



The World As Will And Idea (Vol. 3 of 3)

Arthur Schopenhauer

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SUPPLEMENTS TO THE SECOND BOOK CHAPTER XXL

RETROSPECT AND MORE GENERAL VIEW.

IF the intellect were not of a subordinate nature, as the two preceding chapters show, then everything which takes place without it, i.e., without intervention of the idea, such as reproduction, the development and maintenance of the organism, the healing of wounds, the restoration or vicarious supplementing of mutilated parts, the salutary crisis in diseases, the works of the mechanical skill of animals, and the performances of instinct would not be done so infinitely better and more perfectly than what takes place with the assistance of intellect, all conscious and intentional achievements of men, which compared with the former are mere bungling. In general nature signifies that which operates, acts, performs without the assistance of the intellect. Now, that this is really identical with what we find in ourselves as will is the general theme of this second book, and also of the essay, "Ueber den Willen in der Natur." The possibility of this fundamental knowledge depends upon the fact that in its the will is directly lighted by the intellect, which here appears as self-consciousness; otherwise we could just as little arrive at a fuller knowledge of it within us as without us, and must for ever stop at inscrutable forces of nature. We have to

abstract from the assistance of the intellect if we wish to comprehend the nature of the will in itself, and thereby, as far as is possible, penetrate to the inner being of nature.

On this account, it may be remarked in passing, my direct antipode among philosophers is Anaxagoras; for he assumed arbitrarily as that which is first and original, from which everything proceeds, a *voos*, an intelligence, a subject of ideas, and he is regarded as the first who promulgated such a view. According to him the world existed earlier in the mere idea than in itself; while according to me it is the unconscious will which constitutes the reality of things, and its development must have advanced very far before it finally attains, in the animal consciousness, to the idea and intelligence; so that, according to me, thought appears as the very last. However, according to the testimony of Aristotle (*Metaph.*, i. 4), Anaxagoras himself did not know how to begin much with his *voos*, but merely set it up, and then left it standing like a painted saint at the entrance, without making use of it in his development of nature, except in cases of need, when he did not know how else to help himself. All physico-theology is a carrying out of the error opposed to the truth expressed at the beginning of this chapter—the error that the most perfect form of the origin of things is that which is brought about by means of an intellect. Therefore it draws a bolt against all deep exploration of nature.

From the time of Socrates down to our own time, we find that the chief subject of the ceaseless disputations of the philosophers has been that *ens rationis*, called soul. We see the most of them assert its immortality, that is to say, its metaphysical nature; yet others, supported by facts which incontrovertibly prove the entire dependence of the intellect upon the bodily organism, unweariedly maintain the contrary. That soul is by all and before everything taken as absolutely simple; for precisely from this its metaphysical nature, its immateriality and immortality

were proved, although these by no means necessarily follow from it. For although we can only conceive the destruction of a formed body through breaking up of it into its parts, it does not follow from this that the destruction of a simple existence, of which besides we have no conception, may not be possible in some other way, perhaps by gradually vanishing. I, on the contrary, start by doing away with the presupposed simplicity of our subjectively conscious nature, or the ego, inasmuch as I show that the manifestations from which it was deduced have two very different sources,

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