

## Schopenhauer e o pensamento universal

# Analogy: the universal switch of Schopenhauerian thought

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## ABSTRACT

Often perceived by its contradictors as the main fragility of its system, analogy constitutes however a driving element of the development of Schopenhauerian metaphysics, and makes it possible to avoid the pitfall of theoretical egoism in which any idealistic philosophy can sink. We will try to show, in accordance with the indications of paragraph 19 of *The World as Will and Representation*, how Schopenhauer understands the totality of the phenomena "by analogy with our body" and establishes the structure of his masterpiece from this analogical dynamic that puts in motion the primitive intuition of his thought.

**Palavras-chave:** Analogy; Better consciousness; Body; Theoretical Egoism

From the end of the 19th century, the popularity of Schopenhauer's philosophy contrasted sharply with the discretion of his reception within the university. The immense success he enjoyed with artists seems to have had the effect of gradually drawing the portrait of a thinker whose writing qualities were praised at the same time as the weakness of his reasoning was mocked. The historian of philosophy Émile Bréhier unwittingly sums this up in the tribute he wrote on the occasion of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of our philosopher's birth by saying: "He was a writer of race, and, moreover, he had no system" (BRÉHIER, 1938)<sup>1</sup>. Thus Schopenhauer would easily give in to the pleasure

<sup>1</sup> BRÉHIER, *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* (n°4, 1938). Excerpts from a lecture given in Danzig, at the *Hochtechnische Schule*, on Wednesday 23 February 1938 on the occasion of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Arthur Schopenhauer.

of the “bon mot” and would not hesitate to sacrifice the rigour of analysis to the thousand and one detours of his flamboyant style. When the criticism is more precise, it quickly accuses the analogical process developed in Book II of *The World as Will and Representation*. The fundamental thesis of this work - the metaphysical identity of the will within all representations - would in fact be the fruit of a kind of conceptual sleight of hand in the eyes of many commentators. Martial Guérout (1977), for example, in a comparative study of Fichte's and Schopenhauer's systems, points to analogy as the weak point of his doctrine. This would be a poorly disguised inference, and Schopenhauer would in fact be content to generalise abusively to all external phenomena the internal experience he had of the singular phenomenon of his one's own body - a generalisation that would be all the more erroneous as the two terms involved would be of different natures. In a more profound way, Nietzsche himself questions such a philosophical operation and extends the criticism of Rudolf Haym who already saw in it a kind of “poetic anthropomorphism” (HAYM, 1903, p. 260). In the *Posthumous Fragments* of 1876-77, he develops this point by stating that “Schopenhauer conceives the world as a gigantic human being [...]: one could say that the world is Schopenhauer in a big way. But this is not true” (NIETZSCHE, 1988, p. 469). Analogy thus appears, superficially or not, as a major problematic node of *The World*.

This delicate position makes it a worthy object of study. Above all, even a hasty analysis is enough to reveal that the analogy does indeed constitute a tipping point that allows the body itself to constitute “the word of the riddle” [*das Wort des Räthsels*] (W I, § 18, p. 244) of the whole of Schopenhauer's metaphysics. A more detailed reading of the details allows us to grasp in what sense the very development of this metaphysics can be understood as an unfolding on several levels of this primary analogy. The point is not to reduce the analogy to what it is not - a vague resemblance or a simple inference - but to understand it from its action. Since Plato, analogy has been presented as a process of both harmonisation and homogenisation, which makes it possible to reveal the one in the many, to

introduce the identical in the diverse, while remaining attentive to difference. It acknowledges a certain finitude of thought - it recognises in the relationship it constructs the existence of an unknown - but proposes a means of overcoming it in part. Analogy is therefore by no means a relation of resemblance but is constructed, from its origin<sup>2</sup> and its adequate exemplification in the mathematical proportion<sup>3</sup>, as a resemblance of relations. This essential relational mode does not constitute it so much as a property of things as a method of discovering the unknown from the already known, even through different orders of reality. If comparison and the use of literary analogy are situated on the same ontological plane, analogy in its philosophical, and then obviously theological, deployment will hold together regions without possible ontological continuity and will be confronted on its limit with the experience of the ineffable. It is this very dynamic that Schopenhauer intends to exploit, following Plato but also Böhme and Goethe, while connecting it to the fruitful use made of it in the natural sciences. We will therefore try to show how Schopenhauer intends to rediscover the metaphysical application of analogy by splitting it, making such a figure a kind of universal switch which, at all levels of his system, ensures a link to the unique intuition of his thought and thus founds the coherence of his entire philosophy.

## **1 AT THE HEART OF THE WORLD: THE NEED FOR ANALOGY**

### **1.1 A founding mystery**

The importance of analogy can be measured first of all by the central role it plays in the setting up of the system. It can be appreciated from the fate of the first original concept in Schopenhauer's thought: better consciousness [*das bessere Bewusstsein*]. More precisely, it is the absence of the latter in the published work

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<sup>2</sup> Archytas of Tarentum (Diels-Kranz, 47B2) states that the analogy is of mathematical origin and was developed in the Pythagorean schools.

<sup>3</sup> EUCLIDE, *Elements*, Book V, definition 6.

that functions as a kind of revelation and confirms a decisive change of perspective allowing the foundations of *The World* to be put in place. In the early writings, the opposition between empirical and better consciousness constitutes a sort of static horizon that imposes itself as a form of observation. From 1812 to 1814, Schopenhauer elaborated his thought on this experience of the split, which the great systems of German idealism were unable to account for, as they tried to reduce it to nothing by making it only a moment of a larger process that went beyond it. But as he pushed further the analysis of the phenomenality that empirical consciousness carries with it, in his doctoral dissertation as well as in his personal notes, it will become more and more obvious to him that representation is an illusion with regard to a principle that founds it and that will constitute its reality without being a part of the better consciousness, even if it is through it that the illusion of representation first manifested itself. Henceforth, empirical consciousness discovers itself as an illusion both by passing above it *via* the better consciousness and also, in a certain way, by passing below it with the discovery, later on, of this principle of reality that is the will. This new split leads to a differentiation both from the point of view of being and of knowledge, and calls for a new form of reasoning capable of apprehending them and revealing part of their meaning. Thus, in order to gain full access to the plane of the will, it is necessary to go beyond the static point of view of the two consciousnesses and to initiate, starting from the intimate knowledge of our being, an analogical unfolding of the meaning of the body itself.

The experience that each individual can have of his one's own body will gradually become a problematic node in Schopenhauer's thought and will eventually impose itself as the starting point of the founding intuition of his entire metaphysics. In the *Early Manuscripts*, empirical consciousness and better consciousness are absolutely mutually exclusive <sup>4</sup>, but nevertheless remain

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<sup>4</sup> In fragment 96 Schopenhauer bluntly points out that "[t]he question of this relation [between the two consciousnesses] is therefore meaningless" because "every possible relation is only a determination of

mysteriously connected in the subject who experiences them. The perception of the “so-called moral law” (HN I, [35], p. 23), the action of the saint or the works of the genius make possible a truncated appreciation – “a one-sided view” - (HN I, [35], p. 23) of this better consciousness, they constitute a form of distant echo within phenomenality.

The so-called moral law, on the other hand, is only a one-sided view (taken from the point of view of instinct) of the *better consciousness*, which lies beyond all experience, and thus beyond all reason, whether theoretical or practical (instinct), and has nothing to do with it, except the encounter, thanks to its **mysterious connection** with it in (the same) individual: at that point the individual has to choose between *reason* and the *better consciousness* (HN I, [35], p. 23).

This “mysterious connection” marks from the beginning what we consider to be one of the key points of the doctrine. It is all the more important because it does not relativise the duality described by the experience of the better consciousness, but it does redefine the possible relationship between these two consciousnesses. Moreover, it is not unlikely that this mysterious connection may *ultimately* constitute a form of anticipation of the crucial discovery of the dual knowledge of the body and thus implicitly of the analogical engine of Schopenhauerian thought. This is what the comparison with another fragment from 1814 may suggest two years later:

We who want are also those who know, that is the true promise of salvation. But that this promise exists and is necessary, that we are knowing beings even though we are willing beings, that we are willing beings even though we are knowing beings, is precisely *the great mystery of the identity of the subject of the willing with that of the knowing* (HN I, [274], p. 167-168).

This “mystery” is in the first version (1813) of his university essay understood as “the miracle κατ' ἐξοχὴν [per excellence]” (G, § 43, p. 114). Yet comparison with the 1847 version leads us to a better understanding of how the discovery of his unique thought sheds light on this “mystery”, allowing us in turn to become aware of how far we still had to go at that point. The paragraph doubles in size and the

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empirical consciousness, it has its being only in thought, which is the determination of empirical consciousness insofar as it appears as understanding and reason.

passage we are interested in is introduced by a crucial remark that contrasts “a knowledge of the external world (through sensible intuition)” and “an intimate knowledge of ourselves”. In 1813, Schopenhauer already points out that the proposition “I want” “is, however, most likely the oldest proposition of experience in all consciousness, all knowledge beginning with it” (*ibid.*). “[O]ldest” here means “more original”. The intimate experience of the willing subject constitutes a form of threshold and is like the impossible point of contact between the world of representation and the will. In this experience, the subject gains access to the radical form of what it is at the same time as it touches the limits of representation. The importance of this point of contact is underlined in the addition to the above-mentioned text of 1813 proposed in the 1847 version:

But the identity of the subject of volition with the knowing subject, which (necessarily even) makes the word “me” enclose and designate both of them (necessarily), constitutes the knot of the universe [*Weltknoten*] and is, therefore, unintelligible (G, § 42, p. 278).

This “knot of the universe” will also constitute, in a homological way, the problematic knot of Schopenhauerian metaphysics. The gap between the two versions can be explained by the discovery in the meantime, from 1814 onwards, that the will, which Schopenhauer perceived very early on as the original experience of the body itself, provides us in some way with the most immediate expression of the thing-in-itself, beyond the Kantian prohibition. This is confirmed in the famous paragraph 18 of the *World*, where the identity of my body with the will is revealed “for the first time” (W I, § 18, p. 248) and thus the primary basis of all possible analogies. At the end of this paragraph, he explicitly returns to the passages of the *Dissertation* that we have just quoted and makes explicit what was missing at the time of the first version of his work:

In the dissertation on the principle of reason, it is true, the will or rather the subject of the will was posited as a particular class of representations or objects: only, at that point already, we saw this object coincide with the subject, i.e., in this case, cease to be an object: at that point, to this coincidence we gave the name miracle *κατ' ἐξοχην* [per excellence] and in a certain way the present work is in its entirety the explanation of this miracle (W I, § 18, p. 248).<sup>5</sup>

Far from being trivial, this remark clarifies what is to be understood by the single thought of which the world is the complete exhibition. The latter - greatly connected with the discovery that "my body and my will are *one*" - must ultimately be presented as the elucidation of this mystery which will then be replaced, once this identity of the body to the will is recognised, by the "*philosophical truth κατ' ἐξοχην* [per excellence]" (W I, § 18, p. 249).

## 1.2 The discovery of the one's own body: epicentre of the analogy

Schopenhauer thinks of this discovery as the "philosophical truth per excellence" because it constitutes a starting point but also the original model for all analogical replication. In the same way that the experience of the body itself is conceived as "the most ancient proposition of experience in all consciousness" (G, § 43, p. 114), the truth that follows from it becomes the true principle of Schopenhauerian metaphysics. The descent to the depths of the body, to the most original experience of the subject, paradoxically allows the emergence of a light that the "better consciousness" could not carry. This founding shift occurred as early as 1814 and can be clearly seen in fragment 191: "*The body* [Flesh], (the corporeality of man) *is nothing but the will made visible. ...*] The body is nothing but the visibility of the will." (HN I, [191], p. 106)

From this point on, Schopenhauer possesses a kind of "key" [*Schlüssel*] (W I, § 18, p. 244) that enables him to decipher the enigma of the world. By discovering "the word of the riddle" [*das Wort des Räthsels*] (*ibid.*) in the body itself, Schopenhauer highlights what may have seemed fixed and incomplete from the

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<sup>5</sup> See also W I, § 51, p. 492.



point of view of the better consciousness. But the discovery of this starting point can only become the center of *The World* because the analogy will allow the extension of the truth it contains. It is this capacity that will make analogy a true hermeneutical matrix as well as the principle of deployment and coherence of his entire metaphysics. The experience of the body itself produces an opening that confirms the overcoming of the point of view of the better consciousness, but at the same time indicates a new rupture that will be expressed in the main opposition of the work, that of will and representation. *The World* marks a step back from the experience of the subject and tends to produce a philosophy that is not only a point of view on the world. The disappearance of the better consciousness after the discovery of the will is a sign of this passage towards the constitution of a true metaphysics of experience. It is then a question of understanding both the subject and the object and of grasping a way of enriching this thought by starting from these two opposites. This is what is proposed by the analogical dynamic that is set up at the beginning of Book II of *The World*, that is, once the true basis of our representations has been explained.

This dynamic is not univocal and is structured according to a double movement that could be described as ascending (from the body to the world) and descending (from the world to the body). The two are complementary and allow us to get closer to the true nature of the will. If we try to privilege one over the other, we can only obtain a truncated view of the principle, which is why, beyond the fascination provoked by the discovery of paragraph 18 of Book II, it is essential to keep this double movement of analogy in mind. This movement will eventually grow and constitute the very foundation of Schopenhauer's philosophical method, as the summary he gives in paragraph 27 of the second part of the *Parerga* (P II, § 27, p. 437)<sup>6</sup> clearly emphasises. It is necessary in philosophy to start from a point

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<sup>6</sup> "this starting point of the philosopher, this provisionally admitted fact, must later be compensated and justified. This can be *subjective*: for example, self-consciousness, representation, the subject, the will; or *objective*, what presents itself in the consciousness of other things: for example, the real world, external things, Nature, matter, atoms (...). In order to correct the arbitrary procedure employed and to rectify the



of support, which may be subjective, as in Berkeley, Locke or Kant, or objective. But one cannot remain there and it will necessarily be necessary to correct this starting point thereafter by reinforcing it with the other point of view. This work of correction is the basis of the ebb and flow of the analogy.

The body thus constitutes the point of entry to Schopenhauerian metaphysics (W I, § 18, p. 243)<sup>7</sup> insofar as it is an axis or *nexus* between a surface and a depth that precisely symbolises the field of this new metaphysics. This surface/depth opposition is neuralgic and irrigates the *World*, thus relaying the even more fundamental opposition between exterior/interior which also structures the heritage of the macrocosm/microcosm opposition. The surface illustrates the world of representation entirely shaped and understood by the understanding. Depth, on the other hand, refers to another regime of intuition which is initially brought closer to that of the artist. The body is thus the place per excellence where surface and depth are linked since, as Schopenhauer keeps reminding us, it is the only object in the world that I can apprehend in two different ways. By holding surface and depth within it, the body functions as an analogical key that allows us to pass from one to the other, or rather to understand one through the other. It is a phenomenon like all the others and, as such, a "simple representation of the knowing subject"; but because of its position with respect to this subject, it opens up a "subterranean path" to what this phenomenon really is. Indeed, I also perceive it 'from the inside' through the succession of my voluntary acts. Precisely speaking,

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premise, one must later change the *point of view* and take the opposite point of view, from which one deduces by an additional philosophical argument the assumption admitted at the beginning as given: "From one thing to another, light will pass" (Lucretius, *On Nature*, I, 1117). Paragraph 7 of Book I of *The World* describes precisely the error to which the pursuit of only one of the two points of view leads, and a direct use of this precept applied to the precise knowledge I have of my body can be found in Chapter XXI of the *Supplements*.

<sup>7</sup> "In reality, it would be impossible to find the sought-after meaning of this world, which appears to me absolutely as my representation, or the passage from this world, as a mere representation of the knowing subject, to what it can be outside of representation, if the philosopher himself were nothing more than the pure knowing subject (a winged, bodiless angel head). But, in fact, he has his root in the world: as an individual, he is part of it; his knowledge alone makes possible the representation of the whole world; but **this very knowledge has as its necessary condition the existence of a body.**

it is from these voluntary acts and not from my body as a whole that I have a double knowledge. It is therefore within this affective experience of myself that I discover the word of the enigma and that the starting point of the founding analogy of the world is formed.

## 2 A NEW PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION: THE EBB AND FLOW OF ANALOGY

### 2.1 Analogical extension or the end of the scandal of theoretical egoism

Schopenhauer does not hesitate to assert<sup>8</sup> that the theory of dual knowledge<sup>9</sup> constitutes the core of his metaphysics. It is rightly so insofar as it is the foundation of the original intuition of his philosophy, but also insofar as it constitutes the starting point of the process of analogical replication, since this duality of knowledge can and must be transposed beyond the individual to the whole of nature. Returning to the particular relationship that the knowing subject has with its body, paragraph 19 of Book II of *The World* confronts its reader with an alternative that, as if on a wager, will engage the fate of the rest of the work:

the knowing individual must admit one of the following two hypotheses: either what distinguishes this representation [his body] is that it alone stands in this double relation to his knowledge, while he gains access in two concomitant ways to the intelligence of this single intuitive object, and that this cannot be explained by a difference of this object from all the others but only by a difference of the relation of his knowledge to this single object from that which it bears to all the others - or else he must admit that this singular object is essentially different from all the others, or else he must admit that this singular object is essentially different from all the others, that he alone among the others is both will and representation, the others being on the other hand pure representation, i.e. pure phantoms, and that his body is therefore the only effective individual in the world, i.e. the only phenomenon of will and the only immediate object of the subject (W I, § 19, p. 250).

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<sup>8</sup> Letter to A. Becker of 3 August 1844 in GBr, p. 528.

<sup>9</sup> Schopenhauer sets out this in paragraphs 18 and 19 of *The World*, but also in his Berlin lessons (Part II of his 'Metaphysics of Nature'). In 1836 he provides the clearest formulation of this in *On the Will in Nature*, which explains it in detail and introduces an enlightening comparison with the Pausilippe cave, which makes it possible to better grasp the nature of the relationship between these two 'points of view'.

The very possibility of analogy thus rests on the adoption of a “hypothesis”, one that supposes that this truth discovered by the experience of the proper body would not be linked to the unique and essentially different status of a single representation but only to the nature of the exclusive relation that links the knowing subject to its body and that allows a double perspective on it. The refusal of this alternative leads back to what Kant did not hesitate to describe as the “scandal of philosophy<sup>10</sup>” and what Schopenhauer calls “theoretical egoism” (W I, § 19, p. 251), i.e. the necessity of having to admit only as a belief the existence of things outside the knowing subject. It is because he does not believe that the world can be a phantom that Schopenhauer retains the very possibility of analogy without the slightest hesitation. He then agrees that it is possible to transpose the correspondence he discovers between the body as representation and the body experienced as will to all phenomena. In this, he follows the strict definition of analogy, that is, not the idea of a simple resemblance against a background of dissimilarity, but rather a perfect resemblance of two relationships, since the parallel that the subject establishes between his body and the will shall be strictly repeated for each representation. This passage is therefore necessary in the first place for obvious theoretical and practical reasons if we want to give a certain consistency to our representations as well as to our actions. But such a requirement is not the only reason that leads to the adoption of such an assumption. To claim a logical foundation for this extension of the will to all phenomena simply does not make sense. Schopenhauer readily acknowledges that it is “impossible to refute theoretical egoism by demonstrations” (*ibid.*) but adds not without irony that “it is not so much a proof that will be needed to refute it as a cure” (*ibid.*). In fact, there is everything to lose by attacking this “last fortress of scepticism” (*ibid.*) when it is easily circumvented. This diversion, which is more like a leap, is the very fact of the analogical reasoning that he deploys and that leads him to pass this difficulty without damage. It is not a simple artifice but a real

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<sup>10</sup> KANT, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface to the second edition, B XXXIX note.

necessity because in the end the very possibility of philosophy is at stake. Above all, if we follow the teachings of Book I of the *World* on representation, it seems illogical to even demand such a demonstration. Unless one resolves to fall back into the errors of Kantianism, which his master G. E. Schulze had already denounced before him, it is not possible to use the principle of reason outside the field of representation<sup>11</sup>. The demonstration cannot therefore deal with the will and is not able to affirm or deny anything about the identity of the world and the will. Aware of such a temptation, Schopenhauer takes the time to explain the nature of the relationship that structures this double knowledge that the subject has of his body. Between the body he perceives as representation and the one he experiences as will, there is no need to think of any form of connection. By going beyond the limits of representation, we necessarily leave the field of causality to try to consider at most a form of radical simultaneity that the notions of objectivity and objectification will try to make explicit. It is precisely in order to emphasise a process of objectification deprived of any causal link that Schopenhauer borrows the term "objectivity" from Scholasticism. He thus marks a form of total reversibility between the body and the will that is reflected in the famous statement that "the will is the *a priori* knowledge of the body; the body is the *a posteriori* knowledge of the will" (W I, § 18, p. 245). This "relation" puts the principle of reason and its various applications out of the picture and makes it impossible to logically apprehend this refoundation of metaphysics from the double knowledge of the body itself.

Therefore, we shall continue to use the double knowledge [...] as the key to the essence of every phenomenon of nature, and all objects other than our own body which, as a result, are not given to our consciousness in this double way but only as representation, we shall judge them by analogy to this body and consequently admit that, since, on the one hand, they are representation absolutely in the same way as it, and, therefore, of the same nature as it, and that, on the other hand also, if we discard their existence as representation of the subject, what still remains of them must be, according to their intimate essence, the same thing as what we call for ourselves WILL (W I § 19, p. 252-253).

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<sup>11</sup> In the *Nachlass*, he is careful to specify that there is "no connection" between the plane of the will and that of representation. Cf. for example HN I [260].

There is therefore no other way out because, as Schopenhauer points out, “we cannot find anywhere else to grant reality to the world of bodies” (W I § 19, p. 252-253). It is therefore necessary to accept, at first, the initial uncertainty that accompanies the choice of analogy while keeping in mind that it is not destined to remain. The dual dynamic that Schopenhauerian analogy develops carries with it a process of verification that has not been glimpsed by its critics.

## 2.2 The dual dynamics of analogy

Most critics of the analogy focus on the bottom-up moment of the process, outlined in paragraph 19, but give little consideration to the “top-down” dynamics that illuminate the subject from the *World*. The thunderous discovery of the will tends to obscure the fact that this second “moment” of the analogy occupies a much larger number of pages, not to mention the fact that Schopenhauer - disappointed by the failure of *The World* - will eventually devote an entire book to it, as well as a significant part of the *Supplements*. It is essential to consider the analogical operation in its entirety in order to understand how the supposed weakness of the analogy eventually dissipates as the various analyses Schopenhauer brings back massively to consolidate his starting point progress. The place and role of his essay *On the Will in Nature* can be understood from this intention. In fact, what Schopenhauer says about the different parts of the *World* must be understood from his writings as a whole: they form an organic unity<sup>12</sup> that is opposed in principle to the image of the long chain of logical-deductive reasoning taken by modern thought and mimicked, in his eyes, by post-Kantian systems. The failure of the analogy is partly the result of a linear reading that runs counter to the true nature of Schopenhauer's thought, which is above all thought of as a living

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. W I, “Preface to the first edition”, p. 46: “the order of [his] parts is an organic order, so that each part contributes to the maintenance of the whole, and is maintained in its turn by the whole; none is either the first or the last; the thought as a whole owes its clarity to each part, and there is no such small part that can be fully understood, if the whole has not been previously understood.”

totality in which each element takes its place from the dynamics of the whole. The analogy can only arbitrarily be taken as a dynamic in two moments - in fact these two moments are complementary and can only allow access to the founding intuition of the system when they intersect. If Schopenhauer states that a correct understanding of the *World* implies "reading the book twice", it is to ward off the necessary linearity of the first reading by a second one which restores the whole in each element of the parts and thus allows a better grasp of what the analogy really brings, since the arbitrary aspect of the starting point is henceforth erased by the coherence of the whole. On the scale of the work, it is the precise meaning of each work that is illuminated by such a method. In 1819, the experience of the one's own body provides the key to the metaphysical enigma of the *World* and, if Book II develops a philosophy of nature, it is more to clarify the notion of objectification by showing how the will gradually manifests itself within experience. From 1836 onwards, in *On the Will in Nature*, the relationship is reversed in a way: we start from the experience of nature to go back to the principle. It is understood that the world is will from a reflection on the different elements that make it up, each of which is capable of expressing the principle to a certain degree. The analogical process is thus constantly enriched as we gain a better knowledge of one of the four terms it contains. More precisely, the complementarity of the three terms of the analogy sheds infinite light on the fourth (the unknown, i.e. in this case the will), because the consideration of the different representations of the world constantly gives a more precise insight into what the will that the knowing subject discovers in his body really is. The multiplication of analogies thus gradually makes it possible to refine the image that corresponds to the single thought that supports his philosophy and acts as a confirmation of the very validity of this metaphysics.

The metaphysics of nature particularly illustrates this aspect and demonstrates that for the analogy to be effective it is necessary to hold these two moments together. The ascending movement sheds light on the world from the subjective point of view of the knowing subject, but the metaphysics of nature in

turn makes it possible to correct the particularity of such an experience and to propose a point of view on the will that can be described in the true sense of the word as objective. The latter is therefore based on a complete deciphering of nature, which certainly involves an extremely precise study of the human body, which leads the young Schopenhauer to propose a genuine physiologisation of metaphysics, but also a meticulous examination of the scale of beings which, once the principle of analogy has been established, makes it possible to shed light in return on the true nature of nature's essence. Indeed, each element of nature is an objectification of the will in the same way as our own body and can therefore enlighten us on what it really is and correct the first and subjective apprehension we may have had of this essence. For example, Schopenhauer's numerous analyses of the vegetal world<sup>13</sup> clearly illuminate this hermeneutical procedure. *On the Will in Nature* offers a meticulous study of the mineral and vegetable kingdoms in order to better understand the real nature of the will:

the presence of the latter [will] can be seen in all the phenomena of unintelligent nature, vegetable as well as mineral. Therefore, contrary to the opinion which has hitherto prevailed without exception, I say that knowledge does not condition the will, although the will conditions knowledge (N, p. 61).

This separation between will and knowledge is a “fundamental feature” (N, p. 76) of his doctrine which “is for philosophy what the analysis of water was for chemistry” (N, p. 61). The Observation of the animal world and then of the vegetable world thus allows us to better understand this will by freeing it from the mechanisms of representation. This is the only way to become fully aware of the action of a blind will and thus to recognise the secondary character of knowledge, which is only an artifice linked to survival and therefore by no means an end in itself. It is true that man, through his complexity, seems to objectify a higher degree of will, but the importance of the plant world is linked to its great visibility, which

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<sup>13</sup> Schopenhauer devotes paragraphs 23, 28 and 54 of the first edition of *The World* to this, which will be developed further in 1844 with the addition of the *Supplements* in chapters XXII and especially XXIII. A complete and expanded presentation of these various elements can be found in the chapter 'Plant Physiology' of his 1836 essay *On the Will in Nature*.



allows it to exhibit “at first sight and with perfect innocence” (W I, § 28, p. 341-342) what other beings tend to conceal. Thus, the hermeneutic power of plants is not so much related to the richness of the content they reveal as to their visibility. Plants, like the animal organisms that are offered to our representation, function as spatial switches. They give a form accessible to the understanding to what is grasped in us only by the internal sense (G, § 41, p. 110)<sup>14</sup> and therefore only through time. The plant schematises, without the help of the understanding, the role of the excitation and allows man to grasp by analogy the visceral functioning of his organism and perhaps also the primary functioning of the will. The vegetal gives, as it were, a first form to the last class of objects for the subject - the “subject of volition” - and thus constitutes an important starting point in man's reclaiming of his essence. This method is all the more surprising because it does not impose a univocal point of view, a kind of generalised anthropomorphisation as Nietzsche might have suggested. The analysis of the plant world shows unambiguously that Schopenhauer does not think of the plant in terms of man so much as man in terms of the plant. In this “comparison” he is engaged in a whole reconstruction process, for it is rather from the excitement of the plant that the real meaning of the motif is to be understood. Understood in this way, excitation appears as an unconscious receptivity, a reaction to the world that escapes all representations, but which remains central since it is the mode of being of the entire plant world and the mainspring of “all the changes properly so called, organic and vegetative, occurring in the animal body” (W I, § 23, p. 271). It therefore constitutes the true basis of the living world, and it is from it that we must understand the third cause that will characterise animality in general: motivation [*Motivation*]. Thus, far from being a

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<sup>14</sup> "The last class of object (...) comprises only *one* object; it is the immediate object of the internal sense, the *subject of volition* which is object for the knowing subject and which is moreover given only to the internal sense; for this reason **it does not appear in space, but only in time, and even then, as we shall see, with an important restriction.** »

mute world, the vegetal world asserts itself as the place of a true knowledge of our body and behind it of our being.

## **CONCLUSION: THE KEY TO THE ENIGMA**

The world as a representation imposes itself as a world of meaning where minerals, plants or animals have perhaps as much to say as humans. Unable to conceal themselves, they naively and innocently expose what will is. Analogy then becomes a kind of translator that allows the philosopher to understand beyond his own voice what he actually is. Chapter XVII of the *Supplements*, which tends to redefine the possibility of metaphysics on the basis of experience, thematizes the importance of the natural sciences and asserts “that as complete a knowledge of nature as possible is necessary in order to pose the problem of metaphysics accurately. Therefore, no one should attempt to approach this science until he has acquired the fullest possible knowledge of all the branches of the science of nature” (W II, chap. XVII, p. 1427). This text updates the Galilean metaphor of the great book of nature by emphasising that “the whole of experience is like a cryptic writing” (W II, chap. XVII, p. 1434) whose key to deciphering it is precisely the analogy itself, which, in a game of back and forth, confirms the power of the first intuition while noting the undeniable consistency of the whole. The whole of nature constitutes itself as a witness to a primordial activity of the will and allows each of us to grasp from the outside what is working on the inside, in the depths of our organism.

Analogy thus operates as a universal operator of thought in these conditions, since it is what allows us to link the different strata of reality and to return to the unique intuition of Schopenhauerian metaphysical thought. It functions as a form of logic of intuition that succeeds the logic of concepts in abstract thought. This particularity leads Schopenhauer to anchor his conception of analogy in a specific philosophical heritage that partly neglects the thought of Aristotle and Scholasticism in order to recover the Platonic and Neoplatonic heritage, but also

that of Böhme's theory of the signature or Goethe's theory of metamorphosis. Beyond the philosophical references, it is also, and perhaps above all, a certain practice of the natural sciences that best characterises this renewal of the analogical method. Anatomy, then physiology, constantly used analogy to try to grasp the activity of living organisms, but the new biology that appeared at the very beginning of the 19th century, with notions such as the unity of plan developed by Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire, also explicitly resorted to a theory of analogues. With analogy, Schopenhauer discovered another way of making sense without appealing to the univocal connections of the principle of reason. He chose analogy because it allows for a complex system of expression that weaves a richer network between the different elements of nature. This particularity will very quickly lead analogy to play a central role well beyond the discovery of the principle and the metaphysics of nature. It is also at the heart of the aesthetic theory, allowing us to understand Schopenhauer's work on classifying and ranking the different arts. Indeed, by positing the existence of different series of objectification of the will, aesthetics necessarily returns to their relationships of expression and implies once again to rethink the analogy that may exist between the will and the world but also the one that, beyond the different arts, unites music to the will over the world. Finally, the ethical experience and its saving aim are anchored again in an astonishing experience - compassion - where an analogical relationship is built between my body and the body of the other and then generalised to the whole of the living.

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