



Research article

Mondrian's rendition of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will and disinterested aesthetic experience

Ali Fallahzadeh ¹, Zahra Rahbarnia ²

^{1,2}Department of Research of Art, Faculty of Art, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran.

Abstract

Despite the pivotal role of German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) in the sophistication of Modern aesthetics and art theories in the 20th century and his special attention to aesthetic experience, considerably little is known about the impacts of his aesthetic theory, particularly pertaining his account on conception *disinterested aesthetic experience* formed based on his metaphysics of will, on some of the most enriched Modern art theories like Piet Mondrian's Neo-Plasticism. On the other side of the spectrum, Mondrian's Neo-Plastic paintings, his universal pure abstract style, have been well examined through historical approaches and Modernist theories, especially about the Greenbergian account and Modern styles like De Stijl art movement in the last few decades. Moreover, his quasi-philosophical writings have been vastly scrutinized in the light of their impacts on Theosophic, Platonic, and Hegelian doctrines. Interestingly, Mondrian, in his theoretical writings, explicitly refers to the Schopenhauerian conception of disinterested contemplation and the requirements for having a universal aesthetic experience. Yet, Mondrian's account of Schopenhauer's notion of *disinterested contemplation*, namely for notions like individual will, Will, intellect, cessation of subserviency of intellect to the will, and so on, has not been scrutinized through an aesthetic lens.

Hence, this article first aims to investigate Mondrian's rendition of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will and his account of disinterested aesthetic experience. Indeed, this article proposes this hypothesis that Mondrian, who always sought to unveil the Platonic Idea of an objective manifestation of a universal equilibrium (harmony) or pure beauty as truth through his universal Neo-Plastic art, was heavily influenced by Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will and his attitude toward aesthetic contemplation which is disinterested and objective. At the end of this article, it becomes clear that Mondrian's conception of pure intuition and his contemplative approach to aesthetic experience intimately conform to Schopenhauer's view on the notion of disinterested aesthetic attention or contemplation narrated within his metaphysics of will.

Keywords: Arthur Schopenhauer, aesthetic experience, disinterestedness, metaphysics of will, Piet Mondrian, Neo-Plasticism, intuition.

Article History: Received: 10 August 2023. Revised: 5 September 2023. Accepted: 7 Sept 2023. Published: 12 Sept 2023.

Copyright: © 2023 by the *author/s*. License Aesthetix Media Services, India. Distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Citation: Fallahzadeh, Ali, Zahra Rahbarnia. 2023. Mondrian's rendition of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will and disinterested aesthetic experience. *Rupkatha Journal* 15:3. <https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v15n3.25>

Introduction

The very philosophical ground of the thesis that aesthetic experienceⁱ is *disinterested* goes back to the emergence of Disinterest theory which was first proposed in Britain during the late 17th and 18th century within a tradition called British Taste Theorists by a few philosophers namely Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson, Joseph Addison, Archibald Alison, David Hume, Edmund Burke, and Alexander Gerard. The disinterest theory was further sophisticated in Germany in the second half of the 18th century and early 19th century. Amongst these thinkers, Kant was the first philosopher who propounds that disinterestedness is an essential characteristic of aesthetic attitude, followed by Arthur Schopenhauer who suggests that "disinterestedness is a defining quality of the aesthetic attitude" (Vandenabeele, 2012, p. 45). Schopenhauer further sophisticates, expands, and refabricates earlier ideas of philosophers (especially Kant) into a comprehensive theory of aesthetic experience which has two pivotal and correlated characteristics: *disinterestedness* and *objectivity*. What individuates Schopenhauer from many other philosophers is that he considers a great significance for aesthetic experience, and thereby it is not surprising that his insight has been widely acknowledged by many artists, namely Wagner, Mahler, Hardy, Conrad, Mann, Proust, Yeats (Neill, 2008, p. 179). As such, the penetration of Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory into Modern art theories is conspicuous.

A great deal of what Schopenhauer explicates at the beginning of the third volume of his seminal book *The World as Will and Representation* is pertinent to his spectatorial - and to some extent elitist - approach to aesthetic experience, or what he referred to as *aesthetic contemplation*ⁱⁱ which ought to be disinterestedⁱⁱⁱ and objective. Although Schopenhauer's philosophy, particularly his account of disinterested and objective aesthetic experience, has raised plenty of arguments in the last few decades, after more than a century and a half, it remains one of the most controversial and crucial topics in the realm of aesthetics.^{iv} To this date, many scholars namely but not limited to T. J. Diffey, Christopher Janaway, Alex Neill, Bart Vandenabeele, Jerome Stolnitz, Sophia Vasalou, and Robert McKinley exclusively concentrate on the elucidation of Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory, particularly his theory of disinterested aesthetic experience. What is common among the aforementioned sources, especially in the cases of Janaway, Neill, and Vandenabeele, is that they repudiate the feasibility of Schopenhauerian metaphysical and disinterested ecstasy, or will-less (blind will) state of mind in the moment of aesthetic experience. Very few scholars^v exclusively examine Schopenhauer's disinterested theory in the light of his metaphysics of will regarding Modern art theories of the 20th century.

In my point of view, Alex Neill in his seminal article *Aesthetic Experience in Schopenhauer's Metaphysics of Will* reveals one of the substantial gaps in the analysis of Schopenhauer's conception of disinterested aesthetic experience. He purports that although the will-less nature of Schopenhauer's aesthetic experience has been scrutinized by several scholars, what is less discussed is the *way* and *how* the possibility of disinterested aesthetic experience should be construed in Schopenhauer's philosophy (Neill, 2008, p. 182).

Despite the harsh attacks of most contemporary art critics and philosophers on Schopenhauerian key conception of *disinterestedness* and, more specifically notions like disinterested aesthetic attention, aesthetic attitude, or aesthetic experience,^{vi} one cannot easily overlook it as one of the

key and prevalent theories for the evaluation of the aesthetic value of Modern art. Here, it is noteworthy that in this article, as it is truly argued by scholars like Dickie and Vandenabeele, I demarcate between two notions: *aesthetic attention* or attitude and *aesthetic experience*.^{vii} As the former is merely a preliminary psychological stage of perception, the latter is the feeling or a state of mind perceived as a result of the former (aesthetic attention). Hence, in this article, I treat aesthetic attention and aesthetic experience as two separate but correlated conceptions.

In fact, for Schopenhauer art equates to religion; a doctrine that aims for the salvation of man through aesthetic experience, or contemplation, of art objects. Hence, in his view, artists do not merely possess a special and heightened level of craftsmanship, but they, like priests or prophets, have a role in the creation of a transcendental life. Interestingly, one finds a similar spiritualist standpoint to Modern art which is explicitly embedded in theoretical writings of Modern artists in the late 19th century (namely Paul Gauguin and Van Gogh) and particularly the 20th-century artists namely Wassily Kandinsky, Kazimir Malevich, František Kupka, and Piet Mondrian. It is not exaggerating to say that amongst these artists Mondrian, in his prolific theoretical-philosophical writings and Neo-Plastic paintings (his pure abstract style), elucidates and visualizes tenets of the most esoteric and philosophical doctrines like Platonic, Neo-Platonic, Theosophical and Hegelian insights in their pinnacle of maturity. As such, like Schopenhauer, Mondrian also envisages an equal merit for art and religion. Indeed, the equality of art and religion in Mondrian's vision, which he borrowed from Hegel, led him to seek purity and realization of the essence of things and not the appearance of naturalistic forms, or corporeality: "I don't want pictures. I just want to find things out" Mondrian (as cited in Cheetham, 1991, p. 41).

Despite the crucial role of Schopenhauer's philosophy on the expansion and sophistication of Modern aesthetics and art in the 20th century, little is known about Schopenhauerian roots of Piet Mondrian's theory of Neo-Plasticism which is considered one of the most enriched and significant Modern theories in the twentieth century. In this regard, Michael Pedro truly illuminates such a gap. He asserts that even though Schopenhauer, more than any other philosopher, has had the most impact on 20th-century aesthetics, very little has been written on the relation between Mondrian's Neo-Plasticism and Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory (Cheetham, 1991, pp. 60-1).

Analyzing the rare instances of works that focus on the elucidation of Mondrian's impact from Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory, I would like to highlight Maria Lucia Cacciola's article. In this work, Cacciola scrutinizes the meaning of two notions, abstraction and contemplation, through two lenses: Mondrian's artistic theory and Schopenhauer's philosophy. According to Cacciola, the identity of notion contemplation in Mondrian's theory of Neo-Plasticism is very analogous to that of Schopenhauer. He deduces that for both Schopenhauer and Mondrian, the knowledge of the Idea of objectivity of the will is the knowledge of the immutable and universal (Cacciola, 2014, p. 95). Nevertheless, Cacciola has not analyzed Schopenhauer's disinterested aesthetic experience within his metaphysics of will about Mondrian's Neo-Plasticism.

A few other scholars, mainly art historians and aesthetes, namely Mark Cheetham, Eiichi Tosaki, Italia Boliver Reynaud, and Luis Veen point to the presence of Schopenhauer's philosophy in Mondrian's aesthetic insight, especially his Neo-Plastic doctrine or, like in case of Cheetham, and scrutinize some aspects of Schopenhauerian conception disinterested contemplation within an Essentialist lens about Mondrian's attitude for the abstraction of particularities of form (originated

from Plato) for realization and manifestation of Platonic Ideas, or universal beauty as truth. Although Cheetham investigates the role of Essentialist theory in the development of avant-garde ideas of Modern abstract artists (mainly about abstraction or purification of representational elements in painting) including Mondrian, he, like other scholars, has not extended his scope of research to analyze characteristics of Mondrian's view on aesthetic experience in the light of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will.

Hence, this article first aims to fill this gap by scrutinizing Mondrian's interpretation of Schopenhauer's account of disinterestedness and objectivity of aesthetic experience about his metaphysics of will. Overall, the findings of this article help us to realize how one of the most enriched paradigms of Modern art theories, Piet Mondrian's Neo-Plasticism, has been formed and influenced by Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory. Ultimately, the reflection of Schopenhauer's philosophy in a Modern painter like Mondrian validates the workability, effectiveness, and relevance of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will in the case of Modern art.

Mondrian's rendition of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will

Schopenhauer's theory of the Will considers a domineering and unhappy force, suffering in life, and strives to propose a way to eschew it. He suggests two kinds of escape from such unwanted force: permanent and transitory. The permanent escape requires us to overlook our desires, adopt asceticism, and accept a life full of pure contemplation. The second escape is possible through appreciation of art, since by contemplating artworks we can emancipate ourselves from our ends (desires, wishes, yearning, and so on). As such, Schopenhauer maintains that to release ourselves from our desires, one should appreciate a work of art from a disinterested viewpoint which is based on this tenet that one should contemplate the object for the sake of the object itself and nothing else (Fenner, 2008, p. 82).

Likewise, Mondrian considers two roads to spirituality: art which slowly progresses toward spirituality and directs doctrinal teaching (meditation, etc.). Mondrian holds that to approach the spiritual in art, one should use very little of reality since reality is opposed to spirituality. On this subject, Mondrian, as early as 1914, explicitly points to two roads, like Schopenhauer, which help man to eschew suffering: in Mondrian's terminology: disequilibrium between dual oppositions in art and life.

Two roads lead to the spiritual: the road of doctrinal teaching, direct exercise (meditation, etc.), and the slow but certain road of evolution. One sees in art the slow growth of spirituality, of which the artists themselves are unconscious. (As cited in Fingesten, 1961, p. 3)

It is evident that art, for Mondrian, is a transitory method to emancipate from the burden of individual will and personal ends as Schopenhauer holds. Again, art helps one to realize the Ideas (pure knowledge of the world as representation) through a *slow* but *certain* road of evolution. As it is discussed later, from Mondrian's writings it is understood that such evolution entails transcending the individual intellect and intuition, or consciousness, to a pure and conscious intuition.

Notwithstanding that, as is demonstrated by the majority of scholars, Mondrian's conception of pure beauty as truth, or absolute truth, corresponds with the Schopenhauerian notion of (Platonic) Ideas which can be realized by Will (universal will). To manifest and visualize Platonic Ideas, Mondrian used the most abstract elements of painting – horizontal and vertical lines, primary colors, noncolors, rectangular flat planes, and so on - in his Neo-Plastic art (see Figure 1) to unveil the spiritual (universal beauty as truth).

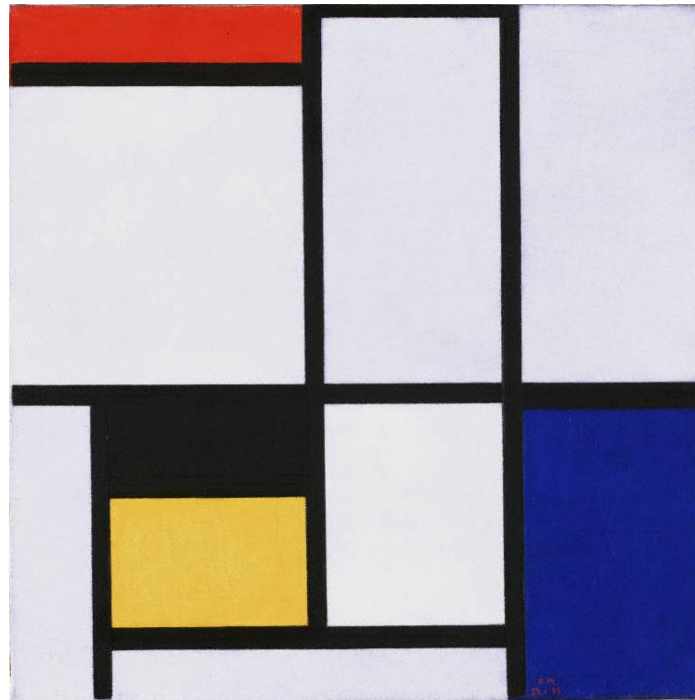


Figure 1: Piet Mondrian (ca. 1921/repainted 1925). Composition no. III. Oil on canvas. 19 3/8 x 19 3/8 in.; 49.2125 x 49.2125 cm. Retrieved from <https://www.phillipscollection.org/collection/composition-no-iii>

In Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will, individual will is the main source of suffering. He used two terms *will* and *Will* in his writings. The former is the will of ordinary and physical man which is subservient to one's intellect. Whereas, the latter (*Will*), is not manipulated by or in the service of the intellect and consciousness. Such distinction between will and *Will* in Schopenhauer's philosophy can be illuminated by understanding his interpretation of the world within two aspects. He construes the world as an *idea* or *representation* of a world we usually perceive through our senses by using empirical methods. Indeed, in the process of representing the world to ourselves, it inevitably alters and distorts from what it inherently is (Soll, 2020, 128). Whereas, he envisages a world as *Will* as a world which is the *thing-in-itself*, a world which is intrinsically or in itself. This kind of world is not pertinent to the way it appears to our subjective mind and it exists even if no mind exists. Schopenhauer distinguishes between the world as appearance or representation (*idea*) and the world as a thing-in-itself (Platonic Ideas) by relying on Kant's transcendental philosophy. While Kant construes thing-in-itself as something unknowable, Schopenhauer characterizes it metaphorically as *Will* which is a formidable blind urging, unindividuated power or force, or "endless undirected striving." As such, the world as will is a world we perceive and realize, and thereby it is known to us. Whereas, the world as *Will* is a world which is hidden to us,

and it needs to be contemplated, or to be sought beyond the world of representation (idea) or appearance (Jacquette, 2007, pp. 2-3). As Schopenhauer delineates, Will as a universal will is indeed the most inward essence of the representational world: "the innermost essence, the kernel, of every particular thing and also of the whole" which is essential for observing and realizing the phenomenal world (As cited in Neill, 2008, p. 179) while will within the body manifests itself through bodily actions.

It is evident that Mondrian, like many pure abstract painters at the beginning of the 20th century, aims to unveil such inherent and inward essence of the representational world (Will) which Schopenhauer discusses within his philosophy of Ideas or pure knowledge of the Ideas. To this end, Mondrian eliminates all representational elements (naturalistic forms and color) from his paintings (see Figure 1).

Notwithstanding that Schopenhauer defines an individual with two components: a *knowing subject* and a *willing subject*, or an intellect and a will. In his vision, what limits individual man to the principle of sufficient reason^{viii} and impedes him to realize the knowledge of Ideas, is subservient to the nature of the relationship between intellect and will (Neill, 2008, p. 181). As such, in Schopenhauer's philosophy, the individual will and intellect are two correlated elements. He maintains that individual will without intellect, as being-in-itself, is incapable of realization of knowledge (the Ideas). He delineates the individual intellect as an objectification of the will which always strives for higher and higher objectification of the will (Neill, 2008, p. 188). The strive of the will to achieve a higher objectification can never be satisfied or fulfilled, and thereby, will is blind in the sense it strives for manifestation of itself and self-knowledge. Therefore, *individual will* obscures our judgment and intellect operates in the service of the will.

Schopenhauer maintains that when we see things based upon the principle of sufficient reason, one always comprehends and looks at things about his will. However, when one stops attending to things apart from the where, why, or when of things and merely attends to the whatness of an object, looking at the object for its own sake, then one can comprehend the Platonic Ideas (Diffey, 1990, p. 132). In fact, for Schopenhauer, art is the source of profound inner experience that in turn provides the spectator with the opportunity to realize the universal truth. As such, he delineates art as "the work of genius" through which it "repeats the eternal ideas apprehended through pure contemplation, the essential anti-abiding element in all the phenomena of the world" (as cited in Cheetham, 1991, p. 62). Indeed, art for Mondrian is a tool that equips the man to grasp the knowledge of the universal: "[Art] although an end in itself like religion — is the means through which we can know the universal and contemplate it in plastic form" (Mondrian, 1917, p. 42).

In Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will, intellect or knowledge is just a tool to satisfy will's demands. It manifests objects in terms of the relations they have to the will (personal ends: desires, inclinations, needs, aims, and so on). As such, *will* is the main source of the individual and suffering.^{ix} As Vandenabeele truly highlights, Schopenhauer, following Hume, asserts that the subject's intellectual imposition of time and space is driven by human desires, needs, and affects. And that the intellect is governed by the will and is merely a tool and servant for fulfilling the demands of the will. As such, Schopenhauer deduces that intellect is usually disturbed by the will and it affects one's needs, urges, inclinations, and passions (Vandenabeele, 2012, p. 56).

It is noteworthy that Schopenhauer defines two sides of consciousness or intellect: the first side is the consciousness of our selves which is the will. The second side is the consciousness of other things which is indeed the knowledge of the external world that is gained by perception of the objects. Furthermore, Schopenhauer holds that the more one is aware of one of these two sides, the less he is aware of the other. As such, when Schopenhauer talks about disinterestedness and disinterested aesthetic attention to objects, he means that the spectator is immersed in the side of the external world (art object itself) that he is unaware of himself as an individual will, or self (Mckinley, 2018, p. 11).

Besides the two kinds of knowledge or consciousness in Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will, there is a third kind of knowledge called *aesthetic representation* which is something between physical and metaphysical knowledge. Such knowledge is neither representational nor metaphysical. Aesthetic representation presents the Idea which is defined as the first objectivity of the Will. As such, in Schopenhauer's view, it is through aesthetic representations that the Platonic Idea is realized intuitively through contemplation. And, such contemplative knowledge and its subject is not constituted of body and knowledge. Instead, it is a purely disinterested subject of knowing (Cacciola, 2014, p. 93). As Schopenhauer expounds, since the body cannot be involved in such a mediated form of knowledge, where subjective interests should be abolished, the spirit takes an objective direction that defines contemplation. In his account, intuition and contemplation are the characteristics of a genius man. Whereas, in the vision of the common man contemplation and intuition has no place for the realization of true and real knowledge (Cacciola, 2014, pp. 93-4).

At this point, it is asserted that Schopenhauer's notions of individual will and Will and the relation between will and intellect correspond with Mondrian's definition of two key concepts instinct and intuition. To understand such an analogy, it is indispensable to have a succinct overview of Mondrian's key conceptions: equilibrium and disequilibrium. Mondrian, influenced by the dialectic of Hegel, defines everything as its opposite (matter versus spirit, individual versus universal, horizontal line versus vertical line, and so on). He postulates that the main source of suffering and subjective (individual) perception of beauty and truth lies in the fact that the majority of men are in disequilibrium between dual oppositions, particularly between matter and spirit. In his view such duality and imbalance (or in his terminology disequilibrium) between those oppositions can be turned into unity (a universal equilibrium) through the purification and enrichment of man's intuition. He maintains that heightened or *pure intuition* helps man to change dual oppositions in art and life from a disequilibrated state into equilibrium. In his view, one of the main roots of mankind's suffering, war, and hostility is *inferior intuition*, or what he called *animal instinct*. And, as long as intuition remains vague and unconscious, disequilibrium of oppositions and subsequently all sufferings of mankind persist. On the contrary, once this intuition and instinct evolves and purifies (transcend to the level of universal), universal laws of the art and life can be disclosed and equilibrium and unity are achieved, and subsequently Platonic Ideas (universal beauty as truth) can be perceived (Mondrian, 1936, p. 293).

Hence, I assert that Mondrian's definition of instinct with a *self-concentrating* and *self-edifying* essence is analogous to Schopenhauer's first side of consciousness: an individual knowledge of the self (a willing subject). Whereas, Mondrian's definition of a *conscious intuition* (a universalized or heightened intuition) as something that results or manifests *self-denial* and *self-destruction* corresponds with the Schopenhauerian conception of Will as a blind and irrational will, or a

universal will, which is considered purely in itself (a knowing subject). In Schopenhauer's view, the whole of reality is ultimately a conceivable manifestation of a blind and irrational will, and such irrational will (Will) as something 'considered purely in itself' without any relation to the world of representation is blind. Will grasps knowledge of itself which is revealed to itself (Neill, 2008, p. 190). It is inferred that such a definition of Will as a universal will that is not subservient to the demands of the individual will conform with Mondrian's conception of intuition which results in self-denial: a faculty of mind which is disengaged from individual intellect to meet its demand. Such intuition corresponds to what Schopenhauer discusses about the second side of consciousness: the knowledge of the external world which is attained through the perception of art objects in the absence of individual self or individual consciousness. In this regard, Mondrian defines instinct and intuition as follows:

Instinct reveals itself as self-concentrating, and self-edifying; it is a limitation. Intuition produces self-denial, and self-destruction; it is expansion. Culture can develop both [...] Human culture reveals an opposition: diminution of the instinctive faculties and development of the intuitive capacity. A cultivation of instinctive faculties produces human degeneration; a cultivation of intuitive capacities creates human progress. (Mondrian, 1942-43, p. 346)

Based upon the above quote, Mondrian defines instinct as a faculty of mind, or state of consciousness, which merely concentrates on the self as a physical and individual body rather than perception of the external world (Schopenhauer's second side of consciousness). Mondrian, like Schopenhauer, deduces that instinct (or individual will in Schopenhauer's terminology) is a *limitation*. Since such instinct or individual will is closely bound to the individual intellect to meet its needs. Moreover, personal desires - as Schopenhauer maintains - can never be permanently satisfied, since new desires constantly replace earlier ones. Therefore, instinct is *limited* and its role cannot go beyond the transitory fulfilment of the individual needs: to satisfy personal ends: wants, yearnings, wishes, and so on. Whereas, intuition for Mondrian is a faculty of mind whose main characteristics are self-denial and self-destruction. Indeed, it is inferred that when intuition becomes conscious, as Mondrian postulates, one is totally emancipated from his individuality, or in Mondrian's terminology *vague consciousness*, and then he, as a pure subject of knowing, can be in a *universal equilibrium* and thereby can perceive beauty as truth, or in Schopenhauer's words: knowledge of Ideas.

It is the same in life, which slowly follows the course of art. As "man," as "individual," man seeks individual equilibrium despite his vague consciousness of the need to achieve universal equilibrium—this is his work. In this way, he not only sustains himself, develops, and fulfills himself but also destroys himself. He must destroy himself: universal equilibrium demands it because it opposes individual equilibrium. (Mondrian, 1932, p. 278)

It should be added here that Mondrian in his esoteric theory of Neo-Plasticism considers expression and realization of equilibrium or a universal balance of dual oppositions in art and life (horizontal versus vertical, matter versus spirit, color versus noncolor, individual versus universal, and so on) as the manifestation of primordial laws of the universe (universal unity and balance in the universe) that is indeed the realization of beauty as truth or Platonic Ideas. Indeed, as Cheetham within his essentialist lens remarks, for Mondrian universal or pure truth is a key aim in

his art: "and if the universal is the essential then it is the basis of all life and art" (Mondrian, 1917, p. 71). Overall, Mondrian maintains that such equilibrium in man and art can only be accomplished when all particularities of self (instinct or inferior intuition) are abolished and intuition is transcended into a heightened level of intellectuality called *pure intuition*.

Similarly, Schopenhauer holds that one of the main prerequisites to grasp the knowledge of the Ideas, and thus having an aesthetic experience, is the abolition of individuality. He purports that for understanding the knowledge of Ideas that cannot enter the principle of sufficient reason, intellect should not be subservient to the individual will. The intellect which is subordinated to the individual will is so conditioned and restricted that it cannot realize the knowledge of Ideas. Therefore, only a knowing subject whose intellect is not operating in coordination with his individual will is capable of understanding the knowledge of Ideas. As such, in Schopenhauer's view, the essential characteristic of aesthetic experience is its 'will-lessness' and that aesthetic experience is defined in terms of 'disinterestedness' (Neill, 2008, pp. 181-2).

Like Schopenhauer who construes individual intellect as a hindrance to the way of discernment of Platonic Ideas, Mondrian believes that *inferior intellect* obstructs intuition to realize the universal equilibrium (primordial laws of the universe), universal knowledge, or Ideas. Yet, it should be noted that Mondrian, like Schopenhauer, never denies the role of intellect (intelligence), or what Schopenhauer describes as knowledge, in the perception of pure plastic expression of equilibrium and unity or realization of universal beauty as truth. In his view, if individual intellect reaches the level of sophistication of what Mondrian refers to as *cultivated intelligence* then such universal intellect and intuition unite and create what he called a *pure intuition* (Mondrian, 1931, p. 250). As such, Mondrian merely considers individual, or inferior, intellect as an obstacle to the apprehension of Schopenhauerian Platonic Ideas: "When intuition is obscured by inferior intellect, error is inevitable. The domination of this intellect is fatal to art because it is based on the past and on superficial observation of nature" (Mondrian, 1924, p. 191). Similarly, in 1926 he maintained that: "Naturalistic beauty is now purified and returns to its origin: "pure intuition." Created beauty is no longer vague and imitative, but conscious and creative. It is sometimes at variance with cerebral logic but always in accord with pure logic" (Mondrian, 1926, p. 199). Mondrian as a painter and theoretician renders Schopenhauer's conceptions of Will and universal intellect as pure intuition which assists the artist to purify the particularities of naturalistic forms found in nature into the purest abstract elements of painting.

Mondrian, like Schopenhauer who asserts that Platonic Ideas cannot be realized by a willing subject (individual will who is reliant on the individual intellect or consciousness to meet its demands), considers a particular self (will) who is limited within his individualistic intuition or inferior intellect (animal instinct) as a hindrance to attaining the pure beauty as truth. Instead, Mondrian asserts that only a knowing subject, a conscious or heightened intuition, can attain the knowledge of the universal.^x As such he construes individual or particular intellectuality - individuals who are trapped within their "ego" (Mondrian, 1924, p. 191) - as a hindrance to the discernment of Platonic Ideas. And that is why Mondrian postulates that conscious intuition is self-reliant to the inferior intellect.

Only through clarity of intuition does intuition cease to manifest itself in the manner of the past, as unregulated freedom. Conscious intuition requires no supervision by the inferior

intellect: it is capable of regulating itself [...]. The new art, and through it the future, can be seen and understood exclusively through pure and intuitive contemplation that is free of the limitations of time and space. (Mondrian, 1924, p. 191)

Overall, Mondrian envisages pure or conscious intuition as a means to realize Platonic Ideas and he renders inferior or individualistic intellect as an obstacle on the way to perceive the spiritual or truth: "intellect often distorts the truth, so that pure intuition, by which humanity evolves, is realized only after centuries" (Mondrian, 1931, p. 249). Noteworthy that such conscious intuition or what he postulates as *conscious vision* is merely attained through self-consciousness. In this regard, Mondrian altered Hegel's approach toward the historical evolution of spirit in this way that transcending self-consciousness is measured through the development of art history. Hence, he holds that new art is a tool and path to achieve the "conscious universal vision", while old art (representational painting) results in the "unconscious natural vision" (Mondrian, 1919-20, p. 93).

Mondrian's interpretation of Schopenhauer's disinterested and objective aesthetic contemplation

Schopenhauer, unlike Kant, holds that aesthetic experience is primarily a sort of objective insight and it is therefore cognitive. In his account, the objective and disinterested viewpoint of beauty is closely bound with Platonic Ideas and it is cognitively valuable. As Diffey truly alludes, for Schopenhauer Art generates the unchangeable and eternal Ideas of all things, the true content of all phenomena, and direct objectivity of thing-in-itself (Will), in the world that can be perceived and realized through pure contemplation.

Notwithstanding that in Schopenhauer's view, one cannot achieve a fully objective view of things. Indeed, there can be no absolute objective act of knowing, because the pure objective element of knowledge is constantly distorted by the individuality of the knower. Hence, at any rate, one may only expect to keep such a lack of purity and absoluteness to a minimum. Moreover, pure disinterestedness like pure objectivity cannot be fully achieved. Nevertheless, Schopenhauer purports that geniuses are capable of apprehending objectively the pure knowledge of the world almost to a perfect degree. Indeed, when a spectator is attuned to an object of contemplation, he/she can disinterestedly realize the universal objects (Mckinley, 2018, p. 19).

In Schopenhauer's vision, a heightened state of consciousness or awareness is pleasurable because it emancipates us from the torments and limitations of the individual will, and it allows us to realize and understand the pure objective inner nature of things, or the Ideas appearing in them. In the moment of pure contemplation and aesthetic pleasure, one is freed from ordinary empirical consciousness which is associated with pain and suffering, and one enters into a blissful moment or what Schopenhauer called *better consciousness*. In Schopenhauer's view, ordinary consciousness is bounded by personal desires, interests, and aims. As these individual ends can only be satisfied for a short period and they are substituted with new desires. Hence, ordinary consciousness results in pain of unfulfilled desire. Whereas, a better consciousness is an experience that occurs when one is freed from his individuality: personal desires, aims, goals, and so on (Vandenabeele, 2012, p. 58).

Likewise, for Mondrian, pure intuition as a state of mind - as it was discussed it corresponds with Schopenhauer's conception of a blind will or Will (better consciousness) - is required to have a Schopenhauerian disinterested contemplation. Intuition for Mondrian is indeed an essential factor for having an objective vision as opposed to a subjective and individualistic vision: "Abstract Art is not the expression of man's predominantly subjective vision. It is the expression of man's objective vision realized by intuition" (Mondrian, 1938-44, p. 371). As such for Mondrian, pure intuition is indispensable to gain the knowledge of universal and it is a creative force that creates art. He called such creative force *universal consciousness* that is the 'wellspring of all the arts' (Mondrian, 1917, p. 30). Pure intuition is not only an objective vision of the artist required for abstracting or purifying the natural appearances into pure elements of painting with exact and equilibrated relationships (as Cheetham examined this aspect of Mondrian's intuitive and contemplative attitude for art creation), but also it is, as Jaffe also acknowledged, substantial for perception of Neo-Plastic art (Jaffe, 1985, pp. 39-41).

As Cheetham within an essentialist lens truly highlights, in Mondrian's account a beholder who has purified his consciousness, a self who is emancipated from torments and limitations of his individual will, can gain direct access to the universal: primordial laws of the universe - universal unity and balance (Cheetham, 1991, p. 62) - which is veiled behind the outward appearances of naturalistic forms and colors (Mondrian, 1942-43, p. 350).

I concur with Cheetham who finds an analogy between Schopenhauer's definition of the term *contemplation* as a method for cultivation of the self and attainment of universal truth, and Mondrian's rendition of contemplation as a tool for the artist to purify his intuition, or his instinctive faculties, into a universal consciousness or a conscious intuition (pure intuition) to realize the universal beauty, beauty as truth, or a universal equilibrium (Cheetham, 1991, p. 62). As such, Mondrian's approach to notion contemplation is analogous to Schopenhauer's third side of consciousness: A kind of consciousness which is between physical and metaphysical knowledge. Mondrian, like Schopenhauer, holds that in the moment of contemplation matter (body) and spirit are in equilibrium. However, here I tend to append this idea to Cheetham's argument that Mondrian not only construes Schopenhauer's terminology of disinterested contemplation as a tool for the artist to purify their self-consciousness into a universal state of intuition which is indispensable for the abstraction of particularities of the form (seeing through nature, as he maintains) but also he envisages contemplation as an essential means to understand the universal and metaphysical nature of his Neo-Plastic art.

To understand such an analogy, it is first inevitable to know that Schopenhauer considers two irresolvable components for aesthetic experience: "the spectator's self-consciousness" which is a will-less subject of knowing, not an individual, and the object which is indeed a Platonic Idea rather than to be a separate object (Vandenabeele, 2007, pp. 567-8). In other words, two main notions of Schopenhauer's aesthetic view are that firstly aesthetic perception, or aesthetic experience, occurs when one looks at an art object (Schopenhauerian disinterested aesthetic attention) as an end in itself or as it is, freed from one's will or desire. Secondly, perceiving an art object means perceiving it as a Platonic idea or form (Diffey, 1990, pp. 135-6). Indeed, in Schopenhauer's view, subject and object are inseparable and are like two ineliminable sides of a magnet. He argues that the world as representation constitutes two essential and inseparable halves: subject (knower) and object (known). He purports that in aesthetic contemplation subject loses its individuality and will

drop away. In fact, in the moment of contemplation, the perceived object is transcended to the Idea of its species and likewise, a knowing subject is raised to the pure subject of will-less knowing (Mckinley, 2018, pp. 12-3).

Similarly, Mondrian purports that when the beholder's attention, as the subject of knowing, is merely on the object of contemplation (disinterested aesthetic attention), his individual disappears and the subject and the object become one. About this issue, I comply with Cheetham's deduction that there is an analogy between Schopenhauer's notion of *calm of contemplation* - when the spectator loses his individuality and will and he merely exists as a pure subject that is a clear mirror of the object - and Mondrian's approach to abstraction of particularities of form and the contrast Mondrian propounds between *changeability of human will* and *immutable*. Indeed, Cheetham truly relates the enigmatic state of the self, emancipated from an individual, with Schopenhauerian conception of *calm of contemplation*. In this regard, Schopenhauer writes: "[We] lose ourselves entirely in [the object of contemplation], we forget our individuality, our will, and continue to exist only as pure subject, as [a] clear mirror of the object" Schopenhauer (as cited in Cheetham, 1991, p. 62). Yet, Cheetham has not expounded the validity of such a conclusion about Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will. He merely indicates that for both Schopenhauer and Mondrian nature as the best instance of individuality (natural appearances) impedes one to realize the immutable, or universal beauty as truth. Interestingly, Mondrian in one of the rare instances in his seminal essay *Natural Reality and Abstract Reality* points to the Schopenhauerian notion of *will* and asserts that when the beholder merely contemplates unity (i.e., universal beauty: primordial laws of the universe) then his particular or individual will, is abolished.

If unity is contemplated in a precise and definite way, attention will be directed solely towards the universal, and as a consequence, the *particular will*^{ki} disappear from art - as painting has already shown. For the universal cannot be expressed purely so long as the particular obstructs the path. (As cited in Seuphor, 1956, p. 143)

As it is evident from the above quote, Mondrian, like Schopenhauer, mainly talks about disinterested aesthetic attention or attitude (as Dickey ascribes) rather than an aesthetic experience. Mondrian here subscribes to Schopenhauer's approach to aesthetic experience by delimiting his vision to its preliminary psychological state: disinterested contemplation or attention to artworks.

For Schopenhauer, disinterested aesthetic attention to an art object is that the subject's attention or concentration on the object is not reliant on the object's relations to the subject's desires, aims, or goals. So, disinterestedness is a state in which a subject is so engrossed in the perception of an object that only the object, for its own sake, fills the subject's consciousness. The objectivity of aesthetic contemplation means that the representation it manifests of the object has no sign of the subject's individuality (Mckinley, 2018, p. 1). In other words, as long as one is not distorted by his subjective vision, viewing objects about his will, his state of mind is objective (Mckinley, 2018, p. 19).

Schopenhauer maintains that one in the moment of aesthetic experience loses his self and transcends into a 'pure will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge.' When one's subjectivity is suppressed, one's comprehension of the world changes into a pure objective vision that is not distorted by inclinations of the needy will. In this regard, Schopenhauer holds that: "the attention

is now no longer directed to the motives of willing, but comprehends things free from their relation to the will. Thus, it comprehends things without interest, without subjectivity, purely objectively" (As cited in Mckinley, 2018, p. 13). Hence, aesthetic attention is will-less and disinterested and it occurs when the beholder loses his self, and attains a universal and objective state of mind.

According to Schopenhauer, when one contemplates an object, he is no longer conscious of himself as an individual. Such a transcended objective state of consciousness abolishes the willing self and emancipates one from the torments and burden of willing and then we are embodied creatures (Vandenabeele, 2012, p. 64). As in the moment of aesthetic experience one completely loses his self and as Schopenhauer holds 'becomes the pure mirror of the objective inner nature of things.' In the state of aesthetic contemplation one 'stepped into another world [...] where everything that moves our will [...] no longer exists.' (As cited in Vandenabeele, 2012, p. 60). In such moments of aesthetic experience or aesthetic contemplation, we turned into will-less, timeless, and disengaged subjects of knowing without egos. Indeed, in aesthetic contemplation knowing and knowledge become one. In this regard, Schopenhauer writes:

We enter the state of pure contemplation, we are raised for the moment above all willing, above all desires and cares; we are, so to speak, rid of ourselves. We are no longer the individual that knows in the interest of its constant willing; the correlative of the particular thing to which objects become motives, but the eternal subject of knowing purified of the will, the correlative of the Idea. (As cited in Vandenabeele, 2012, p. 57)

Similarly, Vandenabeele remarks:

In aesthetic contemplation we have become somehow disengaged and even estranged from the world, for we have adopted a stance in which 'the entire consciousness is filled and occupied by a single image of perception', and which enables us to become alive to usually unnoticed significant features of objects. (Vandenabeele, 2012, p. 59)

Schopenhauer holds that relational knowledge, the 'knowledge of relations among individual and spatiotemporal things,' is egocentric. Since its main goal is to orient our individual selves concerning appealing or threatening things. On the other hand, in the moment of aesthetic contemplation, our egocentric character of relational knowledge is transcended and it provides the subject with an objective vision or consciousness, or in Schopenhauer's terms absolute essences, of the object of contemplation (Mckinley, 2018, p. 14).

Likewise, Mondrian maintains that when one perceives something, namely an art object within a subjective standpoint or vision, or through personal emotions, affects, and senses, he only experiences beauty and reality within an individual and subjective standpoint. He propounds contemplation of Art as a higher value than reality. In his view, the natural outwardness or representation of the matter veils the underlying principles of the matter (true reality). Hence, the spectator needs to be equipped with a strong intuitive faculty to fully perceive the hidden and mystical beauty. For Mondrian, a human eye that operates based on individual and subjective senses and individual intuition can only perceive representational contents and not true reality (universal beauty). Since, true reality is veiled in the outward appearance of natural objects (Seuphor, 1956, p. 118).

Everything one contemplates *for its own sake* is indeed beautiful, but it has a *limited* kind of beauty. When we see something as a thing-in-itself, we separate it from the whole: opposition is lacking—we no longer see relationships but only color and form. We observe one color, one form. (Mondrian, 1919-20, p. 86)

Mondrian borrowed the conception of *thing-in-itself* from Schopenhauer who refabricated this Kantian notion in his philosophy. Mondrian, like Schopenhauer, alludes that for having an aesthetic experience, a spectator in the first place should look at art objects *for its own sake*: attention that is emancipated from all individual needs, desires, wants, yearnings, ego, and so on. At this point, unlike scholars like Cheetham and Cacciola^{xii} who expound the analogies between Mondrian's and Schopenhauer's accounts of disinterested aesthetic contemplation within an essentialist approach, above all, I purport that Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will has shaped Mondrian's viewpoint on the subject of aesthetic experience. Mondrian, like Schopenhauer, holds that in the moment of aesthetic contemplation, the individual will (all personal ends: desires, emotions, ego, intellect, and so on) are abolished: "But in the moment of aesthetic contemplation the individual as the individual falls away" (Mondrian, 1919-20, p. 90). He asserts that the universal expression of beauty cannot be attained or realized by subjective vision. Since it only gives us an illusion of beauty. In his view, universal beauty can only be found in new art, Neo-Plastic painting, as a beauty expressed by the purest elements of paintings and exact and equilibrated relationships. Interestingly, Mondrian, like Schopenhauer, defines the perception of art as disinterested: "Beauty in our surroundings can be prepared only by art, for art is free and disinterested" (Mondrian, 1923, p. 176).

It is self-evident that we cannot see the universal so long as we are dominated by the subjective within; and that it does not reveal itself if the individual—outside us—is dominant. It reveals itself only if the individual—outside us—is annihilated; it is perceivable only when our inner universality is free of subjective limitation (Schopenhauer's disinterested contemplation). (Mondrian, 1917, p. 71)

Mondrian in the above quote explicitly refers to Schopenhauer's key conception of *disinterested contemplation*,^{xiii} and he asserts that as long as a spectator is confined within his personal and "particular feelings" his subjective vision is dominant and thereby he cannot *clearly* (as he emphasized) realize universal beauty as truth or universal equilibrium and unity.

Mondrian, like Schopenhauer, holds that all subjective and individual feelings, intellect, desires, will, and so on result in *tragic* (subjective) expression of plastic expression (reality) and equilibrium, and therefore they are impediments to the way for perception of universal beauty: "Individual thinking and feeling, man's will, his particular desires—all are attachments that lead to tragic expression and make the pure plastic expression of repose impossible" (Mondrian, 1919-20, p. 89). By tragic expression, Mondrian means a partial and vague understanding of universal beauty or absolute truth (Schopenhauer's Ideas). Hence, it is inferred that Mondrian, like Schopenhauer, considers individual will and its demands which can only be fulfilled or met temporarily, as the main obstacle to the realization of immutable laws of nature (universal unity and balance). Hence, Mondrian maintains that only through aesthetic contemplation one is capable of understanding the Platonic Ideas:

This contemplation, this *plastic vision*, is most important. The more consciously we can see the immutable, the universal, the more we see the insignificance of the mutable, the individual, the petty human in us and around us. In *aesthetic vision*, man possesses the means to unite himself with the universal *abstractly*, that is, *consciously*. Through all vision as disinterested contemplation (as Schopenhauer calls it), man transcends his naturalness. (Mondrian, 1919-20, p. 89)

Indeed, Mondrian, similar to formalists like Clive Bell, maintains that the content of art can be perceived through contemplation, or what he called intuitive feeling: "The content of the New Plastic can be *seen* only in the *work itself*. Only through intuitive feeling, through long contemplation and comparison, can one come to complete appreciation of the new" (Mondrian, 1919, p. 78). Nevertheless, following Vandenebee's prospect that Schopenhauer only attends to one aspect of the aesthetic value of artworks, i.e. the pleasure results from pure aesthetic contemplation or will-less realization of artworks, I argue that Mondrian, unlike Schopenhauer, ponders other aspects like the way artworks provide us with "valuable ways of viewing life, developing our cognitive and imaginative capacities, and enriching and deepening our understanding of the world and ourselves" (Vandenebee, 2009, p. 55) pleasurable and aesthetically valuable.^{xiv}

Conclusion

Overall, it is deduced that Mondrian in many aspects borrowed his vision toward aesthetic attention and aesthetic experience from Schopenhauer's metaphysics of Will. Firstly, he, like Schopenhauer, considers two roads for the cessation of suffering of man, or limitation of individual will (personal desires, wishes, yearning, and so on): appreciation of art (transitory method) and asceticism and meditation (permanent method). Secondly, it is argued that Mondrian's definition of instinct as a faculty of mind which manifests itself as self-concentrating and self-edifying corresponds with Schopenhauer's definition of a willing subject or what he ascribes as the first side of consciousness: the one whose individual intellect is subservient to his individual will to meet its demands. Whereas, Mondrian's understanding of intuition as a faculty of mind that results in self-denial and self-destruction is akin to Schopenhauer's rendition of Will (a knowing subject) or what he construes as the second side of consciousness: one whose consciousness, or his will, is filled, or engrossed, in the object of contemplation.

Although, in a few instances scholars, particularly Cheetham, highlight Mondrian's use of Schopenhauer's key term disinterested contemplation as the main evidence of his impact on the philosopher, In this article, I demonstrate that Mondrian in the first place influenced by Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will - about conceptions like an individual will, Will, intellect, and their relationships, and the notion that the root of man's suffering is due to the dominance of individual will (ego, personal affects, and intellect) over universal will.

Mondrian, like Schopenhauer, considers individual intellect, or in his terminology inferior intellect, as the main obstacle to the perception of Platonic Ideas (in Mondrian's terminology: primordial laws of the universe or universal unity and balance). Since in his view, such personal rationality is limited and it is in the service of the individual will to fulfill its demands. Because personal ends

can never be satisfied permanently, and new desires constantly replace older ones, thereby, the cooperation of individual intellect will result in nothing but short-term and subjective pleasure. Mondrian asserts that to realize the Platonic Ideas (a universal expression of equilibrium and beauty), the beholder should transcend his instinctive faculties and intuition into a conscious or heightened intuition which he called *pure intuition*. Indeed, pure intuition is a prerequisite to realizing Ideas, or in Schopenhauer's language pure knowledge of the world. As such, for both Mondrian and Schopenhauer a knowing subject, a conscious or heightened intuition, can attain the knowledge of universal.

Moreover, it is inferred that Mondrian endorses Schopenhauer's disinterested aesthetic attention and objectivity of aesthetic experience. He asserts that aesthetic experience occurs when the beholder abandons his will, personal emotions, and affects. He, like Schopenhauer, mostly renders conception disinterested regarding aesthetic attention or attitude to art objects. Mondrian rendition of pure intuition as a universal and objective consciousness (knowledge or intellect) conforms with Schopenhauer's conception of disinterested contemplation. He, following Kant and Schopenhauer, holds that the spectator, as a universal self, should employ his pure intuition to look at art objects as a *thing-in-itself*. He insists on the indispensable role of contemplation in art creation and perception of art as a prerequisite for having true aesthetic attention and subsequently having an aesthetic experience.

It is also concluded that Mondrian, like Schopenhauer, subscribes to this idea that in the moment of aesthetic experience, the demarcation line between subject and object disappears and the two becomes a holistic one. Mondrian like Schopenhauer holds that when the beholder's attention, as the subject of knowing, is exclusively on the object of contemplation (a disinterested aesthetic attention), then his individual, is entirely abolished. Since, looking at art objects interestingly (by relying on personal emotions, will, and intellect), only provides us with a subjective view of beauty (tragic expression of beauty) or illusion of beauty. Whereas, one who has transcended his view to a universal consciousness, one who is equipped with pure intuition (seeing through art object), is eligible to perceive and realize the universal content of art. Ultimately, it is asserted that Mondrian's interpretation of aesthetic experience as something disinterested and objective in most cases is narrated in terms of aesthetic attention or attitude. Hence, Mondrian primarily ascribes to the limited and peculiar version of Schopenhauer's account of aesthetic experience as a disinterested aesthetic attention to art objects.

Lastly, Mondrian is profoundly impacted by Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will and his use of Schopenhauerian terms like *disinterested contemplation* endorses such influence from the philosopher. Yet, it is also possible to propose other hypotheses that Mondrian was exposed to and affected by other aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy, namely his moral, Pessimistic, and religious philosophy which needs further scrutiny by scholars in the future.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest.

Funding Disclosure/Acknowledgement

This research Paper has not received any funding from Alzahra University. And the first author (Ali Fallahzadeh) will pay the publication fee from his account.

Notes:

ⁱ It is noteworthy that expounding particularity of aesthetic experience is indispensable to demarcate it from other experiences of mundane life and also to define art (as one of the most polemical questions of philosophers and art critics) in order to distinguish between art and non-art.

ⁱⁱ Based on the widely acknowledged interpretation of scholars on Schopenhauer's notion aesthetic contemplation as aesthetic experience, for maintaining the consistency, these two terms are used interchangeably in this article.

ⁱⁱⁱ It should be noted that what Schopenhauer means by his term disinterestedness, should be understood as a kind of will-free and objective aesthetic attention in the first place. In fact, disinterested aesthetic approach to art is best epitomized, as Fenner (2008) remarks, in decontextualism in art; looking at art object apart from its historical, social, political contexts (p. 80).

^{iv} According to Diffey (1990), the non-practicality or non-instrumentality of aesthetic perception, proposed by Schopenhauer, is still valid in contemporary era. However, Schopenhauer's Principle of Sufficient Reason and considering aesthetic experience as something non-conceptual and defining aesthetic perception in terms of realization of Platonic Idea is no longer authentic. In contemporary era aesthetic perception is self-evidently intelligible and good. That is to say, we appreciate the appearance of things just for their own sake (p. 141).

^v Amongst the rare instances, I would like to refer to Stolnitz's article *The Aesthetic Attitude in the Rise of Modern Aesthetics*. In his article, he criticizes George Dickie's definition of disinterestedness and explicates characteristics of Schopenhauer's disinterested perception.

^{vi} In this regard Carroll (2002) reveals the shortcomings of notion disinterestedness when it is considered as a necessary and sufficient condition for aesthetic experience. In his view disinterested pleasure which is the end result of having a disinterested attention, or what Schopenhauer also delineates as state of an aesthetic contemplation, to a given art object is not a necessary condition for aesthetic experience (p. 146).

^{vii} For more information on demarcation line between aesthetic attitude and disinterested aesthetic experience in Schopenhauer's philosophy, please refer Stolnitz's (1978) article titled *The Aesthetic Attitude in the Rise of Modern Aesthetics* (p. 409).

^{viii} Principle of sufficient reason, firstly proposed by Spinoza in his 1663 book geometrical exposition of Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy*, holds that for every x (fact) there should be a y (a sufficient reason or cause) which explains the existence of x (fact). In short, principle of sufficient reason holds that everything must have a reason or a cause. (Melamed, Yitzhak Y, and Martin Lin, 2023).

^{ix} As Neill argues for Schopenhauer intellect is not merely subservient to meet the demands of individual will and it does not need to be detached from its nature. Instead, the aesthetic experience, or understanding of the Ideas, is the wellspring of all capacities of intellect, not only a rare capacity. Schopenhauer holds that other capacities of intellect are also considered in aesthetic experience (Neill, 2008, p. 187).

^x According to Blotkamp intuition for Mondrian is a personal rendition of theosophical view of life which is a detached or meditative state of mind. As Rudolf Steiner holds: "intuition follows on imagination and inspiration, representing the third and highest stage in Man's striving for inner knowledge" (Blotkamp, 1994, p. 203).

^{xi} Italics in this quote and all subsequent ones are original to the text excerpted.

^{xii} Cacciola infers that Mondrian's conception abstraction corresponds with Schopenhauer's notion Idea and his Metaphysics of Beauty which is a presentation of the real and immutable knowledge. Since, within Schopenhauer's Metaphysics of Beauty, art is not a mimesis. Mondrian defines abstraction, similar to Schopenhauer's notion Idea, as expression and manifestation of the universal (Cacciola, 2014, p. 95).

^{xiii} Although, scholars namely Reynaud (2012) and Tosaki (2017) highlight Mondrian's use of Schopenhauer's notion disinterested contemplation, yet here such influence is further expanded, demonstrated, and illuminated within an aesthetic and philosophical standpoint.

^{xiv} Here I also assert that involvement of emotion and intellect in aesthetic experience, though universal version of feelings and rationality, endorses the pluralistic approach to aesthetic experience proposed by contemporary scholars, particularly Alan H. Goldman. In this regard, Fallahzadeh and Rahbarnia (2022) demonstrate that Schopenhauer's attitude toward aesthetic experience is pluralistic, meaning that it involves an active interaction of all mental faculties: perception, emotion, imagination, and cognition. Or as Goldman maintains, aesthetic experience involves the "inseparable, mutually reinforcing, simultaneous operation of the mental faculties" (p. 60). For this subject is out of scope of this article, I do not expand it here and I may address it in another article.

References

- Blotkamp, C. (1994). *Mondrian: The art of destruction*. London, England: Reaktion Books Ltd Rathbonc Place. New York: Abrams.
- Cacciola, M. L. (2014). A contemplação estética: Schopenhauer e Mondrian. *DoisPontos*, 11(1).
- Carroll, N. (2002). Aesthetic experience revisited. *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 42(2), 145-168.
- Cheetham, M. A. (1991). *The rhetoric of purity: Essentialist theory and the advent of abstract painting* (pp. xi-xxiii). Cambridge, New York, Post Chester, Melbourne and Sydney: Cambridge University Press.
- Diffey, T. J. (1990). Schopenhauer's Account of Aesthetic Experience. *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 30(2), 132-142.
- Fallahzadeh, A., & Rahbarnia, Z. (2022). Goldman's pluralistic approach to aesthetic experience and Piet Mondrian's intuitive Neo-Plastic art. *Social Sciences*, 8(2), 51-68.
- Fenner, D. E. W. (2008). *Art in Context: Understanding Aesthetic Value*. Swallow Press: Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio.
- Jacquette, D. (2007). Schopenhauer's metaphysics of appearance and Will. In D. Jacquette (2007, Ed.), *Schopenhauer, philosophy, and the arts* (pp. 1-36). Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, Sao Paulo: Cambridge University Press.
- McKinley, R. (2018). *Schopenhauer on Aesthetic Experience* (Master thesis, Georgia State University, Georgia, USA). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/philosophy_theses/236/
- Melamed, Yitzhak Y, and Martin Lin. (2023). "Principle of Sufficient Reason", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2023 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2023/entries/sufficient-reason>
- Mondrian, P. (1917). *The New Plastic in Painting*. In H. Holtzman, & M.S. James (1986, Eds. and trans.), *The new art-the new life: the collected writings of Piet Mondrian* (pp. 27-74). London: Thames and Hudson.

- Mondrian, P. (1919). Dialogue on the New Plastic. In H. Holtzman, & M.S. James (1986, Eds. and trans.), *The new art-the new life: the collected writings of Piet Mondrian* (pp. 75-81). London: Thames and Hudson.
- Mondrian, P. (1919-20). Natural Reality and Abstract Reality: A Trialogue (While Strolling from the Country to the City). In H. Holtzman, & M.S. James (1986, Eds. and trans.), *The new art-the new life: the collected writings of Piet Mondrian* (pp. 82-123). London: Thames and Hudson.
- Mondrian, P. (1923). Neo-Plasticism. In H. Holtzman, & M.S. James (1986, Eds. and trans.), *The new art-the new life: the collected writings of Piet Mondrian* (pp. 175-177). London: Thames and Hudson.
- Mondrian, P. (1924). Down with Traditional Harmony! In H. Holtzman, & M.S. James (1986, Eds. and trans.), *The new art-the new life: the collected writings of Piet Mondrian* (pp. 190-192). London: Thames and Hudson.
- Mondrian, P. (1926). Purely Abstract Art. In H. Holtzman, & M.S. James (1986, Eds. and trans.), *The new art-the new life: the collected writings of Piet Mondrian* (pp. 198-201). London: Thames and Hudson.
- Mondrian, P. (1931). The New Art—The New Life: The Culture of Pure Relationships. In H. Holtzman, & M.S. James (1986, Eds. and trans.), *The new art-the new life: the collected writings of Piet Mondrian* (pp. 244-276). London: Thames and Hudson.
- Mondrian, P. (1932). Introduction to "The New Art—The New Life". In H. Holtzman, & M.S. James (1986, Eds. and trans.), *The new art-the new life: the collected writings of Piet Mondrian* (pp. 277-280). London: Thames and Hudson.
- Mondrian, P. (1936). Plastic Art and Pure Plastic Art. In H. Holtzman, & M.S. James (1986, Eds. and trans.), *The new art-the new life: the collected writings of Piet Mondrian* (pp. 288-300). London: Thames and Hudson.
- Mondrian, P. (1942-43). A New Realism. In H. Holtzman, & M.S. James (1986, Eds. and trans.), *The new art-the new life: the collected writings of Piet Mondrian* (pp. 345-350). London: Thames and Hudson.
- Mondrian, P. (1938-44). A Folder of Notes. In H. Holtzman, & M.S. James (1986, Eds. and trans.), *The new art-the new life: the collected writings of Piet Mondrian* (pp. 358-392). London: Thames and Hudson.
- Neill, A. (2008). Aesthetic experience in Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will. *European Journal of Philosophy*, 16(2), 179-193.
- Reynaud, I. B. (2012). *The Neo-plastic Figura: An Exploration of Crystallization and Neo-placticism in Rayuela* (Doctoral dissertation, King's College London).
- Seuphor, M. (1956). *Piet Mondrian: life and work*. New York: HN Abrams.
- Soll, I. (2020). Schopenhauer on the Will as the Window to the World. In R. Wicks (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Schopenhauer*, 127-146.
- Stolnitz, J. (1978). "The Aesthetic Attitude" in the Rise of Modern Aesthetics. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 36(4), 409-422.
- Tosaki, E. (2017). *Mondrian's Philosophy of Visual Rhythm: Phenomenology, Wittgenstein, and Eastern Thought* (Vol. 23). Springer. doi: 10.1007/978-94-024-1198-0
- Vandenabeele, B. (2007). Schopenhauer on the values of aesthetic experience. *The Southern journal of philosophy*, 45(4), 565-582.
- Vandenabeele, B. (2009). Schopenhauer on aesthetic understanding and the values of art. In *Better consciousness: Schopenhauer's philosophy of value* (pp. 41-57). Wiley-Blackwell.

Vandenabeele, B. (2012). Aesthetic Disinterestedness in Kant and Schopenhauer. *Estetika: The European Journal of Aesthetics*, 49(1), 45-70.

Veen, L. A. (2017). *Piet Mondrian: The Complete Writings: Essays and Notes in Original Versions*. Leiden, Netherlands: Primavera Pers.

Dr. Ali Fallahzadeh was born in 1981 in Tehran. As an artist, he has practiced and taught painting, drawing, and Iranian calligraphy for more than two decades. Ali obtained his Ph.D. in visual art from University of Malaya in January 2020. In his Ph.D. thesis, he scrutinized the evolution of Piet Mondrian's aesthetic ideas in regard to key Neo-Plastic concepts with reference to six principles of Neo-Plasticism. Since March 2021, the author has been working as a Post-Doctorate Research Fellow at Art Faculty in Alzahra University in Tehran. His main research interests are Modern aesthetics (especially Formalism) and the 20th century art theories of the abstract and pure abstract painting. Fallahzadeh currently is member of some of the prominent Iranian academic journals as referee. He is also in the process of starting his academic career as assistant Professor in Tehran.

Dr. Zahra Rahbarnia is an Associate Professor in the field of art research in the Art Faculty in Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran. She authored over a hundred published original research papers in prominent journals. She has worked on the editorial and advisory board of multiple academic journals and has advised numerous Graduate students for over 30 years. Her main fields of education and research interests are visual arts, illustration, and theoretical studies of the arts. As a scholar, she has focused on the Aesthetics, expression, and communication in Art, interactive arts, interdisciplinary fields of art philosophy and sociology, as well as academic art education.
