Seeing Things: Schopenhauer's Kant Critique and Direct Realism

Alistair Welchman

Forthcoming in Judith Norman and Alistair Welchman (eds) *Schopenhauer's* The World as Will and Representation: *A Critical Guide* (Cambridge University Press).

Draft only. Please do not cite without permission.

Introduction

In this paper I argue, in the first section, that Schopenhauer was a direct perceptual realist. I think Schopenhauer's critique of Kant in the Appendix to WWR 1 is largely bound together by his view that Kant was still welded to a pre-critical indirect perceptual realism which creates the various points of tension or compromise formations that Schopenhauer enumerates. In the second section I go on to argue that this perceptual direct realism sheds light on his account of compassion, in particular making it more plausible that he is a direct realist about our perception of the emotions, or wills, of others (at least in the appropriate circumstances). This helps to resolve a problem identified in the literature, especially by David Cartwright. In the last section I address an objection, and show that far from being an objection, it in fact strengthens my position.

1 Direct Realism

In this section I will try to show that Schopenhauer is a direct perceptual realist. Direct perceptual realism is a response Descartes' influential argument that the only things we can be directly aware of are our own experiences. The most hallowed example of indirect realism in analytic philosophy is the sense-data theory associated with logical positivism. On that view, we perceive sense-data, which are internal mental objects, and use them to infer the existence of the external objects to which they refer. This view has fallen into disrepute, and the emphasis in analytic philosophy of perception on (tacitly linguaform) representational content has sidestepped the question of what perception actually is or is like, although there has recently been something of a resurgence of interest, specifically in direct realism.[1]

By contrast, phenomenologists have long been focused on perceptual experience, which is resolutely direct, and many phenomenologists have been direct realists, doing justice to the strong intuition we all have that we are seeing *things* and not subjective mental representations. Husserl, for instance, clearly articulates a direct realist stance: "I do not see

[1] Tim Crane and Craig French, "The Problem of Perception," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/perception-problem/>. James Genone, "Recent Work on Naive Realism," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 53(1), (2016), 1-25.

colour-sensations, but coloured things, I do not hear tone-sensations, but the singer's song."[2] And similarly, Heidegger makes the same point, somewhat more poetically:

> What we 'first' hear is never noises or complexes of sounds, but the creaking waggon, the motor-cycle. We hear the column on the march, the north wind, the woodpecker tapping, the fire crackling.
>
> It requires a very artificial and complicated frame of mind to 'hear' a 'pure noise'. The fact that motor-cycles and waggons are what we proximally hear is the phenomenal evidence that in every case Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, already dwells alongside what is ready-to-hand within-the-world; it certainly does not dwell proximally alongside 'sensations [Empfindung]' ; nor would it first have to give shape to the swirl of sensations to provide the springboard from which the subject leaps off and finally arrives at a 'world'.[3]

Heidegger formulates the issue very similarly to Husserl (and indeed to Schopenhauer).

Sometimes direct realism is interpreted as involving claims about empirical objects construed as mind-independent, claims that have an ambiguous relation to the Kantian and post-Kantian tradition.[4] Clearly, Schopenhauer is not a direct perceptual realist about ordinary objects if objects are mind-independent. So, I will stipulate that the sense of object pertinent here is that of empirical reality.

There are three elements to the theory of direct realism. The first and third are relatively straightforward. The first is that we perceive objects themselves.[5] The third is that we don't use inference to perceive objects.

The second element is more complicated: direct realists are sensitive to the distinction between the phenomenology of perception and its implementation mechanisms or ingredients. This has been of particular concern to phenomenologists and is clear in the quotations above from Husserl and Heidegger, where they are both at pains to distinguish what we actually take to be the experience of perception from the 'sensations' that are supposed to underlie it. The term 'sensation' refers to an empiricist tradition that Husserl and Heidegger think misunderstands the phenomenology of perception. This tradition is broadly explanatory in nature: sensations are part of the theoretical apparatus empiricists posit to explain perception. Phenomenologists

---

[2] Edmund Husserl (1900) *Logical Investigations* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1970), 121; quoted in David Tostensen "Husserl's Direct Perception," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 41:1 (2010), 94-109, 97.
[3] Martin Heidegger (1927) *Sein und Zeit.* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), 163-4; translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson as *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell 1962), 207.
[4] Crane and French, "The Problem of Perception."
[5] Ibid. 3.4.1 sees naïve realist accounts of perception as claiming that perception is fundamentally a relation to ordinary objects. Genone, "Recent Work," 1, states "[b]roadly speaking, the central commitment of naïve realism is that mind-independent objects are essential to the fundamental analysis of perceptual experience."

DRAFT

object to this apparatus when it's understood as part of the *phenomenology* of perception: we don't see sensations (if such things do in fact exist); we see *things*. But it's important to recognize that correcting this mistake is quite consistent with positing the existence of underlying explanatory structures.

This observation is important because it bears on the sense in which 'direct' perception is indeed direct. If there are implementation mechanisms, then perception is in some sense mediated by those mechanisms. But that's not the relevant sense in which perception *itself* may be said to be indirect. Hence my formulation, that what characterizes a direct theory of perception is sensitivity to the distinction between the phenomenology of perception and its possible implementation mechanisms or ingredients.[6]

The simplest account of this sensitivity is that perception itself is something we are aware of whereas we are not generally aware of implementation mechanisms. Thus, in the case of 'sensations' the mistake of the empiricist tradition is to conflate sensations as a potential explanatory implementation theory with the phenomenology of perception by insisting that in perception we are aware of sensations. Perhaps this is too stringent: it may be possible, under non-normative circumstances, to become consciously aware of items that are normatively unconscious aspects of the implementation of or ingredients in perception. An example is visual after-images. In these cases, however, we are not aware of objects *because* of our awareness of the implementation details.[7]

Schopenhauer's account of perception is based on an attack on empiricism from a transcendentally idealist point of view. His main concern is to establish that perception has an "intellectual basis." (SW 1, 51) By this he does not mean that perception is rational or conceptual. In fact, this is one of the main points of dispute with Kant in the Appendix to WWR 1. Perception remains resolutely intuitive, *anschaulich*.

> This operation of the understanding is not one which proceeds discursively, reflectively, abstractly – by means of concepts and words – but an intuitive and completely immediate one (SW 1, 53).

But it is *constructed*. The operators of this construction are Kantian: space and time, but most importantly, causation. Here again Schopenhauer deviates from Kant in classifying causation as intuitive rather than conceptual. The raw data that is worked up into perception is what

---

[6] The close proximity of analytic philosophy of perception to psychology makes this a relatively uncontroversial point within that tradition. For instance, Genone, "Recent Work," 3, treats it as obvious that naïve (or direct) realism is consistent with unconscious causal mediation in the brain.

[7] I borrow the term 'ingredient' from Richard Aquila, *Matter in Mind: A Study of Kant's Transcendental Deduction* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 1989), 92f. Schopenhauer uses the same word ('Ingrediens') in a similar context (SW 3, 216).

DRAFT

Schopenhauer describes as "sensation."[8] So, his polemic takes the form of an argument from the poverty of the stimulus to the existence of innate i.e. a priori cognitive structures: space, time and causation:

> For what a poor thing is mere sensation, after all! Even in the most refined of sense organs, sensation is nothing more than a local, specific feeling, capable in its own way of some variation, however, in itself always subjective, which as such can contain absolutely nothing objective, and so nothing similar to an intuition (SW 1, 52).

Much of the argument is empirical, but two of his arguments have a transcendental flavor: it's only possible to perceive objects as "outside" by means of the application of the a priori intuition of space—such externality is not given in the raw data of perception, and can't be constructed merely from that data (SW 1, 53). This argument abandons the complex argument Kant provides in the Second Analogy, replacing it with the following elegant argument for the apriority of cause:

> … the understanding's procedure consists throughout in the transition from given effects to their causes, which are first presented [darstellen] as objects in space thought just this procedure. … the law of causality is the first condition of all empirical intuition, but is this the form in which all experience occurs: how then could the law first be derived from experience, for which it is the essential prerequisite? (SW 1, 79)

Just as Kant argues that our representation of space can't be derived from experience because space is a condition of experience i.e. of representing objects as spatially external to us, so Schopenhauer argues that causality must be a priori because we represent objects as—indeed objects just *are*—the *causes* of the raw data of our sensory systems.

In some ways Schopenhauer's theory is consistent with the broad outlines of contemporary psychology. But there is a crucial difference: Schopenhauer is a transcendental idealist. So, where contemporary psychology sees the psychological processes that yield experience of objects as *recovering* the objects that actually are (in a transcendentally realist sense) the causes of the initial data, Schopenhauer by contrast *identifies* the 'representation [Vorstellung]' of the object with the object itself:

> For through this operation alone, hence in the understanding and for the understanding, the objective, real, physical world presents itself (SW 1, 53).

In this transcendental sense, the world *is* representation, i.e. the object doesn't pre-exist its construction by the transcendental apparatus of the mind. So, according to the first criterion developed above, it ought not to be controversial that Schopenhauer is a direct realist. The very

---

[8] '… the *understanding* is the artist forming the work, the *senses* only the assistants that present the material' (SW 1, 79); what the senses, even the objective ones (sight and touch) 'produce is still by no means intuition, but the raw stuff [rohe Stoff] for intuition' (SW 1, 54).

DRAFT

first sentence of the main body of WWR 1 is "[t]he world *is* my representation" (SW 2, 3, emphasis added). Similarly, according to the third criterion, it's uncontroversial that Schopenhauer does not think perception is *inferential*. Only reason infers; and causation is part of the understanding, which does not involve concepts or inferences, but is intuitive and direct. Schopenhauer contrasts our 'direct' grasp of causation with our reflective (and hence inferential) reasoning about it: causal laws "must first of all be directly [unmittelbar] recognized and grasped intuitively by the understanding before it can enter abstractly into reflective consciousness" (SW 2, 25, translation modified).

However, there is some ambiguity in Schopenhauer's formulations, especially as regards the term 'direct [unmittelbar],' which is used in a broad range of contexts. In some cases, it is a 'false friend' of direct perceptual realism. For instance, the 'direct' insight into causal structures just discussed supports the view that Schopenhauer doesn't think of such insight as rational or inferential. In other words, the contrast case here is not perceptual directness but conceptual mediation. So direct causal insight provides only limited support for the view that *perception* is direct: it's evidence that perception isn't inferential but is consistent with perception still being mediated e.g. by causation itself. Indeed, Schopenhauer often talks this way, in particular in distinguishing between the body as the 'immediate [unmittelbar] object' and objective perception proper as mediated [mittelbar]. I think there is evidence that Schopenhauer understands this mediation as an implementation theory that is consistent with directness of perceptual experience itself. But it will take some argument to show this.

The best place to do so is the Appendix to WWR 1, which details the ways in which Schopenhauer's theoretical philosophy differs from Kant's. The Appendix seems not to have much structure, but just to be a list of gripes about Kant. I think, however, there is an underlying principle of unity, that Kant failed completely to jettison the assumptions of pre-critical naïve transcendental realism. This failure is manifest in his persistent and inconsistent attempts to introduce a thought of representation *in addition both to* his account of empirical objects *and* to his account of the thing in itself.

> So Kant actually makes a three-way distinction: (1) representation; (2) the object of representation; (3) the thing in itself. … But there are no grounds for distinguishing between representation and the object of representation … But if we do not want to consider the object of representation as a representation, thereby equating the two, then the object of representation must be assimilated to the thing in itself. … The source of Kant's errors is the unjustified insertion of that hybrid, the object of representation (SW 2, 526-7).

This underlies Schopenhauer's objections to Kant's notions of thing in itself, object of knowledge and object of experience: all three notions are compromise formations, responding in various ways to what Schopenhauer sees as Kant's underlying commitment to a pre-critical, transcendentally realist, and, *indirect* theory of perception. For instance, Kant's conception of the thing in itself is compromised because Kant is still tacitly committed to the idea that it is a kind of object causing our perceptions. Kant knows this is wrong (and so diligently avoids

DRAFT

explicitly describing it as a 'cause') but Schopenhauer thinks there's no other way for Kant to think the 'affection' by means of which the thing in itself is the source of sensory data.

Properly understood, therefore, transcendental idealism is committed to direct realism, in which there is no representational layer intervening between the perceptual subject and the object of perception = representation. This interpretation also makes sense of the critique of what Schopenhauer calls Kant's "meaningless metaphor" describing intuitions as "given" (SW 2, 509; see also SW 2, 519f, 524, 527). Here Schopenhauer elaborates a distinction between perception proper and its ingredients and antecedents. Schopenhauer is commenting on this claim of Kant's:[9]

> Our cognition arises from two fundamental sources in the mind, the first of which is the reception of representations (the receptivity of impressions [Eindrücke]), the second the faculty for cognizing an object by means of these representations (spontaneity of concepts); through the former an object is **given** to us, through the latter it is **thought** (A50/B74).

Schopenhauer's rejection of the metaphor of the 'given' is a deep critique of Kant—for whom the distinction between a spontaneous and a receptive faculty is basic.[10] This is Schopenhauer's critique:

> … the impression is nothing more than a mere *sensation* in the sense organs, and it is only by using the *understanding* (i.e. the law of causality) and space and time, the forms of intuition, that our *intellect* transforms this mere *sensation* into a *representation*, which now exists as an *object* in space and time and can be distinguished from the latter (from the object) only by appealing to the thing in itself, and is otherwise identical with it (SW 2, 520).

Schopenhauer objects to Kant's identification of the impression with *any kind of representation*; it's not a representation, it's a mere sensation. Representations are constructed out of sensations; but sensations are not representations. It is only sensations that are "'given'" (*ibid.*), a term that Schopenhauer now uses with quotation marks around it, because sensations are not (normally) *phenomenologically* given within experience; sensations are given only in the sense that they are implementation details within the psychology of perception. Kant has not liberated his thinking from pre-critical dogmatic transcendental realism, and so wants to try to distinguish between representations (sensations/intuitions) and objects (constructed by categories). But there is no such distinction: representations are objects; and hence 'sensations' or 'impressions' are not objects, but ingredients or causal antecedents of representations.

---

[9] SW 2, 519. I quote from the Cambridge translation of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, giving the usual 1st/2nd edition page numbers as A/B.

DRAFT

Schopenhauer hammers this point repeatedly home in his critique of Kant: "our empirical intuition is immediately [sofort] *objective* precisely because it emerges from the causal nexus. It has things immediately [unmittelbar] as its object [Gegenstand], and not representations distinct from things" (SW 2, 525). The two parts of this claim need to be read together: it's *because* perception is mediated at the implementation level by the application of causation (and space and time) to sensations that perception is directly of objects. The implementational constituents of intuition are *not* (normally) themselves representations precisely because the objects of intuition are the products of implementation-level mental processes.

This analysis is also present in the main body of WWR 1, but Schopenhauer did not always use consistent terminology. Schopenhauer makes reference to the direct nature of perception on several occasions. In his account of causality, for instance, he concludes his view that the being of an object simply is its acting with this comment: "all that we know about an object of intuition … is the way it acts: there is nothing left to know about an object apart from its representation" (SW 2, 17). Similarly, alluding to the critique of Kant in the Appendix, he writes: "dogmatic realism claims to separate the representation from the object (even though they are one and the same) by treating the representation as the effect of the object" (SW 2, 16).

This statement must of course be interpreted correctly and is as good an example as any of Schopenhauer's loose use of language, although also of the fact that it is usually possible to clarify the distinctions Schopenhauer is failing to make on a given occasion. Here the statement looks plainly inconsistent with his views: does Schopenhauer himself *not* think that representations are the effects of objects? He says they *are* in a number of places, for instance, in the passage quoted above from FFR: "… the understanding's procedure consists throughout in the transition from given effects to their causes," but also in WWR 1, when he writes that insofar as an "effect is referred back to its cause, the intuition arises of this cause as an *object"* (SW 2, 13).

The difference is that dogmatic transcendental realists (and hence indirect perceptual theorists) think objects are mind-independent, and we form representations of them as the independently-subsisting causes of effects on our sense organs, while transcendental idealists think of the object as first arising (transcendentally) as a result of a kind of projection outside the body, by means of the forms of space and causation, of the object as a representation. Having made this distinction, Schopenhauer feels entitled to take the empirical stance, since it seems obvious to him that empirical realism is consistent with transcendental idealism.

However, the hermeneutical problem in WWR 1 is that Schopenhauer appears to take back his account of intuitive perception as direct by contrasting the body as "immediate [unmittelbar] object" (SW 2, 120) with the intuitive perception of the body as an "object among objects" (SW 2, 119) occupying a position in space, which he describes as "mediate [mittelbar]" perception (SW 2, 22). But if perception of my body is mediated when it is an object among objects, then it looks like Schopenhauer's account of intuitive perception in general is one in which intuitive perception is indirect. In many cases, the way in which there is mediation in contrast to the body as immediate object actually doesn't have anything to do with the phenomenology of

DRAFT

perception. But then what does it mean to contrast regular perception with the body as 'immediate object?'

To take the first point: in §5 what Schopenhauer says is that "intuition is mediated by cognition of causality" (SW 2, 15). But we already knew this: a representation of causality is a transcendental form that processes raw sensory material into a representational form i.e. into an objective representation. In §6, the contrast case of immediate cognition is different, but still doesn't affect the thesis of direct perception. There Schopenhauer says: "we have immediate cognition of the thing in itself when it appears to us as our own body; but our cognition is only indirect when the thing in itself is objectified in other objects of intuition" (SW 2, 22). Here the topic of discussion is cognition *of the thing in itself*, not ordinary perceptual intuitions. In *this* context there is a difference between direct cognition of the thing in itself (i.e. in inner experience of willing) and indirect cognition *of the thing in itself*, the latter being mediated by representations = objects. This indirection of course says nothing about whether cognition *of objects* as objects is itself direct.

What then should we make of the notion of the body as immediate object? The immediate object is essentially where the lowest level of sensory registrations, sensations or impressions, are located. We "proceed from the effects in the immediate object to a mediate object as cause, that is, to achieve the intuition of apprehension of an object" (SW 2, 27). This really would be an indirect theory of perception if we were first conscious (in an unmediated fashion) of sensations at the sensory surface of the body *and then* inferred (or otherwise figured out) what must have caused them. But Schopenhauer knows this isn't the right phenomenology of perception, and often acknowledges the misleading nature of the term 'immediate object.'

> I claim that we have immediate cognition of the body and that it is *an immediate object*. In this context, however, the concept 'object' should not be taken in anything like its proper sense, because immediate cognition is really pure sensation. As such it is prior to the application of the understanding; and so the body is not really there as an *object* at all; rather, the bodies acting upon it are what are there as objects first and foremost. Cognition of proper objects (i.e. representations intuited in space) occurs only through and for the understanding and comes only after and not before application of the understanding (SW 2, 23-4).[11]

The immediate cognition of the body is really just sensation; the body isn't an *object* at all, because objects presuppose the operation of the transcendental machinery of cognition (space, time and cause). Schopenhauer talks *as if* there's a real chronological sense in which immediate sensory registration is 'before' or 'prior to' the application of cause. But this can't be literally true, since cause is precisely *a priori*. I think the best way to interpret such views is to think of Schopenhauer as grasping for but not quite having the vocabulary to express the thought that sensations are a theoretical construct not part of our actual perceptual experience. I cannot

[11] See also: "[w]hat the eye, the ear, the hand senses is not an intuition: it is merely data. Only when the understanding proceeds from the effect back to the cause is the world present in intuition" (SW 2, 13-14).

DRAFT

independently perceive the sensation that is ingredient to an objective representation: such sensation is "never separated from the representation developed by the understanding" (SW 3, 26).[12] The critique of Kant makes it clear that sensations are *not* representations, and that insight makes its way into this account too, if awkwardly.

A similar hermeneutical problem presents itself in WWR 2, chapter 2, where Schopenhauer addresses Reid and Euler, both pre-critical proponents of direct realism. Again, the context is that Schopenhauer is only tangentially interested in the question of direct realism, and more interested in defending his intellectual view of perception against 'sensualism.' Sometimes this makes it a little hard to see what Schopenhauer is exactly saying. For instance, Schopenhauer writes:

> The feeling that a merely sensualist explanation of intuition is inadequate is also seen in a view expressed shortly before the appearance of the Kantian philosophy, the view that we do not simply have *representations* of things that are aroused by sensations in the senses, but rather that we perceive *the things themselves* directly, although they lie outside of us; which is of course incomprehensible. And this was not intended as idealistic, it was pronounced from the typical realistic standpoint. The famous *Euler* expressed this view well and concisely in his 'Letters to a German Princess', vol. 2, p. 68. 'I therefore believe that sensations (of the senses) contain something more than philosophers imagine. They are not merely empty perceptions from certain impressions made in the brain: they do not give the soul mere *ideas* of things; rather, *they really present* [vorstellen] *the soul with objects*, objects that exist outside of it, although we cannot comprehend how this in fact works' (SW 3, 25-6).

The crucial thing about this passage is that Schopenhauer emphasizes the importance of its *pre-critical* status. The problem is *not* the claim of direct realism, but rather the conjunction of direct realism with pre-critical transcendental realism. On the face of it, Schopenhauer thinks that it is "of course incomprehensible" that we "perceive *the things themselves* directly, although they lie outside of us" (SW 3, 25). But on the very next page of the text he goes on to affirm that this is literally true: we do indeed "immediately perceive *the things themselves* and in fact as located *outside us*" (SW 3, 26). What's the difference? Transcendental idealism. If we interpret "outside us" correctly, i.e. according to transcendental idealism, then we see that things can (indeed must) be perceived as empirically located in external space while that whole space is "itself inside out heads" (SW 3, 26). The expression is awkward: space cannot of course be 'inside' our heads in the same way that objects are outside. But the intent is clear.

Thus, Schopenhauer *affirms* direct realism, but denies pre-critical transcendental realism. We directly perceive things (empirically) external to us; and indeed absolutely must do so, because, as Schopenhauer observes in this same passage, there is no distinction between object and

---

[12] Even if in some cases we can become aware of sensations, those cases exclude their involvement in ordinary experience: I can't 'see' qua sensation the blue sensation that underlies my experience of the sky and see the sky as blue. See the discussion of non-objective senses in WWR 2, chapter 2 (SW 3, 27-8).

DRAFT

representation: we "intuit [things] *directly*, but … do not have within us a representation of the things lying outside of us that is distinct from them." Or again: "the things that we intuit as located outside are only our representations and thus something perceived by us directly" (SW 3, 26).

On the face of it, Schopenhauer is a clear proponent of direct perception because his transcendental idealism commits him to the identity of empirical objects with representations. Equally clearly, he repudiates the idea that we infer the existence of empirical objects from any kind of representational data. He *does* think that intuitive perception is mediated: this is his 'intellectual' theory of perception. But this mediation is merely implementational, as his critique of Kant emphasizes. Sometimes Schopenhauer talks loosely but it is always possible to disambiguate what he says.

2 Compassion

In this section I use Schopenhauer's commitment to a direct theory of perception of ordinary empirical objects to interpret Schopenhauer's theory of compassion.[13]

Schopenhauer defines compassion as follows: it is "the wholly immediate *participation* [Theilnahme], independent of any other consideration, first of all in another's *suffering* [Leiden], and hence in the prevention or removal of this suffering" (SW 4, 208; translation modified).

In WWR 1 Schopenhauer interprets identification in the context of his metaphysics of the will. In Book 2, Schopenhauer 'deduces' will as the metaphysical essence of things, or their intrinsic character. Although this argument focuses on the experience of agency to ground the will, Schopenhauer also uses the term to refer to one's emotional life, not only even to pain and pleasure, but to all the "affects and passions" (SW 2, 128). So, when I share the other's emotional state, I share their will. But to explain identification, Schopenhauer appeals not to the claim that each entity has the same intrinsic property but rather than there is *one* will, in which we all participate, at the metaphysical level.

Identification with the other's suffering is made possible by the compassionate individual 'seeing through' the world as representation into the undifferentiated thing in itself where they are literally but metaphysically identical to the other. Alluding to his reading of ancient Indian texts, Schopenhauer writes that the virtuous person

> shows in his way of acting [*Handlungsweise*] that he *recognizes* his own essence … in foreign appearances that are given to him as mere representations. … [He] sees through the *principium individuationis*, the veil of māyā: and to this extent he equates the

[13] This section builds on an as-yet unpublished talk "Schopenhauer and Compassion," North American Schopenhauer Society Meeting, American Philosophical Society, Central Division Meeting, Chicago, Feb. 2016.

DRAFT

> essence outside of himself with his own: he does not harm it … [H]e *makes less of a distinction than is usually made between himself and others* (SW 2, 439-9).

Many commentators have found this view objectionable. Some find Schopenhauer's metaphysics extravagant.[14] Others see the view as a kind of higher-level egoism: if I am literally identical with you, then my motive for altruism is really egoism.[15] Yet others see the position as contradictory: compassion by definition presupposes the existence of others so it can't be grounded in an identification with the other so complete that it eliminates the distinction between persons.[16]

While it is possible to meet some of these objections, the extravagant nature of Schopenhauer's metaphysics in particular has motivated some commentators, most especially David Cartwright, who has written extensively on the topic, to propose a 'naturalization' of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of compassion.[17] Cartwright's suggestion is to interpret the identification aspect of Schopenhauer's theory of compassion not metaphysically but psychologically: I don't participate 'immediately' in the other's suffering (because we are metaphysically identical), rather I participate 'imaginatively' in the suffering of the other, as in some contemporary accounts of cognitive empathy or perspective-taking.[18]

This interpretation faces a considerable obstacle: Schopenhauer was aware of the view, from a 1772 text by Ubaldo Cassina, and explicitly rejected it. Cassina, according to Schopenhauer, argues that in compassion: "we ourselves substitute ourselves in place of the sufferer and then, in our imagination, take ourselves to be suffering *his* pains in *our* person." This is quite wrong, Schopenhauer says. We do not experience a "deception of fantasy" and "it remains clear and present to us at every single moment that he is the sufferer, not *us*: and it is precisely *in his* person, not in ours, that we feel the pain, to our distress. We suffer *with* him, thus *in* him: we feel his pain as *his*, and do not imagine that it is ours" (SW 4, 211).

Cartwright rejects this objection, arguing that, on balance the theory of imaginative identification as the basis for compassion is more plausible. His rejection does not however lend much weight to what Schopenhauer says about Cassina: this supposed ability to have the "experience of another's pain in another's body" is just "extraordinary," something "Schopenhauer did not present any evidence for."[19]

---

[14] David E Cartwright, "Compassion and Solidarity with Sufferers: The Metaphysics of *Mitleid*," *European Journal of Philosophy* 16:2 (2008), 92-310; here 302-5.
[15] This point was first made by one of Schopenhauer's acolytes, August Becker, as well as by Max Scheler. Cartwright "Compassion and Solidarity," 297f has a summary and references.
[16] Max Scheler (1913), *The Nature of Sympathy,* trans. Peter Heath (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1970), 55.
[17] Cartwright "Compassion and Solidarity," 297.
[18] Ibid., 303.
[19] David Cartwright, "Schopenhauer and the Value of Compassion," in Bart Vandenabeele (ed.) *A Companion to Schopenhauer* (Oxford: Blackwell 2012), 249-265, here 260. See also Cartwright "Compassion and Solidarity," 302-303.

DRAFT

This rejection however is precipitate. Schopenhauer appears to introduce the analysis of compassion in OBM as a way of clarifying his metaphysical account.[20] Compassion becomes a central term because it is "wholly real and indeed by no means … rare … [an] everyday phenomenon," that shows how and that we can be motivated to act by the suffering of the other rather than only by our own interests. Here it is compassion that explains how I can be "*identified with*" the other, how the "*distinction* between me and the other" can be reduced even though "I am not lodged *in the skin* of the other" (SW 4, 208). Schopenhauer doesn't provide an argument for his account of compassion because compassion is supposed to be an ordinary phenomenon whose appropriate description will illuminate the knotty points of his theory.

The basic insight Schopenhauer is expressing is that in compassion, at least in normative cases, we make direct cognitive contact with the other's feelings. We don't have to engage in a conscious exercise of identification in which we imagine what it must be like to be other. In other words, Schopenhauer has a *direct realist* account of emotional perception. This theory of perception acts a necessary condition for the co-feeling aspect of compassion, however that is interpreted; and the co-feeling aspect of compassion itself acts as a necessary condition for the motivational aspect of compassion. I'm not going to say much about the other aspects of Schopenhauer's position but do want to maintain that his views about emotional perception are not at all implausible and, most importantly, it is highly likely that Schopenhauer would have a direct realist view of emotional perception *given that he already has a direct realist view of ordinary perception*.

Direct accounts of emotional perception are not at all out of the ordinary, as Cartwright suggests; indeed, they are commonplace in the phenomenological tradition. A century after Schopenhauer's brief debate with Cassina, there was a quite similar dialectic between a psychological conception of 'empathy'[21] as a mechanism for making contact with the other's emotions and Schopenhauer-style direct perception. Max Scheler and Martin Heidegger both pioneered direct realist account of, in Scheler's case specifically emotional perception, and in Heidegger's case something like other minds (modulo his idiosyncratic terminology). Scheler, for instance, argues, phenomenologically:

> we certainly believe ourselves to be directly acquainted with another person's joy in his laughter, with his sorrow and pain in his tears, with his shame in his blushing, with his entreaty in his outstretched hands, with his love his look of affection, with his rage in the gnashing of his teeth, with his greats in the clenching of his fist, with the tenor his thoughts in the sound of his words.[22]

---

[20] Schopenhauer barely mentions compassion in WWR 1, and it doesn't seem to play anything like the same central role there that it does in OBM. Plausibly, the fact that OBM was written anonymously led Schopenhauer to emphasize a more ordinary experience over his heavy-weight metaphysics.

[21] The term 'empathy' is a neologism introduced to translate the German term *Einfühlung* (or 'feeling into'), which was itself introduced by Theodor Lipps. See Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, xlvii-xlviii.

[22] Ibid., 301-2.

DRAFT

Scheler argues that we don't use (conscious) inference, at least in normative cases, to establish our belief in the emotional (or mental) states of the other.[23] Such considerations, represent a convergence with Schopenhauer, for whom it is very important that virtue (and hence the compassionate perception on which it is based) is intuitive not rational: "virtue is as little taught as genius: indeed, concepts are just as barren for it as they are for art" (SW 2, 320).

More radically, but in the same vein, Heidegger's analysis of Being-with in chapter 4 of *Being and Time* attempts to show that a person's experience of the other, its 'Being towards Others' is an 'irreducible relationship,' i.e. irreducible either to its 'Being to itself' or to 'some Thing which is proximally just present-at-hand,' roughly translating out of Heideggerian, irreducible to either a first-personal or a third-personal view.[24] But just this reduction is entailed by the indirect view, where I have access to first-personal data about my emotions and third-personal data about the behavioral surface of the other, and must construct the other's emotions using some psychological process. Schopenhauer's *Mitleid* is of course cognate with Heidegger's *Mitsein*.

So Schopenhauer seems clearly to cleave to the first and the third criteria of a direct realist account of emotional perception; perhaps even more emphatically than in his account of ordinary perception, he seems to committed to rejecting the idea that emotional perception is mediated by some internal psychological procedure like that of projective empathy; similarly, as with ordinary perception, he categorically rejects any mediation by rational procedures such as analogy. What about the second criterion, i.e. an appropriate sensitivity to the distinction between how perception might be implemented and the proper phenomenology of perception? This is also even clearer than in Schopenhauer's account of ordinary perception: Schopenhauer simply doesn't thematize implementation issues at all; his argument is exhaustively phenomenological, probably because compassion is supposed to be an ordinary experience whose structure yields some insight into his metaphysics.

One objection to Schopenhauer's rebuttal of Cassina's view is to affirm that we *do* in fact have experiences similar to those described by Cassina. Sometimes I am not sure how someone is feeling, and I might try intentionally to project myself into their situation, thereby reading off their feeling from my own. Schopenhauer doesn't deny this. Indeed, there are a couple of occasions where he addresses such phenomena. For instance, in his discussion of justice, Schopenhauer recognizes the difficulty of grounding it in compassion: I can't be motivated to refrain from acting unjustly by compassion because there is as yet no one suffering with whom I can have compassion. Schopenhauer's solution sounds like Cassina: moral principles guide me into *imagining* the suffering I would cause, and it is compassion for this imaginary suffering that motivates me (SW 4, 216). Similarly, in a point familiar to every parent of a small child, Schopenhauer argues that weeping doesn't depend directly on first-order suffering but is mediated by reflection: we imagine we are someone else and experience compassion from that imaginary point of view for ourselves (SW 2:444-5).

---

[23] Ibid., 238-9.
[24] Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 118, 124-5.

DRAFT

But these cases don't show that all compassion takes place in imagination; rather they show that it's possible to have compassion even in imaginary situations. When I imagine how someone will feel if I wrong them, it is the situation that's imaginary. If we demodalize it and consider it as real, there's no reason to think imagination is required to see the pain in the face of the other.

The second objection is Scheler's. Despite the Cassina analysis, Schopenhauer nowhere repudiates his claim that the virtuous person "sees through the *principium individuationis*, the veil of māyā" (SW 2, 439). "That are thou," Schopenhauer repeats several times in the course of WWR 1 (e.g. SW 2, 259-60). But, Scheler points out, this metaphysical identification obliterates the distinctness of persons presupposes by compassion. [25] There are a number of possible responses to this.

First, it's worth noting that the virtuous person makes "*less of a distinction than is usually made between himself and others*" (SW 2, 440) rather than no distinction at all. So, there is *some* room to maintaining the distinctness of persons. Schopenhauer sees virtue and compassion as continuous with an ascetic denial that really does make no distinction between oneself and others. But Sandra Shapshay and Tristran Ferrell have argued that the two views are not continuous but inconsistent.[26] If this is correct, then an analysis of the structure of compassion is no longer hostage to continuity with the strong metaphysical identity thesis underlying Schopenhauer's account of asceticism.

Second, Colin Marshall proposes an interesting solution to the problem of the second person is Schopenhauer's account of compassion. In compassion, he argues, we see through *representational* i.e. spatiotemporal individuation, but not through *all* individuation. Instead, we grasp the intelligible (Platonic) Idea of the other.[27] This supports the Shapshay/Ferrell reading: now there are three quite distinct levels: spatio-temporal individuation (ordinary life); non-spatiotemporal individuation (compassion); and non-individuation (asceticism).

But my aim in this analysis has been to propose a re-interpretation of the metaphysical identity theory in WWR 1 on the basis of the phenomenological account in OBM. It's possible to remain within the purview of Cartwright's original intent to 'naturalize' Schopenhauer but without endorsing a Cassina-like theory of imaginative identification to substitute for Schopenhauer's official theory of metaphysical identification. A notable feature of my analysis of compassion as (based on) a direct theory of emotional perception is that any use of the term 'identification' has dropped out of consideration. This is a feature not a bug: identification is a difficult term, and neither psychological nor metaphysical versions are convincing. My suggestion is that

---

[25] Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 55.

[26] "Compassion or Renunciation? *That* is the question of Schopenhauer's ethics," *Enrahonar. Quaderns de Filosofia* 55, 2015, 51-69**.** See also Sandra Shapshay *Reconstructing Schopenhauer's Ethics: Hope, Compassion and Animal Welfare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2019), 25-33.

[27] Colin Marshall, "Schopenhauer on the Content of Compassion," *Nous* 2020; 1-18. Marshall develops a point from GE Varner, "The Schopenhauer Challenge in Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics*, *7* (1985), 209–229.

DRAFT

identification be interpreted in terms of emotional perception rather than the other way around. It's not that we see 'through' the veil; but that the ordinary experience of compassion shows how we do in fact build collective structures, through emotions taking the (directly perceived) emotions of others as their object. In this way, we can 'identify with' the other, with others, without becoming one with them either in our imaginations or in metaphysical reality.

3 Meaning

In the last section, I address a *prima facie* reasonable objection, and show that in fact it strengthens my argument. This objection is that there is a clear dissimilarity between the kind of direct realism Schopenhauer entertains in the perceptual realm, and the kind involved in compassion. As a result of these dissimilarities, even if Schopenhauer is committed to a direct realist theory of ordinary perception, this isn't evidence that he's committed to a direct theory of *emotional* perception.

Schopenhauer's perceptual direct realism is driven by the equation of object and representation. This is quite different from the standard case of direct realism, which is usually understood in a pre-critical transcendental realist context as the claim that although there may very well *be* mental entities that play a role in perception, these are not ultimately what we perceive: we perceive (mind-independent) objects. In the case of compassion, external behavior is already a perceptual given, and the question is whether one can 'see through' that behavior to the emotional states (states of the will) that lie behind it. In fact, the 'seeing through' metaphor works for the standard case too: we 'see through' representations *to* objects.

The transparency metaphor is obviously at issue for Schopenhauer in questions of (direct) cognition of the thing in itself; but there's no analogue of it in the direct object perception case, for Schopenhauer simply equates representation with object rather than distinguishing them but treating the representation as transparent. Thus, the cases are different, and his perceptual direct realism does not provide support for a direct realist account of compassion or for any other mode of cognition of the thing in itself. Indeed, in many ways the pre-critical (Cartesian) question of our mode of cognitive access to objects independent of our representations is displaced in Schopenhauer onto the question of access to the will. So, it would be quite wrong to use the equation of object with representation (that partly drives Schopenhauer's direct perceptual realism) to legitimate a move *beyond* representation.

I don't think this objection is overwhelming because Schopenhauer's naturalism in fact *does* give him a category of (sub)representational processes that make possible perceptual contact with objects but aren't themselves normally perceptual objects. This is the point of the second property of direct realism: sensitivity to the difference between perception and its ingredients or precursor processes.

But in fact, it turns out that the apparent asymmetry between ordinary and emotional perception in fact *strengthens* my position. The reason is two-fold. First of all, there is another

DRAFT

object of perception that is structured like compassion and which Schopenhauer argues we nevertheless perceive directly. That object is linguistic meaning. But, secondly, the dominant way in which Schopenhauer understands his metaphysics of the will is precisely *in terms of* meaning. This is most explicitly bought out in of WWR 2, where he canvasses a 'hermeneutic' interpretation of his metaphysics that many commentators have found more congenial than his earlier allegedly transcendent metaphysics.[28] I do not think this interpretation is correct: the transparency of linguistic meaning reinforces Schopenhauer's commitment to the phenomenology of direct perception in various domains; and his hermeneutical understanding of metaphysics suggests that we do in fact have direct perceptual access to the representation-transcendent will precisely *as* the meaning of representation in general (even if this access is not ordinary, but given only in special cases, like compassionate moral perception).

Schopenhauer's direct realist reading of the phenomenology of our perception of linguistic meaning is relatively famous because it may have influenced Wittgenstein's similar account.[29]

> As an object of outer experience, speech is clearly nothing other than a highly perfected telegraph that communicates arbitrary signs with the greatest speed and the finest nuance. But what do the signs mean [bedeuten]? How does their interpretation [Auslegung] occur? While others speak, do we somehow instantaneously translate their speech into imaginative pictures that fly past us at lightning speed and move around and link themselves together, forming and colouring themselves according to the ever increasing stream of words and grammatical forms? What a tumult there would be in our heads while listening to a speech or reading a book! It does not happen like this at all. The meaning [Sinn] of speech is immediately understood, grasped exactly and determinately without, as a rule, being mixed up with any imaginative pictures [Phantasmen] (SW 2, 47).

Here Schopenhauer is making both a negative and a positive point. The negative point is a phenomenological rebuttal of empiricist theories of abstraction, in which concepts (and hence concept-terms) are supposed to be represented by one of their instances. The positive point is that (however we *do* in fact achieve an understanding of concept meaning) the phenomenology of the experience of understanding linguistic symbols for concepts is not mediated by any visual images.[30]

If the arguments of section 1 are sound, and this mediation is consistent with the perceptual directness in the case of ordinary objects, then we also have direct perception of linguistic meaning. But linguistic meaning is more similar to compassionate perception than it is to

---

[28] Julian Young, *Schopenhauer* (London and New York: Routledge 2005), chapter 4, for example.

[29] Severin Schroeder, "Schopenhauer's Influence on Wittgenstein," in *A Companion to Schopenhauer*, edited by Bart Vandenabeele (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), 367–84, at 379.

[30] Schopenhauer makes similar comments in WWR 2 (SW 3, 27) where he describes the direct perception of conceptual meaning through words as 'an analogous process' to that of the direct perception of objects: in both cases there is a process of causal mediation, but we have no 'consciousness' of it. Although he also describes the process in rather Kantian 'as if' terms.

DRAFT

ordinary perception. We don't ordinarily have perceptual access to sensations, construed as the ingredients in or antecedents of object perception. But in the cases of perception both of linguistic meaning and the emotions of the other, we have ordinary (direct) perceptual access to people's emotional behavior or faces in the same way we have ordinary (direct) perceptual access to the visual or sonic shapes of words. Direct perception of meaning and emotion involves the transparency of these ordinary perceptions: we see through them into meanings of words and the emotions of the other, respectively. If meaning-perception is analogous to ordinary perception, as Schopenhauer says, then emotional perception is too, other things being equal, and at least in the appropriately enlightened circumstances.

But the bearing of Schopenhauer's direct perception account of meaning on the view that we can have intuitive access to the thing in itself goes beyond the plausibility of attributing the same view across different domains. In fact, Schopenhauer uses the word-meaning relation in a quadrilateral of proportion *as a specific way of describing the relation between appearances and the will*: the metaphysical i.e. the thing in itself is "what is merely clothed in appearance and wrapped in its form; it is to appearance what a thought is to the words" (SW 3, 204).

This is a kind of analogy, but it is being used in a different way, and is stronger than analogies usually are. Schopenhauer's use of this figure is not intended to establish anything about the relata, as the argument from analogy tries to establish something about other minds. Such arguments depend upon similarities and can establish only similarities. Instead, Schopenhauer is using this figure to establish the *identity* of the relations between the two pairs of terms. But if the thought (meaning)/word relation is the same as the will/appearance relation, and the former is characterized by direct perception, then so is the latter. [31]

This is not a mere one-off comparison in the text. Although German uses two terms for 'meaning,' either 'Sinn' or 'Bedeutung,' it is unambiguous in this passage that Schopenhauer is intent on emphasizing that the two relations (between thing in itself and appearance on the one hand and between meaning and word on the other) are the same because he uses the same term, 'Sinn,' when describing the thing in itself as he does in the WWR 1 passage about speech: 'philosophy is nothing other than the accurate, universal understanding of experience itself, the true interpretation of its sense and content [Sinnes und Gehaltes]' (SW 3, 204).

What is particularly interesting is that this whole passage (SW 3, 202f) is the very passage that commentators point to as suggesting a revision in Schopenhauer's conception of metaphysics or philosophy (as the passage just quoted says) from transcendent to immanent. Doubtless Schopenhauer does modify his view in some respects, for instance in distinguishing the thing in itself in itself from the thing in itself for us. But the idea popular in the literature that Schopenhauer goes from transcendent metaphysician to modest mere 'interpreter' of experience cannot be sustained, because the hermeneutic view is perfectly consistent with, indeed partly *explains*, the transcendent metaphysical view. We can, albeit only under special,

[31] This is how Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000), 328, understands such 'qualitative' forms of analogy.

DRAFT

extreme or unusual circumstances, *see* the will as the meaning of the world, as we see the meaning of these words on the page.

And when we consider the wider semantic field of 'Bedeutung' it becomes clear that Schopenhauer himself understood even his early transcendent metaphysics in terms of a semantic relationship. This wider field isn't stretching the point however, and for two reasons. First, in general the semantic fields of 'Bedeutung' and 'Sinn' *both* include clearly semantic relations (like the English terms 'significance' and 'sense'). Second, in the quotation we started with, about hearing speech, Schopenhauer starts with a more general but still clearly semantic question that uses 'bedeuten:' "But what do the signs mean [bedeuten]?" before moving on to specify 'speech,' in which context he uses 'Sinn' (SW 2, 47).

When both of these terms are included however, then it becomes clear that Schopenhauer conceived of the thing in itself, the will, as the meaning or significance of appearances at a very basic level, from the publication of WWR 1, and extremely frequently. To take just one, highly important, example, when Schopenhauer first introduces the very possibility of the thing in itself:

> In the First Book we considered representation only as such, which is to say only with respect to its general form. Of course when it comes to abstract representations (concepts), we are familiar with their content as well, since they acquire this content and meaning [Bedeutung] only through their connection to intuitive representation and would be worthless and empty without it. This is why we will have to focus exclusively on intuitive representation in order to learn anything about its content, its more precise determinations, or the configurations it presents to us. We will be particularly interested in discovering the true meaning of intuitive representation; we have only ever *felt* this meaning before, but this has ensured that the images do not pass by us strange and meaningless [nichtssagend] as they would otherwise necessarily have done; rather, they speak and are immediately understood and have an interest that engages our entire being (SW 2, 113).

Again, Schopenhauer makes a direct comparison between the 'meaning [Bedeutung]' of concepts and the meaning of intuitions themselves. There is something paradoxical about this. Here Schopenhauer does not start off from a phenomenological account of meaning *perception* but from his theory of the constitution of conceptual (and hence linguistic) meaning itself. That theory is extensional or referential (in today's terminology): the meaning of a concept is simply the extension of the set of intuitive representations it refers to. So, the 'meaning' of intuitive representations as a whole can't literally *be* the same as the meaning of concepts: it's the relation that is identical not the relata. But the extensional nature of conceptual meaning suggests something about what it is like: just as it is in intuition that we make cognitive contact with the representations that comprise the meaning of a concept, so there must be privileged or 'peak' epistemic experiences in which we make cognitive contact with the meaning of intuition: in first person experience of agency, in compassionate contact with the will of the

DRAFT

other, in aesthetic contemplation of immediate objectivation of the will, perhaps in the cognitive component of asceticism.

This passage is a crucial one for the development of the text, but Schopenhauer's works as a whole are suffused with a semantic vocabulary used to describe contact with the will. Sandra Shapshay for instance puts a lot of weight on Schopenhauer's poetic claim that Christianity's disregard for animals 'fails to recognize the eternal essence that is present in everything that has life, and that shines out with unfathomable significance [Bedeutsamkeit] from all eyes that see the light of the sun. (SW 4, 162)[32] But what is this significance? It is surely the will—it is not as mere or purely cognitive creatures that we should respect (nonhuman) animals, it is because this cognition is linked to sentience, to a capacity for *feeling* or the will.

And none of these are isolated examples. In the Appendix, Schopenhauer takes up again the comparison between concepts and intuitions, describing 'concepts … deprived of their foundation in intuition,' as 'empty and unreal' while "[o]n the other hand, intuitions have immediate and considerable meaning in themselves (the will, the thing in itself, is even objectified in them): they are their own representatives, speak for themselves, and their content is not simply borrowed, as is the case with concepts" (SW 2,562-3). Concepts get their meaning from intuitions; but intuitions' meaning is as it were immanent to them, directly perceptible in and through them, as in Schopenhauer's description of our perception of linguistic meaning.

And in a more general way, we understand the understand the 'inner meaning' of causation when we think of it as will (SW 2, 150);[33] similarly, will must be presupposed "if causal explanation is to have sense or meaning [Sinn … Bedeutung]" (SW 2, 166). The Ideas themselves are distinguished in a hierarchy where the lower levels "do not have any profound meaning or interpretive richness [Bedeutsamkeit und vielsagendem Inhalt]," (SW 2, 251) while (presumably) the higher levels do ('Bedeutsamkeit' is the same, relatively unusual word, that Shapshay draws relevant attention to). It seems plausible even to say that Schopenhauer's *primary* way of thinking the will is in terms of meaning.

Now is not the time to try to make this claim good. In this section I've wanted to show that an obvious objection to my argument in fact strengthens it. That objection is that the peculiar nature of Schopenhauer's (avowed) direct realist theory of ordinary perception precludes its generalization to e.g. compassion. The former account of direct because Schopenhauer identifies representation with object; but in the compassion case we are already directly aware of the person as (mere) representation, and the direct theory argues that we see 'through' this surface to their wills. It's a reasonable objection. But there's evidence against it because Schopenhauer's theory of meaning perception is also direct, and it's more similar to the compassion than the ordinary perception case. But perhaps more importantly, I have sketched

---

[32] Sandra Shapshay, "Was Schopenhauer a Kantian Ethicist?" *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, Nov. 2019, 1-18, here 11-12.
[33] We understand it *seiner inneren Bedeutung nach*.

DRAFT

an interpretation of Schopenhauer's metaphysics that shows that meaning is in fact the central way in which he understands the will: it is what lends representation significance. So, his account of meaning is of singular importance for understanding how we make perceptual contact with the will. In addition to its independent interest, this also shows that there's less of a break between the 'transcendent' early Schopenhauer and the 'hermeneutic' late Schopenhauer.

Conclusion

I have tried to establish that Schopenhauer's critique of Kant is based in an attempt to purge Kant's transcendental idealism of what Schopenhauer views as the residues of a tacit commitment to pre-critical indirect perceptual realism. As a concomitant, Schopenhauer himself sees transcendental idealism as a form of direct perceptual realism. This form can't be the same as the pre-critical forms of direct realism (of e.g. Euler and Reid) that Schopenhauer also criticizes in WWR 2, because the objects we are (directly) aware of in ordinary perception are transcendentally ideal.[34] Nevertheless, they are *empirically* real. I've further argued that this sheds light on Schopenhauer's account of compassion. Compassion presupposes some kind of access to the emotions (wills) of the other. Schopenhauer's reliance on identification forces him into a dilemma: metaphysical identification through the unity of the will obliterates the distinction between persons (as Scheler points out); but psychological identification, as Schopenhauer himself points out, is a fantasy of connection with the other. A direct perception account resolves this dilemma and is the more plausible because Schopenhauer is a direct realist in ordinary perception. I conclude by addressing an objection. This objection reveals a relatively under-researched aspect of Schopenhauer's philosophy: his persistent understanding of the will as the *meaning* of representation.

DRAFT

[34] For the same reason, Schopenhauer's view is distinct from some of the contemporary forms of direct realism.