

## Ethics according to Arthur Schopenhauer: a comparative study between genius and virtue from the perspective of the world being will and representation

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### *keyword*

Will, Moral,  
Genuine ness,  
Empathy,  
Imagination,  
Creativity.

### **Abstract**

This research deals with the details of Schopenhauer's ethical doctrine that stems from the depth of his philosophy, which is based on the fact that the world is will and representation, and how Schopenhauer was able to abandon the materialistic and idealistic doctrine and formulate for himself a new doctrine in which the individual is the starting point in this world. The first section explains the meaning of the world as a

representation and how this representation is considered the essential image of the contrast between the subject and the object. The second research deals with the world in terms of it being a will or "will to life", as Schopenhauer put it. It clarifies what Schopenhauer meant by this will, which differs in meaning from what is familiar to us about the meaning of the will. The third section deals with the ethical aspect of Schopenhauer's doctrine, which stems from the core of his philosophy of will, where the value of virtue, the principle of compassion, sympathy, and intuitive knowledge are addressed, and how Schopenhauer employed them in the ethical aspect, in addition to addressing the concept of genius and its relationship to the moral aspect.

## Introduction

Ethics is one of the most essential philosophical subjects and the richest in depth and vitality, as it is in direct contact with the human side in all its stages. Schopenhauer is considered one of the most important German philosophers who came to present an ethical doctrine that is consistent with their philosophical approach. Schopenhauer's intellectual approach, which is based on the world being will and representation, was reflected in his ethical doctrine of virtue and the principle of compassion or sympathy.

## Research objective

The research aims to illuminate the ethical aspect of Schopenhauer's philosophy and study the most critical axes that formed the essential foundation for his ethical approach, including the concept of justice and intuitive knowledge. Through these axes, Schopenhauer eliminated individualism and the

will to live, which, from his point of view, is a source of pain, pessimism, and sadness.

## **The first topic**

### **The world as a representation**

#### **Section one: The world as a representation "**

"The world is my representation"<sup>[1]</sup> with this phrase, Schopenhauer began his book (The World as Will and Representation), where he shows us what is meant by this phrase that what man knows "is neither sun nor earth, but only an eye that sees the sun and a hand that feels the earth, and that the world that surrounds him exists only as a representation, that is, it exists only in relation to something else, which is consciousness, which is the person himself".<sup>[1]</sup>

This means that the world is what it appears to us and that its existence depends on us, that is, on the self that perceives it. Schopenhauer has determined the point from which he started, which is representation, not the subject or the self, where it includes them both together, and the contrast between them is the essential image of representation. He explained this issue by saying: " The method that we follow differs from materialism and subjectivity in that it begins with representation as the first important fact of consciousness, and the essential image of this representation is the binary division into the same subject."<sup>[2]</sup>

Thus, it becomes clear that the individual is the starting point in Schopenhauer's philosophy, as he was able to see the individual in two ways: representation and

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<sup>1</sup> Ferrand, J.-P. (2018). *Schopenhauer (1788–1860), ou l'épreuve de la volonté*. Paris: Ellipses.P55.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.56.

will. Representation if we look at him from the outside, and will if we look at him from the inside. Everyone can view this view individually, and they cannot feel it clearly except in themselves alone. Schopenhauer says: "There is no truth more certain and independent of all other truths, and less in need of proof than this truth, namely, that everything that exists is for the sake of knowledge, and therefore this whole world is only an object for a subject or is a perceived perception, in short: a representation".<sup>[1]</sup>

Here, it becomes clear to us that the world, as a representation of Schopenhauer's two interconnected or interrelated trends, like the connection between cause and effect, is both the subject and the object. Thus, Schopenhauer took a bold step when he left the circle of dualism in German philosophy between idealism and materialism.

Here, the question that may come to our minds is: What does self-represent, and what does the subject represent for Schopenhauer? The answer, in brief, is that the self, for Schopenhauer, is consciousness or the knowing part within us. At the same time, the subject is everything that is represented for knowledge before consciousness or self, and accordingly, all the subjects that are everything before us - including our bodies - are representations.<sup>[2]</sup>

In this way, the body is given in two different ways to the knowing self. As an idea in a mental concept, that is, as an object subject to the laws of objects, and

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<sup>1</sup> Tawfiq, S. (1983). *Metaphysics of art in Schopenhauer* (1st ed.). Dar Al Tanweer for Printing and Publishing. P49.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.50.

given, on the other hand, as something known to each of us, the word "will" indicates it.<sup>[1]</sup>

Since every actual act of his will is also, immediately and without exception, a movement of his body. Here, it becomes clear to us that the act of the will and the movement of the body are not two different things known objectively and united by a causal bond... but instead, they are the same thing.<sup>[2]</sup>

According to the unity that the body and the will are formed from, different expressions of the body's parts and movements appear, which are manifestations or embodiments of the will, as they express desires that exist within the body.<sup>[3]</sup>

Schopenhauer says: "The parts of the body must correspond exactly to the basic desires through which the will reveals itself. These parts are necessarily the visible expression of these desires. The teeth, the pharynx, and the intestines are embodied hunger, and the reproductive organs are embodied sexual desire; the clinging hands and the rushing feet correspond to the direct desires of the will which it expresses."<sup>[4]</sup>

Here, it becomes clear, as mentioned above, that the body has taken on the role of the vessel or the field within which the will is centered, since it forms part of its organic-physiological composition, as it enters with the veins and arteries. It is they who push the blood present in the body. And since the will has the absolute characteristic, it longs for the body as a set of desires that never end and are never satisfied. As soon as a specific need is satisfied, a new need

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<sup>1</sup> Aiken, Henry David. *The Age of Ideology*. 1956. P131.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.132.

<sup>3</sup> Tawfiq, S. *Metaphysics of Art in Schopenhauer*(1st ed.).Dar Al Tanweer for Printing and Publishing, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.132, p. 59.

appears that it longs to satisfy. So, its life is an open desire and an endless struggle to fulfill its needs and prove its existence and being in time and place.<sup>[1]</sup>

Schopenhauer says: "The world as a representation is the aspect which, when we contemplate it, we find to consist of two essential, necessary, and interrelated halves. The first half is the subject, which is subject to the images of space and time through which multiplicity arises. As for the second half, which is the self, it does not fall within the framework of space and time."<sup>[2]</sup>

Here, Schopenhauer distinguished between the world as a representation of any subject whose existence is linked to the existence of time and place and the second part, which represents the self or the center of will that lies outside the boundaries of time and place.

Thus, Schopenhauer gave equal importance to the subject and the object since they form the basis of the world, as the object constitutes the general image of knowledge. It exists as knowledge for the subject, and without it, the world loses its coherence since it is the fixed essence inherent in it. Moreover, a world without a subject does not exist.<sup>[3]</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Moawad, A. (2020). *Lights on Schopenhauer* (1st ed.). Cairo: First Book Publishing & Distribution, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1966). *The world as will and representation* (Vol. 1, E. F. J. Payne, Trans.). New York: Dover Publications, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> Barakahem, K., & Noura, J. (2018). *The concept of will between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche* (Master's thesis). University of Mohamed Boudiaf, Algeria, p. 9.

Based on this analysis, the self is the reference or origin of every external existence. Thus, it becomes clear to us that Schopenhauer's doctrine of knowledge goes back to the doctrine of subjectivity. <sup>[1]</sup>

This was clear when Schopenhauer discussed this doctrine in his book (The Fourfold Foundation of the Theory of Knowledge), where he summarized his epistemological position in the phrase "the world is conformable and conceptual." This phrase made him one of the speakers of subjectivity, as the foundation of his theory was a critique of the idea of the thing in itself, according to Kant [R's]. We find that the thing in itself, according to Schopenhauer, can be defined within the limits of experience. Man knows himself and the world as an idea, and he has a body that he knows in a specific time and place within the framework of a relationship in which he responds to countless representations, knowing himself as a creature with behaviors and actions that speak the language of his will, which is the thing in itself. <sup>[2]</sup>

Thus, the thing in itself has regained its existence again at the hands of Schopenhauer, but after he modified the sources of knowledge that led to it. <sup>[3]</sup>

Schopenhauer followed Descartes in considering that all truth or everything, in reality, is due to thought or feeling, which is regarded as the necessary condition for the existence of the world, and without which this world would not have

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<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1966). *The world as will and representation* (Vol. 1, E. F. J. Payne, Trans.). New York: Dover Publications, p58.

<sup>2</sup> Mahmoud, W. A. H. (2019, November 7–8). *Life, absurdity and paradox: A philosophical trilogy by Schopenhauer and the critical position on it*. In *Proceedings of the annual international conference: How to Read Philosophy* (Vol. 5, Issue 2, pp. 777–796). Alexandria University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Philosophy, Egypt, p. 783.

<sup>3</sup> Badawi, A. R. (1942). *The essence of European thought: Schopenhauer*. Cairo: Egyptian Renaissance Library. p. 75.

existential reality. This is very clear because the objective existence outside the perceiving self of anything means that there is a self that perceives. In contrast to it, a perceiving subject, and therefore the existence of the subject, is then conditioned by it, or to put it more precisely, the existence of the subject is only in the self. <sup>[1]</sup>

Here it becomes clear to us that every individual, for Schopenhauer, is a participant in something in itself, which is an objective manifestation of its realization or representation, according to Schopenhauer's expression in summarizing the intellectual aspect of his doctrine, while the existential aspect is outlined by his saying "the world is will", as these two statements formed his doctrine of existence, which when he speaks about it reminds us of Descartes' method that stems from within the human soul and his famous phrase "I think, therefore I am." According to Schopenhauer's doctrine, if we look at a person from the outside, he is a representation, but from the inside, he is a will. <sup>[2]</sup>

According to Schopenhauer, all acts of will are physical; that is, movements reflect them, but they are not the internal cause of the body's movements. What distinguishes an act of will from other events, which also express the will, are two criteria: the first is that this physical movement is the result of a motive, and the second criterion is that this physical movement is accompanied by direct perception. <sup>[3]</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p.p 78-79.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.p 81-82.

<sup>3</sup> Umeh, G.-F. (2021). Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche: A comparative discourse on their basic philosophic thoughts. *Nradie Bube Journal of Philosophy*, 5(2),p. 99.

Schopenhauer offers a psychological and physiological explanation of motives, where motives are causes that occur in the midst of perception or internal causes that arise in response to the perception of some stimulating things, such as desires and emotions that are expressions of the will, which cannot be included under the category of representations, and thus motives are the awareness of some of these representations.<sup>[1]</sup>

In addition, Schopenhauer distinguishes some causal images through which mental events arise since consciousness, as we mentioned earlier, is an event that occurs in response to the perception of stimulating things.<sup>[2]</sup>

Where he distinguishes between the causal image <sup>(\*)</sup>[3][4], Schopenhauer denies the freedom of human beings to respond to motives, according to his famous saying in his book on ethics, "Do no harm to anyone, and help others as much as you can." Schopenhauer finds that most people act on selfish motives since our knowledge of our joy and sorrow is direct knowledge. In contrast, our knowledge of the happiness and misery of others is always merely a representation and, therefore, does not affect us. Although most people are

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p.p 99-100.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Saliba, J. (1982). *Al-Mu'jam al-falsafi* [The philosophical dictionary] (Vol. 1). Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Al-Kitab Al-Lubnani, p. 649.

\* Causality represents the rational principle that links cause and effect, whereby every phenomenon is assumed to have a reason that explains its existence. Jamil Saliba views causality as a divine act through which God directs events toward purposes and integrates nature with mercy, treating chaos with miracles on the condition that they necessitate order since order, for God, is a law that can never be overturned. André Lalande, on the other hand, describes causality as a broader philosophical concept situated within the framework of explaining the relationship between causes and phenomena.

<sup>4</sup> Lalande, A. (1996). *Mawsu'at Lalande al-falsafiyya* [Lalande's philosophical encyclopedia] (Vol. 2, 1st ed., K. A. Khalil, Trans.; A. Awidat, Ed.). Beirut, Lebanon: Awidat Publications, p. 1064.

motivated primarily by selfish concerns, Schopenhauer sees that there are a few people who can act from the position of sympathy and compassion, which forms the basis of ethics according to Schopenhauer, since this sympathy is motivated by an awareness of the suffering of other people that comes from tangible knowledge. <sup>[1]</sup>

Schopenhauer says about it: "Suffering is one of the forms in which we practice our daily life, and therefore it is ultimately necessary because it is a stimulus for the formation of a state of sympathy and compassion, which in turn is a source for revealing a part of the identity of the other, which is a special and unique form of management. Here, we find that sympathy and compassion have become a distinct place of knowledge, through which the identity of the will appears transparently with all its manifestations". <sup>[2]</sup>

In addition, the concept of suffering has revealed to us that it is a border concept based on eliminating the difference between the self and the other and rebuilding the relationship between them on the principle of equality. <sup>[3]</sup>

Thus, we can conclude from all the above that the moral significance of behavior lies in the motive alone - and that Schopenhauer's distinction between the just person and the good person does not depend on the nature of the actions but instead on the level of his sympathy with the other. <sup>[4]</sup>

## The second topic

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<sup>1</sup> Umeh, G.-F. (2021). Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche: A comparative discourse on their basic philosophic thoughts. *Nradie Bube Journal of Philosophy*, 5(2), p.p 99-101.

<sup>2</sup> Hühn, L. (2020). Compassion: On the foundations of moral philosophy for J. J. Rousseau and Arthur Schopenhauer. *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle*, 64(1), 101–116, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.p 109-110.

## The world as a will

After Schopenhauer began to outline the features of his philosophy from within the individual or the self, he returned once again to explain that the individual is not just a self in this world, or as he puts it, the head of a winged angel without a body.<sup>[1]</sup>

Instead, his roots extend into this world, and he, as an individual, is a part of it,<sup>[2]</sup> and is rooted in it," and this is what makes him find himself in it as an individual".<sup>[3]</sup> In other words, we can say that his knowledge of this existence or this rootedness in the world is the conditional basis upon which the world as a whole is based as a representation.<sup>[4]</sup> Moreover, this knowledge requires the existence of a body, whose transformations are the starting point for the mind to enter this world and find the secret word, which is the will.<sup>[5]</sup>

According to Schopenhauer, this can provide the body with the key to understanding the phenomenon and revealing the inner mechanism behind its actions and movements.<sup>[6]</sup>

Here, the double meaning that Schopenhauer tried to lead us to become clear to us, which is that the body itself is the will, but viewed from the inside,

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<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1966). *The world as will and representation* (Vol. 1, E. F. J. Payne, Trans.). New York: Dover Publications, p193.

<sup>2</sup> Mabrouk, A. (2011). *Philosophy modern, Enlightenment*. Beirut, Lebanon: For printing and publishing. pp. 273-374.

<sup>3</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1966). *The world as will and representation* (Vol. 1, E. F. J. Payne, Trans.). New York: Dover Publications, p. 193.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.p. 193-194.

<sup>5</sup> Mabrouk, A. (2011). *Philosophy modern, Enlightenment*. Beirut, Lebanon: For printing and publishing. p.7.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 274.

and that the will, in turn, is the body viewed from the outside, and thus the movement of the body is the movement of the will and vice versa.<sup>[1]</sup>

Moreover, every voluntary act is at the same time a movement of the body, as they represent two phenomena linked to each other, far from the bond of causality. They express one thing that appears to us in two different images, one direct and the other indirect, as the movement of the body represented the voluntary act that was transformed into a subject and became something that we represent.<sup>[2]</sup>

Schopenhauer says: "The action of the will and the movement of the body are not two different things known objectively and united by a causal link, since the relationship of each to the other is not the relationship of cause to effect. They are both the same thing, but they occur in two completely different ways".<sup>[3]</sup>

Thus, according to Schopenhauer, the will constitutes the essence of man and of the world, while the mind functions merely as its subordinate. Desire does not arise because we reason or think, rather, the will drives us to desire, and the mind is occupied with producing reasons and justifications for what the will has already determined.<sup>[4]</sup>

Here, it becomes clear to us that, according to Schopenhauer, the role of the mind has become limited to the organic or biological aspect, where its role is

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<sup>1</sup> Badawi, A. R. (1942). *The essence of European thought: Schopenhauer*. Cairo: Egyptian Renaissance Library. p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.p. 186-187.

<sup>3</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1966). *The world as will and representation* (Vol. 1, E. F. J. Payne, Trans.). New York: Dover Publications, p. 194.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

determined by finding a way to achieve the body's desires and needs. However, according to Schopenhauer, the mind can be liberated from this role when it enters the fields of art and asceticism.<sup>[1]</sup>

In addition, we find that Schopenhauer introduces us to another field of distinction between reason and will, where he tends to explain the nature of the will and what it carries of metaphysical meaning and its difference from the partial reality of reason and its organic role. Schopenhauer says: "The will is the essence shared in all phenomena, and it is the general power of nature that nothing affects because it does not carry the physical qualities of nature, but rather the metaphysical qualities. It does not belong to the apparent world, but rather it is what appears in the phenomenon".<sup>[2]</sup>

It maintains the survival of one of its levels of realization, the human image, as this image makes it feel and perceive itself after it was blind and deaf in the lower levels of realization, with no subject for itself or representation mixed with it.<sup>[3]</sup>

Here we must ask about the nature of the blind will that Schopenhauer described, which must be defined by distinguishing between the will in the general sense and the will in the sense limited by motives, referred to as choice. The latter is the only rational one, while the former is not, because the chosen will act according to motives, and motives are determined in the brain. Therefore, the movement a person performs based on these motives is the only

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>3</sup> Kamel, F. (n.d.). *The individual in Schopenhauer's philosophy*, p. 23.

one attributed to chosen will. In contrast, actions that do not arise from motives are attributed to the will in general.<sup>[1]</sup>

Therefore, we can add the will to the beings that do not have obedience, that is, to the inanimate, as we can expand the meaning of the will to the point of adding it to every existing thing.<sup>[2]</sup>

Thus, it becomes clear to us that the meaning of will for Schopenhauer has been confined far from the meaning of the rational will that is accompanied by knowledge and motives and has turned to that will to which reason is secondary. However, as previously mentioned and according to Schopenhauer, reason can be freed from the control of that will when it begins to be freed and rise to form a knowing self, far removed from this attachment to life. For this reason, Schopenhauer found that the fields of asceticism and art are the closest to achieving that rationality which is accompanied by knowledge.<sup>[3] [4]</sup>

Schopenhauer believed that what distinguishes aesthetic experiences from other experiences is that contemplation of the subject of aesthetic appreciation gives us rest from the struggle of desire, a space to enter a world of pure mental pleasure, and frees us from endless suffering.<sup>[5]</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Badawi, A. R. (1984). *Encyclopedia of philosophy* (Vol. 2, 1st ed.). Beirut, Lebanon: Arab Foundation for Studies and Publishing, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.p 34-35.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.,p. 189.

<sup>4</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1966). *The world as will and representation* (Vol. 1, E. F. J. Payne, Trans.). New York: Dover Publications, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Egboka, O. J., & Aleke, M. (2022). A reconciliation of Arthur Schopenhauer's notion of human suffering and the nature of human existence. *SAGBAMAN: Academic Journal of Arts & Humanities*, 1(1),p.p. 68–74.

In addition to the fact that aesthetic contemplation and what it gives us in terms of freedom from desire or will, it requires transformation into knowing selves without will, where attention through this contemplation becomes far from the motives of will or desire and is directed towards perceiving things free from their relations with the will far from subjectivity, so attention surrenders itself to these things in terms of them being ideals and not in terms of them being motives. Then comes the tranquility that we seek, and we are freed from the conflict of will.<sup>[1]</sup>

There is no escape for man from infinite desires except through rational contemplation of life. The mind, far from selfishness, rises above the errors of the will. Schopenhauer has defined the nature of art as a temporary path to the soul's liberation from the constraints of the will. He says: There is only one innate error, which is the idea that we exist to be happy. We are nothing but the will to live, and we understand happiness only as the successive satisfaction of our will.<sup>[2]</sup>

Here, we notice the significant influence that the mind plays in limiting the desires of the unbalanced will after it employs its cognitive role correctly.

Schopenhauer adds another characteristic to the will in addition to irrationality, which is unity. Still, this unity does not have a numerical meaning but an existential meaning in which Schopenhauer proceeds to affirm the meaning of

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<sup>1</sup> Attia, W. A. H. (2019, November 7–8). Life, absurdity and paradox: Schopenhauer's philosophical trilogy and the critical position on it. *International Annual Conference Research Series: How to Read Philosophy*, Alexandria University, 5(2), p.p.777-796.

<sup>2</sup> Zakaria, F. (2017). *Horizons of knowledge*. United Kingdom: Hindawi Library, p.164.

existence in the manner of Spinoza, in which virtue is formed according to the divine will.<sup>[1]</sup>

Where Schopenhauer expresses his pessimism, the universal will and the will, in general, are evil wills. A source of absurdity, aimlessness, and irrationality, and the furthest thing from the knowledge that always reveals to us the insignificance of life experiences and thus combats the fear of death.<sup>[2]</sup>

Schopenhauer says: "Emotion depends on an illusion that represents what has no value except the preservation of the species, which is considered valuable to the individual, but the illusion dissipates after the purpose of the species is achieved, and it becomes clear to the individual that he was the cat's paw for the species".<sup>[3]</sup>

The will to live does its work when it visits love to the individual as if it were a personal preference and benefit, while in reality, it is a sacrifice and altruism intended for the species. He imagines that he is striving toward an individual goal, while in fact, he is striving toward only a species goal. This illusion is the sexual instinct with its accompanying great pleasure. Everything in love is directed toward the achievement of this goal; I mean the child through whom the species continues.<sup>[4]</sup>

Thus, the will can manifest itself in reproduction independently of knowledge since it works in this field blindly, as it works in the unconscious nature... This

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<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1966). *The world as will and representation* (Vol. 1, E. F. J. Payne, Trans.). New York: Dover Publications, p.p. 62-68.

<sup>2</sup> Mabrouk, A. (2011). *Modern philosophy*. Cairo: Dar Qabaa Al-Haditha for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, p277.

<sup>3</sup> Moawad, A. (1965). *Lights on Schopenhauer's philosophy*. p. 111.

<sup>4</sup> Badawi, A. R. (1942). *The essence of European thought*. p. 249.

is what made the reproductive organs the center of the will, and at the same time, they constitute the center corresponding to the brain, which represents knowledge. In addition, the reproductive organs are the basis for preserving life because they guarantee the continuity of preserving the species, and for this reason, the Greeks and Hindus worshipped them.<sup>[1]</sup>

Thus, according to Schopenhauer, it becomes clear to us that the will is the basis and essence of the universe, as it is present in every part of it, and that the pursuit of happiness is an unreasonable pursuit of illusions, so we will not reach the goal we seek, since the fulfillment of any desire represents a passage to a desire that defines a passage to a new desire, and that every success that a person achieves leaves in our depths a painful feeling of pain or a deep void that requires an incentive for more success and brilliance, and thus existence becomes an existence that oscillates between pain, desire, and the void of satisfaction.<sup>[2]</sup>

This is what encouraged Schopenhauer to call existence the quality of pain, suffering, and absurdity, the absurdity of existence that expresses itself in every way in which things exist in the infinite nature of time and space, as opposed to the finite nature of the individual or in both.<sup>[3]</sup>

Here, we notice the extent of Kant's influence on Schopenhauer's philosophy, to the point that it was considered a natural extension of it, especially when he took

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<sup>1</sup> Durant, W. (1988). *The story of philosophy* (F. M. al-Musha'sha', Trans., 6th ed.). Beirut: Maktabat al-Ma'arif. p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> Latif, S. M. (n.d.). *The philosophy of art in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and its impact on some postmodern philosophers*. p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Tawfiq, S. (1983). *Metaphysics of art in Schopenhauer*. p. 67

Kant's essential ideas, such as time, space, and the concept of the thing in itself, as the basis for his philosophy.<sup>[1] [2]</sup>

According to Kant, time and space, and Schopenhauer agrees with him on this, belong only to phenomena since the nature of the human mind cannot perceive things unless they are in a place and have an effect in time.<sup>[3]</sup>

As for something in itself, it is not in place, time, or will. Likewise, we cannot date it, nor can we divide it into separate actions in place.<sup>[4]</sup>

Through this, we realize that Schopenhauer began to be influenced by Kant through phenomena and the thing in itself and differed with him in the idea of place and time, as the will is comprehensive and includes all actions connected in the phenomenon, as Schopenhauer relied on Kant's idea that we cannot perceive the world except through our sensations and perceptions and linking the will to the body, and this is what Schopenhauer stated, saying: "The will is the knowledge of the body in an a priori manner, and the body is the knowledge of the will in an a posteriori manner".<sup>[5]</sup>

Kant believes that the mind only perceives phenomena sensually because it organizes and arranges the ideas that reach us through the senses by means of the images of time, place, and categories. At the same time, Schopenhauer

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<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1958). *The world as will and representation* (E. F. J. Payne, Trans., Vol. 1). New York: Dover Publications. (Translator's Introduction, p. VI).

<sup>2</sup> Latif, S. M. (n.d.). *The philosophy of art in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and its impact on some postmodern philosophers*, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Russell, B. (1977). *History of Western and modern philosophy* (M. F. al-Shaniti, Trans., Book Three). Cairo: Egyptian General Book House, p. 387.

<sup>4</sup> Hu, B. (2023). *Schopenhauer in Jack London's The Sea-Wolf: A comparative analysis*. Stratford Hall, Vancouver, Canada. p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (2006). *The world as will and representation* (1st ed.). Cairo: Supreme Council of Culture. p. 195.

emphasizes that the mind contains innate mechanisms, which are characteristics that precede perception through which all sensations are filtered before they become concepts. Here, we can say that these innate mechanisms are the same as the synthetic pre-judgments that Kant identified, and on which knowledge is based.<sup>[1]</sup>

### **The third topic Ethics in Schopenhauer**

We have seen above that, according to Schopenhauer, management is the origin of all the suffering, pain, and evils that individuals experience. The authority that this will impose on the mind makes it its prey or victim through surrender to endless desires, hopes, and fears. Hence, the person becomes a prisoner of himself, crouching under the guise of his individuality, surrendering to his whims and desires, unable to unite with the other, reveal himself to him, or attempt to unite with him, so he remains a prisoner of his individuality, the will has deepened within him.<sup>[2]</sup>

To get out of this constraint, I mean the constraints of individualism imposed by the will; Schopenhauer believes that this is done by turning to the moral side and embodying it in the self. Or the aesthetic and contemplative side. Since we are in this research in the process of addressing the moral side, we will address the axes that Schopenhauer tried to employ in his ethical doctrine, including virtue, asceticism, and genius, where Schopenhauer tried through these terms to

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<sup>1</sup> Bloomberg, J. J. (2021). *The indestructible will: A critical examination of Arthur Schopenhauer's theory of athanasia* (Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch University). p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Baptista, T., Tucci, S., & Angeles, F. (2021). Justice and law in the thought of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860). *Forensic Science International: Mind and Law*, 2, 100065, p. 5.

bring out the positive side of the individual by employing these axes in eliminating individualism and selfishness that control him.

To achieve this, Schopenhauer sought to link the aspects of genius, asceticism, and virtue to the theory of knowledge, especially intuitive knowledge, through which he achieved his goal of achieving his ethical doctrine, which is based, as we mentioned previously, on the principle of compassion or sympathy stemming from sharing the suffering of others, far from selfish motives and denying the will. Schopenhauer sees that selfishness and hatred are nothing but two cases of affirming the will, and they are two usual cases of temporal justice. Meanwhile, mercy, compassion, or asceticism are the usual states of eternal justice. <sup>[1]</sup>

Here, we see the extent of the connection between Schopenhauer's reflections on the two aspects of justice (temporal and eternal) and his fundamental idea of the world as will and representation since the world on the apparent representative level is based on the affirmation of the will to life and its inherent self-centeredness, and this is what made Schopenhauer confirm the non-dominance of the positive moral aspect in life, and that what it is prevalent in morals. It is nothing but a hypothetical morality like what Thomas Hobbes described. <sup>[2]</sup>

For Schopenhauer, self-assertion often requires aggression against other individuals, as is clearly the case in the food chain of minerals, plants, and animals, where matter and energy are transferred from one organism to another. This is similar to the case in human and social interactions. Schopenhauer says: "Every degree of embodiment of the will struggles for the matter, space, and

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.,p.p 5-7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.,p.p 5-10.

time of others".<sup>[1]</sup> For most of us, it is the socially acceptable way of life, such as the struggle for possessions, the control of others, and the imposition of our opinion, and in Schopenhauer's thought, as in most comprehensive models of the mind in psychoanalysis, it is the mind that paves the way for the socially acceptable expression of self-assertion. Schopenhauer says: "The faculty of reason is manifested practically, and thus the practical mind is manifested". Whenever behavior is directed by reason, and whenever motives are abstract, and our behavior is not governed by partial representations of visual perception or momentary sensory impression that direct animal behavior".<sup>[2]</sup>

Rational conduct and virtuous conduct are two entirely different things, and reason may be found in association with men as with great virtue, and with its help, it can support the effect of the one as well as the effect of the other. The reason is as ready to carry out systematically and consistently the noble purpose involving wisdom as it is to carry out the evil purpose involving folly.<sup>[3]</sup>

According to this analysis presented by Schopenhauer, we see him praising what Stoicism presented as an image of the practical mind in its true and authentic meaning, which is the ultimate goal that a human being can achieve by using only his mental faculty, which distinguishes him from animals.<sup>[4]</sup>

Stoic ethics, in its essence and foundation, is not a doctrine of virtue but rather a guide that leads us to a rational life whose goal and purpose is to achieve happiness through inner tranquility and peace of mind.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p.p 7-12.

<sup>2</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1958). *The world as will and representation* (E. F. J. Payne, Trans., Vol. 1). New York: Dover Publications. p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.p 70-79.

Virtuous behavior in these ethics came only by agreement as a means, not an end. This contradicts what most ethical doctrines have brought, which directly emphasize virtue, as is the case in Christianity, Plato, and Kant, where these doctrines have shown a state of inconsistency as a result of the gradual absence of the goal and the preoccupation with the means, which leads to us realizing that the truth directly known to us, or the tangible truth that returns us to the path, is not concerned with syllogistic reasoning. <sup>[1]</sup>

This is clearly shown to us in Spinoza's ethical doctrine, which derives a pure doctrine of virtue based on selfishness represented in the search for one's benefit using the methods of explicit sophistry. <sup>[2]</sup>

Spinoza denied the absolute good and the world of ends on which all ideal ethics were based, since moral values, from his point of view, have no place in the actual course of nature, and good and evil exist only in our minds, and have no metaphysical significance, but rather relate only to the point of view of humans. <sup>[3]</sup>

Spinoza says: "Good and evil do not indicate anything positive in things viewed in themselves, but rather they are states of thought or intellectual subjects that we form from comparing things with each other. Thus, one thing can be good and evil and normal at the same time in relation to this and that". <sup>[4]</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.p 75-81.

<sup>3</sup> Mabrouk, A. (2011). *Philosophy modern*. Beirut, Lebanon: Enlightenment for Printing and Publishing, p. 149.

<sup>4</sup> Spinoza, B. (2009). *Ethics* (G. H. R. Parkinson, Ed. & Trans.). Oxford philosophical texts. New York: Classic Books International. p. 160.

We can conclude that Sebuza's ethical viewpoint came from the depth of his philosophy and his belief that God and nature are one thing, that ethics are linked to them, and that a correct understanding of this relationship is the way to live a correct ethical life.

This constitutes a fundamental difference in Schopenhauer's ethical approach in terms of his emphasis on individual values such as sympathy and mercy, and distancing himself from all traditional values that do not suit the individual's will. Schopenhauer focuses on and stresses the strength of personal will in sharing the suffering of others, far from selfish motives and denial of will.

Hence, it has removed the gap between the self and the other caused by that suffering, in addition to the fact that it has established or valued one feeling, which is the feeling of mercy. This contradicts what Kantian ethics brought, which expanded the search for obligation in moral law in the concepts of pure reason alone, in that reason is the source of obligation for ethical standards.<sup>[1]</sup>

This also constitutes the axis of the paradox with what Descartes proposed for his model of ethics, as outlined in his report, which suggests that the way to perceive truth and goodness is through perceiving the innate light by which God guides us to what He has made true and good since eternity. There is no truth or goodness except by the will of God, and without His will, there is no truth or goodness... such that we see that what God willed to be good, even if it appears to our subjective eyes to be incomplete, is always the best.<sup>[2]</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hühn, L. (2020). *Com-assion: On the foundations of moral philosophy for J. J. Rousseau and Arthur Schopenhauer*. p.p 101–116.

<sup>2</sup> Nazmi Luqa, God is the basis of knowledge and ethics according to Descartes, Modern Technical Press, pp. 167-168.

Thus, it becomes clear that the Cartesian model contradicts Schopenhauer's ethical approach in terms of its emphasis on the strength of personal will and its emphasis on mercy, which expands the boundaries of subjectivity.

### 1- Genius

Genius represents an impersonal, lofty view utterly devoid of personal interest. In it, the individual can distance himself from his interests, desires, and goals and temporarily abandon his entire personality to remain a pure, knowing self. It sees the world with a clear vision, and thus, the meaning of the word genius came to indicate the control of knowledge over management with a fixed and precise control.<sup>[1,2]</sup>

This is what makes us realize the extent of the convergence between Schopenhauer's ideas about genius and his theory of intuitive knowledge, which he uses to penetrate the depths of things. So, he and it became one thing. This motivated him to define it, saying, "The essence of genius must consist of the perfection and energy of intuitive knowledge".<sup>[3]</sup>

Here, we note that Schopenhauer linked genius to knowledge from the first aspect and distinguished the type of this knowledge from ordinary knowledge, which is intuitive knowledge.

On the other hand, we find him linking genius to the objective side of life and giving it a human character. He said that the essence of genius is nothing but an abnormal excess of the mind, and the only possible use is to use it to know the

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<sup>1</sup> Azizi, W. (2008). *Schopenhauer and the philosophy of pessimism* (1st ed.). Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Al-Farabi. pp. 149–150.

<sup>2</sup> Moawad, A. (n.d.). *Containing Schopenhauer's philosophy*. Cairo: Nahdet Misr Library. pp. 129–130.

<sup>3</sup> Kamel, F. (n.d.). *The individual in Schopenhauer's philosophy*. p. 61.

essence of existence. This knowledge is dedicated to serving humanity, unlike the ordinary mind, which is dedicated to serving the individual.<sup>[1]</sup>

In this way, we find that genius, for Schopenhauer, constitutes the most complete form of objectivity, that is, looking at things from a purely objective perspective and distancing oneself from the principle of individualism that prevents man from communicating with others.

Moreover, it has become a capacity in which a person distances himself from his interests, desires, and goals and abandons his entire personality for a period to remain a purely knowing self. Then, he sees the world clearly. This contradicts the prevailing expression of the will in that knowledge does not come into the sphere of action except under the motive of the will, and it is only directed by motives of personal advantages and interests alone.

The third aspect is the moral formula; as the personality that is endowed with genius, the mind overcomes the will that constitutes the source of evils and pains, which overcomes it outwardly, which helps his personality to take on a moral character in which he distances himself from selfishness, evils, and individualism, and makes him able to contemplate things with an aesthetic contemplation that tends towards goodness.<sup>[2]</sup>

Here, we note that Schopenhauer used Pyrrho's principle of natural moral love to complete his principle of eliminating individualism by transforming this love

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 61-66.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

into love for humanity or moral love that raises man above the principle of individualism. <sup>[1]</sup>

Schopenhauer gives us a brief comparison between the genius and the saint or the good man in general. Suppose the dominance of knowledge over the will is considered the most crucial characteristic of the good man. In that case, it also represents the nature and essence of the artist or genius and is regarded as a necessary condition for achieving aesthetic vision. The good man or saint shares with the genius this cognitive ability, that is, the ability to influence through the principle of individuality. <sup>[2]</sup>

And the tendency towards the virtue of compassion or sympathy through which the will to live is denied, and surrender to the brutality of the universal will, which is directed primarily towards the tendency to the survival of the self and the species, and away from the subjugation of the body to obtain happiness in future life. <sup>[3,4]</sup>

Seeking to be free from his selfishness and to see himself and the other as one. Suppose the veil of Maya, by which I mean the principle of individuality, is lifted from the eyes of man so that he no longer distinguishes selfishly between himself and the other but cares for the sufferings of others as much as he cares for his own. In that case, he is not only the most charitable and benevolent but

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<sup>1</sup> Badawi, A. R. (1942). *The essence of European thought: Schopenhauer*. Cairo: Egyptian Renaissance Library. p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 144

<sup>3</sup> Karim, Y. (٢٠١٢). *History of modern philosophy*. Egypt: Dar Al-Maaref. p. 279.

<sup>4</sup> Cresson, A. (1958). *Schopenhauer* (A. Kouï, Trans.). Beirut: Dar Beirut. p. 54.

also is prepared to sacrifice his individuality if it saves several other individuals.<sup>[1]</sup>

Here, we notice that the embodiment of the moral principle that Schopenhauer proposed through the comparison between the abilities that the genius and the saint share in liberation from the desires of the will whose influence diminishes before the sovereignty of knowledge, also touches upon another aspect, which is that the genius, like the saint, does not get involved in committing evil, because at the moment his will is aroused, his mind awakens or he remembers the eternal ideals that he was contemplating. Hence, his knowledge prevails over his will, which is the source of all evil, and works to frustrate it.<sup>[2]</sup>

He says, "The genius always shares to some extent the qualities of the saint as a human being of equal competence, and conversely, the saint always shares to some extent the qualities of the genius".<sup>[3]</sup>

In addition, Schopenhauer touches on another point in Al-Aqbari, which is that the genius's mind enjoys a mental clarity that makes him focus on rational issues away from the personal situation. This is what keeps him far from suffering, and it makes us expect that geniuses have tendencies towards tranquility.<sup>[4]</sup>

However, despite his reference to this, Schopenhauer expects, in many places, specific characteristics of genius that may break the barrier of tranquility in him. From his point of view, geniuses suffer more than ordinary people and are

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<sup>1</sup> Zakaria, F. (2016). *The world: Will and representation*. Egypt: Egyptian General Book Authority. pp.30–31.

<sup>2</sup> Badawi, A. R. (1942). *The essence of European thought and Schopenhauer*. pp. 144–145.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 145-150.

<sup>4</sup> Fix, R. (2016). *Schopenhauer* (S. Tawfiq, Trans., 1st ed.). Egypt: Afak Publishing and Distribution. p. 151.

characterized by intense emotions, adding that "an ordinary person cannot be a genius".<sup>[1]</sup>

Here, according to Robert Phoenix, we see a mixture of tranquility and suffering. This mixture then forms the psychology of the genius, which is sometimes driven towards tension and sometimes towards suffering. Then, we find that the mental state of the genius is closer to or characterized by the sublime more than it is characterized by the beautiful, calm, and harmonious... This is what forms the essence of Schopenhauer's moral philosophy, which is based on ethical and ascetic awareness.<sup>[2]</sup>

## 2- Virtue

According to Schopenhauer, virtue is based on the principle of compassion or sympathy, which represents a denial of the principle of individuality. Thus, it is a denial of selfishness, and thus, it represents a stage or image of the denial of the will itself.<sup>[3]</sup>

Schopenhauer believes that this virtue, like genius, is based primarily on intuitive knowledge, not on abstract knowledge that can be expressed in words. It requires that the individual reach it himself, relying on his ability to remove the veil of Maya.<sup>[4]</sup>

Any veil of deception that obscures the eyes of mortals and makes them see a world of which they cannot say whether it is or is not because it is like a dream, like the gleam of the sun on the sand which appears to the traveler from a

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: pp 151-153.

<sup>3</sup> Badawi, A. R. (1942). *Schopenhauer*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, p. 88.

<sup>4</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1966). *The world as will and representation* (Vol. 1, E. F. J. Payne, Trans.). New York: Dover Publications, p. 62.

distance as water, or like a piece of rope on the ground which he sees as a snake.<sup>[1]</sup>

If he cannot get rid of this veil, then all those philosophers and thinkers have written about virtue and good. Evil will not benefit him in this regard. Only intuitive knowledge can make Maya's veil transparent so that things appear as one thing through it. The distinction between the self and the other is only apparent.

This insight is achieved through compassion for others. When the veil of Maya is lifted, one bears the suffering of the whole world. Here, we can see that compassion and sympathy, with their ability to unite self and others, have become the first moral phenomenon that indicates the unity of the human species. In contrast, other virtues remain images of humanity through which people seek to improve their condition.

This breakthrough that the individual achieves, through which he breaks all restrictions or principles of individualism, and reaches a degree that prevents him from committing injustice against others.<sup>[2]</sup>

According to Schopenhauer, "the highest of morality is the will to live, and everything that leads to its death is worthy of attention." Thus, morality is nothing but preparation for liberation from the world, according to the will to live.<sup>[3]</sup>

Schopenhauer points out that what enables us to reach the virtue of compassion or sympathy is to pass through a lower stage of virtues, and among these lower

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Kamel, F. (n.d.). *The individual in Schopenhauer's philosophy*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Schweitzer, A. (n.d.). *The philosophy of civilization* (A. R. Badawi, Trans.; Z. N. Mahmoud, Rev.). Egypt: Egyptian General Organization. p. 298.

virtues is the virtue of justice, as the desire for justice reduces the intensity of the will and confirms the selfishness of the individual. The person who feels justice will not commit any aggression against the will of others because he will respect their rights and property. Thus, the feeling of justice is an introduction to the sense of compassion, which is the first stage of the ladder of virtue. This relationship establishes a conceptual progression from restraint to positive moral engagement. One difference between justice and compassion is that justice is negative in nature, meaning that it refrains from inflicting injustice on others. In contrast, compassion accompanies a positive feeling toward others. <sup>[1]</sup>

Despite all the above, we find that virtue did not embody the pinnacle of morality for Schopenhauer, as he considered it a path leading to the pinnacle of salvation, which is asceticism. What he considers to be the highest virtue or (holiness), as he put it. <sup>[2]</sup>

## Conclusion

Schopenhauer's ethics are based on the principle of compassion or sympathy, through which the principle of individualism is denied. Schopenhauer's will to live is based on this, and from which all forms of selfishness, contempt, pessimism, and slavery spring to life's pleasures. By man reaching the virtue of compassion or sympathy, which he can reach through intuitive knowledge, through which he can penetrate all the veils that separate him from others and unite with them and share their pain and sorrows, the doctrine of individualism is eliminated.

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<sup>1</sup> Badawi, A. R. (1942). *Schopenhauer*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya.p 89.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp 298-303.

But all this will not happen except by going beyond a stage that Schopenhauer calls the stage of justice, which precedes the virtue of compassion or sympathy, where, according to the principle of justice, the individual shares his rights with others and thus abolishes or goes beyond the principle of individualism and the feeling that all of existence is one unit. Based on the above, we can summarize the most important results that we tried to highlight in this research through the following points.

1. In Schopenhauer's philosophy, the individual is governed by his will, which is the source of his misery and happiness. His love, tolerance, and compassion for others are a source of happiness for him and an opportunity to get rid of pain. As for surrendering to the will of life, which is the source of pain, jealousy, envy, and desire, that can make life full of pessimism and pain.
2. Schopenhauer's focus on intuitive knowledge, which is clearly found in ascetics and saints, is the source of the virtue of compassion and pity through which the individual can free himself from his individuality and thus free himself from the control and slavery of the will to live, which is full of pessimism, sadness, and pain.
3. Schopenhauer can be considered one of the most important philosophers in German philosophy, who tried to break away from the duality of the ideal world and the material world and focus on the will instead of the mind as it represents this world.

4. Schopenhauer's ethical side is linked to his religious side through his influence on Indian philosophy and Spinoza and Ellin's theory of pantheism.
5. His philosophy had many metaphysical aspects due to his influence by the German idealist philosophers, including Kant, and Plato's idealism in Greek philosophy.

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