

# GADAMER AND SCHOPENHAUER: A COMPARATIVE ACCOUNT OF THEIR AESTHETIC THEORIES.

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## 1.0 Introduction

Both Schopenhauer and Gadamer are in their own ways reactions to Kant. It is therefore useful to open this paper by contextualizing them vis-à-vis their relationship to him, pointing out briefly what they inherit and how they respond to the Kantian legacy.

Kant's two critiques had explored the nature of theoretical and practical reason, but the end result was a seemingly unbridgeable gap between the two realms. On the one hand, the *Critique of Pure Reason* dealt with the limits of our understanding of the world of nature, whilst the *Critique of Practical Reason* dealt with the moral domain. The former domain of unfree, determined objects was antithetical to the latter where freedom was a prerequisite for moral behaviour. The irreconcilable world of subject and object — itself a major concern to subsequent German Idealists — was mediated by an aesthetic realm. Thus with the *Critique of Judgement* Kant can also be considered as proposing a system-building philosophy within which aesthetics played an important role. And although Kant denied adding a third autonomous, aesthetic realm<sup>1</sup> this was how he was subsequently read.

Even though Schopenhauer admired Kant's first two critiques, he had little to say about the last. In fact, in his review of Kant's works, the *Critique of Judgement* is virtually dismissed. He accuses Kant of having missed the point in focusing upon the conditions enabling one to pass a judgment on the beautiful rather than the beautiful object of perception itself. Kant focussed on judgements of taste for he was primarily interested in what occurred in the

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1. I. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, (Clarendon Press; Oxford 1952) 12.

subject. By starting with the subject, Schopenhauer accuses Kant of learning about the beautiful from the statements of others.

Despite dismissing Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, the other works remain seminal in Schopenhauer's eyes. Although he accepts the Kantian distinction of the phenomenal and noumenal world, he realizes that the way Kant formulates this distinction is not tenable, for Kant illegitimately postulates the noumenon as a kind of invisible object 'behind' the phenomenal world. On Kant's own premises only the objects of experience i.e. the phenomena are knowable, and hence the noumena is unknowable.

However Schopenhauer did not eliminate altogether the Kantian thing-in-itself. He argued that it was in fact knowable. Direct acquaintance of the thing-in-itself was achieved in the act of self-consciousness. In looking at our inner world, Schopenhauer argues that the motivational force of behaviour is the will.<sup>2</sup> The thing-in-itself is identified as the will, which in turn expressed itself in phenomena. However, Schopenhauer did not maintain a dualistic world view. The body was the expression of the will, but the latter was not the causal producer of the former. Rather, the body and other phenomena in the world were external objectifications of the world subject to conditions of ordinary perception. From this standpoint the body is an object amongst other objects. Whilst Hegel considered the Absolute to be the ultimate reality, the culmination of reason, Schopenhauer's will<sup>3</sup> also constituted the ultimate reality, but as a nonrational force, without any teleological designs. It is the will's nature that makes Schopenhauer look upon life as a miserable affair. The will strives to fulfill its desires, but for every desire fulfilled another ten take its place, prompting the will into further activity. This cycle of desires is temporarily satiated, but constantly renewed. As a result life becomes an arena of interminable suffering. Temporary liberation from the striving of the will is possible through the experience of the beautiful, whether natural or artistic. In this experience the subject comes into contact with the Platonic Ideas or the will itself, depending on the artform. Acquaintance of these is what constitutes knowledge and truth.

2. B. Magee describes the will in terms of 'energy': "it is nonhuman and impersonal, without consciousness, without aims and perhaps the most important of all — without life," *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, (Clarendon Press; Oxford 1983) 144.
3. Bowie points out that Schopenhauer's introduction of the will is not as original as is widely believed. Schelling for example, had already claimed, "as the object is never absolute then something per se non-objective must be posited in nature: this absolutely non-objective postulate is precisely the original productivity of nature." Cited from A. Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: from Kant to Nietzsche*, (Manchester University Press; Manchester 1990) 206.

Gadamer also has his starting point rooted in Kant. It is he whom Gadamer holds responsible for the situation where one no longer speaks of truth and knowledge in art. With Kant, aesthetics became subjective for considerations of aesthetic judgments were based not on the nature of the object, but on the subject who synthesized the plurality of impressions confronting him, either as a creator or as a beholder.

In the *Critique of Judgement* Kant attempts to resolve a difficult situation. Judgements of taste and beauty are subjective for they are related to the individual's delight. Pleasure in the beautiful is not acquired through conceptualization or reflection. If this were the case, then it would be merely a question of learning the correct rules of procedure for solving questions of taste and beauty. The subjective element excluded the possibility of aesthetics becoming part of Kant's critical philosophy.

The other problem Kant needed to resolve was how agreement was possible on questions of taste. This couldn't be established by induction i.e., by seeing how many people agree on a particular object as beautiful. What Kant wanted was to show that a judgement of the beautiful was such that it commanded the agreement of others. Thus Kant needed to establish a position where both the subjective and the universal aspects were fulfilled.

Kant's paradigm for the beautiful is nature. It presents itself immediately, unmediated by concepts, whose beauty is in-itself without reference to our purposes. Artistic beauty supplements natural beauty in that the latter is invigorated by the genius's free play of his mental faculties i.e., the imagination and the understanding. However, although his source is nature, the genius presents an idealized version of nature, so that his added contribution becomes a reflection on man himself. This talent cannot be learnt by following rules, so that in the artistic depiction of natural beauty man recognizes similarities between himself and nature, since nature too is devoid of rules, concepts and deliberate purposes.

As a result of Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, aesthetic discourse became subjective, claiming an area independent of considerations on knowledge and truth, focussing on 'taste' and 'feeling'. This is the point Gadamer is stressing. In delineating truth and knowledge within the framework of the 'natural sciences, Kant closed the doors of truth and knowledge to art.

Thus, both for Gadamer and Schopenhauer, the experience of art is a source of knowledge and truth. However, whilst their claims seem to be similar, the content of their claims differs. It is this difference which this paper sets out to explore.

## 2.0 *Truth and knowledge in art*

In the following sections I shall be considering points of contact between Schopenhauer and Gadamer, namely the claims to truth and knowledge in art, the aesthetic experience and their preoccupations with genius. That I have focussed on these particular issues is not an arbitrary choice, but was imposed upon me by the authors themselves who formulate their positions around these themes.

The interesting aspect of Schopenhauerian aesthetics is its ambivalent position when contrasted to Gadamer's aesthetics. Like Gadamer, (and unlike Kant) he talks about truth and knowledge in the experience of art, so that it is on questions of what kind of truth and knowledge that they differ. Yet Schopenhauer also makes the additional claim as to the eternal nature of artistic and natural beauty. Gadamer makes no such claims, but on the contrary argues in *Truth and Method* that 'raising' beauty to an eternal standpoint leads to the dislocation of the work of art from the double world of its and the viewer's context.

Gadamer's historical survey points to Schiller as being responsible for producing what he calls the aesthetic consciousness of differentiation. With Schiller, the word aesthetic changed its meaning from that used by Kant for his transcendental aesthetics. Kant's transcendental justification enabling one to pass a judgement of taste was transformed from a methodological condition to one of content, to the imperative of adopting an aesthetic attitude to things.

Despite the influence of Kant, Schiller's proclamation of art as freedom ultimately drew its resources from Fichte. Schiller was not referring to the Kantian free-play of cognitive faculties, but rather drawing upon Fichte's theory of instinct. The Schillerian play-impulse involved the harmony of the form impulse and the matter impulse; whilst the form impulse strives for unity and persistence, the matter impulse strives for change. These drives are controlled and harmonized by the play impulse. It is with art that the play impulse was brought out. Aesthetic education aimed at developing this instinct. An important consequence ensued: art claimed its own standpoint and established its supremacy. The art of the beautiful appearance was contrasted with reality. Nature and art no longer complemented each other, but were contrasted, leaving art as an autonomous sphere. The laws of beauty as the criterion of art, permit "nature" and "reality" to be transcended. Schiller's defence of the "ideal kingdom" of art against all limitation — both political and moral — led to the culture of an "aesthetic state" where an educated

society was interested in art. Thus, the reality which Schiller opposed art to, is no longer the same concept of reality used by Kant.

According to Schiller the aesthetic world was defined in terms of imitation, unreality, illusion, magic or dream. It was opposed to the 'real' world. The ontological definition of aesthetic appearance was formulated at that moment when the scientific-epistemological model excluded any other form of knowledge outside its own method. Aesthetic consciousness became alienated from reality. It was a consciousness characterizing the educated society, for in such a community its members shared the same features, namely an ability to raise oneself to the universal, by negating those criteria of taste which mark a particular community.

Furthermore, there was a second mode of being of this aesthetic consciousness: the divorce of the work from its original context — its world. Schiller's aesthetic consciousness no longer recognizes the importance of content or the relation of the work of art with its world. Anything which has particular qualities determined as aesthetic belong to the aesthetic consciousness. It has become the centre towards which works are measured as art. The Schillerian notion of aesthetic consciousness is called by Gadamer aesthetic differentiation. It is a process where everything in which a work is rooted — original context of, life, religious or secular function — is disregarded.

Differentiation is that abstractive process which selects in relation to the aesthetic quality. Extra-aesthetic elements, such as purpose, function, the meaning of its content, are excluded from considerations of the artistic nature of the work. By force of its exclusions, the viewer is prevented from taking any moral or religious attitudes with him towards the work i.e., he supposedly approached the work without any preconceptions and prejudices. Furthermore, when the aesthetic consciousness is applied to the performative arts, for example music and drama, a difference is made between the original as opposed to its reproduction. Both — providing they fulfill aesthetic criteria — are deemed independent of each other. Their interpretation is no longer related to the original: each is contemplated aesthetically.

The implication of this view is described by Gadamer as having "the character of simultaneity."<sup>4</sup> The double differentiation — of work from its world and beholder from his attitudes — simultaneously raises works of art of all times to a co-present in the mind of the beholder. Rather than a localization

4. H.G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (Sheen and Ward; London 1975) 77.

of taste, determined by the criteria upheld by the beholder's world, art becomes eternal with aesthetic differentiation. The art of all ages is integrated into the co-presentness of aesthetic differentiation. Its embodiment has taken place in the form of the library or the museum: the art of all ages is lumped together in one building, with the consequence that the aesthetic consciousness adopts a tasteless attitude. Even architecture, which might be considered as resistant to aesthetic differentiation, succumbs to aesthetic consciousness with buildings re-produced as pictures.

Aesthetic differentiation is that attempt to raise art to the standpoint of eternity; but it is a standpoint which is opposed to the Kantian delineation of reality, and consequently excludes ascribing questions of truth and knowledge to art. Schopenhauer in turn considers the experience of art to be an experience of the eternal: "[art] stops the wheel of time."<sup>5</sup> With his contemporaries he looked upon art as transhistorical. Yet unlike them, he also looked upon art as the source of truth and knowledge.

It is in this context that Platonic Ideas — the objective aspect of the aesthetic experience — are introduced.<sup>6</sup> At first sight he seems to be introducing a piece of alien ontology into his world-view for he claimed that reality is an indivisible will which however manifests itself in the world of phenomenon. It has been pointed out<sup>7</sup> that Schopenhauer does not explain why the will needs to objectify itself in space and time at all, given that the will is all that there is i.e., ultimate reality. But I think that even without involving ourselves too deeply in his metaphysics, one could argue that the will's inexhaustible desire for life leads to it manifesting itself in whatever form possible. It is its own striving nature that makes it enter into the phenomenal world, subject to the limitations of space, time and causality.

When Schopenhauer writes that the will objectifies itself into the world, this self-manifestation is graded into four categories: inorganic matter, vegetal life, animal, and human life. Man is at the top of this hierarchy on the grounds that through him knowledge of the will is most easily acquired. The phenomenal world is for Schopenhauer the "indirect objectification of the

5. A. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, (Dover Publications; New York 1969) 185.

6. Schopenhauer uses 'aesthetic contemplation' and the 'aesthetic experience' synonymously.

7. D.W. Hamlyn, *Schopenhauer*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul; London 1980) 110.115; F. Copelston, *Schopenhauer: Philosopher of pessimism*, (Burns Oates and Washbourne; London 1946) 105.

will."<sup>8</sup> And yet, despite the plentitude of objects found in the world, Schopenhauer is adamant that the will is not divided into each such that the result is the complete will. Rather the will is present in each of them. It is indivisible such that "if per impossible, a single being, even the most insignificant, were entirely annihilated, the whole world would inevitably be destroyed with it."<sup>9</sup>

And here we have the crux of the problem which Schopenhauer is faced with, namely how to reconcile an indivisible atemporal will with a plurality of objects in space and time. In this, I will try to show how he is successful, although his recourse to the Platonic Ideas seems to be located in a desire to include aesthetics within his system, a procedure not uncommon in his days, as exemplified in the metaphysics of Hegel, Fichte and Schelling.

The Platonic Ideas are meant to have a mediatory role between the different realms of the will and the world. The uneasiness which accompanies us into thinking of the Platonic Ideas as constituting a separate set of beings is partly due to Schopenhauer's insistence upon calling them Platonic Ideas: "these grades of the objectification of the will are nothing but Plato's Ideas."<sup>10</sup> Perhaps Schopenhauer's insistence upon calling them the Platonic Ideas is to help avoid confusing them with the world as representation. All knowledge of the world is mediated by the senses and the intellect. What we know of the world in ordinary consciousness is its representation. The Platonic Ideas differ from the world as representation in that the latter is expressed through the forms of space, time and causality. The Platonic Ideas, though numerous are atemporal. This is what they have in common with the will.

The similarity between Plato's and Schopenhauer's Ideas lies in their structural nature: both are the essential features of things. The things themselves, precisely because they are subject to those conditions constitutive of the world, appear as a plurality of phenomena in their inessential features:

to the brook which rolls downwards over the stones, the eddies, waves and foam-forms are exhibited by it are indifferent and inessential; but that it follows gravity, and behaves as an inelastic, perfectly mobile;

8. A. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, (Dover Publications; New York 1969) 175.
9. *Ibid.*, 128-129.
10. *Ibid.*, 129.

formless and transparent fluid, this is its essential nature, this, if known through perception, is the Idea<sup>11</sup>

Yet despite this point of contact between Plato and Schopenhauer, there remain two fundamental differences. Firstly, whilst Plato's Ideas are the ultimate reality, for Schopenhauer this reality is the will. Secondly, Plato's Ideas are abstract, Schopenhauer's Ideas are apprehended in perception.<sup>12</sup>

It is the relationship between the Platonic Ideas and the world that still needs to be examined. In one respect, they are like the concept: "both unities represent a plurality of things."<sup>13</sup> But in other respects, the analogy fails, for the concept is abstract, the product of reason, exhausted in its definition;<sup>14</sup> so too the concept is figuratively speaking "a dead receptacle", the Platonic Idea a living organism.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Schopenhauer indicates the difference between concept and Platonic Idea in terms of their direction: the Idea is the unity that has fallen into plurality by virtue of the temporal and spatial form of our intuitive apprehension. The concept, on the other hand, is the unity once more produced out of plurality by means of abstraction through our faculty of reason.<sup>16</sup>

This I think provides a good indicator of how the will manifests itself in the world via the Platonic Ideas. It explains why Schopenhauer considers the world as the indirect manifestation of the will, given that the Platonic Ideas are its direct manifestation.

On the other hand, when he writes that phenomenon 'fall' through the Platonic Ideas, it is not as though the Platonic Ideas are wholly segregated from things. They differ in being atemporal, outside the forms of space, time and causality. But they are perceived — as Schopenhauer will show in his examination of the arts — via the phenomenal objects. This leads back to the different grades of objectifications of the will. Not all the Platonic Ideas are the same, for those with the more complex life forms appear with "increasing

11. *Ibid.*, 182.

12. As T.J. Diffey writes, "whatever Plato's forms are, they could not be objects of perception," "Schopenhauer's Account of Aesthetic Experience," *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 30(April 1990/2)135.

13. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 233.

14. *Ibid.*, 234.

15. *Ibid.*, 235.

16. *Ibid.*, 234-235.



distinctness and completeness.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Schopenhauer makes a distinction between the Platonic Ideas of man and the Platonic Ideas of the animal and vegetal worlds: "the farther down we go, the more completely is every trace of individual character lost in the general character of the species and only the physiognomy of the species remains."<sup>18</sup>

Whilst with animals and plants there is no difference between the species and their character, each man instantiates his own Idea on account of his unique character: "the character of each individual man, in so far as it is thoroughly individual and not entirely included in that of the species can be regarded as a special Idea, corresponding to a particular act of objectification of the will."<sup>19</sup>

This point is important for it shows that D.H. Hamlyn is wrong in claiming that there is an individual Idea for every particular object.<sup>20</sup> It is only in the case of man that the Platonic Idea is both token and type. This should not be confused with the further claim Schopenhauer makes when he writes that every object can be perceived as an Idea, "whether it be a landscape, a tree, a rock, a crag, a building, or anything else."<sup>21</sup> This is not a claim about the nature of the relationship between the Platonic Ideas and particulars. It is a claim about what is eligible to become the object of aesthetic contemplation. Schopenhauer is arguing that every object which manifests itself as a Platonic Idea can be called beautiful.

Even in the inorganic world and in manufactured products, the will is still manifesting itself, and hence contemplation of the Idea of their beauty remains possible. In the case Schopenhauer cites i.e., of manufactured products, he argues against Plato's refusal to ascribe Ideas to manufactured articles. Thus, whereas for Plato there was no Idea of table, Schopenhauer conceded the Idea of table but only as an expression of its matter. There could be no perception of matter as an Idea, for pure, unformed matter would be an exercise in abstraction. Yet despite the fact that all objects can be potentially classified as beautiful, some are more beautiful than others. The more beautiful ones are those which facilitate the transition from object to Idea. Human beauty

17. Ibid., 169.

18. Ibid., 131.

19. Ibid., 158.

20. Hamlyn writes: "it [the Platonic Idea of the oak tree] is an ideal entity, something that is both token and type", *Schopenhauer* 106.

21. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 166.

facilitates this transition "man is (the) more beautiful than all other objects and the revelation of his more inner nature is the highest aim of art."<sup>22</sup>

Art is the medium through which the various Platonic Ideas are perceived. Schopenhauer has successfully bridged the noumenal and phenomenal world without creating a new realm. Like the will, the Platonic Ideas are atemporal;<sup>23</sup> like the phenomenal world, these Ideas are objects of representation i.e., they require a subject for their perception. Since they are atemporal, our ordinary mode of cognition cannot apprehend them. It is in the aesthetic experience that the perception of these Ideas is possible, for this experience necessitates a change in the subject where his condition as a willing subject is temporally eliminated.

Knowledge of the Ideas is knowledge about the true nature of reality i.e., the will, for the Platonic are the "immediate and adequate objectivity of the thing-in-itself, of the will."<sup>24</sup> Artistic beauty is preferred to natural beauty for in art the knowledge of the Ideas is communicated. However, in claiming that the experience of the beautiful is the perception of the Idea, Schopenhauer has raised works of art to an eternal standpoint.<sup>25</sup> Art becomes the medium through which we transcend both its original world and our world. This is the view Gadamer argues against in his critique of aesthetic differentiation. Schopenhauer's position is precisely the position Gadamer attacks in his critique of the notion of aesthetic consciousness. He takes as his starting point the work of R. Hamaan. In the *Aesthetic*, Hamaan takes aesthetic differentiation to its extreme, abstracting it from art itself. By starting with an analysis of perception without any relation to something else, pure aesthetic experience has been transformed into pure perception. But Gadamer argues against the idea of pure perception, drawing upon Aristotle's point that all sense perception tends to a universal. Whatever is perceived is so in relation to something universal: a white phenomenon is seen as man, the noise we hear of a car hooting is its horn, not pure sound.<sup>26</sup> The importance this brings out is

22. Ibid., 210.

23. This is why Magee is wrong when he writes "if plural, [the Platonic Ideas] must be within the the phenomenal world not outside it", *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, (Clarendon Press; Oxford 1983) 148.

24. Schopenhauer *The World as Will and Representation*, 148.

25. On Schopenhauer's account the Idea perceived in natural beauty is also eternal; however, it differs from works of art in that the latter are produced by genius and can therefore make a claim to eternity in the sense of timelessness i.e., irrespective of context.

26. So too a further argument against the idea of pure perception is that the form of life from

that perception can never be a mirror image; the idea of pure perception is impossible because perception is always meaningful. It is the understanding of something as something: "all understanding as...is an articulation of what is there."<sup>27</sup> The criticism of the idea of pure perception is also a criticism of aesthetic consciousness, for given that there is no such thing as pure perception, i.e., no abstraction from meaningful contexts, then the notion of pure art collapses.

Objects looked at aesthetically are not looked at as a simple case of what there is but are dwelt upon and assimilated. In the case of works of plastic art (excluding non-representational and abstract art), recognizing what is represented enables us to understand the picture. "Seeing," Gadamer notes, "means differentiation."<sup>28</sup> There is no perception without meaning. The interpretation of a work of art is the perception of it as something. Interpretation belongs to the work of art. It is not some thing that can be separated from the work: thus, for Gadamer, the aesthetic experience becomes a hermeneutical one. Consequently, the interpretation of art is a way out of the view of aesthetic consciousness, for it shows how a work of art is always linked to meaning and this is in turn determined by context.

The question of how a work of art should be interpreted can be traced back to Kant's adoption of the concept of genius as the creator of art. The formalism which Kant upheld in the *Critique of Judgement* was not that of a pure perception; it was not of form without meaningful content, but of form as the unity of meaning. Form is here opposed to the purely sensuous attraction of the material in the work of art. Kant's examples of the arabesque are purely methodological, but not the aesthetic ideal. In order to achieve this ideal Kant relied upon the concept of genius. This concept has had far reaching implications for even when it declined in the eighteenth century, its influence continued through to the nineteenth century, although instead of being conceived of by the artist, it was then confirmed by the observer. The critical observer saw the work as miraculous, as a product inspired by genius. And though artists acclaimed this view, they were more down to earth, considering questions of technique and of success.

Yet even if the Romantic concept of genius as an unconscious producer is eliminated, the problem remains: how — if genius is excluded as defining the

which we come, i.e., our linguistic background influences our way of perceiving the world.

27. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 81.

28. *Ibid.*, 82.

work of art — is the difference to be enacted between art and craft? A work becomes a work when it is able to fulfill its purpose. Its use determines whether it has been completed. But this criterion is inapplicable to the artwork. Use does not answer the question of what the work of art is. Lack of purpose (end) is perhaps indicative of the condition of art: in itself, it is not completable i.e., endlessly interpretable. The consequences of such a position — adopted by Valery — Gadamer claims is that the recipient is the ultimate authority for the criterion of correct reaction and understanding: “one way of understanding a work of art is then no less legitimate than another.”<sup>29</sup>

Such a relativist position, Gadamer argues leaves the recipient as the absolute authority, as the genius of understanding instead of the genius of creation. What takes place is a transference of the concept of genius from artist to beholder. And this solves nothing for even if the beholder is an ordinary person, the work of art as fragment offers no appropriate reaction, leading to the view that each interpretation of the same work is an interpretation of a new work.

In rejecting Valery’s argument, Gadamer does not opt for the Lukacsian concept of aesthetic experience: it too is unhelpful. The problem with this view is that in emphasizing aesthetic experience, the work of art is considered as an empty form, filled in by a succession of experiences, with the following consequences: the loss of the identity of the artwork, artist and recipient through time. The continuity between each interpretation is broken.

To refute the Lukacsian position, Gadamer invokes Kierkegaard’s criticism of the aesthetic stage. Here, I don’t think Gadamer’s move is legitimate for Kierkegaard’s focus was directed towards an aesthetic existence i.e., towards a sensual way of life where one was not committed to any particular belief except one’s own stance, which serves to show the inherent contradictoriness of the aesthetic stage of existence. But what Gadamer needs to show with the Lukacsian position is that the work of art as an empty form filled with meaning by a subject is untenable. The flaw with Lukacs’s position is that it is object oriented with the object devoid of meaning, whilst Kierkegaard’s critique is subject oriented so that Gadamer’s use of Kierkegaard is misplaced.

That Gadamer needs the Kierkegaardian critique is shown by the consequences of this critique. The Kierkegaardian aesthete despairs of his own life and feels the need to go beyond this stage, to the ethical sphere. It is from

29. *Ibid.*, 85.

the ethical stage that one is able to see the contradictions inherent in the previous stage. Gadamer argues that Kierkegaard's point here shows how even if the aesthetic stance is untenable "the phenomenon of art imposes a task on existence; namely (that) ... of achieving that continuity of self-understanding which alone can support human existence."<sup>30</sup>

This quotation illustrates the kind of knowledge Gadamer expects of art. It is a knowledge which throws light upon man himself. The presupposition he assumes is that both art and man are the product of historical and cultural contexts. Because man is the product of history, he is not immediately present to himself, and cannot therefore know himself. Art is the medium, the 'other' through which man learns about himself. In interpreting art, man interprets himself.<sup>31</sup> The mediation through art is the transportation of oneself to a past world. But this is not the timeless world of the aesthetic consciousness. It is the leaving of one's home to return home. Any interpretation of a work of art needs to consider the background from which the interpreter comes. The past engages the present. The differences which the past reveals produces knowledge of the present. The present can only be known mediated by the past. The value of interpreting art is that "art is knowledge and that the experience of the work of art is a sharing of this knowledge."<sup>32</sup>

Obviously, this view entails rejecting the Kantian conception of what constitutes knowledge and what constitutes reality. On Kant's account it would not be possible to make any claims of knowledge in art. But aesthetics should be precisely that which gives access to a kind of knowledge which differs from scientific knowledge. The truth of art is the truth of self-knowledge.

However whilst I sympathize with Gadamer's view that we learn about ourselves from the past, the way Gadamer talks about history and tradition raises a few questions. In the first case, Gadamer seems to read history in Enlightenment terms as a movement towards progress. He does not seem to consider that history is frequently the story of much suffering, which repeats itself rather than eliminate it. In this case it is debatable as to what the value of such knowledge is towards man's self-understanding. Merely to say that we learn about ourselves from the past is not saying very much. So too, there is

30. *Ibid.*, 86

31. J. Weinsheimer writes, "hermeneutics is what makes continuity out of discontinuity," *Gadamer's Hermeneutics: A Reading of 'Truth and Method'*, (Yale University Press; New Haven 1985) 97.

32. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 87.

the question of history itself. My claim is that history is never a neutral narrative. What is perceived as historical data is motivated by ideological interests. The history we read today is only a particular perspective which was of interest to the historiographers of the time. The claim to objectivity is unwarranted since they would have been the product of their own context. Since Gadamer considers the past as the only possible way of learning about ourselves, it seems that this knowledge would necessarily be distorted. One consequence of this view is that historiography becomes an exercise in fictional revision. As the collective of *The Empire Writes Back* point out: "Hayden White (1973) has noted how a long line of European thinkers from Valery and Heidegger to Sartre, Levi-Strauss and Foucault have cast doubts on the claims of an objective historical consciousness and stressed the fictive nature of historical reconstruction."<sup>33</sup>

Hegel is considered by Gadamer as having a more thorough understanding of the experience of art than Kant. Art and history are inter-related and together result in truth. The truth which art reveals is the truth of history, of world views. Unlike history however, art does not resolve itself into "true art". It is superseded by world history and the history of philosophy. Still, this should not undermine the value of Hegel's contribution, which is precisely that of eliminating subjectivity from art. Truth in art is achieved, but superseded by the concept i.e., philosophy.

The defect with Hegelian aesthetics is that it adopts the standpoint of infinite knowledge, which sees art as a movement leading to philosophy. Gadamer accepts the elimination of Kantian subjectivism from Hegelian aesthetics, but on the other hand rejects Hegel by accepting the Kantian view that the language of concepts and ends is inapplicable to art. His concern ultimately is to show the ontological status of the work of art and its truth-value. Here the work of Heidegger influences Gadamer. In *The Origins of the Work of Art*, Heidegger claims that a great work of art 'speaks' to us, putting us in touch with a truth which we cannot obtain otherwise than through art. The experience of a work of art is the revelation of truth. It is the work that speaks to us, not the artist.

Likewise Gadamer maintains that the experience of art is the revelation of truth. In the experience, he who undergoes it does not leave the work unchanged. Something has happened to him. The mode of being of the genuine work of art is truth. It is a truth the subject does not possess because it alters

33. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul; London 1989) 161.

him. The truth of art is different to the truth which science acquires at the end of methodological inquiry. Rather the subject belongs to the art work such that in its experience he understands the truth of his own being.

### 3.0 *The experience of art.*

When it comes to the experience of art, Schopenhauer and Gadamer have more in common than is ever pointed out. Both have as their central thesis the loss of the subject-object divide. Indeed, considering that Gadamer does not belong to the German Idealist tradition, his concerns on this aspect are remarkably similar to the concerns of that tradition. Thus, the unity of subject-object in the aesthetic experience is for him a central consideration to the nature of art and pivotal to his treatment of all the arts.

Likewise, Schopenhauer — albeit for different reasons — is also concerned to relinquish the dichotomy between the subject and object in the aesthetic experience. It is, in fact, one of the two ways of achieving temporary respite from the trammels of the will. But more than liberation, the aesthetic experience constitutes another form of knowledge, one superior to the knowledge obtained through science. The procedures and aims of science serve to highlight — by contrast — how knowledge is acquired in the arts. In its scientific endeavours the intellect is subjected to the rule of the will. The purpose of scientific knowledge is to get to know and manipulate objects. In this relationship practical purposes determine the relation between intellect and will.

Artistic knowledge differs radically. For a start it is not concerned with the things it encounters, but with the universal aspects of these things — the Platonic Ideas. Yet the perception of these Ideas require a correlative in the individual's mode of being. The individual is no longer interested in the object for his own uses. The relation between the intellect and the will is severed: "thus it considers things without interest, without subjectivity, purely objectively; it is entirely given up to them in so far as they are merely representations and not motives."<sup>34</sup>

The Platonic Idea is a representation requiring a subject. In the perception of the Idea, the subject becomes one with the object i.e., the Idea. The absence of interest towards the object is reminiscent of, and derived from Kant. In the *Critique of Judgement*, he wrote that an aesthetic judgement consists of a

34. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 196.

"delight or aversion immediately with the bare contemplation of the object irrespective of its use or of any end."<sup>35</sup>

Schopenhauer adopts the notion of aesthetic disinterestedness, although he differed from Kant in that the latter was concerned with the harmonious interplay of the faculty of the understanding together with the imagination and the universality of aesthetic judgements. He did not admit that the aesthetic experience was a source of knowledge at all. Indeed, Kant's concern was to establish the conditions which enable one to pass an aesthetic judgement. It is this point that Heidegger stresses and uses to claim that Schopenhauer misunderstood Kant. It is Heidegger's contention that Kant's search for the grounds and definition of the beautiful in terms of disinterestedness is a negative aspect. The positive aspect is — having excluded questions of interests, purposes, and practical ends — the encounter with the object "in its own stature and worth."<sup>36</sup> Whilst Schopenhauer reads disinterestedness as the release from the will in its relation to the object, Heidegger claims that disinterestedness is the establishment of an essential relation to the object itself: "for the first time the object comes to the fore as pure object and that such coming forward into appearance is the beautiful."<sup>37</sup>

Heidegger's critique still leaves the Schopenhauerian position intact. What Heidegger considers as the appearance of the object in its full worth, is to Schopenhauer the revelation of the Idea. And Schopenhauer can still maintain that the revelation of the Idea requires a corresponding change in the subject of the experience namely, from that of an individual willing a particular object, to that of a "pure will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge."<sup>38</sup>

The question we return to is that of establishing in what sense the experience of art produces a unity of subject and object. The dissolution of this dichotomy is heralded with the advent of the Platonic Ideas, for they include within them both subject and object:

when the Idea appears, subject and object can no longer be distinguished in it, because the Idea, the adequate objectivity of the will,

35. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 43.

36. M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will To Power As Art*, (Harper and Row Publishers; New York 1971) 109.

37. *Ibid.*, 110

38. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 179.



the real world as representation arises only when subject and object reciprocally fill and penetrate each other completely.<sup>39</sup>

Knox suggests that on Schopenhauer's own grounds the unity of the aesthetic experience is untenable. Each Idea has a different meaning according to the place it is accorded in the hierarchy of the arts. Thus, the Idea of man is the highest expression of meaning, the lowest being exhibited in architecture. Consequently, the aesthetic experience is "judged only according to the intensity and clarity with which it apprehends that quality [Idea]."<sup>40</sup> The error with Knox's view is that he equates 'oneness' with 'sameness'. He wants the aesthetic experience of each and every object to be qualitatively the same. However, in itself this objection does nothing to invalidate the unity of the aesthetic experience.

Whilst Schopenhauer's contention remains valid, he does seem to weaken his own position when he discusses the question of aesthetic pleasure. In the *Essays and Aphorisms*, he argues that this pleasure is precisely the loss of one's individual will, of all desiring "when all desire disappears from consciousness there still remains the condition of pleasure."<sup>41</sup> But when talking about pleasure in *The World as Will and Representation*, he differentiates as to whether this pleasure is more pronounced on the will-less subject or on the Platonic Idea: "the pleasure...[arises]...sometimes more from the one than from the other, according to what the object of aesthetic contemplation may be."<sup>42</sup> If the object of aesthetic contemplation is a low graded Idea, such as those manifested in architecture, then the pleasure arises from the condition of will-lessness; if on the other hand, it is the contemplation of the Idea of man, the pleasure is derived from the Idea. This distinction weakens his claim to the unity of the aesthetic experience, for to be able to differentiate and locate the pleasure either in the subject or object means that in effect they are not united in the aesthetic experience. If they are undifferentiated in the aesthetic experience then presumably one cannot distinguish between them.

Gadamer's way of eliminating the subject-object divide is radically different from Schopenhauer. Unlike the latter, he does not have any ultimate

39. Ibid., 180.

40. I. Knox, *The Aesthetic Theories of Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer*, (The Humanities Press, New York 1958) 134.

41. A. Schopenhauer, *Essays and Aphorisms*, (Penguin Classics; Middlesex 1970) 155.

42. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 196.

reality from which to escape. Rather his concern is to unify the spectator with the object of his experience such that his own being will be revealed. His strategy involves adopting the theme of art as play, a theme frequently adopted in the history of aesthetics. The view he wants to explicate is different from the Kantian or Schillerian positions. Indeed, one can say he is arguing against their subjectivist considerations of play in art i.e., art as free play of mental faculties. In Kant's case, art as the free-play of the imagination with the understanding, in Schiller's case, art as the harmonizing play of the form and matter impulse. Gadamer's analysis shifts the mode of being of the work of art from the subject to the work itself. What he wants to show is how the work takes over the subject. To do this he will draw a parallel between the mode of being of the work of art and of play. However, it is play that becomes his starting point, for Gadamer will show how the mode of being of play is only a narrower conception of that of the work of art.

Gadamer's primary concern is to show features of play that cannot be classified as subjective. In this way he will shed light on the mode of being of play. As a methodological starting point, Gadamer examines the way play is used in ordinary language: the play of light, the play of forces etc. From its actual use, we can note an emphasis on a movement which does not tend towards an end. The to-and-fro sway of play is what defines a game. In this respect, it is irrelevant to consider whether it is a subject who plays: "hence the mode of being of play is not such that there must be a subject who takes up a playing attitude in order that the game may be played."<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, the primacy of the game over the subject is brought out by another factor: risk. Playing a game involves taking a number of decisions, options for certain possibilities. There is therefore a sense of freedom of choice which accompanies the game. But the choice entails risking, and this risk is what exerts control over the player. It makes the game attractive, and it shows that the player is subjected to the game, and not vice-versa. This view is further substantiated by what Gadamer calls the "proper spirit" of the game. Each game is different and their difference lies precisely in the respective spirit. When a particular game is played, a corresponding mental attitude is adopted. But what must be recalled is that it is the primacy of the game whose spirit induces the respective attitude. It is not the mental attitude which is the cause of the difference in games. Each game is determined by a particular attitude which differentiates it from other attitudes.

43. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 93.

Gadamer has so far provided us with features of play that show its independent status: the swaying movement, the proper spirit and risk. It is the next point which however underlies the most fundamental feature of playing a game: seriousness. When one customarily talks of play, the immediate reaction is to equate it — as Aristotle does — with recreation. But this equation is not exhaustive. The active participation of play is not one of idleness but of seriousness. Not playing seriously is tantamount to not playing. When a game is played seriously “the player loses himself in his play.”<sup>44</sup> The loss of self serves to show how the game takes over the player. To ask about the player’s subjectivity is fruitless, for the mode of being of play has an essence independent of the subject who plays, and which takes over the subject, “the real subject of the game is not the player...but instead the game itself.”<sup>45</sup> What he means is that the subject does not stand over and above the object but loses himself in it.

Is Gadamer’s critique of subjectivism successful? I would argue that Gadamer has established his case against the subjectivist thesis. For a subjectivist to be successful, he must defend the claim that the subject is always in control, manipulating the game to his own ends. But Gadamer has precisely shown the opposite. The characteristic features of play cannot be explained by reducing them to a subject. Rather the mode of being of play is such that it controls the subject.

The essence of a game and that of a work of art are not identical. The difference lies in their mode of representation. With the game, Gadamer argues, that of its nature every game has its own particular space, although he focuses in particular on those games — children’s games — which as such do not require an audience. The space which delineates the field of play is separated from other areas of human behaviour. It constitutes a self-enclosed world. Within the world of the game, no purpose extrinsic to the game itself is pursued. Its nature is autotelic. One plays to fulfill the goals of the game. These goals are fulfilled by the role or task the game gives to each player: “every game presents the man who plays it with a task.”<sup>46</sup> Its being played is its own representation. Having established the nature of play as self-representation, Gadamer goes on to argue that the work of art, like play, also has the mode of being of self-representation, but with the fundamental

44. *Ibid.*, 92.

45. *Ibid.*, 95-96.

46. *Ibid.*, 96.

**difference that it is a representation directed towards an audience. What seems dubious about Gadamer's analysis is that it seems to characterize games in too narrow a fashion so that it allows him to make the further claim that art is a representation-for. Due to his opinion of games, sports are not directed towards an audience. What would he say of those games which combine entertainment with them — say wrestling and boxing. Would it not be legitimate to hold that they are also a representation-for an audience? If this were the case, what is the difference between games and works of art?**

Gadamer's paradigm for the representational structure of the work of art is likened to the religious rite where a god is represented. Here the players in the rite represent a "meaningful whole" for the audience. The audience is required to complement the game. The religious or profane drama is an open world, in the sense of an openness towards the spectator. The representation of the game is the representation for someone, although the game is itself a closed world. A fundamental shift occurs now, for the players involved as they are with their roles, perform for the audience. It is not they who become totally absorbed, but the audience. The play is not performed for the player's personal delight but for the spectator. This is not to say that the player does not experience its significance. It is just — Gadamer maintains — that the audience has methodological precedence. The work of art is essentially a representation-for someone, who is neither the playwright and neither the actor. The correlate of representation-for is meaning. We do not ask of a game what it means, but we do ask it of a performance. The openness of the work of art is the openness to the audience of meaning.

The Gadamerian position is therefore remarkably similar to the Schopenhauerian one. Both display an explicit desire to relocate the aesthetic experience within the space of a unity, involving the breakdown of the subject-object dichotomy. For Gadamer, collapsing this dichotomy ensures the truth of art, reuniting the subject and object in the interpretation. The work of art is experienced as its interpretation. The Gadamerian critique is not concerned with the subject's loss of individuality. Indeed the way he talks about the game despite it controlling the player or the work of art as existing only in its interpretation, still leaves room for the subject's individuality. The question of individuality is not problematic for Gadamer, since he does not have the same premise as Schopenhauer i.e., that the will dominates the individual's life ceaselessly seeking to satisfy its desires. In his case it is precisely the loss of individuality which enables art to make a positive contribution to human life.

#### 4.0 Genius

The concept of genius is discussed by both Schopenhauer and Gadamer. Their views on this concept are radically opposed, for on the one hand, Schopenhauer eulogizes the genius as he who is in contact with the Platonic Ideas translating them into art, whilst on the other hand, Gadamer condemns the aesthetics of genius as the root problem — originating in Kant — of denouncing claims of truth and knowledge in art.

Schopenhauer's artistic genius has extraordinary talents which ordinary people share in, but to a lesser degree. This talent consists in the ability of losing oneself in pure perception i.e., abandoning all subjective interests and willing: "the gift of genius is nothing but the most complete objectively i.e., the objective tendency of the mind, as opposed to the subjective directed to our own person, i.e., the will."<sup>47</sup> This point serves to show that contrary to what many critics claim, Schopenhauer was not a Romanticist for rather than glorifying the self in art and life — one of the assumptions of Romanticism — he considered the value of artistic genius only insofar as his individuality was eliminated.

With the genius's loss of self, a different kind of knowledge is attained: that of the Ideas. It is superior to scientific knowledge on two counts: firstly, scientific knowledge works for the will i.e., it seeks to know relations between objects for the will's procurement. This is not the sort of knowledge which helps the individual achieve peace of mind; secondly the knowledge of the Ideas is 'true' knowledge for it is "the true content of its phenomena, that which is subject to no change and is therefore known with equal truth for all time."<sup>48</sup>

The value of the genius in artistic production was supreme. It was the genius who perceived the Ideas for the necessary duration which allowed him to depict them in art. Thus, the purpose genius serves towards the rest of humanity is that of communicating the Ideas. Yet in my view the fact that Schopenhauer devotes considerable attention to the work of genius as the creator of art rather than the glorification of nature shows that the Romanticist label frequently attached to Schopenhauer is unfounded. This is why, when considering the work of art and natural beauty, though both reveal the Idea, the work of art has an edge over natural beauty in that the labour required to

47. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, 185.

48. *Ibid.*, 184.

perceive the Idea has been done by the genius: "the work of art is merely a means of facilitating that knowledge in which [aesthetic] pleasure consists."<sup>49</sup>

Even Schopenhauer's use of the concept of the imagination did not conform to its Romantic associations. Whereas for the Romantics, the imagination was a special gift of the artist, providing him with an immediate insight into truth, Schopenhauer considered the imagination a necessary but not sufficient condition in the artist's mental framework. The value of the imagination was that it helped the artist go beyond the objects of sense perception and "extend his horizon far beyond the reality of his personal experience, and enable him to construct all the rest out of the little that has come into his own actual apperception."<sup>50</sup> This is Schopenhauer's way of saying that the imagination helps the artist see his experience in universal terms. The second benefit of the imagination is that it helps the artist perfect what imperfect nature produces. The insight behind this is to show that in art, the artist does not passively reproduce the objects of his experience, but anticipates what they would look like had there been no conflict of the will's forms.

Yet despite Schopenhauer's approval of the imagination, he argues that it is not the imagination itself that is a mark of genius: "strength of the imagination is not evidence of genius...even men with little or no touch of genius may have much imagination."<sup>51</sup> His criticism is that the ordinary man's imagination is not employed in the perception of the Ideas but misused and confused with his daydreaming, an escapist ploy, manipulated as a way out of his solitude. Only people of a like disposition can approve of these daydreams, written and published as novels.

When discussing the genius's inspiration, Schopenhauer does seem to be pronouncing two incompatible positions on the nature of this inspiration. In certain passages<sup>52</sup> he emphasizes that in his work the genius is consciously reflecting and intentionally reproducing what he perceives. But when talking about melody he writes that "the work of genius...is far removed from all reflection and conscious intention, and might be called an inspiration."<sup>53</sup> I

49. *Ibid.*, 195.

50. *Ibid.*, 185.

51. *Ibid.*, 187.

52. *Ibid.*, 186.195.

53. *Ibid.*, 260.

would suggest that the latter view is more in keeping with what Schopenhauer says elsewhere in connection with the nature of concepts. The fake artist who starts with the concept and proceeds to depict it. This sort of artist works consciously and deliberately, without any inspiration. So too, since he derives from concepts he tends to imitate the works in vogue at the time. What ultimately happens is that within a few years when a new trend is set, nobody would recall his work. The genius, although acknowledging the debt of his predecessor, uses as his material life and the world, so that the cultural context does not determine the originality of his work. The thesis of the timeless quality of the work of art is substantiated with the concept of genius.

Gadamer's interest in the concept of genius stems from the way Kant differentiates between natural and artistic beauty. In the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant maintains a priority of natural beauty over artistic beauty. He justifies this priority on the grounds that natural beauty is an expression of a pure unintellectualized judgement of taste and hence not related to concepts which define their purposes. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the beauty of nature is such that it arouses the interest of those persons who are morally good; that someone is capable of passing an aesthetic judgment on natural beauty is indicative of his moral worth.

Art also provokes man into facing the moral nature of his existence; but the difference between artistic beauty and natural beauty is that the former exists specifically to confront man with this aspect of his existence, whilst the latter is there speaking to him without intending to do so. That the beautiful forms of nature display a purposefulness without being purposeful indicate to man his position in creation, calling him to his moral being. It is because it is not nature's purpose to be beautiful that man's place in the world is confirmed.

Artistic beauty remains seconded to nature for it is "the beautiful representation of a thing"<sup>54</sup> and is therefore a representation which follows established rules. But Kant realized that just following rules does not account for creativity. To show how art can present something beyond all concepts, Kant introduced the concept of genius. The irrationality of genius brings out the productive creativity of both creator and recipient. Genius corresponds to the playful faculty of one's mental powers, which goes beyond rigid adherence to rules in the process of creating new models.

Yet despite the introduction of the concept of genius, natural beauty remained superior to art. The second part of the *Critique of Judgement*

exclusively with nature. And even though art is defined by reference to genius, this only serves to bring art back to natural beauty "through genius, nature gives the rule to art."<sup>55</sup> Gadamer maintains that until Kant there was no opening for philosophy of art. But after him, art rather than natural beauty attained prominence. The relationship between the ideas of taste and genius changed, so that genius predominated. Questions of taste in relation to art lose their significance for taste is a levelling process, unconcerned with the unusual or original in art. The creativity of genius, on the other hand, with its capacity for innovation contributes to art. Kant's notions of the perfect taste in art resembled the concept of genius. Perfect taste was the attempt to achieve a definite unchangeable form, in so doing becoming eternal. It was particularly inapplicable to natural beauty, for nothing was privileged within nature: "Is there anything ugly in nature?"<sup>56</sup> Gadamer points out that even in art, the idea of perfect taste is troubling:

one does violence to the concept of taste if one does not include it in its variability. If it is anything, taste is testimony to the changeableness of all human things and the relativity of all human values.<sup>57</sup>

Genius is more appropriate to the understanding of art, for it allows the work of art to remain changeless through time. Taste becomes that quality which artistic genius possesses, so that Kant opens the way for the glorification of art at the expense of nature. Fichte and Schelling adopted this perspective of art as the unconscious production of genius, embracing within itself even nature. The natural world was translated into art so that — Hegel maintained — the encounter with a work of art was the encounter with another human spirit. The eternal nature of art was transmitted throughout time through the medium of genius.

Subsequent reactions to Hegel led to a return to Kant, but by now art and genius became firmly entrenched, whilst taste became peripheral. Under the Romantic movement, the concept of genius as the unconscious producer was no longer restricted to the artist, but became a universal concept of value.

The results of Gadamer's investigation show an important consideration: the standpoint of eternity in relation to art attained this position as a consequence of Kant's adoption of genius as the creator of art. It is the

55. Ibid., 166-168.

56. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 53.

57. Ibid., 53.



aesthetics of genius which have led to the movement where the creator and the beholder were distanced from the work of art.

### 5.0 Conclusions

The central argument of this paper has been to show that despite the apparent similarity of their claims, Schopenhauer and Gadamer differ with regards to the content of these claims.

Thus, both agree that it is legitimate to discuss the question of truth and knowledge in art. But whilst for Schopenhauer, it is the truth and knowledge of the Ideas, which in turn manifest the will and therefore reality, Gadamer's considerations on art show how it is the medium through which man learns about the truth of his historical nature. It is therefore an essential part of Gadamer's concern to repudiate the thesis of the timelessness of art, for this would invalidate the historical grounding upon which his thesis rests.

Schopenhauer's support for the timelessness of art is constructed around the metaphysic of the will. The world as representation, subject to space, time and causality, is one of endless suffering. Art is timeless precisely because it enables the viewer to seek temporary peace in its experience. This is what constitutes the unity of subject and object in aesthetic contemplation. Becoming one with the Idea liberates the subject. Gadamer is also concerned with uniting the subject and object, but uses the concept of play to indicate how the subject forgets himself in his playing. His further contention is that when the play of art takes over the spectator, this becomes a revelation of truth. The work of art is of its nature a representation-for-an-audience.

So too, the concept of genius reflects the different concerns of both philosophers. To Schopenhauer, the genius is he who makes the Platonic Ideas accessible to the rest of humanity. In his inspiration, the genius loses his individuality, and produces the timeless work of art. Gadamer's historical analysis of the development of the aesthetics of genius after Kant, is a strategic manoeuvre which serves as a pivot for his critique of the subjectivization of art. Gadamer shows how Kant's notion of perfect taste was inapplicable to art, for taste was relative to its context. Works of art were previously those which were not context dependent. The achievement of an unchangeable form was only made possible by the genius. It was he who made art eternal. The post-Kantian philosophers of art adopted the Kantian concept of genius at the expense of taste. With the concept of genius, art became subjective. When examining the specific artforms differences recur, for Schopenhauer the artform according to the Ideas it depicts, the sole exception to the rule is the

artform of music, through which one is acquainted with the will itself. Gadamer's concern is to show how with each artform, the being of each work of art reveals truth. It is as such not a theory of what it is that makes a work into a work of art, but rather an explanation of how a work of art reveals something to

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