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Arthur Schopenhauer's Philosophical Thought in The World as Will and Representation

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Abstract

This article clarifies several central aspects of Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophical thought through two principal theses: the world as representation and the world as will, both of which are systematically developed in his major work The World as Will and Representation. The article aims to open a discussion of both the value and the limitations of this philosophical system. Using methods of analysis and synthesis, the study highlights Schopenhauer's account of the nature of the world and of human life. It also employs historical and logical methods in order to situate his thought within the development of Western philosophy, thereby clarifying its relation both to earlier philosophical systems and to later intellectual currents. A comparative philosophical approach is further used to identify lines of inheritance and divergence in Schopenhauer's thought, especially in relation to Kant. By combining these methods, the article offers a systematic account of the content and significance of Schopenhauer's philosophy for the historical development of Western thought.

Keywords: Schopenhauer, the world as will and representation, will, representation, philosophical pessimism

1. INTRODUCTION

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) is a unique figure among nineteenth-century Western philosophers in that his philosophy is an attempt to integrate post-Kantian metaphysics, philosophical pessimism, aesthetics, and ethics. While the famous Schopenhauerian principle according to which the world is 'representation' on the one hand and 'will' on the other is perhaps best expressed in The World as Will and Representation - a work considered the central architectural structure of his entire philosophical system [1–5].

Thus, Schopenhauer inherits several decisive issues from Kant, especially the issue of the limitations of cognition, the difference between phenomena and things-in-themselves, as well as the problem of the conditions for the appearance of objects in consciousness; however, he radically reinterprets this framework by equating reality to will, which creates a rather interesting philosophical paradigm that consists of a number of elements, including metaphysics, critique of rationalism, philosophy of suffering, aesthetics, and transcendence of ethics. Undoubtedly, this particularity accounts for both the significance of Schopenhauer in the history of philosophy and his continued relevance to contemporary research in various fields, including aesthetics and comparative philosophy [5–7]. For this reason, studying the philosophy of Schopenhauer is necessary not only to understand his philosophical system but also for elucidating some other aspects of modern Western philosophy.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Work "The World as Will and Representation" is the core of Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophical system and the cornerstone for building his worldview [1, 2, 4, 8]. Thereby, Schopenhauer always emphasized the idea that the world is a symbol for the subject of knowledge and the will as the essential aspect of the world [1, 2, 5, 9]. Then, based on this idea, he developed a unique philosophical doctrine that unites metaphysics, epistemology, aesthetics, and ethics into a single system [5, 9].

In history, the works of the great philosopher of transcendental idealism Immanuel Kant greatly influenced the philosophical system of Schopenhauer. Kant's conception of epistemological limitations, the opposition of phenomena to things-in-themselves, served as the foundation of Schopenhauer's thinking [5, 6]. However, Schopenhauer did not limit himself to the agnosticism of Kant but proceeded to identify the essence of the world with the irrational will that is universal [1, 2, 5, 8]. According to many researchers, the peculiarities of Schopenhauer's system lie in the inheritance and reinterpretation of Kant's legacy [4, 6]. Noted British philosopher Bertrand Russell said that: "Many modern philosophers adopt the theory of the supreme will... That is the clearest change in the philosophical temperament of our time. This temperament was prepared by Rousseau and Kant, but the one who declared the pure form is Schopenhauer" [10, pg. 759]. In her study, Liu Fangdong stated that Schopenhauer philosophy was greatly influenced by the thought of Kant in a fundamental and deep way. Schopenhauer inherited the dualism that Kant established between "phenomena" (our experience of the world) and the "thing-in-itself" (the essence of the world that exists independently of perception) [11, pg. 119]. According to Shahen Hacyan, Schopenhauer developed the idea of his philosophy on the basis of the inheritance and profound modification of Kantian philosophy. Particularly, he questioned Kantian categories of space, time, and causality as forms of knowledge. However, while Kant stopped on affirming the "thing-in-itself," Schopenhauer identified the profound nature of the world with the irrational will [6].

Besides the impact of Western philosophy, Schopenhauer was influenced by Platonism in some sense too. Unlike Plato, the Idea in the Schopenhauerian sense is not associated solely with reason and is linked to the process of objectivization of will in the world of phenomena [1, 2, 12]. Thus, the Schopenhauerian concept becomes not only universal but also aesthetically valuable. It becomes an object that is perceived directly by man during aesthetic contemplation [4, 5]. This area of research illustrates the fact that Schopenhauer did not simply accept the Plato philosophy but rebuilt the concept to meet his philosophical views [12]. Thus, Schopenhauer made a turn from rationalism toward irrationality in his philosophy [12, pg. 378–392].

Besides Western philosophies, some scholars believe that Schopenhauer was influenced by Eastern religions as well. Research dedicated to the Indian Upanishads proves the philosopher's interest in such concepts as Brahman, oneness of reality, suffering, liberation, and negation of desires [2, 13, 14]. Some scholars also notice similarities between Schopenhauer's concepts of asceticism, compassion, and liberation and the spiritual principles of Buddhism. Nevertheless, the degree of this influence remains unclear [7, 14, 15]. Despite the lack of evidence, it should be noted that the Eastern component in Schopenhauer philosophy adds to the interpretation of the philosophy as well as reflects the intercultural character of its creation [7, 13, 14].

Today, the studies of Schopenhauer philosophy focus mainly on three areas. First, the ontological and epistemological analysis of "world as symbols" and "will" [5, 16]. Secondly, aesthetic aspects, which include research of the role of art and music as the possibility to escape the power of will for a while [5, 8]. Thirdly, ethical aspects, in particular the studies dedicated to compassion, asceticism, and denial of will to live [5, 7, 14]. It proves the importance of the philosopher's

ideas and their value to present-day psychology, aesthetics, religion, philosophy [5, 7, 9].

Based on existing literature, it can be concluded that Schopenhauer philosophy is highly systematic yet full of contradictions in terms of rationalism versus irrationalism, affirmation of life against denial of life, liberation for some time compared to radical liberation [5, 5, 16]. These contradictions are the main reason why the work "The World as Will and Representation" remains topical and requires additional research to date [4, 5, 9].

"The world is my imagination," - wrote Schopenhauer [2, pg. 70]. On the one hand, this statement clearly expresses the key role of the subject of cognition, and on the other hand, it is a significant transformation in the philosophy of the world. Namely, instead of recognizing the world as an objective reality, Schopenhauer interpreted the world as a symbol, as a specific structure related to human consciousness. As a consequence, every object accessible to human cognition is not the object itself but its appearance – its symbolic representation. Namely, man knows not the tree itself, but its imagination in his consciousness. Similarly, according to Schopenhauer, the man does not know anything about the sun, the earth; he only sees the sun with his eyes, the earth with his hands [2, pg. 70].

In accordance with the tradition of Kant's thought, Schopenhauer highlighted the fact that the perception of man is always determined by a priori forms, such as space, time, and causality. These forms do not belong to any objects themselves, but these conditions of things appearing before the consciousness. Hence, it follows that the world of phenomena is a subjective structure that emerges during the processes of human cognition. However, Schopenhauer develops Kant's idea, reducing the list of determining forms to a single principle, called "principle of sufficient reason." This principle explains why all the phenomena exist in mutual relationships of rationality and can be cognized.

According to Schopenhauer, among the features of the symbolic world, one should highlight the relationship between the subject and the object of cognition. The latter are "necessary partners," whose separation is impossible, since the subject cannot become an object, but it can only be a "perspective on the world" (a property inherent in every person). Nevertheless, there is also a contrast in their relations: "There is no subject without an object, and conversely, no object without a subject" [2, pg. 73]. However, the subject in question cannot be equated with the individual person, but it represents the condition of cognition and, therefore, something that "knows everything but is not known" [2, pg. 73]. In turn, the subject represents the basis of the phenomenal world, since only in reference to it everything acquires significance. An individual person is perceived by himself only as a subject, while in the condition of being known, it turns out to be an object of cognition. For example, the human body is only an object, existing in space and time and subjected to the laws of cognition.

According to Schopenhauer, human consciousness receives data from the body and processes it using "understanding" (Verstand) and "intelligence" (Intellekt). Otherwise, we would only receive sensations associated with ourselves, but thanks to intelligence, we acquire an image of material objects existing in time, occupying space and serving as the root of the causes of changing and of our sensations. As noted by Shahen Hacyan, the expansion of Kant's ideas shows that space, time, and causality are not objective attributes of the world in itself, but only a priori forms of cognition [6]. In turn, causality plays an essential role in the operation of intelligence organizing sensory data in a system of perceptions of objects. Therefore, the material world does not exist independently of human perception and cognition, it is only a product of its process under the condition of a priori factors.

In the book "The World as Will and Representation," developing the second interpretation of "the world as symbols," Schopenhauer went to a much deeper level than the level of empirical cognition. Namely, while the first interpretation was based on the idea of the prevalence of the principle of sufficient reason in the symbolic world, in the second interpretation he stated the existence of a higher kind of symbolism, independent of this principle. It is the "Ideas (Plato)," which Schopenhauer borrowed from Platonism and reinterpreted in his own way. As Schopenhauer notes, the levels of objectivity of the will are nothing more than Ideas, universal, immutable forms of existence expressing themselves in phenomenal manifestations [2, pg. 264]. Thus, behind the constantly changing world of phenomena, there are also immutable essences, which are Ideas as the levels of manifestation of the will in the world.

To differentiate his notion of "Ideas" from Kantian and Hegelian notions, Schopenhauer often adds a qualifier of "platomatic" and criticizes the misuse of Plato's terminology in the works of Immanuel Kant [2, pg. 264]. In ever-changing perceptual manifestations, we see an immortal Idea, one of the levels of manifestation of the will in nature. In order to avoid misunderstanding due to the use of terms in the language of Kant and Hegel (in Schopenhauer's opinion, incorrect and unjustified), he often used parentheses and mentioned "platomatic Ideas" [4]. Ideas are understood as the collection of eternal objects [4, pg. 40]. Having mastered the notions of Ideas and of true knowledge, Schopenhauer proceeds to artistic contemplation. Namely, in art, man can purely apprehend those Ideas, as the individuality of a subject becomes temporary "pure knowing subject," overcoming the control of will. Thus, art occupies a significant place in Schopenhauer's philosophy, since its object is not individual objects connected by causality, but Ideas, i.e., symbols that exist beyond the principle of sufficient reason.

Schopenhauer imagined "Ideas" as universal objects permeating the whole of nature and capable of being captured by humans at the stage of non-volitional cognition. Thus, in such a condition, the subject transcends individuality and

will, becoming a "pure subject," and reflects the essence of the object directly, that is, acquiring a perception, which is more purely and objectively than empirical perception or scientific understanding. But, nevertheless, despite the fact that Schopenhauer attributed a very high value to art, and particularly to music, as a method of accessing Ideas and overcoming the rule of will, he viewed this process only as temporary, not allowing permanent cessation of suffering. From here comes Schopenhauer's shift toward philosophy, aimed at the complete rejection of will as the only way out.

3. VIEW OF THE WORLD AS WILL

As explained in the second interpretation of the term, the world as will objects the will and refers to the questioner, who wants to understand an essence or meaning in himself and in the world. Will appears in the world through nature, biology, human and animal. The symbolic world in which we appear and which is offered to our mind is indeed the world, rich, many-sided, spatial, temporal, law, and studyable. But the world and oneself should be studied and known only from the standpoint of their intrinsic essence and not from the mere experience of their phenomena. Will is that common element in which the world and oneself are a single unity. It is the main thought in the second volume of the author's work, which was repeated in his later work [4, pg. 70].

One of the main sources of inspiration of Schopenhauer in creating the theory of the will became ancient Indian literature of the Upanishads. In Upanishads, the notion of Brahman as the first being and origin of all other beings, phenomena, and essences is expressed. Brahman is represented not only as intellect, will, meditation, understanding, and mightiness, but also as everything else surrounding us – food, water, air, fire, memory, and hope. Thus, as the author notes in his preface to the first edition: "In my opinion, if any reader has already received the holy inspiration of ancient Indian wisdom, then he will have the best preparation for listening to what I am going to tell him ... Each isolated word constituting the Upanishad may well be a consequence of the thought I intend to convey" [2, pg. 49].

Thus, Schopenhauer formed the idea of a philosophically pessimistic worldview. According to Schopenhauer, the will brought endless wishes and suffering to man. Man, as a result, does not exist as an absolutely free subject but only as a high manifestation of the will, whose actions are under the influence of the internal impulse and are impossible to control completely [17]. It is the incessant movement of the will and the characteristic of infinite craving and insatiability that make the life of a person a continuous stream of sufferings. This contradictory union of weary reason and the unfulfilled desire for something brings a constant pain in the soul of a person. Sometimes it made him pessimistic and gloomy, for human life swings between suffering and boredom like the oscillations of a pendulum. Thus, he once said: "After man leaves suffering and torment in hell, boredom alone remains in heaven" [2, pg. 525].

Schopenhauer proves that the body and the will cannot be considered two different phenomena because they represent a single reality, seen in two different ways. On one hand, the body is a symbol of this reality, and on the other hand, it is the expression of will itself. Thus, he managed to overcome Rene Descartes' dualism and at the same time to get the opportunity to consider the thing-in-itself as an entity, which was believed to be beyond the limits of human comprehension according to Kant's opinion. As a result of this, it becomes obvious that every action and life of a man are manifestations of the will and, in connection with this, that the whole world is various manifestations of the will as well: "My body and my will are one"; "Whatever is taken into account as a visual symbol that I call my body, I name my will insofar as I am conscious of it in a completely different, incomparable manner," or "My body is the objectivity of my will" or "Besides my body being my symbol, it is also my will." [2, pg. 216–217].

According to Sean T. Murphy's analysis of the theory of motivation developed by Arthur Schopenhauer, it becomes evident that there exists an identity of will and body. According to his theory, actions performed by men are not simple physical reactions of the body, but the very expressions of the will using the means of states of consciousness. Thus, consciousness serves as an intermediate step, making possible the external manifestations of will through specific actions and proving that body, as a result of this, represents both the objectification of will and a symbol [18, pg. 1–14]. This allows for a better understanding of the Schopenhauer's statement: "My body and my will are one" or "Whatever is considered as a visual symbol that I call my body, I call my will insofar as I am conscious of it in a completely different, incomparable way" or "My body is the object of my will." In his work "World as Will and Symbol," the author defines the nature of the world as will. Will is a blind, irrational force, controlling all existence of a person and leading to his constant suffering. After understanding that the nature of the world is a blind and irrational will and constant suffering, Schopenhauer was trying to find a solution for the problem. In this sense, the philosopher showed deep understanding of Buddhist doctrine on cessation of suffering. Cessation of suffering is the complete removal of desire to achieve Nirvana. Therefore, Nirvana is the final stage of a human life, which does not require neither rational philosophy nor knowledge but intuitive vision and acceptance of everything. In addition, such a concept as ignorance is introduced by Buddhism, representing the essence of Will and Universal Will. The notions of sea of suffering and karma define the nature of a human life. Doctrines of reincarnation and rebirth allow analyzing human history. Thus, Schopenhauer's idea of the suffering nature of life, prevalence of desire and impermanence of the phenomenal world is quite alike Buddhist doctrine of suffering and salvation. Moreover, he also accepted the idea of metaphysical philosophy of Hinduism, where an existence beyond phenomenon, which he called Will,

was introduced. Schopenhauer constantly stated that Indian philosophy was close to his philosophical thoughts and he followed its teachings in his ethics based on the Upanisads and Buddhism [2, pg. 445].

The author claimed that it was possible to escape from the dominance of will in case of artistic activity, especially through aesthetic contemplation, since it meant that the subject is no longer involved in personal desires. Higher degree of spiritual transformation is connected with compassionate ethics and negation of the Will. In other words, it means following the principles of Buddhism.

Firstly, the Schopenhauer's theory about liberation from the domination of the Will through art implies that in daily life, every person is constantly subjected to certain demands, needs, desires, and purposes. In other words, in daily life, one's actions represent the embodiment of the will. However, during aesthetic contemplation, the subject stops seeing all objects not as an opportunity to gain benefits and pleasures but as "ideas in pure". That means that the subject is no longer associated with personal interests and impulses, becoming a pure observing subject. As regards art, Schopenhauer claims that the highest degree of it is music, since besides embodying ideas, as painting and sculpture do, music embodies the Will itself. Of course, Schopenhauer's theory implies that liberation is temporary and after the end of aesthetic contemplation, one again experiences the domination of Will. Thus, while the whole visible world is the visibility of Will, art illuminates it and shows us all its features. Art is an excellent projection instrument, projecting objects of the visible world in a clearer way, making it possible to better examine them. Thus, Schopenhauer defines art as "flower of life" [2, pg. 461–462].

Secondly, at the ethical level, Schopenhauer develops his philosophy on compassionate ethics. In contrast to those philosophers who defined the foundation of ethics as rational and obligation, the author claims that compassionate ethics is based on empathy with the suffering of others. When an individual comes to the conclusion that the nature of all existence is the same Will, he ceases to make any distinction between "I" and "the other", feeling sympathy for the suffering of another person. Thus, the first step towards liberation is made since selfishness is weakened by compassion. It is noteworthy that compassionate ethics in Schopenhauer's works is quite alike Buddhist philosophy and its concepts of karuna (compassion), non-self and negation of will. Thus, according to Robert Wicks [19], compassionate ethics of Arthur Schopenhauer involves transition to negation of will. Having realized that all living creatures represent the same Will, an individual rejects selfishness and understands the meaning of universal guilt and, as a consequence, renounces affirmation of life. Thus, asceticism becomes an inevitable part of compassionate ethics [19, pg. 213–232].

Finally, the negation of will is made on the highest level through asceticism. According to the philosopher, if a person has fully understood the nature of suffering and meaningless will, it will lead to such consequences as the denial of Will instead of its affirmation. Such a situation is expressed in ascetic life, in the suppression of instincts and desires. In this case, the will no longer dominates an individual's actions, which leads to transcendental stillness, which is very close to freedom from suffering. Such a situation is called "nothingness" but it does not mean anything bad, rather liberation from all limitations of the will.

The important feature of this philosopher is that while traditional philosophy in the West emphasized the affirmation of life, he was developing the negation of the will. Such a viewpoint is pessimistic in philosophy but demonstrates the profound metaphysical and ethical depths of the problem. It gives rise to the challenge facing humanity: denying and overcoming, instead of satisfying and affirming the will. The Schopenhauer's theory on liberation is a multilevel concept: temporary liberation of art, transformation through compassion, and final liberation through denial of the will in asceticism. The philosopher not only gave us a metaphysical concept but a philosophy of life, answering the main questions concerning the nature of humanity and the meaning of suffering.

In conclusion, Schopenhauer's work "World as Will and Representation" represents both a deep analysis of natural and psychological life and the creation of a unique philosophical concept on the meaning of human life. Using the concepts of "symbols" and "will," Schopenhauer proves the rationality of the visible world, determined by the sufficient reason principle, and the irrationality of its real nature as Will. The Schopenhauer's works show the correlation between consciousness and life, and pessimistic reflections on the nature of the world and humanity.

4. DISCUSSION

This work is devoted to such topics as the fact that will is the source of the entire world and that all phenomena in the world have emerged as a result of will, as well as the liberation of a person from will limitations through morality and nirvana. It is believed that not only did the work play an important role in the formulation of Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophical thought, but also had a great impact on many subsequent philosophers and writers. In addition, this work is considered one of the classical works of Western philosophy and is actively used in the research of this discipline, in philosophical thought, and literature.

4.1. THE VALUE OF ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

First of all, it should be noted that Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophical thought critically assesses rationalism and social practice at the beginning of the 19th century and paves the way for idealism. In this regard, Arthur Schopenhauer became a philosopher and rejected rationalism for the sake of idealism, thus developing new directions in philosophy. It is also important that the philosopher made a direct attack on rationalism, especially the system of G.W.F. Hegel. According to G.W.F. Hegel, reason is a supreme criterion determining the movement of the world and history. Meanwhile, Schopenhauer's philosophy suggests the opposite: the essence of reality does not lie in the reason, but in the blind and irrational will. Moreover, according to Schopenhauer, the reason is a subordinate phenomenon since it serves only as a tool of the "will to live", which is unconscious and aimless. Thus, the philosophy undermines the confidence in the absolute rationality of the world while offering an alternative interpretation – the existence of an irrational impulse within each person. However, Schopenhauer's position does not mean that he denies the role of reason in people's lives. On the contrary, according to the author, reason serves only as a tool of will. Cognition and reason are two important factors that must emerge to satisfy the needs of the "will to live" [11, pg. 127].

It is necessary to mention that in the European society of the beginning of the 19th century, the society underwent changes caused by the French Revolution and the era of Enlightenment. Belief in the progress and reason, as well as the rational order of society was at its highest level in that time. However, Schopenhauer took a fundamentally new stance. He claims that human life is full of conflicts, suffering, and unfulfilled desires. Thus, instead of optimism concerning the progressive nature of social life, he emphasizes tragic and irrational aspects. This interpretation is seen as a critical philosophical reaction to rationalism and historical optimism. In such a way, Schopenhauer contributed greatly to the establishment of the foundations of voluntarism in modern philosophy. The will is seen as the main criterion of everything, which shifts the focus from reason to will from cognition to a driving factor of life. Such an impact can be noticed in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche with his famous notion of the "will to power". Thus, this work made a significant contribution to the further development of voluntarism.

Secondly, Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophical thought, especially his most famous work "The World as Will and Representation," opened the doors for further study of many complex psychological and spiritual questions connected with humans and human life. Themes of suffering, conflict, and inner division are widely studied by Schopenhauer and later found continuation in philosophical research in the literature on tragic inwardness, existential loneliness, and problem of human freedom [17, 20, 21]. It should be mentioned that in order to achieve the aim of emphasizing the impulses of will, the author calls for exploring unexplored areas in science and life, as they are needed. Thus, Schopenhauer's philosophy is based on the idea that only such a powerful force as willpower is able to make people discover something new and interesting in their life and the world in general.

Within the framework of the metaphysical system created by Schopenhauer, the category of "Will" is not only seen as the main driving force of all phenomena, but also becomes the principle that governs the existence of all life, including people and nature. Thus, it can be said that human life is interpreted as a manifestation of a blind, irrational, and endless impulse that keeps life going within a whirlpool of desire and suffering. On the basis of such an interpretation, the extension of Schopenhauer's theory on the cosmological level becomes obvious. Thus, it can be stated that "human life is characterized by endless suffering, because we are enslaved by the wishes and frustration created by the will. Expanding this concept into cosmology creates a unique perspective for the universe, imagining cosmic phenomena as manifestations of the same persistent will that rules our lives." "human life is characterized by endless suffering, because we are enslaved by the wishes and frustration created by the will. Expanding this concept into cosmology creates a unique perspective for the universe, imagining cosmic phenomena as manifestations of the same persistent will that rules our lives" [22]

Thus, by establishing the "will" as the main driving force in human existence, Schopenhauer breaks off the old concept of the person as a rational being. He claims that the psychological life of human beings cannot be defined solely by consciousness or reason but is governed by irrational impulses inherent in it. In this case, his philosophical thought opens a new dimension of research, where the psychological phenomena of desire, suffering, longings, fear, etc. are the manifestation of a greater, deeper and underlying force. Thus, human studies can become multi-dimensional and complex, moving beyond purely rational explanations and approaches.

Thus, it should be stressed that Schopenhauer's philosophy is based not on the affirmation of the role of will impulses but on their comprehension. The identification of these impulses is what allows humans to discover themselves and the world around. Since the will as an inherent driving force explains not only the origin of human suffering but also opens access to the discovery of the "unexplored territories" in spiritual life. These territories represent the subconscious that was further developed in psychology by Sigmund Freud. One of the features of Schopenhauer's philosophical thought is the fact that the investigation of will is not conducted with the purpose of reinforcing and satisfying this desire, but overcoming its domination over a person. If a person understands that all desires lead to suffering or boredom, he or she can go from a passive to an active state. It means that he or she begins to realize the necessity of limiting and controlling

the actions of will. It is at this point that art, compassionate ethics, and negation of the will acquire meaning. The former makes a person temporarily free from will impulses, the latter widens the outlook from the individual to the whole, and finally, negation of the will leads to internal harmony, when desire is overcome. Similar studies of Shakespearean and Dostoevskian inwardness suggest that human loneliness, fractured selfhood, and the problem of freedom also remain fruitful areas of reflection and transcendence [20, 21].

Finally, the third aspect of value of Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophy is that his idealism is associated with real life in society. Essentially, it means that the Schopenhauer's philosophical theory of "will" is not only abstract metaphysical speculation but also the result of the careful analysis of human existence in turbulent social conditions of 19th century Europe. Looking at the humanity trapped in the endless circle of desires, competitiveness, and frustration, he defines "will to live" as the main force behind all the processes from nature to spiritual life. David Bather Woods [16] offers a fresh interpretation of Schopenhauer's pessimism: instead of defining the current world as the "worst possible world", the author interprets this philosophical approach as a metaphysical conclusion well substantiated by Schopenhauer. Thus, relying on the assumption of the will as a blind inevitable impulse that leads to suffering, the author considers the existing degree of human suffering as the limit of endurance, after which it would be impossible to maintain life in such conditions. Therefore, Schopenhauer's philosophy should be appreciated for being so pessimistic, which can be viewed as an excellent criticism of metaphysical optimism represented by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's theory of the "best possible world".

Voluntarism of Schopenhauer reflects the existential truth about people: they do not completely rule over themselves and are driven by unconscious impulses, putting them into states of inadequacy and insecurity. Thus, social phenomena such as greed, rivalry, conflict, or the striving for power are not accidental but result from the constant activity of the will. Therefore, not only the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer explains the world through an ontological prism, but it also includes social criticism. Thus, it is the dominance of the will that has led humanity to alienation and spiritual crisis. Even in his solitary writings, Nietzsche acknowledges that Schopenhauer remains his guide: "He teaches us to recognize concrete facts in opposition to the most general concepts, and to feel that wealth, joy, happiness, and knowledge are only attainable through efforts to give eternal happiness and salvation from millennium sufferings to mankind through overcoming illusions and the meaningless life surrounding us" [23, pg. 41].

One of the distinguishing features of Schopenhauer's philosophy is that it does not stop at the stage of criticism and pessimism, but searches for ways to get rid of the existing state. Understanding the nature of the world as a process of activity of a blind "will" is able not only to help people comprehend the sources of suffering in the world, but also to open the way to the realization of the essence of life – compassionate ethics. For instance, Schopenhauer's main postulate is that the awareness of the fact that all people are one and share the same fate – suffering, can allow one to overcome selfishness and come to the stage of compassion. That is, a person who attains the "peak of selfless love and compassion" has attained special awareness, when "he sees the whole thing, its nature, feels that its essence is involved in constant ruin, in fruitless strife, in self-struggle, and in perpetual suffering" [2, pg. 624].

Compassion and altruistic love do not arise from moral norms and rules but from a special awareness about the fate of the person. If a person realizes that everyone represents the will and faces the same fate, there will be nothing to keep the boundaries between the subject and object anymore. Therefore, the former arises naturally from the realization of the equality of all people.

Thus, it can be concluded that voluntarism in Schopenhauer's philosophical thought reflects not only the problems of a person in society but also provides a solution to them. Thus, in this work, the author combines the revelation of the tragic nature of life along with a proposal to develop an area of knowledge leading to compassion. This combination allowed the author to create a philosophy that not only criticized the world but also showed a way to liberation, contributing to the enrichment of the philosophy of life.

4.2. LIMITATIONS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT IN "THE WORLD AS WILL AND REPRESENTATION"

While this work has numerous advantages in terms of the development of philosophy and worldview, it still possesses a number of weaknesses related to the philosophical approach and conception of man and society. Identifying such disadvantages does not mean denying their value but contributes to an objective evaluation of the work.

Firstly, speaking about the philosophical thought of Schopenhauer from the point of view of worldview, one should say that the most significant drawback of this approach is its one-sidedness and the absolutization of the "will" concept. By establishing the will as the absolute reality and seeing it as an absolute force that governs all things, the philosopher ignores the role of the reason and other important factors. As a result, Schopenhauer's philosophy becomes rather subjective, turning into the metaphysics where the reality becomes a mere expression of one concept and is unable to reveal its complexity and dynamic nature. The described drawback is also connected with the fact that such an approach to the understanding of reality leads to a very negative assessment of the nature of the world and does not allow to find explanation

for the positive sides of life such as development, progress, or humanity's ability to transform the world.

Secondly, regarding the traditional tendencies of the development of Western philosophy, it is necessary to note that Schopenhauer is a vivid critic of rationalism. However, his philosophical thought becomes one-sided as well as rationalism, since in contrast to Kant's philosophers who attempted to reconcile experience and reason, Schopenhauer sees reason as a subordinate phenomenon which acts only as a tool of will. In this way, he underestimates the significance of scientific and logical thought, which are the foundation of the Western philosophy. At the same time, in spite of the fact that Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophical thought was greatly influenced by the works of Immanuel Kant, the philosopher tends to interpret the concept of "thing-in-itself" too narrowly by calling it "will". In this case, Schopenhauer's critique of rationalism can be regarded as one-sided and unsuccessful since it fails to create a harmonious alternative to it.

Thirdly, speaking about social and socio-humanistic aspects, the greatest drawbacks are connected with the extremely pessimistic nature of the philosopher and lack of attention to the problems of real life. The fact is that Schopenhauer claims that the nature of human life is suffering, and it is impossible to be happy permanently. As a result, he offers people individual means of liberation through art, ethics and compassion, and, especially, the negation of the "will to live." In his opinion, the latter is a key to solving many existential problems of people. The research of the philosophy of P. Stewart-Kroeker suggests that the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer can be regarded as one of the foundations of nihilism in modern philosophy [24, pg. 178–195]. Establishing the will as a fundamental criterion of human existence and inevitability of suffering, the author denies all the positive values of human life. Thus, even without stating explicit nihilism, Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophy contains its tendencies and thus is criticized for the presence of anti-humanistic trends.

CONCLUSION

The philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer plays an important role in the history of modern philosophy due to its outstanding metaphysical, ethical, and aesthetic understanding of human nature and existence. The concepts of the world as representation and will create the basis of Schopenhauer's philosophical system, as well as offer a unique approach to the understanding of the relations between knowledge, desire, pain, and liberation from it. One of the greatest merits of Schopenhauer is the creation of a philosophy of ethics that is based on compassion rather than the will of God or rationalism and emphasizes the role of art in the realization of truth. Hence, Schopenhauer's philosophy becomes a special path for thinking about being and existence of human nature.

It is necessary to mention the limits of the philosopher's philosophical system, such as its excessive pessimistic position, absolutization of will, the lack of emphasis on history, social relations, and material aspects, as well as the unwillingness to solve practical social problems through philosophy. However, these factors only add value to the philosophy of Schopenhauer due to their critical nature and help realize that his ideas are relevant till now. This is why Schopenhauer is considered an outstanding philosopher who makes people think about suffering, compassion, liberation, and many other issues. This is why he continues to be a very influential figure in the history of Western Philosophy, and indeed, a source of inspiration for modern-day thinkers.

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