Schopenhauer's Theory of Agency in Light of His Account of the Affirmation and Negation of the Will

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I.

Although Schopenhauer's explicit theory of agency may seem simple in its outline, when considered more closely it presents, as is usually the case with many topics in Schopenhauer's philosophy, a series of seemingly aporetic contradictions. This is the case not only when we consider his theory of agency apart from the rest of his system, but also, and especially, when we consider it in the broad context of his thinking as a whole. In this paper, I intend to examine this theory in the light of the notions of affirmation and negation of the will.

At first sight, it may seem that the doctrines of affirmation and negation of the will are already part of Schopenhauer's theory of agency, such that when I propose that we establish a relation between them and his theory of action, I'm actually establishing a relation between a part of the doctrine and its whole. It should be noted, however, that Schopenhauer scarcely mentions these doctrines in connection with his discussion of action, character and freedom in §55 of *The World as Will and Representation*[1] and in the *Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*, just two of the main sources of his account of agency. Accordingly, I propose that we should make a distinction between Schopenhauer's theory of agency in its narrow sense, which includes his accounts of action, character and freedom (which is roughly covered in §55 of WWV I), from his broader account of action (which forms the subject of book IV of WWV I) taken as whole. The former is characterized by the idea of the primacy of the will (or character) over the intellect, of the instrumental character of the latter, and can be seen as an almost naturalistic account of agency. In this context, Schopenhauer also emphasizes the fact that our actions are completely determined by the conjunction of our (individual) character, motives and knowledge of the circumstances in which we find ourselves. His broad theory of agency, on the other hand, which is linked to the doctrines of affirmation, negation and self-knowledge of the will,

1 Throughout the paper, I will refer to the Hübscher edition of Schopenhauer's works. English translations are taken from the Cambridge Edition of Schopenhauer's works. Page numbers for the Hübscher edition are provided in the margins of the latter.

can be characterized as an "existentialist" one. According to the latter, agency can be traced back to two basic possibilities – the affirmation and the negation of the will, along with their respective degrees – and these are a function of our intuitive and immediate knowledge of the world and its nature. It is also in this context that Schopenhauer puts his doctrine of "transcendental freedom" to use by claiming that the will is ultimately able to "choose" which of the two attitudes it ultimately wants, affirmation or negation.

Accordingly, I will show that if we only take into account Schopenhauer's theory of agency in a narrow sense, Schopenhauer seems to present an irrationalist, determinist and naturalist picture of human agency, whereas if we take into account his doctrines of affirmation and negation of the will, we get a view of agency that allows more space for the role of subjectivity and self-knowledge and that appears to be much closer to "existentialist" accounts of agency, which emphasize authenticity, existential insight, and of course freedom.

II.

The first appearance of Schopenhauer's theory of agency in his published work is in the first edition of *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (which was Schopenhauer's doctoral dissertation). There are considerable differences between this edition and the better-known third and last edition. In this paper, I will focus on the latter. Here, Schopenhauer considers the will as the fourth type of object of our faculty of cognition, to be distinguished from «*intuitive*, complete, empirical representations»[2], from «space and time» as the «formal part of complete representations»[3], «the forms of the outer and inner senses» (*ibidem*), and «concepts», that is, «abstract representations»[4]. As its own kind of object, the will is subject to a specific form of the principle of sufficient reason. Correlated with this object is also a specific kind

2 SG, §17, 28.

3 SG, §35, 130.

4 SG, §26, 97.

of faculty of the subject: in this case, self-consciousness. The will is, according to Schopenhauer, the object of self-consciousness[5]. As such, the form of the principle of sufficient reason that can be applied to the will is what Schopenhauer calls the «law of motivation», «the principle of sufficient reason of acting»[6]. This entails, for Schopenhauer, that every act of will has its sufficient reason in an antecedent motive. In other words, we feel a priori justified in asking the question «why?» someone does something or other[7]. This is what it means to claim that the principle of sufficient reason applies to the will. In fact, in the *Fourfold Root*, Schopenhauer misstates the view he presents in other passages. As we will see in due time, the principle of sufficient reason finds application only in particular acts of will[8]. According to Schopenhauer, we cannot meaningfully ask why we will in general (*ibidem*). Thus we cannot say that the principle of sufficient reason extends to the "subject of willing" as such.[9] This ambiguity on Schopenhauer's part is also closely related to the ambiguity in which the notion of «object of self-consciousness» is to be found. Although he says that the object of self-consciousness is the subject of willing (*das Subjekt des Wollens*), through self-consciousness or through «inner sense», as he also calls the former, we are only aware of ourselves in time, that is, in the form of succession and not absolutely as we are in ourselves (as a thing-in-itself)[10]. Thus, we could say that the "object" of self-consciousness is not so much the subject of willing as its acts appearing in the form of a succession. This notwithstanding, it must also be added that we are not aware of ourselves as a "pure spectator" would be, indifferent to the fact that, after all, what appears to us in

5 SG, §41, 140.

6 SG, §43, 144-5.

7 SG, §43, 144.

8 WWV I, §20, 127.

9 Even the expression "subject of willing" can be contested on Schopenhauer's own grounds, for this expression seems to entail that the subject is somehow detached from his own willing, which as such remains a matter of indifference to him. If we want to be strict, there is no "subject of willing" but at most an "individual character" that expresses herself entirely through her own acts of will.

10 WWV II, ch. 18, 220-1.

"inner sense" are our own acts of willing. This is why Schopenhauer speaks of an identity between the subject of knowing and the subject of willing in self-consciousness and even calls it the «miracle par excellence»[11]. Through self-consciousness I, as the subject of cognition, am aware of myself as one who wills, that is, as we will see, as an agent who feels responsible for his own acts, who feels these acts as his very own.

Also importantly, that which answers the question "why" regarding acts of will are what Schopenhauer calls "motives". The use of the notion of a "motive", although in many respects similar to our common usage, also deviates from it in other specific respects. Motives can be, for Schopenhauer, either the "real" objects of intuition – Schopenhauer's first class of objects – or abstract concepts and reasonings – Schopenhauer's third class of objects, although even in this latter case they point to real objects and state of affairs. In other words, in its technical sense, Schopenhauer tends to use "motives" for objects rather than, say, a subjective state. To give a concrete example, if we want to employ Schopenhauer's language of motives in this strict sense, we should say that what "causes" or "moves" me to eat is the representation – be it intuitive (perception) or abstract (the thought) – of food or of a particular instance, say a piece of fruit. In this sense, it is not "hunger" that strictly speaking causes me to eat, but rather the sight of food, for example. It is true that, ultimately, I would not feel hungry if it were not for a "will to eat", as part of a more encompassing "will to live", but what explains my particular act of eating is not that I have this "will to eat" but the representation, be it intuitive or abstract, of food.

Thus far, we already know that acts of will have motives and that these are, roughly speaking, "objects". We also know that the principle of sufficient reason for acting cannot be applied to our willing taken as a whole. We cannot legitimately ask why we will rather than not. To go back to our eating example, we cannot ask why we are hungry or are prone to feel hunger, or even why we want life in general. This belongs to what it is to have a willing nature and is without reason or motive; in Schopenhauer's parlance, it is groundless (*grundlos*).

11 SG, §42, 143.

One of the things that are essential to Schopenhauer's view of agency, and which I have not mentioned until now, is the fact that it entails our embodiment. Besides being cognizing beings, it is only meaningful to think of ourselves as agents as well to the extent that we find ourselves as embodied in the world. This point is already implicit in Schopenhauer's introduction to the second book of WWV. There, Schopenhauer says that it is only possible to investigate the true nature of the world because we are not only the subject of cognition, «a winged cherub's head without a body»[12]. What is implicit in this idea is that beyond being a subject of cognition, for whom the body is only an object, even if an immediate one, we are also the subject of willing. This is in fact one of the points at which Schopenhauer diverts from the view presented in the first edition of the *Fourfold Root*. There, he takes the body to be the "immediate object", both in the sense that it forms the starting point of our perception of the world and in the sense that it is also the starting point of our acting upon the world – it is the first link in the causal chain that begins with the will[13]. Even in his first work, Schopenhauer is quick to point out that we are not really acquainted with the "permanent state" of the will that precedes the causality of the will upon the body as its immediate object[14]. Five years later, in 1919, on the occasion of the publication of WWV, Schopenhauer maintained that the body is the "immediate object of cognition"[15], but he completely transformed his theory on the relation between body and will. As is well known, Schopenhauer claimed from then on that the body and the will are exactly the same thing viewed from two different perspectives. The will is the body seen from the inside, and the body is the will seen from the outside. The *ratio cognoscendi* of this latter claim is the observation[16]

12 WWV I, §18, 118.

13 SG1, §45, 74.

14 SG1, §46, 75.

15 WWV I, §6, 23-4.

16 In the *Prize Essay on the Freedom of the Will*, Schopenhauer says that the proposition «I see each act of my will present itself immediately (in a way totally incomprehensible to me) as an action of my body» is «an empirical proposition for the cognizing subject» (FW, II, 22), although in WWV I Schopenhauer says that the identity between body and will is the most immediate cognition, one that cannot really be demonstrated (§18, 122).

that every act of will is at once an act of the body. From this observation, Schopenhauer goes on to show that the "will as a whole" is the same as the "body as a whole" in every respect. At this point, Schopenhauer's conception of the will was broader than our common concept. He claimed that all of our inner states, such as feelings, emotions, etc., fall under the concept of the will. In order to provide proof of this, Schopenhauer points out that «every impression made on my body also instantly and immediately affects my will»; «every violent movement of the will – which is to say affects and passions – agitates the body and disturbs the course of its functioning»[17]; «correspondingly, any effect on the body is instantly and immediately an effect on the will as well»; pleasure and pain are «immediate affections of the will in its appearance, the body»[18]. It is true that by associating the will with the content of our self-consciousness and by broadening its concept to include all kinds of non-cognitive inner feelings, the link between will and action seems to become looser. This link does not need to be abandoned though. Non-cognitive feelings are aimed, in a more or less direct fashion, at corporeal manifestations, and thus at action, even when it does not result in an effective bodily manifestation.[19]

As already indicated, for the law of motivation to be applied to the will, we must presuppose that the latter manifests itself upon motives according to a rule. For Schopenhauer, character is the ultimate presupposition of our motives' eliciting acts of will (or, what is the same, individual actions). Motives are not an absolute explanation of an action. As Schopenhauer puts it, they only explain why the action had to occur at this time and place. Only the fact that the individual will is as it is accounts for the fact that it is liable to act on certain motives and not others. According to Schopenhauer, character is a concept that we form empirically (taking as a starting point our actions or those of any other individual). It lies at the basis of the individual's various actions as the ultimate presupposition of their causal explanation by motives. Although the notion of character is empirical in that we are only get acquainted with anyone's character, including our own, through observation, Schopenhauer thinks that the

17 WWV I, §20, 128.

18 WWV I, §18, 120.

19 C. Janaway makes a similar point, cf. *Schopenhauer on Self and World*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 221ff.

unity of empirical character is the manifestation of an intelligible character that, as such, is outside of space, time and causality. "Intelligible character" is the a priori unity that is completely inaccessible to us but that we must presuppose as existing outside the forms of appearance (space, time and causality), that is, as a thing-in-itself.[20]

With this background on the notion of character, it is easier to understand Schopenhauer's point regarding the identity of the act of the will and the "act" of the body. Only the act of the body stamps the act of the will, because only the former is a sure sign of one's true nature or character.

III.

I will now sketch in more detail Schopenhauer's theory of agency as it is further developed in paragraph 55 of *The World as Will and Representation*, in the *Essay on the Freedom of the Will*, and in chapter 19 of the second volume of the *World as Will and Representation*.

As I've already hinted at, for Schopenhauer, human action ensues from the influence of motives on our character: from the way motives drive our character towards manifestation. The character itself consists of certain permanent drives or aims that, although unbeknownst to us, each of us pursues. Schopenhauer sometimes characterizes character as the innermost rule (or even maxim) of our conduct[21], although it should be borne in mind that this "maxim" is not an abstract principle of our faculty of reason that we consciously choose to follow. For Schopenhauer, human action does not differ in its nature from non-human action. It does not differ even from all "action" in the German sense of *Wirken*. If we take action or acting in the sense of *Wirken* as the genus, human action is but a species of the former concept. What distinguishes human

20 It should be noted that the qualification "intelligible", although taken from Kant, is at bottom completely foreign to Schopenhauer's philosophical intentions. Kant calls it "intelligible" because he considers it to be a "noumenon", that is, a possible object of non-sensible intuition, a notion that Schopenhauer rejects. For that reason, in the first edition of the *Fourfold Root*, Schopenhauer says it would be preferable to call it "the unintelligible" character (SG1, §46, 76-7).

21 WWV I, §20, 127; §55, 354.

action from non-human animals' action is the fact that, whereas the latter act on intuitive motives, that is, perceptions, humans are for the most part driven to action by abstract motives, thoughts – that is, concepts and judgements. This latter circumstance gives humans the ability to deliberate, to ponder various motives in an abstract manner, to weigh their influence on our will or character, and to choose accordingly. This gives human action a certain circumspection (*Besonnenheit* in German)[22] that non-human animals lack.

The ability to deliberate, to ponder among various courses of action, is also called the "ability to choose" (*Wahlentscheidung*)[23]. The latter, however, must be carefully distinguished from the empirical "*liberum arbitrium indifferentiae*", that is, a "free choice of indifference", i.e. the idea that in a given situation two opposite actions are possible[24]. This latter kind of freedom is a mere illusion, according to Schopenhauer.

Schopenhauer sees the idea of a "free choice of indifference" as being closely linked to his critique of intellectualism or rationalism: the ancient idea, of Platonic ancestry, that our innermost essence consists in a rational soul[25]. If we were a purely rational or cognitive being – as opposed to what we essentially are, for Schopenhauer: a blind, striving, will – we would will according to our cognition. Life would take the form of a purely intellectual problem. We could become whoever we wanted to be according to what we deemed best[26]. We think we remain "impartial" before the power of motives and weigh them until we reach a completely rational decision. However, to choose among various motives is to see which one is stronger,

22 The new Cambridge Edition does not translate *Besonnenheit* in a uniform way. It is variously translated as "circumspection", "soundness of mind", "clear-headedness", "thoughtfulness", "mental clarity", "clarity of mind", etc. The problem is that Schopenhauer employs the term mostly in a technical sense. Although all of these meanings may be involved, I think that "circumspection" is the best option because Schopenhauer links *Besonnenheit* with the ability to represent time as a whole, that is, the past and the future alongside the present. Besides this, it also conveys the idea of being prudent or thoughtful in a practical sense, which is also at play here.

23 WWV I, §55, 351; see also FR, §26, 97.

24 WWV I, §55, 344.

25 WWV I, §55, 345.

26 WWV I, §55, 345.

which one "pulls" us more forcefully. For this reason, there cannot be a purely rational action, that is, one that is driven merely by thinking and weighing reasons for acting (motives). Schopenhauer is thus in complete opposition to Kant's view of agency, in particular Kant's conception of the possibility of a purely rational action, or, in other words, of pure practical reason. In order for action to take place, in order for something to become a motive for us, another side of us, one that is different from the cognitive one, must come into play. Schopenhauer identifies the latter with the will. This dimension of our being cannot be rationally accounted for, and we cannot exert conscious control over it.

Although Schopenhauer does not think our action is conditioned by "blind" causal factors, he thinks that it is necessarily determined by antecedent motives (which are what "cause" actions, according to him). Action ensues with necessity from the solicitation of our individual character by motives. In order for an individual action to be different, we would have to be a different person, have a different nature, in sum have another character. Given one's individual character and the motives that manifest it outwardly, actions cannot be different from what they are. Nevertheless, for Schopenhauer, as for Kant before him, the necessity of actions has validity only at the level of appearances (*Erscheinungen*). Since human beings are as much a part of appearances (*Erscheinung*) as any other natural entities, their actions are just as subject to necessary laws as any other entity in nature. If we consider ourselves as things-in-themselves, however – in other words, if we consider what Kant called our intelligible character, our character as existing outside of time, space and causal relations – then we must consider ourselves free in the sense that our being is not determined or conditioned by anything else. This is a merely negative notion of freedom (this does not mean that Schopenhauer does not have a more positive account of freedom related to his doctrine of the negation of the will, as we will see). Thus, our freedom does not lie where we usually locate it: in the action (which is, on the contrary, thoroughly determined by the motive that elicited it), but rather in our character, in our nature, that is, in our being: «Thus freedom, which cannot be encounterable in the *operari*, must reside in the *esse*»[27]. In WWV, Schopenhauer claims that we have insight into this freedom through

27 FW, V, 97.

the feeling of the "originality" and "independence" of our acts of will[28]. In FW, where he develops this further, he locates this feeling in our sense of responsibility. The latter concerns what we do, our particular actions, only superficially. In truth, according to Schopenhauer, this feeling is directed at who we are, our innermost nature, that is, our character. This is also related to Schopenhauer's contention that the human being "is his own work"[29] rather than having been made by another (be it God or his parents). In this lies Schopenhauer's deep agreement with existentialist conceptions of the human being and action (like those of Sartre), despite their enormous differences (in particular Schopenhauer's more naturalistic outlook).[30]

Since our being lies in our character, our will, and since the latter (being outside of time as well as all other essential phenomenal forms) does not change, the character or "the will as a whole" is immutable, according to Schopenhauer. Change only occurs in time, and the will is free of time[31]. Schopenhauer interprets the metaphysical immutability of character as the fact that character is inborn (FW, II, 53ff.). Changes in behaviour must be ascribed to changes in our cognition of motives, which for Schopenhauer includes our knowledge of our situation and circumstances. Even if we don't accept this argument because it presupposes Schopenhauer's general metaphysical outlook, if we accept his account of action as the interplay between will or character and the intellect, either we must concede that we have a nature (and then everything that we do must proceed according to this nature) or we must conceive of ourselves as being nothing.[32] For Schopenhauer, if we can be said to exist, we have to have a nature, an

28 WWV I, §55, 342.

29 WWV I, §55, 345.

30 In Schopenhauer, the human being «is his own work prior to any cognition» (WWV I, §55, 345), whereas in Sartre the human being is his own work through being essentially pre-reflectively aware of itself.

31 WWV I, §55, 344.

32 The latter idea would later be upheld by Sartre, whose philosophy is thus anticipated by Schopenhauer, at least as a possibility. Since Sartre holds that as the "being-for-itself" we are nothing, as opposed to the "being-in-itself", which is being proper, he also argues, at least in *Being and Nothingness*, that we are radically free. For Schopenhauer, on the other hand, it would be nonsensical to claim that we exist and yet have no nature (which is exactly what Sartre claims, based on his interpretation of Heidegger's idea of the precedence of existence over essence).

essence: «Free will, precisely considered, denotes an existentia without essentia: which means that something would be and at the same time be nothing, which in turn means not be, and is therefore a contradiction»[33].

To this point, I have still failed to mention certain very important aspects of Schopenhauer's doctrine of character. It is not only humans that have a character. Non-human animals also have a character (as does everything else in nature, even non-living beings). The difference is that the character of non-human animals coincides with the character of their respective species (despite Schopenhauer's admission that higher animals show some signs of individuality), whereas humans have, besides the character of the species, an individual character, which is unique to every single person. The fact that humans possess an individual character in addition to a general one entails that, whereas animals immediately exhibit their character or inner nature through action, humans do not. Individuality is also tied to the fact that humans are rational beings[34]. In other words, what they do "in the spur of the moment", unreflectingly, does not adequately express their innermost individual character. Whereas in non-human animals desire tends to pass at once into action, in humans there is a gap between desire and decision.[35] According to Schopenhauer, desire only shows «what *human beings* in general, not the *individual* who experiences this desire, would be able to do»[36]. In other words, desire only manifests the character of the species. Through desire we are drawn into every type of human endeavour. Only those desires that are mediated through the rational deliberative process and issue in a decision are a «sign of individual character»[37]. Even rational decisions can fall short of expressing our innermost individual character, however. If on the one hand reason is a condition of individuality, on the other hand it can also be an impediment to it. The fact that the human being, as a rational being, has

33 FW, II, 58.

34 WWV I, §55, 353ff.

35 M. Koßler, *Schopenhauers Philosophie als Erfahrung des Charakters*, in Dieter Biernbacher-Andreas Lorenz-Leon Miodonski (eds.), *Schopenhauer im Kontext. Deutsch-polnisches Schopenhauer-Symposium 2000*, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann 2002, p. 100.

36 WWV I, §55, 354.

37 WWV I, §55, 353.

to act according to universal concepts disturbs the manifestation of his individual character[38]. This empirical, innate, character is, to begin with, a «simple drive of nature» (*einfacher Naturtrieb*[39]). As long as we remain unacquainted with our innermost essence, we are doomed to zigzag our way through life[40]. The human predicament is that we do not know our individual characters a priori, and it is a lifelong task to become acquainted with our individual selves, with what each of us basically is as an individual. Our individual character is at first as unknown to us as those of everyone else. We must come to know it through experience. This means that we can be misled about ourselves, about who we really are. For all we know, we may be pursuing certain actions – altruistic ones, for example – only because we believe that a certain reward awaits us in another life. Only those that "acquire character"[41] act in a way that is completely consistent with their individual character. They possess conceptual knowledge of the kind of person they are. They have achieved self-knowledge.

It is not easy to reconcile Schopenhauer's doctrine of "acquired character" with the doctrine that human action always takes place according to the agent's innate character. According to him, character always manifests itself in the agent's life course. The difference is that, whereas those who have acquired character manifest it in a consistent way, the others end up manifesting it by passing through many detours and mistaken paths. Of course, this puts pressure on the idea that actions always reflect our will/character. John Atwell has devised what I think is an ingenuous solution to this problem, however.[42] According to him, actions that are out of character reflect the character of the agent as a specimen of the human race more than his individual character.[43] Here, one could also add that, just as an isolated

38 WWV I, §27, 181; §55, 357-8.

39 Cf. WWV I, §55, 357.

40 *Ibidem*, 358.

41 WWV I, §55, 357ff.; FW, III, 50.

42 J. Atwell, *Schopenhauer. The Human Character*, Philadephia, Tempel University Press 1990, pp. 63ff..

43 *Ibidem*, p. 63: «It follows, I think, that there can be no action "out of character", where that expression means actions explainable without reference to a type of human character; but there can be action "out of character" in that I can do actions that need not be explained by explicit reference to my unique character».

musical note is meaningless apart from the whole set of notes that together make up a certain melody, what is supposed to manifest our character is our life taken as a whole and not an isolated action, which taken by itself is meaningless, or at best ambiguous.[44]

IV.

In this section of the paper, I will examine the notions of affirmation and negation of the will and probe their relation to Schopenhauer's theory of agency as described thus far. The latter is basically what I, at the beginning of this paper, called Schopenhauer's theory of agency in the narrow sense. As already anticipated, in WWV, the notions of the affirmation and negation of the will to life significantly transform the framework of his "narrow" account of agency and shed new light on it.

As indicated in the title of book IV, «with the achievement of self-knowledge, affirmation and negation of the will to life», Schopenhauer introduces the two categories that he will use as a key to understanding the meaning of human action and behaviour: the "affirmation" and the "negation" of the will. According to Schopenhauer, the aim of book IV is precisely to describe the essence of the various modes of behaviour through the guiding thread of these notions in that those modes of behaviour are an expression of the affirmation or negation of the will in their different degrees.

The "affirmation" and the "negation" of the will correspond to what can be called two different and opposite global outlooks on the world and life (even though they are not explicit beliefs). Before we can enter into this issue in more detail, we must still define precisely what affirmation and negation of the will are and why Schopenhauer uses them as clues to interpreting the meaning of the different ways in which humans behave and act.

To affirm the will is simply the same as willing. Since willing is the same as acting, in the sense that it all its manifestations are directly or indirectly connected to action (see section II above), the most simple act

44 J. Atwell also likens the agent to the "common feature" that belongs to all of his or her actions instead of being a mere bundle of actions (*ibidem,* pp. 38-39)

of will is already an affirmation of the will as such: «the affirmation of the will is the constant willing itself, undisturbed by any cognition, as it fills the lives of human beings in general»[45].

In organic beings, all willing can be fundamentally reduced to the "will" of the individual to preserve its life and the sexual "will", which can be seen as the ultimate goal of the individual, that is, to contribute to preserving its species:

> «The basic theme of all the various acts of will is the satisfaction of needs that are inseparable from the healthy existence of the body, are already expressed in it, and can be reduced to the preservation of the individual and the propagation of the species.»[46]

As Schopenhauer puts it, all willing is will to life. Will to life is a mere "pleonasm"[47]; the two expressions are synonymous. This does not mean that life is the "object" of willing, as if it were its ultimate, conscious, motive. As Schopenhauer makes clear in §29 of the second book of WWV, the will has no aim, end or goal. That the will is will to life means, rather, that what unconsciously propels willing, its "internal mechanism", is its blind tendency to maintain itself in existence. This means, indirectly, that for Schopenhauer the core of our existence lays in our purely biological side. Culture only hides this true nature of ours, and most of the human activities that compose our existence in civilized society – perhaps with the sole exception of artistic contemplation and creation – aim at filling the void generated by the fact that our fundamental will to life is satisfied.[48] The will to life is a drive for the maintenance of life, or simply a drive for existence for its own sake. Of course, in Schopenhauer's grander metaphysical scheme of things, the will to "biological life" is but a particular case of the metaphysical "will" to objectivation or existence,

45 WWV I, §60, 385.

46 WWV I, §60, 385.

47 WWV I, §54, 323-4.

48 See WWV I, §57, 369 where Schopenhauer says that "boredom" is the root of sociability.

which operates in natural forces as they strive for matter and "compete" with each other to "tak[e] hold" of it[49].

Thus, affirming life in this "natural" sense does not require an explicit stance on our part, as individuals, towards life. The latter is rather something that we pursue for the most part without being aware of it. (It can be anticipated that to "negate the will" can take on the meaning of simply ceasing to will, not willing).[50]

Now, despite the fact that, as we have already seen, humans are distinct from animals inasmuch as their agency is not solely determined by intuitive, present motives and involves an ability to choose among different abstract motives, up to now we may have the impression that the individual will as a whole (or character) is an ineluctable fact: that each has his or her individual character, and there is nothing that can be done about it. As we also saw, however, even if we cannot replace our individual character or transform it in any way, Schopenhauer claims that we are "transcendentally free". We saw that this meant, at first merely negatively, that the will/character is unconditioned. This idea then became more concrete inasmuch as we remain responsible for what we are and a fortiori for what we do (since what we do ensues from, or expresses, what we are). The other way Schopenhauer puts the idea of "transcendental freedom" to use is directly linked to the ideas of affirmation and negation of the will. For Schopenhauer, my acting the way I do entails not only that I am responsible for what I am but also that I "affirm" the will. Furthermore, it is also with reference to transcendental freedom that Schopenhauer introduces the possibility of "negation of the will" and "self-abolition [*Selbstaufhebung*] of character". If there were no "intelligible freedom", it would not be possible to abolish my character, to negate the will.

The claim that the account of character presupposes the affirmation or negation of the will may suggest that action, the natural expression of our individual character, presupposes that we have previously made a "decision" to affirm the will. However, at least in the case of what I called

49 WWV I, §27, 174-5; §28, 192.

50 In a passage from his later works, Schopenhauer speaks of the alternative between affirmation and negation of the will as the alternative between *velle* (willing) and *nolle* (not willing). See PP II, §161, 331.

the "natural affirmation of the will", we do not make that decision at any time, and nor does Schopenhauer hold such a view. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this natural "condition" is already one of affirmation of the will. Here, we must go a little bit deeper than Schopenhauer himself and make a subtler distinction within the concept of "affirmation of the will". To affirm the will, as Schopenhauer makes clear in the passage where he introduces the concept for the first time, is also to will life «consciously, deliberately, and with cognition»:

> «The will affirms itself, which means that while in its objectivity (i.e. in the world and life) its own essence is given to it completely and distinctly as representation, this cognition is no impediment to its willing; rather, consciously, deliberately, and with cognition, it wills the life that it thus recognizes as such, just as it did as a blind urge before it had this cognition.»[51]

This attitude differs from the first in that it entails a kind of reiteration of what we already are, a kind of conscious choice of ourselves, of our ultimate nature. What distinguishes it is the fact that the conscious and deliberate affirmation of the will involves some degree of self-knowledge, of self-transparency as will. Although animals possess consciousness, this does not mean that they affirm life in the sense that is at stake here. Schopenhauer makes clear that the will to life (the instinct of self-preservation and the sexual instinct) does not depend on consciousness, much less on reflectively deeming life to be objectively worth living[52].

As for the negation of the will, it has its roots in seeing through the illusion of individuation that veils the will as a "thing-in-itself", that is, in identifying ourselves to a greater or lesser degree, and feeling one, with the will as a whole, which as such is one and the same in every being. Now, it is not just the negation of the will that involves the ability to rise above individuation. The "conscious and deliberate" affirmation

51 WWV I, §54, 336.

52 Cf., for example, WWV II, ch. 28, 402.

of the will already entails an overcoming of the individual point of view, an identification with nature as a whole, to the extent that it is a will to life. What is at stake in this latter sense of affirmation of the will is thus the affirmation of our existence as a will to life. The life that was affirmed without consciousness, deliberation, and cognition is from now on not only accepted but wanted as such. From a more substantive point of view, Schopenhauer equates this perspective with what he believes to be the point of view of the Stoics and of Spinoza. (We can also see this as an anticipation of Nietzsche's point of view.) For Schopenhauer, to affirm life is to become conscious of the eternity or immortality of the will to life, to take some comfort in it, that is, to overcome our entrenched fear of death, of ever losing our individual self:

> «Someone who has thoroughly integrated the truths stated so far into his way of thinking, without at the same time having any personal experience or far-reaching insight into the continuous suffering that is essential to all life; someone, rather, who is perfectly happy and content with life and who, after calm reflection, could wish that his life as he has experienced it so far would be of endless duration, or of perpetually new recurrence, and whose thirst for life is so great that he would gladly and willingly take on all the pain and hardships that life is subject to in return for its pleasures; such a person would stand "with firm, strong bones on the well-grounded, enduring earth", and would have nothing to fear: armed with the knowledge that we have given him, he would look at death with indifference as it rushed towards him on the wings of time, regarding it as a false illusion, an impotent phantom, frightening to the weak, but powerless against anyone who knows that he himself is that will whose objectivation or image is the whole world, and to which, for this reason, life and the present will always remain certainties, the true and only form of appearance of the will; the thought of an infinite past or future without him can hold no horror for him, since he regards this as an empty illusion and the web of

> māyā, and thus has as little to fear from death as the sun has to fear from the night.»[53]

Although Schopenhauer does not in any way relate ethics to this affirmation of the will – rather, he relates ethical life to negation of the will and affirmation of the will to evil – since it involves self-knowledge, overcoming individuality and identification with the whole, the way of life of a conscious and deliberate affirmation of the will seems to be "ethically" superior to that of the mere "natural" affirmation of the will. The reason Schopenhauer does not emphasize the "ethical" character of the affirmation of the will seems to be parallel to the reason he does not see any ethical dimension in the acquisition of character (although the latter surely seems to have it). Those who affirm the will with full consciousness still fall short of self-knowledge, that is, of a complete and thorough knowledge of the nature of the will. That is, one of the reasons the negation of the will is ethically superior to the affirmation of the will seems to lie in the fact that the former involves a higher degree of self-knowledge. Although they can comfort themselves with the fact that «for the will to life, life is a certainty, and as long as we are filled with life-will, we do not need to worry about our existence, even in the face of death»[54], those who affirm the will still fall short of the insight that «continuous suffering is essential to all life». In this way, negation of the will seems to be a higher point of view than affirmation of the will solely by the fact that it has a higher cognitive value – those who deny the will have deeper insight into the true nature of the world. In the case of the negation of the will, this insight is, of course, the intuitive grasping of the pessimistic thesis that life is not worth living.

Furthermore, the cognition that is involved in the "conscious and deliberate" affirmation of the will to life and, as we will see, also in the negation of the will, is cognition of essential aspects of the world as will in different degrees, as opposed to the cognition involved in the kind of action that ensues from "blind" affirmation of the will (which is what is described by what I have been calling the "narrow theory of agency"). The former

53 WWV I, §54, 334-5.

54 WWV I, §54, 324.

kind of cognition seems, at base, to be identical with that kind of cognition that Schopenhauer introduces at the beginning of book III under the name of "cognition of Platonic Ideas". It must be taken into account that the account of the cognition of Platonic Ideas given in the introduction to the third book[55] is not necessarily specific to aesthetic knowledge and creation and can be seen to be at play in book IV as well, although Schopenhauer never goes into detail on this topic in book IV.[56] He does, however, explicitly remark that cognition of Platonic Ideas is at the basis not only of artistic creation but also of ethical life, and even philosophy: «[b]oth philosophy and art take this cognition [cognition of Ideas] as their point of departure, as does that state of mind which alone leads to true holiness and redemption from the world, as we will discover in this Book»[57].

In acting in accordance with the intuition of Platonic Ideas, in a sense we do not cognize as individuals anymore, but rather from the point of view of the whole, *sub species aeternitatis*, as Spinoza would put it, or as the "pure subject of cognition", as Schopenhauer puts it. This cognition involves overcoming individuation and recognizing ourselves to a certain extent as the same will that is the essence of everything and of the world in general. This is why those who affirm the will consciously, deliberately and with cognition do not fear for themselves as individuals, that is, do not fear death and know that «for the will to life, life is a certainty»[58]. However, contrary to what happens in aesthetic cognition, we do not remain in a purely contemplative attitude. Rather, we act, or, if we come to negate the will, we cease to act, on account of that cognition.

Although Schopenhauer seems to attribute some degree of reflection to the conscious and deliberate affirmation of life, he insists everywhere else that the kind of "cognition" that is at play in affirmation, but especially in the negation of the will, is not the product of reflection, of reason, and

55 WWV I, §§30-35.

56 This has already been pointed out by some commentators. See, for example, D. Hamlyn, *Schopenhauer. The Arguments of the Philosophers*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, p. 150 and R. Malter, *Transzendental Philosophie und Metaphysik des Willens*, Stutttgart-Bad Cannstaat, Frommann-Holzboog, 1991, p. 376.

57 WWV I, §53, 323.

58 WWV I, §54, 324.

has the character of a global insight into the essence of the world and life. Very much like aesthetic productions, it cannot be properly expressed in words, in abstract concepts[59]. Just as the artistic genius represents his or her vision of the Platonic ideas through the production of a work of art, the one Schopenhauer characterizes as a "genius in the ethical sense"[60] expresses his "vision" through deeds. The parallelism goes so far that Schopenhauer claims that the ethical genius is completely unable to put the vision that guides his conduct into words. For that reason, he resorts to all kinds of fictitious explanations and dogmas in order to account for his action[61]. Perhaps for this reason it is the main task of the philosopher to describe this practical insight in abstract concepts: «our philosophical efforts can extend only to an interpretation and explanation of human action and the innermost essence and content of the very different and even conflicting maxims which are its living expression»[62].

V.

The negation of the will can assume two main forms: that of ethical action proper and that of asceticism. The latter can also be called negation of the will in the strict sense. (This is not the place for a thorough discussion of the different forms of negation of the will and reflection on their identity and differences. Below, I will have the opportunity to briefly discuss the relation between ethics and asceticism.) Ethical action, on its own, can be divided again into acts of justice and acts of altruism (*Menschenliebe*).[63] These, according to Schopenhauer, have their origin

59 WWV I, §54, 336; §68, 453.

60 WWV I, §68, 468. The term "ethical genius", as I am using it here, includes not only those who Schopenhauer calls moral or virtuous persons but also all those who are guided by a cognition of the whole, including those who affirm the will "consciously and deliberately".

61 WWV I, §66, 435, 436.

62 WWR I, §53, 321.

63 Because it connotes a mere feeling towards another human being rather than the idea of acting for her sake, I depart from the new Cambridge translation's choice to render *Menschenliebe* as "loving kindness".

not in the use of practical reason or in the state's coercive power, but in an intuition that sees through the principle of individuation, an insight into the fundamental identity of all beings as will. In the *World as Will and Representation*, and more explicitly in *The Prize Essay On the Basis of Morals*, Schopenhauer also identifies the feeling of compassion (*Mitleid*) towards the other as the form of seeing through the principle of individuation that is at play in ethical action.

The affirmation of the will does not remain at the boundaries of our own body, does not limit itself to the activities that are essential to the preservation of one's own life and the satisfaction of the sexual instinct. It naturally tends to overstep the boundaries of the individual body and negate the will/body of the other, for example when I use it in any way to pursue my own ends and interests. Actions thereby cease to be morally neutral.[64] They acquire a moral overtone. The negation of the will/body of the other is the essence of the phenomenon of wrongdoing (*Unrecht*), according to Schopenhauer. For that reason, justice consists in refraining from negating the will/body of the other. Justice has a merely negative status, inasmuch as it is the mere negation of wrongdoing[65]. It should be noted that in order to keep the affirmation of the will within the boundaries of my own body a certain negation of the will is required, and the latter has its roots, as we have already seen, in seeing through the principle of individuation, in intuiting that the separation between me and the other is not absolute[66]. When this intuition goes deeper, we feel compelled to perform acts of altruism, by which we try positively to relieve the other from his pain. For Schopenhauer, altruism – true, unselfish love – is always compassion[67]. This is so because, according to Schopenhauer, only the pain and suffering of the other and not, say, his joy, prompts us to action. When we act compassionately, we see through the principle of individuation and for that reason feel identified with the other, feel his or her pain as our very own, and take pains to relieve and ameliorate it. Here, it is not so much as if we lose all sense of individuality,

64 J. Atwell, *Schopenhauer. The Human Character*, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

65 WWV I, §62, 400; §66, 437.

66 Cf. especially WWV I, §66, 437-8.

67 *Mitleid*; cf. WWV I, §67, 443-4.

but rather that each of us as individuals will identify with other specific individual wills.[68] Of course, those who choose altruism as a way of life do not identify with this or that particular other, but rather with every possible other, and in this sense can be said to identify with the will as a whole. It could also be asked to what extent altruism is a negation of the will if it does not involve any kind of suspension of action, if on the contrary it involves acting for the sake of another or others. To this question, it might be replied that negation of the will can, to a certain extent, be seen as equivalent to negation of the individual will.[69] Thus, inasmuch as the altruistic will acts for the sake of another will, it must cease to act for the sake of its own interests, its own well-being and woe; in other words, it must negate its own will. Of course, this still leaves much to be explained and answered.[70]

Schopenhauer included altruism under the category of negation of the will in part because he saw it as being on a continuum with asceticism, as if altruism, when radically pursued, led to asceticism. He speaks of the «transition from virtue to asceticism»[71] and says that the source of altruism and asceticism is the same[72]. However, this should not obscure the fact that there are also very clear distinctions between both forms of negation

68 In the *Prize Essay on the Basis of Morals*, Schopenhauer further clarifies the phenomenology of compassion and its "paradoxical", even "miraculous", nature. According to him, we feel the pain or suffering of the other without losing our sense that it is we who are feeling this and not precisely the other (GM, §16, 211-2).

69 This can be seen as the answer to the objection that altruism is another form of egoism. For this objection, see J. Young, *Willing and Unwilling: A Study in the Philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer*, Dordrecht, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers 1987, pp. 115ff. and J. Young, *Schopenhauer*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2005, pp. 182f.

70 J. Atwell argues that compassionate action contradicts the identity of body and will (*Schopenhauer. The Human Character*, *op. cit*., pp. 142, 183-4, 208-9). However, as Atwell himself acknowledges, if we construe compassionate actions as a negation of the (individual) will, there is no contradiction. In the latter case, one must view compassionate actions as something that transcends the natural order of things, where egoistic agency prevails (*ibidem*, pp. 98, 100). The question remains, however, what this non-individual will amounts to and whether it can still be called an instance of willing, as Atwell does when he labels it «objective willing» (*ibidem*, pp. 182, 209).

71 WWV I, §68, 449f.

72 WWV I, §68, 447.

(perhaps only asceticism can be called a negation of the will in a strict sense). Asceticism is also based on cognition's being able to triumph over the will. This cognition involves not only (as was the case with justice and altruism) seeing through individuation, feeling oneself to be one with the rest of the world, but also grasping in a purely intuitive manner the meaninglessness of the human condition, the futility of all human endeavours. Asceticism is, as it were, the doctrine of pessimism translated into practice.

Schopenhauer acknowledges that besides «mere cognized suffering», there is a second path towards asceticism. The latter often takes place as a consequence of «suffering felt by oneself»[73]. In the end, however, even when he is contemplating this second possibility, Schopenhauer is quick to remark that negation of the will in this case is not a mere "effect" of suffering (in which case it would not be an appearance of freedom), but rather ensues from looking at one's own particular episode of suffering as embodying the true nature of life (that is, as a "Platonic Idea" in Schopenhauer's technical sense):

> «He only becomes truly awe-inspiring when he lifts his gaze from the particular to the universal, when he views his own suffering as a mere example of the whole and, becoming a genius in the ethical sense, treats it as one case in a thousand, so that the whole of life, seen essentially as suffering, brings him to the point of resignation.»[74]

This is an occasion to briefly return to the discussion of freedom. According to Schopenhauer, there is only one instance where freedom manifests itself in appearance. This is the case when "abolition" (*Aufhebung*) of the will takes place[75] as a consequence of the complete negation of the will. When the will abolishes itself, the body still manifests it, for after all it is nothing but objectified will, but the organism no longer finds itself in a state of willing. In this case, freedom manifests itself directly in appearance, according to Schopenhauer. The problem is that this appears

73 WWV I, §68, 463.

74 WWV I, §68, 468.

75 WWV I, §68, 467; §69, 472; §70, 476ff.

to contradict the idea that every appearance is subject to the principle of sufficient reason and, as such, is necessary. In the case of the negation of the will, we appear to have something that lacks sufficient reason. Schopenhauer admits this contradiction outright. He adds, however, that this merely conceptual contradiction mirrors the real one, that of the appearance of a will that no longer wills[76]. Schopenhauer also says that the «key to reconciling these contradictions» lies in the fact that negation of the will involves an «altered mode of cognition»:

> «The key to reconciling these contradictions is that the state in which the character is removed from the power of the motive does not proceed immediately from the will, but rather from an altered mode of cognition. As long as we are only dealing with cognition that is caught up in the principium individuationis and follows the principle of sufficient reason, the motive has an irresistible force; but when we see through the principium individuationis, we immediately recognize the Ideas, indeed the essence of things in themselves, as being in everything the same will, and from this cognition comes a universal tranquillizer of willing; individual motives become ineffective, because the mode of cognition that corresponds to them retreats, obscured by an entirely different mode of cognition.»[77]

This altered mode of cognition corresponds to a cognition of Platonic Ideas, as opposed to cognition of motives. Insofar as they are related to action, the Platonic Ideas are not motives but what Schopenhauer calls a "tranquillizer" (*Quietiv*). Although Schopenhauer does not avoid resorting to the principle of sufficient reason when he suggests that negation occurs as a consequence of our "altered mode of cognition", we could perhaps frame things differently by returning to how he describes the methodological approach pursued in book IV. There, he says that different modes of conduct are an *expression* of a "living cognition":

76 WWV I, §70, 477.

77 WWV I, §70, 477.

> «Both [affirmation and negation of the will] take cognition as their point of departure – not an abstract cognition that is expressed verbally, but rather a living cognition that is expressed only through deeds and behaviour and remains independent of dogmas which, as abstract cognition, are preoccupations of reason.»[78]

According to the view Schopenhauer expresses in this passage, the negation of the will does not happen as a *consequence* of a certain cognition but is instead its *expression*. The same goes for the other forms of negation and for all forms of affirmation of the will. Each conduct expresses a certain (metaphysical) view of the world, even if the agent herself is not aware of it in most cases.[79] In this way, Schopenhauer's project in book IV can be envisioned as a hermeneutics of different modes of conduct, as the project of bringing to light the different "cognitions" involved in the fundamental types of behaviour.[80]

To complicate things further, Schopenhauer – not so much in the first volume of WWV but in the second, and also in GM – speaks of

78 WWV I, §54, 336.

79 S. Shapshay argues that there is a "Kantian ghost" of intelligible causality hovering over Schopenhauer's work after his 1814 dissertation. Shapshay highlights in particular the role that intellect plays in overcoming the will or character in aesthetic experience, in particular in the experience of the sublime and in asceticism, etc. Shapshay construes this as a remnant of Kant's theory of freedom. What I think Shaphsay overlooks is that this overturning of the will's primacy has nothing to do with the Kantian model of the spontaneous, rational agency of intelligible character. As Schopenhauer makes clear, the cognition that is relevant to the negation of the will is not abstract cognition of reason but rather a type of "practical insight" that is expressed by deeds alone. See S. Shapshay, "Schopenhauer's Early Fourfold Root and the Ghost of Kantian Freedom", in D. V. Auweele, J. Head (eds.), *Schopenhauer's Fourfold Root*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2017, pp. 80-98. For an interpretation that, like Shapshay's, locates the roots of Schopenhauer's theory of freedom and negation of the will in Kant's theory of freedom, see R. Wicks, "Kant's Theory of Freedom in the Fourfold Root as the Progenitor of Schopenhauer's Metaphysics of Will", in D. V. Auweele, J. Head (eds.), *Schopenhauer's Fourfold Root*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2017, pp. 199-212.

80 According to J. Atwell, every agent has what he calls a "behavioral metaphysics", «in that everyone, in virtue of his or her behavior and moral character is (say) logically committed to some theory of ultimate reality» (*Schopenhauer. The Human Character*, *op. cit.*, p. 116).

an «ethical difference of characters»[81] and claims that each character is determined by a unique mixture of three incentives (*Triebfeder*), each of which is present in a different degree. These incentives are egoism, compassion and malice[82]. In WWV II[83], he speaks of a fourth incentive, that of seeking one's own woe, which he posits as the root of ascetic practices. According to this, affirming one's individual character does not necessarily ensue in egoistic actions. One may have a good (compassionate) character, a good will, and even the negation of the will can be "naturally" explained as an inner tendency of the person in question. Whereas in WWV I the value of morality lies in its "cognitive" value, in the fact that moral, and especially ascetic, conduct expresses deeper insight into the true nature of things, in GM non-egoistic actions are presented as a mere fact of human nature.

It must be admitted that there is no easy way to reconcile Schopenhauer's original presentation in WWV I with that in GM. One could argue along the lines that, since GM's view does not presuppose Schopenhauer's metaphysics and is merely empirical, WWV I must be seen as expressing Schopenhauer's definitive view on the matter. Here, I will only draw attention to the fact that what from one point of view can be traced back to a certain fact – for example, a certain type of character – from another, supposedly deeper, point of view can be seen as the expression of a certain cognition. Through his character and behaviour, for example, the egoist expresses the absolute reality of individuation. The altruist, for his part, expresses the view that individuation is not absolute and comes to see himself in others. In this way, we can trace the notion of good character back to the possession of a certain lived metaphysics. The structure of the *Prize Essay on the Basis of Morals* confirms this interpretation. In that work, Schopenhauer starts by exhibiting the existence of a moral incentive through which our actions aim toward the good of others. Further on, however, Schopenhauer also points to its ultimate condition of possibility, that is, the ultimate identity of all beings and the illusory character of individuation. Thus, the moral

81 GM, §20, 249.

82 GM, §20, 252-3.

83 WWV II, ch. 48, 697, note.

incentive is traced back to the metaphysical insight regarding the unity of everything that exists.

All this notwithstanding, the idea that cognition saves us from our willing condition must be qualified. It is true that cognition is a necessary means of reaching redemption for Schopenhauer, but the will must ultimately be responsible for itself, and thus for its condition in this world. Schopenhauer himself says that «the effect of the tranquillizer is ultimately also an act of the freedom of the will»[84] and that the blame for not being able to see through individuation must ultimately be placed on the will[85]. This problem must ultimately be traced back to the idea that we do not know the will as a thing-in-itself as such, but only its appearance as affirmation of the will. What the will may be besides this remains completely unknown to us[86]. Understanding this, however, would involve a thorough discussion of Schopenhauer's theory of ultimate reality and the metaphysical status of the will.

84 WWV I, §70, 478-9.

85 See WWV II, ch. 47, 690.

86 See PP II, §161, 331.

Abbreviations of Schopenhauer's Works

FW=Über die Freiheit des Willens in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4, *Die zwei Grundprobleme der Ethik*, Wiesbaden, Brockhaus 1972 (*On the Freedom of the Will* in *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*, *The Cambridge Edition of Schopenhauer's Works*, Eng. trans. by C. Janaway, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2009.)

GM=Über die Grundlage der Moral in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4, *Die zwei Grundprobleme der Ethik*, Wiesbaden: Brockhaus 1972 (*The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*, *The Cambridge Edition of Schopenhauer's Works*, Eng. trans. by C. Janaway, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2009.)

PP II=*Parerga und Paralipomena*, vol. 2, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 6, Wiesbaden, Brockhaus 1972 (*Parerga and Paralipomena*, vol. 2, *The Cambridge Edition of Schopenhauer's Works*, Eng. trans. by A. dal Caro-C. Janaway Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2015.)

SG=Über den vierfachen Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grund in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, *Schriften zur Erkenntnistheorie*, Wiesbaden, Brockhaus 1972 (in *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason and Other Writings*, *The Cambridge Edition of Schopenhauer's Works*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2012.)

SG1=Über den vierfachen Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grund (1813) in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7, *Dissertation. Gestrichenes. Zitate. Register*, Wiesbaden, Brockhaus 1972 (in *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason and Other Writings*, *The Cambridge Edition of Schopenhauer's Works*, Eng. Trans. by D. Cartwright-E. Erdmann-C. Janaway, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2012.)

WWV I=*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 1, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, Wiesbaden, Brockhaus 1972 (translated in English as *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, *The Cambridge Edition of Schopenhauer's Works*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2010.)

WWV II=*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. 2, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, Wiesbaden, Brockhaus 1972 (*The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 2, *The Cambridge Edition of Schopenhauer's Works*, Eng. Trans. by J. Norman-A. Welchman-C. Janaway, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2018.)