THE WORLD AS WILL AND REPRESENTATION

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

translated by E. F. J. Payne

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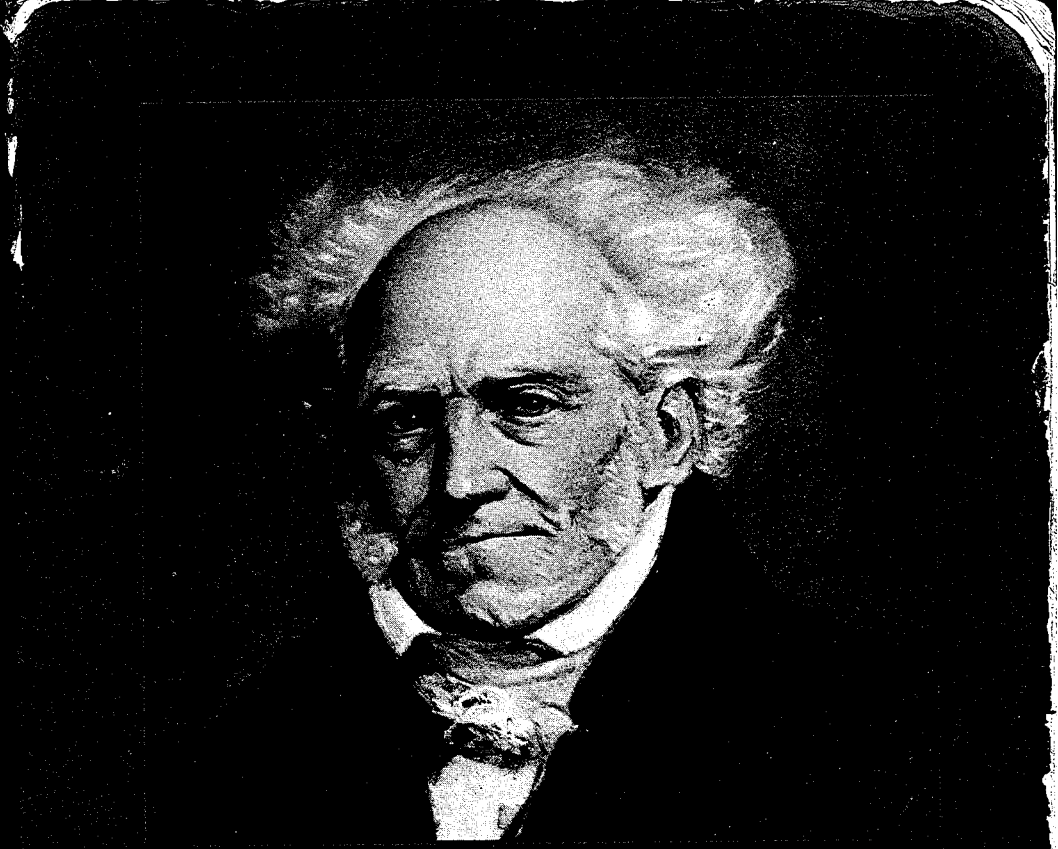

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY E. F. J. PAYNE

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

by a virtuous disposition and a good conscience, and the more distinct appearance of this with every good deed, since this proves to ourselves the depth of that disposition. The egoist feels himself surrounded by strange and hostile phenomena, and all his hope rests on his own well-being. The good person lives in a world of friendly phenomena; the well-being of any of these is his own well-being. Therefore, although the knowledge of the lot of man generally does not make his disposition a cheerful one, the permanent knowledge of his own inner nature in everything that lives nevertheless gives him a certain uniformity and even serenity of disposition. For the interest extended over innumerable phenomena cannot cause such anxiety as that which is concentrated on one phenomenon. The accidents that concern the totality of individuals equalize themselves, while those that befall the individual entail good or bad fortune.

Therefore, although others have laid down moral principles which they gave out as precepts for virtue and laws necessarily to be observed, I cannot do this, as I have said already, because I have no "ought" or law to hold before the eternally free will. On the other hand, in reference to my discussion, what corresponds and is analogous to that undertaking is that purely theoretical truth, and the whole of my argument can be regarded as a mere elaboration thereof, namely that the will is the in-itself of every phenomenon, but itself as such is free from the forms of that phenomenon, and so from plurality. In reference to conduct, I do not know how this truth can be more worthily expressed than by the formula of the *Veda* already quoted: *Tat tvam asi* ("This art thou!"). Whoever is able to declare this to himself with clear knowledge and firm inward conviction about every creature with whom he comes in contact, is certain of all virtue and bliss, and is on the direct path to salvation.

Now before I go farther, and show, as the last item in my discussion, how love, whose origin and nature we know to be seeing through the *principium individuationis,* leads to salvation, that is, to the entire surrender of the will-to-live, i.e., of all willing, and also how another path, less smooth yet more frequented, brings man to the same goal, a paradoxical sentence must first be here stated and explained. This is not because it is paradoxical, but because it is true, and is necessary for the completeness of the thought I have to express. It is this: "All love (ἀγάπη, *caritas*) is compassion or sympathy."

§ 67.

We have seen how, from seeing through the *principium individuationis,* in the lesser degree justice arises, and in the higher degree real goodness of disposition, a goodness that shows itself as pure, i.e., disinterested, affection towards others. Now where this becomes complete, the individuality and fate of others are treated entirely like one's own. It can never go farther, for no reason exists for preferring another's individuality to one's own. Yet the great number of the other individuals whose whole well-being or life is in danger can outweigh the regard for one's own particular well-being. In such a case, the character that has reached the highest goodness and perfect magnanimity will sacrifice its well-being and its life completely for the well-being of many others. So died Codrus, Leonidas, Regulus, Decius Mus, and Arnold von Winkelried; so does everyone die who voluntarily and consciously goes to certain death for his friends, or for his native land. And everyone also stands at this level who willingly takes suffering and death upon himself for the maintenance of what conduces and rightfully belongs to the welfare of all mankind, in other words, for universal, important truths, and for the eradication of great errors. So died Socrates and Giordano Bruno; and so did many a hero of truth meet his death at the stake at the hands of the priests.

Now with reference to the paradox above expressed, I must call to mind the fact that we previously found suffering to be essential to, and inseparable from, life as a whole, and that we saw how every desire springs from a need, a want, a suffering, and that every satisfaction is therefore only a pain removed, not a positive happiness brought. We saw that the joys certainly lie to the desire in stating that they are a positive good, but that in truth they are only of a negative nature, and only the end of an evil. Therefore, whatever goodness, affection, and magnanimity do for others is always only an alleviation of their sufferings; and consequently what can move them to good deeds and to works of affection is always only *knowledge of the suffering of others,* directly intelligible from one's own suffering, and put on a level therewith. It follows from this, however, that pure affection (ἀγάπη, *caritas*) is of its nature sympathy or

compassion. The suffering alleviated by it, to which every unsatisfied desire belongs, may be great or small. We shall therefore have no hesitation in saying that the mere concept is as unfruitful for genuine virtue as it is for genuine art; that all true and pure affection is sympathy or compassion, and all love that is not sympathy is selfishness. All this will be in direct contradiction to Kant, who recognizes all true goodness and all virtue as such, only if they have resulted from abstract reflection, and in fact from the concept of duty and the categorical imperative, and who declares felt sympathy to be weakness, and by no means virtue. Selfishness is ἔρως, sympathy or compassion is ἀγάπη. Combinations of the two occur frequently; even genuine friendship is always a mixture of selfishness and sympathy. Selfishness lies in the pleasure in the presence of the friend, whose individuality corresponds to our own, and it almost invariably constitutes the greatest part; sympathy shows itself in a sincere participation in the friend's weal and woe, and in the disinterested sacrifices made for the latter. Even Spinoza says: *Benevolentia nihil aliud est, quam cupiditas ex commiseratione orta*[54] (*Ethics,* iii, pr. 27, cor. 3 schol.). As confirmation of our paradoxical sentence, it may be observed that the tone and words of the language and the caresses of pure love entirely coincide with the tone of sympathy or compassion. Incidentally, it may be observed also that sympathy and pure love are expressed in Italian by the same word, *pietà.*

This is also the place to discuss one of the most striking peculiarities of human nature, *weeping,* which, like laughter, belongs to the manifestations that distinguish man from the animal. Weeping is by no means a positive manifestation of pain, for it occurs where pains are least. In my opinion, we never weep directly over pain that is felt, but always only over its repetition in reflection. Thus we pass from the felt pain, even when it is physical, to a mere mental picture or representation of it; we then find our own state so deserving of sympathy that, if another were the sufferer, we are firmly and sincerely convinced that we would be full of sympathy and love to help him. Now we ourselves are the object of our own sincere sympathy; with the most charitable disposition, we ourselves are most in need of help. We feel that we endure more than we could see another endure, and in this peculiarly involved frame of mind, in which the directly felt suffering comes to perception only in a doubly indirect way, pictured as the suffering of another and sympathized with as such, and then suddenly perceived again as directly our own; in such a frame of mind nature finds relief through

[54] "Benevolence is nothing but a desire sprung from compassion." [Tr.]

that curious physical convulsion. Accordingly, *weeping is sympathy with ourselves,* or sympathy thrown back to its starting-point. It is therefore conditioned by the capacity for affection and sympathy, and by the imagination. Therefore people who are either hard-hearted or without imagination do not readily weep; indeed weeping is always regarded as a sign of a certain degree of goodness of character, and it disarms anger. This is because it is felt that whoever is still able to weep must also necessarily be capable of affection, i.e., of sympathy towards others, for this enters in the way described into that mood that leads to weeping. The description which Petrarch gives of the rising of his own tears, naïvely and truly expressing his feeling, is entirely in accordance with the explanation that has been given:

I' vo pensando: e nel pensar m'assale
Una pietà si forte di me stesso,
Che mi conduce spesso
Ad alto lagrimar, ch' i' non soleva.[55]

What has been said is also confirmed by the fact that children who have been hurt generally cry only when they are pitied, and hence not on account of the pain, but on account of the conception of it. That we are moved to tears not by our own sufferings, but by those of others, happens in the following way; either in imagination we put ourselves vividly in the sufferer's place, or we see in his fate the lot of the whole of humanity, and consequently above all our own fate. Thus in a very roundabout way, we always weep about ourselves; we feel sympathy with ourselves. This seems also to be a main reason for the universal, and hence natural, weeping in cases of death. It is not the mourner's loss over which he weeps; he would be ashamed of such egoistical tears, instead of sometimes being ashamed of not weeping. In the first place, of course, he weeps over the fate of the deceased; yet he weeps also when for the deceased death was a desirable deliverance after long, grave, and incurable sufferings. In the main, therefore, he is seized with sympathy over the lot of the whole of mankind that is given over to finiteness. In consequence of this, every life, however ambitious and often rich in deeds, must become extinct and nothing. In this lot of mankind, however, the mourner sees first of all his own lot, and this the more, the more closely he was related to the deceased, and

[55] "As I wander deep in thought, so strong a *sympathy with myself* comes over me, that I must often weep aloud, a thing I am otherwise not accustomed to do." [Tr.]

most of all therefore when the deceased was his father. Although to this father life was a misery through age and sickness, and through his helplessness a heavy burden to the son, the son nevertheless weeps bitterly over the death of his father for the reason already stated.[56]

§ 68.

After this digression on the identity of pure love with sympathy, the turning back of sympathy on to our own individuality having as its symptom the phenomenon of weeping, I take up again the thread of our discussion of the ethical significance of conduct, to show how, from the same source from which all goodness, affection, virtue, and nobility of character spring, there ultimately arises also what I call denial of the will-to-live.

Just as previously we saw hatred and wickedness conditioned by egoism, and this depending on knowledge being entangled in the *principium individuationis,* so we found as the source and essence of justice, and, when carried farther to the highest degrees, of love and magnanimity, that penetration of the *principium individuationis.* This penetration alone, by abolishing the distinction between our own individuality and that of others, makes possible and explains perfect goodness of disposition, extending to the most disinterested love, and the most generous self-sacrifice for others.

Now, if seeing through the *principium individuationis,* if this direct knowledge of the identity of the will in all its phenomena, is present in a high degree of distinctness, it will at once show an influence on the will which goes still farther. If that veil of Maya, the *principium individuationis,* is lifted from the eyes of a man to such an extent that he no longer makes the egoistical distinction between himself and the person of others, but takes as much interest in the sufferings of other individuals as in his own, and thus is not only benevolent

[56] Cf. chap. 47 of volume 2. It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that the whole of the ethics given in outline in §§ 61-67 has received a more detailed and complete description in my essay *On the Basis of Morality.*

and charitable in the highest degree, but even ready to sacrifice his own individuality whenever several others can be saved thereby, then it follows automatically that such a man, recognizing in all beings his own true and innermost self, must also regard the endless sufferings of all that lives as his own, and thus take upon himself the pain of the whole world. No suffering is any longer strange or foreign to him. All the miseries of others, which he sees and is so seldom able to alleviate, all the miseries of which he has indirect knowledge, and even those he recognizes merely as possible, affect his mind just as do his own. It is no longer the changing weal and woe of his person that he has in view, as is the case with the man still involved in egoism, but, as he sees through the *principium individuationis,* everything lies equally near to him. He knows the whole, comprehends its inner nature, and finds it involved in a constant passing away, a vain striving, an inward conflict, and a continual suffering. Wherever he looks, he sees suffering humanity and the suffering animal world, and a world that passes away. Now all this lies just as near to him as only his own person lies to the egoist. Now how could he, with such knowledge of the world, affirm this very life through constant acts of will, and precisely in this way bind himself more and more firmly to it, press himself to it more and more closely? Thus, whoever is still involved in the *principium individuationis,* in egoism, knows only particular things and their relation to his own person, and these then become ever renewed *motives* of his willing. On the other hand, that knowledge of the whole, of the inner nature of the thing-in-itself, which has been described, becomes the *quieter* of all and every willing. The will now turns away from life; it shudders at the pleasures in which it recognizes the affirmation of life. Man attains to the state of voluntary renunciation, resignation, true composure, and complete willlessness. At times, in the hard experience of our own sufferings or in the vividly recognized suffering of others, knowledge of the vanity and bitterness of life comes close to us who are still enveloped in the veil of Maya. We would like to deprive desires of their sting, close the entry to all suffering, purify and sanctify ourselves by complete and final resignation. But the illusion of the phenomenon soon ensnares us again, and its motives set the will in motion once more; we cannot tear ourselves free. The allurements of hope, the flattery of the present, the sweetness of pleasures, the well-being that falls to the lot of our person amid the lamentations of a suffering world governed by chance and error, all these draw us back to it, and rivet the bonds anew. Therefore Jesus says: "It is easier for

a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." [57]

If we compare life to a circular path of red-hot coals having a few cool places, a path that we have to run over incessantly, then the man entangled in delusion is comforted by the cool place on which he is just now standing, or which he sees near him, and sets out to run over the path. But the man who sees through the *principium individuationis,* and recognizes the true nature of things-in-themselves, and thus the whole, is no longer susceptible of such consolation; he sees himself in all places simultaneously, and withdraws. His will turns about; it no longer affirms its own inner nature, mirrored in the phenomenon, but denies it. The phenomenon by which this becomes manifest is the transition from virtue to *asceticism.* In other words, it is no longer enough for him to love others like himself, and to do as much for them as for himself, but there arises in him a strong aversion to the inner nature whose expression is his own phenomenon, to the will-to-live, the kernel and essence of that world recognized as full of misery. He therefore renounces precisely this inner nature, which appears in him and is expressed already by his body, and his action gives the lie to his phenomenon, and appears in open contradiction thereto. Essentially nothing but phenomenon of the will, he ceases to will anything, guards against attaching his will to anything, tries to establish firmly in himself the greatest indifference to all things. His body, healthy and strong, expresses the sexual impulse through the genitals, but he denies the will, and gives the lie to the body; he desires no sexual satisfaction on any condition. Voluntary and complete chastity is the first step in asceticism or the denial of the will-to-live. It thereby denies the affirmation of the will which goes beyond the individual life, and thus announces that the will, whose phenomenon is the body, ceases with the life of this body. Nature, always true and naïve, asserts that, if this maxim became universal, the human race would die out; and after what was said in the second book about the connexion of all phenomena of will, I think I can assume that, with the highest phenomenon of will, the weaker reflection of it, namely the animal world, would also be abolished, just as the half-shades vanish with the full light of day. With the complete abolition of knowledge the rest of the world would of itself also vanish into nothing, for there can be no object without a subject. Here I would like to refer to a passage in the *Veda* where it says: "As in this world hungry children press round their mother, so do all beings await the holy obla-

[57] Matthew xix, 24. [Tr.]

tion." (*Asiatic Researches,* Vol. viii; Colebrooke, *On the Vedas, Epitome of the Sama Veda; idem, Miscellaneous Essays,* Vol. i, p. 88.)[58] Sacrifice signifies resignation generally, and the rest of nature has to expect its salvation from man who is at the same time priest and sacrifice. In fact, it is worth mentioning as extremely remarkable that this thought has also been expressed by the admirable and immeasurably profound Angelus Silesius in the little poem entitled "Man brings all to God"; it runs:

> "Man! all love you; great is the throng around you:
> All flock to you that they may attain to God."

But an even greater mystic, Meister Eckhart, whose wonderful writings have at last (1857) become accessible to us through the edition of Franz Pfeiffer, says (p. 459) wholly in the sense here discussed: "I confirm this with Christ, for he says: 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things [men] unto me' (John xii, 32). So shall the good man draw all things up to God, to the source whence they first came. The masters certify to us that all creatures are made for the sake of man. This is proved in all creatures by the fact that one creature makes use of another; the ox makes use of the grass, the fish of the water, the bird of the air, the animals of the forest. Thus all creatures come to the profit of the good man. A good man bears to God one creature in the other." He means that because, in and with himself, man also saves the animals, he makes use of them in this life. It seems to me indeed that that difficult passage in the Bible, Rom. viii, 21-24, is to be interpreted in this sense.

Even in Buddhism there is no lack of expressions of this matter; for example, when the Buddha, while still a Bodhisattva, has his horse saddled for the last time, for the flight from his father's house into the wilderness, he says to the horse in verse: "Long have you existed in life and in death, but now you shall cease to carry and to draw. Bear me away from here just this once, O Kantakana, and when I have attained the Law (have become Buddha), I shall not forget you." (*Foe Koue Ki,* trans. by Abel Rémusat, p. 233.)

Asceticism shows itself further in voluntary and intentional poverty, which arises not only *per accidens,* since property is given away to alleviate the sufferings of others, but which is here an end in itself; it is to serve as a constant mortification of the will, so that

[58] The passage is taken from the *Chandogya Upanishad,* V, 24, 5, and in literal translation is: "Just as hungry children here sit round their mother, so do all beings sit round the agnihotram" (the fire-sacrifice offered by the knower of Brahman). [Tr.]

satisfaction of desires, the sweets of life, may not again stir the will, of which self-knowledge has conceived a horror. He who has reached this point still always feels, as living body, as concrete phenomenon of will, the natural tendency to every kind of willing; but he deliberately suppresses it, since he compels himself to refrain from doing all that he would like to do, and on the other hand to do all that he would not like to do, even if this has no further purpose than that of serving to mortify the will. As he himself denies the will that appears in his own person, he will not resist when another does the same thing, in other words, inflicts wrong on him. Therefore, every suffering that comes to him from outside through chance or the wickedness of others is welcome to him; every injury, every ignominy, every outrage. He gladly accepts them as the opportunity for giving himself the certainty that he no longer affirms the will, but gladly sides with every enemy of the will's phenomenon that is his own person. He therefore endures such ignominy and suffering with inexhaustible patience and gentleness, returns good for all evil without ostentation, and allows the fire of anger to rise again within him as little as he does the fire of desires. 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. Thus he resorts to fasting, and even to self-castigation and self-torture, in order that, by constant privation and suffering, he may more and more break down and kill the will that he recognizes and abhors as the source of his own suffering existence and of the world's. Finally, if death comes, which breaks up the phenomenon of this will, the essence of such will having long since expired through free denial of itself except for the feeble residue which appears as the vitality of this body, then it is most welcome, and is cheerfully accepted as a longed-for deliverance. It is not merely the phenomenon, as in the case of others, that comes to an end with death, but the inner being itself that is abolished; this had a feeble existence merely in the phenomenon.[59] This last slender bond is now severed; for him who ends thus, the world has at the same time ended.

[59] This idea is expressed by a fine simile in the ancient Sanskrit philosophical work *Sankhya Karika:* "Yet the soul remains for a time clothed with the body, just as the potter's wheel continues to spin after the pot has been finished, in consequence of the impulse previously given to it. Only when the inspired soul separates itself from the body and nature ceases for it, does its complete salvation take place." Colebrooke, "On the Philosophy of the Hindus": *Miscellaneous Essays,* Vol. I, p. 259. Also in the *Sankhya Carica* by Horace Wilson, § 67, p. 184.

And what I have described here with feeble tongue, and only in general terms, is not some philosophical fable, invented by myself and only of today. No, it was the enviable life of so many saints and great souls among the Christians, and even more among the Hindus and Buddhists, and also among the believers of other religions. Different as were the dogmas that were impressed on their faculty of reason, the inner, direct, and intuitive knowledge from which alone all virtue and holiness can come is nevertheless expressed in precisely the same way in the conduct of life. For here also is seen the great distinction between intuitive and abstract knowledge, a distinction of such importance and of general application in the whole of our discussion, and one which hitherto has received too little notice. Between the two is a wide gulf; and, in regard to knowledge of the inner nature of the world, this gulf can be crossed only by philosophy. Intuitively, or *in concreto,* every man is really conscious of all philosophical truths; but to bring them into his abstract knowledge, into reflection, is the business of the philosopher, who neither ought to nor can do more than this.

Thus it may be that the inner nature of holiness, of self-renunciation, of mortification of one's own will, of asceticism, is here for the first time expressed in abstract terms and free from everything mythical, as *denial of the will-to-live,* which appears after the complete knowledge of its own inner being has become for it the quieter of all willing. On the other hand, it has been known directly and expressed in deed by all those saints and ascetics who, in spite of the same inner knowledge, used very different language according to the dogmas which their faculty of reason had accepted, and in consequence of which an Indian, a Christian, or a Lamaist saint must each give a very different account of his own conduct; but this is of no importance at all as regards the fact. A saint may be full of the most absurd superstition, or, on the other hand, may be a philosopher; it is all the same. His conduct alone is evidence that he is a saint; for, in a moral regard, it springs not from abstract knowledge, but from intuitively apprehended, immediate knowledge of the world and of its inner nature, and is expressed by him through some dogma only for the satisfaction of his faculty of reason. It is therefore just as little necessary for the saint to be a philosopher as for the philosopher to be a saint; just as it is not necessary for a perfectly beautiful person to be a great sculptor, or for a great sculptor to be himself a beautiful person. In general, it is a strange demand on a moralist that he should commend no other virtue than that which he himself possesses. To repeat abstractly, universally, and distinctly in concepts the whole inner nature of the world, and

thus to deposit it as a reflected image in permanent concepts always ready for the faculty of reason, this and nothing else is philosophy. I recall the passage from Bacon quoted in the first book.

But my description, given above, of the denial of the will-to-live, or of the conduct of a beautiful soul, of a resigned and voluntarily expiating saint, is only abstract and general, and therefore cold. As the knowledge from which results the denial of the will is intuitive and not abstract, it finds its complete expression not in abstract concepts, but only in the deed and in conduct. Therefore, in order to understand more fully what we express philosophically as denial of the will-to-live, we have to learn to know examples from experience and reality. Naturally we shall not come across them in daily experience: *nam omnia praeclara tam difficilia quam rara sunt,*[60] as Spinoza admirably says. Therefore, unless we are made eyewitnesses by a specially favourable fate, we shall have to content ourselves with the biographies of such persons. Indian literature, as we see from the little that is so far known to us through translations, is very rich in descriptions of the lives of saints, penitents, Samanas, Sannyasis, and so on. Even the well-known *Mythologie des Indous* of Madame de Polier, although by no means praiseworthy in every respect, contains many excellent examples of this kind (especially in Vol. 2, chapter 13). Among Christians there is also no lack of examples affording us the illustrations that we have in mind. Let us see the biographies, often badly written, of those persons sometimes called saintly souls, sometimes pietists, quietists, pious enthusiasts, and so on. Collections of such biographies have been made at various times, such as Tersteegen's *Leben heiliger Seelen,* Reiz's *Geschichte der Wiedergeborenen* in our own day, a collection by Kanne which, with much that is bad, yet contains some good, especially the *Leben der Beata Sturmin.* To this category very properly belongs the life of St. Francis of Assisi, that true personification of asceticism and prototype of all mendicant friars. His life, described by his younger contemporary St. Bonaventure, also famous as a scholastic, has recently been republished: *Vita S. Francisci a S. Bonaventura concinnata* (Soest, 1847), shortly after the appearance in France of an accurate and detailed biography which utilizes all the sources: *Histoire de S. François d'Assise,* by Chavin de Mallan (1845). As an oriental parallel to these monastic writings, we have the book of Spence Hardy: *Eastern Monachism, An Account of the Order of Mendicants founded by Gotama Budha* (1850), which is very well worth reading. It shows us the same thing under a

[60] "For all that is excellent and eminent is as difficult as it is rare." [*Ethics,* v, prop. 42 schol. Tr.]

different cloak. We also see how immaterial it is whether it proceeds from a theistic or from an atheistic religion. But as a special and extremely full example and actual illustration of the conceptions I advance, I can particularly recommend the *Autobiography* of Madame de Guyon. To become acquainted with that great and beautiful soul, whose remembrance always fills me with reverence, and to do justice to the excellence of her disposition while making allowances for the superstition of her faculty of reason, must be gratifying to every person of the better sort, just as with common thinkers, in other words the majority, that book will always stand in bad repute. For everyone, always and everywhere, can appreciate only that which is to some extent analogous to him, and for which he has at any rate a feeble gift; this holds good of the ethical as well as of the intellectual. To a certain extent we might regard even the well-known French biography of Spinoza as a case in point, if we use as the key to it that excellent introduction to his very inadequate essay, *De Emendatione Intellectus.* At the same time, I can recommend this passage as the most effective means known to me of stilling the storm of the passions. Finally, even the great Goethe, Greek as he was, did not regard it as beneath his dignity to show us this most beautiful side of humanity in the elucidating mirror of the poetic art, since he presented to us in an idealized form the life of Fräulein Klettenberg in the *Confessions of a Beautiful Soul,* and later, in his own biography, gave us also a historical account of it. Besides this, he twice narrated the life of St. Philip Neri. The history of the world will, and indeed must, always keep silence about the persons whose conduct is the best and only adequate illustration of this important point of our investigation. For the material of world-history is quite different therefrom, and indeed opposed to it; thus it is not the denial and giving up of the will-to-live, but its affirmation and manifestation in innumerable individuals in which its dissension with itself at the highest point of its objectification appears with perfect distinctness, and brings before our eyes, now the superior strength of the individual through his shrewdness, now the might of the many through their mass, now the ascendancy of chance personified as fate, always the vanity and futility of the whole striving and effort. But we do not follow here the thread of phenomena in time, but, as philosophers, try to investigate the ethical significance of actions, and take this as the only criterion of what is significant and important for us. No fear of the always permanent majority of vulgarity and shallowness will prevent us from acknowledging that the greatest, the most important, and the most significant phenomenon that the world can show is not the

conqueror of the world, but the overcomer of the world, and so really nothing but the quiet and unobserved conduct in the life of such a man. On this man has dawned the knowledge in consequence of which he gives up and denies that will-to-live that fills everything, and strives and strains in all. The freedom of this will first appears here in him alone, and by it his actions now become the very opposite of the ordinary. For the philosopher, therefore, in this respect those accounts of the lives of saintly, self-denying persons, badly written as they generally are, and mixed up with superstition and nonsense, are through the importance of the material incomparably more instructive and important than even Plutarch and Livy.

Further, a more detailed and complete knowledge of what we express in abstraction and generality through our method of presentation as denial of the will-to-live, will be very greatly facilitated by a consideration of the ethical precepts given in this sense and by people who were full of this spirit. These will at the same time show how old our view is, however new its purely philosophical expression may be. In the first place, Christianity is nearest at hand, the ethics of which is entirely in the spirit we have mentioned, and leads not only to the highest degrees of charity and human kindness, but also to renunciation. The germ of this last side is certainly distinctly present in the writings of the Apostles, yet only later is it fully developed and explicitly expressed. We find commanded by the Apostles love for our neighbour as for ourselves, returning of hatred with love and good actions, patience, meekness, endurance of all possible affronts and injuries without resistance, moderation in eating and drinking for suppressing desire, resistance to the sexual impulse, even complete if possible for us. Here we see the first stages of asceticism or of real denial of the will; this last expression denotes what is called in the Gospels denying the self and taking of the cross upon oneself. (Matt. xvi, 24, 25; Mark viii, 34, 35; Luke ix, 23, 24; xiv, 26, 27, 33.) This tendency was soon developed more and more, and was the origin of penitents, anchorites, and monasticism, an origin that in itself was pure and holy, but, for this very reason, quite unsuitable to the great majority of people. Therefore what developed out of it could be only hypocrisy and infamy, for *abusus optimi pessimus*.[61] In more developed Christianity, we see that seed of asceticism unfold into full flower in the writings of the Christian saints and mystics. Besides the purest love,

[61] "The worst is the abuse of the best." [Tr.]

these preach also complete resignation, voluntary and absolute poverty, true composure, complete indifference to all worldly things, death to one's own will and regeneration in God, entire forgetting of one's own person and absorption in the contemplation of God. A complete description of this is to be found in Fénélon's *Explication des maximes des Saints sur la vie intérieure*. But the spirit of this development of Christianity is certainly nowhere so perfectly and powerfully expressed as in the writings of the German mystics, e.g. those of Meister Eckhart, and the justly famous book *Theologia Germanica*. In the introduction to this last which Luther wrote, he says of it that, with the exception of the Bible and St. Augustine, he had learnt more from it of what God, Christ, and man are than from any other book. Yet only in the year 1851 did we acquire its genuine and unadulterated text in the Stuttgart edition of Pfeiffer. The precepts and doctrines given in it are the most perfect explanation, springing from deep inward conviction, of what I have described as the denial of the will-to-live. One has therefore to make a closer study of it before dogmatizing about it with Jewish-Protestant assurance. Tauler's *Nachfolgung des armen Leben Christi,* together with his *Medulla Animae,* are written in the same admirable spirit, although not quite equal in value to that work. In my opinion, the teachings of these genuine Christian mystics are related to those of the New Testament as alcohol is to wine; in other words, what becomes visible to us in the New Testament as if through a veil and mist, stands before us in the works of the mystics without cloak or disguise, in full clearness and distinctness. Finally, we might also regard the New Testament as the first initiation, the mystics as the second, σμικρὰ καὶ μεγάλα μυστήρια.[62]

But we find what we have called denial of the will-to-live still further developed, more variously expressed, and more vividly presented in the ancient works in the Sanskrit language than could be the case in the Christian Church and the Western world. That this important ethical view of life could attain here to a more far-reaching development and a more decided expression, is perhaps to be ascribed mainly to the fact that it was not restricted by an element quite foreign to it, as the Jewish doctrine of faith is in Christianity. The sublime founder of Christianity had necessarily to adapt and accommodate himself, partly consciously, partly, it may be, unconsciously, to this doctrine; and so Christianity is composed of two very heterogeneous elements. Of these I should like to call the

[62] "Small and great mysteries" [the former celebrated by the Athenians in March, the latter in October. Tr.].

purely ethical element preferably, indeed exclusively, the Christian, and to distinguish it from the Jewish dogmatism with which it is found. If, as has often been feared, and especially at the present time, that excellent and salutary religion should completely decline, then I would look for the reason for this simply in the fact that it does not consist of one simple element, but of two originally heterogeneous elements, brought into combination only by means of world events. In such a case, dissolution would necessarily result through the break-up of these elements, which arises from their different relationship and reaction to the advanced spirit of the times. Yet after this dissolution, the purely ethical part would still be bound always to remain intact, because it is indestructible. However imperfect our knowledge of Hindu literature still is, as we now find it most variously and powerfully expressed in the ethics of the Hindus, in the *Vedas, Puranas,* poetical works, myths, legends of their saints, in aphorisms, maxims, and rules of conduct,[63] we see that it ordains love of one's neighbour with complete denial of all self-love; love in general, not limited to the human race, but embracing all that lives; charitableness even to the giving away of one's hard-won daily earnings; boundless patience towards all offenders; return of all evil, however bad it may be, with goodness and love; voluntary and cheerful endurance of every insult and ignominy; abstinence from all animal food; perfect chastity and renunciation of all sensual pleasure for him who aspires to real holiness; the throwing away of all property; the forsaking of every dwelling-place and of all kinsfolk; deep unbroken solitude spent in silent contemplation with voluntary penance and terrible slow self-torture for the complete mortification of the will, ultimately going as far as voluntary death by starvation, or facing crocodiles, or jumping over the consecrated precipice in the Himalaya, or being buried alive, or flinging oneself under the wheels of the huge car that drives round with the images of the gods amid the singing, shouting, and dancing of bayaderes. These precepts, whose origin reaches back more than four thousand years, are still lived up to by individuals even to the utmost ex-

[63] See, for example, *Oupnek'hat,* studio Anquetil du Perron, Vol. II. Nos. 138, 144, 145, 146; *Mythologie des Indous,* by Madame de Polier, Vol. II, chaps. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; *Asiatisches Magazin,* by Klaproth, in the first volume; *Ueber die Fo-Religion, also Bhaguat-Geeta oder Gespräche zwischen Kreeshna und Arjoon;* in the second volume, *'Moha-Mudgava;* then *Institutes of Hindu Law, or the Ordinances of Manu,* from the Sanskrit by Sir William Jones (German by Hüttner, 1797); especially the sixth and twelfth chapters. Finally, many passages in the *Asiatic Researches.* (In the last forty years Indian literature has grown so much in Europe, that if I now wished to complete this note to the first edition, it would fill several pages.)

treme,[64] degenerate as that race is in many respects. That which has remained in practice for so long in a nation embracing so many millions, while it imposes the heaviest sacrifices, cannot be an arbitrarily invented freak, but must have its foundation in the very nature of mankind. But besides this, we cannot sufficiently wonder at the harmony we find, when we read the life of a Christian penitent or saint and that of an Indian. In spite of such fundamentally different dogmas, customs, and circumstances, the endeavour and the inner life of both are absolutely the same; and it is also the same with the precepts for both. For example, Tauler speaks of the complete poverty which one should seek, and which consists in giving away and divesting oneself entirely of everything from which one might draw some comfort or worldly pleasure, clearly because all this always affords new nourishment to the will, whose complete mortification is intended. As the Indian counterpart of this, we see in the precepts of Fo that the Sannyasi, who is supposed to be without dwelling and entirely without property, is finally enjoined not to lie down too often under the same tree, lest he acquire a preference or inclination for it. The Christian mystics and the teachers of the Vedanta philosophy agree also in regarding all outward works and religious practices as superfluous for the man who has attained perfection. So much agreement, in spite of such different ages and races, is a practical proof that here is expressed not an eccentricity and craziness of the mind, as optimistic shallowness and dulness like to assert, but an essential side of human nature which appears rarely only because of its superior quality.

I have now mentioned the sources from which we can obtain a direct knowledge, drawn from life, of the phenomena in which the denial of the will-to-live exhibits itself. To a certain extent, this is the most important point of our whole discussion; yet I have explained it only quite generally, for it is better to refer to those who speak from direct experience, than to increase the size of this book unnecessarily by repeating more feebly what they say.

I wish to add only a little more to the general description of their state. We saw above that the wicked man, by the vehemence of his willing, suffers constant, consuming, inner torment, and finally that, when all the objects of willing are exhausted, he quenches the fiery thirst of his wilfulness by the sight of others' pain. On the other hand, the man in whom the denial of the will-to-live has dawned, however poor, cheerless, and full of privation his state may be when

[64] At the procession of Jagganath in June 1840, eleven Hindus threw themselves under the car, and were instantly killed. (Letter from an East Indian landowner in *The Times* of 30 December, 1840.)

looked at from outside, is full of inner cheerfulness and true heavenly peace. It is not the restless and turbulent pressure of life, the jubilant delight that has keen suffering as its preceding or succeeding condition, such as constitute the conduct of the man attached to life, but it is an unshakable peace, a deep calm and inward serenity, a state that we cannot behold without the greatest longing, when it is brought before our eyes or imagination, since we at once recognize it as that which alone is right, infinitely outweighing everything else, at which our better spirit cries to us the great *sapere aude*.[65] We then feel that every fulfilment of our wishes won from the world is only like the alms that keep the beggar alive today so that he may starve again tomorrow. Resignation, on the other hand, is like the inherited estate; it frees its owner from all care and anxiety for ever.

It will be remembered from the third book that aesthetic pleasure in the beautiful consists, to a large extent, in the fact that, when we enter the state of pure contemplation, we are raised for the moment above all willing, above all desires and cares; we are, so to speak, rid of ourselves. We are no longer the individual that knows in the interest of its constant willing, the correlative of the particular thing to which objects become motives, but the eternal subject of knowing purified of the will, the correlative of the Idea. And we know that these moments, when, delivered from the fierce pressure of the will, we emerge, as it were, from the heavy atmosphere of the earth, are the most blissful that we experience. From this we can infer how blessed must be the life of a man whose will is silenced not for a few moments, as in the enjoyment of the beautiful, but for ever, indeed completely extinguished, except for the last glimmering spark that maintains the body and is extinguished with it. Such a man who, after many bitter struggles with his own nature, has at last completely conquered, is then left only as pure knowing being, as the undimmed mirror of the world. Nothing can distress or alarm him any more; nothing can any longer move him; for he has cut all the thousand threads of willing which hold us bound to the world, and which as craving, fear, envy, and anger drag us here and there in constant pain. He now looks back calmly and with a smile on the phantasmagoria of this world which was once able to move and agonize even his mind, but now stands before him as indifferently as chess-men at the end of a game, or as fancy dress cast off in the morning, the form and figure of which taunted and disquieted us on the carnival night. Life and its forms merely float

[65] "Bring yourself to be reasonable!" [Tr.]

before him as a fleeting phenomenon, as a light morning dream to one half-awake, through which reality already shines, and which can no longer deceive; and, like this morning dream, they too finally vanish without any violent transition. From these considerations we can learn to understand what Madame Guyon means when, towards the end of her *Autobiography,* she often expresses herself thus: "Everything is indifferent to me; I *cannot* will anything more; often I do not know whether I exist or not." In order to express how, after the dying-away of the will, the death of the body (which is indeed only the phenomenon of the will, and thus with the abolition of the will loses all meaning) can no longer have anything bitter, but is very welcome, I may be permitted to record here that holy penitent's own words, although they are not very elegantly turned: *"Midi de la gloire; jour où il n'y a plus de nuit; vie qui ne craint plus la mort, dans la mort même: parceque la mort a vaincu la mort, et que celui qui a souffert la première mort, ne goûtera plus la seconde mort."* (*Vie de Madame de Guion* [Cologne, 1720], Vol. II, p. 13.)[66]

However, we must not imagine that, after the denial of the will-to-live has once appeared through knowledge that has become a quieter of the will, such denial no longer wavers or falters, and that we can rest on it as on an inherited property. On the contrary, it must always be achieved afresh by constant struggle. For as the body is the will itself only in the form of objectivity, or as phenomenon in the world as representation, that whole will-to-live exists potentially so long as the body lives, and is always striving to reach actuality and to burn afresh with all its intensity. We therefore find in the lives of saintly persons that peace and bliss we have described, only as the blossom resulting from the constant overcoming of the will; and we see the constant struggle with the will-to-live as the soil from which it shoots up; for on earth no one can have lasting peace. We therefore see the histories of the inner life of saints full of spiritual conflicts, temptations, and desertion from grace, in other words, from that kind of knowledge which, by rendering all motives ineffectual, as a universal quieter silences all willing, gives the deepest peace, and opens the gate to freedom. Therefore we see also those who have once attained to denial of the will, strive with all their might to keep to this path by self-imposed renunciations of every kind, by a penitent and hard way of life, and by looking for

[66] "The noonday of glory; a day no longer followed by night; a life that no longer fears death, even in death itself, because death has overcome death, and because whoever has suffered the first death will no longer feel the second." [Tr.]

what is disagreeable to them; all this in order to suppress the will that is constantly springing up afresh. Finally, therefore, because they already know the value of salvation, their anxious care for the retention of the hard-won blessing, their scruples of conscience in the case of every innocent enjoyment or with every little excitement of their vanity; this is also the last thing to die, the most indestructible, the most active, and the most foolish of all man's inclinations. By the expression *asceticism,* which I have already used so often, I understand in the narrower sense this *deliberate* breaking of the will by refusing the agreeable and looking for the disagreeable, the voluntarily chosen way of life of penance and self-chastisement, for the constant mortification of the will.

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 (δεύτερος πλοῦς)* of attaining to that denial. Indeed, we may assume that most men can reach it only in this way, and that it is the suffering personally felt, not the suffering merely known, which most frequently produces complete resignation, often only at the approach of death. For only in the case of a few is mere knowledge sufficient to bring about the denial of the will, the knowledge namely that sees through the *principium individuationis,* first producing perfect goodness of disposition and universal love of mankind, and finally enabling them to recognize as their own all the sufferings of the world. Even in the case of the individual who approaches this point, the tolerable condition of his own person, the flattery of the moment, the allurement of hope, and the satisfaction of the will offering itself again and again, i.e., the satisfaction of desire, are almost invariably a constant obstacle to the denial of the will, and a constant temptation to a renewed affirmation of it. For this reason, all those allurements have in this respect been personified as the devil. Therefore in most cases the will must be broken by the greatest personal suffering before its self-denial appears. We then see the man suddenly retire into himself, after he is brought to the verge of despair through all the stages of increasing affliction with the most violent resistance. We see him know himself and the world, change his whole nature, rise above himself and above all suffering, as if purified and sanctified by it, in inviolable peace, bliss, and sublimity, willingly renounce

* On δεύτερος πλοῦς cf. Stobaeus, *Florilegium,* Vol. II, p. 374. [Footnotes indicated by an asterisk represent additions made by Schopenhauer in his interleaved copy of the third edition of 1859. He died in 1860, and so there are very few of these. Tr.]

everything he formerly desired with the greatest vehemence, and gladly welcome death. It is the gleam of silver that suddenly appears from the purifying flame of suffering, the gleam of the denial of the will-to-live, of salvation. Occasionally we see even those who were very wicked purified to this degree by the deepest grief and sorrow; they have become different, and are completely converted. Therefore, their previous misdeeds no longer trouble their consciences, yet they gladly pay for such misdeeds with death, and willingly see the end of the phenomenon of that will that is now foreign to and abhorred by them. The great Goethe has given us a distinct and visible description of this denial of the will, brought about by great misfortune and by the despair of all deliverance, in his immortal masterpiece *Faust,* in the story of the sufferings of Gretchen. I know of no other description in poetry. It is a perfect specimen of the second path, which leads to the denial of the will not, like the first, through the mere knowledge of the suffering of a whole world which one acquires voluntarily, but through the excessive pain felt in one's own person. It is true that very many tragedies bring their violently willing heroes ultimately to this point of complete resignation, and then the will-to-live and its phenomenon usually end at the same time. But no description known to me brings to us the essential point of that conversion so distinctly and so free from everything extraneous as the one mentioned in *Faust.*

In real life we see those unfortunate persons who have to drink to the dregs the greatest measure of suffering, face a shameful, violent, and often painful death on the scaffold with complete mental vigour, after they are deprived of all hope; and very often we see them converted in this way. We should not, of course, assume that there is so great a difference between their character and that of most men as their fate seems to suggest; we have to ascribe the latter for the most part to circumstances; yet they are guilty and, to a considerable degree, bad. But we see many of them converted in the way mentioned, after the appearance of complete hopelessness. They now show actual goodness and purity of disposition, true abhorrence of committing any deed in the least degree wicked or uncharitable. They forgive their enemies, even those through whom they innocently suffered; and not merely in words and from a kind of hypocritical fear of the judges of the nether world, but in reality and with inward earnestness, and with no wish for revenge. Indeed, their suffering and dying in the end become agreeable to them, for the denial of the will-to-live has made its appearance. They often decline the deliverance offered them, and die willingly, peacefully,

and blissfully. The last secret of life has revealed itself to them in the excess of pain, the secret, namely, that evil and wickedness, suffering and hatred, the tormented and the tormentor, different as they may appear to knowledge that follows the principle of sufficient reason, are in themselves one, phenomenon of the one will-to-live that objectifies its conflict with itself by means of the *principium individuationis*. They have learned to know both sides in full measure, the wickedness and the evil; and since they ultimately see the identity of the two, they reject them both at the same time; they deny the will-to-live. As we have said, it is a matter of complete indifference by what myths and dogmas they account to their faculty of reason for this intuitive and immediate knowledge, and for their conversion.

Matthias Claudius was undoubtedly a witness to a change of mind of this sort, when he wrote the remarkable essay which appears in the *Wandsbecker Bote* (Pt. I, p. 115) under the title *Bekehrungsgeschichte des . . .* ("History of the Conversion of . . .") which has the following ending: "Man's way of thinking can pass over from a point of the periphery to the opposite point, and back again to the previous point, if circumstances trace out for him the curved path to it. And these changes are not really anything great and interesting in man. But that *remarkable, catholic, transcendental change,* where the whole circle is irreparably torn up and all the laws of psychology become vain and empty, where the coat of skins is taken off, or at any rate turned inside out, and man's eyes are opened, is such that everyone who is conscious to some extent of the breath in his nostrils, forsakes father and mother, if he can hear and experience something certain about it."

The approach of death and hopelessness, however, are not absolutely necessary for such a purification through suffering. Even without them, the knowledge of the contradiction of the will-to-live with itself can, through great misfortune and suffering, violently force itself on us, and the vanity of all endeavour can be perceived. Hence men who have led a very adventurous life under the pressure of passions, men such as kings, heroes, or adventurers, have often been seen suddenly to change, resort to resignation and penance, and become hermits and monks. To this class belong all genuine accounts of conversion, for instance that of Raymond Lull, who had long wooed a beautiful woman, was at last admitted to her chamber, and was looking forward to the fulfilment of all his desires, when, opening her dress, she showed him her bosom terribly eaten away with cancer. From that moment, as if he had looked into hell, he was converted; leaving the court of the King of Majorca, he went into

the wilderness to do penance.[67] This story of conversion is very similar to that of the Abbé de Rancé which I have briefly related in chapter 48 of volume two. If we consider how, in both cases, the transition from the pleasure to the horror of life was the occasion, this gives us an explanation of the remarkable fact that it is the French nation, the most cheerful, merry, gay, sensual, and frivolous in Europe, in which by far the strictest of all monastic orders, namely the Trappist, arose, was re-established by Rancé after its decline, and maintains itself even to the present day in all its purity and fearful strictness, in spite of revolutions, changes in the Church, and the encroachments of infidelity.

However, a knowledge of the above-mentioned kind of the nature of this existence may depart again simultaneously with its occasion, and the will-to-live, and with it the previous character, may reappear. Thus we see that the passionate Benvenuto Cellini was converted in such a way, once in prison and again during a serious illness, but relapsed into his old state after the suffering had disappeared. In general, the denial of the will by no means results from suffering with the necessity of effect from cause; on the contrary, the will remains free. For here is just the one and only point where its freedom enters directly into the phenomenon; hence the astonishment so strongly expressed by Asmus about the "transcendental change." For every case of suffering, a will can be conceived which surpasses it in intensity, and is unconquered by it. Therefore, Plato speaks in the *Phaedo* [116 E] of persons who, up to the moment of their execution, feast, carouse, drink, indulge in sexual pleasures, affirming life right up to the death. Shakespeare in Cardinal Beaufort[68] presents to us the fearful end of a wicked ruffian who dies full of despair, since no suffering or death can break his will that is vehement to the extreme point of wickedness.

The more intense the will, the more glaring the phenomenon of its conflict, and hence the greater the suffering. A world that was the phenomenon of an incomparably more intense will-to-live than the present one is, would exhibit so much the greater suffering; thus it would be a *hell*.

Since all suffering is a mortification and a call to resignation, it has potentially a sanctifying force. By this is explained the fact that great misfortune and deep sorrow in themselves inspire one with a certain awe. But the sufferer becomes wholly an object of reverence to us only when, surveying the course of his life as a chain of sorrows, or mourning a great and incurable pain, he does not really

[67] Brucker, *Hist. Philos.*, Tom. IV, pars I, p. 10.
[68] *Henry VI, Part II*, Act 3, Scene 3.

look at the concatenation of circumstances which plunged just his life into mourning; he does not stop at that particular great misfortune that befell him. For up till then, his knowledge still follows the principle of sufficient reason, and clings to the particular phenomenon; he still continues to will life, only not on the conditions that have happened to him. He is really worthy of reverence only when his glance has been raised from the particular to the universal, and when he regards his own suffering merely as an example of the whole and for him; for in an ethical respect he becomes inspired with genius, one case holds good for a thousand, so that the whole of life, conceived as essential suffering, then brings him to resignation. For this reason it is worthy of reverence when in Goethe's *Torquato Tasso* the princess speaks of how her own life and that of her relations have always been sad and cheerless, and here her regard is wholly towards the universal.

We always picture a very noble character to ourselves as having a certain trace of silent sadness that is anything but constant peevishness over daily annoyances (that would be an ignoble trait, and might lead us to fear a bad disposition). It is a consciousness that has resulted from knowledge of the vanity of all possessions and of the suffering of all life, not merely of one's own. Such knowledge, however, may first of all be awakened by suffering personally experienced, especially by a single great suffering, just as a single wish incapable of fulfilment brought Petrarch to that resigned sadness concerning the whole of life which appeals to us so pathetically in his works; for the Daphne he pursued had to vanish from his hands, in order to leave behind for him the immortal laurel instead of herself. If the will is to a certain extent broken by such a great and irrevocable denial of fate, then practically nothing more is desired, and the character shows itself as mild, sad, noble, and resigned. Finally, when grief no longer has any definite object, but is extended over the whole of life, it is then to a certain extent a self-communion, a withdrawal, a gradual disappearance of the will, the visibility of which, namely the body, is imperceptibly but inwardly undermined by it, so that the person feels a certain loosening of his bonds, a mild foretaste of the death that proclaims itself to be the dissolution of the body and of the will at the same time. A secret joy therefore accompanies this grief; and I believe it is this that the most melancholy of all nations has called "the joy of grief." Here, however, lies the danger of *sentimentality,* both in life itself and in its description in poetry; namely when a person is always mourning and wailing without standing up courageously and rising to resignation. In this way heaven and earth are both lost, and only a watery sentimentality

is retained. Only when suffering assumes the form of pure knowledge, and then this knowledge, as a *quieter of the will,* produces true resignation, is it the path to salvation, and thus worthy of reverence. But in this respect, we feel on seeing any very unfortunate person a certain esteem akin to that which virtue and nobility of character force from us; at the same time, our own fortunate condition seems like a reproach. We cannot help but regard every suffering, both those felt by ourselves and those felt by others, as at least a possible advance towards virtue and holiness, and pleasures and worldly satisfactions, on the other hand, as a departure therefrom. This goes so far that every man who undergoes great bodily or mental suffering, indeed everyone who performs a physical labour demanding the greatest exertion in the sweat of his brow and with evident exhaustion, yet does all this with patience and without grumbling, appears, when we consider him with close attention, somewhat like a sick man who applies a painful cure. Willingly, and even with satisfaction, he endures the pain caused by the cure, since he knows that the more he suffers, the more is the substance of the disease destroyed; and thus the present pain is the measure of his cure.

It follows from all that has been said, that the denial of the will-to-live, which is the same as what is called complete resignation or holiness, always proceeds from that quieter of the will; and this is the knowledge of its inner conflict and its essential vanity, expressing themselves in the suffering of all that lives. The difference, that we have described as two paths, is whether that knowledge is called forth by suffering which is merely and simply *known* and freely appropriated by our seeing through the *principium individuationis,* or by suffering immediately felt by ourselves. True salvation, deliverance from life and suffering, cannot even be imagined without complete denial of the will. Till then, everyone is nothing but this will itself, whose phenomenon is an evanescent existence, an always vain and constantly frustrated striving, and the world full of suffering as we have described it. All belong to this irrevocably and in like manner. For we found previously that life is always certain to the will-to-live, and its sole actual form is the present from which they never escape, since birth and death rule in the phenomenon. The Indian myth expresses this by saying that "they are born again." The great ethical difference of characters means that the bad man is infinitely remote from attaining that knowledge, whose result is the denial of the will, and is therefore in truth *actually* abandoned to all the miseries which appear in life as *possible.* For even the present fortunate state of his person is only a phenomenon brought about by the *principium individuationis,* and the illusion of Maya,

the happy dream of a beggar. The sufferings that in the vehemence and passion of his pressing will he inflicts on others are the measure of the sufferings, the experience of which in his own person cannot break his will and lead to final denial. On the other hand, all true and pure affection, and even all free justice, result from seeing through the *principium individuationis;* when this penetration occurs in all its force, it produces perfect sanctification and salvation, the phenomenon of which are the state of resignation previously described, the unshakable peace accompanying this, and the highest joy and delight in death.[69]

§ 69. Suicide.

Suicide, the arbitrary doing away with the individual phenomenon, differs most widely from the denial of the will-to-live, which is the only act of its freedom to appear in the phenomenon, and hence, as Asmus calls it, the transcendental change. The denial of the will has now been adequately discussed within the limits of our method of consideration. Far from being denial of the will, suicide is a phenomenon of the will's strong affirmation. For denial has its essential nature in the fact that the pleasures of life, not its sorrows, are shunned. The suicide wills life, and is dissatisfied merely with the conditions on which it has come to him. Therefore he gives up by no means the will-to-live, but merely life, since he destroys the individual phenomenon. He wills life, wills the unchecked existence and affirmation of the body; but the combination of circumstances does not allow of these, and the result for him is great suffering. The will-to-live finds itself so hampered in this particular phenomenon, that it cannot develop and display its efforts. It therefore decides in accordance with its own inner nature, which lies outside the forms of the principle of sufficient reason, and to which every individual phenomenon is therefore indifferent, in that it remains itself untouched by all arising and passing away, and is the inner core of the life of all things. For that same firm, inner assurance, which enables all of us to live without the constant dread of death, the assurance that the will can never

[69] Cf. chap. 48 of volume 2.

lack its phenomenon, supports the deed even in the case of suicide. Thus the will-to-live appears just as much in this suicide (Shiva) as in the ease and comfort of self-preservation (Vishnu), and the sensual pleasure of procreation (Brahma). This is the inner meaning of the *unity of the Trimurti* which every human being entirely is, although in time it raises now one, now another of its three heads. As the individual thing is related to the Idea, so is suicide to the denial of the will. The suicide denies merely the individual, not the species. We have already found that, since life is always certain to the will-to-live, and suffering is essential to life, suicide, or the arbitrary destruction of an individual phenomenon, is a quite futile and foolish act, for the thing-in-itself remains unaffected by it, just as the rainbow remains unmoved, however rapidly the drops may change which sustain it for the moment. But in addition to this, it is also the masterpiece of Maya as the most blatant expression of the contradiction of the will-to-live with itself. Just as we have recognized this contradiction in the lowest phenomena of the will in the constant struggle of all the manifestations of natural forces and of all organic individuals for matter, time, and space, and as we saw that conflict stand out more and more with terrible distinctness on the ascending grades of the will's objectification; so at last at the highest stage, the Idea of man, it reaches that degree where not only the individuals exhibiting the same Idea exterminate one another, but even the one individual declares war on itself. The vehemence with which it wills life and revolts against what hinders it, namely suffering, brings it to the point of destroying itself, so that the individual will by an act of will eliminates the body that is merely the will's own becoming visible, rather than that suffering should break the will. Just because the suicide cannot cease willing, he ceases to live; and the will affirms itself here even through the cessation of its own phenomenon, because it can no longer affirm itself otherwise. But as it was just the suffering it thus shunned which, as mortification of the will, could have led it to the denial of itself and to salvation, so in this respect the suicide is like a sick man who, after the beginning of a painful operation that could completely cure him, will not allow it to be completed, but prefers to retain his illness. Suffering approaches and, as such, offers the possibility of a denial of the will; but he rejects it by destroying the will's phenomenon, the body, so that the will may remain unbroken. This is the reason why almost all ethical systems, philosophical as well as religious, condemn suicide, though they themselves cannot state anything but strange and sophistical arguments for so doing. But if ever a man was kept from suicide by purely moral incentive, the