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The Proximity of Genius and Madness: A Study of Schopenhauer's Aesthetics

A proximidade entre gênio e loucura: um estudo sobre a estética de Schopenhauer

Samuel Green
Mestre em Filosofia pela University of Warwick (Coventry-Inglaterra)
E-mail: samjgreen1@hotmail.co.uk

Abstract: Schopenhauer's treatment of aesthetics forms one of the central aspects of his wider philosophical world-view. Although the treatment is both insightful and sensitive, the analysis of the creative genius connects it to the more peripheral examination of madness in a way that threatens to undermine Schopenhauer's conception of the self. Madness is characterised by discontinuity of an individual's self, inviting a comparison with the transition into pure subjectivity from everyday empirical subjectivity during aesthetic contemplation. A comparison to madness is even more relevant to the genius, whose exposure to the sublime elements of nature parallels the madman's exposure to the horrific. By comparing the principle of madness with that of the aesthetic state, that which preserves our identity throughout our change in subjectivity can be brought into question. As Schopenhauer argues our knowledge of the Will is insufficient, an appeal to this as the source of continuity is unsatisfactory.

Keywords: Aesthetics; Madness; Artistic genius.

Resumo: O tratamento da estética de Schopenhauer forma um dos aspectos centrais de sua extensa visão filosófica de mundo. Apesar do tratamento ser perspicaz e sensível, a análise do gênio criativo conecta-se com o mais periférico exame da loucura no sentido em que ameaça solapar a concepção de Schopenhauer do eu. A loucura é caracterizada pela descontinuidade do self do indivíduo, que convida a uma comparação com a transição para a pura subjetividade da empírica subjetividade cotidiana durante a contemplação estética. Uma comparação com a loucura é até mais relevante para o gênio cuja exposição aos elementos sublimes da natureza está em paralelo com a exposição ao horrível que o louco é exposto. Ao comparar o princípio da loucura com o do estado estético, pode ser colocado em questão o que preserva a nossa identidade em toda a nossa mudança na subjetividade. Como Schopenhauer argumenta nosso conhecimento sobre a vontade é insuficiente, um apelo a isto como a fonte de continuidade é insatisfatório.

Palavras-chave: Estética; Loucura; Gênio artístico.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy is his sensitive and insightful treatment of the arts, and how this is related to his notion of the metaphysical will which lies beneath the world of phenomena. It is in the discussion of the arts that Schopenhauer takes a controlled digression on the topic of the madman; he whose inability to cope with encounters with the horrific leads to a fragmentation in their personal history, the interruptions of which are smoothed over by more acceptable fictions.

In discussing the genius, who enters into the state of aesthetic reflection far more than most due to his exceptional powers of perception and imagination, Schopenhauer comments that the categories of genius and madman lie in close conceptual proximity. After a brief exposition of Schopenhauer's

metaphysics and his arguments for idealism which serve as the background for his aesthetics, his treatment of art, genius, and madness will be examined. It will be argued that the madman and the most successful genius both have encounters with the horrific which lead to a serious interruption in their continuity of the subject. For the madman, it concerns the formulation and acceptance of fictional memories. For the genius, it concerns a temporary cessation of their state of being as empirical character while they assume the state of pure subjectivity. The states of empirical and pure subjectivity are radically different, and there are issues regarding their relation and the transition from one to another that need to be examined. It will be concluded that to account for the continuity of the individual throughout these transitions, an appeal to the will as that which remains fundamentally the same is required. However, given that Schopenhauer seems to acknowledge that we are incapable of possessing adequate knowledge of the will, this appears problematic. That which enables the continuity of the genius as an individual thus poses more questions than it answers.

The World as Representation

Schopenhauer begins his treatise with the assertion of a claim which, despite appearing to be counter-intuitive, he believes "everyone must recognise as true as soon as he understands it, although it is not a proposition that everyone understands as soon as he hears it"[1]. This is the claim that "the whole of this world, is only object in relation to the subject, perception of the perceiver, in a word, representation... Everything that in any way belongs and can belong to the world is inevitably associated with this being conditioned by the subject, and it exists only for the subject. The world is representation".[2] To argue his case Schopenhauer presents an account of transcendental idealism which is arguably both more convincing and accessible than Kant's, though Schopenhauer's claims that his philosophy is the logical result of insights Kant failed to develop properly is contentious.

The central claim of Schopenhauer's transcendental idealism is "the doctrine that space, time, and causality belong not to the thing-in-itself, but only to the phenomenon, that they are only the forms of our knowledge, not qualities of the thing-in-itself"[3]. They are the *a priori* conditions of all experience. As such, it is impossible to have an experience of the world without them. To illustrate how this works, and to connect Kant's epistemological theory to contemporary scientific enquiry,

[1] *The World as Will and Representation, Volume II* p. 3 (Hereafter referred to parenthetically as WWV followed by volume and page number respectively)

[2] WWV, I, 3. It is important to note that Schopenhauer, by claiming the world of experience is phenomenal, was not denying empirical reality. Rather, he insisted on the "compatibility of empirical reality with transcendental ideality" (WWV, I, 4). What he argued for was there being something independent of human experience, more fundamental than the phenomenon we experience.

[3] WWV, I, 134.

Schopenhauer applied the principle of the understanding structuring our experience to the study of optics. According to Schopenhauer, "the *understanding* is the artist forming the work, whereas the *senses* are merely the assistants who hand up the materials"[4]. Without the understanding, "we should see the object inverted... but intuitive perception is brought about by the fact that the understanding instantly refers the impression felt on the retina to its cause which then precisely in this way presents itself as an object in space that is its accompanying form of intuition"[5].

This illustration is appropriate as no matter how much we know about the function of the eye we have no access to the unmodified impression of an inverted object. We may gain knowledge of the process, but that process is nevertheless sealed off from us. Also, rather than being something that is learned or habituated by experience, this necessary activity of the understanding is simply something that is in its nature to perform. The understanding applies space, time and causality to our experiences in a similar way. They are an essential feature of all experience and it is impossible to go beyond them and perceive what the world is like in an unmodified state.

Schopenhauer took it as evident that the doctrine of transcendental realism, that space, time, and causality are necessary features of the external world, appears to be intuitive because of the illusory nature of experience. For example, the illusion of space pervades all experience as we assume there to be a distance between the 'I' as perceiver and the object. This is nothing but the understanding's attempt to render experience intelligible:

> the understanding summons to its assistance *space*, the form of the *outer* sense also lying predisposed in the intellect, i.e., in the brain. This it does in order to place that cause *outside* the organism; for only in this way does there arise for it an outside whose possibility is simply space, so that pure intuition a priori must supply the foundation for empirical perception[6] (PSR, 77-8).

In truth, all we really know is the agitation of our sense organs. As Schopenhauer writes in his opening paragraph, we do "not know a sun and an earth, but only an eye that sees a sun, a hand that feels an earth"[7]. However, these "deceptive illusions stand before us in immediate perception [and] cannot be removed by any arguments of reason... the illusions remains unshakeable... in spite of all abstract knowledge"[8].

Schopenhauer turned to Kant for arguments to help dispel these illusions of transcendental

[4] Schopenhauer, *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, p. 114.
[5] Ibid., p. 242.
[6] Ibid., pp. 77-78
[7] WWV, I, 3.
[8] WWV, I, 25.

realism, though accused him of not taking his arguments far enough. For example, he refers to the arguments of the "Transcendental Aesthetic" from the *Critique of Pure Reason* as having "such a complete power of conviction that I number its propositions among the incontestable truths"[9] but considers those truths limited. This is because they do not logically entail transcendental idealism; it remains possible that space and time exist in the world. The world in-itself may coincide with our perceptions, though this is something we could not verify.

Stronger inspiration was to come from the "Antinomies of Pure Reason", wherein Kant attempts to demonstrate that "that objective order in time, space, causality, matter, and so on, on which all events of the real world ultimately rest, cannot even be *conceived*, when closely considered, as a self-existing order, i.e., an order of things-in-themselves... [as] it leads to contradictions"[10]. While Schopenhauer agreed with the points Kant was trying to make, he claimed that "the whole antinomy is merely a sham fight"[11] and that the "proof of the thesis in all four antinomies is everywhere only a sophism"[12]. In "Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy", Schopenhauer provides alternative arguments against the transcendental realism of time, space and causality.

If we assume that time is real and has a starting point, marking the origins of the universe, we are entitled to ask the difficult question of what came before it. Also, if it has an end, we are equally entitled to ask what happens afterwards. On the other hand, Schopenhauer argues that there cannot be infinite time as "the changes of the world absolutely and necessarily presuppose an infinite series of changes *retrogressively* [so that] nothing at all is advanced [as] we cannot by any means imagine the possibility of an absolute beginning"[13]. These arguments apply both to infinite time and an infinite causal chain. Similarly, if we assume that space is real and has limits we can ask what exists beyond them. If we assume space is real and unlimited, the universe itself becomes unintelligible as, to quote Magee's summary, "to exist, an entity must have an identity, and there cannot be identity without limits" hence "the universe cannot be infinite in extent and still *be*"[14].

The assumptions of transcendental realism therefore present the universe as something which cannot be determinately intelligible. If we assume space, time and causality to be real and limited we are presented with the problematic issue of what is on the other side of their boundaries. If we assume them as unlimited, we are presented with problems of the universe's identity and infinite regress.

[9] WWV, I, 437.
[10] WWV, II, 8.
[11] WWV, I, 493.
[12] WWV, I, 493-4.
[13] WWV, I, 494-5.
[14] MAGEE, B. *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer,* p. 90.

Idealism and evolution

If we return to Schopenhauer's study of optics we can clearly see that he views the perceptual functions of the understanding, which maintains the illusion that the world "exists extended in space and time and continues to move regularly according to the strict rules of causality," are "only a physiological phenomenon, a function of the brain"[15]. We may recall that these categories are "lying predisposed in the intellect, i.e., in the brain"[16] to be drawn upon by the understanding.

That the brain is in some way hard-wired to propagate the illusions of transcendental realism is one of Schopenhauer's most original arguments. The suggestion that it is a product of human adaptation to a demanding and competitive environment is startlingly prescient; presenting an anticipation of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, which appeared shortly after Volume II of *The World as Will and Representation*.[17]

Schopenhauer believed that "every plant is well adapted to its soil and climate, every animal to its element and to the prey that is to become its food, that prey also being protected to a certain extent against its natural hunter"[18]. To encourage the flourishing of organic life, nature "has equipped every animal with the organs necessary for its maintenance and support, with the weapons necessary for its conflict"[19]. To the higher animals nature "imparted to each the most important of the organs directed outwards, namely the brain with its function, i.e., the intellect". For these animals "a wider range of vision, a more accurate comprehension, a more correct distinction of things in the external world in all their circumstances and relations were here required. Accordingly, we see the powers of representation and their organs, brain, nerves, and organs of sense, appear more and more perfect, the higher we ascend in the scale of animals; and in proportion as the cerebral system develops, does the external world appear in consciousness ever more distinct, many-sided, and complete. The comprehension of the world now demands more and more attention..."[20].

It therefore seems that transcendental realism is the most conducive to our survival. Split-second decisions needed to be made to successfully navigate the world to find food and shelter, and the most direct way of doing this is to act according to the assumption of space, time and causality's externality. However, the human became so complex that "the requirements for the

[15] WWV, II, 285.
[16] SCHOPENHAUER, A. *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason,* p. 77.
[17] Darwin's theory is, of course, more fleshed out than Schopenhauer's and there are important disparities. Not least of all is Schopenhauer's belief in the parallel evolution of the circumstances of life, i.e. the environment, to meet the needs of the species (see WWV, I, 159).
[18] WWV, II, 159.
[19] WWV, II, 279.
[20] WWV, II, 279.

attainment of [its goals] were so greatly increased, enhanced, and specified, that an incomparably more important enhancement of the intellect than that offered by previous stages was necessary, or at any rate was the easiest means of attaining the end"[21].

The human being has become so sophisticated that the intellect required to attain its complex goals has developed to the point where abstract reflection on the nature of reality is possible. That we live according to transcendental realism but ought to philosophise according to transcendental idealism may explain why its conclusions are so counter-intuitive.

The Insufficiency of Natural Science

The natural world of phenomena is, then, a world of representation. The world of space-time phenomena is created by the mind, and it is for this reason Schopenhauer considers the fundamental reality of it to be beyond the comprehension of the natural sciences. These can identify and describe the forces at work in the world, such as magnetism, electricity and gravity, but they fail to explain why they are present; "all natural sciences at bottom achieves nothing more than what is also achieved by botany, namely... classification"[22]. He argues that the sciences engage in a reductive materialism, attempting to explain everything in terms of physical cause and effect. "But then the effectiveness of every cause is referred to a law of nature, and this law in the end to a force of nature, which remains as the absolutely inexplicable. This inexplicable... just betrays that the whole nature of such explanation is only conditional... and is by no means the real and sufficient one"[23]. As natural science cannot probe the nature of the forces to which they attribute governance of natural phenomena, it remains something of a tragic enterprise: "The force itself that is manifested, the inner nature of the phenomena that appear in accordance with those laws, remain for [science] an eternal secret, something entirely strange and unknown"[24].

Schopenhauer was against the idea that all phenomena could be explained in terms of an underlying physical structure. Young points out that Schopenhauer is compelled to adopt the "pure potentiality" view of forces, which posits the fundamental forces of nature as "entities whose powers are devoid of structural ground"[25], a view he suggests is supported by the entities postulated by modern field theory. He inherited a view, running from Boscovich, through Priestly to Kant, that "matter itself

[21] WWV, II, 279-80.
[22] WWV, II, 174.
[23] WWV, II, 176.
[24] WWV, I, 97.
[25] YOUNG, J. *Willing and Unwilling: A Study in the Philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer,* p. 43.

is not extended, and consequently is incorporeal"[26]. This lack of a physical structure places it beyond the limits of what natural science can achieve. The relevance this has to Schopenhauer's transcendental idealism is that "matter is throughout pure causality; its essence is action in general"[27]. As Schopenhauer goes on to say elsewhere,

> The subjective correlative matter or of causality, for the two are one and the same, is the *understanding*, and it is nothing more than this. To know causality is the sole function of the understanding, its only power, and it is a great power embracing much, manifold in its applications, and yet unmistakable in its identity throughout all its manifestations. Conversely, all causality, hence all matter, and consequently the whole of reality, is only for the understanding, through the understanding, in the understanding[28].

The Will

As such, natural science is insufficient for probing the fundamental nature of the forces which govern reality. If we remain on "the path of *objective knowledge* [i.e., science], thus starting from the *representation*, we shall never get beyond the representation, i.e. the phenomenon. We shall therefore remain on the outside of things: we shall never be able to penetrate their inner nature and investigate what they are in themselves"[29].

The inner nature of physical objects is unknowable objectively. Schopenhauer points out that this is applicable to human bodies in so far as when, viewed objectively, the human "body is a representation like any other, an object among objects"[30]. As such, its "movements and actions... would be equally strange and incomprehensible to him [as] he would see his conduct follow on presented motives with the constancy of a law of nature, just as the changes of other objects follow upon causes, stimuli, and motives"[31].

However, the human body is utterly unique as it is also knowable from the *inside*. It is the only physical object of which we can have both objective and subjective knowledge. Whereas natural science is an enterprise which views phenomena from a third-person perspective, our body provides a first-person perspective of "an object among objects". It provides the subject with "the key to his own phenomenon, reveals to him... the inner mechanism of his being, his actions, his movements"[32].

[26] WWV, II, 308.
[27] SCHOPENHAUER, A. *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* p. 119
[28] WWV, I, 11.
[29] WWV, II, 195.
[30] WWV, I, 99.
[31] WWV, I, 99-100.
[32] WWV, I, 100.

Schopenhauer therefore claims that "my body is the only object of which I know not merely the one side, that of the representation, but also the other, that is called *will*"[33]. The term 'will' is more general than its usual connotations, referring

> not only willing and deciding in the narrowest sense, but also all striving, wishing, shunning, hoping, fearing, loving, hating, in short all that directly constitutes our own weal and woe, desire and disinclination'[34].

Julian Young points out that it covers all psychological states that contain an element of "*action-directedness*"[35]. Direct acts of will in the narrow sense of volitions "*determine* actions" whereas "desires and emotions, pleasures and pains,... tend to action: they grow into action"[36]. However, this is somewhat misleading as Schopenhauer was keen to emphasise that the "act of will and the action of the body are not two different states [and that] they do not stand in the relation of cause and effect... The action of the body is nothing but the act of will objectified, i.e., translated into perception"[37]. A desire does not lead to an action; the action *is* the desire as an objective phenomena. Also, acts of will do not, as Young states, "grow into action". Schopenhauer argued that we do not will future actions: "Resolutions of the will relating to the future are mere deliberations of reasons about what will be willed at some time, not real acts of will"[38].

Young goes on to point out that the will is a subjective analogue to the forces of nature which govern the behaviour of objects. The inner knowledge of our body tells us that the will "plays exactly the same role here as is played by the mysterious forces of nature which underlie the course of events in a physical or chemical causal chain"[39]. Another similarity is between human character and natural forces. Character is our disposition to respond to certain stimuli in certain ways. Young also points out that "intelligent and patient observation" is required to "discover the powers and dispositions of a given body", and this applies to character and natural force[40].

The Will Extended

[33] WWV, I, 124.
[34] WWV, II, 202.
[35] YOUNG, *Willing and Unwilling,* p. 51.
[36] Ibid.
[37] WWV, II, 100. Also, "I say that between the act of will and the bodily action there is no causal connection whatever; on the contrary, the two are directly one and the same thing" (SCHOPENHAUER, A. *Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason,* pp. 114-5).
[38] WWV, I, 100.
[39] WWV, II, 249.
[40] YOUNG, J. *Willing and Unwilling,* p. 57.

However, it becomes apparent that the will is not merely analogous to natural forces. Schopenhauer, after arguing that the will is the inner nature of the phenomena of the human body, extends the notion to cover the inner nature of all phenomena. As Magee points out, Schopenhauer's extended use of the term 'will' is responsible for all sorts of misunderstandings of his philosophy. As the term's connotations suggest the possession of a personality, or at least complex mental states, the extension of the will to other humans, who we see only objectively, does not require much of the reader. Solipsism is not something that Schopenhauer appeared to take too seriously, pointing out that we should "regard this sceptical argument of theoretical egoism, which here confronts us, as a small fortress. Admittedly the fortress is impregnable, but the garrison can never sally forth from it, and therefore we can pass it by and leave it in our rear without danger"[41].

The extension of the will to cover *all* phenomena is much more demanding. Magee suggests that for this purpose, 'force' or 'energy' would be preferable[42]. While Young responds to this by pointing out Schopenhauer's insistence on the concept of 'force' being subsumed under that of 'will'[43], Magee is surely right that 'energy' would be preferable as "we now *know* that matter and energy are equivalent; that at the subatomic level the concept of matter dissolves completely into the concept of energy"[44], and that the "whole universe is the objectification of this force [and] are phenomenal manifestations of a single underlying drive which ultimately is undifferentiated"[45]. The use of modern physics to support Schopenhauer's equivocation of matter and force is compelling, as is the attention Magee brings to the fact that Erwin Schrodinger was an enthusiastic Schopenhaurian, but to avoid confusion the use of 'will' will be maintained throughout.

An important part of Schopenhauer's extension of the will is that the human actions to which we have privileged access is a manifestation of the will, rather than the converse: "in self-consciousness the known, consequently the will, must be the first and original thing; the knower, consequently the will, must be only the secondary thing, that which has been added the mirror"[46]. A large part of the will which governs us is unaccompanied by consciousness, meaning our inner nature only provides a limited insight into that which it expresses. That the will is often unconscious is important for Schopenhauer's extension of the term to the rest of organic matter, as "we see at once from the instinct and mechanical skill of animals that the will is also active where it is [accompanied,

[41] WWV, I, 104.
[42] MAGEE, B. *The Philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer,* p. 144.
[43] YOUNG, J. *Willing and Unwilling,* pp. 64-65.
[44] MAGEE, B. *The Philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer,* p. 145.
[45] Ibid., p. 139.
[46] WWV, II, 202.

but] not guided by any knowledge"[47]. The will is also apparent in the more fundamental "vital and vegetative processes, digestion, circulation, secretion, growth, and reproduction"[48]. Beyond animals, it "appear[s] as the tendency to life, the love of life, vital energy; it is the same thing that makes the plant grow"[49]. The process of "vegetation, as [a] blindly urging force, will be taken by us, accordingly to [be the plant's] inner nature, to be will"[50].

Schopenhauer then makes the more questionable extension of the will to the "phenomena of the inorganic world, which are the most remote of all from us"[51]. In humans and animals, the will "pursues its ends by the light of knowledge", whereas in inorganic nature, "in the feeblest of its phenomena, [the will] only strives blindly in a dull, one-sided, and unalterable manner"[52]. This is manifest in the laws of nature such as gravity and magnetism, between which we can see, as in the rest of nature, "contest, struggle, and the fluctuation of victory"[53]. Thus the phenomenal world is governed by the same inner nature which governs the human, which is, Schopenhauer frequently reminds us, "a representation like any other, an object among objects"[54]. As such,

> everyone in this twofold regard is the whole world itself, the microcosm; he finds his two sides whole and complete within himself. And what he thus recognizes as his own inner being also exhausts the inner being of the whole world, of the macrocosm[55].

Young points out that Schopenhauer's extension of the will to inorganic matter is motivated by "the quest for a higher genus under which to subsume all the species in nature" in order to find knowledge of what is identical throughout[56]. This search for a law of homogeneity prevents a bifurcation between the organic and inorganic realms, and allows Schopenhauer's metaphysics to be all-encompassing.

Schopenhauer, after establishing the presence of will in all objects through analogy, argues for their numerical identity. All of nature, from inanimate and inorganic matter, to plants, animals, and finally humans, are manifestations of the same will. One argument for this is that plurality "in general

[47] WWV, II, 114.
[48] WWV, I, 115.
[49] WWV, II, 359.
[50] WWV, I, 117.
[51] WWV, I, 117.
[52] WWV, I, 118.
[53] WWV, I, 146. Importantly, the realm of inorganic nature is most obviously governed by causes rather than motives. It is in this sense that Schopenhauer refers to the will as 'blind'.
[54] WWV, I, 99.
[55] WWV, I, 162.
[56] YOUNG, J. *Willing and Unwilling,* p. 69.

is necessarily conditioned by space and time"[57] and, being subject to the transcendental conditions of experience, "applies not to the will, but only to its phenomenon"[58]. The concept of numerical plurality is one of the understanding, and is not necessarily part of the reality behind the realm of representation. Negatively postulating the qualities of the reality behind representation, speculating what it is like in virtue of its difference from the phenomenal, allows Schopenhauer to make "the transition from the phenomenon to the thing-in-itself, given up by Kant as impossible"[59] and open the door to meaningful metaphysical speculation.

Platonic Ideas and Schopenhauer's pessimism

To account for the "different grades of the will's objectification"[60] which have a pre-Darwinian structure "form[ing] a pyramid of which the highest point is man"[61], Schopenhauer introduces the notion of Platonic Ideas to stand for "the eternal form of things"[62]. An important difference between Plato and Schopenhauer was that Plate believed in two worlds, whereas Schopenhauer believed in one world with two aspects. For Plato, they resided in the higher, ultimate reality, but, as Magee points out, for Schopenhauer the "Ideas cannot be ultimate but they can be intermediate. Furthermore, if plural, they must be within the phenomenal world, not outside it"[63]. However, they cannot be within the phenomenal world as they do not "enter... into time and space, the medium of individuals, they remain fixed, subject to no change, always being, never having become"[64]. This may appear problematic in so far as the Ideas are at home in neither of the world's two aspects. Schopenhauer makes this intelligible by considering the Ideas to be the "unattained patterns" of the will's objectifications[65], "or as their prototypes"[66].

Schopenhauer emphasises similarities between Platonic Ideas and the Kantian thing-in-itself, as both are approaches to a relation between the one and the many; "they are like two entirely different paths leading to one goal"[67]. For Plato it is how the single Idea relates the plurality of its instantiations,

[57] WWV, I, 127.
[58] WWV, I, 128.
[59] WWV, II, 191.
[60] WWV, I, 129.
[61] WWV, I, 153.
[62] WWV, I, 129.
[63] MAGEE, J. *The Philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer,* p. 148.
[64] WWV, I, 129.
[65] WWV, I, 129.
[66] WWV, I, 130.
[67] WWV, I, 170.

while for Kant it is relating the plurality of phenomena to the unity of the transcendent reality. However, "Idea and thing-in-itself are not for us absolutely one and the same"[68]. The thing-in-itself is "free from all the forms that adhere to knowledge as such"[69] whereas the Platonic Ideas are "cognitive objects for a thinking subject"[70].

The various grades of phenomenally objectified Ideas forms a nested hierarchy, where each tier is subject to both a perpetual internal conflict and subjugated to the higher tiers; "everywhere in nature we see contest, struggle, and the fluctuation of victory"[71]. This endless struggle is for the limited amount of matter which is needed for the objectification of Ideas. It is a struggle between the instantiations of the Ideas, rather than the particular Ideas themselves. The instantiations attempt to "snatch the matter from one another, for each wishes to reveal its own Idea. This contest can be followed through the whole of nature; indeed only through it does nature exist"[72].

At the bottom of the hierarchy are the forces of nature, which compete over inorganic matter. For example, a "magnet that has lifted up a piece of iron keeps up a perpetual struggle with gravitation which, as the lowest objectification of the will, has a more original right to the matter of that iron"[73]. This takes place completely without motivation. "Here we see at the very lowest grade the will manifesting itself as a blind impulse, an obscure, dull urge, remote from all direct knowableness. It is the simplest and feeblest mode of its objectification"[74]. Organic matter is more complex, with plants and animals competing for the matter required for sustenance, generally found contained within other organic life. We can easily observe that "every animal can maintain its existence only by the incessant elimination of another's. Thus the will-to-live generally feasts on itself"[75]. This contestation of resources defines animal life, such that "essentially *all life is suffering*"[76]. As the highest manifestation of the will humans are in a position to dominate the lower tiers of the hierarchy of nature, subjugating the realms of organic and inorganic matter. It almost goes without saying that the over-populated realm of human beings is wrought with internal conflict, locked in a perpetual struggle for resources and competitions for the satisfaction of individual goals. The will-to-life is that which governs all action, guiding it towards what is required for life: "as what the will wills is always life... it is immaterial and a mere pleonasm if, instead of simply saying 'the will,' we say 'the will-to-live' "[77]. The will-to-life, the

[68] WWV, I, 174.
[69] WWV, I, 174.
[70] JACQUETTE, D. *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer,* p. 104.
[71] WWV, I, 146.
[72] WWV, I, 147.
[73] WWV, I, 146.
[74] WWV, I, 149.
[75] WWV, I, 147.
[76] WWV, I, 310.
[77] WWV, I, 275.

reality behind all phenomenal representation, sets the stage for a realm of nature which can only exist in a violent perpetual competition.

Any satisfactions we find when indulging our individual will is necessarily short lived. As Schopenhauer bleakly puts it, satisfaction "is always like the alms thrown to a beggar, which reprieves him today so that his misery may be prolonged till tomorrow"[78]. The will is constantly demanding; "so long as our consciousness is filled by our will... we never obtain lasting happiness or peace"[79]. Satisfaction is so hard to come by because for willing as such there is no goal to be satisfied. Thus if someone "were asked why he wills generally, or why in general he wills to exist, he would have no answer; indeed, the question would seem to him absurd"[80]. The "absence of all aim, of all limits, belongs to the essential nature of the will itself, which is an endless striving... Every attained end is at the same time the beginning of a new course, and so on *ad infinitum*"[81]. This perpetual restlessness and lack of definite goals, whereby "willing as a whole has no end in view"[82], is apparent in humans in their fluctuation between a state of desire and striving on the one hand, and boredom on the other. Once a goal is achieved, it is forgotten in place of a new one. Human life, indeed all organic life, is, for Schopenhauer, a profoundly miserable and unsatisfying condition. The entire world of representation we engage with is the manifestation of a restless and insatiable will. That there is no overarching goal which could justify such a violently discordant world is the basis of Schopenhauer's moral pessimism.

The most obvious objection to this is from a moral optimist, who refers to those privileged humans who seem to be born and raised in circumstances which provide nothing but happiness and opportunities for development. However, such a view is too narrow for two reasons. First, the individual surely suffers from the same cycle of "desire, frustration, greater desire, satiety and boredom, even in the very best of circumstances"[83]. Second, such a wealthy and healthy individual is vastly outnumbered by those who find life unsatisfying; whether it's the people who have missed the opportunities the lucky one has taken or the countless instances of plant and animal life which are consumed for their nourishment. Schopenhauer provides a concise summary of the bleakness of human existence with its unavoidable suffering:

> The ceaseless efforts to banish suffering achieve nothing more than a change in its form. If, which is very difficult, we have succeeding in removing pain in this form, it at once appears on the scene in a thousand others, varying according to age and

[78] WWV, I, 196.
[79] WWV, I, 196.
[80] WWV, I, 164.
[81] WWV, I, 164.
[82] WWV, I, 165.
[83] Ibid., p. 117

> circumstances, such as sexual impulse, passionate love, jealousy, envy, hatred, anxiety, ambition, avarice, sickness, and so on. Finally, if it cannot find entry in any other shape, it comes in the sad, grey garment of weariness, satiety, and boredom, against which many different attempts are made. Even if we ultimately succeed in driving these away, it will hardly be done without letting pain in once again in one of the previous forms, and thus starting the dance once more at the beginning; for every human life is tossed backwards and forwards between pain and boredom[84].

Respite from the will-to-life through acquaintance with the Ideas

In the regrettably concise section 34 of the first edition, Schopenhauer enters into a discussion of how we can become acquainted with the Ideas and the metaphysical implications this has. The Ideas are the most direct phenomenal manifestations of the Will; "only the Idea is the *adequate objectivity* of the Will"[85]. The Ideas are not something that we can know through philosophical reflection, nor through any normal, direct perception. A special perceptual state is required in which the subject "rests in fixed contemplation of the object presented to it out of its connection with any other, and rises into this"[86]. We need to

> devote the whole power of our mind to perception, sink ourselves completely therein... and continue to exist only as pure subject, as clear mirror of the object, so that it is as though the object alone existed without anyone to perceive it, and thus we are no longer able to separate the perceiver from the perception, but the two have become one, since the entire consciousness is filled and occupied by a single image of perception[87].

Entering into this state of intense contemplative reflection, becoming a "pure subject", dissolves the distinction between object and subject as "both are of entirely equal weight"[88]. When reflecting on this, we come to realise that

> As will, outside the representation and all its forms, it is one and the same in the contemplated object and in the individual who soars aloft in this contemplation, who becomes conscious of himself as pure subject. Therefore in themselves these two are not different; for in themselves they are the will that here knows itself[89].

Plurality and difference vanish as "knowledge, the world as representation, is abolished" and

[84] WWV, I, 315.
[85] WWV, I, 179.
[86] WWV, I, 178.
[87] WWV, I, 178-9.
[88] WWV, I, 180.
[89] WWV, I, 180.

the individuality of both subject and object are replaced by "mere will, blind impulse"[90]. The purity of this state is of immense importance for Schopenhauer, as the subject is "free from individuality and from servitude to the will"[91]. This state is "the finest part of life, its purest joy, just because it lifts us out of real existence and transforms us into disinterested spectators of it"[92]. A respite from the tempestuous world of will, and the endless cycle of suffering within it, is thereby offered, providing a hint of optimism after the bleakness of the second book.

Aesthetic contemplation and the artistic genius

As we are phenomenal manifestations of the Will, "it is all the same whether we pursue or flee, fear harm or aspire to enjoyment; care for the constantly demanding will, no matter in what form, fills and moves consciousness; but without peace and calm, true well-being is absolutely impossible"[93]. Fortunately, the aesthetic contemplation of the beauty of art and nature allows for the peaceful acquaintance with the Ideas. The subject contemplating beautiful objects "considers things without interest, without subjectivity, purely objectively; it is entirely given up to them in so far as they are merely representations, and not motives"[94]. While in this state, we escape from the pressures of our individual will. Art "repeats the eternal Ideas apprehended through pure contemplation, the essential and abiding element in all the phenomena of the world... Its only source is knowledge of the Ideas; its sole aim is communication of this knowledge"[95].

Successful works of art are those which allow the spectator to share the genius's perceptions. The genius possess "a measure of the power of knowledge... far exceeding that required for the service of an individual will"[96]. This surplus of knowledge allows for greater and more frequent use of the ability to enter into the pure contemplation required for the intuition of the Ideas, such that the artist becomes a "subject purified of will, the clear mirror of the inner nature of the world"[97]. This ability is to an extent present in everyone, "as otherwise they would be just as incapable of enjoying works of art as of producing them"[98], but the genius possesses it in a far greater degree. The "man of genius" then deploys their faculty of "imagination, in order to see in things not what nature has actually formed, but

[90] WWV, I, 180.
[91] WWV, I, 180.
[92] WWV, I, 314.
[93] WWV, I, 196.
[94] WWV, I, 196.
[95] WWV, I, 184-5.
[96] WWV, I, 186.
[97] WWV, I, 186.
[98] WWV, I, 194.

what she endeavoured to form, yet did not bring about because of the conflict of her forms with one another"[99]. The artist's use of thoughtful intelligence allows them to recognise "in the individual thing its *Idea*, he, so to speak, *understands nature's half-spoken words*. He expresses clearly what she merely stammers"[100].

The successful works of art are those which "accommodate themselves" to the spectator's transition into pure perception; "in other words, when by their manifold and at the same time definite and distinct form they easily become representatives of their Ideas, in which beauty, in the objective sense, consists"[101]. Schopenhauer presents a hierarchy of arts, in which the degree of beauty a form can potentially express is determined by the underlying Idea's complexity. Architecture is the lowest, though still highly capable, form of art, as the Ideas it concerns are those of "weight, rigidity, and cohesion" and how they compete with gravity[102]. Sculpture is capable of displaying greater beauty, as it presents the more complex Ideas of humans by portraying their physical beauty and grace of temporal movements[103]. Painting is higher still though this has its own internal hierarchy, from the Dutch still-life painting, of which Schopenhauer provides a somewhat questionable critique based on the foodstuffs depicted interrupting contemplation due to "our being positively forced to think of its edibility"[104], up to historical painting, which has as its subject, in addition to beauty and grace, "character [which is] the manifestation of the will at the highest grade of its objectification"[105]. Tragic poetry is the highest of all the art forms which represent phenomena, providing an unflinching portrayal of the "unspeakable pain, the wretchedness and misery of mankind... and here is to be found a significant hint as to the nature of the world and of existence"[106]. In tragedy, "it is one and the same will... whose phenomena fight with one another and tear one another to pieces"[107]. The tragic hero will renounce the ambitions and pleasures of their life and will "die purified by suffering"[108]. Tragic art reveals both the terrible nature of human existence and provides an instructive figure to inspire our acceptance of that nature; it is both diagnostic and prescriptive.

Music is its own artistic category, holding a very special place in Schopenhauer's system. Unlike the other arts, music is not a representation of any phenomena. By not containing "the copy, the

[99] WWV, I, 186.
[100] WWV, I, 222.
[101] WWV, I, 200.
[102] WWV, I, 215.
[103] WWV, I, 224.
[104] WWV, I, 208.
[105] WWV, I, 230.
[106] WWV, I, 253.
[107] WWV, I, 253.
[108] WWV, I, 253.

repetition, of any Idea of the inner nature of the world"[109], music bypasses the world as representation altogether and expresses "only the inner nature, the in-itself, of every phenomena, the will itself"[110]. Schopenhauer's treatment of music is one of the most enduring aspects of his philosophy, though it does appear questionable. For example, if beauty is the clear expression of an Idea then music, which is not concerned with them, can not be said to be beautiful.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Schopenhauer's rich treatment of art is his treatment of the sublime, which he considers a particular type of beauty. The sublime is the emotional response of the subject to those phenomena which threaten to overwhelm them, which can happen in two ways; "they [the phenomena] may threaten it by their might that eliminates all resistance, or their immeasurable greatness may reduce it to nought"[111]. The former is dynamically sublime and clearly interests Schopenhauer more, while the latter is mathematically sublime. The threat posed by such phenomena must not be perceived as being against the subject as an individual, as the individual will "would at once gain the upper hand. The peace of contemplation would become impossible, the impression of the sublime would be lost, because it had yielded to anxiety, in which the effort of the individual to save himself supplanted every other thought"[112]. In order to feel the sublime, the phenomena must be perceived as a threat to "human willing general, in so far as it is expressed universally through its objectivity, the human body"[113].

A feeling of the sublime is possible during the observation of a surprising range of phenomenon. For example, it is present, albeit weakly, in winter landscapes in which the light of the sun carries no warmth and so demonstrates "the absence of the principle of life"[114]. The solitude of barren landscapes invite contemplation, but also reminds the subject of how dependent the human will is on phenomenal objects for its activity. A desert landscape "takes on a fearful character"[115] because of the startling absence of organic phenomena needed for human subsistence. A scene of tempestuous nature offers an even greater feeling of the sublime as the individual is "helpless against powerful nature, dependent, abandoned to chance, a vanishing nothing in face of stupendous forces"[116]. In the face of such danger, the aesthetically reflecting subject contemplates the Ideas of those threatening phenomenon and, in forgetting his individual willing, becomes "the eternal, serene subject of knowing,

[109] WWV, I, 256.
[110] WWV, I, 261.
[111] WWV, I, 201.
[112] WWV, I, 202.
[113] WWV, I, 202.
[114] WWV, I, 203.
[115] WWV, I, 204.
[116] WWV, I, 205.

who as the condition of every object is the supporter of this whole world"[117].

The mental demands on the genius

By looking at Schopenhauer's treatments of the individual arts, it is apparent that the depiction of Ideas does not necessarily entail a depiction of Schopenhauerian pessimism. For example, still-life paintings of animals and plants appear to be fairly innocuous. It is simply false to state that all art is pessimistic and that all artists suffer for their vocation, or at least that they suffer to the same degree. However, it is clear that Schopenhauer holds the highest regard for those artists who take it upon themselves to depict the Ideas of those phenomenon which express the will's nature most clearly. These are the artists who concentrate on the sublime, particularly the dynamically sublime, and the human. It is upon these artists that the attention will now be focused.

It is difficult to comprehend the difficulty of the life that such an artistic genius is faced with. It is questionable whether the fact that they are born with their abilities is best considered a blessing or a curse. The naturally well-endowed capacity for intuition provides the genius with a sensitivity to the nature of reality, and for the Schopenhauerian artist who decides to take human existence as his subject matter this can only be painful.

The artist frequently enters into aesthetic contemplation of the human Idea, gaining an extraordinary awareness of how savage, unsatisfied, purposeless and profoundly miserable its manifestations are. As a phenomenal manifestation of the Idea of the human, the artist must surely see that this applies to himself as well as others. With this knowledge, the artist then absorbs himself (Schopenhauer believed females were not capable of the sustained contemplative states required of an artist) in the creation of works which reflect this terrible state. After this harrowing contemplation of humanity, the producer of tragedy, "the summit of poetic art"[118], commits himself to the creation of a work which reflects "The unspeakable pain, the wretchedness and misery of mankind, the triumph of wickedness, the scornful mastery of chance, and the irretrievable fall of the just and the innocent"[119].

The tragedian appears to be under a tremendous amount of strain. First, he is predisposed to contemplate the Idea of the human and the unhappiness of its manifestations. Second, he absorbs himself in the creation of a bleak representation of his insights. The artist of the dynamically sublime is in a similar situation. After fixating on those phenomenon which could easily overwhelm and

[117] WWV, I, 205.
[118] WWV, I, 252.
[119] WWV, I, 253.

annihilate the human in its bodily objectivity, the artist must absorb himself in depicting these scenes.

To make matters worse, in addition to the horrors they are exposed to, the artist is faced with the frustrations of representing their intuitions of Ideas via the medium of imperfect phenomenon. They must work within the world of phenomena in order to communicate the truth of their essentially non-phenomenal intuitions. As Krukowski neatly summarises, "the process of art-making must incorporate the processes of a world that art's content gives reason to abandon".[120]

Given what the genius is exposed to and the creative tasks he takes upon himself, it is a wonder that he does not descend into a state of madness. Indeed, it is in the treatment of the genius that Schopenhauer undertakes a controlled digression to discuss madness and its proximity to genius. The genius can often appear to "exhibit several weaknesses that actually are closely akin to madness"[121], such as an "animation, amounting to disquietude... since the present can seldom satisfy them, because it does not fill their consciousness. This gives them that restless nature"[122]. Their behaviour takes on the appearance of irrationality, as they are "often subject to violent emotions and irrational passions"[123] as their conduct is guided by their absorption in focused perception rather than adhering to a conceptual structure. They also have an inclination to soliloquize. So it seems, then, that it is not only difficult to be a genius, but it is also difficult to be around one. Such behaviour would surely isolate the genius, thus making Schopenhauer's figure of the genius cohere with the Romantic notion of the solitary, tortured artistic genius. It such considerations which compel Schopenhauer to note that "genius and madness have a side where they touch and even pass over into each other"[124].

The point of contact identified by Schopenhauer is the inclination of both to disregard the principle of sufficient reason; that is, the various forms of causality which govern the relations between phenomenal objects. The genius demonstrates this by focusing on the Ideas intuited in perception, and subsequently "neglect[s] a consideration of his own path in life, and therefore pursues this with insufficient skill"[125]. The artistic genius has an inadequate grasp of how his phenomenal existence relates the people and objects around him. The madman also exhibits a tenuous grasp of the principle of sufficient reason, though this is through a failure to make connections between temporal events: "the madman correctly knows the individual present as well as many particulars of the past, but... he fails to recognize the connection, the relations, and therefore goes astray and talks nonsense"[126].

[120] KRUKOWSKI, L. "Schopenhauer and the Aesthetics of Creativity", p. 74.
[121] WWV, I, 190.
[122] WWV, I, 186.
[123] WWV, I, 190.
[124] WWV, I, 190.
[125] WWV, I, 188.
[126] WWV, I, 193.

Schopenhauer's discussion of this focuses on the issue of memory, and its ability to make "continuous connexion being abolished"[127]. Memory does not fail the individual altogether, with the exception of the worst cases where the "mad person's knowledge has in common with the animal's the fact that both are restricted to the present"[128]. The individual whose memory of a series of events is fractured fills in the gaps with imaginary events, and it is the "influence of this false past [which] then prevents the use of the correctly known present"[129]. Schopenhauer remarkably attributes the fracturing of one's memory of events to the individual's inability to cope with an event which has such a magnitude of suffering that "nature... seizes on *madness* as the last means of saving life"[130]. If there is a strong enough association of sorrow with the memory of an event, the "mind, tormented so greatly, destroys, as it were, the thread of its memory, fills up the gaps with fictions, and thus seeks refuge in madness from the mental suffering that exceeds it strength"[131].

Schopenhauer's treatment of madness is remarkable though it is not clear how the artistic genius is able to maintain a consistent memory throughout his exposure to the horrors of the world as will, resisting the minds submission to madness. The absorption in the perception of Ideas generates the behavioural oddities described above, such as restlessness, agitation and soliloquizing, and this presumably applies to all great artists. For instance, the Dutch still-life painter will demonstrate this behaviour while contemplating the Ideas of the objects of his study. Schopenhauer can be criticised at this point for failing to draw a hierarchy of the types of artistic genius which corresponds to the hierarchy of the arts. Surely the creative genius behind the most harrowing tragedies is of a different type, beyond the perception of Ideas, than that behind the Dutch still-life paintings. The tragedian or artist of the sublime is exposed to Ideas which are horrifying in addition to beautiful. It is these artists who will have the closest proximity to madness, yet it is not clear what prevents them from crossing its border. Their embracing the terrifying nature of their subject matter would certainly put them closer to madness than the architect, who is concerned with the far simpler Ideas of the forces which govern matter. However, it is not clear what distinguishes the character of the producers of the most harrowing works of art from that of the madman such that the former does not have nature make the intervention of madness to cope with the horrors they are exposed to. If the madman's madness is induced by phenomenal horrors, then surely the artist would be driven mad by the more profound horrors of non-phenomenal reality?

One initial response could be that the artistic genius is so frequently exposed to the horrors of

[127] WWV, I, 192.
[128] WWV, I, 193.
[129] WWV, I, 193.
[130] WWV, I, 193.
[131] WWV, I, 193.

the world as will that they become, to an extent, desensitised, which allows them cope with events which would be traumatic for anyone else. However, Schopenhauer's discussion of the individual character suggests that this may not be so. One's character is a "particularly and individually constituted" instance of the will which cannot be known a priori, and as such is considered an empirical character[132]. The character of others, as well as ourselves, is knowable only through experience. This character is within the world of phenomenon, and, being a phenomena itself, is governed by laws of causality and is "like the natural forces... original, unchangeable, and inexplicable".[133] The character of an individual is inborn, "the work of nature itself".[134] It is also constant: "it remains the same, through the whole of life".[135] An individual may change their goals as they progress through life, but this is attributable only to a change in circumstances; the underlying motivations, governed by character, will remain the same. The commonsense notion of freedom is a myth. There is a transcendental freedom in the sense that we are instantiations of the metaphysical will which is by definition unconstrained. However, the way in which we are manifest defines the parameters within which we can act. We can pursue the things that we want within these parameters, but we cannot change the things that we want. If character is determined then the ability to develop a *stronger* character sufficient to cope adequately with the horrors of the world is not an option. It is not the case that we can decide to want to be able to better withstand trauma and aim towards this goal. It seems then that the madman is born within an innate weakness in their ability to cope with trauma, while the genius has an innate strength. The genius, with his heightened faculty of perception and imagination, sees the Idea behind the dynamically sublime which others may find terrifying. The madman lacks this faculty and focuses on the threat to himself as phenomenal individual. As the character is knowable only through experience, it is only by coming up against the horrific or the dynamically sublime in its most threatening that we find out which side of the distinction an individual is closest to.

However, this seems like an unsatisfactory explanation of the point of distinction between the two as it raises a further, broader, issue within Schopenhauer's aesthetics. This is the relation between the empirical subject of ordinary perception, i.e. what we would typically assume to be meant by the term 'self', and the subject of aesthetic reflection. There is room for a distinction between these two notions of subject because the former seems defined by its relation to an object.

The empirical character is an individual phenomenal instantiation of the metaphysical will, and

[132] SCHOPENHAUER, A. *One the Freedom of the Will,* p. 49.
[133] Ibid., p. 49.
[134] Ibid., p. 55.
[135] Ibid., p. 51.

all of the behaviour demonstrated by it is in relation to the rest of the world of phenomena. This distinction of subject and object is essential for the empirical self: *I*, that is, as an individual instance of willing, desire *this* object and want it to be my own. However, Schopenhauer is clear that in the aesthetic experience this distinction is no longer present; "we are no longer able to separate the perceiver from the perception, but the two have become one, since the entire consciousness is filled and occupied by a single image of perception"[136]. As our attention shifts to the Ideas behind the objects, we "continue to exist only as pure subject"[137]. We cease to be the empirical character of ordinary experience, becoming something significantly different as we disregard individual willing to facilitate aesthetic reflection.

The issue of concern regarding this distinction is to do with the continuity between them. If we take Schopenhauer's claims literally and accept that aesthetic reflection temporarily disregards the empirical subject, such that the reflecting individual's notion of self-hood requires revision, there appears to be a fragmentation, or at least interruption, of the subject's continuity of self. This is important for his discussion of the genius, who is so frequently engaged in aesthetic reflection. The genius accordingly has a double identity; as a human individual he is defined by his empirical character, while as the creator of successful art he is defined by his escaping his empirical character. These seem to be mutually incompatible so it appears as though a contradiction may be present.

If we accept that the genius suffers from a discontinuity of self then he appears to be close to the madman. The madman has gaps in the history of his empirical character which are filled by fictions of the mind as a refuge from the horrific, while the genius has gaps in his empirical character which are filled by the aesthetic state. When reflecting on the dynamically sublime or the tragic, the genius's reflection is also a response to the horrific. The madman's interruption of self regards memory, while that of the genius seems to be a kind of schizophrenia. However, such a criticism is to misread Schopenhauer. It is clear that the subjects of empirical character and aesthetic reflection are intimately related as the continuity of memory between the two is present, which suggests that there is a more fundamental self of which the empirical character and states of aesthetic reflection are moments.

The Individual Will

If there is an aspect of the individual which underlies both empirical character and aesthetic reflection, allowing for memory to bridge the transitions between them, it is outside the realm of consciousness as it is something we do not have access to. This, for Schopenhauer, is the metaphysical

[136] WWV, I, 178-9.
[137] WWV, I, 178.

will of which are individual phenomenal manifestations, determining our dispositions, the ways we respond to stimuli, the purposes we ascribe to our actions, etc. This allows for the continuity between the empirical subject and subject of aesthetic reflection, but it is not necessarily a desirable response. John Atwell questions the coherency of the will creating, or manifesting, as something which allows for itself to be interrupted. This is indeed a concern, as Schopenhauer frequently claims that the will *is* a striving for continued existence, manifest as the sexual preoccupation of animal behaviour for example. That it should allow for the cessation of itself is a kind of self-destructiveness at odds with its blind urge for reproduction. Atwell claims that Schopenhauer takes this as "an undeniable fact... even when doing so threatens to pose a contradiction to his original and perhaps basic account of things"[138].

A response to this apparent contradiction could be to claim that Schopenhauer did not argue for a complete cessation of willing in aesthetic reflection. If the subject becomes the mirror of the object, as Schopenhauer is fond of saying, then surely the will of the object is reflected also. Such reflection is allowed by the in-itself of both subject and object being metaphysically identical while having superficial phenomenal differences. The individual will of the subject ceases while the metaphysical will of each continues:

> in themselves these two are not different; for in themselves they are the will that here knows itself... As soon as knowledge, the world as representation, is abolished, nothing in general is left but mere will, blind impulse[139].

So, contrary to Atwell's criticism, it can be argued that the will does not set itself up for its own cessation and the contradiction in aesthetic reflection is resolved, and a continuity between the empirical subject and subject of reflection is enabled. In Atwell's defence, the contradiction seems to re-emerge in Schopenhauer's discussion of how the genius imaginatively completes the Idea of the objects experienced in the past. Through the recollection of the object and contemplation of its Idea, "we are able to produce the illusion that only those objects are present, not we ourselves... Then the world as representation alone remains; the world as will has disappeared"[140]. Although Schopenhauer does say here the will disappears, it is also important that he refers to this as an illusion. It remains another instance of the will knowing itself.

To recapitulate, if we accept the continuity of the will underlying both the subject's empirical character and state of aesthetic reflection, as Schopenhauer argues in the above quotations, then the

[138] ATWELL, J. "Art as Liberation: A Central Theme of Schopenhauer's Philosophy", p. 84.
[139] WWV, I, 180.
[140] WWV, I, 199.

genius does not suffer from the same disruptions in their personal history of the madman. Both the madman and the genius suffer from gaps in the history of their empirical character, which is what makes them seem so closely related. However, accepting the will as the common underlying factor throughout the interruptions of the genius's empirical character means that a unity is provided throughout the changes in subjective states.

There are problems with this view of the relation between the will and the empirical character, elucidated by Gardener. According to this view, we as empirical characters are "reduced to the status of mere spectators, in the strictest sense, of the workings of that inner nature which... we know in an immediate and non-perceptual manner to be ours".[141] As we have to empirically discover what our character is, Gardiner suggests that it is "cut off from me, in the way in which the will of another is separate from me".[142] Young responds to this by pointing out that we have "an epistemic relation to my own psychological states which is unique and different from my relation to the inner states of another".[143] While agreeing with Schopenhauer that there are aspects of our will which are discovered empirically, he maintains that there are also aspects which have a first-person experiential significance such as emotional responses to the world - these are "objects of immediate, non-inferential awareness so that it is *not* [Schopenhauer's] position that my access to all my "willing" is just the same as that of another person".[144] This is argued for explicitly by Schopenhauer, such as the claim that "About *himself* everyone knows directly, about everything else only very indirectly"[145].

However, Gardiner argues that such a response is to present Schopenhauer with a dilemma. Our self-knowledge now has two aspects: "non-perceptual awareness of ourselves as will and the perceptual knowledge we have of our own behaviour".[146] The dilemma is in relying on the former aspect to dispel the claim that we are mere spectators of our own character. The non-perceptual knowledge required, which Young attempts to argue for, suggest that the will is something of which we can have experience. This contradicts Schopenhauer's claims that the will is beyond experiential knowledge, that the will is noumenal rather than phenomenal. If something is known through experience, it is subject to the principle of sufficient reason and subsequently cannot amount to knowledge of the thing-in-itself.

This issue of the adequacy of our knowledge of the will is relevant to the discussion of Schopenhauer's aesthetics because if our knowledge is *not* adequate, then the claim that it is the will

[141] GARDINER, P. *Schopenhauer,* p. 168.
[142] Ibid.
[143] YOUNG, J. *Willing and Unwilling,* p. 60.
[144] Ibid.
[145] WWV, II, 192.
[146] GARDINER, P. *Schopenhauer,* p. 172.

which provides coherency to the changes between empirical character and the state of aesthetic reflection appears somewhat vacuous. In light of this we are entitled to question how satisfactory it is for the interruptions in the history of the genius's empirical character to be resolved by appeal to the unknowable will, compared to the interruptions of the personal history of the madman being filled by fictions.

Schopenhauer discusses the inadequacy of our knowledge of the will in the chapter entitled "On the Possibility of Knowing the Thing-in-Itself". Here he states that "even the inward observation we have of our own will still does not by any means furnish an exhaustive and adequate knowledge of the thing-in-itself"[147]. The inner knowledge we have is closer to adequacy than knowledge based upon external phenomena, as it "is free from two forms belonging to outer knowledge, the form of *space* and the form of *causality*"[148]. However, the form of time remains. As such, the principle of sufficient reason is still in play, preventing wholly adequate knowledge of the will and thus that which provides the sought unity through genius's changes between subjective states.

Schopenhauer argues that in "self-consciousness the known, consequently the will, must be the first and original thing; the knower, on the other hand, must be only the secondary thing, that which has been added, the mirror"[149]. However, since the will which is primary to the self cannot be known adequately, the I is "not *intimate* with itself through and through... but is opaque, and therefore remains a riddle to itself"[150].

Conclusion

The genius contemplates the Ideas and encounters with the sublime, the most insightful being the Idea of the the human and the dynamically sublime, and represents it in the form of artwork. To make the most successful art, the genius must have had a sufficient amount of encounters with the horrific. While the madman copes with the horrific by creating a blank in his personal history and filling it with fictions, the interruptions of the genius's personal history as an empirical subject are filled with moments of aesthetic reflection. This state is radically different to the empirical subject, and issues regarding their relation seem to be resolved with the notion of the metaphysical will being that which allows for continuity between the states of subjectivity.

However, in light of the discussion of the inadequacy of our knowledge of the will, the appeal

[147] WWV, II, 196.
[148] WWV, II, 197.
[149] WWV, II, 202.
[150] WWV, II, 197.

to it for a source of continuity between the empirical subject of individual willing and the pure subject of aesthetic reflection seems unsatisfactory. It is difficult to argue against Schopenhauer's claims that the will is beyond the reach of human knowledge; that despite being able to remove the forms of space and causality the form of time remains and prevents the acquisition of adequate knowledge. If this is the case, that which is fundamental to human character remains an unknown entity. The will remains sealed off from human knowledge and its explanatory function appears to be weakened. If we thus reject the will as a satisfactory account of the continuity of the genius's individuality throughout the changes in subjectivity, Schopenhauer's aesthetics seems to have a weakness at the core of one its most important aspects. Indeed, the role of the will in explaining the character of individuals seems to be analogous to the laws he claims are produced by natural science; the postulation of an unknowable force which remains a mystery.

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