

8/13/19
MOTS Chapter 46
Prejudice Easily Kills But It Does Not Easily Die

By fighting it is impossible to win;
by fighting one another no faith is destroyed;
one who argues against another's faith, not recognizing this,
fights in vain and perishes; this should be understood.

Free translation:

It is not possible to vanquish any religion by fighting it. By becoming competitive and fighting each other's religion, the zeal of the members of the persecuted religion only increases. By promoting religious feuds one is only destroying one's own integrity and succumbing to the evils of hatred. This should never be forgotten.

Right at the outset, Deb reminded us of a typical human foible: we read something inspiring and then think if only other people would listen to this, it would be so great for everyone. That's never going to happen! It can only apply to us, and we should really try to get what it means. In the midst of this chaotic time we have to understand that we are not being open to the other people as people, we're treating them as tokens for whatever we despise. Somehow we have to really listen, if we are going to change the situation.

Jyothi ran with Deb's baton. She was raised a devout Hindu admirer of Narayana Guru, learning to chant the Atmopadesa Satakam in her childhood, going to temples, the whole bit. She was schooled in a Catholic convent, though, and the Hindus at the school were not supposed to go to chapel. Christians only. Of course, to a young person, that doesn't make sense. When she asked about it, one of the sisters allowed her to attend in disguise. She saw the Catholics making the sign of the cross, and she

thought it was the same as Hindus pressing their hands together in worship. Narayana Guru said we all have one God, and so did the Christians. So what's the problem?

Jyothi explained it as we all have a deep myth inside us. Our particular belief is naturally grown in us: the beliefs and faiths, it's all the circumstances of how we are raised. Our society is interwoven with our faiths.

The chapter itself starts with a classic Indian issue. As a legacy of Shankara, sannyasins are traditionally supposed to be celibate, but the Gurukula does not require it. It doesn't matter to some people that it offers one of the most profound philosophies anywhere, allowing marriage alone is disqualifying. A man who registered a complaint about inmates marrying, went off in a huff when Nitya wasn't concerned about it. Nitya didn't argue with him, since "it is next to impossible to change people's strongly held opinions, especially when they have in them a moralistic or puritanical bias about sex." He admits, "To me the man-woman relation is a purely personal affair between two people. It is none of my concern to judge its moral validity." It sounds perfectly straightforward, yet an orthodox thinker with rigid ideals might freak out about it.

Jyothi also laughingly related how true it is that Kerala is full of suppressed sex people. As a young person there was no sex instruction at all. Boys and girls are always segregated. Somehow she came to believe that if she simply sat next to a boy she would become pregnant. Her parents never talked about sex, and she never knew how babies are made.

As a young woman, Jyothi came to stay with Guru Nitya, eventually becoming his fulltime assistant for nearly two decades. By Kerala standards he had become a libertine, though he remained a celibate renunciate. (His less liberated earlier self is revealed in Part II.) Jyothi wanted to know how to love all people alike, and he took her instruction seriously, almost as an initiation to discipleship. He gave her books to read about relationships, then had her come to him with an oil lamp and touch his feet. He didn't

like having his feet touched, but he knew it was so ingrained in the culture that it would mark a significant commitment from her.

Jyothi had been chanting *Saundarya Lahari*, Shankara's erotic masterpiece, since she was eight years old. Nitya asked her to start singing it and to go into herself as she went along. Jyothi graced us with the first verse in her rich and devoted voice. She and Nitya studied it together, with all the mantras, but she kept wondering, Why does Guru want me to learn a meditation with sex in it? She still thought of sex as a terrible, secret thing.

Then one day a Catholic priest came to the Gurukula, and she became infatuated with him. Of course she couldn't say anything to him, but she felt an intense yearning. Erotic literature such as the *Saundarya Lahari* develops spiritual bliss from the raw material of such yearnings. When the priest left, she confessed to Nitya that if he was not here, she would have run away with him. She expected to be chastised, but he told her it would have been okay for her to go off with him. She was shocked, and secretly excited too.

Under Nitya's care she began to sense the beauty of how we can love everyone alike. For a long time she felt ordinary emotions like jealousy and disgust, but he assured her one day you'll reach a place beyond that. She enthused that when she's in places like our class she can really feel the beauty of what Guru Nitya taught her. She laughingly admitted she's 64 now, and that helps. Those of us in her peer group laughed along.... We no longer have so much energy to get upset about trivialities! She closed her presentation saying that life is a process of learning, and there are some stairs she's already climbed. Yet there's still so much to learn.

I assured her that when you think you've got it, you haven't got it. You've just made yourself stuck in an imaginary paradise. It's essential to not feel like we understand everything. So "knowing everything" should not be the goal.

Andy was entranced by Jyothi's deep sincerity and praised her for the mystic depth of her background. He did admit to having a sense of awe, but he's never been part of any religion. That kind of freedom is a blessing, but he was now seeing the value of how

she was raised—admittedly a very special and refined version of what is called Hinduism, for lack of a better term. Deb concurred, agreeing with Jyothi that every person is founded on a deep myth, and with Andy that our first experience in life is of a kind of awe. Later we find our society has chosen a particular story to explain it.

One of Nitya's greatest strengths was his ability to meld science and spirituality in a non-dogmatic way. He was level-headed in a manner few people achieve, and he had learned from Nataraja Guru that sexual mythology was dark and debilitating. Mostly it consists of fictionalized flights of fancy. He makes his position crystal clear here:

Though the Gurukula is not a monastic order, there are people in the Gurukula who strongly advocate celibacy as one of the hallmarks of spirituality. In this matter I hold a different opinion. I am convinced of the social independence of unmarried people and of the unlimited freedom they have in devoting their entire attention to whatever pursuit they undertake. But I am not convinced of celibacy's spiritual excellence or even its value in mental and physical hygiene.

A few hours earlier I bumped into one of those frequent "coincidences" in Kurt Vonnegut's excellent book *Bluebeard*. Actually more than one, as you'll see. Paramahansa Yogananda, in his famous autobiography, wrote glowingly about the widely-held belief underlying sannyasa (and Christianity for that matter) that ejaculation weakened the blood, and we can recall that until 1925 blood was thought to be the residence of consciousness even among the scientific community. This unscientific belief still permeates much of spiritual life. Vonnegut begins chapter 19 musing on it, speaking of his late teen years:

Belief is nearly the whole of the Universe, whether based on truth or not, and I believed back then that sperm, if not ejaculated, was reprocessed by healthy males into substances

which made them athletic, merry, brave and creative. Dan Gregory believed this, too, and so did my father, and so did the United States Army and the Boy Scouts of America and Ernest Hemingway. So I cultivated erotic fantasies about making love to Marilee, and behaved as though we were courting sometimes, but only in order to generate more sperm which could be converted into beneficial chemicals....

The theory that sperm, if unspent, was converted into cosmic vitamins seemed validated by my own performances....

An idea has just come to me from nowhere, to wit: Might not the ancient and nearly universal belief that sperm could be metabolized into noble actions have been the inspiration for Einstein's very similar formula: $E \text{ equals } MC \text{ squared}$ ”?

I recall Nitya telling us that 999 out of a thousand who attempt a celibate lifestyle go mad. Of course that was just a ballpark figure, it's probably more like 997 or 998, but he was very sympathetic to other routes to enlightenment. I struggled with celibacy myself for several years before I gave up. I found I was obsessing much more about sex by not having any than if I followed a normal pattern of releasing the tension. Biology really wants us to reproduce! After all, each of us is the product of a perfectly unbroken chain of sexual reproduction for over 650 million years, at current estimate.

Puritanical conditioning permeates even the modern world, despite its praise of reason and tolerance, so it makes an excellent example of how rigid beliefs color and devalue our lives, despite our hubris. Nitya gets to the main point next, that beliefs routinely lead humans to even more deranged behavior, such as rationalizing killing:

It is futile to argue the right and wrong of ideologies implying values that can be described as antinomic. It is also paradoxical that people stray so far away from truth that they can kill others or die for the cause of religious, puritanical or political obsessions.

When you can't argue successfully, why not just eradicate the opposition? Narayana Guru's point is that enmity doesn't work, it just energizes the ideas you disapprove of. Plus, you demean yourself to the lowest criminal position by using violence to promulgate your position.

Nitya muses on what the precipitating factor is, since some beliefs don't matter much, while others drive us crazy. Somehow the ego becomes so identified with its ideologies that it fears it will die without them. Nowadays such obsessions are called identities, and they are universally prized. Paradoxically, we have to first accept ourselves completely before we can relinquish our limited identities. Only a dedicated spiritual aspirant will be able to overcome their comfort-bestowing identities. And why should they? Because the underlying experience of ananda, of meaningful, loving bliss, is curtailed by our specific identities. They mask it. If the mask is taken away, ananda permeates every aspect of our life. There is no reason to fight for it. Nitya really nails this:

The zest to kill for a belief is not uniform. If somebody says the law of gravitation is a humbug, people will only laugh at them; but if the same person says that Christ was an imperfect sinner or that Krishna was a shameless playboy, a mob may tear them to bits. In the case of the latter kinds of beliefs, the faith or opinion is intrinsically related to a mental haven of security on which the believer leans for social, moral or spiritual support. The believer's identity with his opinion is so complete that you cannot challenge it without challenging the man himself.

Krishna famously made celestial love to 16,008 milkmaids, an early error of judgment of his publicist, we can suppose. I quote my *Handbook of Hindu Mythology*, by George M. Williams, after a brief survey of Krishna's erotic adventures, on their deeper meaning:

But good mythology, like good theology, has many levels of meaning—and at the deepest level that kind of lovemaking has been seen as pointing to a devotional relationship that risks everything for a personal experience of Krishna’s presence and grace: loving, total, dangerous, and so much more. (188)

We are heading for the deepest levels, but Nitya has more cautionary advice first. We individuals are easily drawn into groups that amplify our prejudices and spawn the dualism that forgives our criminal behavior. Nowadays it is playing out in a grand drama of the political erosion gripping the globe, but religion and politics are awfully similar:

Both the individual and society employ various kinds of defense mechanisms to safeguard the very vulnerable grounds of their basic beliefs. It is helpful to understand the formation of religious convictions. Structurally and functionally, political convictions are not different from religious convictions.

The second “coincidence” from *Bluebeard* fits right in with Nitya’s pinpointing of duality as the basis of conflict. Vonnegut’s words ring even more true of America today than the mid-1980s when the book was written:

The darkest secret of this country, I am afraid, is that too many of its citizens imagine that they belong to a much higher civilization somewhere else. That higher civilization doesn’t have to be another country. It can be the past instead—the United States as it was before it was spoiled by immigrants and the enfranchisement of the blacks.

This state of mind allows too many of us to lie and cheat and steal from the rest of us, to sell us junk and addictive poisons and corrupting entertainments. What are the rest of us, after all but sub-human aborigines?

It may seem we are in the grasp of a delusion so titanic that we can never escape it. Yet change proceeds without a pause. All we can do is refrain from being sucked in to polarized attitudes, where we choose a side and pit our animosity against its contrary positions:

When people holding similar opinions are drawn to each other, they enter into a kind of religious pact, and the opinion gains the status of a divine decree. This is so with regard to most of the hypostatic ideas or symbols that govern the fate of people, whether religious or political. In religion a theoretical concept can gain the status of the real God or the Absolute by the common consent of believers. Thereafter anyone who defects from that faith will become an infidel.

Nitya has a long screed against worshipping imaginary deities and principles, as he was passionate about holding to verifiable truth. Sure, we still have a lot to learn, but we can be reasonably certain about some things, too. He makes his case with sly humor:

You can love your personal God and believe you are loved in return. There is no danger of Him calling you on the phone and blurting out destructive allegations against you. There is ample room to exaggerate His great love for you.

Andy bemoaned the idea of fighting someone else's sense of the profound, as if we are defending one set of symbols against another set. Yet symbols are intrinsic to all of our experience. He wanted us to know you can have an interior fight that is similar. When you are meditating, you are watching your mind, and it sometimes produces grotesque things and you want to resist them. You treat your own thoughts as evil. So you mount an inner battle, where you could as well have a spirit of blessing grounded in forgiveness. It's so difficult to accept yourself as a whole person!

I affirmed that that's the idea of yoga, as well as exactly what the Gurus are trying to teach us. You need to accept that you have

these polarities in yourself. Without coming to terms with that, how can you extend that generosity to other people?

Andy continued how he really enjoys meeting people who are free of polarizing attitudes, who value ahimsa—non-hurting in the largest possible sense. Those who are imbued with ahimsa do not induce fear in others. There is a kind of halo around them, and to enter that atmosphere is very affecting.

Speaking of halos, Jyothi related how in India so many people are prejudiced against anyone wearing a sannyasin's robe. They think they are all just lazy bums. Some of them complained to her about Nitya once upon a time, lumping him into that category without knowing anything about him. She invited them to come and meet him. Those who did would invariably be touched by his mere presence, and become pacified. Just by being there, the animosity they were holding on to melted away. They wouldn't even dare talk to him, since they felt so calmed it relieved all their doubts. Andy added it was the same with Ramana Maharshi. People just wanted to be in his presence. It was enough.

Susan has been reading *Sapiens*, by Yuval Noah Harari, a condensed history of the human species. It shows how we evolved in groups, and as long as we are in contact with our tribe, we can maintain political and social sanity. Once corporate life exceeded our ability to stay in direct contact, deception became possible, and then normalized. Nancy added that we are social animals, but there is a limit to how many people you can respond to. With the internet, we're expanding contact so we have more of an ability, but it's still problematic.

For Andy it remains a strange feature of human beings that they attack their own because of their beliefs. I pointed out that Nitya shows why here: we misidentify ourselves with our beliefs, as though they were as real and solid as we are, and that makes us as insubstantial as our beliefs. Vedanta and Buddhism teach that we are other than our beliefs—something more in Vedanta, something less in Buddhism—but this neurologic truth is still not penetrating into general consciousness. It takes work to realize you

are not what you think. And it helps to have a solid grounding in caring attitudes, to instill confidence, which more and more of us lack. Insecurity causes you to react strongly to people disagreeing with you. It's amplified because those disagreeing also believe in the solidity of what they think, which increases their hostility too.

In discourse with strangers, Nitya and Narayana Guru first made friends with them, and only then put forth their radical arguments. This is a good policy: come to agreement first, and then you've tacitly agreed to disagree amicably. Nataraja Guru was different. He went right for the jugular, calling people mad, and then discoursed with only the ones courageous enough to stick around. Gurus can sometimes get away with it, but for most of us, open hostility will backfire.

Nitya always felt that when you present a negative teaching, for completion's sake you need to bring in the positive side also, and he does this wonderfully in this chapter. One of my favorite quotes in *Therapy and Realization in the Bhagavad Gita* is: "If self-realization is the motive of the psychologist, why do we stop half way? Why don't we push it all the way until the patient is no longer a patient but a student, and further, not a seeker but a seer?" Here he poetically presents his alternative to clinging to womblike beliefs that coddle our egos:

The case of the truly spiritual person is very different. He is inspired by his love for truth. His sensitivity to feel the beautiful and to love the good is irresistible. He breaks out of his shell of traditional conventions and customary mores and lives in the naked beauty of his spirit. He makes no division of men into sheep and goats. He does not label anyone. He does not mistake poetic allegories for the facts of a world of brute actualities. He does not allow his experience to cast around him a magic spell to ward off the truth of others' visions. He knows the sharp demarcation between sharing and proselytizing. He knows that what is sweet to him could savor bitter in another's mouth. He can soar above the clouds without looking down on

those who cannot lift themselves off the ground, and he can also share the drudgery of a caravan that is bound to earth with the bonds of necessity.

To such a seer, freedom is the fragrance of his thoughts and the winged mobility of his altruistic will. To him love is the unceasing obsession of seeing his dear Self in all, not the unsatiated craving for attention or gratification. To him Truth is an ever- changing and ever-widening world of infinite possibilities which is always new, ever-revealing, and never fully discovered. Reciprocal justice is the keynote of his behavior. His ability to forgive and serve in silence distinguishes him.

A wise man alone realizes that all men are of the same kind and are of the same God and are of the same religion. Others, blinded with prejudices, waste their lives in fighting the color and creed of their neighbors.

Jan was deeply touched by this, by the “unceasing obsession” of seeing unity everywhere. She admitted how hard it is even after long study to do this with the people we are judging. It’s a real challenge to see ourself in them, but she has found it does make a difference in her ability to communicate.

Jyothi echoed that whoever is not fighting, or thinking this combative urge is not who they are, are the wise sages. They are like an ocean without any waves. Such a person does not want to argue, they want to commune.

Susan has been trying a new program of chanting and movement that has helped her learn about radiating love. She’s found it’s not something that makes you tired, like exercising too much, or busyness, and you can send out infinite amounts of love.

The love that this wisdom generates is a balm for so many problems. As Narayana Guru puts it, this should be shared. He didn’t mean by proselytizing, but by living it, by living love in the way Susan is learning from her new discovery.

Uplifted by our time together, we dispersed with shining faces into a gorgeous evening, with a nearly fully moon and perfect, balmy temperatures—just right for balmy people! We even got a note back from Jan the next morning, speaking for all of us:

Thanks for a wonderful class last night. Our discussion and meditations about Verse 46 were so inspiring! I left feeling elated, my heart brimming with joy. I so appreciate our classes and studies.

That's why we do it.

Part II

Nitya's autobiography recounts part of his own learning curve about sex. This story was recounted late in life, and I can picture him laughing about his foolishness:

A girl from the neighborhood used to come and help in the Gurukula kitchen. One day I saw her crying. When I asked the reason, she spoke of the other man's misbehavior. In those days I had an exaggerated sense of morality and thought a person drawn to passion should have no place in an ashram. So I went and promptly reported the matter to Guru.

I expected him to get annoyed and reprimand the man then and there. Contrary as always, Guru laughed heartily. He took my interest in correcting the other man as evidence of sexual jealousy. As I prided myself in my moral behavior, the allegation was too harsh for me to accept. To my mind I had been maintaining a high degree of purity and was beyond blemish. Not only was Guru not seeing my virtuousness, he was bracketing me with an evil man. He was characterizing me as a cheap person with a mean outlook. I felt very hurt.

That night I was fretting and fuming about the injustice of it all. Guru lost his temper and said, "How can you ever understand

the true meaning of sex and have a healthy view of it when you yourself are the son of a repressed schoolteacher?” The more I tried to explain myself, the more he found reasons to disbelieve me. I thought, “What’s the use of speech if words cannot convey truth, even to your Guru?”

In the evening talk he maintained that all Kerala was a society of repressed people with an exaggerated notion of sex, and stressed that only a mentally healthy person could appreciate sex and be proud of it. Guru’s sermon not only sounded radical, it struck me as being downright perverted. I thought of leaving the place at once. (171-2)

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Deb sent a Tarot reading from social media she found resonated with this lesson:

She goes by @thejessicadore on both instagram and twitter. She is also a mental health therapist. Here is today's card, The Wheel of Fortune:

• [thejessicadore](#)

Research suggests people with gambling addictions share a common core belief that ultimately there is a reliable way to win. Things like lucky machines, benevolent dealers, optimal times of day are believed to have some influence over outcomes & the tactic is assumed to eventually be proven effective. This belief is so pervasive that it endures even when it is consistently debunked & disproven which is the nature of all core beliefs, really; however incongruent with reality, they are compelling enough to shape our whole lives. To some extent I think we all share some variation of this core belief, that if we just do things a certain way we will “win,” & to some extent that belief is also problematic for all of us. Sure, we might have different ideas about what winning is—to some it’s an absence of pain, to others it’s the ability to feel a wide

range of things—but I’d say the vast majority of us believe that we are somewhat in control of that winning & if we can just name the right answers and do the right things we’ll be good. We create rituals for “winning” & adhere to them so loyally that even when they bleed us dry and never pay out we keep doing them, fused with this illusion of control. Researchers investigating treatment for gambling addiction suggest that learning to notice such core beliefs is a good first step to learning to take them less seriously. From there we can start to usurp & replace them with more functional ones, like these: There is very little that we are actually in control of & it’s best we learn to live with that. The only thing we are truly in control of is how we relate to change & even that has limits because domesticated as we may be, we are still wild beings with wild instincts, drives & urges. It takes only the scent of a mouse to turn a house cat back into hunter. And the way we regard our lack of control is likely correlated with our levels of adaptability because the more we loathe uncertainty the more rules we have. The less our lives feel like living things & the more they feel like dead ones. Life is only ever change, 99.9% of answers have a very short shelf life, & it is we who take cues from life, not the other way around.

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Prabu shared an interpretation of Schopenhauer from a book he’s reading, Bryan Magee’s “The Philosophy of Schopenhauer” that he thought was very similar to Nitya’s essay. He has sent his thoughts about it, and the excerpt appears below it:

Few years back, I started reading the philosophy of Kant and Schopenhauer simply to find out what they have thought and where their philosophies agree or differ from Advaita Vedanta that I was familiar with. Some how I knew that they were the two most important western thinkers who changed the course of western thought. Hegel is also important in that aspect. I had also

learnt that most of their conclusions are similar to the conclusions of traditional Indian thought - either Advaita or Buddhism. So my curiosity was kindled. But attaining knowledge rather than seeking wisdom remained as the main impetus to read western philosophy.

At first it was extremely challenging to pierce into the thought of Kant. Although I enjoyed that challenge I didn't know how it was going to help with my life. I would get frustrated for not being able to understand his thinking. Often I had to throw the books into some corner and take long showers or sleep for hours. Nevertheless I persisted to read Kant for a while and continued into Schopenhauer. During the course I learnt that the clarity with which they had thought is paramount to question my beliefs and understand the real motives behind my actions.

Kant concluded that space and time are forms through which we experience the world and causality is category of our understanding. He was the first western philosopher to say that these forms and causality belongs only to the phenomenal world (i.e, mind) and are not part of the reality. He used the term 'things in themselves' to describe the inner nature of things. Kant's phenomenal world is similar to the idea of Maya in vedanta. I think the similarity between Kantian metaphysics and Vedanta ends there. Because for Kant humans don't have access to reality or 'things in themselves', our sense apparatus and mind are only equipped to perceive the phenomenal world, any effort to go beyond that would only lead to a stone wall. It is not interesting for me to get into the arguments on validity of Kants conclusion. But I would say that it was unsettling to believe that all we are left with is just the world of appearances. I was already struggling to find meaning in life and I went to philosophy to find some solace. Alas, Kant threw my existence under the rail. Now I don't recall Kant discounting human experience of the world. Despite it I have to admit that his conclusion of denying us access to reality was unsettling.

Schopenhauer understood the importance of Kant's separation of the phenomenon and noumenon. But he said Kant hastily denied us access to noumenon. Then he set himself to the task of correcting and expanding Kantian metaphysics. Schopenhauer pointed out there is one unique object among all the objects in the world through which we can get some sense of the operations of noumenon. It is our own body. He also corrected the Kant's term 'things in themselves' as 'thing in himself'. By this correction he essentially meant that there cannot be various realities underneath every object in the universe and the ultimate reality must be one and the same. It is this reality he named as "Will". It is the characteristic of the will that is described in the passage I read. In his theories on ethics Schopenhauer uses this underlying unity to advocate compassion towards all beings. I find this premise in his philosophy helpful. These are some of the positive insights of Kantian- Schopenhauerian philosophy.

Schopenhauer's observations on our unconscious and blind strivings are also helpful. As described in the quote above he considered the inner nature of human and all other material objects to be a primitive unconscious force. It is contrary to the popular belief in the modern industrial world that humans are by nature rational beings. I tend to agree with Schopenhauer on human nature. Most of our desires and goals, thus most of our actions too, arise from unknown places in our psyche. Like the Vasana's and Samskara's. Accepting this truth is important to reflect upon our desires and strivings. Otherwise, it would lead us to falsely believe that all our desires will always bring happiness.

Here's Schopenhauer, with Magee's take after:

“The conclusion now stares us in the face: the noumenon is of the nature of that willing which is unconscious and inaccessible to consciousness; the willing of which I am conscious is a

phenomenal expression of that noumenon; and since the noumenon is the one and the same in everything, whatever the noumenon is of which my cognized willing is phenomenon must be the same as the noumenon of which every other phenomenon is phenomenon. And indeed this is precisely what Schopenhauer says. ‘With me it is the will-without-knowledge that is the foundation of the reality of things’.

“We have seen that our inner world consists in largely of the operation of primitive forces unaccompanied by consciousness. So too does the outer world, the physical world in space. Every object attracts every other with a force so powerful that the whole universe consists of matter in motion, for the most part of unimaginably vast physical objects hurtling through space at unimaginably high velocities. Most of the surface of the one we are living on is covered with immeasurable quantities of water which are all, because of this same force, in perpetual motion. What is not covered with water is half covered with plants shooting and vegetating, pushing down roots, turning their leaves or their flowers to the sun. The air above all this is in perpetual motion too, and so are the clouds in the air. Even a pocket of perfectly still air exerts a pressure on everything it touches. In this environment live uncountable billions of automative insects, fish, birds and animals, all of them in constant motion. So the whole material world is a welter of movements, pressures, forces, tensions, attractions, repulsions and transformations of every kind- over a range and on a scale so tremendous as to be altogether beyond any human powers of determinate representation, and without any known beginning or end in time- and all of it, except for the tiny animal and human component which has arrived on the scene so lately, unaccompanied by consciousness.”

What Schopenhauer is saying is that this energy (will) is itself what is ultimate in the world of phenomena. He is saying, furthermore, that what is indicated by our knowledge of the one

material object in the universe (our own body) that we know from inside is that all material objects, in their inner nature, are primitive, blind, unconscious force inaccessible to knowledge. Everything that appears to our organs of sense and intellect as matter in motion is, in its unknowable inner nature, this unconscious force- they and it are the same thing manifested in different ways, just as my physical movement and my act of will(will as in willing here) are the same thing manifested in different ways. The whole universe is the objectification of this force. It constitutes gravity, which is everywhere, and is everywhere the same; it forms the chicken in the egg, and the child in the womb; it pushes up the plants; it sweeps along the winds and the tides and the currents; it crashes through the cataracts; it is the go in the running animal, the pull of magnetism, the attraction of electricity, the energy of thought. All these are phenomenal manifestations of a single underlying drive which ultimately is undifferentiated.