selecting the purposes of man and the volition of man as the reality under which all other realities may be graded.

Schopenhauer has pointed out what he considers to be the various grades of reality, or at least he has suggested the idea that we should grade reality in accordance with the modes of the working of the world-will. The will has manifested itself in many different forms and in many different grades of potency. This grading of reality is a most valuable part of the transcendental idealism which we are trying to put forward as on the whole the best way of looking at reality. All reality must be shown to be an expression of the organic effort which constitutes the life of the universe. This conception will be explained at greater length in the chapters that follow.

The will, in the language of Schopenhauer, has expressed itself in various grades, from the "simple forces of nature" exemplified in gravitation and cohesion and the various atomic forces, up through the "various forms of animal and vegetable life" to motived action in the case of man.<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer uses the expression "Platonic Ideas" to represent the "different grades of the objectification of the will." The "different species," the enduring forms of organised nature, exhibit themselves — he holds — in a graduated succession or series, in which the higher species or forms are always a more perfect and distinct assertion of the will to live than the lower. Every individual being needs will-power, so that the form of life which it represents shall be victorious over lower forms of life. The organic and vital forces that are at work for some time in the human body must be strong enough to overcome the physical and chemical forces. Each individual organism, according to Schopenhauer, represents a "grade of the objectification of the will," the "Idea," of its "species"; but the

<sup>1</sup> It is useful, with a view to an understanding of Schopenhauer, to try to think of our conduct as in a sense an expenditure of cosmic force, and a consummation, as it were, of the various forces that are at work in the world.



“species,” the “Idea,” the “grade of the will,” is mightier than any one assertion of it that is apparent in time and space. The will has expressed itself in the various grades of existence and life that we see. All these grades of life are relatively permanent, and the grade of life that is exemplified in the will of man is the highest assertion of the world-will that we know of. The intellect that exists in the brain of man lights up all the rest of existence, and makes us aware of the different forms in which the will has asserted its life. Schopenhauer would say that the intellect brings only confusion into the world by making man think that he is different from other beings and things in the world. We should prefer to say that the intellect shows us the various things in the world which have fallen short of the higher reality that is shadowed forth in our own tentative but ever more perfect and successful efforts after life. There seems, then, every reason in Schopenhauer’s thought not only for grading the world into different kinds of reality, but for regarding the reality that expresses itself in the will of man as the highest kind of reality. The foundations are thus laid for a complete scheme of *transcendental* philosophy or *transcendental* idealism. He uses the highest grade or manifestation of the will to interpret and explain all the other grades of the will or of existence. In view of the perfect human being all other existence seems phenomenal and ideal. All other things exist, not for themselves, but for man as the consummation of all reality. We may then deny the absolute reality of beings and things which fall short of the reality of the human personality. In this sense of idealism perhaps many more people are idealists than those who call themselves by that name.

We already see that the supreme difficulty in Schopenhauer is to connect his disparagement of the intellect (as somehow falsifying things) with his view of the intellect as a tool in

the service of the will. It is not in the intellect, according to Schopenhauer, but in the will that the meaning of reality is to be read. Now it is wrong to say that the intellect reveals only "ideas" which are the "effects" of the action of things upon it; it reveals *things* and other *beings* in their relation to my will. Thus in harmony with Schopenhauer's own fundamental principle, the distinction between subject and object is not to be viewed ontologically but *teleologically*. This means that the reality of so-called *things* is measured by the degree to which they subserve that ultimate purpose in the universe which man alone is able to understand and adequately realise. They are, if we care to put it so, "phenomenal" or "ideal" in relation to the will of man, inasmuch as man seems to possess a higher kind of reality than the reality that they exhibit. It is absurd to ask what the *subject* is *in itself* and what the *object* is *in itself*. In fact the attempt to study the world in terms of the distinction between subject and object is a miscalculated attempt. For the intellect reveals to us only the extent to which things affect our will; and the object is best understood, not as a phenomenon of the intellect but as something which sustains a relation to the human will. If we wish to introduce a real "content" into the merely logical distinction between the *subject* and the *object*, we must view things dynamically and ask about the relation that they sustain to our will, whether that is absolute or relative. The world-will sustains an absolute relation to my will—its volition determines my reality as a person; all mere "things" sustain only a relative relation to my will—they can be used by me as instruments or tools.

The outcome of transcendental idealism would thus seem to be that human persons and the supreme will of the universe are the only ultimate existences. With the question of what the world is *apart from human purposes* we cannot possibly have anything to do. The sense of things that we have in

our volition is for us the best instrument by which we can interpret reality. The vulgar have always felt this, and so far have all along been superior to the philosophers, who rarely get beyond the abstract conceptions of the intellect, because they have lost sight of the fact that the intellect is nothing on its own account but only a tool or servant of the will. The "transcendental reality" of the world is to be found in will, and the highest form of reality may be said to be the conscious or rational will of man. This is substantially the teaching of Schopenhauer himself; and it all, in a sense, comes out of his attitude to the "ideal system." He simply diverged from ordinary idealism to find the reality of things in will. It is impossible to construct a real idealism so long as we keep merely to the plane of the intellect. If we stay there we shall get into nothing but illusionism, for the intellect is really nothing on its own account; it only "lights up" for us the relations that things sustain to our will. In the relations that things sustain to our will, in the various "grades of reality," and in the fact that the will of man seems to represent the highest "grade of reality," we have a complete scheme of transcendental idealism or transcendental realism, just as we please to call it.

## CHAPTER III.

## SCHOPENHAUER'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE.

"In my chief work I have shown that the thing in itself—*i.e.*, whatever, on the whole, exists independently of our representation—cannot be got at by way of representation, but that, to reach it, we must follow quite a different path, leading through the inside of things, which lets us into the citadel, as it were, by treachery."—"The Fourfold Root,' etc.

"A Reason, on the other hand, which supplies material knowledge primarily out of its own resources, and conveys positive information transcending the sphere of possible experience ; a Reason which, in order to do this, must necessarily contain *innate ideas*, is a pure fiction, invented by . . . and a product of the terror with which Kant's 'Criticism of Pure Reason' has inspired."—*Ibid.*

IN the preceding chapter we have seen how the study of Schopenhauer's attitude to the philosophy of idealism centred or culminated in the examination of his opinions on the nature and reality of knowledge. In the present chapter we shall seek to pursue this examination in more detail. But Schopenhauer's theory of knowledge is also interesting for a more general reason. To many who have learned Kant's lesson, the shortest way of estimating the value of any philosophical system is to discover and criticise the views it is inclined to take of the nature and the reality of knowledge. Schopenhauer's system lends itself very easily to this kind of examination, as Schopenhauer professed, with some reason, to teach the problem of philosophy through an initial acceptance of Kant's main theoretical principles. So far as the pure

theory of knowledge goes he stands midway between Kant and those of Kant's followers who proceeded, against the warnings of Kant himself, to convert the Critical Philosophy into a new and positive system of truth, called Transcendental Philosophy. We have hinted that Schopenhauer learned from Kant, better than most of Kant's successors, the real difficulty—if not the practical impossibility—of attempting to foist on human thought, by way of a philosophy of reality, anything at all akin to the old ontology, with its professed knowledge of entities that are ordinarily supposed to transcend human knowledge. Schopenhauer's philosophy, like Kant's, is, in the first instance at least, almost more epistemology or theory of knowledge than metaphysic. It is only when we interpret Schopenhauer in the light of the positive facts over which his philosophy confusedly stumbled, that his doctrine becomes in some sense a real description of the facts of life. Still his epistemology is instructive enough in itself. We learn here, better than anywhere else, his solid reasons for protesting against his contemporaries Schelling and Hegel, and at the same time the reasons of the illusionism which characterises his own positive thinking.

Schopenhauer learned from Kant the main ideas and principles of the Critical Philosophy, and the critical idea always dominated his mind—in a positive way so far as "phenomena" were concerned, and in a negative way so far as "noumena" were concerned. In his 'Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason' he expands Kant's idea of certain categories appropriate to certain realms of fact, and the whole book may be regarded as an attempt to connect the categories in some sort of system. It has many merits into which one cannot here go in detail, the chief of these being its extreme exactness of conception and execution; its scholarly and critical introduction; its more faithful adherence to the idealistic point of view than we find in Kant; and its partial abandonment of

the "faculty-psychology," in treating, not so much of different mental faculties as of groups of mental "representations" (ideas) corresponding to objects in some such way as Spinoza's *idea* to its *ideatum*. It shows us that there are four kinds of necessity—physical, mathematical, logical, and moral—these being the four roots of the Principle of Sufficient Reason, which is the supreme principle of all knowledge. The phenomenal world is to be explained by these four kinds of necessity, each phenomenal object or thing by its own kind of necessity; a physical object, for example, by the law of causality, or a moral fact by reference to the will of man, and so on. All this is perfectly satisfactory.

But just as Schopenhauer in his preliminary philosophy of reality (which was Idealism) always presupposed that there were other things than phenomena, so in his theory of knowledge he presupposed that there was a kind of knowledge different from the knowledge reached by the application of the different categories or principles of the understanding (cause and space and number and substance, and so on) to the ordinary world of the senses. This idea he borrowed from Plato, and it is one of the many grievous defects of Schopenhauer's philosophy, that while professedly a direct and observational account of reality, it contains more than one preconception taken without analysis or criticism from earlier philosophy. Of course not even the most radical or naturalistic account of reality can dispense with the past spiritual attainments of the human mind, but Schopenhauer was a vandal in the way that he treated the past thought of humanity, taking or leaving just what he pleased, without any respect for the organic character of human knowledge as a whole. Like his great master Kant, he was too much concerned with creating a standard for ruling irrelevant philosophy out of court, to make a really patient and sympathetic study of the history of human thought in and for itself, and out of relation if necessary to his own

position in it. He identified the "Ideas" or the "*universals*" of Plato with the "grades" of the objectification of the Will, which modern natural science was beginning to apprehend.<sup>1</sup> "The 'Idea' is a universal like the concept, but yet a different sort of universal altogether from this. The 'Ideas' (in the genuine and original sense of the word as introduced by Plato) are the different species of the objectification of the will (the thing in itself). They are expressed in numberless individuals as the unrealised types or eternal forms of things. They do not enter into space and time, the media of individual things, but remain, subject to no change, always being and never becoming; while the mere individual things come and go, always becoming and never being."<sup>2</sup> Kant's interest in the study of metaphysics was as to whether there could be a science of the great Ideas of the Pure Reason; and so was Schopenhauer's, and almost in the same way. The "Ideas" to him were manifestations of the thing in itself of the world, the "most immediate objectification" of the world-will; they expressed the different kinds of reality which the world-will had evolved out of itself. We shall learn what an important rôle he was prepared to attach, but without success, to the

<sup>1</sup> I am thinking of the investigations of Lamarck ('Die natürliche Stufenordnung') and Cuvier ('Principe de la subordination des caractères'), which helped forwards the substitution of natural for artificial (Linné) classification in "natural history." Cuvier's famous treatise 'Sur un nouveau rapprochement à établir entre les classes qui composent le règne animal' appeared in 1812—four years before Schopenhauer went to Dresden to write out in peace his 'World as Will,' and St Hilaire's 'Sur le principe de composition organique' in 1828—two or three years before Schopenhauer went to Frankfort to pass the last half of his life, to survey as it were from a watch-tower the gradual conversion of Germany from philosophy to biology. (He foresaw the pessimism that would come by way of recoil from the gospel of mere science.) There is evidence in Schopenhauer's writings that he studied Cuvier and Lamarck. It has always seemed to me that Schopenhauer's blind will, trying to express itself in many ways, and finally to transcend itself in a spiritual or ideal life among human beings, is closely connected with the *effort after life* which the natural science of the century has tried to understand.

<sup>2</sup> Die Welt als Wille, &c., i. 154.

Platonic Ideas.<sup>1</sup> We have here simply to chronicle the bare fact that he adopted them as a part of his theory of knowledge—*i.e.*, a part of the *apparatus* of first principles with which he undertook to construe reality.

Schopenhauer used, then, the principles of Kant and of Plato to interpret reality. The categories of Kant, he thought, explained phenomenal things and phenomenal knowledge; while the "Ideas" of Plato explained supra-phenomenal things and supra-phenomenal knowledge. The best way to follow Schopenhauer in his train of thought is to consider a fundamental charge he felt inclined to make against Kant's whole procedure. The fundamental principle of Kant's method he takes to be the "starting from *indirect* or *reflective* knowledge"; philosophy is for Kant a science *of* (or *out of*) conceptions, while for Schopenhauer it is a science *in* conceptions. By this he means that Kant found in conceptions the subject-matter of philosophy, while he (Schopenhauer) found in conceptions only the form of philosophy—philosophy being a *conceptualised* or generalised statement of the matter of our knowledge, of ordinary reality.<sup>2</sup> Kant further, Schopenhauer holds, actually tried to find in *conceptions* the ultimate elements of reality, or at least tried to find in conceptual knowledge the explanation also of intuitive or immediate knowledge. This is why Kant *failed*, he thought, to find the thing in itself or things in themselves; Kant, that is, simply could not find the last or the simplest and the most fundamental realities, because he implicitly took them to be *conceptions* or abstractions of thought or ideas.

It is the nature of this charge in itself, almost more than its truth or its error as directed against Kant, that ought to interest us, although it is in part, at least, certainly relevant. It is not strictly true that the real reason for Kant's being

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chaps. v. and vi. *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> See 'Mind,' xvi. 359; article by the present writer.



left with the thing in itself as the ultimate insolubility of philosophy was his use of the abstract method; but rather that Kant, like Schopenhauer, thought that somehow knowledge *changed* things for us in the very process of knowing, and that consequently we never could in mere *knowledge* attain to reality. Still Schopenhauer's polemic against the concept as Kant's chief instrument of philosophising led him finally to a view of knowledge which frees us from the puzzles of the idealistic difficulty about *knowledge somehow falsifying* things, although he himself can hardly be said to have realised this. Schopenhauer's philosophy is, on its very face, a polemic against the philosophy of the idea, and a plea for the substitution in its place of the philosophy of the will or of the practical and the unconscious or even of the non-rational. This means that in his thinking he fought both against the idea-philosophy or the idealism in which the things of sense seemed to be made out to be mere ideas of the subject (even although he himself was at least inclined to accept this philosophy to a certain extent) and against the concept-philosophy of the rational philosophers who tended in general to seek an explanation of things in the entities of thought. In reading Schopenhauer one feels that it is difficult to say to which of these two lines of thought he had the greater antipathy. Each of them he *felt* rather than clearly *saw* to be inadequate as a final philosophy of reality. True, he thought of the world as in the first instance "the idea of the subject," but he felt at once it must be something more than *that*. Philosophy was doubtless "a science *in* conceptions," but it could not, after Kant, be made "a science *out* of conceptions." One sometimes feels that the acrimony or the casual indifference with which Schopenhauer treats one of these two kinds of dogmatic philosophy is only explicable when we consider that he is implicitly thinking of the wrongness also of the other. For him, in short, the idea-philosophy

stood doubly condemned: first, in so far as it refers to ordinary things (which are surely more than mere *ideas*); and second, in so far as it refers to *concepts* or ideas in the strict sense (which are only indirectly related to reality). It is with the latter kind of dogmatism that we are more immediately concerned just now. A philosophy of the idea or concept is always illusory to Schopenhauer, always too indirect a way of getting at reality.<sup>1</sup> And so his polemic against the dogmatic use of ideas or concepts is the main part of his criticism of Kant.

I. It is one of the main tendencies of Schopenhauer's thought to seek to overturn the whole philosophy of the concept. "Since the days of Socrates philosophy has been a *systematic misuse of general conceptions*." Both the Positivist and the Pessimist have profound sympathy with this statement. The one feels the unsatisfactoriness of all explanation of things by "quiddities" and "essences" and conceptions, and the other feels the profound pettiness and thinness of all merely abstract views and theories of life in face of the rending force of reality and real life. In Schopenhauer the meaning of things is always something that one *feels and sees rather than thinks and infers*. One can explain this to some extent in the language of psychology and epistemology, by unfolding Schopenhauer's opinions on the three important elements of knowledge known as the perception, and the conception, and the pure Idea.

By *pereceptions* or percepts, Schopenhauer means on the whole our concrete intuitions of the things of the real world, our complete and rounded perceptions of ordinary reality, of individual objects, of animals and men and things. He pre-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*. Chapter vii. will speak of Schopenhauer's conviction that the *concept* is unequal to the spiritual depth of religious mysticism. Chapters viii. and ix. also refer incidentally to the illusionism that springs out of an excess of conceptualism or mere thought.

supposes, as a follower of Kant, that perceptions are synthesised or focussed sensations, but beyond this, unfortunately, his psychology of sensation does not go. This is not so great a drawback as it might be, however, for the reason that Schopenhauer's treatment of sensation is essentially metaphysical. Sensations are to him a "confused manifold," elements of knowledge that are "nothing" for us apart from the synthetic activity of the understanding.<sup>1</sup> Perception, as it were, implies the intellect—not the reason, but the understanding with its arrangements of things into a causal order. That is, Schopenhauer as a Kantian never thinks of sense-perception as possible save through the interpretative activity of the mind — *i.e.*, through the applications of the "categories" to reality. As the categories are not merely *conceptions* to Schopenhauer, we may not object to his saying that perceptions are possible without abstract conceptions, without the *reason*. As a matter of fact, the perceptions of ordinary things perhaps are; but there are some perceptions, such as the perceptions of the causal relation, or of goodness, or of beauty, which are not possible without the exercise to some extent at least of the reason. These things, however, are a second kind of *perceptions* to Schopenhauer, corresponding to the power that we have of perceiving what he calls the "Platonic Ideas." He did not see the place of the reason or of our rational consciousness in helping us to attain to these intuitions of beauty and goodness and truth. He forgot that reason<sup>2</sup> too may end in giving us certain intuitions, just as sense gives us intuitions or perceptions; and just because he tried to separate too rigidly and too widely the higher *perceptions* of the mind from reason, he is largely unable to

<sup>1</sup> "In fact the senses supply nothing but the raw materials which the understanding at once proceeds to work up," &c.—'The Fourfold Root,' &c.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Fraser, in his works on Berkeley and Locke, often suggests that reason when really *pure* is akin to sense-perception or Common-Sense, and the Scottish philosophers in their identification of reason with Common-Sense express this idea.

describe the Ideas of art and religion and ethics in anything else than negatives. We shall see this when we come to treat of these things. The perception of a work of art, according to Schopenhauer, really takes us *out* of the world. Some people, on the contrary, feel that the perception of a work of art gives the mind a deeper insight *into* the world, at the same time that it may seem in a certain way to carry us beyond mere matter of fact. Schopenhauer, however, was so anxious to *separate* perception from reason that he paid the penalty incident to this in the palpable unintelligibility of his views about the nature of artistic reality.<sup>1</sup> His excess of Platonism rendered him incapable of stating clearly what ordinary perceptions are, or what artistic reality is.

In general it will be found that when we are describing knowledge, no one element of knowledge can be fully explained without considering its relation to all the other chief elements of knowledge. Schopenhauer did not always remember this. He saw the relations of perception and understanding better than he did the relations of perception and reason, or understanding and reason. The good of this was, as has been hinted, that he always saw the function of the intellect in sense, and that he took the main function of the understanding to be the unravelling of the connections and relations among given things. That is, he was free from the dangers of a *merely sensationalistic* philosophy in the first instance, and from the dangers of a *merely rationalistic* philosophy in the second. The understanding in man is akin, according to Schopenhauer, to the understanding in the brutes: it is concerned only in detecting the relations which exist among perceived things, and this merely for the practical purposes of life. The understanding, for example, cannot be made an organ of philosophy or speculation, because, from first to last, it knows things only in the relations they sustain

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chaps. v. and vi.

to each other and to the self. When we come to Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion, we shall see that he disparages altogether the use of the mere understanding to fathom the mysteries of religion; and he is perfectly right in this. *Perception* (as implying, of course, the rational activity of the understanding) remains for Schopenhauer the type of all real knowledge, and if we are to know higher things we must have some *perception* of them too—reason is not equal to *thinking* them out. Thus the God of mere reason is only "The Absolute" and not a living reality, and Schopenhauer despises the purely formal theology of the transcendental philosophers. In whatever way we may in a given case attain to perceptual knowledge, our most real knowledge is always perceptual for Schopenhauer. One of the most serious questions in Schopenhauer is whether, when perception or the possibility of perception passes away, we are entitled to talk of having knowledge at all. The literal outcome of his views upon knowledge would be that we certainly are not. All conceptual knowledge, he holds, ultimately comes from perception. We cannot talk about knowing things or beings which have never in any way come under our power of perceptual apprehension. Philosophy, for example, can attain to a knowledge of God only in so far as it finds God revealed in man's own nature.

The main drift of what Schopenhauer says about the *concept* has the simplicity and convincingness of an elemental truth apprehended in childhood. It is as near the truth— as it can be; although when he has to think of the *relation* of the "concept" to the "percept" and to the "Idea" he is hopelessly at sea. The conception, he says, is the "abstract" or "general" idea, which is liberated by the power of thought from single perceptions and isolated instances. Schopenhauer here stands on the ground of the old psychology of Wolff and the Scholastics with all its crudities and all its defects.

His concept is the old class-universal, and its utility is best seen by thinking of what he considers to be its chief use. "We perceive one thing and think another. The beasts have knowledge of perception but no abstract knowledge. Hence the brutes have infinitely less to suffer than we have, because they have no other pains than those of the present. The one great advantage of the conception is that it is free from the power of time. In the conception experience is stored up, and this is the only real reason for subjecting ourselves to reason as the Stoics teach. The essential condition of surpassing others in actual life is that we should reflect or deliberate. For the immediate action that has been guided by correct conceptions will, in the result, coincide with the real object aimed at." All this, without going into particulars, has the simplicity of fact. We do have abstract or general ideas, and these come somehow from perceptions. There are, further, no abstract ideas or conceptions which have not come somehow from perceptions. Locke offered to show this directly, and Kant demonstrated it indirectly, as Schopenhauer often reminds us. And lastly, it will be found that the main utility of conceptions is a practical utility and not a speculative one; we can in conceptions summarise reality in a few simple pictures, as it were, but pictures always remain pictures. In other words, conceptions are always an indirect way of knowing reality. It is a poor thing, after all, to be able only to *think* the world. Much of Schopenhauer's philosophy is devoted to showing the inadequacy of so-called philosophy, or the helplessness of the mere concept or idea to even *express*—much less *explain*, as the Hegelians say—reality. The struggle and the misery and the strife of ordinary life is something to which the mere *Idea* as such is certainly inadequate. Philosophy has often acted as if our conceptions and our thoughts had to "conquer" things, ignoring the fact that consciousness is

only the accompaniment of a small part of life. In doing so it has, to say the least, forgotten the spirit of the Baconian philosophy.

Schopenhauer never talks, or at any rate never means to talk, of the "idea" of a thing before at least *looking* at the thing itself, and the best example of this is the fact that his supreme principle will is to him firstly a perception, something that can be observed, before it becomes a rational principle, something under which all reality has to be construed. *Since Socrates*, he would put it, men have forgotten that the value of the concept is not primarily *ontological* but *telcological*; we really ask about the "what" of things only to determine their practical value for us, their value relatively to the ends of our will. Bacon wrote this fact "in large letters" over the face of his whole philosophy, but the Hegelian metaphysic practically ignored it. And the philosophy, too, of Kant, "*der alles Zermalmende*," is in the first place the substitution of a *regulative* and verifiable philosophy for the old dogmatic concept-philosophy or theology. Schopenhauer is in the line at once of Kant and of nineteenth-century evolutionism, in substituting the question of the *regulative* value of conceptions for the absurd question as to whether there are or are not *entities* corresponding to our mere conceptions or ideas. How he does this is to be gathered from the trend of his system as a whole, from his positive treatment of his supreme generalisation *will*.

One very definite thing needs to be said about Schopenhauer's treatment of the concept, and that by way of apology. Seeing that Schopenhauer, at least in the polemical aspects of his philosophy, started from that crude psychological philosophy which placed *thought* over against things, he is generally far too apt to depreciate the concept, to proclaim its flagrant inadequacy to life rather than to set forth even the limited and relative and practical value he is willing to concede to it.

“Reason is needed in the full stress of life, when quick conclusions, bold action, rapid and sure comprehension are required; but it may easily *spoil all* if it gains the upper hand, and by *perplexing* hinders the intuitive direct discovery, and grasp of the right by simple understanding, and thus induces irresolution.” Schopenhauer shows the practical utility of reason to a certain extent in his whole philosophy, yet he never quite corrected his initial error of viewing thought as originally outside things. As a matter of fact, thought is not *outside* things, but *latent* in them. My thought comes out of my organic consciousness, and my organic consciousness comes out of the organic life of the world as a whole; so that my thought, when I am healthy—only when I am healthy—is a *quasi* focus or internalisation of the life of that world, and valuable therefore as a kind of epitome of reality. Of course it may be said that Schopenhauer, by his iconoclastic treatment of the mere concept, bears indirect testimony to the fact that our thought is to be trusted, not when it anticipates reality, but only when it focusses or mirrors reality.

Bearing in mind what we have just learned about the ultimate source of the concept in perception, we are prepared to think that if there is a higher kind of knowledge than ordinary or conceptual knowledge, there must be a higher kind of perception to correspond with it, a power of perceiving a higher plane of reality than ordinary reality. And it is so. There are, according to Schopenhauer, the *Ideas*, and our power of perceiving the *Ideas*. The genesis of the *Ideas* is something that is never explained by Schopenhauer any more than by Plato or by Wordsworth. The *Ideas*, indeed, as regarded by Schopenhauer, cannot be said to have a genesis at all. One simply *becomes aware* of their existence through a kind of intellectual vision. The *Idea* in the “Hermes” of Praxiteles or in the “Mona Lisa” of Leonardo



da Vinci is recognised as *eternal* whenever seen. The Ideas, he holds, have no such practical utility as conceptions have; they simply enable us to *see* the *nature* of the world as we *do not know it* in ordinary perception. They thus enable us to *escape* from the world. But of this again.

As Schopenhauer rigidly adheres throughout his system to the Platonic signification of the Ideas as absolute entities, where the subjective and the objective blend and become indistinguishable, it is enough at this place to refer back to what we said in the preceding chapter about the Ideas. They were there presented in an objective way, as denoting certain grades of being or elemental modes of existence. We ought here to speak of the *knowledge* of the Ideas, of how they are apprehended by the mind. But these two things are the same to Schopenhauer. The Ideas at once eternally *are* and are yet "generated" in the mind by a kind of spiritual or intellectual birth. To this birth we shall refer in the chapter on the philosophy of art.

There is, however, the general difficulty (already partially<sup>1</sup> encountered) in regard to these three mental elements, *percept*, *concept*, and *Idea*, that their relations to each other are not fully thought out by Schopenhauer. Of course to place them in their proper relations to each other, or rather to relate to each other the planes or spheres of being which these elements of knowledge represent, would be to unfold "a complete scheme of transcendental philosophy."<sup>2</sup> And this one does not find in Schopenhauer, although the root ideas of such a scheme are certainly to be found in him—partly in the way he set about classifying the categories as referring to different planes of experience or reality, and partly in his notion of different kinds of idealism (subjective idealism, empirical, and transcendental), and partly in his idea of reducing all planes of experience or of being to manifestations of the will.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*, section iv.

The Idea is said by Schopenhauer to be known by a kind of perception. His concept is a mere "double" of things, connected with things in an external and artificial sort of way. Conception and perception always seem to be regarded by Schopenhauer as two ways of knowing which we *happen* to possess, it being conceivable, as it were, that we should only have one way of knowing, or four or five ways. That is why he could never see the relation of the reason to ordinary things and to life. Not only had he not cleared up for himself the old difficulties of the Nominalists and the Conceptualists (his "Ideas" connect him with the old doctrine of the Realists), but he did not sufficiently consider the fact that our conceptual knowledge is not so much a mere reflex of our perceptual knowledge as an actual differentiation from it, and therefore *a real part of our experience*. As human beings we live in thinking, or at least partly live in thinking; in thinking our experience we live over again; our thoughts, too, help us to create new realities or new forms of reality in our lives. Fortunately the relation of the concept to reality comes out in Schopenhauer after all, because the only conceptions he cares anything about are the conceptions which constitute *motives* to action. This is set forth in the following chapter and in the chapter upon the ethics of his system. Still he continues to contrast immediate knowledge or perception, which is "rich and full," with reflective knowledge, which is "partial" and "indirect" and "abstract" and "empty." In fact, he was ever eager to overturn the philosophy of the concept, although he never completely explained it. The Hegelian system dealt, he held, with barren abstractions, like "being" and "non-being," while his own philosophy dealt with organised living reality as we feel it and perceive it.

But it is not true that the concept and the percept can be sharply separated from each other. Knowledge, indeed, as

knowledge, is always partly conceptual and partly perceptual at one and the same time. We use our senses to see things, but we need our reason and understanding to see the *connections* among other things. Just on account of this divided character of *knowledge*, however, we never *know* the world as a whole. We can be said to realise the world as a whole only in organic effort or in our total organic sense for reality, as when we undertake anything which involves our total physical activity. Indeed Schopenhauer stands for this very thing—and it is the redeeming feature of his thought, confused as it is—that only in a full and total sense for life can we be said to know the world whole. The real philosopher ought to strive more than any other man for richness and complexity and totality in his impressions and feelings about life, and ought not to be content with a view of the world that can be fully expressed in abstract conceptions. In this sense life is will, as Schopenhauer puts it. It is quite wrong again to oppose, as Schopenhauer does, the artistic (Platonic) intuitions of the mind to conceptual knowledge as something vastly superior to it. No one thing, no one plane of experience, is as such inherently superior to any other plane of experience—artistic insight to thought, for example. Schopenhauer, however, has the most marked contempt for all ways of knowing reality short of the insight of pure genius and pure art (which he was fully convinced was his own way). He exalts the knowledge of the Platonic Ideas above all other kinds of knowledge. This is going too far. As a matter of fact, artistic knowledge enables us to relate the view that we have of the world in our concepts and in our thoughts with the knowledge that we have in our perception of things as individuals separate and distinct from each other. Art mediates between sense and understanding, just as it also mediates between understanding and reason.

No doubt the whole history of philosophy is the record of

the oscillations of the human understanding between the conception (*Begriff*) and the perception (*Vorstellung*); and Schopenhauer's philosophy represents this conflict as well as do most other systems. At one time reason or the concept is by him made inferior to perception or the direct sense for reality that we have in organic effort and volition; and at another our instinctive feelings and organic strivings are made out by him to be as different as possible from reason, under the erroneous idea that their reality can be saved or strengthened by so doing. Reason is so separated off from reality in Schopenhauer that it becomes empty and formal and useless, and feeling or volition is so separated off from reason that it becomes irrational and blind and altogether unconscious. In his desire to avoid the dangers of rationalism and the concept-philosophy, Schopenhauer gives us a philosophy of reality that is at the outset a-logical or irrational, and in the end mystical and inarticulate. Throughout the body of his writings will be said to be that in which the essence of man and animals consists, and at the end of it the knowledge that is said to free us from the blind striving of the world is, as he puts it, simply the perception that everything is really *nothing*. That is, he at once depreciates thought so much as to make out brute and physical force to be everything, and yet at the end of his investigation imagines that thought is powerful enough to negate the whole world and to pronounce it to be nothing.

As we shall see, much of pessimism comes from the sense of illusion or from the paralysis of thought that is produced by the discovery of the inadequacy of any one mere mental element or mere intellectual function to the facts of life and reality as a whole,<sup>1</sup> and of the inadequacy of all mere "ideas" to the actual complexity of things. Elsewhere we shall find Schopenhauer saying, for example, that "good" and "bad"

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chaps. ix. and x.

are not things or qualities that are positively real in the world, but simply expressions denoting the relations of things to our wishes.<sup>1</sup> He was probably helped to this idea of our utter inability to fully characterise the world in our ideas and conceptions, by the fact that he regarded, as we have seen, all the forms of thought as purely subjective—*i.e.*, as applying only to what is in the mind and not to what is out of it. This idea of the forms of thought as subjective, however, is not contradictory of the main idea in his Theory of Knowledge, that the various forms or categories of thought are all real enough in their appropriate and respective spheres. Physical reality is no more real than moral reality; in fact we found Schopenhauer calling the former “ideal” as depending on our mind for its very reality. And if moral reality depends upon the existence of conscious moral persons, “good” is real enough in its way, just as “straight” and “crooked” and “beautiful” are in theirs. The chief difficulty in connection with goodness is as to what we actually mean by it, because there must be some equivalent in the nature of things for the expression “good.” At one time in Schopenhauer the brutes are said to be superior to man just because they have only perception and instinct, and see straight to the mark and “hit” it when they aim at it; at another time the philosopher is made out to have “exhausted” all life in the concept, and to be therefore superior to the unreflecting person who has to wait for experience; and at another time we are shown the hopelessness of all mere conception or thought when the brain gets “tired out”<sup>2</sup> and can think no more;

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. such sentences as the following: “But what is to be expected of heads, of which even the wisest is every night the scene of the strangest and most senseless dreams, and which has to take up its meditations again on awakening from these? Clearly a consciousness which is subject to such great limitations is *little suited for solving the riddle of the world.*”—*Welt als Wille*, ii.; *Werke*, iii. 152; H. and K., ii. 333.

and at another we find that genius<sup>1</sup> alone is made out to have the true insight into life, though we are elsewhere told that "genius is as useless in the ordinary business of life as a telescope in a theatre." What is lacking in Schopenhauer is a proper theory of the relation of abstract thought to concrete perception, and the relation of the concept to the percept, and of both to what he calls the Ideas or the intuitions of art and religion and morality.

II. Reason to Schopenhauer means simply and solely the fact of the existence of conceptions in the human mind. To this idea he adheres rigidly and unequivocally throughout his system. In spite of this it must be confessed that it is hard to discover in Schopenhauer what the real utility of conceptions exactly is. The theoretical value of reason is its power to give us in conceptions or ideas a summary statement about the nature of things. We can fully estimate the extent to which Schopenhauer allows for this possible theoretical use of reason only when we consider his metaphysical teaching as a whole. And so with the practical utility of reason. We shall encounter that in studying his ethic and his pessimism. I have hinted that it is his contention that all conceptual constructions of the universe have mainly a practical value—that is, a value in so far as they actually or possibly affect our action. I shall use the large element of truth that is contained in this contention as one of the strongest reasons for a broad acceptance of Schopenhauer's teachings about life as a whole. To be sure, one always feels that the use to which he puts reason is more formal and preventive merely than real and positive. He sympathises, for instance, with Stoicism as a "spiritual hygiene, in accordance with which,

<sup>1</sup> "But in the aristocracy of intellect, as in other aristocracies, there are many thousands of plebeians for one nobleman, many millions for one prince, and the great multitude of men are mere populace, mobs, rabble, *la canaille*."—Werke, iii. 161; H. and K., ii. 342.

just as one hardens the body against the influences of wind and weather, against fatigue and exhaustion, one has also to harden one's mind against misfortune, danger, loss, injustice, malice, perfidy, arrogance, and the folly of men." Schopenhauer is far more eloquent, as might perhaps be expected from the general tenor of his thought, on the dangers than on the advantages of rational knowledge or conceptions. "Having become accessible to thought, man is at once exposed to error." "Reason opens for him paths of error into which the beasts never stray." "Through reason a new species of motives, to which the brute is not accessible, obtains power over his will." "These are the *abstract* motives, the mere thoughts, which are by no means always drawn from his own experience, but often come to him only through the talk and example of others, through tradition and literature."<sup>1</sup> Then according to Schopenhauer, the mere existence of the power of reflection in man lays him open to much more suffering than the beasts are exposed to, for "our greatest pains do not lie in the present as matter of immediate knowledge or feeling, but in the *reason* in the shape of abstract ideas and troublesome thoughts, from which the brute that lives only in the present, and consequently in inevitable thoughtlessness, is completely free." Certainly pain is a greater evil to man than to the brutes, and the possibility of pain and suffering is largely increased in his case; but this shows that the only real pain to man is spiritual pain, and the numberless fears to which he is exposed by the thought of the possibility of missing the destiny which he has as higher up on the scale of existence than the beasts "that perish." Be this as it may, a false fear or a wrong opinion is so pernicious, in the eyes of Schopenhauer, that it should always be attacked and driven out as an enemy of mankind. Nothing, he thought, could

<sup>1</sup> World as Will, Eng. transl., H. and K., ii. 241. I have transposed sentences to some extent.

make error sacred. "There can be no such thing as privileged or sanctioned error. The thinker ought to attack it, even if humanity should cry out with pain, like a sick man whose ulcer the physician touches." Schopenhauer, for example, felt bitterly hostile to the idea that man's natural reason should be appealed to as equal to prove the existence of a First Cause or personal God. He always wished that the negative results of Kant's teaching should be better known in a country like England, and suggested that a mission might be formed for the benefit of the English clergy, which should go to them with Kant's 'Criticism of Pure Reason' in the one hand and Strauss's 'Criticism of the Bible' (*Bibelkritik*)<sup>1</sup> in the other. But the greatest of all errors to Schopenhauer since the Christian era is the error of the Hegelian philosophy, to think that reason exists "in and for itself," and that reason somehow generates reality out of itself.

Schopenhauer makes us reflect upon the consequences of the famous proposition supposed to represent the teaching of the experience-philosophy about reason: *Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*. It is to be noted that this proposition is true as it stands, even without the equally famous addition of Leibnitz, *nisi intellectus ipse*. It is true that there is nothing in the intellect which was not sometime a matter of perception; the *form* of the intellect—that which critics say is left out of the proposition—is of course in the intellect from the beginning (the very name *intellect* speaks of a power of the mind that is *formally* different from other mental powers); but the *content* of the intellect comes from experience. It may not indeed, after all, be so fatal to think that all the content of our perceptions or our conceptions about things comes from actual experience or from sense-perception, because, for one thing, we now know perfectly well that the individual may be said to inherit as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Parerga, "Versuch ii. Geisterschen," Werke, v. 286, 287.



part of his mental system somewhat of the experience of the whole human race. That experience gives him impulses and tendencies, desires and cravings, which his individual reason can at least take cognisance of and appreciate in some way. But we must go further even than this in the case of Schopenhauer. His negative treatment of reason, as unable to transcend the limits of experience (which some philosophers, *in spite of Kant's warning*, allow people to think it can do), is only a step to his own view of the reason or the intellect as simply the *form* of the will in the case of man, a sort of conscious way the will has in the case of man of seeking to realise its ends, while in the case of the lower animals it pursues its way in comparative unconsciousness. Without doubt post-Kantian philosophy made far too much of reason—tended, in fact, to make reason almost the whole of consciousness. It was natural therefore that a line of thought like Schopenhauer's, which in the end really tends only to show the play of will as well as intellect in consciousness, should seem somewhat subversive of existent notions at the outset. In spite of the blunders and crudities of Schopenhauer's psychology, in spite of his trying to make broad distinctions where no broad distinctions can be made (in separating reason from perception, and both from our power of apprehending what he calls the Ideas), there is a whole world of significance in his iconoclastic treatment of reason and the concept, and in his exaltation of both perception and intuition over mere reason and the mere conceptions of the reflective intellect. When a philosopher says that he knows the world whole in reason, he is right if he remembers that the function of reason is to systematise all the perceptions and the intuitions which the human mind has or tends<sup>1</sup> to have about reality. Schopenhauer is

<sup>1</sup> *Tends* to have, because the perceptions and intuitions of art and religion represent, in the first instance, merely a tendency on the part of man to surmount the limits of his life.

quite right in laying emphasis upon the fact that reason, while of course impressing its own form on what it receives, can give only what it has received. He himself pointed out to philosophers much that was really included in reason, which they had left out of account—viz., instinctive reason, habit and impulse, and the like.<sup>1</sup> They had assigned altogether too much power and importance to the merely reflective reason. He of course was wrong in concluding that because reason could not know the transcendent aspects of reality, such aspects of reality could be studied only in a realm of fact as different from the sphere of reason as could well be supposed (the mystical plane in which we move or seem to move when we read what he says about art and religion). He ought simply to have given up the search for the transcendent, and to have developed the idea that lay in his own view of reason, as lighting up the world for the will or for the practical purposes of our existence. Reason can systematise thought only from the standpoint of the will, from the standpoint—in the phraseology of Aristotle—of the highest *good for man* as a being who is acting and developing himself continually.

Again and again in Schopenhauer we are made to feel that our so-called *knowledge* of reality is not a direct experience of reality. The idealist's "idea of sense," the "effect in us" that a thing causes, colour or sound, *e.g.*, all this does *not* seem to be reality. We have suggested that it was wrong ever to imagine the "sense ideas" of Locke or Berkeley to be realities; they are abstractions or fictions. But then, too, if (with Schopenhauer) the conception be taken as the type of knowledge, of knowledge which is articulate and definite, it is true that in this case our knowledge of reality is indirect. Schopenhauer never departs from the idea that by knowledge

<sup>1</sup> By saying that impulse and habit are included in the sphere of reason, we mean only that the sphere of reason includes the latent and (to us) unconscious reason which is manifested in instinct and impulse and natural tendencies.

we mean conceptual knowledge. When he teaches that intuition and perception and feeling and volition are far more real than mere knowing,—constituting, in fact, a direct contact with reality,—it is to be remembered that he is offering a substitute for a conceptual knowledge of the basis of reality, of which he has for certain (erroneous?) reasons despaired. Just because he conceived of intuitive knowledge as opposed to conceptual knowledge—opposed, that is, to the only kind of knowledge that in his eyes is real knowledge—he is often rather vague in his references to intuitive knowledge. This is why, in describing artistic and religious intuitions, he strikes one as unable to say anything positive about them. They are not rational or ordinary discursive knowledge at all, and that is enough. We shall see this later. The literal outcome of his teaching is that, on the one hand, all knowledge is indirect simply as knowledge (this is why he seems to turn *from* idealism the moment he seems to accept it), and indirect too for other reasons (because the things of sense are “ideas,” and then again because conceptions are only a reflex of perceptions); and that, on the other hand, direct experience of reality is given us only in volition and action, in being and living, and not in thinking. This is the central trend of his teaching, and just for the very reason that such a contention seems to be a mere reflex of the attitude of the healthy man to all philosophy, beautifully expressed in Goethe's lines,—

“Grau, theuer Freund, ist alle Theorie  
Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum,”—

just because with this idea we seem to be passing *out* of philosophy, to be giving it up, as it were, is it of such consummate and critical interest. No philosophy seems so supremely near and yet so dangerously far from the central shrine of rational wisdom as Schopenhauer's. It is certainly

an illusion to think that knowledge, or the fact of knowledge, makes a real acquaintance with things impossible. Still Schopenhauer shows us, better than any other philosopher, how it is an illusion to think that there is in the mind any such thing as *mere knowledge*. If any one ever seriously thought that the "idea," whether in the form of the sense-impression or the intuition or the concept, is the first thing in consciousness, he was wrong, and he is undeceived by Schopenhauer. Of course, if by consciousness we mean simply an intellectual awareness of things, then certainly the very notion of consciousness is just an idea and nothing else, and the idea is then obviously the first thing in consciousness. But by our consciousness cannot be meant a mere intellectual awareness of things; it is far too dynamical a thing for that. Consciousness is always the consciousness of some activity or other, and even the concept represents an active effort of the mind to bring several things into its focus by the perception of some one element in them that is common to them all. Every one professes to admit this, of course, but not perhaps for the reasons that Schopenhauer will point out. There is much truth and much error in his view that by knowledge must be meant conceptual knowledge. But whether true or false, it is a view to which Schopenhauer adhered; and it is because he adhered to it that he turned away from knowledge and sought another approach to things—strange and contradictory though it sounds to seek to know things by some other process than knowledge.

Thus, in short, if we ask the question: Is our knowledge of things direct or indirect, and where, if anywhere, have we an immediate experience of reality? Schopenhauer's answer is that our knowledge of ordinary things is indirect or mediate (for the reasons pointed out first by Berkeley and afterwards by Kant), while our knowledge of the Ideas is immediate, direct, and underived, demanding only the disinterested view

of an object apart from its relation to the will. In addition to our knowledge of the Ideas—which is at best a mystical kind of thing in Schopenhauer—the knowledge we have of ourselves in volition and action is also in a sense immediate and direct, according to Schopenhauer. “Although all objects are appearances, there is still a difference between ultimate and immediate objectification, immediate and secondary. The former is what the Ideas have, the latter particular things. The particular thing that appears under some form of the Principle of Sufficient Reason is only an indirect objectification of the thing in itself (which is the will), between which and it the Idea stands as the only direct objectivity of the will, because it has assumed none of the special forms of knowledge as such, except that of the idea in general—*i.e.*, the form of being an object for the subject.”<sup>1</sup> Another way of stating this same truth is to say that the things of sense are not absolute things at all, and that if we wish to come into direct contact with reality we must betake ourselves to the Ideas or the self. Transcendental idealism suggested that both things and the lower animals fall short of being complete and rounded existences; their unity and their reality fall, in fact, outside of themselves; they are only the lower grades of the objectification of the will to live. It is a hard lesson to learn that the things which we think to be the most real, stocks and stones and rocks and animals, are not real in an ultimate sense at all; but Schopenhauer insists—with all the idealists, of course—that we must learn it. Still we must keep here as far as possible to the subjective way of looking at the matter. We do not say outright that things are not absolute existences, but only that ordinary knowledge seems to be essentially phenomenal and unsatisfactory; the reality of the things we *know* lies, as it were, *outside* of themselves: the very form and order that we give to things, the very definite-

<sup>1</sup> Die Welt, &c., i. 206, *passim*.

ness in time and place, the very causality and reciprocity we attribute to them, are the invention of our intellect. Schopenhauer teaches all this, and in doing so he thinks he is acting up to the principles of Kant.

III. We are now in a position to appreciate a somewhat precise and technical presentation of Schopenhauer's opinions on knowledge and the chief elements in knowledge. The main object-matter of knowledge is the ordinary things of sense-perception. Just because things, however, are *objects* of knowledge, their reality is questionable. They are "ideas" of "sense" to begin with, and the whole category-mechanism of the intellect is employed to "work them up" into "things." The "self," on the contrary, as the highest object in experience, is the least *known* of all objects, being only *felt* or *realised* in action; and between things and the self, according to Schopenhauer, there may be said to stand the Ideas which are a sort of "pure and cloudless" knowledge, where the distinction between the "known object" and the "knowing self" for the time vanishes. Schopenhauer's theory of knowledge, then, reduces itself to the proposition that we must learn to think of different kinds of reality. As in Plato there are the things of sense, and the Ideas of which these things are a sort of copy, and also the fictitious things that the artist makes, copies, as it were, of the things of sense; so it is in Schopenhauer with a slight difference, the chief point of the difference being that to Plato artistic reality is still only a copy of ordinary reality, or ordinary reality itself, worked-up into an artificial product, while to Schopenhauer it is the direct expression of the Ideas. There are, according to Schopenhauer, first, ordinary things; these are ideas or phenomena — an imperfect reality made out of mere sense impressions: then there are the *forms* or the categories of the understanding, such as cause, and substance, and the like: and then, thirdly,

there are the Ideas, the various *grades* of reality, such as the chemical atom, the physical particle, the seed of the plant, the structural element in living beings, and the different kinds of animals (lower and higher), the various races of man and the individual characters of individual men. These third things, the various Ideas or "species" or "types" of existence, are the only real things to Schopenhauer; they are the permanent forms of the will to live. The highest of ordinary objects is the self, or the human body, a kind of *union of the knowing and the willing subject*, the most stupendous "mystery" in the universe, seeing that it is a kind of real focus of the *will* to live and of the *Idea* of man.<sup>1</sup> The will has "struck a light for itself" in the brain or the consciousness of man, and man sums up in himself, as it were, the various grades of existence, having in himself a consciousness partly explicit and partly implicit of the whole will to live, of the whole *rerum natura*.<sup>2</sup>

(a) There is much perplexing detail about these distinctions of Schopenhauer's, but without dwelling upon them further we may proceed to a formal statement of the most important and the most difficult position that he formulates about knowledge. This is, that the more "real" knowledge is, the less of "form" is there in it; and *vice versa*, that the "more of form" there is in knowledge the "less of reality" is there in

<sup>1</sup> This simply means that the human personality is a combination of the knowing and the willing self. The combination is "mysterious," because even the psychologist (who is supposed to be accustomed to *introspection*) experiences a sense of mystery in trying to grasp the fact that the self which thinks upon itself and the self which acts are one and the same. It is very mysterious to Schopenhauer, because volition and reflection seem to him contradictory to each other. Volition seems to imply that the man is going out of himself in action, and reflection that he seeks to return back upon himself. No human being, in other words, ever perfectly understands himself, or is ever master of himself. *Misera conditio nostra*.

<sup>2</sup> Schopenhauer says that each individual man is the assertion of the whole will to live, and that a thoroughly selfish man *wills* for the time as if he were the whole world. (Individuality, it will be remembered, is to Schopenhauer only an appearance. He consequently professes to find the one will everywhere.)

it. This dilemmatic way of putting the matter represents perhaps the most extreme form of scepticism that has ever been invented in regard to knowledge: it seems to make knowledge virtually destroy itself. At the lower limit of consciousness (*mass* or organic sensation say—bodily feeling—or mere confused sensation), knowledge is real, as it were (must be real—we must know something), but there is so little “form” about it that it can hardly be described; at the upper limit of consciousness, on the contrary (the rational concept or idea), knowledge has “form,” and is therefore capable of expression, but it is at the same time so indirect, and so far removed from reality, that it is bound to become illusory. If we want to know things, it appears, we must qualify them with formal or mental attributes; but if we go on qualifying them too far, formalising and conceptualising them, that is, we will end by destroying their reality. Schopenhauer means that when we know phenomenal things, we employ all the mental equipment we possess in the shape of categories and principles of the understanding, such as cause, substance, time, space, antecedent and consequent, etc., and yet we know only phenomena after all, only what the understanding has itself constructed; whereas when we know the most real thing in the world, the self, we throw off our mental furniture entirely, throw it overboard as it were, and lo! we know reality for once. This is *the illusionism on which Schopenhauer's whole philosophy rests, the central metaphysical thought in his system*. We see in it his whole tendency to exalt the immediate knowledge that we have of ourselves in being and in willing, and to despise the indirect knowledge which, according to the principles of idealism, we have of all other things—for, as we have already seen, he accepts the teaching of idealism that “things” are “ideas.” Idealism is wrong in this, no doubt, but it has created the impression that things are ideas.

The middle zone of knowledge, between the things that



we know and characterise with qualities and distinctions, and the self which we do not *know* (because knowing means splitting up and distinguishing) but only *realise*, is constituted, according to our author, by the Platonic Ideas or the Ideas of art, where the distinction between the self and the not-self "vanishes." In the contemplation of an artistic object, or a Platonic Idea (one of the eternal forms<sup>1</sup> of the will), there is such a perfect sense of harmony between the Idea which the artistic product is said to realise and the artistic object itself, that we seem to enter into the inner reality and potency of things. An artistic object seems to be such a perfect creation that it might almost be said to be self-existent, to be an absolute something which sets forth its own Idea as one of the direct or immediate assertions of the world-will. Schopenhauer maintains that in the contemplation of the Platonic Idea or object of art, the mind is as much passive as active; pure contemplation and pure perception are merged together, he says. All the categories or principles of knowledge taken together would be needed to explain a perfectly beautiful object, and yet taken all together they would still be found utterly inadequate to such an object, which somehow speaks best for itself. An artistic object is not an "object" at all, as it were—not an ordinary thing—but an eternal thing or an absolute Idea; we read our whole self into it; it seems to allow perfect being and perfect life to emanate from and through itself. We are "at rest" in the contemplation of beauty; we are

"laid asleep  
In body, and become a living soul :  
While with an eye made quiet by the power  
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
We see into the life of things."

Artistic knowledge, Schopenhauer thinks, is the most perfect phase of knowledge, because it is a perfect fusion of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 108.

subjective and the objective elements in knowledge; it represents a neutral zone, where these subjective and objective elements shade into each other, unite and coalesce. As we retreat from this central neutral zone we pass, at the one extreme into the merely volitional sense we have of the self, and at the other into the realm of external perception, where the things of the outer world fill our vision, and where we ourselves are only one object among other objects.

The things of sense are to Schopenhauer the most unreal things in the world. They are so for the reasons of idealism, that both their matter and their form are mental or subjective. Artistic objects are to him more real than ordinary objects; an artistic reality is a higher kind of reality than ordinary reality. The self *should be* to him the highest of all realities. It is so, if we take firm hold of his first principles and of some very emphatic<sup>1</sup> things he says about the self as the union of the knowing and willing subject. That is, Schopenhauer effectually teaches that in the search for reality we are driven back upon the self; ordinary things—he early made up his mind—are no reality at all; artistic objects are more real than ordinary objects; but the highest reality lies within the self, or *is* the self, or is the pure potency in the self which we call the will. “How do we know the self?” you ask him. “You have hit upon,” says Schopenhauer, “the supreme paradox in the universe, for when we seek to know the self, we find that the known self is nothing, and that it is only the willing self that is real.” His meaning may be otherwise expressed by saying that in the search for real knowledge we finally come to a point where knowledge as such “*passes away*”—ceases to be—passes, namely, into *volition*, which is the key-note of the self. It is of *the very essence of Schopenhauer's philosophy* to affirm that “the standing contradiction of man's life is this, that he is compelled to seek the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 139.

reality of the universe *with his brain*—i.e., in and through the use of *knowledge*; and that he has yet to confess in the end that *knowledge* does not help him to understand the world, but that something different from knowledge is needed to do this—namely, will.” In other words, just where we do have a critical and crucial interest in knowledge, where we would “give everything” to *know* (namely, in the case of the self, to which point we are, *as a matter of fact*, driven in our quest for reality), we find that *knowing* does not help us, but that we must cease our endeavour to *know*, and must rest content with *being*, and yet we find too that in so *being* we also understand. The man of the world or the realist will doubtless rejoice in this; he will probably confess that he neither understands nor cares for the dialectic by which the result has been reached, but that he rejoices to be told, what he always thought to be true, that the meaning of the universe is apprehended not by means of the concept, not by means of “rational knowledge,” that ghastly spectre of the real world, but by a kind of sense, a *nisus* or effort, an effort simply at being and evolving. In truth, of course, knowledge is only that part of the sense of life which has become definite and articulate, and it is this that Schopenhauer proclaims out of the archives of philosophy, with dozens of elaborate ontological schemes stacked in lonely splendour above and around him. All philosophy, he makes us feel, which does not try to express the real life of things, is of interest only from the standpoint of moral pathology.

There are several ways in which Schopenhauer's dilemma can be expressed and is expressed by himself, and they are all more or less important. His idea is hard to understand without the system behind it, because when one hears of there being more reality in certain things than in other things, one perhaps, again, naturally thinks of external things—rocks, stones, and trees—as the most real. But this is because we

are sunk in what Schopenhauer calls "degenerate European realism," to which any intelligent Buddhist feels himself superior. It is these very things of sense that are most unreal or ideal or phenomenal, for reasons indicated more than once. Schopenhauer's reasons for so regarding them are, as we know, highly philosophical, and cannot be fully appreciated by the mind which is untrained in philosophy. But there is a difficulty in Schopenhauer for the philosophical mind also. One who has really been "spoiled by philosophy," who has been led to question the reality of ordinary things, is apt to go to the other extreme of concluding that his only real knowledge is of his own consciousness and of his own self. Such a person may indeed never have been perfectly comfortable in thinking of David Hume and the empiricists, who tell him that within the self there are only mental states and changing psychical phenomena, and not any static or permanent self; but he is now apt to be completely upset by Schopenhauer's contention that, strictly, we do not know the self at all—not only that knowledge here, as everywhere, splits up its object into separate units and phenomenalises it and renders it illusory, but that the only key to the self (and consequently to all other reality on the principles of Idealism) is will. Schopenhauer's feeling is that the self is far too real to be merely known, and that there must be an immediate apprehension of the self—viz., in will. If it be suggested at this point that of course the reality of the self is given in a *quasi* feeling or *sense*, the sense of organic effort, and that, strictly speaking, all *knowledge* of the self is inadequate, there being depths retrospectively and heights prospectively in the self, which are never fully known, Schopenhauer might reply that this is doubtless a line of thought along which his reflections might be studied. It might be possible, too, to carry Schopenhauer's idea about an immediate knowledge of the self further than he himself thought of doing. We might

fall back, for example, on the general psychological position that our test of reality is the possibility of a thing affecting our will, and we might then say that anything which affects our will, which really determines our experience, is for all practical purposes "real." In this way the lower animals, and trees and rocks and stones, would all be "real" to the extent to which they affect our experience. Thus, through our will, we are in contact with reality from the beginning of our lives to the end of them. It might, indeed, be said that our practical knowledge of things is always real and immediate; and in this way logical or exact expression would be given to Schopenhauer's feeling that there must necessarily be immediate and real knowledge somewhere in our experience.

(β) There is an even more strictly epistemological although perfectly objective way, in which Schopenhauer expresses his theoretical illusionism. He says that on the lowest step of the scale of nature cause and effect are quite homogeneous and quite equivalent, and therefore perfectly comprehensible. In the case of the impact, under perfect conditions, of one billiard-ball upon another, the one ball receives just as much movement as the other loses. That is, cause and effect do not differ as to quality. But "things change as soon as we begin to ascend in the scale of phenomena. Heat, for example, considered as cause, and expansion, liquefaction, volatilisation, or crystallisation, as effects, are not homogeneous, and so their causal connection is not intelligible. The comprehensibility of causality has diminished: what a lower degree of heat caused to liquefy, a higher degree makes evaporate: that which crystallises with less heat, melts when the heat is augmented. Warmth softens wax and hardens clay; light whitens wax and blackens chloride of silver. And, to go still further, when two salts are seen to decompose each other mutually and to form two new ones, elective affinity presents itself to us as an impenetrable mystery, and the properties of the two new

bodies are not a combination of the properties of their separate elements. Nevertheless we are still able to follow the process and to imitate the elements out of which the new bodies are formed; we can even separate what has been united and restore the original quantities. Thus noticeable heterogeneousness and incommensurability between cause and effect have here made their appearance: causality has become more mysterious.”<sup>1</sup>

Going on to speak of the effects of electricity on the voltaic pile, where communication, distribution, shock, ignition, isolating, charging, discharging, are all mysterious in their operation, Schopenhauer continues: “Here, therefore, cause and effect are completely heterogeneous, their connection is unintelligible, and we see bodies show great susceptibility to causal influences, the nature of which remains a secret for us. Moreover, in proportion as we mount higher in the scale the effect seems to contain more, the cause less. When we reach organic nature, therefore, in which the phenomenon of life presents itself, this is the case in a far higher degree still.” “Think,” he says, “of a world of *infusoria*, arising out of watered hay, or the acorn giving birth to the oak!”<sup>2</sup> or of any of the phenomena connected with the origin of life!

Finally, when we come to the sphere of beings which have knowledge there is no longer *any sort of resemblance or commensurability* between the action performed and the object which as representation evokes it. Animals, seeing that they are restricted to *perceptible* representations, still need the *presence* of the object acting as a motive. Their action is then immediate and infallible (“if we leave training—*i.e.*, habits enforced by fear—out of the question”). “For animals are unable to carry about with them conceptions that might render them independent of present impressions, enable them to reflect, and qualify them for deliberate action. Man can

<sup>1</sup> The Will in Nature; Bohn's Eng. transl., p. 313.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 315.

do this. Therefore, when at last we come to rational beings, the motive is even no longer a *present*, perceptible, actually existing, real thing, but a mere *conception*, having its present existence only in the brain of the person who acts, but which is extracted from many multifarious perceptions, from the experience of former years, or has been handed down in words.”<sup>1</sup> Here, Schopenhauer maintains, just where the problem of causation is becoming most difficult—that is, in dealing with the connection between motives and actions—a “sudden light” arises, an “unexpected light”—“the chance circumstance that we, the judges, happen to be the very objects that are to be judged.”<sup>2</sup> “Just at this point the observer receives from his own inner self the direct information that the agent in his actions is the will—that very will which he knows better and more intimately than anything that external perception can ever supply.”<sup>3</sup>

In the foregoing we have Schopenhauer's philosophy of causality, which is, that in our study of causation, of the question of the cause of any event or phenomenon, we are, as a matter of fact, *driven* up through the many stages of natural causation to the causation that is in the self, action in conformity with motives. This means that anywhere below or short of human action we are always compelled, practically and theoretically compelled, to ask for the “cause of the cause,” and that *in human action alone* is it impossible and superfluous to ask for the “cause of the cause,” because a man's motives are *himself*, are his will, because his action is the manifestation of a causal energy working from *within* outwards, to be explained only by itself, to be referred only to itself, the will. In man we see, as it were, the “inside” of the will; we understand causation for the first time, because we see it *from the inside*. But—and this is our point—the same dilemma

<sup>1</sup> The Will in Nature ; Bohm's Eng. transl., p. 316.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 317.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

recurs here that we encountered before when we were seeking simply for the reality of "things." We found that we were driven to seek reality in the self, but not merely a *known* reality, rather a *felt* reality—a reality that we *willed*. And so it is here. In seeking to know causation, we have to confess that the result to which we have been driven is that we can only *know* it by *being* it,—by being causal (as we are in willing)—that knowledge (reflective, indirect knowledge) somehow passes away, and that willing or being *takes its place*. We understand causation because we give up seeking to understand it by means of reflection, and because we ourselves become causation, find ourselves to be will, which "*must* be that which is everywhere," nay, "is everywhere." On looking back from our newly acquired standpoint (the will), we really see that all causation is simply the will. *This is the true Schopenhauer*. In the *deepest search for knowledge we are compelled, as a matter of fact, to give up the attempt to know*; we find something better than knowledge. We realise—if we reflect for a moment—that the deepest things in the world are not known but lived and felt, and are inexplicable. Why should not philosophy admit this? There is no explanation of will, Schopenhauer says. "*Velle non discitur*." He would agree with Edwards that we cannot "will to will." This is such a great result for the purposes of philosophical theory and philosophical ontology, that its import can hardly be grasped at once. One thing may be said, however. In will we seem to have a *real* principle by which to explain things, a reality we know immediately and surely. In explaining all causality and all real existence by relation to volition, to evolved and evolving purpose, we explain it by relation to a *reality* which is directly known, felt, and realised; whereas in explaining the world by reference to the "idea," we are explaining it by reference to an *ideality*—to a fiction (the conception, namely, of *exhaustive knowledge*, which is always



an ideal and never a reality); and to a *secondary* thing, seeing that knowledge is (*ex vi termini*) never reality itself, but only our consciousness of a reality that is beyond ourselves.

Our power of thought, from which Fichte and Schelling and Hegel all started as an absolute principle, is only the possibility of our being able to view any object or element in the cosmos as so far relative to human purpose and human volition. It is will which is the real thing in the world, and can therefore be made a principle which explains and bears the weight of all reality. On the principles of Schopenhauer's theory of knowledge, we must give up the *merely* causal way of explaining things (there is always a "next" cause to any given cause, and so causality can never be a final explanation of reality), and rather look upon things as manifestations of organic *purpose*, which we *know on the inside, in ourselves, in our will*. Anything that has no relation to the will, to human purpose, that does not affect it in some way (a pseudo-entity, for example, like "mere matter" or a mere Epicurean god in the interstellar spaces), is for us absolutely nothing. To be sure, we are here developing the positive significance of our author somewhat beyond the letter of his system. But Schopenhauer had himself a broad intuitive perception of the power of his principle, will (as different from the mere idea), and held to the end of his life that the thinking world would come to accept his principle of will as the true first principle of philosophy. Of course there is the Idea, too, as has been suggested; but that is something which exists in relation to the will, and simply expresses the form or forms under which it energises. Generally speaking, the will represents the content of experience—life and energy—and the Idea represents its form, the articulate expression of life, or the different modes in which life is exhibited. The Idea, moreover, is often unconscious, as it is in the case of impulse and instinct, and so the Idea is never quite equal to the fulness of life.

Roughly speaking, the post-Kantian idealists reversed this whole mode of conception, and said that the Idea represented the essence of experience, and that life and movement and impulse and feeling were all secondary things, indifferent things (*ἀδιάφορα*, in the language of the Stoics), belonging to what they contemptuously called the *Vorstellung*, the phenomenal appearance of things. This is indeed the philosopher's fallacy *par excellence*; <sup>1</sup> it has made many a soul feed on the husks of *form* under the insane idea that the rich varied life of nature and of instinct is so much mere "empirical detail." As a matter of fact, the extent to which a man *understands* life is "empirical detail"—something that varies with the individuality; no man understands life fully, but all men may boldly live up to the fulness of human purpose and possibility, believing in development where they cannot *see* and *understand*.

"On the lowest stages of nature, then, we see the will exhibiting itself as a blind tendency, a dark dull striving, far from all immediate knowableness. This is the simplest mode of its manifestation." The highest assertion of the will is in the motives of human beings, and the supreme motive—as we shall see in the next chapter—is the will to live. Now if the lowest stages of the will's assertion of itself are essentially removed from knowledge—incomprehensible—we might expect to find that its highest stages, its assertion of itself in man, would be nearer to knowledge, to consciousness, and therefore more intelligible. But it is not so. Schopenhauer is always afraid, as it were, of saying that the self can be *known*. Any attempt to *know* anything necessarily falsifies or *phenomenalises* that thing, makes it merely the "object" of a subject. And so he saves the reality of the self—the highest assertion of the will—by saying that it too cannot be known,

<sup>1</sup> It is really more than this; it is a kind of philosophical *l'arsa majestas*—a rebellion against the truth that by doing the will of the universe do we understand it. And yet one is constantly encountering assertions to the effect that the only way of learning the meaning of things is to think, to sit still and *think*.

but only *willed*—lived, felt. To understand will we must will. As we have already called his reasons (those of dogmatic idealism) for distrusting knowledge imaginary, we object to this conclusion about the self. We can act and still *know* that we are acting. Still it is true that we do not know ourselves fully. The lower and the higher aspects of our life both “end in mystery.” But there is always the second trouble in Schopenhauer that he finds *volition* as well as knowledge to be an illusory thing. He thought willing a huge mistake (because it makes us break away from the eternal peace of the Ideas or of blissful unconsciousness and painlessness), but this absurd notion must simply be thrown out of court just now. He had, in spite of his belief in will and motion and tendency as the principle that governs all reality, the philosophical prejudice that *rest* is superior to motion and infinitely more intelligible (in the sense that in rest consciousness seems to be allowed to turn back upon itself, while in motion it is always carried outside of itself). Apart, however, from both these difficulties about what knowledge and willing are *in themselves* (a very absurd thing to contemplate!), there is profound truth in Schopenhauer’s feeling that to *understand* the will (and this can only mean to understand life) we must resolve to *will* and to *live*. But we must never “lose our heads” in willing, we must always will as human beings, retaining, potentially at least, a consciousness of what we are doing, and this even when we “let ourselves go” in action. Schopenhauer forgets this somewhat. We can see from the various forms into which he casts his dilemma that he had a much better understanding of what *willing* is than of what *knowing* is. He always felt that knowing falsified things, which must be wrong, because knowledge reports reality, and must be trusted and not distrusted. It is necessary to state still another form of his difficulty.

(7) “The more *necessity* any piece of knowledge carries with it

. . . the more there is in it of that which cannot be otherwise thought or presented in perception—as, for example, space relations—the clearer and more sufficing then it is, the less pure objective content it has, or the less reality, properly so-called, is given in it. And conversely, the more there is in it which must be conceived as mere chance, and the more it impresses us as given merely empirically, the more proper objectivity and true reality is there in such knowledge, and at the same time the more that is inexplicable—that is, that cannot be deduced from anything else.”<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer thus practically agrees with Hegel in disparaging the idea that we add to the reality of any piece of knowledge by introducing the conception of its necessity. We really weaken it by so doing, because the conception of necessity belongs to demonstration and not to fact. When we try to prove a thing necessary, we try to show its connection with something else, supposedly more real or fundamental than itself. This has a direct bearing on Schopenhauer's philosophy. He is inclined to maintain that the highest reading of experience is not to be found in demonstration or in reasoning, but in observation of actual fact. The will is always something we can see, as it were, and so are the realities of art and ethics and religion. It is only conceptions or ideas which have to be strung together in a necessary or logical order; reality, on the contrary, is its own justification, and only needs to be allowed to speak for itself. Philosophy has first to adopt a receptive attitude to reality in order to see what reality is, before attempting to deduce all reality from a single principle, as the “Hegelians” always seem to be trying to do. To return to our former phraseology, Schopenhauer teaches that the more “conceptual” knowledge is, the less “real” is it, and that the more “real” knowledge is, the less “conceptual” is it. The most real form

<sup>1</sup> *World as Will*, H. and K. transl., i. 158. The italics are mine.

of knowledge, accordingly, is immediate or so-called perceptual knowledge, and this comes to be Schopenhauer's practical persuasion, although his logical presupposition<sup>1</sup> always is that only conceptual knowledge is knowledge in the strict sense. His whole philosophy records his oscillations between these two points of view, the point of view of his natural feeling and the point of view of his intellect as trained (imperfectly trained?) by reading philosophy. Seeing that we have an immediate knowledge of ourselves as willing (whatever willing means, and as Schopenhauer does not accept the idea of the dualism of mind and body he is free from the difficulties of Maine de Biran, say, on the matter), our knowledge of ourselves as willing is the most real knowledge we have. The Scottish philosophers had the feeling that immediate knowledge is the most real kind of knowledge, and to save the reality of our knowledge of the external world they maintained that such knowledge was immediate. If we can grasp the meaning that lies in Schopenhauer's idea of our having an immediate knowledge of the will, and if we can then grasp (partly with the help of the Scottish philosophers<sup>2</sup>) the idea that we immediately know everything to be real which affects the will, we have learned Schopenhauer's lesson, or at least the lesson that may be drawn from him. Schopenhauer, by the way, like a recent expositor of Reid,<sup>3</sup> has a higher opinion of Reid than is commonly held, and regards him as having vindicated, under the idea of the immediacy of perception, the fact that perception is an ultimate thing, not to be explained out of mere sensation, but only as a unique process. Reid's book, he says, speaking of 'The Inquiry,' is "very instructive and well

<sup>1</sup> See chap. i. p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> The Scottish philosophers practically felt that there must be an immediate knowledge of anything that is real. *Indirect* knowledge of a thing is no sufficient guarantee of its reality.

<sup>3</sup> Professor A. Seth, *Scottish Philosophy*, pp. 76, 77, &c.

worth reading—ten times more so than all the philosophy together that has been written since Kant.”<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious at once that the more *real* knowledge is, the less *form* has it about it, because our most real knowledge is *perceptual* knowledge, and perception only tells us the *what* and not the *how* of things. It is obvious, too, that the more *ideal* or *formal* knowledge is, the less “reality” is there about it, because ideal knowledge is conceptual knowledge, notional knowledge, knowledge in thought, indirect knowledge. The most *real* knowledge, as Schopenhauer teaches, is the knowledge of the self; and that knowledge, we may add, is not mere knowledge, but something more—will, concrete experience. The most *ideal* knowledge is, again, the knowledge of the things of sense and of science, because sense phenomena are partly subjective (in the sense of the Idealists), and because science makes us regard the reality of all things as consisting in *laws*—mere statements of *isolated sequences*, which of course are abstract things.

(c) Lastly, a cosmic or objective way Schopenhauer has of stating his dilemma is also worthy of attention. “Knowledge becomes clearer, purer, and more objective, the more the intellect develops itself, and becomes perfect in the ascending scale of animal beings, and the more knowledge separates itself from willing.” A nervous system that is most completely separated from the muscular system, and becomes specialised, as in the case of man, into a sort of centre of its own, in the greater and the lesser brain, is the best guarantee, according to Schopenhauer, of purely objective and theoretical knowledge, or knowledge “on its own account.” He holds that the more the cerebral lobes get freed from the other bodily organs, the greater is the intelligence possessed by the organ in question.<sup>2</sup> Willing, according to him, is “foreign to

<sup>1</sup> Werke, ii. 24, 25 : H. and K., ii. 186.

<sup>2</sup> Man's brain, as it were, is on the top of his body, as far away from the ground

insight," and prevents it ; and insight or knowledge is " foreign " to willing, and tends to prevent it. This means that when a person wills he strives to go outside of himself, and consequently cannot have " insight " into anything (for insight would involve his being at rest)—it means that the quiet and the " inwardness " of knowing and of insight is foreign to the unrest and the " outgoingness " of volition.

It is a puzzle throughout Schopenhauer how a man can act and yet be perfectly self-conscious, or how he can be perfectly self-conscious and yet act. It is the destiny of man to act with knowledge, not with an acute and painful self-consciousness, but still with intelligence. But Schopenhauer could not grasp this, owing to his idealistic suspicions about " knowledge " and his weariness and hatred of the idolatry of knowledge by the " Hegelians." He was afraid of endangering the reality of the most real thing in the world (the willing self) by making it a matter of knowledge. And yet he knew very well that the superiority of man over the brutes consists in the fact that his brain is at the top of his body, elevated above his stomach and his feet and his bodily organs. In all this we see the contradictory tendencies that are at work in his mind—the tendency on the one hand to exalt intellect and the " clearness " and the " comprehensibility " of formal conceptual knowledge, and the tendency on the other to throw knowledge altogether off his shoulders in despair, and to exchange it for the deeper, the *intuitive* and the volitional, and the *heart* knowledge of things, the immediate knowledge we have of ourselves as agents in the business of life. It is with the brain and the intellect, of course, that we must philosophise, and yet these are a poor thing at best, as all those who feel

(and grovelling and burrowing in the earth) as can well be, while the brain of many animals is not clearly separated even from their bodies, and is quite close to the ground. The greater and the freer, as it were, the cerebral hemispheres are, the further removed is any animal from an immediate pursuit of the will or of appetite.

deeply and who live deeply know. Schopenhauer felt this: he is always talking of how soon the brain gets wearied out and tired. He often emphasised and re-emphasised his *caveat* that "philosophy is not a science *out of* conceptions, but only a science *in* conceptions,"—an attempt, that is, to state the world in the terms of a few simple elements like the Will and the Idea.

Fichte and Schelling and Hegel were doubtless guilty of beginning in philosophy with conceptions which it required a "very high effort of thought" to grasp: the "*Ego* positing itself," the "I as a principle of philosophy," "pure being" which was the same as "pure nothing," and so on. Descartes even began philosophy with an abstraction—*Cogito* instead of *Ego sum cogitans*, as has been said. Kant, too, suffered from his tendency to assimilate the categories to conceptions, as we have seen. In face of all this, Schopenhauer thought that his will, while in a sense a conception, was yet a real conception—a conception that was also a perception—a phase of reality that one could actually see and be immediately conscious of in himself; whereas the conceptions of most other philosophers—such as "substance," "monads," "absolute reason," "idea," etc.—were for him the "merest *abstracta* of thought." Philosophy, as he said, has been, "since the time of Socrates, a *systematic misuse* of general conceptions"—a kind of *Begrifflichkeit*, as it were, a deification of the concept. He shows several times how philosophy has gone on explaining things by the most abstract sort of concepts, by concepts so abstract that little positive significance could seemingly be attached to them, and how the Hegelian philosophy which uses such "utter abstractions" as "being" and "non-being" and "becoming" as its bases, is thus "the poorest and thinnest and most impossible of all philosophies." We shall have to consider whether Schopenhauer, with all his severe abuse of the concept, has really himself given us a true



account of the utility of the concept.<sup>1</sup> We have suggested that it is not very easy to find this in him, except by way of suggestion. Indeed the attempt to find it takes us beyond his mere theory of knowledge. It is partly entered upon in the next and in succeeding chapters.

IV. It is easy to see how Schopenhauer's difficulties about knowledge reduce themselves to the fact of his inability to distinguish from and relate to each other properly the two ideas of consciousness and self-consciousness. "The more the one side of consciousness comes to the fore, the more does the other retreat. And so our consciousness of other things—*i.e.*, our *attuitive* knowledge (*anschauende Erkenntniss*) becomes more complete, more objective, the less we are at the same time conscious of ourselves. The more we are conscious of the object, the less we are conscious of the subject; the more, however, our consciousness of the self increases, the weaker and more imperfect is our conception of the external world." It is perfectly evident from this description of consciousness that there are upper and lower limits of consciousness, and that consciousness tends to pass at its lower limits into a merely passive physical sense of reality, a mere intuitive (to use a favourite term of Professor Laurie's<sup>2</sup>) feeling of being in general, and at its upper limits into a reflective sense more of one's own personality than of external things. Consciousness, as we ordinarily know it, never goes to the one or the other of these extremes; it merely tends to do so. It is because Schopenhauer unconsciously wanted a knowledge of the "mere self" out of its relation to the outer world, and of the "outer world" out of relation to the self,—the very thing that his splendid idea of connecting both the world and the self in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 194, 210, 477.

<sup>2</sup> See 'Metaphysica Nova et Vetusta,' 2d ed., pp. 17, 57, *et passim*.

the one element of organic volition really ought to have kept him from,—that he tended to separate reflective consciousness from “attuent” or perceptual consciousness. He goes on to say, just after the words last quoted, that “it is only possible to attain to a pure volitionless knowledge—that is, to an objective appreciation of the world—when the consciousness of other things is so emphasised in potency that the consciousness of one’s self vanishes.” One is inclined to ask what an appreciation of the world could mean when there is no self! Of course the outcome of his philosophy is that you cannot separate the self and the world, self-consciousness and consciousness; he himself brought them together in will; and our question is, whether this idea or this fact of will does not enable us to connect physical and psychological reality better than the traditional notion of self as intellect or idea. Schopenhauer himself wanted to get to “objective knowledge,” because the “idea” and the “concept” both seemed “subjective” to him. As a matter of fact, they are not subjective in the sense that in them we do not know reality; *both in the idea and in the concept we do know reality, and it is Schopenhauer who has best taught us to see this.*<sup>1</sup> The idea and the concept are both connected with will, and in willing we have an immediate sense of reality. Reality is for us what we find it to be in our volition, and what we make it to be in our volition. In a sense reality is something which we evolve or will. There is something of the self in external things (things are what is related to our will); and there is something of external things in the self (the self must have a given amount of matter or material reality which it can idealise or perfect by its volition). The meeting-point of the self and reality is in

<sup>1</sup> Chap. iv. will suggest that the main utility of the concept is to give us motives to action. It unfolds the relation that things sustain to our will—*i.e.*, the reality of things.

the will,<sup>1</sup>—we may say in *evolution* or in *process*, but that is the same thing.

Schopenhauer was wrong in separating consciousness and self-consciousness, perception and reflection. Knowledge does not *phenomenalise* things and make them illusory, but if we really take a firm hold of it, it tells us what things are; we learn through it of the various grades of reality or causality (in the language of Schopenhauer), such as physical causation, chemical combination or dissolution, organic effort, motivated action, and so on. *Self-consciousness*, too, cannot be separated from *consciousness*, our knowledge of ourselves from our knowledge of things. We are in a *real* world, and we are only *real* in that world, and not out of it. We are organised will, in short, and the world is organised will too. It is futile to separate the knowledge of the self from the knowledge of other things. I express myself in my actions and purposes, in my body, and in its actions, and in its surroundings. Schopenhauer's dilemma about real knowledge and formal knowledge, about necessary knowledge and actual knowledge, about conceptual knowledge and perceptual knowledge, has no basis in fact. All knowledge is partly formal and partly real—that is, it has formal or ideal (mental) aspects, and it has also real or material aspects. In the same way knowledge is partly conceptual and partly perceptual, partly necessary and partly contingent, partly consciousness and partly self-consciousness, partly objective and partly subjective. The chief service of the whole dilemma is to bring out the fact that reality is indeed greater than our *knowledge* of it, or that we are only conscious of a small portion of reality, or that reality has to be *lived* and *willed*, and not merely to be *known*, and that all

<sup>1</sup> This may be more evident later—after the chapter on Art. It is there suggested that artistic reality may be said to sum up all reality, and yet that artistic reality is a reality which we to a certain extent ourselves evolve or create. And so in ethics. It lies in the power of the human will to help to create the ethical kingdom that is in a sense the outcome of history.

knowledge and all self-consciousness, and all conceptions and all ideas, refer to the one cosmic process called "will"—*i.e.*, cosmic life or evolving reality. It is what we *do* and *attain to* that constitutes our reality, and not merely what we think. Reality, in other words, does not consist in mere ideas. There is much palpable truth, no doubt, in the idea that our knowledge of ordinary things is "clear and comprehensible," at least for all practical purposes, so long as we steer clear of the sophistries of subjective idealism. Our knowledge of the self, again, seems to be incapable of being expressed in definite terms, or at least to evade us when we are busily engaged in the work of life. We *feel* the self, but we do not really *know* it. "Our consciousness becomes brighter and clearer the more it extends itself outwards towards perception, where its greatest clearness is to be found; it becomes, on the other hand, darker as we go inwards, and ends, if one follows it right up into its inmost recesses, in a darkness where all knowledge passes away." It is true that the recesses of our being become dark to mere intellectual philosophy, to mere introspective psychology. The reality of the self consists in an effort—an effort which is best studied in an ethical regard. We shall see this later. It may be questioned, in fact, if the true explanation of the personality of man is to be found at any lower stage than the philosophy of religion, because only in religion are we forced to study the struggle between the natural (the unconscious) and the spiritual (the conscious or ideal) will of the individual. It has been once or twice suggested that religion constitutes an integral part of philosophy to Schopenhauer.

Knowledge has no right to question the reality of any object which appears before consciousness as an object. There may be different grades of reality—Schopenhauer's idea of *grades* of reality or of the will admits of great extension: a stone is

one thing and a sound another, and autumn tints another, and a man's body another; but these things are all real, all phenomena of the real world. If we surrender one phase of reality we do violence to all reality; for, as a matter of fact, the highest objects, like the human body, include in them all the other objects or phases of reality. We must therefore retain all of them intact and whole. We may "grade" reality as much as we will, but all the grades of reality are reality. Even if a thing is only relatively real, in the sense that it is not an absolute entity (like the fully conscious person, for example), it is still "réal." There is the difficulty, of course, of connecting these different planes of reality with each other. We have seen this in thinking of transcendental idealism or transcendental realism. From first to last we have seen that our knowledge of reality reduces itself to the sense we have of *reality as affecting our action and our volition*. Our consciousness of reality is our knowledge of things as affecting or affected by our volition. Our self-consciousness is our knowledge of ourselves as affected by and possibly affecting all other reality. Our self-consciousness seems indeed to be vague, because it is reducible, in idea, simply to our consciousness of infinitely being and willing. Our knowledge of ourselves is, in the phraseology of modern psychology, merely an accompanying presentation, a *Begleitvorstellung* of what we are made and are making ourselves to be. The "I" is dark, as Schopenhauer suggests and has the courage to say; our knowledge of ourselves is not equal to all that we are already or may yet become. Reality, according to Schopenhauer, consists in being, in evolving, and in evolving infinitely. The self has the task before it of relating itself in action to all reality and to the highest reality.

V. Having already reached the limits of the mere theory of knowledge, we may bring this chapter to a close with a simple reference to one or two important theoretical advantages of

regarding the world as will, and of placing the reality of the self in will. Let us take, for example, that very technical part of Logic which is called the *theory of predication*. A philosophy of life must make some broad assertion about reality as a whole. The outcome, indeed, of wisdom is the ability to *judge*—to pronounce a *judgment* about things and events which shall be, moreover, a *real* judgment about them. A philosophy which sins against the logical conditions of the judgment can be no philosophy. But how can our mere judgment ever be true about reality? It may be emphatically stated that if knowledge consists in the mere concept, and if the judgment is only the comparison of one concept with another concept, of one mental entity with another, then a judgment about the world as a whole by the mere individual is impossible and absurd. No mere juxtaposition of two ideas in our heads can ever adequately represent the world as a whole. There is one great theoretical reason why Schopenhauer's philosophy will always preserve a hold on the human mind, and it is this: no philosophy thought out of the brain of a thinker ever asserted so strongly as does his, the utter inadequacy of all mere conceptions or ideas about life before the great fact of life itself. Indeed one very soon learns from Schopenhauer that our conceptions about life are simply nothing or very little, save as coming from a total experience of life. Now no man knows life *a priori*, just as no man knows himself *a priori*. Schopenhauer always insists that it takes some time, some experience of our own conduct—in which we generally think we are free, although we afterwards know we followed deep instinct which we could not control—to enable us to know what we are ourselves. We are *will*, and we only know will *a posteriori*, not *a priori*. How, to resume, can our knowledge be real unless it is in contact with reality—*i.e.*, issues from a direct experience of reality, and so is no longer a matter of abstract conceptions? Our knowledge indeed seems

to issue from our volitional experience of reality, but is that experience of the very essence of reality? It is doubtless a large thing to claim the whole of reality as will. But we have seen several logical reasons for regarding the world as consisting simply of will or purpose, or of our will and things which affect our will. There is a great deal of satisfaction, too, in being able to connect the *scientific* analysis of the world into a sum of forces with Schopenhauer's epistemological analysis of reality into that which affects our will. Schopenhauer, in fact, has converted *ontology*—the question, "What is such and such a thing really and ultimately?"—into *teleology*—the question, "What does such and such a thing ultimately do?"

A judgment upon life, if Schopenhauer's account of the matter be in the main true, simply resolves itself into the question of interpreting our experience of life. It is true that Schopenhauer professed to do this himself, and ended by saying that, as matter of fact, life was for the most part painful and bad. But we cannot accept this conclusion, and on Schopenhauer's own principles. He has taught us that all conceptions come from perceptions; they are consequently conceptions of how things affect our will. But our will carries us beyond the mere things that affect us, carries us infinitely beyond them, in fact, onwards and ever onwards, towards further volition. The best judgment about life, then, is to be found not merely in conceptions, for conceptions only tell us how we have willed or how we ought to will in view of a certain end, but in the fact that we still will. Adjectives both positive and negative are inadequate to life. The fact that we have experienced is a proof that life has attained to some things. That it has attained to some things is another way of saying that it is good as far as it has gone, for the original meaning of the word *good* is serviceable or valuable in view of some end. The fact that we still have experi-

ence, and can through our volition attain to ever higher and higher (or deeper and deeper) experience of reality, shows that life is still good. And our necessary acceptance of the principle of *continuity* warrants us in maintaining that life is essentially good—objectively good and valuable. Schopenhauer himself has to admit much of this even at the same time that he talks of the illusoriness of many of the expectations that we form about life.

By saying, therefore, that the world is will, or that life is will, Schopenhauer has enabled us to understand the saying that the history of the world is the justification of the world, —“*Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht.*” He thought that history was “nothing,” because *time*, the category of history, was only “in our heads” (pseudo-Kantism!); but the experience of the race is just as real a thing as the experience of the individual, and the experience of the race is *history*, is tantamount to the fact that humanity has accomplished something—has willed. Of course we shall only later be able to think fully of the content that may be read into the expression *the world is will*. That there is a history of the world is a justification of the world, because it means that the world-will has attained to something. Schopenhauer himself could not see anything positive in history, but that was owing to a radical defect in his mental constitution. He thought, indeed (for wrong reasons), that the will did not attain to anything, but this does not militate against the significance of his general principle. We shall later, in the chapters on art and ethics and religion, inquire why his philosophy of volition, which is or ought to be a philosophy of evolution, has no outlook. The final process of the world Schopenhauer absurdly imagines to be downwards or backwards, as it is in the decadence philosophy of Proclus.

It ought in fairness to be mentioned that Schopenhauer's own definition of the judgment connects him more with



scholasticism than with modern theories. "Judging," he says, "is simply comparing one concept with another." "The meaning of the copula is that the predicate inheres in the subject." In fact, Schopenhauer's whole views on logic were those of scholastic formalism, just as his theory of the concept was. His inability, therefore, to connect the judgment with reality is a characteristic defect. A "Hegelian" might justly pass the strongest censure on Schopenhauer for a great deal of crude dualism that he takes into his philosophy without the slightest "criticism"—the dualism between the concept and the percept, for example. But then Schopenhauer is perfectly careless about his own consistency. We have tried often, in spite of Schopenhauer himself, to give an extended interpretation to his general principle of will as connecting many things that he kept apart. As a matter of fact, all judgments reduce themselves to an assertion that the real world is such and such or so and so. But we know the "such and such" or the "so and so" only through our experience, and we are warranted in making a judgment about the world as a whole on the strength of our experience, just because our experience is *experience*, is a real thing—attainment, will (which is the reality of all things). As being really will, our experience is an expression of the nature of reality, which is through and through movement and process and development. The complete theory of the judgment, indeed, implies that reality is not merely something that we know on the outside, but something that *we in a sense are*. — From the standpoint of knowledge alone, of conceptual knowledge alone, it always remains a problem whether or not our judgments about reality will turn out to be valid and objective and real. The consistent philosopher, from the standpoint of knowledge alone, is necessarily to a large extent a sceptic. But he need not be this on a general acceptance of Schopenhauer's principles. If reality is will or process in relation to

our experience, and if our experience is will too, then what we experience is true of reality—is in fact reality.

In the chapters on art and religion we shall suggest that our highest purposes and aspirations actually constitute for us the final reality of the world. We must certainly agree that reality cannot be anything other than what we really experience. Our experience is reality: we as conscious persons, having conscious purposes, are, in fact, the highest reality—or rather we are capable of becoming the ultimately real things in the world, for we are not yet as real as we may be. If it be urged with Protagoras that a “dog-faced baboon” might say the same thing about reality, that reality is that which sustains an active relation to *its* will, the meaning we have extracted from Schopenhauer is not yet perfectly understood. Of course it is true that for the “dog-faced baboon” reality is what it experiences it to be. But man has, as a matter of fact, a higher place in the economy of nature than the “dog-faced baboon.” He is more, because he *does* more or experiences more. Reality, according to Schopenhauer, consists in infinitely being and doing, and it is in infinitely being and doing, in infinitely aspiring and willing, that man’s nature consists. History rightly interpreted shows this. Once again, Schopenhauer himself does not rise to the height of this thought, but he enables others to do so.

It may be said, by way of *résumé*, that the most important things in Schopenhauer’s theory of knowledge are his Platonism and his Kantism (“the divine Plato and the marvellous Kant”), and the use that he makes of both, or compels us to make, on the basis of his realistic principle of will. We see on the one hand that the transcendental world is simply will, the reality of the visible world; and on the other that all conceptions (and not merely the highest conceptions) have

at bottom a practical significance. Schopenhauer does not make a dogmatic use of reason,—does not try to make the various concepts and entities of reason constitute the real world. Philosophy is a science *in* conceptions, but not *out* of conceptions. He does not use reason to find out the essence of the world, while he does use it as causing us to think anything that may prove to be practically helpful to us. Reason, he would say, simply systematises the matter that is presented to it.

Of the will Schopenhauer holds that we have an immediate experience. So far, therefore, as reality is will, it may be said that we have an immediate knowledge of the nature of reality. The outcome of his positive philosophy is that we sum up reality in our volitions, and bring reality to its highest expression of itself in our highest volitions or aspirations or efforts. His principle of will may be used as a path along which we may get out of the puzzles of idealism about reality, but of course many of these puzzles are largely unreal. On the principles of Schopenhauer and on those of modern psychology there is no cognitive element of consciousness which is not associated with a life-preservative impulse or a life-preservative movement of the body. All our ideas are psychical efforts on our part to conquer the “real” for our practical and moral purposes. The self is a key to reality—not, however, the knowing self, but the willing self. All this is right, if by the willing self is meant all that the human personality is and is capable of becoming.

A highly interesting feature of Schopenhauer's theory of knowledge is his pronounced tendency to *perceptualise intellection*, to assimilate all real knowledge to the type of perception and immediate apprehension. Philosophy must somehow come back to the richness of an immediate and direct knowledge of reality, and will also have to learn to *trust knowledge* in what it says about things. It indeed

must do so if the meaning of things is to be learned more by living than by thinking. We must have a practical (volitional) acquaintance with reality before we can think it.<sup>1</sup> We cannot, for example, understand goodness or beauty or religion unless we try to evolve these things in our lives by an exercise or an attitude of will. Reality is for us what we make it to be. Only because Schopenhauer began in philosophy with a half-understood idealism, did the ideal of knowledge seem to him to be knowledge that is altogether independent of the will. It is not true that the genius sees things out of relation to the will. Napoleon read men's natures all the better because he estimated them as instruments for his purposes. It is false to say that "any design or intention is always dangerous to insight."<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, the world can be understood only as one gigantic design or organic attempt. Schopenhauer ought to have revised his ideas about knowledge so as to bring them into harmony with his doctrine of will. His idea that all concepts have primarily a practical value is a step in this direction, although he does not work it out fully. What he teaches about the relation of the concept to the percept, while to a certain extent almost truistic, is something that philosophy has always to learn anew. Locke long ago told us to relate our conceptions to perceptions, to reality; and Comte and others have told us the same thing in this present century. Schopenhauer has shown us how hard a thing it is to grasp the unity of the knowing and the willing self. He has suggested to us that the best way to do this is to view the self dynamically and teleologically, and not ontologically. Many philosophical questions, indeed, are best answered by taking a dynamical or practical or evolution-

<sup>1</sup> "The true kernel of all knowledge is that reflection which works with the help of intuitive representations; for it goes back to the fountain-head, to the basis of all conceptions."—"The Fourfold Root."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pp. 26, 182, 197, 206.

istic view of reality. A great defect of Schopenhauer's is that he did not fully grasp the truth—which is as old as the *Theatetus*<sup>1</sup> of Plato—that knowledge consists in the union of conception and perception. It is idle to write at length, as Schopenhauer does, about the *mere* concept or the *mere* percept. There are no such things. A last reflection is this. Schopenhauer always held that reason never discovered the *unconditioned*, but only the “*next condition*”; not the final cause, but only the efficient or immediate cause of things. Where, then, does the ideal of a knowledge of the world as a whole come from? From the reason, despite Schopenhauer? or from the will? or from our total organic consciousness? Schopenhauer also insisted that philosophy, as different from science, sought for a unified view of things. The effort to understand the world as a whole is perhaps best comprehended when seen to be bound up with the need we feel of having our own experience complete itself. This is a desire of the will.

The net outcome of this chapter is to suggest that neither knowledge nor the attitude of mind towards things that is called idealism, nor in fact reality itself, can be properly understood, so long as we try to keep to the plane of the mere intellect. Fortunately, according to Schopenhauer, it is impossible to separate our intellectual consciousness of things from our total organic sense of reality, and our total organic effort to will and to continue to will and exist. As we proceed with the study of his philosophy, the truth of this should become still more apparent. We have found Schopenhauer virtually contending for a new kind of idealism about reality, a dynamic idealism in which the reality of all things is determined by the function and purpose they discharge in the cosmic process. All things seem capable of being graded as lower or higher assertions or manifestations of the

<sup>1</sup> Ἐν μὲν ἄρα τοῖς παθήμασιν οὐκ ἔνι ἐπιστήμη, ἐν δὲ τῷ περὶ ἐκείνων συλλογισμῷ.

same force or will that makes itself most completely felt in the case of the human personality. We found Schopenhauer entangled in many confusions when dealing with the ordinary or dogmatic idealism. That was inevitable, for a literal acceptance of subjective idealism or of ordinary dogmatic idealism is sure to lead to illusionism. Schopenhauer's halting attitude toward reality is due to his inability to shake himself completely free of intellectual idealism (the philosopher's *idolon*)—an inability which continues to the end of his system. We have touched very lightly on the reasons Schopenhauer imagined he had for accepting idealism at the outset of his philosophising, and indicated the relations which his system as a whole, and the different parts of it, sustain to the problems of philosophy as seen by the idealist.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE BONDAGE OF MAN.

“And so the care for the preservation of existence, under demands that are excessively hard and that make themselves felt anew from day to day, makes out, as a rule, the whole of human life. On to that care a second demand immediately attaches itself, the care for the preservation of the race. Life is threatened constantly by the most diverse kinds of dangers from all sides, and to avert these the most constant watchfulness is necessary.”<sup>1</sup>

“ὅς νῦν μοι φιλότητα καὶ ἥμερον, ἔτε σὺ πάντας  
δαμνᾷ ἀθανάτους ἢ δὲ θνητοὺς ἀνθρώπους.”<sup>2</sup>

“Das ist's ja, was den Menschen zieret  
Und dazu ward ihm der Verstand,  
Dass er im innern Herzen spüret  
Was er erschafft mit seiner Hand.”<sup>3</sup>

WE may, as already suggested, contemplate Schopenhauer's whole philosophy as representing the difficulties and the consequences attendant on the introduction into philosophy of the thought which a leading exponent of Naturalism is reported to have expressed in the following words: “Nowadays we must abandon the study of the metaphysical man of the years gone by, for an inquiry into the physiological creature of our days. That is my opinion, and it is in defence of this conviction that I have worked for years.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Werke, ii. 368.

<sup>2</sup> Homer, Iliad, xiv. 198, 199.

<sup>3</sup> Schiller, “Das Lied von der Glocke.”

<sup>4</sup> The Idler, July 1893; reported conversation of M. Zola.

Man, according to Schopenhauer, is in bondage both in his mental and in his moral activity. It is on the slavery of man, as he conceives it, that Schopenhauer rears what has been called his *pessimism*; it is the slavery of man which gives to his ethic and his metaphysic their problems. It is well known that in post-Kantian philosophy man was conceived as elevated out of the phenomenal necessity of the world, now in virtue of his reason, which seemed to make him "the author" rather than "the subject" of necessity, and now in virtue of his will, which seemed to contain in itself a principle of free initiative, not to be explained out of any antecedent thing whatever. Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of Schopenhauer's teaching in this regard is in connection with the reason of man. He reminded philosophers that most of their decisions about the universe are inevitably influenced by the fact that the intellect of man is not a spontaneous automatic thing, energising for its own free delight, for the delight of a godlike contemplation of all things in heaven above and in the earth beneath and in the water under the earth, but a form of activity that is wholly subservient to the needs of the will and the multifarious wants of man's life. We invent explanations only about things which affect our will in some way or other, he teaches; and all our knowledge about things tells us only about the relations they sustain to our will and practical nature.

As to the will, he emphasises the teaching of Kant, that it is impossible to prove its freedom inductively, and that only in a transcendental sense can it be regarded as free; but the significance of his teaching lies in the fact that he studied the problem of the freedom of the will from the point of view of impulse and instinct and of cosmic evolution in general. Schopenhauer's philosophy practically reduces itself to an exposition and defence of the thesis that we cannot know the world out of relation to ourselves and our



practical activity. This indeed may be the true sense of Kant's doctrine that knowledge is limited to phenomena, a doctrine which has never failed to impress common-sense and scientific and theological thought as containing a large amount of profound truth.<sup>1</sup> Then, again, we may see from Schopenhauer, although only by way of suggestion at the end of his system, that, as Hegel said, "Freedom is the truth of Necessity,"—that out of the very bondage of man comes, in a sense, his "salvation" and his "freedom." Hegel saw this truth more as a flash of dialectic insight and not as Schopenhauer causes us to see it, after dragging us down to the depths of the animal aspects of the human personality and along the common highway of actual and conventional life.

It would be possible to begin by showing how, according to Schopenhauer, man is in his reason enslaved to the ministry of his practical wants, and so to continue the approach to the system from its theoretical side. But it will be more apparent what the Will is on which Schopenhauer builds everything, if we begin instead with the moral or the practical bondage of man, with the bondage of the will instead of the bondage of the reason. Reason is a secondary and a special form of the activity of man, according to Schopenhauer, his primal and general activity being will. In our study of Schopenhauer's metaphysic we shall see the difficulties which beset the chief assumption of the Critical Philosophy, that reason is the first thing about man's life, the point of view from which man's activity and the life of the world are to be explained; or at least we shall see by implication the small extent to which reason alone can be said to be adequate to the systematisation of human life. We ought,

<sup>1</sup> Philosophers of the nineteenth century would not perhaps have foisted so much transcendentalism on to Kant, if they had considered somewhat the actual effect of the study of Kant upon typical men. The lesson Goethe learned from Kant was to restrict the mind to the study of what is manifestly concrete and practical.

in fact, to imbibe from Schopenhauer a healthy distrust of all attempts to regard any one element or any one point of view about the world as really and ultimately fundamental. His doctrine of the bondage of man seems to ignore the very existence of idealistic and speculative philosophy in the same stout, stolid way that Positivism does. Schopenhauer, indeed, has many of the leanings of the Positivist. When one closes one's Hegel or Plato and reads what he has to say about the incessant aimless toiling of the will, one is reminded of the effect the speech of Mephistopheles produces on the mind after that of the angels in the Prologue to "Faust." "With the world alone has philosophy to do, and it leaves the gods at rest; expecting, however, in return, that it will be left at rest by them."<sup>1</sup> Writers like La Rochefoucauld, Chamfort, Cervantes, and Rousseau—Schopenhauer quotes most of them—and Voltaire put the student in the proper attitude of mind for the study of the positive aspects of Schopenhauer's system. We may regret this somewhat—may regret that any writer should be so one-sided as to profess to study the actual (*profana*) to the exclusion of the ideal (*sacra*); but we may still be willing to admit that philosophy should study the actual as well as the ideal (*omnia sacra et profana*). If Schopenhauer had not the sobriety of insight of Aristotle, for whom, as Hegel puts it, "there are plants and animals and men, and besides this God, the most excellent of all,"<sup>2</sup> his generalisation *Will* may be broad enough to include in it the effort after ideal reality as well as the search for material satisfaction.

I. Although Schopenhauer's philosophy is essentially a *cosmology* (*hylozoism* almost), it is possible to expound somewhat summarily his teaching about will, for the reason that

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Wallace, 'Life of Schopenhauer,' p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from 'Journal of Speculative Philosophy'; transl. of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Aristotle.'

he avails himself throughout his works of several scientific conceptions and distinctions of recognised significance. Will, in the cosmic sense, is the sum-total of all physical and organic processes, and is identified with the world as a whole very much by the same line of thought that makes scientific men reduce matter to force.<sup>1</sup> Will, in the case of man, however, if we are to be perfectly fair to the system of Schopenhauer, can be described only in a double way. It may mean, and it is sometimes practically taken by Schopenhauer to mean, the sum-total of all the organic and instinctive and reflex and unconscious actions performed by man—all those actions, in short, from which thought or conscious effort, in the strict sense, is excluded; it may, on the other hand, receive such an extended signification as to include even thought-processes and conscious processes, for Schopenhauer could not give his will a truly universal significance, unless human thinking also were made by him in a sense a form of will, one of the ways in which the world-will acts and asserts itself. There is a certain difficulty, of course, in correlating or uniting these two ways of looking at will, and this is the difficulty of the system. Apart from this technical difficulty there is the fundamental difficulty of reconciling a cosmic philosophy of mere force or tendency with the idealistic analysis of experience, which shows that mental or subjective elements enter into even what we call things or "objects." We must waive this second<sup>2</sup> difficulty, however, just now, and without any misgivings; for after all a true philosophy, as Schopenhauer teaches, must be able to look at the world from all sides: the results, in fact, of a really final philosophy must admit of being worked out in various ways, and the highest test of a philosophy is its power of working into the facts from any side, its capability of being explanatory from whatever point of view it may be compelled

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, chapter on Idealism.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chaps. v. and vi.

to start. "For this reason I have never had a care as to the mutual consistency of my doctrines—not even when some of these appeared to me inconsistent, as was the case for some time; for the agreement came afterwards of itself in proportion to the numerical completeness of the doctrines; consistency in my case being nothing more than the consistency of reality with itself, which, of course, can never fail."<sup>1</sup>

We are conscious in ourselves both of instinctive actions and of so-called conscious actions or actions with a motive, and it is well known that our conscious actions rest upon and include and are only possible through the normal occurrence of the instinctive and automatic and habit-acquired actions which make up what is often called the lower forms of our activity. Of the more purely physiological actions of the body we are not strictly conscious at all, and indeed we become aware of their existence only when we are in a state of physical illness and find our deliberate or conscious actions hampered by them. Only when our digestive organs are out of order do we become consciously aware that there are such things in us as digestive functions, on whose normal and periodic performances our physical and mental tone is very largely dependent. Of reflex actions that are partly psychical as well as physical, like winking or feeling afraid, we have at least a *feeling* consciousness, while our highest and most intense form of consciousness is associated with what are called purely deliberative or motivated actions. Consciousness is simply the total feeling we have of all the organic and all the psychical actions which our personalities exhibit. There is, then, unconscious and conscious volition. Schopenhauer makes us ask very carefully what the consciousness is which exists in man over and above mere automatic or habit-engendered function, or more particularly, whether automatic function (or will in the broad sense) exercises any controlling

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Werke, v. 142; Eng. transl., Belfort Bax, Schop. Essays, pp. 154, 155.

influence over our consciousness proper and our power of deliberate volition; and if an influence, whether such an influence as to warrant us in regarding will, in the sense of automatic organic process, to be the first and the supreme thing in consciousness. This is, we can see, the vexed question of the *freedom of the will* in a most modern form, and Schopenhauer recognises the importance of his difficulty. "Our question is really one of grave import. It opens up, in fact, an investigation into the inmost nature of man: we desire to know whether he too, like everything else in the world, is a being which is determined once and for all by its proper nature, and which, like all things in nature, has got its definite and lasting qualities which cause it to react in a necessary way towards external stimulus—the reactions, of course, maintaining their necessary character, and being, so far as any possible modifications are concerned, wholly at the mercy of external circumstances; or whether man actually constitutes an exception to the whole of nature."<sup>1</sup> We shall see what light is thrown upon this problem at the different stages of Schopenhauer's thought. We shall likely agree that no real solution is given of it until we come to the philosophy of religion, and that even the religious solution is only practical, not theoretical. Will, to Schopenhauer as to modern psycho-physics, is essentially a form, however complex, of *reaction to stimulus*, whether the stimulus comes from the outer world or from the depths of the organic self. "When a man wills, he wills some thing: his volition is always directed to some object, and can only be thought of in this way. What does it exactly mean to will anything? It means that the act of volition, which, to begin with, is itself only matter of *internal* or conscious experience, is called forth on the occasion of something that falls under our consciousness of *external* things, and is thus an object of

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Werke, Freiheit des Willens, ss. 20, 21.

knowledge. This something, as falling under our knowledge, is called motive, and constitutes at the same time the *matter* of our volition, that on which the will effects a change or on which it reacts. In this *reaction* consists the whole nature of will.”<sup>1</sup>

This is perfectly satisfactory, and all the facts of volition admit of being studied under the light of this idea. The slightest acquaintance with the literature of the psychology of volition will show that modern psychologists never think of the will in any other way than this. As has long been recognised, and as Schopenhauer always insists, there is no action without motives (however feebly a given motive may be felt), and the whole question of volition may be centred in the inquiry whether the act of will, as Schopenhauer puts it, is necessarily called forth by motive. If it be said that the real question of freedom lies behind the relation of motive to action—lies, in fact, in the formation of motives—this does not at all destroy the contention that the question of freedom can be studied only by considering the relation of motives to actions. The question of freedom has been raised for so many different reasons, and common-sense is so easily thrown into confusion on the point by the “slightest philosophy,” that it seems fair to conclude with Schopenhauer (and indeed with Kant too) that *our immediate consciousness gives us little help in solving the question of freedom*. As Schopenhauer puts it, it is the *head* that asks the question, and the *head* that must solve it (so far as it can be solved?). This is right; the question of freedom is one of the two or three problems which justify for all time the existence of philosophy: mere common-sense knows nothing, or next to nothing, about it. As a very accomplished and philosophical statistician<sup>2</sup> remarks: “Whatever one’s personal convictions

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Werke, Freiheit des Willens, s. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Mr Arthur Macdonald of the Bureau of Education, Washington, U.S.A., in ‘Abnormal Man’ (Essay on Criminology), p. 38.

may be, questions of the freedom of the will and the like must be set aside, not because they are not important, but simply because enough is not known regarding the exact conditions (psychological and physiological) under which we act and think. If we were obliged to withhold action in the case of any criminal for the reason that we did not know whether the will is free or not (allowing for all misconceptions as to this whole question), the community would be wholly unprotected." Professor Sidgwick, after much careful reflection, has decided that "it is of no practical importance for a man to decide, with a view to the general regulation of his conduct, whether he is or is not a 'free agent' (in the metaphysical sense)." <sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer thinks that all the greatest philosophers and religious teachers have answered the question of freedom (absolute or abstract freedom) in the negative—Augustine and Kant, for example. We need go into no process of collation of opinion to prove or to disprove this. Schopenhauer shows us how man *is more necessitated than free*, and we must study with him the consequences of this conclusion. Common-sense, indeed, tells us that we are free to act *as we will*, but common-sense knows very little about *why* we do will as we will.

All our instinctive and automatic and habit-engendered actions are capable of explanation as reflex actions, under the ordinary assumptions of biology about heredity, and adaptation to environment, and the end of life as more life and fuller life. Schopenhauer does not put the matter exactly in this way, but his whole philosophy rests on the fact that impulse or instinct is absolutely irresistible in its workings, and that the instincts and tendencies of man constitute a total system in which some impulses are subordinated to and guided by other impulses, and that the end of life is (much as he deplores the fact) simply more life. It

<sup>1</sup> The Methods of Ethics, 1884, p. 70.

is true that if Schopenhauer had seized in its entirety the idea that the impulses and instincts and habits and motives of man constitute a natural system, in which the higher instincts and motives on the whole balance the actions of the lower and the relatively unconscious instincts and tendencies, he would not have been misled for one moment by the idea that there could possibly be a lasting conflict between the lower and higher impulses, or even between the unconscious and the conscious acts of man. He sees, to repeat, that all unconscious tendency in man is perfectly inevitable and irresistible in its action, and that so far man is, in virtue of his organic or corporeal nature, not free but necessitated. The difficulty of his philosophy is that he makes us think that man's higher or rational activity has as much a purely natural history as his lower impulsive activity has, and so that man throughout his whole personality is determined by the necessity of natural character and circumstance.

Can, then, our conscious actions be explained as purely reflex actions? The answer is that they can be. And they are explained in modern psychology and biology as also life-furthering actions, as representing the organic effort of the individual to attain to that which most directly furthers life at the particular place or time. Our free or conscious actions are simply actions wherein we are, to a greater or less extent, aware of *the way in which* we seek to attain the end at which we aim; but there is a perfect natural history of volition and of the fact that we will just this object at this time and just that object at that time. We may *wish* many things, but we only can and only do *will* just one precise thing at a given time and not another thing. We have learned this from a study of the two ideas of *apperception* and *will*, introduced into philosophy, we might almost say, or at any rate reintroduced with new meaning, by Kant and Schopenhauer, respectively. Kant practically showed that nothing enters



into actual consciousness without being apperceived, as he put it — *i.e.*, recognised and incorporated into our mental system by our total available consciousness; and Schopenhauer showed that nothing enters into actual consciousness without *disturbing*, to a greater or less extent, our total mental and physical activity—throwing it out of adjustment, as it were, and calling forth a reflex *organic movement* which restores the equilibrium of our total active nature, just as the mental apperception of Kant restores the equilibrium of our ideational or mental system. In other words, Schopenhauer reminds philosophy that all so-called mental acts are also organic acts, acts of the will, phases of our active nature. Even thought is only *one* out of *many* organic activities. And modern psychology has learned Schopenhauer's lesson by studying apperception as *always accompanied* by a physical reaction movement which we know from biology to be also a life-preservative movement. In thinking we are all conscious of the sense of effort, located somewhere in the head, to adapt our whole organic and mental activity to the perception of the object we are studying in its real connection as opposed to its many possible connections. In fact, our whole mental system rejects more or less deliberately or consciously any conception or idea or set of ideas which does not fit in with its established order, which is, as far as possible, the order of ideas most calculated to call forth the action which best furthers our organic development.<sup>1</sup> This is why the human mind rejects, for example, such schemes of philosophy as founded materialism or rounded idealism.

The truth about will as intelligent conduct is that it is a development of the action, in unison, of the two tendencies termed by the psychologists the apperception-impulse and

<sup>1</sup> As is well known, there is, in the life of humanity and of the individual, a gradual evolution of those ideas or beliefs or systems which most truly develop the life of man. That idea or belief or system which gives vital power to men is necessarily true and real. Cf. *infra*, p. 418.

the action-impulse. If we push popular thinking to an issue about the freedom of the will, it always takes refuge in either one or the other of these two ideas, and is therefore always partial, and for that reason of no great moment to the investigator, whether the philosopher or the pathologist. It says that man is free either because he can *think* the things that he chooses and aims at, or because our action ultimately rests on our being able to initiate certain movements of our body; but it is not at all sure about the relation of these two possibilities to each other. One can excuse popular thinking for looseness in this matter, however, when one finds that in the same way many psychologists adopt the one or the other of these positions alternatively without really bringing them into connection. A psychologist like Wundt, for example, thinks of the will as fundamentally a form of apperception—a fact of profound significance in so far as Wundt is professedly a physiological psychologist; and a psychologist like Ribot always thinks of the will as a development of the action-impulse common to all organic beings.<sup>1</sup> Now it is undoubtedly a property of all organic matter to react and redistribute its energy in response to external stimulus or “circumstance” or “occasion.” The fact, indeed, expressed by the term will is simply the consciousness a man has of himself when he has acted in what is called an intelligent manner; there is no one thing called “will”; will is simply acting in an intelligent manner, acting while knowing what one is doing. Positive psychology understands by will what in German is called *die Herrschaft der Idee über die Bewegung*, the control of movement or action by intelligence. From Schopenhauer's standpoint there would be something misleading in the word *Herrschaft* or control. Despite everything, one feels that in him knowledge does not control conduct at all; it is at best but an accompaniment of some

<sup>1</sup> Ribot, ‘Les Maladies de la Volonté,’ *passim*.

conduct, and seems to affect only the way in which we seek certain ends, but never the ends themselves. This, however, is perhaps all the freedom man has, the freedom to work in his own way towards the ends that Nature or God has assigned to him in the system of things.

We must use some care in thinking out Schopenhauer's account of the relation that knowledge sustains to action. He does not say that we are merely conscious automata, machines wound up with a certain consciousness of what we are doing, although his belief in the practical identity of mind and body almost commits him to this view. "As the result of the whole of this discussion of the freedom of the will and what relates to it, we find that although the will may, in itself and apart from the phenomenon, be called free and even omnipotent, yet in its particular phenomena enlightened by knowledge, as in men and brutes, it is determined by motives to which the special character *regularly and necessarily responds*, and always in the same way. We see that because of the possession on his part of abstract or rational knowledge, man, as distinguished from the brutes, has a *choice*, which only *makes him the scene of the conflict of his motives without withdrawing him from their control*."<sup>1</sup> His teaching is thus to the effect—not that we are conscious *automata*, but—that we are conscious, *and* that we are *automata*. Still, in spite of this allowance for the presence of consciousness and the sense of free initiative, it must be confessed that Schopenhauer makes us feel or suspect that our automatic tendencies exercise almost a controlling influence over our conscious actions. Spinoza said that if the stone which my hand sends flying through the air could think, it would *think itself free*. "To this," says Schopenhauer, "I have only one thing to add: and the stone would be *quite right*."

To physiological science conscious actions are simply auto-

<sup>1</sup> World as Will; H. and K.'s transl., i. 338. The italics are mine.

matic actions in the making, representing the felt struggle of the organism to do deliberately what it comes later to do naturally and by way of habit and tendency. Schopenhauer takes pains to connect conscious actions as closely as possible with instinctive actions, with merely physical or organic actions. He insists that all volition means bodily or organic movement, so that the study of the relation between the will and the actions of the body comes to mean simply the study of the relations existing between one set of bodily acts and another set of other bodily acts. "There is *no causal connection whatever between acts of the will and actions of the body*; on the contrary, both are immediately one and the same thing, only perceived in a double aspect—that is, on the one hand, in our self-consciousness or inner sense, as acts of the will; on the other, simultaneously in exterior spatial brain-perception as actions of the body."<sup>1</sup> Will is at least desire, and desire is essentially a bodily or organic fact, the fact of inclination towards or away from certain objects or the effect these objects would produce on our personality. To those who hold that will is essentially above desire—decisive, in fact, about certain desires, repressing or encouraging them—Schopenhauer would simply repeat the commonplace of modern psychology, that we are not warranted by experience in talking of any state or operation of the mind whatever, from cupidity, say, or anger, up to speculative thinking or contemplation, as having no bodily counterpart. As Wundt<sup>2</sup> says, "mental presentations are not (psychical) substances, but *functions*." We cannot, that is, think of our perceptions or thoughts<sup>3</sup> as unique things which exist merely "in the

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Fourfold Root, &c.; Eng. transl., Bohn, 1889, p. 93. The italics are mine.

<sup>2</sup> Physiol. Psychol., 1887, i. 228.

<sup>3</sup> Wundt shows us how thoughts as well as perceptions represent organic functions in the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of his 'Psychology'; and the same thing, in considerable detail, in his 'Logic.'

mind," and which are raised quite above the phenomena of impulse and sensation. It is true that speculative thought or artistic contemplation or religious emotion does seem to draw the mind away and back from ordinary objects and ordinary pursuits; but this very movement backwards is, as it were, an organic or life-furthering movement: it is a movement backwards in order that we may go better forwards—a *reculer pour mieux sauter*; and so the proposition that all movements or impulses of man are simply such as are preservative (directly or indirectly) of his life is unaffected.<sup>1</sup> And while Schopenhauer himself manifestly (he writes pages on the negation of the will and of all life) refuses to recognise *all* actions as life-preservative actions, the main tendency of his system is to the effect that they are such. The precise influence on the will, however, of what Schopenhauer calls "the contemplation of the Ideas," is a point which can only be discussed later.

What is here suggested about the end of all actions being simply life and more life, must be taken to apply to the conduct which according to Matthew Arnold is "three-fourths of life." Not that there is any possible fourth part of life which cannot be explained in this way. The life which the higher ethical and æsthetic and religious aspirations tend to further is a higher sort of life than the ordinary activities of man (to which we are just now in the first instance referring), but it is nevertheless continuous with them; it issues from them and returns upon them. Volition is not a thing made up of mechanical parts, but is the continuous exercise of the psycho-

<sup>1</sup> It may be thought that the generality of this proposition is just extreme enough to divest it of any important meaning. The life that is preserved by religious thought and the life that is preserved by eating food may seem too discrepant to be covered by a single formula. Yet it is just this very distinction between "other-worldliness" and worldliness, between the ideal and the real, between the mind and the body, etc., which the best thought and feeling on religion and art and anthropology since the time of the Renaissance have been and are trying to destroy.

physical force of the individual for an end (the development of life) of which he is conscious in both motivated and impulsive action. To modern psychology there is no essential distinction between instinctive acts, on the one hand, like breathing or the twisting of the lips as the result of a bitter taste or of disgust or the desire of association with other human beings, and actions, on the other hand, where we are conscious of a definite end, like fencing, or investing money, or aiming at goodness: all of these actions are simply actions which further or develop our personality and help us better to attain to the one end of life, which to Schopenhauer, as to Darwin and Spencer, is not so much happiness as the furtherance of the life of the individual and the species. Instinctive actions are actions which are produced in us without any conscious purpose on our part, as when we blink under too much sunlight, or when we cough; and all the instinctive actions of the body form a system ranging from the merely physiological reflex actions, such as breathing and digestion, up to the psychical reflex actions, such as rushing out of darkness or poisoned air, or the desire of food, or love, or hate; so that there is no lasting conflict possible between our different instinctive actions: physiological reflex actions do not permanently interfere with psychical reflex actions or actions that are half physiological and half psychical; and the different psychical instinctive actions do not permanently interfere with the physiological reflex actions, but at most only partly determine or direct them. Schopenhauer, we repeat, did not grasp this idea of the *system* of the different impulses and reflex actions even so far as the ordinary actions of life went, but his doctrine of man rests upon a rigid *determinism* of thought and action. That he did not see an organic connection between the very highest impulses of man's life, such as the feeling after perfect goodness or perfect benevolence, and the apparently lower or merely life-sustaining actions, is a point which we shall

discuss in dealing with his ethical and religious thought. If he had grasped this connection, he would have made out true morality and true religion to be positive and not merely negative things, to represent not merely a renunciation and a denial, but also a pursuit and affirmation. It is indeed not an easy problem to get over the apparent dualism between the rational self and the organic self. For of course we are dealing here neither with the complete saint nor with the complete sinner, but simply with the ordinary man in whom the dualism between the rational self and the physical or natural self is not effectually overcome. The ordinary man is simply seeking as best he can to further his life and his happiness; both his higher thoughts and his unconscious tendencies are all in that direction.

The higher desires and motives which lead to rational action do seem, it must be confessed, very far from having merely physiological or organic causes, even although their very presence and recurrence in consciousness is doubtless conditioned by the normal performance of countless physical and organic functions, such as the regular flow of the blood in the capillary tubes and in the brain, and so on. It may indeed seem like wilfully ignoring the psychological point of view to think of conscious actions too closely in connection with physiological processes, but Schopenhauer is instructive about volition just on this very point. We forget too easily that the psychological point of view in regard to consciousness is itself an "abstract" point of view,—that there is, in reality, no consciousness of what is purely "psychical" or purely mental. All ideas and thoughts are really mental functions, and mental functions are also at the same time organic or corporeal functions; we have always a feeling, even though it is only vague, of our mental and corporeal unity. As soon as psychology gave up the idea prevalent in the eighteenth century that the particular isolated sensation is the simplest datum of con-

sciousness, and recognised the fact that the simplest kind of sensation is the sensation-impulse, it had virtually abandoned the study of consciousness as the cognisance of merely internal phenomena or of purely psychical states. Consciousness as a knowledge or experience of reality oscillates, as we have seen, between the two extremes<sup>1</sup> of the cognisance of external objects and the cognisance of the self. Generally speaking, we are conscious of our activity in relation to objects and persons round about us. The will is the attitude we take to certain objects or certain circumstances; it is the reaction of "the within" on "the without." It may be more than that, but it is at least that, and has to be explained as that. We often know the causes or the precise circumstances of our actions, but we very often do not. I do not exactly know *why* I am running from under a falling body when I am doing it, nor do I exactly know why a certain kind of music gives me more pleasure than another kind, nor why I tend to bite my lips when I am thinking. There does seem, of course, to be some inward initiative in choice. Am I not free in choosing?<sup>2</sup> Schopenhauer teaches that choice is hard to explain, for the reasons referred to in the chapter on his Theory of Knowledge—viz., that motives and actions are phenomena where cause and effect get more and more different from each other, and almost, in fact, come to seem discrepant, as when a "mere idea" or a "mere reflection" calls forth some action or other. Still he insists that there are and must be connecting-links between motives and actions, between ideas and actions, and that the careful thinker will always insist on finding these connections, or at least on allowing for their presence.

Schopenhauer assumes, then, that given certain ideas and circumstances, only one course of action is the natural reaction movement for the mind or the organism to make, and also that it can (if we investigate far enough) always be explained

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, chap. iii. p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, chap. i. p. 2.



in a perfectly positive and natural way why certain ideas should arise in the mind in certain circumstances. Modern psychology explains the latter phenomenon by the aid of the two ideas—first, that the highest life is the end of all action; and, secondly, that whatever the intellect even speculates about or only instructs a man about in a purely positive way, can always be shown to be something that makes for his highest life or highest welfare. Schopenhauer recognises the first of these two principles in the doctrine (which pervades his whole philosophy) that life is will, and that there is no limit to willing; and the second by insisting that all motives arise through the presence of conceptions in the mind, the sole end of conceptions being to furnish man with motives to action. That the supreme end of action is simply the highest life, is what few minds would now, at the end of this century and in the light of all the other centuries, care to deny. It seems, however, rather a large assertion to maintain that *the only function of conceptions or thoughts is to give us motives*, and yet it is just this that Schopenhauer teaches perhaps more emphatically and persistently than any other single thing. “Our intellect is originally designed only to hold before the mere will of the individual its petty ends, and so only apprehends the *relations* of things [to the will], and does not penetrate into their inward nature, into their proper essence. It is accordingly a merely surface-energy, getting hold only on the surfaces of things, on mere *species transitivas*, and not on the real essence of things.”<sup>1</sup> The merely practical utility of reason is here definitely asserted. To apply the intellect to speculation about the nature of things initially conceived as outside ourselves is to Schopenhauer absurd. And he is right. We have to give up altogether that way of looking at reality, and to find the meaning of the world within our volitions and purposes which represent and tend to com-

<sup>1</sup> Werke, iii. 325.

plete a cosmic evolution transcending altogether the comprehension of our intellects. Most men find that—whatever view they may have at one time taken of thought—the best thing they can do with all thoughts is to apply them to life.

The *merely practical* value of reason could, of course, be proved only by showing that all the chief conceptions of the mind can be reduced to the level of being essentially ideas for the will or ideas for action, and that all possible mental conceptions have significance only as ideas that ultimately aid action. All this, as a matter of fact, is the outcome of Schopenhauer's philosophy, which rests on the fact that we know reality only as affecting our will and our action and our development. A little reflection may convince us, for example, that even such a conception as that of "being," with which Hegel begins his 'Logic,' is inexplicable save through the idea of function, of definitely occupying, as Hegel himself suggests, a particular place at a particular time; and that the conception of "non-being" may be reduced to the idea of that which does not affect our activity at all; while the conception of "becoming" is probably nothing apart from the experience of evolving activity; and it is to be remembered in all three cases that activity or function means activity or function in relation to some *ποῦ στῶ*, some *punctum stans* or other, and that, as a matter of fact, the movements of man's life, such as his planting the seed in the spring, and his going to sleep at night, are by common consent taken to be the movements to which all other movements, from those of the solar system to those of microscopic cells, are to be referred. All this, indeed, opens up a most serious line of philosophic consideration; and Schopenhauer himself is impressed by it. In particular he is struck by the strange or perverse character of the idea of philosophers that philosophy should be able to tell us about the nature of the world out of all relation to our will. "In philosophy the intellect is applied to something for which it is *not at all made*

*or intended*—namely, existence in general in-and-for-itself. Its first tendency therein naturally is to apply the laws of the phenomenal (which alone it knows) to being-in-general, and so to construe the laws of existence in general in terms of the laws of the merely phenomenal, for example, to seek the beginning and the end, the cause, and the ends of existence in general. So all philosophy is at the outset *dogmatism*. After the failure of this kind of philosophy and the exhibition of its failure, which is scepticism, criticism finally comes.”<sup>1</sup> Into this view of the limits of human thought it is impossible to enter just now. We shall refer to it when dealing with Schopenhauer’s metaphysic. It is only necessary to present it just now to show that Schopenhauer believes in the theoretical bondage of man’s intellect as well as in the practical bondage of his will.

As to the latter, it is not yet obvious that our highest volitional consciousness, our deliberate and ideational (ideal?) effort, can be explained as at bottom only physiological or organic function. It is true, as Schopenhauer suggests, that there is no causal relation between the will and the bodily actions, for the merely verbal reason, if for no other, that there is no such thing as “will” in one part of our personality and actions in some other part, or on the outside, as it were. Still the question of free action, as every physiologist knows, is merely the question of the relation of so-called conscious activity to so-called instinctive or automatic or habit-engendered activity; and without going at all into the question of the genesis of consciousness, it may simply be said that what Schopenhauer suggested about consciousness is in the main right, that what we call conscious action is as natural and systematic in its development and manifestation as automatic action. We never “will” nothing, as it were, or simply “will in general,” and we never “will” without occasion or circumstance, and it is

<sup>1</sup> Aus Schopenhauer’s handschriftlichen Nachlass, s. 297.

psycho-physically true that the question of volition is the question of the relation of the activity which the contemplation of an object or an idea tends to awaken in us, to the total organic activity which results from our natural constitution. "According to all this, when the will is strengthened by knowledge, it always knows what it wills *now and here*, never what it *wills in general*; every particular act of will has its end, the whole will has none; just as every particular phenomenon of nature is determined by a sufficient cause so far as concerns its appearance in this place at this time, but the force which manifests itself in it has no general cause, for it belongs to the thing in itself, to the groundless will."<sup>1</sup> Mental philosophy must be able to solve the question of freedom into whatever form that question may be cast, just as philosophy in general ought to be able to begin anywhere in explaining the world. We must learn from Schopenhauer the sense in which *man is not absolutely free*, but free only to seek, in the best way he can, the means to the ends that have been assigned to him by the system of things. It is psychologically true about action that "instinct furnishes us with the general or with the rule, while intellect gives us the particular or the application, in so far as it provides for the details of the execution of an act; and in this way instinct adapts itself to variety of circumstance."<sup>2</sup> The ideas and the motives which the intellect excites in us on the occasion of action have to do only with the best possible way in which we can realise our highest welfare; and our highest welfare is already determined in outline for us by the natural system of our impulses and desires and tendencies, and only awaits being carried on to its highest possible development by the limitless exercise of our conceptual or higher faculties. Man's freedom lies in his being able to *fasten his mind or consciousness upon ever higher*

<sup>1</sup> Welt als Wille, i. 196; H. and K., i. 215. The italics are mine.

<sup>2</sup> Schop., Freiheit des Willens.

*and higher conceptions of his highest welfare.* This is surely what those Libertarians must mean, who, like Professor Calderwood,<sup>1</sup> rightly contend that man's freedom lies in his intelligence and in his power of directing his thoughts. Schopenhauer's thought rests securely upon the position that there is a perfect natural history of the thoughts and ideas and motives of every individual, and that what any individual at one moment of time thinks of executing by way of volitional effort, is or has been strictly determined by the necessities of his inborn character and of the circumstances in which he finds himself; just as what he in general desires or wills—his own welfare, say, or that of others—is or has been determined by the constitution or system of organised tendencies which Nature or God gave him at birth.

Is there anything, after all, so unsatisfactory about the teaching of determinism (which Schopenhauer accepts) that all the actions of an individual are strictly determined by the necessities of his nature and character on the one hand and his environment on the other? There are many who agree with a writer already quoted<sup>2</sup> when he says, "But, taking the deterministic view of the world, the highest morality is possible. One proof is that some fatalists are rigidly moral. A psychological analysis will show that the persons who are *loved* and *esteemed* are *those whose very nature* is to do good—that is, they would not and could not see a fellow-being suffer; it is *from the necessity of their nature*, they were from infancy of a kind disposition. We *admire* the sturdy nature who, by long struggle, has reached the moral goal; but we cannot love him always. He is not always of a kind disposition; this is not a *necessity* of his nature." Schopenhauer is also very emphatic on the point that the only thing we really love and admire in people is an inward good nature, a good

<sup>1</sup> Handbook of Moral Philosophy, chapter on the Freedom of the Will.

<sup>2</sup> A. Macdonald, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

heart. Christianity teaches the same thing. Still we feel that the intellect has something to do with the formation of character. Perhaps if we can satisfactorily point out the share which the intellect has in the formation of character, there will be less objection to the acceptance of the general proposition about actions being, like everything else in nature, determined both in their outlines and in their details. We may learn from Schopenhauer that reflection itself or thought is at least an instinct, although the highest instinct we have. If so, if it is an instinct, it has a natural history like any other instinct—as a matter of fact, that whole growth in inwardness and complexity which is represented by the highly specialised central organs of the nervous system in the higher animals. But if thought is an instinct, and has, as such, a natural history, we may expect that to be true about thought which we found to be true of all instincts—viz., that the efforts it constrains man to make are always efforts after the highest possible life, which in man is self-conscious life, consciousness of himself as a real co-worker with the Absolute Will in the evolution of the limitless purpose which runs through all things, and is chronicled and suggested in a thousand ways.

The only freedom that man has, according to Schopenhauer, is that of guiding his conduct by his conceptions; but this only means the *objective possibility* of the conduct of man being of very many different phases, and not the *subjective possibility* of a man's choosing to be and to do whatever he likes. Man must somehow learn wherein his highest welfare consists, and the perception or the idea of that will call forth new motives in him, which will in their turn effect a re-organisation of the system of tendencies which make up his life. In this way he may become *more* free—that is, less and less the mere sport of what his past has determined him to be. The majority of men are the slaves of custom, and of

prejudice, and of ignorance, too, so far as any real idea of their true welfare goes; they cannot therefore be properly said to be *free* at all. Men like Calvin and Augustine, and indeed all leaders and physicians of mankind, have seen this. Determine a man's thoughts and you determine him. The thoughts of most men are determined by their horizon, by the circumstances and the spirit of the times in which they live. "In various passages of my works I have argued that whilst a lower animal possesses nothing more than the generic character of its species, man is the only being which can lay claim to possess an individual character. But in most men this individual character comes to very little in reality; and they may be almost all ranged under certain classes: *ce sont des espèces*.<sup>1</sup> Their thoughts and desires, like their faces, are those of the species, or, at any rate, those of the class to which they belong; and accordingly they are of a trivial, everyday, common character, and exist by the thousand. You can usually tell beforehand what they are likely to do and say. They have no special stamp or mark to distinguish them; they are like manufactured goods, all of a piece. If, then, their nature is merged in that of the species, how shall their existence go beyond it? The curse of vulgarity puts men on a par with the lower animals, by allowing them none but a generic nature, a generic form of existence."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. a very common expression of the denizens of the *Quartier Latin* of Paris—"Toi ! . . . espèce de type !"

<sup>2</sup> Schop., Werke, vi. 633; Psychol. Bemerk. B. Saunders, Studies in Pessimism, pp. 65, 66.

A leading sociologist (Professor L. Gumplowicz) is so convinced of the fact that the *thoughts* of men are purely the result of their social environment, that he denies outright the so-called *freedom* of the individual: "Aller Glaube an die Freiheit des Menschen, an sein freies Handeln wurzelt in der Ansicht, dass die Handlungen des Menschen Früchte seiner Gedanken sind, diese aber die eigenste Domäne des Individuums, sein ausschliessliches Eigenthum sind. *Letzteres nun ist ein Irrthum*. Ebenso wenig wie er sich physisch selbst erzeugt, ebenso wenig geistig. Seine Gedanken, sein Geist sind das Erzeugniss eines socialen Mediums,

A modern Libertarian—and he is somewhat hard to find now—has to grant the psychological fact that an “idea” is always apt to call up a movement,—that, in fact, attention to an idea *is* a movement, apt after more or less quick mental conflict to complete itself by a definite bodily movement. The mind of a healthy man contains a store, as it were, of pent-up energy which is apt to explode in any direction that may prove to be, in given circumstances, the line of least resistance. Still our Libertarian holds that the power of attention or reflection ensures the freedom of the will, seeing that that power is a power of turning our thoughts in any direction, either towards or away from desires. The strict psychologist will answer this along a line of thought entered upon and partly worked out by Schopenhauer. The freedom of thought, he will remind us, is strictly limited. Objectively, a man may put any two ideas or any two elements together in his brain; and so objectively thought is “free” in so far as a man may be thinking about anything, for all we know; but subjectively a man never does think about “anything,” but always about *something*, and moreover, about something which, disguise it as he may, is felt by him at that moment to be conducive to his welfare. Hegel argues very much in this way in talking about the idea of the *possible*. *In abstracto* anything is *possible*, but in reality possibilities are always narrowed down to one course. Wise men know this, and refrain from talking about the merely possible. “Just as little as a body can be set into motion without a cause, so it is impossible that a thought can enter consciousness without occasion. The occasion may be an outer circumstance, like an impression on the senses, or an inner circumstance—that is, another thought which brings  
des sozialen Elements, in dem er entsteht, in dem er lebt und webt.”—Grundriss der Sociologie, s. 171. The reading of works on Criminology and Sociology firmly convinces one of the fact that the *thoughts* of the individual are to be traced to his environment.



along still another with it by way of association.”<sup>1</sup> Often, indeed, we are unable on reflection to bring into explicit consciousness all the causes or motives that have affected our will in the process of coming to a decision, and therefore are also unable to trace the necessity of the decision actually made, and thus, to quote our author, it “seems to the intellect that in a given case two opposite decisions are possible for the will. But this is just the same thing as if we were to say of the perpendicular beam that had lost its balance and is hesitating which way to fall, that it can fall either to the right hand or the left. This case has only a subjective significance, and only means as far as the data known to us are concerned.”<sup>2</sup> This description is certainly true of the actions of all men who do not always follow some invariable standard fixed for them independently of their own will. They are in a state of unstable equilibrium until some circumstance, some occasion or other, precipitates their action along some definite line. They are more determined than free. In real love, for example,—and Schopenhauer uses this illustration very often,—the grounds of choice are far more unconscious than conscious. In Schopenhauer’s language, knowledge is subservient to the will, and in the language of psychology freedom of choice is only freedom to seek that which is judged to be conducive to welfare; and a man’s judgment as to what is conducive to his welfare is a natural product of the joint action of his original nature and the perceptions or impressions he has by virtue of his environment been submitted to. As Schopenhauer puts it, the will is the sum-total of the motor forces that are brought to bear on a man, and these necessitate action just as hydrogen and oxygen in certain proportions make water. The most of these forces, further, are forces native to man’s constitution which he did

<sup>1</sup> Welt als Wille, ii. 145.

<sup>2</sup> World as Will, &c.; Eng. transl., H. and K., i. 375.

not make; and the forces of which he is conscious, his motives, are a natural evolution from the forces which are instinctive and reflex and automatic—an evolution, that is, which he can no more help than he can help running to one side when threatened with danger from a falling body. All organic matter has a tendency to react in certain ways when subjected to what is called stimulus or excitation, and man's will is no exception to this general rule. It is a power he has of reacting in response to the various stimuli to action which he finds in himself and outside of himself; it can no more act without impulses and motives than electric force can act without a circuit; and the very fact that many of man's motives arise out of impulses that are natural to him,<sup>1</sup> shows that his conduct cannot be fully explained from the mere standpoint of his consciousness, for his consciousness only *finds* these impulses and does not make them.

It is impossible here to discuss in detail the psychology of deliberative or rational or consciously-chosen action. The philosophical mind ought simply to remember the maxim, *Natura non facit saltum*. There is a natural history of the will and of the intellect, just as there is of the act of walking, of visual perception, or of the association of ideas; and there is a normal condition of mental health, just as of bodily health in general, of which mental health is only one aspect. No doubt we are in all this assuming the action of thought and the power of thought; but thought is a perfectly natural activity or an activity having a natural mode of operation, and having nothing arbitrary or spasmodic about its procedure. The presence of thought means the possibility of combining in an ideal or mental synthesis any two elements of experience; but any mental combination is a mental function initia-

<sup>1</sup> That is, many motives are constituted by our simply identifying certain natural impulses (*e.g.*, the gregarious instinct or family affection) with our personality.

tive of action, a function which is, in fact, incipient action, or action viewed from within, and we know from the doctrine of natural selection in general that there is a process of natural selection among ideas. For though all ideas engender movements, only those movements can be executed which do not conflict with the whole established system of physical and psychical reflexes which constitute after years and ages of experience the normal activity of the human organism. Schopenhauer was perfectly right in insisting that the natural intellect is simply the servant of the natural will for the selection of ideas, which in turn determine courses of conduct that are subservient to the one great end of the highest life. Unlimited freedom of choice is never realised by any individual. No one man can be anything he likes; he can only take any means his intellect knows to be possible to the one end of life—the highest life for self or for others. Indeed the intellect of man is wholly at the service of his practical nature, and fulfils its highest function in telling him as an individual the means by which alone he can attain to what is for him the highest life. “But, like all the rest, nature takes this last step also in extending and perfecting the brain, and thereby in increasing the powers of knowledge, only in consequence of the increased needs, thus in the service of the *will*. What this aims at and attains in man is indeed essentially the same, and not more than what is also its goal in the brutes—nourishment and propagation.”<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer holds that until a man obtains a real knowledge of himself, he is more “impelled from behind” by blind impulses than “guided from ahead” through the presence of controlling ideas. “In order to recognise, as something original and unconditioned, that exceedingly strong tendency of all animals and men to retain life and carry it on as long as possible—a tendency which was set forth above as characteristic of the

<sup>1</sup> World as Will, Eng. transl., iii. 15.

subjective, or of the will—it is necessary to make clear to ourselves that this is by no means the result of any objective *knowledge* of the worth of life, but is independent of all knowledge; or, in other words, that those beings exhibit themselves, not as drawn from in front, but as impelled from behind.”<sup>1</sup>

Only when a man obtains a perfect knowledge of what he himself is can it be at all said that his conduct is guided by knowledge or by conceptions, and this self-knowledge, this perfect self-knowledge, only comes from the experience of many unfulfilled and many accidentally fulfilled aims. What Schopenhauer calls *objectivity of intellect*, the seeing of things in their true light, is an *acquisition* and not a possession at the outset. Our *acquired* character, he maintains, is an established tendency or disposition to act or think in accordance with what we have learned about life, and about the possibilities and limitations of the nature with which we are endowed at birth. Self-knowledge to most people brings in the first instance a sense of disappointment and limitation rather than of boundless possibility of fulfilment or of boundless freedom. “For just as a fish can only get on in water, and a bird in the air, and the mole under the earth, so can every individual man only get on in the atmosphere that is suited to him; court life, for example, is a thing that some people can’t breathe. . . . We have first to learn from experience what we will and what we can; before that we do not know this at all, we are without a character, and have often, through hard strokes from the outside, to be driven back on to our own way. Once we have learned this, however, then we have got what men call character, acquired character.”<sup>2</sup> He goes on to say that this is just an exact knowledge of our unchangeable qualities and characteristics, of our mental and physical capacity, of the strength and the weakness of

<sup>1</sup> Welt als Wille, ii. 402; H. and K., iii. 110.

<sup>2</sup> Welt als Wille, i. 359.

our individuality. And again: "At last we learn to know ourselves as quite different from what we took ourselves to be *a priori*, and we are then often terrified at what we really are." Not only "he who wills to be great" must learn to "limit" himself, but he who would really deliberately will anything at all. For me as an individual at any one moment of time there is only one thing which is the rational and the natural thing for me to do; and life is simply the play of forces and tendencies and vague strivings until we learn by experience and by knowledge what that one thing is. The fully-developed man knows in every situation in life just exactly what he can and therefore must do, and does it: the possibilities of action are for him narrowed down to one definite course, and in order to act differently from that he would need to be a different man.

II. All Schopenhauer's wisdom of life rests upon this line of thought, which is the quintessence of fact. It is satisfactory to read what he says about men and things, because he always sees intuitively the necessity or the "inwardness" of the person or of the situation, and everything he portrays as being said or being done seems to follow just from the necessity of the character or the situation in question. "Nature is not like those bad poets who, in setting a fool or a knave before us, do their work so clumsily and with such evident design, that you might almost fancy you saw the poet standing behind each of his characters and continually disavowing their sentiments, and telling you in a tone of warning: *This is a knave; that is a fool; do not mind what he says.* But Nature goes to work like Shakespeare and Goethe, poets who make every one of their characters—even if it is the devil himself!—appear to be quite in the right for the moment that they come before us in their several parts; the characters are *described so objectively* that

they excite our interest and compel us to sympathise with their point of view; for, like the works of Nature, every one of their characters is evolved as the result of some hidden law or principle which makes all they say and do appear *natural and therefore necessary*. And you will always be the prey or plaything of the devils and fools in this world, if you expect to see them going about with their horns or jangling their bells.”<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer always explains completely in explaining men and things, because he always explains them from the necessity of the case. All a man's knowledge simply shows him his relation to the world of which he is a part, and all knowledge ought to end in self-knowledge, which is the knowledge of how one is necessitated to act if one means to develop in the only way that is possible for one. When a man truly knows himself, he is for the first time free. Freedom, apart from all complicated considerations of jurisprudence and religion and ethics, has really a negative connotation; it means an absence of all the obstacles and hindrances to one's being one's true self. And of course the essence of the self consists in freely acting out the end which has been assigned to it by Nature. We find this way of looking at men as the subjects of a necessary and inevitable process in such a book as the ‘Table-talk’ of Napoleon. The wise man and the man of experience always judge of men as necessarily determined by their nature, which is written all over their faces and bodies, and shows itself in their slightest movements and words. “A man shows his character just in the way in which he deals with trifles—for then he is off his guard.”

It is not pretended that with this everything about human action is perfectly clear and comprehensible. It has only been suggested from Schopenhauer that, *given the power of*

<sup>1</sup> B. Saunders, *Counsels and Maxims of Schopenhauer*, pp. 82, 83. The italics are partly mine.

*thought or taking the power of thought for granted*, it is possible to give a perfectly natural history of the ideas and of the systems of ideas which any one person will entertain regarding the conduct which is for him most conducive to life. "For the course of our lives is by no means our own work, but the product of two factors—namely, a series of circumstances and a series of our resolutions which continually cut into each other and mutually modify each other. . . . It is just the same in life as in a game: we propose to ourselves a plan; but this depends upon what in a game of cards the opponent, or in actual life destiny, may please to do. The modifications which our plan may thus have to undergo are generally so great that it can hardly again be recognised even in its main features."<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer presupposes rightly that in face of all that men *say* about what they are seeking they are always seeking more life. He thinks, to be sure, that life is bad, but he knows that men always seek it. There are, then, two systems of tendencies which govern man—the unconscious tendencies, which he cannot resist but only co-ordinate and guide; and the conscious tendencies, or the motives to which the system of ideas that has formed itself in the mind subjects him. It is a fact that over life as a whole these two systems of tendencies balance each other, and that men think at the end of their lives that they have at once acted out their nature and yet acted freely. It is impossible here to show psychologically how there is no real and ultimate conflict between the unconscious tendencies and the conscious actions of man. It is implied and asserted by Schopenhauer that the conscious actions of man serve only to make him aware, and this only to a certain extent, of the necessities of his nature, of his whole nature (including the highest developments of thought as well as the highest developments of instinct). That the conscious actions of man *only*

<sup>1</sup> Parerga, i.

serve this purpose may not seem to have been proved: but in what has been previously hinted about the passive nature of reason, about its merely presenting in the form of the concept what it has received from experience or perception, and in what was said and implied about experience in general being experience of how reality affects us, it has virtually been shown that reason cannot and does not make us conscious of anything which does not somehow affect our life.

If higher objects than the gratification and the perpetuation of our merely natural life enter somehow into our cognisance, then the possibility of a higher life is of course given us with this, but still only the possibility. There is, too, in reason the ideal of an exhaustive knowledge of the world as a whole; but such knowledge would always be the knowledge of how reality either actually affects us or could possibly affect us. Hence there is no escape from Schopenhauer's circle. Knowledge always brings us back to the will, and the will is "not now beginning and not now likely to end," as Plato said of the Ideas, and we must act in the world as it is and along with the world-will that energises in us. We shall see that Schopenhauer himself comes across some cognitions and ideas, the Ideas of art chiefly, which, inconsistently with his main principle, he thinks of as somehow non-utilitarian, as having no reference to the will or to our practical nature; but we shall find that even these cognitions or ideas can be analysed into life-furthering intuitions or feelings; and so we shall correct his casual errors (his theories about the Ideas) by means of his fundamental teaching (his philosophy of will).

Something of a clue to the way in which the conscious actions control or guide the unconscious actions of man is given in the phenomenon which we call habit: all ideas call forth active tendencies or movements,—Schopenhauer's philosophy proclaims this fact in large letters,—and movements or



actions once executed tend to repeat themselves when their re-performance is the line of least resistance to the development of our personality. "Although first principles and abstract knowledge are by no means the ultimate source or foundation of morality, they are yet indispensable to the normal course of the moral life, as the receptacle, the *réservoir* in which the *disposition to act*, which is the source of all moral conduct, and which does not exactly flow out into action at every moment, is kept stored up ready to flow through certain *conducting channels* (*Ableitungs-kanäle*), when the real occasion for action arrives."<sup>1</sup> The conducting channels of which Schopenhauer here speaks suggest the tracts or paths in the brain on which modern psychology insists. Action for man is a resultant of the conflict of the various impulses and motives which exist in him, and inevitably tends to take that form which is the most calculated, whether by nature or by reason, to further his life. Just as a man knows that some of the tendencies to action which now exist in him are the result of conscious or intelligent choice on his part, so he must regard the unconscious tendencies he finds to exist in himself (whose causes of course go back to "creation") as the result of the choice of nature regarding his welfare before he individually came into being. Conscious actions tend to become unconscious habits; and the unconscious tendencies we find in ourselves must be regarded as the survivals to some extent of past conscious actions or past conscious choice.

To go somewhat more deeply into this same matter, it is impossible for a man to explain his actions solely from the point of view of his own conscious individual self; he must identify himself in his thought with the whole past of the human race, and indeed with the whole system of things. As this *must* represents not a logical necessity but

<sup>1</sup> Grundlage der Moral, Werke, iv. 214, 215.

a practical necessity,—something, to wit, that man must do if he desires to continue to exist and evolve,—the *ultimate explanation of the world for man is a practical one*, one that is to be found in will or process rather than in reason. There is thus more necessity about man than freedom. In so far as man is subjected to the nature of things he is necessitated. The truth of the world for man, as Schopenhauer suggests, is will. Now the intellect certainly experiences a feeling of consternation on learning this. It would seem as if the intellect had not really much to do with the formation of motives and “springs” of action. The intellect seems to have been given to man to make him aware of different possible ways in which he may realise himself in life; and yet experience teaches that the possibilities in question are not so unlimited as we are at first apt to take them to be. The life of man seems to consist in being gradually undeceived about the possibilities of his life. Schopenhauer's philosophy reflects this feeling, and it is most instructive in so doing. It is the discrepancy between the *ideas* that we are compelled to form about life—compelled because the very growth of our intelligence means our forming ideas—and the facts of life, which is the theoretical reason for Schopenhauer's pessimism. “A man soon accommodates himself to the inevitable—to something that must be; and if he knows that nothing can happen except of necessity, he will see that things cannot be other than they are, and that even then the strangest chances in the world are just as much a product of necessity as phenomena which obey well-known rules and turn out exactly in accordance with expectation.”<sup>1</sup> Learning about life is to a great extent unlearning many things,—recognising, that is, the nugatory character of many ideas which we frame with our speculative reason about life.

But how is it that we are able to frame ideas about life

<sup>1</sup> *Counsels and Maxims*, &c.: Bailey Saunders, p. 121.

that have afterwards to be rejected? If the reason is wholly subservient to the will, as Schopenhauer teaches it is, how can it ever form unpractical ideas? How is it that man always, or at least for half of his life, thinks of himself as being possibly different from what he actually is?—

“Qui fit, Mæcenas, ut nemo quam sibi sortem  
 Seu ratio dederit seu fors obiecerit illa  
 Contentus vivat, laudet diversa sequentes?”

It cannot be said that this is fully explained by Schopenhauer, although it is easy to answer it from his main principles. The reason of an individual man may or may not have grasped the full significance of life, or even not have understood the best means to select to the furtherance of life, —may not, that is, have fully conformed itself to the leading of the will; but that is natural enough, as man has been made with the privilege of attaining or not attaining to the end of his life largely within his own power. It takes the individual time and experience to grasp the meaning of things. All his conceptions and ideas represent tentative efforts on his part to conform his reason to the will, and in the end it will be found that nothing a man has learned about life by way of ideas or theories is of any significance whatsoever save as bearing on the fact of his development in accordance with the world-will. The ultimate criterion of reason must be consistency with the world as will; and so the general principle of the conformity of the reason to the will is not affected by the fact that there is a temporary difficulty on the part of the individual in making this adjustment. Horace, who knew life fairly well, goes on in the Satire just quoted to unfold many examples of the speculative discontent of men with their lives, and traces all their imaginings about being other than they really are to the effort they are unconsciously making to succeed in the battle of life:—

“Nil obstat tibi, dum *ne sit te ditior alter.*”

It is with truth that Schopenhauer teaches that any real spontaneity that man has is to be found in his will and not in his intellect. "I must here take occasion to remark that what I understand by the idea of *spontaneity*, when closely examined, always reduces itself to some assertion of the will, with which, indeed, it is synonymous. The only difference is that we get the idea of spontaneity from external perception, but the idea of an assertion of the will from our own inward consciousness."<sup>1</sup> Of course this means only that man can initiate action from within himself, and not that man can act in any way conceivable; man, indeed, can act as he chooses, but he cannot choose "anything"—only those things which are in the line of his development. Nothing seems so free as thought; a man's head is "set on his shoulders and is carried by his body," and his thoughts roam over the infinities and the stars, and not along the ground like a beast's; and yet they only tell him how he may relate himself to all other organic beings and all other persons, and so endlessly develop his life. The intellect works spontaneously in the sense that it obeys its own laws, and can make any object or any aspect of existence a focus for its consideration of things, but yet it knows things and persons only in so far as they affect the personality or the will. Sensation, for example, was long thought of as possibly telling us about the qualities of things, whereas it really tells us only how things actually or possibly affect us. Berkeley saw this in his own way. The intellect never tells us about things out of all relation to our will, and so the intellect ought not to be conceived as raised above the will and so capable of dictating ends to the will from outside it, as it were, but rather as only discovering means by which the will, which is the total self, can attain to its end. "It is in the service of the will of an individual being that the intellect

<sup>1</sup> Schop., *Ü. d. Willen in d. Natur*; *Pflanzen-Physiologie*.

has been called forth by nature ; it is only calculated, therefore, to know things in so far as they awaken motives in such a being, and not to constitute their essence [as Hegel thought ?] or to apprehend their inmost nature [as Kant at first thought]. . . . Accordingly we find that the intellect exists only to serve the will, and is everywhere just adapted to this.”<sup>1</sup> Reasonable conduct, Schopenhauer always reminds us, is conduct guided by conceptions, and conceptions when real are founded on the necessity in things, and are not merely the arbitrary creations of our intellect. If it is suggested that it does not matter where conceptions come from or how they are formed, and that the only point is that man tries to guide himself by conceptions, and does so consciously, and that in so doing alone does he rise above the necessity of nature to a voluntary determining of himself, it must be confessed that Schopenhauer fails to recognise this as the real issue.

In so far as Schopenhauer fails to give a complete account of man's intellectual freedom, he in a sense fails to give man any freedom at all, and simply teaches that man acts as a natural being—that is, as he is made to be and determined to be. We shall see this later, and for the present only observe with Schopenhauer that we cannot make out man to be free merely by insisting on an analysis of the contents of his thoughts, for there is a natural history of the formation of the thoughts, and consequently of the motives, that determine the action of every individual. “Motives do not determine the character of man, but only the phenomena of his character—that is, his actions ; the outward fashion of his life, not its inner meaning and content. These proceed from the character, which is the immediate manifestation of the will, and is therefore groundless. That one man is bad and another good does not depend upon motives or outward influences, such as teaching and preaching, and is in this sense quite inexplicable.

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Werke, iii. 156.

But whether a bad man shows his badness in petty acts of injustice, cowardly tricks, and low knavery which he practises in the narrow sphere of his circumstances, or whether as a conqueror he oppresses nations, throws a world into lamentation, and sheds the blood of millions,—this is the outward form of his manifestation, that which is unessential to it, and depends on the circumstances in which fate has placed him, upon his surroundings, upon external influences, upon motives ; but his decision upon these motives can never be explained from them ; it proceeds from the will of which this man is a manifestation. . . . The manner in which the character discloses its qualities is quite analogous to the way in which those of every material body in unconscious nature are disclosed. Water still remains water with its intrinsic qualities, whether as a lake it reflects its banks, or leaps in foam from the cliffs, or, artificially confined, spouts in a long jet into the air. All that depends upon external causes. . . . So will every human character under all circumstances reveal itself, but the phenomena which proceed from it will always be in accordance with the circumstances.”<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer's positive teaching is thus that man is necessitated both in his practical and in his theoretical activity. Man is so far a creature merely, and not free.

It has already been suggested that Schopenhauer's philosophy, except in one particular relation,<sup>2</sup> makes much more of the helplessness of man's thought before the facts of the world than of the so-called might or self-sufficiency of thought. This was partly because loyalty to his own generalisation about will and to the facts of science seemed to compel him to take an attitude of pronounced antagonism to the old way of looking at the consciousness of man as somehow elevated out of all the necessity and bondage of the physical and

<sup>1</sup> *Welt als Wille*, i. 164, 165 ; *H. and K.*, i. 180.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *chaps. v. and vi.*

organic world. There is, of course, in Schopenhauer an equivalent of this old way of looking at things; and we shall consider it in dealing with his views on transcendental or noumenal<sup>1</sup> freedom. He reflects, however, all the astonishment the ordinary mind seems to experience on being made conscious of the fact that the human personality is to a very large extent a natural creation—whatever else it may be—and also all the difficulties which the philosophical mind encounters in thinking out a freedom that is consistent with natural or physical necessity. He saw clearly the inevitableness of all physiological and organic and reflex actions, and portrays, in his futile attempt to escape from the necessity of things, all the consternation the mind feels in being confronted, as he puts it, with a thousand and one natural needs and impulses and necessities to which it has been led to think itself superior, or to which it feels itself superior in its consciousness of ideal things like truth and goodness and beauty, which seem to have no equivalent in the mechanically necessitated world of physical objects—in the phantasmagoria of the things of sense, as a Platonist or a Berkeleyn would put it. This is what is meant by the *world as the scene of a conflict between the will and the idea*, because, as Schopenhauer is a subjective idealist, what is true of the self is true of the world: the world depends on the self, according to him, and so there is no natural<sup>2</sup> escape from this conflict between the will and the idea; that is to say, the world throughout exhibits the same conflict between the intellect and the will that is apparent in the life of the individual man, or rather it is simply this conflict made manifest or objective on a large scale. Reason can deliver us neither from the natural necessity which exists in ourselves nor from

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chaps. vii. and viii.

<sup>2</sup> *Natural* because the escape which Schopenhauer comes to hold as possible is, as it were, supernatural—a spiritual mystery.

that which exists in the world: for these two necessities are at bottom the same, the necessity of will, from which the reason can by no effort achieve a real emancipation.

The whole significance of Schopenhauer's philosophy in this connection lies in the fact that it represents the schooling of the intellect into a proper consciousness of its real function and value in the system of things. Schopenhauer is always writing about the "consternation of intellect," on being "confronted with an idea" which it "did not will"; and this means only that he had inherited from philosophy the old notion of the intellect as somehow the first thing in man's life, assigning ends to his practical nature and even to his speculative energy, and yet felt he had to address himself to the hard task of reconciling all that philosophy had taught about the world being undoubtedly to a certain extent a subjective world, bound up with a knowing mind, with the indubitable teaching of evolutionary science and of history that man's intellect discharges only the function of enabling him better to understand his natural or practical life. This attempt to unite conflicting views was sure to lead to a certain amount of pessimism and illusionism, for the highest ideal of philosophy, from the time of Aristotle and the Stoics downwards, had been that of undisturbed inward self-consciousness, just as the ideal of monastic Christianity had been the passive virtues; and now came modern biology with its demonstration of the fact that not abstract reflection and "quiet" "inward" "insight" was the essence of man, but impulse and action and attainment, however strange that might seem. Man, in the eyes of Schopenhauer, could not be at rest with himself if he had to obey his animal nature — *i.e.*, if action or will constituted his essence instead of thought; a conflict seemed to be inevitable and eternal between thought, whose essence seemed to be a return of the soul backwards upon itself, and volition whose essence seemed to be the soul's infinitely



going out of itself in organic effort. He was unable to reconcile these two things; he could not bring the head and the heart of man together; he thought they tended to get "more and more separated from each other as life went on." The life of the individual was thus to him necessarily a conflict from beginning to end, there being by nature no accord between a man's thoughts and his actions. It seemed in the first place to take a long time to work out even an apparent harmony between these two things; and in the second place there would still be to Schopenhauer an eternal opposition between the world of beauty as a great whole and the world of ordinary actions as a scene of conflict and confusion.

In order to bring out Schopenhauer's real lesson, it is necessary to emphasise what he thinks of as the bondage of the intellect under the will. He could not allow that the individual reason is in itself adequate to the emancipation of man from the necessity that is in things. Reason only makes us aware of the necessary connections between things and between our thoughts (which are in the first instance a kind of abridged statement of reality). In action, reason only makes us aware of the steps we must take to the realisation of certain ends; many ends, of course, are only subordinate ends; and ultimate ends are assigned to us, not by our reason, but by the system of things of which we form a part, whether we call that nature or God.

It is because Schopenhauer, in agreement with all past philosophy, assumed consciousness to be primarily intellectual or contemplative, that he could not but regard the activity of man's nature as an irruption into the calm and quiet of consciousness. The characteristic of his philosophy is not that it exhibits a consistent evolution of all man's activity, of his rational and self-conscious activity out of impulse and instinct, but that it attempts to find a place for the rational

and the self-conscious in spite of the existence of impulse and instinct and passion. This very attempt of course discloses the metaphysical assumption that the ultimate explanation of things is to a certain extent to be found only in consciousness, in our knowledge of how things affect us, and our inner consciousness of our own destiny. It seems difficult to believe that there is any other real reason than this for Schopenhauer's persistently maintaining that the first thing or the only positive thing in consciousness is pain and not pleasure, that he regarded any "content" of consciousness—anything that came into consciousness—as essentially a disturbance of the timeless peace of the Idea or the consciousness that thinks itself. Schopenhauer is a metaphysician all the time in spite of himself; he saw—in the language so dear to the English Hegelians—that nature is only possible through the existence of "a consciousness that is out of time and space." It is the irruption into this consciousness (of which our consciousness was to him naturally a part—a *part* which, like all his philosophic brethren, he could not always in his thought separate from the *whole*) of the contingent things of space and time, and of the sporadic and spasmodic experiences of life, which give him all his intellectual troubles and difficulties. When we look at thought, it seems that the timeless peace of pure contemplation is the proper spiritual heritage of man; and yet when we look at what he is subjected to by the various shocks of time and circumstance and the thousand necessities of life and the thousand griefs of living among such a "servile crowd" as the majority of men are, we are led to wonder whether man can really hope to attain anything at all in this present life.

III. The idea that pain is the real incentive to all volition, is primarily an expression of the fact on which Schopenhauer's

whole philosophy rests, that man *has to do certain things*, has to will certain actions, *not because he rationally chooses* to will them, but rather *because he must will them*, whether he in the first instance rationally chooses to do so or not. Instead of being born to do things because they please us, we are born to find our pleasure in the things we must do. The end of life is like the end of education for the young, according to Aristotle, to take pleasure in the right things, *οἷς δεῖ*. Schopenhauer does not exactly give a formal approval of this idea, but he simply tears away our thoughts from the idea that pleasure has any conceivable importance whatsoever in our computation of the value of life. The new kind of positivism that he sets up completely overturns both ordinary hedonism and ordinary speculative dogmatism. In his eyes man is not made either to understand life or to feel any particular kind of feeling in regard to it. Man has to live, whether he understands life or not, and whether he likes life or not. Of course, in thinking about actions and impulses and motives as somehow an irruption into consciousness, Schopenhauer, be it repeated, implies that man's consciousness is in some way outside the play of his natural life, either potentially or actually outside of his merely natural life. His own doctrine of will, however, is the best refutation of this very error; for if it implies anything, it implies that consciousness is a consciousness of energy or of the realisation of the self through energy. The first "awakeners of the mind," as has been said,<sup>1</sup> "are the wants of the body." Reason learns its own utility, its own function, from the very irruption into it of numberless desires or tendencies to act. "By nature man is a lotus-eater until hunger makes him a Ulysses." We can apologise, therefore, for the inadequate explanation that has been given of consciousness or of conscious actions in this chapter by saying that Schopenhauer has,

<sup>1</sup> Bonar, 'Malthus and his Work,' bk. i. chap. 1.

on the surface of his system, no theory of consciousness at all except the spectator one, and that he did not try to relate this idea fully to the Kantian idea of consciousness as somehow the active condition of all experience. Only from his writings as a whole can one find some indication of the real relation of conscious actions to unconscious actions, of consciousness to unconsciousness. The real permanent bondage of man that Schopenhauer points out is a bondage or yoke which the wayward or ignorant intellect or the wayward or ignorant will has to submit to. If consciousness, as it were, imagined itself to be a complete law unto itself, it is undeceived in Schopenhauer. Life, whatever else it be, is in the first instance a thwarting of the merely individual or capricious elements in human thought and action. Such thwarting or pain is, of course, a *vis medicatrix naturæ*, an indication on the part of nature of how man is not to seek his happiness, and therefore indirectly of how he is to seek the same. But Schopenhauer cannot see that it is such, for the reason that in his philosophy he never gets rid of the prejudice that it is the privilege of the intellect or consciousness to be elevated above all the necessity that holds sway in the world of phenomenal things. Now the intellect or consciousness, on the contrary, must simply submit to the necessity that is in things.

The argument that life contains positively more pain than pleasure need not detain us long here. It is indeed far too general and far too one-sided a statement to be taken seriously. It is a very narrow statement, too, because we cannot estimate life in terms of feeling: feeling is too subjective a thing to be made a criterion of life; it is an accompaniment of life, and not an end of life, as Aristotle said. And Schopenhauer himself knows this, and often admits it: "Whether we are in a pleasant or a painful state depends ultimately upon *the kind of matter* that pervades and engrosses our consciousness." Our happiness, in other words, depends upon *objective* con-

siderations, upon what we are occupied with and what we are attaining to. Hence feeling is not of itself equal to being a standard whereby we can measure life; it must itself be measured.

It is, moreover, hard to determine the causes of our feelings, and Schopenhauer reminds us of this: "The causes of our pain as of our joy lie for the most part not in the actual present, but only in our abstract thoughts. These are the things that often seem to us intolerable, which often bring about miseries in comparison with which all the sufferings of the animal world are a very small affair. Indeed our own physical suffering is often nothing to the pain of our thoughts, for very often in extreme mental suffering we afflict ourselves physically in order to draw our attention away from our mental suffering. In acute mental suffering, for example, people tear their hair out and strike their breasts, lacerate their countenances, and throw themselves on the ground, which are all just so many devices for taking away their attention from the intolerable pain of their thoughts."<sup>1</sup> We must take Schopenhauer to mean what he here says; and the line of reflection that it starts is characteristic of his whole philosophy. Despite appearances, he is really far beyond the estimation of life in terms of mere feeling. As in life itself, so in Schopenhauer's account of it: the real cause of pessimism is a general sense of disenchantment or illusionism in life, a discrepancy between the expectations we form about our life and what life really turns out to be. "The period of youth . . . is troubled and made miserable by the pursuit of happiness, as though there were no doubt that it can be met somewhere in life,—a hope that always ends in failure and leads to discontent. An illusory image of some vague future bliss—born of a dream and shaped by fancy—floats before our eyes; and we search for the reality in vain. So it is that

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Werke, ii. 353.

the young man is generally dissatisfied with the position in which he finds himself, whatever it may be: he ascribes his disappointment solely to the state of things that meets him on his first introduction to life, when he had expected something very different; whereas it is only the vanity and wretchedness of human life everywhere that he is now for the first time experiencing.

"It would be a great advantage to a young man if his early training could eradicate the idea that the world has a great deal to offer him. But the usual result of education is to strengthen this delusion; and our first ideas of life are generally taken from fiction rather than from fact."<sup>1</sup>

When we give up the idea that we are entitled to form any expectations about life at all, we give up many of the possible causes of pessimism. And yet it is those who are endowed with genius and nobility of nature who are apt to suffer the greatest disappointment in life because they are apt to think that other men are as elevated in thought and feeling as they are themselves; whereas most men generally turn out to be mere slaves to the will to live, caring for nothing so much as for personal advantage. "The reason of this is that when a man has little or no experience, he must judge by his own antecedent notions, and in matters demanding judgment an antecedent notion is never on the same level as experience. For, with the commoner sort of people, an antecedent notion means just their own selfish point of view. This is not the case with those whose mind and character are above the ordinary, for it is precisely in this respect—their unselfishness—that they differ from the rest of mankind; and as they judge other people's thoughts and actions by their own high standard, the result does not always tally with their calculation. . . . Five-sixths

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Werke, v. 511; Vom Unterschied. d. Lebensalter. B. Saunders, Counsels and Maxims, &c., p. 131.

of men are morally and intellectually so constituted that if circumstances do not place you in relation with them, you had better get out of their way, and keep as far as possible from having anything to do with them.”<sup>1</sup> We can see that the assumption upon which all this illusionism and disappointment rests is the idea that reason exists merely to think itself in all its own potency and fulness. To say the very least, this is not an idea which is borne out by an examination of the purpose that reason seems to serve in the life of the average man.

Again, the idea that pain outweighs pleasure is wrong so far as the teaching of biology goes. If pain really outweighed pleasure, life would come to an end. Consequently the idea that pain exceeds pleasure was a faulty theory even of Schopenhauer's own life. How can we account for a man's thus forming erroneous estimates of his own life, and of all life? This is our old question about the objective value of any man's intellectual theories or beliefs about life, and about the elements that enter into a man's so-called “free” decisions concerning anything.<sup>2</sup> Schopenhauer's pessimism is a serious thing, because founded upon the idea that there are causes at work in the life of every individual which *tend to make him form erroneous estimates of life*. We cannot help forming theories and reasons about our lives. Schopenhauer makes us feel that they are, all of them, imperfect, or at least inadequate to the fact of life. He does everything he can to make knowledge seem difficult and obscure and unworthy of trust. The mere idea of the excess of pain over pleasure is therefore by no means the deepest thing in Schopenhauer. It is, in the first place, an illusion arising out of the tendency we have—Schopenhauer has it himself—to regard inward contemplation and quiet as the essence of consciousness, in

<sup>1</sup> B. Saunders, *Counsels and Maxims*, &c., p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pp. 2, 128, 163.

spite of the fact that consciousness is actually broken into at a thousand and one points by the necessities of living. It is condemned, too, as a theory of life; because all mere theories about life are inadequate. They are inadequate as proceeding from the intellect. The intellect, in point of fact, denotes only that amount of consciousness which rises above the threshold, as it were, of conscious life, and does not directly speak at all about the sub-conscious depths of our nature wherein our real being (the will) resides. The inmost recesses of the self are dark until a man sees his course of life, looking backwards on it from the end. Only at the end of life does a man know what his nature really is. "We only know ourselves as we come to know other persons, *a posteriori*, through experience."<sup>1</sup> We will and we act long before we know *why* we do so. No mere theories of life, according to Schopenhauer, are theories of life as a whole: they could not be that, he thinks: they are at best only the imperfect explanations which different individuals give of their different lines of conduct—imperfect because individuals know next to nothing about the infinity of causes which produce their actions. "The manner in which we act on the main occasions of our life, at its chief steps, is not so much the outcome of clear knowledge of what is right as of an inward impulse, one might almost say instinct, which comes out of the depths of our nature. And then afterwards we feebly try to paint our conduct in the light of some clear yet meagre and acquired—nay, borrowed—conceptions. In this we may easily be unjust to ourselves; and indeed it is only happy old age which is, subjectively and objectively, equal to the task of judging in the matter."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, although Schopenhauer says that pain is a phenomenon of the will, consisting in the fact that the will is hindered or crossed in its action, we see quite well that for

<sup>1</sup> World as Will, Eng. transl., i. 390.

<sup>2</sup> Schop., Parerga, &c.



him the deepest pain in life arises from the sense that consciousness has of being confronted with many things that it "did not itself will," and is simply forced to will, as it were, without having rationally chosen to do so. He teaches that "pain increases" as the intellect "increases" or "gains in clearness." Men suffer, he holds, more than animals, and highly intelligent men suffer more than less intelligent men. The idea that the man of genius or exalted thought and feeling should be compelled at all by natural necessity is excruciating to Schopenhauer. He has, we see, a double idea of the intellect: first, from philosophy, that it is independent of the will; and secondly, from biology, that it is the slave of the will. Consciousness has not yet been explained by Schopenhauer in harmony with his central principle of will—it has only been assumed as coexisting with or standing over against will—and we have been led into an illusionism because we have been unable to effect a compromise between the view of the intellect which makes it the spectator of the will, and the view which makes it the servant of the will. It is probably true that an individual in the course of his life tends to entertain both of these views of the matter and to oscillate between them; and if this is so, Schopenhauer's philosophy expresses a real illusionism which is a natural incident of human life, if not essential to it. There lies in the background of all his thinking the idea that consciousness is free from the ups and downs of life, from the eternal process of things and the eternal process of will. Again and again he insists that the consciousness of "internal worth outweighs the most protracted pain," and that happiness consists more in "what we are" than in "what we have" and "what we do." There is a sense in which this is right, and a sense in which it is wrong. Consciousness cannot be content merely with what we are; so much is clear on the principles of Schopenhauer himself, the essence of life being attainment or volition. Conscious-

ness can be content only with ever-evolving and at the same time perfectly self-conscious life. But in this idea we are brought face to face with Schopenhauer's old difficulty about thought and action. How can the wayward self—the wayward will and intellect which have to be schooled by the rude shocks of miscalculated and ignorant effort into submission to the higher or rational self with its affirmation only of the highest kind of life—be brought into true subjection to reason? There is a real difficulty here, because, of course, the self is “one” (whole, that is) and must be one. The highest form of intellect (reason) cannot, as we have partly seen, be completely separated from the sense-perception that is common to man and to brutes. Reason after all can only furnish us with ideas that have come from perceptions. Schopenhauer says that the intellect is like a flame which is “tarnished by the materials it arises out of or feeds upon” (the data of sense perception, to wit). It cannot, as it were, see things out of relation to the development of the self. This all makes for showing that the mere reason of man cannot lift him out of and above the plane of the actual world. The ideal that reason can suggest to man must be drawn from the actual world of experience and history: all ideals of life, in fact, have been constructed out of the elements of man's life as we know him—a struggling, evolving, human being. If we think of the matter we shall see that this is sober truth, and not at all so unsatisfactory as it looks. It is only the people who imagine that reason lifts man altogether above the world of common-sense reality who need to be undeceived by Schopenhauer. A man like St Paul would probably accept *en bloc* Schopenhauer's account of the natural life of man. St Paul knew life too well to think that the mere reason of man can avail to elevate man on to a higher plane of thinking and doing. So did Voltaire, although to a great extent an apostle of reason. And so did Rousseau, who

entered his plea for natural sentiment and feeling in an age which enthroned reason and the natural man. And so did nearly all the French and English moralists and most of the theological moralists.

IV. Schopenhauer's view of the bondage of man has been treated in this chapter more by way of suggestion than by way of exhaustive exposition. Most of the consequences of a practical bondage of the intellect and of the will are drawn out at length in Schopenhauer's philosophy of life. What has been said may help the reader to recognise some of them as that philosophy unfolds itself. That the reason of the individual must be dethroned from its imaginary position of omnipotent survey, is the lesson we have learnt at this stage; and we must not be deterred from accepting to the full the truth of what he teaches by any anxiety as to how this dethronement of the reason can be made to square itself with the sure hold that an idealistic philosophy undoubtedly has on the world of ordinary reality. This dethronement of reason is, in fact, part of that deliverance from prejudice which is for Schopenhauer the best fruit of experience. "The chief result gained by experience of life is *clearness of view*. This is what distinguishes the man of mature age, and makes the world wear such a different aspect from that which it presented in his youth or boyhood. It is only then that he sees things quite plain, and takes them for that which they really are; while in earlier years he saw a phantom-world, put together out of the whims and crotchets of his own mind, inherited prejudice, and strange delusion: the real world was hidden from him, or the vision of it distorted. The first thing that experience finds to do is to free us from the phantoms of the brain—those false notions that have been put into us in youth."<sup>1</sup> Of course what seems to Schopenhauer to be a

<sup>1</sup> B. Saunders, *Counsels and Maxims*, &c., p. 134.

bondage of the reason and the will of the individual to the pursuit of the prosaic wants of life (which can all be summed up under the idea of imagined welfare or organic development or happiness), may not seem to others to be bondage at all. Our author, in drawing a pessimistic conclusion from his statement of the facts of life, may seem to be seeking for better bread than can be made of wheat. Man must accept the limitations under which he has to live. Many men who write from the standpoint of the natural sciences accept Schopenhauer's description of life with but few reservations. They pass over his assertion that pain outweighs pleasure as simply false, but accept his idea that life is certainly a complete illusion to the person who thinks it is anything for him as an individual. The end of life, they say, is the furtherance of the species, and "Schopenhauer is perfectly right in holding that all the ideals of art and morality and religion are simply devices invented by the world-will to make men will this altruistic effort of endlessly transmitting life to others."

There is, indeed, much that is illusory in the struggle of life. There is the ceaseless struggle between the will and the intellect, the effort of men "to be everything," in face of the fact that they can "be only one thing" really and completely. In childhood we know nothing about life, and want, as it were, the moon out of the pail of water in which it is reflected; our youth is spent in being undeceived about life; and with old age the possibility of living has passed away.<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer brings out the large element of truth in determinism. The individual is free only to act out his proper nature, and one-half of the vague pursuit in his life is nothing in itself. All the discoveries (more or less humiliating) by man of what his proper nature really is, tend to show the questionable char-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Measure for Measure"—

"Thou hast nor youth nor age,  
But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep  
Dreaming on both."

acter of the assumption of what may in general terms be called rationalism, the idea that man can know the world out of relation to his will, the idea that reason can make of human nature what it will.

If we turn to history we shall see nothing there, according to Schopenhauer: the ideal, he would say, has never been attained to by any people or any community.<sup>1</sup> The economic and the physiological wants of life seem to govern history just as they govern the lives of individuals; "peoples" strive only to obtain a position of vantage in the struggle for existence, and to perpetuate their corporate life; but nature cares nothing for "peoples," just as she cares nothing for individuals. Nowhere is that which has been attained to as a matter of fact just that which should have been attained to as a matter of theory—the production of an ideal society, for example, or of a life that is perfectly at rest with itself. And so reading Schopenhauer is like reading a history of disenchantment; it is reading about how much life promises and how little it brings, and the narrative seems sufficiently convincing if we think of the slavery of the lives of so many myriads of our fellow-men.

The depressing thing about Schopenhauer's philosophy is, that in it even our thinking seems to be determined both as to its form and as to its content. It seems settled by nature both *that* we must think and *what* we shall or what we possibly can think. And it is true that thought does not move merely *in vacuo*; we often imagine that it does, and that so it is free; but it does not. Thought seems, according to Schopenhauer, to be destined to make a number of guesses at the real truth of things, while only some of these guesses will turn out to be of real value, to be in accordance with the nature of things. We may think out for ourselves many imaginary ends of conduct and many imaginary means to these ends; but nature has already defined what the ends of conduct

<sup>1</sup> See chaps. vii. and viii.

are, and indeed what the best means to these ends are too. Any *conception* or idea is a thought-combination of many elements taken from the real world; as such it *may be* the real key to the world and to our conduct, but it also *may not*. Most men have at one time or another formed erroneous ideas about life, ideas which experience has caused them to reject.

It is indeed excessively difficult to see just what man's so-called freedom practically amounts to. It would seem that a man is free only when his brain is in a normal condition, and when it presents to him the real *ends* and *motives* that should govern his conduct. And indeed freedom is largely the understanding of one's self and the world in which one is placed. Is one, then, a clock or a mechanism, and would one "go all right" perhaps even without thought or consciousness? What is the good, in short, of consciousness, or of our idea that we can govern ourselves? It is doubtless abstractly possible that man might have been "wound up" as a machine to work towards a certain end. This, however, is out of the question, for the simple reason that man has been so made that we may either consciously *affirm* the ideal life of the universe or consciously *deny* it. It may seem foolish to be dissatisfied with the life of sense and nature merely because we have the misfortune to *think*. But it is even so; we must think our best just because we are born to think. One thing that is not adequately recognised by Schopenhauer is that man's thought when mature is always slightly *in advance* of his conduct and impulses. He is driven from behind and he looks before at one and the same time. The Gods gave man Prometheus and Epimetheus, and these are twins. The mind can always seize upon anything that may possibly help it out of its bondage to the individual body and to the purely personal wish or will. Of this again.

But the main contention of this chapter has been that nothing will appeal to man's mind which does not, to a certain

extent, promise to *advance* his life, which does not fall under the idea of the "good for man"—*sub specie boni*. The "good" is what seems to "conform to the will" and to our practical development. But, fortunately, the individual has not been left wholly to himself in his struggle to escape from the bondage of the merely natural life. Nature itself and history present man with numberless helps to his "transcending" his merely natural life. The conceptions and the visions that appeal to him out of the past make up the ideal wealth of the ages and of the world. Can man appropriate to himself the inheritance that has come down to him in history? The answer is that through his *will* he can fasten his attention upon these things, and they *may* become motives to his volition and development. We can go no further than this here. Man is, in the language of Schopenhauer, "an eternally old and an eternally new assertion of the will to live"; he is partly enslaved and partly free. Why this cycle of individuals and of groups of men? Life is, in a sense, a living contradiction. Man "partly is" and "wholly hopes to be." Is he entitled to hope, however? The first impression we seem to get from Schopenhauer seems to be a profound sense of the bondage and the futility of much of ordinary life, and of the feebleness of the mere individual reason. The individual reason seems to be free and is not really so. Is there not something of illusion in this, and so something of pessimism?

## CHAPTER V.

## SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY OF ART.

"It is commonly felt that pleasure and enjoyment in a thing can arise only when it comes into some relation to our will, or, as we prefer to say, when it serves some end which we have in view. If this were so, it would seem to be a contradiction to talk of pleasure which did not involve bringing the will into play, and yet it is quite obvious that we derive pleasure from and enjoyment from the Beautiful as such, quite apart from any connection it may have with our personal aims, or, in other words, with our will.

"This problem I have solved in the following way: By the *Beautiful*, we mean the essential and original forms of animate and inanimate Nature—in Platonic language, the *Ideas*; and these can be apprehended only by their essential correlate, a *knowing subject free from will*; in other words, a pure intelligence without purpose or ends in view."<sup>1</sup>

SCHOPENHAUER'S philosophy is a web or texture in which *hylozoism* or naturalism is the warp and idealism or Platonism is the woof. We cannot contemplate these skeins separately from one another any longer. All through the last three chapters the higher reason and the higher Ideas and intuitions of the mind have been knocking at the door for entrance and recognition.<sup>2</sup> We kept them out on the assump-

<sup>1</sup> Parerga, &c., kap. xix. Werke, vi. 447. Bailey Saunders, Religion, &c., p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> In the preceding two chapters we have read about Schopenhauer's treatment of things as ideas; we are now (in v. and vi.) to consider his philosophy of the Ideas. To Schopenhauer the world is will on the one side and idea on the other. But the idea side is a plexus of the Platonic Idea and the ideas of the senses—ordinary things—objects (for a subject).



tion that truth is one, and that whatever else we might at a later stage see to be true, nothing could be in conflict with the fact of the slavery of the ordinary understanding and the empirical self and the wayward will. Schopenhauer's method, of course, in this regard is very different from that of Hegel. Hegel is all method, while Schopenhauer cares next to nothing about method. A method is an all-important thing to Hegel, because he really wished—*naïf* though the wish seem to the anthropologist—to subdue everything to thought; it was quite an unimportant thing to Schopenhauer, because he did not look upon philosophy as an effort to formulate a perfect logical system, and because he felt that true and honest thought could not wander very far away from reality. Hegel never admitted a fact into his exposition until he had prepared a Procrustean framework of dialectics into which to receive it; Schopenhauer never concerned himself about the possible consistency or inconsistency of some new fact with what he had already thought out systematically. He philosophised as a man of the world, knowing that just as the "sun" shines on "the just and the unjust" the actual world is full of contrasts, and we must take things as they happen to come. In Hegel, everything is forced to square itself with thought—the direct perceptions of our senses and the deepest feelings and intuitions of the world's greatest poets and prophets, and even fact itself, as has just been suggested; while in Schopenhauer *thought* has to square itself with reality, the concept with the percept.

We know the awe with which Kant passed from the study of the ordinary understanding and its prosaic work of interpreting reality, to the study of the soaring reason of man and the realm of the Ideas proper. There is nothing of that in Schopenhauer. He hates the very expression *pure reason*; *Vernunft*, he reminds us, is connected with *vernahmen*, to perceive; and so in the higher reaches of his thought he

simply examines the intuitions of art and of ethics and of religion as some more facts and perceptions and motive-forces with which the philosopher must reckon. Our interest, of course, in the study of these things under his leadership is to see whether in them we do or do not find a way out of the bondage and the servility of ordinary life wherein the imperious claims of instinct and impulse and phenomenal necessity assert themselves. And indeed we may state our problem in this chapter either subjectively or objectively: *subjectively* we are in search of any kind of knowledge that will free us from the practical bondage of the ordinary understanding and reason (and indeed we must get *that* somehow if we are to be philosophers at all); and *objectively*, we have to show how it is that there seems to be contained in the higher artistic and moral intuitions of the mind a knowledge or view of things so different from the ordinary concepts of the understanding—from the facts and principles of common-sense and scientific knowledge.

Every one seems to realise in a moment that there is a very great difference between the ordinary life of the practical person and the lives of such men as have been considered by the world to be great geniuses, eminently wise or eminently good. The creations of the wise and the good and the great hang over us and round about us all our lives, and make us ask whether the life we are actually leading is worth the effort that it costs to sustain it and to transmit it to our children. In a perfectly concrete and matter-of-fact way the question of questions in Schopenhauer is: Where and how do the creations of art and religion come into our ordinary daily life? He himself got into great difficulty because he found that these things, simply did not come into life at all, but seemed to take the mind out of life, away from it and beyond it; and to exist in and by themselves—away from the phenomenal world, out of time and space, in an absolute

kind of way, as Platonic Ideas; permanent amid the flux of things; in things, and yet far more than merely in them; in the nature of things somehow. The permanence and the absolute character of true beauty in Schopenhauer make us despise and condemn all life. "Now, further, just this, that genius in working consists of the free intellect—*i.e.*, of the intellect emancipated from the service of the will—has as a consequence that its productions serve no useful ends. The work of genius is music, or philosophy, or paintings, or poetry; it is nothing to use. *To be of no use* belongs to the character of works of genius; it is their patent of nobility."<sup>1</sup> Again, "for the purposes of ordinary life genius is about as useful as a telescope in a theatre;" and "regarded from an æsthetic standpoint the world looks like a cabinet of caricatures, from the intellectual a house of fools, and from the moral a tavern of rogues."<sup>2</sup>

It is well known that there is something in Schopenhauer equivalent to the *contemplation* of Aristotle, or to the *ratio* of Spinoza, or to the *wisdom* of M. Renan, or to the *culture* of Matthew Arnold, or to the *righteousness* of the saint; and that somehow Schopenhauer looks to the intellect for deliverance from the bondage of the will—not to the intellect which is in the service of the will to live, but to the intellect which, so far from being sunk in the study of mere causes and effects and of practical interests, is free to roam over the world of beauty and of creative genius and of disinterested goodness. The notion of two sorts of intellect, the one wholly in the service of the will and the other already partly emancipated from the will and destined to be wholly so, is puzzling, especially in the case of Schopenhauer, who knew the psychological error of splitting up the mind into faculties,<sup>3</sup> and of separating

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Werke, iii. 444, Vom Genie; H. and K., iii. 154. The italics are mine.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., iv. 199 (Grundlage der Moral).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. chap. iii. p. 114.

even the mind and the body. The emancipating intellect in Schopenhauer is the antithesis of what is usually described in philosophy as the discursive understanding, the act of arranging our knowledge in the most practical and serviceable way for the purposes of the will. The discursive intellect, the ordinary understanding, can never bring us the knowledge of which we are in search, for the reason, first, that it must always see things in the relation of *end* and *means* and *cause* and *effect*, the causal perception being, in fact, the essential function of the ordinary understanding; and, secondly, because conceptions are at best an indirect way of knowing, and are themselves nothing but abridged perceptual knowledge.

The idea that intellect is at bottom *perception*,<sup>1</sup> and that there may be higher perceptions in the intellect than the perceptions of sense, helps us to find the intellectual knowledge of which we are in search, the intellectual knowledge which is to free us from the bondage of the will. It does, as a matter of fact, far more than this,—so much more that we shall be able, at the close of this chapter, to suggest an expanded meaning which may be given to Schopenhauer's central principle of will, a meaning that will strip it of its merely physiological or materialistic character and bring it into harmony with the reality of our highest aspirations and spiritual possessions. It was of ordinary perceptions and ordinary scientific knowledge that we were treating in the last chapter. We there saw that the mind was subjected to things, to the necessity of things. If we wish to stop at this point and insist that we are very well satisfied with this relation of ourselves to reality through our will, for which Schopenhauer's philosophy seems to contend, and that we do not at all feel the working out of our various possible relations to reality to be the misery that Schopenhauer makes it out to be, Schopenhauer bids us reflect upon the inade-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. iii. *passim*, and p. 167.

quacy of the reasons for our contentment. If Schopenhauer will live for no other reason, he will live for the reason that he so forcibly exhibits in his philosophy the unwillingness, the simple unwillingness of the human mind to rest content with mere utilitarianism or mere materialism or mere naturalism in any of its forms as a final philosophy of human life. We did not find in the last chapter an adequate recognition of the intellect or the consciousness of man; and it may be questioned whether mere materialism or utilitarianism or naturalism ever does adequate justice to the possibilities of the human intellect. Schopenhauer had the courage to act upon the assumption that a merely naturalistic account of man's life is incomplete, because essentially unsatisfactory to his higher consciousness. He had this courage simply because he felt the presence in the human mind, not of higher conceptions or notions—because all conceptions come from ordinary perceptions—but of higher *perceptions* (or intuitions) which he held were so real as to make the whole of the rest of life seem illusory. Of course, too, Schopenhauer was unable to accept any mere philosophy of *relativity* as a final philosophy. This meant that he did not believe that science could ever present us with a complete philosophy of things; science seeks only the “next cause” of an event, not the ultimate cause, merely what is relative, never what is absolute. If philosophy is not to seek the highest reality, why does philosophy exist? he practically asks. And we cannot leave his own philosophy without showing the reading that it is prepared to give of the reality of the highest things in the world, of the alleged “noumenal” or “transcendent” realities. Our main effort will be to bring what he teaches about art and religion and ethics into harmony with the main positive principles of his system.

One cannot forbear the reflection at this point that it is a very strange thing for a philosopher to be striving to think

out a scheme of intellectual and moral salvation, as if philosophy had anything to do but to state the actual, to state what the real world is. Schopenhauer himself, in fact, professed that this is the only duty of philosophy. He taught that the only business of philosophy is to give a reading of the world as it actually is, leaving it to people to like or to dislike *the truth*, according to the state of their mental cultivation. By way of answer to this reflection it may be said that in our artistic consciousness of things and in the religious life we are presented with definite psychological fact, fact which is just as much fact as our scientific consciousness of things; and that philosophy as systematised knowledge must seek to effect a reconciliation between the seeming freedom and exuberance of artistic insight and the loftiness of religious contemplation, and the manifest necessity and mathematical precision and prosaic reality of mere scientific knowledge. And Schopenhauer recognises this. He practically saw that there were in the human mind only two broadly contrasted kinds of knowledge—artistic knowledge and scientific knowledge. “*Wer Kunst und Wissenschaft besitzt, der hat Religion.*” Our experience must be made to “round itself off,” either by art and science together, or by true action and true religion. Schopenhauer’s problem is the thoroughly modern one of finding in the physical order of things a thinkable basis for all the higher or apparently non-utilitarian intuitions of the mind.

To recapitulate somewhat, it may be said that for Schopenhauer the kind of knowledge which will free us from the theoretical and practical bondage of man’s ordinary life is neither understanding nor reason, whether we think of the reason of the formal logician (which is the only reason that Schopenhauer will recognise and allow for) or of the reason of the transcendentalists (which to Schopenhauer is

a mere *flatus vocis*, a mere sound signifying nothing). To Schopenhauer as to Plato, when we know the Ideas we do not phenomenalise them, because the knowledge we have of the Ideas in pure art or in pure contemplation is, according to them, "pure cloudless knowledge," knowledge not ruled by "the principles of individuation in space or time," nor by the "principles of subject and object," nor by the "principles of cause and effect." In artistic and contemplative knowledge, according to Schopenhauer, we see the Ideas, which are "the immediate objectivity of the will," and therefore the highest reality, the thing in itself of the world, and we ourselves at the same time become "pure subjects of knowledge," in which the "distinction of the subject and object vanishes." Art, he maintains, affords us the most real knowledge of things; in the artistic view of an object we seem to see it no longer as an individual thing, but as a copy or "realisation of an Idea," a pre-existent idea, one of the archetypal Ideas on which existence is designed—as Plato or Butler would say, or which, as Schopenhauer (who scorns theism) puts it, set forth the "inward" meaning of the world, which, in short, reveal the modes or ways in which the world-will energises. He sets forth his meaning by referring to and quoting many of the analogies and similes of Plato, wherein the Ideas, the real archetypes or original forms of things, are said to have "neither multiplicity nor coming into being nor passing out of being." He holds that the knowledge we have of these Ideas is "transcendental knowledge," knowledge which, if "only powerful enough," could free us from the view of things as related to our will and the feeling that we ourselves have of being necessitated like all other beings in the chain of natural sequence and process.

#### I. The Platonic Ideas,<sup>1</sup> we saw, represented to Schopenhauer

<sup>1</sup> See above, "Schopenhauer and Idealism," towards the close.

the various grades of the objectification of the will, and were said to be related to the individuals composing the group or species, as archetypes to their copies. The Platonic Idea, he insists, does not itself "come under the Principle of Sufficient Reason," and has therefore neither "multiplicity nor change, genesis nor destruction"; it is also free from the distinction between self and non-self, which last distinction, according to him, is simply the general principle of all ordinary knowledge—the idea that things should become *objects* for a subject. In ordinary perceptual knowledge we always see things as distinct from ourselves, as if they were objects in a world outside of ourselves; but in looking upon beauty or beautiful objects, we seem to find this distinction somehow vanishing, and the beautiful object becomes for us at the time a complete expression of existence in general, or at least of a definite "grade" of existence. This all sounds fanciful to the ordinary mind, which is not accustomed to the procedure, unfortunately too prevalent in philosophy, of taking away all ordinary predicates and adjectives from a thing out of a desire to add somehow to its reality. It is obvious, no doubt, that we can expect no great accuracy of thought or language in describing a process of mind or knowledge to which none of the ordinary principles of knowledge in any way apply. The reader of Plato or of Winckelmann, the lover of art—especially of pictorial art (for it is contemplation which Schopenhauer cares most about in art)—the student of philosophical and religious mysticism, the ascetic: all of these have a vague intuitive consciousness of what Schopenhauer is trying to express in philosophical language. It is true that a sense for beauty and the world of beautiful objects is the first thing in art; and it does seem that without this sense all characterisation and description of artistic objects would indeed be negative. Spinoza's *omnis determinatio est negatio* is to Schopenhauer certainly true of artistic objects; scientific and ordinary phraseology do



not enable us to describe them ; they are apprehended by the appropriate sort of intuition for which neither the most excellent understanding nor the most uncommon degree of acuteness nor the strongest logical faculty can possibly be a substitute. Every one who has a true feeling for art has felt in himself the presence of intuitions which, with Winckelmann and many others, he finds it hard to describe. Just as the pure mind has moral intuitions which the world fails to understand and appreciate, and just as the mystic has intuitions of deity and of the oneness in things which can only be mystically apprehended, so the artistic mind has intuitions which have to be felt before they can be described. There is a "taking off the shoes from the feet," and there is a taking off the ordinary shackles of the understanding and of the principles of the mere reason on the threshold of the beautiful, which makes us feel that beauty will require a language and a thought of its own, differing largely from that of the marketplace or of the laboratory. Schelling, like Schopenhauer, uses the word *ideas* to express the various unities of the *universal* and the *particular* which we see when we contemplate natural beauty or artistic beauty.

"Let us consider this with the help of examples taken from the most insignificant things, and also from the greatest. When the clouds move, the figures which they form are not essential, but indifferent to them ; but that as elastic vapour, they are pressed together, or that masses come, drifted along, spread out, or torn asunder by the force of the wind : this is their nature, the essence of the forces which objectify themselves in them, the Idea ; their actual forms are only for the individual observer. To the brook that flows over stones, the eddies, the waves, the foam-flakes which it forms, are indifferent and unessential ; but that it follows the attraction of gravity and behaves as inelastic, perfectly mobile, formless, transparent fluid : this is its nature ; this, *if known*

*through perception*, is its Idea; these accidental forms are only for us so long as we know as individuals. The ice on the window-pane forms itself into crystals according to laws of crystallisation, which reveal the essence of the force of nature that appears here, exhibit the Idea; but the trees and flowers which it traces on the pane are unessential, and are only there for us. What appears in the clouds, the brook, and the crystal is the weakest echo of that will which appears more fully in the plant, more fully still in the beasts, and most fully in man. But only the essential of all these grades of objectification constitutes the Idea; on the other hand, its unfolding or development, because broken up in the forms of the Principle of Sufficient Reason into a multiplicity of many-sided phenomena, is unessential to the Idea, lies merely in the kind of knowledge that belongs to the individual, and has reality only for this.”<sup>1</sup> It is this that the student of natural beauty must see, and this that the artist must catch for us and cause us to contemplate.

“The same thing necessarily holds good of the unfolding of that Idea which is the completest objectivity of will. The history of the human race, the throng of events, the change of times, the multifarious forms of human life in different lands and countries, all this is only the accidental form of the manifestation of the idea, does not belong to the Idea itself, in which alone lies the adequate objectivity of the will, but only to the phenomenon which appears in the knowledge of the individual, and is just as foreign, inessential, and indifferent to the idea itself as the figures which they assume are to the clouds, the form of its eddies and foam-flakes to the brook, or its trees and flowers to the ice. To him who has thoroughly grasped this, and can distinguish between the Will and the Idea, *the events of the world will have significance only so far as they are the letters out of which we may read the Idea of man*,”<sup>2</sup> but not

<sup>1</sup> World as Will, H. and K., i. 235.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236; the italics are mine.

in and for themselves." It is thus in the end the Idea of man that the painter and the sculptor must apprehend, the idea of man's life, and its cadences and discords and harmonies, that the creative artist must apprehend; and all three do this by a sort of native and indefinable intuition. "It is in the world the same as in the dramas of Gozzi, in all of which the same persons appear, with like intention, and with a like fate; the motives and incidents are certainly different in each piece, but the spirit of the incidents is the same. The actors in one piece know nothing of the incidents of another, although they perform in it themselves; therefore after all experience of former pieces, Pantaloon has become no more agile or generous, Tartaglia no more conscientious, Brighella no more courageous, and Columbine no more modest." In art, in short, according to our author, we apprehend the inner language of the world and of man; we have a sense of the eternal meaning of things and of the eternal sameness of human life.

Matter as such, according to Schopenhauer, "cannot express" the Ideas, because it is "through and through nothing but causality": its being "consists in its causal action." Causality, he goes on to explain, is a form of the Principle of Sufficient Reason, and the Ideas, of course, in his eyes can never be known under any form of this principle. Matter, in short, and the perception of matter, is simply an objectification and a presentation for the senses of the workings of the will or force that constitutes the whole of nature. As has been said,<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer is a literal follower of Kant in maintaining that ordinary sense-perception is impossible without the exercise of the understanding and its disposition of the sensations of the different senses into an objective and causal order. It was partly, then, because he, as a Kantian, hastily thought of causality as the main principle of the understanding, and partly because he naturally tended to think of matter as essen-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. iii., the beginning and elsewhere.

tially consisting of will or force, or action and reaction, that he said matter was simply causality or causal force presented to perception. It could not, therefore, as essentially mechanical and physical in its constitution, be in his eyes adequate to the expression of an Idea. He forgot altogether, as we shall suggest below, that this is just the very *crux* of the philosophy of art, and indeed of philosophy in general, how the Ideas or the "universal" element in things can be made to take on a sensuous or material setting. In matter, he thinks, we apprehend the one individual Will split up into a thousand shapes and forms and half-formed things, which we take to be essentially different and distinct from each other, acting and reacting upon each other; and this mechanical separateness from each other of the different portions of matter, this very physical action and reaction, as it were, prevents matter from adequately representing the Ideas. At best matter may be regarded as "the common substratum of all particular phenomena of the Ideas, and consequently a connecting-link between the Ideas and the phenomenon or particular thing." Matter, in short, as matter, cannot express any Idea, and so the Ideas cannot be apprehended as things at all, or apprehended by any of the principles of the ordinary understanding, which loses itself in tracing out the endless causal connections among things.

"If raised by the power of the mind, a man *relinquishes* the common way of looking at things, gives up tracing under the guidance of the forms of the Principle of Sufficient Reason their relations to each other, the final goal of which is always a relation to his own will; if he thus ceases to consider the where, the when, the why, and the whither of things, and looks simply and wholly at the *what*; if, further, he does not allow abstract thought, the concepts of the reason, to take possession of his consciousness, but, instead of all this, gives the whole power of his mind to perception, sinks himself

entirely in this, and lets his whole consciousness be filled with the quiet contemplation of the natural object actually present, whether a landscape, a tree, a mountain, a building, or whatever it may be; inasmuch as he *loses* himself in this object (to use a pregnant German idiom)—*i.e.*, forgets even his individuality, his will, and only continues to exist as the pure subject, the clear mirror of the object, so that it is as if the object alone were there, without any one to perceive it, and he can no longer separate the perceiver from the perception, but both have become one because his whole consciousness is filled and occupied with one single sensuous picture;—if thus the object has to such an extent passed out of all relation to something outside of it, and the subject out of all relation to the will, then that which is so known is no longer the particular thing as such; but it is the *Idea*, the eternal form, the immediate objectivity of the will at this grade; and therefore he who is sunk in this perception is no longer individual, for in such perception the individual has lost himself; but he is *pure* will-less, painless, timeless, *subject of knowledge*. This, which in itself is so remarkable (which I well know confirms the saying that originated with Thomas Paine, *Du sublime au ridicule il n'y a qu'un pas*), will by degrees become clearer and less surprising from what follows. It was this that was running in Spinoza's mind when he wrote: *Mens aeterna est, quatenus res sub aeternitatis specie concipit*. In such contemplation the particular thing becomes at once the idea of its species, and the perceiving individual becomes *pure subject of knowledge*. The individual as such knows only particular things; the pure subject of knowledge knows only Ideas.”<sup>1</sup>

There is only one end of all the arts for Schopenhauer, the representation of the Ideas; and their only difference lies simply in “the different grades of the objectification

<sup>1</sup> H. and K., i. 231.

of the will to which the Ideas that are to be represented belong." Architecture, for example, represents—if we set the needs of shelter and other practical purposes on one side—the aim of "bringing to greater distinctness some of those Ideas which are the lowest grades of the objectivity of the will," such as gravity, cohesion, rigidity, hardness, those "universal qualities of matter, those first, simplest, most inarticulate manifestations of will—the bass notes of nature; and after these light, which is in many respects their opposite." Even at these low grades of the objectivity of will we see, according to Schopenhauer, something of the discord which characterises all nature; for, "properly speaking, the conflict between gravity and rigidity is the sole æsthetic material of architecture; its problem is to make this conflict appear with perfect distinctness in a multitude of different ways." It solves it by depriving those indestructible forces of the shortest way to their satisfaction, by taking them round to it by a circuitous route, so that the conflict is lengthened, and the inexhaustible efforts of both forces become visible in many different ways. The whole mass of a building, if left to its original tendency, would exhibit a mere heap or column, bound as closely as possible to the earth, to which gravity, the chief form in which the will appears here, continually presses, while rigidity, which is also an objectification of the will, resists. But this very tendency, this effort, is hindered by architecture from obtaining direct satisfaction, and only allowed to reach it indirectly and by roundabout ways. The roof, for example, can press the earth only through columns, the arch must support itself, and can satisfy its tendency towards the earth only through the medium of the pillars, and so forth. But just by these enforced digressions, just by these restrictions, the forces which reside in the crude matter of stone are made to unfold themselves in the most distinct and multifarious

ways: and the purely æsthetic aim of architecture can go no further than this. And so with the other arts. Landscape-painting represents "the rest of unconscious nature"; animal-painting and sculpture reveal a still higher grade of the will, where the will shows itself in a "free, *naïve*, and open way"; the problem of historical painting is to "express directly and for perception the Idea in which the will reaches the highest grades of its objectification," human character, to wit, and human beauty and grace; and, lastly, poetry rises still higher in representing the connected series of the efforts and actions of man, and it does this in the epic, and the drama, and the tragedy, and so on. Music, Schopenhauer says, is an "absolutely unique art, more incomprehensible and indescribable than all the others." "It stands quite alone, quite cut off from all the other arts. In it we do not recognise the copy or repetition of any Idea of existence in the world. Yet it is such a great and exceedingly noble art, its effect on the inmost nature of man is so powerful, and it is so entirely and deeply understood by him in his inmost consciousness as a perfectly universal language, the distinctness of which surpasses even that of the perceptible world itself, that we certainly have more to look for in it than an *æercitium arithmetice occultum nescientis se numerare animi*, which Leibnitz called it."<sup>1</sup>

The uniqueness of artistic perceptions and artistic objects to Schopenhauer consists in the fact that they separate us completely from all the interests of the will and of our practical nature and of our practical life. This may sound strange after the arts have just been exhibited as expressing, all of them, different grades of the will to live. In the arts, Schopenhauer would say, the cosmic will has come upon something which makes itself out to be in a state of inner contradiction. In the arts and in beauty we encounter some-

<sup>1</sup> H. and K., i. 330.

thing that bids us be still and contemplate simply the *what* of the world, letting go our hold on the process and development in the world, and our own efforts to develop our lives and to attain to more life. In the contemplation of the Ideas, he holds, we are no longer conscious of the distinction between the attaining and the attained, between the subject and the object, between the Will and the Idea. There is no pursuit therein of the ends of the will, and consequently no frustration of the will, and consequently no pain. Feeling, according to Schopenhauer, has to do with the will,<sup>1</sup> and so there is neither pleasure nor pain in artistic contemplation—it is “disinterested,” as Kant and many others have said. “It is all one whether the setting sun is seen out of a prison or a palace, just as it is all one whether the eye that beholds it is the eye of a mighty king or of a suffering beggar.” As “everything” is in a sense beautiful “when seen in its Idea,” the conception of beauty is thus possible for every one. Even a person in extreme misery is relieved by the sound of a melody or by the momentary perception of something beautiful.

This doctrine of everything being in a sense beautiful may seem to conflict with the notion that matter as such cannot express an Idea. The truth is, however, the very idea or the very expression “matter as such” is a contradiction, and Schopenhauer knows this too, although if he had remembered it better he would not have made his theory of beauty so formal and so abstract. Beauty is, as we shall see, a sort of combination of sense and of reason, an eternal idea in a sensuous medium, such as colour or sound. But this is to anticipate. “Since . . . every given thing may be observed in a purely objective manner, and apart from all relations; and since, on the other hand, the will manifests itself in everything at

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 220, 279, and elsewhere.



some grade of its objectivity, so that everything is an expression of an Idea; it follows that everything is also *beautiful*. That even the most insignificant things admit of pure objective and will-less contemplation, and thus prove that they are beautiful, is shown by what was said above in this reference about the Dutch pictures of still life."<sup>1</sup> One remembers, indeed, how much one has been struck by Dutch paintings of mere interiors of houses, or fruit, vegetables, and dead flesh, and so on. It is just because beauty is in a sense universal and universally perceptible, that Schopenhauer finds in art an escape from the theoretical and practical bondage under which we live. In art we no longer know the world as a panorama of objects as common-sense does, or as a plexus of forces, acting and reacting on each other, as the scientist does; but as unity and multiplicity, as the *one* and the *many*, as one theme with a few variations. In art, too, we are ourselves free; we see ourselves as we really are; we realise the Idea of man; we become, in short, that Idea; we become a soul or potency in which the life of all things at once beats and expresses itself and is at rest. "Art is everywhere at its goal; science never is. It plucks the object out of the stream of the world's course and has it isolated before it. And this particular thing, which in that stream was a small perishing part, becomes to art the representation of the whole, an equivalent of the endless multitude in time and space. It therefore pauses at this particular thing; the course of time stops; the relations vanish for it; only the essential, the Idea, is its object." The salvation of the world consists for Schopenhauer in the fact that we can see the Ideas. But seeing that the distinction between the subject and the object is said to "vanish" in the "contemplation of the Ideas," we may say that Schopenhauer makes out the salvation of the

<sup>1</sup> H. and K., i. 271.

world to consist in the fact that the will can contemplate itself in the Ideas.<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer stands in art very near where many philosophers have stood in regard to reason or contemplation,—where Aristotle, for example, stood in the tenth book of ‘The Ethics’ or the twelfth book of ‘The Metaphysics.’ To speak plainly, Schopenhauer’s extravagant language about art amounts simply to this, that when a man sees things artistically he seems to understand the world for the first time, and that when he *understands* the world he is, figuratively speaking, at rest. But what does the rest that is in the *contemplation* of art do for us? We have not as yet got to the last word upon art so far as Schopenhauer is concerned.

II. In view of the fact that it is the practical value of art and of artistic perception that most interests us in the case of Schopenhauer (the value of art for the individual, and the value of artistic perception so far as a *final reading* of the world goes), it ought to be at once mentioned that Schopenhauer’s whole philosophy of art is bound up with his philosophy of genius. Genius in general is something that, in Schopenhauer’s eyes, is not at all related to ordinary life. We remember his saying that, for the purposes of ordinary life, genius is “about as useful as a telescope in a theatre.” Now, genius or an element of genius has been thought by many to be the only thing that is adequate to a real comprehension or perception of the nature of the world as a whole. Fine art, in fact, has been said to be the art of genius. Genius has, of course, intuitions of truth and moral perfection as well as of beauty. Indeed it may be said that, as the world is one, and as life is one, and as real genius cannot see things broken and

<sup>1</sup> We could make out Schopenhauer to hold that the idea *can* contemplate itself in art, and so minimise the difference between Schopenhauer and Hegel, but this would do some violence to the nature of the system.

by halves, so the intuitions of genius are all interwoven, and the highest artistic intuitions cannot be contemplated apart from the highest moral and intellectual intuitions. A touch of genius, it may be said, just as a "touch of nature," makes the "whole world kin." All this holds good in Schopenhauer. And his philosophy of life simply is that a man stumbles on in life making mistakes and "noble errors" one after another, until the true light of æsthetic perception, of genius, lights up his confused striving, and the confused striving of the whole world, so that he sees himself and all things "whole" and "objectively," or in a spirit of "perfect objectivity." The greatest helps that the cosmos affords to man in his partially blind effort to understand things are practically, according to Schopenhauer, the Ideas of art, the collective art of the world, the visions of the ideas that art has and holds out to us.

Art is *vision* to Schopenhauer. One feels, from what he says, that the way in which art came home to him was in the shape of a vision. Pictures and sculpture were obviously the first things that affected him in the way of art, although he later came to feel music to be the most perfect expression of the energising of the world-will, and to associate art with the whole philosophy of genius. In all his disquisitions, indeed, upon art and upon genius, he does not seem ever to have got away from his first idea of art as a vision into the world of things and the life of men. This has its disadvantages as well as its advantages; indeed the former perhaps outweigh the latter in Schopenhauer's case. In all his thinking and all his feeling and all his acting, he seemed to be dominated by the assumption that *seeing* and comprehension is one thing, and *doing* and acting quite another. It was the radical defect of his mind and his life to be unable to correlate seeing and doing, and this in spite of the fact that his whole system is based upon the idea that

knowledge exists simply to light up the will. Just as the idea of the intellect being merely a light to the will was used by Schopenhauer more as an after-thought than as a main principle, so his whole philosophy of art and of genius was also largely an after-thought for him. It came to him after he had perceived, and had logically convinced himself of, the inevitable bondage of man. True, it was almost the capital discovery of his life, the thing that brought him rest in his own life, that symbolised his moral conversion, but it was still an after-thought. And so one always feels that the nature of art is never stated with perfect freedom and naturalness and "objectivity" by Schopenhauer. For him, art is not a beautiful accompaniment of life, not the same thing that it was for the *schöne Seelen* of whom the German literature of his day was beginning to talk, or for those who are children of grace and light from the very beginning of their lives, as the Greeks were, or as a man like Goethe was. Life had always seemed a good deal like a glorious pageant to Goethe, but not so to Schopenhauer. Art was not the same thing to him that it is for a perfectly poetical or musical or creative soul; artistic feeling did not appeal to him in the garb of the *play* or the *form* impulse that Schiller found to be so large an element in the creation of the beautiful. He was not dowered to know and appreciate beauty as was Mozart or Robert Burns or Botticelli.

In saying that Schopenhauer's theory of art cannot be separated from his philosophy of genius in general, one must realise not merely that his account of artistic perception is very unreal save when associated with the whole realm of sensuous and imaginative and intellectual beauty, but that his philosophy of art sustains the same errant and uncertain attitude towards reality that has so often characterised the lives of men (Byron and Heine and François Villon,

for example), who, because they could not connect together, in their feeling and thought, different kinds of beauty (moral, intellectual, and aesthetic), were led into a revolt against life rather than a sympathetic and sane attitude towards it.

“The troubled life  
Of genius, seen so bright when working forth  
Some trusted end, seems sad when all in vain——”

Schopenhauer knew what beauty was, but he did not appreciate it in his soul as Sophocles did. To him beauty was only a “light”—not the spontaneous and joyous creation of a full sense for reality, but a feeble fair flicker—the “light” and the “steady gaze” on the “face of genius,” or the “gleam of rest and repose” that often appears on the faces of those who die after extreme suffering. He evidently came at the end of his life, through reflection upon poetry and music as universal arts, to appreciate art as the outcome of a healthy and refined general sense for things; but this feeling represented a summit of effort towards which he had struggled during the course of his life, and not a level of attainment from which he could always calmly survey the realm of beauty. Painting and sculpture were the arts that he first appreciated and really always most appreciated. He did not, however, fully understand colour in painting, nor painting itself as an outcome of the modern romantic sense for life, a sense which has its fullest expression after all in music.<sup>1</sup> It was more the form and the feeling

<sup>1</sup> Although Schopenhauer thought music to be the highest of all the arts, and the supreme expression of the will to live, he by no means approved of the grand opera or of the “highly complicated” character of opera music, or of its thousand accessories. Lights and shadows, different colours, fable and superstition, the *ballet*, with its repetition of mere melody, elaborate scenery—to his mind all these things prevented that undivided and undisturbed attention which should be accorded to true music. Music, indeed, which demanded such accessories could not be true music, he thought. It is an interesting question at the present time how far some modern operas simply represent, as Schopenhauer says, an “unmusical invention for unmusical spirits.” One certainly understands and appreciates his contention.

of perfect simplicity or repose exemplified in the few master-pieces of sculpture and the early classical painting of modern Europe that he worshipped. It is true that his idea of the different arts, as representing different grades of the will to live, introduced some degree of breadth and depth into his æsthetic theory. But this idea was probably suggested to him by the fact that classical architecture seemed to be largely the simple arrangement of longitudinal blocks of stone, and classical sculpture the expression of the perfect human figure. Take it, in short, where one will, his theory of art and of genius has all the defects and all the interest incident to the fact that he thought of beauty chiefly as a mere vision or spectacle revealed to the eye, and not as an articulate system or world of ideal forms and realities invented and created by the constructive activity of the human soul acting in accordance with the laws of creative production that are shadowed forth even in the natural world (if we can conceive, as indeed we cannot, of the natural world apart from the spiritualised reality which it is destined to sustain and support). "The subject of willing is thus constantly stretched on the revolving wheel of Ixion, pours water into the sieve of the Danaids, or is the ever-longing Tantalus." This is how he thinks of the ordinary effort to live, the ordinary struggle for life. Then in the next line we have an indication of the sudden irruption—a most unæsthetic and unphilosophical and crude way of thinking of the matter, yet perfectly representative of our author—of the blessed vision of art into life. "But when *some external*<sup>1</sup> *cause* or inward disposition lifts us *suddenly* out of the endless stream of willing, delivers knowledge from the slavery of the will, the attention is no longer directed to the motives of willing, but comprehends things free from their relation to the will, and thus observes them without personal

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 254.

interest, without subjectivity, purely objectively, gives itself entirely up to them so far as they are ideas, and not in so far as they are motives. Then all at once the power which we were always seeking, but which always fled from us on the former path of the desires, comes to us of its own accord, and it is well with us. It is the painless state which Epicurus prized as the highest good and as the state of the gods; for we are for the moment set free from the miserable strivings of the will; we keep the Sabbath of the penal servitude of willing; the wheel of Ixion stands still."

If Schopenhauer had reinterpreted his whole theory of art in terms of music or of poetry, and not considered so exclusively the media of colour and marble, art might have become for him an accompaniment of *all* life, instead of a half-hearted hope or a fair but impossible dream—a mere *consolatio*. As it is, beauty in Schopenhauer can undoubtedly take us out of life or cause us to pause in the struggle of life, but it cannot fully enter into our lives as a pervading sense for reality as it ought to do. An adequate subjective appreciation of beauty is needed before its full objective reality and potency can be realised by the mind. By an adequate subjective appreciation of beauty is meant a sense of beauty as somehow the highest possible expression of the ideals of human life, and this Schopenhauer had not. It has already been said that we must do Schopenhauer the justice of thinking of his philosophy of art in the terms of his whole philosophy of genius. By so doing we read into it a breadth and a depth that it cannot otherwise have.

Schopenhauer could always "read everything into" art, even although his philosophy of art and of genius suffered from the fact that art and genius gave to him more the seeing-understanding than the sympathy and love which is such a necessary ingredient in the artistic sense. He compares art to the "single free glance" that a man tormented

with pain or sickness may suddenly have *into nature*; and even a single comparison like this may be taken to signify his conviction that art brings complete peace into the life of the person who is susceptible to its influence. Mere seeing and mere contemplation, however, is not enough: it is one thing to see and understand and another to act and live; and this contrast always remains to the end in Schopenhauer. Indeed he is convinced that *knowing* as "insight" is *foreign to willing*.<sup>1</sup> We are tempted, in reading him, to linger eternally over the vision that art affords, and to forget that *life* is meanwhile flowing past, and that we must again enter into it whether we can carry beauty along with us or not. He says that in artistic contemplation thought stands still and the distinction between subject and object "vanishes"; but all this is figurative and unreal. The faculty, however, for art is not merely *one* of our powers, or the power of abstract contemplation alone; it is all the senses taken together, our *whole* consciousness of reality, with the kinetic (if we may be allowed so to speak) and creative energy of which that consciousness is the reflex. Apart from art, Schopenhauer's own life was a "blind will rushing eternally into life." He was an unregenerate youth, living in some of the most trying years of this century, with no one country that he cared about in particular, and no relatives or friends for whom he had any real affection. Plato and art made him *live* for the first time, as it were, but that bliss was always defined for him over against his own background of "unsatisfied will," and the background of political chaos and incipient materialism and naturalism and democratic vulgarity of the beginning of the century. Romanticism had been the only thing in the spirit of the times that had turned men's thoughts from the material to the ideal world, but the historical aspects of romanticism and its vagueness and capriciousness were things for which Schopenhauer had no sym-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 168, note 2.



pathy. At the end of the century we have now come back to the idea that even nature herself is essentially spiritual and mysterious, and that fine art represents somehow a natural gradation of, or development from, what is called natural beauty; but Schopenhauer saw the fine arts defined only against a world of brute force and relentless causal law. Indeed (partly, perhaps, by reason of his contempt for history, and partly, perhaps, from his native perversity of mind), he tended to think that the glimpses into the inner nature of the world which pure art and pure genius afforded could never be otherwise than out of touch with the spirit of the times. "Genius in its efforts and achievements is for the most part in contradiction and conflict with its times."<sup>1</sup> "Mere men of talent are always adapted to their day and generation; in fact, they are only called forth by the spirit of their times and its needs, and so they have just the capacity of satisfying these things. They therefore identify themselves with the progressive culture of their contemporaries, or with the slow growth of some particular science; and for this they obtain reward and approval. Of course their performances give no satisfaction to the next generation, and so they have to give place to others, who in their turn give place to still others. Genius, on the contrary, comes upon the horizon of its times like a comet on the regular path of the planets."<sup>2</sup>

III. In unfolding Schopenhauer's theory of art before we have studied his treatment of the ethical and the religious consciousness, a difficulty arises from the very fact that we cannot as yet fully know the content or the reality which art may be said to work up or express. Art enables us to idealise everything from mere matter up to the unfulfilled problems of our moral and religious life, and Schopenhauer's simply saying that

<sup>1</sup> *Welt als Wille*, Werke, iii. 447.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

art expresses the Ideas seems too easy a way of getting over the well-known difficulty about the precise content of our æsthetic perceptions. He tells us, when we look into the matter, far more what art is not than what it is. Nowhere in his system is the nature of artistic reality fully studied and thought out in connection and contrast with ordinary reality. What is the real with which art deals? Is it ordinary reality treated simply in an artistic way? Or is it something different from ordinary reality? In regard to this it may be said at once that Schopenhauer fails to treat of artistic production in a satisfactory way, and so does not seem to have been even conscious of the difficulties of trying to see precisely what it is that the artist is working up, or trying to make, or trying to create. His whole theory of art is ontological and statical, a thing of entities and cold rigid forms—not free and expansive and adaptive as the artistic instinct itself is. The vision of art is to him as sudden as the view of sunrise over mountain-summits. It comes into life “somehow,” he feels; but he cannot just say how. “As regards the birth of a work of art in a man’s mind, if he is only in a susceptible mood, almost any object that comes within his range of perception will begin to speak to him—in other words, will generate in him some lively, penetrating, original thought. So it is that a trivial event may become the seed of a great and glorious work. Jacob Böhme is said to have been enlightened upon some deep point of natural science by the sudden sight of a tin can.”<sup>1</sup> Art, he suggests, is simply “the artist lending us his eyes.” There is some incidental matter in Schopenhauer about artistic production, and he certainly knows all that the average person knows about it, and he wades through some of the main discussions of his time about the fine arts, such as those represented by Lessing in his ‘*Laocoön*,’ but it cannot be claimed that he has taught anything positive about

<sup>1</sup> Religion, &c., by Schop., Bailey Saunders, p. 140.

the nature of artistic production, or anything which can naturally be woven into the essential meaning of his positive thinking. He ignores, in fact, the nature of artistic reality as such, contenting himself simply with the idea that artistic objects have nothing to do with the objects of the will. If the artist has not the heaven-born intuition of the Ideas (which Schopenhauer feels to be a mysterious affair altogether, an affair of insight or consciousness or divine grace), he will never do anything positive in art. "If the reader wishes for a direct example of the advantage which intuitive knowledge—the primary and fundamental kind—has over abstract thought, as showing that art reveals to us more than we can gain from all the sciences, let him look at a beautiful human face full of expressive emotion; and that, too, whether in nature itself or as presented to us by the mediation of art. How much deeper is the insight gained into the essential character of man, nay, into nature in general, by this sight than by all the words and abstract expressions which may be used to describe it. When a beautiful face beams with laughter, it is as though a fine landscape were suddenly illuminated by a ray of light darting from the clouds. Therefore *ridete, puellæ, ridete*." <sup>1</sup> The one thing that Schopenhauer is most emphatic about is how the artist is not to go to work; that is, it is at best only the *form* of artistic production which he considers, and so far as the content goes he simply lapses back into his Platonism—his Platonism, not his Plato.

And as is obvious, the form of artistic production is considered only in a negative manner by Schopenhauer. The one thing that the artist must not do, he maintains, is to use the concept or any mechanical or mathematical or scientific device; he must not consider utility or purpose at all; only bunglers and inferior workers, as it were, do that, go by rule of thumb or by way of calculation. He notices how real genius has so often

<sup>1</sup> Werke, vi. 453, Parerga; Bailey Saunders, Religion, &c., p. 131.

had a frantic horror of the quantitative or the mathematical sciences, a horror to be traced to the intuitive perception that all "external" ways of going to work in art will never produce art, but only mechanical artifice.<sup>1</sup> Architecture, for example, Schopenhauer insists, is hampered by the fact that conceptions of utility and design must often enter into it; and allegorical art, he thinks, is always inferior art, for the reason that it is intended to teach something different from the mere imagery or representation, in which it professedly deals. Schopenhauer could not see that the real problem of art is just as to how we can infuse into ordinary reality, or into the media of the different senses or of imagination and phantasy, what is called spiritual expression or expressiveness or spirituality of content. Goethe has explained for us how he came, after much prejudice in favour of merely classical art, to appreciate the beautiful in Gothic architecture. Schopenhauer could find nothing in Gothic architecture but "barbarous formless fantasticism," and a "false devotional utilitarianism, foreign to the purpose of real art," expressive of the belief in a merely external as opposed to an internal God. Even the purpose of "uplifting the mind of man" is to Schopenhauer still a *purpose*, and as such has nothing to do with art at all. Only the "clear comprehensibility" of the elemental forces and types of nature, and of the different ways in which the Ideas express themselves, is what we ought to seek in art, according to him. We see that he is strengthened in his tendency to exclude utilitarian or teleological considerations from the work of art by the fact that he denied "purpose" even to the world-will: the will was essentially irrational in all its aims, and the only thing that we ought to look for and find in the Idea was in his eyes simply finished expression and nothing more. Even when he drops into such descriptions of the work of the artist as that he "recognises the Idea in the particular thing," and thus, as it

<sup>1</sup> Cf. note on p. 505.

were, understands the "half-uttered speech of nature," and "recalls clearly what she only stammered forth," that he "expresses in the hard marble the beauty of form, which in a thousand attempts nature failed to produce," and represents it to her, saying, as it were, to her, "That is what you wanted to say?" and that whoever is able to judge replies, "Yes, that is it;"—even when he speaks in this way it is not to be for one moment thought that Schopenhauer is following the road entered upon to a certain extent by Aristotle when he gave his best account of the work of the artist as somehow idealising nature, and helping her to bring her imperfect efforts to perfection.<sup>1</sup>

Schopenhauer is not even at the point of view of the difficulties that Plato encountered in trying to state the kind of reality with which the artist deals. Art is not imitative to Schopenhauer, because the artistic Ideas are more apprehended than created or evolved by the artist—merely seized by him as the "most perfect objectivity," the most perfect manifestation of the world-will. To seek to explain art by theories of imitation or by an inductive comparison of the features of beautiful things, savours to Schopenhauer of the "gall of bondage" of mere crass utilitarianism and philistinism. The elements of beauty, he holds, are not pieced together in any way at all; there is no juxtaposition or mosaic work in the creation of beauty. He goes too far, however, in refusing to consider anything that ordinary reflection or psychology or positive æsthetic criticism has to say about the distinguishing characteristics of the beautiful. If he had studied beautiful things in a positive way, even as far as Plato or Aristotle did, not to speak of the German writers upon exact æsthetic theory in the present century or of English writers like Mr Ruskin and Mr Morris, he

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Phys., ii. 8, 199 a 15, ἡ τέχνη τὰ μὲν ἐπιτελεῖ ἃ ἡ φύσις ἀδυνατεῖ ἀπεργάσασθαι.

would have understood the nature of beauty far better than he did. But he was far too impatient for this, too eager, in fact, to bring the whole realm of art under one or two sweeping generalisations. Ordinary things, he felt, were simply phenomenal manifestations of the will; and the one thing that he felt he could say about artistic objects was that they had nothing to do with will or purpose, or that they had emancipated themselves somehow from its influence. A crowning proof that he had nothing positive and constructive to say about the content of the artistic consciousness or the nature of artistic reality other than his mere reference of them to the ideas (to Platonism as coloured by the philosophy of Plotinus and by Christian symbolism), might be found in such a sentence as the following: "If the whole world as idea is only a manifestation of the will, art is simply that which makes this manifestation visible, a *camera obscura* which shows objects in a clearer sort of way, and enables us to survey them better and take them in better as a whole, simply the 'play in the play,' the stage upon the stage in 'Hamlet.'" <sup>1</sup>

This makes us think of Plato's view of art as being twice removed from reality, as copying things which themselves were mere imperfect copies of Ideas; but it is dangerous to compare Schopenhauer with Plato in any exact way so far as the nature of artistic reality goes. Plato admitted that there could be Ideas even of manufactured or fabricated things; whereas Schopenhauer thought that art never copied particular things at all, *never copied* at all, in fact, but simply represented somehow only the "universal" and never the "particular" element in things. Perhaps Schopenhauer is well off in being free from all the puzzles of the imitative theory of art; but we would rather have these than nothing at all, because they make us think, to some extent, of the relation of artistic

<sup>1</sup> Die Welt als Wille, Werke, ii. 315. Cf. p. 265.

reality to ordinary reality. Equally little can Schopenhauer's ideas be brought into line with those of Aristotle and Hegel, who both think of art in connection with the process of evolution that is going on in the world as a whole. There is a seeming contradiction, too, between his notion of the Ideas as setting forth the most fundamental aspects of reality and the notion conveyed by the metaphor just quoted ("the stage upon the stage"), of art as lighting up the illusoriness of things in general. This contradiction, however, is only another example of that fatal tendency of Schopenhauer's philosophy to make any light, that he does seem to kindle for us, serve only to make the surrounding darkness more dark. The light of the natural understanding seemed to show us only what slaves of the world-will we really are, and the light of art seems to show us only how ugly and formless ordinary reality is, and how useless it is for us to try to explain even artistic things themselves by any exercise of our natural reason. The artist is at once glorified and degraded in Schopenhauer: he has, it is true, "a seeing eye," but he can give no account of himself as an artist; he is no real ποιητής or maker; and there is next to nothing said about what it is that he creates, or makes, or deals with. True beauty is simply something that "takes place" or "appears" in the case of the true artist. There is a certain value in this idea, the value, namely, of reminding people that there is something subjective or personal about beauty, and that it cannot be understood apart from the human personality and man's powers of perception and imagination.

"Tis God gives skill,  
But not without men's hands : He could not make  
Antonio Stradivari's violins  
Without Antonio."

Still Schopenhauer did not develop the consequences of the truth that there is no art without the artist or the human

percipient. If he had, he would perhaps have been able to set forth artistic reality as representing the highest evolution of the consciousness of man, and consequently of the will of the world. But in avoiding the question of the nature of artistic reality—in putting the matter in such a negative way as he did—he was unable to make out the strong case for art that he might have done.



## CHAPTER VI.

SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY OF ART—*Continued.*

“Accordingly it is a poor compliment, though sometimes a fashionable one, to try to pay honour to a work by calling it an action. For a work is essentially higher in its nature. An action is always something based on motive, and therefore fragmentary and fleeting—a part, in fact, of that will which is the universal and original element in the constitution of the world. But a great and beautiful work has a permanent character, as being of universal significance, and sprung from the intellect, which rises, like a perfume, above the faults and follies of the world of will.”<sup>1</sup>

It is desirable to realise with some degree of particularity and exactitude the limits of Schopenhauer's treatment of art. Reflection upon the creative faculty of the artist, and upon beauty as partly a creation of the mind which seeks to enter into the more subtle secrets of nature and to idealise both nature and human life, is one of the best ways of realising the extended meaning and the idealisation that Schopenhauer's principle of will is capable of. For it is a principle which can perfectly well be brought into living relation to all that is best and most real in life.

No one who reads Schopenhauer for any length of time can fail to observe the profound influence that the mere *contemplation* of the beauty of painting and sculpture had upon the man's whole mind and being. It affected both his activity

<sup>1</sup> Werke, v. 416; Von Dem, was Einer vorstellt. E. S., ‘The Wisdom of Life of Schop.,’ p. 117.

and his aspiration: it made the former simply one continued search for *quies in otio*, a life *procul negotiis*, sure of itself in its own depth and tranquillity; and it gave to the latter a tinge of placidity and quietism which overcame altogether that volitional effort to surpass the present self and to be ever making new conquests, that is commonly associated with aspiration, and that might naturally be looked for in the aspiration of a man whose *professedly* deepest conviction was that *effort* and *will* characterise all life and all being. The idea of æsthetic contemplation coloured his philosophising upon morality and religion: there is surely a connection between the *harmony* that he talked of as existing between the percipient and the perceived thing in the perception of beauty and the *sympathy* which he claimed to be the essence of morality;<sup>1</sup> and then the insensate dreamy contemplation which is for him the kernel of true religious feeling is only a reflex of the deep calmful satisfaction that he felt in *looking* upon beauty, as always affording to its votaries a peace that "the world cannot give." It helped to determine his prevailing mood of mind, and consequently his literary style; he always writes of things as if he *saw* them in all their plenitude and openness; one really *sees* the will *rushing* through life, and all its "hideous ruin and combustion"; and as to "the Ideas"—well, it is just as it is in his great master Plato; they are spiritual essences which you see and hear in all their visual and audible harmony, despite the unrest and storm of the phenomenal world. It affected the way he walked about among men, always looking (as one does in the corridors of a great gallery) for a *vision* at the end of a vista—a vision that would naturally cause other things to be seen in mere perspective—peering through the commonplace faces and restless countenances of ordinary men in search for the *still gaze* of true genius and true beauty. And lastly, the love

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. vii.

of artistic contemplation became the redeeming thing about the man's irresponsible overpowering personality, with all its irascibility and profundity: it makes one almost like him as a man who longed for the hidden meaning behind all appearance, and who spoke out with perfect candour and directness what he saw of the good and the evil in the world.

(a) Even as a metaphysical theory Schopenhauer's philosophy of art is very limited indeed. His theory is *metaphysical* partly because the *content* that he attributes to the *artistic consciousness* is transcendental—the Ideas. It is highly *formal*, because he fails to recognise some important concrete aspects of æsthetic feeling which give to the perception of the beautiful a great deal of its meaning. One cannot find in Schopenhauer an adequate psychological account of æsthetic feeling, just as one cannot find a definite answer to the question of what it is that makes an object really beautiful. Students of æsthetic proper and of the psychology of æsthetics will find in him much that is of great value, for the reason, first, that he took up the problem of æsthetic where Lessing and Kant left it; and secondly, because his concrete æsthetic criticism, although largely incidental and casual, is always penetrating and deep, and always carries with it a feeling of complete relevancy and of finality. But then it is true, on the whole, that he sacrifices the psychological point of view to the metaphysical, and that in his very desire to say something absolutely final and fundamental about works of art—to get their *Idea*, in short—he overlooks to too great an extent the perceptual and the imaginative conditions of beauty. The tantalising thing about Schopenhauer in his æsthetic philosophy is that he is on the whole more transcendental even than Plato, and far less broad and systematic than Kant.

It is well known that there are three or four interesting defects in Plato's theory of art, which show that even *he* was

by no means emancipated from the ordinary Greek difficulty about the work of the artist, about his possibly either reduplicating ordinary reality or introducing a kind of show-reality over and above ordinary reality. Plato, too, did not go so far as many modern Hellenists in separating art from morality; he kept art, to a certain extent, in touch with morality and ordinary reality, and so is much less "Platonic" and abstract than some of his followers. There is, however, nothing, or next to nothing, in Schopenhauer's theory of art which lets us see how art is related to ordinary reality or to the moral life. If he had said that the content of art is to be found partly in ordinary reality or in ordinary morality, we should not have found his theorising so empty. He did not, in fact, know his two masters (Plato and Kant) well enough so far as what they said upon art goes. Indeed it is not Plato that Schopenhauer reflects in art, but the symbolism and transcendentalism that came out of Plato; nor did he make anything like the deliberate and careful attempt that Kant made to connect æsthetic theory with epistemology and teleology and morality. It may be questioned, in fact, whether he had not himself, in respect to art, that sensation of "going up in a balloon" which he said all Germans had when they heard the word *Ideas* pronounced something like *Uedähen*.<sup>1</sup>

Art in Schopenhauer takes us at once out of the world, and he does not even try to settle the question of the relation of art to the ordinary life and the ordinary efforts of men. It is true that we know well enough where art stands in his theory of knowledge, at least in name; it is said to deal with the *Ideas*, while sense-perception deals with ordinary things, and science deals with causes and effects and laws: but this is only an explanation in name—it is the relegation of art to a place which, when we come to look into it, turns out to be simply an empty void. Schopenhauer probably thought that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Werke, i. 113; Ü. d. vierfache Wurzel.

he ensured the objective reality of artistic objects by referring them to the Ideas, which all transcendentalism after Plato has been inclined to regard as indisputably real. But then, when we ask what it is that the person who perceives beauty has in his consciousness, we get only the answer that he has an intuitive perception of an Idea which he is quite sure has nothing to do with the will. This seems very close to Kant's description of the artistic consciousness, as the "sense of adaptation in general without the sense of any special purpose" to which the artistic object is adapted: but then we have not the same teleological or dynamical view of nature on which to rest a theory of art that we have in Kant. The will (or nature) is essentially devoid of all purpose to Schopenhauer; and so, if art deals with an imaginary kind of reality (the Ideas) resting upon a reality (the will) that is or is felt to be also illusory, it becomes very hard to think of art as representing anything real at all. It was such a feeling on Schopenhauer's part which probably prompted and warranted the "stage upon the stage" metaphor.<sup>1</sup>

Nor did Schopenhauer reflect the broad patient spirit that Kant showed in treating of art. Kant's 'Criticism of Judgment,' where both art and teleology are discussed, reflects the whole thought of Kant's lifetime, as well as his infinite patience and tentative carefulness. Art to Kant is the great mediating link between a purely objective and a purely subjective philosophy; it focuses all the ways of looking at reality. There are two things in Schopenhauer's theory of art which most distinctly suggest Kant: the idea that artistic feeling has nothing to do with the will suggests Kant's vindication of artistic pleasure as being disinterested pleasure; and, as we have just said, the idea that art has nothing to do with utility and purpose suggests Kant's famous and subtle account of artistic adaptation as adaptation without the definite

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 258.

representation of any end—*Zweckmässigkeit in der Vorstellung ohne allen Zweck*.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps these two things are one; and if so, it means that a great deal that seems distinctive in Schopenhauer's theory of art is to be traced to Kant. And yet, although Schopenhauer ought to have known how important Kant's views about art are for the unification of Kant's thought, he does not in his main book devote more than six or seven pages to the discussion of the 'Criticism of Judgment,' and he very seldom mentions the name of Kant in his sections on æsthetic proper.

Kant's main merit, so far as art is concerned, lies for Schopenhauer in the fact that he did not treat of art in an "empirical sort of way" at all, that he did not consider what, as a matter of fact, made an object beautiful, but that he went "to the root of the matter" in giving a broad analysis of our æsthetic consciousness. He says that Kant "led the way" to the real theory of æsthetic by considering the "*conditions* of the judgment of the beautiful." He never considers anything in Kant, which goes to show that the judgment of beauty is more than merely subjective. There are indications in Kant that beauty is in a sense objective, and this is the point where the problem of æsthetic had to be taken up after Kant. But Schopenhauer thought that it was the essence of the artistic judgment to have "nothing to do with the will." This meant, of course, that it could not be connected with teleology at all, or with adaptation in nature, or with the world as a teleological unity. Kant associated æsthetic judgment in many ways very closely with the teleological judgment, with the idea of the world as realised or organic purpose, but Schopenhauer preferred to keep to the idea of the 'Criticism of Pure Reason,'

<sup>1</sup> Kritik d. Urtheilskraft, 1 Thl., 1 Abschn., § 11. " . . . die subjective Zweckmässigkeit in der Vorstellung eines Gegenstandes, ohne allen (weder objectiven noch subjectiven) Zweck." Cf. " . . . eine Zweckmässigkeit der Form nach, auch ohne dass wir ihr einen Zweck (als die Materie des *nexus finalis*) zum Grunde legen . . ."—Ibid., § 10.

that the notion of *end* was foisted on to nature only by our intellect, and had only a subjective but no objective significance. We have already noticed how strange this is in a philosopher who makes out will to be the essence of reality: if things are really related to the will, they must in a sense partake of the objective reality of the will itself. But there is nothing in Schopenhauer about the nature of artistic production, and so it is difficult to connect artistic reality with that which alone, on Schopenhauer's principles, can give it reality.

We now know, after the help given us chiefly by Hegel, that the outcome of the Critical Philosophy is not merely that many things which we took to be objective (cause, for example) are partly subjective, but that whatever our experience compels us to assume as really operative in our experience is real and objective. In art we are conscious of the *fact* that nature *does* attain to ends, and that "the beautiful" is a system of organic, living forms, which express the meaning and the reality of life and of the world. This idea lay to a certain extent in Kant, but Schopenhauer *would* rest content with his own mere transcendentalism or Platonism about art. He thought that the best way to "save" the reality of the artistic consciousness was to emphasise its difference from all other kinds of consciousness rather than to connect it in any way with them. In Kant's philosophy of art is to be read the whole history of the æsthetic problem from Descartes to Baumgarten and from Bacon to Kames and Shaftesbury. We can study there the whole question of the compromise that must be struck between a rationalistic and an empirical treatment of the æsthetic problem, and between the philosophy of the "universal" and the philosophy of the "particular" so far as the elements of artistic reality go. The 'Criticism of Judgment,' in fact, affords us the sight of Kant's mind

taking its broadest possible survey of reality, trying indeed to finally correlate the "objective" and the "subjective" elements in experience; the "universal" and the "particular"; and the "finite" and the "infinite." But Schopenhauer failed to see this. At the very point in Kant where a broad view of reality as opposed to a merely formal view was the all-important matter, he was unequal to the task of appreciating his master. Perhaps this was because nowhere in Kant's philosophy is the sense of *historical development* — of historical development in general and of the æsthetic consciousness as historically an element in the struggle of the mind of man to grasp the "whole" of things — so necessary as in the case of the 'Criticism of Judgment.' Kant's æsthetic focussed, as it were, the whole problem of beauty as it had been treated by the modern mind, and just in so far as it did so was Schopenhauer's lamentable want of historical appreciation and of real "objectivity" of mind only too apparent when he tried to deal with its difficulties. A vague general appreciation of the transcendental or Platonic element in the theory of æsthetic is not enough to enable a man to set forth an analysis of beauty in general, or of its supreme significance for the modern mind.

Nowhere, in short, is Schopenhauer's want of historical sympathy, and his mere abstract formalism, more disastrous in its consequences than in his philosophy of art. The difficulty is that his æsthetic transcendentalism may mean "anything"; it simply stands for the fact that art enables us somehow to see things *sub specie æternitatis*. And as every one feels this about art, Schopenhauer does not seem to say very much. It is not, however, the essence of art to give merely a static analysis of reality. Our interest in Schopenhauer's analysis of beauty is to see whether he gives us therein a whole and a real view of the world as



opposed to a partial and an illusory one. The essence of art is that it is creative, that it represents an effort on the part of man to rise beyond the limits of his life. Art is not static and perfect and impassive as Schopenhauer makes it out to be; it is kinetic and evolutionary and enthusiastic. "*Ernst ist das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst!*" But it was impossible for a philosopher to understand this who failed to appreciate Aristotle's explanation of pleasure as the sense of unimpeded energy. Art is like free pleasure, and like the play-impulse that Schiller talked of in connection with it; both "pleasure" and the "play-impulse" represent the free and the natural and the spontaneous energy of the mind, and art, like them both, is also free and creative in its nature. A metaphysic of art is all very well in its way, but there can be no metaphysic of art without a psychology of art, without a psychology of the artistic impulse.

What we in the end mean by *art*, if we think of the matter, is fine or creative art, artistic production. Natural beauty is a mere stage in the evolution of spiritual or free beauty. But there is no *positive* theory of artistic production in Schopenhauer, although the germs of it lay certainly in both Plato and Kant. Schopenhauer saw what it was *negatively*; he said that it had nothing to do with mechanical construction or utilitarian contrivance, but that was all. His ingenious and in the main correct notion of the Ideas as representing the various "grades of the objectification of the will," makes one think that in his æsthetic he ought somehow to give a dynamic or evolutionary account of art; art is said by him to represent the various grades or planes of existence, and to tell us, so to speak, what nature is trying to do. But Schopenhauer really cannot see how art completes the work of nature, because he does not think of the artist as creatively doing anything; the artist simply "finds," he tells us, the vision of the

Ideas in himself, but he cannot see how it was generated. "In æsthetic contemplation, the particular thing *suddenly* becomes the Idea of its species, and the contemplating person a *pure subject of knowledge*." Now it is the outcome of a sound æsthetic philosophy to hold that even natural beauty cannot be understood save as, to a certain extent, the creation of beings who see it, and consequently the line between natural and artificial beauty is hard to draw. Neither natural beauty nor created beauty can be understood apart from the manner and fact of its production or creation by the artistic subject or percipient. The world has always felt that art is somehow dependent on the existence of the artist:—

"Is it you, O beauty, O grace,  
O charm, O romance, that we feel,  
Or the voice which reveals what you are?"<sup>1</sup>

Schopenhauer's notion of the Ideas as representing the different grades of the will, and of the artist as simply "lending us his eyes," makes us almost suspect that he is dealing or ought to be dealing chiefly with natural beauty, and only indirectly with artistic or created beauty.<sup>2</sup> And then the whole passive-like character that artistic appreciation has in his eyes, makes us feel that his treatment of beauty is too easy and superficial—he thinks of it far too much as something already made (instead of to be made) by the co-operation or creative activity of the percipient. All who truly understand the perception of the beautiful must feel that beauty has in a sense to be *made* in order to be understood. Schopenhauer would not study the evolution of the feeling for beauty as a feature in the history of civilisation; there could be "nothing new under the sun," he

<sup>1</sup> M. Arnold, 'The Youth of Nature.'

<sup>2</sup> The reference to the "essential and original forms of animate and inanimate nature," in the quotation at the head of chapter v., is characteristic. The idea of human life seems to be absent from it.

thought: he virtually insisted that we must understand beauty once and for all. With such ideas he very naturally went to the Greeks and stayed there to worship, but he never came back to explain in modern language or in a modern way the fact that art somehow sets forth the infinite expressiveness or significance of life. And even in learning from the Greeks he overlooked all the attempted analyses of aesthetic perception that were to be found in Plato and Aristotle; he simply took his notions of the *content* of beauty from Plato, and said that that was the "Ideas." He did so far give a modern version of the Ideas, by making them out to be connected with the different species or grades of existence, but he did not go on to incorporate them with the dynamic view of reality to which modern natural science was already committed in his days, and to which his own theory of the world as will inevitably commits him. The only thing he had to do, and could have done, was *to connect art with the will*, with the effort to realise ever higher and higher forms of life; but he could not do this by reason of the many defects in his theory of knowledge and in his view of will (he took the lowest type of will instead of the highest as his principle for explaining things). And again he could not do it by reason of the fact that his view of art was so static and so little dynamic. Aristotle puts us on the right path for understanding art, as for understanding most other things. In his eyes, the artist could help nature to evolve and to perfect her work, and thus bring her to her highest development in the spiritual and ideal purposes of man. But for all this Schopenhauer had no sense. He had no feeling for the world as an organic or unified whole: the world was cleft for him into two halves (Will and Idea, or noumenon and phenomenon) which could never be brought into vital relation with each other. Even his generalisation

of all things as will did not enable him to take a direct and free and flexible hold upon all reality. Both nature and human life—the subject-matter of art—were to him essentially illusory; the one concealed an ultimate reality (the will) which could never be known or definitely expressed,<sup>1</sup> and the other revealed nothing but blind strife<sup>2</sup> and confusion—the aimless effort to be.

If we look at the *formalism* of Schopenhauer's views upon art, we shall feel that he did not indeed advance very far beyond the Greeks. His whole philosophy of art seems almost a phase of that glorification of Greek statuary and architecture, which was a kind of worship in his days, with its Neo-Hellenism as opposed to crude Protestantism and Judaistic theism. Schopenhauer certainly never felt the full force of the modern gospel of Romanticism, with its exaltation of the need of a free and expansive (and even fantastic and extravagant) sense for beauty and reality. It would probably have shocked him very much to think that there was colour and ornament even in Greek statuary and architecture. He certainly could not bring the little that he did see in the modern sense for tragedy and romantic beauty into harmony with his preference for Greek over Gothic architecture. (He *hated* the Middle Ages, with their repression of the mind and life of the individual, if indeed he ever thought of them.) He at once maintains that Gothic architecture is barbaric and fantastic (Saracenic in its origin, he says), and formless and spurious in conception—the antithesis of art, in fact; and yet at the same time holds that modern tragedy is to be placed far above Greek tragedy, because the ancients “had not yet attained to the summit and goal of tragedy, or indeed of insight into life itself.”

But how could a man have a complete theory of art who refused to feel his way sympathetically through all the efforts

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. iii., the close.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chap. vii., the beginning.

that the spirit of man had made to assert itself from the time of the Renaissance to the French Revolution? *Eadem sed aliter* is too one-sided a maxim to be of much use in æsthetic. It is all very well to say that art represents the "Ideas"; but then, there is an evolution of the Ideas or the ideal import of the world in time, an evolution that is manifested in man's life and in the life of things; and it is in fact this evolution of the ideal meaning of the world that art may be said to aim at expressing. The Greeks conceived of beauty as formal and abstract, the moderns of beauty as characteristic and expressive and concrete.<sup>1</sup> The "Hegelians" were trying as hard as they could to make beauty more objective and real than Kant had left it, but of course they were "too great blockheads" in metaphysic in Schopenhauer's eyes to make him wish to have anything to do with them in æsthetic. The student of æsthetic theories is largely baffled and confused, and simply irritated, in trying to give Schopenhauer a place in the history of æsthetic. It is easy to explain him as coming in a manner after Kant in that peculiar period of transition and slow reconstruction through which Germany passed in the first three decades of this century; but he would not have wished to have himself located at all. Just because he did not feel the necessity of understanding beauty historically and psychologically, he could not clearly and comprehensively show how the artistic consciousness was the one thing to be exalted by the spirit of man as capable of affording him a rounded view of the world and of reality. It may be safely said that the arts cannot be classified by one who does not really care about understanding the history of the theory of beauty. Schopenhauer has some ingenious and suggestive formal philosophising about the relation of architecture to music—the two arts that represent respectively the "bottom" and the "top" of the artistic ladder,—about the logical connection between "sym-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bosanquet, History of Æsthetic, *passim*.

metry" (the secret of architecture) and "rhythm" (the secret of music), but the whole thing is strained to the breaking-point. It is the old story of his trying always to *see* in art rather than to *feel*; one may say that one sees temples and figures and colour and tragedy and comedy in music—the highest art must in a sense include the characteristic features of all the others—but in music we pass from seeing to feeling, from one sense to another, to a new creation in fact—

"That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star."

The history of art, which is an essential part of the metaphysic of art—the best instance perhaps of the necessity of *history* to *criticism*—can show us how man has needed first one sense and one medium and then another sense and another medium by means of which to express his feeling for things and to gain a consciousness of the reality of things, and then finally his whole creative and evolving consciousness to feel out and to express the essential relations and meanings of things. Schopenhauer's classification of the arts has little reference to their history, and impresses one as too arbitrary and rigid to be of much use in enabling us to understand history.

(β) It would be easy to show further how Schopenhauer's theory of art is lacking in many other ways—how it leaves out many things that form part of the theory of beauty. It is very strange, for example, that he has not an elaborate treatment of the *ugly* as a species or variety of artistic perception. Why does he not make much of it with a view to the pessimistic or negative side of his philosophy? His illusionism is at any rate largely a glorification of the eternal *defect* in things, of the eternal *defect* of the *finite* as such. With the ugly would come, to be sure, the bad, and sin and misery, and the whole philosophy of the defective and the finite. For this we have

to go to our author's views upon religion. The ugly (as well as the fantastic and the ridiculous) has indeed a place in the philosophy of art, but Schopenhauer did not fully realise the fact.

It is difficult even to indicate the place that art as such has in Schopenhauer's system. Art, in a sense, makes his *system*, as well as the world in general, seem illusory. Ordinary reality is to Schopenhauer, as we have seen, illusory on the presuppositions of ordinary idealism that things are mere phenomena of the senses. Then the reality which the understanding reveals to us, reality as defined by the so-called laws of science, is also illusory; the order that is here considered is largely an order of our own making, and we never do and never can get to the ultimate nature of things from the standpoint alone of science and the scientific understanding, and this all wise scientists admit. And now beautiful objects in nature or in art—the absence of a theory of the distinction makes the “confusion worse confounded”—can become real to us only if we let go our hold on everything else and live (die?) for these things alone—lose our personality, as it were, in them. This whole vein of illusionism doubtless expresses the confusion that many minds feel in being driven, in their search for reality, from common-sense to the philosophical consciousness of things, and then from that to art, and from art to mysticism; nowhere do they seem privileged to plant their feet firmly upon any one thing.<sup>1</sup> We could give up everything for beauty, if beauty really lit up the world for us anew, as the highest religious faith does for many people. Schopenhauer, however, practically tells us (what he impresses us as having himself felt) that the person who has experienced the exaltation of artistic insight has no taste left for ordinary reality. One wonders whether it is essentially true of all idealism, that it tends to make us lose our hold upon all

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chaps. ix. and x.

reality. It may be. Idealism may be apparently convincing to some extent about reality, as has been suggested in the chapter in which it was discussed, but it seems to fail us and become illusory at the last. Would Schopenhauer have been the victim of idealistic illusionism if he had carved his way into the meaning of life with modern realism and modern romanticism? What of Rembrandt and of Corot, and of Jean François Millet? What of Rubens with his passionate devotion to the representation of action, and of Murillo's boys at play, and so on? But then, on the other hand, there is *Plato* and his immortal cave simile, and Schopenhauer felt with *Plato* that "Those who, outside the cave, have seen the true sunlight and the things that have true being (Ideas), cannot afterwards see properly down in the cave, because their eyes are not accustomed to the darkness; they cannot distinguish the shapes, and are jeered at for their mistakes by those who have never left the cave and its shadows"; and "that there can be no true poetry without a certain madness; that, in fact, every one appears mad who recognises eternal Ideas in fleeting things."<sup>1</sup>

There does seem something inevitable about all this. And so Schopenhauer's whole system is a kind of illusionism about all reality. "There is an unconscious propriety in the way in which, in all European languages, the word person is commonly used to denote a human being. The real meaning of *persona* is a *mask*, such as actors were accustomed to wear on the ancient stage; and it is quite true that no one shows himself as he is, but wears his mask and plays his part. Indeed the whole of our social arrangements may be likened to a perpetual comedy; and this is why a man who is worth anything finds society so stupid, while a blockhead is quite at home in it"<sup>2</sup> The tantalising thing is that the highest aspect we have

<sup>1</sup> *World as Will*, i. 247 (H. and K.)

<sup>2</sup> *Werke*, vi. 623; B. Saunders, *Studies in Pessimism*, p. 61.



yet reached of this illusionism is the illusionism about art itself—about the very thing that we have been led by Schopenhauer to look forward to as a refuge from the bondage of ordinary life. Has art a hold on reality or has it not? Schopenhauer maintains that the man of genius is infinitely more sensitive than all other men, and so excels all other men in that susceptibility which is essentially a human characteristic, seeing that “no beast can adequately compare with man,” so far as “sensitivity” goes, sensitivity to impressions. The genius is “infinitely more sensitive,” he says, to all the aspects of life than the ordinary man. “Well, then!” we exclaim, “the genius has a truer or more real hold upon things than ordinary men have; his being more sensitive means that he sees and feels more.” “No,” says Schopenhauer, “that is just what makes him so excruciatingly unhappy!” “And so we understand how it is that some men of genius cannot look upon other men, with their monotonous countenances and universal stamp of mediocrity, as human beings at all; they cannot find their equals in these men, and so naturally fall into the error of regarding their own high standard as the normal one.<sup>1</sup> It is in this sense that Diogenes went about with a lamp seeking for a man; and in that work of genius, the *Kohleth*, we read, “Out of a thousand have I found one man, but not one woman among all these.” But why should genius and why should art thus spoil a man for perceiving meaning and importance in ordinary things and ordinary people?<sup>2</sup> Schopenhauer’s whole system tends to show the nugatoriness of ordinary life and of ordinary reality in face of the vision of the Ideas—all that appears to him simply “nothing,” only the “form of the appearance,” the “grades of being” in which the will chooses for the nonce

<sup>1</sup> Schop., *Über den Willen in der Natur—Physiologie u. Pathologie*.

<sup>2</sup> Schiller shall answer this question for us: “In seinem Gebiete muss auch der mächtigste Genius sich seiner Hoheit begeben und zu dem Kindersinn vertraulich herniedersteigen.”—*Ü. d. ästh. Erzieh., &c.*, Brief xxvii.

to appear. *What* the world expresses (the Ideas) is everything, as it were; the world itself is essentially nothing. It is Schopenhauer's old tendency simply to *see* and to *understand* that asserts itself in all that he writes in this strain—his tendency to think only of the universal and to neglect the particular. In so far, perhaps, as a philosopher has this tendency, he is apt not to be the best critic of works of art. But if the philosopher or any one else does fall into this tendency, this attitude of regarding life, Schopenhauer's system will afford him real food by the way it has of squeezing the *idea* out of everything, and then throwing away what seems to be left. This, we can see, is intellectualism in excess, and it must be confessed that Schopenhauer's theory of art is far too intellectual. In real art there is enjoyment and lingering feeling and perfect satisfaction; but there is no enjoyment, no *Genuss*, no pleasurable satisfaction in the contemplation of beauty as Schopenhauer sets it forth. His theory of artistic insight is far too metaphysical and too little psychological. As soon as he has *seen* a thing or a person in the light of the Idea, he has apparently "done with it." All intellectual artists have this tendency merely to *see* what a thing is, and then to "have done with it." Goethe had something of it in his attitude towards women and towards life as a whole. Leonardo da Vinci had it; hence that consummate intellectualism in his faces, and the play of irony that lives on their lips; they express *one* Idea eternally, but they are all the time conscious of the limitations of this expression, and might equally well have been made by their master to have set forth something else.<sup>1</sup> It is the same too in philosophy with Hegel—in Hegel's dialectic: as soon as a thing is therein *understood* it ceases to have any more meaning, in fact any more existence.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "The Holy Family with St Anne," and the "St John the Baptist," in the Louvre. The St John might represent a Circe.

All Schopenhauer's descriptions of art have the irony of genius running through them,—the feeling that much of life is mere surface-play, as it were, mere illusion. What he says is often extremely satisfactory in an intellectual regard, but it is too utterly soulless. He never seriously studied feeling as something that mediates between intellect and volition, as something that is in a sense a blending of both. He is strong enough to treat often of feeling and passion *more mathematico* as Spinoza did, but he is not appreciative enough of the element of spontaneous creative feeling in art proper. There is no positive feeling in his art, and art without feeling is dead and illusory. He said,<sup>1</sup> we remember, that feeling is essentially negative, denoting only that something is—*not thought* but merely—*felt*. This explains the formalism of all that he writes upon art. Now, as a matter of fact, feeling has to do with energy or effort (it measures effort), with the struggle for life and better life; and consequently the will ought to enter into Schopenhauer's theory of art. How contradictory it is to hold that the will does not enter into art, and yet that the Ideas express the grades of the will, and that the arts may be graded according to the grades of the will that they express! In art we see the consequences of Schopenhauer's original error, his *πρῶτον ψεῦδος*, that ordinary reality is illusory. If we question the reality of one grade of reality, one grade of the will, we shall likely go on to question the reality of other grades. If the primary qualities of matter are nothing, are only subjective, then the Ideas of art may possibly be subjective too. And it is so in Schopenhauer. Art really shows up only the unreality of things. Again, any one grade of the will ought to be just as good as any other grade. All things are perfect in their kind; a good tree seems just as real as a good magnet or a good man. Art is apparently a reflex of reality, but if reality

<sup>1</sup> See chap. i. p. 4.

is illusory, art will likely be illusory too. It is all very well to say that art copies or expresses Ideas, but then the Ideas are the quintessence of things, and if things are illusory the Ideas may be illusory too. We are never, in short, free in Schopenhauer from a large amount of illusionism about art itself. He felt this illusionism himself, and fell into the danger of saying that art was like "*the stage upon the stage* in 'Hamlet.'" Indeed he has no real standing-ground in the matter. We have seen his attempt to *grade* reality, and to *grade* the arts in accordance with the kind of reality that they express, but he had not the courage or thought to make out the highest grade of reality to be the most real grade of reality, and so the highest arts the most real of the arts; and so the whole of art as representing for man the final way of looking at reality. He is an idealist, and an idealist who, having questioned reality once, questioned it twice, and more than twice. He traces everything to the will, but we nowhere seem to get hold of the will. If we had got hold of it in artistic creation and aspiration, we should not have demurred so much. The highest of the arts simply takes Schopenhauer back to the beginning of the cosmic process. Music, he says, is simply the rhythm of the will that is trying to assert itself. That is, the will having toiled its way up to man, simply begins to hymn itself over again as a mere potency and no more. The will commits suicide, so to speak, in music, passing through expressibility into inexpressibility and mere potency.<sup>1</sup>

The defect of this whole line of thought is just the fact that it is simply a line of thought; it never stops to take

<sup>1</sup> It seems to me that the effect which Wagner's music produces upon certain people indicates the fact of its being to some extent an example of what is here put forth as Schopenhauer's doctrine. In so far as Wagner's music often illustrates the transition from what is inartistic (merely natural) to the truly artistic (what has been "born again" of the mind or of true mental form), it has a pedagogical rather than an artistic significance—it represents devices for interesting the unmusical in music. Cf. p. 249.

hold of anything: it began by questioning the reality of ordinary experience, and it now questions the reality of artistic experience. The intellectuality of Schopenhauer's theory of art is enough to destroy it altogether: art, he says, has "nothing to do with the will"; it bids us be at rest rather than go on to be and to evolve. No doubt we must allow for a certain inevitable abstractness and formalism in any attempt to say what art is on its own account. The mind often views things "apart" which really cannot be viewed apart. "Art for art's sake" is largely meaningless for this very reason. The fact that Schopenhauer isolates art from life is alone enough to make art seem illusory. And naturally enough there is another fatal consequence of this abstraction: remove beauty far enough away from life, and life itself will seem a pretty poor thing. "If we take out of life its few moments of religion, of art, and of pure love, what is left but a long series of trivial thoughts?" But we cannot take these things out of life! they are in life and of it! It is no use to think of isolating them and separating them from the rest of life—to think of them merely *by way of idea*. Art must be realistic as well as idealistic—must take firm hold of reality, however commonplace it may at first appear to be. Artistic realism is a thing that Schopenhauer did not face, and this again in spite of the fact that he did not believe in a dualism between mind and body.<sup>1</sup> If he had studied realism in art he would have seen both nature and man trying to evolve the highest kind of reality, and this would have enabled him to become a concrete instead of an abstract idealist, and to have connected his Ideas with reality and with the human personality. He might have seen that the highest effort of art is to realise a complete and perfected human individuality or person. Poetry is the most universal expression of human life, and not merely an endless comment or variation upon a few tran-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 27.

scendental Ideas. In other words, Schopenhauer failed to connect formal or abstract beauty with vital beauty, and his whole philosophy of art suffered from this defect.

There are but two things in Schopenhauer's whole philosophy—the will and the idea.<sup>1</sup> They are not reconciled with each other, but tend in turn to *assert* themselves and to destroy one another. All through the system the influence of each is felt equally strongly, and it would be difficult to say which is emphasised more strongly by Schopenhauer himself. Inasmuch as he is a metaphysician, he cares supremely for the idea, and it is somehow made by him finally to overtake the will and to throw it back into a state of mere potency; and so far the impersonality of the idea is victorious over the titanic tantalus-like striving of the will. On the other hand, his distinctive contribution to philosophy is the will, and the will is always present in his thought as the dark background of the whole system, as the beginning and the end of all things. But the system is really like a stream, with eddies and pools and side streams; *art* in it is like the water on the surface, collecting itself together in silent strength and potency before toppling over a cataract or fall, or like the water that is dammed off into an artificial channel, to flow over a revolving wheel, on which the sunlight or the moonlight may play. In both cases it will get broken up into countless myriads of particles, and will join the main current again, to again form the central flow and the side swirl and the eddies; while the whole current continues to move on, undergoing protean transformations, bearing down all obstacles and hurling up all sorts of things from its depths, and finally rushing on into the restless boundless ocean. Schopenhauer certainly gives us a description of life *as it is*, with the ideal and the real, with the calm

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 61.

and the quiet of the saint and the æsthete, and the vain pursuit of the sinner, and the crass realism and *naïve* faith of the philistine, all mixed up together. Looked at broadly, his system is just an illusionism woven out of the many broad contrasts in the world. He is right in thinking that art shows man what the world really and ultimately is, and that it brings this fact home to his consciousness. But he is utterly unable to tell man what he is to do with art, and how he is to obtain from art the service which it is fitted to perform. It may savour of a want of appreciation to use the word *service* about art at all, but there is nothing higher than human life and its possibilities, and Schopenhauer has taught us to subordinate all things to the one effort to live and to perpetuate life. Hegel, with one of his reassuring touches, suggests to us somewhere that even the highest things are also the most useful things. Yet Schopenhauer scorns all thought of connecting art with life.

(γ) We may again remind the reader of the fact that Schopenhauer uses (both consciously and unconsciously) the whole philosophy of "the universal" in thinking of the relation of the artistic consciousness to the ordinary stress and strain of life. His "universal," as has been said, is the Platonic Idea. But once again the Idea may mean anything, any mode of conceiving a thing in its general as opposed to its particular aspects, in its generality as expressive of some fundamental aspect of reality (the fish as a vertebrate, *e.g.*) as opposed to its particularity here and now (this particular fish). Schopenhauer unfortunately grew up to find his theory of the universal created for him all at a stroke in Platonism. He supplemented that theory by his happy reference to the different grades of life or the different species of natural history (there was no *biology* at the beginning of this century). Still, he relied far more upon intuition than upon objective

science to teach him what the universal or the Idea in things really was. The *feeling* for the universal he complacently regards as a part of the genius temperament. It is latent, he is willing to concede, in all men, and is brought to birth by the vision of artistic objects and of natural beauty. He was impressed by the element of inexpressibility or the transcendental character which we feel to exist in all real works of art, but he made no attempt to think of that in connection with a real scientific or philosophical theory of the universal. But such a theory we must have when we undertake to state what art is, if we would not lose ourselves in unintelligibility.

The artistic view of an object gives, let us say, the full "universal," the completest view of an object we can with our faculties attain to. Nevertheless art must be set forth as carrying all the other views of things, the common-sense view and the scientific view, and the ethical and the logical, to their completion and fulfilment. We do not find this in Schopenhauer. He does not relate art to science at all, but talks as if the former were altogether superior to the latter, above all comparison with it. This is why there is such danger of losing one's bearings in reading what Schopenhauer says about art. There is too violent a leap into another kind of reality altogether, a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*, and if we do not, despite Schopenhauer himself, read some real meaning into the Idea or the universal, we shall lose ourselves in unintelligibility and mysticism. In Aristotle's idea of art enabling us to do what nature has somehow failed to do, we have already seen the path along which artistic reality may be connected with ordinary reality and with scientific conceptions.

Nothing of this must be so construed as to cause us altogether to pass over Schopenhauer's idea that the artistic consciousness takes us out of the necessity of physical nature and out of the contradictions of life. It must be admitted that in artistic and religious perception and contemplation we



have the consciousness of a spiritual freedom and an æther-like at-homeness everywhere in reality, which is the highest efflorescence of life, a kind of salvation or exaltedness in which everything that savours of bondage, restriction and restraints and misery, seems to pass away. But what are we to think of that *disappearance of the distinction* between the "subject" and the "object," between "shadow" and "substance," between "appearance" and "reality," which Schopenhauer defined to be the essence of artistic contemplation? If art means the disappearance of *all* distinctions, does it not come to mean the extinction of consciousness, and so of all meaning whatsoever? If art has nothing to do with life, if it is purely a static account of reality and not a dynamic account, then it is something that we cannot at all appreciate, something that is quite unreal. The rest and repose that we find in true art and true religion come from the consciousness of having potentially attained to a perfection which we instinctively regard as the end of our being. It is right to emphasise the extinction of all feelings of pain and "defect" that takes place in the perception of beauty, provided we do not allow ourselves to think that with the realisation of beauty in our lives everything else has actually ceased to be. It is all very well to feel with the first modern discoverers of the glories of Greek architecture that there is simply "nothing to do here but to worship," but we cannot worship if the use of our faculties is denied to us; and Schopenhauer in substance says to the person who wishes to appreciate beauty, "You must take away your whole intellect with its tendency to distinguish and to judge before you can approach the threshold of art!" If we cannot approach art *with* our intellect, and if we cannot see, to a certain extent, how artistic objects are connected with all other objects, how they bring these objects in a sense to their perfection, we cannot worship at all.

The universal and the particular elements in artistic things are too much separated from each other in Schopenhauer from the very beginning. He had evidently never fully considered Aristotle's criticism of the Platonic Ideas, which, prosaic and captious as it sometimes seems, has yet to be mastered by every student of matters philosophical—ἐν τοῖς εἰδέσει τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς τὰ νοητά ἔστι.<sup>1</sup> The Ideas have to be apprehended in a concrete or sensuous setting. Art enables us to see the eternal forms of reality in the objects of sense, in the media of sense and imagination; not in some sphere wherein we throw away all our ordinary or our scientific consciousness of things. Schopenhauer has no definite philosophy of the "particular." He does not tell us how particular things are organically related to the universal element in things. It is true that he tends to think, as was remarked before,<sup>2</sup> that particular things are not real which do not discharge some definite function or purpose. (Art in a sense tells us what the universe is trying to realise, but does not adequately realise before it comes to man, and in man only potentially and not without his conscious co-operation in artistic and moral effort.) This dynamic way of looking at particular things is healthful and sound as far as it goes. It is theoretically wrong even to ask how particular things stand related to their archetypes or their Ideas; particular things and Ideas do not exist "apart"; there are no mere "particulars" and no mere "universals" or Ideas. Schopenhauer thought there were mere Ideas existing as the "immediate objectivity of the will," and consequently taught that all things other than Ideas were unreal and illusory. He had, as it is said, the metaphysical tendency to *place all reality in the universal*. Now the mere universal is nothing. And moreover the uni-

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, De Anima, iii. 8, 432 a 4.

<sup>2</sup> See above, chapter on Idealism, the close, in reference to Transcendental Idealism.

versal element in things is a *function* or *operative principle*, the idea of the *purpose* or *function* that they discharge in the system of things. It may be hard to say where the idea of the "purpose" or "end" of different things resides—whether in the mind of man or in the mind of God; but it is still true that the reality of things consists in their function, in the purpose they serve: if a thing fulfils only a temporary function in the world, then it is only a temporary thing; and if it fulfils a relatively permanent function, it is a relatively permanent thing. But only conscious persons seem to be permanent things or relatively permanent creations in the universe. Thus, on the whole, art teaches more what nature is *trying to do* than what nature *is* (statically and definitely). Every one who has read either Heraclitus or Darwin, knows that the world is best understood as an evolution of some tendency or other. But in art alone are we fully conscious of the universe as *potentially* realised purpose, as a purpose that is ever tending to complete itself.

All this only brings out in another way what has already been suggested about ontology being resolved by Schopenhauer into teleology. The universe has essentially attained its end in the case of man, or in the highest evolution of man's life, in the spiritualised and creative human purpose that expresses itself in art and morality and religion. Art is best understood when taken to be a reading of man's life and of the perfection of man's life,—of what the ideal human personality really is. This is the outcome of Aristotle's theorising about poetry, and it is the outcome of much modern æsthetic philosophy. It is what is exemplified in such a piece of music as Beethoven's Heroic Symphony, and in such of Wagner's musical efforts as are theoretically legitimate. Schopenhauer's own successor, von Hartmann, treats of art as an evolution, and so did Hegel, and so does the nineteenth century in general. We are best enabled to solve the

antithesis between Classicism and Romanticism by viewing art as an evolution which tends on the one hand to establish the canons of its own perfection—of clear and definite and finished *expression*; and on the other to endlessly feel its way into the evolving life of the universe, as if it could only satisfy its own instinct by setting forth or creating new aspects of reality. Wagner, in our own day, has made music practically co-extensive with human life; and Goethe and Browning have done the same thing for poetry. If Schopenhauer could have learned the lesson of evolutionary biology about teleology, his analysis of art would not have been so static; he would not have thought of the universal as simply representing the grades of the assertion of the will, the “species” and “genera” that were established in definite and rigid outlines. Biology has taught us that there is, indeed, a fundamental, structural element in every organism, which is relatively permanent, but yet that even structure itself and form—not to mention species—is undergoing constant modification and evolution and adaptation to the endless wants of that mysterious effort after life which characterises all animal beings. It has taught us, too, that even species are not groups of beings whose limits in quantity and quality can be definitely established, and that, in short, the very specific type which all beings in a certain group are supposed to exhibit is constantly undergoing modification.

Function, structure, type, the organic idea, species itself, can be understood only as the varying expression of evolving life: these things are, none of them, fixed and definite, stable and rigid. Greek art, the art of finished form, is not the only art of the world; and we must not forget that even the Greek artists studied in the Palæstra as well as in the studio—studied, that is, the human form as indefinitely modifiable by training and exercise as well as relatively fixed and already perfect. Modern scholarship, too, has established

the fact that there are elements of Romanticism not merely in Greek poetry but in Greek sculpture; that the Greeks, let us say, thought of reality as endlessly transforming itself. Schopenhauer is quite wrong in regarding the Ideas of art, or of the different species and grades of the will to live, as fixed and immovable and eternally complete. They are not so. Artistic forms and artistic ideas and the various arts express the various efforts which the cosmos is making to attain to perfect formal expression of itself. It can do this only in the case of man, in the spiritualised purpose and achievement of man. All the arts from architecture to music have a bearing on the perfect development and expression of human life. Schopenhauer did not give this fact a place in his system. It is to take altogether too quietistic a view of art to think of the singer of a lyric as merely "conscious of himself as the subject of pure will-less knowing," or of tragedy as simply "making manifest the strife of the will with itself"—the "original sin of human nature, the crime of existence"; or to think of music as absolutely "independent of the world." It is *human beings* who sing and struggle and express harmony or rhythmic movement.

He emphasises altogether too strongly the difference between artistic objects and ordinary things. In sometimes talking as if artistic beauty represented the only kind of beauty, he forgets his own contention that everything is in a sense beautiful. Beauty is neither entirely objective nor entirely subjective: it is a phenomenon or fact which exists only in a world where conscious life plays a great part. Artistic beauty is a refinement and development of natural beauty. Art does not deal merely with *pictures* of reality but with a *kind of reality*.<sup>1</sup> Plants are beautiful, and so are

<sup>1</sup> Speaking of the realm or kingdom of the beautiful, Schiller asks: "Existiert aber auch ein solcher Staat des schönen Scheins, und wo ist er zu finden? Dem Bedürfniss nach existiert er in jeder feingestimmten Seele . . ."—*Loc. cit.*

the colours of birds, and even animals have some sense of beauty; and a "mound of loose earth, if left to itself in the open air," will assume beautiful shapes and forms, as Mr Ruskin points out.

There is in short objective beauty, or the beauty of things, as well as pictorial beauty, and art is not merely like the "stage upon the stage" in 'Hamlet.' Of course objective beauty is only beauty that exists for some percipient being or other. There are various grades of beauty, and these all shade into each other and form a graduated series, just as reality itself undoubtedly has grades—to use the language of Schopenhauer himself. Art is "everywhere at home," and art is everywhere both subjective and objective. From idealism we have learned never to allow ourselves to think of a world where there is no self or no "subject" or no percipient being, where there could be an object without a subject. Artistic reality thus represents a definite grade of reality, perhaps the highest reality, but at least a real phase of things. The world we know includes both subjective and objective factors, and it is in the world which we know that beauty exists. Beauty is therefore both subjective and objective. It is the chief thing that proclaims the fact that the world is a spiritual world, a world in which conscious *persons* may really feel at home and expect to feel at home. The power of perceiving beauty exists in us by way of latent capacity, and we can develop it just as we can develop the moral perceptions—feeble or dull though they may be—that exist within us. Just as Aristotle could not explain the genesis of virtue otherwise than as the development, by means of training, of a latent possibility,<sup>1</sup> so art cannot be explained otherwise than as the outcome of an artistic susceptibility existing in human nature from the beginning. And this susceptibility, when taken in conjunction with the objective elements of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. τὰς δὲ ἀρετὰς λαμβάνομεν ἐνεργήσαντες πρότερον.—Eth. Nic., ii. 1103 a 31.

beauty existing in the world of the senses, constitutes an ultimate fact of the universe, as real as any other fact in it, and as impossible to expunge or remove from the world. Beauty exists only for the senses, or in some medium which we can actually and really appreciate. The imaginative world is itself a differentiation of the real world, and not a mere "double" of the real world, a double which might be quite unreal. Schopenhauer writes of beauty as if it needed no media for its expression; or at least his transcendental way of talking about art is apt to give us this impression.

It is wrong to dissociate beauty too much from reality. The formal conditions of beauty are not merely non-adaptability to purpose and necessary difference from anything that we can perceive with the senses or imagine or think, as Schopenhauer's language seems to suggest. They do not indeed represent any kind of non-adaptability or unintelligibility; they are simply the conditions of formal expression for the medium in which we have to work in any given art. The medium of art in general is partly sensuous and partly imaginative. In music there is sound; in architecture there is gravity and cohesiveness, etc.; and in painting, colour and light. There are formal scientific conditions for the treatment of colour and sound and stone and language, etc., and the artist must master these formal conditions so as not to sin against them; still he must not be limited by these mere conditions, but must be able to treat his medium freely and creatively, so as to animate it with the appearance of spiritual suggestiveness and reality and expressiveness.

It does not require much reflection to realise that a great deal of speculation as to the nature of beauty has turned upon the idea of beauty as representing some sort of adaptability or conformity on the part of beautiful objects to their Idea or their end or their purpose. Neither Socrates

nor Aristotle could discuss or even think of the problem of beauty out of all connection with the idea of some conscious or unconscious end. Plato no doubt philosophises much about the *absolute* character of true beauty, but one rarely finds pieces of æsthetic criticism among the Greeks, where the notion of beauty as a kind of adaptation to or expression of purpose is entirely absent.<sup>1</sup> Socrates positively could not think of beauty save as relative to purpose, and Aristotle tended to think of it as such, of the artist as somehow bringing to perfection what nature herself had failed to perfect or "to turn off well."<sup>2</sup> Even the attempt that Plato made to extend his notion of the Ideas so as to include ordinary and mechanical things, such as hair or filth or a bed, suggests that an ultimate philosophy of the Ideas must think both of the Ideas themselves, the "universal" element in things, and of artistic objects in connection with purpose and fulfilment. By a thing realising its Idea, Plato partly meant the possibility of a thing realising or not realising a purpose or an Idea for which it was intended. The Gods to Plato<sup>3</sup> are supreme workers or artists in the sense that they fashion things after their eternal Ideas. In modern æsthetic, Kant discussed the problem of beauty under the idea of adaptation, which is half-way to the idea of teleology, and the history of later æsthetic theory seems to justify more or less the selection of the point of view of adaptation as a way of judging of artistic reality. Goethe insisted that a creature was beautiful when it reached the height of its natural development, and it does seem as if the attribute of *perfection* which we unconsciously attribute to all beautiful things is to be traced to the feeling that a really beautiful thing is a perfect realisation of some purpose or other, which seems to have been implied in its

<sup>1</sup> The celebrated description of the shield of Achilles (Iliad, xviii.—*c.g.*, line 549) is quite typical.

<sup>2</sup> ἀπεργάσασθαι.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the idea of the δημιουργός in the Timæus. Also Rep., 530 A.



very existence. This idea exists in Père Buffier too, and in many others.

It is true that the word "purpose" is inadequate to express the spontaneity and the freedom and the organic wholeness which every beautiful thing seems to exhibit, and in this sense we sympathise with Schopenhauer in scorning the idea of purpose or utility or end as applicable to artistic things. But humanity has now definitely adopted the evolutionary way of looking at reality, a way that is as old as Greek thought and Oriental fancy. And thus we must think of beauty, too, in connection with the whole philosophy of evolution, or of the will. Although natural beauty is an efflorescence rather than the result of mechanical contrivance, it still represents or expresses the harmonious adaptation of matter to creative and organising form or purpose. In artistic beauty we are not conscious of the way in which the result we see has been obtained; nor does any artist produce his work by a conscious following out of rules, or by any rigid adherence to clearly defined purpose. The artist works in obedience to the creative impulse which he somehow finds in himself, and which he cannot altogether account for. It was the intellectual dread which Schopenhauer had of dragging down artistic reality to the level of the ordinary categories of science and of common-sense that prevented him from thinking of art as having anything to do, directly or indirectly, with purpose and causation. He thought that "end" was a conception or category of the pragmatic intellect, which is the slave of the will. But then, as has been suggested, both humanity at large and the philosophers have decided that the glory of art lies just in the fact of its seeming to set forth those ideals and purposes that we are "toiling all our lives to find." Art simply *must* be explained in terms of our leading ideas about life. It carries, in short, all the other ways of explaining reality to their highest degree of expression.

Ordinary reality always falls short even of the scientific idea of perfect reduction to law, but in artistic reality we seem to see reality expressing itself fully and completely. In his æsthetic philosophy Schopenhauer was a slave to the formalism of Kant. Kant was always afraid of saying that things really are what we are compelled to think them. He modestly contended that our estimates of reality were only subjective after all. Schopenhauer had learned from Kant that all the principles and the categories which we use in explaining reality have to do only with our experience of reality. And so, rather than imperil the reality of the thing he cared for more than anything else in the world, he avoided the use of any of the ordinary terms of knowledge in characterising or describing art. Thus both philosophers are victims of one and the same error. What we are *compelled to assume about reality is true of reality*. Our experience may be and, on the lines of thought suggested by Schopenhauer's principle of will, *is the most real thing in the world*.<sup>1</sup> Ordinary experience, science, and art have reality, each in its own way. But artistic reality sums up all reality, and all ordinary ways of looking at reality. Art is a creation of the spiritualised will that exists in man and in the world, of the purified taste and aspiration of humanity.<sup>2</sup> The world is will, is process, and in art and in beauty the world-process is brought to its most complete or consummate expression, a consummation which is a *conscious* consummation for *conscious* persons. Hence it is that human beings may be said to *help to make* artistic reality; this power is a heritage that is theirs by birth, the privilege of *bringing reality to its most complete development*. We have, in the present century, the representatives of natural

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. iii., close.

<sup>2</sup> We have studied the materialised (corporeal) will of man in chapter iv. The idealised will, which is to infuse new meaning into the *effort after life*, will be studied in chapters vi. and vii. A creative impulse ought to control the higher as well as the lower life of man.

science who are prepared to demonstrate to us the utility of beauty so far as organic evolution and sexual selection are concerned. As a matter of fact, beauty *is useful*, whether we like to think so or not. We *know* that it is useful in helping animals and human beings to attain to a higher type of life, to realise perfection in different species and types of existence. Beauty may not be *merely* useful, but it is *at least* useful.

(δ) Then, again, there can be no complete theory of beauty without a theory of æsthetic pleasure, and so far as this goes Schopenhauer is essentially found wanting. We have never yet got beyond the fact, pointed out by Aristotle, that pleasure is simply the sense of unimpeded energy. Artistic pleasure must therefore somehow be considered as a reflex of the very highest kind of activity, of the effort partly intellectual and partly emotional, to grasp the world as a unity—to create, if we will, the kind of reality after which we aspire. The pleasure of art, no doubt, is disinterested, as Kant and many others suggest, but it is disinterested just because it is not limited to the consciousness of any merely particular or inferior achievement or design. It can associate itself with any object when that object is viewed in its universal relations. Aristotle discussed *Tragedy* as in a manner quickening our consciousness of *life*, as presenting the events and actions of life on some scale of magnitude and importance, and, through the excitation in us of pity and fear, relieving our most vital feelings and bracing our system for the normal work of life.<sup>1</sup> In short, the will to live involves *attainment*, both conscious and unconscious, and æsthetic pleasure must somehow be connected with the pleasure of living or the highest pleasures of living. The fine arts represent a graduated series of the forms of life which are the inheritance of the human person-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Prof. Butcher's note on the different meanings of the word *κάθαρσις*.—Some Aspects of the Greek Genius (1891), p. 351.

ality, and which it can carry to still more perfect and unified expression in the case of its own evolution if it only has the courage to *will* artistic reality as part of its own life. Artistic pleasure, then, cannot be considered apart from the evolution of life, just as art cannot be considered apart from artistic production. The world has always felt that art depends upon the existence of the artist, or upon the existence of artistic feeling in the person who seeks to appreciate beautiful things. This is why, when a great artist dies, we feel that a priest of humanity has been lost to the world. But as the poet<sup>1</sup> reminds us, despite the endless idealisation by man of all the forces that animate nature and control his own life, the world is "still young." The high ideals of many of the best and truest of men have not yet become the common heritage and possession of all men. It is only within the present century that man has gained a consciousness of the oneness of all creation, and of its infinite subserviency, therefore, to the moral and spiritual aspirations of humanity.

Schopenhauer considered art far too little in connection with the theory of artistic production, and he simply did not come in sight of the view of æsthetic pleasure as necessarily—*qua* pleasure—connected with the sense of energy and volition, of creative energy. Aristotle, with his fine ethical and æsthetic instinct, associates art with habit, just as he associated virtue with habit. He says that art is a habit of creation (the production of a work or result) under the guidance of true reason—*ἐξῆς μετὰ λόγου ἀληθοῦς ποιητική*.<sup>2</sup> He also assumes that the man of really cultivated artistic tastes—*ὁ χαρίεις*—is the ultimate court of appeal in matters æsthetic. The whole tendency, that is, of the best æsthetic reflection and criticism, goes towards connecting art both with the artistic impulse and artistic pleasure—with some

<sup>1</sup> See Morris, 'Epic of Hades,' conclusion of the poem.

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.*, vi. 4. 1140 a 10.

form, in other words, of instinctive or conscious human energy. Natural beauty cannot be sharply marked off from artistic or artificial beauty, for all beauty is a creation; beauty does not exist for the man who has neither the artistic temperament nor the sense for artistic reality. Art, in short, does not represent anything definite and established, as Schopenhauer tended to think, but a kind of growing reality, a kind of consciousness of things, which is ever attaining to a more and more adequate expression of itself. It is impossible to discuss the existence of art apart from the artistic impulses, which are a kind of surplus play or reflex of the sense for life itself, as Schiller saw. Beauty is real only as the result of appreciative perception and creative effort, and as a realm of spiritual beauty which is a conscious development from the realm of natural beauty. It is both subjective and objective, as real as anything else is, and possibly more real as expressing the highest evolution of reality. And because it is a compact and organic realm or kingdom, it is capable of increase both from within and from without, from man himself and from nature.

When Schopenhauer said that the man of genius is man in the highest degree, he was thinking of the susceptibility of the man of genius, of his being infinitely alive to all the sides of life. Even in this he advances beyond all his own statements which seem to imply that the man of genius merely *sees* into life (having, so to speak, no generous and healthy appreciation of action and achievement and of the evolution of human history). But if he really believed that the man of genius is a man in the highest degree, how could art be to him such a negative thing as it apparently was, so negative of all ordinary life and achievement, and so unconnected with it? The man who is a man in the highest degree must be potentially able to will everything

in life, or at least be capable of understanding every aim and impulse in life. If the artist, or the man of genius, has an infinite susceptibility for all life, how can art be made out to consist in the negation of life? Humanity has decided that evolution is unintelligible apart from the idea of *end* or achievement, and so the artist must be able to feel and appreciate art as shadowing forth the consummation of human achievement.<sup>1</sup> Indeed genius and the insight of art can mean only a power of seeing things in the light of their true relations and their true development and complete expression. If life consists in will as Schopenhauer, with a considerable show of reason and truth, says it does, there is really as much reason for admiring a genius of action like Cæsar as for admiring a genius of "insight" like da Vinci, or a genius of "contemplation" like Plato, or a genius of "religious insight" like Buddha.

All really fundamental intuitions into things or into persons depend in the end upon a power of divining their true function or end. Schopenhauer says that a good will is "everything" in ethics, and "nothing" in art. This may be very seriously questioned. It would be impossible, for example, for an artist devoid of all good will to portray what is called beauty of character, and this may certainly fall within the sphere of art. Is it possible, again, for the creative genius to know nothing about life and yet to represent it completely? To *know* about life is to be infinitely susceptible to all the aspects of life, to be infinitely capable of *living into* reality. And is not living and sympathetically living into things a matter of the will after all? Have not all real artists felt in themselves the imperious necessity of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Man musste es zuletzt am gerathesten finden aus *dem ganzen Complex der gesunden menschlichen Natur* das Sittliche so wie *das Schöne* zu entwickeln," quoted from Goethe by Professor Mackenzie, 'A Manual of Ethics,' p. 121.

experiencing a great deal of life in order that they might feel themselves capable of giving adequate expression to all its aspects? Speaking of the play-impulse which he associates so closely with the æsthetic instinct, Schiller says that a man has it, "only in so far as he is in the complete sense of the word *a man*"—*nur, wo er in voller Bedeutung des Worts Mensch ist*. It is doubtless up to a certain limit possible to know things and the life that is in things, simply through the power of mere intellect. Some artists do this. But there are some things which can only be *understood*, as it were, by *being* them, or by *becoming* them. To *know* in art we must have the courage to be artistic, and to put ourselves at the point of view of artistic production. And it is the same thing with many experiences or aspects of life—they must be actually *felt* to be understood. The highest art is art which is expressive of the heights or depths of human character. If art is equal to the expression of this, it becomes an interpretation of human life, and if it is capable of interpreting human life, it is implicitly capable of interpreting all life. Art must not be thought to take us *out of reality*, but only *more deeply into reality*. Because Schopenhauer did not make out art to interpret life, he very often falls into extreme vagueness of thought and language when describing artistic objects. In doing so he is often—much though he would dislike being told so—in the words of Heine about the excesses of Hegelianism, really *echt deutsch, romantisch, verrückt*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One often wonders why even official German philosophy should not be able to incorporate in itself, and give the proper philosophical expression to a great deal that men like Heine and Voltaire make merry over in regard to the philosophers—in particular, their slowness to see the inadequacy to life of even the most formally perfect knowledge. Schopenhauer is one of the very few philosophers who are philosophic enough to see the limits of philosophy. These of course, according to the main line of thought of this book, are not quantitative but qualitative. That is, there are some things which cannot be discovered or detected, much less understood, by the mere idea or reason.

It is because art is so intimately connected with life that we encounter such apparent exuberance and extravagance in the language of those who describe what they feel in the exercise of artistic perception and insight. "Beauty is the life of love, apprehending its own ground and purpose in the idea."<sup>1</sup> This language is to be found in such a comparatively rational observer of art as von Hartmann.<sup>2</sup> It is true that beauty is in a sense a kind of life, and not merely an efflorescence of life. At least it can be understood only as the highest outcome of the sense of life. *Heiter ist die Kunst!* Now surely there can be no *Heiterkeit* apart from life or from the sense of life. Schopenhauer's cold, rationalistic, transcendental formalism about art indicates an absence on his part of a real, concrete, sympathetic divination of what art really is and can really profess to do. Is it not true, as a matter of fact, that nearly all artists or workers at art feel most keenly the real organic and vital connection that exists between the creative feeling in art and the instinct for life and love as the focus and spring of all life?

It is true that the estimation of beauty according to any merely particular interest is in a sense unæsthetic, and that in this regard art can be said to have no purpose but its own perfection. But our only concern is to suggest a line of reflection in which beauty may be seen to be real, to be objective as well as subjective. One way to do this is to connect art or beauty with life by making it a real part of life, by making it a real thing in the world, a real side of existence. The world of beauty is a real world, or at least a differentiation or development of the real world. The per-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Mr Bosanquet from von Hartmann's "Æsthetic;" 'History of Æsthetic,' p. 628.

<sup>2</sup> Some of von Hartmann's very best work is to be found in his 'Die deutsche Ästhetik seit Kant.' His disciples admit this.



fection of art bespeaks the perfection of the development of life. The perfection of art is nothing but its being able to express the infinite significance of life. There are limits to the extent to which we may seek to estimate beauty solely on its own account. Indeed there is no such thing as *mere beauty*. It is always *persons* and *things* that are beautiful. Philosophy has to guard against abstractions in art perhaps more than in any other realm of human knowledge or feeling. It is the essence of art to make the universal and the abstract concrete, to reconcile us to the actual world as really beautiful when seen in the light of the ideas that express its life. Art can reserve to itself only the right to say what the direction of its idealisation of reality should be. No one knows this but the artist, and we must learn it from him—

“ But God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear ;  
The rest may reason and welcome : 'tis we musicians *know*.”

There is a sense in which even art is never fully able to express its ideal of a complete expression of life ; for expression is qualitative more than quantitative. Formally, no doubt, true art is always perfect, but there are no limits as to the “content” that it may seek to express or show to exist in things. The limits of life are not yet known—it is practically infinite ; and so it is true that art is really limited by nothing save the idea of its own infinite perfection. The world of art is the whole world carried infinitely beyond its present self, to infinite realisation and expressiveness. It is still, however, the world and life. A mere Platonism or idealism which does not lift up the earth to the clouds, but which itself remains merely in the clouds, is nothing that man can appreciate. It is “a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain,” to use the words of Matthew Arnold about Shelley—if what he said is strictly true, which may be questioned, as neither Shelley nor

anybody else could create poetry which had nothing to do with life or the real world. Art which disappeared completely into "the universal" would be no art, for it is the essence of art to reconcile the universal with the particular.

It is hard to say whether Schopenhauer is more right or wrong in his philosophising about art. He wanted to make art infinitely real, and he felt it to be so, but he chose a very bad way of expressing what he felt. He exhibits the whole philosophy of what has been called the "false" or the "abstract" universal. He ought to have brought art infinitely into life instead of taking it infinitely out of life. And yet *it is only an adequate realisation of his own great principle of will* which enables us to connect art with life. Some Hegelians may think that Hegel's *Idea* would enable us to do this equally well. It does not, however, for this one reason if for no other, that the will has a future before it while the *Idea* has none. The will is always trying to be; the glory of the idea in Hegel's eyes, is that it always *is*.<sup>1</sup> So far as human life goes, the will represents a truer way of looking at it than the idea. The essence of human life is that it is an effort at attainment, and so the will is a more fruitful principle in the realm of art than the mere idea. The history of modern art bears out this conclusion. Modern art has so often shown an express or implied contempt for what is merely established by way of artistic canon and precedent and rule, and so often sought, in "realism" or "impressionism" or "naturalism," or through an imaginary acceptance of the teachings of science,<sup>2</sup> to force its way to the undisguised reality or appearance of things. The true artist is always

<sup>1</sup> The *Idea* or the *Notion* of Hegel is of course different from the Platonic *Idea* of Schopenhauer.

<sup>2</sup> I am thinking of some Swedish paintings (exhibited at the Chicago Exposition) the idea of which was to make things appear as they ought to appear according to the laws of optics and light.

in search of a new *motif*. He realises, in other words, that art is always seeking to evolve a kind of art that lies ahead of us, and so he is always seeking for something in life that others have overlooked, and that he possibly may be able to find and give expression to. But this translation of the world of art into terms of the will or of the *achievement* which seems to be the essence of human life, is a thing which Schopenhauer himself did not attempt. It will be remembered that we undertook to examine his views on art, to see whether art took us out of the bondage and the alleged misery of ordinary life. We have now found that art, instead of taking us out of life, rather takes us more deeply and vitally into life.

By way of drawing the foregoing general remarks to a conclusion, we may perhaps be allowed to suggest that the *Idea* of a thing is simply the sense we have of the totality of the relations which that thing sustains to the world as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Reality consists in process, in function, and in evolution. Neither common-sense, nor science, nor rational philosophy is equal to the full knowledge or sense of the relations that one thing sustains to the rest of reality. Nor do all these things taken together give us a full sense for reality. Art it is, and art alone, which supplements and rounds off our partial

<sup>1</sup> I say the *sense* we have, &c., because we perhaps never have an absolutely clear and distinct *knowledge* of the *Idea* (or "universal" or "type" or "generic qualities," or "notion") of a thing or phenomenon. Let me open, for example, a statistical or scientific report. I read there: "St Hilaire says we *never see a type*; it is only in the mind. Broca says human types have no real existence. I [Lombroso] acquiesce in these views. There is only one question: *What is the minimum of useful characteristics to which a type can be reduced?* The question is not answered. It depends upon the rigour which one requires in a particular case."—'Abnormal Man,' p. 80. My suggestion is that science necessarily gives a relative and incomplete answer to the question: What is the *Idea* of a thing? Art alone gives the complete answer. And yet Art must answer this question along the lines of function and purpose and end. "*Das Schöne allein genießen wir als Individuum und als Gattung zugleich*"—Schiller.

sense for reality. There is an inexpressible element in any one thing which can only be shadowed forth for the human mind in imaginative presentation, and it is art that does this. The direction which the artistic idealisation of an object may take cannot be expressed before the creation of the artistic representation of the object. The artist divines the full significance of an object or situation only because he is gifted with a sensitiveness and subtle inventiveness that are qualitatively superior to and infinitely more penetrating than the knowledge of the scientist or the rational philosopher. All knowledge of things rests upon a sense of the relations things sustain to our will, as expressive of the highest purpose that is apparent in the universe; and the artistic sense is the highest possible refinement of the sense of life. Art must never be used to do anything else than simply light up the infinite significance of all life and of all reality. Schopenhauer's idea that art takes us out of life or makes us desirous of negating life, is theoretically inconceivable and actually false. He urged this idea, as has been suggested, out of a desire to do justice to the reality of artistic insight, but his zeal for art took a mistaken direction. In what he wrote about art he forgot his professed sympathy for Locke's empirical philosophy and his contention that the mind can give out again only what it has already received from perception. Art does not go beyond experience, for it cannot invent anything that is not suggested by the real world. It idealises the real, and so seems to go beyond the real, but it is always the *real* that art idealises.

In suggesting the limitations under which Schopenhauer's theory of art is conceived, and the reconstruction which it must undergo before it can be brought into real relation with life, we have indicated from yet another point of view the illusionism which characterises his whole system. In per-

fect fairness to Schopenhauer himself, his pessimism might be summed up in the contention that the only thing that is worth anything in the world is beauty, and that life is inevitably illusory because beauty can never become a real possession for the *individual* person. It cannot become so, because, in the first place, art deals with "the universal," and the individual is confined or hemmed in by his own particular interests; and because, in the second place, the life of the individual consists in will and attainment—beauty, on the contrary, in statuesque repose. Exception has been taken to these assumptions both in the case of art and in that of the individual. It is very strange that Schopenhauer, in making so much of the sexual instinct and of the mere desire to live and to perpetuate life, did not connect our æsthetic instincts more with the fact of the attraction of the sexes and with the desire to live endlessly, and with the creative instinct which characterises human life and all life.<sup>1</sup> This has been done in our own day by metaphysic and biology, by psychology and æsthetic. And of course Plato connected both philosophy and art with the creative instinct of man's mind and life.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Breslau has painted a cheek so true to nature, so perfect, that I, a woman and a rival artist, felt like kissing it."—Journal of Marie Bashkirtseff, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Symposium, 206 D—"Μοῖρα οὖν καὶ Εὐλείθυια ἡ καλλονὴ ἐστι τῇ γενέσει."

## CHAPTER VII.

## SCHOPENHAUER'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

"That the world has only a physical but no moral significance is the very greatest and the most pernicious of errors—the only real perversity of judgment—and is at bottom that which faith has personified as anti-Christ."<sup>1</sup>

"Only that metaphysic is really and directly a support to ethics, which is itself ethical in its origin, constructed, in fact, out of ethical material, the will. For this reason I could have called my metaphysic ethic with much more justification than Spinoza, with whom the word savours of irony—a sort of *lucus a non lucendo*, in fact, since it is only through sophistry that he foists morality on to a system which has logically no room for it."<sup>2</sup>

SCHOPENHAUER'S ethical philosophy has a peculiar significance, for the reason that he thought the secret of the world could be understood only in an ethical regard. His supreme principle is indeed in name an ethical one, and he meant to imply that its nature and its workings could be understood only by reference to the principles which govern the actions of man. The metaphysical meaning of the world is for him an ethical meaning. Ontological philosophy, whether scientific or metaphysical, actually dissolves itself in his hands into ethical philosophy. It was suggested, in the chapter on Idealism, that persons might in the strictest sense be claimed to be the only *existences* in the world, and that things other than persons have only a borrowed or relative existence—they do not exist

<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer.

<sup>2</sup> Schop., Werke, iv. 141 Ü. d. Willen in. d. Natur.

for themselves, but only for other things or for *persons*. Schopenhauer's idea that human individuality, like all individuality, is an illusion, prevented him from seeing this as a natural outcome of an evolutionary philosophy of will. He ought to have seen that the real problem in respect to the personality of man is just as to how man can conserve and develop his conscious existence as already something more than a mere focus of impulses and forces. The will attains to its highest expression in man, and it surely ought not to fail of reality just there. Yet we saw, in dealing with Schopenhauer's theory of knowledge, that the danger-point of his whole system lay in connection with the reality of the *self*. Knowledge seemed to fail us at the very point where it became supremely important—at the point, namely, where it tended to become self-consciousness: the inward roots of our being lay in profound darkness to Schopenhauer. This, however, was his own fault. He called conceptual knowledge the only kind of knowledge; and certainly the knowledge that we have of our own personality is not merely conceptual knowledge, but rather something more real—a kind of *sense* of our life as evolving will.

Schopenhauer may be said to have pronounced the world to be illusory, just because it makes us expect something in the case of the human personality—final and absolute existence—which it fails to give us. Perhaps it was only to be expected that he should find the world or nature to be in itself insufficient to satisfy the demands of the human will in its desire for infinite existence. That, however, is not our point just now, but rather that it is natural enough for Schopenhauer to hold that the meaning of the world could be understood only in an ethical regard, since he held will to be the essence of the most characteristic being in the world—man. We have seen how he could say that the essence of the world, whatever it might turn out to be, was at least

something which we could not apprehend by knowledge alone. By the highest good or the most real thing in the world, we undoubtedly mean the highest good or the most real thing for man. If we only think deeply enough on the matter, we shall likely concede that the significance of the world must at least be *thought* to be ethical. "That the extreme point to which the significance of existence runs itself up is the ethical is evident from the fact that on the approach of death every man's thoughts, whether he has adhered to religious dogmas or not, take an ethical turn, and that he tries to make up his account with his own past life in a moral regard."<sup>1</sup> This no one perhaps would care to deny. As a matter of fact, the ultimate meaning of things *is* a moral meaning. That Schopenhauer called his world principle *will* is a proclamation of this fact. Another way of expressing the same thought is to say that ethics tries to give a deeper analysis of reality than any other of the so-called special sciences. Ethics is the highest of all the special sciences, and runs more inevitably than any of them into philosophy proper. The *method* of ethics, as a recent writer<sup>2</sup> properly suggests, is in fact "the method of philosophy rather than that of science." Ethics has to sift its facts perhaps more carefully than any other science, and is implicated in theory almost at the outset. This all means that we cannot study ethics to much purpose if we do not feel that in ethics we encounter somehow the final meaning of things, and that a merely scientific method would not there be completely adequate. We shall find that Schopenhauer's own treatment of ethics is almost wholly philosophical or metaphysical—too philosophical, in fact. He does not attach enough importance to the scientific study of ethical facts as such. This is perhaps natural enough, seeing that he is before everything else a philosopher in the grand old sense

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Werke ; Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik, s. 261.

<sup>2</sup> Professor James Seth, A Study of Ethical Principles, p. 21.



of the word—a man who is trying to solve the problem about the essence of all things. In his ethics, then, we come very close to his final teaching, though not altogether to it, because Schopenhauer had the courage to go beyond the philosophy of ethics into the philosophy of religion. We shall see whether this is or is not a natural thing to do.

I. The two greatest ideas in all philosophy to Schopenhauer were the ideality of space and time, and noumenal or transcendental freedom—both of them achievements of Kant. He says emphatically in his essay on the 'Foundation of Morals,' published in 1840 (with the words "Not crowned by the Royal Danish Society of the Sciences," immediately under the title, along with another called the 'Essay on Freedom,' which had been "Crowned by the Royal Norwegian Academy of the Sciences"), that Kant's doctrine of the mutual consistency and compatibility of freedom and necessity is the greatest achievement of human thought. It is this idea—one of the few inevitable ideas in philosophy—which really helped Schopenhauer more than any other to the transcendental explanation of reality of which we have been in search from the beginning; and this in spite of the great length at which "genius," the "insight" of art, and the "insight" into the Platonic Ideas are discussed in his philosophy, and in spite of the real strength and depth of his own artistic susceptibility. Although what Schopenhauer writes upon ethics is inferior in quantity and quality to what he writes upon art, it is still ethics that conducts him to the gate of heaven—the *ethical* and not the *intellectual* aspects of goodness and beauty. He worshipped goodness almost in spite of himself, and the lever by which he raises himself up into the transcendent world from the wilderness world in which he thinks we live, is Kant's *moral* will after all, just as it was in the case of Fichte. One does not like to say this about Schopenhauer, because he is in many

respects as much a Greek or Platonist as a would-be literal follower of Kant. The vision of the Ideas was indeed his secular baptism; but it was the *good will* that he envied in his heart, and envied so much that he proclaimed the whole world an unreality because the good will was never realised. "Kant recognises that *human action has a significance transcending all the possibilities of experience*, and is therefore the appropriate bridge to what we call the intelligible world, the noumenal world."<sup>1</sup>

This is one of the dozen or so most important sentences in all Schopenhauer. He quotes Kant's view with all the emphasis of which he was capable, and with all that deep regret of his that the world should be so blind to some of the greatest things in "the greatest modern philosopher" (other than himself, as he would add). Now, unfortunately, the mere reading of this sentence suggests a difficulty. How can human action be said to have a significance transcending all experience? If this means that human action is the thing in the world that transcends all other things in importance, then we may quietly accept it. The outcome of Schopenhauer's teaching, in fact, is that human action gives the deepest sort of experience that we can possibly have. It is almost the outcome of his system to hold that by experience we ought to mean *action*—action and all that is implied in action. By experience philosophers have too often meant simply consciousness or abstract thought; and it has frequently been made a matter of reproach to them that they treated things which other people believed to be facts as mere ideas.

It is a real reproach to philosophy that it has since the time of Descartes made more of our experience of ideas than of our experience of actions. Action is the supreme fact for the ordinary man, and the ordinary man attacks the philosopher only when he puts forward some belief which would paralyse

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Grundlage der Moral., Werke, iv. s. 118.

action. Action ought to be the supreme fact for the philosopher, because action—human, intelligent, or motivated action—comprises in itself not only mere physical and organic movement but feeling and knowledge. It has been one of the direst fatalities for philosophy that a man's reflective doubts about his actions have often been considered more important than his actions themselves. Actions, as a matter of fact, express knowledge and something more than knowledge. Schopenhauer's phrase, therefore, about action having a significance transcending experience, means simply that action is transcendently significant. It is. There ought to have been a development in philosophy from the time of Descartes, starting from the proposition "I act, therefore I am," parallel to the line of philosophy we are acquainted with, which started from the proposition "I think, therefore I am." It might, of course, be said that a study of actions or events is science, and a study of thought philosophy; and this would do fairly well to mark off the three philosophical sciences of logic, ethics, and æsthetic, with their ideas of the true, the good, and the beautiful, from the different physical sciences. But we are here dealing with philosophy in the highest sense of the word as a general systematisation of all knowledge. As such, philosophy cannot afford to neglect action and events; to the highest philosophy action is as much an object of study as thought.

Is there, however, anything transcendent in human action, anything that carries us beyond that mere action itself? Responsibility, for example, is often thought to carry us beyond action to something higher than action. Schopenhauer discards responsibility because he discards theism, but is there any transcendent principle which is needed to explain ethics, and if so, is there in this transcendent principle a kind of knowledge which enables us to obtain a higher view, not only of action but of everything else? Schopenhauer accepts in substance the dictum of Kant, that the only absolutely good

thing in the world is a good will. How the will is to be made good (good in his own sense, it is true) is really the problem of ethics for him. This problem obviously belongs also in part to the philosophy of religion, and the difficulty of Schopenhauer's ethics is just this, that while it has a specious look of being a positive study of the actions of man, it is in reality an *Erlösungslehre*—a doctrine of salvation. There is much danger in this, for the metaphysic of ethics or the philosophy of religion ought not to precede but to follow the positive study of ethical facts: it ought, in fact, to be determined by this.

II. Nevertheless, there is a minor recognition on Schopenhauer's part of what he conceives to be the positive facts of conduct. The only way, he holds, to find the basis of ethics is the "empirical way,"—to see, in fact, if we can discover "any actions to which we ascribe real moral worth." We ought, then, to take these actions as the subject-matter of ethics, and examine them and analyse them into the motives which prompted them. These motives, with the susceptibility for them, would be the actual basis of morality, and the knowledge of them would be the supreme principle of morality. The only actions to which we do "unconditionally attribute moral value" are, according to Schopenhauer, "magnanimous justice" and "pure love" and "nobility of soul," and these things are "one and the same," he adds. It is only the possibility of "magnanimity" and "pure disinterested benevolence" as a disposition of the will, that interests Schopenhauer in ethical philosophy. Isolated actions are to him nothing at all; it is only the will which is unconditionally good or unconditionally bad. This is in the spirit of Kant's teaching that a good will is the one thing of absolute importance in ethics.

Socrates and Kant were practically the only two ethical philosophers of the world to Schopenhauer, and his views

upon the ethical teaching of these two men form a natural introduction to his own teaching. Virtue to Socrates was a "knowledge of the good." This idea, Schopenhauer says, is really "worse than nothing." What is his meaning here? In the first place, by "the good," he says, we mean only what is relative to the will: "good" is the conformity of an object to any definite effort of our will, such as good eating, good weather, a good weapon, and the like. Schopenhauer agrees with Spinoza in this, that good is simply anything that is relative to any purpose that we may happen to have. Good, he says, is "according to its concept" *τῶν πρός τι*, as Aristotle said, among the categories of "relative" things. Seeing that everything that is good is good "for something," an "absolute good" is a contradiction in terms. This may sound revolutionary, but it is not at all so revolutionary as it looks. The notion of an "absolute good" has too long been one of the main supports of philosophical quietism and rationalistic pantheism. It is one of the most interesting lines of study in Aristotle, for instance, to see the fallacious way in which he is led to close the 'Ethics' with "contemplation" as the "ultimate good," after beginning at the outset with the notion of "a good for man." And in reading Socrates we know we always stumbled over the question, "Good for what?" when Socrates said that "virtue" was "knowledge" and that knowledge was knowledge of the good. Utilitarianism has done good in entering a lasting protest against the conception of an "absolute good." To tell a man to be absolutely good is really to tell him nothing. An "absolute good" is a purely formal idea, and as such highly unpractical. Knowledge, moreover, will never make the will wholly good; at least it can never alter the nature of the will but only its momentary direction; it can only make us seek our happiness in a different way, but never make us cease seeking our happiness. To know what is good we need to have experience. We pronounce that to

be "good" which has proved to be good for us, to be that which is in harmony with our development, or our nature, or our will. We certainly cannot know beforehand what is absolutely good for us, even if we overlook the fact that the realisation of an absolute good would mean ceasing to be and to live. So if virtue is a "knowledge" of "the good," it must be of what is relatively good, good for us. Because we can learn this only by experience, virtue is regarded by Aristotle as a *habit*. The knowledge of the good, then, does not seem to elevate us above the ordinary plane of life. Indeed it was suggested in the chapter on the Bondage of Man that man is unable to seek anything else than simply the highest development of his life. Most religions, and especially the Christian religion, are very emphatic on this point; and their continued existence is due to the fact of their giving man an analysis of his nature, which before all things refuses to flatter his imagination. Knowledge of the good in ordinary life means too, unfortunately, knowledge of the evil and of the evil tendencies which exist in human nature. Virtue is, in short, if we think of it, a thing of the will and not of the mere intellect. No amount of knowledge of the good seems to change the nature of the will.

Seeing, then, that Schopenhauer regarded the possibility of perfectly magnanimous and noble actions as the problem of ethics, he was right in maintaining this to be an affair of the will and not of the mere intellect. It was no wonder that he could not regard Socrates as having "done anything" in ethics. The language of Schopenhauer is very strong, but it is perfectly deliberate and emphatic—as deliberate and emphatic, indeed, as the language of St Paul when he talks of the "righteousness" that is of "the law." No amount of *knowledge* of "the good" will make the will "good," or purge the nature of man from its original taint of evil and selfishness. The knowledge of which Socrates

talked could not raise man out of the bondage in which Schopenhauer seemed to find him; it could not make man do anything else than simply seek those things which gratify his own will. Schopenhauer thus agrees with those who can credit Socrates with teaching only an enlightened sort of utilitarianism. Again, to say that virtue was a "knowledge of the good" was all very well in its way as showing the strong faith of the Greek mind in reason (a faith that is found even in Neoplatonism), but then even Socrates himself could not shut his eyes to the fact that man often knew what was apparently good and often did what was apparently bad. Being an intellectual man, Socrates could not for his own part see very well how this could be, but he knew that the fact was so notwithstanding. But in so far as the strongest practical outcome of the teaching of Socrates was the Stoic character, we may give a practical assent to Schopenhauer's conclusion about his ethics. Magnanimity of soul and perfect disinterestedness and sympathy were not qualities of soul that the Stoics exhibited or cared to exhibit. The Stoic's attitude to both men and gods was one of practical exclusiveness, not of approach. He praised himself for not being like the imperfect men he saw everywhere around, and he considered that a perfectly wise man was just as necessary to Jove as Jove was to him. The *wise* man, in fact, was the ideal of the Stoic and not the *sympathetic* man, not the man who "loved his neighbour as himself." In short, like all rationalistic ethics or ethics which is founded upon knowledge merely, Stoicism ended in a mere contemplation of a peace of mind which could never be realised in the arena of life. The idea of the Stoic being happy on the rack in the mere contemplation of his own wisdom is the paradoxical expression of this truth. In it we see the Socratic ethics reduced to a state of inward contradiction. Knowledge of the good really does contradict

itself so far as practical life goes. No amount of knowledge prevents the wise man from falling into the sins of intellectual exclusiveness and neglect of his fellow-men, or preferring, like Rabelais, the company of the "most noble and illustrious drinkers, and you thrice-precious profligates,"<sup>1</sup> to that of good citizens and honest men. Something like this is what Schopenhauer felt when he said that Socrates did next to nothing in ethics.

Kant's moral system is as easily passed over by Schopenhauer as is the teaching of Socrates. Reference has already been made to the idea of the phenomenal slavery of man and his transcendental freedom, which Schopenhauer appreciates as part of the "Copernican discovery" of Kant. To put matters plainly, it is, according to Schopenhauer, part of Kant's "immortal service to ethics" to have shown, and in "quite a special way," that the kingdom of virtue is "not of this world." The theological wording prepares us to see how Schopenhauer's ethical system becomes (perhaps unconsciously on his part) largely a philosophical substitute for the theology which was discarded by eighteenth-century rationalism and nineteenth-century incipient natural science, or dissipated somewhat in men's minds by the new spirit of the nineteenth century. He means that Kant's idea of freedom and of a realm of persons who regard one another as members of a moral kingdom, to be treated always as persons and never as things, conducts us into a region which after all is described for us only in negatives by Kant himself. Phenomenally and practically man was to Kant necessitated in all his actions, while really and noumenally he was free. Man was free to Kant because he had the consciousness in himself of an absolute moral law which allowed of no exemption and no compromise. This consciousness of the moral law was to Kant a sort of timeless or eternal fact

<sup>1</sup> Life of Gargantua, Author's Prologue.



of the universe, something from which man can no more get away than he can from under the eternal vault of heaven—" *der bestirnte Himmel über mir und das moralische Gesetz in mir.*" Man was free because he could will unconditional moral law; the power to be conscious of such a law meant somehow the power to will it. There is no need of going into detail as to the peculiar defects of Kant's ethics. It is sufficient to follow Schopenhauer in the merest outline. He is right in suggesting that the way in which Kant worked out his conception of freedom (so far at least as his ethical writings go) is imperfect. The absolute "ought" of which Kant talked is found, when examined, to be as faulty as the notion of an absolute "good." All imperatives or commands, Schopenhauer reminds us, are hypothetical; there is no "*must* in general." Any given end implies the performance of certain means to its attainment; that is all. An absolute "ought" is a contradiction in terms—a "sceptre of wooden iron." All imperatives are obligatory only in view of a certain end. Waiving, however, this general criticism, which in truth is assented to by most students of Kant, let us mention another of Schopenhauer's criticisms on Kant, which perhaps warrants us in passing over Kant as quickly as he did himself.

The idea of "ought," Schopenhauer maintains, is a survival from the theological morality of the Decalogue. This is certainly a very bold and perhaps a somewhat dogmatic statement, but there seems a great deal of reason for admitting it. Kant had probably an ordinary knowledge of the average Protestantism of his day, and he can hardly be said to have applied the critical analysis for which he was so famous to his notion of two selves in the human person, a transcendent self and a phenomenal self. He taught, we know, that the noumenal self gave to the phenomenal self the idea of an unconditional moral law. So much was mere matter of asser-

tion. But when the idea of a personal God was taken out of the consciousness of man by the pantheistic philosophies that succeeded Kant's system in Germany, the soul of man very soon lost the double character it had in Kant, and was unified and simplified and finally sublimated into the soul of the universe. Kant's introduction of "God," at the end of his ethical system, is in itself enough to prove that the "categorical imperative," the absolute "ought," could not stand of itself in the human will. It is notorious that no *monistic* philosophy of the universe, whether materialistic or idealistic or evolutionary, is equal to the setting up of a standard of duty for man, or at least of an absolute standard. In fact, *duty* is by monistic systems given altogether over to the vulgar. Schopenhauer, as might be expected, repudiates the theological parentage of morality himself, while rightly maintaining that it exists in Kant. Of the being which is simply a "creature," he says, we simply cannot predicate an ought at all. It is meaningless, he holds, to tell a creature to be anything else than what he is. *Operari*, as he puts it, follows *esse*. In this too he is right, to the extent that to tell a created being to be something that he is not—to be perfect, say—is meaningless, unless the means of becoming what is prescribed are also accorded to him. However, all that we are concerned to suggest just now with Schopenhauer is that the "ought" or an "absolute imperative" cannot be predicated of human nature without the presence of supporting conditions or considerations.

Kant, Schopenhauer concludes, was perfectly right in saying that the only action which could be properly called ethical was action which originates in a good will, and not in any idea of consequences, or in any sort of natural impulse; but "beyond that he did nothing in ethics." This means, to put matters briefly, that everything in Kant depended upon the idea of a good will, while he himself gave almost no account

of how the good will could exist or could be made to exist. The good will, indeed, appeared in Kant as if "from above," although, of course, Kant could not allow himself to say so. Nor could he explain the good will "from beneath," as it were, as arising out of good habit, as Aristotle did. The good will in Kant, in short, comes neither from above nor from beneath. Like Melchisedec, it has neither father nor mother. It is verily as Schopenhauer says; we learn from Kant that "the kingdom of virtue is not of this world." But how could Schopenhauer commend him for that reason? The answer is, only because of his resting everything upon the transcendent will or the noumenal will, which Schopenhauer himself makes the root of everything.

"The deeds and conduct of an individual and of a nation may be very much modified through dogmas, example, and custom. But in themselves all deeds (*opera operata*) are merely *empty forms*, and only the disposition which leads to them gives them moral significance. This disposition, however, may be quite the same when its outward manifestation is very different. With an equal degree of wickedness one man may die on the wheel and another in the bosom of his family. It may be the same grade of wickedness which expresses itself in one nation in the coarse characteristics of murder and cannibalism, and in another finely and softly in miniature, in court intrigues, oppressions, and delicate plots of every kind; the inner nature remains the same."<sup>1</sup> This idea that all deeds are mere forms or "empty pictures," as Schopenhauer somewhere else calls them, is fundamental in Schopenhauer's ethics. It brings out what he is always thinking of—the will or the inward disposition. He is at one with the fervent Christian believer who maintains that the centuries have only shown that man "cannot save himself," because he "cannot change his evil will." And yet people continue to

<sup>1</sup> World as Will, &c., Eng. transl., i. 477.

smile complacently on each other in society, like so many whited sepulchres—hypocrites, all of them, in the eyes of Schopenhauer,—utterly selfish and sordid, like the whole of unregenerate humanity. The whole world is sunk in wickedness because the form of the will is not perfect, but is simply selfish and self-seeking.

So much for Schopenhauer's views on his predecessors. His criticism is most summary, but it goes to the root of the matter. His own ethical analysis brings us at once by the same kind of forced march to the central problem of the metaphysic of ethics. There are but three fundamental principles in all human action, he maintains: "egoism, which seeks one's well-being, and is boundless; wickedness, which seeks the harm of another, and goes to the utmost extreme of cruelty; and sympathy, which desires the welfare of others, and rises to nobility and greatness of soul."<sup>1</sup> The character of each person is, according to Schopenhauer, a complete assertion of the will to live, and a direct assertion of that will. There is an inconsistency, no doubt, between this statement and Schopenhauer's other statement that the most direct manifestation of the will is the "Platonic Ideas." One can get out of the inconsistency only by saying that while in Schopenhauer's eyes the Ideas are only a *quasi* phenomenal objectification of will, character belongs to the same identical noumenal reality: that is, in virtue of his noumenal or transcendental character, man is one with the will or the thing in itself. It is only the intellect that makes us think that different men really are different from each other; in essence they are all one and the same, a direct assertion of the will to live. Seeing then, Schopenhauer continues, that the character of each man is a direct assertion of the will to live, it follows that boundless selfishness or boundless self-will is the

<sup>1</sup> Schop., *Grundlage der Moral*; Werke, iv. 210.

common characteristic of human nature. Each man is naturally the enemy of every other man—*homo homini lupus*. “The formula of egoism is, ‘I am different from everything else;’ that of altruism is, ‘I am the same as all other beings.’” Every individual being as such is a being fundamentally different from all other beings.<sup>1</sup> In myself only, as it were, does my true being consist—everything else is not I, and is strange to me. It is “this knowledge, the truth of which is vouched for by flesh and bone, which lies at the bottom of all egoism, and whose true expression is every unloving, unjust, or wicked action.” On the contrary, “my true inmost being exists in every other being as immediately as it exists in my consciousness where it manifests itself to me. This knowledge, for which the formula in Sanscrit is *tat-tvam asi*—‘this thou art’—is that which comes before us as sympathy, upon which therefore all true—*i.e.*, unselfish—virtue rests, and whose real expression is in every good deed. It is this knowledge in most instances to which every appeal to mildness, to love of man, and to sympathy for right, addresses itself, because such an appeal is a reminder of the sense in which we are all one and the same being. Egoism, on the contrary—*i.e.*, envy, hate, persecution, severity, revenge, rejoicing in injury, brutality—appeals to that first knowledge and assures itself with it. The satisfaction and the delight which we experience on even hearing of, or seeing, or best of all, on producing in ourselves, a noble action, rests ultimately on the fact that it makes us feel that beyond all the differences and the separate individuality of men which the *principium individuationis* effects for us, there lies a unity which is actually existent, nay is accessible to us, seeing that it has really come before our eyes.”<sup>2</sup>

It is in painting human nature thus conceived that Schopenhauer strains his philosophy to the utmost, and

<sup>1</sup> Grundlage der Moral ; Werke, iv. 270.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 271.

"paints the devil most black," as Chamisso reproached him with doing. He says that each individual character is not merely an assertion of the will to live, but is its assertion whole and complete. A man who wills his own happiness wills for the time being as if he were the whole world, or as if the whole world were simply the horse on which his will rides.<sup>1</sup> A man would almost kill another to get grease for his boots, Schopenhauer says. Egoism has "no limits." "Walter Scott speaks of the same human inclination in language as true as it is strong: 'Revenge is the sweetest morsel to the mouth that ever was cooked in hell!'"<sup>2</sup> When we think of this pursuit by the individual of his own happiness in connection with what Schopenhauer holds about its being impossible to satisfy the will, and about the subordinate character of the intellect, and the merely phenomenal character of the world to the idealist, we can understand how he regards man in his selfishness as looking on the whole world as simply made for himself. "Life is a path of red-hot coals, with a few cool places here and there." "The truth is, we ought to be wretched, and we are so. The chief source of the serious evils which affect men is man himself; *homo homini lupus*. Whoever keeps this last fact clearly in view beholds the world as a hell, which surpasses that of Dante in this respect, that one man must be the devil of another. For this, one is certainly more fitted than another; an arch-fiend, indeed, more fitted than all others, appearing in the form of a conqueror, who places several hundred thousand men opposite each other, and says to them, 'To suffer and die is your destiny; now shoot each other with guns and cannons,' and they do so."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "If I were a goddess, and the whole universe were employed in my service, I should find the service badly rendered."—Journal of Marie Bashkirtseff, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> Werke, vi. 624; Psychol. Bemerk.

<sup>3</sup> Werke, vi. 663; H. and K., iii. 388.

Schopenhauer's problem is how to account for social morality on the basis of this natural egoism, which he takes to be the truth about human nature. Obviously society can exist only if men take some regard for the strivings and feelings and wishes of their fellow-men, and the highest state of society can exist only if man takes as much regard for the feelings of others as he does for his own. But how is this possible? As Rousseau says in 'Emile,' "Il n'est pas dans le cœur humain de se mettre à la place des gens qui sont plus heureux que nous, mais seulement de ceux qui sont plus à plaindre." The first step towards morality is found, according to Schopenhauer, in the natural sympathy that we have with the suffering of others. It is in keeping with his whole theory that he holds that pain somehow affects us more than pleasure. He notices, for example, that parents always love a deformed child more than their other children: the reason of this is to be found in the fact that "the contemplation of deformity or suffering tends to awaken sympathy with ourselves or with the will to live." Now sympathy, not only with the sorrows but with the joys and the desires and the strivings of others, yields ordinary moral conduct. The principle, therefore, of ordinary civic morality to Schopenhauer is sympathy. His use of the fact of sympathy is different from that of the English moralists. It is not with him a mere correlative to egoism as a principle of conduct, but a force which is destined to destroy egoism altogether. Nor is it a power, such as Adam Smith conceived man to possess, of placing ourselves in the situation of others so as to be able to take a disinterested survey of our own conduct. Nor yet is it that highly reflective sense of conduct as a balance of personal and social affections, or as "calm, stable, universal goodwill to all," of which Shaftesbury and Hutcheson respectively speak. Sympathy, to Schopenhauer, is a positive principle of conduct—the supreme positive principle of con-

duct. It is based upon the intellectual perception of the identity of all living and willing beings, and is never really infallible in its operation as a principle until this perception is developed within the moral agent. But however awakened—through metaphysic or art or divine grace—sympathy is to Schopenhauer the one principle which makes moral conduct possible; it alone causes us to feel and act towards others as to ourselves. The facts of human nature being what they are to Schopenhauer, he finds the only real explanation of the possibility of sympathy in the metaphysical principle just referred to. Unfortunately, there seems to be something of a logical *tour de force* about that;—it looks like an attempt to save an extreme view of human nature by having recourse to a highly abstract metaphysical conception (or perception). On the other hand, we may readily enough think of his sympathy as arising from the perception that life is so damnable and illusory that the logical thing to do is to get rid of it altogether, in the case of others as well as of self.

Maintaining, then, that sympathy finally passes into a profound feeling of the inutility of all volition, Schopenhauer teaches that genuine goodness ultimately means refraining from all willing, a state of the will in which it ceases to will. Ceasing to will, of course, on his view, practically brings the world to an end, since will is the essence of all things. This destruction of the world is a consummation devoutly to be wished for by the philosophical mind, which knows the illusoriness of all things. Genuine goodness belongs to the man who has emancipated himself from the will to live and attained to the will which, in the phraseology of Schopenhauer, denies the personal will and even the social will, and enters upon the service of the will that “affirms the Ideas.” He who no longer wills to be anything for himself and is content to be what the universe has ordained that he should be, simply a mirror of the essential



nature of the world, loses his misery, according to Schopenhauer, and has attained to true goodness. Schopenhauer does not dwell much, as von Hartmann does, on the notion of mankind becoming as a whole possibly so impenetrated with the spirit, firstly, of altruism, and then of the negation of the will, that they will cease to will, and so bring the world to an end. He rather believes that the world will continue to exist as it is, because men will always seek the satisfaction of their own individual wills. Besides, "humanity" does not mean very much to Schopenhauer; the race does not mean much more to him than the individual; it is a mere appearance, a mere phenomenon of the will to live. The whole world to him is just like one gigantic individual; it is one individual will rushing into life, but life which will always be miserable because the will must ever continue to assert itself anew. Even if the Ideas seem to be a complete expression of the will, they have still to be "asserted" by the will in countless individuals, if a "phenomenal" world is to be kept up at all. Of course the whole idea of bringing the world to an end, even in the case of the individual, is fanciful; it rests on the false presupposition that dogmatic idealism is true, that the world is simply a creation of the brain or the intellect, and that consequently it could be negated with the destruction of the intellect, or when the individual intellect has ceased to exist as individual and passed into "the contemplation of the Ideas."

But how does the perception of the identity of all willing beings and the inutility of all willing arise in the mind? Schopenhauer says it comes instantaneously, and his doctrine here becomes mystical. Art and genius and metaphysic, he holds, bring into the mind the knowledge that the real world is not the world of volition and of practical knowledge, but the world of the Platonic Ideas in which the distinction of self and not-self does not exist. There are various practical

ways of facilitating the entry into the mind of this knowledge, such as complete renunciation of the search after pleasure, voluntary chastity, mystic contemplation, and so on. The saints of most religions have learned the lesson of the inutility of all willing without an explicit knowledge of philosophy; but the quietude and the resignation of the saint can be greatly supplemented by the knowledge of the philosopher, that all things are one although they seem to be different. To Schopenhauer there is much in common between the prevailing mood of the saint and that of the philosopher. Both have the constant sense of the relative non-existence and the nugatoriness of much that ordinary men believe to be real. We cannot help reflecting here that it is a pity that Schopenhauer should have seen this common element in goodness and genius, and yet never have made out in his theory of art the real connection between art and morality and life as a whole.<sup>1</sup> A good man, for instance, will have certain artistic intuitions that a bad man cannot have, and so art may have something to learn from morality, as in general art may be said to rest upon as complete an experience of life as can be obtained by any man or by all men. But, to resume, the knowledge we require to elevate us above the ordinary pursuits of life and above ordinary knowledge is, according to Schopenhauer, that perception of the nothingness of mere individuality and selfishness which is implied in good conduct. Translated into other terms, this means a knowledge of the relativity of all principles of the mere understanding, and of their applicability to phenomena only and not to things in themselves. Things are not separate and individual according to Schopenhauer; they only seem to be so, because the understanding is forced to break up the world into a congeries of separate things with a view to the practical purposes of life. (*"Divide et impera,"*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 298.

Bacon said.) We are not different from one another although we seem to be so; we are at bottom the same substance that others are. It is one will that energises in us all, in all animals and in all things. "*Tat-tvam asi*"—"that thou also art"—is what the individual may say to himself when engaged in the contemplation of another thing or another person. "*Neminem læde*"—"hurt no one"—because in hurting them you hurt yourself. Schopenhauer does not advance to the fulfilment of the other part of the motto, "*et omnes quantum in te potest juva*"; to assist others to the best of our ability would mean in his eyes to assist them to live, which is to prolong their misery.

The true way to help people, Schopenhauer maintains, is to show them the inutility of all volition. The will is intrinsically so bad and so selfish that we can become different only by ceasing to will altogether. We must become dead to the will to live, according to Schopenhauer. As it stands, this result is manifestly a negation of the ethical problem, and so Schopenhauer does not seem to be better off himself than he thought Socrates and Kant to be. Still the honesty of a *non possumus* is in his eyes superior to compromise. "The kingdom of virtue is not of this world." "*Aut salus, aut nihil*," is the sum and substance of his thought. When we negate the finite will we are supposed by Schopenhauer to affirm the Ideas; in fact we negate the finite will by "affirming the Ideas." In "affirming the Ideas" we become timeless and eternal. When we ask what this means, the most direct answer from Schopenhauer would be, "Look at the complete rest on the faces of the greatest artistic creations; realise the *stigmata* of the Christian ascetics and saints; breathe the lotus-like air of the Hindoo scriptures; seek in any way you can *æternam quietem*." Were we to rejoin that this is just as inexplicable as Kant's noumenal or transcendental freedom, Schopenhauer would repeat that

Kant's merit lies just in showing that the "kingdom of virtue is not of this world;" "I, the only other modern philosopher, agree with Kant in this matter," as it were. Virtue lies only in the will which affirms the Ideas. It must be confessed that the result of affirming the Ideas is not so very different in Schopenhauer from what it is in Hegel. In both salvation seems to lie simply in the contemplation of the eternal Ideas or the eternal order of the world, and salvation in both instances seems to involve the loss of individual or separate existence. There is this slight difference in the case of Schopenhauer, that he maintains salvation to be an affair not so much of the intellect as of the will: whatever else salvation may be, it must mean to him a changed attitude of the will, and if the finite will can be changed only by death, then death must somehow lie on the path to salvation. This is a wholesome reminder. Reality, we shall later see, has more to do with the will than is often recognised. Here at least, in ethics, the will is the main thing, because virtue has far more to do with the will than with the intellect. It is a habit of *the will* according to Aristotle and according to common-sense. The Hegelians all make virtue far too intellectual a matter, just as Spinoza did.

In this affirmation of the Ideas by the benevolent or virtuous will we have reached the supreme meaning of reality according to Schopenhauer, the true transcendental meaning of reality of which we have been, directly and indirectly, in search throughout. In the noumenal will, and in the submission of the finite will to the will that affirms the Ideas, Schopenhauer as well as Fichte finds the highest reality or the highest phase of reality. As he said, it was Kant's idea of noumenal freedom which led him to this discovery.

III. The ethical student will certainly feel at this point that it is time he is allowed to pause, after refraining from

criticism so long. The path we have traversed is strewn with fallacies. The only assumption that at all justifies Schopenhauer's unparalleled haste in generalisation, is that the metaphysic of ethics is the only thing worth caring about in ethics, or at least the fact of the inner contradiction between the merely personal and the altruistic or perfectly moral will. Now the metaphysic of ethics is doubtless the highest thing in ethics, but it is not the only thing. There must be in every ethical philosophy an adequate recognition of the concrete facts of the ethical consciousness. In this regard Schopenhauer is a supreme sinner. It was perfectly natural that the Danish Academy did *not* crown his essay on 'The Foundation of Morals.' Sympathy is certainly not the whole of morality, nor is it even the supreme principle of morality. It is a good deal to Schopenhauer, because the first thing we ought, according to his way of thinking, to perceive about the world is that it is illusory. Consequently we ought to regard "all men as the victims along with ourselves of an illusion even in the ordinary perceptions of the senses."<sup>1</sup> We ought not to address men as comrades—Good Sir, Monsieur—but as fellow-sufferers—*socii malorum*." Unfortunately we have been compelled to deny the illusoriness that Schopenhauer attributes to sense-perception and to all knowledge.

Schopenhauer makes no attempt to explain in an unprejudiced and positive way the very first things that we have a right to expect an explanation of in ethics, the ideas of duty and obligation. These ideas ought to be put in the forefront of any ethical theory, to be at least explained or criticised, if not finally accepted. Ethics differs from positive science in describing or in explaining "what ought to be," rather than what "is." Most of the great German idealists attempted to give some account of the eternal *Sollen* that they all felt to be somehow deeply imbedded in the moral consciousness of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. ii., section ii. *et passim*.

mankind. Again, under the name of characteristic ethical facts, Schopenhauer selected not so much activities as passive states of mind. Without doubt there is a savour of fairness in his proposition to examine, as the subject-matter of ethics, those actions or states of mind which all men unconditionally approve. We are reminded of Hume, whose ethical inquiry was also undertaken in regard to the generally approved qualities of human nature. Still one could never feel, even in Hume's case, that the fact of certain qualities being pleasing to men and certain others being displeasing, was a sufficient explanation of what we call right and wrong in actions; and the case is similar in Schopenhauer. It is the ethical standard, and the consciousness which both the agent and the spectator of ethical action have of that standard, that are the characteristic facts of ethics. In approaching the study of ethics, the point of view of the ethical agent must be taken into account even more than that of the ethical spectator. If this is not done we are apt to bring forward an apparently unconscious basis of ethics, as both Hume and Schopenhauer to a certain extent do. We are apt to talk as if the agent simply might or might not happen to act morally, might or might not exhibit those qualities which we call moral. Both Schopenhauer and Hume seem to start with the purely inductive method in ethics, and there is something commendable in this. But we cannot very well seek for ethical facts if we have not already in our minds some standard or other of what is or is not ethical. Those facts, we know, are economic which have some bearing on the production or the distribution of wealth; and, similarly, those facts are ethical which have some bearing on the performance or non-performance of what is called duty. Schopenhauer, in short, cannot be regarded as having started from the characteristic facts of ethics.

Benevolence and sympathy are obviously a very small part of ethics; a person might even be benevolent and sympathetic

without knowing much about duty and without acting dutifully. Schopenhauer's partly morbid account of the origin of sympathy, as arising chiefly from the perception of suffering, is of itself sufficient to show this. We must be able to sympathise with the upward efforts of mankind as well as with their tendency to suffer and to act imperfectly. We must have sympathy for the performance of duty as well as for the non-performance of duty by mankind. Sympathy, so to speak, is a secondary principle of ethics, and rests upon some implied perception of what is worth sympathising with in man. One cannot help remarking in passing, that if Schopenhauer had felt the reality of duty as Kant did, or as Schiller did, or as Carlyle did, it might have made life less illusory for him and more real. His Diogenes-like finding of all men to be rogues and devils and cheats, might then have had in his mind for its obverse a perception that man could be real and heroic when obeying the call of duty. The very underived and ultimate character that moral obligation seems to have in Kant infuses a reality and a meaning into life which causes sceptical and agnostic prejudices to dry up and wither away. In the idea of duty we do seem to find some stable ground in this world of fleeting things. Wordsworth found that the "ancient heavens" were "fresh and strong" through the idea of "duty," the "stern daughter of the voice of God." There is little that is noble in Schopenhauer, although there is much that is beautiful and pathetic, as we have seen. And perhaps the way in which he ignores the idea of duty is to some extent responsible for this. The beautiful, we found, was for Schopenhauer not something that man was called upon to attain to or to realise in his life, but rather something that called him out of the world and away from it. In some respects nothing strikes us as more strange in Schopenhauer than that he did not realise the full significance of his own teaching that the reality of man and of all other things is will. If man

really is will, attainment ought to be the key-note of his life. The reason of its not being such in Schopenhauer is, once more, that the will with which he deals from first to last is not the reasonable will, which the will of man undoubtedly is, but the unconscious will that we think of as mere impulse and (blind) effort. He thus came to think of will as that which indicated, in the first instance, an absence of reason, something that was different from reason and opposed to it. He failed to see how instinct, when properly understood, may be viewed as organised or unconscious reason.<sup>1</sup>

It was but sorry justice at best that Schopenhauer did to the ethics of Socrates and Kant. The idea of Socrates that virtue was knowledge, contains very much more than Schopenhauer saw in it. It stands at least for the fact that man is a being who must have a reason for his conduct, who must always act intelligently, with full consciousness of what he is doing—the very thing that Schopenhauer overlooked in seeming to explain conduct out of that which was largely unconscious. It is perhaps, however, needless to repeat here what was suggested in the chapter on the Bondage of Man, about the inadequate recognition that Schopenhauer gives to the conception or the idea. It was perfectly natural that he could not fully sympathise with Socrates, who placed the essence of virtue in a conception or knowledge of what was good. His feeling about Kant was doubtless in the main correct, that there is no such thing as an imperative in general which can maintain itself to be a law to man without any supporting conditions whatsoever. But, then, there are the many concrete duties of life, and to these Schopenhauer paid little attention. From the days of childhood onwards men are subjected to the thousand and one demands of the

<sup>1</sup> It is an outcome of chapters v. and vi. that the natural creative impulse of our lives may be rationalised through a desire to create the highest forms of beauty.



various institutions and relations and conventions of civilised life. No one of these demands in itself exactly explains the fact of obligation or duty, but, taken together, they all of them imply it; yet of none of them did Schopenhauer take any account in thinking out his philosophy of conduct. Apart from his want of perception of the importance of the general idea of duty to the philosopher, there is this utter want of perception on his part of the extent to which man is helped along the highway of life by the institutions and arrangements of society, and by custom even, by usage, by civic and common duty.

Schopenhauer has very little sense for the midway region in morals, the plain broad highway of life on which ordinary ethical actions are exhibited. The ethical man is neither a beast nor a god, but a plain being exhibiting rarely the extremes of "excess" and "defect." It was mainly the "excess" and the "defect" in life that Schopenhauer saw, and consequently he had not the first prerequisites of the dispassionate and unprejudiced and appreciative ethical observer. Like Machiavelli, he could not see the guiding and restraining power of the *media axiomata* of life; he could only figure to himself the workings of perfect goodness or perfect badness. He had no sympathy for such a representation of life as is given in a poem like Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," with its lingering love for such things as "contented toil" and "hospitable care" and "steady loyalty" and "kind, connubial tenderness." He had too much hatred for compromise and toleration, and again for the influence of priesthoods and father-confessors over mankind, to have any sympathy with the helplessness of the average man.<sup>1</sup> He was incapable of appreciating the contentment that comes to ordinary people

<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer had the regular Continental contempt for *l'hypocrisie Anglaise*, the extent to which many of us lay stress on a pseudo-conformity to external standards of religion and social conduct.

from the simple discharge of duty, and from simple participation in the ordinary delights of life. He would have scorned as utterly beneath his notice such blissful contentment as Jean Paul represents in his schoolmaster "Wuz" or in his "Fixlein." He had no real inward feeling for the ethical value of the Greek idea of the "limit" in things, or of their maxim *μηδὲν ἄγαν*, or of Aristotle's idea of virtue as a "mean" between two extremes.<sup>1</sup> Nor had he any sympathy for the insignificant pursuits of insignificant people or the innocent satisfaction of humble wants. He saw only the extremes in life, like Nero having Seneca for a tutor, or the stupid Germans trying to shake a man like Napoleon off their shoulders, or the fact that the French, although the most gay and most superficial and the most consummately mundane of all peoples, have yet given birth to the strictest and the severest religious order, the *La Trappe* monks. It is astounding to think how he could, although by his own profession a "man of the world" who pretended to know men as they are, maintain *all* human actions to be the outcome of simply *three* motives—selfishness, wickedness, and benevolence. There is the mere student and the hardened bachelor and the soured observer of human life in a great deal that he writes upon ethics.

We must remember, of course, that our philosopher grew up at the end of the eighteenth century, at a time when individualism had run riot, and when the wayward self had expressed its infinite willingness to "govern" but not to "obey." With the cynical and the selfish moralists, and with some of the early founders of the science of political economy, he thought of man as always seeking merely his own happiness or advantage. People, in his eyes, are simply seeking to be happy, and to eat and drink and multiply their numbers, as

<sup>1</sup> Nay, he objected to this very idea. "Aristotle's principle, to observe the mean in all things, is very ill adapted to become a principle of morals."

they have done since the beginning of history. "What the will aims at and effects in man, is essentially just the same as what it aims at in the case of the lower animals—nutrition and propagation."<sup>1</sup> His sense for the evil that he found in man probably came to him, partly through his own strangely passionate and uncontrollable nature, and partly from modern evolutionary science with its doctrine of the animality of man, and partly from the Protestant and Catholic doctrine of the original depravity of human nature. It undoubtedly requires a great man to be fundamental in his views, but to be a good moralist a man must be able, through delicacy and tact and insight, to judge of conduct as a whole, as in some sense an art, a kind of harmony established between the purely impulsive and the purely rational or benevolent or æsthetic forces in man's nature. The only man that Schopenhauer unconditionally respected was the merchant, of whom he had a good type before his eyes—the old Hansa merchant with his spirit of enterprise and daring, and his own father with his high notions of commercial and political honour. He held that all men were rogues, but that the merchant was the only man who had the courage to say so, and to act upon the truth of his statement. For the soldier, the hero, and the great statesman, Schopenhauer had no admiration at all; as a class these men simply exemplified to his mind different ways in which the great vulgar mob that is called humanity is schooled into some sort of order for a given time. By far the greater number of human actions seemed to him merely conventional; and the question of men like Holbach and Helvetius and D'Alembert, whether all justice and honesty were not conventional too, seemed to him far from out of the way. They probably were so, in his eyes, for the general reason that men do not really *know* what they *say* about their actions by way of theory, and that what they do say about

<sup>1</sup> Welt als Wille, ii. 316.

them is of no importance whatsoever, because their actions are all governed by the one selfish effort after mere existence and mere personal happiness. In all this the influence of the eighteenth century, with its theories about the "natural man" and natural rights and "the social contract," is most apparent.

It is needless to say that Schopenhauer showed little love or sympathy in looking at men *from the outside* in the way in which he did. The love and the sympathy that he talked about both represented an imaginary solution of an imaginary difficulty. They were both put forward as desperate remedies for a desperate disease—extreme selfishness. The very intellectualism of his love and sympathy disproves their value as positive ethical principles. They both rested in his mind simply on the intellectual perception or the intellectual conviction that all human beings were really and fundamentally one and the same substance (the will to live), although they appeared to be different. Here, again, he is at the eighteenth century point of view, which makes individual men seem to be as different and as separate from one another as they possibly can be. He violently separated men from each other at the outset, or he imagined that extreme individualism was the fact from which he had to start, and he violently and desperately brought the separate individuals together, in order that some sort of ethical relations might seem to prevail among men. *La volonté de tous* was really a very troublesome thing to Schopenhauer in his extreme desire to show that the world was only *une seule volonté*. He took up the problem of ethics with the idea that individuals as individuals had simply to be suppressed and negated. That was all.

This reference to the *Zeit-Geist* of the eighteenth century is far from being "external" or forced in the case of Schopenhauer's moral philosophy. It is perfectly apparent what he tried to do in ethics. He tried to reconcile what has been called the "abstract individualism" of the

eighteenth century with the rationalism or the intellectualism of Socrates or Kant (with what they deemed to be absolute knowledge and absolute goodness of will), and also to some extent with the facts of life. He failed in that as every one else has done, from Rousseau and Bentham downwards. All thinkers who start with the idea that men are fundamentally selfish and different from one another, are forced in the end to bring them together in a very violent way; only, in fact, by some "third thing," some third entity, which is over and above both the individual and society, such as an absolute state, or a providential natural order (there is something of the latter idea in Adam Smith, for example). Schopenhauer was the more sure to fail, as he can hardly be claimed to have seen any one thing clearly in ethics. Some of the worst things in eighteenth century thought, and some rough equivalent of the Christian doctrine of the radical evil in human nature, and the supreme desire to get at all costs a philosophical synthesis, coloured everything he saw.

He tried, in the first place, to find out some one thing in human nature that was universally true about it. This is certainly next to impossible, unless we are content with the broadest possible generalisation, such as a theologian or a metaphysician would make. No doubt Schopenhauer had the concrete intuition of the evil that is in the world (whether such an intuition was with him an affair of instinct or of training); and no doubt he wanted to make as much of that intuition as he could, to overturn ordinary ethics with it, in fact. But his apotheosis of selfishness is just a chapter in the history of the introduction of the idea of the natural man into the moral and the political sciences. It represents, in fact, the last chapter of that history, when the early crude way of conceiving the natural man, borrowed from crude Protestant theology and Stoicism and the old Academy was

flickering luridly before it died out. It was to be expected that the idea of the "natural man" should come before metaphysic, its highest tribunal, after having flourished in, and nearly wrecked, several of the special sciences, such as political science and ethics and political economy. The conception of the natural man was largely negative at the end of the eighteenth century; the "natural man" was thought of simply as the unwilling slave of established law, law itself being conceived more as arbitrary and conventional than as rational and necessary. But it is impossible to assert only one passion or feeling about human nature. Even Rousseau<sup>1</sup> says, "*Qui ne sent que l'amour ne sent pas ce qu'il y a de plus doux dans la vie. Je connais un autre sentiment, moins impétueux peut-être mais plus délicieux mille fois, qui,*" etc.

Whenever men came to understand the evolutionary idea, the natural man was seen no longer in a merely negative but also in a positive aspect, as the creator, in fact, of all that he was, for a fatal moment in the history of thought, supposed to be anxious to overturn. The laws of the state and the institutions under which men live are not really repressive of his liberty, but concrete aids to the realisation of his true humanity, aids which he himself has built up and maintained during the ages of past history. Schopenhauer's metaphysic of ethics represents as sharply as can well be conceived the transition from the mechanical philosophy of society of the eighteenth century to the organic social philosophy of the nineteenth. He had only the slender hold on political philosophy and political science that the fact of its being a link in that transition implies. He showed that fatal inability to grasp the conception of sovereignty, whether in its ethical or its political aspects, which is common to the exponents of the philosophy of naturalism from Rousseau to Herbert Spencer. If he had understood the fact of sovereignty he

<sup>1</sup> Confessions, p. 99 (Bibliothèque Charpentier : 1886).

would have understood Socrates and Kant better, and the part that the reason or the rational will or the rational consciousness plays in co-ordinating the various impulses of life, and in making life systematic and orderly. Evolution or no evolution, the first fact about man is the idea of being controlled by something other than his mere wayward or capricious will, just as the first idea about a state is the idea and the fact of sovereignty, apart altogether from the question how the idea or the fact of that sovereignty arose, or who the individuals were who were the first to act upon it. Will simply cannot overturn society or the state, for these things rest not so much upon the will which is achieving, but upon the will which has already achieved, upon established will. Will is established in the case of the individual in the system of tendencies towards self-government which are in him because he is already a member of a human and not of a bestial society. Will is established in society in the various organised institutions which express society's co-ordinating power over itself, and its controlling power over refractory individuals.

There are many things which go to show that a confused naturalism, bred of a radically incoherent Protestantism and an incipient natural science and the revolutionary spirit, exists in Schopenhauer. There are numerous expressions in his writings about the duty of the state, the "sovereignty of the people," the "freedom of the press," the "balance of European power," the "foundation of the state," which show him to have been perfectly familiar with and a good deal influenced by the false political philosophy which nearly wrecked Europe at the end of last century. In what he says about the state, the merely negative or merely restrictive functions of government are most apparent. "The end of the state," he says, "is that no one should suffer evil," it being natural, as it were, in his eyes, that man (who is "at bottom only a wild and terrible

beast ") should, in a state of anarchy or imaginary freedom from restraint, try to trample down his fellows exactly as the beasts are supposed to have done on the theory of natural selection. Schopenhauer himself does not "seriously suppose" that any one could deny the "sovereignty of the people," in the sense that "no one has the right to dominate a people against its will." The reason, too, that he assigns for his belief that monarchy is the form of government best suited to human nature as it is, shows no signs of a departure from this naturalism in political theory of which we are speaking. He says that monarchy is the most natural form of government; but by natural he does not mean what Aristotle meant when he said that man was by nature a political being. His reason is a purely naturalistic or physiological one. "Even an animal organism is constructed (he does not say *organised*) monarchically; the brain alone is the guide, the ruler, the *Hegemonikon*. The monarchical form of government is the natural one for men, just as it is so too for bees and ants, and wandering cranes and elephants, and ravenous wolves and other animals, all of which place a single leader at the head of their undertakings."<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer quotes Homer in this regard, who says—

οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίῃ· εἰς κοίρανος ἔστω,  
εἰς βασιλεύς.<sup>2</sup>

Of course physiological analogy in the case of government is found in many writers on political science, who have sounder ideas on the functions of government than has Schopenhauer, such as Bodin<sup>3</sup> and others; but one feels justified in maintaining that Schopenhauer took in general merely that ordinary naturalistic view of human society in which sovereignty

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Werke, vi. 271; Zur Rechtslehre u. Politik, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Iliad, ii. 204.

<sup>3</sup> De la République (1586), in the earlier chapters, where Bodin attacks the communism of More and Plato and the Anabaptists.



is explained only on loose and fallacious utilitarian grounds. Although he despised history too, it is easy to see that he was profoundly influenced by the introduction (represented by Montesquieu) of historical considerations into the study of politics. And the introduction of the historical spirit into the political sciences tended at first rather to give credence to the idea that society had arisen out of non-social elements. The whole organisation of the state, to Schopenhauer, serves only to keep the passions of man under control and no more; it is itself controlled only by means of the safety-valve of the "freedom of the press," and the general equilibrium of forces, or the general "balance of power." The equilibrium of the state might be disturbed at any moment, and the wild beasts which it keeps within bounds would again roam about with their fangs and their claws exposed.

Nor was Schopenhauer, as we have suggested, more successful in thinking out the sovereignty of the individual's control over himself. There is for him no law of duty from which man cannot escape, no sense of an obligation to make one's life truly harmonious. In fact, even the mere organic control of the impulses is not a thing that is perfectly understood by Schopenhauer, the mere power of the brain in co-ordinating and regulating the bodily functions. Man to Schopenhauer is simply in a state of inward confusion and conflict; he has some tendencies, of course, to *think*, but many more to *act*, which he cannot control. Man is torn all his life long by a hopeless struggle between his brain and his other bodily organs, and there can be no abatement of this struggle save by death, or by the fanciful (?) emancipation of the mind from the influence of the body, or by the forced unselfishness, which, in his philosophy of ethics and religion, he suggests under the name of sympathy or disinterestedness. Schopenhauer saw everything in nature and in man "red in tooth and claw"; and the whole force of the ideas of his time combined with

the force of his own predilection for natural science and his own uncontrollable *naturel* to make him utterly unable to think out (either in the case of the state or in that of the individual) a consistent philosophy of order.

So far as Schopenhauer's ethical difficulties arise from an attempt to bring the abstract individual or the natural self or the wayward self into an ethical kingdom, they may be said to be largely imaginary and unreal. There is no such abstract or utterly isolated or merely selfish self, utterly opposed to law and order and sympathetic co-ordination with the life of society at large. The Hegelian ethic, indeed, regards even duty as a transitional aspect of morality, just because the individual is really a member of a social whole, relations to which define the sphere of his action. Schopenhauer, however, would not have allowed the problem of ethics proper to disappear in what Hegel calls "*Sittlichkeit*," ordinary or conventional morality. He would not have allowed the individual to disappear altogether in society, and there is some ethical justification for his position. No amount of mere social progress can make up for or completely obliterate the radical contradiction which exists in the case of every individual between his rational self and his wayward or imperfect self. It is, after all, what we might call the dialectic of the ethical consciousness that is the first and the last thing in Schopenhauer's ethics. In the ethical agent there is ever a struggle between what he knows and what he does, between the intellect and the will. It is this struggle which is for Schopenhauer the fundamental fact in ethics. As a matter of fact, there does exist in the case of the individual, as an individual, a lasting conflict between the will and the intellect. In this sense the problem of ethics is certainly how to make the will good. However widely and deeply a man may contemplate the world as a whole, and however completely he may try to devote his life to the service of his

fellow-men, there is something in himself that he never altogether gets away from, the radical imperfection of his own nature. Whether we believe that the supreme category of ethics is "duty" or the "moral end," there is always a conflict in the individual between the wayward self and the rational self, between the egoistic self and the altruistic self. There is, indeed, a fundamental contradiction in all morality, and in the very nature of the moral life, which it is the supreme business of ethics to explain or at least to consider. In the moral life we never completely come out of the "wilder-ness" into the "promised land." Morality somehow always seems to enjoin upon a man that he should be different from and better than what he actually is. This permanent contradiction is of the very essence of morality, and we can, to a large extent, sympathise with Schopenhauer's wholesale condemnation of all ethical philosophy that does not take adequate account of the contradiction.

Viewed in a certain regard, the problem of ethics is just the dialectic or the contradiction which seems to exist in the will of man. Man is always trying to be what he is not. A complete ethical philosophy must reckon with this fact. Morality, as Schopenhauer said, is an affair of the will and not merely of the intellect. If it were an affair of the intellect, we could possibly rise to the intellectual knowledge of which Spinoza and other transcendental moralists speak—the knowledge of the world as a whole and of men as parts in that whole. But Schopenhauer refuses to allow that morality is only an affair of the intellect. That is why he passes over Socrates almost in a sentence. He had a firm conviction that all merely rationalistic ethics was wrong in speaking as if morality were an affair of the intellect rather than of the will. Why cannot man attain to his moral ideal? The answer is, because the nature of man is will, and will means ever trying to be and never being. When we think of this contradiction that

characterises all life, we can see how a considerable amount of illusionism about things should naturally arise in Schopenhauer's mind, even from the standpoint of ethics alone. He could not allow himself to say that the end of the moral life was the highest possible attainment, simply because attainment would mean to him the negation of the will. The difficulty of ethics lay, for Schopenhauer, in the fact that the individual always has a tendency to will for himself, and yet that he must somehow be made to will for the sake of others. It does not matter so much what Schopenhauer considered to be the material nature of the contradiction in the will of man. The fact that he saw the formal contradiction there—the simple contradiction between the *is* and the *ought*—is sufficient to make his theory of ethics of considerable importance. It is easy enough to get over the dialectic or the contradiction that exists in the ethical consciousness if morality is an affair of the intellect. Ideally speaking, we are already perfect if we even *wish* to overcome the contradiction that is in our nature or to will the good of others. But, really, the conflict in our nature is never healed, because we are not actually what we wish to be ideally, because, in short, we are will—in the language of Schopenhauer.

Knowledge of human nature, according to Schopenhauer, is acquired by observing, not the intellect, but the will. It is a man's actions which show what he really is; his ideas show only how much or how little he understands of the world in which he lives. Schopenhauer makes us feel that the naturalistic or the observational moralists know far more about human nature than the speculative or the rationalistic moralists. This itself is worthy of notice. There is much more (to put the matter in this way) to be learned about human nature from the English and the French moralists than from the German philosophers. Rousseau certainly knew far more about the human heart than Kant did, and

so too did the English novelists and moralists of the eighteenth century. Schopenhauer read these English eighteenth-century prose writers, and he read French moralists almost more than any other class of ethical writers.<sup>1</sup> German moral philosophers—one cannot say moralists—almost always place the reason of man before his conduct; and yet we know that the ends of conduct are fixed for the individual independently altogether of his own natural inclinations. A man can reason about his nature only after he knows it; and he knows it only from experience; and the most valuable conceptions a man can have are the conceptions which come after, rather than precede, experience. It takes a man a certain amount of time and experience to acquire a reasonable knowledge of himself. This is a most important fact to remember in reading Schopenhauer. We know how little he makes throughout his philosophy of the concept or rational idea. The concept seems only to enable us to understand life, hardly to guide it. In short, we have to guide our lives not by our own mere knowledge but by the facts which constitute the nature of things. Life is, according to Schopenhauer, a process of trying to conform our ideas to the necessity that is in things. If we ask, as the Greeks did, “Can, then, virtue be taught at all?” Schopenhauer’s answer is undoubtedly nearer that of Plato than that of Aristotle. Plato thought there was a kind of divine essence (*θεῖόν τι*) about virtue which, properly speaking, could not be taught; Schopenhauer held that virtue never came from abstract knowledge of the reason, but rather from a kind of mysterious intuitive knowledge—an intuitive knowledge which makes one feel that all things and all persons are one and the same will, and that goodness comes not from affirming the will but from denying it.

<sup>1</sup> It is said that the majority of the books in his personal library were in the French language.

Wherever goodness comes from, there is one thing that Schopenhauer is very emphatic about—that it does not come from conceptual or rational or abstract knowledge, but only from intuitive knowledge. Our general experience seems somehow to make us assent to this; real virtue or goodness is a condition of the will which must either be born in persons or be acquired by them by a sort of new birth. Virtue can never be reasoned into a man on utilitarian or rationalistic principles. Nor can virtue or goodness be acquired by a mere effort of personal volition. The will must in a manner be baptised with some spirit or feeling which will make it seek “not its own” things but the things of others, not the will of man but the will of the universe, the will of beauty and of goodness. There is, then, a good deal of meaning in Schopenhauer’s contention that the problem of ethics lies in the will, how to make the will good, how to “universalise” the individual will in its motives and in its essence so as to make it will the universal good. There is, for Schopenhauer, a mystical element in all goodness. One has the feeling of what goodness is, but one cannot be completely good. No doubt, we are to some extent going beyond the sphere of mere morality when we seek goodness or perfection; in the sphere of *duty* we are only told to do right or not to do wrong. But still it lies in the very idea of morality, Schopenhauer would say, that the will should come to be in harmony with the knowledge we have of the moral law or with the intuitive knowledge that we have of goodness. It would be rash to say that this permanent opposition between what the moral law demands of us and our ability or inability to fulfil the demands of that law, is the precise form which the fact of the inner contradiction that exists in the will takes in Schopenhauer; although one might risk saying so, with the proviso that Schopenhauer naturally has his own ideas on the nature of moral law or moral perfection.

Schopenhauer recognises in his ethics all the contradictions that are ordinarily said to apply to the will. His use of the word *will* is really almost equal to the expression *human nature*; to him the will or human nature is in a state of contradiction which ethics is largely unable to remove. While we cannot accept his idea of a total surrender of the will as a solution of the ethical problem, we ought to be willing to concede that the contradiction which he finds to exist between egoism and altruism (although only a part of ethics, and by no means the whole of it) is not after all an utterly irrelevant or imperfect way of contemplating the broad element of contradiction that characterises the whole life of man. If the world is so full of illusion and contradiction as Schopenhauer makes it out to be, and as it sometimes seems to even the best of men to be, it is certainly wrong to think of perpetuating the world's existence in the lives of others. In short, the question of egoism and altruism is bound up in a most vital way with the universally-confessed contradiction between the "is" and the "ought" in the will. Morality somehow bids us go beyond itself in seeking the completion of the moral ideal. If the will became good, of course morality would cease, but Schopenhauer practically teaches that morality cannot be thus transcended or left behind, for the reason that morality is an affair of the will. So long as the will remains in conflict with itself, the world stands in need, not of a mere Platonic or Hegelian idealism, but of actual regeneration. The real outcome of Schopenhauer's ethics is illusionism. Just because morality is an affair of the will, perfect morality is something that never can be attained to by human nature, because human nature can never get rid of the merely individual or selfish will.

IV. There are several additional reasons in Schopenhauer

for regarding conduct or morality as something illusory. Spinoza suggested that men never know the infinitude of causes which produce their actions, and this idea is apprehended in its full scope by Schopenhauer. He observes that the ethical and religious dogmas which men sometimes bring forward in support of their conduct are very often nothing but imaginary theories, which they invent because they must have some reason or other to satisfy their intellect about their conduct. But conduct, according to Schopenhauer, cannot be properly explained in this way; conceptions and notions are inadequate to reality in general, and they are especially inadequate to conduct. Conduct must be explained as emanating from the inward necessity of the will or the impulses, or the needs of man's nature. A man never knows the whole truth about his conduct through his own mere reason, because reason only explains to him, and that but partially, the surface, as it were, of his conduct—those actions which with his eyes he has seen to emanate from himself; but it never tells him about the depths of his conduct, the tendencies to action and the pent-up energy which have been accumulated in the depths of his nature and which often explode without any consciousness on his part. "*L'esprit est toujours la dupe du cœur.*" It seems true, too, that men are not wholly to be trusted about the reasons they give for their conduct. To be a good judge of his own conduct a man would require to be a first-rate physiologist and psychologist; he would require, too, to have a perfect knowledge of his own character. The latter qualification is gained by experience, as has been pointed out, and the former is one that very few men possess. A truly good man, for example, when asked about the reasons or the motives for his conduct, may talk of some transient desire that he had or some external standard to which his adherence is after all only nominal and not real. His good conduct really came from his good heart; he did certain things because he



was a good man or because his will was good, and he might not be able to give a perfect explanation of how his will became good. A bad man, when asked about his vicious conduct, will probably point to some irritating circumstance in external things or in the persons with whom he had to deal, whereas the truth is that a bad man, even if suddenly transplanted into perfect circumstances and among good people, would still exhibit certain tendencies to evil which he could not, at least for a certain time, even resist, much less overcome. As long as either goodness or badness is explained from outside the personality we have not reached the root of the matter.

“In the case of good deeds the doer of which appeals to dogmas, we must always distinguish whether these dogmas really are the motives which lead to the good deeds, or whether, as was said above, they are *merely the illusive account of them with which he seeks to satisfy his own reason* with regard to a good deed which really flows from quite a different source—a deed which he does because he is good though he does not understand how to explain it rightly, and yet *wishes to think something* with regard to it. But this distinction is very hard to make, because it lies in the heart of a man. *Therefore we can scarcely ever pass a correct moral judgment on the actions of others, and seldom on our own.*”<sup>1</sup>

This last sentence of Schopenhauer's is one of the best theoretical expressions of the illusionism on which his whole ethical thought reposes. It must be thought of in connection with the dilemma which we found to puzzle him in his Theory of Knowledge. He said there that the higher up we went in the scale of being—that is, as we passed from ordinary things to the actions of man—the less explicable do we find things become. Human action is to Schopenhauer the most inexplicable of all things; it flows out of the inward necessity

<sup>1</sup> World as Will, Eng. transl., i. 476. The italics are mine.

(and freedom) of the will. No man knows what he really is in himself until he has felt his weakness as well as his strength. The rationalistic idea of conduct as resting upon perfect self-knowledge is to Schopenhauer an irritating piece of falsehood. No man has a perfect knowledge of himself, at least at the outset of his life; and so it is wrong on general principles to explain conduct out of knowledge. And perhaps it is only the vulgar and the half-educated who seek to explain their actions. "Only he who intuitively knows the nature of men as they in general are, and thus comprehends the individuality of the person before him, will understand how to manage him with sureness and rightness. Another may know by heart all the three hundred maxims of Gracian, but this will not save him from stupid mistakes and misconceptions, if he is without that intuitive knowledge."<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer very rarely explains actions, or at least explains them by reference only to the man himself, and he explains man only as an assertion of the will to live. Once again, what people *say* they do—and this hits the rational moral philosophers who theorise upon conduct from the standpoint of the idea—is of no importance; the only thing that is of importance is what men *do*; and when we look at the actions of men, we find that they are all of them assertions of the one will to live. Conduct is to Schopenhauer wholly an affair of the will, and men will never in his eyes be different or perfect until their will is different or perfect.

To put the matter definitely, it is only a knowledge of his "empirical" (or acquired) character that Schopenhauer is willing to concede to man. Man, that is, knows himself in so far as he has observed that it has been his tendency to act in certain ways and to seek the end of life by using certain means. Our "noumenal" or transcendental character (the roots of our nature, in plain prose) Schopenhauer teaches

<sup>1</sup> Welt als Wille, ii. §1.

that we never do know but only vaguely or intuitively apprehend. Conduct, he teaches, arises partly out of some conscious tendencies of our own, some tendencies that we know, that we develop as we go through life, and partly, or rather very largely, out of a great many unconscious tendencies. Our conscious tendencies, our tendencies to seek the end of life in a certain way or to adopt certain means towards the end of life, we can partly modify; but our unconscious tendencies we are not the authors of, and can modify only to a very limited extent if to any. The end of life is fixed for us independently of our volition, and we have within our power only the choice of certain means towards the attainment of that end. Most of our actions we do not fully comprehend or even consciously will. We have, as Schopenhauer would put it, the illusion that we are free and the illusion that we understand ourselves. Our question just now can hardly be whether these notions are complete illusions, but only whether they are not at least partly illusory, and that from the standpoint of morality alone. Morality tells us, as we saw, to be something—to be perfect, say, or altruistic—which we know quite well we never can become. If we examine Schopenhauer's account of some of the leading conceptions of ethics, this illusory aspect of morality will become more apparent.

“The rebukes of conscience,” says Schopenhauer, “of course refer immediately and sensibly to our acts, to what we have done, but in reality and fundamentally they refer to what we are, as that to which alone our acts bear complete testimony, inasmuch as our acts are related to our character just as symptoms to a disease. Only in virtue therefore of our real being, of what we are, can we be blamed or praised. . . . And so the object of our content or our discontent with ourselves is just our real being, what we are, and unalterably are and remain. It is the same with even our intellectual and

physiognomical characteristics. *Conscience is the ever growing and the ever more complete knowledge of ourselves, the protocol of our deeds that is always filling itself up.*"<sup>1</sup> This last sentence is very important. Conscience is ordinarily described as the feeling we have of being obligated to duty in general; but the consciousness of duty has always for its background the consciousness of what we really are and of how far short we inwardly are of moral perfection. Our conscience reveals to us our inability as well as our ability to fulfil the moral law. We are not responsible for our actions, Schopenhauer teaches us, because our actions flow from our inward being; we are responsible only for what we are, for our inward being itself. "But we did not make ourselves!" we demur. "No," replies Schopenhauer, "but you freely choose to be what you are; or at least you have often willed purely for yourself and your own imagined comfort and happiness."<sup>2</sup> Schopenhauer holds that the idea of freedom was first invented to account for the fact of wickedness or sin on the assumption of theism—that is, he holds that the whole philosophy of freedom has come from theology, and was invented by theologians only to reconcile the human mind to the thought of its responsibility for its conduct. If men are free, they taught, they are partly responsible for being what they are. It is far from easy to deny this theological parentage of the idea of freedom. It is at least true that the question of freedom is distinctively a modern question, and has been most keenly discussed in relation to the great historical creeds of the Church and the great theological systems. It is true, too, that what is metaphysically called the "extreme of subjectivity," the feeling of the alienation and separateness and individuality of the human finite person, is most truly reached when there is some sort of consciousness of our own personality in relation to a con-

<sup>1</sup> Grundlage der Moral; Werke, iv. 256 *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> This point is opened up further in the next chapter.

ceived personal God.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, then, it is true that the whole question of freedom has descended upon philosophy from theology. Most monistic systems, whether evolutionistic or idealistic or materialistic, identify the question of man's freedom with the question of the extent to which man is somehow part of the essence of the universe—partly creator, even if confessedly more than three-fourths a creature. That is, they contrive to sublimate the question of freedom into that of the universe itself, very much as Schopenhauer himself does in pushing the question of freedom back to mean simply the freedom of the will that manifests itself in all things.

The idea of anything finite and created being *free*, is to Schopenhauer perfect nonsense, just as freedom is virtually nothing to most monistic systems whether they confess this or not. Professor Sidgwick thinks that the question of freedom may very well be left out of ordinary ethics, as he does not think that it affects men's judgments as to the standard of right conduct. This idea is in Schopenhauer to some extent too; he practically scoffs at the ignorance implied in the ordinary discussions about freedom. And there is certainly something illusory about the ordinary conceptions of freedom. When the ordinary man is in argument pushed back one or two removes from what he regards as the fact about freedom, he is absolutely "at sea" in the matter. The learned all tend to wind up the discussion by saying that the idea is meaningless when applied to anything that is an ultimate source of activity.<sup>2</sup> Just as it is impossible to explain the flow of the blood throughout the body on the principles of mechanical physics alone, or by anything short of the tendency of the living matter of which the heart is composed to expand and contract in a periodic way; so the actions of man are really explained by nothing short of the tendency that is innate

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> See "Psychology," by Dr J. Ward (Ency. Brit., 9th ed.)

in him to seek after that which furthers his life and to avoid that which hinders it. Man is always "free" to seek "life" and "happiness" unless he is tied or in chains. The character, Schopenhauer teaches, is *inborn* and *unalterable*; and what is in our consciousness is largely or almost entirely determined by what is *below* the sphere of our consciousness, by the original tendencies of our nature. Consequently it is not our *actions* which we repent of, but rather what we are in our inmost nature. And moral growth or perfection, in so far as it rests upon instruction and effort, is simply the possibility of our acting upon what our intellect tells us about the limits of our character. Ordinary moral improvement leads to no radical change in our inward character. Character depends on the will, and it is, according to Schopenhauer, the nature of the will to seek what is finite and selfish at the expense of what is ideal and unselfish. He says that the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," properly means, "Do not let me see the kind of man I am." Therefore, so far as freedom and repentance and moral improvement go, Schopenhauer seems only to show up more hopelessly than ever the inward contradiction of the will, and the meaninglessness or the illusion of the ethical idea which bids us attain to something that we never can attain to. There is, we may console ourselves, a certain soothing effect produced upon the mind by the knowledge of the necessity in our own nature and in the world. Conduct, if we could fully understand it, would appear to us to be in reality perfectly invariable and inevitable and necessary in the mode of its action. "He who is thoroughly penetrated with the idea of necessity will do what he can and suffer what he must."

V. It may be said by way of comment on all this that without doubt the assumptions of ethics, or at least many of these assumptions, take us beyond the scope of the merely

practical or the semi-scientific treatment that is adequate to most ordinary ethical questions. It is true that ethics is a science just like any other science, and can give us no final solutions of the problems it raises, such as freedom and responsibility, or the inherent dualism that exists in the will of man. Still in ethics we are carried directly into the sphere of what is noumenal and transcendental. Conduct arises from the will, and the will means the body and its members and its constitution, and these carry us back through all nature and into the depths of all nature. This indicates the point where Schopenhauer passes out of positive ethics into the metaphysic of ethics. It is my *will* which carries me back to my "first parents" or to *nature*. With my *intellect* I can of course identify myself with the universe, and so to a certain extent sublimate my personality in it. But in so far as my conduct emanates from my will, I am made acquainted with the sources of the evil that is in myself; I come to know that my deeds are myself, and that in virtue of my evil self my being is in a state of inward contradiction.

All my theorising about my conduct does not alter the fact that I have to a large extent willed simply my own personal satisfaction, and that, as having done so, I am out of harmony with the nature of the universe.<sup>1</sup> Our intellect lights up only that of which we are immediately conscious in our conduct, and hence the explanation of conduct out of the *idea* or the *concept* will carry us a very small way indeed.<sup>2</sup> This is the real teaching of Schopenhauer upon ethics, and the breadth and the significance of it are what we have to think of. The real roots of our being, he holds, go back into the unknown. There is all the difference in the world between our actual consciousness of our actions and complete self-consciousness. We may be conscious of the states and activities that are in the self, but we are not conscious of the self. "Our con-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. following chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 183.

sciousness becomes brighter and clearer the more we go outwards, and indeed its greatest clearness lies in the sphere of perception" (any simpleton, as it were, knows external things, whereas even a Socrates hardly knows himself); "it becomes, on the contrary, darker as we go within, and becomes, when followed up to its very home, darkness where all knowledge passes away. This is because consciousness presupposes *individuality*; but individuality belongs to the mere phenomenon, which of course is conditioned by its appropriate forms (space and time). Our inmost being, on the contrary, has its roots in that which is no longer phenomenon, but thing in itself, to which the forms of the phenomenon are not adequate, to which, therefore, the chief determining conditions of individuality are wanting, and with these the distinctness of consciousness falls off. In this root of existence the plurality of beings ceases, just as the rays of a sphere lose their plurality at its centre; and just as in the sphere the surface is produced by the radii ending and breaking off, so consciousness is possible only where the essence of things runs out into the phenomenal sphere, through whose forms separate individuality becomes possible upon which consciousness depends. Consciousness is thus limited to phenomena only."<sup>1</sup> "It is in its inmost depths dark, and is, in fact, with all its objective cognitive powers, directed towards what lies without. There on the outside before its gaze is to be found the greatest brightness and clearness. But in an inward direction it is dark, just like a well-blackened telescope; there is no *a priori* knowledge which lights up the night of its inward recesses, its rays of light shining only towards the outside." "The 'I' is the dark point in our consciousness, just as on the retina the point where the optic nerve enters is dark, and just as the eye sees everything but cannot see itself."

Now if we cannot be conscious of the inmost depths of our

<sup>1</sup> Werke, iii. 370. Cf. chap. iii. p. 160.



personality, we cannot be held to be conscious of the roots of our actions or of the roots of the evil or finite self. When we think of the will which is ourselves, and of its roots, we find that both it and they go back to the beginning of creation. Our tendency to do actions which fall short of the moral law or the moral ideal is inborn and rooted in the very depths of our nature. It is thus easy to see that there is an inner contradiction in ourselves in regard to the ethical life. The *Sollen* or the "ought" is a permanent fact, but yet it is permanently meaningless for us as a practical possibility, because the roots of our will, of our wayward will, go back to infinity. Of course the Hegelian simply recognises this inward contradiction in the will as of the very essence of morality. It is of the essence of the "ought," he says, that it is eternally something which is *to be* and never *is*. He then proceeds to pass beyond duty into some higher idea or fact about man's life. But duty cannot be passed over in this way. It is not a mere idea for man; it is a fact, because it refers to his will, which is his real existence. Inasmuch as man is will, the category of duty cannot be explained away or "sublimated," as the phrase is. Duty, for example, may be set forth in a higher light by the idea of moral faith in the fulfilment of duty somewhere—in the universe, say, or in God—but not in the life of the mere individual. But this by no means exonerates the individual from his particular duties here and now, nor does it make the individual as God or the universe is. It was easy for Hegel to allow the idea of duty to pass over into something higher than mere duty, social morality, to wit,—because the essence of man's life to him was soul or spirit. It is easy, in short, to sublimate man into God or into society, if the individual is merely soul or spirit. But the will of the individual—in which all man's true being resides—cannot be explained away so easily as spirit or soul or the idea.

One often wonders where Hegel got his idea of man's nature or of the essence of man's nature. He seems indeed to have assumed "spirit" to be the essence of man's life, without ever thinking where he got the idea of spirit. It came, roughly speaking, from Descartes and his *Cogito*. But Descartes would never have been able to separate himself, in his thought, from the world and from God too, for that part of it, if he had not had all the wealth of a thousand years of Christian history and experience to go upon. Nor could Montaigne have asked his question "*Que sais-je?*" Nor could Luther have thought of himself as an individual before God, nor Kant of his three great "Ideas of the Reason." It was possible—that is, for Hegel and for Descartes, and for Montaigne and Kant—to think of spirit as the essence of man's life, because the idea of spirit had in it practically the wealth of centuries of Christian thought and experience. It may be questioned, however, if even Christianity ever thinks of the spiritual life of man as apart from a bodily life; in its highest flights it seems to talk of a spiritual body taking the place of a natural body, but still it always thinks of a body of some sort as essentially an accompaniment of the soul. Schopenhauer is far too near the earth we live on to allow the dualism between soul and body to become so pronounced that one element in that dualism (soul, say) might be thought strong enough to eliminate the other altogether. Man's life is a manifestation of the will to live, and this implies the existence of an individual organic body, for the will always is, according to Schopenhauer, the effort to possess and penetrate a given amount of matter. Duty is a real thing and not an imaginary thing, because it applies to the will of man as that actually exists in a definite living organism.

Schopenhauer could not explain from the standpoint of ethics alone the radical contradiction that exists in the will of man. Because he could not do this he seems to pronounce

the world illusory from the ethical standpoint. He found the ethical consciousness to be involved in a permanent contradiction between egoism and altruism, or between selfishness and disinterested benevolence. It cannot be said that the individual's failings are remedied by society, or that society completely solves the opposition between egoism and altruism. Even the intellectual perception of the identity of all willing beings is not, as a matter of fact, strong enough to overcome the tendency that the individual still has to seek his own happiness. Consequently Schopenhauer could not solve the dualism that exists in morality. Nor can that dualism be solved so long as the radical contradiction that exists in the will of man is not completely removed. Ethics, in short, has to deal with the radical conflict between what may be called "reason" and what may be called "will"; or between the universal will and the finite or particular will. The desperate straits to which Schopenhauer was put in his attempt to solve this conflict show clearly that the mere intellect or consciousness of man is not adequate to its solution. The problem of ethics comes to be, as Schopenhauer said, the question of making the will good. By placing the root of conduct in the will Schopenhauer has expressed the fact that the attainment of the ethical ideal is a permanent difficulty for man and not a transitional one.

VI. As to egoism and altruism, one or two concluding remarks may be made. The whole attempt to solve the ethical problem, with a regard mainly to the individual man, may seem to some people morbid and unreal. The very difficulties, they would say, that we have found in seeking for the reality of moral perfection in the individual show us that we had better look to society for the solution of the ethical problem. Both the Comtist and the evolutionist say in substance to Schopenhauer, "Life is explicable only from

the social standpoint or the standpoint of humanity at large; for the *individual as individual there is no complete solution of the problem of life.*" Schopenhauer himself believed that the apparent end of the will was the perpetuation of the race, and that consequently the world is illusory from the ethical standpoint so long as a man regards his own individual welfare or happiness as anything of ultimate moment. It is certainly true that if the individual persists in regarding himself as a mere individual there is no solution of the world for him. This is one of the chief lessons of life, and Schopenhauer teaches it as emphatically as any one else. The will is the will to live, and to live again in others. The will receives "content" in our living in others. This is, so to speak, the ethical reason for altruism. From the standpoint of the mere individual, or the "abstract" individual of the eighteenth century, the reasons, whether rational or natural, for living again in the lives of others are far from conclusive. If the individual is really complete in himself, and if society is made up only of individuals in an aggregate or totality, the argument for benevolence and disinterestedness can never be made logically perfect. But on the other hand, to take up the case for Schopenhauer, there is no completely rational ground for altruism unless one is convinced that the society for which one is to sacrifice something of one's own is to be morally better than one finds one's own natural self to be. And so the question of altruism becomes logically bound up with the question of the possibility of one's being able to realise in one's self the ideal that is ordained by duty.

There is no rational sanction for producing or helping to sustain beings who will be intrinsically no better than I am myself. Evolution can only say that the lives of the beings who succeed me, and whom I may influence, are likely to be more diversified and complex than my own. But civilisation

cannot be said to guarantee that human beings will be intrinsically better than they are now or than I am now. It would, indeed, be a step in the progress of civilisation for the civilised world to come to admit this. The possibility of its doing so is the only social outlook that Schopenhauer entitles us to take. He cared little about social or political considerations, because he did not see that humanity was or could be better than individual men. Morality is thus, in the first instance and formally regarded, an individual thing, however true it may be that the individual can attain to fulness of life only by living to some considerable extent in others. Thus, from the ethical standpoint, if the world must be judged illusory by the individual—as Schopenhauer holds it must—it is essentially illusory. And so we can see why Schopenhauer liked Buddhism. Buddhism seeks salvation for the race not in any half measures of social reformation or social reconstruction, but in a complete conquest of the secular spirit as such, and of all desire for mere selfish and personal existence.

The present age is too apt to exalt the social question above the moral question. Nevertheless the conflict between the moral ideal and the moral will of man is ultimately the point upon which social as well as individual welfare depends. If moral perfection cannot somehow be guaranteed to man as an individual, there does not seem to be much reason why the world should continue to exist and evolve. Ethical perfection, of course, is not primarily the question of ethics, but it arises naturally out of what we have called the dialectic of duty, or the contradiction that exists in the will of man. If there is no possibility of the individual's attaining to perfection as a moral being the world is certainly illusory. A person who is not convinced of the possibility of moral perfection in the individual has no completely rational sanction for altruism. Schopenhauer's failure to solve the question of altruism is in this regard characteristic. He really solved it only by a

*salto mortale*. His main reason for altruism is that others are just as bad as one is one's self, and ought consequently to be helped to bring the world to an end as soon as possible. "Boundless sympathy for all living beings is the best and the surest guarantee of social well-being. This truth needs to be supported by no casuistry. He who is filled with sympathy will assuredly injure no one, hurt no one, do harm to no one, but rather treat every one with care, pardon every one, help every one as much as he can, and all his actions will bear the stamp of justice and benevolence. Let any one make the attempt to say, 'This man is virtuous, but he has no pity,' or, 'He is an unjust and wicked man, but yet he is full of pity,' and the contradiction will at once become apparent. Taste may differ somewhat; but I know no more beautiful prayer than this one with which the ancient Indian plays conclude (just as in early times English plays with one for the king). It is this, 'May all living beings be free from pain.'"<sup>1</sup> Unless, however, the moral question is solved or is soluble, to devote attention to the social problem betokens a want of intellectual seriousness. Social utopias founded upon science and enforced social sentiments are impossible to the sage of Frankfort. If the world is illusory from an individual standpoint, it is also illusory from a social. Schopenhauer's social and political philosophy was partial; but his partiality may well be pardoned so far as it was the effect of his insight into the permanent dualism that exists in the will of man. The end of this century may witness a partial return to the moral consciousness of the individual.<sup>2</sup> For some time past the individual has lost himself in the contemplation on the one hand of an animal past and the struggle for life, and on the other of an imaginary future when the methods of science

<sup>1</sup> Grundlage der Moral, Werke, iv. 236.

<sup>2</sup> There are many indications at present of a revival of the moral point of view in regard to the social question—*e.g.*, "The Ethical Solution of our Social Problem." C. Ford. 'West. Rev.,' Sept. 1895.

shall be allowed to control all human life, and a man be reckoned able "to love an infinitely extended post-office directory."<sup>1</sup> Neither the past nor the future of evolution has any bearing on the vital question about the nature of man as man, so long as the dialectic of the moral ideal or the contradiction in the will of man is not seriously studied.

Evolution or no evolution, there is a permanent *individualism* in ethics so far as the fulfilment of the moral ideal goes. The will of the *individual* man has to be made perfect. Nothing should tempt the ethical student to let go his hold on this fact. Kant and Schopenhauer both fasten our attention permanently upon the contradiction that exists in the nature of the individual man so long as the idea of duty remains unfulfilled. In this lies the greatness of both. It is useless to talk about society to a man who has not solved the question of the dualism or the imperfection in his own life. A man, in fact, cannot "gain the world" if he "lose his own soul."

But we are now clearly passing out of the study of ethics proper into the study of the metaphysical postulates of action. We may think of one or two practical corollaries with which we are naturally left after reflection upon Schopenhauer's treatment of the ethical problem. In no science are we more apt to run into ultimate ideas instead of relevant particular facts than in ethics. Schopenhauer in his ethics is largely the victim of a one-sided devotion to such ultimate things as "supreme goodness," "supreme badness," "pure love," "transcendental freedom." He is right in connecting ethics with the will, and right too in insisting that all the difficulties of ethics centre in the problem of the goodness or the badness of man's will, but he tends too greatly to subordinate the concrete problems of ethics to the meta-

<sup>1</sup> From a pamphlet (printed for private circulation) entitled 'Further Determination of the Absolute,' by J. M. E. McTaggart, Trin. Coll., Cam.

physic of ethics. He wished to simplify conduct too much when he tried to reduce it to one or two elements or facts. He gave, indeed, a greater prominence than most other philosophers to the notion of the *bad*. He would have held that only he who knows what is bad knows what is good, and he clearly saw that this knowledge of badness implies an original taint of imperfection in the will of man which no amount of moral effort on his part will enable him to get over. But in his effort to give, as he put it, a really *serious* analysis of conduct, he unduly emphasised some one or two aspects of man's nature.

The extent to which Schopenhauer is a victim of all the false philosophy associated with the idea of a "state of nature" as applied to man, shows how important it is for an ethical philosopher to have an exact knowledge of the traditional meaning of the terms which he uses. Schopenhauer, however, refers to history only when it suits him to do so (saying, for instance, that freedom and responsibility have a meaning only when connected with theism); and at other times he completely ignores all historical considerations, as when he takes, so to speak, the eighteenth-century theory of the "state of nature" to represent truth for all time. The treatment that he gave of the dualism in the will of man savours too much of the difficulties of the eighteenth century in trying to overcome what it believed to be the natural selfishness of the individual. He was right in insisting that there is an ultimate contradiction in the will of man, and therefore that from the standpoint of ethics alone the world is certainly illusory. Because of this particular *embodied* selfishness in the individual, the moral ideal—whether it is unselfishness or something more comprehensive still—is never realised. But although the idea of duty or obligation, or of the contradiction that exists in the will of man, is in a sense an ultimate notion, it cannot be understood apart from history. It is unfair, however, to drag



Schopenhauer before this tribunal. It was not the past he cared about. "Two philosophers (Socrates and Kant) have talked about the reason. I have talked about the will. Together we constitute philosophy. Posterity will have to admit this." In words similar to these would he express his feeling about the whole course of human thought.

If we were rigorously to apply analysis and criticism and historical study to Schopenhauer's ethical terminology and ethical notions, his whole ethical philosophy would fall to pieces in our hands. By expressing agreement with his idea that ethics has to do chiefly with the will of man, we mean merely that man's active nature is the permanent thing about him, that man's will rather than his intellect is the supreme object of study in ethical philosophy. On the possibility of the will of man attaining to perfection depends his fulfilment of the moral ideal. On the possibility, therefore, of the will of man being somehow made perfect does the real meaning of the world as a whole depend. True, the distinguishing thing about man is his rational consciousness, the fact that he is able to act with intelligence, while brutes act only in obedience to instinct. But man's intellect or consciousness means only his power of knowing in a measure the direction which the development of his life is taking and ought to take. In the language of Schopenhauer, the idea is secondary to the will so far as ethics is concerned.

The course of our philosophical examination thus far has shown us that the real world depends for its complete reality and development on the reality of the purpose and effort of the will of man. The will of man is the reality which ensures the (relative) reality of all other things. In the chapter on the Bondage of Man, we saw how man is not free to do anything else than seek the attainment of his true reality and happiness in the way that nature has ordained he shall seek it. In the last two chapters we found that the reality of

the life of man seemed to depend on his ability to make beauty and perfection part of the content of his volition, and in the present chapter we have seen that the moral imperfection or contradiction which exists in his individual will seems to stand in the way of that. Neither his speculative intellect nor his artistic susceptibility enables him to see things out of relation to his will and the purposes of his will. Just because morality has to do with the will, with the concrete embodied life of the individual, it can never attain to its own completion. We are compelled, then, to study a still higher plane of human experience to see if we can thereon attain to the reality (or ideality) of which we are in search, the completely rational and harmonious individual human will.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.

“Un château immense, au frontispice duquel on lisait, ‘Je n’appartiens à personne, et j’appartiens à tout le monde : vous y étiez avant que d’y entrer, vous y serez encore, quand vous en sortirez.’”<sup>1</sup>

“Man kann in wahrer Freiheit leben,  
Und doch nicht ungebunden sein.”<sup>2</sup>

“Resolve to be thyself ; and know that he  
Who finds himself, loses his misery.”<sup>3</sup>

It is extremely difficult to separate Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion from his philosophy of art and his philosophy of ethics. All these three things represent the same violent effort of his mind to overcome the defect of the finite or the bondage of the finite will and intellect, with all the sense of illusion and repression and disappointment that accompanies human life. The effort in each case reduces itself simply to the overcoming in thought and feeling of all belief in the separate or individual reality of things and human beings, and the coming to regard all apparent individuality as merely a manifestation of the will under the conditions of time and space. It is hard to say which of the three things, art, transcendental ethics, or religion, is of the greatest logical importance to Schopenhauer. In treating of each he indulges in

<sup>1</sup> Diderot, Jacques le Fataliste, quoted by Schop., Werke, iii. 550.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe, *Lieder*.

<sup>3</sup> M. Arnold.

superlatives. The mind that has a vision of the Ideas; the will that exhibits perfect magnanimity and unselfishness; the soul that is perfectly resigned after conquering in itself the will to live, may all be said to have "conquered" in life, to have "overcome" and to have "attained." Religion, indeed, is seen by Schopenhauer so much on its merely formal<sup>1</sup> and subjective side that it is true in his case, as perhaps in the case of Goethe, that art could almost supply its place; he who has real "art" and real "science," he who has seen the Ideas and who knows the limitations of ordinary knowledge, how it applies merely to things seen under the conditions of our intellect, has religion—he has experienced the beatific vision. And there is another reason why Schopenhauer's religious ideas cannot be thought of apart from art and ethics. All positive religion, all dogmatic religion, appears to him to indicate rather a *defect* than an *excess* or a due amount of real religion; it is only for those who have not art and perfect benevolence, and who have not overcome all evil desire in their own hearts. It is only the man, as it were, who has not art and perfect knowledge (including self-knowledge) who ought to have recourse to positive religion—"Wer diese Beide *nicht besitzt*, der *habe* Religion."

In spite of this, however, it may be said that Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion represents the highest effort of his thought to overcome the dualism or the contradiction and illusion which he found in all experience and all reality. In his æsthetics and ethics Schopenhauer failed to overcome this dualism. It is wrong, as we have seen, to think that art takes us out of the world, and wrong also to talk as if the mere metaphysical perception of the identity of all living beings actually overcomes the selfishness that is inherent

<sup>1</sup> *Formal*, because Schopenhauer cares very little about the actual content in different religious systems. A religion, in his eyes, needs to be examined only as *affecting or not affecting* the human will.

in the individual will. The beautiful must always be seen in a medium of sense or imagination; and morality is a matter of habit and training and social experience and not a mere result of intellectual perception. With his philosophy of religion it ought to be different. Religion is the supreme effort of the human mind to reconcile itself to the shortcomings of life and to the fact that neither the ideal of beauty nor the ideal of goodness (a perfect human society) is completely realised in the world as we know it. Schopenhauer knew and felt this, and thus religion was for him the supreme witness to the *metaphysical need* of man. "Religion is the only way of proclaiming the high significance of life to the rough sensibility and the obtuse understanding of the majority of men who are sunk in base pursuits and material labour, and of bringing it home to them. It is the *metaphysic of the people* which one has to give over to them and pay an outward respect to. Just as there is a folk-lore and a wisdom of the people expressed in proverbs, so there must be a metaphysic of the people; for men are hopelessly dependent upon some theory or other of life, which must of course be adapted to their powers of comprehension. . . . The different religions are therefore only different devices by which the people take hold of and visualise for themselves *the truth* which they cannot apprehend directly, and which becomes in their minds hopelessly interwoven with the framework in which they cast it."

In the religious consciousness we come upon a higher plane of the metaphysical attitude of mind than even in art or in ethics. The formal essence of religion, if we may so speak, is to Schopenhauer something that even the philosopher himself cannot dispense with, because in religion we find a supreme attempt made to account for and to overcome the irrational element in man. Seeing that the irrational element does exist in the will of man, the whole universe is spoiled or vitiated

for him. In the world as we know it, "art for art's sake" is a mere dream, and pure goodness is hardly a thing that people believe in as a reality. "But since our state is rather something which had better not be, everything about us bears the trace of this—just as in hell everything smells of sulphur—for everything is always imperfect and illusory, everything agreeable is displaced by something disagreeable, every enjoyment is only a half one, every pleasure introduces its own disturbance, every relief new difficulties, every aid of our daily and hourly need leaves us each moment in the lurch and denies its service, the step upon which we place our foot so often gives way under us, nay, misfortunes great and small are the elements of our life; and, in a word, we are like Phineus, whose food was all tainted and made uneatable by the harpies."<sup>1</sup> From Schopenhauer's writings it is evident that religion was a most serious thing to his own mind, and the sighs that he emits over the vision of perfect resignation and perfect goodness in the truly religious man are to be taken *au sérieux*, in spite of his numberless emphatic declarations to the effect that "the philosopher must be before all things an unbeliever," and that "nobody who really philosophises is religious; he walks without leading-strings, dangerous but free." We may deny the actual world in our thought when we see or contemplate perfect beauty or perfect goodness, but this mere denying the world in our thoughts does not destroy the world in reality. Religion alone pretends to answer the question, why it is that non-finality and non-attainment and illusoriness seem to characterise all human experience and all human life.

I. Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion is very different from most rationalistic philosophies of religion. That it should be so is in perfect accord with the character of his system, which is a pervading illusionism on the assumption of

<sup>1</sup> Werke, iii. 662; H. and K., iii. 387.

the truth of idealism. The essence of the illusionism and the pessimism that Schopenhauer teaches consists in his finding many suppositions upon which other philosophers build their systems to be false and fictitious. Like Spinoza, who may fairly well be selected as a type of the broadest kind of rationalism in religion, Schopenhauer represents the substitution of a simple cosmic emotion for the multiplicity of philosophically defective creeds current among men. He distinguishes philosophy and knowledge very sharply from religion and belief: "religion has to do with belief and philosophy has to do with rational conviction." "Belief and knowledge do not comport very well in the same mind: they are like the wolf and the sheep in the one fold; and as a matter of fact, knowledge is the wolf who is sure to eat up his companion." "Religions, properly speaking, do not address themselves to rational conviction founded upon proof, but to beliefs supported by revelations." Now it is perfectly well known what this alleged dualism between philosophy and religion amounts to in the way of ordinary polemic, and it would be unfair to degrade Schopenhauer to that level.

Philosophy has shown a thousand times that all knowledge rests upon certain fundamental assumptions about the universe, assumptions as to the continuity and rational coherence of all experience; and religion ought never to lose the opportunity of emphasising the truth and necessity of these assumptions with the view of showing the great extent to which *belief* is bound up with them. Assumptions and beliefs have to do with the *will*, with the necessity that is laid upon us to act. And so Schopenhauer should not have separated philosophy and religion so much from one another; the fact of *will* binds them together. It might be held that religious belief is not antithetical to knowledge but rather a *mode* of cognition—a sense for reality—that is radically higher than ordinary knowledge. If all knowledge reposes on faith or belief (as it

does to men like Kant and Berkeley), it is wrong to try to mark off knowledge sharply from belief. Knowledge both at its upper and its lower limits passes into something akin to belief—in the former case a volitional consciousness of the self, and in the latter *an immediate feeling of the relation that reality sustains to our will*. As Schopenhauer himself teaches us, it is only the middle zone of knowledge that is clear and distinct and definite.<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer, in fact, was philosopher enough to see that knowledge and belief run into each other, and his theory of knowledge shows this. We could easily make out his conception of religion to be in reality that of a higher kind of knowledge, and so condemn him on the ground of his own theory for insisting too strongly on a separation between knowledge and belief.

One of the material advantages to be derived from the study of Schopenhauer's views upon religion is that they seem to tell us something about the *kind* of knowledge we ought to expect in the case of religion. He himself builds religion upon certain great cosmic intuitions. These intuitions are apt to seem devoid of *content*, just because the element of knowledge or reality is mistakenly excluded from them. But he really means well in excluding mere knowledge from our religious intuitions and perceptions, even if he does indulge somewhat in mysticism and nihilism (negation of the reality of the physical universe) in his theory of religion. He insists on the fact that the *conception* belongs to the middle plane of knowledge which lies between the plane of ordinary sense-perception and that of the Ideas proper. He does not allow that knowledge constitutes the ultimate court of appeal in matters of religion, and this denial is sound enough if an adequate account is given of the religious emotions or intuitions which are professedly higher than ordinary knowledge. But we may allow the antithesis between belief and know-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. iii. *passim*.



ledge to take care of itself. It is real enough in Schopenhauer, but it is not so ultimate as his words might make it out to be. And then Schopenhauer's general exaltation of the will above the intellect, of the practical nature as greater than the speculative intellect, stands for the fact that it at best is very foolish to make too much of knowledge, seeing that the supreme test of all truth is a general consonance between our thoughts and reality as we know it in our practical experience.

The true reason of Schopenhauer's hatred of ordinary dogmatic religion was the fact that he believed such religion to have no effect upon the will at all. "Where is the religion whose adherents don't consider prayers, praise, and manifold acts of devotion, a substitute, at least in part, for moral conduct?"<sup>1</sup> He held that people were wrong in saying that they lived in accordance with the formulas of any religious system or sect, or that such formulas represented anything outside the reality of their own experience (the *assertion* or the *denial* of the will to live). He believed that life exhibited its own eternal and natural necessities, and that all the theorising of men about their present, future, and past actions, apart from the will which is in them and through them as it is in all things, was completely illusory. People only theorise, he thought, about their actions, because they see them through the medium of *motives* and therefore distorted, appearing to be separated from the will or the self while they are not really so. We see all our actions through the medium of our intellect, which makes them appear to be different from what they really are, whereas conduct is in reality all of a piece, and emanates from the inborn character. A man is what he is to the end of time, and acts out the will that is in him. Even the acquired character of a man is not at all reliable in Schopenhauer's eyes. It simply means, he

<sup>1</sup> Werke, vi. 379 ; B. S., Religion and other Essays, p. 45.

says, the tendency in a man to act in accordance with what he *thinks* he has learned about himself from experience. But the fact is, Schopenhauer would say, there are depths in a man's nature that he never knows; the natural self every now and then simply sets at defiance, as it were, all that we have thought we knew about ourselves. All religions are invented to save man from himself, and none of them which stop short of the idea of a crucifixion of the evil self by death are powerful enough to do this. Even the religion that Schopenhauer himself invents cannot save man in this world from his damnable self, from the damnable will to live; and so the world, to Schopenhauer, is essentially illusory, and out of illusionism comes pessimism. There is only one thing that is absolutely true about the world, according to Schopenhauer, and that is, that it is through and through the will to live. And the supremely damnatory thing about the world seems to be, that we are born (compelled by the very bent of our intellect) to think that it is a little better than it is, and to draw fig-leaves of casuistry and excuse over our perfectly inevitable actions. Religious theories, he maintains, do not affect the will at all, but are simply fictitious and imaginative descriptions of the world invented to satisfy the intellect, in entire forgetfulness of the fact that our intellect is given us not for its own sake but only for the sake of the will whose servant it is. No religion so-called was to him really a religion which merely consisted in a professed adherence to certain dogmas or suppositions about the nature of things. If Schopenhauer emphasised anything about religion, he emphasised this, that true religion has nothing or at least very little to do with any mere creed about the nature of things. This is at once his strength and his weakness.

Schopenhauer is inimical to all rational religion. Religion, he teaches, has primarily to do not with the intellect, but with the will and the feelings. "Virtue and holiness do not pro-

ceed from reflections, but from the will." The philosophy of religion, if it perplexes itself about the nature of things *outside of the self*, has forgotten the simplest lesson of idealism, that the *external universe*, so far from being able to affect our conduct in any way, *ought to be explained from the standpoint of the self* or the will of man. It is doubtless with the "transcendental" significance of our actions that religion deals, but the true transcendental is to be found within and not without, in will, not in the external world. I need never, for example, have any fears about my immortality, according to Schopenhauer, because the will in me no more dies with my individual life than it took a beginning with my birth;<sup>1</sup> it is eternal; in my life my ancestors and progenitors are crucified afresh for their error in trying to will as finite individuals, and I myself have already *asserted* the will to live in a thousand ways, and must therefore myself be punished for this in discontent of soul. "So much the less, then, should it come into our mind to regard the ceasing of life as the annihilation of the living principle, and consequently death as the entire destruction of man. Because the strong arm which, three thousand years ago, bent the bow of Ulysses is no more, no reflective and well-regulated understanding will regard the force which acted so energetically in it as entirely annihilated, and therefore, upon further reflection, will also not assume that the force which bends the bow to-day first began with this arm. The thought lies far nearer to us, that the force which earlier actuated the life which now has vanished is the same which is active in the life which now flourishes; nay, this is almost inevitable."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer holds both birth and death to be phenomenal appearances, and not realities. His reason for doing so is that *time* is only a category of the intellect. This, however, is wrong. Duration is a fact of the world. The only hope for man is that "spiritualised" volition on his part may overcome the merely natural and temporal basis of his life.

<sup>2</sup> Welt als Wille, ii. 538; H. and K., iii. 259, 260.

Actions seem to be many and diverse, but in reality there is only one act, the eternal action of the world-will; the world may *seem* to be a manifold, or to be broken up into many different forces, but it is not really so; it is only our intellect which makes it seem so; there is one will and one continual willing and doing; this is the nature of the universe, and this represents the one element of truth in all religions. It may be said that this is simply cosmic monism over again, and we must allow that it is. What Schopenhauer cares about is only the *form* of religion, not the *matter* of the different religions; and his significance in regard to this very point lies in the fact of his having tried to connect religion with the will and not with the intellect (as other philosophers did). All intellectual religions in his eyes commit the initial and unpardonable sin of being first a creed about things, and not a feeling about our own will or our own conduct. We shall see if Schopenhauer's connection of religion with the will enables us to solve any of the problems that had to be left unsolved in ethics, and any problems that are not much considered in most intellectual disputes about religion.

(a) The kinds of religious phenomena that are studied by Schopenhauer have all to do with the will and our practical nature and our feelings. In art he is a would-be Greek; in ethics he is an eighteenth-century philosopher; and in religion he is a Christian or a Buddhist, with all the dogmas or the "external supernatural" simply left out. He felt what both Aristotle's *Ethics* and the *Sermon on the Mount* teach about virtue and goodness having to do with our desires and our will, and he felt this so deeply that he left the rational element out of the definition of virtue almost entirely. If any one had asked him what virtue meant, he could only have said that we learn its meaning through a sympathy which makes us intuitively feel an underlying iden-

tity in all things, an identity of the life of other beings with our own life. And so it is the conflict of the will of man with itself that is to be overcome in real and practical religion. Schopenhauer is always talking about the different sects, philosophical and religious, which represented the overcoming of the conflict of the will as the greatest thing in life, and about the fact of its being overcome as the essence of all real religion. He speaks of the Buddhists in this connection, and also—like Voltaire—of the Quakers, and of the Shakers, and the Rappists, and the monks of the La Trappe order, of the Essenes, of Stoicism, of the Christian monks and the *stigmata*, and of the crucifixion of the flesh with its “affections and lusts.” It is the possibility and the actuality of sudden conversions and of changed lives, of the true *vita nuova* in which the cross of life is taken up and carried, and in which the “necessity” of nature or fate becomes divine Providence—*θεία μοῖρα*—or divine grace, that interest him. He talks of how the Abbé Rancé was converted, and he chronicles dozens of repentances on the gallows and in the cell—anything that can effect these things is for him a religion. The superficial eighteenth-century deism of his day never could affect the will or the heart, and Schopenhauer felt that, and hated cordially both deism and liberal Protestantism, and also all metaphysical religions with their “absolutes” and “self-caused causes.” He says that Spinoza’s *causa sui* was just like the picture of Baron Munchausen trying to lift himself and his horse up from the ground by his own pig-tail. The Hegelian philosophy of religion had no effect upon the will, and therefore could not be said to be a religion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If it be urged that Hegel’s philosophy of religion is only a philosophy of religion, and therefore not necessarily addressed to the will, it may at once be rejoined that many students find Hegel to make philosophy actually *supplant* religion. And, in so far as he looks upon religion merely as a *way of looking upon things*, he undoubtedly *tends* to do so. Now religion cannot be *understood* save as firstly an attitude of the *will*.

The religious literature that Schopenhauer quotes is, in the main, first and foremost, the Vedas, then all esoteric Christianity whether of the New Testament or of the Christian ascetics, the *Enneads* of Plotinus and Jakob Böhme and Meister Eckhart, the 'Deutsche Theologie,' Molinos, Bunyan, Augustine's 'Confessions,' the Pythagoreans, the poems of the Sufis and the philosophy of the Essenes, Madame de Guion, Angelus Silesius, etc.; the sayings of all the *schöne Seelen* of religion, of "the babes and sucklings" who desire the pure milk of the word that they may "grow thereby," and of the "dying thieves" who attribute everything to divine grace and feel the need of redemption. The whole of the liberal Protestantism of his day, with its optimism and common-sense realism and its pleasure-morality and its crass theism, seemed to him, in spite of all its insistence on the true, the beautiful, and the good, to be intellectually inferior to the simplest kind of Buddhism with its profound conception of the misery that is inherent in the human will. The religious phenomena that Schopenhauer deplores are naturally to some extent those which all philosophers deplore: the appeal in ordinary Protestantism to the mere understanding and the consequent lack of true spirituality; the monopoly of the means of grace which priest-hoods arrogate to themselves; the explanation of conduct by external dogmas and formulæ instead of by an immanent necessity; the confusion of love and sympathy with intellectual wisdom and creeds about the nature of the external world; the endless wars of religion, and so on. He talks of the practical error by which pseudo-worship of God is taken to be superior to duty towards men, and creeds and ceremonies, rather than the fulfilment of the ordinary duties of life, to be the peculiar delight of the Deity. But he is more bitter in his condemnation of the religion of the reason than of anything else; reason only systematises the experience that we have about life and can never take us beyond that ex-

perience. All vital religion, he insists, comes by way of a kind of revelation or intuition, the chief ingredient in which is the self-revelation of the evil in one's own nature and of one's own inability to overcome the conflict that exists in the will.

(β) It is an essential part of Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion to point out the formal defects of all the most generally accepted religious systems—of all systems which are, to begin with, merely affairs of the intellect, invented one after the other to supplant each other for merely logical reasons. He is far too impatient with what he considers to be the eternal irrelevancy of all merely intellectual philosophies of religion to think out even a natural or an anthropological history of them all. That might be a task which the ordinary scientific investigator would undertake, but it is one for which Schopenhauer himself had neither sympathy nor patience. He must, however, get a certain amount of credit for suggesting that an anthropological treatment of religious systems would be the best way of setting forth their relative truth or falsity. He says that all the proofs of God's existence are at bottom not theoretical but, as it were, emotional, *herraunological*, arising out of human need. "Theism is no creation of the intellect, but of the will. If it were by origin a purely theoretical affair, how could *all its proofs be so faulty?* It arises out of the will, and in the following way. The continual need which always troubles the heart (will) of man, and sometimes throws it into deep excitement, and always keeps it in a condition of fear and hope, while the things about which he hopes and fears are not within his control at all, while indeed the causal sequence which could bring them about can be traced only a very short way by his intellect;—this sense of need and continued fear and hope causes him to invent the hypothesis of personal beings on whom all things depend."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Erläut. zur Kant. Phil., Werke, v. 126.

In this idea there is perhaps more objectivity and historical truth than in the idea which some Hegelians have that religious systems indicate simply phases of the evolution of the intellectual consciousness that man has of the world. The only objective test after all of the reality of a religion is its suitability to our practical human needs. Roughly speaking, the Hegelian philosophy of religion comes to be simply a conception of God as spirit, or of the universe as permeated by spirit; but such a conception carries no real satisfaction with it. Spirit is only an accompaniment of life, for life as we know it is always psychical as well as physical. Objectively regarded, *animism* is just as good as pantheistic spiritualism. We must be shown that the Spirit of the world is a spirit that feels our human needs and human misery. A merely idealistic principle never seems real enough as an explanation of the present world with its infinite effort and struggle and pain. If we could think of something that the world-will is trying to realise in the case of the finite individual, then we should have, perhaps, a principle which would to a large extent reconcile us to the world as we find it. For these and similar reasons we may go as far as we like with Schopenhauer in thinking of the formal defects of all merely intellectual religious systems, if we succeed in showing that there is a will at work in the world which sustains living relations of help and sympathy to human beings. The Hegelian too, it is true, can always point out to us the formal defects of theism and of materialism and of Spinoza's philosophy of substance, and so on; but he is always anxious to conserve the element of truth that he finds to exist in each of these faulty systems, and to keep it for his final "notion" or "idea" which he is going to deify. But how can a merely logical philosophy know exactly what to deify? Or why should it deify any one thing rather than any other?

The difficulty is, of course, to a certain extent, the same for



Schopenhauer as for a follower of Hegel. No man can be sure that what he in his mere thoughts takes to be of the essence of the universe is what the universe itself regards to be its essence. But then Schopenhauer has his principle of the will, and we have suggested that there is a real teleology inherent in that. The highest evolution of the will (the life of man) represents that which the world-will has pledged itself to bring to perfection. The mere idea or the mere notion of self-consciousness is indeed empty without the will, without purposive activity. The "idea that thinks itself," or the world that "comes to self-consciousness," is an empty conception unless we know what the self-consciousness is going to do with itself; and, as Schopenhauer suggests, every thought of an end or purpose in the world is a more or less direct appeal to the will rather than to the intellect. Thus Schopenhauer was enabled to infuse an element of reality into the philosophy of religion. The true way, he insists, of thinking of the different religions, and of classifying them, is in accordance with their effect upon the will. They must view the will as either attaining or not attaining to what it strives for. All religions, he says again and again, are simply either optimistic or pessimistic; they say either "yes" or "no" to man's need of salvation or help in the battle of life. "The chief difference among all religions cannot be said to consist—as it is generally made to do—in the fact of their being monotheistic, or polytheistic, or pantheistic, or atheistic, but only in the fact of their being optimistic or pessimistic." And again, "Atheism is not synonymous with the want of religion." This to him is the "true inwardness of the matter," and the less concealment there is about it the better. Religions either say that life is good enough as it is or that it is not. Optimism to Schopenhauer is in the first place a "shallow" and "ignorant" philosophy, and then, secondly, a really "perverse" and "wicked" reading of the world as we know it and see it. It is not merely that

there is a discrepancy between the ideal and the real in the world; it is that this discrepancy is in the nature of things. To be finite is to be subjected to a certain amount of illusory experience; this is the essence of Schopenhauer's religious philosophy. Religions should, he thinks, occupy themselves before everything with the fact that life as we find it is full of contradiction and illusion. We seem in the world to be striving for something that we never attain to. The first thing we ought to ask about a religion is, he holds, "Does it provide a scheme of salvation or does it not? for if it does not, it is a mere intellectual house of cards." For the comfortable secularist who would ask: What is salvation? out of a satisfied conceit that the world is very well as it is, Schopenhauer has nothing but boundless contempt and aversion—the man is simply not taking things seriously, he would say.

Schopenhauer's own courage is seen in this very fact of his proposing to divide religions by a standard which practically rules most of them on the negative side. There is something about his wholesale condemnation of all human religions which might captivate the believer in a positive *revelation*. But how many representatives even of revealed religion maintain the world to be literally and actually, and not figuratively and imaginatively, a *Jammerthal*—a vale of woe? or how many of them continue to believe in man's real need of redemption from his evil and wayward self? Real Christianity to Schopenhauer is frankly pessimistic about the world we live in. It realises the depth of the religious problem. "The inmost kernel of Christianity is the truth that suffering—the *Cross*—is the real end and object of life. Hence Christianity condemns suicide as thwarting this end; whilst the ancient world, taking a lower point of view, held it in approval, nay, in honour."<sup>1</sup> We shall see that there are some things about Christianity, or the scheme of which it forms a part, that

<sup>1</sup> B. Saunders, *Studies in Pessimism*, p. 48.

Schopenhauer cannot be held to have very well understood. But he is at one with the Christian religion in emphasising as strongly as possible the helplessness of man to work out his own salvation and to deliver himself from the inward contradiction that characterises his whole life.

(γ) Only the most salient and relevant points in Schopenhauer's condemnation of existent or historical philosophies of religion need be touched upon here. Indeed most students are fully aware of the radical shortcomings of all religious theories which bear some one distinctive logical label; they are all incapable of standing alone as a complete philosophy of the world; they have a meaning only within the limits of some special antithesis. Atheism, for example, is only intelligible in relation to theism. And then theism, as Schopenhauer suggests, can hardly present itself anywhere without feeling conscious of its parentage in Judaism. Schopenhauer's greatest *animus* is against theism and liberal Protestantism and the philosophies that have taken their origin therefrom without having the honesty to say so. In this he is at one with much æsthetic and poetic feeling, which generally prefers pantheism to theism. If we take the religions that are based upon such apparently "immediately given" elements as nature and the reason of man, naturalism (or materialism) and rationalism in all their forms, we must agree with our author's thought upon the matter. Naturalism, he says, is physics without metaphysics; it makes out the *natura naturata* to be *natura naturans*—created nature to be creative nature. Then as a religion it does not meet the many needs of the human spirit, for "Nature is not really benign and beautiful," but "devilish and cruel." Materialism is nothing but "formulated naturalism"; to begin with, it takes the objective world to exist on its own account, which is nonsense; and then, so far as the religious life is concerned, it does not make for that at

all, but rather for sensualism and bestiality and the crass affirmation of the will to live generally. Rationalism, again, is to Schopenhauer at bottom nothing but a fatuous reliance on the "concept" and on the pure reason as guides in life. In the first place, it can never elevate us beyond the present world, but only enable us to systematise it to a small extent. And secondly, it can never pretend to guide life without some reference to the feelings and the impulses and the needs of man, which is practically a surrender of its professed reliance upon the reason alone. Stoicism—to which Schopenhauer often refers—was a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* of ethical rationalism; it obtained a moral victory over the world either by a fatalistic acquiescence in the nature of things, or by the suppression of that which gives life its whole content and richness and meaning—the various feelings and emotions. Rationalism in the form of modern free-thought or anti-supernaturalism is to Schopenhauer about the poorest and the blindest and the most ignorant of all philosophies. Both the rationalists and their opponents, the mere supernaturalists, are in his eyes "very poor creatures indeed." They both argue as if everything in religion hinged upon the historic truth of a few propositions or narratives, and thus both ignore the nature of spiritual truth; the rationalist, its mystical character; and the literalist, its real inwardness and universality. The rationalists may make a stand, he says, for honesty, but they are poor blind creatures at best, and they always fall a prey to the commonest kind of materialism and sensualism. We can estimate the value of this when we remember how easily some members of the "Hegelian Left" as a matter of fact passed from rationalism into undisguised sensualism and materialism.

Then there are the philosophies which take up some attitude to the *idea* of God—pantheism and atheism. Schopenhauer says, and says rightly, that both of these are de-

fective logically. They both, in fact, presuppose an initial theism. This is perfectly true. Pantheism is a mere after-thought, invented to get over the difficulty of a God that is merely "outside of" nature, and not "in" it, and not "in" man. It is, too, a contradictory expression; for how can there be a supreme being when all is one and all is God? It suggests, he aptly says, the way Rousseau has of calling the people *le souverain*, or a king who, out of a desire to destroy the power of his nobles, hits upon the device of ennobling everybody. Indeed, to say that all is God is just a polite way "of bowing God out of the universe." "It is only dishonest Protestant liberalism which has made Spinoza a calendar saint; Spinoza was really an arch-atheist, and it is only German philosophy which has ever made people think anything else—in France in the eighteenth century everybody at once perceived the subversive character of Spinoza's teaching." This is in the main quite satisfactory. All the Hegelian philosophy of religion is to Schopenhauer simply "Spinozism dressed up": and the "faithful" among Protestants and all true Catholic Christians have always seen it to be such, and as such atheistical or at least negative of a personal God. "Pantheism assumes that the creative God is himself the world of infinite torment, and, in this little world alone, dies every second, and that entirely of his own will; which is absurd. It would be much more correct to identify the world with the devil, as the venerable author of the 'Deutsche Theologie' has, in fact, done in a passage of his immortal work, where he says, 'Wherefore the evil spirit and nature are one, and where nature is not overcome neither is the evil adversary overcome.'"<sup>1</sup>

Atheism our author affirms to be logically defective, for the reason that it is firstly a negative philosophy, and secondly, that it is not really atheism but simply *non-Judaism* (for to

<sup>1</sup> B. Saunders, Religion, &c., p. 57.

Schopenhauer the Jews were the only people who as a nation attained to the conception of a personal God). These two reasons when fully thought out warrant our passing over atheism. It is no philosophy in itself, nothing that admits of a positive examination.

Upon the great historical religions Schopenhauer's opinions are as usual fundamental and to a large extent final,—at least from his point of view. We may omit the thousand and one things that he says about the merits of “the Ancients” (*die Alten*), and state only what he judges to be their defects. “In an ethical and religious regard the Ancients stood very far back indeed. In ancient times the whole character of all public life, of the state and of religion, and of private life, was a decided affirmation of the will to live.” The Greeks, as we know, felt thoroughly at home in the world. Sin and disease and the ugly were only, in their eyes, *defects* in things, representing in fact things that were simply imperfectly formed (or “turned off”) by nature. Indeed the cultivated Greek mind could not think of disease and of evil as positive things at all. It is true that the Greeks had harpies and monsters and other creations which expressed their sense of what was ugly and deformed, but these very creations rather bear testimony to their love of order and symmetry as that which alone is strictly intelligible in the world. As for the Romans, their organising will and their iron tread over the greater part of the then known world represent as decided an affirmation of life as could well be imagined. “The Christian theory of original sin and salvation was something utterly foreign to the Greeks and Romans as peoples who seemed to enter directly into life, and whose thoughts never seriously went beyond it.” “The Ancients, although far advanced in almost everything else, remained children so far as the chief thing (religion) was concerned, and were in fact surpassed by the Druids, who taught metempsychosis. That one or

two philosophers, such as Pythagoras and Plato, thought differently, does not alter matters much.”<sup>1</sup> Nothing that may be said about the melancholy of the Greeks or the superstition of the Romans can detract from the truth of this statement, nor all that might be written about the extent to which the Greeks and the Romans were conscious of having their golden age rather behind them than in front of them. The Greeks and the Romans had no solution of the pain and the misery of the finite as such. Achilles and Cato,<sup>2</sup> in thinking of death, both exhibit that absence of the feeling of alienation of the human personality from the world and the infinite, which is a mark of the spirit that has gone far down into the depths of human misery.

The Hebrews are the other people among whom the modern world cares to study its “origins,” and the Hebrews too Schopenhauer was able to pass over very easily. He finds among them the two things that are integral parts or presuppositions of theism—*realism* and *optimism*; for theism takes this natural world to be absolutely real, and life to be a present that is made to us, and that is agreeably accepted by us as such. “The fundamental characteristics of the Jewish religion are realism and optimism, views of the world which are closely allied; they form, in fact, the conditions of theism. For theism looks upon the natural world as absolutely real, and regards life as a pleasant gift bestowed upon us. On the other hand, the fundamental characteristics of the Brahman and the Buddhist religions are idealism and pessimism, which look upon the existence of the world as in the nature of a dream, and life as the result of our sins. In the doctrines of the Zendavesta, from which, as is well known, Judaism sprang, the pessimistic element is represented by Ahriman. In Judaism, Ahriman has only a subordinate position; but, like Ahriman,

<sup>1</sup> Welt als Wille, ii. 722.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Horace, Carm. i. xii.—“Catonis nobile letum.”

he is the lord of snakes, scorpions, and vermin. But the Jewish system forthwith employs Satan to correct its fundamental error of optimism, and in the *Fall* introduces the element of pessimism, *a doctrine demanded by the most obvious facts of the world*. There is no truer idea in Judaism than this, although it transfers to the course of existence what must be represented as its foundation and antecedent.”<sup>1</sup> Now after Kant, as Schopenhauer suggests, this kind of theism is not possible as either a logical or a real resting-place for human thought. It is really a cardinal sin in philosophy to think of the world as first real enough “out *there*” in its own way, perfectly “objective” and independent of spirit, and then in naïve ignorance to ask for a cause of that world. If we *could* find a cause for such a world we should immediately want a cause for that alleged cause. And then if life is really a positive thing, beautiful and good on its own account, why should we desire to seek help from the gods? People who argue for theism do not really know what they are doing. Theism is only a temporary stage of thought, a partial aspect of reality. There is no personal God *outside* of the world of men and things. In modern times both Goethe and Carlyle emphasised this idea. It is quite enough, in short, for our purpose in unfolding Schopenhauer’s religious ideas to say, as a leading writer on theism has said, “History proves mere theism insufficient.”<sup>2</sup> A mere theism is never a satisfactory thing for the human mind to think. A God to whom we are bound in a merely external way cannot be the Father of our spirits. All people who can think and feel infinitely prefer pantheism to theism. Islamism is for Schopenhauer the “*worst* of all religions,” because it is perhaps most optimistic, and because in it we find “the most miserable and the poorest form of theism.” Buddhism in his eyes is the highest

<sup>1</sup> Werke, vi. 405; B. S., Religion and other Essays, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Flint, The Baird Lecture, 1876, p. 303 ff.



of all religions, because it is the most thoroughly atheistic and the most thoroughly pessimistic; it is farthest removed, as it were, from any merely intellectual creed about things—its preliminary acceptance of the philosophy of idealism apart—and from that self-satisfied philosophy called optimism, which is perfectly well contented with things as they are. Optimism he regards as really the supreme sin against the Holy Ghost, and as such philosophically unpardonable. “There is a most glaring difference between the ethics of the Greeks and of the Hindus. In the one case (with the exception it must be confessed of Plato) the object of ethics is to enable a man to lead a happy life; in the other, it is to free and redeem him from life altogether—as is directly stated in the very first words of the *Sankhya Karika*.”<sup>1</sup>

It would be superfluous to enumerate all the defects that Schopenhauer points out in organised Catholicism and in disorganised Protestantism. The pulpit is everything to the latter, the mere appeal to the understanding; and this is a Samson-like way of pulling down the whole edifice, because the appeal to the understanding has inevitably led, and inevitably leads, to what is called *rationalism* or *anti-supernaturalism*. The altar is everything to the former, the presentation of the suffering and dying Saviour and of the divine pity and humiliation. As never wavering about man's need of redemption, Catholicism is superior to Protestantism, but its conceit and absurdity in doling out supernatural help to men in infinitesimal doses from a monopolised reservoir are too shameless for anything. Real religion cannot be brought into man from without, and in the will and the heart alone can true repentance and magnanimity of soul be made manifest. All organised Christianity represents to Schopenhauer simply the metaphysic of the people—*Volksmetaphysik*. He practically thinks that if it could “take away” all its paraphernalia of

<sup>1</sup> Werke, vi. 334; Saunders, Studies, p. 25.

creeds and dogmas and institutions, the Spirit or the Will of the world would be "open" before us.

It is to be remembered, however, about both Catholicism and Protestantism, as indeed for that matter about Judaism too, that they represent stages in the evolution of a great religious movement, and that they are intelligible only as such. And here again it is to be said that if there is one thing that Schopenhauer could not understand, and did not care to understand, it was history and historical development.<sup>1</sup> Consequently he cannot be regarded as having understood religious systems whose historical character is part of their very essence. We must agree that most of the things which he criticises and rejects in his search for a final philosophy of practical religion are certainly halves rather than wholes—imperfect things: they cannot stand by themselves. As already suggested, a Hegelian might say that they represent only stages in the evolution of the religious consciousness. Schopenhauer neither affirms nor denies that; in fact, that is clearly not his point. All intellectual philosophies of religion are simply to him flagrantly inadequate to the needs of human life; they cannot work out for humanity the salvation it needs. In this sense all good people are *atheists* along with Schopenhauer. This is why men like David Hume and Voltaire are immortal. They both saw and taught the utter inadequacy of the mere philosophy of the idea, firstly, to explain, and secondly—what is greater than explaining—to atone for the facts of life. A Lisbon earthquake or the suffering of any one individual is enough to refute a superficial optimistic philosophy of the idea. We cannot say of the world as we see it with our eyes and our reason that it is "very good." Three-fourths of life is unfulfilled purpose and struggle, and all life is one continued effort after development. No external philosophy such as theism can

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. vi. and the close of chap. vii.

in Schopenhauer's eyes be reconciled even with the idea of human liberty, not to speak of the suffering of life. "Being-free and having-been-created are two characteristics that nullify each other, that are contradictory; hence the assertion that God has made creatures and given to them at the same time freedom of will, really says that God has made them and at the same time not made them. . . . A created being is as it has been created. . . . Consequently the guilt of the world (just like the evil of the world, which it is as hard to deny) always falls back on its creator."<sup>1</sup> Nor, again, can a pantheism of the idea, with its abolition of the distinction between human and divine thought, be regarded as explanatory of the actual process and development in the world, or of the actual contradiction in the will of man, which we have found to constitute the crucial part of the ethical problem. No philosophy of religion which fails to give a deep and serious explanation of the contradiction that is in my being and *will* is for Schopenhauer a philosophy of religion at all. There must at least be an explanation of the radical contradiction that characterises the life of the individual, and there must be some path pointed out along which that contradiction may be overcome.

II. Schopenhauer's own philosophy of religion is a kind of fusion of esoteric Buddhism and esoteric Christianity on the foundations of dogmatic idealism, with the objective elements of professed history and dogma left out of Christianity. "At the same time it [my philosophy] is candid in confessing that a man must turn his back upon the world, and that the denial of the will to live is the way of redemption. It is therefore really at one with the spirit of the New Testament, whilst all other systems are couched in the spirit of the Old; that is to say, theoretically as well as practically, their result is Judaism—

<sup>1</sup> Werke, Parerga.

mere despotic theism. In this sense, then, my doctrine might be called the only true Christian philosophy, however paradoxical a statement this may seem to people who take superficial views instead of penetrating to the heart of the matter.”<sup>1</sup> If we can hold together much that we have already reached, or indicated as reached by Schopenhauer, in regard to the bondage of the intellect and the will of man and his would-be struggle after a higher life, and incorporate it with Christian teaching about innate or original sin, and Buddhistic teaching about the “perfect enlightenment” of the man who sees that the whole world is show and semblance, all evil so far as it is bound up with the evil will of the individual, and who seeks for nothing beyond this very enlightenment itself about the illusoriness of all that depends upon the merely finite intellect and will, we have the pith and the essence of Schopenhauer’s belief and feeling in the matter of religion.

The first thing that we have to think of if we would appreciate his position is the eternal necessity of all events and all phenomena. Every finite thing to the wise man is determined or necessitated, in the sense that it forms part of a chain of necessary events which extends infinitely far both backwards and forwards. Everything is connected with every other thing in the world, and nothing could be different from what it is or happen otherwise than it does. There is nothing outside of this chain of necessary events and phenomena, and nothing can be said to be the beginning or the end of it. In other words, the world is cyclic in its character and returns back upon itself, and there is nothing in the world but one will to live, which is omnipotent so far as it itself is concerned, although all of its finite assertions are necessitated. When we view things with the intellect we see that all things are determined in a necessary sequence. There is no proof possible of the free-

<sup>1</sup> B. S., *Studies in Pessimism*, p. 27.

dom or the spontaneity of any one being or of any one person in the universe. To Schopenhauer indeed there never could be such a proof, for it is of the essence of the intellect to view all things as necessarily determined, as having causes which inevitably make them what they are. By the intellect, of course, we must mean, when reading Schopenhauer, practically the understanding, and its power of detecting the causal order that is in things. This power of tracing the connections among things is the only value that our intellect has for us according to Schopenhauer. He believes in no such transcendental or mystical faculty as would enable us to rise beyond the necessity of the world as we know it.

The only transcendental thing in the world is will, and this we know directly in ourselves. The manifestations of will we perceive with our senses and with our understanding; but we see these manifestations only indirectly, because, when we use our senses or our understanding, we always see phenomena separated from and only externally connected with one another, and not continuous with one another as they really are in the will. All things on the inside are will to Schopenhauer. We are on the inside of things because we are will, and we know everything to be part of the one evolution of life or will. There is no explanation of will; it itself is not known by the mere intellect although its different assertions may be. There is no difficulty about learning what will is. Willing needs not to be learned or understood; indeed it cannot be—*velle non discitur*. To know will you simply have to be will. There is no beginning and no end of will. You may reduce my personality to the beat of my heart or to the property that all living matter has of expanding and contracting, but that very power of expansion and contraction again is just willing. In short, you must simply give up trying to go beyond willing; in willing the world is at once an eternal process and an eternal stationary thing—a *nunc stans*—at the same time. As

a thing or being among other things and beings I am determined and necessitated; as representing and in fact being in a sense the core of things, the will, I am free. I will all that the world-will does; I have willed the life of the world a thousand times; I willed that life even before my consciousness of myself arose; I willed before I knew what I was doing. I waken up to find that I am implicated in the guilt or the theoretical error of all existence. I have willed with the world-will, and have gone the way of all flesh. The responsibility for all my actions falls upon myself. I have willed with the cosmos; I have affirmed life. I must identify all the consequences of my actions with myself. My natural character, although inborn in me, is yet something that I have myself willed; I myself have affirmed it.

“There is nothing more certain than the general truth that it is the grievous sin of the world which has produced the grievous suffering of the world. I am not referring here to the physical connection between those two things lying in the realm of experience; my meaning is metaphysical. Accordingly, the sole thing that reconciles me to the Old Testament is the story of the Fall. In my eyes it is the only metaphysical truth in that book, even though it appears in the form of an allegory. There seems to me no better explanation of our existence than that it is the result of some false step, some sin of which we are paying the penalty.”<sup>1</sup>

I cannot shift the responsibility of my being on to anything else or anybody else. In the first place, it is theoretically absurd to do so, because there is only one will in the world, and I am of its essence. I am in fact “it.” A person who regards himself as made by another is already irreligious in the eyes of Schopenhauer. He is unregenerate and unrepentant in so far as he is unwilling to take upon himself the burden of all the misery and sin in the world. This explains the

<sup>1</sup> B. S., *Studies, &c. (Sufferings of the World)*, p. 24.

venom of his hatred against all merely external and intellectual philosophies of religion. They are all, in his eyes, cosmological instead of, as they should be, anthropological, speaking about an external world rather than about man and his will. They do not deal with the problem of the misery of the will. The first step across the threshold of religion to Schopenhauer consists in the acknowledgment of what the Bible calls the evil that is in our nature, and what he calls the inutility of individual and personal volition. "If that veil of Maya, the *principium individuationis*, is lifted from the eyes of a man to such an extent that he no longer makes the egoistical distinction between his person and that of others, but takes as much interest in the sufferings of other individuals as in his own, and therefore is not only benevolent in the highest degree, but ever ready to sacrifice his own individuality whenever such a sacrifice will save a number of other persons, then it clearly follows that such a man, who recognises in all beings his own inmost and true self, must also regard the infinite suffering of all suffering as his own, and take on himself the pain of the whole world. No suffering is any longer strange to him. All the miseries of others . . . work upon his mind like his own. . . . Since he sees through the *principium individuationis*, all lies equally near him. He knows the whole, comprehends its nature, and finds that it consists in a constant passing away, vain striving, inward conflict, and continual suffering." <sup>1</sup>

There is a breadth of intuitive perception in all this, a fundamental recognition of the essential characteristics of human nature—as there is, for that matter, in nearly everything that Schopenhauer writes <sup>2</sup>—which commends it to us as containing probably a large element of truth. It is the evil self that we want explained, and the contradiction that exists

<sup>1</sup> Werke, ii. 447 ; Die Welt als Wille. H. and K., i. 489.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 201.

in the will of the individual. It must be confessed, with Schopenhauer, that we never can fully explain our actions so long as we insist that we are different from other people and from our ancestors and from those who are round about us, and from the world generally or the life that is in the world. The moment that we regard ourselves as individual beings, separate from others and entitled to wishes of our own, we find that we practically put ourselves in the position of a billiard-ball which is to be moved by others, and must be moved and will be moved in any way that a given combination of conditions may render inevitable. We must say, whether we like it or not, that we are part of the will to live; that we are its assertion, and that our life has to be explained by the thousand and one unconscious tendencies (and of course also by the few conscious tendencies) of the will to live. We must do this if we would understand the world even as an intellectual phenomenon. We cannot, indeed, understand the world if we do not take the point of view of the will in looking at it.

As soon, then, as a man has grasped the notion of volition as the key-note of the self, he ceases to explain himself by things outside of himself. He has also at the same time done with *external* explanations of the world, and he is prepared to find the reality of the world in the one will that is manifesting itself in himself and in all things. I must take to myself all the guilt of my finite existence, and admit that I too have willed to live, have willed the world. Only in my volition, or in the fact of my volition, and in all that is implied in that, do I gain an understanding of the world. From the standpoint of religion I must confess that I have made myself a slave of the will to live, and I must be willing to take to myself the consequences of my wayward and sinful volition. A man must admit the extent to which he is necessitated and not free, before he is on the road to real



peace of mind, which is real freedom. This is getting into mystery of course, but it is getting to the roots of human personality, which are shrouded in mystery.<sup>1</sup> I can see myself at once as a natural creation, a wayward finite thing, and yet as a being who recognises himself to be one with all existence, who is potentially everything that the will is trying to be—that is, who is potentially free. It is literally true that liberty is a mystery. As finite will I am enslaved, but as infinite will I am free. The finite will must be made to die unto itself, and to affirm the eternal Ideas of the eternal Will. Whatever else religion is, it is first and foremost a perception of the radical evil that is in the finite will. When a man sees that and becomes conscious of that, becomes conscious of the fact that he has willed the natural life before he had even a consciousness of the spiritual life, he is on the road to salvation—Schopenhauer would say he is potentially saved.

It is not exactly incumbent upon Schopenhauer to say how the perception of the guilt of the merely natural will in man may be brought about. The evil of the purely selfish or of purely natural will is so apparent to him, that he says life is nothing but one continuous crucifixion. Out of the merely finite will can never come anything but self-assertion and waywardness and unhappiness. If man could really *affirm* the Ideas—enter, that is, upon the heritage of beauty and moral perfection—he would of course be able to crucify the finite will to some effect. We have already seen that man can do this according to Schopenhauer only by an absolute surrender of all particular interests, all particular life, all separate personality. It is for the individual as individual that the world is nugatory and illusory. And Schopenhauer really stops here. It is literally true, however, as he maintains, that neither pure goodness, nor freedom, nor responsibility, are explicable apart from the religious intuition

<sup>1</sup> Again see chap. iii. p. 139.

lying at the foundation of Christian teaching about original sin and Buddhist teaching about finite desire and finite volition. The finite self must be seen to be actually implicated in the guilt of all existence, and must be virtually crucified, before a complete answer to the question of personal freedom, and therefore of conscious personality, can be either given or understood. The problem of freedom, in other words, cannot be solved at a lower level than that of the philosophy of religion.<sup>1</sup> Nor can the world, the so-called objective world, and the relation of that world to the human personality, become intelligible until we put ourselves at the point of view of the will. We are now almost for the first time in a position to see the significance of Schopenhauer's cosmic philosophy in its ultimate form.

With the negation of the wayward self and the wayward will in the religious intuition and in religious repentance and resignation, the whole world assumes a different aspect. We may think of a poem of Goethe's in which this idea is expressed. A man is there supposed to have placed happiness successively in money and possessions, in pleasure, in travel, in reputation and honours, in war and glory. None of these things seem to bring what they promised, and at last the man gives up all pretensions and claims to individual happiness. He then finds that the whole world belongs to him.

"Nun hab' ich mein' Sach' auf Nichts gestellt  
Und mein gehört die ganze Welt."<sup>2</sup>

The New Testament parable of the rich young man sets forth the same negative teaching with more that is positive behind it. Many of the Buddhistic parables and much Buddhistic teaching speak in a similar strain. Schopenhauer can only say that with the negation of the finite self, the world is negated and the illusions of life at an end. The finite intellect is but a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the refrain of the 'Imitatio': "Dimitte omnia et invenies omnia."

tool of the finite will ; it exists and has existed only to help the will in the pursuit of its ends. In the intellect, as Schopenhauer says, the will struck a light for itself to help itself along its path. And in truth philosophy has often made itself absurd in trying to explain the world from the point of view of the intellect without reference to the will, whose mere servant intellect is. The world is intelligible only from a teleological point of view, as an evolution of will from lower to higher grades of potency ; and we must take a firm hold of the element of fact that is contained in this thought. To Schopenhauer the world is throughout illusory, for the reason that human beings will apparently never cease to will as separate existences, because they will continue to act as if their own finite satisfaction were the only thing for which the world existed. "The whole foundation on which our existence rests is the present—the ever fleeting present. It lies, then, in the very nature of our existence to take the form of constant motion, and to offer no possibility of our ever attaining the rest for which we are always striving. We are like a man running down hill, who cannot keep on his legs unless he runs on, and will inevitably fall if he stops ; or again, like a pole balanced on the tip of one's finger ; or like a planet which would fall into its sun the moment it ceased to hurry forward on its way. Unrest is the mark of existence."<sup>1</sup> Art and disinterested moral conduct make men feel how illusory separate existence and separate volition really are, but religion alone can make a man sincerely repent of the assertion of his finite will and completely disbelieve in it. There is just as much suffering and disappointment in the world as there is of separate or selfish volition.

Death is the punishment meted out by the retributive justice of nature to human beings for their error in willing to live as individual existences. "Every individual existence is funda-

<sup>1</sup> B. Saunders, *Studies, &c.*, pp. 34, 35.

mentally an error, a mistake, something that had better not have been, something that it is the special purpose of life to bring us back from." "Death is the great reprimand which the will to live, or more especially the egoism which is essential to this, receives through the course of nature; and it may be conceived as a punishment for our existence." "Death says, 'Thou art the product of an act which should not have been; therefore to expiate it thou must die.'" Schopenhauer is like St Paul in always looking upon death as a punishment for a sin that is original or implicated somehow in the very fact of life itself. One rather objects to his use of this conception without a more definite acknowledgment of its possible source. But then, once more, this is not the way in which Schopenhauer proceeds. He would simply have said that he intuitively felt that death was the penalty for the error of willing to exist for self. The faces of all old people, he often remarks, show that "disappointment" which is the outcome of all individual life; and the faces of the dead that resignation to the world-will which is a tacit acceptance of the punishment that is due to them. The individual who wills to exist for himself is inevitably disappointed, according to Schopenhauer, and inevitably shows it. Death is something that is necessarily bound up with the life of the individual.

It is quite possible to hail Schopenhauer as one of the most pronounced upholders of altruism that ever existed. He may, in fact, be said to teach emphatically that if life is measured in terms of our own mere individual existence, our own mere individual happiness, then beyond question it is and must be illusory. But he teaches far more than that, or at least his instructiveness does not end merely there. For philosophical purposes it is just as interesting to study how he fails to lay hold of the real universal, the real altruistic element in things, the thing that makes the individual rise above the limits of his own mere finite personality.

Schopenhauer thinks of the world or of life as something that is being at once eternally affirmed and eternally denied in the case of the individual will that is conscious of the error and the guilt of finitude—the will that affirms at once a purely natural and a purely ideal existence. The “to be” and the “not to be” is the great question every individual being must put to himself. It is nothing after all to be and to will as a separate finite individual. “The substance of the world-famed Monologue in ‘Hamlet,’ taken as a whole, is simply this: our condition is so pitiable that complete non-existence would be decidedly preferable to it.”<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer goes on, however, in the same place to say that these alternatives are *never really presented to men*, because we have the feeling that death does not end things—that it is no absolute destruction. Ontologically and teleologically reality, according to him, may be reduced to the self that is trying to be real, through an affirmation at once of its own natural life and also of the life of the Ideas. If he had shown—which he has not—how the self could attain to a real as opposed to an illusory existence, there would be evident a whole world of meaning in his positive principle of will. But the affirmation and negation of the world hangs on such a slender thread in Schopenhauer (on the human intellect or brain, in fact), that we cannot, dogmatically, stand just where he stands himself. The Christian and the Buddhistic elements in Schopenhauer’s religious thought are more true and more real and more valuable than the mere idealism, the subjective idealism with which his philosophy began, and which still persists, to a certain extent, in his religious ideas. His whole edifice totters if we deny, as we saw good reason for doing,<sup>2</sup> the idealistic presuppositions on which it rests—the idea that the world depends for its existence on the mere self or the mere intellect.

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Werke, ii. 382, 383.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chap. ii.

The interesting thing in regard to this very point is, that our best grounds for denying Schopenhauer's idealistic pre-suppositions lie just in his own idea—his greatest idea—of willing, and of the contradiction in the will. I cannot negate the world so simply and so easily as Schopenhauer would have me in theory to do, for the mere reason that I am will, embodied will, and that as such I am myself a part and not the whole of existence. I may "negate" the merely natural basis of my life as such, in order to "affirm" the spiritual purpose that is suggested in the life and history of humanity; but I cannot "negate" the life of the whole world. I cannot be said to be even the supporter—much less the destroyer—of a world out of which my natural self comes, and which I recognise as infinitely greater than I am myself. The intellect is only an accompaniment of my life; it may enable me to think of the world as my idea, but that thought has only a practical value, the value of enabling me to determine my relation to the world of which I form a part. It is at least a healthy way of looking at things to regard the intellect as a secondary element in man's life. The intellect is the distinctive thing about man, it is true, but yet it is not the thing about his life that makes him real. That which makes him real is will. This the idealists have always forgotten, and Schopenhauer himself forgot it in allowing himself to think of the world as simply the idea of the conscious subject. The man who is deliberating about being and non-being, about the "to be" and the "not to be," is, after all, debating only about the reasonableness or the unreasonableness of the little world that he is working out for himself. He is at the porch of repentance and resignation, which is the approach to the gate of life, but he is only there.

Schopenhauer's answer, then, to what he affirms to be the two cardinal problems of all religion, the transcendental significance of our actions and our existence after death, is fairly

apparent. It is that our action points us to and connects us with all existence *a parte ante* and *a parte post*; the roots of our action carry us back through preceding generations into the infinite life of the world, and we have in our efforts and impulses and instincts willed the life of all finite existence. Yet everything in experience tends to show that our personality, in subjecting itself to external nature, has received into itself something that is foreign to it; hence the non-attainment and the non-finality that are the characteristics of all finite life. It is only by a sort of new and spiritual birth that we can enter upon the ideal life, the life of the Ideas; by an essential negation of the merely natural life, of the idea of the satisfaction of the finite, and an admission of the fact that we ourselves are somehow responsible for the whole error and guilt of the finite. There is endless life in the affirmation of the Ideas of perfect beauty and perfect goodness. The perfect life is associated with the perfection of the purpose that is expressed in things, and most perfectly expressed in the ideals of beauty and goodness which we are somehow made aware of in the great creations of the greatest minds.

It may of course again be said that the philosophy of the idea, the philosophy of Spinoza and of Hegel (and of Aristotle too, for that part of it), has always contended that man's true life consists in spiritual purpose and not in the life of sense and impulse. But, then, by spiritual purpose we can mean only the highest possible development of life itself; and so it is still true that life consists in *effort* (or will) and *attainment*—attainment, indeed, that can *contemplate* itself, self-conscious attainment, but still *attainment* and *volition*. To say that man's life consists in the contemplation of the Ideas, in his mere power of returning back upon himself in his thoughts and conceptions, is to lay one's self open to the logical dangers of a pantheism of the idea. It cannot be said that Schopenhauer himself is free from this tendency, as has been indicated

in the discussion of his main ideas upon artistic insight and beauty. Indeed Schopenhauer's philosophy is an illusionism resulting from a more or less uncritical acceptance on his part of two abstract views about man's life: the idea of man as a being who thinks the universe; and the idea of man as a being in whom the will asserts itself most strongly. If we rest on the letter of Schopenhauer's system, we must say that although the first thing he saw about man was his volition and his activity, he yet could not give a completely rational account of volition, could not show how man in his volition really accomplished anything, and that he consequently fell back on Platonism or a pantheism of the idea. But there remains this difference between Schopenhauer and other philosophers, that philosophers whose thought was concerned with the idea from the very beginning were enabled to infuse some rational meaning into the idea; while he could not do this, owing to the very fact that he had recourse to the philosophy of the idea only after having despaired of everything else, and in particular of a rational account of the volitional activity of man (in which, as a matter of fact, he was supremely interested).

Seeing that Schopenhauer, however, made will his first principle, we are bound to interpret the idea in the light of the will, and to make out a life of endless attainment to be the real life of man—an attainment which is to be more and more conscious, but which is already partly achieved by nature in her construction of the organised life that she has given to man. The duty of man is simply to infuse a spiritual meaning into the purpose that nature already seems to have written in his life. "Will, then, is that which we possess in common with all men, nay, with all animals, and even with lower forms of existence; and in so far we are akin to everything—so far, that is, as everything is filled to overflowing with will. On the other hand, that which places one being over another, and sets differences between



man and man, is intellect and knowledge ; therefore in every manifestation of self we should, as far as possible, give play to the intellect alone ; for, as we have seen, the will is the *common* part of us. Every violent exhibition of will is common and vulgar ; in other words, it reduces us to the level of the species, and makes us a mere type and example of it, in that it is just the character of the species that we are showing. So every fit of anger is something *common*—every unrestrained display of joy, or of hate, or of fear—in short, every form of emotion ; in other words, every movement of the will, if it is so strong as decidedly to outweigh the intellectual element in consciousness, and to make the man appear as a being that *wills* rather than *knows*.”<sup>1</sup>

The great difficulty that exists in Schopenhauer is just the difficulty that he himself has in *thinking* his own principle of will. He really does not *like* action and volition ; it distracts his mind to think of them. If the life of man consisted only in thought, it would be very easy for man to negate the natural basis of his life. Philosophy and art would enable him to do this. But it is not so much spiritual or ideal thought that man has to attain to as spiritual or ideal volition ; and the difficulty that lies in the way of his realising this is that his will is already largely or almost completely determined by the necessities of his natural life. Only the strongest possible motive can enable him to affirm the ideal life as matter of actual volition on his part. Religion, in fact, represents the only force that is adequate to giving man this motive. The real thing that religion tries to do and ought to try to do, according to Schopenhauer, is to eradicate out of man his wayward and evil will. On a general view of the matter, it may do this in any way it pleases ; indeed different religions do it in different ways. But this at least all those religions which are really schemes of moral salvation propose

<sup>1</sup> Werke, vi. 634 ; B. S., Studies in Pessimism, p. 67.

to attempt. Schopenhauer practically holds that a religion may teach us anything it likes about the gods, provided it show us how the gods can help us. The only way in which he thought the wayward or selfish or natural or evil will could be overcome, was to have it utterly eradicated or completely negated. He cannot tell us how the will may "find" itself again after having denied or "lost" itself. Doubtless this very difficulty indicates the limits of philosophy. Philosophy can never give to man any conclusive answer about the survival of his personality after the destruction in him of the merely finite will to live. It can only put the thought of man on the path along which it may see how such survival is *not only possible but natural and rational*. Man, as Kant put it, must always do his part in the matter of his salvation, believing that God will do the rest. Schopenhauer was so strongly convinced of the error of finite existence as such, or at least of the illusory or partial character of finite existence, that he refused to give any encouragement to the idea of a personal immortality. The individual who is in any way concerned about the survival of his merely personal life is not yet, in his eyes, sufficiently impenetrated with the knowledge of the evil of the finite will as such; he is, in fact, neither philosophical nor truly religious.

And yet on Schopenhauer's own principles we are bound to seek for a development of the life of man along the path of will and volition. Man's being consists in will, and it is in the very idea of his being that he ought to attain to the reality of which he seems potentially capable, the reality of a completely rational life. Kant saw that a thoroughly good will is the only absolutely good thing in the world, and yet that it exists nowhere. The realisation, as it were, of the ideal in *thought* and in *consciousness* is not its realisation in *practice* and in *reality*. The philosophy of the will takes its stand upon this fact. So long as man is will, he is

striving to bring about something that never is but only ever is to be. The key-note of will is conflict and defect, and the sense of defect is the motive to volition. The effort of man's life is to make his higher purpose as instinctive and organic and real in himself as are his lower instincts and natural impulses. We have already suggested that Schopenhauer finds it very difficult to relate together instinct and conscious purpose. Natural instinct is natural purpose that has become organic, and the highest reality of man's life would seem to be a state of things in which spiritual purpose had also become organic, and so in a sense natural. The problem of man's life is to allow the good and the ideal to interpenetrate his life, even his natural and impulsive life, and not merely to negate it. We may, in short, save ourselves from the illusionism in which Schopenhauer himself ends, by insisting more strongly upon his own principle of will than he himself was able to do.

The problem of religion is to make the will good. It can best do this by awakening in man some powerful intuitive perception of the evil of his own nature. Schopenhauer cannot define such a perception other than negatively—as consisting in the recognition on the part of man of the futility of his merely *natural* life. Man must recognise once and for all that only by a sort of spiritual birth, and not by any amount of natural effort and struggle, can he obtain the heritage of ideal character and ideal purpose, which is potentially his in virtue of his higher perceptions. The condemnation of man consists in the fact that he has already allowed himself to be carried away by, and to be determined by, merely natural instinct and impulse. He has done much that was not “born again of the spirit.” Now all that he does ought really to be “born of the spirit.” This is the problem for religion, and not some mere intellectual theory about the nature of the world. Man must become convinced that the nature of things lies in *himself*, in his

will, and recognise that it is only through the *moral conversion of his will* that he will be enabled even to *understand* the universe. All this, doubtless, is as old as esoteric Christianity or esoteric Buddhism, but the human mind had lost sight of this at the end of the eighteenth century, with its rampant individualism and superficial deism and rationalism and "state-of-nature" philosophy.

III. Without going too deeply into religious polemic, we may notice two or three other details of Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion, which further define the main drift of his teaching. He maintains that religion, in the first instance, *presupposes pessimism*. No one who is not pessimistic can be religious. No philosophy which finds the world to be perfectly satisfactory can have any place for religion. The philosophy that leaves the world just where it finds it, is to Schopenhauer a "wicked estimate" of things. It may invoke any god or any number of gods, to whom to credit the general tendency of things, but it is still dishonest and wicked. Once a man believes that the world is perfectly good *as it is*, there is no limit to the length to which he may go in theological superficiality—the theism of a *Bon Dieu* who sees everything with perfect complacency and draws no distinctions about the actions of men, or of a supreme *Speise-meister* who has prepared a continued carnal feast for his creatures, or of an Epicurean god enjoying himself in the interstellar spaces of the world far from all the cares of men, or, again, a crass materialism or sensualism, or a listless indifferentism. The slightest philosophy has destroyed all this, in the first place, by breaking up the supposed reality of the external world on its own account, and secondly, by pointing out the non-finality of all merely human achievement. Schopenhauer had the concrete intuition of evil as strongly as St Paul or John Bunyan or Augustine or Thomas à Kempis or

a Buddhist devotee; and if he has done nothing else he has perhaps compelled philosophy to recognise the fact of evil in the world, under whatever name it may please to treat of it.

Then, in the second place, religion to Schopenhauer always presupposes a certain amount of idealism. He is, in the main, right in this too. He thinks that no philosophy of religion which fails to rise beyond the ordinary realism of common-sense deserves the name of philosophy. Now we have seen that we may agree with idealism in its affirmations if we cannot agree with it in its denials about reality. Idealism insists that much of apparent material reality implies the existence of spirit or of consciousness. Both Brahmanism and Buddhism seem to recognise this fact, at least by way of sensuous fancy or imagination if not by demonstration, and in so far as they do so they are doubtless, as Schopenhauer suggests, superior to European materialism and liberal Protestantism with its *Bon Dieu* and salvation for all. Idealism is, of course, wrong if it seeks to deny the reality of the body or of matter. To do so would be to deny the existence of the will, of the process in the world, of which the idea is only the spectator. A true idealism, we have seen, ought to allow that all things are real enough in their own appropriate way, and that some things, in so far as they serve a more permanent function in the world than other things, are more real than other things. Despite its many faults, idealism stands for the fact that reality must be construed not after the fashion of a soulless materialism, but in relation to the spiritual purposes which characterise the volition of human beings. The chief mistake of idealism is to have fostered the notion that the reality of the world depends in any way upon the existence of the merely finite mind. A philosophy of the will has never any difficulty in showing that the so-called finite mind or consciousness is simply a particular form of the will to live, a mere knowledge that the will has in the

brain of man of what it is aiming at, and not in any sense a primary or absolute reality.

Thirdly, it may here again be definitely stated that Schopenhauer insists very strongly that the rise of all religions is to be studied in connection with the will. Man has fled to the gods—"ad Dei voluntatem confugitur"<sup>1</sup>—because he has *needed* them, and not merely because he wanted a theory of the external universe. In fact the idea-philosophy is (in its extreme developments) an enemy of religion. It spoils religion, because it sets man on the road to thinking himself to be, in virtue of his reason, as good as God, or to be the only god in the universe. Man is indeed certain to take this view of things unless he is deeply penetrated with the idea of the evil that exists in the world, and the waywardness that exists in the finite human will. Both the Stoic and the Hegelian are very far from that spiritual humility which is the first prerequisite for an entrance into the kingdom of heaven. It may be seriously questioned, too, whether the extent to which idealists and mystics have neglected and despised the human body—as Plotinus, for instance, did—has been much of a service to true religion or to humanity. The body, with its living system of impulses and instincts, stands for the fact that it is life that we want and not the mere negation of the body or a mere absorption of both body and mind into the thought or the unity of the universe. The will in which the life of man consists is best seen in the body and its volitions, and in the effort man feels called upon to make to infuse a spiritual purpose into the volitions of his body. The deepest wish of men is to live on as better men, and not merely to lapse back into the universal reason. But, to return, while it may not be literally true that *primus in orbe fecit deos timor*, it is very nearly true so far as the great majority of men are concerned. We go to God when we

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Spinoza, Ethics, Pars i., Appendix.

feel we need his help to live. There may be a few highly gifted individuals who find God through a kind of spiritual perception, but the majority of men never realise the existence of the Deity at all unless they have known human need and human suffering. The words of Goethe in this regard are almost axiomatic:—

“Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass,  
Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte  
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass,  
Der kennt euch nicht, ihr himmlischen Mächte!”

If the essence of man's life in its full scope is will and activity, it is perfectly natural that some of the practical needs of man should have been the earliest influences towards the formation and growth of religious ideas. Rationalistic philosophy, as a rule, forgets this. It is too apt, as it were, to hand over religious experience to old women and children, and to rely altogether upon the *conception* in the matter of religion. As if the *conception* could by any possibility contain anything which had not come from a real experience of life! Some of the unique religious feelings upon which Schopenhauer dwells at length in his writings are, as was said, the transcendental significance of our action, the actual wickedness of man, and the feeling of the inutility of all strife and struggle that is not controlled by spiritual insight, the beauty of saintliness and goodness, and the feeling of what “the grace of God” can do with those who are most deeply sunk in the sense of their misery. “I am persuaded that unless the natural heart be broken and renewed by divine mercy, however noble and amiable it may be deemed by the world, it can never think of eternity without shuddering.” These are the words of a murderer which Schopenhauer quotes with approval.<sup>1</sup> They represent that consciousness of the illusoriness of the whole world, in so far as it is bound up

<sup>1</sup> Werke, iii. 227 ; Welt als Wille, H. and K., iii. 457.

with the finite will and intellect, which is the first step on the road to salvation according to him. "I have the less hesitation in giving them here since Shakespeare also says—

‘ Out of these convertites  
There is much matter to be heard and learned.’ ”

Schopenhauer always insists that the whole force of belief is best seen on its ethical and volitional and not on its intellectual side. This is in keeping with the ruling of psychology, that in belief the subjective elements are more adequately represented than the objective. If the objective elements on which belief implicitly rests were directly given in consciousness, then belief would become knowledge or certainty, and would cease to be belief. Religion rests upon belief, upon the attitude of mind towards the gods that is most truly in accord with our experience of life as a whole. It is very hard, of course, to see how we can be at all affected by the idea of gods, if we have no grounds for believing that the gods are somehow affected towards human beings. And Schopenhauer made no effort to consider what the teaching of history and experience is upon this matter, or whether they indeed show any apparent purpose on the part of the universe (or God) in regard to man.

Schopenhauer's whole theory of religion is, as we might suppose from the beginning of his philosophy, conceived mainly from the standpoint of the individual and of solipsistic idealism, and of the need of the individual to transcend the limits of his life. Brahmanism and Buddhism, too, do not seem to get further than this. They are, like Schopenhauer's religious philosophy, largely a doctrine of "enlightenment" applied as far as possible to the will rather than (as is the way with rationalistic or idealistic systems) to the intellect. The salient thing in Schopenhauer's treatment of religion is perhaps his disparagement of the element of mere



knowledge in the religious consciousness. Religion rests upon an attitude of the whole man rather than upon definite conceptual knowledge. We are really conscious only of what comes over the threshold of our consciousness, of that which represents the excitation of the higher nervous or cerebral centres. Our real and deepest relations to reality are largely sub-conscious; they lie out of our immediate consciousness; we must *believe* that our lives are somehow completely related to the life of the world, although strictly speaking we never know just how they are so related. The mere rationalist is the most foolish of all investigators so far as the philosophy of religion goes, when he fails, as he very often does, to insist upon the emotional and the volitional aspects in the religious life. These elements in the religious life are, we must remember, spiritually or practically discerned, and the effect of a religious doctrine or belief on the will is one of the most important considerations to be taken into account in estimating its objective value, and consequently its reality. Objective value, indeed,—and this is the outcome of Schopenhauer's philosophy,—applies only to that which affects the will. That is real in the world which vindicates itself as a practical reality. There is no other test of reality than the fulfilment of purpose or end, whether that purpose or end is consciously apprehended or not. Reality is not so much a question of ontology as of teleology.<sup>1</sup> Only that is *really* real which discharges a more or less permanent function in the system of things—that is, which has a bearing more or less direct on the evolution of organic life or of the purposes of human beings. The ontological argument for the existence of God is at best an attempt to characterise for our thought the reality that is already present in our emotional and volitional consciousness.

Strictly speaking, a philosophy of religion never proves the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 163.

reality of a religious object from the mere existence of an idea or set of ideas. The best way to set forth the reality of religious ideas is to proceed at once to show that as conceptions they could not be in the mind unless there had been already some corresponding reality in practical experience, of which they are simply the analyses or imperfect subjective apprehension. Ontology in religion, as in everything else, is best understood when connected with teleology, or the discharge of function or purpose. We understand, for example, what the personality of God or of the universe probably means, chiefly because there is a tendency in our own consciousness to return back upon itself and to think itself fully. To be conscious of a tendency, if we have the faith of the idealist, is to be conscious of a *reality*. If we feel a certain reality to be present to our consciousness, then we are sure that that reality exists. God exists for us in that very tendency which we have to determine our lives and our thoughts in relation to a will that is fully conscious of itself (and not imperfectly conscious, as we are of ourselves). It is on account of this fact that the "pure in heart" are said to *see* God, and the penitent to find God in the depths of the consciousness of their misery. It must be repeated that Schopenhauer almost vitiates the whole force of his philosophy of will by relapsing in the highest reaches of his religious thought back into subjective idealism, by speaking as if the whole reality of the world were dependent upon the idea or the intellect of the finite human person. He ought, as it were, at this point to have *trusted* more—if we can think of him as capable of trust or faith—in the reality of our consciousness, and found in it the real relation of our own will (which in itself is nothing) to a spiritual will (which is everything). It is this omnipotent spiritual will, of which our own rational will (the will that affirms the Ideas) is only the partial expression, that is the ultimate reality of the universe. The world, in other words, is not merely an idea of the intel-

lect or the object that corresponds to the subject, but the total manifestation or volition of the cosmic will.

The redeeming thing about Schopenhauer's condemnation of rational or intellectual religion is the fact that such condemnation rests upon his belief that conceptual ideas are an affair only of the intellect, of that narrow knowledge of reality which we have in our explicit consciousness. If philosophers were wise men, they would seek more often after a direct and verifiable *sense* of reality (which may be had in many ways from physical up to moral and æsthetic *sensations*), as a far wider thing than the explicit *judgment-knowledge* of reality which we get through the brain or understanding. Reality as a whole is apprehended, on the principles of Schopenhauer, by our will, by our dynamic and total consciousness, and not merely by our reflective consciousness. And truly our practical apprehension of things is far greater in range and in potency than our merely reflective or conceptual analysis of reality. There can be no conception of God or of anything else of which there has been no previous practical apprehension or *felt* knowledge. Kant, we remember, pointed out the limits of the ontological argument for the existence of God. And, as a matter of fact, some philosophers have always insisted that the existence of God is something that is above all proof, as necessarily presupposed in any kind of proof or chain of causes whatsoever. This idea is at the bottom of Jacobi's confused philosophy of theism, and also at the bottom of Pascal's feelings about both dogmatism and scepticism.<sup>1</sup> God is just the will of the world, as characterised by its highest purposes, which we feel and see in our own human consciousness. We know the cosmic will immediately in our feelings and in our impulses, and we are enabled through moral and idealistic

<sup>1</sup> See, *e.g.*, Professor Calderwood's 'Handbook of Moral Philosophy' (section on the Metaphysic of Ethics), where the existence of God is claimed to be above all proof—given rather as a reality.

faith to credit it with the fulfilment of those ideal ends and purposes which we see only faintly suggested, partly for sense and partly for imagination in the real world. The aged, if humble and sincere, are generally ready to repeat the *Nunc Dimittis* with Simeon. The question of knowing God is a question of doing the will of God which is written in large letters in the *laws* of the universe, and sketched out in the ideal purposes which have as yet been but partly achieved by humanity. Strictly speaking, there is no *conceptual* knowledge of God; it is only of particular things in the world that there can be a conceptual knowledge (a knowledge of the relations which they sustain to other things or to the diverse manifestations of the cosmic force). Of such an ultimate principle of reality as the world-will there is only an organic apprehension on our part, a gradual or growing apprehension by our whole actual and potential consciousness; only such a knowledge, in fact, as is necessary for the practical purposes of life, necessary to constitute for us a permanent motive towards further volition and development.

For the design argument for the existence of God Schopenhauer has, in common with a great many other philosophers, the most supreme contempt. It is good enough in his eyes for the philistines, for those who cannot understand things unless they can take hold<sup>1</sup> of them with their claws and feet and teeth, as it were; that is all. The people who look at things in the world as if they were perfectly real on their own account, and then proceed to ask for a cause of these things, are really too godless to deserve any God; their way of looking at things is certainly inferior to that of the Asiatic Buddhist or the European idealist, either of whom is conscious of the ideal elements that enter into ordinary reality. The world, when looked at sympathetically as in art, is already

<sup>1</sup> Cf. οἱ οὐδὲν ἄλλο οἰόμενοι εἶναι ἢ οὗ ἂν δύνωνται ἀπρὸς τοῦν χερσὶν λαβέσθαι.—Plato, Theæt., 155.

seen to be a manifestation of a spiritual principle or ideal will.

It is, according to Schopenhauer, only by reason of their moral<sup>1</sup> and practical value that religions have maintained their hold on humanity. The truth of this statement can hardly be gainsaid. Broadly speaking, religion is the metaphysic of the people; it represents that attitude of mind towards the world as a whole which is necessary as a lever and support in the ordinary actions of life. It should be studied as the science of the implications of the actions of mankind, of the relations which these actions sustain and may sustain to the universe as a whole. The chief practical difficulty in religion is to show men how they are at once necessitated and free in their actions, how in virtue of their evil will they are enslaved, and are yet, in virtue of their good will or their potentially good will, the subjects of divine grace and power, and consequently free. Religion, in other words, must be connected with the will. The worth of a religion, as Schopenhauer says, is to be estimated according to the greater or less amount of truth that it contains, despite its various allegories and mysteries; this means that the value of a religion consists simply in its practical power to mould the will of man and so enable him to overcome the evil will that is in him and to rise in his life to a real *affirmation* of the ideal ends and purposes that are partly apparent in the world. Even by *truth* as a whole, as an abstract thing, Schopenhauer means, and can mean, nothing more than a general consonance between our ideas and our practical experience of life. Truth is, when we think of it, nothing absolute and static (consequently nothing that we can know

<sup>1</sup> So far as the writer has been able to infer (not having as yet done more than run through the first, and peruse a general notice of the second), this line of argument is represented in two notable recent books which treat indirectly or directly of religion: Mr Kidd's 'Social Evolution' and Mr Balfour's 'Foundations of Belief.'

*a priori*, and nothing that a philosophy ought to aim at as a final resting-place for the mind); it is a kind of *consonance* in a right life, a consonance between its ideas and its experiences; but the life itself is greater than any mere consonance or harmony in it. We ought really to be ashamed of only having discovered the *truth* in our lives. The having done so would only mean that we had solved, or got rid of, a personal equation that stood between ourselves and the reality of things; it would not necessarily mean that we had added anything to the life of humanity, or helped the world a stage onwards in its evolution. The religion which fully accords with the practical experience of life, and gives us the best possible motive force so far as this life is concerned, must be the true (the *objective*) religion. There is perhaps no other way in which we can ever prove the objectivity of a religion than this—its power of affecting and redeeming the finite will of man, and of infusing a divine or ideal reality into his life. Of course Schopenhauer holds that all religions, Christianity among the rest, are true only *sensu allegorico*, not *sensu proprio*. He means that objectively no religion is literally true as to the events and the mysteries that it speaks of, but that subjectively most of them—except mere theism and rationalism perhaps—are to a certain extent true, seeing that they all more or less vaguely apprehend something that is essentially true about human action.<sup>1</sup> The perfect religion, according to this, would be the religion which sums up all the truths, all the essential truths about the human will. It is here, however, just the same as it is in the case of Schopenhauer's philosophy of art. His fatal contempt for history dispenses us from criticising seriously his views about the different religions of mankind, which he did not see and did not make any attempt to see in their organic historical connection. If he had not been so much of the crude idealist, so much a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 181.

literal follower of Kant (in believing that *time*, and consequently *process*, was nothing real and objective in the world, but only something subjective), he might have been enabled to see the different religions of the world in some sort of historical connection, representing in their evolution the evolution of the real attitude man ought to take towards the universe of which he forms a part. It often strikes one as strange that a philosophy of the will should not have sought to connect itself more organically with the philosophy of history. This indeed seems to be the one thing above all with which it should have sought an affiliation, for in history we may be enabled to read the nature of the reality which the will is trying to create. But Schopenhauer imagined history to make too much of *time* and time-process and time-evolution, of something which he thought to be merely *subjective* and not objective. Time, however, is not merely subjective, nor are any of the categories. Kant or no Kant, *time* refers to the duration of experience; and experience, volitional experience, is the highest reality of the universe.

IV. The theoretical defects in Schopenhauer's treatment of religion are naturally the weak points that correspond to his strong points. The *alpha* and the *omega* of the matter in his eyes is simply man's being able to "read his own breast aright," and to find all the pain and defect and misery of the world in his wayward will, in his tendency to seek mere personal satisfaction, instead of affirming in his spirit and in his volition the eternal Ideas of justice and righteousness and beauty upon which the world as a whole is established. It is a pity that Schopenhauer had not the full courage of his own principle of will. According to him, it is only, after all, in his mind and intellect that man can *affirm* the Ideas. He could not see how man could actually affirm the Ideas in his *will* and practical life. There is, it is true, language in Schopenhauer to the

effect that the intellectual perception of the folly of egoistic and selfish volition may actually affect the will itself, but there is no *thought* on the matter which is woven into his positive philosophy of will. This indeed is the defect of his system. He could see only the necessity of eradicating the finite evil will, and could say nothing about the perfected human will. He went as far as any man could go in overturning the merely external and static and ontological element in religious faith. Anything in religion that did not seem at the same time to exist in *man himself*, and anything that had no bearing on the will of man—anything that was external to man's very life and volition—was to him *not of the essence* of religion at all. He even wages war against the expression God, and rejoices in the fact of the difficulties that missionaries in his own day were finding in the attempt to translate the opening words of the book of *Genesis* into Chinese. He says that that language seemed to have no exact equivalent for the word God. He felt that a mere external God was nothing of value to us. The very idea of an external God was in his eyes the beginning of that theism which makes beings other than man himself accountable for the existence of evil, the irreligion which wishes to shift the blame of sin on to some one else (as the man in *Genesis* is said to have done) rather than keep it one's self. Unfortunately, it was always rather the *evil* than the *good* that Schopenhauer was thinking of; he had to do justice to *that*, had to give *that* its full weight. And if evil had to be crucified anywhere, it was in man's own breast that it had to be crucified. One often wishes that he had rigidly adhered to this idea of the evil that is in the world being due to something that has taken place in the will of man, rather than in the author of the universe or in the universe itself. "Que de tous ces maux," as Rousseau<sup>1</sup> said in conversation with Voltaire, "il n'y en avait pas un

<sup>1</sup> Les Confessions (édition Biblio. Charp., Paris, 1886), p. 420.



dont la Providence ne fût disculpée, et qui n'eût sa source dans l'abus que l'homme a fait de ses facultés, plus que dans la nature elle-même." If he had done this, his world-will would not have been so much of a devil and so little of a god.

The Christian believer, if he were a "true mystic," as a Molinist would say, might easily reply with much force to Schopenhauer just at this point, might in fact try to show him that this very connection with the will of man was to be found in the Christian religion. But Schopenhauer would have refused to listen to what such a man had to say, knowing very well that the temptation to dogmatism would be too strong for him, and that he would immediately proceed to run out the guns of dogmatic theology, to thunder against the ontologies of every other religious or irreligious system, forgetting the fact that the ontology of Christianity (as of any other religion) is not the thing of primary importance about it. Religious ontology indeed has brought rest to wonderfully few souls, but the suffering Christ and the Buddha who humiliated himself to know suffering and pain have brought rest to many. Nowhere is the thinness and the hollowness of theism so mercilessly shown up as it is in Schopenhauer. He compels those people who profess to hold to theism, without acknowledging Judaism or Christianity, to reflect seriously about the historical truth and the logical tenability of their standing-ground. One cannot help thinking that his compulsion is justifiable.

Schopenhauer is so anxious in all this to insist that religion shall affect the will and be within the individual person, that he often makes the mistake of speaking as if the power of affecting the will were the only logical content of a religion—as if, in fact, any "content" would do for a religion if it had the power of affecting the will. A real religion, however, must present to man a rational content, a content that satisfies his *reason* as well as his will, and his *conscious* knowledge about the system of things. By *rational* content, again, Schopen-

hauer (broadly interpreted) could mean only a congruity or consonance with practical experience. Why not then say that the best religion after all is simply my practical experience itself, with its real perception of its own nugatoriness and inward contradiction? This is just what a great many people who cannot persuade themselves of the truth of any religious system do believe. It is what Schopenhauer himself does in substance say and teach, and it marks the limitations of his thought. He is at one with Buddhism in refusing to explain man's life by anything outside himself. Man is in his eyes alternately the agent and the patient in the game of life, a being who at once acts and suffers and seeks to escape from the consequences of his action; he may become, too, his own saviour and redeemer by negating altogether the finite will which is the source of all his misery.

This idea of man being at once the supreme agent and patient in the universe, at once the creator and the destroyer and the saviour of the world, comes from the subjective idealism in which we have found Schopenhauer to be implicated from the beginning. But it is not true that the intellect of man reveals to him a world which is merely a thing of his intellect. The intellect, as we have seen, presents to us only that which is in relation to our will; and in our experience we are conscious of being in relation to a will which is the actual support of our merely natural will, and the possible support of our spiritual will also. Schopenhauer could not think of the Ideas as indicating a plane of reality up to which man is to struggle with the divine help or the help of the universe behind him, a plane upon which man may become real, *because it is real*. Seeing that the world was only an "idea," the higher Ideas of beauty and goodness also became merely "ideas." And so the whole of life appeared to be an illusory thing, merely a continual oscillation between the will to live and the will to die—one continued imagin-

ary affirmation and denial of the world as a whole. This, indeed, is of the letter of the system, and is often presented as the whole significance of it. If man's wayward self, however, is to be redeemed and saved for ideal purposes, it must be through the help and stay of a will which is more powerful than his own.

The cosmic will with which we are in contact from the beginning to the end of our lives is stronger than our own will; and it is of that cosmic will that our intellect makes us conscious—not of a so-called phenomenal world which is the intellect's own creation. Man's higher will may attain to a reality in this cosmic will, if he will but trust the affirmation of his consciousness, which tells him that he is in relation to it throughout his whole experience. The truth of our practical experience is our relation to a supreme will and our dependence upon it. It may again be said that this is only a working out in relation to the will of what other philosophers have worked out in relation to the idea. It is so to a large extent. But then it is to be again remembered that it is will which gives the element of reality to things.<sup>1</sup> If man can become real as *will*, he will

<sup>1</sup> I find an admirable apprehension and exposition of the value of volitional effort in enabling us to find a spiritual order behind the natural order, in a paper contributed to the 'International Journal of Ethics' (Oct. 1895), by Professor William James, of Harvard University. I summarise that whole paper to my own mind as an apprehension of the possibilities of the philosophy of will. The following lines give a vigorous presentation of the way in which that philosophy may be applied to the religious problem: "It is only by risking our persons from one hour to another that we live at all. And often enough our faith beforehand in an uncertified result is *the only thing that makes the result come true*. Suppose, for instance, that you are climbing a mountain and have worked yourself into a position from which your only escape is by a terrible leap. Have faith . . . and your feet are nerved to its accomplishment. But mistrust yourself, and think of . . . *maybes* . . . and . . . roll in the abyss. In such a case (and it belongs to an enormous class), the part of wisdom as well as of courage is to *believe what is in the line of your needs*, for only by belief is the need fulfilled. . . . You *make* one or the other of two possible universes true by your trust or mistrust, both universes having been only *maybes*, in this particular, before you contributed your act."

become *really* real and not merely *ideally* real, if we may so speak. Christianity itself teaches that man is working for a perfected body which shall be an expression of a perfected will, and that only with such a body or with such *real* possibilities can he be enabled to *affirm* the ideal will.

In remembering, then, that *will* is (*ought to be*) rational or evolving will, we have in our hands the best means of reconciling Schopenhauer's affirmations about subjective—personal or psychological—religion (or religion on its *practical* side), and his denials about objective—dogmatic or ontological—religion (or religion on its theoretical side). There is a reality in the world which we can apprehend with our consciousness and feel ourselves related to in our ordinary life. In philosophical language, God may be brought within the world and shown to be the "truth" of ourselves, and not merely of an external or objective universe. With some little care it may be shown that the will of the world sustains just such a relation to man as Schopenhauer found to be of the essence of all true religion. If Schopenhauer had not started with the idea that the world-will is essentially unconscious, and that consciousness exists only in the brain of man, he would not have found the chief elements of religion in the individual's mere power of denying intellectually the natural basis of his life. If he had had a hold upon history as a process, and upon the world as a rational instead of an irrational evolution, he might have found the redemptive agencies to be at work in the world as a whole which he found to exist only in the intellect of the individual with its merely logical or ideal *affirmation* and *denial*. His turning to Eastern religions to find in them the elements which were lacking in the shallow Protestantism and rationalism of his day, was natural enough in the circumstances. Some writers have thought that Schopenhauer's greatest significance for

European thought lies in his introduction of the ideas of Eastern religions into the West. He certainly put in a plea for these ideas when the general deification of the understanding in the *Aufklärung* had taken away from men or caused them to lose sight of the more spiritual aspects of their traditional religion. Eastern religions have rendered great service by proclaiming the inevitableness or the necessity of suffering and death, as things essentially and organically connected with the finite life of man. Indirectly, too, they tend to show that the truest or the most objective religion is after all the least dogmatic affair that can well be imagined, being, on the contrary, that which is most intimately connected with the life and experience of man. To see what kind of man one is, to see the ineradicable contradiction that exists between our power to contemplate the ideal life and our power to realise it, is the best way of realising one's need of salvation as a real and not as a figurative thing. Even before Buddhism, Brahmanism had proclaimed what Schopenhauer calls the "transcendental significance of our actions," had shown how our volition connects us with, and makes us in a sense responsible for, all the evil that exists in the world, and how physical evil is to be traced to the moral evil inherent in the will. Brahmanism insists that the whole of man's activity is merely an expression of what he was at birth, or before birth, of what he ultimately and essentially is; and that through his own guilt the individual is implicated in all the evil of the world. It is wholly irreligious, according to Brahmanism, to connect our evil deeds with any one or anything but ourselves. True repentance and resignation and absolute self-abandonment are the first steps towards salvation.

Both Brahmanism and Buddhism indicate a path along which we must approach the shrine of religion, and it was perhaps desirable in this connection for Europe to become

acquainted with an older religious experience than its own. Schopenhauer was always right in teaching that the literalism and the realism and even the liberalism of average Protestantism were all very far from the spirit of esoteric Christianity or of esoteric Catholicism. "Natural realism" is apt to prove fatal to the interests of true religion. It is apt to make men think that the world is perfectly satisfactory as it is. All mere literalism in religion tends to draw men's minds rather to the setting or the framework of religious ideas than to these ideas themselves. And all mere liberalism, or *rationalism* in religion, is more apt to enslave man than to free him (as it professes to do at first sight), because it encourages him to will over again his natural life instead of seeking a spiritual birth that may become the entrance to new life. The reality of divine grace can never be fully appreciated where there is lacking a profound recognition of the helplessness of man in so far as he is the slave of his wayward will or self. Rationalism, with its impossible glorification of the intellect of man, is really to be distrusted morally too; it leads to a presumption of mind that is very far from the humility which is the best outcome of the experience of life.

Much of this, it is evident, is of the very essence of Christianity, and Schopenhauer himself knew how near his own system ran to precipitating itself into that. He said once or twice that his system of philosophy was substantially in agreement with Christianity, and that it addressed itself to the same problems that Christianity did. We must not, however, be misled by the undoubted analogy that exists between much of his teaching and Christianity, and by his own admission of that fact. The latter was no concession to Christianity, nor a withdrawal on his part of the illusionism and pessimism which he taught about life as a whole. He believed that life was essentially unsatisfactory, even although

he once or twice suggested in his writings that the one thing we can do in the world is to understand our experience and to *hope*. Life is, in his eyes, illusory so long as the individual is bent upon the furtherance and maintenance of his own life and personality, and even the desire to live over again in another form of life—as one is, *mit Haut und Haar*, as some Germans contemptuously put it—shows the primal error which is somehow implicated in the very roots of the finite personality. But, as has been suggested, experience seems to witness to the fact that the will of the world supports to some extent the will of the individual in his search for beauty and goodness; and it may do so infinitely.

We may say that the will of the world is God, and that through a renewed or perfected will man becomes the son of God. But Schopenhauer would have objected himself to all such particularising of the fundamental drift of his system. He refused to see anything else in the world than the alternation between the self-assertion of the finite will and the self-abnegation of the enlightened mind which “affirms” the Ideas. Once again, however, the weakness of all mere philosophies of religion is that they seem merely able to set forth the conditions of establishing harmony in *our thoughts* about the universe, while utterly unable to affirm that to be an *objective reality* or objective “content” in things which they find to be a necessity of thought. It has already been suggested that the courageous idealist (the critical or Kantian idealist even) ought not to be ashamed of stating that *to be actually true* about the world which he has found to be a condition of its real perfection or formal intelligibility. The world, for example, might be shown to exhibit punitive and restorative agencies which are of the essence of true religion, and in this way the reality of religion could be set forth. Schopenhauer has taught us to regard the will as the deepest thing about life. We must consequently regard the effort after

ideal volition and ideal purpose to be for the individual the *highest reality* in the universe.<sup>1</sup>

There is no need of examining at any great length into the extent to which Schopenhauer understood Buddhism and other religious systems, or indeed the extent to which he is to be held responsible for drawing the attention of the Western mind to Eastern religions. Many of Goethe's best poems represent very decidedly the influence of Eastern ideas; and Herder and Hamann also get inspiration from the same source. The thing perhaps that pleased Schopenhauer most about Buddhism was its exaltation of the *spirit* of religion over the *letter*. The Christian believer will doubtless say that it is easy enough for a religion that has little letter to boast of to exalt the spirit over the letter, and may find superior comfort in the historic character and philosophy of history of his own religion. As a philosopher, however, Schopenhauer cared only for the universal elements in all religious belief. In this he is a true follower of Kant. We see, too, that his religious ideas show a satisfaction with the mere formal essence of religious insight, just as his artistic ideas show a satisfaction with the mere formal characteristics of beauty.<sup>2</sup> He did not see exactly what it was that art had to idealise or ought to idealise. He did say that it was the will of man that religion must perfect, and one wishes that he had in his theory of art said that it was human character and human

<sup>1</sup> In this very effort (with all that it implies—our rising above whatever is *merely* natural and tentative in our lives) the will obtains a consciousness of itself, which is also the deepest *insight* into the universe of reality. When philosophers grasp this, when they see that the highest insight (or vision or contemplation) comes as the result of a volition, they will have in their hands an idea which will enable them to connect in a system philosophy and science and art and life. This is the point where one could begin to write out *over again* the subject-matter of the present volume, so as to do more *apparent justice* to intellectual philosophy. Fortunately, however, the "upward way" and the "downward way" are one: ὁδὸς ἄνω καὶ ὁδὸς κάτω (Heracliti Eph. Reliq., lxix.)

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 272.



life which art seeks to perfect. But he defined the perfection of the will of man only in a negative way. He looked upon the will of the individual as altogether a rebellious affair, as a breaking away from the timeless peace of the unconscious will of the universe. He cannot, therefore, be said to have given anything like an adequate account of the content or the reality of religious experience or of the religious life as such. He ought to have seen the full consequences of his admission that the instinct to live endlessly is the deepest thing about our lives. If the desire after fuller life is the deepest thing in our lives, it is also, according to the general principles of the philosophy of will, the deepest thing in all nature. And if it is the deepest thing in all nature, a belief in the scientific postulate of continuity ought to make us feel that nature cannot disappoint us just at the stage where she seems to be attaining to her highest reality. The cosmic will is manifestly seeking a perfect assertion or individuation of itself in the personality of man.

Schopenhauer, however, does not believe so much in the continuity of experience, or in the upward tendency of the process of evolution, as in the cyclic character of cosmic life. Life is so illusory to him, or rather finite life is so illusory to him, that no good thing can be expected to come out of the world until the illusoriness and unreality of finite life as such are definitely recognised. He seems to hold that when this is recognised the universe will return to its state of primal unconsciousness. Schopenhauer is honest enough to scoff at the question or idea of immortality, in accordance with his doctrine that individuality is only an *appearance* of the intellect. Now, as matter of fact, it is not the intellect that individualises things; the intellect, or thought, always tends to universalise things, to see them only in the light of their universal relations. (This truth receives illustration in the tendency of most philosophers to run up all reality into an impersonal idea.) It is

the will which is striving after more complete individuality, after ever more and more concrete expression; at least the will of man is always striving after a more complete assertion of his personality.

This idea is as old as Duns Scotus, who held that it was the *individual peculiarity (haecceitas)* of a thing that in the end completely constituted its reality. Each being is striving to be perfect in its kind. Each man has in himself the capacity of becoming a perfect man if he is willing to submit his finite will to the infinite will of the world. The merits of Schopenhauer's philosophy and religion all lie along the line of his substitution of a volitional and practical attitude towards reality for a merely reflective and speculative one. The deepest meaning of reality is to be found in the more or less articulate consciousness that we have of our own activity. It is as futile as it is meaningless for man to seek for the meaning of things outside his own practical activity and moral life—futile because the intellect has not been given us to tell us about the nature of external reality, and meaningless because, as a matter of fact, our volitional experience seems to be the highest reality of the physical universe. It is the conflict in the will of man between his wayward or evil will and his rational will to which the philosophy of religion must first address itself. A philosophy of religion based upon the *idea* offers to man a solution of the world in terms of impersonal thought; but such a philosophy has little to say of this "present body of death," this wayward tendency in man's own nature. The defects of Schopenhauer's philosophy of religion are fairly apparent. It is lacking in intellectual content. The will of which he speaks is unintelligible rather than intelligible—something to be distrusted rather than trusted. Our very consciousness of ourselves, in fact, had to be distrusted; it was only as a *blind impulse* that we were to think of the self; the idea that we "presented ourselves to ourselves in our

thought" was an illusion. Now, on the contrary, our consciousness of ourselves as striving towards the realisation of a completed individuality is not to be distrusted, just because the root of our personality is will. The will is destined to accomplish what our consciousness tells us it has begun in ourselves. Schopenhauer's treatment of religion lacks objective reality, because he did not make the effort he ought to have made to grasp the rationality of the will that is in the universe, and that is the support of our life and volition. All the confusionism and all the illusionism with which his system is so largely taken up, simply speak of the struggle and the process of education that the finite will has to go through before it really seeks to will along with the rational will of the world.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE METAPHYSIC OF SCHOPENHAUER.

"In philosophy, the intellect is applied to something for which it is not at all intended nor calculated [the study], namely, of existence in general, and in and for itself."—Schopenhauer.

"Et tout est là, il n'y a, dans le monde, pas d'autre volonté que cette force qui pousse tout à la vie, à une vie de plus en plus développée et supérieure."—E. Zola, 'Le Docteur Pascal.'

THE metaphysic of Schopenhauer is one of the strangest things in the history of philosophy. In a sense it is not philosophy at all; or at most it is only its consummate effrontery and pan-illusionism which is its chief title to recognition. It proclaims to philosophy in a highly realistic and almost spectacular manner the limits of philosophy. There had been negative philosophies, of course, before Schopenhauer's, such as the scepticism of Pyrrho or that of Hume and the decadence philosophy of Proclus, with the descending development it professed to find in the course of the universe; but these systems for the most part wore the garb of philosophy much more than Schopenhauer's did; they were all of them expressions of a real despair from the side of philosophy of solving the question of absolute knowledge. Schopenhauer never—the time of his youthful devotion to Plato apart—believed very much in absolute knowledge, or at least he never sought for it as such. He knew that the

philosophers sought for absolute knowledge, and with his brain he went with them to some extent, but he could never persuade himself that they were right. He did believe in *insight* and he sought insight, but he is eternally different from the rational philosophers in his view of insight. Insight for him meant a refined sense for life—always a sense; his nascent youthful personality represented the effort of a soul not so much to understand life as to feel it, to feel out for itself a reliable attitude towards things. He is surely one of the very few philosophers who commenced life in a commercial office. This is something of a guarantee for the reality of his hold upon the world; like Socrates, he knew men in the market-place. Nevertheless he saw the necessity of a philosophy or a metaphysic, of an abbreviated statement of the different points of view from which the world can be regarded. He grew up, in other words, to an appreciation of Kant—and Kant is really a solar system, as Jean Paul put it—and, like Herder and Schiller and Goethe and many others of his contemporaries, he felt that Kant had said essentially the last word about *mere knowledge*. Every educated modern man must reckon with Kant, he would have said. Life, Kant, Plato—life, knowledge, artistic feeling, in other words—Schopenhauer assimilated these three things; and his metaphysical significance is that he tried somehow to express (in the language of the schools and in the language of science, and in a new language of outspokenness and breadth which the schools had not cultivated) the fact that it is all very well to have philosophical doubts about the limits of knowledge, but that it is a poor thing to stop there; that it is rather an indication of naïveté or of lack of breadth of education ever to have thought that the universe might possibly go into a rational formula; in short, that life is a much greater thing than philosophy, and that philosophers to be perfectly honest ought to say

that the most philosophical thing in the world is to cease to be merely a philosopher. That is why Goethe appreciated the young Schopenhauer and the first edition of his main work, and why Wagner later wrote to Schopenhauer that he accepted in the main his theory about the world being will, and why many men who have indeed some culture, but who have to fight the battle of life with might and main, read Schopenhauer and will continue to read him.

The philosophical fallacy *par excellence* is to make everything of philosophy, to pronounce the world insoluble if it will not go into the idea. Schopenhauer himself is hardly free from the influence of this fallacy. He takes it for granted, as we have seen, that peace of mind or contemplation is the greatest thing in the world, and that it is simply horrible to think that the thousand pains and cares of life should invade that peace. Still it is his message to philosophy that, in explaining the world, it should use a principle which will not cause it to surrender its very existence, but which will leave it as before the queen of the sciences — a principle which will bear the weight of reality and be capable of infinite application. "Schematise knowledge as you will," he practically says, "but do not make the mistake of taking knowledge to be a primary thing when it is not such: a sense for life is the only thing that will in the end tell you what the principle of the world is." And indeed the world will not go into the idea, and if it could there would be no world left, but only an "idea that thinks itself," as in Hegel's philosophy. We want, in short, a real principle to explain reality, a principle which allows for the "more things in heaven and earth" than are in philosophy, and which allows of development and expansion. Will does this; it is a real thing; and it is continually seeking to manifest itself afresh. It is not limited either in a backward or in a forward

regard; it has had a limitless past and may have a limitless future.

I. The scope of Schopenhauer's metaphysic can best be seen by looking at some of the broadest features of his thought. As to its most general features, his metaphysic is a proclamation in large letters of the illusionism which we have found to characterise so much of his thinking. It is all the illusionisms of the system, those pertaining to art and ethics and knowledge and ontology and religion, taken together and put upon the basis of his fundamental principle, will. But it is more than that. Schopenhauer really holds that, take life as we will, we shall always find it full of illusion. The final illusionism, as it were, which he teaches is not a mere result or a mere summation of the difficulties he had about different things; it is radical and fundamental. We cannot get out of his pessimism by saying that philosophy, doubtless, naturally abounds in dialectic and paradox and contradiction, but that *life*, on the contrary, when taken as a whole, is fairly consistent with itself. Schopenhauer would insist that he takes life and philosophy together and yet finds an element of radical contradiction in our experience; and that, for example, the very contradiction between life and philosophy, between life and thought, has to be reckoned with at the outset. "Why," he virtually asks, "should we be compelled to think that we can solve life in our thoughts when we cannot solve it?" And what is the good of thought, when life is explained to more than three-fourths of its extent by physical or practical necessity? We cannot, it seems, limit philosophy to the study merely of that of which we are directly conscious, for the object of philosophy is "the world itself in its entirety, without excepting anything." In short, to Schopenhauer, philosophy rests on the fact of there being mystery or contradiction or illusion in things, and to him, as

to Plato and Aristotle, no one who is unmoved by a sense of wonder or illusion is a fit subject for philosophy. "Philosophy, like the overture to 'Don Juan,' begins with a minor chord." He elsewhere says that philosophy looks at first sight like a monster having many heads, and each talking a different language. One is entitled to call Schopenhauer's philosophy pessimistic because it seems to find the illusionism in things and in thought to be permanent. Even the escape which he suggests from life can never be an escape for all living beings; it is itself only a last great illusion completing the series of illusions which constitute life. "The philosophical astonishment is therefore at bottom perplexed and melancholy."

It is possible to show how the illusionism incident to any one part of Schopenhauer's system naturally leads, either directly or indirectly, into the illusionism incident to any other part. The illusionism of the system, as has been indicated, is all-permeating and universal. Take the illusionism in his ethics, for instance, the antithesis between egoism and altruism, or the antithesis between the reasonable will which affirms the Ideas and the wayward will which affirms personal advantage. To see the connection between this ethical illusionism and the illusionism of epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, we need only think of Schopenhauer's reason for his assertion that the difference between myself and other selves is unreal and imaginary. This is, that knowledge or our intellect causes us to split up the world into a congeries of separate and individual things in space and time, while in reality the world is not a congeries but one thing, one organic effort or assertion of will. The generalised statement of this epistemological illusionism is again the metaphysical illusionism—namely, that if knowledge falsifies things, it follows that what *appears* is different from what *is*. Now the distinction between the apparent and the real becomes the problem of ontology, and we can pass from Schopenhauer's ontology



either to his ethics or to his æsthetics. We may go back to ethics by following out his practice of resolving ontology into teleology (the inquiry about what *is* into the inquiry about what is becoming). And teleology is a question of the will. Or we may go back into art by saying that, properly speaking, the individual things and beings in the world do not exist, but only the *species* or the Ideas of the different species, and that of course the reproduction or the vision of the Ideas is an affair of art.

From ethics one can easily, as has been seen, pass into religion through the idea that man's evil will or evil self always stands in the way of the realisation of the moral idea of pure disinterestedness or pure altruism. Religion, that is, gives us the philosophy of the evil will and thus of the non-attainment by man of the ethical ideal—gives us, in short, the metaphysic of ethics. It insists that all the illusoriness of the world is to be traced to the fact that man will continue to prefer his own personal happiness and interest to the attainment of the rational purpose that is partly apparent in the system of things. It insists, to put it otherwise, that we must learn to accept the workings and purposes of the will of the universe in preference to the desires of our own will. Now this fact of our being born to submit our minds and our volitions to things whether we like it or not, is just what we at an earlier stage meant by the Bondage of Man;<sup>1</sup> man is born to submit his intellect and his choice to the demands of his practical nature and of the needs of his personality, or rather to the world-will which wills the evolution of life above everything else.<sup>2</sup> We are not born, it might be said, merely to contemplate beauty and goodness as such. Even these things to a certain extent represent devices on the part of

<sup>1</sup> Chap. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "But the ultimate aim of it all [the 'endless strife' and 'tumult' of the will], what is it? To sustain ephemeral and tormented individuals through a short span of time," &c.—Werke, iii. 407; H. and K., iii. 115.

the world-will to make us will the evolution of life in general as something greater than our own mere personal life. There is a great difference, of course, between the involuntary and constrained and restricting subjection to the necessities of our practical nature and the voluntary submission of religion which means the attainment of freedom ; but it is nevertheless true in general that the explanation of life is to be found in a complete submission on our part to the necessity that is in things.<sup>1</sup>

Open Schopenhauer where one will, one always finds him considering some particular illusion or other which is bred of the notion that the individual man exists in order to seek his own mere happiness. Any particular illusion, as it were, is only a part of the general illusionism of the system. The whole of life is to him a constant effort to effect an equilibrium between opposed and opposing forces. Walking, he reminds us, is only a continually prevented falling. The moral life is a continual struggle between selfishness and unselfishness ; and life as a whole is a struggle between the ideas that we are apt to form about life and the fact of life itself. "A man's knowledge may be said to be mature ; in other words, it has reached the most complete state of perfection to which he, as an individual, is capable of bringing it, when an exact correspondence is established between the whole of his abstract ideas and the things he has actually perceived for himself. . . . Maturity is the work of experience alone, and therefore it requires time."

Upon reflection we feel that it is just the contradiction between what may be called Platonism and the fact of life itself that determines the problem of Schopenhauer's metaphysic.<sup>2</sup> He is always trying to correlate idealism and naturalism or naturalistic evolution. Kant's philosophy is for him

<sup>1</sup> "Willing I follow ; were it not my will  
A baffled rebel I must follow still."

<sup>2</sup> This is why the theory of art becomes such an integral part of his system. Cf. chaps. v. and vi.

only a go-between in relation to these two views of the world. His problem is thus, so to speak, the eternal problem of the philosopher. The chief function of the philosopher, the function that the world is always willing to concede to him, is to show by some manipulation or other of the problems of knowledge, how the Ideas of art and the things of the spirit may possibly be real in view of all the stern realism of the mere brute struggle for existence to which we are all subjected. How can we *find* the self in the higher realities of art and ethics and religion, when life is to at least three-fourths of its extent struggle and unrest? Schopenhauer practically insists that we cannot do this since there is a radical difference between the world as will and the world as idea, and since life is ultimately will and unconscious tendency and unconscious force and instinct. Neither life nor the idea seems to bring us what it promises. Life does not bring us *attainment*, but only a blind *attaining* or effort to attain. The idea or the intellect does not give us absolute knowledge, but only phenomenal and relative knowledge,—knowledge of the connections among things and not of things themselves. It is hard to suppress one's tendency to cut Schopenhauer's whole knot by simply saying that there is no opposition at all between the will and the idea. There is *no such thing*, in fact, as the *mere idea* or as *absolute knowledge*, and also no such thing as *mere will* or *unconscious force*. But then philosophy has not yet abandoned the idea that we may, despite apparent difficulties, attain to absolute knowledge; or, at least, there are still some philosophers who continue to seek knowledge as an end in itself. And so it is natural to find the system of Schopenhauer following that of Hegel, and suggesting to men that in the mere idea there is no complete solution of things. The philosophy of the will was the Nemesis which overtook the philosophy of the absolute idea. Even, too, if we look at life as a *struggle between* the idea

and the will, there is no solution of life. Life is rather a process of development in which what is attained is always something more than what mere knowledge could have enabled us to foresee. We can use our knowledge only to understand the great fact of life itself, and to make us conscious, to a certain extent, of the ends which the universe or its author has designed for us. The predominating idea in Schopenhauer's philosophy is that all life is a manifestation of what is first a matter of unconsciousness for us, something that we only imperfectly know and only progressively and imperfectly apprehend. That it is such, however, is nothing at which we should be shocked or pained, if we have got rid of the idea that we have any right to frame expectations about life before knowing the facts of life.

II. The outlines of Schopenhauer's cosmic philosophy have already been indicated. The first assertion, to use his own language, of the will is the Platonic Ideas, the Ideas of the various forms that the cosmic force tends to take, and of the different species of beings that such forms or modes of the cosmic force tend to create. The natural world to him is like a musical theme with variations, a kind of fugue, as it were, in which the central idea always tends to elude us and is caught and apprehended by us only from time to time, or only in its most general features. The Ideas represent the central meaning of the world to Schopenhauer. They are confusedly apprehended by the majority of men, but with relatively perfect clearness and comprehension by the artist and the man of genius. The separating and discriminating intellect which happens to have made its appearance in the case of "man's brain," makes man, according to Schopenhauer, think that the various assertions and creations of the world-will are different and distinct from each other, whereas in reality they are not so. In the case of man the intellect causes him to distinguish

between *himself* and his *motives*, even although it is perfectly clear that the motives are incipient tendencies to action, *nascent actions* in fact, and that the man is just his motives or the tendencies to action that exhibit themselves in him. The understanding, Schopenhauer holds, can never see things except as disjoined and separated from one another; its view of things is consequently always partial and never complete. Instead, however, of encouraging us to go on with our intellect to seek an intelligible reason for things, an *intellectual basis* for reality, Schopenhauer would have us abandon altogether the attempt to give an intellectual explanation of the world. Any intellectual explanation of the world must always in his view be an "external"<sup>1</sup> or artificial one, because it must always cause us to separate things from each other and from the self, and so make reality appear to be something *outside* ourselves, which we have to assume, and the real essence and genesis of which we can never understand, seeing that we do not ourselves make it. He makes us turn from the *without* to the *within*, from the merely intellectual aspects of things to their volitional aspects. In the will, he teaches, we apprehend the life of the whole world, since that life is the same everywhere as in ourselves. But just as Schopenhauer's principle of will came to him as a discovery, by way of reaction from the vain endeavours after an intellectual explanation of the world (in Fichte or in Schelling, or in himself as a beginner in philosophy), so he always seemed to think of will as an irrational thing, as a breaking away from the timeless peace of perfect contemplation, or the timeless peace of the mind that contemplates the Ideas. His principle of will would have been nearer to ordinary life, nearer the truth of the actual world as we know it, if it had not been put forward as, in the first instance, unconscious and irrational. We know that it seemed to be so only for the reason just stated.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 396.

The root idea in Schopenhauer's metaphysic is, that the will is something essentially different from what it seems to be—something, in fact, that cannot be known but only experienced. This was Schopenhauer's own impression and feeling about reality; and it was the idea which he tried to unfold with more or less success in his system. The undertone of all that he writes upon human life and human character and human institutions and manners and customs and things generally, is the feeling that everything is essentially illusory. "In (these) later years, and not before, a man comes to a true appreciation of Horace's maxim: *Nil admirari*. He is directly and sincerely convinced of the vanity of everything, and that all the glories of the world are as nothing: his illusions are gone. He is no more beset with the idea that there is any particular amount of happiness anywhere, in the palace or in the cottage, any more than he himself enjoys when he is free from bodily or mental pain. The worldly distinctions of great and small, high and low, exist for him no longer; and in this blissful state of mind the old man may look down with a smile upon all false notions. He is completely undeceived, and knows that whatever may be done to adorn human life and deck it out in finery, its paltry character will soon show through the glitter of its surroundings; and that, paint and bejewel it as one may, it remains everywhere much the same,—an existence which has no true value except in freedom from pain, and is never to be estimated by the presence of pleasure, let alone, then, of display."<sup>1</sup>

It must be confessed that the feeling that there is much illusion in the world is not one that can be very easily passed over. A feeling or impression such as this, when it is at all deeply rooted,—as this of Schopenhauer's seems on the whole to be,—must have arisen from some permanent effect that the world or experience itself has had upon the will and disposition.

<sup>1</sup> Werke, v. 525; B. S., Counsels and Maxims, pp. 154, 155.

And indeed if all reality is just that which affects the will, the fact cannot be overlooked that the will is hemmed in and repressed at a thousand points and in a thousand ways by the rude shocks of time and circumstance. "When I have nothing to trouble me, even this very fact that nothing troubles me is a source of annoyance to me, as if there really ought to be something to trouble me, which I cannot just at the present see. *Misera conditio nostra.*"<sup>1</sup> The fault, of course, may be in the will itself of the individual man, but that does not destroy the fact that, taking the world and life as a whole, there is a vast amount of illusion in it. Most of what Schopenhauer writes upon the actions and sayings of man reveals a fundamental distrust upon his part towards these actions and sayings—a feeling that they are nothing on their own account, but rather only indications of the great extent to which man is submitted in life to the necessities of physical and unconscious nature. He always seems, as it were, to be pressing his way beyond the convention and the ignorance that are displayed in ordinary life and conversation. He has no feeling of complacency or politeness or kindness towards men and towards the numberless conventions of life and society. His attitude towards the doings and sayings of ordinary men is like that of the trained physician or lawyer examining a patient or witness, only interested in the sayings of that person so far as they help him to get beyond them to something that is deeper and more fundamental. "The doctor sees mankind in all its weakness, the lawyer in all its wickedness, and the theologian in all its stupidity."<sup>2</sup> Reduce all experience to its simplest form—this is Schopenhauer's feeling—and you will find that it is the *will* or the effort to *be* and to *attain*. Just as in his cosmic philosophy he breaks down all physical entities and forces into one great cosmic will, so he reduces almost all of the conscious

<sup>1</sup> Schop., *Cogitata*.

<sup>2</sup> Schop., *Werke*, vi. 639 ; *Psychologische Bemerkungen*.

phenomena of the human mind into terms of the unconscious impulses and desires, and thus makes the individual will simply the fact of more life rather than the numberless particular objects which he may by his words and professions claim to be pursuing. It is in a sense true, of course, that it is the unconscious actions and tendencies of men that we ought to study if we are seeking to know their real character.<sup>1</sup> We may indeed use our consciousness to enable us to interpret so-called unconscious phenomena (as when we attribute emotions to the lower animals), but then our consciousness itself is only so much of the unconscious depths of our nature as has risen above the "surface" or the "threshold" which marks this very transition from the conscious to the unconscious. Now what we find out about the unconscious, our conscious interpretation of the unconscious, is true enough and real enough as far as it goes, but it does not go very far. Schopenhauer was wrong in thinking that the unconscious was necessarily quite different from the conscious, that what is underneath the surface in human actions is very different from the words and expressions and aims that are found upon the surface. But he was justified in feeling that the deepest meaning of life is to be found somehow beyond the impressions and ideas that the average individual has about himself.

At the head of this chapter we have quoted an expression indicating Schopenhauer's belief that philosophy has made altogether a wrong use of the human intellect, in the construction that it has tried to put upon things. Philosophy has often tried to state definitely and directly what the world means *for thought alone*. Now Schopenhauer stands for the fact that there is *no such view of the world*, and that the very use of the intellect for this purpose reveals a fundamental misconception of what the intellect or consciousness properly is.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 344.



It is more correct for philosophy to ask what the world is manifestly trying to *bring about* or *attain to*, than what the world as a matter of fact *is* for our thought at any one moment. Philosophers have too often forgotten the fact that Socrates, whose glory it was to have found out the conception and its value for knowledge and philosophy, was really in the questions that he asked of men a most tantalisingly practical and utilitarian<sup>1</sup> kind of person, always asking the question *πρὸς τί*, the *practical* or *relative good* of a thing, its use or purpose; and also that Socrates is praised by Aristotle, in a memorable passage,<sup>2</sup> as the father of inductive reasoning, because he differed from other philosophers in not separating (*τὰ καθόλου οὐ χωριστὰ ἐποιεί*) the “universal” from particular instances. Socrates, in fact, never studied the conception or the idea apart from the notion of purpose or utility or design, and never studied design or purpose apart from the various examples that he and other men had before their eyes of this very thing. And so Schopenhauer’s professed feeling, that nothing had been done in philosophy from the time of Socrates until the time of Kant, is far from being utterly ungrounded. It is largely true that people studied the conception for more than a thousand years after Socrates, without ever being clear in their minds as to what the conception really was, and whether it expressed any definite element of reality. Indeed, as Schopenhauer often says, nothing *was* done in philosophy with the conception until Kant came and criticised the dogmatic or ontological use of the conception, and substituted therefor the regulative or the practical use of the same, its utility in

<sup>1</sup> We cannot be too grateful to the World-spirit for having given us Xenophon as well as Plato to portray the personality of Socrates. Knowing how refreshing a touch of reality is after an excess of transcendentalism, one might almost give a turn to the words of Jacobi about Spinoza, and say, “Offer with me a lock of hair to the pious Xenophon.”

<sup>2</sup> *δύο γὰρ ἔστιν ἃ τις ἂν ἀποδοίη Σωκράτει δικαίως, τοὺς τ’ ἐπακτικούς λόγους καὶ τὸ ὀρίεσθαι καθόλου.*—*Meta.*, 1078 b, 27-9.

enabling us to co-ordinate our experience.<sup>1</sup> Whatever some of the ultimate consequences of the Critical Philosophy may be, its idea that most of the conceptions of the human mind—most of our knowledge of reality—have, after all, only a practical or regulative value, represents one of the greatest contributions of speculative philosophy to the thought and life of humanity. Indeed, the criterion of all the conceptions of science and philosophy is their practical value, their power of enabling us to set forth more or less completely the relation that exists between the human will (the actions of men) and the cosmic will that is the support of the whole universe.

All the leading ideas of science and philosophy can be arranged more perfectly in a teleological and practical way than in an ontological and dogmatical way. Schopenhauer felt this, and was consequently right in feeling that much post-Kantian philosophy was a departure from Kant's true meaning, and that we had still to grasp the meaning of Kant's attitude towards the world that we know with our senses. The bold antithetical character of his own first principle of will, in contradistinction to the philosophy of the idea, and the emphatic (if not complete) development that he gave to this principle, constitute him perhaps the only *dogmatic* philosopher of modern<sup>2</sup> times, whose system will last with humanity itself; just as Kant, in spite of the many remnants of dogmatic philosophy which hang round his system, is the only *critical* philosopher of modern times. On a broad view of matters, the assertion that the world is will is much more nearly

<sup>1</sup> "And did scholasticism make no use of the conception?" some one may ask. "No!" says Schopenhauer—"no real use, because it used the conception out of relation to the will; it applied the intellect to something for which it was not at all intended."—Cf. the first quotation under the title of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> I confess to feelings of reservation even as I write this. My meaning is that if one were compelled (in contravention of the general sobriety of true *criticism*) to affirm some one thing about the world, one might have less objection to calling the world will than to calling it something else. (Will at least connotes *evolution* and suggests *purpose*.)

true than some other assertions which have been made by philosophers, such as that the world is substance, or that it consists of atoms or ultimate chemical or physical elements. Kant almost said the last word that ever can be said about *knowledge* as such and its limits, and Schopenhauer has at least suggested a path along which the reality of the world as a whole can best be understood. Hegel is certainly *not* the most characteristic modern philosopher, not the philosopher whose results are most nearly true about reality, for this simple reason, if for no other, that he created an impression in the minds of his followers that the *ultimate* meaning of reality is to be found in *thought*.<sup>1</sup> Kant may be said to have broken down ontological philosophy from the standpoint of the intellect, and Schopenhauer to have broken down the same thing from the standpoint of the will. There are no *static* elements in reality if everything is will. The striking thing is that the work of both philosophers to a certain extent coincides, in so far as Kant's philosophy affords us an illustration of the truth that the problems of intellectual philosophy are best understood when a practical construction is put upon them, and as Schopenhauer's philosophy renders us the same service in regard to the problems of ontology or teleology. The concept, in short, does not enable us to say what reality is, but only what our relation is to the system of things of which we form a part; and in the same way matter, or the physical universe, may be said to be nothing that is absolutely real on its own account, but rather only a manifestation of a gigantic cosmic force which is at bottom identical with the force that we feel in ourselves impelling us to act and to evolve.

<sup>1</sup> It is possibly permissible to avow that one gets one's self this impression from reading Hegel. Out of numberless statements about Hegel's philosophy in this regard, the following may be selected from Professor A. Seth's 'Kant to Hegel' (from a page representing a deliberate and judicious summary estimate of Hegel): "Thought itself becomes the object of philosophy, and the search for something 'real' beyond and apart from thought is *definitely abandoned*" (p. 146).

The illusionism which characterises Schopenhauer's metaphysic is thus partly the inevitable disappointment of the philosopher who expects to solve definitely and dogmatically the problem as to what the world *is*. The system of will bears standing testimony to the fact that *thought* is not equal to setting forth the composite nature of the world. Schopenhauer himself owed the intellectual disappointment in question to the fact that in his youth he was greatly influenced by the ideal which rational philosophers had set themselves. He ought to have confessed at the end of his system that much of the illusionism that he had taught or discovered about our experience was imaginary and gratuitous, as having arisen, in fact, from certain false ideas in the minds of philosophers about reality. He did not do this, and even if he had done so, it would not have removed all the atmosphere of disenchantment and illusion from his system. There is, as has been stated, another phase of illusionism in Schopenhauer's system which is due to his mistaken acceptance of the philosophy of idealism. Idealism begins by questioning the reality of the world revealed to us by our senses, and having done this it is on the road to question the reality of all reality,<sup>1</sup> the reality of everything that professes or appears to be real. Schopenhauer shows in his system this tendency of the mind that has imbibed something of the temper of idealism to question one plane of experience after another. "Politeness," for example, he says, is the "mask to egoism." (He could not think of such a thing as "heart-politeness" or the politeness arising from natural grace of manner.)

Now it is possible to have an idealistic temperament and an idealistic attitude of mind towards reality in excess. We remember how Robert Browning, in his 'Bishop Blougram,' hits off the danger of letting go our hold on the reality that is before us, under the imaginary idea that we may somehow

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 84, 275.

encounter a greater reality than the present. He compares this to the action of a man who discards warm clothing in Russia because he is going to France where it will be needless, and light clothing in Spain because he is going to Africa where one needs hardly any clothing at all. And so it is in Schopenhauer. "The scenes of our life are like pictures done in rough mosaic. Looked at close, they produce no effect. There is nothing beautiful to be found in them unless you stand some distance off. So to gain anything we have longed for is only to discover how vain and empty it is; and even though we are always living in expectation of better things, at the same time we often repent and long to have the past back again. We look upon the present as something to be put up with while it lasts, and serving only as the way towards the goal. Hence most people, if they glance back when they come to the end of life, will find that they have all along been living *ad interim*: they will be surprised to find that the very thing they disregarded and let slip by unenjoyed was just the life in the expectation of which they passed all their time. Of how many men may it not be said that hope made a fool of him until he danced into the arms of death!"<sup>1</sup>

In philosophy one must never let go one's hold upon reality, but grapple with it resolutely—like the capturers of Proteus in the 'Odyssey'—through all the changing phases of its manifestation of itself. It is very dangerous to think of brushing aside the surface of things, the phase of reality that is revealed to us by our senses, with the idea of getting beneath to some imaginary hidden reality. Having questioned the "surface" of things, one will be apt to question also the "hidden reality" that is beneath, because we have removed the surface in relation to which alone that supposed

<sup>1</sup> Schop., Werke, vi. 305; zur Lehre von der Nichtigkeit des Daseyns. B. S., Studies in Pessimism, pp. 36, 37.

reality can be understood. All things exist in relation, as it were; and yet Schopenhauer always seems to be passing away from one plane of reality to another, under the idea that he will thus somehow encounter more real reality or a greater amount of reality. It has been suggested how easy it is to get from any one point in Schopenhauer's philosophy to any other point. Indeed he prides himself on that very feature of his system. But it is not only easy to make transitions in his philosophy—it is too fatally easy. Schopenhauer was himself driven from one plane to another in his search after reality, because he could not definitely make up his mind about the reality or the relative reality of any one thing. It is not implied in this that we can say what any one thing or any one plane of reality is, in and for itself; but only that at least relative justice ought to be done to one thing before passing on to another—to the phenomena of the senses, for example, before passing on to the phenomena of thought or the phenomena of volition. Schopenhauer is always shifting about from one plane of reality to another, and so his whole system seems to be a restless and futile quest after reality. We remember how inadequate his treatment of ethics was, in so far as he gave no sufficient recognition to the positive facts of ethics.<sup>1</sup> Ethical reality eluded him because he did not have a real enough hold upon the *ordinary duties of life*. He passed too easily from ethics into religion, just because the controversial and speculative problems in ethics blinded his eyes to what was positive and real in morality. No doubt experience seems to show that a philosopher, in his search after reality, is very apt to eat the heart out of one thing after another, and to seize at once the essence of a thing or a situation, and to be always passing on to something other than what he has immediately before him. He is apt to bring great

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 330.

intellectual pain to himself in this very way, mainly because he has never, as it were, the satisfaction of exhausting any one side of reality, of doing the fullest justice to any one thing. Schopenhauer shows this intellectual pain and restlessness. He rushes from philosophy into spiritualism, from science into art, from art to religion, and in religion he is a sceptic and a devotee at one and the same time. The philosopher, in fact, goes on feeling his way towards reality from one experience to another, and through one plane of reality to another, until he finds that in this very *process*, in this very *transition*, the deepest meaning of reality is apparent. He then is able to proclaim somewhat in the way that Schopenhauer does, or more perfectly perhaps than Schopenhauer does, the fact that reality is simply *that which endlessly transforms itself*, and that a will to evolve and to attain to higher development is the last and most real aspect of reality.

There is still another reason for the illusionism that exists in Schopenhauer's system. His illusionism grows in a manner out of the very difficulties connected with the philosophy of will. If reality is will, it is natural for us to seek for some last stage to which the evolving movement that is in things will finally conduct us. Reality must be evolving in some direction, and to some end. It has been suggested that the direction in which reality is evolving may be found in the highest purposes and volitions of conscious human beings. Now, if this be true, everything that falls short of the highest reality and the highest achievement is apt to seem illusory. Schopenhauer speaks as if life never brought to us anything else than the mere experience of life. It is hard, as we have seen, to say just wherein the reality of the human personality consists according to him, because he seems to make æsthetic enjoyment and religious contemplation—the highest experiences or the highest planes of reality that are known to us—dependent upon the complete elimination of all individual

and separate existence. And, in general, he clearly teaches in all that he says and writes that most of the strife and struggle of human beings (in so far as it ignores the fact that the education of the will of man and the eradication of the selfishness of the personal will is the greatest thing in the world for us) is *illusory*. We accomplish nothing in the world, so to speak, until we see the vanity of most of the ordinary pursuits and achievements of man. This is manifestly that pessimism of the preacher and the theologian to which we have already referred as a part of Schopenhauer's system. All reality seems to sum itself up in the conscious person and in the possibility of his spiritual or ideal volition. It is only *there* (this is the outcome of Schopenhauer) that we find an answer to the first problem of philosophy, the question about the nature of the real world.<sup>1</sup> All life and all existence which falls short of the reality of the idealised aspiration and volition of conscious human beings is illusory in the eyes of Schopenhauer, even though, as we must remember, he can make the individual real only by robbing him of his personal identity. Now we are prepared to regard the reality of all that falls short of the reality of the human person as not absolute but relative. If the individual, then, has not realised in his volition the idealities of which art and ethics and religion all speak, he will find that nothing else in the system of things can well be calculated upon to take their place. In the absence of these spiritual possessions he will have nothing in his experience which he can intelligibly think to be real. And so the whole world will seem to him to be illusory.

III. Into the idea and the fact of *volition* Schopenhauer melts everything down—all the entities of science and metaphysic, and all the doctrines founded upon these entities. The first thing that goes is the general idea that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 99.



philosophy can tell us about that which lies beyond all experience and reality. And, by the way, the disappearance of this notion must have been instructive to Schopenhauer himself. "By metaphysic I understand knowledge that pretends to transcend the possibility of experience, thus to transcend nature or the given phenomenal appearance of things, in order to give an explanation of that by which, in some sense or other, this experience or nature is conditioned; or, to speak in popular language, all that which is behind nature and makes it possible."<sup>1</sup> Now the system teaches that this is wholly wrong; we cannot get *beyond* nature or experience. We cannot, because, to begin with, thought is only a part of experience, dependent upon the rest of experience for its subject-matter. We can think only in so far as we have also experienced, and we can have experience only in so far as we take up in our lives a direct and volitional attitude towards reality. Our thought is nothing but our experience of life and of our action, stated in the simplest terms possible. Nature has given us the power of thought so that we may, in our knowledge, take cognisance of the *place* which we occupy in the evolution of the life of the universe. And then, again, we can have no knowledge of anything that *transcends* the world, for the plain reason that if things do not, somehow, affect our will, we can have no consciousness of them at all. Doubtless Schopenhauer might hold that, by making out the transcendental side of things to be will, he gets to know the transcendental meaning of reality; but his philosophy would have been still more intelligible if he had revised his definition of metaphysic and had said that there is no transcendental<sup>2</sup> knowledge whatever of reality. He might in all naturalness

<sup>1</sup> World as Will, &c.; Eng. transl., H. and K., ii. 364.

<sup>2</sup> In using the word *transcendental* here I use it in its current popular signification, and not in the precise sense in which Kant uses it and some of those who are careful to follow him closely.

have done this, seeing that will is manifestly that which is most visibly revealed to us in everything that we see and apprehend in ordinary life. He did not do this, however, because, like Fichte and Schelling, he allowed himself to talk of his chief principle as if it were an abstract potency, an imaginary point from which all reality could be evolved, instead of a concrete reality. Philosophy ought to insist that it knows nothing of the creation or the evolution of the world from any abstract potency or primal principle. We can know only what the world of which we are actually conscious is tending to do and to evolve. The very idea of will expresses just this. And Schopenhauer's fierce tirades against mere theism and merely external ways of looking at reality seem to point in the same direction. He professed to give what is called an *immanent*<sup>1</sup> view of reality, at the same time that he made a dogmatic use of his principle of will. Will, as it were, is the *truth* of things as they now are, independently of how they came to be what they are. In so far as Schopenhauer did not get completely rid of the philosophical tendency to substantiate an abstraction (in the shape of his idea of will as an original *potency*), he is not free from the difficulties and the intellectual jugglery in which both Fichte and Schelling entangle themselves in their attempts to evolve the universe out of a mere abstract potency or thing in itself.

The *finite self*, in the next place, is also nothing to Schopenhauer. It is dissolved by him into the consciousness that the individual has of himself as an assertion of the will. This consciousness he held to be merely an illusion, a thing of the intellect which has a tendency to think of itself as something more than the mere world-process which it apprehends. The error of this position has already been criticised, and will again be referred to below. The world to Schopenhauer is simply

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 67.

one great embodied effort of the will; and *knowledge* is nothing absolute—nothing at all, in fact, but a kind of consciousness which accompanies the will at its highest stages. After studying biology and Schopenhauer, one seems to grasp the fact that the “*Cogito ergo sum*” of Descartes expresses not so much an actuality as a possibility—the possibility, namely, of the individual being able to take into his own experience many of the things which at first seem to be outside or beyond himself. The individual is enabled to *think* a great part of reality because it has passed through his organic consciousness: there are records of the whole of creation in his body, in the system of tendencies which constitutes it; and it is because the individual can legitimately hope to leave the impress of his personality on things, and make some of the highest purposes of the universe his own, that he is entitled to regard himself as real and personal. A philosopher who is rapt in contemplation (as in Rembrandt’s picture *Le philosophe en rêve*, or in the late classical statues of philosophers) is only, after all, trying to analyse his *experience* of reality as a process that is tending to complete itself. He may seem to be doing something more than this, trying to think of existence in and for itself, but he really cannot do more than analyse his volitional experience of things. Thought, so to speak, is largely an attempt to grasp within our consciousness the conditions that determine or limit our activity in the world as it impresses itself upon us. But we cannot grasp all these conditions with our mere understanding. The understanding unfolds to us the connecting-links between some of the conditions in question; but this knowledge takes us only a very small way. The deepest *thought* about reality must somehow cease to be merely *thought*, and become a general consciousness of being and doing, a sense of evolving life. We can be conscious only of that amount of reality which we have ourselves lived or experienced, or which we have carefully

observed in the lives of other beings, and carefully interpreted in the light of our own ideas and motives and purposes. The doctrine of evolution has shown us how we can, in the lives of beings lower than ourselves, see in the full range of their inception and performance many actions which discharge themselves unconsciously in our own lives. Thus by simply trying to will and feel and experience as much of reality as is accessible to us, whether directly or indirectly, we may gain a knowledge of all reality.

We need only remember that neither philosophers nor scientists ever agree among themselves about any alleged ultimate constituents of things, to realise the fact that there is a considerable amount of meaning in Schopenhauer's substitution of a dynamic account of reality for a statical and ontological account. The philosophy of will, to be explicit, stands, thirdly, for the general idea that no *one* thing, no *one ultimate element* or *ultimate thing*, can be put forward as the supreme principle of reality. The ultimate fact about the world is not a thing, nor any number of things, but a process, a force, an evolution. Scientists can never agree about the ultimate nature of atoms or matter; nor can philosophers ever agree about the ultimate conceptual elements of things. The fact of this having been true since the times of Parmenides and Heraclitus is enough of itself to prove that both scientist and philosopher are travelling on a wrong path, or at least a path that leads to no positive result. Schopenhauer inveighs in the strongest terms against the *dogmatism* of science, feeling convinced—and rightly so—that the mere methods of natural and experimental science will never enable the human mind to come upon a substratum of things that it will be able to accept as really ultimate. Science, indeed, never comes upon an ultimate substratum, and only mistaken science, science which has been unconscious of its own limitations, has ever pretended

to do so. "Certain philosophers of nature must be taught that a man may be an accomplished zoologist, and have the sixty species of monkeys at his fingers' ends, yet on the whole be an ignoramus to be classed with the vulgar, if he has learned nothing else, save perhaps his school catechism." Now it may be disappointing to think that we have to give up our search for the ultimate nature of the real. To abandon the attempt to state the world in terms of scientific entities or of ideas and conceptions, and to begin to treat all conceptions and ideas of the mind dynamically, in relation to our practical experience, seems like passing from what is strictly called science and from scientific metaphysic to what is called naturalism and to a mere *philosophy of the unconscious*. In laying the whole weight of explaining things upon our natural tendency to evolve and to live and to continue to evolve and to live, we seem in a sense to give up the privilege of thought to demand an explanation of existence which will satisfy our reason. Still in the dynamic naturalism for which Schopenhauer contends in philosophy there is room left for our rational and ideational consciousness of things. We have seen how our artistic and moral consciousness of reality may be claimed to be actually the highest outcome or development of reality, and so something as ostensibly and demonstrably real as anything else that is alleged to exist in the world. It is, in fact, somehow implied in the very nature of the physical universe, that it should rise to a consciousness of itself in the aspirations and purposes of man. The consciousness of beauty and of subserviency to moral purpose is, when properly understood, as real and natural an aspect of things as gravitation or organic life and growth and development. The philosopher knows that what is present or what reveals itself at the end or the upper reaches of the world-process, must be implicitly present in that process from the beginning and in even the

simplest phases of it.<sup>1</sup> Thus it is possible for a dynamic and practical philosophy to maintain that thought and consciousness are both of them natural aspects of reality, aspects of the universe just as real as chemical and physical attraction. The amount of reality that any one individual may be said to know is comparable perhaps to the air that passes through his lungs in the course of an hour. The air in a man's lungs is only a part of the atmosphere which extends over the whole surface of the earth; and so the knowledge that one man may be said to have of reality is only a part of the consciousness that is in things and that is as wide as the vast universe itself. A man may breathe any portion of the atmosphere to which he is able to transport himself, and he may in the same way be conscious of any aspect of reality which he can in some way or another allow to pass through his personal experience. From a universal standpoint the thought of the world is more than a mere abbreviated picture of the world; it is a consciousness of things which is coincident with the life that is in things.

IV. It is fairly evident that many of Schopenhauer's failures result from his inability to connect together logically and really some of the different ways in which reality can be regarded. The world of perception, for example, represents one side of reality, and so does the world of thought, and so does the world of artistic reality, and so does the world (or the kingdom) of moral effort. He allows himself to be beaten about from the one to the other of these aspects of reality, as he can find no one side of things to be complete and satisfactory in itself. This is, of course, simply what could have been expected. The true way to understand reality is to grasp it as a whole; and this can be done only with our total consciousness and not by perception alone, or by thought

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*—the reference to Schopenhauer's omission from his will of an eternal consciousness.

alone, or by feeling alone, but by all of these taken together and supplemented by the sense of organic effort. No one so inevitably and so thoroughly exhibits the limits of the finite as such, and of one-sided ways of looking at things, as does Schopenhauer. There is a penumbral obscurity and illusion about all knowledge, for the very reason that the act of acquiring knowledge involves our attending at one time only to certain aspects of things, and leaving certain others out of account. The scientific view of the world, too, is different from the artistic, and the artistic from the moral. We are compelled—everywhere outside of philosophy—to take these things separately, and we must pay the logical penalty of doing so—the sense of incompleteness and unreality. If we look on art, for example, as revealing to us a kind of reality that is real in itself, apart from all other reality, we are sure to experience a sense of illusion.<sup>1</sup> And if two people think of love as a thing in which they alone are concerned, and apart altogether from the desire it represents on the part of nature to give birth to a new individual, they are certainly the victims of an illusion—“*Amantes amentes*,” as Terence has it. “The longing of love, the *ἔμπερος* which the poets of all the ages are unceasingly occupied with expressing in innumerable forms, and do not exhaust the subject, nay, cannot do it justice, this longing which attaches the idea of endless happiness to the possession of a particular woman, and unutterable pain to the thought that this possession cannot be attained—this longing and this pain cannot obtain their material from the wants of an ephemeral individual, but they are the sighs of the spirit of the species which sees here, to be won or lost, a means for the attainment of its ends which cannot be replaced, and therefore groans deeply.”<sup>2</sup> In the same way knowledge or even truth if pursued for its own sake alone becomes

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> Werke, iii. 631 ; Welt als Wille. H. and K., iii. 362, 363.

illusory, and scepticism is always able to show this. Religion, too, if conceived as a giving to God of what is taken away from men, is certainly illusory; it overlooks the fact that men are the children of God and the direct manifestations of God. All things—birth, love, art, life, goodness, knowledge, devotion—are merely agencies and expressions of the will to live, and are only intelligible as such. If we mention to Schopenhauer any one thing or any one phenomenon in life or in the world, he is able instantly to point out to us the “defects” of that thing if regarded as anything real on its own account. It is singular, indeed, that negation interests him more than affirmation,—that he is stronger in objecting to all abstract views of life than in asserting anything real and positive about it; but this is due to the nature of his mind, and to the fact that he had in the interest of civilisation to overturn the philosophy of the mere idea. “Whatever torch we may kindle and whatever space it may light, *our horizon will always remain bounded by profound night.* . . . For all our forms of knowledge are adapted to the phenomena alone; therefore we must apprehend everything through co-existence, succession, and causal relations. . . . Therefore the actual, positive solution of the riddle of the world must be something that human intellect is *absolutely incapable of grasping and thinking*; so that if a being of a higher kind were to go and take all pains to impart it to us, we would be absolutely incapable of understanding anything of his expositions. Those, therefore, who profess to know the ultimate—*i.e.*, the first ground of things—thus a primordial being, an absolute, or whatever else they choose to call it, together with the process, the reasons, motives, or whatever it may be, in consequence of which the world arises from it, or springs, or falls, or is produced, set in existence, ‘discharged,’ and ushered forth, are playing tricks, are vain boasters, when indeed they are not charlatans.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Werke, iii. 206; Welt als Wille. H. and K., ii. 392. The italics are mine.



We need not be alarmed by these words. Translated into simple language, they only mean that the intellect certainly cannot so extend its range and increase its depth as to become an absolute comprehension of all reality, but that it simply focusses reality for the individual so that he may become aware of his practical relation towards it. We see too from them how absurd it was for Schopenhauer to fall into the error of deriving the world from a mere abstract potency which he could describe only negatively, as unconscious will. The positive outcome of his philosophy is that reality is continually tending to transform itself and transfigure itself and transcend itself in ever higher volitions and achievements. In his idea of the different grades of the manifestation and assertion of the will he has taught how we may give, if necessary, a summary or epitome of reality. And as far as the general tendency of reality as a whole is concerned, his system represents the fact that that can be apprehended only practically, as an aspiration or a purpose which is only gradually realising itself. We can appreciate Schopenhauer's position here, if we reflect a moment on what it is that philosophical explanations of things do for men. Most ultimate theoretical questions about the nature of the world admit only of an indirect answer. As a matter of fact, many questions about reality indicate a very *naïf* point of view about things—the assumption that reality can be expressed directly and completely in some one or two simple positive statements. On the contrary, the truth is that philosophy can at best only put people on the path towards solving the nature of the real, and that by unfolding to them the conditions of their own volition and evolution. “Kant has shown that the problems of metaphysic admit of no direct, and in general of no satisfactory solution.” For once Schopenhauer goes on (in the next sentence) to give the true reason of this fact. He does not this time say that it is because our intellect reveals only phenomena to us and not things in them-

selves, but because our intellect tells us only about the existence of things which affect our will, and about the way in which these things affect our will.

The *illusionism incident to the very attempt to grasp the world as will* is wide-reaching in Schopenhauer. It is easy to see that the world cannot be understood as anything fixed and static, but only as a purpose that is trying to realise itself. But what is this purpose in Schopenhauer? When one reads him, one finds that volition or purpose is something that is always tending to break away from the eternal unconsciousness that is at the heart of things, or trying to realise something which in the nature of the case it cannot. All the ends that men theorise about and consciously strive after are illusory to Schopenhauer, and so consequently are the actions which these ends represent and involve. There is nothing absolute about these ends, and so the pursuit of them contains in itself somehow the evidence of its own futility. And then the category of "end" cannot be applied to the world as a whole, because we are not in any way able to transplant ourselves outside the world-will and take notice of that towards which it is struggling. The ends of the world are already determined by the world-will, and the intellect can at most discern the ways and the means by which these ends seem to be attained. It may be said that the ends of the world can to a certain extent be read along the lines of what the world-will has already achieved in history and in civilisation, as well as in the adaptations that are apparent in the bodies of animals and men. But then Schopenhauer's mind is so extremely radical that he cannot see the place of *partial* attainment and of *relative* perfection in the world and in history and in humanity. There is, in short, in him no direct answer to the questions that may be raised about the real purpose of the world. His feeling is that the will is always seeking something that had better not be than be. The ends of the

will, too, in his eyes so much transcend the mere conceptions of our intellect, that he falls into the error of thinking of them as necessarily supra-rational or non-rational or even irrational. And it is true that the world-will does not seem to have to any great extent consulted the intellect of man about the end or the tendency of things. But as this perhaps was hardly to be expected, a great deal of disappointment that man may feel about the universe is purely gratuitous. What is lacking at this point in Schopenhauer is, as has been indicated more than once, a fuller or more adequate philosophy of the unconscious. That which is unconscious *for us* is not necessarily so for the *universe* or the world-will itself. Instinct and impulse are not necessarily irrational in their workings simply because their workings are unconscious. It is by no means difficult to discern a rational tendency in impulse and in instinct, even in the ordinary physical or purely natural instincts of life. All such instincts have been left by nature in the constitution of human nature, that humanity may be compelled to continue trying to work out its own salvation. The various instincts that man possesses, the desires for nourishment and for the reproduction of his life, do not indeed exactly guarantee that a better moral world than the present is likely to be evolved in the near future, but they enable humanity to approach the struggle of life with organisms that are fitted to carry them through it. This struggle to which nature subjects man is part of the means that she has instituted for the perfecting of his humanity. He may not be fully conscious of the purpose that is in things, but this absence on his part of the consciousness of that purpose does not destroy its reality.

Schopenhauer is wrong again in thinking that only the world-will is real and that particular volition is nothing at all on its own account. "Life can very well be looked upon as a dream from which death is the awakening. But then the personality, the individual, appertains to the dream and

not to the wakening consciousness ; it is on this account that death looks like annihilation to the former." This tendency of his to find reality only in what philosophers call the universal has often been criticised.<sup>1</sup> It is a tendency which must have been apparent from the outset of our investigation. He ought to have been able to grasp the fact that volition in the case of individuals indicates an effort on their part after independent existence, an effort which cannot be meaningless in view of the fact that it is so persistently made again and again. The fact of this persistent striving indicates a desire on the part of the individual to be real on his own account, and not merely as a phase or manifestation of a universal will. Philosophy has too often dissolved all reality into a universal principle underlying all things, because it has looked more to the intellect than to the will as indicating the real nature of man. The intellect in seeking to connect things together in a logical or perfectly general way, to find out their points of *common resemblance*, naturally seems to take away any apparent reality that they have on their own account. The will, on the contrary, is that which gives to things and human beings an element of particularity, of existence in and for self. It is, in fact, matter of common knowledge that prolonged thought rather incapacitates a man for action, in so far as it inclines him to overlook this very element of definiteness and particularity in things which is the essence of their reality. Schopenhauer made the mistake of saying that it is the intellect which separates the world into a congeries of separate things and persons, and that the will is really inimical to and destructive of all particular reality in things and persons. Both these assertions are false ; and so, consequently, is the antithesis which they constitute. If anything tends to sublimate the reality of things, it is the intellect. (It need not necessarily do so ; for, if the

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.*, by Professor Adamson in 'Mind,' vol. i., 1876.

intellect is the servant of the will, as Schopenhauer rightly says, it will rather tend to set forth the reality of things as related to the practical purposes of our lives.) And if anything tends to particularise things, to develop their individuality to the uttermost, it is the will. The true measure of the reality of things is the idea of the function or purpose they discharge in the evolution of the world. The effort of human beings to persist in their own being and to will endlessly is not an irrational thing, just because it is not a mere speculative fancy but a real *nisus* or effort, an affair of the will. The tendency of man to be real in his own life and personality is the highest tendency of the universe. Just because this is an effort of his will and not a mere idea of his intellect, may he lay hold upon the fact of separate personal existence and claim it as his own. If Schopenhauer had been able to correlate the intellect and the will of the individual, the consciousness and the unconscious instincts of the individual, he would have proclaimed the desire of man to evolve endlessly to be the most real thing in the world. Man thinks of himself as a real individual, because he is partly conscious of acting and willing as a real individual. He is born to rethink the purely natural basis of his life and to *will* life over again in unselfish and ideal effort. His intellect tells him of the relations that he as a moral agent sustains to the world of physical reality; and what his intellect tells him about things, about their relations to his moral purpose, is real and not illusory.

If the effort of the individual to attain to real personal existence is an illusory thing, then the world is undoubtedly a failure. No one who disbelieves in the idea of man's life being somehow made to complete itself—disbelieves, that is, in the complete and perfect development of the life of the individual as an individual—can be honest in pronouncing the world to be good or satisfactory. But we have no reason for

mistrusting the effort that we feel in ourselves to be real and to be personal, or the consciousness that we have of that effort. The best thing about the philosophy of will is the idea, suggested by its very name, of attributing reality to all actual achievement on the part of man. That man has willed, and that he has accomplished something in his volition, is the best proof that the world is rational, and is making for the realisation of rational purpose.<sup>1</sup> We must not dwell too much on the palpable pettiness of most of the things that individual volition and individual purpose can accomplish. What it does accomplish is real enough as far as it goes. To Schopenhauer finite volition as such contains in itself the germs of its own dissolution, and is destined somehow to pass over into the infinite, or to return to it. Instead of feeling that *whatever is is right*, he rather feels that

"Alles das besteht  
Ist werth dass es zu Grunde geht."<sup>2</sup>

It is true, as Schopenhauer points out, that any living body is real only so long as the vital forces that exist in it are able to counterbalance the destructive forces that are working for its dissolution. An animal organism must be strong enough to overcome, for instance, mere physical and chemical forces. When its own energy is spent these chemical and physical forces will combine to destroy it. The individual human being that wills to be real, has to overcome the force of unconscious nature, and has to assert its personal life as a higher force or existence in the material universe. But Schopenhauer thought that this very tendency of the individual to separate himself in his volition from the universal will of nature was a thing that could not really be effected. There

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. iii., conclusion.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe, quoted by Mr Bonar when describing Engel's 'Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy'; 'Philosophy and Political Economy,' p. 347.

is no life, it seemed to him, for the individual out of or apart from the universal will. There is a great deal of truth in this. Whatever our notions may happen to be regarding individual existence and individual volition, Schopenhauer is always prepared to proclaim their illusoriness or merely partial reality. The whole world, as it were, is one alternating assertion and denial of the will to live, and the man that wills to live on his own account must be able to sum up in himself all the forces of nature, and to carry them on to a greater development than they are capable of when not associated with the lives of conscious human beings. The human being who is not powerful enough to assert his moral life as a real thing in the system of things, is perhaps only as real as a stick or a stone or a straw which is drifted about over the face of creation by the play of the different forces that are at work in the world. Any being, of course, that wills separate existence is to Schopenhauer living under an illusion. If Schopenhauer, however, had been able to think of the universe as the manifestation of an upward and a growing instead of a downward and irrational purpose, he would have been better able to connect together in his thought the unconscious forces that are at work in nature, and the conscious forces that are at work in the life of man.

We must not, however, lose sight of the element of positive truth that is contained in Schopenhauer's illusionism. Indeed his whole idea of the illusoriness of the individual life that does not comprehend and understand itself in its relation to the will of the world is in the main to be accepted. In the first place, Schopenhauer is quite right in thinking that any mere concept philosophy, any mere *theory* that the finite mind may frame about things, is inadequate to reality. He agrees that philosophy is indeed a science *in* conceptions, and that it seeks to reduce the multiplicity and complexity of the world

to a few simple elements. But no mere elements and no mere ultimate *things* can be a resting-place for the thought of the philosopher. If we are to think at all of a world, we must think of the elements of things as connected with each other in a vital or teleological way. And seeing that we know nothing about the generation or the creation of the world—of the way in which the “elements” of things were first put together—it is better to give up the whole attempt to analyse the world into its ultimate material elements. We shall do better if we simply try to take hold of the world with our total feeling and volition, identifying ourselves with the creative force that works and operates in all things. The idea and the fact of will (or energy or purpose) and of the various grades of the manifestation of that will and purpose, give us at least an intelligible real principle whereby we may explain reality. Moreover it is not one that we have to assume without proof, but one which we can actually see and verify with our senses and our consciousness. And then, secondly, Schopenhauer's idea of subordinating the intellect to the will, is in the main sound as far as the finite individual is concerned. Anthropology and history both tend to show that for all the practical purposes of life the will and the moral nature are more potent factors than the intellect. It is indeed only in the moral experience of the individual that a real comprehension of the universe as a whole is to be found. The history of civilisation is the record of the struggle that man has had to undergo to eliminate the obstacles that stand in the way of his moral progress. The intellect is the chief tool that nature has given to man to equip him for the struggle of life.

Then, in the third place, Schopenhauer makes us feel that teleology is undoubtedly the highest part of philosophy; and yet that in teleology we do not so much learn about the



absolute *reality* of things, but rather of their relative *utility*, the relative value of the service they discharge in the fabric of things. Of course we cannot make the will of man the principle whereby we measure the reality of all things, unless it can be shown that somehow the human will is at the centre of things. But it is just this that Schopenhauer's philosophy, when liberally interpreted, teaches more distinctly than anything else. A person who stands outside the world and looks at it, as at something other than he is himself, can never be said to have a real and sure hold on the world, and can never be said to be logically entitled to predicate anything about it. In the chapters on idealism and art it was suggested that the highest efforts of the world-will are to be read in the spiritual purposes of conscious human beings. And in general Schopenhauer has shown us how absurd it is for the individual to attempt to realise in his life anything that is not organically connected with the cosmic purpose that is written in the world as a whole. Nature has provided that there shall be much illusion and deception for the individual that takes his own individual pleasure, instead of the ideals of moral and intellectual perfection that are shadowed forth in art and religion, to be the measure of his life and development. Once again, all is "vanity" that falls short of the highest evolution of the life of conscious human beings.

The intellectual knowledge that we have of the world might easily be arranged and schematised in such a way as to set forth its subservience to the will. This schematism would come by way of corollary to Schopenhauer's main principles.<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer doubtless imagined that in his theory of knowledge he had arranged phenomenal things in the order of their importance with regard to human actions.

<sup>1</sup> One is glad to see the attempt to construct a body of metaphysical doctrine on Schopenhauer's principle of will made in 'Elements of Metaphysic' by Professor Deussen of Kiel (English transl. by C. M. Duff. Macmillan, 1894).

He put human actions at the top of the scale of the objects which the mind can contemplate: they represent, as it were, the hardest things that thought has to grapple with (it is hard to grasp the philosophy of motivated action). And then he graded ideas or cognitions in a way similar to the way in which he graded things, making self-knowledge to be the highest kind of knowledge, and yet the kind of knowledge where we have more than anywhere else to rise above the limits of ordinary everyday knowledge. His interesting dilemma about knowledge being formally imperfect when materially real, and most real when least perfect formally, rested upon the fact that knowledge does become illusory if we look upon it as anything real on its own account. Where knowledge is most formally perfect, as in the case of pure mathematics, it tells us very little about the reality of things,—it has very little content, as the logicians say: and if we think of the knowledge concerned in knowing the self, we find that it tends to pass into a kind of general sense of life or of volition. All the mere knowing of things on the outside, as it were, is shown by Schopenhauer to be not perfect knowledge. If we wish to be *sure* about things we must know them, as it were, on the inside, must know their inner meaning and their organic place in the world, and volition is the only thing that enables us to attain such knowledge.

Schopenhauer's thousand and one inconsistencies may be reduced to the one fact of his losing his head over the distinction between the phenomenon and the thing in itself. A man who believes on general principles that things are quite *different from what they seem to be*, can never really and thoroughly interest himself in any one thing whatsoever. We have seen this illustrated in the Tantalus-like effort of Schopenhauer to get a firm hold upon reality; what

is apparently solid ground never proves to be such for any length of time, but seems under the consideration of that unreliable intellect he is so fond of talking about to turn into shifting sand. He feels that things are different from what they seem to be, that life is different from our expectations of it, and that even our memories cannot be trusted to report accurately the things which we once experienced. We never *are* something with which we are thoroughly contented; we live either in the past or the future, but never wholly in the present. Perhaps the cultivated Epicurean who tries to live in the present is the only wise man, but yet we can hardly persuade ourselves that he is. "Our life is like a journey on which, as we advance, the landscape takes a different view from that which it presented at first, and changes again as we come nearer. This is just what happens—especially with our wishes. We often find something else, nay, something better than what we were looking for; and what we look for we often find on a very different path from that on which we began a vain search. Instead of finding, as we expected, pleasure, happiness, joy, we get experience, insight, knowledge—a real and permanent blessing instead of a fleeting and illusory one."<sup>1</sup> The way to cut the knot in which all this perplexity and confusion is tied up is simply to say outright that the experience which is here talked of *is* life, *is* will, *is* reality. From the very nature of the case too, that experience must somehow complete itself.

An all-permeating sense of illusion is the air in which Schopenhauer's philosophy lives and moves. This fact, taken together with the way in which he shows up the contradictions in life and experience, and with the many flagrant contradictions in his thought, and with the imperfect way

<sup>1</sup> Werke, v. 438; B. S., Counsels and Maxims, p. 15.

in which he takes hold of his own omnipotent principle of will, warrants us in calling his whole philosophy a *quasi* general overturning of the philosophy of the idea—a general proclamation of the inadequacy of the idea to the facts of life, a sort of “*philosophie à rebours*,” to give a turn to an expression of Bastiat’s about the political economy of Sismondi. In reading Schopenhauer one always feels that the words Karl Marx used about Hegel might have been written by him too. “My dialectical method is fundamentally different from Hegel’s, and is even its direct opposite. For Hegel it is the process of thought, which (under the name Idea) he ever converts into an independent Subject, the Demiurgos of this actual world, which is only its outward manifestation. For me, on the contrary, ideas are only the material facts turned up and down in the human head.”<sup>1</sup> So helpless is the whole philosophy of idealism in his eyes in face of the all-conquering force of will! There is something legitimate enough about this feeling; thought should certainly be content to interpret things or the will that is in things, and not seek to construe reality out of itself. Schopenhauer need not have held, however, that thought falsified or rendered illusory whatever was brought before it.

V. It may be well to look again at the strong foundations upon which his system rests. The main idea upon which it stands is that the significance of the world can be understood only in an ethical regard, and this is a very sure foundation if it means that the world can be understood only in so far as it has some ultimate reference to the moral purpose of the individual man. The key which opens the system is the reflection that, just as the causality that is in the external world is explicable only by reference to motives, so similarly the conscious states which make up the self are best explained

<sup>1</sup> Bonar, *Philosophy and Political Economy*, pp. 327, 328.

by will.<sup>1</sup> The will, consequently, is the key which unlocks all reality for us, the explanation of the whole visible and tangible world. The idealists are essentially right in making out the world to be something that is related to human personality, but the deepest thing about the human personality is will. The world, in other words, must be understood as will. And then as to how the fortress of will may be taken, Schopenhauer would have its assailants understand that the notion they may have formed of will as simply *conscious* purpose does not represent a complete idea of will at all. Will to him includes instinct and impulse and habit and all the unconscious forces of nature. He is thus intrenched behind the contention that the primary thing about a man is not his thought but his volition and action, and that all causality in nature is intelligible only by some reference, indirect or remote though it may be, to human purpose.

“Only those changes which have no other ground than a motive—*i.e.*, an idea—have hitherto been regarded as manifestations of will. Therefore in nature a will has only been attributed to man, or at the most to animals; for knowledge, the idea, is of course, as I have said elsewhere, the true and exclusive characteristic of animal life. But that the will is also active where no knowledge guides it, we see at once in the instinct and the mechanical skill of animals. That they have ideas and knowledge is here not to the point, for the end towards which they strive as definitely as if it were a known motive is yet entirely unknown to them. Therefore in such cases their action takes place without motive, is not guided by the idea, and shows us first and most distinctly how the will may be active entirely without knowledge. The

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. iii. sec. 3, where it is suggested that causality actually *dissolves* itself into volition. And then (so far as the comparison suggested here goes) we may, according to Schopenhauer, say that the reality of both external and internal phenomena is will; for our conscious states *dissolve* themselves into our consciousness (or feeling) of effort or action.

bird of a year old has no idea of the eggs for which it builds a nest; the young spider has no idea of the prey for which it spins a web; nor has the ant-lion any idea of the ants for which he digs a trench for the first time. . . . In such actions of these creatures the will is clearly operative as in their other actions, but it is in blind activity, which is indeed accompanied by knowledge but not guided by it. If now we have once gained insight into the fact that idea as motive is not a necessary and essential condition of the activity of the will, we shall more easily recognise the activity of will where it is less apparent.”<sup>1</sup>

The will that Schopenhauer generally uses in explaining the world, or the illusion that is in the world, is the unconscious will of nature; and the fundamental contradiction that he finds in man's life is due to the fact that he conceives the life of man to be for the most part a mere battle-ground between instinct or impulse and reflection or intellect. As soon, however, as we insist that the expressions mere will, mere intellect, mere instinct, and so on, are all abstractions and not realities, we take away much of the ground for the contradiction and illusion which Schopenhauer professes to find in reality. There is no such thing as a merely unconscious will, and so we should not seek to explain the world in reference to any such idea. Schopenhauer ought to have remembered that the will which we find in ourselves, and by reference to which he explains most things, is not wholly unconscious but partly conscious, not wholly irrational but partly rational. In short, the truth about ourselves and the world is that the world represents an energy or a force which asserts itself in different degrees of consciousness. The very lowest as well as the highest phases of the world's will are undoubtedly hard to *understand*—the mere physical force of gravitation and the apparently merely psychical

<sup>1</sup> Werke, ii. 135, 136; H. and K., i. 147, 148.

force called consciousness. The middle region of volition, all ordinary activity wherein we at once act and have a relative consciousness of what we are doing, is intelligible enough as far as it goes.<sup>1</sup> Our consciousness does not falsely report what we experience. We experience in ourselves, on the part of the will that is in us, more or less rational attempts at a complete assertion of our nature.

Whatever we know about the world rests upon the reality of what our consciousness tells us about ourselves in action. We know that we are organic beings who are trying to attain to a more fully rational conscious experience. We are more or less conscious of the relations which other persons and things sustain to our personality, and these relations constitute the reality of these things and persons for us. Beings or existences which have the power of affecting or determining us as well as of being affected or determined by us, are not mere things but persons. *Things* are not lasting arrangements of the cosmic matter or the cosmic force that is in the world. These "cloud-capped towers" and "gorgeous palaces," as the poet says, shall all "*dissolve*."

Part of Schopenhauer's strength, too, lies in insisting that the intellect is only a part of our total sense for the life of reality. Mere *knowledge*, or, for that part of it, *scientific knowledge*, is never able to state exhaustively the relations that things sustain to our will. There are always relations within relations, and the world is still in a state of evolution. Or, —to think of *knowledge*, and the difficulties that philosophers have made about it, — putting matters at the worst, mere knowledge cannot split the world into two halves, phenomenon and thing in itself, with an impassable gulf between them. The world is one, and all the things and persons in it draw their life from the one will. The knowledge that is a mere *reflex* of life and reality can never contradict reality itself, or

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. iii. sec. iii. (β).

split up the universe into two universes. The scope of mere knowledge is far inferior to that of a full and healthy and expansive *sense* for the world of things and for the life that is in them. The moonlight or spectral knowledge of reality that the rational philosopher may be said to possess is far less rich and full than the stored-up experience of humanity about life. It is an abridged or analytical view of the world, which is real only in so far as it shades out into the larger sense for reality that we have in consciousness of action and aspiration. There are some things that a philosopher cannot see in nature and in man unless he has the eager, expanding, and expansive sense for things which characterises those who live keenly and deeply. Poets and artists patiently cultivate an immediate or a *feeling* sense for reality. A man like Wordsworth<sup>1</sup> turns from the philosopher *for intellectual reasons*, for the reason that the mere thinker fails to see some things in the world which he might with a more whole or a more expansive sense for reality be enabled to see. David Hume, although one of the purest of speculative geniuses, always saw that a whole and healthy sense for men and things was a greater and a more real thing than mere speculative insight.

If Schopenhauer had connected our intellectual knowledge of things more organically with our consciousness of effort and will, he would have had more faith in the intellect and its conclusions about reality than he had, or indeed could have with some of the erroneous idealistic presuppositions from which he started. He ought to have seen and felt and believed that our intellectual feeling for things really passes into our organic feeling of volitional effort. His philosophy of will ought to have been supplemented by a faith in intellect equal to that of the English Hegelians, the followers of T. H. Green. Green's philosophy resolves all reality into an absolute and eternal consciousness which attains to a full realisation of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "The Poet's Epitaph."



itself only in thought or knowledge. If Schopenhauer had seen that the intellectual consciousness man confessedly has of the world presupposes a cosmic consciousness at least equal in potency to his own (and, indeed, demonstrably more potent than his own), he would have made out his will to be rational and not irrational in its assertions and operations. A liberal acceptance of the idea that the highest reality is to be found only in the highest purposes of conscious human beings compels us, in the spirit of idealism, to deny outright the absolute reality of anything that is thought of as independent of the consciousness and the life of man. But then the consciousness and the life of man are both of them expressions of an active will which is the fundamental principle of all reality. Will is not such an unreal thing as the idea. The idea, indeed, can only be understood as an expression of the will, a kind of consciousness that the will has of itself. There is always the danger, of course, of reducing all things to an impersonal will, just as the English Hegelians tend to reduce all reality to impersonal reason. But then our analysis has already shown us that the will cannot be regarded as having attained to a perfect assertion of itself, to perfect reality therefore; it is rather seeking to attain to this, to attain to complete reality in the lives and purposes and spiritual possessions of conscious human beings.

Again, if the intellect tells us, as it does, that what we know about reality reduces itself to the sense which we have of the relations that things sustain to our will, it is right to infer that the part of reality which we do not yet know will also prove to be related to the practical and moral purposes of our lives. The sense which we have for reality may be regarded as partly the sense which reality has for itself. As reality cannot contradict itself, the future evolution of the world must be one which is harmonious with what has already been attained in the history of man and of the world. Schopenhauer's pessim-

ism is based upon the idea that the world contradicts itself; he thinks that the intellect with its consciousness of ideal perfection can never be made harmonious with the will which is never satisfied but only always seeking satisfaction. But this is an extreme position to take. It is of the essence of man's life that he should consciously attain to the ends that have been set before him, and not unconsciously. Each human being has the idea that he exists in a sense for himself, in his conscious thought. Schopenhauer pronounced this idea to be an illusion, only because he had the faulty view of the intellect which we have already spoken of. He said that it made us conscious only of ideas or phenomena, whereas the fact is that it makes us conscious of the will or purpose which we find in ourselves, of the endless aspiration and evolution in which our true being consists. All knowledge short of our volitional consciousness of ourselves is always imperfect and unsatisfying. The reality of man is to be found in his will, even though the *distinguishing* characteristic of man is to be found in his intellect, in the effort he exhibits to seek consciously what nature seeks unconsciously. In making out knowledge to be merely a part of the sense of life, we have placed the reality (as opposed to the *ideality*) of knowledge in the strongest possible light. There is really no discrepancy between the will and the intellect. The intellect makes us aware only of the will or the effort to be that we find in ourselves and in all nature; and the ideas that it enables us to frame about reality are meant to be helps to us in the evolution of our lives. As Schopenhauer suggests, we must get rid of the idea that we possess an intellect to tell us about the nature of things considered as something outside of or apart from the human personality.

In discussing the freedom of the will, we found that Schopenhauer hardly seemed to make enough of the unique value of the intellect, of the fact that the intellect is the dis-

tinguishing feature of the life of man. Some of the earliest changes in the human embryo have to do with the convolutions of the brain. We may read in this phenomenon Nature's testimony to the fact that she looks upon the intellect as capable of rendering unique service to man in the efforts he must put forth to develop his life. Through the use of his intellect man can carry on his life to higher developments than the beasts can. Our freedom is nothing but the intellectual freedom which is implied in the very constitution of our being. Most statisticians hold that the idea of the freedom of the individual man has very little practical value.<sup>1</sup> The existence of man's intellect denotes the *objective* possibility of his consciously helping or not helping nature in the matter of his own development. He can *present himself to himself* in his thoughts, and so awaken ever better motives within himself.

In so far as the intellect of man tends, after some experience of life, to submit itself to the necessity that is in things, it may be said that our consciousness is at best a mere mirror of things, quite the passive thing that Schopenhauer made it out to be. In fact, many of the puzzles of Schopenhauer's philosophy arise from the fact of his pointing out a kind of contradiction in the intellect. The intellect in man makes him think himself independent of nature, whereas he is just as much dependent on her or on the world as a whole as anything else is. If, however, we take a broad grasp of Schopenhauer's philosophy of art and religion, we are enabled to see how the intellect, in making man conscious of an ideal world, becomes an active thing in his life and no longer a merely passive thing. Our artistic and our religious and our social consciousness, so far from merely furnishing us with unattainable ideals (Ideas), may all become dynamic elements in our lives, forces that idealise and elevate our lives. Schopenhauer himself did

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 178.

not make the Ideas or our knowledge of the Ideas subservient enough to life and to the will to live. Strictly speaking, that is, the intellect—so far as his treatment goes—does not emancipate us from the omnipotent power of the will to live. But then if we insist on the fact that our higher or intellectual consciousness of things is itself an assertion of the will, representing an effort on the part of man to transcend the limits of his personality and attain to a greater reality, we virtually use the intellect to make us free men and not slaves.

There are one or two remarkable general defects in Schopenhauer's whole philosophy which may naturally be thought of in connection with his metaphysic. The first of these is Schopenhauer's failure to take an adequate account of *feeling* as a *tertium quid* between the intellect and the will. Ostensibly, to be sure, his system recognises all the feelings as contained under the supreme generalisation *will*. But he does not really know what the feelings are. He thinks of them all in a pathological way—just as Spinoza did to a great extent—as “affects” of the mind, indicating either a furtherance or development of our life or the hindrance and restriction of it. The chief reason for his doing so is an historical one. Owing to the fact that modern German philosophy was in its beginnings so closely connected with an intellectual dogmatism about the nature of the external universe, Schopenhauer could not appreciate the message of Romanticism, with its tendency (there is a similar tendency in some Renaissance writers) to find in feeling a real and positive and qualitative knowledge of the world. The feelings give us a real qualitative and positive consciousness of the world which no philosophy can afford to neglect. Reality is, to a great extent, what we feel it to be—heart of our heart, a life that pulsates not merely *in response* to our feelings, but *in* these very feelings themselves. Schopenhauer ought accordingly to have proclaimed those feel-

ings which we experience in art and religion to be of the very nature and essence of the will that is at work in the world—the ecstatic joy that it takes in our life when healthy and harmonious, and the deep sympathy that it proclaims with our weakness and our sin in our own contrition and humility of soul. If he had done something like this, he would not have made out the artistic consciousness to be merely the sense of the abolition (in the apprehension of beautiful objects) of the distinction between self and not-self, nor the religious consciousness to be the sincere desire to *negate* the world by abstaining from both thought and action.

So far as the *content* of the feelings goes, Schopenhauer tends—apart from his general reference to the will just mentioned—to think of that as something that is simply antithetical to *thought*.<sup>1</sup> The artistic feeling that he talks about is quite negative, and so is the religious; the former is the vague feeling that the distinction between the *subject* and the *object* no longer exists (what good does it do to tell us merely this?), and the latter the vague feeling that we have ceased to affirm the will to live (as if *life* could contradict and negate itself in this way!). For Schopenhauer feeling and will are alike the negation of thought. Just as his will is primarily a world-principle antithetical to the intellectual principles of all other philosophers, so the *feeling* side of reality (*i.e.*, its whole *qualitative* and *characteristic* and interesting side!) is taken by him to be something that is essentially a disturbance of the calm and quiet of the intellectually *perceived* (or thought) world. The result of this is that there is no *mediating* element in his system between the a-logical (blind, struggling, irresponsible) will, and the all too logical intellect.

Goethe in one of his poems speaks of all the laws and sciences stalking round the world and confronting man in their nakedness and coldness until poetry came and clothed them all

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. i. p. 4.

with warmth and beauty.<sup>1</sup> Had Schopenhauer used *feeling* as a mediator between "thought" and "being," between "reason" and "sense," between the will and the intellect, between art and science, and religion and science, his system would not have been full of so many gaping oppositions and contradictions, nor the world have seemed so illusory as to baffle thought at every turn. It is because *feeling* intervenes between the intellect and the will that we can understand the will, and work out our lives in harmony with the ascending and evolving will that is in things. It is through feeling, through positive, courageous, aggressive feeling, that we breast our way through all the illusory experiences of life, and gain even through them a true sense of the living relation which exists between our own lives and the life of the universe. In the highest *feeling* about life, in clarified and exalted and expanding feeling (will) about the world, is to be found our highest sense of reality. And that *sense* is to be *trusted*, not distrusted. The artist *knows* this.

Again, after Hegel no philosophy which does not address itself in a positive and receptive spirit to history can lay claim to have taken in the whole "object," to have exhausted the real. Schopenhauer saw in history only the mere succession of what people call "events," and what he regards as aimless and fatuous assertions of the will to live ("struggle for life"). We have already sought to indicate the reasons why Schopenhauer could not think of any end in connection with history, and therefore need not dwell upon what he *lost* by his exclusion of history from his system. It is only desirable just now to mention one or two consequences of his failure to address himself—for right reasons or for wrong reasons—in a perfectly free and positive way to the study of history. One consequence was that he failed to recognise the

<sup>1</sup> Werke, Parabolisch—Die Poesie.

historical antecedents and limitations of some of the elements in his own system. If he had been acquainted with the notion of progressive periods or stages in historical evolution, if he had looked upon history as an evolution and not as a mere process of transition and succession, he would have allowed for the fact that all transitions in the life of society are usually accompanied by some disadvantages and drawbacks, as well as by some benefits, by some difficulties of adjustment to new or modified circumstances, and therefore by *suffering*. Germany during the greater portion of his life was trying to adapt herself to the new ideas of liberty and enlightenment that had become *forces* among men in consequence of the French Revolution. There are, in short, certain objective causes for a great deal of the intellectual perplexity and disappointment that men may feel in trying to think the world at a particular time in history, but these causes may be temporary and not permanent. The period of depression, for instance, which constitutes so well marked a phase in a commercial crisis, cannot last for ever; the facts of human nature are against its doing so. There are laws, in fact, in accordance with which feelings of social depression dissipate themselves. Pessimism as a mood of mind, and the sense of illusionism in general, ought always to be studied in connection with general historical conditions, but to this fact Schopenhauer was blind. A vast amount of the mental distress and sadness of the present time is a partial consequence of the great extension which our knowledge of men and things has been gradually undergoing. But the social action to which this very distress and sadness is leading is the natural outlet for our pent-up energy, which, as it becomes active energy, will again give us feelings of pleasure.

And again the perfectly unbiassed study of history would have taught Schopenhauer that the idea as well as the will is operative in the world, that men have shed blood and

carried on enterprises for the gratification not merely of economic but of intellectual and ideal wants. Whatever one may think of the Middle Ages of Europe (Hegel said we ought to stride through them with seven-leagued boots) and of the comparative lack of achievement that seems to characterise that period of the history of the world, it is nevertheless true that humanity, through being cradled so long in the notion of all life and all social order as determined "from above"—from God or from His representatives on earth—obtained thereby a conception of its life as something higher than the life of unconscious nature and of imaginary natural freedom and individual interest. Human history is not, after all, merely the record of the struggles of a blind will that has no knowledge of itself or of the *essential dignity* of human nature. It is the history of the efforts of beings who have striven as men and not as beasts, striven to bring about an ideal order they already felt within themselves, and striven always with a sense of the fact that human life ought never to be compromised or degraded by the pursuit of aimless issues. The study of constitutional history, and of the different manifestations of that principle of *sovereignty* and *government* which exists in all *human* societies, is the best corrective to the blind materialism and physical philosophy of life which is continually cropping up "from beneath" and menacing the existence of order and organisation among men.

In failing to grasp the notion of the modern state and of its historical evolution, Schopenhauer failed to see in history that *rational will* which is the best negation of the merely blind will, which he, in the spirit of early modern<sup>1</sup> science and in his well-meant but excessively dangerous opposition to the philosophy of the idea, took to be the

<sup>1</sup> As has already been suggested, the evolutionary idea has altogether dispelled the naturalism of the eighteenth century.



essence of all reality. Through the study of constitutional history he might have found some meaning in the Hegelian philosophy, one of the strongest merits of which is its tacit insistence on the fact that whatever man does and feels and wills, he always does and feels and wills as a rational being, — as a being whose intellectual consciousness of himself (dormant, possibly, in the early years of life, but awakened and deepened through the various efforts he is led to make to live in harmony with the world of men and things) reveals to him the *spiritual beauty* it is his privilege to infuse into his life. Victor Hugo (who can never be charged with having overlooked the message of naturalism and romanticism) in a memorable sentence compares the life of nations to the life of the human *embryo*, in the fact that each may be said to begin in its highest organ, in its head or its highest consciousness of itself: “Le fœtus des nations se comporte comme le fœtus de l’homme, et la mystérieuse construction de l’embryon, à la fois végétation et vie, commence *toujours par la tête*.”<sup>1</sup> In being utterly unable to think of a real head of modern Europe, of a real central organising power running through all history, unifying all human effort, of a rational ideal of human life in relation to which all advance and all decay and all growth and transition is to be estimated, Schopenhauer failed to grapple with the most important considerations which operate upon the mind in making it feel the world to be rational and not irrational.

<sup>1</sup> ‘The Paris Guide’ of 1867, 1<sup>e</sup> partie, “Le Science, l’Art,” &c. Victor Hugo is referring in his most pontifical style to Paris as the intellectual head of Europe.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE SYSTEM.

“‘Tous les événements sont enchaînés dans le meilleur des mondes possible ; car enfin si vous n’aviez pas été chassé d’un beau château . . . si vous n’aviez pas été mis à l’inquisition, si vous n’aviez pas, . . . si vous n’aviez pas, . . . vous ne mangeriez pas ici.’ . . .

“‘Cela est bien dit,’ répondit Candide ; ‘mais il faut cultiver notre jardin.’”<sup>1</sup>

“This [doctrine of Schopenhauer’s] was a brilliant and ingenious bit of insight, and I am willing to incur the risk of the charge of exaggeration by saying that it has begun a revolution in the world of mind which will bring about changes as great as those wrought by Christianity.”<sup>2</sup>

IN the foregoing pages an attempt has been made to set forth Schopenhauer’s general suggestiveness and the philosophical roots of some of his leading ideas, rather than to give a critical exposition of his thought. Schopenhauer was not a scholar (as Leibnitz was, for example), although he had many of the instincts of the scholar, and although he was a very widely read man. The exactitude of mind which he on the whole possessed was due in the first instance to his knowledge of the Critical Philosophy, and then to a fairly adequate general acquaintance with the literature of the world. But Schopenhauer was far more than a mere scholar ; he was first and foremost an extraordinarily suggestive thinker, with the know-

<sup>1</sup> Voltaire, ‘Candide.’

<sup>2</sup> Mainländer, *Philosophie der Erlösung*, p. 465, as quoted (in German) by Lester Ward, ‘*Psychic Factors of Civilisation*,’ p. 59.

ledge of a far-reaching positive principle in his mind, and with the ability and the courage to apply that principle to the full in the explanation of things. His principle of will and the extended application it is capable of receiving constitute a revolution in philosophy. As *par excellence* the philosopher who objects to the philosophy of the reason as such, and who uses a *real* and *vital* principle in explaining things, and who is yet keenly sensitive to the ideal things of art and literature, he commands the approval of most men who are quite willing to give philosophy its place in the world, but are not willing to give it more than its place.

The more one lives and thinks, and the more one devotes attention to the natural and the social sciences, the more does one feel that Hegel, in trying to give knowledge a unique and absolute character, a higher and more real place than anything else in the world, has played the human race false. Hegel has indeed taught many of us to think connectedly, and he discharged a very great *rôle* in unifying the consciousness of modern Germany—his services in this regard are really comparable to those of the Zollverein and the organising genius of Prussia—but he somewhat exaggerated the power of the idea as such. As has often been suggested, his maxim, “The actual is the rational,” would seem to justify any existing order of things in any country; it looks, in short, too much like the confident offer of a thinker to the general public to display in any way they may choose his own dialectical ability. When it comes, in short, to the question of a *criticism of life* (which it is surely more the province of philosophy than of literature to give), we prefer to turn to Kant for the knowledge of the possible points of view we can adopt in reading the world and to Schopenhauer for an exemplification of the real principle of life itself. Both Kant and Schopenhauer saw fairly well that the function of the ordinary intellect is simply to enable man to “interpret and control” nature, and both saw that ulti-

mately knowledge rested upon some few *practical* postulates or assumptions expressive of our belief in the continuity and consistency of our experience.

It is interesting to think of the philosophical affinities of the different chapters under which we have found that Schopenhauer's system may naturally be studied. His views on *idealism* naturally connect him with Berkeley and with Kant, and his solution of the idealistic difficulty about reality, his getting at reality through the "backdoor" of the willing self, connects him with the philosophy of biology. Seeing that biology represents perhaps the *broadest* way of looking at man's life, it might reasonably be expected that philosophy should proceed to its work not altogether in contempt (conscious or unconscious) of the point of view of biology—not *outside* it, but rather *within* it and under the most distinct recognition of it. Schopenhauer was an evolutionist in the sense of believing that all organisms tend to evolve and perfect just those organs which they need to enable them to conform to their environment.<sup>1</sup> This idea, in fact, is for him intimately bound up with the very conception of will. He was not an evolutionist in the sense of believing that the organised and the formed could be developed out of the unorganised and the formless.<sup>2</sup> His *theory of knowledge* relates his philosophy closely to the central portions of Kant's 'Criticism of Pure Reason' (where the real Kant is for ever to be found), and his sense of the limitations

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ü. d. Willen in d. Nat.—Vergleich. Anatom.*, ss. 40-42, where Schopenhauer talks of the long claws of the aut-bear, the lengths of the necks of birds, talons, web-feet, etc. "The *lex parsimonie* admits of no superfluous organ. . . . The animal's structure has been determined by the manner of its life, and not *vice versa*."

<sup>2</sup> He expressly objected to Lamarck's idea of a first animal without articulate organs, preferring that of Geoffroy St Hilaire, of the necessity of an "anatomical element" as something given before all modification and development.—*Ibid.*, s. 52.

of knowledge to all the scepticism and agnosticism inside the history of philosophy and out of it. The apparent dogmatism of his view that knowledge is given to us only as a servant of the will (to light up its steps on the path of life) associates him with all the great practical philosophers of humanity, with those who have more or less clearly divined the merely *practical considerations* upon which the majority of men arrive at their so-called ideas or convictions.

What we found Schopenhauer to set forth about the *bondage of man* shows that he incorporates into his system the elements of truth in *positivism* and *determinism*. It is idle to think that we can understand the world *out of relation* to ourselves and our *practical* life, and it is also idle to think of directing man's thoughts up to some imaginary platform altogether outside the life in which they are actually interested. Any transcendental or "theological" view of things, for example, that can hope ultimately to obtain credence with the majority of men, must show the ideal or the divine world to be the truth of the world in which we actually find ourselves. In studying Schopenhauer's *theory of art* we come upon his Platonism. Like Plato, he is not only an idealist in believing in ideal things and ideal conceptions, but an idealist in the way in which he thought that the things he strove for could be realised; he would have people *negate* all finite interests and the thought of all individual existence as the first and last step on the way of salvation. In the vision of the Ideas, we were told, the distinction between the *subject* and the *object*, and between the *finite* and the *infinite*, altogether vanished. It must not be forgotten, however, that in art Schopenhauer connects himself with biological evolution by making out the Platonic Ideas to represent the *species* into which the myriads of living individuals seem naturally to fall as well as the different planes or stages of natural law.

The affinity of his philosophy of *sympathy*<sup>1</sup> (the necessity of loving our fellow-men as our fellow-sufferers) to Buddhistic and Christian teaching is perfectly apparent. Again, the intimate connection which he finds to exist between ethics and religion adds its own weight to the contention of many philosophers that ethics cannot be understood apart from some theory or other of the way in which the whole world is related to the end of human action. While "the significance of the world can only be understood in an ethical regard," the science of ethics itself is unequal to the task of giving us a final rendering of the world. And then, lastly, as to Schopenhauer's views upon *religion*, his depreciation of mere rationalism and mere dogmatism about an external universe or about historical events also conceived to be "external" to ourselves, connects him with those advocates of spiritual truth who rightly contend that one can enter into the kingdom of heaven only *sub persona infantis*, in all moral humility and true spirituality of soul. Religion begins, as he insists, with the taking up of one's cross and with the willingness to "be crucified upon it"—to borrow the language of Archbishop Leighton; it is an affair of the repentant and regenerate will, and not of the logical or the scientific understanding. The understanding simply enables us to trace out the relations that exist among things when once these things are "given" to us as objective realities; it is quite unequal to the task of comprehending the world as a whole. Indeed, the world as a whole passes *comprehension*: it may be *felt* and *willed*, but not *understood*.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the things, then, for which Schopenhauer's philosophy virtually contends may easily be recounted: the signi-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Again, it may be urged that we can only *understand* the world, and that we can never feel it all or will it all. I reply that we know only the aspects of reality which present themselves to us in our practical experience. The postulate of *continuity* is not a *cognition* but the expression of a *practical* necessity.

ficance of the world is *ethical*, and is grasped more fully by the heart and by the will than by the head; the question, "To what are things tending?" ought to be substituted for the question, "What is the end of things?" It is better to look at life directly and with our whole organic susceptibility than with our mere intellect, which only enables us to trace out a few of the infinite connections among things. There are no entities like "soul" and "intellect" and "mind" and "will" in the human personality, but only one organic effort after life, which is ever seeking a more perfect and a more definite expression of itself. Finite existence, so far as we know it, is always an organised and bodily existence (the Eastern theories of *palingenesis* and *transmigration* and the Christian idea of the *resurrection of the body* all express this). Man does not so much really exist as a *conscious* person as he is trying to become one. Man is *will*, much more truly will than he is *soul* or *spirit* or *thought*; and a moment's reflection on what the potent factors in civilisation and "social evolution" have been, will bring this idea home to our minds. The pressure of *need* and *want* and *pain* is necessary to make man develop his life. The more that knowledge increases the more does sorrow increase, because the extension of the range of our consciousness means the possibility of its being thwarted and broken in upon at an increasing number of points. The roots of the self are something that we do not so much *know* as *feel* and *realise* in organic effort. Knowledge is nothing on its own account, because both at its higher and its lower limits it *passes* over into something that is larger and fuller, to wit, complete *consciousness* or complete *sensibility* (*somatic consciousness*). No things and no persons exist "in and for themselves"; the reality, indeed, of many things lies altogether outside themselves, and even the reality of human beings lies rather *ahead* of them than actually in them. It is impossible to characterise life as a whole by any one

adjective or by any set of adjectives; the most philosophical thing to do by way of understanding and characterising life is to let life answer its own questions. And lastly, every finite individual person must be willing to take on to his own shoulders the tentative character of his life and the moral guilt of all merely selfish and personal volition.

No doubt many of these things represent lessons which are valuable only to those who need to learn them; they speak for the most part rather of a process of unlearning false ideas about things than of approaching life and philosophy directly. Most people, however, who have tried to think out for themselves a theoretical solution of the problem of life come to admit that the unconscious theory of life upon which they proceeded in their own early years, and upon which the great majority of men (called "Philistines" by so-called educated people, who very often try to become as "Bohemian" as possible in their own lives) always have proceeded and always will proceed, contained within it the sum and substance of human wisdom. Our natural and spiritual instincts to be and to will and to enter into the universal life of things contain somehow within themselves the true theory of life. All that we really can do with our thought is to make explicit the logic of the life of the ordinary man as man—to make explicit the *unconscious reason* that is latent in even the tentative efforts that he makes to transcend the natural limits of his life. In the language of Hegel, "The absolute idea may . . . be compared to the old man who utters the same religious propositions as the child, but for whom they are pregnant with the significance of a lifetime."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hegel, 'Logie'; Eng. trans. by Wallace, p. 324. Compare what Robert Louis Stevenson says in his 'Inland Voyage': "People connected with literature and philosophy are busy all their days in getting rid of second-hand notions and false standards. It is their profession, in the sweat of their brows by dogged thinking, to recover their old fresh views of life, and distinguish what they really and originally like from what they have only learned to tolerate by force." Or a fine



While it is in a sense true that Schopenhauer's system is a path to reality only for those who have been spoiled by philosophy, it is also true that his positive principle of will may be made a real and an all-inclusive way of explaining reality, especially if we correct, as has been suggested, his one-sided view of the intellect as something quite opposed to the will, and show it to be essentially implied in the will itself from the very beginning. Viewed in its realistic and positive and non-polemical aspects, Schopenhauer's philosophy is simply an *immanent evolutionism* in which the effort (natural, in the case of the animals, and *spiritualised* in the case of man) of all organised existence after life and more life is made out to be the supreme characteristic of the world. And this view of the system is a very natural one to take—the most natural one indeed, the only one that a layman in philosophy would naturally take, and the only one that the world at large will chronicle as distinctively Schopenhauer's view of things. Haeckel, for example, looks at Schopenhauer in this way, and so did Wagner, and so does an anthropologist or historian of civilisation like Lester Ward.<sup>1</sup>

The following quotation from Schopenhauer himself may serve to indicate the spirit in which we ought to take all that he writes about the extent to which individual wish and preference and judgment is thwarted and disciplined in life:—

“No little part of the torment of existence lies in this, that Time is continually pressing upon us, never letting us take breath, but always coming after us, like a taskmaster with a

saying attributed to Pasteur: “Quand on a bien étudié on revient à la foi du paysan breton. Si j'avais étudié plus encore, j'aurais la foi de la paysanne bretonne.”—‘Cot. Rev.,’ Nov. 1895.

<sup>1</sup> *Psychic Factors of Civilisation, passim.* A recent important *brochure* on the “Theory of Social Forces” (Professor Patten, Publications of the Amer. Acad. Pol. and Soc. Science, Dec. 31, 1895) reflects, in a suggestive way, upon the inadequacy of the old (intellectual and not volitional) psychology and philosophy for the purposes of sociology.

whip. If at any moment Time stays his hand, it is only when we are delivered over to the misery of boredom.

"But misfortune has its uses; for, as our bodily frame would burst asunder if the pressure of the atmosphere were removed, so, if the lives of men were relieved of all need, hardship, and adversity; if everything they took in hand were successful, they would be so swollen with arrogance that, though they might not burst, they would present the spectacle of unbridled folly—nay, they would go mad. And I may say, further, that a certain amount of care or pain or trouble is necessary for every man at all times. A ship without ballast is unstable and will not go straight.

"Certain it is that *work, worry, labour, and trouble* form the lot of almost all men their whole life long. But if all wishes were fulfilled as soon as they arose, how would men occupy their lives? what would they do with their time? If the world were a paradise of luxury and ease, a land flowing with milk and honey, where every Jack obtained his Jill at once and without any difficulty, men would either die of boredom or hang themselves; or there would be wars, massacres, and murders; so that in the end mankind would inflict more suffering on itself than it has now to accept at the hands of Nature."<sup>1</sup>

Much has already been quoted from Schopenhauer to show that life itself is a very much greater thing than all the judgments that individual men pronounce upon it, and much more might be quoted to the same effect. In this sense Schopenhauer himself rises beyond his own pessimism, and places a direct warrant of the rightness of their interpretation in the hands of those who find him a philosopher simply for having put forward the principle of will as the open secret of life. He writes page after page upon the comparative inutility of the conception or of abstract thought for the

<sup>1</sup> Werke, vi. 313, 314; B. S., Studies in Pessimism, pp. 12, 13.

purposes of daily life (where quick and rapid thought is a matter of supreme importance), as compared with the *intuition* or the intuitive knowledge which pierces its way at once to the root of the matter. That is, he attaches in the ordinary concerns of life far more importance to practical experience or practical insight than to deliberate thought or calculation. And as to life as a whole, we have suggested that the only judgment that possesses objective validity is the practical judgment expressed in the volition of men to live and to go on living.<sup>1</sup> If Schopenhauer does not himself exactly put the matter in this way, he more than once says that the only thing that life does bring to us is *experience*. One may surely infer from this that the attitude of the man who lives truly and who waits for what the world may bring forth to him is the most consonant with the nature of things, and therefore the wisest one to adopt.

All the passages in Schopenhauer which tend to show that our estimates of life, of its pleasureableness or painfulness, its utility or inutility, are largely subjective, tend to support this view. Life is an end in itself, something that we cannot and ought not to seek to get beyond. "Happiness depends more on what one *is* than on what one has," says Schopenhauer.<sup>2</sup> And again, "The result of the life of the individual is an evil or a blessing, just according as the individual himself is bad or good." The great fact about life is that if we are healthy and in a state of normal susceptibility to all the influences that life brings to bear upon us, we still *will* to live, and do so with our whole physical and psychical energy, both deliberately and instinctively.<sup>3</sup> Schopenhauer himself once or twice rises to the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. iii. p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "It is not fame itself which is so precious, but the being worthy of fame,"—quoted from Schopenhauer by E. Rod, 'Les Idées Morales du Temps présent,' p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> We even sometimes will to live when we are suffering acute pain; or at least we often experience a curious disinterested pleasure in seeing ourselves

height of saying that life may even become *heroic*. "A happy life is impossible; the very highest thing a man can attain to is a *heroic* course of life. Such is the course of the life of the man who in every way and on every occasion, through overwhelming difficulties, battles for any conceivable good that may come to any one, and conquers in the end, but may be ill rewarded or not at all rewarded. In that case he stands at last, like the Prince in the 'Re Corvo' of Gozzi, transfixed in stone, but in a noble position and with a magnanimous bearing."<sup>1</sup> Thus does the pulse of the arch-illusionist throb now and then with the beat of real life! Would that it had always done so! And yet, if it had, we should have had no Schopenhauer, no theorist to proclaim the illusoriness of mere thought and mere theory *about* life,—an illusoriness that is especially prominent in the case of those who (like the idealist) imagine that thought is an end in itself, or that there is a thought aspect of things *apart* from their total or organic reality.<sup>2</sup> We need have no fears, however, about Schopenhauer's being true to his mission of proclaiming the illusionism that comes out of dogmatic idealism. In the very next sentence to the one we have just quoted, we read: "His memory remains and will be celebrated as that of a hero; his will, which was mortified throughout his life by effort and labour, by wrong consequences and the ingratitude of the world, *vanishes into Nirvana*."

What is significant for philosophy in Schopenhauer is not

suffer. This "objective" way of looking at pain is one of the proofs that life itself is greater than any and all of its momentary sensations. "Perhaps you may not believe it, but for me every overpowering sensation, even the sensation of pain, is a joy."—Journal of Marie Bashkirtseff, p. 373.

<sup>1</sup> Werke, vi. 346; Zur Lehre u. d. Bejah. u. Vernein. z. Leben. Anhang.

<sup>2</sup> It is really to this pass that the distinction between *phenomena* and *things in themselves* brings us. What can be the good of thinking if we are firmly convinced that, think as hard as we may, the reality of things will still elude us, seeing that its very nature is something altogether different from thought?

so much the mere principle of will, which he sought to substitute for the *idea* of rationalistic metaphysic, as the simple fact of the attempted substitution. Strictly speaking, life cannot be grasped by thought as reducible, in the way of the old ontology, to some one or two entities. Whenever Schopenhauer talks of the will as if it were a thing in itself, we become distrustful of him. The chief safeguard of the will as a principle in philosophy lies in the fact of its being an impulse or an attempt, a fusion of all actual and imaginable entities into one grand effort to become all reality. The mind, in trying to grasp reality, must grasp it expansively and broadly and freely as something that is continually changing and evolving—must grasp it, in short, as an *effort* after a fuller and richer life. In doing so, it will become conscious of the fact that the very effort to attain to a philosophical synthesis of things is nothing that possesses an absolute significance in itself, nothing in connection with which we should look for definite returns or results, but is rather itself to be construed as part of the effort put forth by the human personality to attain to a more stable and permanent position in the fabric of reality than is apparently possessed by material things and by the lower animals. We *think* things in order that we may act better and preserve our individuality in the system of things. Just as we cannot understand art without cultivating in ourselves the artistic impulse, and just as we cannot know the moral ideal without (as Aristotle suggested) cultivating in ourselves the habits and the insight of the good man, so we cannot *understand* philosophy without cultivating the philosophical *impulse*, without appreciating philosophy as itself a supreme effort of man to make more sure of his existence in a world where everything seems to have the mark of finitude upon it. Philosophy represents the highest effort of man to find and to secure for himself an established place in the cosmic process of change and development. The philosopher should be a

man who has the emotional and volitional capacity to appreciate every side of life, and *along with* that the power of thought to reduce the varied forms of his experience and the different aspects of the cosmos to their simplest terms. In this way he will be enabled to *think* reality and to *think* himself and to trace the roots of his action in his own organism and in the organisms that preceded his own. As soon as we see that the world is one will, we can relate ourselves to the whole universe and make our "dead self" in unconscious nature a "stepping-stone" to higher things.

Schopenhauer's suggestiveness, in short, extends as far as the dynamic or volitional philosophy of life will carry us. His *quietism* in art and ethics and religion cannot be taken to be the last phase of his thought. It has a meaning undoubtedly, the great meaning, in fact, that in art and religious aspiration we already see the world spiritualised or made subservient to the purposes of intelligent human beings. For

"Was im Leben uns verdriesst  
Man im Bilde gern genießt,"<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the outcome of quietism, as of religious faith in general, is that we must have the courage to proclaim *as real* what we experience in art and in religion, and must deliberately place our artistic and religious intuitions, the world of beauty and of goodness, above the world of the senses and of the scientific understanding, although we may not have the *knowledge* and the critical ability to justify this procedure with our understanding.

Reality as we know it at any one moment of time thus practically comes to be, on a positive and liberal interpretation of Schopenhauer's philosophy of will, a combination in organic unison of an absolutely existent being (the world-will not as a

<sup>1</sup> Goethe.

mere potency but as a living, organic thing) with a number of imperfect existences that we call things and a number of beings called *persons*, who are destined to attain through the ethical and spiritual life a reality after which they are continually striving. Every one carries about within himself a consciousness of that active effort *to be* which is the key-note of the existence of the self and of that of all other living beings. We are never so sure of ourselves as when we are acting with our whole activity; when we reflect about ourselves we are always in doubt about ourselves, but never so when we act. This is the element of plain truth which underlies all Schopenhauer's difficulties about knowledge.<sup>1</sup> If by knowledge we mean a corporate and organic sense of things, in that case we *do* know the world as whole and unified; but if by knowledge we mean the dissecting intellectual activity of the understanding, then in that case we know the world only in sections and "in part." The knowledge of the world in sections has of course more of a practical than a theoretical value. It is absurd to think about and to seek after the *intelligible meaning of things* as such, as if that were anything on its own account. The construction put upon things by the understanding has reference only to the wants of the will and the exigencies of our practical life.

It is convenient, for instance, in interpreting nature,—in thinking about the relation of so-called *inert matter* to the forces and the life that is in the universe,—to imagine to our-

<sup>1</sup> "Philosophy alone is the study of [the] reality itself both as fact and consciousness. The contemplative consciousness? or the active? Not the former, for by the very fact that it contemplates and reflects [Is not this Schopenhauer's contention? See chap. iii.], it changes and abstracts; but in the second, in which we are the whole of ourselves, in which, along with the sentiment and the action of practical life, we obtain the most intense sentiment of reality. This reality, moreover, is not immobile and as if crystallised in the past; it is in the process of becoming and determines the future. It embraces then as one moment the *done* and the *to-be-done*, the realised and the more or less conscious ideal which realises it."—Alfred Fouillée, 'Internat. Jour. of Ethics,' Jan. 1896.

selves such things as "atoms" and "cells" (simple organisms); but there are no such things as atoms or material *minima* on which forces from without may be thought to act, or cells which can be regarded as *first* cells (cells which do not need to be explained by reference to antecedent cellular matter). The *soul* of man, too, is an ideal thing or a fiction inasmuch as it is merely the inward reflection or the consciousness that he has of his evolving life. It is as an organic functioning being that man is real; and so the soul, like most other ontological entities, is to be explained (after Schopenhauer) not statically but dynamically. Aristotle saw this, and expressed it in his definition of the soul as "the first realisation of a body potentially endowed with life":<sup>1</sup> but the German spiritual philosophy of the nineteenth century evidently felt it best in the interests of religion and other ideal things to put forward the ontology of the idea or the spiritual soul as opposed to the ontology of crass matter or the material body. It is not, however, a service to religion to reduce man wholly to spirit; to do so plays too easily into the hands of pantheism.

It is the same with the *will* and the *intellect* and the *feeling* of man; every one of these faculties must be explained dynamically in order to be understood: the will is the life-force that pulsates through man's nature, and the intellect is the partial knowledge that he has of his life, and feeling is the reflex or measure of the effort or energy which makes him what he is. And so on with such things as the "soul of the world," and the "*Zeit-Geist*," and the "will of the people." None of these things are definite and absolute realities on their own account, but are all intelligible only as aspects of the life or the will that assert itself everywhere. All explanations of things other than as phases or grades of the will to live are in a sense fictitious and abstract; they

<sup>1</sup> De Anima, ii. 1, 412 a.



very often begin by defining things as "that which" and so on. Heat, for example, is said to be a particular mode of motion, and "life" to be *that* property of organised matter in virtue of *which* it can move from place to place and nourish itself and reproduce itself. Schopenhauer's ability to adopt the phraseology either of materialism or of idealism rests upon the knowledge that all merely statical and ontological explanations of things are inadequate. All volition and all forms of organic life and of physical energy are *assertions* of the will which is the life of the world. That life is material and spiritual at the same time. The whole difficulty of life consists in infusing a spiritual meaning into what is called material.

That the world is will or life, is the only complete answer to the question about the nature of reality. All definitions of the real according to the point of view of any one science, or of history, or of art, are relevant enough as far as they go; but they all stop short of unfolding the complete nature of things. It is true, for instance, that the world as we know it consists of matter and force, and that all changes in the world are explicable as transformations of energy; but it is equally true (as the idealist would put it) that the world is a stage which seems to have been erected for the evolution of the conscious life of man, and is consequently most truly intelligible as simply "objectified spirit." Realism and idealism, in short, are both looking at two sides of one reality (the will of the world); the former sees the material condition under which *all* life exhibits itself, and the latter the growth in *internalisation* or spirituality, of which all "external" force and movement and surmounting of obstacles is the mere symbol or condition. No statical or ontological definition of reality is adequate to the living personal reality of the world. Our answer to the question, What is the real? always depends upon the point of view we adopt in looking

upon things.<sup>1</sup> A definition of the real may apparently be perfectly "objective" and valid, or it may apparently be logically perfect (*e.g.*, the world consists of appearance and reality, of something that appears and of the appearance of that something), and yet fail to do justice to the fulness of reality, fall short of setting forth the volitional and personal character of reality. Of course the real—I wish to avoid the expression *the ultimate real*—is in its central life or essence *unknowable*, in the sense that life is greater than knowledge and cannot be grasped by something that it merely engenders or creates (knowledge), and that it cannot be grasped by anything short of the impulse after life which it essentially is itself.

It is the same with every phenomenon or event in the world. It *is* what we find it to be from the point of view we adopt. Thought *is* a secretion of the grey matter of the brain, and hearing *is* a molecular process which is converted into a neural process, and the colour of many insects *is* a device (imitation) on the part of nature to disguise them from their enemies, and government *is* (as far as we can see with our eyes) force or power, and love *is*, in the last resort, a passion, and so on. All these definitions are perfectly final from some one point of view or other, yet we could not write the word *only* after the *is* in any one instance. There *is* nothing in the world but the one will after life and better life, and the various forms in which that will expresses itself. The only absolutely true statement about the nature of the real is the conscious reference back (in the impulse to live) of "reality" to itself, as itself (in the life it wills) the best explanation of itself. We are bordering on tautology, but tautology has always the possible value of letting a thing speak for itself,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Please remember that optimism and pessimism are definitions of the world, and that our own reactions on the world, small as they are in bulk, are parts of it, and necessarily help to determine the definition. They may be the decisive elements in determining the definition."—Prof. W. James, 'Internat. Jour. of Ethics,' Oct. 1895, p. 22.

of *clearing the way for vision*. In clear vision and in true life we *do* learn the reality of things. “‘Things are what they are,’ says Bishop Butler in his unadorned but forcible English — ‘things are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be; why, then, should we desire to be deceived?’ Yet men do deceive themselves every day.”<sup>1</sup>

Say what one will about Schopenhauer, he seems, after all (his transcendental metaphysic *à la* Fichte and Schelling apart), to take the world *as it is*, and this is why scientific men often agree with his philosophy, while philosophers do not. Every one who has been imbued with the spirit of the positive method of science must sympathise with Schopenhauer in his ridicule (he thinks the ridicule justified because serious positive examination is out of the question) of that most vicious aspect of German philosophy, so prominent in the Hegelian<sup>2</sup> dialectic and Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*, whereby it always seems to be telling us what a fact *must be* before we know what it *is*. If you only thump your lecture-desk hard enough, Schopenhauer suggests, and just insist with a sufficient amount of effrontery that “of course such things as the ‘absolute idea’ or ‘pure being’ must exist,” you will carry your blue-eyed Teutonic audience with you wherever you wish to go. No doubt German philosophy took a terribly long road to reality after Kant, and one might say that the whole movement of thought from Fichte and Hegel to Herbart and Schopenhauer simply chronicles the struggle which the German mind had to go through before it could look at things fairly and squarely and positively. It is in this sense that one feels inclined to assent to what Engels says about Hegel in his essay upon

<sup>1</sup> Professor Andrew Seth, A Graduation Address, ‘The Scottish Review,’ July 1895.

<sup>2</sup> The first signs of this method of procedure are to be traced, according to Professor Adamson, to Fichte’s ‘Kritik aller Offenbarung.’ Fichte (Blackwood’s Philosophical Classics).

Feuerbach: "With Hegel all philosophy ends, partly because it is he who apprehends its whole development in his system, and partly because, without intending it, he has pointed the way out of the labyrinth of systems to the really positive knowledge of the world."<sup>1</sup>

From Schopenhauer we learn that it is the law of man's nature to idealise the real and to think of the idealities of his own making as realities in order that he may pursue them and attain—perhaps not to them, but at least to the development of his own personality through the search and the effort itself. Or rather nature has so made man that in his evolution he becomes conscious of different planes of reality, of different grades of the will (in the language of Schopenhauer); each new object, from the playthings of his childhood up to the ideal creations of his youth and the hard ambitions of his manhood, commands almost his *whole attention* for the time being, and so brings him from time to time the sense of partial failure, owing to the non-attainment of what he sought so earnestly. In this way man obtains a consciousness of the fact that the only thing that is true about life is that it is a pursuit. This is the meaning of all that Schopenhauer says about the restlessness and the constant struggle of life. The law of the pursuit of man's life and the law of his gradual disenchantment and partial attainment would be a very important thing for philosophers to work out.<sup>2</sup> Schopenhauer fails to do this, or at least he does it only indirectly and negatively in what we have called his *illusionism*. If philosophy were to do what we have just suggested, it would become doubly convinced of the fact that the world can be understood only in a practical and an ethical regard, a truth

<sup>1</sup> Bonar, *Philosophy and Political Economy*, p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> It may be said that von Hartmann has attempted this in his law of the three stages of illusion as applied to both the individual and the race. There is a great deal in von Hartmann about the objective reality of pessimism or the necessity of illusion both to the individual and the race that is of the utmost value.

which it is Schopenhauer's signal service to philosophy to have emphasised.

A great part of the secret of living is not to allow the merely illusory things of life and the negative aspects of our own experience and the partial character of the lives of most men to occupy our thoughts too deeply; they might so "fill our consciousness" that our development would be seriously obstructed. Schopenhauer perhaps thought he had learned the secret of life in his "favourite trick" (*Kniff*) of "suddenly pouring" on to the most vivid "impression or the deepest feeling" the "coldest" and the most "abstract" thought, "so as to freeze it cold" and be able to "preserve" it. He talks of this as a veritable "trick of genius," maintaining that there is a kind of secret trick or artistic sleight behind all the productions of genius. The most sane kind of genius, however, would know the danger of turning on the tap of cold thought too suddenly at the moment of actual enjoyment; the well-spring of pure feeling might be thus frozen at its source. The most powerful and the most sane genius would be capable of deliberately allowing his feeling to transcend his thought, knowing that feeling connects us with the life of the universe as a whole, while the understanding<sup>1</sup> never does.

<sup>1</sup> One should never forget that a really good intellect means on the whole a fairly powerful and accurate understanding, with at least something of the mathematical and scientific power of analysis—the power of seeing the connections in things. It seems possible for a man to have an element of genius without having a really good understanding; many men of undoubted genius, for example, have never been able to tolerate *mathematics*. Schopenhauer affects to despise the mathematical intellect. He says it shows only that a man has a capacity for tracing out the quantitative relations among things—these relations being in his eyes the most external and the poorest aspects of reality. But it is wrong to dissociate the mathematical aspects of reality from the other aspects. A good mind can see things connectedly. Kant, for example—perhaps the strongest *intellect* the world has ever seen—had the mathematical faculty, or the power of tracing relations and connections where others might fail to find them. There must be something in mere genius akin to feeling—the power of appreciating things whole. Many poets and artists have felt the world to be whole, have had the synthetic faculty, who were unable to *show* just how the different phases of reality were connected with each other, how the world was *actually* one and whole.

The real "trick" of genius would be to enjoy reality and yet consciously to enjoy it, to be able to think it and yet to approach it at the same time directly. Napoleon as a genius of action must have had something of this ability, although because associated too much with the love of personal power it must have lost in spontaneity. Goethe tells us that he who would speak of love must have lived it in his heart.<sup>1</sup> But Goethe himself sacrificed too much to the mere *experience* of life, refusing often in his mind to contemplate any of the well-marked aspects or relations of actions (their moral quality, for instance, or their consequences) other than their relations to the pleasure or interest of the agent. Shakespeare's genius, as the most objective the world has ever seen, was naturally the most sane.

The fact of pain and disappointment is a matter to which Schopenhauer has done almost as much justice as have the professed exponents of Christianity and Buddhism. It is impossible to will and to live without suffering, he reminds us a thousand times. The actual fact of suffering has not been considered at great length in this volume, but the metaphysical importance of the fact has not been overlooked.<sup>2</sup>

Just as Malthus overturned Godwin's Utopia of a world where "natural justice" should prevail and the natural wishes of man find free scope by pointing to the two simple facts of the desire of all animal life to multiply itself and the need for food, so Schopenhauer overturns most philosophical temples and republics and systems by emphasising the fact that of more than three-fourths of the life of more than three-fourths of human beings it may be asserted that life brings with it a profound sense of disappointment and

<sup>1</sup> "Eh du von der Liebe sprichst  
Lass sie erst im Herzen leben."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pp. 215, 220.

failure and pain (which at death possibly rises to the level of acquiescence and resignation), and that the life of the majority of human beings, as well as that of all animals, is characterised by unceasing struggle and effort. It is no way out of Schopenhauer's clutches to say (as most men of the world do say) that of course the only sensible man is the man who has ceased to form any expectations whatever about life; for, on the very principles of Schopenhauer, the man who has no expectations and no desires has practically ceased to live in any real sense of the word. It is true that Schopenhauer says we ought to give up willing; but he can mean by that, and he really does mean, only the abandonment of all effort after mere personal satisfaction (although he knows perfectly well that such efforts will never be abandoned by the majority of men).

It is interesting to remember that Schopenhauer, while thrusting upon philosophy the necessity of reckoning seriously with what is called naturalism, — "*psychologus nemo nisi physiologus*," as Johannes Müller used to say, — is not a victim of the false metaphysic of materialism or dogmatic evolutionism.<sup>1</sup> He did not seriously believe in the actual historical evolution of the conscious from the unconscious, in spite of the fact of his talking about thought as a chance light developed out of the blind will in its struggle with nature. He knew as a philosopher that what is called "matter" implies the existence of mind or consciousness, and that, as a recent President of the British Association is reported to have said, "the origin of life, the first transition from lifeless things to living matter, is a riddle which lies beyond our scope."<sup>2</sup> And again, when we agree with his contention that life and the world are will, we are thinking of all the grades of the assertion of the will, including physical energy and intellectual

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 37, 383.

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Address of 1893.

and æsthetical and moral activity. Unfortunately it is often the same with Schopenhauer as it is with Hegel: metaphysical and physical evolution are not always clearly distinguished from each other; or rather both philosophers often write as if metaphysical evolution were something that actually took place as matter of fact somewhere else than in the brain of the thinker. A metaphysical analysis of the world must naturally always be taken in a timeless or ideal (non-historical) sense. From the point of view of *dialectic*, the world is ideally perfect, even although the will is always seeking to assert itself anew in different finite individuals. Man as evolving will can, in the ethical and the artistic and the religious life, already enter upon the timeless completeness and perfection of the world-will itself.<sup>1</sup> By the negation in his will of the defect and the illusion that he finds in his own life and in the lives of others, and of the sin and sorrow that are in the world, he can enter upon the *affirmation* of complete and perfect life.

À propos of ethical evolution, the idea of man's life as will, as something that is essentially *becoming* rather than anything that actually *is*, affords a valuable corrective to many of the notorious difficulties of the Hegelian metaphysic of reality. It is quite in the spirit of Hegel's dialectic, or of the philosophy of the idea in general, that a so-called *higher* point of view about the world or the life of man should actually *supplant* or remove altogether a so-called lower or inferior point of view. In the different stages of Hegel's 'Logic,' and in the transitions from one part of his system to another, we generally find that a lower category tends to disappear altogether into a higher category: *reciprocity*, for example, is made to supplant

<sup>1</sup> "Und ob alles in ewigen Wechsel kreist,  
Es beharret im Wechsel ein ruhiger Geist."

—'Die Worte des Glaubens,' Schiller.



*causation*, and the *sylllogism* to supplant the *judgment*, and the *object* the *sylllogism*, and finally the *Idea* is made to supplant the *object*; and then finally the *Idea* becomes all in all. And in the same spirit the philosophy of religion is practically made to take the place of or to supplant concrete religious feeling, and philosophy is made to supplant science, and science is made to supplant common-sense. Now this whole tendency is lacking in a true regard for reality, for the reality of ordinary things and the facts of ordinary life.

It is all very well to idealise life and reality in the way that Hegel seeks to do, and actually to pass in one's thought from a *lower* to a *higher* point of view about things. But the idea cannot be made to win its conquest over the world so easily. As a human being the philosopher or the idealist has to discharge the ordinary duties of life like his less-gifted fellows; he cannot afford to neglect these in his thought or to allow himself to think himself superior to the concrete performances of duty merely because he *understands* everything in idea.<sup>1</sup> Just as the artist can never utterly get rid of the laws of physical science which determine the way in which objects appear to the eye of the percipient, nor the chemical laws which determine the possible combinations that he may make of his colours; so the philosopher or the genius can never completely eliminate or abolish the lower or the material aspects of reality, or ignore the fact of his being surrounded by people who may not be his own equals or the fact of his own material or economic wants. The whole problem of ordinary life—of life *ici bas*, as the French say—consists in the continual effort to mould the lower aspects of life in conformity with the higher. As a matter of fact, the ideal or the

<sup>1</sup> I am thinking of instances in which well-known men of genius have often set at naught several of the established rules of society. I am not criticising such procedure, but merely pointing out the fact that they have to recognise the existence of ordinary obligations and duties. Going to the polls to vote in a municipal election would be such a duty.

psychical never wholly supplants the material or the physical. We know perfectly well that our physical wants subject us to the physical laws of the universe, and also that the scientific aspects of reality continue to exist alongside of both natural and artistic beauty. Owing to this, philosophy has continually to justify its existence over against that of science, and religion to justify its existence over against both mere philosophy and mere secularism. And this is so just because life is *will*, because the life of man is a struggle which is not blest with the possibility of victory until its close.

The different planes of reality, or the different grades of the will, in the language of Schopenhauer, do not completely pass over into each other or disappear into each other so easily as in Hegel *being* passes into *becoming* or *reciprocity* into the *notion*, nor as *nature* passes into *thought*. The world ever *remains* before us as a plexus or tissue of all the different kinds of force that are exemplified in it, of physical *and* chemical *and* organic as well as of purely psychical energy. The lower planes of experience—the natural and physical aspects of reality—may indeed seem to philosophy to have their meaning only in view of the higher (as even *matter* and *causality*, for example, are to a certain extent psychical phenomena); but they do not altogether *disappear* into the psychical and the ideal, just because the world is will and not idea. The world as we know it is to a large extent the stage of a struggle between the real and the ideal. Because man's life is essentially will it cannot be spiritualised away into the "pale moonlight" of the idea; what man wants is not ethereality but an organism which shall be equal to the highest aspirations of his rational will. Once again, it is true that Schopenhauer himself generally relapses into a pantheism of the will, just as Hegel did into that of the idea, but he ought not to have done this. When he did so he took for his type of will not the complete will that man is developing in the moral and intellectual life,

but the fictitious thing called mere *potency* or mere *tendency*, which is really mere nothing, or at least just the same as nothing. When he did so he fell back into an imaginary physical evolutionism, an imaginary evolution of the higher from the lower in point of *time*, of the ideal from the material. And as we have said, he was so good a disciple of Kant that he ought to have been above this.

Schopenhauer always remained something of an idealist in the sense that he could never quite believe the reality of things to be just what it seemed to be. Now while this belief is to a certain extent justifiable, there is something exceedingly dangerous about it.<sup>1</sup> The perception of this danger is the perception of Schopenhauer's limitations and of the limitations of idealism and illusionism generally. All idealism is apt to lead to pessimism. Schopenhauer's pessimism is due to an *excess* on his part of the *idealistic temperament*. Idealism, in questioning the reality of things, even of the so-called lower and material aspects of the world, tends to cut away any real foothold that it might have upon reality. In questioning things it may come in the end to despair of the reality even of subjective facts—of human experience, of the thoughts and volitions of men. We can see this tendency to lose hold upon palpable reality through straining after something supposedly higher than ordinary reality in the case of the idealism of religion. The consistent Roman Catholic, for instance, is necessarily to a large extent—in so far as he is now forced to give up the idea of the "temporal supremacy" of his Church—a political pessimist; he believes, or he ought to believe, that the present world is actually going to "rack and ruin" because it does not present to him the realisation of the religious ideal in which he believes. The absolutist or idealist, in fact, in whatever shape we find him, is always apt to have

<sup>1</sup> Cf. chap. ii. ; also pp. 275, 449, &c.

a *despairing*<sup>1</sup> *hold* upon reality : he takes it all to be illusory in so far as it does not fit in to his idea, whatever that may happen to be. It takes very little of the historical spirit to put all ideas and all ideal systems on the same footing, as being all of them inadequate attempts to grasp the world as a whole, suggestive enough at a given time but one-sided and unreal. Unless the idealist is something of a *realist*, unless he has a firm grasp on some *real* which he wants to idealise, he is of necessity always verging into illusionism.

Schopenhauer was a man who had been spoiled by philosophical idealism, and was struggling vainly, struggling with all the energy of his passionate and powerful nature, to get to reality. Plato cast his spell upon him in his youth and made him feel the whole world to be alien and foreign to spiritual will. There really never was anything very home-like about the world for the young Schopenhauer; and Plato and Kant gave him intellectual grounds for believing that it never could be home-like to the human spirit. The idealists of his day only made him angry with their extravagances, and so matters always went from bad to worse with him. The anthropologist might summarily characterise Schopenhauer's personality as representing simply the effort to struggle through idealism to reality. He would not by this be doing complete justice to Schopenhauer, but he would not be travelling in a wrong direction. Much of Schopenhauer's philosophy is simply devoted to portraying the efforts of an imperfect idealism to get to reality. It is a great lesson to learn from Scho-

<sup>1</sup> "Scepticism brought me at one time to a condition nearly bordering on frenzy. I had the idea that besides myself nobody and nothing existed in the whole world; that things were not things, but presentations, which became phenomenal only at what time I directed my attention to them, and that these presentations disappeared at once when I ceased to think of them. . . . There were hours when, under the influence of this fixed idea, I came to such a pitch of mental bewilderment, that I at times looked quickly the other way, in the hope that in the place where I was not, I might be surprised by nothingness."—Tolstoi, as quoted from Löwenfeld by Nordau, 'Degeneration,' p. 166.

penhauer that all idealism has a tendency to pessimism just because it naturally tends to illusionism. And of course this means that *all philosophy has a tendency to pessimism* because idealism is such an integral element in all philosophy. Realism rarely leads to pessimism. People who face the tragic side of life all their lives through are rarely pessimistic. No one, in fact, who works hard can be pessimistic. Such a man tends to believe in goodness almost in spite of himself. Human nature has a wonderful amount of recuperative power and positive vitality about it. Realism does not necessarily mean materialism; it means only a belief in the philosophy of action and energy and function and achievement. The study of action is healthful because it brings to the mind the sense of free energy and consequently of pleasure and of hope; while the study of mere thought, in so far as it is unnatural, is unhealthful—is apt to spoil a man's sense for reality.

It has been said that Schopenhauer's philosophy occupies itself largely with the contradictions or the illusionism and the discrepancy that are in things. There is an element of contradiction in experience, and even if that be only apparent and not real, the very contemplation of it, the effort to surmount it in one's thought, is apt to engender a feeling of illusion. "Life oscillates like a pendulum from left to right, from pain to *ennui*." The whole philosophy of the concept is apt to "sickly things over" with the "pale cast of thought," and so to make them lose their apparent and manifest reality. The greatest of all contradictions in experience is the contradiction between what is apparent and what is real, the search that constitutes life and that which the search really brings. It is this upon which Schopenhauer especially fastens his attention. He found things illusory because they were not what they seemed to be. But this was mainly because he did not take a firmer hold upon his own philosophy of will.

He ought to have detected and followed up the reality, the definite reality, that the will is manifestly seeking in its toilsome ascent through creation and in the totality of its manifestations. He was unable to do this because he always fastened his attention upon the many things that merely enter into life for a time without filling it up or really constituting it as a whole. Indeed nothing is calculated to satisfy the aspiration and effort of man but the very fact of a rounded and perfect life. This is really attained in the regenerated spiritual volition of which Schopenhauer himself has made us think so much.

It is very easy to fall into illusionism if we do not keep a firm hold of the fact that life is manifestly an end in itself, as itself greater than all the things which enter into it. An ardent young disciple of von Hartmann's, for instance, exclaims: "Life feeds us with illusions. We simply stagger on from one deception to another and keep on hoping to obtain happiness; . . . but happiness seems only to float away from our eyes, hope to be as illusory as the objects to which it attaches itself: 'the only thing which remains to us as the object of hope is not the greatest possible happiness but the least possible unhappiness.' 'The result of the life of the individual is thus that one turns away from everything, that one finds with Koheleth everything to be "vanity"—*i.e.*, illusion, nothing.'"<sup>1</sup>

This is quite convincing about the illusoriness of the mere momentary pursuits as opposed to the permanent interests and realities of life. It is true both to the spirit and the letter of Schopenhauer, who writes scores of pages in the same strain. The proper conclusion, however, to draw from the illusory character of many particular things and many particular pursuits is not that we ought to seek such a negative thing as the least

<sup>1</sup> Dr Arthur Drews, 'E. v. Hartmann's Philosophie und der Materialismus in der modernen Kultur,' s. 29.

amount of pain, but that we ought to fall back upon the fact of life as that of which pleasure and pain are both a mere index. The regenerated and ideal will finds all things in the world to be *new* and *full* of significance, because they are approached in the proper spirit. One of the many inconsistent things about Schopenhauer is that he seems to recognise this himself perfectly well. "So far as enjoyment is concerned, the average man is dependent upon things which are outside himself,—possessions, rank, wife and children, friends, society, and so on. Upon these things he builds his happiness in life: it consequently falls with these when he loses them or when he finds himself deceived in them. We might express his condition by saying that his centre of gravity falls outside himself. This is why his wishes and desires change so much. He will—if his means allow it—purchase country houses and horses, give banquets, undertake journeys, and in general go in for great extravagance. He does all this because he is seeking in every conceivable way *external* happiness, just as an invalid hopes through the use of *consommés* and drugs to attain to health and vigour, which does not come from these things at all, but from general vital power. Let us place beside this man—not to go to the very opposite extreme—another man, not of great capacity, but still of capacity slightly above the average; we will find this man working as a *dilettante* at some fine art or devoting himself to a positive science, like botany, or mineralogy, physics, astronomy, or history, and finding in this a great portion of his happiness, and gaining fresh strength from it when the external sources of his happiness have come to an end or do not satisfy him any more. We are warranted in saying that the centre of gravity of such a man falls partly *within* himself." <sup>1</sup>

When reading such a passage as this, we find that Schopenhauer is a wise man in spite of himself, that he seems really

<sup>1</sup> "Von Dem, was Einer ist." Werke, v. 358.

to have a firm hold upon life.<sup>1</sup> But (as so often happens) if we read further on in the same place,<sup>2</sup> we find him falling into that excess of subjectivity and idealism which is the prevailing weakness of his whole system. He goes on to describe how, after all, the greatest satisfaction in life falls to the lot only of the man of extraordinary genius (the being who is so dear to him<sup>3</sup>): he is the only man whose "*centre of gravity really falls within himself*," seeing that he of all men is least dependent upon what is outside himself. Such a man, he says, takes continual delight in occupying himself simply with his own thoughts, and so finds the supreme good in the free enjoyment of leisure and the free sense of his own power and capacity. Now, as a matter of fact, the merely contemplative genius fails to realise the meaning of life. It is only the genius of action, the genius who creates what enters into the lives of other men than himself, that is really happy; it is only he who sets forth by his works the real significance of human achievement. We have seen this in dealing with the question of artistic production. It is only by relating the idea to the will, the ideal to the real, thought to action, that we can make life cease to wear the illusory character which it seems to wear in the hands of a superficial or exclusively intellectual philosophy.

It is to the spirit of *criticism*<sup>4</sup>—the spirit of the Kantian philosophy—that we must look if we would be delivered from

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Now it is certain that nothing contributes more to serenity than health, and nothing less than riches."—Werke, v. 343; Parerga, "Von dem, was Einer ist."

And again: "Hence it is that *subjective* goods, a noble character, mental ability, a happy temperament, a well-constituted, thoroughly healthy body—in short, *mens sana in corpore sano*—are among the first important conditions of happiness. We ought to think much more about the promotion and development of these things than of the possession of wealth and external honours."—*Ibid.*, 342.

<sup>2</sup> Werke, v. 359; Parerga, "Von dem, was Einer ist."

<sup>3</sup> He was very fond of quoting the words of Goethe, "Nur die Lümpe sind bescheiden."

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 8.



the extremes of optimism and pessimism. Both optimism and pessimism are simply states of mind incident to the process of distinguishing and accepting and rejecting, *affirming* and *denying*, which goes on in the search of the individual for what is real and objective as opposed to what is illusory and subjective, —in his search for a plane of reality upon which he may build the creations of his life. There is comfort in the very fact that pessimism is more an affair of the intellect than of the will, for it is in the will that the reality of man's life is to be found. Pessimism really arises only from erroneous estimates of life. In making out life to be an affair of the will, and so an end in itself—something that is greater than all our mere descriptions of it—Schopenhauer has broken the back of his own illusionism.

The supreme contradiction, after all, in Schopenhauer's system is the confusion that it exhibits between the *critical* and the *dogmatical* methods of philosophising. If Schopenhauer had simply adopted the critical way of looking at life, of signalling definitely and distinguishing clearly from one another the different points of view from which it can be regarded, he would not have fallen into so much absurd dogmatism about non-existence being better than existence. The very notion of non-existence, of non-being, is simply a hasty generalisation from the fact of contradiction and illusion. The contradictions or illusions in life are apt to make one *think* that non-being is really preferable to being. But the difficulty of *thinking* that which is hard of comprehension and not easily assigned to its true place in the context of our experience, does not warrant us in taking a negative view of the whole of human life. As has been said by philosophers,<sup>1</sup> the *category* of non-being does not belong to *things* at all; it is only an invention of the intellect to enable us to think quickly—

<sup>1</sup> See, *e.g.*, Bradley, 'The Principles of Logic' (Book I. chap. iii.) Lotze, in his 'Logic' (transl. Clarendon Press), sets forth the relation of notions (positive and negative) to reality.

to pass away from what is really contradictory ; it belongs, in other words, to the *idea*, not to the *will*.

The sense of disenchantment and illusion and error is incident to the very fact of search and of life, of life as a search after better life. Life, however, would not be sought at all were it not for the fact that slowly in the experience of the individual and of the race a higher consciousness of the realities of personal and social life is ever dawning upon the human race. In this higher consciousness and the higher effort of which it is the reflex resides the reality of life, the reality upon which the reality of all other things depends. All other things are *in themselves* illusory in comparison with this supreme fact. But fortunately things do not exist *in themselves* ; life, in other words, is not a sum of momentary experiences, as the Cyrenaics thought. The hardest contradiction in life, as has already been suggested, arises out of the fact that we must think as well as act. It is true that our bodies have been wound up by nature to discharge certain functions and so to commit us to the pursuit of certain definite ends ; and it is true that our mental health seems to a very large extent to depend upon the kind of bodily organisation we inherit from our progenitors. But, in virtue of our intellect, new motives to live are continually awakened within us, which may in their turn effect a reorganisation of our whole natural system of instincts and impulses. When we are weary with the struggle of life we are apt to think that the lives of beings who are not cursed with the power of human thought are more happy and free than our own ; but nature and history and society bring us ever and anew under the influence of forces for the uplifting of our lives, forces which exercise power over us in spite of our individual weakness and indifference. The key-note of our lives is will and the eternal effort to will.

It is an old story that our very finitude means our being

subjected to suffering and defeat and pain. Schopenhauer is by no means the only man who has insisted on the fact that pain is necessarily bound up with life, although he is decidedly original in the extreme vehemence with which he proclaims this fact. He has compelled us all to think the fact of pain and suffering along with the fact of volition and the struggle for life. In explaining life he often seems as one-sided in one way as Hegel is in another. He always seems to be explaining the higher by the lower, while Hegel is always explaining the lower by the higher. But we must not go outside the fact of life in our efforts to explain it, nor keep our attention fastened only on some of its phases to the neglect of other phases. We can never say why the world should be so and so, why the will should have done just as it has done, and not differently. We know, indeed, that nothing could be different unless the whole universe were different. The inexplicability of life is just the inexplicability of all willing. We cannot "learn to will"—*velle non discitur*. And so the only explanation of life is the fact of life itself. A clear consciousness of the fact of life is an indispensable condition of all rational knowledge of the meaning of life.

In this final recurrence to the fact of life itself as that alone which philosophy enables us in a measure to understand, we have come to a point where we may well take leave of Schopenhauer with one or two general observations. The positive suggestiveness of Schopenhauer lies in the reality and the breadth and the expansiveness of the fact of volition. A positive philosophy, indeed, has always an unlimited scope on its own ground, whatever that may be; its only limitations arise from the fact of its own possible tendency to call all philosophy *negative* which has preceded itself, and everything illusory which is hard to comprehend. In this respect Schopenhauer and Comte are in accord.

Pessimism is partly the result of refusing to convert any knowledge we may have of the ideal into certain science. Schopenhauer exemplifies this attitude. He said that a philosophy, to be serious, must be pessimistic, must deny the reality of much that appears, and the possibility of giving a *rational* explanation of the world. We have found that it needs a much more serious philosophy to be optimistic than to be pessimistic. If we are in earnest in our study of the real, we shall detect the positive achievement that runs through all the tentative efforts of the life of man. In so far as this involves the necessity of a direct attitude to reality, Schopenhauer has thrust upon philosophy the duty of reconsidering everything in idealism which seems to suggest that we have not in our experience a direct knowledge of reality. We have tried to indicate the direct knowledge that we have of reality in will. This of course may be questioned; but if so, and if we fall back upon idealism (uncritical idealism), we shall find it excessively difficult to get rid of illusionism. If, indeed, our experience of reality is not direct but indirect, there is before us nothing but illusionism. We may learn, then, from Schopenhauer that it is at least a desirable thing to cultivate a direct knowledge of life.<sup>1</sup> With a view to this it is desirable to develop to the full all our susceptibilities and capacities, and this is expressed in Schopenhauer's idea that the proper way of approaching reality is through will.

<sup>1</sup> That the world is at least learning this lesson as it applies to the very highest ideas and ideals of humanity, may be seen from many contemporary movements. It may not be learning this from Schopenhauer; our point is only that it *might* be doing so. This may be seen from the appeal to the *practical* reason and the actual development of life itself contained in the following quotation from a well-known *brochure* of one of the leaders in what has been called the "New Idealistic Movement" in France: "S'appuyant sur la Raison pratique de Kant, ils répéteront à tous que *l'action bonne éclaireit seule les doutes de l'esprit* . . . que la foi est purement et simplement la conscience en nous de notre progrès moral, graduelle comme lui, et qui elle en est la récompense."—M. Paul Desjardins, 'Le Devoir présent,' p. 68.

The study of Schopenhauer's system and its fate in the present century shows how desirable it is to study the history of philosophy in connection with the whole natural and spiritual development of mankind. The history of philosophy, as is often said, is the history of civilisation. We do not intend by this to deny the existence of that part of philosophy that is called metaphysic. Metaphysic, on the contrary, represents a permanent necessity of the human mind to relate together all that it is supposed to know and to experience about reality. One of the important *indirect* services of Schopenhauer, indeed, is to have turned the attention of students of philosophy to Kant, where metaphysic is found in its strictest and most abstract and most unadorned form. Only we find in Schopenhauer so many practical difficulties in carrying out the distinction upon which Kant insisted between the apparent and the real, that we learn to treat this distinction as relative and not as absolute. The reality of things is what it appears to be in rational volition. The best corrective to the prejudice which we are almost certain to have inherited and to bring to philosophy with us—the idea that philosophy is going to reveal the *hidden reality* of things to us—is to be found in taking up the direct attitude to reality incident to the study of philosophy as itself vitally connected with the whole mental and natural development of mankind.

## EPILOGUE.

IT is no adequate characterisation of Schopenhauer's philosophy to call it pessimism. There are many reasons for this. The word has, to begin with, particular associations antithetical to optimism, and it is certain that Schopenhauer himself attached quite as much importance to the positive aspects of his system as to the negative. Even if he had thought of its negative aspects, he would have held that it was negative of a far broader thing than optimism—to wit, of the whole philosophy of the concept. He never wavered in his conviction that he was one of the great positive philosophers of the world, having shown forth more clearly than any one else the inmost nature of reality. He rarely uses the word *pessimism*—perhaps three or four times in all—and then only about the philosophy of others, and generally in the adjective form as opposed to an optimistic view of things. He often enough left it to be inferred that his own philosophy was pessimistic, but the truth is that it is simply a general illusionism about life and reality, a general illusionism resting upon the contention—which he proves, at least, to his own satisfaction—that both life and reality are essentially different from what they are generally taken to be.

Schopenhauer's philosophy, again, is in a sense greater than pessimism, just as pessimism is in a sense greater than it: it is greater than pessimism, because pessimism cannot be more than a mere corollary from a philosophy of reality—

it is not itself a philosophy of reality; and pessimism is greater than Schopenhauer's philosophy, because no pessimism can be thorough-going which does not try to show that the outcome of human history as well as that of the cosmic process is essentially negative. The former fact is what we should think of here.

Reflection upon the attitude of the European mind of this century towards Schopenhauer's philosophy helps to confirm us in the idea of it as essentially *illusionism*. It really began to take hold of the minds of men only when they were to a great extent unable to reckon with the world and with the problems of their time. And wherever this state of matters is repeated, as it is just now in what is called *Fin-de-Siècle-ism*,<sup>1</sup> there again does Schopenhauer obtain a hearing. It is always perhaps some of the finer spirits of a people or a country (Schopenhauer's influence has spread from England and Germany through France and Italy to Russia and America<sup>2</sup>) who are first impressed by Schopenhauer; but this is partly be-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. Nordau in 'Degeneration,' *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Schopenhauer commands a hearing in most civilised countries, not only because his philosophy is a study of the *Weltschmerz* that we all feel at times, but also because he reflects in his personality and style some of the pronounced characteristics of different national types. He has from his ancestry the pride and the aggressiveness of the Dutch mercantile spirit of the seventeenth century, the depth (*Tiefe*) of the German nature and (in his style) the fascination and inwardness (*Innigkeit*) of the German language; the consummate worldliness and the *gaieté* of the Frenchman and the *esprit* of the literary *émancipés* of the *Éclaircissement* period; something of the silent fury of the Englishman (he was at an English school for a short time, and, when travelling, generally fraternised with Englishmen), and of his belief in the maintenance of physical vigour and of his contempt for irrelevant issues; and what he himself called the shamelessness of the Italian. And there are other *piquant* things about the man. He is the stylist of the German philosophers, hating the obscurity of German metaphysics; he knew Spanish; he had a profound feeling for Indian mysticism; he was a good deal of a *moqueur* at all the foibles of humanity—foibles national, social, sexual, professional—foibles belonging to the different periods of life; and he is always *spirituel*. His faults are all due to the fact that his intellect, and his feeling, and his will, were all developed to so unusual a degree, that they could not be brought into harmony with each other. He is a Titan wrestling with the problem of life.

cause it is they who most readily show the signs of any momentary weakness or chronic despair that may characterise the spirit of their times—any lack of *objectivity* of mind (in the phraseology of Schopenhauer) or of *attention* (in that of Max Nordau)—any lack of ability or courage to look the facts of life directly in the face. It is naturally comforting at times to be able to put one's self in the hands of a man who had the strength to assault all intellectual presuppositions and theories about life whatsoever, and, in particular, to help to overturn a philosophy whose proudest boast it was to exhibit the intellect or the idea as actually victorious over both nature and history; if one adds, *and over God too*, one renders a homage to Hegelianism which it did not—suicidal though it was to do so—refrain from courting, and the pursuit of which finally destroyed it.

Schopenhauer first began to obtain a hearing for his philosophy during the political and social lull which fell across Europe for a few years after the movements of 1848. In Germany Hegel had ceased to have any influence over the educated classes. This perhaps was natural enough. Hegel's political ideals of 1830 may have been true to the Prussian bureaucratic spirit of his day, but history had not then made evident the great extension that the German *national idea* was capable of receiving. The fact that Hegel talked distrustfully just before his death of the English Reform Bill shows us that he was not altogether in sympathy with the aspirations of the people, with which all modern statesmanship has been compelled to reckon. Even the veteran Kant had hailed the first news of the French Revolution with a "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace! etc." Men turned to Schopenhauer's philosophy when they had despaired of other, and more real, things. The growth of democracy had suffered checks, and the Utopian character of many of its aims and



principles had been made apparent; and conservatism had awakened to the fact that the past order of things had been to a great extent sensibly and insensibly modified. Rather than have no intellectual food at all, thoughtful people had been reading Feuerbach and some of the other members of the Hegelian Left; but they had found that the ideas of egoism and sensuous enjoyment were very poor materials out of which to build a philosophy of history or of society.

In France Comte had come forward with his ideas of a positive and social philosophy, but the Germans could not attach much importance to a system which seemed to demand of its disciples at the outset the giving up of all attempts to *think* the universe. Socialism and collectivism and the idea of *humanity* of course constituted the logical antitheses to the individualism of which the world had grown afraid in consequence of the French Revolution. But no one in Germany could take collectivism, or the idea of a socialistic state, seriously in the absence of such an organising force as the Germans discovered among themselves after 1870.<sup>1</sup> They had, in fact, before their eyes only the extreme manifestations of both the conservative and the modern spirit: Austria, with her hostility to industrial development and intellectual freedom and her general spirit of reaction, and France with her whole political system dependent upon the changing opinions and practice of a single city.

Again, neither to science as a whole nor to the political sciences in particular could men look for guidance in the early fifties. Natural science had not yet attained to its splendid generalisations about life and the development of life, which admit of at least a partial application to human society: there was little in that regard but a crude physical materialism, which applied rather to the machinery of life than to life

<sup>1</sup> The Eisenach Congress for the study of the social question took place in 1872.

itself.<sup>1</sup> The moral and political sciences having adopted the idea of the relativity of all social and governmental institutions and of all social and political ideals,<sup>2</sup> were beginning to write their own history rather than continuing to expound positive dogma. Their example, too, was being taken by celebrated professors of theology and philosophy about their own fields of research, so that almost everything in the realm of theory was in the same state of solution and instability that characterised practical matters. Everything in both theory and practice, in short, was ranged before the bar of the evolutionary idea, the effort to reckon with which has constituted the intellectual life of the century from Hegel and Goethe to Comte and Spencer. Schopenhauer's philosophy itself chronicles very well the effort a century has had to make to reconcile its ideal theories about life with the facts that science has disclosed or thinks it has discovered.

Strangely enough, Schopenhauer was against almost everything that was in vogue in his day. He cared nothing for the social question or for the aspirations of democracy. He saw the meaninglessness of abstract liberty and abstract justice. He looked askance on both Church and State, and despised mere national feeling.<sup>3</sup> He did not believe in the attempts of idealists and idealistic politicians (*idéologues*, as Napoleon had called them) to think out or establish an ideal society. Nor did he sympathise with the intense devotion of realism to the study of history.<sup>4</sup> He was, as it were, against both *dogma* and *history*. And, as a matter of fact, he also blasphemed

<sup>1</sup> It can hardly be said that the materialism of men like Vogt, Moleschott, Büchner, or Czolbe (or even later, of our own Tyndall) left a lasting impression on the mind of the century. Biology was soon to carry everything before it; and we know how *speculative* biology is always apt to become.

<sup>2</sup> See the writings of Roscher, Hildebrand, Knies, Schmoller, Held.

<sup>3</sup> He subscribed to the idea that patriotism was "*la plus sotte des passions et la passion des sots*."

<sup>4</sup> " . . . nichts als Krieg und Empörungen . . . : die friedlichen Jahre nur als kurze Pausen, Zwischenakte."

science. The only stable thing about his whole mind was his abstract belief in Platonism, and his insistence (due to his unconventional up-bringing in an age of criticism and transition) upon the need of an objective study of the facts of the world. He expressed both these things in an obscure way in his philosophy of art, in his notion of the Platonic Ideas as connected with the different natural species and the different grades of the assertion of the cosmic will or energy, and so he put people upon the way of correlating *idealism* and *realism*—Platonism and life. Therein lay his real work; but owing to his lamentable contempt for and ignorance of history and the problems of history, he had himself no clear consciousness of it. He appealed to those who were without any gospel, to those who felt that the will was at the bottom of everything, but who yet could not feel that they had been wrong in believing something else to be at the bottom of everything. The redeeming thing about him and those who began to listen to his teaching was that both he and they had got hold of a fact greater perhaps than they could reckon with, but still a fact.

Enough has been indicated about Schopenhauer's own personality to show that he was the very man to appeal to the gospelless—to those who readily enough believed that life was a much greater thing than philosophy had made it out to be, but who were as yet devoid of a philosophy of life. We have suggested that Schopenhauer is in a sense the last of the dogmatic philosophers, owing to the very fact that his first principle is such as to make us feel that the solution of life does not lie in the intellect but in the will, in the moral will of the individual and the moral effort of the race to transform its whole environment into an ideally perfect thing.



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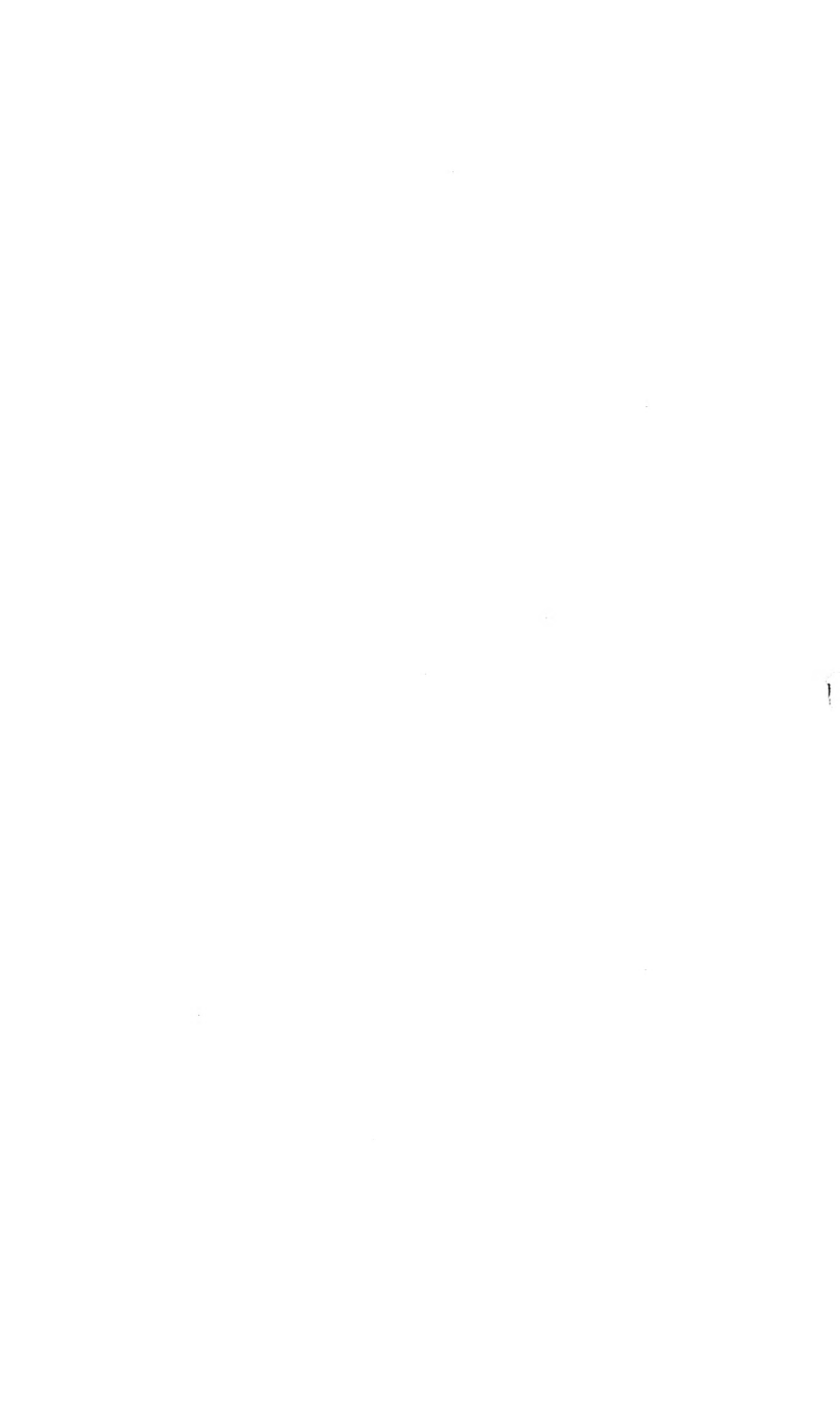
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