UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SCHOPENHAUER'S SPINOZISM

Jenny Bunker

Submitted for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy

January, 2015.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

Abstract

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Philosophy

Doctor of Philosophy

SCHOPENHAUER'S SPINOZISM

By Jenny Bunker

This thesis investigates Schopenhauer's Spinozism in relation to the topics of the self and ethics. It aims to show that a recognition of the parallels between the two philosophers is illuminating in terms of understanding and interpreting Schopenhauer's philosophy. Such a recognition brings to the fore philosophical resources in his system which are otherwise under-exploited, helps to solve interpretive puzzles and provides a new vocabulary with which to more adequately delineate key Schopenhauerian concepts.

Chapters one and two address the metaphysics of the self in the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Spinoza, arguing that neither thinker accepts the Cartesian dogma that the self is to be identified with the mind; each insists upon the self's embodiment and its integration into reality at large. Each, too, offers an explanation of how, in spite of this, individuals can be picked out both physically (within the spatio-temporal realm) and in virtue of their possession of an eternal nature or essence. A comparative analysis of these explanations forms the basis of the second chapter.

The thesis then turns to the subject of ethics and salvation. Chapter three shows that their shared determinism bequeaths Schopenhauer and Spinoza a common problem regarding the viability of practical ethics. It demonstrates that Schopenhauer's philosophy boasts the resources for an ethics along the lines of Spinoza's and that his rejection of them generates explanatory and metaphysical puzzles for the Schopenhauerian. Both systems culminate in an account of blessedness or salvation. The final chapter proposes that the differences between these accounts are best understood in the light of Schopenhauer's epistemological and metaphysical pessimism – and again, enumerates some of the challenges that result for an interpreter of his philosophy.

The thesis concludes with an indication of further work which could usefully be performed both in terms of interpreting Schopenhauer's philosophy and of situating it with reference to established philosophical traditions.

Contents

Academic Thesis: Declaration Of Authorship

I, Jenny Bunker

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

Schopenhauer's Spinozism

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

7. Either none of this work has been published before submission, or parts of this work have been published as: [please list references below]:

Signed:

Date: 30/01/2015

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the AHRC for providing the funding which allowed me to pursue this research. My sincere gratitude is owed to my supervisor, Professor Alex Neill, for his unfailing patience, encouragement and support as well as his extremely insightful comments and his philosophical engagement and expertise. I am grateful, too, to my advisors Professor Aaron Ridley and Dr Daniel Whiting for their wisdom and support.

This thesis was written over a long period of time, interrupted by several years of illness, and would not have been possible at all without the care of many friends. In particular, I would like to thank Nina Power, my Kadesh friends, Elliot Staunton, Charis Staunton, Pepper Bunker and Dr Brendan McDonald for their support and encouragement. I am especially grateful to Lily Staunton, Daniel Whistler, Julia Bunker and Chris Bunker, and above all to my brother-in-law Tom Staunton, for *their* moral support and encouragement but also for practical assistance, care and wise advice.

In loving memory of John Bunker, my fellow Spinoza fan.

Abbreviations

After the first reference to each, I abbreviate Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation Vol I* and *The World as Will and Representation Vol II* to WWR I and WWR II. I abbreviate Schopenhauer's *On the Basis of Morality*, *Prize Essay on the Freedom of the Will* and *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* to BM, FW and FR respectively.

After the first reference, I abbreviate Spinoza's *Ethics* to E. I reference the *Ethics* by part and proposition number rather than page number. I indicate Parts I-V by the relevant Roman numeral, propositions by P followed by the relevant number, demonstrations by D, scholia by S and corollaries by C.

Introduction

1. RATIONALE

Spinoza was a major, though ambiguous, influence on Schopenhauer and there are profound similarities between the philosophical systems of the two. Both thinkers are monists, both see individuals as defined by striving, both insist upon a deep-rooted connection between ethics and metaphysical insight. Schopenhauer's Spinozism, however, has attracted comparatively little attention: his philosophy has much more often been read in terms of its Kantianism or Platonism. Arguably even the influences of Buddhist and Hindu thought and of British empiricism on Schopenhauer are better understood than that of Spinoza.[1]

It therefore seems worthwhile to investigate the impact of Spinozism on Schopenhauer's philosophy, and I will argue that it is both deep and far-reaching. Nevertheless, it is not the primary aim of this thesis to assess the extent of Schopenhauer's Spinozism or to compare it to that of other sources. Instead, I hope to show that reading Schopenhauer as a Spinozist can be fruitful in terms of understanding his own thought: that it can bring to the fore philosophical resources in his system which are otherwise under-exploited, help to solve interpretive puzzles and provide a new vocabulary with which to more adequately delineate key Schopenhauerian concepts. I will also offer some assessment of how successfully Schopenhauer's philosophy incorporates Spinozist tropes. I try to identify, for instance, where Schopenhauer's Spinozism comes into conflict with his Kantianism and, on the other hand, where it is his departures from Spinoza which threaten the cogency of Schopenhauer's thought, indicating that he should, perhaps, have been a more thoroughgoing Spinozist.

---

[1] Henry Walter Brann in 'Schopenhauer and Spinoza', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (1972): 181-196, notes the fundamental commonality between the two thinkers (181) – systematic monism – and that Schopenhauer made a painstaking study of Spinoza's philosophy (182). He helpfully details the very many references Schopenhauer makes to Spinoza both in published work and notes, comments that 'Arthur Schopenhauer's attitude toward Spinoza is rather ambivalent, with a strong slant in the positive direction'(182) and remarks that Schopenhauer's Spinozism has been little-investigated. Bela Egyed, too, points out that 'his preoccupation with Spinozism is evident throughout his writings' and highlights Schopenhauer's ambivalence towards Spinoza. Bela Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', *PhaenEx* 2, no. 1 (2007):110-131, 110 and 111.

2. TOPIC

I focus on the topics of self and ethics. The first two chapters of this thesis address the metaphysics of the self in the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Spinoza. I argue that neither thinker accepts the Cartesian dogma that the self is to be identified with the mind; each insists upon the self's embodiment and its integration into reality at large. Each, too, offers an explanation of how, in spite of this, individuals can be picked out both physically (within the spatio-temporal realm) and in virtue of their possession of an eternal nature or essence. A comparative analysis of these explanations forms the basis of the second chapter.

I then turn to the subject of ethics and salvation. In chapter three I show that their shared determinism bequeaths Schopenhauer and Spinoza a common problem regarding the viability of practical ethics. I demonstrate that Schopenhauer's philosophy boasts the resources for an ethics along the lines of Spinoza's and that his rejection of them generates explanatory and metaphysical puzzles for the Schopenhauerian. Both systems culminate in an account of blessedness or salvation. In the final chapter I propose that the differences between these accounts are best understood in the light of Schopenhauer's epistemological and metaphysical pessimism – and again, enumerate some of the challenges that result for an interpreter of his philosophy.

There are a number of reasons to investigate these two topics in particular. They seem to me to highlight the surprising congruences between Schopenhauer's thought and that of Spinoza. These two aspects of their thought are closely bound together and, in my view, offer significant insights into the character of Schopenhauer's Spinozism and the adequacy of his philosophy more generally. *The World as Will and Representation*, like Spinoza's *Ethics*, is crowned by an ethical theory which grows out of the metaphysics which precedes it, but particularly out of the account of the embeddedness and individuation of the human self.

The clearest similarities between the two systems probably lie in the area of metaphysics: monism, determinism, the notion that striving constitutes the essence of individuals, the distinction between finite individuals and eternal essences. The *differences* between Schopenhauer and Spinoza are most obvious when considering their philosophical methods and theories of knowledge, with Spinoza's realism and rationalism confronting Schopenhauer's transcendental idealism and empiricism. In

chapters one and two we will see that Schopenhauer's theory of the self stands as a microcosm of the relationship between his philosophy and Spinoza's. Exploring the nature of the self as understood by each reveals much about the Spinozism of Schopenhauer's metaphysics more generally, and also demands an analysis of his methodology, in the process of which I suggest an amendment to the way in which it is usually understood.

The metaphysical doctrines which I clarify and assess in the first two chapters set the terms for the ethical theories examined in the second half of the thesis. For one thing, Schopenhauer and Spinoza's moral philosophies are profoundly shaped by their determinism. For another, the fact of the self's embeddedness in nature and *knowledge* of this fact play a crucial role in each of their ethics. Third, individuation in terms of the Platonic Ideas is a central but troublesome element of Schopenhauer's practical philosophy and helps bring to light the stark differences between his epistemology and that of Spinoza. As regards the theory of salvation, there are remarkable parallels between the two bodies of work. We will see that it is once more Schopenhauer's pessimistic epistemology which divides them, but analysing his theory of salvation also requires a return, in the final sections of the thesis, to metaphysics, by which stage Schopenhauer's pessimistic slants on monism, dynamism and the nature of the self can be brought into sharper focus.

3. CONTRIBUTION

In the first place, I intend this study of Schopenhauer's Spinozism concerning self and ethics to contribute to the understanding and interpretation of Schopenhauer's – and, to some extent, Spinoza's – philosophy. In particular, it offers a sustained analysis of the following Schopenhauerian topics: the nature of the self, the status of the Platonic Ideas and their relationship to phenomenal individuals, the connections between ethics and epistemology and the metaphysical pessimism which underpins – perhaps threatens to undermine – his theory of salvation. Examining the Spinozist character of these elements of Schopenhauer's philosophy offers, I believe, several advantages. In some cases, it highlights strengths of his system which generally receive little attention – his model of an ethics of self-fulfilment within determinism, for instance. In others, it provides the tools to analyse Schopenhauerian concepts in a more thorough and adequate way, as – I argue – is the situation with the theory of the

Platonic Ideas. In other cases, it helps to cast new light on or underscore problematic aspects of Schopenhauer's thought, including the issue of the differentiation of intelligible characters and the notion of the abolition of the will.

I hope too, to bring out philosophical theories common to the two thinkers which are of more general interest. In particular, I argue that Schopenhauer and Spinoza offer a philosophy of the self which provides a valuable alternative to the Cartesian model; an account of ethics which, in contrast to those of Schopenhauer's forerunners Kant and Hume, centres on the power of knowledge; and a fascinating picture of salvation without making any appeal to a transcendent God or the promise of a heavenly reward. Finally, I submit that an analysis of Schopenhauer's Spinozism contributes to the broader project of establishing whether and how a reconciliation might be managed between naturalism and (rationalist) metaphysics on the one hand, and Kantian philosophy on the other. This might be of particular interest to scholars of Hegelianism, the German Idealist tradition and Nietzsche, among others, but also to those working on contemporary post-Kantian metaphysics and epistemology.

The Embedded Self

It has been suggested that Schopenhauer was groundbreaking in his refusal to equate the human self with the intellect alone. Gunther Zöller, for instance, writes that '[t]he basic disagreement between Schopenhauer and the philosophical tradition on the self concerns the standard identification of the self, as the core of the human being, with the intellect'.[2] In particular, it is Schopenhauer's insistence on the embodied nature of the self that is taken to set him apart. Thus, in his own attempt to effect 'an indissoluble wedding of these twin partners [mind and body] that were, had we only known, destined from birth for one another' and 'trace already existent *a priori*-given links between… mind, body, will' ('the one sure way of healing splits of the kind endorsed by Cartesians') it is *Schopenhauer* whom Brian O'Shaughnessy takes as a paradigm.[3] In this chapter I shall argue that Spinoza had previously offered a model of the human self that attempted to heal these Cartesian splits, characterising it as both embodied and thoroughly integrated into nature or reality as a whole.[4] I will attempt to delineate this 'embedded-self' thesis in Spinoza's work and claim that it is also something to which Schopenhauer subscribes. The comments of Zöller *et al* notwithstanding, I suggest that this is a surprising fact given Schopenhauer's professed allegiance to Kantian idealism.

1. SPINOZA'S EMBEDDEDNESS THESIS

1.1 The Cartesian Self

In order to clarify by way of contrast, I start by rehearsing the key features of Descartes' picture of the self. Not only is Descartes the standard-bearer for what one

[2] Günter Zöller, 'Schopenhauer on the Self', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1999), 19. Similarly, John Atwell's assessment is that Schopenhauer 'deposes the mind from the throne of philosophical investigation and installs in its place – the place the mind has occupied since at least the time of Descartes – the body'. John E. Atwell, *Schopenhauer on the Character of the World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 81.

[3] Brian O'Shaughnessy, *The Will: A Dual Aspect Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 357 and 349.

[4] I am taking the terms nature and reality to be synonymous in Spinoza and Schopenhauer and using nature for the deterministic realm in Descartes (so that Cartesian reality consists of nature plus human minds and God).

might call the traditional substantial or non-embedded self camp, but it is surely highly plausible that Spinoza's theory of the self is offered precisely as an alternative to the Cartesian model.[5] For one thing, Descartes was Spinoza's most influential predecessor. More specifically, it is his early writings on Descartes in which Spinoza's own alternative views on aspects of the self (regarding the freedom of the will, for instance) first appear.[6] Thus I hope that the distinctiveness and radicalism of Spinoza's theory of the self will emerge on the basis of an examination of that to which it forms a response.[7]

Henry Allison reminds us (in a chapter devoted to the historical context of Spinoza's philosophy) that Spinoza's age saw the Medieval Judaeo-Christian cosmology effectively replaced by a modern scientific conception of nature. As Allison notes, the former, a synthesis of Aristotelian and Biblical doctrines, affirmed the Biblical picture of the world as 'created by God, largely for the benefit man, who was "made in His own image"', while following Aristotle in 'conceiving it as composed of distinct types of substances, falling into fixed genera, or "natural kinds," each obeying its own set of laws.'[8] Thus nature was presented as ordered but discontinuous, comprising multiple substances and kinds of beings each obeying their own laws, and with an external and pre-existent God. This discontinuity was underscored by the emphasis orthodoxy placed on final causes: if the behaviour of each substance was, as Allison indicates, to be explained primarily in terms of its individual function,[9] then differences between substances would inevitably appear even more striking. And while nature as a whole was not to be understood as uniform, the anomalous nature of *humans* – occupying the unique position of being created in God's image – was particularly emphasised.

---

[5] In what follows I will investigate whether any differences must be inherent in their respective embedded-self theses given that Spinoza is responding to Descartes and Schopenhauer primarily to Kant (although Zöller and others suggest he too is reacting to the Cartesian dogma).

[6] See, for instance, the letter to Oldenburg (Ep 2), and Lodewijk Meyer's comments on Spinoza's divergence from Descartes in his preface to Spinoza's first published work *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* with *Metaphysical Thoughts*, ed. Steven Barbone and Lee Rice, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), 5-6.

[7] Edwin Curley, of course, devotes an entire book to the project of showing 'how some of the most distinctive features of Spinoza's philosophy arose from internal tensions within the Cartesian system.' Edwin Curley, *Behind the Geometrical Method: A Reading of Spinoza's Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 4.

[8] Henry E. Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza: An Introduction* Revised Edition (New Haven: Yale, 1987), 25.

[9] Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza*, 26.

All this, however, had already been challenged by the new science, figureheaded by Descartes, so that this – in Allison's words – was the conception of nature that Spinoza inherited: 'the modern universe is infinite, mechanically ordered, and governed by a single set of universal laws that apply to all phenomena'.[10] Nature, then, was taken to comprise a single substance and explanations of its phenomena no longer appealed to diverse final causes but to unvarying mechanical laws.[11]

The position of humans in this system remained problematic, however. Central Christian tenets, such as free will and the immortality of the soul, required – in Descartes' view – that an exception be made for human selves. Rendered *necessary* by his desire to preserve Christian doctrine, this exemption of humankind was rendered *possible* by Descartes' metaphysical dualism, which differentiates nature, or extended substance, from the thinking substance, mind.[12] In Descartes' system, then, the human mind or soul held a unique metaphysical position: it alone belonged to a different substance than the rest of reality, was a *thinking* rather than an extended thing.[13] And man's exceptionality was heightened by an asymmetry between the two substances: while the physical world consisted of one extended substance with myriad modifications,[14] 'each individual mind… constitute[d] a distinct thinking substance.'[15] Every human individual, then, was the possessor of a mind or soul – indeed, most properly *was* that soul – in virtue of which he was capable of free action (and therefore impossible to understand in a thoroughgoingly mechanistic, law-governed way).

1.2 The Spinozan Self

If it is on the basis of his substance dualism that Descartes divorces the human self from the rest of reality, it is Spinoza's *monism* that underpins *his* picture of the

[10] Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza*, 27.
[11] Again, I refer to nature in Descartes' sense, which I understand more narrowly than Spinoza's *Deus sive natura* (reality as such).
[12] Charles Taylor suggests that, for Descartes, '[c]oming to a full realization of one's being as immaterial involves perceiving distinctly the ontological cleft between [the soul and the material]'. Charles Taylor, *Sources of The Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 145.
[13] Or at least, alone save the mind of God.
[14] Curley points out (in a footnote to BTGM p141-2) that Descartes vacillates on this, the Descartes of the *Meditations*, in particular, seeming to hold 'that such ordinary items as stones (AT VII, 44) and pieces of wax (AT VII, 360) are material substances'.
[15] Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza*, 30.

self as embedded in reality at large: his metaphysical system makes it impossible for human selves to be ontologically aberrant as they were for Descartes. Because for Spinoza there is only one substance, the mind can't be singled out as *substantially* different to everything else. And while thought and extension constitute different attributes of substance, each attribute applies uniformly across all of substance's modes. Every existent mode, then, is mental as well as physical; every body is correlated with a mind.[16] This both precludes the possibility of human selves claiming distinctiveness in terms of their being mental as well as physical (everything else is, too!) and indicates that for Spinoza the human self is not essentially a mind but a *mode*. Thus Spinoza affirms the identity of mind and body – as parallel expressions of the same event of substance. A human mind and its body represent the same mode of substance viewed under the attributes of thought and extension respectively.

Spinoza, then, rejected both the thesis that human individuals are to be identified primarily with their minds and the claim that mind constitutes a separate substance. And in their very unity, human selves are consonant with reality at large. As Stuart Hampshire writes '[t]he union of individual human minds with individual human bodies is for Spinoza only a special case of the general identity of the order or connection of causes in nature; what he has proved refers no more to man than to other individual things'.[17] In a human self, mind and body are inseparable, just as are the mental and physical aspects of substance as such and so of the whole of reality.

This in turn means that human freedom can no longer be taken to involve non-compliance with the mechanistic laws that govern the rest of nature – all elements of nature, including humans, are to be 'understood in terms of their logical, lawful relationships to each other'.[18] Thus Spinoza universalised the mathematical method that the new science used to explain nature in general so that it also comprehended human individuals (including their minds). The Preface to Part III of the *Ethics*, for instance, promises to 'consider human actions and appetites just as if it were a question of lines, planes, and bodies.'[19] One major theme of that preface, in fact, is precisely the consistency and law-governed character of nature. Introducing this very

[16] Although the notion that every Spinozan idea has an associated body has been disputed by, for instance, Steven Nadler, I take what I say here to be the standard interpretation. See Steven Nadler, *Spinoza's 'Ethics': An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
[17] Stuart Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 59.
[18] Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza*, 38.
[19] Unless otherwise stated, all citations of Spinoza's *Ethics* refer to Edwin Curley, *A Spinoza Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

topic of the geometrical analysis of human behaviour, Spinoza writes '[n]ature is always the same… the laws and rules of Nature… are always and everywhere the same. So the way of understanding the nature of anything, of whatever kind, must also be the same, namely, through the universal laws and rules of nature.' Nature is consistent throughout, law-governed throughout and, throughout, explicable in the same way – human beings are no exception.

Thus for Spinoza, in contrast to Descartes, human selves are thoroughly integrated into reality as a whole. We can be understood in exactly the same (mathematical) way as everything else because we are comprehended by the same deterministic system. *Like* everything else, human selves are modes of the one substance. And rather than identifying the self with the mind, Spinoza insists that the human self is a mode which can be viewed as mind under the attribute of thought or as body under that of extension.[20]

1.3 Embeddedness Without Materialism

Spinoza's embedded-self thesis does not commit him to a species of the materialism that perhaps constituted Cartesian dualism's foremost contemporary rival. The position, most commonly identified as Hobbesian, that matter exhausts reality is clearly amenable to an embedded-self theory. If the only substance is physical, and if, as a corollary, human beings are nothing but bodies, then it becomes natural to conceive of the human self as one more cog in a mechanistic system – neither ontologically distinct from the rest of nature, nor exempt from its laws, nor requiring any special kind of explanation. Materialism, then, is the natural ally of the embedded-self thesis.

It has recently been argued that a reductive materialist stance is, in fact, improperly ascribed to Hobbes. (Stewart Duncan, for instance, has characterised him as what one could call an epistemological and Robert Arp as a methodological – rather, in each case, than an ontological – materialist).[21] Nonetheless the view that mind is reducible to matter was an available alterative to Cartesianism and shared

[20] I intend take this to presuppose no particular answer to the debate concerning the reality or otherwise and objectivity or subjectivity of attributes.
[21] Stewart Duncan, 'Hobbes's Materialism in the Early 1640s', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 13, no. 3 (2005): 437-448. Robert Arp, 'Re-thinking Hobbes's Materialistic and Mechanistic Projects', *Hobbes Studies* 15, no. 1 (2002): 3-31.

with Spinoza's philosophy a commitment to substance monism and to universalising mechanistic explanation, along with the ability to accommodate the embedded-self thesis. It is not, however, Spinoza's position – the autonomy of the intellect is preserved in Spinoza's system. This may not be immediately apparent: Spinoza contends, after all, that there is only one substance and that everything that occurs in the mind has a physical correlate: '[t]hought cannot produce ideas for which there are no nonmental correlates', as Genevieve Lloyd puts it.[22] Proposition 7 of Part II of the *Ethics* tells us that '*[t]he order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things*', inviting speculation that physical reality determines our thoughts about it. In the Scholium to that proposition Spinoza concurs with those Hebrew thinkers who 'maintained that God, God's intellect, and the things understood by him are one and the same.' Here one might be tempted to think that Spinoza goes further still by apparently suggesting that a thought is nothing other than the object of which it *is* a thought. Given that the human mind is defined as the idea of the body (Part II P13), one might conclude that, in Spinoza's view, the mind is reducible to the body and its thoughts to brain activity or other bodily events.

Lloyd explains, however, that for Spinoza

> the mind, as idea of the body, is not a mere passive reflection of bodily states… thought, of which the mind is a mode, is an attribute relating directly to substance – an alternative expression of substance, mapping that of matter. So, although it has the body as its object, the mind also belongs in a totality of thought that relates directly to substance.[23]

So while everything in the mind has a physical correlate for Spinoza, this is not materialism – thought remains autonomous. Thus the Demonstration of Proposition 6 of Part II tells us that 'each attribute is conceived through itself without any other (by IP10). So the modes of each attribute involve the concept of their own attribute, but not of another one' and the Scholium to Part I's Proposition 10 that 'one may be conceived without the aid of the other'. The attribute of thought itself, then, (like that of extension) is a self-sufficient and adequate expression of substance. Likewise the *modes* of thought, that is, minds, far from being reducible to brain states as certain kinds of materialist might have it, are explicable purely with reference to thought.

---

[22] Genevieve Lloyd,. *Part of Nature: Self-Knowledge in Spinoza's* Ethics (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 27.
[23] Lloyd, *Part of Nature*, 26-7.

Spinoza's is not a materialist philosophy,[24] then, but neither is it dualist: thought and extension are two expressions of the same set of events. Admittedly it is true that attributes are causally independent: a bodily event is caused by substance as extended, a mental one by substance under the attribute of thought (IIP9D 'the cause of one singular idea is another idea'). Also, each attribute constitutes an essence of substance and thus cannot be explained away in terms of any other attribute. Nonetheless everything that happens within substance finds an expression in every attribute, every mode is both physical and mental. There can, then, be no purely mental events: each thought has a physical correlate. And this is because mind is not a free-floating substance but one among an infinite number of ways of looking at or describing the one substance. Perhaps, then, one should say that there aren't really any *mental* events at all, just events of substance that can be described either physically or mentally. Thus Spinoza's parallelism steers a course between materialism and dualism, characterising the human subject as bodily as well as mental, and both body and mind as continuous with the rest of nature as well as bound by its laws, while nonetheless preserving the integrity of the intellect.

1.4 Advantages over the Cartesian Model

1.4.1

While my primary aim in this first part of the chapter has simply been to offer a characterisation of Spinoza's embedded-self thesis, I intend in this section to explore a number of advantages that I take it to hold over its Cartesian rival. The embodied nature of the mind – and the continuity of the human self with nature more generally – is frequently stressed in contemporary philosophy. This is perhaps true of feminist thought above all, and Spinoza's role as a trail-blazer in this arena has been acknowledged by feminist philosophers. Thus in an interview with the journal *Women's Philosophy Review*, Genevieve Lloyd explains to Susan James that she 'first became interested in the relation between Spinoza and the feminist questions partly because he offers an alternative to Cartesian ways of thinking about the body and its

[24] Hampshire comments in his introduction that '[a]ny philosopher who questions what has been called the official Two-world doctrine formulated by Descartes is liable to be classified as a materialist, even if he is simply rejecting the conception of minds and bodies as constituting two independent systems, each a realm in itself. Spinoza was certainly not a materialist in the other and cruder sense'. Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism*, 70.

relation to the mind.'[25] An endorsement of Spinoza is surely intended, too, when in *Part of Nature* Lloyd writes that while the 'Cartesian self is fated to the hopeless attempt to insert itself back into a world from which it has been metaphysically separated', Spinoza's self, 'in contrast, is immersed in the whole of nature'.[26]

It is, indeed, often Descartes who modern philosophers of embodiment invoke more or less explicitly as the chief propagator of a dominant but damaging model of the self to which they seek an alternative. 'Feminists have been critical of dualism', writes Naomi Scheman, for its 'privileging of the mind over the body and for the misunderstanding of each that results from their being prised apart.' Scheman's piece is subtitled 'Against physicalism'; she goes on to explain that this more currently respectable descendent of materialism 'has seemed to many an unpalatable alternative [to dualism], in large measure because the sort of attention to bodies that, for example, [Susan] James encourages is not the attention of the scientist to an object of study, but the attention of a subject to her or his own experience'.[27]

Later in this chapter we will see that Schopenhauer makes an appeal to the distinction between the scientific and the subjective or experiential attitude to the body central to his account of the self – indeed, he takes the latter kind of relation to provide the key to understanding the world as a whole. Though it is far less trumpeted in Spinoza's philosophy, I think one could make the case for a similar kind of attention to the body there – particularly when his view of matter and the body is contrasted with that of Descartes. Charles Taylor takes this contrast as a theme in his *Sources of the Self*: he suggests that 'the Cartesian discovers and affirms his immaterial nature by objectifying the bodily' – by doing 'violence to our ordinary, embodied way of experiencing.'[28] In order to understand one's nature as immaterial soul, one must recognise the 'ontological cleft' between soul and matter.[29] Because our bodies are part of the material world we must, for Taylor's Descartes, 'disengage from our usual embodied perspective'. I must objectify my own body, as I must

[25] Genevieve Lloyd and Moira Gatens 'The Power of Spinoza: Feminist Conjunctions', interview conducted by Susan James, *Women's Philosophy Review*: no. 19 (Autumn 1998), 6.
[26] Lloyd, *Part of Nature*, 39.
[27] Naomi Scheman, 'Feminism in philosophy of mind: Against physicalism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*, ed. Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 49-67, 50.
[28] Both Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 146.
[29] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 145.

everything else in the world I wish to understand, seeing it 'mechanistically and functionally, in the same way that an uninvolved external observer would.'[30]

Spinoza, by contrast, according to Taylor, emerged for Goethe's generation as 'a forerunner of that great quasi-pantheistic sense of a cosmic spirit running through the whole of nature and coming to expression in mankind'.[31] One could make too much of this: Taylor himself notes that Spinoza 'would have been rather astonished to hear the doctrines for which he was admired.'[32] The quotation mentioned nonetheless makes plain Spinoza's difference, as diagnosed by Taylor, from Descartes, the latter philosopher being taken to have 1) instituted a paradigm of 'rational mastery', of reason as instrumental; 2) to have done this in part by 'disenchanting' nature – characterising it as 'devoid of any spiritual essence or expressive dimension' and 3) to have insisted upon the unique exemption of mankind from nature.[33] As mentioned, it may be objected that the implied interpretation of Spinoza is unreliable – even if not, Spinoza's account might not necessarily be seen as an improvement over its forerunner. It is surely plausible, though, that Spinoza's conception of the role of reason differed considerably from that of Descartes, and that *Descartes'* rational programme involved the adoption of an objective, scientific stance towards the body. If even this much is granted to Taylor, Spinoza must at least emerge as a more attractive resource for the kind of contemporary philosopher of the body Scheman describes.

1.4.2

The resonance with (and indebtedness of) contemporary philosophies of embodiment aside, I would identify two specific features of Spinoza's account of the self that could be said to represent advances over that of his predecessor, both stemming from his rejection of dualism. First, and most obviously, replacing dualism with parallelism allowed Spinoza to avoid the interactionist problems that beset Descartes' thinking. The issue of uniting, as Henry Allison puts it, 'his completely mechanistic physiology… with his conception of an immaterial, independent, and immortal soul, or thinking substance' was probably the most intractable problem

[30] Both Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 145.
[31] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 314.
[32] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 314.
[33] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 146.

resulting from Descartes' attempt to integrate Christian tenets with the new science.[34] The question of how interaction between mental and material substance is possible becomes particularly pressing in the case of humans, given that they are composed of embodied mind. Descartes' notorious 'pineal gland' solution to this conundrum was mocked by Spinoza, who also rejected the entire metaphysical set-up that necessitated it. It is, of course, parallelism that provides Spinoza's alternative model. If the challenge for Descartes is to explain how a mental event like a decision can cause a physical one like raising the hand, Spinoza's response is to deny outright that such a thing is possible.

This might appear to put *Spinoza* – rather than Descartes – at the disadvantage, because, as Hampshire notes 'one naturally thinks of events in my mind causing events in my body'.[35] But the substance dualism offered by Descartes is incapable of supporting this pre-theoretical assumption: 'to conceive thought and extension as two substances is logically to preclude the possibility of strictly causal interaction between them'.[36] And for Spinoza, as we have seen, the appearance of two radically incommensurable types of event masks the reality of *one* set of events expressing itself in two ways. We take the act of will to be different from the act of arm-raising – to borrow Steven Nadler's example – because we consider it 'now under the attribute of thought, now under the attribute of extension'.[37] As Nadler writes, Spinoza's parallelism 'suffices to account for the correlation between states of the mind and states of the body in a human being without causal interaction'.[38] 'There is a correlation between… volition and arm-rising' Nadler continues, 'just because they are one and the same event'[39]– prefiguring Schopenhauer's assertion of the identity between willing and acting which is later taken up by Nietzsche. Thus Hampshire judges that 'Spinoza drastically overcomes' the difficulties of mind/body interaction which 'are shown very clearly in the embarrassed history of Cartesianism after Descartes'.[40]

As a codicil to this, I would point to two further features of Descartes' picture of the self – each again stemming from his substance dualism – which could be

[34] Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza*, 32.
[35] Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism*, 57.
[36] Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism*, 57.
[37] Spinoza, EIIP21S.
[38] Nadler, *Spinoza's 'Ethics'*, 145.
[39] Nadler, *Spinoza's 'Ethics'*, 145.
[40] Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism*, 57.

accounted confusions or embarrassments cleared-up or avoided by Spinoza. First, there is the previously-mentioned asymmetry between Descartes' two created substances, thought and extension. That it countenances multiple individual minds but just one extended substance might of itself be taken as a weakness of Descartes' metaphysics. And the claimed substantial union between the mind and body of each person is perhaps made still harder to fathom by the fact that one of these constituents is apparently an individual substance while the other is presumably one modification or accident of an infinitely large substance.

Second, for Descartes, mind and matter constitute different substances – God aside, the only two substances there are. One should, then, presumably be able to expect clarity concerning to which substance any particular thing belongs. Clear distinctions, however, don't necessarily always seem to be forthcoming. Are such things as emotions, perceptions and sensations mental or physical phenomena? If our intuition is that they are a bit of both, then Spinoza will easily be able to accommodate that intuition – 'he will always think of perceptions as processes which have two aspects', writes Hampshire; and again, 'Spinoza is arguing against Descartes in his survey of the emotions [which] … discourages a sharp and traditional contrast between analytical reason, on the one hand, and the passive emotions, on the other.'[41] *Descartes*, by contrast, owes us an account of the side of the mind/body divide on which each of these phenomena falls. Perhaps anything that is not unambiguously mental should be classified as physical.[42] Hampshire, in the quotation above, suggests that the emotions fall on the opposite side of the divide to thought. Lloyd makes a similar point regarding perception: '[t]he operation of the senses, rather than being seen as a function of the human soul, rejoins the material world'.[43] But if, as Lloyd claims, everything non-rational is part of the body, her diagnosis of the Cartesian self's status as 'metaphysically separated' from the rest of the world looks even more

[41] Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism*, *xl*.
[42] In order to ascribe this degree of clarity to Descartes one would need to over-rule certain of his interpreters – Allison, for instance, calls imagining, willing and feeling 'merely diverse forms of thinking.' Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza*, 30. In his Second Meditation Descartes declares himself unable to ascribe sense-perception to himself with certainty because it 'surely does not occur without a body', but he also states that *as* a thinking thing he 'imagines and has sensory perceptions.' René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* ed. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 18 and 19. I think that this – and probably Allison's comment too – can be explained by noticing that Descartes distinguishes between (in this case) the perception itself, which is a mental item and might conceivably have been implanted by a malicious deceiver and the bodily act of perception which in fact causes it. This of course only serves to render the split in the Cartesian self which, following Lloyd, I go on to highlight, all the more striking.
[43] Lloyd, *Part of Nature*, 33.

bleak. Those things from which it is ontologically separated include its own emotions and perceptions – things which we might normally take to be aspects of the self.

1.4.3

Spinoza, then, has no need to posit an asymmetry between the mental and the material, or to view the self as internally divided (or alternatively to leave it ambiguous as to whether certain phenomena are mental or bodily). I have suggested these two drawbacks of Descartes' metaphysics are corollaries to his difficulties regarding the possibility of interaction between mind and matter. We will see that those very difficulties are also intimately connected to what I would hold to be the other main attraction this aspect of Spinoza's philosophy offers compared to that of his predecessor: the completeness of his commitment to rationalism.

This is a comparison that Stuart Hampshire makes. 'If Descartes was a rationalist, in the sense that he advocated the solution of all problems of natural knowledge by the application of the mathematical method of pure reasoning,' he writes, 'Spinoza was doubly a rationalist in this sense'.[44] While, as we saw in section 1.2, Spinoza *universalized* the mathematical method, Descartes 'laid emphasis on' the distinction between the physical and mental 'in order to mark as clearly as possible the limits of the new mathematical science'. On the Cartesian picture 'Nature was therefore divided into Extension, the system described in mathematical physics, and the realm of thought, which cannot be so described.'[45] The crucial difference for Hampshire is that 'Spinoza, unlike Descartes, designed a single system of concepts to apply over the whole range of the natural world; he did not think of knowledge as divisible into unrelated compartments.'[46]

1.4.3 a)

Descartes and Spinoza, then, disagree over the kinds of thing that are susceptible to mathematical explanation – but perhaps this is a value-neutral difference. Two considerations suggest that it is not. Possibly the less persuasive of the two is the notion that Descartes failed on his own terms: that his philosophy falls short of providing a universal – and univocal – explanation towards which he took himself to be striving. Steven Nadler makes a suggestion along these lines, noting that

[44] 'Spinoza: An Introduction to his Philosophical Thought' in Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism*, 32.
[45] Both Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism*, 55.
[46] Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism*, 69.

'Descartes claims, rather optimistically, there is "no phenomenon of nature" which he has not explained in his treatise [*Principia Philosophiae*] by the principles enumerated, namely, the various sizes, shapes, and motions which are found in all bodies.'[47]

Nadler insists that Descartes includes in this claim 'not just the properties and operations of physical bodies among themselves, but also their effects in the human mind – in particular, sensations.'[48] He records that contemporary critics such as Gassendi were quick to argue that Descartes had here stumbled into 'a domain in which mechanistic explanation breaks down, in spite of Descartes' attempts to explain everything (motivated, perhaps, by his desire to replace the Peripatetic philosophy as a complete and comprehensive system).'[49]

I hesitate to endorse this assessment whole-heartedly: it is surely implausible that Descartes ever meant to claim an ability to explain *thought* in terms of the principles 'which are found in all bodies'. He might well have believed that he could explain *sensations* in these terms, but if so that might be because he took sensations to fall on the physical side of the mind/matter divide[50] – not because he took mind to be encompassed by mechanically explicable nature.

Nadler's suggestion that Descartes' proscription of the scope of mechanistic explanation represents a failure on his own terms is, then, unconvincing. Hampshire perhaps makes a more plausible case for a similar thesis: that Descartes and Spinoza were engaged in a common project, but that Spinoza managed to take it further than his predecessor. Hampshire writes:

> [a]fter Descartes had taken the first great step within natural philosophy towards a unitary physics by breaking down the Aristotelian division of the world into natural kinds, Spinoza took an equally large step towards the project of a single system of organized

[47] Steven Nadler, 'Doctrines of Explanation in Late Scholasticism and in the Mechanical Philosophy' in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy, Volume 1*, ed. Daniel Gerber and Michael Ayers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 513-552, 522.
[48] Nadler, 'Doctrines of Explanation ', 532. I have until now taken only the extended world as the referential scope of the term 'nature'. If, in his 'no phenomena of nature' claim Descartes only meant it to refer to that realm, his boast of being able to explain all natural phenomena would appear less 'optimistic' and any failure to explain aspects of human mental life mechanistically would not count as a failure to achieve that which he had set out to do. It is, however, far from certain that 'nature' always has that restricted meaning for Descartes; in the p55 quotation cited above, for instance, Stuart Hampshire clearly takes Descartes' 'nature' to encompass thought as well as extension.
[49] Nadler, 'Doctrines of Explanation', 532.
[50] See section 1.4.2 above

> knowledge when he challenged the last remaining division of reality into two irreducibly separate compartments.[51]

This is troublesomely ambiguous: are the quest for a unitary physics and that for a single system of knowledge supposed to be one and the same project? If not, is Descartes nonetheless presumed to subscribe to the latter? One might question, too, whether a 'single system of organised knowledge' would be obliged to offer only a single type of explanation – mathematical or mechanical – for all phenomena. Nonetheless, Henry Allison gives (perhaps slightly tentative) support for the view that Descartes *did* hold the ambition of producing a single system of knowledge, *and* one with a single explanatory principle – and did fail to achieve that: 'the dream of a unified science, which would include a science of man in one universally applicable system of explanation, which was already at least suggested by Descartes's idea of a universal mathematics, remained unfulfilled.'[52] Again, I suspect that a defender could plausibly respond that Descartes never intended to offer a univocal explanation for both thought and extension.

1.4.3 b)

In my view, the limited nature of Descartes' commitment to rationalism is indicated not so much by his failure to subsume all of reality under a single explanatory principle as by his failure to offer any real explanation at all for certain aspects of reality. In particular, Descartes fails through his inability to explain the relationship between mind and matter. Hampshire writes that, for Descartes '[i]t is a fact that changes in the world of thought produce, or lead to, changes in extended things… [b]ut… the connection between the two realms remains… impenetrable to our reason.'[53] Hampshire goes on to note that Descartes met the difficulty of apparent causal interaction between two distinct substances 'partly by a rather lame appeal to a special hypothesis in physiology, partly by accepting the causal relation between the

---

[51] 'Spinoza: An Introduction to his Philosophical Thought' in Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism* , 69-70.

[52] Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza*, 32. This view might also find support in John Cottingham's emphasis upon Descartes' aspiration towards systematicity and an 'organic unity' in knowledge. John Cottingham, *Descartes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 3. Steven Barbone and Lee Rice, authors of the introduction to the Hackett version of Spinoza's *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy*, go further, asserting that the interest of both Descartes and Spinoza 'was directed at foundational questions in physics because they believed, quite correctly, that these foundations are sufficient for the establishment of the entire system of human knowledge'. Benedict de Spinoza, *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* with *Metaphysical Thoughts*, ed. Steven Barbone and Lee Rice, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), *xxvii*.

[53] Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism* , 56.

world of thought and the world of extended things as a mystery which cannot in principle be made entirely intelligible to human reason.'[54] Descartes leaves us with an unhappy combination of the perhaps rather half-hearted, and certainly unconvincing, 'pineal gland' solution and a shrinking from offering any solution at all.

Allison makes a similar assessment to Hampshire, pointing out that Descartes had, indeed, a more general tendency 'to resolve any conflicts between faith and science or philosophy by assigning them to different realms and claiming that the sacred truths of the former are beyond the capacity of human reason'.[55] This was, of course, anathema to Spinoza, a crusading rationalist and debunker of (religious) superstition. Allison concurs: 'in opposition to the Cartesian appeal to the limits of knowledge, an appeal that was undoubtedly motivated by theological considerations, Spinoza affirms an absolute rationalism.'[56] Hampshire draws a parallel contrast between the scope of Spinoza's rationalism and that of Descartes: 'Spinoza, a rationalist without reservation, allowed no appeals to God's inscrutable will or to theological mysteries in the design of his metaphysics.'[57]

Thus one can perhaps level a general criticism – supported by the particular case of inter-substance causality – at Descartes: that his rationalist project, unlike Spinoza's, is constrained by his inability or refusal to offer an explanation for certain aspects of our experience, referring the reader instead to faith or the inscrutable will of God. This seems to have been a criticism that Spinoza himself felt to be apposite, his friend Meyer stressing, in his preface to Spinoza's *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy*, the contrast between the two philosophers on this point:

> that this or that surpasses human understanding, must be taken… as giving only Descartes' opinion. This must not be regarded as expressing our Author's own view. All such things, he holds, and many others even more sublime and subtle, can not only be conceived by us clearly and distinctly but can also be explained quite satisfactorily.[58]

---

[54] Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism* , 58.
[55] Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza*, 29.
[56] Allison, *Benedict de Spinoza*, 33.
[57] Hampshire, *Spinoza and Spinozism* , 58.
[58] Spinoza, *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* , 6. One might claim as the main advantages of *Descartes'* theory of the self that it allows for freedom and immorality – indeed, Edwin Curley *Behind the Geometrical Method*, 79 suggests that indeterminism could be the prime motivation behind Descartes' dualism. Spinoza, of course, would claim to be able to account for both freedom and immortality without recourse to dualism.

We have seen, then, that Spinoza offers what I have called an 'embedded-self' account of human beings, characterising them as being physical as much as they are mental creatures and as thoroughly integrated into reality at large. He does this by rejecting Descartes' dualism, while nonetheless eschewing materialism. I have argued, too, that his approach holds a number of advantages over its Cartesian predecessor – in particular, it allows him to avoid the problem of interaction and its corollaries and to present a more complete and consistent explanation of reality, in accordance with his thoroughgoing rationalism.

2. SCHOPENHAUER'S EMBEDDEDNESS THESIS

2.1 The Schopenhauerian Self

If parallelism and materialism do indeed constitute two distinct alternatives to Cartesian dualism, surely the most celebrated fourth option is idealism. And it is precisely Schopenhauer's claimed allegiance to Kantian transcendental idealism that seems to preclude *his* being an embedded-self theorist.

Schopenhauer holds that the world of objects is governed by the principle of sufficient reason and that this is supplied by the knowing subject. He writes in *The World As Will and Representation* that 'the essential, and hence universal, forms of every object, namely space, time, and causality… reside *a priori* in our consciousness.'[59] The objective world is unvaryingly law-governed: '[t]he whole content of nature, the sum-total of her phenomena, is absolutely necessary',[60] and this invariancy 'follows from the unrestricted and absolute validity of the principle of sufficient reason'.[61] But the forms of this principle, to repeat, reside in the mind of the subject, so that the knowing self is not subject to but the *provider of* that law. Moreover, Schopenhauer's idealist position – that '[e]verything that in any way belongs and can belong to the world… exists only for the subject' which 'is accordingly the supporter of the world'[62] – seems to suggest a self that is external to the world. Schopenhauer, then, appears to uphold two of the claims for human minds

[59] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation Volume I* trans. Eric F.J. Payne (Toronto: Dover, 1969), 5.
[60] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 286.
[61] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 287.
[62] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 5.

rejected by Spinoza: that they are immune to the laws that govern the rest of nature and that they differ from it at a fundamental metaphysical level.

Schopenhauer's subject, then, must at least be exceptional – it is '[t]hat which knows all things and is known by none'[63] – but also appears to be ontologically divided from and *prior to* the rest of nature. I will argue, however, that he nonetheless shares Spinoza's embeddedness thesis. For one thing, the *human individual* is not identical with the knowing subject (we have been considering the latter until now). Like Spinoza, Schopenhauer insists that we are body as much as mind, and the human body – like any other object – is utterly bound by the forms of the principle of sufficient reason ('this body is nevertheless an object among objects, consequently is liable to the laws of this objective corporeal world.').[64]

That the human individual is continuous with the remainder of reality according to Schopenhauer's philosophy remains unproven, however. The knowing subject may not exhaust the human self, but unless *it* is shown to abide by the same laws and exist in the same metaphysical realm as nature more generally then any individual of which it is a part remains aberrant.

The suggestion that, for Schopenhauer, the knowing subject is ontologically *prior* to the objective world can, at least, be quashed. As Günter Zöller argues, 'the relation between the subject and any and all of the objects which are subject to the principle [of sufficient reason] is not a relationship of one-sided dependence but a *correlation* in which none of the members can be what it is without the other ones.'[65] Schopenhauer's claim is that subject and object are equiprimordial poles of the world as representation: 'these halves are inseparable even in thought,' he writes, 'each exists with the other and vanishes with it.'[66] But is the self as knowing subject ontologically homogenous, as it is for Spinoza?

For Schopenhauer, the world in itself is will, from which the knowing subject is derived and to which it is subservient.[67] In §27 of *The World as Will and Representation* we discover that 'knowledge… proceeds originally from the will' and

---

[63] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 5.
[64] Paul Guyer, 'Schopenhauer, Kant, and the Methods of Philosophy' in Janaway, *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, 93-137, 122 quotes Schopenhauer, *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (New York: Cosimo, 2007), 124-5.
[65] Zöller, 'Schopenhauer on the Self', 25.
[66] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 5.
[67] Or at least, in Schopenhauer's more modest moods, the deepest metaphysical reality we can know is will.

that 'destined originally to serve the will for the achievement of its aims, knowledge remains almost throughout entirely subordinate to its service'.[68] The will's character is of striving, it 'always strives, because striving is its sole nature'.[69] In the context of a discussion of striving as the nature of the will, Schopenhauer lists various capacities which constitute means for the will's phenomena to pursue such goals as nutrition and the continuation of the species; among these, 'knowledge enters as an expedient'.[70] So the knowledge with whose appearance 'the *world as representation* now stands out at one stroke'[71] – that is, the knowing subject – is nonetheless both an instantiation of the Will and one more instrument of its striving.

This aspect of the human self too is, then, ultimately part of nature and bound by its 'laws'. It is not included among the phenomena of the world as representation but rather is its necessary correlate, and is not subject to its laws. It does, however, seem to be one among many instantiations of the will, which is the world in itself,[72] and to conform to its striving nature.

Indeed, for Schopenhauer the essence of the world – that is, the endlessly striving will – is recognised by extrapolating from ourselves as willing beings. In explaining this, Schopenhauer employs the kind of distinction between a scientific and a subjective attention to one's own body that we saw Naomi Scheman identify as key to the work of certain contemporary feminist philosophers. According to Schopenhauer, when an individual considers himself as representation – his body as just one more object – he sees 'his conduct follow on presented motives with the constancy of a law of nature' but can have no understanding of how those motives are able to influence him.[73] For Schopenhauer, 'the answer to the riddle is given to the subject of knowledge appearing as individual, and this answer is given in the word *Will*. This and this alone gives him the key to his own phenomenon'.[74] Because '[e]very true act of his will is also at once and inevitably a movement of his body', the subject has an insight into the 'inner mechanism of… his actions, his movements' which he would otherwise be aware of only as representation.[75]

---

[68] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 152. The exceptions to this being aesthetic experience and resignation.
[69] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 308.
[70] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 150.
[71] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 150.
[72] Or, again, at least the deepest metaphysical reality we can know.
[73] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 99.
[74] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 100.
[75] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 100.

The rest of nature is equally mysterious: 'even the most perfect etiological explanation of the whole of nature would never be more in reality than a record of inexplicable forces… the inner nature of… [which] was always bound to be left unexplained by etiology, which had to stop at the phenomenon'.[76] According to Schopenhauer, this problem can only be resolved by using 'the double knowledge which we have of the nature and action of our own body… as a key to the inner being of every phenomenon in nature'.[77] In fact, if other objects are to have any reality at all – beyond 'their existence as the subject's representation' – then it must be as instantiations of will, because '[b]esides the will and the representation, there is absolutely nothing known or conceivable for us.'[78] Thus to render the rest of nature explicable, and even to grant its existence independent of our representations, we must assume that its inner nature is the same as our own – after all, other than representations, will is the only thing of which we are aware.

For Schopenhauer, then, everything that exists is an instantiation of the will. Far from comprising exceptions to this, humans represent the paradigm case on the basis of which alone we can recognise will as the essence of everything else. Thus he writes:

> the *will* is *thing-in-itself*… the innermost essence, the kernel, of every particular thing and also of the whole. It appears in every blindly acting force of nature, and also in the deliberate conduct of man, and the great difference between the two concerns only the degree of the manifestation, not the inner nature of what is manifested.[79]

Schopenhauer's position can be summarised as follows. Human selves are bodily as much as they are mental, and our bodies are bound by the forms governing all phenomena. The intellect, like phenomena, emerges from and serves the will. I am, in essence, a willing being and as such a microcosm of the world whose essence is also will. Schopenhauer, then, is an embedded-self theorist.

2.2 Materialism Avoided

[76] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 98.
[77] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 104-5.
[78] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 105.
[79] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 110.

Schopenhauer's metaphysics, like Spinoza's, may invite a materialist misreading. For one thing, he writes that there is no substance other than matter.[80] For another, as we have seen, Schopenhauer holds that the intellect is emergent from and subservient to the will: 'as a rule, knowledge remains subordinate to the service of the will, as indeed it came into being for this service; in fact, it sprang from the will, so to speak, as the head from the trunk.'[81] And again, he holds that that it is via our embodiment that we recognise our own inner nature, and – by inference – that of everything else, as will. It is the body that Schopenhauer says is given to us as will – the body is concretized will. It seems, then, that my *will* is to be identified with my body: '[t]his body itself is only concrete willing', Schopenhauer insists, '[t]he act of will and the action of the body… are one and the same thing'.[82]

Nonetheless, Schopenhauer, explicitly rejects materialism, referring to its 'fundamental absurdity'.[83] In Christopher Janaway's gloss on Schopenhauer's pronouncement 'materialism starts by removing conscious subjectivity from its picture and can never work its way back to including it.'[84] How, then, are we to understand the claims about matter, mind, will and body cited above? As regards the first, Schopenhauer's statement about matter being the only substance is in fact intended only to make an anti-dualist point. The concept of substance, he suggests, is abstracted from that of matter because it gives the impression of being a more general term, purely in order that 'the second ungenuine subspecies' immaterial substance can be 'surreptitiously' introduced: the 'concept was formed solely to take up this secondary species.'[85] To call matter a substance adds nothing to our concept of it. 'Strictly speaking,' indeed, 'the concept of substance must be entirely rejected, and that of matter be everywhere put in its place.'[86] Schopenhauer, then, is not making any positive point in calling matter the only substance – certainly not that matter exhausts reality or that ultimate metaphysical reality is material.

But if my will and body are identical, is it then my body from which my mind emerges and to which it is subservient? Clearly not: matter, for Schopenhauer, is

[80] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 491.
[81] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 177.
[82] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 175 and 100.
[83] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 27.
[84] Christopher Janaway, 'Will and Nature' in Janaway, ed *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, 138-170, 147.
[85] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 491.
[86] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 491.

causality and arises through the combination of time and space.[87] Matter, then, presupposes the forms of the principle of sufficient reason, which are provided by the knowing subject; 'all causality, hence all matter… is only for the understanding, through the understanding, in the understanding.'[88] Thus there can be no matter without intellect, and

> the fundamental absurdity of materialism consists in the fact that it starts from the *objective*… in order to let organic nature and finally the knowing subject emerge from it, and thus completely to explain these; whereas in truth everything objective is already conditioned as such in manifold ways by the knowing subject with the forms of its knowing, and presupposes these forms; consequently it wholly disappears when the subject is thought away.[89]

It is therefore clear that it cannot be my *body* (considered as a material object) from which my intellect springs. While it is true that my will is objectified (precisely by my intellect!) as my body, in as much as it is that from which my intellect emerges, my will must be something ontologically prior to matter as well as mind. In fact the materiality of my body is precisely that which differentiates it from my will's inner nature: body is *concretized*, *objectified* will 'i.e., will that has become representation.'[90]

In this my own will is utterly continuous with the will itself: just as mind and matter emerge from the will, my body and mind instantiate the striving of my will. At the level of the willing self, then, I am fully embedded in reality as a whole. (And it is surely not matter but the ontologically prior will – as ultimate metaphysical reality of which mind and matter are expressions, and outside of which there is nothing – that best bears comparison with Spinoza's substance).

2.3 Ethics and the Embedded Self

I have argued that Schopenhauer and Spinoza share an embedded-self thesis without, in either case, subscribing to materialism. The thesis plays an equivalent systematic role in the philosophy of each thinker, emerging out of a monist metaphysics and bearing fruit in a similar ethics. Indeed I would suggest that the

[87] Schopenhauer, *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, 97 'matter is throughout pure causality'.
[88] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 11.
[89] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 27-28.
[90] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 100.

concordance between Schopenhauer and Spinoza which I have been discussing is to a surprising extent carried over into their respective ethical positions. One might otherwise have expected these to diverge radically due to the weight Schopenhauer assigns to Kantian noumenal freedom – a notion that is clearly unavailable to Spinoza. For both philosophers, however, right actions are informed by an understanding of one's status as thoroughly intertwined with the world as such. Thus Spinoza contends that when we recognise that a person who has injured us is not a free agent in the Cartesian sense but one link in a causal chain, our hatred of them will be replaced by a sense of understanding. Similarly, the realisation that, as finite modes, we are dependent on other modes of like nature for the achievement of our own ends – and in particular the recognition of our being situated in a social network of other human beings – will lead us to cooperate and display benevolence. As for Schopenhauer, the three basic elements of character, on his view, are malice, egoism and compassion. In those for whom compassion dominates, it does so on the basis of an innate understanding of reality that is more adequate than the world-view possessed by those who are predominantly malicious or self-seeking. The compassionate person recognises that the distinction between individuals is merely phenomenal; at the level of ultimate reality self is utterly indistinguishable: I am *really* as much you as I am me. But if perpetrator and victim are, in reality, one, then to hurt another is to hurt myself. Compassion, then, is the enactment of a world-view that sees through phenomenal individuation to the undifferentiated Will.

Just as strikingly, for each philosopher knowledge of the unity of nature and one's own embeddedness is crucial to the greatest good that an individual can achieve. In Spinoza's case, our highest blessedness – the intellectual love of God – just consists in the pleasure emergent from understanding the structure of substance as it really is (including, necessarily, our own place within it). The one mode of being that *Schopenhauer* ranks more highly than compassion is asceticism. Like compassion, asceticism is premised on seeing through the world as representation to the will in itself, the difference being that for the ascetic the knowledge that individuation is alien to ultimate reality is supplemented by an awareness that suffering is essential to life.

2.4 Differences from Kant

I have suggested that Spinoza's account of the self as embodied and embedded was forged in response to the comparatively isolated self envisioned by Descartes. While Schopenhauer, too, is taken by Zöller and others to be offering an alternative to a Cartesian picture of the self, it is not so much Descartes' philosophical legacy as that of Kant that makes Schopenhauer's embeddedness thesis remarkable. His subscription to this thesis is one indication that Schopenhauer is a Kantian only to a certain point.

Kant's critical project puts epistemology centre-stage: philosophy is merely dogmatic where it fails to investigate the tools on which it relies – reason, in particular. With this much, Schopenhauer is in accord. What he seems to dispute is the scope of the prohibition which Kant's investigations in the *Critique of Pure Reason* impose upon metaphysics. For Kant, all transcendent metaphysics is demonstrably illegitimate, the 'antinomies' indicating the fate of reason when it attempts to overreach its bounds (which coincide with the limits of experience – Sebastian Gardner comments that Kant indicates in the Preface that the *Critique*'s 'verdict will be, simply, that reason *is* competent to know things lying *within* the bounds of experience, but *not* to know anything lying *outside* them.').[91] Schopenhauer, however, is to be found maintaining – to take three examples – that the world in itself is will, that there exist Platonic Ideas of which all individual things are manifestations and that each human self is the possessor of an intelligible character, a free act of will outside of time. Each of these is a claim to knowledge that exceeds the limits of possible experience as understood by Kant: that which comes to us in the spatio-temporal forms of intuition and is organised by the categories.

It is precisely Schopenhauer's transgression of the limits set for knowledge by the *Critique of Pure Reason* which allows him to offer an embedded-self theory in the style of Spinoza. In so far as he remains faithful to (his own understanding of) Kant's picture, Schopenhauer can offer the following account of the self. 1. My self as experienced as one phenomenon among many – my body viewed objectively – is perfectly continuous with other objects of experience. 2. The knowing self which transcendental philosophy reveals me to be, though, the subject who *organises* such experience under the principle of sufficient reason, is necessarily *other* to its phenomenal objects. But for Schopenhauer, nonetheless, human selves *are* continuous

[91] Sebastian Gardner, *Routledge Guidebook to Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1999), 24.

with reality at large – because we are willing selves and the world in itself is will. Thus Schopenhauer's embedded-self thesis depends on his metaphysical claims about the ultimate, perhaps the noumenal, natures of self and world. It is, then, the return to metaphysics in Schopenhauer's philosophy – that most often remarked of his departures from Kant – that makes possible his commitment to the embedded-self thesis.

What warrants this departure? If Schopenhauer is taken to be more metaphysically ambitious than Kant – perhaps even to claim to know the character of the thing-in-itself – then one might well imagine that this is due to a return to rationalism in his philosophy. Rationalist confidence in the ability of reason to discern the structures of reality – in the human mind's attunement to those structures – might even seem to be a prerequisite for a metaphysician. Systems of metaphysics are, of course, largely associated with rationalist philosophy – not least by Kant, who comments that 'metaphysics is a completely isolated speculative science of reason, which… rests on concepts alone'[92] Loosely, metaphysics concerns that which transcends experience, so one should not expect one's empirical findings to be able to furnish a metaphysics. A little more technically, Kantian experience is structured by *a priori* forms, so we cannot expect *experience* to be able to elucidate the character of the reality behind those structures – rationalism, then, may seem to be the only possible route via which to come by a metaphysics.

So there's a reason to think a metaphysician would be a rationalist – can there be any reason to believe *Schopenhauer* could be plausibly characterised as such? Possibly so, picking up on a hint from Frederick Beiser, who suggests that the return to metaphysics in much of post-Kantian German Idealism might be founded precisely on a Spinozist brand of rationalism. Beiser's contention is that the more metaphysically-inclined Absolute Idealist successors of Kant differ crucially from him in what they understand by the term 'idealism': *not* that reality is dependent on a knowing subject but that it is a manifestation of the ideal, conforming to a rational archetype. This, then, is a model of idealism which is compatible not only with rationalism but also with *realism* – in this spirit, Schlegel is able to name Spinoza,

[92] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), Second Edition Preface, B*xiv*.

both a rationalist and a realist, 'the highest idealist'.[93] Schopenhauer's *own* idealism is, surely, circumscribed in a way that Kant wouldn't countenance.[94] Refusing to stop at the claim 'the world is my idea' he proceeds to inform us that the world in itself is will, within which the self – which *supports* the world as idea – is embedded. In other words, like the Absolute Idealist followers of Spinoza cited by Beiser, Schopenhauer posits a reality which is ontologically prior to the idealist structure which he, following Kant, identifies. One might, therefore, be tempted to make a case for Schopenhauer's confidence in positing a world as will underlying representation as being similarly grounded in a return to a Spinozist rationalism.

I am committed to the claim that Schopenhauer, like Spinoza, insists that the human self is thoroughly integrated into reality at large. I have also argued that his subscription to this embedded-self thesis depends on Schopenhauer's comparative metaphysical boldness, his transgression of the Kantian limits on knowledge. I am not, however, convinced that this re-emergence of metaphysics is explained by a return to rationalism in his thought. It might seem plausible that if Schopenhauer differs from Kant in subscribing to a Spinozan thesis, that would be explained by his adopting a more Spinozist method than Kant. Equally, that if Schopenhauer mirrors his near-contemporaries and compatriots the Absolute Idealists in being more metaphysically bold than Kant, that would be explained in his case too by a return to a Spinozist style of rationalism. But Schopenhauer, of course, would strongly object to being lumped together with his fellow post-Kantian thinkers, and while he might share their realism – something that Zöller attributes to Schopenhauer in common with Fichte and Schelling – it would be a mistake to think that he shares the rationalism that Beiser sees in them.[95] His own realism has a different underpinning. In fact, Paul Guyer has convincingly demonstrated that it is specifically an *empiricist* twist that Kantian transcendental philosophy receives in Schopenhauer's work.[96] Guyer points out that Schopenhauer rejects transcendental argumentation as a methodology, claiming instead that we discover space, time and causality to be

[93] Frederick C. Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2008), 459.
[94] For further discussion of this, see Günter Zöller's 'German Realism: the Self-Limitation of Idealist Thinking in Fichte, Schelling, and Schopenhauer' in *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*, ed. Karl Ameriks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 200-218.
[95] In as much as he is an idealist, Schopenhauer *is* positing the subject-dependence of the world of experience, not the existence of a rationalist archetype.
[96] Guyer, 'Schopenhauer, Kant, and the Methods of Philosophy', 93-137.

universal features of experience through direct scrutiny. And more generally, that philosophy, for Schopenhauer, 'begins in perception, and essentially consists in giving abstract and 'contracted' expression to the most salient features of perception.'[97] Borrowing a term from Merleau-Ponty, Guyer judges that 'the "primacy of perception" is the basis for Schopenhauer's positive philosophy as well as his critique of Kant.'[98]

It is this empiricism, I would suggest, which presents Schopenhauer with options unavailable to Kant, sanctioning his transgression of the First Critique's epistemological limits. We can, I think, identify three reasons for Schopenhauer's faith in *perception*'s ability to offer metaphysical insight. First, and this is a point which Guyer emphasises, Schopenhauer contends that with his insistence that there can be no experience where the understanding is not involved, Kant 'has burdened the understanding with an impossibility merely in order to have less need of sensibility'.[99] But if unaided sensibility or perception does more work than Kant gives it credit for, we can have a greater degree of confidence than Kant does in the informative nature of straightforwardly perceptual experiences (aesthetic experiences, for instance, being metaphysically informative despite being non-conceptual).[100]

Second, for Kant, experience comes in spatio-temporal form but is also subsumed under concepts by the understanding. For *Schopenhauer*, concepts are not part of the furniture of experience but subsequent abstractions drawn from it by reason. Schopenhauerian experience is therefore subject to less *a priori* clutter than its Kantian counterpart, offering an account of reality comparatively free from moulding by subjective forms. Again, this alternative account of conceptualisation is one of Schopenhauer's empiricist divergences from Kant which Guyer lists – I would simply add that it might well play a role in accounting for Schopenhauer's comparative enthusiasm towards metaphysics. If experience is less veiled by subjective forms than Kant took it to be, we can put greater faith in its ability to tell us about the true nature of reality.

Third, one could perhaps argue that, with his description of immediate bodily awareness of oneself as willing in Book 2, Schopenhauer indicates an entirely new

[97] Guyer, 'Schopenhauer, Kant, and the Methods of Philosophy', 110.
[98] Guyer, 'Schopenhauer, Kant, and the Methods of Philosophy', 111.
[99] Schopenhauer, FR, 131.
[100] Guyer points out that one consequence of Schopenhauer's emphasis on perceptual over conceptual knowledge is a less rigid delineation between ourselves and other animals – another hallmark of the embedded-self theorist.

source of knowledge – itself perceptual – which is not recognised by Kant. If so, he can avoid the previously mentioned dilemma of either remaining within the knowledge internal to spatio-temporally and conceptually formed experience (never being able to make any substantive claims about that which underlies representation) or falling back on a rationalist faith in some kind of congruence between the structure of reality itself and that of reason. In other words, one could make metaphysical claims about self and world without transgressing the experiential limits Kant sets for knowledge. On this reading of Schopenhauer, reason and phenomenal experience are not the only sources of knowledge: there is also inner experience – direct, bodily awareness which is not moulded according to the *a priori* forms and can thus be relied upon to reveal things as they are in themselves.[101]

One might deny that inner experience is supposed to constitute a wholly new kind of knowledge which is entirely free from what I referred to as the clutter of *a priori* forms – one might, for instance, as Sandra Shapshay does, take the view that it remains temporal. But nonetheless there *are* types of experience for Schopenhauer (aesthetic experience alongside inner intuition) which, in comparison to ordinary phenomenal experience are relatively uncontaminated by subjective forms of experience and thus able to present a less veiled picture of reality.[102] This, then, is the third reason I would adduce for Schopenhauer's faith in empiricism as a conduit for the return of metaphysics.

2.5 Embeddedness: Differences in Routes and Detail

Before finishing by indicating one or two differences in detail between Schopenhauer's embedded-self thesis and that of Spinoza, it is worthwhile to draw out one consequence of the preceding discussion which may also tempt one to query

[101] One implication of this is that for Schopenhauer things-in-themselves (at least, our bodily selves in themselves) aren't, after all, *noumenal* if that means unexperienceable – while ordinary, representational experience can't access them, there is another kind of experience that can. On this interpretation, all knowledge remains within experience, but not all experience remains within the categories and forms (of intuition). It is worth noting that Sandra Shapshay, who also suggests Schopenhauer sees inner experience of the will as a form of knowledge to which Kant was blind, argues that this knowledge remains 'shaped by our mental faculties.' Sandra Shapshay, 'Poetic Intuition and the Bounds of Sense: Metaphor and Metonymy in Schopenhauer's Philosophy' in *Better Consciousness: Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value* ed. Alex Neill and Christopher Janaway (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2009): 58-76, 62.

[102] Bearing in mind that even ordinary phenomenal experience is, on Schopenhauer's model, itself relatively uncluttered by *a priori* forms compared to its conceptually-moulded Kantian counterpart.

whether it can really be quite the same thesis to which the two are subscribing. This worry concerns the different – indeed opposite – routes by which each reaches the thesis. One might say Spinoza *derives* the self from his monist metaphysics. In *starting* by defining substance and ascertaining that it must be unique, Spinoza cannot but conclude – when he moves on to investigate the human self – that it must be embedded in the world at large. By contrast, it is the bodily awareness of oneself as a willing being that Schopenhauer takes as his starting point and he uses this as a key to understand reality as a whole. Again, it is inevitable that the human self will be consonant with the rest of nature, but the direction of explanation is reversed.

Perhaps this contrast is inevitable given the one's rationalism and the other's empiricism, but I do think the point that, in formulating their views of the self, Spinoza is responding primarily to Descartes, Schopenhauer to Kant, can be overstated. As I have noted, such commentators as Günther Zöller and Severin Schroeder claim *Schopenhauer*'s philosophy as the first real alternative to the Cartesian theory of self. While I have disputed that in this chapter, citing Spinoza as an earlier deviator, it does at least suggest that Schopenhauer too may well have had Descartes in mind as an opponent. But there *is* a specifically Kantian challenge for Schopenhauer in arriving at an embedded-self thesis: the restriction placed on the scope of knowledge by the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Schopenhauer is able to offer an embedded-self thesis because he is willing to make the kind of metaphysical claims about self and world that Kant disallows himself. (The early Schopenhauer embedding the idealist structure he inherits from Kant *itself* into a picture of reality as such as will).[103] Attributing this metaphysical confidence, in Schopenhauer's case, to the kind of return to a Spinozist rationalism that Beiser sees in some of Schopenhauer's contemporaries strikes me as implausible. A more credible defence, I think, can be built on Guyer's characterisation of Schopenhauer as a thorough-going *empiricist*: as having more faith than Kant does in what experience can tell us. If Schopenhauer was persuaded, for the reasons adduced in the previous section, that there were at least forms of experience which could convey metaphysical truths, then he could make those claims about self and world which ground his embeddedness thesis *without* appealing to any non-experiential source of knowledge. All knowledge

[103] If Schopenhauer later reneged on his view that the world is *in-itself* will, he presumably still held that the intellect emerges from will, even if the latter is simply the world's inner essence – or, that there is a thing-in-itself from which intellect emerges, and will is our nearest approximation to it.

comes through experience, yes; all experience is moulded by the forms of intuition and the categories, no. Ordinary experience is non-conceptual; aesthetic experience and inner bodily awareness are subject to fewer forms still and so are more informative about reality as such. It is, perhaps ironically, his being – as Guyer has argued – a *more* enthusiastic empiricist than Kant that ultimately allows Schopenhauer to subscribe to a Spinozist-style embedded-self thesis.

Spinoza and Schopenhauer, then, differ regarding the route by which each arrives at the embedded-self thesis. Spinoza is reacting against the Cartesian image of the self as a kingdom within a kingdom – Schopenhauer may well be doing the same, but he must also be reneging somewhat on Kant's idealist picture of the self. Spinoza is a rationalist for whom the self's embeddedness follows from the uniformity of (the laws of) nature, Schopenhauer an empiricist for whom we identify the inner nature of the world via an immediate awareness of the self's inner nature. But there are differences, too, in terms of the precise *content* of the embedded-self thesis to which each subscribes. The similarities between Schopenhauer and Spinoza here can be summarized as follows. Individual minds and bodies are expressions of an underlying metaphysical reality. Because of this, human individuals as body *and* mind are consonant with the rest of reality.[104] Dualism is rejected while avoiding reductive materialism. However, differences remain. While Spinoza's attributes are ubiquitous and eternal, mind and matter appear to be more patchy for Schopenhauer in two ways. First, there is an asymmetry between intellect and matter. While every physical thing, as object, requires a mental pole, not everything expressed physically also has a mental expression – just one mind is sufficient to establish the entire objective world, and in fact there are far fewer minds than bodies in reality. Schopenhauer, then, does not subscribe to panpsychism.

The second departure looks more problematic for Schopenhauer. His evolutionary account suggests that the world as representation emerges at a particular time: once the will expresses itself as a creature with knowledge, the whole world of individuated bodies appears at a stroke. If creatures with minds evolved, they must have had predecessors. But time, as one of the forms of the principle of sufficient reason, only appears with the first intellect, the will in itself being atemporal. Equally,

[104] For both, too, the body is the immediate object of the mind, through which it knows the rest of nature: Spinoza, EIIP26 '[t]he human mind does not perceive any external body as actually existing, except through the ideas of the affections of its own body.'

the evolutionary account seems to presuppose the existence of individuals prior to any knowing subject, even though individuation is supposedly foreign to the will in itself. Schopenhauer addresses this seeming inconsistency in Section 7 of *The World as Will and Representation*, explaining that 'time with its whole infinity in both directions is also present in the first knowledge' and that 'the phenomenon filling this first present appears as the effect of previous states filling [the] past according to the law of causality.'[105] The elusive, and perhaps ultimately unsatisfactory claim is that the individuals from which the first knowing beings emerged – to which they were of course causally connected – along with the past that houses them were retrospectively brought into being with the first instance of knowledge.

To conclude briefly, Schopenhauer follows Spinoza in offering an embedded-self thesis according to which human beings are material as much as they are mental and are enmeshed in reality as such. This picture has definite advantages over the (Cartesian) standard model of the human self and can be maintained whilst rejecting materialism. It is not, however, a return to Spinozan rationalism which allows Schopenhauer to uphold this thesis in the face of his professed Kantianism, but rather his own unique brand of empiricism. Indeed, the routes by which Schopenhauer and Spinoza reach the embedded-self thesis are quite different, and there are, too, some differences in the precise nature of the embedded-self thesis to which the two thinkers subscribe. Both, though, are left with a common problem: how to account for individuation in a way that is compatible with monism and the embedded-self thesis. I turn to this in the next chapter, arguing that the two thinkers tackle the problem in parallel ways and that there are resources within Spinoza's philosophy and its attendant scholarship which can help us to read Schopenhauer's own solution in a more careful and charitable way.

[105] Both Schopenhauer, WWR I, 31.

Individuation

For Spinoza, reality is substance; for Schopenhauer, it is will. For each, any human being is thoroughly enmeshed in that metaphysical stuff (and the possession of a mind doesn't alter that). This raises the question of what it is that is distinctive of human beings such that we can distinguish them from other kinds of thing. More generally, how can we identify different species or types of thing? Most generally of all, Schopenhauer and Spinoza may seem to owe us an explanation of individuation as such – of what it is that refracts univocal being into separate entities.

Given embeddedness, then, the challenge of individuation arises. In this chapter I will investigate the solutions Schopenhauer and Spinoza offer to this shared challenge. I will set out Schopenhauer's account of individuation and the key problems it may be said to face, before turning to examine Spinoza's alternative model. Finally, I will investigate the extent of commonalities between the two and argue that Spinoza's theory of individuation offers resources upon which a Schopenhauerian could draw in order to counter some of the criticisms raised against Schopenhauer's own account.

1. INDIVIDUATION IN SCHOPENHAUER

1.1 Individuation of the Phenomenal

At the level of phenomena, individuation is easily explained for Schopenhauer. The phenomenal is precisely the realm of the individual. Phenomena are, by definition, subject to the *principium individuationis* – it is the forms of that principle which *produce* them.

Of the world as representation, Schopenhauer tells us in §2 of WWR, 'one half is the *object*, whose forms are space and time, and through these plurality.'[106] Schopenhauer reiterates this point – that plurality is a function of space and time – when discussing the principle of sufficient reason in §23: 'time and space belong to this principle, and consequently plurality as well, which exists and has become

[106] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 5.

possible only through them.'[107] It is through the forms of space and time that a monistic reality can become a plurality of entities. And this is to say, it is through space and time that individuation is possible. 'In this last respect', Schopenhauer continues, 'I shall call time and space the *principium individuationis*'.[108]

The world as representation is one of a plurality of phenomenal individuals as a result of the workings of the forms of the principle of sufficient reason – space and time in particular. Space and time allow for plurality, Schopenhauer explains, because they make coexistence and succession possible. This needs both time and space together, and their products causation and matter: 'countless objects *coexist*, because Substance, *i.e.* Matter, remains permanent in spite of the ceaseless flow of Time, and because its states change in spite of the rigid immobility of Space'.[109]

For Schopenhauer, then, 'plurality of the homogeneous becomes possible only through time and space'[110]. Because of the *principium individuationis*, monism is compatible with the multiplicity of the world as we experience it. The will which is one appears as innumerable individuals thanks to the imposition by the knowing subject of the forms of space and time. The correlative of this is that the Will itself is foreign to individuation, as Schopenhauer makes clear in Volume II: 'beyond the phenomenon, in the true being-in-itself of all things… time and space, and therefore plurality, must be foreign'[111] and reiterates a little later 'the plurality of things has its root in the subject's manner of knowledge, but is foreign to the thing-in-itself, to the inner primary force manifesting itself in things'[112].

This second formulation foregrounds the debt to Kantian transcendental idealism in Schopenhauer's account of individuation. Individual objects are not to be found 'out there' but instead are produced by knowing subjects. The world of objects 'cannot walk into our brain from outside all ready cut and dried through the senses and the openings of their organs.'[113] Compare Kant in the Critique of Pure Reason taking raindrops as an example 'not only these drops are mere appearances, but even their round form, indeed even the space through which they fall are nothing in

[107] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 112.
[108] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 112.
[109] Schopenhauer, FR, 33.
[110] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation Volume II* trans. Eric F.J. Payne (Toronto: Dover, 1966), 274.
[111] Schopenhauer, WWR II, 275.
[112] Schopenhauer, WWR II, 322.
[113] Schopenhauer, FR, 61.

themselves, but only mere modifications… of our sensible intuition'.[114] For Kant and Schopenhauer alike, the knowing subject is active in producing the objects it perceives. One central feature of this Copernican Revolution in philosophy is that the structures which *individuate* objects – space and time and, for Kant, concepts – are organisational tools of the knowing subject.

Individuation, therefore, is explained by the idealist Schopenhauer as the product of the forms of the principle of sufficient reason – specifically, space and time – working together. It is, then, the world as representation which is divided up into different individuals. The world in itself is foreign to plurality because it is not subordinate to the forms of the principle of sufficient reason. When taken together with Schopenhauer's comments on the dream-like and illusory nature of phenomenal experience, this may suggest that he believes our common understanding of the world as being populated both by separate individuals and by different kinds or species of beings to be simply false. '[T]here is really *only one being*', he writes, 'the illusion of plurality (*Maya*), resulting from the forms of external, objective apprehension'[115]. This impression may be furthered by the ethical theory of part IV, with Schopenhauer depicting the world-view that sees through individuation as more adequate. In fact, however, this is not Schopenhauer's final word on the subject of individuation – there *is*, for him, a way of distinguishing individuals that is truer to and more informative about reality.

1.2 Platonic Ideas

Schopenhauer does believe that there is a more adequate way of distinguishing types of thing. Human individuals are not merely illusory phenomena and nor are species-types. We can distinguish different kinds of things at a more metaphysically profound level in virtue of the Platonic Ideas.

Schopenhauer's term 'Platonic Ideas' refers to '[t]hose different grades of the will's objectification, expressed in innumerable individuals, [which] exist as the unattained patterns of these, or as the eternal forms of things'[116]. For Schopenhauer as

[114] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A46/B63 187. Schopenhauer's appendix to *The World As Will and Representation*, of course, criticizes Kant for sometimes falling away from this strict understanding of an object as something that is by definition a product of the forms of experience.
[115] Schopenhauer, WWR II, 321.
[116] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 129.

for Plato, there is an archetype 'cat' which is instantiated in the millions of individual cats we can experience: this archetype is the Platonic Idea. There is, then, such a thing as feline nature – a cat is really different from a dog because each participates in a different form or Idea.

The Platonic Ideas boast a greater degree of reality than phenomenal individuals, they more adequately reflect the mind-independent reality of the Will. Whilst technically remaining part of the world as representation – they are *objects* known by subjects – they are obscured by fewer mental filters. The forms of space and time do not apply to them.

Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas correspond to species rather than to specific individuals. The archetypes of species are (at least relatively) real; phenomenal creatures are instantiations of them resulting from the imposition of the forms of the principle of sufficient reason. Because of this, individuals do not possess the eternity and universality of Platonic Ideas and are less adequate objectifications of reality. As Hilde Hein puts it in her article 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas': 'only the Idea which is depicted in the animal has true being... The individual features, as well as the position in space and time of the animal, are of no account.' So for Hein. 'while Ideas are eminently real, phenomena cannot be claimed to exist fully.'[117]

There is one exception to the rule that Platonic Ideas correspond to species rather than individuals.[118] Each human being, Schopenhauer says, has his or her own unique Platonic Idea in the form of an intelligible character.[119] This means that by adopting (and adapting) the theory of Platonic Ideas, Schopenhauer is able to explain how kinds of things differ from each other, how human beings differ from all other kinds of things as such and how human beings differ from one another. With regard to the first, cats are different from dogs because individual cats partake in or express a different Platonic Idea to individual dogs. Human beings differ from other kinds of thing because, rather than simply partaking in a species-Idea, each individual corresponds to its own Idea. And this in turn grounds a real distinction between one human individual and another. The distinction between one cat and another is merely phenomenal – a function of space and time. But those between different species kinds,

[117] Hilde Hein, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 4, no. 2 (1966): 135.
[118] In this sense of the term it is not only flora and fauna which fall under distinct species, but natural forces too – gravity, for instance, has its own Platonic Idea on Schopenhauer's schema.
[119] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 156: 'the intelligible character coincides with the Idea.'

between the species human and all other species taken together and between different human individuals are more adequate reflections of reality.

Platonic Ideas, then, are expressions of species rather than individuals (except in the case of human beings). They are not subject to space and time and so are eternal and unchanging. Because of this, they are more real than phenomenal individuals – they are obscured by fewer forms. Nonetheless, they remain within the form 'object for a subject' and so are ultimately part of the world as representation rather than the world as will.[120]

Schopenhauer, then, has a two-level account of individuation. The forms of space and time, imposed by the knowing subject, operate as a *principium individuationis*, dividing the phenomenal realm into distinguishable things. But at a more profound metaphysical level – in a way that is more truly reflective of the nature of reality in itself – beings are individuated in virtue of the Platonic Ideas of which they are instantiations.

1.3 Problems with the Platonic Ideas

Schopenhauer's theory of the Platonic Ideas is one of the most criticised aspects of his thought. I turn now to explore some of the problems commentators have identified, and the extent to which they can be successfully addressed on Schopenhauer's behalf.

One point to be considered is whether Schopenhauer's account of Platonic Ideas is able to escape the problems said to afflict Plato's own version. Most pressing, perhaps, is the complaint – dating back to Aristotle – that with the theory of the Forms Plato posits a second world which does not help to explain the actual one we inhabit. The salient charge, here, is of inventing an excessive ontological category. Hilde Hein argues that Schopenhauer can indeed rebut this charge, even if Plato cannot. Schopenhauer's account of Platonic Ideas constitutes a 'radical departure' from the metaphysical dualism of Plato's version, according to Hein.[121] For Schopenhauer, Hein argues, will, Ideas and phenomena are in fact metaphysically the same: '[t]here are no *entities* called Ideas, which are metaphysically apart from other aspects of

[120] Schopenhauer ,WWR I, 175.
[121] Hein, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas', 135.

reality.'[122] Instead Ideas stand between the other two categories (will and phenomena) *epistemologically*. Hein positions Schopenhauer as closer to his other great philosophical influence, Kant, in this respect. Kant's 'noumenal and phenomenal realms are distinguished only epistemologically', she contends, 'Schopenhauer, in his concept of the Platonic Idea, adheres to the Kantian monism.'[123] This, of course, depends on a dual-aspect reading of Kant's transcendental idealism along the lines of that offered by Henry Allison (as opposed to the 'two-worlds' account preferred by Strawson and Paul Guyer). But if we accept that for Schopenhauer and Kant even the noumenal and the phenomenal are not metaphysically discrete entities, then of course we cannot characterise Schopenhauer's Ideas as a third ontological category.

Is this reading of Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas as an epistemological rather than an ontological category convincing? Two influential commentators, Christopher Janaway and Julian Young, are divided on the subject. Janaway asserts that 'Schopenhauer follows Plato in claiming that Ideas exist in reality, independently of the subject' and that 'Ideas are parts of nature awaiting discovery.'[124] On the other hand, Young argues that unlike Plato 'Schopenhauer does not, in fact, treat them as things at all.'[125] The artist doesn't perceive 'the Idea *instead* of the individual, but rather perceives the individual *as Idea*.' Indeed, 'all that is to be found in the world as representation are individuals. So, ontologically speaking, the Ideas can only be normal individuals.'[126]

If we do accept that the Platonic Ideas are only epistemologically, not metaphysically, distinct from other representations then we must see any talk of them as more real than individual phenomena as misleading. On this model, it is better to think of them as more *adequate* ways of knowing reality – and Schopenhauer does indeed describe them as the immediate, adequate objectivity of the will. This formulation reemphasises that the world as representation is a manifestation of – not distinct from – the will; the Platonic Ideas, too, are ways the will appears to us and differ from phenomenal reality in terms of the adequacy of the perspective they give on it.

---

[122] Hein, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas', 136.
[123] Hein, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas', 136.
[124] Christopher Janaway, *Schopenhauer: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 75.
[125] Young, *Schopenhauer*, 132.
[126] Young, *Schopenhauer*, 132-3.

Schopenhauer gives us further detail as to their nature when he describes the Platonic Ideas as representing different grades of distinctness of the will's manifestation. The idea that they form a hierarchy might itself seem implausible – Dale Jacquette calls it 'reminiscent of pre-Darwinian conceptions of the animal kingdom.'[127] But a more profound problem concerns how this notion of 'grades of distinctness' is to be fleshed out. Schopenhauer makes it clear that he does not claim that one Idea manifests *more* will than another: '[i]t is not a case of there being a smaller part of will in the stone and a larger part in man',[128] in fact 'the inner being itself is present whole and undivided in everything in nature'.[129] What he cites is 'a higher degree of this objectification' and different 'degrees of visibility'.[130] Again, this seems to be more of an epistemological than a metaphysical distinction. Just as the Platonic Ideas reveal to us more about the inner nature of reality than do ordinary phenomena, so the Platonic Idea of man is more revelatory of the will's character than the Idea of a stone. However, with the distinction between phenomena and Platonic Ideas in general, this is explained by the fact that the former are obscured by more forms than the latter. It isn't clear that there is an equivalent difference between one Idea and another to underpin Schopenhauer's distinction between them: every Idea is subject only to the form object-for-subject.

Another very familiar criticism of Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas is that their appearance in his system is merely *ad hoc*. It may be said that his introduction of the Platonic Ideas is more plausibly explained by Schopenhauer's avowed desire to reconcile the thought of his two heroes Kant and Plato than by any *philosophical* necessity. Alternatively, that the Platonic Ideas act as a kind of *deus ex machina*, winched into the *World as Will and Representation* to cover over gaps or solve problems that can't be resolved by resources proper to the system.

Both James D. Chansky in 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas: a Groundwork for an Aesthetic Metaphysics' and G. Steven Neeley in 'Schopenhauer and the Platonic Ideas'[131] enumerate commentators who have levelled versions of this criticism at

---

[127] Dale Jacquette, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer* (Chesham: Acumen, 2005), 99.
[128] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 128.
[129] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 129.
[130] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 128.
[131] James Chansky, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas: a Groundwork for an Aesthetic Metaphysics' in E. von der Luft (ed.), *Schopenhauer, New Essays in Honour of His 200th Birthday (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988),* 67-68. G. Steven Neeley 'Schopenhauer and the Platonic Ideas: A Reconsideration' *Idealistic Studies* 30, no. 2. (2000): 123.

Schopenhauer. Bryan Magee, both note, doubts that the Ideas are necessary to Schopenhauer's philosophy and suggests that they were introduced as an *ad hoc* solution to one particular difficulty that simply 'got out of hand'.[132] D.W. Hamlyn had earlier described their introduction into the system as sudden and surprising and as a necessary but failed attempt to link the phenomena and the will.[133] Each quotes Hilde Hein's assessment that '[t]he Ideas play by no means as fundamental a role in the philosophy of Schopenhauer as in that of Plato.'[134] Finally, Neeley points out Michael Fox's judgement that Schopenhauer's introduction of the Platonic Ideas is 'arbitrary at best' and 'to a large degree responsible for giving his system the appearance of being a hybrid that suffers from an inexcusably careless job of grafting.'[135]

Christopher Janaway judges that such assessments aren't entirely fair, pointing out that 'the Ideas were one of the earliest parts of the system to fall into place.'[136] Neeley's own response to the objections he outlines highlights the different and complementary functions of science and philosophy according to Schopenhauer's world-view. Far from being inconsistent with the remainder of his system, 'Ideas are necessary if Schopenhauer is to complete the scientific image of the world'.[137] While causal scientific explanations must ultimately end in the brute fact of some particular inexplicable natural force, philosophy's aim is to grasp the meaning of these forces. It is precisely the job of the Platonic Ideas to 'describe the action and being of natural forces in a manner not open to the sciences'.[138] Without them, 'Schopenhauer could not have rendered a full understanding of the world.'[139]

Neeley's emphasis is on the epistemological function of the Ideas. He notes that they alone are 'capable of rendering *immanent* metaphysical insight', differentiating them from both ordinary empirical and from *a priori* transcendental sources of

---

[132] Bryan Magee, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 239 Cited in James Chansky, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas`, 67 and G. Steven Neeley, 'Schopenhauer and the Platonic Ideas`, 123.
[133] David Walter Hamlyn, *Schopenhauer* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 103 cited in James Chansky, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas`, 67-8 and G. Steven Neeley 'Schopenhauer and the Platonic Ideas`, 123.
[134] Hein, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas', 144, quoted in Chansky, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas`, 68 and Neeley 'Schopenhauer and the Platonic Ideas`, 123 (cited as Hilde *Heine* in the latter).
[135] Michael Fox, "Schopenhauer on Death, Suicide and Self-Renunciation," in *Schopenhauer: His Philosophical Achievement* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980), 149. Quoted in Neeley, 'Schopenhauer and the Platonic Ideas`, 123.
[136] Janaway, *Schopenhauer*, 75.
[137]Neeley, 'Schopenhauer and the Platonic Ideas`, 140.
[138] Neeley, 'Schopenhauer and the Platonic Ideas`, 124.
[139] Neeley, 'Schopenhauer and the Platonic Ideas`, 125.

knowledge.[140] For Neeley, many of the objections to the Ideas fall away when you recognise what they are *not*: '[t]he Ideas are neither a metaphysical "half-way house," a "feed-pipe between the noumenon and the world of phenomena," nor a third separate construct of reality'[141] (citing the characterisations of Copleston, Magee and Magee again respectively). He answers Christopher Janaway's concern that the Ideas 'are supposed to be real, existing in nature prior to perception... the Ideas are thus required to repose somewhere between appearance and thing in itself, and it is deeply uncertain whether there is any such location for them to occupy'[142] by remarking that because the Ideas are not spatio-temporal, there can be no genuine question as to 'where' they exist. While this does not seem to me to adequately resolve the question of what kind or degree of metaphysical reality pertains to the Platonic Ideas in Schopenhauer's system, it is worth noting that, like Hein as discussed above, Neeley offers a deflationary account of the metaphysical role of the Ideas.

In *his* attempt to defend Schopenhauer against the criticisms both he and Neeley list, James D. Chansky argues that the Platonic Ideas are pivotal to Schopenhauer's system as 'the proper objects of metaphysical knowledge'.[143] In describing the Ideas as *objects* of metaphysical knowledge rather than simply as *acts* of knowing, it may sound as though Chansky pictures them as more metaphysically substantial than Hein or Neeley would admit. Nonetheless Neeley is probably right to gloss Chansky's defence of the Ideas as similarly dependent on characterising them as epistemological rather than metaphysical cogs in Schopenhauer's machinery. He writes that 'Chansky's argument… serves to doubly underscore the central importance of the Platonic Ideas in Schopenhauer's philosophy by concentrating somewhat more heavily upon the *epistemological* function they play'.[144] What Chansky claims is that the Ideas can be seen as naturally arising in Schopenhauer's project when that project is understood to be a 'subversion of reason and rational metaphysics' which itself emerges from his 'fusion' of transcendental idealism with empirical realism.[145]

Chansky, I would argue, convinces on the vital contribution of the Platonic Ideas to Schopenhauer's project. As he says, they are fundamental in resolving the problem of how we can have a metaphysics that offers genuine insight, going beyond

[140] Neeley, 'Schopenhauer and the Platonic Ideas`, 127.
[141] Neeley, 'Schopenhauer and the Platonic Ideas`, 129.
[142] Janaway, *Schopenhauer*, 127.
[143] Chansky, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas`, 68.
[144] Chansky, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas`, 125.
[145] Chansky, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas`, 69.

what ordinary experience tells us, but which remains immanent – neither transcendent nor even transcendental. This might recall the argument developed in the previous chapter, starting from Paul Guyer's insisentence on the strikingly *empiricist* twist which Schopenhauer puts on transcendental idealism. If Kant has debarred transcendent metaphysics and if transcendental idealism can offer no insight into the inner essence of things, the only hope is an alternative kind of experience less veiled by forms than ordinary phenomenal representation. This is, as I argued there, what inner awareness of the self as will offers but also what we gain from aesthetic experience. In recognising Platonic Ideas through art works or natural beauties we grasp, perceptually rather than conceptually, the essence of things outside (most of) the forms of ordinary experience.

The Ideas do, then, play a crucial role in Schopenhauer's project when it is understood in this way, but Chansky's response to the other part of the '*ad hoc*' objection is perhaps less clear. Schopenhauer *needs* the Platonic Ideas, but is he entitled to them – are they genuinely immanent to his system or effectively a *deus ex machina*? All Chansky says is that

> Schopenhauer is brought quite directly to his way of considering the world metaphysically by means of the Ideas by, prior to their introduction into his system, having brought about the subversion of reason and rational metaphysics… through his fusion of an intensified transcendental idealism with an empirical realism or materialism.[146]

Chansky sees this as distinct from the claim that they allow Schopenhauer to offer a new kind of metaphysics. For me, however, it too explains only why the Ideas are necessary to Schopenhauer's project – that is, because rationalist metaphysics must be abandoned – and doesn't give an independent reason to accept their reality. Perhaps the focus of the second half of Chansky's chapter on aesthetic experience hints towards one possible answer. Arguably, the evidence for Platonic Ideas as a mode of metaphysical insight is empirical. We can be sure that things – individuals, natural forces – have graspable essences because we have in fact grasped them in our aesthetic experiences. What Schopenhauer says in §37 may well seem to fit with this: anyone who couldn't perceive Ideas at all 'would have no susceptibility at all to the beautiful and the sublime'. Again, '[w]e must therefore assume as existing in all men

[146] Chansky, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas`, 69.

that power of recognizing in things their Ideas... unless indeed there are some who are not capable of any aesthetic pleasure at all.'[147]

Even if we accept that the Platonic Ideas are not entirely *ad hoc*, there remains a set of questions as to whether Schopenhauer's picture of them really makes sense on his own terms. There may seem to be inconsistencies in his account. In the first place Schopenhauer talks of a multiplicity of Ideas but describes them as innocent of the forms space and time. The problem, then, is of explaining how there can be a plurality of individuals without reference to the *principium individuationis*. If any given Idea is subject only to the form of being object for subject, what differentiates one from another?

A second seeming paradox affects the Platonic Ideas of individual human beings in particular. It is crucial to Schopenhauer's ethical theory that each person has an intelligible character, which is, he says, a 'free act' of the person concerned. In §28, Schopenhauer identifies a person's specific intelligible character with a Platonic Idea.[148] One problem may seem to be that it is difficult to see how a Platonic Idea could be the sort of thing that could act. Equally, as Christopher Janaway notes, Schopenhauer calls a person's intelligible character 'a 'free act' occurring in the realm of the 'in itself'', which sounds incompatible with the intelligible character being a Platonic Idea – Ideas, after all, being objects. The problem here is both about whether a Platonic Idea could be expected to act at all, and about what something which exists as a representational object is doing acting in the noumenal realm. In fact, Schopenhauer can be defended against this. After stating that 'the intelligible character coincides with the Idea' he goes on to amend this 'or more properly with the original act of will that reveals itself in the Idea.'[149] Nonetheless, the act revealed by that Idea remains troublesome. As Janaway argues it is difficult to see how such an atemporal act of will can be seen as the act of a particular individual person.[150] This renders problematic Schopenhauer's ethical claim that people can be held responsible for their acts because they are responsible for their intelligible characters. Equally, given that the will is beyond plurality, can Schopenhauer legitimately claim that each intelligible character is or reveals a distinct act of will? And yet he maintains that each person has his or her own intelligible character and that the Platonic Idea of each

[147] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 194-5.
[148] Schopenhauer , WWR I, 158.
[149] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 156.
[150] Janaway, *Schopenhauer,* 96.

species and force of nature is the manifestation 'of an indivisible act of will that is outside of time.'[151]

Hilde Hein points to a third incongruity.[152] For Schopenhauer, will is goalless – that its striving remains unsatisfied is inherent to it, nature *must* be imperfect.[153] Schopenhauer, though, seems occasionally to get caught up by the common, non-technical meaning of 'ideal' as betokening perfection, as when he suggests Ideas are 'objectives which nature vainly seeks to realize.'[154]

Aside from the criticisms that can be levelled at Schopenhauer's picture of the Platonic Ideas, it is worth considering whether or not it really offers what we would want from a theory of individuation. One point to note is that while Schopenhauer claims that there is a distinct Platonic Idea corresponding to each human individual, the same is not true of other things. For everything else, there is only a species-Idea. And (unlike Plato) Schopenhauer is explicit that only natural kinds have Ideas. This means, then, that particular nonhuman creatures or forces have no individuality at this level and nor do manufactured things or even *kinds* of manufactured things. A Schopenhauerian must be satisfied with the distinctions between one cat and another and between castles and lipsticks as such being merely phenomenal. Another consideration, of course, is that even those distinctions which are founded on Platonic Ideas do not pertain to the ultimate level of reality but remain dependent on a knowing subject, since – despite what Schopenhauer says about the intelligible character – Ideas are objects not will.

The Platonic Ideas, then, are central to Schopenhauer's account of individuation but remain a somewhat troublesome element of his system. I believe it can indeed be shown that they are crucial to Schopenhauer's philosophical project. It is true, too, that some apparent absurdities melt away when the Ideas are given a more epistemological spin, downplaying any claims for them to be a substantial component of Schopenhauer's metaphysical structure. He need not be seen as inventing an, excessive, third ontological category when he introduces the Platonic Ideas. This does though, in my view, prompt the question as to what precisely the nature and status of Platonic Ideas as Schopenhauer conceives them are. It may be that we should see them as abstract objects. They are, after all, free from the forms of space and time.

---

[151] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 156.
[152] Hein, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas', 140.
[153] Hein, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas', 141.
[154] Hein, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas', 140.

Janaway seems to understand them as having at least this degree of reality, but for him this leaves Schopenhauer owing an explanation of where they belong metaphysically. On the other hand, Young seems to take a nominalist position: an Idea is, he says, 'a merely nominal object'.[155] This notion of a 'nominal object' may seem somewhat contradictory. Possibly what Young is arguing here is not anti-realism about Platonic Ideas but that they exist *in* rather than separately to the individuals which instantiate them. In other words, he seems to be rejecting a reading of Schopenhauer's Ideas as abstract objects. However, if the Ideas do indeed exist *in* their instantiations that may seem to leave them as concrete entities existing in space and time.

Thus, worries remain and it is not entirely clear how Schopenhauer himself means us to understand the Ideas. As discussed, he writes of them as grades of distinctness of the will's objectification, specifying that this does *not* mean a higher grade contains a larger part of the will.[156] The question of how we *are* to flesh out what differentiates these grades is perhaps a special case of the general problem of how one Platonic Idea is to be distinguished from another given that they are not subject to the *principium individuationis*. And this in turn is one of several puzzles – set out above – relating to the exact status Schopenhauer envisages for these vital constituents of his account of individuation. With this in mind, I turn now to Spinoza to see whether he can offer a more propitious explanation of individuation, before offering a comparative analysis of the two accounts.

2. INDIVIDUATION IN SPINOZA

2.1 The Reality of Spinozan Individuals

The one substance, for Spinoza, is divided into different modes. These are individuated in virtue of the pattern of motion and rest among parts that is characteristic of each. In the light of his embedded-self thesis, the question with which I am most concerned here – one that has preoccupied readers of Spinoza from the beginning – is that of the degree of reality which he grants to individuals as such. It has often been alleged that individuals are effectively swallowed up by substance in

[155] Young, *Schopenhauer*, 132.
[156] Schopenhauer, WWI, 128.

Spinoza's system: that substance is real and modes merely illusory. In this section I will argue against the view that modes are simply products of imaginative 'knowledge' – the view that we err in attributing real existence to them. I will suggest that recognising that Spinoza has a metaphysical – as well as a physical – account of how modes are individuated allows us to explain and understand this. I will also briefly address the question of whether Spinoza has an adequate account of *personal* identity in particular.

According to Lee Rice, 'Joachim provided perhaps the least ambiguous statement of the claim that there is no room for individuals in Spinozism because there is but one substance. Individuals, or modes, are thus absorbed; and to speak of an individual is to speak from a radically subjective viewpoint.'[157] The charge that Spinoza's system is unable to account for real individuation has a pedigree. Yitzhak Melamed lists some of the thinkers who have levelled it at Spinoza.[158] He quotes Maimon's assertion that '[i]n Spinoza's system the unity is real while the diversity is merely ideal' and notes that Hegel follows Leibniz in identifying Spinoza's metaphysical picture with Eleatic monism in which individuality disappears.[159] The German Idealists, he reminds us, thought of Spinoza's attributes as merely subjective, time as unreal and modes as fictions – in Hegel's case, because they (modes) have no independent reality. 'Hence,' Melamed writes, 'in the *Encyclopedia Logic*, Hegel claims that Spinoza's substance is a "dark shapeless abyss, so to speak, in which all determinate content is swallowed up as radically null and void".'[160] Melamed himself, although as we shall see he goes on to defend Spinozan individuals as non-illusory, judges that 'Spinoza's criteria for the individuality of finite things are indeed very weak'.[161]

Marx Wartofsky also remarks the long history of the objection that Spinoza has difficulty in providing a true account of individuation. He notes that correspondents such as Tschirnhausen and Oldenburg raised it with Spinoza himself. For Wartofsky and the contemporaries of Spinoza he cites, the problem is posed as one of a contradiction between the simplicity and indivisibility of substance and the claimed

[157] Rice, 'Spinoza on Individuation', 207.
[158] Melamed, 'Acosmism or Weak individuals?: Hegel, Spinoza, and the Reality of the Finite' Journal of the History of Philosophy 48, no. 1 (2010): 77-92.
[159] Melamed, 'Acosmism or Weak individuals?', 79 and 78, respectively.
[160] Melamed, 'Acosmism or Weak individuals?', 85.
[161] Melamed, 'Acosmism or Weak individuals?', 82.

real existence of finite individuals.[162] In 'Spinoza's metaphysics' Jonathan Bennett reminds us that ordinary finite bodies are not parts but modes of substance, for Spinoza.[163] His extremely influential take on the nature of modes arguably gives more bite to the criticism that individuals have no real existence in Spinoza's system. Bennett takes a blush as his paradigm example of a mode – something that is not so much a thing in its own right as a quality of something else. For Bennett's Spinoza, individuals are not the primary units of explanation. Rather than saying that a pebble exists in a certain region of space (and has spatial relationships with other bodies), one should instead say that a certain region (temporarily) has a 'pebbly' quality.[164] Thus substance is the primary entity of Spinoza's metaphysics, substance is indivisible, any finite existents are merely qualities of some particular region of that substance.

The line of criticism under discussion most obviously develops as a response to some of Spinoza's claims in the first part of the *Ethics*, in particular on this question of modes and the divisibility of substance. At IP15S, he writes that parts of matter 'are distinguished only modally, but not really' and that Nature's parts 'cannot be really distinguished, that is, that corporeal substance, insofar as it is a substance, cannot be divided.' (This is based on IP13 which states that '[a] substance which is absolutely infinite is indivisible.') It is worth noting, though, that in talking of a 'real' distinction, Spinoza uses the same language as does Descartes in discussing the real distinction between mind and matter.[165] In other words, by a 'real' distinction he means 'a distinction of substance' rather than, say, 'a non-illusory distinction'. Modal distinction does, of course, differ from substantial distinction – it does not inevitably follow that any distinction between modes is unreal in the sense of being illusory, false or meaningless. So the question remaining to be answered is, given that substance cannot be divided, what kind and degree of differentiation *can* there be between one mode and another?

---

[162] Marx W. Wartofsky, 'Nature, number and individuals: Motive and method in Spinoza's philosophy' *Inquiry* 20, no. 1-4 (1977).
[163] Jonathan Bennett, 'Spinoza's metaphysics' in ed. Don Garrett, *The Cambridge Companhion to Spinoza* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 67.
[164] Bennett, 'Spinoza's metaphysics', 70.
[165] Spinoza: 'unde eius partes modaliter tantum distinguuntur, non autem realiter'. Compare Spinoza explaining Descartes' position in his exposition of Descartes' *Principles*: 'Duae substantiae realiter distingui dicuntur, cùm unaquaeque ex ipsis absque aliâ potest existere', 10.

Some have concluded that modes only exist for the imagination or senses – the kind of knowledge which, for Spinoza 'is the only cause of falsity'[166] and which, unlike the other two kinds of knowledge, cannot teach us 'to distinguish the true from the false.'[167] Such a view might seem to be supported by Spinoza's claim in IP15S that 'if we attend to quantity as it is in the imagination… it will be found to be finite, divisible, and composed of parts; but if we attend to it as it is in the intellect, and conceive it insofar as it is a substance… it will be found to be infinite, unique and indivisible.' The second part of this formula, with its qualification 'and conceive it insofar as it is a substance' again need imply no more than that the intellect will find no *substantial* distinctions within substance as such. The first part, however, does seem to suggest that such distinctions as there are – that is, modal distinctions – exist for the imagination (alone?). As Viljanen glosses it in 'Field Metaphysic, Power, and Individuation in Spinoza' '[h]e claims that those who are inclined to divide extension attend to it only superficially, as it appears to our senses.'[168] Viljanen concludes, nonetheless, that 'although extended substance cannot strictly speaking be divided, it is not altogether without distinctions'.[169] Genevieve Lloyd argues interestingly that singularity is real even *though* it is constructed through operations of the imagination. Drawing on the interpretation offered by Antonio Negri in *The Savage Anomaly*, she posits that the imagination does not simply distort reality but is involved in its construction. On her picture, duration and individuality are not objects of adequate knowledge, but nonetheless 'are not illusory but real'.[170] I share the view that Spinoza's modes are individuated not merely superficially but would contend, further, that individuation is *not* only in the imagination of observers.

The distinction between modes could be subjective without depending upon the first kind of knowledge. In other words, modes could be relative to a knower without being merely imaginative. There is a serious strand of Spinoza scholarship that envisages a status of this kind for the attributes. Spinoza defines an attribute in ID4 as 'what the intellect perceives of a substance, as constituting its essence.' For those who

---

[166] Spinoza, IIP41.
[167] Spinoza, IIP42.
[168] Valtteri Viljanen, `Field metaphysic, power, and individuation in Spinoza` *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 37, no. 3 (2007): 397.
[169] Viljanen, `Field metaphysic`, 398.
[170] Genevieve Lloyd, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Spinoza and the Ethics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005) 58 cites Antonio Negri, *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

read the attributes as having a subjective existence – that is, as being dependent upon an intellect – it certainly does not follow that they are consigned to the first kind of knowledge. There may be good reason to believe that even if modes are individuated only from the point of view of some intellect, this individuation too can be the object of some more adequate kind of knowledge than imagination. In IIP40S2 Spinoza defines the third kind of knowledge as that which 'proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things.' In Part V he reminds us of this, and establishes that to achieve the third kind of knowledge is the mind's greatest virtue. It is a kind of knowledge which is necessarily true and adequate. VP22 tells us that 'in God there is necessarily an idea that expresses the essence of this or that human body, under a species of eternity.' For Spinoza, then, there exist true, non-illusory ideas of the essences of finite things. Melamed captures this thought in 'Acosmism or Weak Individuals? Hegel, Spinoza, and the Reality of the Finite'

> Spinoza's discussion of the third kind of knowledge in part five of the *Ethics* makes clear that it pertains to the knowledge of *finite* modes—such as our bodies and minds—as well (see, for example, *E* 5p22 and *E* 5p31). But if the finite modes are mere illusions, why would they be the objects of the *adequate* third kind of knowledge?[171]

There is, then, the prospect of a Spinozan account of how things are individuated within substance that would allow such individuals to be the objects of adequate knowledge. I now turn to review briefly the most propitious models of how Spinoza's theory of individuation might work, in order to draw out such an account.

2.2 Physical Individuation

At first sight, Spinoza seems to account for individuation in material terms. In IIL1 he tells us that '[b]odies are distinguished from one another by reason of motion and rest, speed and slowness'. The full definition of an individual follows at IIA2":

> When a number of bodies, whether of the same or of different size, are so constrained by other bodies that they lie upon one another, or if they do so move… that they communicate their motions to each other in a certain fixed manner, we shall say that those

[171] Melamed, 'Acosmism or Weak individuals?', 90.

> bodies are untied with one another and that they all together compose one body or Individual, which is distinguished from the others by this union of bodies.

In my view, the two readings of Spinoza's theory of individuation which stick most closely to this physics-based, mechanistic starting point are those offered by Steven Barbone in 'What Counts as an Individual for Spinoza' and by Don Garrett in 'Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation'.[172]

Don Garrett claims that he reads Spinoza as offering a metaphysical account of individuation. The distinction he draws, however, is between a metaphysical account explaining what *constitutes* an individual and an epistemological account which would 'explain how one knows something to be an individual thing'.[173] Garrett's model is not metaphysical as opposed to physical, it focuses squarely on ratio of motion and rest as the key marker of the individual. Garrett interestingly fleshes out two crucial aspects of this model. First, he clarifies what the relevant ratio is *of*: motion and rest are 'dual quantities of force… distributed differentially throughout… extended substance.'[174] This remains a physicalist account, though a subtle one. More significantly for our purposes, Garrett then tries to establish what the individuating ratio itself *is*. He argues that the phrase 'fixed ratio of motion and rest' should not be understood too restrictively, and quotes approvingly Bennett's alternative formula, 'coherence of organisation'.[175] For Garrett, there are two minimal conditions required for a thing to count as sufficiently organised in terms of motion and rest to constitute an individual. First, the quantity of motion and rest belonging to any part must not vary 'entirely independently' of that of the remaining parts. Second, and intriguingly, 'the manner in which the motion and rest of these parts is interrelated must conform to some enduring pattern'.[176] Garrett himself says no more on the matter here, but the notion of an 'enduring pattern' perhaps hints at something more than a mechanistic account of individuation. This thought is developed further in Garrett's 'Spinoza on

---

[172] Barbone, 'What Counts as an Individual for Spinoza?' in eds. Oli Koistinen and John Biro, *Spinoza: Metaphysical Themes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002): 89-112 Don Garrett `Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation,` in eds. Jorge Gracia and Kenneth Barber *Individuation in Early Modern Philosophy*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994): 73-101.
[173] Garrett, `Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation,` 73.
[174] Garrett, `Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation,` 80.
[175] Bennett, 'Spinoza's metaphysics', 86.
[176] Garrett also writes that 'Spinoza claims at the end of the Preface to Part IV that a horse would be destroyed if it were changed into an insect or man only on the grounds that it would thereby lose its form' Garrett, `Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation,` 85.

the Essence of the Human Body and the Part of the Mind that is Eternal', to which I will return shortly.

Barbone's explicit intention is to argue for a purely physicalist account of Spinozan individuation, and he is admiring of the influential interpretation set out by Alexandre Matheron in *Individual and Community in Spinoza*.[177] Thus Barbone writes that we 'can follow Matheron in employing a physical model to understand Spinoza's theory of individuals' and holds, following Matheron, that 'the individual "boils down to"… a mathematical equation describing the physical activities, that is, the operations, of that individual.'[178] Nonetheless, Barbone also appeals to a notion of 'form' and of an individual's essence as a blueprint, a 'relation that could be expressed mathematically.'[179] Even Matheron himself distinguishes material from *formal* elements of the individual which, Barbone remarks, accords with common sense in as much as material parts of an individual can be changed while the individual remains as long as the pattern characterising it is constant. In order to differentiate Spinozan *individuals* from mere aggregates, Matheron and Barbone state the need for a formal element organising the material element: a pattern which is the source of the individual's operations. This, on Matheron and Barbone's reading of Spinoza, is the individual's conatus. 'The defining character of each individual, then, is its singular conatus, which is its power to exist and to operate as that individual.'[180]

Garrett and Barbone, then, point to a pair of Spinozan concepts (conatus and form) which may seem to take us beyond an account of what constitutes the individual relying on pattern of motion and rest alone. Concepts, in other words, which indicate something beyond the mechanistic account of individuation offered in Part II of the *Ethics*. The first of these, then, is the concept of conatus. IIIP6 states that '[e]ach thing, as far as it can by its own power, strives to persevere in its being' and IIIP7 that '[t]he striving by which each thing strives to persevere in its being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing.' As Garrett puts it 'nothing can *be* an individual thing unless it tends to persevere in its own existence.'[181] For Spinoza, then, to be an individual is to have a particular organisation or pattern of motion and rest, *and* to strive to continue in existence by maintaining this ratio. This striving –

[177] Alexandre Matheron, *Individual and Community in Spinoza (*Paris: Minuit, 1987)
[178] Barbone, 'What Counts as an Individual for Spinoza?' 97.
[179] Barbone, 'What Counts as an Individual for Spinoza?' 98.
[180] Barbone, 'What Counts as an Individual for Spinoza?' 100.
[181] Garrett, `Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation,` 96.

conatus – constitutes an individual's actual essence. More significant still for Spinoza's metaphysical account of individuation, though, is his notion of an individual's *formal* (as opposed to actual) essence. This notion will be play a crucial role in what I take to be the most promising accounts of Spinozan individuation, as discussed below. Before outlining these, I clarify why such alternative accounts are needed.

It is as well that his account has these additional resources, since if the mechanistic model was all Spinoza had to say on the subject of individuation, his account would have two troublesome weaknesses. First, Spinoza would still owe us an explanation of the nature and method of distinguishing individual *ideas or minds*. This is a worry that Ruth Saw and Stephen Nadler raise in rather different contexts. For Saw, by the end of Part I Spinoza has given us 'an account of the unity of man as a bodily being, and nothing whatever of his unity as a thinking being.'[182] Nadler suggests that what he calls Spinoza's 'explanatory materialism' whereby mental functioning is understood in terms of physical functioning breaches Spinoza's own axiom [IA5] that '[t]hings that have nothing in common with one another cannot be understood through one another.'[183] Garrett's response that while individuals are defined as bodies 'it is not difficult to infer' a parallel theory for the individuation of minds may well be right, but it is also true to say that Spinoza's account of individuation is not restricted to the discussion of bodies in Parts I and II.[184]

Second, any straightforwardly mechanistic model of individuation does seem to me to expose Spinoza to the criticism that finite things exist only for the imagination – for the inadequate first kind of knowledge. In the first place, IIL1 tells us that bodies are to be distinguished in terms of motion and speed – features which would seem to be relative to an observing body. It is, for Spinoza, the imagination that gives us perspectival, sensory knowledge. Again, when something is known under the third kind of knowledge it is known 'sub specie aeternitatis'. What we have from Parts I and II is a picture of bodily finite modes possessing a particular duration. If there is nothing more to an individual, for Spinoza, it is difficult to see how it could be known from the viewpoint of eternity. Indeed (although this is disputed by Bennett), Marx Wartofsky holds that for Spinoza time, number and measure belong inherently to the

[182] Saw, 'Personal Identity in Spinoza', 5.
[183] Steven Nadler, *Spinoza's Ethics: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 148.
[184] Garrett, `Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation,` 89.

first kind of knowledge.[185] They are 'aids to the imagination' and 'fundamentally false'.[186]

As Wartofsky puts it, the crux of the problem is that 'either there is only one individual, and there are no finite existences of individual things…; or there is no infinite substance, but only the aggregate of finite individuals.'[187] He surveys three attempts to reconcile the (seeming) contradiction between the simplicity of substance and its differentiation into real individuals, by all of which he is unpersuaded. [188] The first of these he calls the Platonist reading, according to which only substance is real and individuals are an imaginative illusion (compare the critics enumerated at the start of this section). The second, Neo-platonist, interpretation presents modes as possessing a lesser *degree* of reality, derived from substance. Finally, the nominalist position holds that 'only individuals are real' with substance a 'bloodless' abstraction.[189] Wartofsky's own purpose in examining Spinoza's account of individuation is precisely to expose this contradiction and to diagnose it as resulting from Spinoza's methodology. Nonetheless, in so doing his article strikes me as offering some resources valuable in helping to reconstruct a satisfying Spinozan account of individuation. Certainly, Wartofsky is convinced that *Spinoza* views individuals as real. He confirms that what the third kind of knowledge offers is knowledge of the essences of individual things (and that, *pace* Christopher Martin, these must be unique rather than common essences).[190]

In the 'letter on the infinite' to Meyer, Wartofsky points out, Spinoza says we can only think of modes in terms of quantity and of limited duration when we think of them in abstraction from their real being in substance.[191] Individuals are not *parts* of substance and are not denumerable. If they are not to be simply fictions, but proper objects of the third kind of knowledge, then Wartofsky concludes that individuals must themselves be infinite. So for Spinoza, either individuals are not real, or they

[185] Jonathan Bennett, `Spinoza's Metaphysics` in ed. Garrett, D. *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 77 qualifies this, suggesting that it is only measurements of time that are unreal or imaginative. He does not take Spinoza to mean that time itself has no place in a true account of reality.
[186] Wartofsky, 'Nature, number and individuals ', 473.
[187] Wartofsky, 'Nature, number and individuals ', 466-7.
[188] Wartofsky, 'Nature, number and individuals ', 459-460.
[189] Wartofsky, 'Nature, number and individuals ', 459.
[190] Wartofsky, 'Nature, number and individuals ', 467-8. Christopher Martin's interpretation of essences is discussed in the next section.
[191] Wartofsky, 'Nature, number and individuals ', 473.

must be 'somehow infinite in their essence, yet singular in their existence.'[192] For Wartofsky, this remains an 'enormous tension in Spinoza's system',[193] and yet it points to the very kind of picture that forms the basis of at least two of what I would suggest to be the three most useful readings of Spinozan individuation.

2.3 Individuation by Formal Essences

The first of these is set out in Christopher Martin's 2008 article 'The Framework of Essences in Spinoza's *Ethics*'.[194] Martin distinguishes between two kinds of modal essences – actual and formal. While actual essences are durational and particular, formal essences are eternal and pertain to species. He identifies a mode's actual essence with its endeavour to maintain its ratio of motion and rest - in other words, with its conatus.[195] Formal essences on the other hand, Martin believes, should be understood as mediate infinite modes. For Martin, Spinoza's mediate infinite modes are best pictured as laws of nature. Formal essences are infinite in the sense that they are eternally and universally true specifications of what it is to be some particular thing. Thus Martin suggests '[t]he mediate infinite mode *humanity*, for instance, stipulates conditions for a mode's being a human being'.[196] The relationship between a mode's actual and its formal essence, according to Martin, is one of instantiation: formal essences are laws of nature, actual essences are instances of the former.[197] This helps to explain how a mode that is itself of finite duration can nonetheless have an infinite and eternal essence. 'As these essences exist apart from their exemplification in actually existing modes', Martin writes, 'they exist even when unexemplified, and as such are the object and idea of non-existing modes.'[198]

---

[192] Marx W. Wartofsky, *Models: Representation and the Scientific Understanding* (Boston: Springer, 1979), 273.
[193] Wartofsky, 'Nature, number and individuals ', 475.
[194] Christopher Martin, 'The Framework of Essences in Spinoza's *Ethics*', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 16, no. 3 (2008): 489-509.
[195] Martin, 'The Framework of Essences', 497.
[196] Martin, 'The Framework of Essences', 504. Martin continues 'and these conditions are true of all modes of the attribute, i.e. those that are and those that are not human beings.' This captures the sense in which formal essences are infinite – the idea that they are pervasive throughout a given attribute in the sense of… 'So it is by being applicable to every mode, even if not actually applied or exercised, that mediate infinite modes may be said to be infinite' 'Formal essences, being neither manifestly pervasive nor finite, are infinite in this way as well, so formal essences are mediate infinite modes.'
[197] Martin, 'The Framework of Essences', 507-8. Martin draws a direct comparison with Plato's forms, here. I discuss the similarities with Schopenhauer's version of Platonic Ideas below.
[198] Martin, 'The Framework of Essences', 499.

With this insight into the nature of formal essences, Martin believes that he has taken 'a first step toward a robust account of individuals in Spinoza's one-substance metaphysic.' In doing this, he hopes 'to have dispelled some of the disbelief that follows the recognition that individuals for Spinoza are mere modes, i.e. properties or qualities, of the one substance.' While it is true that individuals are modes, Martin argues, it 'fails to capture the identity and individuality that modes have on account of their essence.'[199] His model does seem to have the advantage that modes can be picked out – in virtue of their formal essences – in a way that is not simply a function of an observer's imagination. For one thing, these essences are eternal (so not at the mercy of time/duration). In this sense, his account of individuation is a robust one. Whilst remaining modes or qualities of substance, Spinozan individuals are not fictions or illusions but exist in a metaphysically profound sense.

Arguably a disadvantage of Martin's picture, however, is that it categorises formal essences as species essences. This may give us pause as to whether Martin's *own* account really captures 'the identity and individuality' that we think of individuals as having. Formal essences being laws of nature, they are, as Martin puts it 'capable of being simultaneously identically exemplified in numerous finite modes.'[200] In other words, modes of the same kind share an essence: '[t]he difference between a mode's existence and essence is that its existence is unique to it, whereas its essence is not.'[201] This means that the feature of an individual which guarantees its real existence (as a potential object of the third kind of knowledge, rather than a fiction of the first) is not unique to any particular individual. A mode such as a flower or a person is of finite duration and has as its actual essence the striving to maintain its pattern of motion and rest. What takes us beyond this – what guarantees a mode's real existence – is its formal essence. This, however, is not particular to that mode, but something in which all other modes of the same kind participate. As unique, finite particulars, then, modes may seem to be no better off in Martin's picture than they were under the physicalist reading.[202]

Garrett's article 'Spinoza on the Essence of the Human Body and the Part of the Mind that is Eternal' points to Spinoza's distinction between a body's actual endurance and its formal essence (and, like Martin, between its formal and actual

[199] Martin, 'The Framework of Essences', 509.
[200] Martin, 'The Framework of Essences', 504.
[201] Martin, 'The Framework of Essences', 495.
[202] The clear parallel with Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas is discussed in the 'Analysis' section below.

essence).[203] He contends that '[t]he so-called "Physical Digression" following 2P13S strongly suggests that this formal essence lies in or involves a certain "fixed pattern of motion and rest" that makes an extended singular thing what it is.'[204] Garrett too confirms that a thing's formal essence doesn't entail the actual existence at any given time of that singular thing. In a sense, singular things are derivative of their formal essences. Formal essences exist in their own right as modes of substance.[205] Because they do not have a particular duration but are permanent features of reality they cannot be ordinary finite modes. Instead Garrett, like Martin, concludes that they must be infinite modes: 'the formal essences of singular things are existing infinite modes in their own right'.[206] So a formal essence is a permanent mode which grounds the actual existence of a singular thing (and exists as a 'nonlocalized part of the human body.')[207]

Garrett's claim that a mode's essence forms part of that mode represents a key difference from Martin. The latter makes explicit that '[a]lthough each mode (i.e. each individual) exemplifies some formal essence or other, it does not follow that the formal essence is itself an element of the mode, just as it does not follow that the form is an element of particulars exemplifying it.'[208] For Martin, formal essences are independently existing natural laws which are simply exemplified by finite modes as and when the order of causes dictates that such come into existence. For Garrett, formal essences retain their independence from temporary modes whilst forming *part* of those modes. So a finite mode, for Martin, is one among many possible instantiations of a formal essence. For Garrett, on the other hand, a mode has its formal essence as a (non-localised) part of itself. Garrett, then, offers an account according to which formal essences are both infinite and unique to – indeed part of – individual finite modes. Thus an individual mode has, in its formal essence, an identity which is unique to it but also independent of the imaginative structures of duration and motion.

---

[203] Garrett, 'Spinoza on the Essence of the Human Body and the Part of the Mind That Is Eternal' in ed. Olli Koistinen. *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's Ethics.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 285 and 286 respectively.
[204] Garrett, 'Spinoza on the Essence', 293.
[205] Garrett, 'Spinoza on the Essence', 289.
[206] Garrett, 'Spinoza on the Essence', 291.
[207] Garrett, 'Spinoza on the Essence', 301.
[208] Martin, 'The Framework of Essences', 508.

The final reading of individuation in Spinoza which seems to me to hold firm against the objection that individuals can have no real existence in his system is that offered by Valtteri Viljanen in his 2007 article 'Field Metaphysic, Power, and Individuation in Spinoza'.[209] Viljanen draws, as the title suggests, on Bennett's field metaphysic theory, but also on Deleuze's understanding of the relationship between an actual finite mode and its essence.[210] He makes explicit, as I have argued above, that that there are both physical and metaphysical elements to Spinoza's account of individuation. In fact, Viljanen quotes Spinoza in support of this '"the *Ethics* … must be based on metaphysics and physics" (Ep27).'[211]

Viljanen distinguishes between '(1) *eternal essences* that specify certain spatial arrangements of intensity as individuals, and (2) *actual individuals*, i.e. relatively stable concrete structures of power quanta that realize these arrangements in temporality.'[212] Actual individuals, then, are particular arrangements of power – patterns of motion and rest – each maintained by its own conatus. Essences, for Viljanen 'could be seen as blueprints or diagrams that pick out certain patterns of intensifications as individuals'.[213] So while an individual exists for a particular duration, its essence is timeless: 'formal essences do not come and go out of existence (E2p8, 2p8c), but an individual's actual being begins and ceases at certain temporal moments.'[214] He agrees with Deleuze that 'a mode exists actually when it possesses the extended parts that correspond to its eternal essence'.[215] Viljanen continues: 'an individual's temporal existence can be seen as a state of affairs where concrete power quanta are organized in the arrangement corresponding to the individual's essence.'[216] Thus like Deleuze, Viljanen holds that a mode is individuated by its eternal essence,[217] and has its temporal, physical existence for as long as the blueprint that is its essence is actually expressed by the appropriate arrangement of forces.

---

[209] Viljanen, `Field metaphysic`.
[210] As set out in Giles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza.* trans. M. Joughin, (New York: Zone Books, 1997).
[211] Viljanen, `Field metaphysic`, 406.
[212] Viljanen, `Field metaphysic`, 410-411.
[213] Viljanen, `Field metaphysic`, 413.
[214] Viljanen, `Field metaphysic`, 414.
[215] Viljanen, `Field metaphysic`, 411. Viljanen cites Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 202; see also Giles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy.* trans. Hurley, R. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988, 76.
[216] Viljanen, `Field metaphysic`, 414.
[217] Viljanen, `Field metaphysic`, 416. The 'basic constituents of physical reality form complex entities whose metaphysical essence not only individuates certain formations of dynamic intensifications as individuals but also strives to maintain their temporal existence.'

I suggest, then, that Spinoza's philosophy offers resources for a metaphysical account of individuation, according to which modes differ *essentially* as well as existentially. A mode of durational existence has an actual essence (conatus as a striving to preserve the ratio of motion of rest). It also has a formal essence (the formula or blueprint of that ratio of motion and rest or coherence of organisation which has metaphysical status of an infinite mode. This may form a *part* of the durational mode or may simply be instantiated by it, but in either case is permanent, not dependent on duration, not merely physical, knowable by third kind of knowledge and therefore real.

2.4 Personal Identity

In an article entitled 'Personal Identity in Spinoza', Ruth Saw inflects the charge that Spinoza's system is unable to account for real individuation to deal with human individuals in particular.[218] Her criticisms are as follows. Fist, that Spinoza's account of bodily individuation in general is insufficient, producing only 'derived, dissoluble, and in a sense, illusory individuals'.[219] Second, that Spinoza's focus on the body leaves him failing to account for the unity of the mind or that of the person as such ('the moving together of the bodily parts must not be allowed to engender the unity of the mind, nor even of the total organism').[220] Third, that he cannot explain human agency: because Spinoza's distinction between activity and passivity is not made in terms of free will, Saw argues, '[i]t does not… yield the notion of the "active" man as agent.'[221] Even in the case of the active man, his 'actions' are to be explained causally, thus 'Spinoza has no account whatever to give of the "I" who does anything at all.'[222] Taken together, these failings mean that Spinoza can offer no distinctive (and successful) account of personal identity. Saw therefore concludes that the Spinozan 'human person is not a person in the ordinary sense of the word.'[223]

[218] Ruth L. Saw, 'Personal Identity in Spinoza', *Inquiry*, 12, no 1, (1969): 1-14.
[219] Saw, 'Personal Identity', 5.
[220] Saw, 'Personal Identity', 7.
[221] Saw, 'Personal Identity', 10.
[222] Saw, 'Personal Identity', 10.
[223] Saw, 'Personal Identity', 12.

2.4.1

Certainly, human persons are not unique in the sense of having a substantial identity, for Spinoza, as he clarifies at IIP10 '[t]he being of substance does not pertain to the essence of man, or substance does not constitute the form of man.' Rather, like every other finite individual, they are modes: '[f]rom this it follows that the essence of man is constituted by certain modifications of God's attributes.' (IIP10C). I have argued in the foregoing that Spinoza *can* account for the reality of modal individuals. In the case of individuals which happen to be human beings, Saw says Spinoza wishes to claim that 'identity through duration is not possible' and that on his account, neither body nor mind is 'self-identical through time'.[224] She judges that 'if he is right, we cannot give a satisfactory account of the human person.'[225]

There seem to me to be two options open to the defender of Spinoza. One is to deny that Saw's conclusion follows: to deny the Humean supposition that without strict identicality there can be no identity at all. Even were Spinoza to hold that there was no strict identity across time, we need not accept that he has no real account of human identity. In fact, Saw herself believes that 'Spinoza rejects the notion of identity throughout duration in favour of continuity of life history, so long as there is enough similarity maintained through the parts of the history.' In his 'Spinoza on Individuation', Lee C. Rice argues that Spinozan personal identity is a matter of degree: 'talk about preservation of a constant balance of motion and rest among the parts which make up an individual is talk about a relation or balance which is more or less constant'.[226] Admittedly for Rice the criteria for whether something counts as the same individual are conventional, but, he insists, 'this does not make personal identity a purely conventional matter'[227] because whether or not the criteria apply in any given case is a matter of fact.

For Don Garrett the story is slightly more complicated, and he offers an alternative reading of Spinoza's famous example of the Spanish poet who suffers a disease making him forget his life until that point.[228] Rice claims that the philosopher

[224] Saw, 'Personal Identity', 9 and 12 respectively.
[225] Saw, 'Personal Identity', 9.
[226] Lee C. Rice, 'Spinoza On Individuation' *The Monist* 55, no. 4 (1971): 656.
[227] Rice, 'Spinoza On Individuation', 657.
[228] Garrett, `Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation`, 93 On this subject Saw, 'Personal Identity', 8 implicitly concurs in Butler's criticism of Locke on memory – that memory can't constitute identity, but see Rice, 'Spinoza On Individuation', 656 'Spinoza's point is not Locke's: it is not loss of memory which causes loss of identity, but rather loss of identity which causes loss of memory'.

accepts someone might effectively become a different person during the course of 'his' life. Further, he insists that '[w]ith as much propriety we often speak of a person as "not being the same person" after events of far less destructive (or even constructive) force.'[229] According to Garrett, however, Spinoza implies both that the poet is and is not the same individual as he was before and again, both that aged men in general are the same individuals as the infants they began life as and that they are not. Garrett's suggested solution is that

> there is an individual that does continue, constituted by the particular fixed ratio of motion and rest involved in continuation of the same animal functions, and another individual that does not, one for which the more complex fixed pattern of motion and rest involved in retaining memory and similarity of higher mental functioning is essential.[230]

This second option perhaps has the advantage of greater compatibility with the general account of individuation offered previously. It allows for the possibility of an account of identity – including *personal* identity – where the criteria of sameness are not just conventional and identity is more than a matter of degree.

2.4.2

With regard to Saw's second objection – the criticism that Spinoza can at best explain bodily identity and offers no account of that of the mind – Rice and Garrett again suggest alternative defences. Rice advises that we take 'a somewhat Strawsonian turn and claim that our criteria of identification and reidentification are wholly geared to bodies in space'.[231] If this is true of philosophical accounts of identity in general, for Rice, then it is not a failing of Spinoza's that '[a]ny talk of mental identity would be, on this account, derivative'.[232] On the other hand, Garrett admits that on Spinoza's definition (Garrett is referring to IIA2" Definition) individuals are composed of bodies, but suggests that 'he restricts the Definition to extension only because it occurs in a discussion that is devoted explicitly to bodies'.[233] Given Spinoza's parallelism and 'the identity of ideas with their objects', Garrett argues, 'it is not difficult to infer' what his theory of the identity of a thinking individual would be: 'a thinking thing is an individual in virtue of being the idea of a

[229] Rice, 'Spinoza On Individuation', 656.
[230] Garrett, `Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation`, 93.
[231] Rice, 'Spinoza On Individuation', 657.
[232] Rice, 'Spinoza On Individuation', 657.
[233] Garrett, `Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation`, 89.

composite body with a fixed ratio of motion and rest'.[234] Certainly, Spinoza himself does not hold that it is only extended things which can be individuals. Garrett highlights his claim at IIP21D that 'the mind and the body are one and the same individual.' Indeed, he notes, 'Spinoza states explicitly that human beings are individuals'.[235]

Spinoza is not, though, as explicit as we might like on what it is that constitutes the individuality of a mind. In my view, given that eternal essences are central to his account of individuation, he does provide some discussion of mental individuals in his treatment of the eternity of the mind at V P22 and P23, where he says that each mind has eternal existence in God as a 'certain mode of thinking'. Even here, though, the (eternal part of the) mind is figured as an idea which expresses the *body* under a species of eternity. Perhaps the explanation is simply that the topic of individuation arises at a point in *Ethics* when Spinoza is treating of extended things, and he would have assumed his readers could draw out an account of the thinking individual from that discussion. Or perhaps – as Rice suggests – it is that our understandings of mental identity are always derivative of those concerning the identity of bodies.

2.4.3

Saw's third objection is that Spinoza offers no account of human agency. Lee Rice rejects her claim that Spinozan individuals are not agents. That Spinozan persons have no free will is irrelevant, he insists, because they are nonetheless 'centers of real action—they are causally efficacious'.[236] Rice suggests that Saw's error in thinking there can be no agency without free will results from her view that 'what constitutes the human individual has to be something distinctly human (in this case freedom).'[237] He points out that while what makes a particular individual *human* must indeed be something distinctively human, the same is not true of what makes him or her an *individual*.[238] In his view, Spinoza would 'flatly reject' this second claim.[239] This

[234] Garrett, `Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation`, 89.
[235] Garrett, `Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation`, 90.
[236] Rice, 'Spinoza On Individuation', 654.
[237] Rice, 'Spinoza On Individuation', 655.
[238] Rice, 'Spinoza On Individuation', 655.
[239] Rice, 'Spinoza On Individuation', 654 'Here Spinoza stands firmly on the same ground occupied by Hume. When we say of a man that he is the same individual whom we encountered earlier, we mean much the same thing as when we say of a church that it is the same church that we encountered earlier. Individuation, and criteria of reidentification, are not due to special and mysterious properties

indicates a notable difference between the accounts of individuation offered by Schopenhauer and Spinoza. For Schopenhauer, as we have seen, what individuates a person at the most profound level is being an expression of a unique Platonic Idea – and this applies to human beings alone. There is no parallel in Spinoza's philosophy: a human being is individuated in the same way as any other mode. It is not clear, however, that this constitutes a weakness in Spinoza's account. As Rice puts it at the start of his article 'the philosopher has no right to assume' that the question of personal identity is distinct from that of identity as such.[240] Indeed, it could be seen as an advantage to be able to offer one explanation that covers a diversity of phenomena, and – as we saw in the previous chapter – the naturalisation of the human being is one aspect of Spinoza's thought which has often been admired. At the very least, Rice is surely right to reject the claim that the lack of a specifically human way of individuating persons leaves Spinoza with no account of their individuation at all.

3. SCHOPENHAUER'S SPINOZISM REGARDING INDIVIDUATION

3.1 Some Similarities of Form and Content

I mean now to offer an analysis of Schopenhauer's Spinozism when it comes to the problem of individuation. Schopenhauer and Spinoza are two thinkers with a common problem, but with very different philosophical approaches. Each is a monist, committed to the embedded-self thesis – a picture of a univocal reality in which human selves are as enmeshed as everything else – and thus each owes us an account of how and to what extent individuals can be picked out. Neither can appeal to differences of substance to explain the distinction between one individual and another.[241] But while Schopenhauer is a transcendental idealist of empiricist bent, Spinoza is a rationalist, realist and arch-metaphysician. Nonetheless, their responses to this problem have marked similarities in terms of both structure and content.

---

possessed by all and only men; and personal identity is a problem of identity to the same extent that architectural identity is.'

[240] Rice, 'Spinoza On Individuation', 641.

[241] As with the theory of the embedded self, here too Spinoza and Schopenhauer are united in their anti-Cartesianism. As Garrett puts it in 'Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation', 77, on the theory attributed to Descartes 'the only individual things are substances, and substance *always* plays the crucial role in individuation.'.

In the first place, each has a fairly straightforward account of how individuals can be distinguished within space and time. For Schopenhauer, it is the forms of space and time – provided by the knowing subject – which constitute the *principium individuationis*. Because of them, the world as representation, unlike the world as will, comprises a plurality of phenomena. For Spinoza, a mode can be picked out as an individual with reference to its pattern or ratio of motion and rest.

For neither thinker, though, is this a sufficient response to the problem of individuation and I would suggest that we shouldn't accept it as such either. Schopenhauer's phenomena are not only mind-dependent but, he is wont to say, illusory. Organisation in terms of motion and rest is an inadequate (in Spinoza's sense) way to divide up reality, characteristic of the first kind of knowledge. The physicalist element of modal individuation is imaginative for Spinoza, just as spatio-temporal individuation is merely phenomenal for Schopenhauer.

The first concept which takes us beyond this simple account of individuation in Spinoza is that of conatus. Spinoza refers to a mode's conatus as its actual essence. By 'conatus', Spinoza means desire, or self-preserving force. 'Desire is man's very essence', he writes in *Ethics* III Definitions of the Affects I, and explains that by desire he means 'all the strivings of human nature that we signify by the name of appetite, will, desire, or impulse.' This is markedly similar to Schopenhauer's view that what each of us really is, is a willing being. My phenomenal body is a concretisation of my will and it is only through its relationship to this embodied will, Schopenhauer says in §§18 and 19, that the knowing subject finds itself as an individual.[242]

Ultimately, for Schopenhauer, any individual is the working out or expression in empirical reality (over time, in space and subject to causality) of some act of will. In other words, each individual is the manifestation of a particular Platonic Idea. This, for him, is individuation in its most metaphysically profound sense. The Spinozan equivalent is individuation by virtue of a mode's formal essence. Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas and Spinoza's formal essences represent the most interpretatively

[242] Saw's comment that '[i]f it were not for our inside knowledge as human beings, *conatus* would be no more than gravitation as applied to bodies' (Saw, 'Personal Identity', 8) finds striking echoes in Schopenhauer's account of any knowing subject's dual relationship to its own body, the 'subterranean passage' without which a person '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' Schopenhauer, WWR II 195 and WWR I, 99.

challenging and contentious aspects of their respective accounts of individuation. Before offering some analysis of the internal coherence of each and the extent to which they shed any light on one another, I want to briefly point to one clear similarity and one potential disparity.

Both Schopenhauer and Spinoza explicitly reject universal abstractions. Spinoza's critique of them is well known. The examples he gives are the universals man, horse and dog. For Schopenhauer, each of these species would have its own Platonic Idea, but he is keen to emphasise that the Ideas as he understands them do not fall into the category of abstract universals. For one thing, Platonic Ideas are percepts rather than concepts. While a Platonic Idea is expressed as a *'species* or kind', 'the *species* are the work of nature, the *genera* the work of man; thus they are mere concepts.'[243] Plato himself, in Schopenhauer's view, used 'Ideas' too loosely – 'Schopenhauer believes that there is a fundamental distinction between the Idea and the concept, the latter being a mere object of rational thought and science. Plato, he says, failed to make such a differentiation and thus he sometimes characterized as Ideas universal abstractions which are not Platonic Ideas at all.'[244] For neither thinker, then, can universal concepts abstracted or derived from experiences of particulars help to explain the way reality is divided up into individuals.

The status each gives to causation may seem to evidence a major difference between Schopenhauer's account of individuation and that of Spinoza. As Saw emphasises, for Spinoza to understand something properly is to understand it in its causal connections. She concludes from this that it is not people in their *individuality* that are known at the highest level of knowledge but in their causal contexts. In my view, Lee Rice is right to deny that an individual is understood in its causal context at the expense of being understood as an individual.[245] Either way, to know an effect one must know its cause and adequate knowledge maps the causal connections between things. For Schopenhauer, conversely, causation is a feature of the phenomenal realm and the most adequate knowledge available to us – knowledge of the Platonic Ideas – precisely involves knowing things outside of their ordinary causal contexts. It is only when the veil of causality is lifted that the essence of an individual can be seen.

[243] Schopenhauer, WWR II, 365.
[244] Hein, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas', 137.
[245] Rice, 'Spinoza On Individuation', 652: 'To be an individual is to be a center of action connected in various ways with a network of other individuals. It would be frivolous to claim that this causal connexion with others in a larger whole erases or absorbs individuals; since, on Spinoza's own example, being an individual in one's own right is a necessary condition for being so connected.'

This stark contrast can at the very least be softened in the light of Thomas M. Ward's discussion of varieties of causation in Spinoza in his 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes'.[246] He maintains that the 'the proximate cause that is sought in a complete definition of a thing is the fixed and eternal thing which is the essence of that thing'.[247] The cause which must be understood in order to understand an individual, then, is that individual's (formal) essence. But the kind of causation that operates between an essence and a particular thing is not ordinary efficient causation, for Ward, but 'formal or exemplar causality'.[248] Ward's picture of the 'infinite modes of EIP21 as formal essences which are produced prior to and independent of the creation of finite modes, and which function as the formal causes of finite modes'[249] brings the relationship between Spinoza's individuals and their formal essences much closer to that between Schopenhauer's phenomena and their Platonic Ideas. Schopenhauer denies that causality can operate other than between one phenomenon and another, and explicitly criticises Spinoza for his unwarranted extension of the concept. But given Ward's sense of causation its role in defining the nature of an individual no longer puts Spinoza at odds with Schopenhauer.

Individuation at its most adequate is a function, for Schopenhauer, of the Platonic Ideas and, for Spinoza, of the formal essences of modes. I now turn to the difficult problem of how each model is to be understood in its own right and in comparison to its counterpart, aiming to assess the extent to which either is convincing and to see whether either has resources to flesh out or improve the other account or at least whether either can illuminate the other.

3.2 The Nature of Individuation in Schopenhauer and Spinoza

In the first place, there is a question as to the kinds of things that count as individuals for each thinker. For Schopenhauer, as we know, it is the *principium individuationis* which separates out what we would perhaps normally think of as individuals – which distinguishes this pen from that paper, our cat Hero from their cat Millie. They are individuated phenomenally. Apart from in the case of human beings,

[246] Thomas M. Ward, 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes' *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 19, no. 1, (2011): 19–46.
[247] Ward, 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes', 38.
[248] Ward, 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes', 39.
[249] Ward, 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes', 39.

it is *species* – including natural forces – with which Platonic Ideas are identified. For Spinoza, the answer is less clear. As Don Garrett puts it 'persons and animals are clearly identified as individuals, it is less obvious whether nonliving things... can be individuals.'[250] On the other hand, as he notes, even spatially discontinuous groups of people *can* be considered individuals. Certainly, Spinoza allows for a series of 'nested' individuals: '[e]very individual is part of an individual of still higher complexity; but it does not thereby sacrifice its own status as an individual'[251] and indeed Garrett himself had earlier quoted Spinoza's statement in L7S that 'the whole of nature is one individual'. In fact, if we focus on formal essences as the locus of real individuation even the cases of humans and animals might not be quite so clear-cut. On Martin's understanding of them, formal essences pick out species rather than particulars. This, of course, would position Spinozan and Schopenhauerian individuation even more closely together. This is not, however, a particularly widespread reading of Spinoza's formal essences. On the two alternative readings I considered, those of Garrett and Viljanen, anything that has a fixed pattern of motion and rest or a pattern of intensification is an individual, but it is apparent that Garrett at least finds insufficient clarity in the *Ethics* as to the sorts of things that count.

Another set of interpretative problems concerns the status or nature of individuation according to each philosopher. Are things individuated physically, metaphysically or epistemologically? Are the distinctions between individuals subjective or objective? As regards the first of these questions, I have argued that Spinoza's account of individuation is not just physicalist or mechanistic but metaphysical.[252] Schopenhauer's account too is not merely physical but arguably even *more* metaphysical in its reliance on the category of Platonic Idea. We have seen though, that Hein and others model Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas not as things known but (more adequate) ways of knowing the one thing that really is. Thus in attempting to distance Schopenhauer from Plato and problems affecting his own account of Ideas and in trying to show how the Ideas are truly integral to

[250] Garrett, `Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation`, 90.
[251] Rice, 'Spinoza on Individuation', 650.
[252] Viljanen 'Field metaphysic' 414 quotes Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 228: '[a]s Deleuze comments, "mechanism does not exclude the idea of a nature or essence of each body, but rather requires it, as the sufficient reason for … a given proportion of movement and rest."' Compare Deleuze, *Spinoza*, 57 and even Gueroult does end up stressing the 'metaphysic of essences' underlying Spinozistic physics.

Schopenhauer's system Hein, Neeley and Chansky offer readings of Schopenhauer's Ideas which downplay their metaphysical and emphasise their epistemological role.

This takes us to the second question: whether the distinctions between individuals are subjective or would exist in the absence of a knower. This itself is not uncontentious as regards Schopenhauer's account of the Platonic Ideas. Christopher Janaway speaks of them as parts of reality to be discovered and Schopenhauer calls species works of nature rather than works of man.[253] However he also says that they retain the form 'object for subject' and there is, he insists, 'no object without a subject'.[254] Only the will itself is truly non-ideal. Schopenhauer calls the Platonic Ideas manifestations of acts of will, which may indicate that there *is* some non-subjective basis for individuation, but as discussed above the notion of multiple acts of will may not be one to which Schopenhauer is entitled. For Spinoza, individuation is not merely a function of the imagination's inadequate way of understanding the world. Essences of things are known by the third kind of knowledge which is adequate and parallels the order and connection of physical reality. Individuation *may* remain relative to knowledge, but one point to consider is that holding something to be for the intellect, or knower-dependent, needn't have the usual idealist implications given the role of the infinite intellect of God. To say that an individual's essence exists in the mind of God is very different to saying that things are only individuated from the perspective of finite human subjects. Thus even if the distinctions between Schopenhauerian and Spinozan individuals exist for knowers (and it is not clear that this is the case for either),[255] that does not imply that they are illusory in the way that phenomena are.

3.2.1 The Nature of Spinoza's Formal Essences

This means that Schopenhauer and Spinoza reject nominalism (understood loosely) regarding Platonic Ideas and formal essences respectively.[256] Schopenhauer can't plausibly be taken to hold that the term 'Platonic Idea' is an empty name; the

[253] Schopenhauer, WWR II, 365.
[254] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 175 and Appendix, 434.
[255] Garrett, 'Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation', 76. Garrett states that individuation in Spinoza is metaphysical, 'Spinoza is describing what *makes* something an individual, and not merely what makes something be *recognised* as an individual.'
[256] Their respective stances on nominalism in a more technical sense – that is, the rejection of universals or of abstract objects – will be considered in the discussion that follows.

same is true of Spinoza and 'formal essence'. It may seem that Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas should be classed as universals – I will consider that possibility below. I don't think, though, that Spinoza's formal essences should be accorded that status. Admittedly, such a reading might well fit Christopher Martin's interpretation of their role. For Martin, Spinozan formal essences are – like certain of Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas – laws of nature. Each such formal essence exists apart from and is instantiated in multiple actual essences. However, Spinoza's famous critique of universals such as 'horse' and 'man' was noted above, and as Thomas M. Ward puts it, 'Spinoza scoffs at the realist thesis that a shared nature exists independent of the things of which it is the nature'.[257] In this sense, Spinoza *is* a nominalist, and his views may seem opposed to those of Schopenhauer, at least on many interpretations of the latter. As Ward himself has it, for Spinoza '[a]ll essences… are individual essences'.[258] *This* characterisation does seem in tune with the accounts of Garrett and Viljanen, outlined above, according to which each finite mode is individuated by its own, unique formal essence.

If Spinozan formal essences are particulars rather than universals, are they also concrete entities? In my view, they are not. For one thing, they are infinite and eternal, while ordinary, concrete modes are finite and of a particular duration. I would suggest that Spinoza's formal essences are, in fact, abstract objects. This too would seem to chime with the models offered by Viljanen and Garrett, both of whom speak of them almost as mathematical formulae specifying patterns of motion and rest whose actualisation will constitute a finite mode. It also fits with my contention that space and time are features of individuation according to the first kind of knowledge, and do not apply to the formal essences of modes.

Questions remain as to the nature of the relationship between an ordinary mode and its formal essence. For one thing, there is some indication of a causal relationship between them. For Spinoza, to fully understand an individual is to understand its causal origin.[259] More specifically, on *Ward*'s picture a Spinozan

[257] Ward, 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes', 25.
[258] Ward, 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes', 27.
[259] Ward, 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes', 38 draws our attention to TIE101 where, as he glosses it, Spinoza 'says that the fixed and eternal things are the proximate causes of the particular mutable things. Therefore, the proximate cause that is sought in a complete definition of a thing is the fixed and eternal thing which is the essence of that thing. The picture here is that there are fixed and eternal things which are the essences of particular mutable things, and that these essences are related causally to the particulars of which they are essences.'

essence is 'some feature or features of a thing which cause(s) other (non-essential) features'.[260] Given that things of different natures cannot act causally upon one another and that causality may anyway be thought (as it certainly is for Schopenhauer) to operate only between spatio-temporal entities, it might seem difficult to explain how there can be such a relationship between concrete finite modes and formal essences conceived as abstract objects. I think, though, that Ward is right to suggest that Spinoza conceives of two different types of causality, efficient causality operating between finite modes and what Ward calls 'formal or exemplar' causality between formal essences and concrete particulars. [261] On this understanding, the existence of a causal relationship between finite modes and their formal essences does not rule out the latter having the nature of abstract objects.

Another such question concerns the independence of formal essences from their respective durational modes. Viljanen has it that 'when an individual's eternal essence is actualized in duration… substantial power as *conatus* in a sense 'grabs hold of' the formation that corresponds to the individual's eternal essence'.[262] This makes it sounds as though formal essences exist in their own right (even when not instantiated by their finite modes), and Garrett is explicit about this. He notes that 'the reality or being of the formal essence of a singular thing – such as the formal essence of a human body – does not presuppose or entail the actual existence of that singular thing' and says that 'Spinoza strongly implies that formal essences are truly *something* in their own right' concluding that 'formal essences of singular things must be modes of God.'[263] Formal essences are, then, independently existing modes – but infinite rather than finite ones. While Ward seems to support this reading in his conclusion when he says that for Spinoza 'formal essences are produced prior to and independent of their determination as the essences of finite modes', he also reminds us that 'Spinoza thinks both that the essence cannot be or be conceived without the thing of which it is the essence, and that to grant the essence is to posit the thing.'[264] Ward is here arguing against the possibility of common essences, but this point also seems difficult to square with the idea that a formal essence could exist independently

[260] Ward, 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes', 28.
[261] Ward, 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes', 39.
[262] Viljanen, `Field metaphysic`, 415.
[263] Garrett, 'Spinoza's Ethical Theory', 287 and 289.
[264] Ward, 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes', 45 and 27. Spinoza does indeed state in E II D2 that 'to the essence of any thing belongs that which, being given, the thing is necessarily posited… and which can neither be nor be conceived without the thing.'

of – indeed, prior to – the thing of which it is an essence. Just possibly, some sort of distinction could be drawn between the mere positing of a finite thing and its actualisation or, as Ward hints at in the quotation above, between a formal essence's existence as such and its existence or determination *as* the essence of some concrete thing in an attempt to resolve this tension.

Connectedly, it remains to be clarified whether a formal essence relates to its concrete mode as an exemplar to its instantiation or as a part to a whole. In fact, for Ward and for Garrett it seems to be both. Ward sees Spinoza as following those medieval Aristotelians who held that 'God creates through these essences as the archetypes or exemplars of created things.'[265] He also argues, though, that for Spinoza 'the essence is some feature or features of a thing which cause(s) other (non-essential) features', which sounds more akin to a part/whole relationship.[266] Similarly, Don Garrett refers to Spinozan formal essences as 'unchanging forms that can be instantiated or exemplified by existing things', but insists too – as previously outlined – that they constitute non-localised *parts* of those things.[267]

This kind of reading of Spinoza may be thought to leave him to open to a criticism helpfully summarised by the author of the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy's entry 'Spinoza's Physical Theory', who argues that

> it represents Spinoza as, not an avant-garde thinker anticipating modern physics, but as a rear guard defender, despite his official anti-scholastic stance, of the traditional neo-Aristotelian doctrines of essence and substantial form, open to the same charges of *ad hoc* theorizing and appeal to occult powers that Modernity and the Scientific Revolution leveled against it in its their rise to intellectual dominance.[268]

It should be noted, though, that Ward highlights two ways in which Spinoza's is *not* an Aristotelian or neo-Aristotelian position. First, Spinoza's formal essences are not universals: as Ward puts it, 'Spinoza firmly denies that Aristotelian natural kinds characterize the deep structure of reality'.[269] Second, Ward insists, 'Spinoza followed

---

[265] Ward, 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes', 45.
[266] Ward, 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes', 28.
[267] Garrett, 'Spinoza's Ethical Theory', 287 and 301.
[268] `Spinoza's Physical Theory` Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2006, February 22, 2015. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spinoza-physics/
[269] Ward, 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes', 24. There is also a possible defence against the charge of an appeal to problematic metaphysical entities to be found in Ward's reading too. 'The homogeneity of the extended world, characteristic of mechanistic physics,' he writes, 'is preserved in Spinoza's essence-based metaphysics, for Spinozan essences do not include the Aristotelian biological and

Descartes's profound innovation to this basic model; they broke from the medieval tradition by putting the formal essence firmly on the side of what is produced.'[270] In Spinoza's terms, formal essences remain part of *Natura Naturata* rather than *Natura Naturans*, just as Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas remain object rather than will.

I would suggest, in summary, that Spinozan formal essences are particular rather than universal, but nonetheless infinite. That they are abstract rather than concrete but in a sense causally related to their actual, durational modes. They should probably be interpreted as having an existence independent of these concrete modes – and could arguably be understood as possessing a greater degree of reality[271] – but this interpretation needs to be made consistent with what Spinoza says about essences in IID2.

3.2.2 The Nature of Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas

The nature of Spinoza's formal essences is contested, that of Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas is under-examined. It is very difficult to pin them down in terms of the standard philosophical categories used above. Nonetheless, I attempt here to sketch out some of the possibilities which emerge from the discussion in the first part of this chapter and to indicate problems that may attach to each.

Schopenhauer, as Hilda Hein points out, believes that Plato errs in (sometimes) imagining the Ideas as universal concepts abstracted from concrete particulars. Thus Hein: 'Schopenhauer believes that there is a fundamental distinction between the Idea and the concept... Plato, he says, failed to make such a differentiation and thus he sometimes characterized as Ideas universal abstractions which are not Platonic Ideas at all.'[272] Nonetheless it is in my view most plausible to read Schopenhauer's own Platonic Ideas as both abstract and universal: abstract rather than concrete because

---

elemental kinds, but only the infinite number of determinate ways of being extended.' 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes', 45.

[270] Ward, 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes', 45.

[271] Garrett, 'Spinoza's Ethical Theory', 287 'the formal essence of a singular thing is *directly related* to the singular thing, and even provides a sense in which the singular thing itself can be said to have a kind of derivative being.'

[272] Hein, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas', 137.

they are free from the forms of space, time and causality, universal rather than particular because each is instantiated in multiple individuals.[273]

The immediate challenge for this suggestion is to show that it is compatible with Schopenhauer's critique of Plato. What distinguishes *Schopenhauer's* Platonic Ideas, when understood as abstract universals, from Plato's unsatisfactory universal abstractions? Schopenhauer insists upon the point that his Ideas are percepts rather than concepts. Perhaps the idea is that they are perceived and exist *in* their instantiations. This would seem to tally with Julian Young's statement that the artist 'perceives the individual *as Idea*', rather than perceiving a separate idea.[274] Possibly, Young himself is making a stronger claim: that if the Platonic Ideas are to exist at all it can only be as particulars, and that the Ideas are exhausted by their instantiations. He does, after all, claim that 'ontologically speaking, the Ideas can only be normal individuals.'[275] Schopenhauer surely rules out any possibility of reading his Platonic Ideas as *phenomena* – as concrete, spatio-temporal particulars. Perhaps Young could be understood, then, as advancing a nominalist writing-off of the Platonic Ideas, according to which only phenomena (and will) exist. Given the crucial role the Ideas play in Schopenhauer's system this seems no more plausible an interpretation. In my view, the most charitable way of understanding Young is to see him as rejecting only the notion of the Ideas existing separately to the individuals which express them in a *concrete* way, and so as open to the abstract objects model.[276]

If the Ideas do indeed exist *in* their phenomenal instantiations, perhaps it is as essential features of the latter. This would certainly make for a parallel between Schopenhauer's Ideas and Spinoza's formal essences as interpreted by Garrett and Ward. Such a suggestion might be supported by what James D. Chansky says about aesthetic perception of the Platonic Ideas, in which 'the incidental and inessential fall away, leaving for this consciousness no longer the mere particular thing but the object

[273] Chansky, 'Schopenhauer', 71 'for it is just the spatial, temporal, and causal relations, drawn out in accordance with the principle of sufficient reason and of individuation, which distinguishes objects as individual, merely particular things.'
[274] Young, *Schopenhauer*, 132.
[275] Young, *Schopenhauer*, 133.
[276] There are certainly difficulties with reading Young's *Schopenhauer* in this way. He argues that unlike Plato 'Schopenhauer does not, in fact, treat them as things at all', 132, and insists, 130, that they are determinate as well as universal – indeed what seems to trouble Young most is the suggestion that Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas are foreign to space and time, 129.

as it is itself'.[277] For Hilda Hein, Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas differ from those of Plato himself because 'for Schopenhauer the Ideas *are* present in the realm of ordinary experience.' However, she says, 'they are never totally realized in natural phenomena.'[278] Perhaps we can conclude, then, that while for Plato ordinary things are separate and imperfect *copies* of the Ideas, for Schopenhauer the Ideas exist *in* phenomenal individuals, probably as their essential natures or features. They are not, however, exhausted by these phenomenal instantiations and do have some independent existence – in my view, best characterised as an abstract rather than concrete existence.

Schopenhauer does also appear to think of the Ideas as universals.[279] We have seen that Spinoza's account of individuation seems to rule out this possibility. For Spinoza, if the essence of something exists, then that thing must itself exist, and so each thing must have its own unique essence. For Schopenhauer, however, individual cats come and go while their essential cat-like nature persists. Of course, an account which sees the essential nature of a cat as a universal which exists in multiple individuals – effectively, an Aristotelian immanent realist position – is open to criticism. One line of criticism dates back to Pierre Abelard's famous question as to whether a universal was itself *one* or *many*, and if it was supposed to be one, how it could exist in different things at the same time. The Aristotelian model of universals does at least have the advantage of not being susceptible to the so-called 'Third Man Argument', raised by Plato himself.[280] However, unlike Platonic realism, it can't accommodate the possibility of the Ideas having some existence independent to their instantiations.

3.2.3 Conclusions from the Foregoing

To conclude this section of the analysis, I have suggested (against Martin) that we read each Spinozan formal essence as unique to its concrete mode, but each Schopenhauerian Idea as a universal instantiated in a multiplicity of phenomena. It seems plausible, to me, to see both a formal essence and a Platonic Idea as

[277] Chansky, 'Schopenhauer', 76. And at 75 in perception of the Platonic Ideas 'what is relinquished is the… seeking out of reasons, grounds, and causes, the specification of an object's location in a specific space and time, as if all these relations and qualifications were attributes of an essential nature.'
[278] Hein, 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas', 139.
[279] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 134 'the Idea multiplies itself into innumerable phenomena.'
[280] In the *Parmenides*.

constituting *part* of a finite individual – its essential features. I think formal essences and Platonic Ideas should *probably* be interpreted as having some kind of existence independent of their durational instantiations and that therefore both are best understood as abstract objects.

There are other notable similarities. First, for each thinker finite individuals are dependent both upon other finite individuals and their formal essence or Platonic Idea. Ward expresses this as a combination of efficient and formal causality but it is a point Garrett and Viljanen also make.[281] Schopenhauer, for his part, insists that 'every natural cause is only an occasional cause.'[282] As he explains in the same passage, the appearance of a phenomenon is determined by other phenomena, its inner nature depends on an 'immediate phenomenon of the will' – a Platonic Idea.[283] So while Schopenhauer rejects any possibility of causality operating outside of the spatio-temporal realm, his account of the relationship of dependence between a temporal thing and its eternal essence seems very close to Spinoza's.

Second, both philosophers highlight the composite nature of an individual and the fact that each imperfectly expresses its essence. For Spinoza, individuals seem to

---

[281] Garrett, 'Spinoza's Ethical Theory', 290: '[a]s we have already noted, the being of the formal essence of a singular thing is not alone sufficient for the singular thing's actual existence; instead, the singular thing, as a finite mode, *can* actually exist only – and also *must* actually exist – whenever and wherever there actually exist finite causes with the causal power to bring that singular thing into existence.' Viljanen, `Field metaphysic`, 396 notes that a mode's eternal essence is its 'portion of God's power' and that its actuality (duration) depends on other finite things. His assessment at 415 '[i]f we keep in mind the *conatus* character of our essential power (E3p6, 3p7) — the striving to maintain a certain pattern of power quanta — together with the thesis that an individual's actualization is caused *solely* by other modes (not by the individual's *conatus*) (E1p24, 1p28), the emerging picture of modes, and thus also of human beings, is highly compelling. Because the existence of any human being is produced by the necessity of causal laws, without any kind of teleology (E1p17, 1app, 4pref), substantial power does not consciously strive to form patterns that would correspond to certain individuals' eternal essences. But when an individual's eternal essence is actualized in duration by other modes, substantial power as *conatus* in a sense "grabs hold of" the formation that corresponds to the individual's eternal essence' is very reminiscent of Schopenhauer, with regard to our own striving to remain in existence, our phenomenal existence as determined within the realm of causality, and the 'grabbing hold' model.

[282] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 138.

[283] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 138. Bela Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', concurs that Schopenhauer appeals to Malebranche's doctrine: 128 ftn 6 '[i]n an attempt to avoid the embarrassing consequence of having to admit a causal relation between noumena (intelligible character) and phenomena (acquired character), *and* at the same time making room for moral deliberation, Schopenhauer invokes Malebranche's theory of "occasional causation."' However, I would demur from Egyed's gloss on this: '[i]n other words, an individual's intelligible character is the "occasional" cause of that person's conduct in a given situation. For a discussion of this matter, see *World I* 137-9.' In my view, Schopenhauer's point in the pages cited is that occasional causation occurs within the phenomenal; it is not a doomed attempt to mitigate a causal account of the relationship between the noumenal and phenomenal simply by the addition of the adjective 'occasional'! Rather, Schopenhauer (WWR I, 138) says that deeds are caused (determined) by motives and the content and significance of a man's character 'proceed from' (as opposed to being caused by) his groundless intelligible character.

be composite by definition.[284] Chansky notes that for Schopenhauer 'our essential character or nature manifests itself as our whole organic body and all its functions and activities' but also that the Ideas constitute what 'nature struggled but failed to produce' in individuals 'because of the inevitable conflict among all the various forms of nature.'[285] This is echoed by Hilda Hein who describes complex individuals as composites whose imperfections arise because they combine different Ideas, but it also resonates clearly with what Beth Lord has to say about the Spinozan human mind and body expressing their essences only partially thanks to their confusion with other ideas or bodies.[286]

Each account has a neo-Aristotelian aspect which leaves it exposed to a degree of criticism. In Spinoza's case, it seems to be the very appeal to formal essences as the basis for individuation which provokes the objection of invoking a discredited metaphysical category of entities. This would presumably also apply to Schopenhauer's Ideas, with the added difficulty that they are also universals. Still, it is hardly surprising that two thinkers who I have interpreted as realists on this question would find themselves subject to such 'Ockham's Razor'-style criticisms. It is that very realism, of course, which enables each to offer an account of individuation in which the distinctions between things have a real metaphysical grounding.

There are, then, significant resonances between Spinoza's account of individuation by formal essences and Schopenhauer's by Platonic Ideas, concerning the nature and metaphysical status of these entities and how they relate to ordinary individuals. It is worth noting that such questions have received much fuller discussion in the scholarly literature on Spinoza. It seems to me that the analysis therein offers resources which could help in the development of a more cogent interpretation of Schopenhauer's Ideas such that those commentators who seem to

[284] See for instance Spinoza, EII A3" which refers to 'the parts of an individual, or composite body'.
[285] Chansky, `Schopenhauer`, 73 and 75.
[286] Hilde Hein 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas', 140. Complex entities (for example, humans) have more parts 'each with its *vita propria*' so it is harder to harmonise these into beauty/perfect manifestations of their Ideas. 'Things in nature, we must gather, do not correspond to complex Ideas, but rather are composites in which a variety of disparate Ideas are brought together. It is thus in the process of combination that imperfections appear.' Compare Beth Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 72 'Just as your actually existing mind… is the partial expression of its essence…, "confused" with many other ideas, your actually existing body… is the partial expression of *its* essence…, "confused" with many other bodies.'

have dismissed them as unworkable could perhaps be persuaded that they have been too hasty.[287]

3.3 Individuation and Methodology, Intuitions and Ethics

3.3.1 Individuation and Philosophical Method

Three tasks remain. First, to consider any implications of the foregoing for our understanding of Schopenhauer and Spinoza's respective methodologies. Second, to assess the extent to which their accounts of individuation might be thought to tally with our intuitions on the subject and third to point to connections between these accounts and the ethical theories of each thinker. With regard to the first of these, their accounts of individuation may seem to call into question aspects of the way I have characterised Schopenhauer and Spinoza's philosophical approaches throughout this thesis. When it comes to individuation, we seem to be confronted with a Schopenhauer whose Kantianism is tempered by his Platonism, a Spinoza who appears more of an idealist than a realist with respect to time and a comparatively metaphysically modest Spinoza and metaphysically extravagant Schopenhauer.

Not all of this withstands scrutiny, however. Taking Spinoza first, his is *not* a merely physical account of individuation, there is a metaphysical element in virtue of the formal essences. Characterising the physicalist part of the account as subject to the first kind of knowledge is what makes Spinoza seem closer to Schopenhauer's idealism on space and time. The very distinction between realism and idealism, however, may be complicated by the existence of adequate knowledge in the infinite intellect of God. Schopenhauer appears to give a more clear-cut, metaphysical answer to the question of what individuates things but the metaphysics of Ideas has been a source of contention, trailing problems such as that of explaining the plurality of the Platonic Ideas given their freedom from the forms of the principle of sufficient reason. There may also be a question – given his empiricism – as to what entitles him to the notion of Platonic Ideas at all. Schopenhauer does, though, think that Platonic Ideas

[287] Such critics, according to Nietzsche may include Schopenhauer himself! "The world does not let itself be so easily fastened into the system as Schopenhauer had hoped in the first inspiration of his discovery. In his old age he complained that the most difficult problem of philosophy had not been solved in his own. He meant the question concerning the borders of individuation." KGW 1.4 57 [51-55]

can be directly experienced – they are perceived in aesthetic experience. And the accusation of metaphysical extravagance may be unfair. Several of the readings of his Platonic Ideas I have discussed reposition him as closer to Kant, with the only metaphysical distinction he draws being between that which exists in itself and its manifestations. Indeed even this distinction Hein understands on a two-aspect rather than two-worlds model.

It remains the case, however, that for each thinker there is an account of individuation within space and time which gives only an inadequate picture of the nature of reality. For both, too, individuation ultimately depends upon the relationship between durational, finite particulars and their infinite, eternal essences which, I have argued, should be understood as abstract objects. Thus, as was the case with the embedded self, the similarities between the two thinkers' accounts of individuation surely do call into question the extent to which they can be operating with entirely alien philosophical approaches.[288]

3.3.2 Intuitions as a Test of Individuation

I will now briefly assess whether each thinker can offer a satisfying answer to the questions set out at the beginning of this chapter – and more generally whether their accounts fit with our intuitions about individuation. For neither can there be *substantial* individuation – to what extent, then, can things be really distinct? For Schopenhauer, as I have said, the distinctions between a pen and a piece of paper and between the cats Hero and Millie are merely phenomenal. That doesn't just mean subjective but, arguably, illusory and certainly distant from will as it is in itself. Distinctions between species, between mankind and other species and between one human person and another are less distant, but nonetheless not features of ultimate reality. For Spinoza, any individual has an essence. This may well imply that manufactured things, inanimate things, and non-human living things are all as much individuals as human beings. There is no special account of personal identity nor any

[288] Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', sees Schopenhauer's account of individuation within embeddedness as offering a real point of contact with Spinoza:112 'his ontology of immanence brings him closer to Spinoza than to Kant, or Plato, or to Vedantic philosophy… one can see similarities between the way he relates Ideas to the will and to individual things, and the way Spinoza relates the attributes' (and indeed Egyed speaks of eternal essences rather than attributes) 'to "Substance" and its "modes".'

marker distinguishing one species from another. In fact, when Spinoza discusses talk of the species man, horse and dog it is to highlight the inadequacy of universals. Of course, there are varying degrees of complexity, and a human being is more complex and more capable than a rhododendron. But there is no reason to believe these degrees of complexity are differentiated into distinct grades, as with Schopenhauer's Platonic Ideas of species.

The question of whether Spinoza's theory of individuation is intuitively appealing has been much discussed – the same cannot be said for Schopenhauer. Don Garrett is convinced of the plausibility of Spinoza's account. He remarks that 'readers of the *Ethics* are often struck by a sense that modern science will eventually lead us to something very much like Spinoza's approach to individuation.'[289] He concludes that the theory is coherent and reasonable[290] and that Spinoza's 'rejection of substance as a principle of individuation at the very least clears the way for an alternative conception of individuality, one from which… a powerful conclusion about individual things might be derived.'[291]

One aspect of Spinoza's account that appeals to Garrett is its inclusivity – it can allow not only for natural forces and species of living things to count as individuals but also – at least arguably – such things as inanimate objects, cooperative groups of people and the whole of nature. Also, as Garrett points out, it is not too rigid[292] but is able to accommodate the idea of something that changes nonetheless remaining the same individual. I would suggest that this tallies better with our normal ways of thinking about individuals than do the more restrictive accounts of identity later offered by Locke and Hume. (Though it should be noted that Ruth Saw feels otherwise, commenting with regard to personal identity that 'our feeling that we are persons is *in spite of* whatever Spinoza may be thought to have shown as to our ephemeral and fragmentary nature.')[293]

Equally, it may be thought to be in Spinoza's favour that he recognises the connectedness of individuals and the fuzziness of distinctions between them – and,

[289] Garrett, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 97.
[290] Garrett, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 94.
[291] Garrett, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 96.
[292] Garrett, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 75.
[293] Saw, 'Personal Identity in Spinoza', 14.

even more so, between different species.[294] It might follow, though, that for Spinoza unlike Schopenhauer the distinctions between *types* of individuals are merely conventional. As Lee C.Rice puts it, the difference between the identity criteria for churches, persons and cats 'is one of degree, and is determined by the conventions which we establish.'[295] The worry for critics of Spinoza is that his criteria of identity are too loose, that there are – according to his picture – infinitely many ways of drawing the boundaries of individuals.[296] This is part of what motivates the many objectors, listed early in this chapter, concerned about the disappearance of individuals in Spinoza's system. I have tried to argue that his appeal to formal essences allows Spinoza to offer a metaphysically-grounded account of individuation, but even without this he is able to distinguish between individuals proper and mere things by stipulating that an individual is something which maintains its pattern of motion and rest.[297]

As I say, the intuitive appeal of Schopenhauer's account of individuation seems to have been much less discussed. The exception, perhaps, being his treatment of aesthetic experience, which was taken up enthusiastically by artists if not by philosophers.[298] On the other hand, Julian Young's insistence that Platonic Ideas are 'ordinary perceptual objects' rather than 'exotic entities'[299] is motivated by his sense that the alternative represents an 'impossibly odd view'[300] and Bela Egyed judges Schopenhauer's theory of the Platonic Ideas to be 'the weakest aspect of his philosophy since it precludes any reference to rigorous conceptual and empirical analysis—comes across as artificial and, from a modern scientific point of view, amateurish.'[301]As we saw in the previous chapter, Schopenhauer's emphasis on the embodied nature of the self has, however, found favour and certainly he himself

[294] Melamed, 'Acosmism or Weak individuals?`, 91 suggests that 'it may well be the case that Spinoza intentionally designed the building blocks of his finite world as fuzzy units, in order to stress their inferiority to the self-subsisting, self-explaining, and well-defined substance.'
[295] Rice, 'Spinoza On Individuation', 656-7.
[296] Although it is probably right to say that not just anything whatsoever can count as a Spinozan individual – see for instance Barbone's claim in 'What Counts as an Individual for Spinoza' (arguing against Matheron) that the state does not count as one.
[297] Melamed in 'Acosmism or Weak Individuals?' points out that any aggregation can be a thing if concurring in an action [86], regardless of , for instance, physical proximity. P88 To be an *individual* requires a 'fixed proportion of motion and rest' over and above this.
[298] Which of course plays a role in his theory of individuation insofar as it is through aesthetic experience that we have access to the Platonic Ideas.
[299] Young, *Schopenhauer*, 130.
[300] Young, *Schopenhauer*, 129.
[301] Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation',123.

believes that our intuitions of personal responsibility find satisfaction in his rendering of the free intelligible character.

As regards the theory of individuation itself, we can perhaps be guided to some extent by what commentators have made of Spinoza's model. Certainly, Schopenhauer shares the project Garrett admires in Spinoza of seeking to explain individuation without appeal to substantial distinctions. It is, though, a less inclusive account – at least at the more metaphysically profound level of the Ideas, which individuate only species as such and human persons. Of course this has the consequence that natural kinds are not merely conventional for Schopenhauer, as they seem to be for Spinoza.

As a corollary, it is perhaps worth questioning the extent to which readers' intuitions – even assuming they coincide – offer a good standard against which to test the philosophies under consideration. This itself is a point which has been discussed within the scholarship on Spinoza. In Ruth Saw's judgement 'to apply one very important test to a metaphysical system' is 'to exhibit its inner harmony, but this needs to be complemented by another test, the confrontation with fact, or at any rate, with our ordinary way of referring to facts.'[302] This test she takes Spinoza to fail on the question of personal identity. Lee Rice, however, disagrees both that Spinoza fails the test and that it should be considered in any way a decisive one:

> there is no special problem about personal identity and... identity through time is a matter of degree. Both of these also seem plausible to me, and also appear to be in accord with ordinary linguistic usage; though I should not regard the latter as being a decisive point in their favour.[303]

Rice develops this theme, noting Spinoza's caveat that 'I am aware that in ordinary usage these terms have different meanings. It is not, however, my intention to explicate the meanings of words, but rather to explicate the nature of things'[304] and noting, too, that 'in twentieth-century terms' Spinoza's metaphysics is 'revisionary and not descriptive (in Strawson's sense).'[305] It seems perfectly possible that Spinoza would designate an appeal to intuition or to our ordinary ways of speaking of things

[302] Saw, 'Personal Identity in Spinoza', 14.
[303] Rice, 'Spinoza on Individuation', 658.
[304] Rice, 'Spinoza on Individuation', 658.
[305] Rice, 'Spinoza on Individuation', 659.

an appeal to the first kind of knowledge rather than an adequate, rigorous philosophical test.[306]

3.3.3 Individuation and Ethics

The last of my three tasks is to point to the fact that the ethical theory of each thinker is shaped by his account of individuation. Taking Schopenhauer first: for one thing, it is only in virtue of the intelligible character that each of us is free and can be held responsible for our actions. For Schopenhauer, knowledge of the Platonic Ideas – of what things are in their essence – is valuable in its own right, as is clear from his aesthetic theory as set out in §§34-52. But these sections also reveal that the kind of experience we enjoy when perceiving the Platonic Ideas, one in which the individuality of the knowing self, as well as that of the object, drops away, gives us our first taste of possible salvation. It is the first indication that there may be a way of escape from the torment of life and further that any such salvation will involve first, a kind of knowing that has freed itself from servitude to the will and second, a dissolution or vanishing of the individual. On the other hand, it is precisely as individuals and species that we suffer. In §61 Schopenhauer reminds us of the lesson of book 2 that 'there was necessarily a constant struggle between the individual species, and that precisely in this way was expressed an inner antagonism of the will-to-live with itself.'[307] That book also made clear that the Platonic Ideas themselves are in conflict: 'since the higher Idea or objectification of will can only appear by subduing the lower Ideas, it endures the opposition of these.'[308] What is more, Schopenhauer identifies the ethical mode of life that is compassion with an understanding of the illusory or phenomenal nature of individuation. To recognise that beyond the phenomenal each of us is constituted by the same will is to take on another's interests as our own.[309]

---

[306] See for instance what he say about divisibility at IP15S 'if we attend to quantity as it is in the imagination, which we do often and more easily, it will be found to be finite, divisible, and composed of parts; but if we attend to it as it is in the intellect, and conceive it insofar as it is a substance which happens with great difficulty, then… it will be found to be infinite, unique and indivisible.'
[307] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 331.
[308] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 146.
[309] Janaway in 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 4 puts it more strongly: 'the world as thing in itself is not divided up into distinct individual entities, and our own individuality is not metaphysically fundamental. The importance of this distinction for Schopenhauer's philosophy of value can scarcely

For Spinoza, as Garrett points out, the theory of conatus is founded on individuation and in turn founds Spinoza's psychology and ethics.[310] His descriptive or psychological egoism starts from the idea that each individual has a conatus – the very essence of an individual is to strive to preserve itself. Nonetheless, because of certain facts about individuals, this egoism is compatible not only with cooperation but with many traditional virtues, even to the point of self-sacrifice.[311] First, the Spinozan self is embedded, integrated into and dependent upon a network of other individuals. Second, what we seek to preserve is ourselves as active beings, in the case of humans this means as rational possessors of true ideas, for the sake of which we should be prepared to put aside our own immediate physical interests. Indeed Spinoza concludes in EIVP73 that '[a] man who is guided by reason is more free in a state, where he lives according to a common decision, than in solitude, where he obeys only himself.' This relates to two other aspects of Spinoza's ethical theory to which his account of individuation is relevant. The first is Spinoza's own conception of freedom, according to which to be free is to be self-determined, so that we are freer the more active we are, and the more what we do follows from our own nature. The second is that for Spinoza as for Schopenhauer blessedness is very closely tied to knowledge and particularly to understanding the true nature of reality and our place as modes within it. And it is as possessors of adequate ideas that we can hope to achieve a kind of eternity. My next two chapters will examine the Spinozism of Schopenhauer's ethics and the relationship between the two thinkers' accounts of salvation in turn.

---

be over-estimated. His accounts of aesthetic experience, morality, and the value of life all hinge around the possibility of ceasing to separate oneself out from the whole'.

[310] Garrett, 'Spinoza's Theory of Metaphysical Individuation', 95.

[311] Spinoza, EIVP72S.

Ethics

The central aim of my thesis is to demonstrate commonalities between Schopenhauer's philosophy and that of Spinoza and to argue that reading Schopenhauer as a Spinozist can help us to understand aspects of his philosophy that would otherwise remain obscure. It is often the influence of Kant's philosophy on Schopenhauer that represents the greatest obstacle to characterising him as a Spinozist – and Schopenhauer at least thought of *himself* as a Kantian. This is certainly one major difficulty that arises in trying to present Schopenhauer's ethics as Spinozist, because Schopenhauer adheres to Kant's notion of noumenal freedom. But perhaps equally challenging to this project is the gulf between Spinoza's optimism and Schopenhauer's pessimism. Spinoza is a pantheist who identifies the whole of reality with God, while Schopenhauer is an atheist who thinks that the inner nature of reality itself – which he calls the will – is a malevolent force. Spinoza recommends human cooperation and believes that nothing is more useful to a person than other people, while Schopenhauer subscribes to the inevitability of conflict between individuals. Again, Spinoza claims that by becoming increasingly rational we also become more free, more powerful and more happy until we ultimately reach the state of highest blessedness, which he calls the intellectual love of God. *Schopenhauer* thinks that human life alternates between boredom and suffering, that it would be better for us not to have been born and that the best we can hope for is to withdraw from life through ascetic denial of the will.

Despite all of this, I hope to show that Schopenhauer's philosophy leaves room for an ethics which is very close to that of Spinoza and which he himself largely overlooks. I will also suggest that the ways in which Schopenhauer's ethics depart from Spinoza's are not to Schopenhauer's advantage and that his ethical theory would have been more persuasive had it remained closer to Spinoza's. In the final chapter I will address the questions of pessimism and optimism and of salvation. In this, I focus on the possibility of a practical ethics within determinism and particularly on the role of knowledge and the account of the self in such a project. I will start by establishing Schopenhauer's Kantian account of freedom and its limits, before setting out the ethical theory Spinoza offers despite his determinism. I will suggest that Schopenhauer has resources for a similar account and address three objections that I

think he would be likely to raise to that suggestion. Finally, I will argue that Schopenhauer's refusal to offer a full moral philosophy in the style of Spinoza is a product of his own particularly narrow understanding of what constitutes the ethical domain.

1. ETHICS WITHIN DETERMINISM

1.1 Schopenhauer's Kantian Theory of Freedom

Schopenhauer takes a Kantian line on what is perhaps the debate most fundamental to ethics: the question of whether we have any freedom or if all of our actions are determined.[312] Certainly, Schopenhauer's theory of freedom could not have existed prior to Kant (and hence wasn't available to Spinoza) because it depends on Kant's separation of phenomenal and noumenal realms. Kant, of course, distinguishes the appearances of things (which he designates phenomena) from things as they are in themselves (noumena). He maintains that our knowledge is limited to phenomena or to things as they appear to us, and we can have no knowledge of things as they are in themselves.

Schopenhauer, as we know, shares Kant's idealism, which he adapts to some extent. He maintains that space, time and causality – which he labels the forms of the principle of sufficient reason – are not to be found in things as they are in themselves (that is, noumena) but are forms within which objects appear to us and this is because, effectively, they are provided by our own minds. This means that space, time and causality only apply to phenomena and not to things in themselves. And this in turn means that anything that is *noumenal* is not subject to the causal order and can therefore be called free.

Schopenhauer accepts, along with Kant, that as phenomenal individuals we are utterly subject to the causal order of nature – that is, all our actions are determined. This means that if we are to be free at all, it can only be to the extent that we ourselves are not only phenomena but are also noumenal or intelligible beings. And going beyond the more cautious Kant, Schopenhauer positively asserts that 'the

[312] Matthias Koβler 'Life is but a Mirror: On the Connection between Ethics, Metaphysics and Character in Schopenhauer' in Neill and Janaway, *Better Consciousness*, 77-97, 89 tells us that Schopenhauer sees the question of freedom 'as an absolutely necessary presupposition of his ethics.'

intelligible character of every man is to be regarded as an act of will outside time'.[313] He maintains that this act is free because it falls outside the principle of sufficient reason, which, again, applies only to phenomena, and only *within which* laws of causality apply.

The topic of freedom, then, might seem an unfruitful place to start the attempt to construct a Spinozistic account of Schopenhauer's ethics – after all, the Kantian notion of the noumenal realm as a last refuge for human freedom was unavailable to Spinoza. Schopenhauer's Kantian response to the question of whether or not we are free, however, leaves his philosophy with a problem that Spinoza also faced and because of this Spinoza's *Ethics* may offer resources to be plundered in the search for a solution, as we shall see.

Both Kant and Schopenhauer are interested in freedom because they are concerned to establish that a person can be held responsible for their actions. If my actions are caused by something outside of myself then I cannot be said to be responsible for them. For Schopenhauer, what I do as a phenomenal individual is determined by motives operating on my character. If my character is egoistic then the motive of buying a chocolate bar will move me to action; in the same situation a person of compassionate character might respond to the motive of buying the *Big Issue*.[314] Because of this my behaviour is not free but determined by the potential motives I stumble across and, in the final analysis, by my own character (which determines whether any particular motive will be operative in my case). This is what I call Schopenhauer's character-determinism. But if a person's actions are determined by her character, the only remaining possibility for validly holding her responsible for her actions would be if her character itself wasn't caused by anything else. And this is exactly what Schopenhauer claims. As we saw, Schopenhauer holds that things as they are in themselves are immune to causality. Therefore my intelligible character (my character as it is in itself) is free because it is uncaused (causality just doesn't apply to it) – so nothing outside of me is responsible for my actions.[315]

---

[313] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 289.

[314] Schopenhauer adopts a slightly less common technical use of the term 'motive' such that it refers to something more like an external stimulus to which I respond rather than an interior drive or psychological goal.

[315] Schopenhauer cannot, here be making the claim that I have freely chosen my own character. For Schopenhauer I *am* my character, so how could I have pre-existed that character in order to freely choose it? To be responsible for one's actions they don't need to be or to originate from something that one has freely chosen. All that is required is that they are due to nothing other than oneself – and for Schopenhauer one's actions result from one's character which itself is entirely independent.

Freedom of the noumenal self or intelligible character is morally relevant for Kant and Schopenhauer because it means that we can legitimately hold people responsible for their actions. But in another sense it might seem completely irrelevant to ethics. Anything noumenal is independent of all time and space: noumenal freedom, then, cannot concern the actions performed by individuals in the world, which, surely, constitutes the realm in which ethics plays a role. Indeed, Schopenhauer denies that human actions can ever be free – they are strictly determined by an individual's character.[316] Given that our freedom only exists in the noumenal realm and even then is rather a matter of being uncaused than of freely choosing or acting, as far as human individuals are concerned Schopenhauer is effectively a determinist.

Here, then, is the problem that Schopenhauer's Kantian conception of freedom bequeaths him. If freedom is restricted to the noumenal realm and our daily actions are entirely determined then writing an ethics at all may seem pointless. We are not free to choose one course of action over another, we will necessarily do what our unchanging characters dictate. Why, then, does Schopenhauer appear to prescribe a certain course, to suggest, as he does, that the compassionate life is better than the egoistic, and that asceticism is best of all? The problem, more pressingly, is to make room for ethics (and, perhaps, to make sense of Schopenhauer *writing* an ethics) within a determinist picture of (phenomenal) reality.[317]

This is not a question that Schopenhauer focuses on in his ethical writings. However, the fact that *Spinoza* clearly believes that it makes sense for a determinist to still be an ethicist – to show people that they can become better, and even freer – might inspire us to look more carefully at his successor Schopenhauer's work. Does that work provide any resources on which to base an ethics, any indications that one can change one's behaviour in a morally relevant way, for instance? I will argue that it does, and that these resources demonstrate significant similarities with those Spinoza himself provides.

[316] Except in the special case of denial of the will, but Schopenhauer does not restrict the moral to this alone: there can be virtuous action within our unfreedom.
[317] In section 2.3 below I will address the question of whether Schopenhauer does in fact offer a prescriptive ethics.

2. Spinoza's Ethics: Freedom Within Determinism

My account of Spinoza throughout has been based primarily on the *Ethics* as the locus of the systematic and mature exhibition of his philosophical thought. The title of his major work indicates that Spinoza's project is, ultimately, to show us the route to virtue and happiness,[318] its subtitle – *Demonstrated in Geometrical Order* – reminding us that this will be achieved whilst nonetheless treating human behaviour 'as if it were a question of lines, planes, and bodies',[319] in effect, without recourse to the notion of free will. Spinoza is a determinist: '[i]n nature there is nothing contingent, but all things have been determined… to exist and produce an effect in a certain way',[320] even a necessitarian: '[t]hings could have been produced by God in no other way, and in no other order than they have been produced',[321] and free will is explicitly ruled out: '[t]he will cannot be called a free cause, but only a necessary one…each volition can neither exist nor be determined to produce an effect unless it is determined by another cause'.[322] But Spinoza nonetheless believes that humans *do* have a degree of freedom and can become better and happier.

Spinoza understands freedom in terms of self-determination. Because 'God acts from the laws of his nature alone, and is compelled by no one', Spinoza holds God to be a free cause.[323] When explaining human bondage, Spinoza reminds us that this is not possible for human beings: '[i]t is impossible that a man… should be able to undergo no changes except those which can be understood through his own nature alone, and of which he is the adequate cause.'[324] However, the more closely we human beings approximate to God's position, the freer we are. We are more free the more that we are active, less so the more that we passively endure experiences which are beyond our control. For Spinoza, this means that we are free to the extent that our behaviour results from our own adequate understanding but unfree while we are subject to and swayed by passions. Thus in the Demonstration to Part IV Proposition

---

[318] As Don Garrett puts it in 'Spinoza's Ethical Theory' in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, ed. Don Garrett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996):267-314, 267 'Spinoza's guiding intellectual purpose' was 'to improve the character of human beings… by improving their self-understanding.'
[319] Spinoza, EIII Preface.
[320] Spinoza, EIP29.
[321] Spinoza, EIP33.
[322] Spinoza, EIP32.
[323] Spinoza, EIP17.
[324] Spinoza, EIVP4.

23 Spinoza writes: 'insofar as he is determined to do something from the fact that he understands, he acts', while when outlining the nature of bondage in the Preface to that part he tells us 'the man who is subject to affects is under the control, not of himself, but of fortune' so that 'though he sees the better for himself, he is still forced to follow the worse.'

Thus for Spinoza to be free is to be active, for one's own essence to be the cause of what one does. Because the nature of the mind is to understand, the more we know and understand, the freer we are. Our essence – our conatus – is to strive to preserve ourselves, and the nature of the mind is to understand, so that 'what we strive for from reason is nothing but understanding'.[325] In fact, such understanding reduces the power that the passions have over us: Propositions 3 and 4 of Part V – 'Of Human Freedom' – tell us that we can form a clear and distinct idea of any affect of the body (P4) and that when we do this with a passion, it ceases to be one (P3). So for Spinoza, within a deterministic system in which free will is an illusion, we can nonetheless increase our freedom by increasing our knowledge and understanding.

It is also precisely by gaining knowledge and freedom that we can become both happy and virtuous. Joy, for Spinoza, is that emotion 'by which the mind passes to a greater perfection'[326] and the mind 'rejoices insofar as it conceives adequate ideas, that is (by P1), insofar as it acts.'[327] The activity of the mind brings joy even to the point of blessedness – the greatest happiness of which we are capable is the intellectual love of God. As Spinoza explains in Part V Proposition 32 '[w]hatever we understand by the third kind of knowledge we take pleasure in' and in its Corollary '[f]rom the third kind of knowledge, there necessarily arises an intellectual love of God', having already established in P16 that '[t]his love toward God must engage the mind most.' Finally, in the Scholium to VP36 he is able to conclude that 'we clearly understand wherein our salvation, *or* blessedness, *or* freedom, consists, namely, in a constant and eternal love of God'.

Our greatest happiness, then, comes through intellectual activity. That this also corresponds to our greatest virtue is really a foregone conclusion given Spinoza's definition of virtue – and his definitions of good and bad. Spinoza asserts repeatedly that a thing's virtue is simply its power to act according to its own nature. So for

[325] Spinoza, EIVP26.
[326] Spinoza, EIIIP11S.
[327] Spinoza, EIIIP58 D.

instance EIV Definition 8: 'by virtue and power I understand the same thing… the very essence, or nature, of man, insofar as he has the power of bringing about certain things, which can be understood through the laws of his nature alone' and EIVP18 S: 'virtue (by D[efinition]8) is nothing but acting from the laws of one's own nature'. It follows, then, that '[k]nowledge of God is the mind's greatest good; its greatest virtue is to know God.'[328] This is because, as we have seen, virtue consists in acting according to one's own nature – at its apex, for the human mind, this means knowing and loving God – but also because good and evil are, for Spinoza, relative to desire. In Part IV Definition 1 he establishes that '[b]y good I shall understand what we certainly know to be useful to us.' This means that from the point of view of a human being, whose blessedness consists in intellectual activity, '[w]e know nothing to be certainly good or evil, except what really leads to understanding or what can prevent us from understanding.'[329] Thus the greatest virtue we can attain inevitably coincides with our greatest freedom and happiness: understanding.

What is perhaps more surprising is that Spinoza claims that our happiness coincides, too, with virtue in the more traditional sense. Those who are freer, more active and more happy will also possess the moral virtues. As he puts it at EIVP46, '[h]e who lives according to the guidance of reason strives, as far as he can, to repay the other's hate, anger, and disdain toward him, with love, or nobility.' A little later, at EIVP72, Spinoza insists that '[a] free man always acts honestly, not deceptively' and claims in the demonstration to that proposition that even if he 'could save himself from the present danger of death by treachery' a free man would refuse to do so. In brief, the compatibility between egoism and moral virtue depends on at least three Spinozan ideas. First, that what we seek to preserve when seeking to preserve ourselves is our active understanding and possession of adequate ideas (rather than simply our bodily existence, for instance). Second, that what the free person desires is available to all, not a good over which we are doomed to compete. And third, that as finite parts of nature we are dependent on one another – in particular, on modes who are like us, for our own well-being. Because of this '[t]he good which everyone who seeks virtue wants for himself, he also desires for other men' and 'free men are very useful to one another, are joined to one another by the closest bond of friendship (by

[328] Spinoza, EIVP28.
[329] Spinoza, EIVP27.

P35 and P35C1), and strive to benefit one another with equal eagerness for love'.[330] Spinoza, then, is a determinist who denies free will to God and man alike. He nonetheless believes that we can become both happier and more morally virtuous. We achieve this through gaining knowledge: through exercising power by coming to understand ourselves and God, the reality of which we are part.

1.3 Character-Determinism and the Possibility of Changing Behaviour

Until this point, then, I have argued that although Schopenhauer believes humans are (noumenally) free, he appears to have left no space for ethics. This is because ethics concerns the actions of individuals but, for Schopenhauer, freedom is precluded from the phenomenal arena in which individuals live: our actions as individuals are determined. Spinoza, too, is a determinist but he believes that we have some degree of control over our actions: we can modify our behaviour to become better and happier people. Could one argue that Schopenhauer similarly makes room for ethics?

As previously noted, Schopenhauer insists that each of us has a single, unchanging character which strictly determines all of our actions. But at the same time, Schopenhauer discusses the phenomenon of remorse, which he describes as arising as a result of performing an action that is not within one's character. Also, he states that one can 'acquire' one's true character over the course of a lifetime. Both of these seem to challenge that picture of an unchanging and inescapable character. In my view, however, that picture can be shown to be consistent with these notions of acting out of character and of acquiring one's character.

Egoism, compassion and malice are, for Schopenhauer, the three basic types of human character. Most people's natures comprise a mix of all three, but the proportions of each component are eternally fixed in each individual. If one's character is predominantly egoistic, then to act out of character would be to act in a way that is, so-to-speak, 'too' altruistic. This could happen, Schopenhauer points out, through a misreading of the situation. If you signed up to donate money to charity because you *thought* you were signing up for an investment scheme you would have acted more altruistically than was in keeping with your character because the 'wrong'

[330] Spinoza, EIVP37 and EIVP71D.

external stimulus operated on it. When you later realised this, you would feel regret or remorse, on Schopenhauer's account.

Schopenhauer's explanation of remorse, then, reveals that being better informed can change your behaviour. And it is in this sense, too, that Schopenhauer suggests one's character can gradually be 'acquired'. If over your lifetime you gain in knowledge and understanding of the world and your reason improves at clearly distinguishing motives then your behaviour will become increasingly in keeping with your (nonetheless unchanging) character. Your character can only express itself properly if your knowledge and reason set the world *before it* properly. Your behaviour at the age of seventy may look radically different to that at the age of seventeen if you become wiser – or less so! At each point your character determines your behaviour but at one it is obstructed by your lack of knowledge or reasoning ability so that the resultant behaviour is very different in each case.

While Schopenhauer's statement that and explanation of how we can act out of character seem clear, neither he nor his interpreters focus on this to any great extent. The one real exception to this is the account offered by John Atwell, which challenges the view that Schopenhauer's character-determinism is compatible with the phenomenon of acting out of character. He writes that 'Schopenhauer is honest enough to acknowledge the feeling of repentance, but to acknowledge it is one thing and to accommodate it in a reasonable manner is another… it certainly appears that he cannot do the latter.'[331] He points out that, for Schopenhauer, there can be no action without a motive, and that motives can't operate in the absence of a character. In fact, he says, there 'cannot be an "operative" motive or action of the egoistic or altruistic sort without a corresponding susceptibility in the character – which all means that there can be no actions done "out of character"'.[332] In other words, if you don't have an egoistic aspect to your character then you can't respond to an egoistic motive. But without a motive there can be no action, so unless you have an egoistic element to your character it is impossible for you to perform an egoistic action at all – and so there can be no such thing as 'out of character' behaviour.

If the phenomenon of remorse (which seems to presuppose such 'out of character' behaviour) really *were* so hard to reconcile with his theory of human action

[331] John E. Atwell 'Doers and their Deeds: Schopenhauer on Human Agency' in *Schopenhauer: New Essays in Honor of his 200th Birthday*, ed. Eric Von Der Luft (Lewiston: Mellen, 1988): 1-23, 22.
[332] John E. Atwell 'Doers and their Deeds' 22.

one might be surprised that Schopenhauer drew attention to it at all. In a footnote to Atwell's article his editor darkly hints that Schopenhauer might have raised the notion of acting out of character in the hope that it could explain away some of his own dubious behaviour. My own view is that rather than standing in need of a somewhat cattish psychoanalytical explanation, Schopenhauer's account of remorse points the way to the untrumpeted but rich and plausible ethical theory one can extract from Book 4.

Atwell's own, rather half-hearted, attempt to show how Schopenhauer can deal with the idea of acting out of character unfolds as follows. He suggests that those actions which are not explicable with reference to my own unique character result from the operation of motives on a general human character in which I participate. (Atwell uses the same model to explain the acquired character, which is achieved when one acts solely on motives to which one's own unique character responds, shunning those which only provoke action via the general human character). Briefly, questions which this account does not seem well-designed to answer include the following: if the general human character is '"rather charitable" or "moderately generous"' as Atwell suggests, how does one explain actions that are more egoistic or malicious than those demanded by one's own character?[333] Also, if my own character is an amalgam of the general human character and my own particular ratio of compassion, egoism and malice then why should it be that in certain situations only the former element responds to motives and in others only the latter? Since Atwell himself notes that 'this line of argument can extricate Schopenhauer from inconsistency only partially, and perhaps it does not even do that', I shall abandon it.[334]

Atwell is right that both motive and character are necessary to explain each human action. He is not, however, quite right to say that there 'cannot be an "operative" motive or action of the egoistic or altruistic sort without a corresponding susceptibility in the character'.[335] This is because, as Schopenhauer explicitly states, motives operate not as they *are* but as they *are known* or seem to be. Thus a compassionate person *could* respond to a motive that was in fact egoistic if they thought it was altruistic, in which case an egoistic motive would have been operative

[333] Atwell, 'Doers and their Deeds' 23.
[334] Atwell, 'Doers and their Deeds' 22.
[335] Atwell, 'Doers and their Deeds' 22.

without there being any corresponding susceptibility in the character. Motives influence character through the medium of knowledge and, as I indicated earlier, to the extent that knowledge distorts reality or reason fails to extrapolate the consequences of some particular course one could be misled into acting out of character. As one corrects one's knowledge and as one's reasoning abilities improve one's actions will increasingly fit one's character; thus one will come to acquire one's character.

In my view, the lack of attention to this aspect of Schopenhauer's moral philosophy is unfortunate because, I shall suggest, it leaves him with a significant body of ethical theory that remains compatible with his character-determinism and relegation of human freedom to the noumenal realm. My immediate concerns, then, are to demonstrate *that* Schopenhauer provides the resources for an ethical theory, the *scope* of that ethics (which I want to say is significant), and that it has a Spinozistic character.

The interpretation of Schopenhauer's theory of remorse and the acquired character which I just offered might suggest that knowledge stands between potential motivating factors and my character, often obscuring or misrepresenting reality, and so might imply that a more immediate relation between motives and character would allow one to express the latter more fully. But in fact, without perception we would have no access to the motives at all and without *knowledge* the range of motives that could affect us would be dramatically reduced, making us much less successful at pursuing our interests. If our only access to motives was, as Schopenhauer says it is for animals, through perception we could only respond to things immediately in front of us. As it is, we can set all the relevant motivating factors before ourselves in the abstract so that each can exert its proper influence on our characters. We can, therefore, be influenced by motivating factors that aren't actually present – perhaps most importantly by future ones through our awareness of time. This means, for instance, that a person of largely egoistic character could decide to sacrifice her immediate pleasure in favour of a greater benefit that would only be enjoyed in the future. She would, through her abstract reasoning ability, be acting more fully in accordance within her own character, deriving a greater personal gain instead of a smaller one.

In this respect, Schopenhauer endorses Spinoza's claim that it is to my advantage to increase my knowledge and improve my reasoning ability. For Spinoza,

freedom and happiness are correlated with self-determination. The fewer erroneous ideas I have, the less I am affected by things outside of myself and the more I can be truly myself. The greater the extent of my self-determination in this sense, the more free and happy I will be. Of particular relevance to Schopenhauer's ethics is Spinoza's insistence that using reason helps a person to fulfil his or her nature more successfully, perhaps by helping that person to become aware that something he or she took to be in his or her interests in fact wasn't, or *vice versa*.[336] Schopenhauer and Spinoza are equally in agreement concerning how things can go wrong. One can act in a way that is opposed to one's nature if one is misled by false ideas or has inadequate knowledge; if one reasons badly; or if one fails to reason at all and one's actions are determined merely by perceptions. Perhaps more notable still is the fact that both mention two further sources of unrepresentative action: when emotion overpowers reason and when motives are furnished by the imagination rather than reality.

Like Spinoza, then, Schopenhauer gives us an account of how a person can come to fulfil her own nature, where this means coming to act more in accordance with her character and where it is achieved through improved knowledge and reasoning abilities. But this means that – thanks to an element of his theory that is far from the focus of his moral philosophy – Schopenhauer gives us much of what we demand of an ethics. Our capacity for knowledge gives us a great deal of control over our actions by allowing us to be motivated only as is appropriate to our own nature, it distinguishes us from animals and it allows us to take time and future consequences into consideration in our deliberations. And while this sphere of control is bounded by Schopenhauer's character-determinism (his view that a person's behaviour is determined by her unchanging character), it leaves room for a person to change her life radically in strikingly moral ways. Earlier I gave the example of a person whose behaviour appeared very different at different stages of life while that individual's *character* nonetheless remained the same, and Schopenhauer himself maintains that a 'wild youth can be followed by a staid, sober, manly age.'[337] But Schopenhauer goes further still, saying that:

[336] Although they would, of course, differ in that Spinoza would say that to know more and reason better was in itself to fulfil your nature and thus good for you.
[337] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 296.

> the ability to modify knowledge, and through this to modify action, goes so far that the will seeks to attain its ever unalterable end, for example, Mohammed's paradise… [by] applying prudence, force, and fraud in the one case, abstinence, justice, righteousness, alms, and pilgrimage to Mecca in the other.[338]

If pursuing Schopenhauer's theory can make the difference between a violent, fraudulent person and a just and charitable one, one might wonder if it doesn't fully satisfy the criteria for a successful ethics.

While Schopenhauer has to allow that even on his own account we can change our behaviour to a significant extent, he *wouldn't* have to accept that this is morally relevant because such change needn't be for the better. A person of compassionate character needs reason and knowledge for her actions to be as expressive of compassion as her character demands. But equally, by enabling her actions to more fully express *her* character an egoistic person would use knowledge and reason to become more selfish. Thus the development could be for good or bad, depending on the quality of a person's character. Given this, moral considerations appear to remain stuck outside of the domain of human action since the compassionate, egoistic or malicious nature of a person's character depends on a noumenal act of will unchosen and unalterable by that person.[339]

1.4 Knowledge and Virtue

For Spinoza, the moral relevance of the impact of reason and knowledge on behaviour is clearer. According to Spinoza, *everyone's* nature is egoistic, but reason clearly reveals that one's self-interest is best served through co-operation with others. A cooperative community, in turn, can only be maintained if its members behave justly towards one another. For Spinoza, then, to act in a way that is more in tune with reason is inevitably to act more justly towards others. Could Schopenhauer accept a claim like this? It seems unlikely given his characterisation of the phenomenal world as a constant struggle between individuals over limited resources. Schopenhauer *does* seem to hold that in the long-run it is advantageous to at least *appear* virtuous. Equally, Spinoza would, of course, have to accept that on certain occasions my own physical well-being would be best served by treating another unjustly. His claim that

[338] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 295.
[339] Except that one might say a person who knew their character to be predominantly egoistic ought to avoid improving their reasoning abilities!

genuine virtue to the point, in certain circumstances, of self-sacrifice follows from enlightened egoism depends on his belief in a 'true' self-interest that is not identified with one's physical well-being or even, perhaps, one's continued existence as an individual.

There is a second, though related, way in which education leads inevitably to more ethical behaviour on Spinoza's account. To properly understand the world is to have one's image of oneself as an entirely distinct individual – perhaps as a substance in one's own right, for example – undermined. For one thing, Spinoza holds that each individual is simply a *mode* of the one substance, which he calls God or nature. For another, the lines we draw to separate such modes are not clear-cut: I am not utterly separate, for instance, from the tools I use, from my family and friends or from the communities of which I am a member – to some extent my interests are bound up with theirs. So for Spinoza an adequate knowledge of reality brings with it an expanded sense of self and identification with others which in turn leads me to promote 'their' interests along with my own.

Schopenhauer shares the view that knowledge of reality is central to virtue in this sense. His own metaphysical position identifies phenomenal individuals as illusions that deceive those who see the world through the veil of maya. In reality, everything is will, to which the principle of individuation does not apply. But this means, for Schopenhauer, that I am *really* as much you as I am me. If perpetrator and victim are, in reality, one, then to hurt another is to hurt myself. Schopenhauer tells us that the compassionate person lives according to the motto '[i]njure no one; on the contrary, help everyone as much as you can'.[340] But presumably this is also how a self-interested person would behave if they had attained to the knowledge that they and everyone else are ultimately identical.

Arguably, then, Schopenhauer ought to hold not that a compassionate person is someone of a radically different character to an egoistic person, but – along with Spinoza – that compassion results from the combination of a self-interested nature and knowledge of how the world really is. This means that it would not take an (at any rate, impossible) change of character for an egoistic person to behave compassionately. Nor would an egoist behaving compassionately rely on them being misled into acting out of character. Instead, once my sense of my self has been

[340] Arthur Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality,* trans. E. F. J. Payne (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998) , 69 footnote 18.

expanded to take in the whole of reality, properly fulfilling my self-interested nature would itself involve behaving compassionately towards all other phenomenal individuals.

We saw, earlier, that Schopenhauer certainly has the resources to account for significant and ethically relevant changes in behaviour over the course of a lifetime. We also saw that, like Spinoza, he can explain this in spite of his determinism. And, again like Spinoza, that he holds man's reasoning ability to be responsible for this possibility. We also saw, however, that this theory falls short of being a true ethics. While the changes in behaviour that improved knowledge can bring are ethically relevant – one could, for instance, as Schopenhauer's 'Mecca' example suggested, become a pilgrim instead of a fraudster – the role of reason in producing these changes is morally neutral because the changes could go either way. In other words, if your character is egoistic then increasing your knowledge might well change you *from* a pilgrim *to* a fraudster.

Presumably it is expected of a moral philosophy that it be capable of pointing out a course that is guaranteed to make us more virtuous – or at least one which holds no risk of making us less so. On the model I have extracted from Schopenhauer's theory this would only be possible if it were the case that advancing reason and knowledge *necessarily* made us better. For Spinoza, this is in fact the case: we are all self-interested, and treacherous behaviour will never accord with this self-interest as clear reasoning reveals it to be. This, however, follows from Spinoza's conception of a 'higher' self-interest which involves taking knowledge and reason to be goods in themselves. It does not seem obvious that Schopenhauer would have any reason to accept this picture, but he *does* concur with Spinoza in asserting that to see the world truly is to identify with others and thus behave compassionately towards them. Because, for Spinoza, the basic nature of all is to be self-interested, then this compassion can only be a kind of extended self-interest (which perhaps fits well with the etymology of compassion as 'feeling with'). My argument in this section has been to the effect that *Schopenhauer's own* account of compassion might make it too sound like a kind of extended self-interest. But if this is so, then surely compassion needn't be inborn but something that a person of egoistic character could also achieve if only they had adequate knowledge of reality?

Were Schopenhauer to argue this he would, like Spinoza, have shown the following things:

First, that knowledge and reason can lead you to act differently
Second, that they can do this to such an extent that your behaviour can be radically changed
Third, that such a change in behaviour would necessarily make you more virtuous
And fourth, that it would nonetheless continue to be a fulfilment of your own character.

In other words, he would have provided a full ethical theory within his character-determinism.

2. SCHOPENHAUER'S OBJECTIONS

Schopenhauer, of course, does *not* argue this and would strongly object to it. Before offering some criticisms of what I've called Schopenhauer's character determinism, I will outline three specific objections that I think he would raise to the ethical theory I've derived from his philosophy. I'll diagnose them as depending on Schopenhauer's view of what is relevant to ethics which, if not idiosyncratic, is certainly not universal. First, Schopenhauer takes compassion or altruism to be the (sole) mark of morality, so that he would refuse to categorise even an enlightened egoism as praiseworthy. Second, he is what David E. Cartwright calls a 'motivational pluralist', who would insist that compassion *cannot* be reduced to or explained as an expanded version of egoism.[341] Third, he argues that it is a mistake to believe that ethics can be really transformative: that knowledge can change us in morally relevant ways.

2.1 Compassion as the Mark of Morality

First, he would object that the ethics of extended egoism are insufficient to morality. As an illustration, Schopenhauer compares on the one hand the situation in which an ideal state governed its dominion perfectly according to the self-interest of its members with, on the other hand, the situation in which justice of disposition prevailed, that is, in which everyone naturally and in accordance with their own

[341] David E. Cartwright 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers: The Metaphysics of *Mitleid*' in Neill and Janaway, *Better Consciousness*, 138-156, 140.

character freely gave everybody else their due. Schopenhauer maintains that while the *effect* would be exactly the same in each case, the inner natures of the two would be opposite and the first situation would have nothing to do with morality.

Aside from their radically divergent understandings of freedom, this surely represents the biggest difference between Schopenhauer and Spinoza as regards ethics. In 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', Christopher Janaway puts it bluntly: '[t]he single criterion of moral goodness for Schopenhauer is that one's action spring from compassion.'[342] In his own essay in the same volume, David Cartwright concurs: for Schopenhauer, 'compassion is the basis of all virtue' and he elaborates that 'malice is the incentive for morally reprehensible actions, egoism for morally indifferent actions and compassion for actions possessing moral worth'.[343]

Schopenhauer's *reasons* for holding this view are less easy to establish. Cartwright's own suggestion is that Schopenhauer's reasoning appeals to the idea that the ethical necessarily has to do with the relation to other people: '[e]goism, he argues, cannot confer moral worth on actions because the ethical significance of any action lies only "in reference to others."'[344] This seems to fit ill with his claim that Schopenhauer – like Spinoza – sees good and bad as defined in relation to will.[345] Cartwright's claim that 'Schopenhauer defined the good as that which is in agreement with one's will'[346] resonates strongly with Spinoza's statement in *Ethics* III P39S that '[b]y good here I understand… what satisfies any kind of longing… we desire nothing because we judge it to be good, but on the contrary we call it good because we desire it'. Spinoza concludes from this that 'each one, from his own affect, judges, *or* evaluates, what is good and what is bad'. If good and bad are relative to our desires, it is difficult to see from what independent standpoint *Schopenhauer* feels able to judge compassion as the one motive carrying moral worth. If he wants to share Spinoza's

---

[342] Christopher Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value' in Neill and Janaway *Better Consciousness*, 1-10, 6.
[343] Cartwright, 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 141.
[344] David E. Cartwright, 'Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche on the Morality of Pity', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45, no. 1 (1984): 94 quoting Schopenhauer, BM, 144.
[345] See Spinoza at EIV Definition 1: '[b]y good I shall understand what we certainly know to be useful to us' and E III P39S '[b]y good here I understand… what satisfies any kind of longing… we desire nothing because we judge it to be good, but on the contrary we call it good because we desire it… So each one, from his own affect, judges, *or* evaluates, what is good and what is bad'.
[346] Cartwright 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 151. See also David E. Cartwright 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', *Schopenhauer Jahrbuch*, 69 Band (1988): 560: 'Schopenhauer argued that… those things which are agreeable to the will are good, and those contrary to the will are bad'. This seems to be supported by WWR I, 362 where Schopenhauer writes: 'every good is essentially relative; for it has its essential nature only in its relation to a desiring will.'

naturalisation of morality, surely Schopenhauer too ought to hold that a thing only has moral worth in as much as it satisfies some desire.

Other commentators have concluded that Schopenhauer takes it to be obviously true that compassion is the mark of the morally good, or at least to be an accurate description of how we do as a matter of fact evaluate actions morally. Michael Maidan, for instance, argues that Schopenhauer doesn't really prove that (only) altruistic acts are moral, but simply surveys a variety of moral systems to show that this is a shared intuition.[347] Schopenhauer is unable to show that altruism is intrinsically worthwhile, Maidan believes, but Maidan proposes that it possesses moral value, for Schopenhauer, as a species of the denial of the will: '[t]he moral worth of altruism seems to depend not on its intrinsic value, but on its connexion with… the denial of the Will.'[348] Indeed, 'any act has moral worth, in proportion to the measure of self-denial of the Will that it manifests.'[349] Of course, denial of the will may seem to stand in just as much need of an explanation as compassion as the criterion of moral worth. Possibly, such denial has moral worth because Schopenhauer sees the will itself as evil. While Maidan doesn't dwell on this, he does mention in passing the idea of 'redeeming the will'.[350] Maidan does, though, discuss one problem with tying the moral value of altruism to its role as a species of will-denial: '[t]he identification of morality with salvation… empties the moral act of its specificity', and he notes that it entails that 'aesthetic experiences, philosophic cogitations, and other acts' which manifest a degree of denial must also have moral value.[351] Such a morally revisionary claim seems hard to reconcile with Schopenhauer's supposed method of surveying moral systems.

If it is difficult to find reasons for Schopenhauer's view that compassion is the mark of morality, it is harder still to find justification for the view that compassion is its *sole* mark – that the only criterion for whether something has moral value is whether it was inspired by compassion. Neither of the suggestions considered above seem capable of sustaining such a claim. That an action must be concerned with

---

[347] Michael Maidan 'Schopenhauer on Altruism and Morality', *Schopenhauer Jahrbuch* 69 Band (1988): 265.
[348] Maidan, 'Schopenhauer on Altruism and Morality', 268.
[349] So that 'it is because altruism can be seen as one of the forms in which the self-denial of the Will operates, that it can be said to have a moral value… any act has moral worth, in proportion to the measure of self-denial of the Will that it manifests.' Maidan, 'Schopenhauer on Altruism and Morality', 269.
[350] Maidan, 'Schopenhauer on Altruism and Morality', 269.
[351] Maidan, 'Schopenhauer on Altruism and Morality', 271 and 269.

others to have ethical significance may rule out moral egoism, but surely does not leave Schopenhauer's position as the only viable one.[352] To take one example, Utilitarianism would seem to offer a moral system which is not characterised by compassion *per se* but which is clearly marked by 'reference to others'. Maidan's view that altruism is valuable as a species of denial of will not only shifts the criterion of value *from* compassion *to* denial, but precisely leaves compassion as just one species among a broader genus of morally valuable activities. Maidan himself seems exasperated by Schopenhauer's implication that 'compassion is not only a necessary, but also a sufficient condition for morality', which he calls 'plainly erroneous'.[353] For one thing, '[a]n act can be motivated by sincere compassion, and yet be an immoral one according to some other standard.'[354] For another, such a view fits ill with what Maidan sees as Schopenhauer's method of appealing to intuitive support and a review of established ethical positions to underwrite his moral claims. As Maidan puts it 'there is a contradiction between Schopenhauer's account of morality and his description of the history of ethical thought. Schopenhauer rightly points out that classical ethical thought was eudemonistic… pity entered into Western ethical thought only through Christianity'.[355] In other words, compassion has certainly not been universally acknowledged as the criterion of morality. It therefore seems to me that we can conclude, with Maidan, that 'altruism… cannot be the sole and legitimate mark of morality. Schopenhauer's identification of altruism and morality provides us only with a too narrow criterion of morality, one which cannot be supported in intuitive terms'.[356] Schopenhauer's insistence that compassion is the mark of morality, and its only mark, represents an extremely narrow understanding of the ethical and one for which it is difficult to find persuasive underpinnings in his work.

Of course, there have been those who have argued that – far from being the mark of what is moral – pity or compassion is in fact morally troubling. Foremost among such critics is Nietzsche, who responds explicitly to Schopenhauer, but Spinoza too has an argument to the effect that pity is an evil rather than a good. In his 'Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche on the Morality of Pity', Cartwright notes that Spinoza, Kant and Nietzsche share an account of the nature of pity – what he labels

[352] Perhaps it would also rule out Kantian duty ethics and eudaemonism.
[353] Maidan, 'Schopenhauer on Altruism and Morality', 266.
[354] Maidan, 'Schopenhauer on Altruism and Morality', 266.
[355] Maidan, 'Schopenhauer on Altruism and Morality', 266.
[356] Maidan, 'Schopenhauer on Altruism and Morality', 266.

the 'psychological model' – as well as a negative evaluation of it.[357] His contention is that Schopenhauer's model is different. In another article, 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', he argues that the term 'Mitleid', common to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, should in fact be translated differently in each case: as 'compassion' in Schopenhauer's case, and 'pity' in Nietzsche's. This is important because 'these nouns name emotions that are morally different in ways that show why Schopenhauer could correctly praise *Mitleid* and Nietzsche could correctly condemn it.'[358] For Cartwright's Nietzsche, pity is to be condemned because it implies a superior status in the pitier, who helps the sufferer in order to enhance these feelings, so that this help is 'not morally good.'[359] It is effectively a form of contempt. It represents an exercise of power, but a weak one which picks on easy prey.[360] It results in actions either designed to relieve the pitier's own suffering or gain applause.[361] Its correlative is self-pity, which 'is debilitating' and 'robs its agent of natural incentives to solve one's own problems'.[362] On the other hand, Schopenhauer's compassion 'has as its ultimate end another's well-being… it is an altruistic motive'.[363]

For Cartwright, then, despite the two philosophers using the same term, the ethical attitude which Nietzsche condemns is very different to the one which Schopenhauer praises ('[i]nsofar as the conception of *Mitleid* is employed in Schopenhauer's ethics, it is not the emotion Nietzsche detailed') so that Nietzsche's criticisms of Schopenhauer miss their mark.[364] In fact his view is that Schopenhauer himself would hold that actions performed out of pity, as characterised by Nietzsche, 'are egoistic and lack moral worth'.[365] Cartwright does acknowledge that part of Nietzsche's aim is to show not only that pity is problematic, but that what Schopenhauer takes to be instances of compassion are in fact examples of pity and further, that no cases of Schopenhauerian compassion are to be found. I will discuss below the question of whether or not Schopenhauer convinces on the very existence of compassion as a source of ethical action. Perhaps the differences between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer dissolve if we understand the former as objecting not to

[357] Cartwright, 'Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche on the Morality of Pity', 84 footnote 5.
[358] Cartwright, 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', 558.
[359] Cartwright, 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', 559.
[360] Cartwright, 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', 563.
[361] Cartwright, 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', 562.
[362] Cartwright, 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', 559.
[363] Cartwright, 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', 560.
[364] Cartwright, 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', 564.
[365] Cartwright, 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', 565.

compassion but to pity. Even if so, can *Spinoza's* concerns about *commiseratio* be reconciled with Schopenhauer's extolling of *Mitleid* in a similar way?

Spinoza does use the two different nouns *commiseratio* (pity) and *misericordia* (compassion). It is of the former that he writes that 'in a man who lives according to the guidance of reason' it 'is evil of itself and useless.'[366] On the other hand, of compassion he says it 'is love, insofar as it so affects a man that he is glad at another's good fortune and saddened by his ill fortune', so that it may seem if as he evaluates them quite differently.[367] However, when defining pity, Spinoza's analysis is that '[t]here seems to be no difference between pity and compassion, except perhaps that pity concerns the singular affect, whereas compassion concerns the habitual disposition of this affect.'[368] It may be that Spinoza thinks of compassion as a broader tendency towards concern for others which would incorporate both the positive affect of joy at another's well-being as well as the negative passion of suffering with their pain. Given that Schopenhauer's focus is overwhelmingly on the role of another's suffering as ethical motive – thus on what Spinoza would term pity – it seems as if the disagreement between the two thinkers must be real. Even if *misericordia* also encompasses a positive affect, Schopenhauer's *Mitleid* would equate to Spinoza's *commiseratio* or pity. Spinoza classifies pity as a passion rather than an active affect and defines it as sadness at another's suffering.[369] 'Sadness is a man's passage from a greater to a lesser perfection'[370] and so for Spinoza 'sadness… is directly evil',[371] from which follows Spinoza's conclusion at EIVP50 that pity itself is evil.[372]

2.2 Motivational Pluralism

One might also wonder whether it is necessary or even plausible to posit three different fundamental types of character, as Schopenhauer does – the compassionate,

---

[366] Spinoza, EIVP50.
[367] Spinoza, EIII Definition of the Affects XXIV.
[368] Spinoza, EIII Definition of the Affects XVIII Exp.
[369] Spinoza, EIII Definition of the Affects XVIII 'Pity is a sadness, accompanied by the idea of an evil which has happened to another whom we imagine to be like us.'
[370] Spinoza, EIII Definition of the Affects III EIIIP59 Dem.: 'insofar as the mind is saddened, its power of understanding, that is (by P1) of acting, is diminished or restrained.'
[371] Spinoza, EIVP41.
[372] And even of *misericordia* Spinoza says at EIIIP32S: 'from the same property of human nature from which it follows that men are compassionate, it also follows that the same men are envious and ambitious.'

the egoistic and malicious. This certainly doesn't seem to be a necessity in accounting for human behaviour, Spinoza, for instance, believes he can explain such diverse phenomena as *Schadenfreude* (or pleasure at someone else's suffering) and self-sacrifice from just the single motivating tendency of egoism.

We have seen, then, that there is doubt over whether Schopenhauer has successfully shown that being prompted to action by another's suffering is morally praiseworthy and certainly over whether it can be the *only* praiseworthy ethical impulse. But there is also a question to be answered about whether such a motivation actually *exists*: the question of Schopenhauer's motivational pluralism.[373] This is the second element of Schopenhauer's ethics that would lead a defender of his to object to the ethical position I sketched above. A Schopenhauerian would see it as reductive in explaining away seemingly altruistic acts as ultimately egoistic. But Schopenhauer's claim that there exists a plurality of ethical drives – in particular, that compassion is really distinct from egoism – is open to question.

Spinoza holds that we, like everything else, are driven in everything we do by our striving to continue in existence. Schopenhauer, by contrast, believes that some human actions are motivated purely by concern for others. For Schopenhauer compassion is, as Christopher Janaway puts it, 'an irreducible incentive present in the character of human beings'.[374] For a number of commentators, such a claim has stood in need of explanation. David Cartwright notes the tension between Schopenhauer's motivational pluralism and his metaphysical monism[375] and more specifically raises a question about the compatibility of the existence of compassion with the role Schopenhauer gives to egoism in his account of human nature. 'One of the problems that Schopenhauer's *Mitleids-Moral* faced', he writes, 'was to explain how it is possible for me to pursue another's well-being given the central significance of egoism in his analysis of human behavior.'[376] The problem being that 'Schopenhauer had argued that egoism is our "chief and fundamental incentive" (B, 131; E II, 196)'.[377] Both Janaway and Michael Maidan are exercised by the same issue. Thus Janaway: 'Schopenhauer admits that the existence of compassion is somewhat

[373] To borrow David Cartwright's term. Cartwright, 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 139.
[374] Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 6.
[375] Cartwright 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 139: given his metaphysical monism 'it appears that Schopenhauer should have been a motivational monist in some sense of that term, recognizing that there was some single motive that ultimately accounts for all human actions.'
[376] Cartwright, 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', 561.
[377] Cartwright, 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', 561.

mysterious. We are in our essence, and not by choice, beings that will their own well-being, which means, in ethical terms, that we are all egoistic', so that Janaway concludes that '[c]ompassion therefore seems to go against our nature as individuals'[378] while Maidan asks '[i]f egoism is a general characteristic of being, how is altruism possible at all? It would seem, at first glance, that altruism is something *contra naturam*, a mere impossibility'.[379]

Indeed, given the similarities between Schopenhauer and Spinoza's monist metaphysics and, even more so, given their dynamist accounts of the self one might well expect Schopenhauer to share Spinoza's psychological egoism. Just as for Spinoza the essence of the self is conatus, for Schopenhauer we are fundamentally willing beings, fated to constant striving. Cartwright, Janaway and Maidan between them seem to adopt two different strategies in attempting to account for and, to the extent they find possible, defend Schopenhauer's motivational pluralism. The first is to present Schopenhauer as making an empirical, descriptive claim: as presenting *evidence* for the existence of compassion as an incentive for action. The second is to essay *explaining* how compassion is possible in the light of Schopenhauer's philosophy of the will as essence of both self and world.

As an example of the first strategy, Janaway suggests that '[a]gainst the sceptical line that all would-be compassionate actions are ultimately egoistic, Schopenhauer appeals to the reader's intuitions about particular examples'.[380] He notes that Schopenhauer points to 'inner satisfaction' and the 'sting of conscience' to evidence 'a great deal of consensus' about the praiseworthiness of other-directed action, which tends to be 'applauded by third parties'. He takes it that Schopenhauer 'aims to describe' what counts as morally good, appealing to shared standards as 'decisive evidence for this in ordinary experience'.[381] This, of course, fits with Maidan's understanding of Schopenhauer's empirical method as noted above. But if this is all the foundation Schopenhauer gives for his insistence on the existence of compassionate stimuli it seems to leave him vulnerable to the counter-assertion of others who don't share these intuitions. David Cartwright has it that given 'the Kantian/Schopenhauerian notion that morally good actions are not performed out of self-interested motives' then for Nietzsche 'there are no morally good actions… since

[378] Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 7.
[379] Maidan, 'Schopenhauer on Altruism and Morality', 268.
[380] Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 7.
[381] All Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 6.

all actions are egoistic.'[382] It may well be that when confronted with the kind of instances to which Schopenhauer appeals, a reader is as likely to ascribe them to egoistic as to altruistic motives. Cartwright notes that in *On the Basis of Morality* Schopenhauer admits his examples of altruism 'were not immune to doubt' and that others may be able to explain them egoistically, but refuses to debate with such people, limiting himself to addressing '"those who admit the reality of the matter"'.[383] This perhaps hints that he has separate reasons for believing in the reality of compassion as a motive force.

This brings us to the second strategy, of attempting to explain the nature of compassion and how it is possible within Schopenhauer's broader system. Cartwright, Janaway and Maidan all make attempts at this, with Maidan judging that '[i]f egoism exists because of the contradictions among the parts of the world conceived as a multiplicity, altruism is based, according to Schopenhauer, on the other pole of the duality of being, i.e., in the underlying unity of all beings, in the unity of the Will.'[384] Similarly for Janaway '[m]orally good and morally bad human beings relate differently towards the very fact of individuality… The good character… has the superior insight into reality… compassionate human beings sense the allegedly deeper truth that the separateness of individuals is an illusion.'[385] Janaway and Maidan's explanations, then, both appeal to metaphysical unity and the illusory nature of phenomenal individuation. The risk with this strategy is that the distinction between compassion and egoism becomes blurred. Thus David Cartwright notes that '[t]his type of analysis' – that is, that compassion involves penetrating the *principium individuationis* and seeing another's woes as my own – 'has led commentators, such as Eduard von Hartmann, Friedrich Nietzsche, Max Scheler, Patrick Gardiner, and D. W. Hamlyn to suggest that Schopenhauer reduced compassion to some form of egoism.'[386] This is also an argument that Julian Young makes, claiming that despite Schopenhauer's official position 'the altruist *does* act for the sake of his own interest,

[382] Cartwright 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', 562. Once again, it is Schopenhauer's Kantianism that pulls him away from a Spinozist line on ethics.
[383] Cartwright 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 140 quoting Schopenhauer, BM, 139/203.
[384] Maidan, 'Schopenhauer on Altruism and Morality', 268.
[385] Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 9.
[386] Cartwright, 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 144. I will discuss Cartwright's own defence of Schopenhauer against this charge shortly.

the only difference between him and the egoist being that he acts for the sake of the interests of his *metaphysical* rather than his empirical self.'[387]

This would, of course, bring Schopenhauer much closer to Spinoza's own position, according to which compassion *is* a natural disposition, but one that is ultimately to be explained with reference to our self-interest. Acting to relieve another's suffering is, for Spinoza, quite natural: '[a]s far as we can, we strive to free a thing we pity from its suffering.'[388] This is because pity is a version of affect mirroring, wherein '[i]f we imagine a thing like us… to be affected with some affect, we are thereby affected with a like affect.' Thus it is quite compatible with, and in the final analysis a function of, our egoistic natures, because what moves us is ultimately 'an affection of our body'.[389] So for Spinoza pity is a genuine and spontaneous disposition which provokes a real desire to help the subject's suffering fellow but is nonetheless explicable in terms of subject's own conatus or striving towards flourishing.

The distinction between egoism and compassion is, though, absolutely crucial to Schopenhauer's account of the morally good, and David Cartwright tries to offer a reading of the nature of compassion capable of preserving that distinction. To my mind, he is not quite able to show both that compassion is explicable given Schopenhauer's metaphysics and that it is not reducible to egoism. In his 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', Cartwright argues that there are two possible ways for a Schopenhauerian to explain the possibility of compassion given that egoism is the fundamental human incentive. 'One is based', he writes, on Schopenhauer's 'metaphysics and the ultimate unity of being. That is, *Mitleid* is possible because the separation between individuals is only apparent'. The second is that '*Mitleid* as a desire for another's well-being is possible only if another's misery becomes directly the same sort of incentive as my own misery.'[390]

Cartwright elaborates on each of these possibilities in his chapter 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers: The Metaphysics of *Mitleid*'. With regard to the first, he clarifies that Schopenhauer's true position cannot be that compassionate behaviour is *motivated* by 'cognition into the unity of being', but that such 'conduct "shows" or

[387] Julian Young, *Schopenhauer* (Oxford: Routledge, 2005): 182.
[388] Spinoza, EIIIP27C3.
[389] Both Spinoza, EIIIP27.
[390] Both Cartwright, 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', 561.

"expresses" what his metaphysics describes – the unity of the will'.[391] He admits that some of what Schopenhauer says suggests the former interpretation, but argues that 'Schopenhauer distanced himself from this view by claiming that he did not mean for the phrase that others were an 'I once more' to be taken literally.' Rather than explaining feeling another's pain metaphysically, 'he moves to consider whether the behaviour of good or evil characters is metaphysically warranted'.[392] Cartwright's *second* approach is to naturalise compassion such that the compassionate person 'participates imaginatively in' the other's suffering.[393] This enables the pain of the sufferer to become a motive for the compassionate person, just as her own pain would for the egoist.

Each of these approaches has problems. Cartwright is sensitive to the fact that appealing to its metaphysical underpinnings to explain the possibility of compassion risks it collapsing into egoism. In fact he himself judges that Schopenhauer's 'attempts to ground compassion metaphysically were unsuccessful'.[394] Instead he emphasises those passages where Schopenhauer talks of compassionate behaviour as *exemplifying* a more profound metaphysical understanding rather than being *motivated* or made sense of by the compassionate person recognising her oneness with the other. The worry here, though, is that we are left with no real explanation of how compassion is possible: of why it is that a being defined by ceaseless striving would set its own interests aside in favour of another's. Cartwright's preferred approach, therefore, is that of explaining compassion *psychologically* by appealing to the role the imagination plays in enabling us to be motivated by another's suffering.[395]

The problem Cartwright himself identifies with this second approach is that it would not be acceptable to Schopenhauer. But while he acknowledges this, if compassion were indeed 'returned to the province of psychology', Cartwright argues, it 'could be explained by the natural sciences, which seems to be perfectly compatible with the descriptive and empirical nature of Schopenhauer's ethics.'[396] He believes, too, that 'this reformulation eliminates the very phenomenon that leads Schopenhauer to call compassion "the great mystery of ethics" and which led him to claim that

[391] Cartwright, 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 147.
[392] Cartwright, 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 148.
[393] Cartwright, 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 149.
[394] Cartwright, 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 151.
[395] In a way that is perhaps somewhat reminiscent of what *Spinoza* says at EIIIP27, quoted above.
[396] Cartwright, 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 150.

compassion required a metaphysical rather than a psychological explanation.'[397] It strikes me, however, that this approach needs to plot an extremely careful course between the Scylla of explaining too little and the Charybdis of explaining compassion as a version of egoism. On one side, is it merely descriptive rather than explanatory? Schopenhauer, of course, is insistent upon the limited scope of natural science to explain the inner nature or meaning of phenomena in general. In this particular case, if we are not given an account of how and why it is that imagining another's suffering motivates us to act on their behalf it seems as though we are again (as with the first strategy adopted by Schopenhauer's defenders, as discussed above) being asked to accept the existence of compassion as a brute fact. On the other side, there must be a suspicion that what gives this account of compassion any plausibility it has is that it explains altruistic behaviour in terms of our own interests. We imaginatively take on another's suffering *as our own* and so wish to relieve that suffering. This helps to explain why Cartwright's second solution 'would not please Schopenhauer': it too may threaten to collapse back into egoism.[398]

I would argue, then, that it is difficult to find a convincing reason to accept Schopenhauer's motivational pluralism. We seem to be left either with accepting the existence of compassionately-motivated behaviour as a blunt fact (supported by disputed empirical examples) or with an explanation of compassion which makes it impossible to distinguish clearly from the kind of enlightened, expanded egoism characteristic of Spinoza's ethics. It may in fact be the case that Schopenhauer's ethics of compassion is not just unexplained but inexplicable: Cartwright himself cites Janaway's conclusion that the intersubjectivity of Schopenhauer's ethics is precluded by his own metaphysics.[399] As Janaway summarises it 'Schopenhauer cannot make morality depend on the recognition of intersubjectivity, and at the same time explain its possibility in terms of the absorption of all individuals into a single will.'[400] The

[397] Cartwright, 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 150.
[398] Cartwright, 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 154. Cartwright himself comments that pursuing one's own interests is not the same as egoism. Cartwright 'Schopenhauer's Compassion and Nietzsche's Pity', 565: just to show an agent may get pleasure from helping a sufferer 'is not to show that the action was self-regarding' equally, 'simply arguing that in one sense all interests are mine, in the sense that I possess them, does not show that this is a self-regarding interest.'
[399] Cartwright, 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 154 footnote 23. Cartwright, of course, maintains that naturalising compassion resolves this problem.
[400] Christopher Janaway, *Self and World in Schopenhauer's Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989): 283. Bela Egyed makes a similar point: '[o]n the one hand, Schopenhauer wants to say that "the true nature of man is his own *will*," in order to safeguard morality; on the other hand, he wants to say, in making a case for "compassion," that as acts of the same will there is no difference in the

judgement is stark: Schopenhauer can't have it both ways. If compassion is to remain distinct from egoism then the compassionate person must see the object of her concern as a separate person.[401] If compassion is to be explicable, it can only be because the compassionate person sees no such distinction. No wonder he calls it 'the great mystery of ethics'.

2.3 The Impotence of Knowledge

The third objection that Schopenhauer might raise is as follows. Early in this chapter I presented Schopenhauer with a dilemma: if nothing of moral relevance can take place at the level of one's behaviour as a human individual then why be prescriptive at all? Why write an ethics? This may have been somewhat misleading: Schopenhauer does note that being prescriptive is fruitless for this very reason, maintaining that '[v]irtue is as little taught as is genius… We should therefore be just as foolish to expect that our moral systems and ethics would create virtuous, noble, and holy men, as that our aesthetics would produce poets, painters, and musicians'.[402] One response, however, would be that he *ought* to have been prescriptive: his theory shows us how we can use reason to change our lives in radical ways. I will suggest below that to rule this out from being ethically relevant can only be done arbitrarily. This claim does need one qualification however. It may be that what one can uncontroversially take from Schopenhauer's philosophy is an ethics that has morally relevant features but falls short of being a full moral doctrine. While Schopenhauer concedes that reason can change your life and help you to fulfil your character, one can only guarantee that such a change will be for the better if one accepts, which

---

nature of one person or another' noting, interestingly that '[b]ecause Spinoza maintains that singular modes do not lose their identity, he does not have this problem.' Bela Egyed, 'Soinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', *PhaenEx* 2, no.1 (2007): 110-131, 130 footnote 22.

[401] Bernard Reginster, 'Knowledge and Selflessness' in Neill and Janaway *Better Consciousness*, 98-119, 116 footnote 1 notes that 'Schopenhauer himself insists, in my view correctly if perhaps not consistently, that compassion requires a clear consciousness of the difference between us and the other: "at every moment, we remain clearly conscious that *he* is the sufferer, not *we*; and it is precisely in *his* person, not in ours, that we feel the suffering…" (*BM* 147).' Further, he argues at 117-8 footnote 14 that Schopenhauer's overreaching inference from claim that the principle of sufficient reason shapes the phenomenal world to the claim that it doesn't apply to reality 'underwrites Schopenhauer's view of the possibility of compassion, in ways that threaten the coherence of his own account of it'. Schopenhauer's own monist metaphysics, including his embedded-self thesis, clash with his ethics.

[402] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 271, where he also suggests that 'to become practical, to guide conduct, to transform character, are old claims which with mature insight it [philosophy] ought finally to abandon.'

Schopenhauer doesn't, that we can improve our knowledge in a way that will inevitably make us more virtuous.

This means that the third difficulty for the picture I presented above of a Schopenhauerian ethics along Spinozan lines is that Schopenhauer argues that it is a mistake to believe that ethics can be really transformative: that knowledge can change us in morally relevant ways, as it can for Spinoza. Schopenhauer *does* hold, in common with Spinoza, both of the following things: that reason and knowledge can be instrumental in fulfilling one's character, and that compassion follows from a truer knowledge of the world than does egoism. But it is not the case, for Schopenhauer, that just anyone can discover this truth and thereby become more compassionate. This is because of the distinction Schopenhauer draws between two types of knowledge, one being abstract, conceptual knowledge along with the use of reason, and the other being an immediate intuitive or perceptual awareness of how things are.[403] This means that for Schopenhauer the world-view that inspires benevolence or compassion is knowledge of an entirely different sort to the type which enables a person to act more in accordance with their own character, whatever that character happens to be. This latter type of knowledge consists of abstract reasoning which, for instance, enables a person to hold before them different possible motivations and compare them, allowing each to affect their will with its proper force. The former kind, by contrast, is an intuitive knowledge of the way the world is.[404]

What Schopenhauer claims is that abstract, conceptual knowledge can only ever enable you to better fulfil the character which is already yours. It can never play a role in making an egoistic person more compassionate. It is worth briefly considering what convinces Schopenhauer of the different potencies of these two types of knowledge. One possibility would be that they differ in terms of content. One might imagine that abstract knowledge can't induce compassionate behaviour because it can't provide us with the relevant picture of how the world is, but this surely can't be what Schopenhauer is claiming. After all, Schopenhauer's philosophy itself is presumably intended to offer an account of the fundamental nature of reality – an abstract equivalent to the compassionate person's intuitive recognition of the

[403] See particularly Schopenhauer, WWR I, §66, 367-374.
[404] Cartwright, 'Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers', 143: the cognition that sees through the *principium individuationis* 'admits of degrees of clarity; that is, this metaphysical unity is perceived more dimly by a person displaying the virtue of justice than it is by a person displaying the virtue of loving kindness.'

illusoriness of individuals. While abstract knowledge can effectively present us with the same content as intuitive knowledge can, and while such knowledge is presumably available to anyone, it cannot change our behaviour, according to Schopenhauer.

Schopenhauer's position, then, appears to be that while reading his philosophy could provide an egoist with an understanding of the world equivalent to the compassionate person's understanding, it couldn't move them to behave compassionately. A second possible way of explaining this division might appeal to a kind of Humean, sentimentalist picture according to which knowledge and reasoning are motivationally impotent and only passion can move us to action. This does perhaps tally with some passages of *The World As Will and Representation*. For instance, when discussing the power of knowledge over the fear of death, Schopenhauer writes that 'the inward and merely felt consciousness of what we have just raised to distinct knowledge does… prevent the thought of death from poisoning the life of the rational being.'[405] This may suggest that knowledge *as such* is powerless but gains force when it manifests as feeling. Spinoza makes such a claim at EIVP14 '[n]o affect can be restrained by the true knowledge of good and evil insofar as it is true, but only insofar as it is considered as an affect.' Schopenhauer, however, doesn't seem to make it explicit that the difference between abstract and intuitive knowledge is that only the latter carries an emotive force – except by merely claiming that only it can influence behaviour. And indeed later in the same paragraph where he talks of the consoling power of the felt consciousness of immortality, the gloss is rather different:

> when feeling [the fear of death as extinction of the individual] leaves us helpless to such an extent, our faculty of reason can nevertheless appear and for the most part overcome influences adverse to it, since it places us at a higher standpoint from which we now view the whole instead of the particular. Therefore philosophical knowledge of the nature of the world… could… overcome the terrors of death.[406]

This version makes it sound rather as if knowledge has power *over* rather than *as* feeling – and indeed that this is true of philosophical knowledge.

It seems, then, that one *can* gain *abstract* knowledge of the fundamental nature of reality and that such knowledge does have power at least to overcome emotion.

[405] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 283.
[406] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 283.

One might wonder, then, why the purely instrumental reasoning of an egoistic person who knows that in reality as such she is as much the other as she is herself couldn't lead her to behave in what we would normally call a compassionate way. Schopenhauer argues that it is of the nature of such abstract knowledge that it not be capable of changing our behaviour, whereas the intuitive insight a compassionate character has into the nature of reality does explain her actions. It is difficult to establish what justifies the distinction between these two kinds of knowledge.[407] Nonetheless, Schopenhauer holds that it is only as intuitive knowledge that an understanding of how the world is can have an impact on behaviour and for Schopenhauer intuitive knowledge is not something that one can gain. It seems, instead, that one is born with a certain level of intuitive understanding, that it is impossible to move between levels and therefore that one's behavioural scope is permanently fixed. While the exact relation that Schopenhauer envisages between intuitive knowledge and character remains unclear, his way of ruling out the possibility just mentioned might be with reference to the idea that character types are *defined* as *embodying* a certain level of intuitive knowledge. To be of compassionate character is simply to see the world as will, to be egoistic is to see it from within the principle of sufficient reason that is, as a collection of distinct individuals. However, merely to stipulate that different levels of intuitive knowledge are tied to different types of character doesn't *prove* that one can't move from one level of knowledge to the next – it simply shows that if one could, Schopenhauer's character system would be undermined.

In other words, all the weight of Schopenhauer's argument is thrown back onto his claim that a person's character is fixed and eternal. I shall suggest some problems with his argument for this claim shortly. First, however, it is worth noting that Schopenhauer seems to be sending mixed messages regarding whether or not one's level of intuitive knowledge can change. I have argued that what prevents Schopenhauer from offering a full ethical theory on Spinoza's model, in which greater knowledge inevitably leads to great virtue, is Schopenhauer's insistence that a person's intuitive knowledge – the kind which is tied to character – is permanently

[407] Indeed Schopenhauer himself seems to muddy the distinction at points: Schopenhauer, WWR I, 274 '[f]rom such knowledge [of the Ideas] we get philosophy as well as art; in fact… we can also reach that disposition of mind which alone leads to true holiness and to salvation from the world.' Not only does this seem to constitute an admission of the transformative power of knowledge but also a backsliding from the dismissal of philosophical knowledge as merely theoretical as on p271, as referenced in footnote 402 above.

fixed. But Schopenhauer doesn't seem fully consistent on this. Part 4 of *The World as Will and Representation* apparently suggests a situation in which it *does* change. For Schopenhauer, the ultimate virtue is denial of the will, and this appears to embody a level of intuitive knowledge that is yet more adequate than that possessed by the compassionate person. One denies one's will because one recognises, along with the compassionate person, that *noumenal reality* consists of undifferentiated will rather than phenomenal individuals, *but also* that the essence of this reality is striving and hence suffering, from which the only escape is through asceticism. Schopenhauer does *not* seem to suggest that one is born an ascetic. The most common route by which this mode of living is reached is a breaking of the will through intense suffering. This can happen even to the wicked: if great suffering leads such people to asceticism, Schopenhauer says, 'they have become different, and are completely converted.'[408] And it seems to be the case that suffering produces this change in behaviour by revealing to one a fact about reality – that is, by changing one's knowledge of the world. After all, Schopenhauer says that 'the last secret of life has revealed itself to them in the excess of pain, the secret, namely, that…the tormented and the tormentor…are in themselves one…and since they ultimately see the identity of the two, they reject them both at the same time; they deny the will-to-live.'[409] In the case of denial of the will-to-live, then, one can gain intuitive knowledge of reality and as a result of this change one's way of life for the better. If it can happen in this case, one is tempted to question why it can't happen at one level down such that an egoistic person comes to see through the veil of maya to her underlying identity with others and therefore comes to behave more compassionately?

The objection here, then, is that Schopenhauer offers us no good reason to accept that a person's level of intuitive knowledge – and hence their moral behaviour – can't improve, apart from by referring us back to his position on the unalterability of character. In fact, he even gives us one example in which it seems someone's intuitive knowledge *can* change! One qualification to this should be acknowledged: while this case *does* seem to represent an altered level of intuitive knowledge, Schopenhauer would not accept that it constitutes a change of character. He maintains that denial of the will involves a withdrawal from rather than a change of character. But if one's level of insight can change then it seems all the more difficult to deny that we can

[408] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 393.
[409] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 394.

change for the better. To do so would surely require divorcing one's character type from one's level of intuitive understanding. This in turn would seem to leave Schopenhauer with no real explanation of why it is that the compassionate person relates to others in a more morally praiseworthy way than the egoist and perhaps with no way of distinguishing between character-types at all.

2.4 Problems Concerning the Intelligible Character

Schopenhauer refuses to offer a Spinozistic ethics in which increasing one's knowledge and reasoning abilities inevitably makes one more virtuous because he insists that the kind of intuitive knowledge which has an impact upon behaviour is unchangeable. I have suggested that he justifies this assertion by tying a person's level of intuitive knowledge to their character, which is itself unalterable. But what, in turn, justifies that claim? For Schopenhauer one's intelligible character is fixed because it is noumenal and therefore eternal or outside of time. We have, then, come full circle. All the weight of Schopenhauer's refusal to offer a moral theory on the model of Spinoza's falls back on his doctrine of the intelligible character as a free act of will outside of the forms of the principle of sufficient reason, including time and causality.

This doctrine is perhaps the most problematic aspect of Schopenhauer's ethical philosophy. One of these problems, perhaps a comparatively minor one, concerns Schopenhauer's evidence for the freedom of the intelligible character. Schopenhauer, of course, argues in his *Prize Essay of the Freedom of the Will* that the feeling of freedom that many profess to have is misleading, and deceives us into believing our actions are freely chosen.[410] But Schopenhauer himself seems to rely on our feelings of responsibility for our actions as evidence of our noumenal freedom. In 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', Janaway interprets Schopenhauer as follows: '[s]elf-consciousness gives us the impression of being free when we act, but Schopenhauer unmasks this as an illusion.'[411] Just a few lines later Janaway asks '[w]hy then do we have feelings of responsibility and guilt…?' and answers on Schopenhauer's behalf that 'what I feel responsible for and guilty about is my

[410] Arthur Schopenhauer, *Prize Essay on the Freedom of the Will, e*d. Gunther Zöller, trans. Eric F. J. Payne. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 36.
[411] Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 8.

character as it is in itself'.[412] It looks as if our feelings of responsibility are supposed to stand in need of an explanation – with reference to the intelligible character – while our impressions of being free can be dismissed as illusory. Julian Young, quoting the *Prize Essay on the Freedom of the Will*, glosses Schopenhauer's argument as follows:

> [t]he truth of universal causation is an inescapable datum. But so too is "the wholly clear and certain feeling of *responsibility* for what we do". Since the "Kantian" accommodation of both these facts is the only possible accommodation, we have no option but to accept it as the truth of the matter.[413]

Again, while we should dismiss our misleading feelings of freedom, we must nonetheless accept the existence of the intelligible character as the only possible explanation for our feelings of moral responsibility.

The more substantial metaphysical concerns that attach to Schopenhauer's doctrine of the intelligible character have been carefully detailed, in particular by Christopher Janaway, so I will just touch on some of them very briefly here. As we know, Schopenhauer believes that a person can be held responsible for her actions because these actions are determined by that person's intelligible character, which is itself a free act. Schopenhauer explains that the intelligible character is a Platonic Idea. In the first place, given that Platonic Ideas are representation rather than will, Schopenhauer doesn't seem entitled to call intelligible characters free. This can perhaps be circumvented by characterising the intelligible character as a representational manifestation of a free act in the will. However, this seems to exacerbate a second problem – that of the questionable relationship between a person and the free act which entitles us to hold her morally responsible.

Even if the intelligible character *is* identified as a Platonic Idea, the fact that the Platonic Ideas are not subject to individuation by space and time makes the intelligible character seem very alien to the phenomenal individual who is also supposed to be identified with it. All the more so if the intelligible character is indentified with an act of will: such an act can be no act of *mine*, *I* am an individual – so that one might reasonably question the fairness of basing my responsibility on an

---

[412] Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 8.This leads Janaway to conclude that '[f]or all the genuine atheism of his metaphysical system, Schopenhauer adopts the Christian notion of "the deep guilt of the human race by reason of its very existence, and of the heart's intense longing for salvation therefrom" (WWR II: 625).'

[413] Young, *Schopenhauer*, 164 quoting Schopenhauer, FW, 94.

act that was not performed by me.[414] Given that the noumenal realm is supposed to be entirely foreign to individuation, identifying the intelligible character with a free act of will trails other puzzles. First, one might ask how there can be different acts in a realm to which individuation and plurality don't apply, but Schopenhauer holds that different people have different characters and presumably attributes this fact to the existence of different noumenal acts. Second, one might question how any *act* is possible at all, given that time only holds for phenomena and not for things in themselves.[415]

3. SCHOPENHAUER'S NARROW CONCEPTION OF ETHICS

3.1 The Exclusion of Politics

We have seen that Spinoza offers a model of ethics within determinism. While there is no free will, a person is able to become freer, happier and more virtuous – to better fulfil her own nature – through developing her understanding of reality. There are resources within Schopenhauer's philosophy for a similar ethical theory. Although a person's actions are determined, motives can only operate as they are known, so an improved understanding can enable a person to better fulfil (to 'acquire') her character. Equally, a person's degree of virtue is tied to her level of metaphysical insight. Nonetheless, Schopenhauer would deny that this amounts to a constructive ethical position. This is because he would reject the idea that knowledge can make, say, an egoist more virtuous, on the basis of his motivational pluralism, his claim that compassion is the mark of morality and his scepticism about the transformative power of knowledge. Schopenhauer would accept that knowledge *can* transfigure a person's behaviour within her character. However, compassion is genuinely distinct from

[414] Bela Egyed, casting the intelligible character more on the side of the person than of the will, nonetheless makes a similar point: the will's freedom, he says, 'does not prove that persons – intelligible characters – are also free.' 'Schopenhauer slides over this problem', for Egyed, saying only that because my nature is ultimately my own will and therefore I am my own work I can be held responsible for my actions – but, writes Egyed, 'I take this to be one of the major weaknesses of Schopenhauer's philosophy: he seems to be oblivious to the problem of "individuation" that is posed by remarks like these.' Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 117 and 128 footnote 7.

[415] Janaway raises just such worries in 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 8, noting that 'Schopenhauer runs into a metaphysical tangle here, for if the thing in itself is beyond individuation, how can there be an 'in-itself' that pertains uniquely to me? And how can there be any 'acting' outside of time, space and causality?'

egoism, only compassion is moral and compassion is innate – improved knowledge *can't* alter a person's character and therefore can't be morally transformative.

I have raised problems with each of the three theses on which Schopenhauer's rejection of prescriptive ethics (and by inference, rejection of the Spinozan ethics I have attempted to derive from his own philosophy) is based. Even setting these problems aside, to agree with Schopenhauer's conclusion one would need to accept a narrow and far from universal conception of what counts as ethics. For one thing, politics would be excluded from the sphere of moral philosophy, as would various types of established ethical systems. In this final section of the chapter, I intend to make clear that Schopenhauer's vision of ethics is unusually narrow and investigate whether we should accept the restrictions he places on what counts as ethical.

Schopenhauer is explicit about the moral irrelevance of political justice – of justice in the context of the political state. Because egoism is non-moral (or possibly, immoral) and because the state in general and its justice system in particular are founded on appeals to self-interest, they too can have no moral value. Christopher Janaway rightly notes that for Schopenhauer '[t]he justice that is a moral virtue for Schopenhauer is quite distinct from the kind of justice which consists in acting out of respect for law'. The latter, a function of the state, motivates behaviour only by threatening punishments or offering rewards – in other words, by appeals to self-interest. Indeed for Schopenhauer the state as such emerges as a tool of collective self-interest – Janaway again: '[h]e regards the State as an institution that arises from collective egoism, and not, strictly speaking, as a matter of morality.'[416]

In 'Schopenhauer's Politics: Ethics, Jurisprudence and the State', Neil Jordan makes a case, against Schopenhauer, for the state's *moral* value.[417] He argues that the separation between political and moral justice is not so clear as Schopenhauer suggests. The state is founded on a contract; given Schopenhauer's view that contracts are moral institutions, the state 'possesses a certain moral legitimacy' on Schopenhauer's own terms.[418] In like manner, Jordan takes evidence from Schopenhauer's theory of punishment to show that his separation of politics and morality doesn't hold up. Despite his official view that the only purpose of punishment is to deter (by appeal to self-interest), Schopenhauer is to be found hoping

[416] Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 7.
[417] Neil Jordan, 'Schopenhauer's Politics: Ethics, Jurisprudence and the State', in Neill and Janaway *Better Consciousness*, 171-188.
[418] Jordan, 'Schopenhauer's Politics', 179-180.

that punishment can achieve 'correction of knowledge and the awakening of a desire to work'.[419] In other words, Jordan writes, punishment 'plays a corrective role of an instructional nature' and the state's 'punishment and "re-education" of criminals constitutes a moral obligation".[420] Jordan also points out that in Schopenhauer's view punishment 'should be of equal worth' to the crime, which I would argue seems like a concern motivated by something like fairness rather than by deterrence.[421] Indeed Jordan himself concludes that 'in accordance with Schopenhauer's approach to jurisprudence, the state must be guided… by moral considerations of fairness… that reach beyond his broader claim that the only real aim of punishment is to deter.'[422]

Schopenhauer would no doubt reply that even in its educative role punishment has no moral value. Jordan is right to say that 'punishment can direct a man along a more socially acceptable path in life', but it does this, as Jordan himself notes, by showing the man better ways to pursue his ends.[423] The corrective re-education that punishment can provide makes no difference morally, for Schopenhauer, because of his character determinism. The best that instruction can do is to show a person how better to fulfil her own ends, it can't change those ends (which are fixed by her character) and so is remote from what matters morally.

Even if it were true that the state operates only by appeal to self-interest, and therefore within rather than as a corrective to egoism, Schopenhauer's dismissal of claims for its moral relevance clearly depend on his own narrow reading of what counts morally. I argued in section 2.1 above that it is difficult to see what justifies his exclusion of all but actions motivated by compassion from carrying moral value. Here we see in a more concrete way how this leads to the exclusion of practices or motivating principles which would be taken by many to have moral worth. Jordan quotes Schopenhauer: 'the *State contract* or the *law*… is readily devised and gradually perfected by egoism which, by using the faculty of reason, proceeds methodically, and forsakes its one-sided point of view.'[424] Jordan notes that for Schopenhauer this function should not 'be conceived of as moral in any way' because

[419] Schopenhauer, WWR II, 597 quoted by Jordan, 'Schopenhauer's Politics', 181.
[420] Jordan, 'Schopenhauer's Politics', 181 and 182.
[421] Jordan, 'Schopenhauer's Politics', 183.
[422] Jordan, 'Schopenhauer's Politics', 186.
[423] Jordan, 'Schopenhauer's Politics', 181-182. For Jordan the state's obligation to punish is nonetheless a moral one because it emerges from the social contract, and contractual obligations are moral obligations.
[424] Jordan, 'Schopenhauer's Politics', 178 quotes Schopenhauer, WWR I, 343.

it is 'based entirely upon the collective self-interest of the people'.[425] The role of political collectives in using reason to overcome one-sided self-interest and facilitate cooperation (banishing a brutal and irrational state of nature), though, is just the sort of quality that has *Spinoza* lauding their contribution to virtue.[426]

Jordan himself suggests that 'the state may be of moral worth precisely because it *resists* the popular will'.[427] He implies that in this respect the state shows itself not to be beholden to collective egoism alone but also to real considerations of justice. I suspect a Schopenhauerian would decline to acknowledge this as an exception to the state's function to further collective self-interest. It could certainly be within the long-term interests of a group to establish and uphold a justice system against which there would be occasional temptations to rebel. But again the point is that a state enables an enlightened self-interest in which desires are reflected upon and pursued rationally and collectively. While it might remain within the logic of egoism, this is very different from the situation in which each pursues his or her own immediate appetites with no thought to other people or to the long term. Why is a political theorist like Spinoza unentitled to call this a *moral* difference?

Reminding ourselves of Schopenhauer's statement, reminiscent of Spinoza's own position, that 'every good is essentially relative; for it has its essential nature only in its relation to a desiring will' we might rather feel that it is Schopenhauer who has no right to exclude self-interested actions from the realm of the moral.[428] So while Jordan correctly says that for Schopenhauer 'the "state of justice" realized by the successful state is a semblance of virtue only… the value of such a situation amounts to little more than the fact that the citizens will it', if good is relative to the will it is hard to see how this can offer a basis on which to exclude the state from having moral value.[429] Similarly, Jordan quotes Schopenhauer's statement that 'the state "is by no means directed against egoism, but only against the injurious consequences of egoism arising out of the plurality of egoistic individuals"' as an explanation for the previously cited Schopenhauerian view that the state's protective function shouldn't

[425] Jordan, 'Schopenhauer's Politics', 178.
[426] Jordan, 'Schopenhauer's Politics', 178 quoting Schopenhauer, WWR I, 345: the 'state "is by no means directed against egoism, but only against the injurious consequences of egoism arising out of the plurality of egoistic individuals"'.
[427] Jordan, 'Schopenhauer's Politics', 185.
[428] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 362.
[429] Jordan, 'Schopenhauer's Politics', 185.

'be conceived of as moral in any way'.[430] But again, if good and bad are defined in relation to the will, one must wonder where Schopenhauer is able to find a standpoint from which to dismiss the state as non-moral. More generally, this is a question of what standard Schopenhauer can use against which to measure compassion as morally good and egoism as bad (or at best non-moral) – Spinoza, for instance, would deny the existence of any standard independent of the interests of individuals.

Neil Jordan, then, argues that the state is more than just a machine to serve collective egoism. He points out that while Schopenhauer insists on a separation between politics, which concerns actions suffered and operates through providing egoistic motives, and morality, which concerns the intentions or will behind an action, this separation is belied by Schopenhauer's own account of punishment and the social contract.[431] According to Jordan, even the Schopenhauerian state operates according to principles of fairness and moral justice, and so plays a genuinely ethical role. I would add that even where its function is underpinned by collective self-interest, it should nonetheless be seen as having moral value. It may be true that politics is interested in actions rather than intentions and is founded on egoism rather than compassion, it does not follow straightforwardly that it is outside of the moral realm.

3.2 The Exclusion of Self-Interest

Much of this, of course, has relevance far beyond Schopenhauer's exclusion of the political from the realm of morality, which simply offers a useful illustration. There are well-established ethical systems including, most relevantly to the Spinozan ethical resources within Schopenhauer's own theory, those modelled on flourishing, for which acting in one's own self-interest is compatible with – even necessary for – virtue.[432] Certainly when we see the goods which Spinoza believes flow from

[430] Jordan, 'Schopenhauer's Politics', 178 quoting Schopenhauer, WWR 1, 345.
[431] Jordan, 'Schopenhauer's Politics', 174.
[432] Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 127 attributes Schopenhauer's rejection of an ethics of self-fulfilment (which was in his reach by virtue of the doctrine of acquired character) directly to his adherence to the Kantian theory of noumenal freedom. 'Schopenhauer… dismisses the problem of how one becomes who one is, as irrelevant to what is properly "ethical".' But 'if by having "acquired character" we mean having "better knowledge"… then we reach what Spinoza calls "blessedness," the high point of his ethics. The only reason that Schopenhauer might have for denying that Spinoza has a proper ethics is that he can only see freedom as "noumenal freedom" in the Kantian sense, and not as power to act (and to be), as Spinoza understood it. So, we see that Schopenhauer's criticism of Spinoza's ethics relies on the problematic Kantian conception of noumenal freedom, modified by an equally problematic conception of noumenon as "will."'. I would argue that

enlightened egoism it can seem narrow to the point of idiosyncrasy to insist that they hold no moral value.

For Spinoza, as we know, '[t]he first and only foundation of virtue, *or* of the method of living rightly… is the seeking of our own advantage.'[433] Pursuing one's own true advantage (that is, the preservation and strengthening of oneself as a thinking being) brings greater freedom and brings happiness – even blessedness.[434] It brings wisdom to the ignorant, and through wisdom, power,[435] including the power to restrain one's lusts.[436] It brings a respect for religion and morality – indeed a more honourable commitment to these which isn't, like that of the multitude, simply motivated by hope for reward and fear of punishment after death.[437] It brings many of the traditional virtues – freedom from the sins of anger, envy and pride.[438] It brings shared interests and an end to conflict.[439] It brings a desire for others to attain the same good.[440] It brings friendship, cooperation and a striving to benefit others.[441]

According to Spinoza, then, seeking her own self-interest makes a person freer, happier, wiser and gives her greater control over the passions which affect her. It also leads to a commitment to religion and morality and to the development of virtues and the overcoming of sins. Finally, it encourages her to work with others,

---

Schopenhauer's claim that compassion exhausts morality also plays a role in the rejection Schopenhauer makes.

[433] Spinoza, EVP41D.

[434] Spinoza, EIVP18S.: 'since virtue (by D[efinition]8) is nothing but acting from the law's of one's own nature… it follows: (i) that the foundation of virtue is this very striving to preserve one's own being, and that happiness consists in a man's being able to preserve his being'. EIV Appendix IV 'In life, therefore, it is especially useful to perfect, as far as we can, our intellect, *or* reason. In this one thing consists man's highest happiness, *or* blessedness.' See chapter 4 for a discussion of blessedness in Spinoza's *Ethics*.

[435] Spinoza, EVP42S 'From what has been shown, it is clear how much the wise man is capable of, and how much more powerful he is than one who is ignorant'.

[436] Spinoza, EVP42 'Blessedness is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself; nor do we enjoy it because we restrain our lusts; on the contrary, because we enjoy it, we are able to restrain them.'

[437] Spinoza, EVP41 'Even if we did not know that our mind is eternal, we would still regard as of the first importance morality, religion' as opposed to EVP41S '[t]he usual conviction of the multitude… Morality, then, and religion, and absolutely everything related to strength of character, they believe to be burdens, which they hope to put down after death, when they also hope to receive a reward for their bondage, that is, for their morality and religion.'

[438] Spinoza, EIVP37S 'the true freedom of man [is]… related to strength of character… a man strong in character hates no one, is angry with no one, envies no one, is indignant with no one, scorns no one, and is not at all proud.'

[439] Spinoza, EIVP35 'Only insofar as men live according to the guidance of reason, must they always agree in nature.'

[440] Spinoza, EIVP37 'The good which everyone who seeks virtue wants for himself, he also desires for other men; and this desire is greater as his knowledge of God is greater.'

[441] Spinoza, EIVP71 'Only free men are very thankful to one another' and in the Demonstration '[o]nly free men are very useful to one another, are joined to one another by the closest bond of friendship (by P35 and P35C1), and strive to benefit one another with equal eagerness for love'.

prevents her from coming into conflict with them and leads her to care about and promote their interests. Thus when Spinoza claims that he has shown that 'men who, from the guidance of reason, seek their own advantage – want nothing for themselves which they do not desire for other men. Hence, they are just, honest, and honourable', he says that he has done so in order 'to win, if possible, the attention of those who believe that this principle – that everyone is bound to seek his own advantage – is the foundation, not of virtue and morality, but of immorality… I have shown… that the contrary is true'.[442] This will seem convincing to many – but it did not to Schopenhauer.

In Schopenhauer's view, no matter what goods egoism might lead to it cannot be the foundation of morality because the sole criterion of moral value is having a compassionate intention. Effectively, the intention must be altruistic, because a compassion that is compatible with egoism wouldn't merit the name, on Schopenhauer's model. I (following Spinoza!) have tried to argue that altruism is not all there is to morality. Figures including Seneca, Aristotle, Mill and Nietzsche – as well as Spinoza – held self-interest to be in harmony with morality. I suggest many readers would feel intuitively that the goods listed by Spinoza as the fruits of rational self-interest hold *moral* value. For Schopenhauer's debarring of egoism and its fruits from moral relevance to be more than stipulative, for his restricted understanding of the ethical to be more than arbitrary, he needs to offer a good reason for identifying compassionate intention alone as morally valuable. I argued in section 2.1 above that no convincing reason seems to be forthcoming.

Finally, I want briefly to draw attention to one further suggestion regarding something that might be part of what underpins his insistence that compassion is the lone mark of morality. In 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', Christopher Janaway explains Schopenhauer's contention that an egoist can be made less harmful by providing him with a different set of interests. He writes 'Schopenhauer sometimes refers to this figuratively as reforming the head but not the heart of the human being. The heart is his will, as opposed to the less essential and mutable intellect'.[443] Could it be that part of why Schopenhauer puts all the weight of his moral theory on intentions, and in particular on the compassionate character, is because he sees them

[442] Spinoza, EIVP18S.
[443] Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 7.

as more integral to a person than any other feature? For Schopenhauer, a person is essentially will and to be judged according to the nature of his or her will; reform of the intellect, while having the advantage of being possible, does not touch the inner nature of the person. This could, I suggest, help to explain the different ethical approaches of Schopenhauer and Spinoza. While both argue against Descartes that a person is not to be identified with his or her intellect, I do not take Spinoza to hold that will or conatus is more essential to a person than is intellect – or even that the two can be straightforwardly distinguished in this way. I will investigate the roles that their respective understandings of the nature of the self play in Schopenhauer and Spinoza's ethical thought further in section 3.2 of the final chapter.

3.3 Conclusion

I have argued that, in spite of himself, Schopenhauer offers resources for an ethics along the lines of Spinoza's moral philosophy, wherein embedded individuals subject to causation can nonetheless reach self-fulfilment through improving their knowledge. Spinoza, of course, is a psychological egoist for whom virtue and happiness grow out of pursuing one's enlightened self-interest. For Schopenhauer, by contrast, nothing has moral value that fails to spring from a compassionate will. I have suggested that Schopenhauer gives no satisfying reason for this stipulation, and indeed that the profound distinction he draws between compassion and egoism is undermined by his own metaphysics of embeddedness and his claim that good is relative to desire (both shared with Spinoza).

While Schopenhauer accepts that knowledge can radically change a person's way of living, he denies that this has moral relevance because knowledge can only influence behaviour not character. Again, it is not entirely clear how Schopenhauer justifies the claim that the only moral change would be a change of character – possibly he takes empirical evidence to show that this is a widely accepted view, possibly it rests on his belief that the will or character is more essential to a person than the intellect. I have also questioned whether he gives reason for us to believe that knowledge has no transformative power over character.[444] If he is indeed unable to

[444] Janaway 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 7 simply has it that Schopenhauer 'says, on a certain amount of anecdotal evidence, that character is unique in each individual human being, that it is inborn and unchangeable.'

prove both that abstract philosophical knowledge is different to the kind of intuitive knowledge that *is* morally relevant and that the latter is innate and unchangeable, then the space for an ethics which is not merely descriptive remains open.

Salvation

1. SPINOZAN BLESSEDNESS AND SCHOPENHAUERIAN SALVATION

1.4 Virtue and Happiness

In the previous chapter I described the coincidence of virtue, activity, freedom, power, joy and understanding in Spinoza's ethical theory. This happy confluence reaches its pinnacle with what he calls blessedness: the intellectual love of God. As its preface states, Book V of *Ethics – Of Human Freedom* – concerns 'what freedom of mind, *or* blessedness, is'.[445] Meanwhile, a discussion of salvation takes up the latter part of Book 4 of *The World As Will and Representation* so that the analysis of this state forms the apex of Schopenhauer's philosophical system too.[446] The two philosophers use similar, quasi-religious language in their accounts of blessedness or salvation.[447] Spinoza usually writes of *beatitudo* but also uses *salus* (so that Curley translates the formula at VP36S as 'salvation, *or* blessedness, *or* freedom'). Not only does he claim that this blessedness consists in the love of God, but also identifies it with what 'is called glory in the Sacred Scriptures'.[448] Schopenhauer uses *das Heil*, (which he compares to faith, and to Christian 'new birth', which comes through grace alone)[449] and cites Christian, Hindu and Buddhist saints and ascetics as expressing such holiness in their conduct.[450]

The consonances here are more than superficial. In each case, the best state available to us is one which embodies virtue, profound knowledge and the stilling of passions which disturb us, as well – arguably – as some kind of transcendence of finitude or mortality. I will take virtue first. At P41D of the fifth part, Spinoza reminds us that '[t]he first and only foundation of virtue, *or* of the method of living

---

[445] Spinoza, EV Preface.
[446] Julian Young speaks of 'the ultimate goal and final point of Schopenhauer's philosophy, the… doctrine of transcendent salvation.' Julian Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation' in Neill and Janaway *Better Consciousness*, 157-170, 166.
[447] Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation',159 talks of *The World as Will and Representation*'s 'quasi-religious dimension, its doctrine of salvation'.
[448] Spinoza, EVP36S.
[449] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 403-407. At 405 he asserts that '[t]he doctrine of original sin (affirmation of the will) and of salvation (denial of the will) is really the great truth which constitutes the kernel of Christianity'.
[450] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 383.

rightly (by IVP22C and P24) is the seeking of our own advantage.' We have learnt from Part IV that virtue is acting according to the laws of our own nature and acting to preserve ourselves under the guidance of reason. Because, by P36S 'the essence of our mind consists only in knowledge', it is when engaging in the intellectual love of God that we are most active and so this intellectual activity also constitutes our greatest virtue. We also know from Part IV that such virtue, despite its foundation in self-interest, is not incompatible with traditional moral characteristics of honesty, beneficence and love but rather inevitably expresses itself in them.[451] Compare Schopenhauer's claim when discussing salvation and its foundation the ascetic denial of the will that 'this system of ethics fully agrees with the Christian dogmas proper' and 'is also just as much in agreement with the doctrines and ethical precepts of the sacred books of India'.[452] This denial of the will-to-live, he insists, springs 'from the same source from which all goodness, affection, virtue, and nobility of character spring',[453] in contrast to 'the wicked man' who is marked out by 'the vehemence of his willing',[454] and he points to the charity and love of neighbour expressed in Christian and Hindu asceticism.[455] Indeed Schopenhauer identifies denial of the will with saintliness: it is the highest virtue, exceeding both voluntary justice and charitable compassion.

It must be unsurprising that according to Spinoza's ethics our greatest virtue, when understood as the pinnacle of our activity and self-fulfilment, would also bring the greatest joy of which we are capable. In Part V he stresses repeatedly that the intellectual love of God represents true blessedness in this sense. So for instance at P36S 'our salvation, *or* blessedness, *or* freedom consists… in a constant and eternal love of God… And this love, *or* blessedness, is called glory in the Sacred Scriptures… it can rightly be called satisfaction of mind… it is joy'. This is because our minds are at their most active and so achieve their greatest satisfaction when understanding things by the third kind of knowledge, that is, when understanding them in relation to God – which means engaging in the intellectual love of God.[456] In

[451] See especially Spinoza, EIVP35, 46 and 72.
[452] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 408.
[453]Schopenhauer, WWR I, 378.
[454] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 389.
[455] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 386 and 388.
[456] Spinoza, EVP31S 'the more each of us is able to achieve in this [the third] kind of knowledge, the more he is conscious of himself and of God, that is, the more perfect and blessed he is.'

addition to such understanding being pleasurable in itself,[457] any passage from a lesser to a greater perfection brings joy, so achieving the greatest perfection (that is, self-realisation or activity) of which we are capable brings the greatest joy: blessedness.[458]

It is more surprising, surely, that Schopenhauer should end *The World As Will and Representation* with a promise of a happy state. Of course, the idea of death as a welcome release from suffering may seem entirely congruent with his pessimism,[459] and it is certainly to this that he believes the ascetic can look forward: 'if death comes… it is most welcome, and is cheerfully accepted as a longed-for deliverance.'[460] But Schopenhauer does not only speak of an escape from suffering but of 'the enviable life of so many saints and great souls among the Christians, and even more among the Hindus and Buddhists'.[461] He characterises this life as 'full of inner cheerfulness and true heavenly peace' and suggests 'it is an unshakable peace, a deep calm and inward serenity, a state that we cannot behold without the greatest longing'.[462] Indeed in the same section (§68) he talks of bliss and blessedness, inferring from the 'most blissful' ('*säligsten*') moments we experience – in aesthetic contemplation – to just 'how blessed ['*wie sälig'*] must be the life of a man whose will is silenced… forever'.[463] Thus it seems for Schopenhauer, as for Spinoza, that some of us can hope for a longed-for state of cheerfulness, peace and, indeed, blessedness.[464]

---

[457] Spinoza, EVP32 'Whatever we understand by the third kind of knowledge we take pleasure in'
[458] See Spinoza EVP27 'The greatest satisfaction of mind there can be arises from this third kind of knowledge' and EVP27D 'he who knows things by this kind of knowledge passes to the greatest human perfection, and consequently (by Def. Aff II), is affected with the greatest Joy'. Again, VP33S '[a]f joy, then, consists in the passage to a greater perfection, blessedness must surely consist in the fact that the mind is endowed with perfection itself.'
[459] In fact, though, Schopenhauer will argue that this is only true for the death of the ascetic, any other death merely affecting the phenomenon and not the will.
[460] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 382. At 390 he says '[r]esignation… frees its owner from all care and anxiety for ever.'
[461] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 383.
[462] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 390.
[463] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 390.
[464] In the very final section of Volume I Schopenhauer points to 'that state which is experienced by all who have attained to complete denial of the will, and which is denoted by the names ecstasy, rapture, illumination, union with God, and so on.' Schopenhauer, WWR I, 410.

1.5 Knowledge

1.2.1 The Role, Nature and Content of Knowledge

As regards the connection between salvation and knowledge, Spinozan blessedness consists in perfection of the mind (P33S),[465] identified as the intellectual love of God which is achieved through knowledge of the third kind.[466] For Spinoza, then, '[t]he greatest satisfaction of mind there can be arises from this third kind of knowledge' and 'he who knows things by this kind of knowledge passes to the greatest human perfection, and consequently (by Def. Aff II), is affected with the greatest Joy'.[467] According to Spinoza, therefore, blessedness results from or consists in knowledge. This knowledge is of a specific kind: intuitive knowledge which is grasped *sub specie aeternitatis*.[468] And what this knowledge *concerns*, as propositions 29 and 30 of Part V make clear, is the nature of reality as depending on God and in particular of the individual's own place in reality as an expression of God – in other words, it is knowledge of our own embeddedness.[469] I would argue that Schopenhauer's accounts of each of these – of the role, the nature and the content of knowledge in our salvation – are markedly similar.

For Schopenhauer, a person can reach the point of denial of the will in one of two ways: either by recognising the phenomenal nature of the *principium individuationis* and that suffering is essential to the will or as a result of enduring 'great personal suffering'.[470] In the first case, it is clear that it is knowledge which offers the route to denial and hence salvation, as Schopenhauer makes explicit at 397

---

[465] 'If joy, then, consists in the passage to a greater perfection, blessedness must surely consist in the fact that the mind if endowed with perfection itself.'
[466] Spinoza, EVP31S 'the more each of us is able to achieve in this kind of knowledge [third kind], the more he is conscious of himself and of God, that is, the more perfect and blessed he is.'
[467] Spinoza, EVP27 and P27D.
[468]Spinoza, E IIP40S2 IV defines knowledge of the 'third kind, which we shall call intuitive knowledge' and IIP44C2D specifies that 'it is of the nature of reason to regard things under this species of eternity.'
[469] Spinoza, EVP20S: when we understand things under a species of eternity 'we conceive them to be contained in God and to follow from the necessity of the divine nature.' VP30: '[i]nsofar as our mind knows itself and the body under a species of eternity, it necessarily has knowledge of God, and knows that it is in God'. (We can understand any affection of our body whatsoever clearly and distinctly and in as much as we do, we relate that image or affection to God. The better we understand our affections the more we love God (P15 '[h]e who understands himself and his affects clearly and distinctly loves God') – and love of God is that which most engages the mind (P16 '[t]his love toward God must engage the mind most') and, by P20D '[t]his love toward God is the highest good which we can want').
[470] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 392.

'denial of the will-to-live, which is the same as what is called complete resignation or holiness, always proceeds from that quieter of the will; and this is the knowledge of its inner conflict and its essential vanity'. But a change in knowledge is essential to the more common second case too, so that Schopenhauer says of the subject of great suffering that '[w]e see him know himself and the world, change his whole nature, rise above himself and above all suffering… in inviolable peace, bliss, and sublimity'.[471] It is also conceivable that for Schopenhauer, as for Spinoza, salvation actually consists in or involves a state of knowledge. This might be implied by the comparison Schopenhauer draws between it and the more temporary release provided by aesthetic contemplation, which is of course a state of will-less knowing. Bernard Reginster, who agrees that in both aesthetic experience and ascetic resignation 'freedom from willing is achieved *through knowledge*' argues that in the former 'it is simply by assuming this pure cognitive stance that the individual frees himself from the will' whereas in the latter 'the individual must free himself from the will *before* he can assume that pure cognitive stance'.[472] This seems to indicate that, according to Reginster, knowledge is not after all a precondition of denial of the will, but rather that such denial provides the route *to* knowledge. If this is right, Schopenhauerian blessedness would presumably consist in the achievement of that knowledge. Schopenhauer does, however, remark of denial of the will that 'such a state cannot really be called knowledge, since it no longer has the form of subject and object' and because it is incommunicable – although the qualifying 'really' perhaps suggests that he would otherwise have been tempted to characterise it that way![473]

What is more certain is that the knowledge required for salvation is of a special kind, just as it is for Spinoza. As Bela Egyed puts it, Schopenhauer 'agrees with Spinoza (and Plato), in opposition to Kant, that there is a form of knowledge that can go beyond everyday human understanding.'[474] The knowledge achieved in Schopenhauerian aesthetic contemplation does seem to bear comparison to Spinoza's knowledge *sub specie aeternitatis*, each being a perception of things independently of their spatio-temporal existence.[475] Further, the insight that leads to the denial of the

[471] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 392.
[472] Bernard Reginster, 'Knowledge and Selflessness: Schopenhauer and the Paradox of Reflection' in Neill and Janaway *Better Consciousness,* 98-119, 103
[473] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 410.
[474] Bela Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 112.
[475] Spinoza, EVP29S 'We conceive things as actual in two ways: either insofar as we conceive them to exist in relation to a certain time and place, or insofar as we conceive them to be contained in God and

will-to-live is precisely a penetration beyond the *principium individuationis*, whose forms are space and time. In addition, both Schopenhauer and Spinoza refer to the knowledge belonging to the most blessed individuals as a form of intuition. However, each understands something rather different by this term. When Spinoza calls the third kind of knowledge intuitive, he seems to have in mind the certainty and immediacy with which it is grasped ('no one fails to see', 'in one glance').[476] Schopenhauer, unlike Spinoza, sees intuitive knowledge as utterly divorced from what he calls the 'dogmas' of reason. The Christians, Hindus and Buddhists who achieved salvation believed different rational dogmas, but 'the inner, direct, and intuitive knowledge from which alone all virtue and holiness can come is nevertheless expressed in precisely the same way'.[477] For Schopenhauer, intuition seems to be defined by the fact that it is distinct from abstract reason. As we saw in the previous chapter, one's level of intuitive insight appears to be innate according to Schopenhauer, so that '[i]t is therefore just as little necessary for the saint to be a philosopher as for the philosopher to be a saint'.[478] This marks a clear and consequential difference from Spinoza's view that we become more joyful and blessed as we gain understanding and become more active in our reasoning. In section 2.1 below, I explore what this means in terms of to whom salvation is available for each thinker.

As we saw, Part V of the *Ethics* tells us that the knowledge involved in blessedness consists in an understanding of ourselves and other modes *as* modes of God. For Schopenhauer, too, the knowledge which is essential to salvation comprises an understanding of the connectedness of reality and our embeddedness in it. It is a prerequisite of salvation that the will should '*recognize or know* its own inner nature in this phenomenon.'[479] Spinoza's third kind of knowledge proceeds from God – the whole of reality as such – to the essence of individual things,[480] just as for Schopenhauer it is 'knowledge of the whole' which 'becomes the *quieter* of all and

---

to follow from the necessity of the divine nature.' When we conceive things under a species of eternity, we conceive them the second way. Meanwhile Schopenhauer says of aesthetic experience that '[t]he pure subject of knowledge and its correlative, the Idea, have passed out of all these forms of the principle of sufficient reason. Time, place… have no meaning for them.' Schopenhauer, WWR I, 179.

[476] Spinoza, EIIP40S2IV.

[477] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 383.

[478] Schopenhauer, WWR 1, 383.

[479] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 400.

[480] Spinoza, EIIP40S2IV.

every willing.'[481] In section 68 Schopenhauer reminds us that the essence of goodness is seeing through the *prinicipium individuationis*. Now he adds that a higher degree still of this penetrating vision 'will at once show an influence on the will which goes still farther.'[482] For the person who truly understands that the distinction between self and other is illusory (and thus takes on the whole world's suffering as his own), 'that knowledge of the whole… becomes the *quieter* of all and every willing.'[483] Salvation, then, belongs to the person who sees reality *sub specie aeternitatis*, recognises the connected nature of reality beyond the forms of the *principium individuationis* and understands his or her own existence as a phenomenon or expression of that ultimate reality. Schopenhauer's account of the *content* of the knowledge which is key to salvation, however, has a characteristically pessimistic overtone entirely absent from Spinoza's picture. What the ascetic knows is not simply that all phenomena are expressions of the one reality, will, but that the essential nature of reality is conflict and suffering. I will assess the coherence of this claim in section 3.1 below.

1.2.2 The Value of Knowledge

The kind of knowledge essential to blessedness clearly offers both of what Schopenhauer calls, in his analysis of the experience of aesthetic contemplation, objective and subjective value. In section 38 of *The World As Will and Representation*, he maintains that aesthetic experiences are valuable in part because they involve a kind of knowledge unavailable in ordinary life and in part because they provide respite from the suffering inherent to constant willing. As we have seen, Spinoza's blessed person and Schopenhauer's ascetic understand reality in the most adequate and profound way, so that they do indeed benefit from the objective value of achieving a special kind of knowledge. But each also enjoys a particular and similar subjective effect that results from this knowledge – the power it has over disturbing passions.

Part IV of *Ethics* articulates Spinoza's view that we are unfree to the extent that we are governed by and unable to control our passions. We are necessarily part of nature and as such, subject to forces beyond our control. This means that we are

[481] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 379.
[482] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 378.
[483] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 378-9.

subject to passions. The more we are able to preserve ourselves and pursue our own advantage, the more we are 'endowed with virtue'.[484] Unfortunately, the passions which 'torment' us can extinguish or restrain our knowledge of what is really good for us and our ability to pursue the good,[485] as when the 'rash desire' for a momentary pleasure disrupts the pursuit of a greater but more remote good.[486] In addition, the more subject we are to passions, the more we come into conflict with one another.[487]

Part V, of course, offers the remedy for this bondage to the passions, with its preface promising to demonstrate 'the power of the mind, or of reason, and… above all, how great its dominion over the affects is, and what kind of dominion it has for restraining and moderating them.'[488] P20S assures us that clear and distinct knowledge either entirely removes passions or at least 'brings it about that they constitute the smallest part of the mind'. It is, then, knowledge or reason that brings the passions under our control – specifically, knowledge of passions themselves, so that Spinoza insists that 'we can devise no other remedy for the affects which depends on our power and is more excellent than this, which consists in a true knowledge of them.'[489] By coming to understand a passion which enslaves us we dissolve it: '[a]n affect which is a passion ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it.'[490] This is because the act of understanding is by its nature joyful and liberating; to understand anything in its proper place in reality – in relation to God – brings us joy. This is why Spinoza can conclude that 'insofar as we understand the causes of sadness, it ceases (by P3) to be a passion, that is (by IIIP59), to that extent it ceases to be sadness. And so, insofar as we understand God to be the cause of sadness, we rejoice.'[491] Thus reason, for Spinoza, has the power to moderate the affects and free us from their power, to the extent that understanding a sad passion actually turns it into a joy. One addendum to this is worth noting: it is particularly understanding the nature of the passions as *necessary* that enables a person to limit their power. In general, we are more strongly affected by things when we consider them to be free, but when we identify their causes and see them as they really are – as

[484] Spinoza, EIVP20.
[485] Spinoza, EIVP15.
[486] Spinoza, EIVP16.
[487] Spinoza, EIVP32-34.
[488] Spinoza, EV Preface, 244.
[489] Spinoza, EVP4S.
[490] Spinoza, EVP3.
[491] Spinoza, EVP17S.

necessary unfoldings of substance – their impact is lessened. 'Insofar as the mind understands all things as necessary, it has a greater power over the affects, or is less acted on by them.'[492] In the case of the passions, this means that their harmful power over us is diminished.

Schopenhauer, too, holds that understanding something to be necessary is a balm for our distress: 'nothing is more effective for our consolation than a consideration of what has happened from the point of view of necessity'.[493] Reginster draws attention to this comment and glosses Schopenhauer's view as follows: 'if I believe that my current privations could not have been avoided, they will feel less painful than if I believe they could have',[494] which clearly resonates with Spinoza's claim that 'sadness over some good which has perished is lessened as soon as the man who has lost it realizes that this good could not, in any way, have been kept.'[495]

More generally speaking, for Schopenhauer, willing is suffering, so anything that can release us from our servitude to desire is of great value. We know from Book 3 that knowledge can perform this service, and something similar happens in the denial of the will. One whose will is silenced, Schopenhauer writes, 'is then left only as pure knowing being, as the undimmed mirror of the world. Nothing can distress or alarm him any more'.[496] As we saw in section 1.2.1 above, Reginster confirms that in both aesthetic experience and ascetic resignation 'freedom from willing is achieved *through knowledge*.'[497] Reginster's view, once again, is that the process is slightly different in each case. In aesthetic contemplation 'it is simply by assuming this pure cognitive stance that the individual frees himself from the will' – the mind's power allows it to free itself (temporarily) – whereas in asceticism 'knowledge actually "quiets" the will, or induces its "self-suppression".'[498] For Reginster, then, with aesthetic experience it is the fact *that* I know objectively which allows temporary escape from will, in resignation it is the content of the knowledge – the will's inevitable frustration – which directly *affects* the will, quieting it.[499] It is interesting that he suggests that it might be by means of *reflection* on the stirrings of the will that

[492] Spinoza, EVP6.
[493] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 306.
[494] Reginster, 'Knowledge and Selflessness', 107 and 108.
[495] Spinoza, EVP6S.
[496] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 390.
[497] Reginster, 'Knowledge and Selflessness', 103.
[498] Reginster, 'Knowledge and Selflessness', 103.
[499] Reginster, 'Knowledge and Selflessness', 108.

knowledge is able to offer us relief from them. As Reginster puts it 'if I manage to *reflect* on my jealousy, I also thereby, if only for a moment, cease to *be* jealous.'[500] Reginster's formulation strongly recalls Spinoza's words at VP3 and VP4S (quoted above), expressing his contention that sad passions can be dissolved by coming to understand them. Schopenhauer and Spinoza, then, might well be in agreement on the specific points that it is through reflecting on the passions that we can lessen their power over us, and that they trouble us less the more we understand them to be necessary. They certainly do seem to share the broader idea that our blessedness or salvation consists, in part, in a freedom from disturbing feelings, and that this freedom comes as a result of knowledge.

1.3 Immortality

One final commonality that I would like to highlight between the highest blessing proffered to humanity in Part V of the *Ethics* and that advanced at the end of *The World as Will and Representation* is as follows. It may be that each philosopher thinks there is a kind of immortality available to us. Indeed, in Volume II Schopenhauer endorses Spinoza's comment that '*sentimus experimurque nos AETERNOS esse*' – as Payne translates it, "[w]e feel and experience that we are *eternal*".[501] Julian Young does seem to believe that Schopenhauer envisages some sort of post-death state. In 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation' he notes that 'temporary release from suffering is possible through art; permanent release is possible through "denial of the will", that is to say, death.'[502] Of course, this could simply mean that the ascetic's death puts a permanent end to suffering by obliterating the sufferer. It might, however, suggest that, just as aesthetic contemplation induces a temporary state in which we are free from suffering, death gives the denier of the will permanent access to such a condition. This latter reading seems to be confirmed when Young goes on to argue that Schopenhauer sees philosophy's task as being to provide consolation in the face of death, first, that death isn't absolute annihilation for us and second, that there is a blissful post-death state.[503] The first of these consolations is supposed to be assured by Schopenhauer's idealism: our experience of the

[500] Reginster, 'Knowledge and Selflessness', 112.
[501] Schopenhauer, WWR II, 478, Payne translation at footnote 18.
[502] Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 157.
[503] Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 157.

phenomenal world is dependent on (being) a transcendent subject which itself lies outside the form of time and so must be untouchable by death.[504] The second, Young writes, 'Schopenhauer seeks to achieve by appeal to mysticism and art.'[505] Salvation as a blissful post-death state is augured in 'the testimony of mystics, "vouched for with the stamp of truth by art"… that that which is indeed "nothing" to the rational mind, is in fact a *heavenly* "nothing".' Again, that 'beyond the "dream" of individuality is a *divine* Oneness: "pantheistic consciousness"'.[506] For Young's Schopenhauer, then, it seems the ascetic can look forward to a divine, heavenly state after death, with the writings of the mystics and the paintings of Raphael and Correggio evidencing the reality of such an experience.

On the other hand, commentators including Christopher Janaway and Dale Jacquette have insisted upon the point that no personal immortality is possible within Schopenhauer's metaphysics. On Janaway's reading of Schopenhauer, it is simply a mistake to think we survive death as individuals.[507] For Jacquette, we may console ourselves that death is unreal without this meaning that any kind of personal immortality is *real*.[508] Beyond this, the only consolation for death that Schopenhauer offers is just the realisation that willing life is an error, there is nothing of 'the comforting sense of survival by which a particular person with specific memories and expectations continues after the body's death, promised by popular religions'.[509] We should not hope for any kind of blissful state. While Young argues that Schopenhauer demands a philosophy which can console us by displaying 'one's post death existence as, in some way or other, blissful' – and that Schopenhauer takes himself to achieve this consolation in *The World as Will* – on Jacquette's reading of Schopenhauer '[t]here is nothing to look forward to as the meaning or final reward or consummation of life except its termination in death.'[510] Death, on this picture, does offer a release from suffering, but there is no desirable state in its aftermath, not least because there is no individual subject who survives death to experience any such state. In section

[504]Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 157.
[505] Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 158.
[506] Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 158 quoting Schopenhauer, WWR I, 411and WWR II, 612-3. It is worth noting, too, that at WWR I, 405 Schopenhauer asserts that '[b]ehind our existence lies something else that becomes accessible to us only by our shaking off the world.'
[507] Janaway, 'Self and World in Schopenhauer's Philosophy', 319.
[508] Jacquette, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, 122-125.
[509] Jacquette, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, 124.
[510] Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 157 and Jacquette, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, 127.

3.3 below I appraise these divergent interpretations and assess the possibility of a coherent Schopenhauerian account of immortality.

Spinoza's insistence on a kind of immortality is more incontrovertible though his account of it is barely less contentious, Jonathan Bennett famously writing it off as 'an unmitigated and seemingly unmotivated disaster'.[511] Nonetheless, Spinoza's philosophy does offer a promise of immortality to the wise. While it is true of the ignorant man that 'as soon as he ceases to suffer, he ceases to be', the wise man 'never ceases to be'.[512] Spinoza explicitly signals his intention to address the topic of immortality midway through Part V: '[w]ith this I have completed everything which concerns this present life… So it is time now to pass to those things which pertain to the mind's duration without relation to the body.'[513] Clearly, this version of immortality has to do with the mind, and its immunity to the destruction of the body; Spinoza states that '[t]he human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains which is eternal.'[514] In particular, that which is immune to death is the intellectual love of God: '[t]he intellectual love of God, which arises from the third kind of knowledge, is eternal.'[515]

For Spinoza, then, although we are finite modes and our bodies will inevitably succumb to death, we can aspire to a kind of immortality in virtue of the eternity of the mind. We shall see, however, that this is not – as it is for Descartes, say – an immunity of the mind as such and as a whole, nor of the self. Modes of thought are not inherently indestructible and different minds will attain eternity to different degrees. This is because our minds are only eternal to the extent that they have – better, consist in – true, adequate ideas. As Spinoza puts it in the demonstration to proposition 38 of Part V '[t]he mind's essence consists in knowledge (by IIP11); therefore, the more the mind knows things by the second and third kind of knowledge, the greater the part of it that remains'. He has already said of the third kind of knowledge in P31S that 'the more each of us is able to achieve in this kind of knowledge, the more he is conscious of himself and of God, that is, the more perfect and blessed he is.' The result of this is that we are immortal to just the same degree that we are blessed – to the extent, that is, that we enjoy the intellectual love of God.

---

[511] Jonathan Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1984), 357.
[512] Spinoza, EVP52S.
[513] Spinoza, EVP20S.
[514] Spinoza, EVP23.
[515] Spinoza, EVP33.

Spinoza's account of immortality offers a number of blessings or consolations. First, of course, that we can to a greater or lesser extent transcend death. The part of each of us that is destroyed by death shrinks, the more that each is composed of adequate ideas: 'death is less harmful to us, the greater the mind's clear and distinct knowledge'. Therefore, 'the more the mind loves God', the more that mind survives the death of the body.[516] This in turn reduces the fear of death: '[t]he more the mind understands things by the second and third kind of knowledge, the less it is acted on by affects which are evil, and the less it fears death' [517] to the extent that '[a] free man thinks of nothing less than of death'.[518] Spinoza here offers the kind of comfort which Schopenhauer sees it as philosophy's calling to provide – his system purports to show us how to be less troubled by thoughts of death. And less troubled generally in life – 'the wise man… is scarcely at all disturbed in spirit'[519] – and entirely upon death: '[o]nly while the body endures is the mind subject to affects which are related to the passions.'[520] The more we engage in the intellectual love of god the less we fear death and the less we are disturbed by sad passions. Eternity is entirely without passion: in its post-death existence the mind is utterly untroubled by passions.[521] Finally, we are assured by Spinoza that what survives is the best part of us: at P40C he writes that 'the part of the mind that remains… is more perfect than the rest.' He continues: 'the eternal part of the mind (by P23 and P29) is the intellect, through which alone we are said to act (by IIIP3). But what we have shown to perish is the imagination (by P21), through which alone we are said to be acted on'. Thus the eternal aspect is, in a sense, also the part of myself that is most truly me, because it is the most active part and therefore the aspect of myself in which I am freest, most self-determining and least at the mercy of external forces.

In another sense, however, the immortality which Spinoza believes we have available is utterly impersonal. Adequate ideas are eternally true. To the extent that my mind consists of adequate ideas it is eternal. But presumably the stock of adequate ideas of which my mind is composed is equally available to all other minds. My mind is eternal only in as much as its ideas coincide with the set of eternally true, adequate

[516] Spinoza, EVP38S.
[517] Spinoza, EVP38.
[518] Spinoza, EIVP67.
[519] Spinoza, EVP52S.
[520] Spinoza, EVP34.
[521] Schopenhauer's version of immortality might seem to offer *this* blessing at least: if the ascetic does escape the will upon death, he escapes the suffering attendant upon desires and passions.

ideas. Spinoza makes clear that we would be mistaken to acquiesce in 'the common opinion of men' that someone's personal imagination or memory 'remains after death',[522] P21 clarifying that '[t]he mind can neither imagine anything, nor recollect past things, except while the body endures.' For Spinoza, of course, imagination and memory belong to the first kind of knowledge, in the possession of which we are least fulfilling our essence as reasoning beings. It may well, though, seem to be that it is precisely these bodies of knowledge which are most distinctive of or personal to each of us as individuals, so that the fact they do not survive death might limit the extent to which Spinoza's picture of immortality is found to be consoling. It must also be remembered that Spinozan immortality does not involve *duration*: it is somewhat misleading to think of the mind as continuing to exist after the death of the body. Again, that is a mistaken but common opinion of men who 'are indeed conscious of the eternity of their mind, but… confuse it with duration'.[523] The eternity of the mind in as much as it consists in adequate ideas is rather a kind of timelessness than of unending duration or sempiternity.

For Spinoza, then, we are immortal to the extent that our minds include ideas which are eternally true and not subject to time, just as for the idealist Schopenhauer the will is independent of time and so inasmuch as we are will, we are immortal. The other sense in which we have a kind of immortality, according to Spinoza, finds its own echo in Schopenhauer's philosophy. As we saw in chapter two, there exists an eternal essence of each Spinozan mode ('in God there is necessarily an idea that expresses the essence of this or that human body, under a species of eternity')[524] just as each Schopenhauerian self is identified with an atemporal intelligible character.

So we have seen that Spinoza's account of blessedness and Schopenhauer's of salvation coincide on several points. The fact that each offers an account of salvation which nonetheless does not constitute some kind of post-death reward for virtue[525] and can be maintained while eschewing the ideas of an absolute good,[526] teleology or

[522] Spinoza, EVP34S.
[523] Spinoza, EVP34S.
[524] Spinoza, EVP22.
[525] Spinoza, EVP42: 'Blessedness is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself'.
[526] As Spinoza says at EIVP27 '[w]e know nothing to be certainly good or evil, except what really leads to understanding or what can prevent us from understanding' and as Christopher Janaway glosses Schopenhauer: '[a]nything is good only if it satisfies the will of some being, but there can be no ultimate satisfaction of the will as such, and so there is no absolute good.' Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 2.

a concerned and benevolent God is remarkable enough.[527] For each, the condition constitutes the highest human virtue and offers the greatest joy of which we are capable. For both Spinoza and Schopenhauer, these beneficial states belong to those who have the most profound knowledge of the nature of reality (in particular, understanding it *sub specie aeternitatis* and recognising the interconnectedness of things). Such knowledge offers both objective and subjective values for its possessors. Finally, there is the prospect of some kind of immortality in each account.

2. EPISTEMOLOGICAL PESSIMISM

The differences between Schopenhauer's model of salvation and that of his fore-runner fall broadly into two camps, the first having to do with the route by which it is attained and the second concerning the value or purpose of salvation. I turn now to investigate these significant divergences between the two, arguing that they are best explained in terms of Schopenhauer's epistemological and his metaphysical pessimisms respectively. In the process, difficulties with Schopenhauer's model will come to light and be examined. In this first part these concern the extent to which Schopenhauerian salvation is achievable. In the second, metaphysical pessimism, section, I will explore the extent to which we can make sense of the metaphysics of salvation on Schopenhauer's own terms.

2.1 Schopenhauer *contra* Spinoza

First, then, I address the question of how and for whom blessedness or salvation is achievable in the light of Schopenhauer's pessimism and Spinoza's optimism. Of particular relevance is Schopenhauer's picture of phenomenal reality as characterised by a fight over limited resources. By contrast, it is Spinoza's view that the thing that is best for us is unlimited – in fact, the *more* others have it the more available it becomes to each of us – and that cooperation is the best way to serve our own interests. Equally significant is the link between ethics and epistemology discussed in my previous chapter – the impossibility of gaining moral knowledge in Schopenhauer's world in

[527] 'Our existence and the existence of the world that is so ready to frustrate our willing', Janaway writes on the question of teleology, 'are not designed to achieve any good, nor are we capable of making any progress towards perfection.' Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 1.

contrast to the positive feedback cycle of knowledge, joy, activity and freedom in Spinoza's. On the other hand, when it comes to the topic of salvation specifically, the chasm between Spinoza's moral and epistemological optimism and Schopenhauer's pessimism narrows. For Schopenhauer, in this exceptional case, the relevant knowledge *can* be gained and *can* change us. Nor, presumably, is ascetic denial of the will an inherently limited resource over which we must fight. Rather, its rarity is a product, at least in part, of the need for an excess of intellect – a kind of moral genius. But for Spinoza, too, the blessed state of the wise is a rare one – the famous last line of the *Ethics* tells us precisely that – so that the chasm between the two thinkers may seem to be narrowed from this side too.[528]

We know, nonetheless, that phenomenal reality is, according to Schopenhauer, characterised by an inevitable struggle over limited resources (this struggle itself being a manifestation via the *principium individuationis* of the will's inner self-contradiction).[529] The moral life of human beings expresses the highest degree of this struggle and is dominated by the egoistic impulse driving each to 'snatch from another what he himself wants'.[530] This avowedly Hobbesian picture contrasts starkly with Spinoza's moral philosophy, according to which the good is sharable and increases by being shared so that, by EIVP36, '[t]he greatest good of those who seek virtue is common to all, and can be enjoyed by all equally' and by P37 '[t]he good which everyone who seeks virtue wants for himself, he also desires for other men'. This leads to Spinoza's conclusion in Part V that blessedness (the intellectual love of God) 'cannot be tainted by an affect of envy or jealousy: instead, the more men we imagine to be joined to God by the same bond of love, the more it is encouraged', and that it 'is common to all men' and 'we desire that all should enjoy it'.[531]

In spite of their innate egoism Spinozan individuals, then, unlike Schopenhauerian ones, are naturally inclined to cooperate in order to attain the good.[532] Equally, attaining this good is achievable for them: on Spinoza's model, we are capable of

---

[528] Spinoza, EVP42S: 'On the other hand, the wise man, insofar as he is considered as such, is hardly troubled in spirit, but being, by a certain eternal necessity, conscious of himself, and of God, and of things, he never ceases to be, but always possesses true peace of mind.

If the way I have shown to lead to these things now seems very hard, still, it can be found. And of course, what is found so rarely must be hard, For if salvation were at hand, and could be found without great effort, how could nearly everyone neglect it? But all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare.'

[529] See for instance Schopenhauer, WWR I, §61, pp.331-333.

[530] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 333.

[531] Spinoza, EVP20D.

[532] At least, unlike that majority of Schopenhauerian individuals in whom egoism predominates.

gaining the knowledge which quells passions and inspires the intellectual love of God. This is a result of two happy facts which are true in Spinoza's world but not in Schopenhauer's. In the first place, the third kind of knowledge, though it is a philosophical and rational understanding, is able to move us. At P36S Spinoza remarks 'how much… intuitive, *or* knowledge of the third kind (see IIP40S2), can accomplish', having explained at P31S that 'the more each of us is able to achieve in this kind of knowledge, the more he is conscious of himself and of God, that is, the more perfect and blessed he is.' Blessedness results from the third kind of knowledge, but though Spinoza refers to this as 'intuitive' knowledge, it is not some kind of mystical or innate insight but a paradigm of active, rational understanding.[533] Because of this – here is the second happy fact – it is something we can achieve through our own efforts.[534] Spinoza emphasizes the wise person's *passage* to understanding and blessedness: 'he who knows things by this kind of knowledge passes to the greatest human perfection, and consequently (by Def. Aff II), is affected with the greatest Joy'.[535] In particular, it is through understanding our passions that we are able to neutralise their painful affects, situate them in relation to the necessary unfolding of substance and thereby attain the joyful state of the intellectual love of God.[536] At EVP15 Spinoza states that '[h]e who understands himself and his affects clearly and distinctly loves God', explaining further at EVP20S that clear and distinct knowledge of the affects 'begets a love toward a thing immutable and eternal (see P15), which we really fully possess (see IIIP45), and which therefore… can always be greater and greater (by P15), and occupy the greatest part of the mind'. Indeed, we can understand any affection of our body whatsoever clearly and distinctly and in as much as we do,

[533] With the third kind of knowledge the mind '*proceeds* from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things.' Again, in the example Spinoza gives from Euclid, 'we *infer* the fourth number from the ratio'. Spinoza, EIIP40S IV, italics added.

[534] Spinoza, EVP39S 'We strive, that is, that whatever is related to its memory or imagination is of hardly any moment in relation to the intellect'.

[535] Spinoza, EVP27D.

[536] This is a recurring theme of Part V. See for instance the claims at Spinoza, EVP4S that 'we can devise no other remedy for the affects which depends on our power and is more excellent than this, which consists in a true knowledge of them', at V Preface, 244 that 'the power of the mind, or of reason, and… above all, how great its dominion over the affects is, and what kind of dominion it has for restraining and moderating them' and VP3 that '[a]n affect which is a passion ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it.' At VP17S we learn that 'insofar as we understand the causes of sadness, it ceases (by P3) to be a passion, that is (by IIIP59), to that extent it ceases to be sadness. And so, insofar as we understand God to be the cause of sadness, we rejoice', at VP20S that clear and distinct knowledge either entirely removes passions or at least 'brings it about that they constitute the smallest part of the mind' and at VP6 'Insofar as the mind understands all things as necessary, it has a greater power over the affect, *or* is less acted on by them.'

we relate that image or affection to God. The better we understand our affections the more we love God – and love of God is that which most engages the mind.[537]

By contrast for Schopenhauer, as we know, knowledge of the kind that can be gained philosophically has no moral power. The insight that sees through the *principium individuationis* and grasps the essence of reality is not an abstract understanding which can be worked out and gradually increased: the saint's conduct 'springs not from abstract knowledge, but from intuitively apprehended, immediate knowledge of the world and of its inner nature'.[538] And, on the other hand, '[t]he great ethical difference of characters means that the bad man is infinitely remote from attaining that knowledge, whose result is the denial of the will, and is therefore in truth *actually* abandoned to all the miseries which appear in life as *possible*.'[539] Although one's chance of happiness is determined by one's level of insight, such knowledge is innate or, at the very least, not to be acquired by intellectual effort so that – as William Blake had it – 'Some are born to sweet delight, Some are born to endless night'.[540] A further point of contrast is the fact that for Spinoza when once we have gained blessedness, we are assured of it, whereas for Schopenhauer our salvation is always at risk. Thus Spinoza tells us that '[t]here is nothing in Nature which is contrary to this intellectual love, or which can take it away'[541] whereas Schopenhauer points out that ascetic practices must be watchfully maintained and that desires constantly threaten to draw us back into the sufferings of a life ruled by will. Denial of the will 'must always be achieved afresh by constant struggle', he writes, and 'on earth no one can have lasting peace.'[542]

2.2 Narrowing the Gap

However, as I indicated above, when it comes to the relationship between epistemology and salvation the gap between Spinoza's optimism and Schopenhauer's pessimism may be narrower than at first appears. For one thing, though blessedness is

[537] Spinoza, EVP14 'The mind can bring it about that all the body's affections, or images of things, are related to the idea of God.' We can form a clear and distinct concept of any affection of the body. P15 'He who understands himself and his affects clearly and distinctly loves God' and P16 '[t]his love toward God must engage the mind most.'
[538] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 383.
[539] Schopenhauer, WWR I , 397.
[540] Auguries of Innocence.
[541] Spinoza, EVP37.
[542] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 391. See also, for instance, WWRI, 379.

in principle achievable, according to Spinoza, he does acknowledge that it is rarely attained. Of the path to salvation he concludes in the final proposition of *Ethics* that '[n]eeds must it be hard, since it is so seldom found. How would it be possible, if salvation were ready to our hand, and could without great labour be found, that it should be by almost all men neglected?'[543] So blessedness, even on Spinoza's picture, is found seldom and neglected by almost all. Let alone being 'as difficult as [it is]… rare', though Spinoza maintains that blessedness can be found with great labour, we might wonder if it is achievable at all. This is particularly so when he characterises the intellectual love as *perfection* of the mind at P33S '[i]f joy, then, consists in the passage to a greater perfection, blessedness must surely consist in the fact that the mind is endowed with perfection itself.' On the other hand, Spinoza's claim is that it is in virtue of the complexity of the human body that blessedness is achievable, which presumably leaves it in reach of all or most.[544] Indeed, in the Scholium to Proposition 10 of Part V he seems to suggest that it is not difficult to follow the rules which lead us to increased rationality and the intellectual love of God:

> One, therefore, who is anxious to moderate his affects and appetites from the love of freedom alone will strive… to come to know the virtues and their causes, and to fill his mind with the gladness which arises from the true knowledge of them… And he who will observe these [rules] carefully – for they are not difficult – and practice them, will soon be able to direct most of his actions according to the command of reason.

Perhaps, though, it would be more consistent to read this passage as holding that the rules are not difficult to *understand* – not difficult in the sense of not abstruse – rather than that the work of following them is easily done.[545] This leaves us with a picture according to which, in virtue of their bodily and corresponding mental complexity, human beings are capable of attaining the intellectual love of God and this can be achieved through their own striving, but where this involves great labour and so is

---

[543] Spinoza, VP42S.

[544] Spinoza, EVP39 establishes both that it is such complexity which facilitates the intellectual love of God: '[h]e who has a body capable of a great many things has a mind whose greatest part is eternal' and, in the Scholium, that this is a feature of human individuals: '[b]ecause human bodies are capable of a great many things, there is no doubt but what they can be of such a nature that they are related to minds which have a great knowledge of themselves and of God, and of which the greatest, *or* chief, part is eternal. So they hardly fear death.'

[545] After all, although Spinoza maintains at EVP10 that '[s]o long as we are not torn by affects contrary to our nature, we have the power of ordering and connecting the affections of the body according to the order of the intellect', he also makes it clear that as finite modes, human beings are *always* subject to more powerful external forces.

rarely accomplished. This remains, in my estimation, an optimistic, though not a rose-tinted, picture of the relationship between knowledge and blessedness and the human capacity for happiness.

As for Schopenhauer, certainly salvation is rarely found, according to his world-view – it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle.[546] Some degree of optimism, however, may be glimpsed in the fact that the kind of knowledge which inspires ascetic withdrawal is *not* entirely bound up with a person's innate (intelligible) character in the way that we have seen other moral knowledge is. Instead, in this one instance, non-abstract, morally transformative knowledge can be gained and can change our relationship to the will such that salvation becomes attainable. It is knowledge of the inner nature of reality – penetration of the *principium individuationis* – that produces salvation: 'when this penetration appears in all its force, it produces perfect sanctification and salvation, the phenomenon of which are the state of resignation previously described, the unshakeable peace accompanying this, and the highest joy and delight in death.'[547] But this point can be reached not only through 'suffering merely known' but also, and more often, through 'suffering personally felt'.[548] In other words, what happens in the course of a person's life – their phenomenal existence – can in this one case change their understanding of the nature of reality in such a way as to transform them morally, resulting in denial of the will and hence salvation.

In fact, it is not entirely clear whether this is a case of *epistemological* optimism – of Schopenhauer accepting the existence of a kind of knowledge that is both transformative and acquirable. He seems, to some extent, to *contrast* the path to salvation through knowledge to the path through personal suffering, calling the latter 'a second way' which is not like the first and insisting that 'only in the case of a few is mere knowledge sufficient to bring about the denial of the will'.[549] The suggestion seems to be that profound personal suffering somehow produces resignation

[546] Schopenhauer borrows from Matthew 19:24 New International Version at WWR I, 379-380. As Robert Wicks puts it 'only a small minority… are not fated to such an unfulfilled life, for their characters and lives unfold in a manner… allowing them to cultivate instead, a more select, universalistic mode of awareness, instantiated through either an aesthetic, moral, or ascetic attitude.' Robert Wicks, 'Natural Beauty and Optimism in Schopenhauer's Aesthetics', in Neill and Janaway, *Better Consciousness*, 120-137, 121. See also Schopenhauer, WWR I, 385 on the rarity of asceticism compared to 'the vanity and futility of the whole striving and effort' of the sweep of world-history and its 'always permanent majority of vulgarity and shallowness'.
[547] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 398.
[548] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 392.
[549] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 392-3.

directly.[550] On the other hand, in explaining this path to salvation Schopenhauer notes of those converted by suffering that '[t]he last secret of life has revealed itself to them in the excess of pain', that they have come to see the identity of tormentor and tormented and that this is an 'intuitive and immediate knowledge'.[551] It seems reasonable to conclude, then, that in most cases Schopenhauerian salvation is achieved through the transformative power of a piece of knowledge which is acquired during the course of a person's life.

If the knowledge which produces asceticism is exceptional in this respect, it nonetheless remains something that can't be attained incrementally and by our own efforts. Rather, it comes as from without and is passively received, rather than worked at, by those who are fortunate enough to be especially unfortunate in the degree of suffering they undergo. Schopenhauer writes that 'salvation is to be gained only… through a changed way of knowledge… as from without.'[552] Even more explicitly, he says

> Now since, as we have seen, that *self-suppression of the will* comes from knowledge, but all knowledge and insight as such are independent of free choice, that denial of willing, that entrance into freedom, is not to be forcibly arrived at by intention or design, but comes from the innermost relation of knowing and willing in man; hence it comes suddenly, as if flying in from without. Therefore the Church calls it the *effect of grace*'

The insight that induces denial of the will, then, is not something that we can gain through our own efforts – as Romans 11:6 has it, if being saved comes 'by grace, then it cannot be based on works'.[553] Clearly in this respect Schopenhauer is more of an epistemological pessimist than Spinoza. Perhaps, though, he has good reason to be. For Schopenhauer, the fact that we can't labour to gain salvation follows from the fact that we do not have freedom of the will.[554] Knowledge and insight, he says, are independent of free choice. Presumably Schopenhauer would see it as

---

[550] Although not, Schopenhauer comments, 'with the necessity of effect from cause' – rather, this is the one point where freedom appears in the phenomenal realm. See discussion in section 3.4.2 below.
[551] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 394.
[552] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 407.
[553] Romans 11:6 NIV.
[554] Bela Egyed sees this disagreement as a function of Schopenhauer's Kantianism: in his 'appropriation of the Kantian notion of "noumenal freedom"' he loses 'the notion that, under certain circumstances – if the individual is wise – the individual can be free' whilst 'Spinoza, who also denies that individuals have a free choice' nonetheless 'allows for individual freedom'. Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 125.

hopelessly optimistic of Spinoza – his fellow determinist – to claim that we can work at understanding our passions and the rest of modal reality in relation to God.[555]

One further pessimistic twist in Schopenhauer's account is arguably less well justified. He suggests that the remarkable agreement between Christian and Vedantic mystics 'is a practical proof that here is expressed not an eccentricity and craziness of the mind… but an essential side of human nature which appears rarely only because of its superior quality.'[556] Why should the superior quality of ascetic human nature of itself make it rare? Of course, if it is superior then there must by definition be a nature that is inferior to it, but I don't see that anything follows about the relative frequency with which each appears. At least Spinoza offers an *explanation* as to why salvation is rare: all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare. It is not simply because of its excellence or superiority that salvation is rarely found, but because of the difficulty of achieving it. For the arch pessimist, by contrast, it is to be assumed that any great blessing would inevitably be meanly distributed.

We have seen that points of disagreement between Schopenhauer and Spinoza on this issue can to some extent be explained by the former's pessimism about the accessibility and transformative power of knowledge and the latter's optimism. Schopenhauer's doctrine of salvation – unlike Spinoza's – is underpinned, too, by metaphysical pessimism. In the remainder of this chapter I look, first, at the *content* of the knowledge inherent to salvation – what is revealed in it about the nature of reality. Second, I examine the topic of what salvation means for the self, and what more this can tell us about the two thinkers' theories of self. Finally, I address some of the potential metaphysical problems with Schopenhauer's account of salvation, in particular immortality, the abolition of the will as such and the unique appearance of freedom in the phenomenal realm.

[555] This may be part of what Bela Egyed has in mind when he says that '[w]hat Schopenhauer takes to be Spinoza's "optimism" is the belief that through an understanding of the way in which God's attributes are expressed in finite individuals (modes), human individuals can come to know and, as a result, acquiesce in the order of things, of which they, too, are an essential expression.' Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 122. He may simply mean that Schopenhauer would object to the idea that this order is something to acquiesce in, but in my view he would also object to the claim we can come to know this.

[556] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 389.

3. METAPHYSICAL PESSIMISM

3.1 What is Known

The content of the knowledge that induces or – perhaps – constitutes salvation is, of course, somewhat different in each case and revelatory of each thinker's evaluation of the nature of reality. For Spinoza, what the blessed individual comes to understand is her embeddedness in reality and that reality is characterised by necessity. For Schopenhauer, it is an understanding of embeddedness and that reality is suffering.

For Spinoza, what the blessed person knows is that he or she is embedded, as a mode of substance, in a system characterised by necessity. Understanding modes in relation to substance effects the intellectual love of God, which constitutes blessedness. Certainly, gaining knowledge – becoming freer, more active, more powerful – brings us joy, and this is in stark contrast to Schopenhauer's view that those with greater understanding are more exposed to suffering.[557] It is perhaps not entirely clear that the joy gained results from anything more than the *process* or *activity* of knowing – whether the content of what we know of itself brings joy. In other words, does what the wise person comes to understand about the nature of reality constitute good news? For Schopenhauer of course – and as I shall discuss further below – reality is actually evil. For Spinoza, substance is at worst neutral. As Bela Egyed has it in 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', the inner nature of world is neither good nor evil for Spinoza, but a necessary unfolding, which is not 'in conformity with human values and expectations.'[558] There may be reason to believe that what we understand in making sense of our place in reality does itself bring us joy. For one thing, blessedness consists in the intellectual *love* of God, with the word 'love' seeming to suggest a positive valuation of God or substance. Egyed himself suggests that the nature of reality and our place within it is something to be positively affirmed for Spinoza, in his useful account of the way in which Schopenhauer diverges from Spinoza on this topic.[559] Egyed argues that '[w]e attain

[557] Whereas for Spinoza, as Egyed puts it, 'those who are ignorant will strive blindly under the influence of external causes.' Egyed 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 124.
[558] Egyed 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 122.
[559] He writes that Schopenhauer's criticisms of Spinoza 'when they are not misguided, have to do with fundamental disagreements about the ultimate nature of reality and whether it is to be affirmed or

salvation, according to Spinoza, by affirming necessity'.[560] It is precisely through this that we gain freedom: 'the freedom that comes from grasping that one is a specific expression of the infinite power of God (*natura naturatans*)' so that 'salvation comes, not through denial of the will-to-live ("*conatus*," in his terminology) but through its affirmation.' The intellectual love of God, then, is modelled by Egyed as the recognition that we are finite modes of nature and the understanding that our power to act is a part of that.[561] It is as embedded, determined individuals that we are free and active – our understanding of that brings us the joy that constitutes our salvation.

Things are, of course, very different for Schopenhauer. What marks out the knowledge of one who denies the will from that belonging to the compassionate person is that in addition to understanding that phenomenal individuals are an illusion and we are all, ultimately will, the will-denier also recognises the ubiquity of suffering. This is why such a person transcends compassion and becomes an ascetic: 'it is no longer enough for him to love others… but there arises in him a strong aversion to the inner nature whose expression is his own phenomenon, to the will-to-live, the kernel and essence of that world recognized as full of misery.'[562]

According to Schopenhauer, then, suffering is inherent to the will's concrete manifestation, the phenomenal world. This is because the will is in contradiction with itself,[563] its inner conflict expressing itself 'in the suffering of all that lives.'[564] As Christopher Janaway puts it in 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value' '[w]illing continues perpetually and without final purpose… Throughout nature one being dominates and destroys another, the will tearing itself apart, says Schopenhauer, because it is a hungry will and there is nothing for it to feed on but itself.'[565] The will

---

denied.' Egyed 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 111. In my terms, about metaphysical optimism and pessimism.

[560] Egyed 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 123.

[561] Egyed 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 125.

[562] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 380. Again, at WWR I, 394, the knowledge that brings someone to the point of asceticism is that '[t]he last secret of life has revealed itself to them in the excess of pain, the secret, namely, that evil and wickedness, the tormented and the tormentor… are in themselves one' and 'the knowledge of the contradiction of the will to live with itself… and the vanity of all endeavour can be perceived.'

[563] For instance, Schopenhauer, WWR I, 394: 'the knowledge of the contradiction of the will to live with itself… and the vanity of all endeavour can be perceived' and WWR I, 399: suicide is 'the most blatant expression of the contradiction of the will-to-live with itself.'

[564] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 397.

[565] Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 4.

is in contradiction with itself, it is hungry, never-satisfied and possibly evil[566] – at the very least Schopenhauer insists upon 'the colossal evils of the world'.[567]

Schopenhauer and Spinoza share a metaphysics of monism and dynamism: despite ultimate reality being one, there is constant change at the level of individuals, which are driven by will or conatus. I suspect, though, that Spinoza would offer two responses to Schopenhauer's picture. First, while he too characterises finite beings as vulnerable to destructive forces greater than themselves Spinoza also insists that individuals are capable of strengthening themselves, particularly through combining with others. Second, it seems likely that he would see the idea of a hungry will as merely superstitious. Even the idea of the will – the inner nature of reality and something that is beyond space, time and plurality – being in contradiction with itself is perhaps difficult to make sense of.

Schopenhauer's counter, of course, is to accuse Spinoza of an unrealistic – even callous – optimism. Robert Wicks mentions Schopenhauer's 'repeated condemnations of optimism – sometimes associated with pantheism – as an insensitive, wicked outlook.'[568] Bela Egyed argues that Schopenhauer has two main objections to Spinoza's ethics. One is that the connection between Spinoza's ethics and ontology is tenuous, leaving 'good and evil as merely conventional' and Spinoza's ethics, as a result, empty and abominable.[569] The other is precisely that Spinoza is a pantheist and therefore an optimist.[570] Egyed quotes Schopenhauer on the relationship of his own philosophy to this worldview: '"it is true that I have that 'one and all' in common with the *Pantheists* but not their 'all is god'… they are thus put in the position of having to sophisticate away the colossal evils of the world" (*World II* 643).'[571]

One thing this quotation suggests is that we should not read too much into the religious language Schopenhauer adopts in his account of salvation – he remains a

[566] I discuss Julian Young's claim to this effect in the 'Immortality Revisited' section below.
[567] Schopenhauer, WWR II, 643.
[568] Robert Wicks, 'Natural Beauty and Optimism in Schopenhauer's Aesthetics', 123.
[569] Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 121. The intimate connection between ontology and ethics in the thought of *both* Schopenhauer and Spinoza has been a theme of this thesis, and we should remember that Schopenhauer himself insists that there is no such thing as an absolute good.
[570] Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 121.
[571] Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 121.

staunch atheist.[572] Indeed he makes it explicit that when it comes to one who denies the will it is 'immaterial' whether ascetic conduct 'proceeds from a theistic or from an atheistic religion.'[573] More significantly, it is worth asking whether Spinoza really is an optimist of the type Schopenhauer finds so objectionable. 'If it is possible to call Spinoza a "pantheist,"' Egyed argues, 'he can by no means be called an "optimist."'.[574] He points out that Spinoza makes no claim as to whether the inner nature of the world is good or evil.[575] I would add that this, of course, is consistent with Spinoza's view that good is relative to the interests of the person judging. According to Egyed what really underlies Schopenhauer's accusation against Spinoza is the latter's 'belief that through an understanding of the way in which God's attributes are expressed in finite individuals (modes), human individuals can come to know and, as a result, acquiesce in the order of things, of which they, too, are an essential expression.'[576] Egyed's point here seems to be that Schopenhauer would object to the idea that the order of things is something to acquiesce in, though he might also reject the claim that we can come to understand that order. Egyed goes on to make this case too, noting that 'Schopenhauer might reply that it is optimistic to claim that it is possible to know the complex of causes constituting us with any degree of certainty'.[577] While for Spinoza '[a]s our knowledge grows, the less contingent the world appears to us', Egyed's belief is that for Schopenhauer reality is 'fraught with unpredictability'.[578]

Once more, then, what underlies Schopenhauer's rejection of a Spinozan position seems to be an *epistemological* pessimism, although I would suggest the question of the meaningfulness of reality plays a role here too. For the rationalist Spinoza – as we saw in the very first chapter – the world is fully comprehensible, the order of ideas paralleling the necessary connections that hold between things. Schopenhauer, by contrast, is at pains to point out the irrationality of the will and the

[572] In part *because* of the suffering of the world – in WWR I, 407 footnote 72 he speaks of the 'contradiction between the goodness of God and the misery of the world'. Of course, Nietzsche famously questioned his professed atheism, charging Schopenhauer with a failure to fully escape the Christian worldview, and Janaway comments in similar vein that '[f]or all the genuine atheism of his metaphysical system, Schopenhauer adopts the Christian notion of "the deep guilt of the human race by reason of its very existence, and of the heart's intense longing for salvation therefrom" (WWR II: 625).' Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 8.
[573] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 385.
[574] Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 121.
[575] Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 122.
[576] Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 122.
[577] Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 123.
[578] Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 123.

meaninglessness of the world. Schopenhauer may be wrong to dismiss Spinoza as a thoughtless optimist who has to turn a blind eye to suffering because of a dogmatic belief in a good God. He may, too, struggle to convince on the notion that the ultimate nature of reality is cannibalistic and self-contradictory. The particular question of meaningfulness, though, strikes me as a little more finely balanced. Perhaps Schopenhauer should have toed the more cautious Kantian line that we can't know about the nature of reality as it is beyond the forms of intuition, and so can't pronounce it irrational or meaningless. But equally, Spinoza might be overreaching in his appeal to the rationalist doctrine that for everything that exists, it must be possible to find a reason.[579] Part of what explains this divergence, perhaps, is that Schopenhauer envisages a starker division between the will and its (determined, law-governed) manifestations than does Spinoza between substance and its expressions.

3.2 The Self

In the previous section, we saw that the *content* of the knowledge which induces salvation is quite different in the cases of the two philosophers, revealing Schopenhauer's metaphysical pessimism about the nature of reality and Spinoza's comparative optimism. I would argue that another key difference between the two accounts of salvation concerns the relationship between salvation and the self. In this section I will set Spinoza's optimistic model of blessedness as the fulfilment of the self against Schopenhauer's picture in which salvation involves denial and an escape from the self. I will also try to draw out what more this tells us about each thinker's understanding of the nature of the self.

For Spinoza, as we know, when enjoying the intellectual love of God we are at our most active, our freest, our most joyful, our wisest and our most capable. Our relations with others are strengthened and we feel ourselves to be more at home in the universe.[580] There is (inevitably, given parallelism) a simultaneous flourishing of

[579] See for instance Spinoza's argument for the Existence of God at EIP11D, where he states that for 'each thing there must be assigned a cause, *or* reason, both for its existence and', going further still, 'for its nonexistence.'

[580] Egyed, 'Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation', 125: 'Spinozistic affirmation, I suggest, is the affirmation of self, not against, but along with the affirmation of nature.' This is the intellectual love of God: 'the recognition that one is merely a finite mode of an infinite complex of causes' but also that 'within this complex of causes our power to act has its essential role'.

body and mind[581] and although it gives us power over the damaging passions, it does not involve a complete flight from emotion.[582] By engaging in understanding through the use of reason we are effectively perfecting ourselves; we are ensuring that the most perfect part of our nature makes up the greatest part of ourselves possible, and thus grasping a greater share of eternity.[583] All finite individuals have a conatus and through the intellectual love of God we human beings fulfil that drive to self-preservation by expressing and strengthening what is most essential to us – the intellect – and by storing up adequate knowledge so that we are, indeed, to a certain extent immortal.[584] For Spinoza, then, '[t]he greatest satisfaction of mind there can be arises from this third kind of knowledge' and 'he who knows things by this kind of knowledge passes to the greatest human perfection, and consequently (by Def. Aff II), is affected with the greatest Joy'.[585] This is blessedness.

Schopenhauerian salvation, by contrast, is rather about the suppression than the fulfilment of self. In the first place, the route to salvation is brutally painful, as opposed to the joyful and strengthening process it is for Spinoza. Suffering is compared to a painful cure;[586] the knowledge which precipitates asceticism 'has revealed itself to them in the excess of pain';[587] the ascetic process itself is a self-torture that we must struggle against ourselves to maintain. Thus as Christopher Janaway puts it 'for Schopenhauer value is ultimately snatched from the jaws of

---

[581] Spinoza, EVP39: '[h]e who has a body capable of a great many things has a mind whose greatest part is eternal' and in the Scholium: '[b]ecause human bodies are capable of a great many things, there is no doubt but what they can be of such a nature that they are related to minds which have a great knowledge of themselves and of God, and of which the greatest, *or* chief, part is eternal. So they hardly fear death.'

[582] Spinoza, EVP4S: 'each of us has… the power to understand himself and his affects, and consequently, the power to bring it about that he is less acted on by them.' 'The result will be not only that love, hate, and the like, are destroyed (by P2), but also that the appetites, *or* desires, which usually arise from such an affect, cannot be excessive'. But 'the appetites, *or*, desires, are passions only insofar as they arise from inadequate ideas, and are counted as virtues when they are aroused or generated by adequate ideas.'

[583] Spinoza, EVP40: '[t]he more perfection each thing has, the more it acts and the less it is acted on; and conversely, the more it acts the more perfect it is' and VP40C 'the part of the mind that remains… is more perfect than the rest.' 'For the eternal part of the mind (by P23 and P29) is the intellect, through which alone we are said to act (by IIIP3).'

[584] Spinoza EVP36S: 'the essence of our mind consists only in knowledge', EVP25: '[t]he greatest striving of the mind, and its greatest virtue is understanding things by the third kind of knowledge' and EIVP23D: 'insofar as he is determined to do something from the fact that he understands, he acts (by IIIP1), that is (by IIID[efinition]2), does something which is perceived through his essence alone, *or* (by D8) which follows adequately from his virtue'.

[585] Spinoza, EVP27 and EVP27D.

[586] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 397 'We cannot help but regard every suffering… as at least a possible advance towards virtue and holiness' and 395 'all suffering… has a potentially sanctifying force.'

[587] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 394.

nihilism' only through a cure – denial of the will and loss of metaphysical individuality – 'potentially as radical and unnerving' as the condition itself.[588]

Second, and because of this, while Spinoza's free man increases his body's capacity and power as he gains in wisdom, the Schopenhauerian ascetic sets out to punish and destroy the body which is the expression of his will. Schopenhauer tells us 'he resorts to fasting, and even to self-castigation and self-torture' and the body's 'vigorous flourishing and thriving' is precisely what he avoids in case it should 'animate afresh and excite more strongly the will.'[589] He denies the will, denies his desires, seeks out what is opposed to his will.[590] Thus while to achieve blessedness is, for Spinoza, to fulfil your conatus, according to Schopenhauer salvation can only be attained by *thwarting* the will to live.

This means, in turn, that salvation requires an overthrowing or abandonment of the self. To achieve salvation I must deny my will, and my will is myself: 'salvation, deliverance from life and suffering, cannot even be imagined without complete denial of the will. Till then, everyone is nothing but this will itself'.[591] Even more explicitly: 'salvation is to be gained only… through a changed way of knowledge… as from without. This means that salvation is something quite foreign to our person, and points to a denial and surrender of this very person being necessary for salvation.'[592] As we saw in section 2 of this chapter, the knowledge that facilitates salvation comes from without, like an act of grace, rather than through our own efforts of understanding. It alters us completely,[593] though not through a change of character but a complete withdrawal from it – and therefore from the self as such.

Finally, for Spinoza blessedness involves the recognition of one's own integration into reality, an expansion of the most essential aspect of the self and establishing that part of the self as immortal. On the other hand, Schopenhauerian salvation brings withdrawal from reality, destruction of the self and death envisioned as a release or escape. For the ascetic 'if death comes… it is most welcome, and is cheerfully accepted as a longed-for deliverance.'[594]

---

[588] Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 2.
[589] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 382.
[590] The ascetic 'compels himself to refrain from doing all that he would like to do' and 'gladly sides with every enemy of the will's phenomenon that is his own person'. Schopenhauer, WWR I, 382.
[591] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 397.
[592] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 407.
[593] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 404: '[i]n consequence of such an effect of grace, man's whole inner nature is fundamentally changed and reversed… a new man, so to speak, actually takes the place of the old.'
[594] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 382.

We saw in the first chapter that Schopenhauer and Spinoza share what I called an embedded-self thesis. The differences in their respective accounts of salvation and its relation to the self reveal ways in which their understandings of the self as such also diverge. To some extent, this is a direct function of metaphysical optimism or pessimism. For Spinoza, our integration as finite modes into reality as such is to be celebrated, and the more we come to understand it the more we love God and are blessed. For Schopenhauer, our embedding in the masochistic will is to be mourned and salvation offers an escape. There may, though, be a question for Schopenhauer to answer about who it is that makes this escape, given that a person is her intelligible character and it is this character – her will – which is somehow transcended in salvation: I explore this further in sections 3.2 and 3.4.1 below.

The self's integration is one characteristic of the embedded-self thesis, the other is the refusal to follow Descartes in identifying the self with the intellect. It may be that this refusal is somewhat muddied for each philosopher by his theory of salvation. In Schopenhauer's case, identifying the self with the knowing subject might in fact seem to offer him the best chance of plausibly explaining how one can transcend one's will and achieve a kind of immortality. Again, I discuss this possible interpretation of Schopenhauerian salvation in what follows. Nonetheless, Schopenhauer's official line is that the essence of the self is the will. As Janaway puts it, our 'unique inner consciousness of our own will when we act gives us the key to understanding our essence: it is that we are active and strive towards ends.'[595] For Spinoza, too, an individual's conatus is its essence: '[t[he striving by which each thing strives to persevere in its being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing.'[596] At the same time, though, his focus in the account of salvation seems to be squarely on the intellect and at EVP33S he tells us that blessedness consists in the perfection of the mind.

Does blessedness, then, really constitute a flourishing of the whole self for Spinoza? The focus on the mind rather than the body may seem to reverse what Nadler calls Spinoza's 'explanatory materialism' – his supposed failure to explain the mental equivalent to the individuation of physical modes.[597] Given that he thinks mental and physical systems run in parallel, perhaps Spinoza is entitled explain

[595] Janaway, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value', 4.
[596] Spinoza, EIIIP7.
[597] Nadler *Spinoza's 'Ethics'* 148. See discussion at chapter 2, section 2.2.

salvation as it occurs in one of those attributes and leave us to work out the equivalent. And his account does at least seem to be more holistic than Schopenhauer's with respect to the affects. While Schopenhauerian salvation involves quashing all desires as such, joy continues to be felt within the state of blessedness and Spinoza acknowledges the good in the affects of love, cheerfulness and so on. However, the immortality Spinoza envisages is simply the eternity that belongs to adequate ideas as such, which perhaps troubles that holism in two ways. First, Spinoza himself says that his account of eternity concerns 'the mind's duration without relation to the body.'[598] Second, it is precisely an account of *eternity* – of the timelessness of adequate ideas – so that Spinoza's own reference to duration is somewhat misleading. Whether a person's conatus would truly be fulfilled simply by attaining eternal ideas or whether it is also a striving for the self's real endurance is a moot point in Spinoza scholarship.[599]

Meanwhile, there are readings of Schopenhauer which offer a more optimistic – indeed, Spinozist – interpretation of what becomes of the self in salvation. Julian Young reminds us that the nothingness which remains after the abolition of the will '"is in fact a *heavenly* 'nothing'"' and that '"beyond the 'dream' of individuality is a *divine* Oneness: 'pantheistic consciousness'"'.[600] Robert Wicks similarly refers to the 'universalistic mode of awareness' which is 'instantiated through either an aesthetic, moral, or ascetic attitude' and is available to the 'small minority' who 'are not fated to such an unfulfilled life' as are most of mankind.[601] Here, then, we have quite explicitly the claim that the ascetic self might be a more fulfilled self, as well as the idea that salvation involves (a sense of) pantheistic oneness and finally that there might be some kind of positive state awaiting the ascetic beyond the abolition of the will. This returns us to the question, raised in section 1.3 of this chapter, of whether Schopenhauer really can offer a full account of immortality incorporating, as Julian Young argues in 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', invulnerability to death and the promise of a blissful state.

---

[598] Spinoza, EVP20D.
[599] See Andrew Youpa, 'Spinoza's Theory of the Good', in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's Ethics* ed. Olli Koistinen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 242-257, 243. Spinoza himself says at EIIIP8 '[t]he striving by which each thing strives to persevere in its being involves no finite time, but an indefinite time', which might perhaps lend credence to the latter interpretation.
[600] Both Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 158 quoting Schopenhauer, WWR II, 612-3.
[601] Wicks, 'Natural Beauty and Optimism in Schopenhauer's Aesthetics', 120.

3.3 Immortality Revisited

It is interesting to note that almost all of the references Young makes in discussing Schopenhauer's treatment of immortality and bliss are to Volume II of *The World as Will and Representation*. This might help to explain the seeming distance between his reading of Schopenhauer on these subjects and the interpretations offered by Janaway and Jacquette. Certainly, Schopenhauer uses the latter parts of Volume II, chapters xli, xlviii and xlix in particular, to elaborate upon his account of salvation. However, if Janaway and Jacquette understand Volume I correctly, and *Young* is right to see the promise of a post-death bliss made to an experiencing subject in Volume II, this would suggest a real incompatibility between the two volumes. Indeed, the elaborations of Volume II might have to be seen as inconsistent with central tenets of Schopenhauer's systematic philosophy, as set out in the first volume, having to do with the ideality of time and the relationship between the will and the knowing subject. In my view, Volume II does not make such drastic revisions. On page 494 of that volume, Schopenhauer asserts that though one's 'true inner being is indestructible', precisely *because* of the ideality of time 'we cannot attribute continuance to it' and on 495 he emphasizes that it is not the intellect but the will to which this indestructibility should be attributed.[602]

If time is dependent upon a knowing subject, then on the death of the knowing subject there is no more duration through which one's inner being could continue. This is the position that Jacquette takes.[603] Of course, if it turned out that one's inner being *was* the knowing subject then *this* would be untouchable by death and so its continued duration would not be paradoxical. This brings us, then, to the question of the relationship between the will and the knowing self and that which is our essence and which is untouched by death, which might be enlightening with reference to the apparent dispute between Young and other interpreters. Young writes

> according to idealism, life and the world are, ultimately speaking, a 'dream'. But a dream requires a dreamer who is not part of the dream, a transcendent subject. It follows that death is no more than the end of the dream (or nightmare), that our real self is untouched by it.[604]

[602] I explain the significance of this in what follows.
[603] Jacquette, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, 122-125.
[604] Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 157.

It seems natural to think of Young's one who dreams the dream that is life as Schopenhauer's knowing subject, for whom alone the phenomenal world exists.[605] Young goes on to claim that the self that lies beyond the dream is 'the *true* 'I'… the transcendent self… beyond both birth and death.' If the real self, the transcendent subject *is*, for Young, the knowing subject, then his position must be that it is as knowing subjects that we are immune to death. This, however, Schopenhauer explicitly denies – and, in fact, most explicitly of all in Volume II: '[a]ll philosophers have made the mistake of placing that which is metaphysical, indestructible, and eternal in man in the *intellect*. It lies exclusively in the *will*'.[606]

It is not as intellects, as knowing subjects, that we are untouched by death. As Schopenhauer goes on to say 'the intellect is a secondary phenomenon'.[607] The intellect, like the body, is a manifestation of the will. And although phenomenal objects are dependent upon the knowing subject, the subject is itself, in a sense, also a feature of phenomenal reality. Object and subject, Schopenhauer makes clear as early as §2 of Volume I, are two halves of the world as representation: 'each exists with the other and vanishes with it.'[608] The consequence of this is, as Jacquette puts it, that death of the phenomenal individual means 'total annihilation of the … subject'.[609] Of course, Young is talking specifically of the rare phenomenon of salvation, and perhaps the death of the ascetic should be seen as an exception to this rule. Schopenhauer certainly does characterise this particular kind of death as exceptional, but if anything this seems to be because the death of the ascetic is a *more* rather than a less effective obliteration![610] To repeat, then, the knowing subject does not survive death. One's inner being is not intellect, but will and it is this will which is untouched by the death of the phenomenal individual.

---

[605] Natural not only because Schopenhauer speaks of the knowing subject as a dreamer but also because for Young the consolation of immortality is supposedly achieved through idealism – and because Schopenhauer's term 'subject' is most often used for that which corresponds to object, that is, the knower.
[606] Schopenhauer, WWR II, 495.
[607] Schopenhauer, WWR II, 495.
[608] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 5.
[609] Jacquette, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, 124.
[610] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 396: 'a withdrawal, a gradual disappearance of the will, the visibility of which, namely the body, is imperceptibly but inwardly undermined by it [grief 'extended over the whole of life'], so that the person feels a certain loosening of his bonds, a mild foretaste of the death that proclaims itself to be the dissolution of the body and of the will at the same time.' I will investigate what sense can be made of this picture in section 3.4.1 below.

The words which I have quoted from the start of Young's chapter do not directly contradict this. I have said that it seems natural to think of the 'dreamer' or 'transcendent subject' that he calls the 'real self' as the knowing subject, but Young himself does not explicitly make this claim. What would the consequences be were we to take Young here to be identifying the real, death-defying self with the will rather than the intellect? We *could* retain the idea that it is Schopenhauer's idealism which makes possible the consolation that death is not an absolute annihilation. Young states that 'Schopenhauer satisfies his own meta-philosophical requirement by appeal to… idealism'.[611] Again, the more natural way to read this might be as suggesting that it is the haver of the ideas that constitute phenomenal reality – the subject of representation – which is the real, transcendent self. However, this consolation remains attributable to idealism even if the real self is understood to be the will. This is because it is Schopenhauer's distinction between the phenomenal world of representation and the noumenal will which allows him to maintain that our inner nature as will is unaffected by death, this distinction constituting Schopenhauer's spin on Kant's transcendental idealism.

On the other hand, Young's notion that there is a 'subject' who survives death and enjoys a post-death state is surely overstretched on this alternative account – even more so, his talk of 'one's post-death existence', which intimates that it is the same individual to whom this consolation is offered who will persist. If it is only as will that 'we' survive, that is really just to say that the will is timeless and unaffected by the passing away of one of its phenomena. Admittedly each of us *is* will, will is our inner being, but as Jacquette stresses nothing that is unique to each of us survives: '[t]he part of me that survives death… is no different from but exactly the same as the pure willing part of you that survives death.'[612] In the service of reassuring us that death does not amount to annihilation Schopenhauer himself seems to me to underscore the very meagreness of this picture of immortality, pointing out in Volume II that the aspect of 'me' which continues after death is precisely what was already there before my birth.[613]

We are left with the consolation that death is not absolute, but what survives is neither a knowing consciousness nor 'me' as a distinctive individual. What, then,

---

[611] Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 157.
[612] Jacquette, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, 124-5.
[613] Schopenhauer, WWR II 495, for instance: 'no more can be abolished through death than was produced through birth'.

becomes of the ideas of salvation, of the specialness of the ascetic's death and of a blissful, post-death state? If we read these first paragraphs from Young as consistent with the view that the surviving 'self' is simply the will then his position draws much closer to the more standard one typified by Jacquette, but at the cost of any real sense of consolation. This is not offered by way of a criticism of Young: he himself goes on to say that the will is 'fundamentally *evil*' and that 'if *that* is what our true self is then, far from receiving "consolation" in the face of death, to realise the character of one's true self is to descend into a realm of cosmic self-disgust.' Worse still, if my inner nature is will not only should I feel horror at it, but I should recognise that suffering is inescapable: 'death merely transforms personal into cosmic suffering'. Young concludes, therefore, that 'if the will is the thing in itself then there can be *no* doctrine of "salvation" in Schopenhauer's philosophy.'[614] For Young, this is primarily because if the noumenal is will then any post death state could have no positive value – but I think there are other problems too. If all that remains after death is the will, it is indeed hard to see how a post-death experience could be positive, but equally hard to imagine who the *subject* of that experience could possibly be. Jacquette, of course, can offer no better consolation and he too concludes that there can be no 'meaningful form of salvation' through death in Schopenhauer's philosophy.[615]

Jacquette despairs of the possibility of Schopenhauerian salvation, Young does not. Young's conclusion is conditional and he follows up his judgement that there could be no doctrine of salvation were will to be understood as noumenal by reminding us that the *The World As Will* clearly does offer such a doctrine.'[616] For Young, this contradiction between two of Schopenhauer's credos is resolved when, in Volume II, Schopenhauer resiles from his claim that the thing in itself is will and accepts it is unknowable, leaving room for the possibility that ultimate reality is not evil and that salvation can be attained.[617] Philosophy can tell us no more, but art and the writing of mystics illustrate the blissful state that is available to an ascetic. It is not clear to me that Volume II's retrenchment fully revives the doctrine of salvation. The thing in itself might be unknowable, but it remains the case that the most profound insight we do have into the nature of reality depicts it as the ever-hungry will – this

[614] All Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 163.
[615] Jacquette, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, 123.
[616] 'But, of course, there *is* such a doctrine.' Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 163.
[617] Young Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 164.

seems unpromising regarding the possibility of a blissful state. If reality is, as Young believes Schopenhauer would have it at the end of book four, 'at bottom, "divine"',[618] that it manifests as will seems somewhat mysterious.

There remains, too, the question of what it is of *me* that survives death. Young does indeed (as the early passages of his chapter suggested) seem to believe that a knowing subject survives, and quotes Schopenhauer's description of the condition of an ascetic as depicted by Raphael and Correggio: 'only knowledge remains, the will has vanished'.[619] However, in Volume II Schopenhauer states that knowledge, consciousness and the intellect end with the brain's death.[620] If this is not to be a straight contradiction, it must be because in the former passage Schopenhauer is attributing this blissful state to the ascetic *before* the moment of his or her phenomenal death. I think this probably is the case: the description quoted by Young is supposed to be of 'those who have overcome the world, in whom the will… has… freely denied itself, and who then merely wait to see the last trace of the will vanish with the body that is animated by that trace.'[621] This, then, does not seem to offer a promise of immortality or a blissful *post-death* state. On the other hand, it does appear in the context of Schopenhauer's encouragement that the nothingness that follows the ascetic's death might be a blessing. Certainly, Young argues that Schopenhauer is promising something more than the this-worldly ascetic detachment familiar from Stoic ethics; for Young's Schopenhauer 'salvation has to possess an ultimately "transcendent" character'.[622]

What, then, of the consolations – immortality and a blissful post-death state – that Young took it to be Schopenhauer's philosophical project to offer? In terms of immortality, it seems that it is only the will that is immune to death.[623] However, an individual is identified with her intelligible character, and the intelligible character is will and so unaffected by the death of the phenomenon. The death of the ascetic is, according to Schopenhauer, a special case. In that one case, we see 'the world melt

[618] Young, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 163.
[619] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 411 quoted in Young, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 165.
[620] Schopenhauer, WWR II, 495: 'Consciousness… consists in knowledge; but this, as has been sufficiently demonstrated, belongs, as activity of the brain, and consequently as function of the organism, to the mere phenomenon, and therefore ends therewith.' Again, 'the intellect is a secondary phenomenon, and is conditioned by the brain, and therefore begins and ends with this.'
[621] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 411.
[622] Young, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 169 footnote 43.
[623] In the penultimate section of this chapter I examine the notion that the will itself is destroyed upon the death of the ascetic.

away with the abolished will, and retain before us only empty nothingness.'[624] The possibility of a blissful post-death state appears to hang on the possibility of that nothingness being, as Young would have it, divine. What Schopenhauer offers as an indication that this might be so is a picture of a blissful state of pure knowing prior to death. While his claim that the intellect is a secondary manifestation of will that dies with the phenomenon seems to undermine any promise that this could continue after death, Schopenhauer does, however, describe how the *aesthetic* genius 'becomes the subject purified of will', his 'superfluity of knowledge having become free' from the will.[625] The only glimpses this life can give us of such a post-death state (those coming from aesthetic experience, from the mystics and from the artists who painted them) indicate it as a state of knowing. If Schopenhauer does *not* envision a kind of knowledge that can transcend the will, it is difficult to see what this state of salvation could be or how there could be any kind of subject to experience it – leaving the prospect of the consolation of a blissful post-death state utterly remote.

Ultimately we may have to conclude that there is a tension, perhaps a contradiction, between Schopenhauer's ethical project and his own metaphysical set-up. He does seem committed to the idea that salvation is available to a few, at least. *The World As Will and Representation* ends on a positive note: the state of the ascetic is blissful, the nothingness which follows his death is to be welcomed not feared. But if the essential nature of reality is will, various complicating factors seem to follow. First, if ultimate reality is will and intellect is secondary, we are left with the question of what kind of experiencing subject of a post-death state there could be. Second, if all that survives after our death is will, no personal immortality (except in very attenuated sense) is available. Third, even if the will is not noumenal, that the deepest level of reality we know is the 'evil' and constantly striving will hardly bodes well for our post-death existence as will being blissful. It is presumably only the ascetic who can aspire to a blissful post-death state; through death the ascetic destroys the will and escapes it entirely. Philosophy cannot speak of the nothingness beyond the will, but the idea that it could be experienced as blissful doesn't seem merely beyond the scope of philosophical understanding but in contradiction with Schopenhauer's metaphysics. It seems the best chance of finding consolation in Schopenhauer's philosophy is to read him as making the following claims. We are all indestructible by death in the

[624] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 411.
[625] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 186.

sense that we are, essentially, will. It is possible that, despite the secondary nature of intellect, the ascetic's knowledge survives death. This death destroys the will so the post-death state would be nothingness. This at least assures an escape from painful willing, but given that nothingness is relative, may offer more than mere obliteration. I turn now to investigate whether we can make sense of this claim that the ascetic's death destroys the will.

3.4 Two Final Paradoxes

3.4.1 The Abolition of the Will

Schopenhauer claims that the death of the ascetic differs from other deaths in as much as it touches the will and not just the phenomenon. Through ascetic practices, particularly starvation, the will is denied to such an extent that even the last glimmer of it is extinguished.[626] According to Schopenhauer, 'such a completely resigned ascetic ceases to live merely because he has completely ceased to will.'[627] Sometimes he puts it the other way round: when the ascetic dies, his will also flickers out. So at WWR I 390 Schopenhauer says the will of the ascetic is 'completely extinguished, except for the last glimmering spark that maintains the body and is extinguished with it.' Either way, a 'complete abolition' of the will is achieved.[628] Ascetic suicide through starvation is to be distinguished from other suicides which in fact represent an *affirmation* of life and of the will and in which, more significantly, only the phenomenon is destroyed and 'the thing-in-itself remains unaffected'.[629] In the case of salvation, on the other hand, '[i]t is not merely the phenomenon, as in the case of others, that comes to an end with death, but the inner being itself that is abolished.'[630] Schopenhauer is clear, then: in this one case, will as well as phenomenon is destroyed with death.

The difficult question here concerns what, precisely, is abolished and for whom – Schopenhauer isn't as explicit as he might be in answering this. Some of

[626] In the case of 'voluntarily chosen death by starvation' 'the complete denial of the will can reach that degree where even the necessary will to maintain the vegetative life of the body, by the assimilation of nourishment, ceases to exist.' Schopenhauer, WWR I, 401.
[627] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 401.
[628] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 412.
[629] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 399.
[630] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 382.

what he says seems to suggest that the successful ascetic destroys *his* will, and the world is abolished *for him*. He writes, for instance, that 'for him who ends thus, the world has at the same time ended'.[631] When he says we 'see the world melt away with the abolished will, and retain before us only empty nothingness', Schopenhauer is describing what we see when we 'turn our glance' to the experience of those who have denied the will.[632]

Of course, the problem here is that the will is one, and can't be divided into parts. If the ascetic truly destroys *his* will, he destroys *the* will as such – and with it the whole phenomenal world which is its manifestation. Indeed Schopenhauer insists that 'the whole phenomenon of the will… the universal forms of this phenomenon… all these are abolished with the will. No will: no representation, no world.'[633] Again, it may be that Schopenhauer thinks of these as abolished *for* or *relative to* the ascetic – that for *him* what remains is nothing, but I fail to see that he can be entitled to this qualification. Perhaps his remark that 'the rest of nature has to expect its salvation from man who is at the same time priest and sacrifice' represents an acknowledgement of this: it is the ascetic who can achieve denial and hence abolish the will and its phenomena, releasing them from their suffering.[634]

The defender of Schopenhauer seems to be left with an unpalatable choice. If she agrees that the abolition of the will in one individual would entail the abolition of the whole, she needs to explain the continued existence of the world since Schopenhauer appears to believe that there have been ascetic saints who have achieved full denial and the abolition of the will.[635] Further, if anyone is ever to attain this state even in the future, it is presumably right to say that on Schopenhauer's account the world couldn't currently exist. He tells us past and future come into being with the first representing subject, they must surely also disappear with the abolition of the will.[636] Given the current existence of phenomenal reality, the conclusion must be that no-one has attained and no-one ever will attain Schopenhauerian salvation. The alternative for Schopenhauer's defender is to show that the denial and abolition of the ascetic's will need not destroy the will as such. It may be that this option would

[631] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 382.
[632] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 411.
[633] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 411.
[634] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 381.
[635] See in particular Schopenhauer, WWR I, 401-402.
[636] Unless, of course, it is possible for a representing subject to survive the abolition of the will. See discussion in section 3.3 above.

seem the more appealing: Schopenhauer does after all (as we saw in chapters two and three) need individual wills to be separable from the will as such in order to make viable his accounts of moral responsibility and non-phenomenal individuation respectively.

3.4.2 The Appearance of Freedom

We have seen that Schopenhauer's account of salvation raises a number of metaphysical paradoxes. The last one I would like to touch on concerns the appearance of freedom in the phenomenal realm. Schopenhauer emphasises that this is a unique and remarkable occurrence, calling it 'the transcendental change'.[637] Denial of the will constitutes 'the one and only point where its [the will's] freedom enters directly into the phenomenon'.[638] In section 70 Schopenhauer directly addresses the charge that the phenomenon of denial of the will is inconsistent with his theory of determinism via motives. He argues that the *philosophical* contradiction between his determinism and his claim that the will can be suppressed and motives become inactive simply reflects a *real* (presumably, ontological) contradiction arising from the encroachment of the freedom of the will on necessity.[639] These contradictions can be resolved, he argues, because the withdrawal of the will from the power of motives 'does not proceed directly from the will, but from a changed form of knowledge'.[640] Schopenhauer reminds us that this happens as if by grace, not from an internal impetus but as from without.[641]

It is indeed the worry that Schopenhauer's account of salvation appeals to a *willed* refusal to will that has occupied some critics. Janaway, for instance, notes that one 'final concern about the denial of the will is whether it is always bound to be an

---

[637] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 398.
[638] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 395.
[639] 'Now the contradiction between our assertions, on the one hand, of the necessity of the will's determinations through motives according to the character, and our assertions, on the other, of the possibility of the whole suppression of the will, whereby motives become powerless, is only the repetition in the reflection of philosophy of this *real* contradiction that arises from the direct encroachment of the freedom of the will-in-itself, knowing no necessity, on the necessity of its phenomenon.' Schopenhauer, WWR I, 403.
[640] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 403.
[641] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 404: 'that denial of willing, that entrance into freedom, is not to be forcibly arrived at by intention or design, but comes from the innermost relation of knowing and willing in man; hence it comes suddenly, as if flying in from without. Therefore the Church calls it the *effect of grace*'.

act of will.'[642] It is not entirely clear to me that Schopenhauer is able to answer this concern fully. For one thing, he at least uses the *language* of willing and desire throughout his account of ascetic denial. For instance, he talks of the '*voluntarily* chosen death by starvation at the highest degree of asceticism' and says that in such a case the 'dissolution of the body, the end of the individual… is welcome and *desired*.'[643] It may be that Schopenhauer envisages these choices and desires taking place before the moment that freedom brings will-lessness,[644] and indeed the question of timing seems to be a significant one. This brings me to the second reason for doubting the completeness of Schopenhauer's answer to his critics: the elusive mechanics of this unique appearance of freedom in the phenomenal.

If with regard to the abolition of the will the key questions were *what* and for *whom*, here they might be thought of as *when* and *how*. Schopenhauer states that it is through a changed way of knowing that freedom makes its appearance.[645] He also, however, describes this knowledge as prompting the *process* of becoming an ascetic: on the appearance of 'the knowledge of the contradiction of the will-to-live with itself' men 'have often been seen suddenly to change, resort to resignation and penance, and become hermits and monks.'[646] But, again, he describes such asceticism as '*deliberate* breaking of the will… the voluntarily chosen way of life of penance'.[647] It may be that Bernard Reginster's distinction between renouncing pursuit of a desire and renouncing the desire itself may be useful here.[648] Perhaps one could make a case on Schopenhauer's behalf – he doesn't seem to do so explicitly himself – that the ascetic *process* is characterised by a refusal to pursue one's desires, it is only when freedom breaks in and genuine denial occurs that the ascetic becomes completely indifferent to and withdrawn from his or her desires.

It may be that Schopenhauer would not wish to characterise the advent of freedom and complete denial of the will as occurring at some particular *time* at all, since they are presumably noumenal in nature. But it seems to me that presenting

---

[642] Janaway, *Schopenhauer*, 114.
[643] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 401 and 403. I have added the emphasis in each.
[644] Although the ascetic *process* itself is, of course, presented by Schopenhauer as one of refusing desire.
[645] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 400 'The will itself cannot be abolished by anything except *knowledge*…Only in consequence of this knowledge can the will abolish itself,' and again 403 'the result of this knowledge is a universal quieter of willing, then the individual motives become ineffective'.
[646] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 394
[647] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 392.
[648] See Reginster, 'Knowledge and Selflessness', 105.

them as happening at some moment later than the onset of asceticism offers the best chance of reconciling Schopenhauer's account of the ascetic process with the idea of a freedom which involves total will-lessness. The question of the point at which knowledge enters remains unresolved, however. Schopenhauer seems to have it both that it is the dawning of insight which prompts someone to become an ascetic *and* that it is the act of grace which explains the appearance of complete freedom and withdrawal.[649]

Neither do the final sections of *The World as Will and Representation* seem to me to make it entirely clear quite *how* knowledge produces the withdrawal from will. Schopenhauer emphasises that the knowledge or suffering which produces denial does *not* operate as a determining cause: 'denial of the will by no means results from suffering with the necessity of effect from cause; on the contrary, the will remains free.'[650] He is less clear, though, on how precisely the relationship between knowledge and denial *does* work. Denial, he says, results from 'the innermost relation of knowing and willing in man' but he also in the very same sentence says that it is an act of grace rather than will because 'all knowledge and insight as such are independent of free choice'.[651] We have seen, of course, that knowing and willing are intimately related in as much as Schopenhauer differentiates intelligible characters by virtue of the metaphysical insight they express. Nonetheless in this one case a person can *gain* a piece of metaphysical insight which seems to come from without and precisely isn't tied to her character or will.

Compounding these difficulties of interpretation, Schopenhauer also seems to suggest that there needs to be an act of free acceptance of this grace. He writes that 'just as she [the Church] still represents it [the effect of grace] as depending on the acceptance of grace, so too the effect of the quieter is ultimately an act of the freedom of the will.'[652] Having intimated that it was free and unmotivated *because* it came from outside, Schopenhauer now seems to suggest that to be free this grace needs to be chosen or accepted. He doesn't say why – it may be that without my act of acceptance, it would be hard to see how this could be my freedom – a free act of

[649] It is interesting to note that Julian Young, too, distinguishes between the partial renunciation characteristic of asceticism and the complete denial which doesn't occur until the moment of death. To further complicate the picture, *he* suggests that 'will-less knowing' is precisely what is transcended with this abolition. Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', 168 footnote 15.
[650] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 395.
[651] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 404
[652] Schopenhauer, WWR I, 404.

mine, rather than something that simply happens *to* me. Finally, then, in addition to the questions of when and how freedom enters the phenomenal we can add the question of whose freedom this is. This question Christopher Janaway addresses, and he insists that for Schopenhauer's account of denial to be cogent it must precisely not be *my* – the subject's – freedom. '[I]t is not I who turn against the will to life. The "agent" here is the will to life, which turns against itself… However,' Janaway concludes, 'Schopenhauer sometimes writes as if it were.'[653] Not only that but there is a situation wherein it really is the case that '/ must continue to will its denial after all': when the 'will to life within in me is recalcitrant, and reverts to affirming itself, even if it has previously been broken'.[654] As Janaway reads Schopenhauer (and as I do too) the ascetic continues to be involved in the denial of the will as a self, and continues to *will* his will-lessness. In other words, Schopenhauer does not offer an adequate account of when, how and whose freedom enters the phenomenal, nor convince that this is not after all a willed refusal to will.

3.5 Conclusion

There are remarkable correspondences between Schopenhauer and Spinoza's doctrines of salvation. Remarkable, in the first place, that each boasts such a doctrine at all: that two thinkers who reject the idea of a divine guiding hand would end their philosophies with an augury of salvation; that the parallelist Spinoza should promise eternity of the mind; that the pessimist Schopenhauer could aspire to bliss. In each case, salvation represents the highest virtue, the greatest freedom and the most blessed state we can hope for and is a function of knowledge – specifically, an understanding of the nature of reality and our place within it. It is here that Schopenhauer's pessimism makes a difference. While Spinozan blessedness is rarely attained, it can be achieved by our own good offices, whereas the knowledge from which Schopenhauerian salvation proceeds comes from without, similarly to Christian grace. In another way, Schopenhauer's version is characteristically pessimistic too: where Spinozan blessedness constitutes a fulfilment of the self, Schopenhauer's is a denial of and escape from it. For both philosophers metaphysical conundrums arise which challenge the coherence of their accounts. The possibility of immortality is difficult to

[653] Janaway, *Schopenhauer*, 115.
[654] Janaway, *Schopenhauer*, 115.

make real sense of in each case, and for Schopenhauer the hypotheses of the abolition of will and the appearance of freedom are equally puzzling. Schopenhauer calls salvation the transcendental change; perhaps we must conclude that the attempt to earth a transcendental element – in particular, freedom for Schopenhauer and eternity for Spinoza – in the natural systems which are Spinoza's reality and Schopenhauer's phenomenal realm threatens the coherence of their philosophies.

Conclusion

1. FINDINGS

I would like to finish by briefly recapitulating the argument of each chapter in turn, drawing out the major conclusions derived from them. I will then offer a number of more general findings regarding Schopenhauer's Spinozism and the interpretation of his philosophy. Finally, I will indicate some directions for future work suggested by the foregoing.

In the first chapter I maintained that Schopenhauer and Spinoza shared a metaphysical position which they nonetheless reached by different routes. I argued that each offered a version of what I called the 'embedded-self' thesis, according to which the self is embodied and integrated into nature, but did so without appealing to materialism. I suggested that, in each case, this theory of the self formed a response to the standard Cartesian model, over which it boasted several advantages. I noted that Schopenhauer subscribed to this thesis in spite of his Kantian transcendental idealism, and that investigating this fact further led to interesting conclusions concerning Schopenhauer's philosophical method. In particular, I proposed that the re-emergence of metaphysics was better understood as sanctioned by Schopenhauer's own brand of empiricism than any return to Spinozan rationalism on his part.

Their adoption of the embedded-self thesis left Schopenhauer and Spinoza with a shared problem which I investigated in chapter two. Each, I argued, owed us an explanation of how individuals and types of beings were to be distinguished from one another – and I concluded that their respective solutions had similar, bipartite structures. Individuation within the phenomenal realm is easily explained, for Schopenhauer, but for individuals to be more than merely illusory they need to be identified in a way that transcends the veil of maya. This Schopenhauer achieved by reference to the Platonic Ideas, and I examined a number of interpretive difficulties concerning the philosophical coherence of these Ideas, their supposedly *ad hoc* nature and whether they should be read as fulfilling a metaphysical or an epistemological function. I interpreted Spinoza as offering a physical account of individuation by reference to motion and rest and a metaphysical account in virtue of formal essences. Spinozan essences should be viewed, in my judgement, as abstract and infinite but

particular, relating to finite modes through a special kind of causality. Analysing Schopenhauer's Ideas along the same lines, I came to the conclusion that they are best understood as abstract universals which exist *in* phenomena, as their essential natures, but also have a degree of independence from them.

The Platonic Ideas – in particular, the human intelligible character – play a crucial role in Schopenhauer's ethical philosophy. A person's moral nature is dictated by her intelligible character, which is free and thus allows her to be held morally responsible. In chapter three I argued that Schopenhauer's account of the intelligible character lacks cogency and so threatens the coherence of his ethics *per se* – I highlighted problems, too, with his motivational pluralism and his insistence on compassion as the sole mark of morality. Instead, a defender of Schopenhauer would do well to re-examine the resources his philosophy offers for an ethics of self-fulfilment within determinism, which would mirror Spinoza's model of the possibility of freedom and flourishing through knowledge.

It is above all Schopenhauer's pessimism regarding epistemology which takes his ethics so far from that of the *Ethics*, and something similar is at play in the case of salvation. I started my final chapter by showing *that* each thinker offers an account of blessedness or salvation and outlining the substantial similarities between these accounts. I suggested that the main differences concerned the attainability of salvation and its consequences for the self. I diagnosed these differences as depending on Schopenhauer's epistemological and metaphysical pessimisms respectively. Finally, I argued that the attempt to make sense of Schopenhauer's doctrine of salvation – particularly as regards immortality, freedom and the abolition of the will – raised questions about how the relationship between self and will in Schopenhauer's philosophy should best be understood.

2. SCHOPENHAUER'S SPINOZISM

The relationship between Schopenhauer and Spinoza played a slightly different role in each chapter. As regards the embedded self, we saw that Spinoza's philosophy really did stand as a precursor to Schopenhauer's, offering a similar alternative to Cartesianism a century and a half earlier. Of course, the most significant intervention between these dates as far as Schopenhauer's thought was concerned was the emergence of transcendental philosophy. Schopenhauer's Kantianism makes the

similarities between his account of the self and that of Spinoza all the more intriguing, and provokes questions, as detailed above, about the philosophical methodology which justifies his rehabilitation of metaphysics.

In the second chapter parallels between Schopenhauer and Spinoza again became apparent, regarding both the structure and to some extent the content of their theories of individuation. The extensive scholarship examining Spinozan essences provided a useful resource in analysing an aspect of Schopenhauer's thought which has often been dismissed and in attempting to construct a workable rendering of his Platonic Ideas.

Chapter three considered the branch of philosophy – ethics – within which Schopenhauer most explicitly rejects Spinozism, decrying its optimism, egoism and moral relativism. Nonetheless the two philosophers encountered a similar task – producing an ethics compatible with determinism – and could have offered similar solutions. The main thing preventing this, I argued, was Schopenhauer's epistemological pessimism: his conviction that the kind of knowledge which makes a moral difference is innate and unteachable.

With the theory of salvation it was again a case of uncovering real and perhaps surprising parallels between the versions proposed by the two philosophers. Further examination, however, revealed consequential differences between the two models. I concluded that Schopenhauer would dismiss Spinoza's faith in the possibility and power of acquiring knowledge as naively optimistic while Spinoza would regard Schopenhauer's characterisation of the will as not merely pessimistic but superstitious. Both, in my view, get into difficulties with the encroachment of a transcendent element on a naturalistic system – in Spinoza's case, with the doctrine of the eternity of the mind; in Schopenhauer's, with the mooted appearance of freedom in the phenomenal realm

There are then, as we have seen, extensive and meaningful commonalities between the two philosophies. Schopenhauer and Spinoza share an account of the self and its relation to nature which offers a genuine alternative – to Descartes' model in particular. Their two-level explanations of individuation bear comparison and each highlights the capacity knowledge has to change us within a deterministic structure, as well as the ethical importance of understanding our place in reality. Finally, each philosophical system culminates in a vision of blessedness or salvation featuring

profound metaphysical insight, joy and the freedom from suffering and arguably too a promise of immortality.

There are also, of course, significant divergences. Most pressingly, the two thinkers operate according to different methodologies. I hope to have cast just a little more light on these and to have modified to some extent the way they are typically understood. For instance, I have argued – following Paul Guyer – that Schopenhauer could be read as a more enthusiastic empiricist than Kant and I have suggested that Spinoza's realism can be called into question.[655] Connectedly, I would argue that the seeming metaphysical chasm between Spinoza's immanent substance and Schopenhauer's noumenal will need not be seen as *quite* so gaping. For instance, Spinoza's account of the eternal essences may constitute a challenge to the picture of his philosophy as unremittingly naturalistic. Equally, if we accept that Schopenhauer's negative valuation of the malevolent will finds insufficient warrant, it becomes more plausible to read him as proposing a combination of monism and dynamism much closer to Spinoza's own model.

3. INTERPRETING SCHOPENHAUER

Studying Schopenhauer's Spinozism has provided an opportunity to confront and revise certain truisms concerning his philosophy. In particular, chapter one re-examined Schopenhauer's methodology and chapter two investigated the allegations of metaphysical extravagance and incoherence made against his version of the Platonic Ideas. The supposed impossibility of a Schopenhauerian practical ethics was considered anew in chapter three while chapter four indicated that even Schopenhauer's pessimism could to a certain extent be called into question in the light of his doctrine of salvation.

I have argued that Spinoza's philosophy and the significant body of scholarship it has inspired offer resources of great value in coming to understand or interpret aspects of Schopenhauer's thought. In some cases, I have borrowed categories and concepts from the Spinoza literature in an attempt to analyse

[655] His division between the eternal perspective characteristic of the third kind of knowledge and the inadequate understanding which individuates according to spatio-temporal location seems to bring him closer to Schopenhauer's own idealist position. Indeed Walter Brann mentions that Schopenhauer himself sometimes suggested Spinoza could be read as a transcendental idealist who made his own phenomenon/thing-in-itself distinction. Brann, 'Schopenhauer and Spinoza', 188-9.

Schopenhauerian theories in a new way. In others, I have suggested that emphasising Schopenhauer's Spinozism (in contrast to his Kantianism, say) serves to reveal underplayed elements of his philosophy.

Finally, I would affirm that assessing Schopenhauer's thought through the lens of his Spinozism has helped to indicate or underscore problematic areas of his system. For instance, Schopenhauer's difficulty explaining the status of intelligible characters as individuated acts of will came into focus as a result of his resistance to Spinozan ethics. Similarly, his comparatively pessimistic model of salvation was seen to depend on an unsatisfying account of the fate of both world and self upon the complete denial of will.

4. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

I believe these conclusions highlight further work that could be usefully undertaken both in Schopenhauer studies and more broadly. As regards the understanding of Schopenhauer's philosophy in its own right, particular issues about its content have emerged. I would suggest, for instance, that more needs to be done to produce a fully satisfactory analysis of his take on the Platonic Ideas. In my view, they should not be written off as *ad hoc*, incoherent metaphysical extravagances until a more careful – and perhaps more philosophically technical – examination has been performed. On the other hand, there may well be elements of Schopenhauer's thought which *should* be abandoned. It may be, for example, that the goal of explaining the abolition of the will and its blissful aftermath in a way that is consistent and coherent is ultimately unattainable.

I would argue, too, that a case has emerged for a reassessment of Schopenhauer's relation to various philosophical traditions. I have endorsed Guyer's suggestion that one of the ways in which Schopenhauer deviates from Kantianism is in his recognition of additional sources of knowledge. If Schopenhauer is a transcendental philosopher he is one whose method is complicated by a customised empiricism – this warrants further study. I suspect it may be, too, that a reading of Schopenhauer which reinserted him – protesting – into the German Idealist tradition would have a fair prospect of taking fuller account of his Spinozism.

This in turn suggests future endeavours of more general interest. It seems to me that a thorough examination of Schopenhauer's Spinozism would contribute to a

number of wider philosophical projects. While it has not been the primary aim of this thesis to try to prove the extent of his Spinozism or to show that Schopenhauer is, say, more truly a Spinozist than a Kantian, this might be something interesting to explore. In part, of course, it would make for a more adequate understanding of Schopenhauer's own philosophy, but I would argue, too, that the possibility of a post-Kantian Spinozism is interesting from many points of view. It would therefore be of considerable value to assess the extent to which *Schopenhauer* managed to reconcile the two philosophies and what difficulties were exposed. In particular, this might form part of investigations into the prospects of post-Kantian metaphysics or a rapprochement between transcendental philosophy and naturalism. Both of these are areas of contemporary academic interest and each finds an instance in Schopenhauer's Spinozism.

Bibliography

Allison, H. *Benedict de Spinoza: An Introduction*. Revised Edition. New Haven: Yale, 1987.

Ameriks, K. *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Arp, R. 'Re-thinking Hobbes's Materialistic and Mechanistic Projects', *Hobbes Studies* 15, no. 1 (2002): 3-31.

Atwell, J. E. 'Doers and their Deeds: Schopenhauer on Human Agency' in ed. Eric Von Der Luft, *Schopenhauer: New Essays in Honor of his 200th Birthday*, Lewiston N.Y.: Mellen, 1988: 1-23.

Atwell, J.E. *Schopenhauer on the Character of the World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Barbone, S. 'What Counts as an Individual for Spinoza' in eds. Olli Koistinen and John Biro, *Spinoza: Metaphysical Themes.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002: 89-112.

Beiser, F. *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism.* Boston: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Bennett, J. *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics.* Indianapolis: Hackett, 1984.

—. 'Spinoza's metaphysics' in ed. Don Garrett, *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996: 61–88.

Brann, H. 'Schopenhauer and Spinoza', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (1972): 181-196.

Cartwright, D. E. ‘Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche on the Morality of Pity’, Journal of the History of Ideas 45, no. 1 (1984): 83-98.

—. ‘Schopenhauer’s Compassion and Nietzsche’s Pity’, *Schopenhauer Jahrbuch*, 69 Band (1988): 557-567.

—. ‘Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers: The Metaphysics of Mitleid’ in ed. Alex Neill and Christopher Janaway, *Better Consciousness: Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value.* Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2009: 138-156.

Chansky, J. ‘Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas: a Groundwork for an Aesthetic Metaphysics’ in ed. Eric Von Der Luft, *Schopenhauer, New Essays in Honour of His 200th Birthday.* Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988: 67-81.

Cottingham, J. *Descartes* Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.

Curley, E. *Behind the Geometrical Method: A Reading of Spinoza’s Ethics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

—. *A Spinoza Reader*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Deleuze, G. *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy.* trans. Hurley, R. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988.

—. *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza.* trans. Joughin, M. New York: Zone Books, 1997.

Descartes, R. *Meditations on First Philosophy* ed. John Cottingham. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Duncan, Stewart. ‘Hobbes’s Materialism in the Early 1640s’, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 13, no. 3 (2005): 437-448.

Egyed, B. ‘Spinoza, Schopenhauer and the Standpoint of Affirmation’ *PhaenEx 2*, no.1 (2007): 110-131.

Fox, M. *Schopenhauer: His Philosophical Achievement.* Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980.

Fox, M. “Schopenhauer on Death, Suicide and Self-Renunciation,” in ed. Michael Fox, *Schopenhauer: His Philosophical Achievement.* Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980: 147-170.

Fricker, M. and Jennifer Hornsby. *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Gardner, S. *Routledge Guidebook to Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason.* Abingdon: Routledge, 1999.

Garrett, D. `Spinoza’s Theory of Metaphysical Individuation` in eds. Jorge Gracia and Kenneth Barber, *Individuation in Early Modern Philosophy*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994: 73-101.

—. *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

—. ‘Spinoza’s Ethical Theory’ in ed. Don Garrett, *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996: 267-314.

—. ‘Spinoza on the Essence of the Human Body and the Part of the Mind That Is Eternal’ in ed. Olli Koistinen, *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's Ethics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009: 284-302.

Gerber, D. and Michael Ayers *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy, Volume 1.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Gracia, J. and Kenneth Barber. *Individuation in Early Modern Philosophy*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

Guyer, P. 'Schopenhauer, Kant, and the Methods of Philosophy' in ed. Christopher Janaway, *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999: 93-173.

Hamlyn, D. W. *Schopenhauer*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.

Hampshire, Stuart. *Spinoza and Spinozism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Hein, H. 'Schopenhauer and Platonic Ideas' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 4, no. 2 (1966): 133-144.

Jacquette, D. *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*. Chesham: Acumen, 2005.

Janaway, C. *Self and World in Schopenhauer's Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

—. *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

—. *Schopenhauer: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

—. 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value' in ed. Alex Neill and Christopher Janaway, *Better Consciousness: Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2009: 1-10.

Jordan, N. 'Schopenhauer's Politics: Ethics, Jurisprudence and the State', in ed. Alex Neill and Christopher Janaway, *Better Consciousness: Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value.* Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2009: 171-188.

Kant, I. *Critique of Pure Reason,* ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Koistinen, O. and John Biro. *Spinoza: Metaphysical Themes.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Koistinen, O. *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's Ethics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Koβler, M. 'Life is but a Mirror: On the Connection between Ethics, Metaphysics and Character in Schopenhauer' in ed. Alex Neill and Christopher Janaway, *Better Consciousness: Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value.* Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2009: 77-97.

Lloyd, G. *Part of Nature: Self-Knowledge in Spinoza's* Ethics. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994.

—. *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Spinoza and the Ethics*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2005.

Lloyd, G. and Moira Gatens 'The Power of Spinoza: Feminist Conjunctions', interview conducted by Susan James, *Women's Philosophy Review*: no. 19 (Autumn 1998).

Lord, B. *Spinoza's Ethics.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.

Martin, C. 'The Framework of Essences in Spinoza's Ethics', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 16, no. 3 (2008): 489-509.

Magee, B. *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1983.

Maidan, M. 'Schopenhauer on Altruism and Morality', *Schopenhauer Jahrbuch,* 69 Band (1988): 265-272.

Matheron, A. *Individual and Community in Spinoza.* Paris: Minuit,1987.

Melamed, Y. Y. ‘Acosmism or Weak individuals?: Hegel, Spinoza, and the Reality of the Finite’ *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 48, no. 1 (2010): 77-92.

Nadler, S. ‘Doctrines of Explanation in Late Scholasticism and in the Mechanical Philosophy’, in eds. Daniel Gerber and Michael Ayers *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy, Volume 1.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998: 513-552.

—. *Spinoza’s Ethics: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Neeley, G. S. ‘Schopenhauer and the Platonic Ideas: A Reconsideration’ *Idealistic Studies* 30, no. 2. (2000): 121-148.

Negri, A. *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Neill, A and Christopher Janaway, *Better Consciousness: Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value.* Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2009.

O’Shaughnessy, Brian. *The Will: A Dual Aspect Theory*. 2 Vol. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Reginster, B. ‘Knowledge and Selflessness’ in ed. Alex Neill and Christopher Janaway, *Better Consciousness: Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value.* Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2009: 98-119.

Rice, L. C. ‘Spinoza On Individuation’ *The Monist* 55, no. 4 (1971): 640-59.

Saw, R. L. ‘Personal Identity in Spinoza’ *Inquiry* 12, no 1, (1969): 1-14.

Scheman, N. ‘Feminism in philosophy of mind: Against physicalism’, in ed. Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000: 49-67.

Schopenhauer, A. *The World as Will and Representation Volume I* trans. Eric F.J. Payne. Toronto: Dover, 1969.

—. *The World as Will and Representation Volume II* trans. Eric F.J. Payne. Toronto: Dover, 1966.

—. *On the Basis of Morality,* trans. Eric F. J. Payne. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998.

—. *Prize Essay on the Freedom of the Will, e*d. Gunther Zöller, trans. Eric F. J. Payne. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

—. *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*. New York: Cosimo, 2007.

Shapshay, S. 'Poetic Intuition and the Bounds of Sense: Metaphor and Metonymy in Schopenhauer's Philosophy' in ed. Alex Neill and Christopher Janaway, *Better Consciousness: Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value.* Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2009: 58-76.

Spinoza, B. *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy* with *Metaphysical Thoughts*, ed.Steven Barbone and Lee Rice, trans. Samuel Shirley. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998.

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. `Spinoza's Physical Theory` Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2006, February 22, 2014. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/spinoza-physics/

Taylor, C. *Sources of The Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Viljanen, V. `Field metaphysic, power, and individuation in Spinoza` *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 37, no. 3 (2007): 393-418.

Von Der Luft, E. *Schopenhauer, New Essays in Honour of His 200th Birthday.* Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988.

Ward, T. M. 'Spinoza on the Essences of Modes' *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 19, no. 1, (2011): 19–46

Wartofsky, M. W. 'Nature, number and individuals: Motive and method in Spinoza's philosophy' *Inquiry* 20, no. 1-4 (1977): 457-479.

—. *Models: Representation and the Scientific Understanding*. Boston: Springer, 1979.

Young, J. *Schopenhauer.* Oxford: Routledge, 2005.

—. 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation' in ed. Alex Neill and Christopher Janaway, *Better Consciousness: Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Value.* Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2009: 157-170.

Youpa, A. 'Spinoza's Theory of the Good, in ed. Olli Koistinen, *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's Ethics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009: 242-257.

Zöller, G. 'Schopenhauer on the Self', in ed. Christopher Janaway, *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999: 18-43.

—. 'German Realism: the Self-Limitation of Idealist Thinking in Fichte, Schelling, and Schopenhauer' in ed. Karl Ameriks. *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000: 200-218.