

On the Role of Consciousness in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's Contentions

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1.1 – Introduction: Schopenhauer & Nietzsche.

Schopenhauer presents us with a fascinating look into the power of the unconscious. However, the leading theme in his discussion, as detailed in *The World as Will and Representation*, is freedom from this unconscious. Nietzsche, heavily influenced by Schopenhauer, recognizes the great importance of the unconscious mind. However, he disagrees with Schopenhauer's evaluation (that freedom from the unconscious is desirable), and believes that such emancipation is impossible—Nietzsche does not believe consciousness can be severed from the unconscious drives.

Sections 2 & 3 of this essay will discuss Schopenhauer's philosophy, beginning with a brief discussion of the similarities and differences between Schopenhauer's and Kant's systems, and leading to Schopenhauer's ultimate description of how consciousness (or the intellect) can free itself from the drives. According to Schopenhauer, the drives (and willing in general) are the cause of aimless suffering. Because of this, it would be better to cut off and deny the drives, so as to free ourselves from the deceptive grasp of their endless striving. The 3rd section of the essay begins by describing how Schopenhauer conceives of the role of consciousness in the normal individual, that is, how he describes the destined, normal role of consciousness according to its design. Following this description, he leads us into a discussion of the *exceptional* role of consciousness, that is, the role of consciousness in a man who has been endowed with an overabundance of consciousness—the genius.

Schopenhauer combines his concepts in a novel and captivating way by realizing the bodily basis of both our drives *and* of our mind. He argues that the intellect belongs to the brain and that the drives belong to the rest of our body (e.g. our reproductive drive belongs to our genitals). This bodily basis follows interestingly from his description of the differences between the normal man and the man of genius.

To conclude Schopenhauer's description in section 3, this essay will discuss the disbalance between consciousness and the drives that results in the emancipation of the former from the latter. The following section, section 4, presents Nietzsche's four main arguments (*i-iv*) against Schopenhauer's conclusions about the normal and exceptional roles of consciousness, and against the emancipation from the drives that Schopenhauer describes as advantageous.

2.1 – Kant & Schopenhauer: the thing-in-itself, the will-to-life, and the drives.

Kant distinguished between the appearance of the world and the essence of the world. He utilized the term "phenomena" to stand for appearance, and thing-in-itself (or noumenon) to stand for the underlying essence of the world (which is inaccessible to us). Schopenhauer retained Kant's distinction but interposed the terms "representation" for appearance, and "will" for the thing-in-itself or the essence of the world.

While Kant believed that we could not have direct access to the thing-in-itself, Schopenhauer believed that we *could* access the will (the thing-in-itself) through experiencing our own willed bodily movements. To help elucidate this point, Schopenhauer distinguished between the phenomenal experience of our body and the willed, in-itself, experience of our body. Consciousness first experiences our body and the world as phenomena or representation; then, "the body occurs in consciousness in quite another way, *toto genere* different, that is denoted by the word *will*. It is just this double knowledge of our own body which gives us information about that body itself, about its action and movement following on motives, as well as about its suffering through outside impressions, in a word, about what it is, not as representation, but as something over and above this, and hence what it is *in itself*" (WWR I: 103).

According to Schopenhauer, willed bodily actions reveal the underlying will (or striving) that determines our thoughts and our actions. The same underlying will (or will-to-life) that lies beneath all reality can be manifest in different forms: e.g. as the slow growth of inanimate crystals, the particular

spin of elemental particles, or as the many drives in humans. For practical purposes, when discussing human striving in this essay, the underlying *will* will be called the individual's *drives*.

3.1 – *Consciousness: its destined servitude (in the practical man)*.

According to Schopenhauer, the *blind will* developed perception to serve in its willing, to gain the perceptual capacities¹ to guide the will to its temporary satisfaction. In a similar way, according to him, the intellect or consciousness of man was developed to serve the drives². In the normal or practical individual, consciousness plays a servile role in obedience to the drives.

Although consciousness in the normal individual is designed to calculate and represent the world, according to Schopenhauer, this representation is not without its distortion. The normal individual's consciousness does not perceive the world *as it is* — the drives distort the appearance of the world in order to attain their end; that is, each drive “twists, colours, and distorts [...] the original perception of things” in order to guide the body toward the object of their satisfaction (WWR II: 373). The world is meaningless and uninteresting, but the drives coat the represented world with meaning to make it interesting, and this is the mechanism by which the drives guide consciousness to the objects of their satisfaction.

Schopenhauer gives a good example of how the reproductive drive can distort our perception in order to attain its reproductive aim in a chapter titled, “On the Metaphysics of Sexual Love” (WWR II: 531-67)³. According to him, “in all sexual love, instinct holds the reins, and creates illusions, since for nature the interest of the species takes precedence over all others” (WWR II: 566). Love is just a delusion of the individual; what is operating beneath this delusion is the reproductive drive that manipulates individual into its service. The exemplary situation is as follows: a man perceives a

1 WWR I: 275: “The will, considered purely in itself, is devoid of knowledge, and is only a blind, irresistible urge, as we see it appear in inorganic and vegetable nature and in their laws, and also in the vegetative part of our own life. Through the addition of the world as representation, developed for its service, the will obtains knowledge of its own willing”.

2 WWR I: 176: “Thus, originally and by its nature, knowledge is completely the servant of the will”.

3 cf. Katsafanas 2009: 19-21.

woman as his object of love, as the most delightful perception. When he perceives her, all her wonderful features are exaggerated, her imperfections recede, and in totality, her form is perceived as the embodiment of his love toward her. Beneath all of these distortions, the reproductive drive works to produce this distorted infatuation in consciousness. The conscious delusion guides the individual to the drive's aim: sexual reproduction.

Schopenhauer also gives an example of how this distortion works with the reflective perception motives. An individual can believe he is operating on a selfish motive when the resultant action is in fact altruistic:

[N]ature can attain her end only by implanting in the individual a certain *delusion*, and by virtue of this, that which in truth is merely a good thing for the species seems to him to be a good thing for himself, so that he serves the species, whereas he is under the delusion that he is serving himself (WWR II: 538).

A motive may appear to serve the self-interest of an individual when it has only been made to appear this way by the underlying drive to which the motive corresponds. The action that results from this selfish motive may actually be an unselfish, altruistic action that serves the interest of the species⁴.

As demonstrated, Schopenhauer claims that the intellect or consciousness of the normal individual serves his drives. These drives manifest their influence by producing meaningful motives and perceptual distortions that guide the individual toward the drives' aims⁵. In addition, these drives keep the individual busy and too distracted to realize the truth: that their striving is insatiable. Schopenhauer writes, “[N]owhere is there a goal, nowhere a final satisfaction, nowhere a point of rest” (WWR I: 309).

No attained object of willing can give a satisfaction that lasts and no longer declines; but it is always like the alms thrown to a beggar, which relieves him today so that his

4 WWR II: 541: “All this throws light once more on the instincts and mechanical tendencies of animals. These are also undoubtedly involved in a kind of delusion that deceives them with the prospect of their own pleasure, whereas they work so laboriously and with self-denial for the species. Thus the bird builds its nest; the insect looks for the only suitable place for its eggs, or even hunts for prey which, unsuitable for its own consumption, must be laid beside the eggs as food for the future larvae; the bee, the wasp, the ant, attend to the work of their ingenious structures, and their highly complicated economy. They are all undoubtedly guided by a delusion that conceals the service of the species under the mask of an egotistical end”.

5 WWR II: 376: “By its destiny, the intellect is merely the medium of motives; and so it apprehends originally in things nothing but their relations to the will”.

misery may be prolonged till tomorrow. [...] [W]e never obtain lasting happiness or peace (WWR I: 196).

As Schopenhauer warns us, a drive's satisfaction is usually only temporary; the drive will unyieldingly return. All of this repetitious striving can only lead to imaginary conclusions, delusional ends, and fabricated meaning that will never reach any actual conclusion.

3.2 – *Consciousness: in the genius.*

“The merely practical man [...] uses his intellect for that for which nature destined it, namely for comprehending the relations of things partly to one another, partly to the will of the knowing individual. The genius, on the other hand, uses his intellect contrary to its destiny, for comprehending the objective nature of things” (WWR II: 388). As Schopenhauer describes, the practical man uses consciousness as it was designed: in the service of the drives; however, the genius, equipped with an overabundance of intellect, is able to gear this excess toward the comprehension of reality *as it is*⁶.

A normal consciousness is only strong enough to function in service of the drives:

Therefore an entirely pure and objective picture of things is not reached in the normal mind, because its power of perception at once becomes tired and inactive, as soon as this is not spurred on and set in motion by the will. For it has not enough energy to apprehend the world purely objectively from its own elasticity and *without a purpose* (WWR II: 377).

The genius, on the other hand, is endowed with an abnormally large portion of intellect, a consciousness strong enough to pass over into the study of the world in-itself. In Schopenhauer's words, “[G]enius consists in the knowing faculty having received a considerably more powerful development than is required by the *service of the will*, for which alone it originally came into being. [...] Genius, therefore, consists in an abnormal excess of intellect which can find its use only by being employed on the universal of existence. In this way it then applies itself to the service of the whole human race, just as does the normal intellect to that of the individual” (WWR II: 377). Thus, the role

⁶ WWR I: 186: “For genius to appear in an individual, it is as if a measure of the power of knowledge must have fallen to his lot far exceeding that required for the service of an individual will; and this superfluity of knowledge having become free, now becomes the subject purified of will, the clear mirror of the inner nature of the world”.

of consciousness in the genius occasionally⁷ ascends from the role of serving the drives to that of perceiving the world in-itself—this is facilitated by the abundance of intellect in genius.

3.3 – *Consciousness: the intellect as the brain, the will as the genitals.*

Schopenhauer equalizes the power of the intellect and its function to the organic brain, and the will's strongest drive⁸ to the human reproductive organs: "For intellect and brain are one; and in just the same way, the genital system is one with the most vehement of all desires" (WWR II: 394). Thus, according to Schopenhauer, the *great* intellect of the genius implicates that he has a *large* brain. Schopenhauer notes this difference in the brains of Byron and Cuvier: two geniuses he admires. "The report of the post-mortem examination on the body of Byron, however, states that in his case the white matter was in unusually large proportion to the grey, and that his brain weighed six pounds. Cuvier's brain weighed five pounds; the normal weight is three" (WWR II: 392).

Schopenhauer continues this line of thought by noting that a child's brain is disproportionately large compared to the brain-body proportions of the normal adult. He correlates this physical observation (of the disproportionately large brain in children) to the observation that children possess such eager minds, noting that: "in childhood our whole existence lies much more in knowing than in willing" (WWR II: 394). The child isn't dominated by the drives as much as the adult because his drives, especially those of his reproductive system, are not as fully developed. This endowment of a greater intellect, a stronger consciousness with respect to the influence of the bodily drives, leads him to confer that, "every child is to a certain extent a genius, and every genius to a certain extent a child" (WWR II: 395).

7 WWR I: 188: "Now this is by no means the case at every moment of their lives, for the great though spontaneous exertion required for the will-free comprehension of the Ideas necessarily relaxes again, and there are long intervals during which men of genius stand in very much the same position as ordinary persons, both as regards merits and defects. On this account, the action of genius has always been regarded as an inspiration, as indeed the name itself indicates, as action of a superhuman being different from the individual himself, which takes possession of him only periodic.

8 WWR I: 329: "The sexual impulse is proved to be the decided and strongest affirmation of life by the fact that for man in the natural state, as for the animal, it is his life's final end and highest goal"

However, Schopenhauer notes, as puberty strikes and the child's development continues into adolescence and adulthood, the drives begin to gain the upper-hand as the rest of the body grows much more rapidly than the brain. "In this way the sexual impulse appears with puberty, and the will gradually gains the upper hand" (WWR II: 395). The child's eagerness to learn about the world soon becomes transformed into the adolescent's preoccupation with sexuality. In the normal, developing individual, consciousness is soon pushed into the servitude of the enlarging drives.

This interplay and struggle between the brain and the genitals, between pure knowledge and sexuality, between the intellect and delusions, between freedom and servitude, leads Schopenhauer to conclude that the emancipation from the will lies in the triumph of consciousness over the drives in the exceptional individual. Although the practical role of consciousness lies in servitude to the drives, the exceptionally endowed intellect has the opportunity to transcend this willing and emancipate himself from the suffering caused by this endless striving.

As he concludes, "By reason of all this, the genitals are the real *focus* of the will, and are therefore the opposite pole to the brain, the representative of knowledge[...]. The genitals are the life-preserving principle assuring to time endless life. [...] On the other hand, knowledge affords the possibility of the suppression of willing, of salvation through freedom, of overcoming and annihilating the world" (WWR I: 330).

3.4 – Consciousness: the emancipation from its destined servitude.

Once again, according to Schopenhauer, the presence of genius is accidental in two ways: it is a rare, accidental occurrence, and it gives consciousness a new role that was not intended by the drives (in the creation of consciousness). He says, "In accordance with the description we have given of the true nature of genius, it is contrary to nature in so far as it consists in the intellect, whose real destiny is the service of the will, emancipating itself from that service in order to be active on its own account. Accordingly, genius is an intellect that has become unfaithful to its destiny" (WWR II: 386).

According to him, this accidental result, that is, the overbearing consciousness of the genius, allows the genius to occasionally emancipate himself from drives (and from the motives, delusions, and distortions that these drives produce in consciousness). When he emancipates himself, the genius is able to perceive and understand how the world works objectively. For example, in this emancipated understanding, the genius might no longer be drawn toward a reproductive mate by delusions of love. Instead, he may realize that he is only serving a powerful drive in pursuing these delusions and that he can now avoid the compulsion caused by the drive with his objective knowledge. By realizing how the drives work and how they produce delusions, the genius is able to reflect on the workings of his motives, with indifference, and avoid being misled⁹.

Even more strongly, Schopenhauer claims that, by perceiving reality *as it is*, the genius is able to momentarily *transcend* the underlying will altogether—he alters the role of consciousness from its destined role, servitude of the drives, to an emancipating role through the *denial*¹⁰ of the will from the perception of reality *as it is*.¹¹ This emphasis on perception is important for Schopenhauer as he distinguishes discursive, dialectical, and mathematical intellects¹² from the more rare genius that relies on his perceptual capacities. As he emphasizes, “the true nature of genius must lie in the completeness and energy of the knowledge of *perception*” (WWR II: 376)¹³.

9 WWR II: 381: “I take it in the sense here discussed, when Jean-Paul [...] puts the essence of genius in *reflectiveness*”.

10 WWR II: 367: “Apprehension of an Idea, its entry into our consciousness, comes about only by means of a change in us, which might also be regarded as an act of self-denial. To this extent it consists in knowledge turning away entirely from our own will, and thus leaving entirely out of sight the precious pledge entrusted to it, and considering things as though they could never in any way concern the will. For only thus does knowledge become the pure mirror of the objective inner nature of things”.

11 WWR I: 152: “Thus knowledge in general, rational knowledge as well as mere knowledge from perception, proceeds originally from the will itself, belongs to the inner being of the higher grades of the will's objectifications as a mere [...] means for preserving the individual and the species, just like any organ of the body. Therefore, destined originally to serve the will for the achievement of its aims, knowledge remains almost throughout entirely subordinate to its service; this is the case with all animals and almost all men. However, [...] in the case of individual persons, knowledge can withdraw from this subjection, throw off its yoke, and, free from all the aims of the will, exist purely for itself, simply as a clear mirror of the world; and this is the source of art. Finally, [...] we shall see how, if this kind of knowledge reacts on the will, it can bring about the will's self-elimination, in other words, resignation. This is the ultimate goal, and indeed the innermost nature of all virtue and holiness, and is salvation from the world”.

12 WWR I: 178: “[W]e do not let abstract thought, the concepts of reason, take possession of our consciousness, but, instead of all this, devote the whole power of our mind to perception, sink ourselves completely therein, and let our whole consciousness be filled by the calm contemplation of the natural object actually present”.

13 WWR II: 367: “The change in the subject required for this, just because it consists in the elimination of all willing, cannot proceed from the will, and hence cannot be an arbitrary act of will, in other words, cannot rest with us. On the

Schopenhauer emphasizes the importance of perception because he believes that this particular makes obtaining objective knowledge possible—because he believes genius can perceive with indifference:

To explain this somewhat more accurately, I remind the reader that our consciousness has two sides; in part it is consciousness of *our own selves*, which is the *will*, and in part consciousness of *other things*, and as such primary knowledge of the external world *through perception*, apprehension of objects. Now the more one side of the whole consciousness comes to the front, the more does the other withdraw. Accordingly, [as] the consciousness of *other things*, or knowledge of perception, becomes the more perfect, in other words the more objective, the less conscious of ourselves we are during it (WWR II: 367).

In this state of enhanced perception, consciousness “considers things without interest, without subjectivity, purely objectively; it is entirely given up to them in so far as they are merely representations, and not motives” (WWR I: 196). According to Schopenhauer, in this state, consciousness is able to be absorbed entirely in the object and is able to “perceive”¹⁴ the *Idea*¹⁵, that is, the Platonic form of which the perceived object is merely a token of this higher type. This act of enhanced perception, of pure contemplation, is an act of denial of the drives—the drives are altogether ignored by the emancipated consciousness. The importance of this denial is emphasized in Schopenhauer’s praise of the ascetic’s harshness toward his body¹⁶. In realizing that he is a mere, meaningless instrument of his drives and that these acts of pure contemplation release him from the deceptive influence of these drives, the ascetic denies his body in order to weaken the drives and allow

contrary, it springs only from a temporary preponderance of the intellect over the will, or, physiologically considered, from a strong excitation of the brain’s perceptive activity, without any excitation of inclinations or emotions.”

14 The quotation marks around “perceive” indicate that this act of perception is more like an act of contemplation and less like the mere perception of representations. According to Schopenhauer, when our consciousness is filled with the object of perception, “We *lose* ourselves entirely in this object, to use a pregnant expression; in other words, we forget our individuality, our will, and continue to exist only as pure subject, as clear mirror of the object, so that it is as though the object alone existed without anyone to perceive it, and thus we are no longer able to separate the perceiver from the perception, but the two have become one, since the entire consciousness is filled and occupied by a single image of perception” (WWR I: 178-9). As he says, “Idea and thing-in-itself are not for us absolutely one and the same. On the contrary, for us the Idea is only the immediate, and therefore adequate, objectivity of the thing-in-itself, which itself, however is the *will*—the will in so far as it is not yet objectified, has not yet become representation” (WWR I: 174).

15 WWR I: 185: “We can therefore define [the Idea] accurately as *the way of considering things independently of the principle of sufficient reason*, in contrast to the way of considering which proceeds in exact accordance with this principle, and is the way of science and experience”.

16 WWR I: 382: “Just as he mortifies the will itself, so does he mortify its visibility, its objectivity, the body. He nourishes it sparingly, lest its vigorous flourishing and thriving should animate afresh and excite more strongly the will, of which it is the mere expression and mirror”.

consciousness to free itself from their domineering influence.

This state of pure contemplation of the Ideas does not last long; as was previously stated, a genius is only able to amplify his perceptive capacities occasionally. For the most part, the genius is somewhat similar to the normal, practical man in his everyday preoccupations and in his servitude to the drives. These states of pure contemplation that the genius enters are states of infrequent inspiration that, “must always be achieved afresh by constant struggle” (WWR I: 391). However, there are methods by which the intellect can achieve this freedom from the drives more easily.

The ascetic is able to increase the frequency of entering these pure states by weakening the body. If the vicious, drive controlled body is weakened, consciousness can more easily escape its grasp. In other words, by increasing the *relative* strength of consciousness, the ascetic is able attain pure contemplation with greater ease.

And even to a second degree, the skilled ascetic can use the suffering and striving produced by the drives to further ease his emancipation. A skilled ascetic no longer perceives striving and suffering as a *distraction* from attaining these pure states; on the other hand, he is able to use suffering as propulsion to enter into these states of detachment¹⁷. Toward this end of self-denial, Schopenhauer praises the asceticism professed in Christianity. He highlights Christianity's description of the world as a terrible mess of meaningless vices¹⁸ that must be denied.

On the one hand, the child and the genius are able to free themselves from the drives because their enlarged brain endows them with the possibility of indifferent perception. On the other hand, the ascetic is able to free himself from the drives by weakening them through the denial of his body. The ascetic genius, most strongly, is able to increase the relative strength of his intellect, foremost, because he has been endowed with a disproportionately large brain, and secondly, because his striving body has

17 WWR I: 392: “Now, if we see this practised by persons who have already attained to denial of the will, in order that they may keep to it, then suffering in general, as it is inflicted by fate, is also a second way of attaining to that denial”.

18 WWR I: 326: “Let no one imagine that the Christian teaching is favourable to optimism; on the contrary, in the Gospels world and evil are used almost as synonymous expressions” and cf. pages 580 and 584-5 of the chapter “On the Vanity and Suffering of Life” (WWR II: 573-88).

been weakened. In the ascetic genius, consciousness is most apt at emancipation from the meaningless, eternal striving of the world.

To recapitulate, Schopenhauer distinguishes between the normal role and the exceptional role of consciousness. The normal role, as it appears in the practical man (and to which end consciousness arose), is toward the servitude of his drives. The exceptional and accidental role, as it appears in the man of genius, is toward the emancipation from this servitude, freedom from the drives. Transcendence of the will arises through the focusing of consciousness toward objective perception and a contemplation of the forms (the Ideas). A relatively enlarged brain and comparatively weakened drives facilitate this transcendence.

4.1 – Nietzsche against Schopenhauer.

Nietzsche disagrees with Schopenhauer's prescription to transcend the drives. He argues that the sort of emancipation Schopenhauer discusses is impossible. For Nietzsche, emancipation entails the realization of your own drives and freedom from any forms of control that inhibit them. Nietzsche is toward the amplification of the drives in his higher individual rather than a reduction and denial of them. Nietzsche's own call is for emancipation from a particular type of life and from the morality that corresponds to that type of life. However, Nietzsche's positive account of consciousness will be argued in my following essay. To conclude this essay, I will detail and compare how Nietzsche's description of consciousness contrasts Schopenhauer's description and how Nietzsche disagrees with the picture that has been presented by Schopenhauer.

Nietzsche describes several aspects of consciousness that run counter to the description provided by Schopenhauer. Nietzsche believes (i) that thinking is only ever a relation among drives, (ii) that any seemingly reflective activity (one in which consciousness contemplates which motives to act upon) is actually controlled by a hidden drive and not by consciousness itself (cf. Katsafanas 2009: 36-38), (iii) that knowledge is perspectival (and that we cannot hope to attain the sort of objective

knowledge Schopenhauer describes in the emancipated consciousness), and (iv) that consciousness only ever presents us with a *simplification* of the world (and never with an understanding of objective reality *as it is*).

[i] As previously described, Schopenhauer believes that the more conscious we become of the represented world, the less conscious we become of ourselves¹⁹, and that this implies that consciousness can operate independently of the drives (when it has moved them outside of awareness). According to Nietzsche, however, whether or not we are aware of the drives, they are *always* operating in the background. Even more strongly, Nietzsche claims that any sort of thinking can only take place with drives. He writes that, “thinking is only a relation between these drives” (BGE 36). Nietzsche strongly contests the view that consciousness, and conscious thinking, can occur independently of the drives. In a note from 1887-88, he states that there is a misunderstanding between drives and consciousness “as if the latter were an independent entity and not rather a system of relations between various passions and desires; and as if every passion [drive] did not possess its quantum of reason—” (WP 387; cf. Z I: “On the Despisers of the Body”).

Schopenhauer certainly involves the role of the unconscious heavily in his philosophy—he introduces the drives and their influence on conscious thought—but he does not consider the possibility that thought itself could belong, inextricably, to this realm of the unconscious. Nietzsche, on the other hand, describes this *subterranean* process of thinking in *The Gay Science*:

Before knowledge is possible, each of these impulses [each drive] must first have presented its one-sided view of the thing or event; then comes the fight between these one-sided views, and occasionally out of it a mean, an appeasement, [and when, for example, three drives were struggling] a concession to all three sides [...]. Since only the ultimate reconciliation scenes and final accounts of this long process rise to

19 WWR II: 367: “To explain this somewhat more accurately, I remind the reader that our consciousness has two sides; in part it is consciousness of *our own selves*, which is the *will*, and in part consciousness of *other things*, and as such primary knowledge of the external world *through perception*, apprehension of objects. Now the more one side of the whole consciousness comes to the front, the more does the other withdraw. Accordingly, [as] the consciousness of *other things*, or knowledge of perception, becomes the more perfect, in other words the more objective, the less conscious of ourselves we are during it”.

consciousness, we suppose that *intelligere* must be something conciliatory, just, and good, something essentially opposed to the instincts, when in fact *it is only a certain behaviour of the drives towards one another*. For the longest time, conscious thought was considered thought itself; only now does the truth dawn on us that by far the greatest part of our mind's activity proceeds unconscious and unfelt (GS 333).

Not only is conscious-thought merely the result of a relation between drives, but much of our thinking occurs pre-consciously, that is, without ever rising to the surface of consciousness²⁰. Alas, because of this meagerness, Nietzsche describes consciousness as a narrow chamber²¹—and a surface²²—that is always in service of the drives.

[ii] Schopenhauer believes that by realizing how the drives work and how they produce delusions, the genius is able to *reflect* on the workings of his motives and avoid being misled into action. He says, “I take it in the sense here discussed, when Jean-Paul [...] puts the essence of genius in *reflectiveness*” (WWR II: 381). Schopenhauer believes that the drives can be mastered and denied in acts of indifferent reflection. Nietzsche *also* believes that drives can be combated and mastered; however, not through the process described by Schopenhauer. In a passage from *Daybreak*, Nietzsche *does* describe “six essentially different methods of combating the vehemence of a drive” (D 109). Despite this, Nietzsche does not believe that the intellect is free to choose to combat the drives, as this combat is only a result of competition between drives. He explains, (ii)

[*T*]hat one *desires* to combat the vehemence of a drive at all, however, does not stand within our power; nor does the choice of any particular method; nor does the success or failure of this method. What is clearly the case is that in this entire procedure our intellect is only the blind instrument of *another drive* which is a *rival* of the drive whose vehemence is tormenting us [...]. While 'we' believe we are complaining about the vehemence of a drive, at bottom it is one drive *which is complaining about another*; that is to say, for us to become aware that we are suffering from the *vehemence* of a drive presupposes the existence of another equally vehement or even more vehement drive, and that a *struggle* is in prospect in which our intellect is going to have to take sides (D 109).

20 GS 354: “man, like every living creature, is constantly thinking but does not know it; the thinking which becomes *conscious* is only the smallest part of it, let's say the shallowest, worst part”.

21 GM III: 18: “for it is *narrow*, this chamber of human consciousness”.

22 EH II: 9: “consciousness *is* a surface”.

When the intellect or consciousness does take a side, it is only the result of a struggle, not of a freely-willed choice made by consciousness itself²³. As Katsafanas summarizes, “*This* is the problem that Nietzsche's drive psychology raises: choice may control action, but agents do not control choice” (Katsafanas 2009: 38). While Schopenhauer describes a state of reflectiveness in which the genius can deny acting on his drives, Nietzsche notes that this state of *reflection* has been induced by another drive, one which has merely cornered the others into obedience. In other words, consciousness “is not the directing agent, but an organ of the directing agent” (WP 524).

[iii] Schopenhauer claims that by denying the drives the genius can hope to gain objective knowledge of the world²⁴. In contrast to Schopenhauer's conclusion, Nietzsche does not believe in such objective knowledge, but discusses how a multitude of drives and perspectives provide us with a more apt view of the world. While Schopenhauer calls the emancipated consciousness the “Pure Subject of Knowing” (WWR II: 367-75), Nietzsche mentions the error in such titular fabrications and then follows with his metaphorical description about the intellect's dependence on the drives (*iii*):

For let us guard ourselves better from now on, gentlemen philosophers, against the dangerous old conceptual fabrication that posited a “pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge”; let us guard ourselves against the tentacles of such contradictory concepts as “pure reason,” “absolute spirituality,” “knowledge in itself”: here it is always demanded that we think an eye that cannot possibly be thought, an eye that must not have any direction, in which the active and interpretive forces through which seeing first becomes seeing-something are to be shut off, are to be absent; thus, what is demanded here is always an absurdity and non-concept of an eye. There is *only* a perspectival seeing, *only* a perspectival “knowing”; and *the more* affects we allow to speak about a matter, *the more* eyes, different eyes, we know how to bring to bear on one and the same matter, that much more complete will our 'concept' of this matter, our “objectivity” be.

23 In a particular passage, Schopenhauer almost describes the uncontrollable and accidental trigger that leads to the intellect's emancipation. He says, “When, however, an external cause or inward disposition suddenly raises us out of the endless stream of willing, and snatches knowledge from the thralldom of the will, the attention is now no longer directed to the motives of willing, but comprehends things free from their relation to the will” (WWR I: 196). Nevertheless, this description is still not free from Nietzsche's contention that the “inward disposition” is only another drive that is inducing this event. Thus, e.g., consciousness does not become free from all the drives; rather, one drive is combating the others.

24 WWR II: 367: “Apprehension of an Idea, its entry into our consciousness, comes about only by means of a change in us, which might also be regarded as an act of self-denial. To this extent it consists in knowledge turning away entirely from our own will, and thus leaving entirely out of sight the precious pledge entrusted to it, and considering things as though they could never in any way concern the will. For only thus does knowledge become the pure mirror of the objective inner nature of things”.

But to eliminate the will altogether, to disconnect the affects one and all, supposing that we were capable of this: what? would that not be to *castrate* the intellect? (GM III: 12; cf. BGE 34 & WP 481).

Nietzsche tells us that each drive provides us with an opinionated perspective of the world; our drives coat our perceptions with value judgments. He says, “There are no experiences other than moral ones, not even in the realm of sense perception” (GS 114); “It cannot be doubted that *all sense perceptions are permeated with value judgments*” (WP 505). In other words, each drive makes opinions about the perceived world and hence gives our perceptions meaning. To a certain degree, Schopenhauer agrees with these statements²⁵—that the influence of our drives permeates our perception of the world; however, Nietzsche believes that we cannot hope to free the intellect from such a perspectival seeing while expecting it to be able to extract any sort of knowledge from the world. Without our drives, the world would appear meaningless. Thus, if we pictured each drive as an eye, then the more eyes we had, the better informed we would be; however, if we tore out each of our eyes, we wouldn't be able to see anything at all. With more drives, our experience of the world is richer, with less drives—poorer. Without drives, we may still be able to collide and react mechanically with the world; our *intellect*, however, would take *no part* since it would have been asphyxiated in the denial of the drives (because, as discussed in subsection *i*, thought is the result of relations between drives).

[*iv*] Even if we give Schopenhauer the benefit of the doubt, allowing him the claims that thinking *can* take place without the drives and that we *can* perceive the world with indifference, he would still not attain to objective knowledge according to Nietzsche. (In other words, this last of Nietzsche's contentions, presented here, undermines Schopenhauer's emancipatory argument even if we were to dismiss contentions *i*, *ii*, & *iii*.) Nietzsche claims (*iv*) that Schopenhauer's seemingly “objective knowledge” is merely a vulgarization of the world, a simplification and generalization of the

25 WWR II: 373: “In order to see that a purely objective, and therefore correct, apprehension of things is possible only when we consider them without any personal participation in them, and thus under the complete silence of the will, let us picture to ourselves how much every emotion or passion obscures and falsifies knowledge, in fact how every inclination or disinclination twists, colours, and distorts not merely the judgement, but even the original perception of things”.

world that does not obtain to knowledge of the world-in-itself. Knowledge gained through thought cannot obtain to objectivity—“He is a thinker: that means he knows how to make things simpler than they are” (GS 189). Anything but “simple,” Nietzsche says that, “The total character of the world, by contrast, is for all eternity chaos, not in the sense of a lack of necessity but of a lack of order, organization, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever else our aesthetic anthropomorphisms are called” (GS 109). All of the *form* consciousness perceives of the world is merely a useful simplification; it is a vulgarization of the world to make it calculable for our means—we do *not* perceive the world *as it is*.

As Nietzsche says, “Thoughts are the shadows of our sensations—always darker, emptier, simpler” (GS 179). “[D]ue to the nature of *animal consciousness*, the world of which we can become conscious is merely a surface- and sign-world, a world turned into generalities [...] all becoming conscious involves a vast and thorough corruption, falsification, superficialization, and generalization” (GS 354). As described previously, Schopenhauer believes that the Ideas that the genius extracts from perceiving the imperfect world of appearances represent the truth, the objectivity of the in-itself; Nietzsche contention is that this realm of Ideas is a “*made-up* world” and that appearance and representation, though certainly deceitful, *is* our reality²⁶.

So when Schopenhauer claims that the ascetic and the genius can emancipate themselves from their drives by perceiving reality *as it is*, his condition for emancipation (“perceiving reality *as it is*”) does not obtain. All consciousness amounts to is a simplification, and hence, a falsification of reality. If seeing reality *as it is* is required for emancipation, then Schopenhauer’s genius is far from freedom since his consciousness has, according to Nietzsche, *falsified* reality. Thus, as Nietzsche would conclude, in the indifferent perception Schopenhauer describes, consciousness conceptualizes and falsifies reality instead of objectifying it.

26 EH P: 2: “The ‘true world’ and the ‘world of appearances’ – in plain language, the *made-up* world and reality”.

5.1 – Conclusion: Schopenhauer & Nietzsche.

In response to Kant's claim that "There was a time when metaphysics was called queen of all the sciences" (a viii) and his attempts to reestablish her honor, Nietzsche, the psychoanalyst of metaphysicians, demands: "that psychology again be recognized as queen of the sciences." According to Nietzsche, "psychology is again the path to the fundamental problems" (BGE 23).

Schopenhauer has given us a fascinating interpretation of our psychology that predates Freud's contributions to the field by nearly a century. Nevertheless, it is clear from his conclusions that Schopenhauer held on to many prejudices that had been assumed or argued by prior philosophers—prejudices that Nietzsche consequently attempted to unravel and discredit. For one, as previously discussed, Schopenhauer believes that consciousness (our reason) can operate without drives, but how could our reason, for example, decide between motives without any motives of its own? Nietzsche launches a penetrating critique of these arguments—arguments that presuppose without interrogating such assumptions. Though heavily influenced by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche presents us with a further, more incisive look into the workings of our minds.

From analyzing the intellect's role in the normal individual to the role of consciousness in the genius, Schopenhauer has given us an intriguing story, guided by numerous psychological insights. Starting from these insights, Nietzsche has developed his own psychological picture beyond the one presented by Schopenhauer. Seeing past and breaking away from Schopenhauer's presuppositions, Nietzsche presents his philosophy with a loud cry that we emancipate ourselves from the grasp of the ascetic ideal perpetuated by Schopenhauer. In *this* emancipation, Nietzsche gives consciousness a role. It is for a subsequent essay to discuss the role of the normal and exceptional consciousness in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche.