

## **ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER AND FREDRICH NIETZSCHE: A COMPARATIVE DISCOURSE ON THEIR BASIC PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHTS**

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### **Abstract**

In many instances, ideas do blend or conflict in different personalities, at different times and different places. Such is the case between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche which is the focus of this research as we try to analyse their philosophies, looking for a philosophical connection. To do this better, we ask questions such as; is there any similarity between their philosophies? If there is, what is the similarity or similarities? Do they always agree or disagree on a point. Do their dissimilarities give any clue to their philosophical connection? And so on. The work employs the method of hermeneutics where their ideas are placed side by side for easy interpretation. However it was discovered that there are actually connections between Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer in their philosophies. A clear instance of this is how they developed the concept of the "will" as the basic factor that motivates human undertakings. Nevertheless, they conceived this "will" from different aspects. While Schopenhauer sees the will as the basic desire of human beings to live, Nietzsche conceives of will as the desire of man to control himself and others. Finally, this work recommends the application of reason in appreciating the works of these philosophers in order to discover and separate the merits from the demerits of their philosophies.

**Keywords:** *Philosophy, Analysis, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche*

### **1. Introduction**

Late Modern Philosophy refers to the philosophy of the nineteenth century. Varieties of idealism, realism, materialism, naturalism, positivism, utilitarianism, and pragmatism all thrived in Europe and the United States during this period. Many of these philosophies were products of the academic culture of the universities; however, academic philosophy was being challenged by new developments in politics and economics, science and technology, religion and culture. Hence, the nineteenth century was a tumultuous and even revolutionary period in the history of philosophy. Of all the philosophers in this era, this work is concerned with espousing the philosophical ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer. The man Friedrich Nietzsche is often times regarded as a prophet of doom in that he was able to perceive the gloomy features of the century coming after him. This stems as a result of the fact that the notions of God, truth, reality, objective values and human progress would be exposed as empty

illusions that are no longer viable. Nihilism which is the philosophical doctrine that there is no enduring values on which to build our lives was gaining more adherents. In this spirit, he saw it a worthy mission to criticise a culture he believed had reached *Nnadiesube Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 5(1), 2021* 91 an unprecedented low point. The reinvention of humanity is the persistent theme in his philosophy. Furthermore, Nietzsche's writing styles is another aspect of his life phenomena which is different from what was obtainable in his own era. Typically, he expresses himself in aphorisms or brief, pithy statements meant to provoke, shock and challenge his reader. Disgusted with the graceless style of most philosophers, he sought to "dance with concepts, words and the pen" (1968:no7). We shall now go on to espouse his philosophical ideas in details. To do that, it is pertinent to review his background as well as expose factors that may have shaped his philosophy.

## **2. Friedrich Nietzsche: Life and Works**

Friedrich Nietzsche was born in 1844 in Prussian Saxony. He was a brilliant student and distinguished himself at universities of Bonn and Leipzig, where he studied classics and philology. He gradually drifted away from his earlier piety and by the time he reached his early twenties he had embraced the spirited atheism that was one of the most distinguishing features of his philosophy. At the early age of twenty-five, he was appointed professor of classical philosophy at the University of Basel. He had not yet completed his doctoral degree, but had already attracted the attention of scholars through his published papers. In 1869 he discovered Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* in a secondhand bookshop, a book he expressed as written 'especially for me'. He developed a reverence for Schopenhauer out of the belief that he had courageously told the truth about life and the world.(Young:2003:53). In 1879, tired of academic life and suffering from the ill health that plagued him the rest of life, he retired from teaching. Struggling with migraine, headaches, nausea, insomnia, and bad eye-sight, he travelled from one resort to another throughout Switzerland and Italy in an attempt to regain his health. Despite these problems, he wrote eighteen books and a lengthy unfinished manuscript during the years 1872 to 1888. Towards the end of his life, he was physically disabled and pathetically insane. In 1889, his rapidly deteriorating mental condition tipped clearly into madness. In a letter to Jacob Burckhardt he claimed to be God, and to the patients in the sanatorium to which he was, for a time, confined he apologised for the bad weather they had been having, promising to 'prepare the loveliest weather for tomorrow'. Clearly, he had forgotten, by this time, that God had 'died'. The cause of his madness is uncertain. Many — keen to preserve his philosophy from any taint of madness — suggest it to have been syphilis. Others, however, among them his friend Franz Overbeck, think that the cause really is to be found in his philosophy. Nietzsche died in 1900 without ever regaining sanity. He died on August 25, 1900.

Some of his works include: *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), *The Gay Science* (1882), *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) as well as four long essays appearing under the title "Untimely Meditations." Let us now discuss some of his ideas.

### **3. Epistemology: Radical Perspectivism**

Friedrich Nietzsche's epistemology begins with an attack on knowledge and adherence to the correspondence theory of truth. This is the view that reality has a certain independent and objective content and that a theory is true or false to the extent it correctly states that content. He destroys this theory arguing that we cannot have objective knowledge of reality. Hence, there is no such thing as truth. In his words, "we cannot establish any fact in itself; perhaps it is folly to want to do so." (Nietzsche:1968: no 481). Consequently, there are no un-interpreted facts or truths, for everything we encounter is seen from one perspective or another. Thus, he propounded his theory of perspectivism. For Nietzsche, three things can be said about perspectives: they are unavoidable, they are false, and yet they are useful. By being "unavoidable" Nietzsche reduces every observation, reference, judgment, assertion as coming from a view-point. In his words, "there is only a perspective seeing, only a perspective knowing"(Nietzsche: 1969:no 312). For example, looking at a book, if you want to know its title, you look at the cover, but in another sense, if you want to use it to hold down papers so as to avoid scattering, you consider the book now in terms of its bulk. As an artist, you would be interested in its design and colour, but as an editor, you would be concerned with its marketability. In other words, there are no facts-in-themselves for a sense must always be projected into them before they can become facts. Put differently, we cannot express things without coming from a particular perspective.

The second feature of the perspectives is that they are lies and false reality. Every item in the world and every experience is unique, but we seek to preserve the contents of an experience by relating it to similar ones and then applying verbal labels to the group. These labels become universal concepts and are added to our intellectual inventory so that they can be used again and again to refer to new experiences. Falsity comes up as result of the fact that these universal concepts conceal the originality and individuality of each moment of reality; they do not depict reality. Hence, our language, by not capturing individuality becomes a separate world unto itself, which we mistake for the real world. The third and most important point about the perspectives is that even though they do not depict reality itself, they do serve a purpose. Thus, Nietzsche (1966) asserts that interpreting the world by means of a perspective is the basic condition of all life. Perspectives therefore are useful in that they make the overwhelming chaos of

the world manageable by making it seem simpler than it really is. By imposing our interpretation on the world, we are able to create a world which is calculable, simplified and comprehensible for us. At this point, it is now clear why Nietzsche rejects the objectivity of truth (an essential nature of truth) as well as the correspondence theory. Truth is the kind of error without which a certain species of life could not live. Put differently, what we call truths are simply those fictions that have had the most survival value throughout our evolutionary history. This leads us to another idea below.

#### **4. Romantic Primitivism**

Nietzsche (1974:no 333) insists that the development of perspectives is not carried out at the conscious level, for then we would be aware of the fact that all our cherished truths are lies and most people could not bear to face this. Rather, our perspectives arise from a very deep stratum within human consciousness. This position of Nietzsche is called "Romantic Primitivism" because for him, our primary interaction with the world is in terms of feelings and instincts rather than ideas. All judgments arise out of our instincts, likes, dislikes, experiences and lack of experiences. Knowledge is actually nothing but a certain behaviour of the instincts toward one another.

In such a manner, Nietzsche places human instinct at the centre of epistemology. Reason invariably had little to do with the behaviour of the human animal. He avers that reason is just a name we use to disguise the underlying, primitive drive that fuels our cognitive life. Also, going through the works of philosophers, he came to the conclusion that whatever idea they may have posited is secretly guided and forced into certain channels by his instincts. In other words, there is no drive to knowledge behind philosophy but another drive that is animalistic and disgusting. This drive he labels as the "Will to Power". This he explains is a drive in one to overcome, to dominate the environment, and make one's personal mark on the world, to create, to express oneself (Lawhead:2002:419). He effectively classifies philosophy as a clash of wills.

Going further, he avers that this will to power is the essence of life and is manifested as the essential priority of the spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, form-giving forces that give new interpretations and directions. Getting ideas from the epistemologies of Kant, Hegel and Kierkegaard, he states the development of his epistemology as follows.

1. There are multiple ways of structuring experience
2. They are relative to each individual
3. Based on non-rational instincts
4. Thoroughly subjective and void of any absolute value.

Hence, Nietzsche insists that every individual postulation of philosophers are nothing but mere subjective impositions on and interpretations of the world. Since they lack

objective reality, they cannot effectively be regarded as truth. These are aspects of his nihilism. He further asserts that interpretations and criticisms are symptomatic in that they tell us something about the speaker as well as the object of discourse. He even regards those who would shrink from his outrageous conclusions as fearful.

### **5. Criteria for Evaluating Perspectives:**

Nietzsche tries to bring out some possible standards for judging what qualifies to be regarded as perspectives, thereby pointing to the possibility of bad interpretations. Thus, according to Nietzsche, we can rank interpretations based on their pragmatic value or aesthetic value. By pragmatic, he means that despite the fact that an idea is not true, we may judge it on the basis of its usefulness in accomplishing our purposes namely that of life promoting, life preserving, species preserving, perhaps even species cultivating. When we face two judgements, we decide between them on the basis of their utility for life (1974:no 110).

Secondly, we can also judge ideas in terms of their aesthetic value. Philosophies for Nietzsche are like various works of art by artists that try to get our attention. Hence, ideas may provoke delight and may be the expression of an intellectual impulse. Nevertheless, Nietzsche contends that instead of enjoying the multiple insights of different perspectives, different ways of doing things which the world presents to us, we give the tag of truth to our favourite ones and the irregular ones to us, we classify as lie or wrong. For Nietzsche, the search for variety was more important than Descartes' quest for certainty. Hence, he is noted for breaking away from conventions and traditions and doing things as they please him. He sees philosophy in different ways such as;

#### **Philosophy as Pathology:**

Nietzsche also averred that traditional philosophy is not simply the result of intellectual mistakes but is symptomatic of a deep-seated psychological disease of which we need to be cured. In his words, "Gradually, it has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been, namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir"(1966: no 6). Invariably, he tows the line of Hegel who believes that every philosophy is a product of its time- however, while in Hegel the context is an objective and historical one, in Nietzsche it is a personal and psychological one.

#### **Philosophy as Therapy:**

Nietzsche also considers the possibility of falling into despair as a result of the type of nihilistic philosophy he posits. Despair is not inevitable but a choice we make or refuse to make. It is dependent on our temperament. Nietzsche argues then that what is needed

is a new type of spirit that will let us face this dismal picture and triumph over it. The hope for philosophy then is the rising of a new breed of philosophers who no longer willing to accept traditional conventions are ready and eager to explore the world, create their own truth and their own values. Also, he recommends a welcoming attitude to new ideas. For him, the proper attitude to a new idea should not be to ask if it is true but to exclaim: let us try it (Nietzsche:1974: no51). Then in experimenting with it, we are to ascertain if it enhances or diminishes one's life. He strongly believes that to become entrenched in only one point of view robs life of its variety and possibility.

### **6. Metaphysical Knowledge and “Death of God”**

From Nietzsche's epistemological interpretations, it follows then that we must abandon all hopes of a rational metaphysical knowledge of the true world that lies beyond the world of appearance. Thus, he regards abstract speculation and efforts at grasping ultimate reality as wasteful. He posited that Metaphysics grows out of human weakness, the need for certainty or something outside of us that we can lean on. This illusion according to Nietzsche gave us comfort and shielded us from blame and the harsh realities of life. Thus, he goes on to propound the idea of the "death of God"

The death of God in Nietzsche can be said to be a conclusion arrived at after a thorough observation and analysis of the state of things. Following Nietzsche's philosophy and his rejection of absolute and objective truth, it is not possible for God to exist. This is because if God existed, he would be an absolute standard of truth and value. Again, Nietzsche believes that if he is able to find the psychological origins of an idea, it is sufficient to discredit, in his account, the God story, because we were unable to have faith in ourselves and thus need to project something out there to which we can cling on. (Lawhead: 2002:423) Once we realise this, religious faith is no longer credible. Here Nietzsche shares the same view with Ludwig Feuerbach.

Nevertheless, interpreting this, Nietzsche is not suggesting the bizarre notion that an all-powerful, eternal being once existed and then died. Rather, he is describing a cultural and psychological event that was beginning to make itself evident in his time. Despite the fact that theism had played a major role in shaping western civilisation, Nietzsche predicted an age of secularism in which people will no longer find the notion of God relevant. The traditional beliefs in God were rendered unbelievable by developments in science. Theism for Nietzsche had served its purpose and like a dead skin must be put off. The death of God meant the opening of a new day, a day when the essentially life-denying ethics of Christianity could be replaced with a life-affirming philosophy. In his search for a new foundation for values in a day when God could no longer be the goal and sanction of human conduct, Nietzsche turned to the aesthetic dimension of human nature as the most promising alternative to religion. He describes

it as the greatest recent event; enabling "Free Spirits" to throw off their metaphysical shackles and embrace a genuinely open future.

A major consequence of this shocking conclusion amidst other consequences is the end of morality. Nietzsche posits the end of morality with the death of God for European morality was built on the idea of God. In his words, "how much must collapse now that this faith has been undermined because it was built upon this faith, propped up by it, grown into it; for example, the whole of our European morality". Again, the individual can expect no supernatural help because God is dead. In place of God, Nietzsche brings up the idea of the reinvented man, the *Übermensch*.

### **7. Will To Power- Master Versus Slave Morality:**

For Nietzsche, morality is not a universal term; it is subjective because there are various kinds of human nature. However, he posited that there is one thing which characterizes every human nature and that is the "will to power." This is the driving force in every human person. It is a feeling that one has command of himself and of his future, is in control of his future and finds conventional values which most people accept as inadequate and unacceptable. Every person manifests this will to power either openly or covertly. Going further, he avers that all morality is a manifestation of the will to power. He nevertheless, criticises how the human person produces such morality promulgated by the Judeo-Christian ethics. He says that it stems from the development of two primary type of morality based on the good and evil, namely; the master morality and the slave morality. In the master morality, good means noble in the sense of a soul of high calibre and evil meant vulgar, contemptible, cowardice, petty, timidity, etc. The noble people act out of feeling of power, which seeks to overflow and regard themselves as the creators and determiners of value.

The slave morality has to do with the lowest elements of society, the abused, the oppressed, the slaves, and those who are uncertain of themselves. For the slaves, good is the symbol for all those qualities that serve to alleviate the existence of sufferers, while the person who arouses fear is evil. Nevertheless, the positive affirmation of life in the master morality was made to seem evil and they overturned the European morality. Thus, European morality championed by Judaism and Christianity, by denying the primacy of the will to power was basically dishonest because they contradict human nature. Their doctrine of equality and the requirement to love your enemies dilute the vital energy of the strong by routing a person thinking towards God. Nietzsche believes that exploitation is rooted in the nature of man, that is, the will to power, and is good for man as against the new values of peace and equality championed by the Judeo-Christian religion. Here Nietzsche is wrong for if the world should go by

this idea, we shall return to the state of nature of Thomas Hobbes which is so unpleasant and might is right of Thrasymachus will prevail.

### **7. Revaluation of Values**

Friedrich Nietzsche lived in the days when Christianity was regarded as the basis of morality. He however, attacked Christianity and Judaism as the main offenders of morality. He regarded Christian morality as a slave morality, which is contrary to nature. For him, this traditional morality which seems to protect the weak and the poor gives rise to mediocrity and the downplay of man's natural strength. To solve this problem, he embarked on a revaluation of values, which entails ranking values according to what he perceives as the criterion. For him, this is the only antidote that will be potent. By revaluation, Nietzsche does not mean a total annihilation of value. Rather, he meant to "declare war upon presently accepted values." (Stumpf:2002;428) The term revaluation, also called transvaluation implies "that all the stronger motives, which appear in disguised forms, under false name and false valuation, should be uncovered through critical analysis." (Ezema:2017) Nietzsche's revaluation aims at a type of morality, where "moral values become relative; irresponsible freedom becomes the order of the day; while anarchy and oppression are celebrated." (Ezema:2017) This is an attempt to replace slave morality with the master morality. Slave morality (traditional Christian ethics) for him, was the morality for the weak; a solace for the lazy ones. For instance, in slave morality, silly ideas like equality and generosity are promulgated, virtues like humility, charity, abstinence, submissiveness and pity are encouraged. By so doing, it encourages people to live inauthentic life and deny obvious facts of nature. It makes a virtue out of weakness and cowardice. Thus, it prevents the strong-willed from reaching their full potentialities. On the other hand, master morality is the morality of the strong-willed. For the strong-willed, anything considered noble, strong or powerful is good. The essence of master morality is nobility. Remarkably, Nietzsche holds that the noble man lives in trust and openness with himself. He is not like the man of resentment who is neither upright nor naive, and neither honest nor straightforward even with himself. Other qualities cherished in master morality include courage, open mindedness and an accurate sense of worth. People of this class live the most actualized form of human lives, and as such, are happy, energetic, and optimistic about human conditions.

For Nietzsche, once the slave morality is removed, the true values which lie in the true nature of morality and its environment will emerge. And the true nature of humanity lies in the will to power, the internal power within an individual, which is capable of shaping and creating events.

### **8. The Superman - Ubermensch**

Nietzsche effectively summarised his ideal of humanity in the image of the Ubermensch- the superman. This superman describes a type of person that will realise for the first time, all the unfulfilled potential within humanity. The salvation of humanity lies in the arrival of the superman. Thus, he asserts that man is a rope stretched between beast and superman. This superman however is not produced by a process of evolution rather by a process of self-cultivation, which can only be accomplished through an act of the will.

However what is lacking in his postulation is proper check and balance or consistent guide to man's actions in his quest for self actualization and if lacking, throws the whole society into a big confusion of survival of the fittest. However, although Nietzsche speaks of the superman as a powerful, commanding person, Nietzsche is not describing a tyrant. A good deal of self-mastery is also essential for the superman. The Christian ascetics and their discipline would have Nnadiesube Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 5(1), 2021 98 made excellent reference for the superman for their lack of self-affirmation in the name of humility. The ideal superman is one in whom there is a union of spiritual superiority with well-being and an excess of strength, a combination of the Roman Caesar with Christ' Acknowledging that he shares the same vision of human ideal with the German Poet Goethe, Nietzsche states the description of the superman as follows:

A human being who would be strong, skilful in all bodily matters, self-controlled, reverent toward himself, and who might dare to afford the whole range and wealth of being natural, being strong enough for such freedom; the man of tolerance, not from weakness but from strength, because he knows how to use it to his advantage, even that from which the average nature would perish; the man for whom there is no longer anything that is forbidden-unless it be weakness, whether called vice or virtue.

### **9. Eternal Recurrence**

For Nietzsche, like the atomists, there are no final ends. The world is a certain finite combination of units of force that are randomly interacting to produce various combinations. Eventually, given an infinite amount of time, every combination and every sequence of combinations are repeated again and again. In other words, the cosmos and one's life has no purpose. There is nothing other than the eternal recurrence of people, things and problems. For Nietzsche, the superman is able to love the immediate moment seeing it as rich in value even though it has no significance that transcends it. They have overcome the human psychological need to find meaning and are content to live with the smaller "meanings" they have created for themselves.

### **10. Arthur Schopenhauer:**

**Life and Works** Born in Danzig in 1788, he began his educational studies in the requirements for a career as a merchant. But after the death of his father, he began his studies in philosophy, Greek, Latin, History, Mathematics and Classics. His knowledge in merchandise, classics and sciences greatly influenced his philosophical thoughts. Ideas and Aesthetics:

Schopenhauer is famously known for the assertion "the world is my idea." By this, he means that the whole universe is only object in relation to subject, that is, it is the perception of the perceiver or the idea of the perceiver. The world presents itself to a person as an object to a subject. Thus, the whole world of objects is and remains idea, and therefore wholly and forever determined by the subject. This means, also, that we as subjects know only the world we perceive. Schopenhauer insists that though the world continues to exist when the perceiver dies, the world is still the idea of the perceiver because no one knows anything except what is presented to him or what he perceives. Thus, perception is the basis of knowledge. Abstract conceptions are firmly based or gotten from perceptions. Hence, the world is my idea because it is an objective or empirical presentation to me as an understanding subject. Schopenhauer states that aesthetic contemplation is characterized by objectivity. "This is because in Aesthetic contemplation, man becomes the disinterested observer" (Jacquette: 1996:46) The intellect in its normal functioning is in the service of the will. As such, our normal perception is always tainted by our subjective strivings. The aesthetic point of view, since it is freed from such strivings, is more objective than any other ways of regarding an object. Art does not transport the viewer to an imaginary or even ideal realm. Rather it affords the opportunity to view life without the distorting influence of his own will.

### **11. Human Will:**

**Agency, Freedom and Ethical Action Agency and Freedom:** According to Schopenhauer, all acts of will are bodily movements, and thus are not the internal cause of bodily movements. What distinguishes an act of will from other events, which are also expressions of the will, is that it meets two criteria: it is a bodily movement caused by a motive, and it is accompanied by a direct awareness of this movement. Schopenhauer provides both a psychological and physiological account of motives. In his psychological account, motives are causes that occur in the medium of cognition, or internal causes. Motives are mental events that arise in response to an awareness of some motivating object. Schopenhauer argues that these mental events can never be desires or emotions: desires and emotions are expressions of the will and thus are not included under the class of representations. Rather, a motive is the awareness of some object of representation. These representations can be abstract; thinking the concept of

an object, or intuitive; perceiving an object. Thus, Schopenhauer provides a causal picture of action, and it is one in which mental events cause physical events.

Schopenhauer distinguishes between causation that occurs through stimuli, which is mechanistic, and that which occurs through motives. Each kind of causality occurs with necessity and lawfulness. Because human action is causally determined, Schopenhauer denies that humans can freely choose how they respond to motives. In any course of events, one and only one course of action is available to the agent, and the agent performs that action with necessity.

In his *Ethics*, the dictum of morality is "Harm no one and help others as much as you can." Most persons operate exclusively from egoistic motives, for, as Schopenhauer explains, our knowledge of our own weal and woe is direct, while our knowledge of the weal and woe of others is always only representation and thus does not affect us. Although most persons are motivated primarily by egoistic concerns, certain rare persons can act from compassion, and it is compassion that forms the basis of Schopenhauer's ethics- Compassion is prompted by the awareness of the suffering of another person, and Schopenhauer characterizes it as a kind of felt knowledge.

Since compassion is the basis of Schopenhauer's ethics, the ethical significance of conduct is found in the motive alone, an aspect of his ethics that finds affinity with Kant. Thus, Schopenhauer distinguishes the just person from the good person not by the nature of their actions, but by their level of compassion: the just person sees through the principle of individuation enough to avoid causing harm to another, whereas the good person sees through it even further, to the point that the suffering he sees in others touches him almost as closely as does his own. Such a person not only avoids harming others, but actively tries to alleviate the suffering of others.

## **12. Metaphysical Pessimism**

Schopenhauer's pessimism is the most well-known feature of his philosophy, and he is often referred to as the philosopher of pessimism. "Schopenhauer's pessimistic vision follows from his account of the inner nature of the world as aimless blind striving. Because the will has no goal or purpose, the will's satisfaction is impossible. The will objectifies itself in a hierarchy of gradations from inorganic to organic life, and every grade of objectification of the will, from gravity to animal motion, is marked by insatiable striving. "The attainment of a goal or desire, results in satisfaction, whereas the frustration of such attainment results in suffering. "(Y. Julian: 1987: p. 31). Since existence is marked by want or deficiency, and since satisfaction of this want is unsustainable, existence is characterized by suffering. This conclusion holds for all of nature, including inanimate natures, insofar as they are at essence will.

However, suffering is more conspicuous in the life of human beings because of their intellectual capacities. Rather than serving as a relief from suffering, the intellect of human beings brings home their suffering with greater clarity and consciousness. Even with the use of reason, human beings can in no way alter the degree of misery we experience; indeed, reason only magnifies the degree to which we suffer. Thus, all the ordinary pursuits of mankind are not only fruitless but also illusory insofar as they are oriented toward satisfying an insatiable, blind will. Schopenhauer's pessimism is thus metaphysical in the sense that it is presented as a consequence of the nature of the metaphysical will" (Y. Julian: 1987: p. 31). He is not simply engaged in drawing attention to the empirical fact that there is much evil and suffering in the world. He is also indicating what he believes to be the cause of this empirical fact.

On how to escape from the wills, Schopenhauer gives two ways by which we can escape from this overpowering force of the will; namely: through ethics and aesthetics. Ethics which has compassion as its foundations liberates one from the selfish interest of the will by making one cognisant of the sufferings and the needs of others. Thus, one is able to realise that all share the same nature. Thus, we develop unselfish virtues (pity, love, mercy, gentleness) and deny other passions and desires. Aesthetic on its part, connotes the aesthetic attitude treated above, which involves suspension of the will in making judgements. It enthrones objectivity in our judgements.

### **13. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche: A Comparison**

The ideas of Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche are coterminous in the sense that they share some boundaries. It is important to note, before we navigate that Nietzsche was greatly influenced by Schopenhauer in many ways. In 1864, he entered the University of Bonn but left the following year to follow his excellent teacher in classics and philosophy F. Fritsch who accepted an invitation at the University of Leipzig. It was here that he encountered the main work of works of Schopenhauer. His atheism and anti-rationalism influenced him for some time and it established and confirmed his revolt against contemporary European culture, which he attached as decadent. In 1865, he carefully studied the works of his admirer/mentor, Arthur Schopenhauer- *The World as Will and Representation*. To him Nietzsche dedicated his essay 'Schopenhauer as educator' in "untimely meditations",

Also, both scholars differed on what the basic motivation for man is. The world as the will and representation (will and idea) which is the key point of Schopenhauer's philosophy was his investigation of individual motivation, mainly treated in his major work above. "He upholds that human beings are motivated by only their basic desires (ie will to live) called *willezumleben*"<sup>36</sup>. He maintains that this principle guides and

drives all humans to action and behaviour. For him 'man can do what he wants but he cannot will what he wants. He is of the opinion that the will is a metaphysical existence which controls the actions of men. It is malignant and evil. It can be overcome by man's duties, asceticism or self-denial and charity. Nietzsche was horrified by the Schopenhauer's notion of the 'will'. Hence his philosophy was vehemently opposed to this negative view of the will. Life is basically a will to power i.e. a feeling that a person has command of himself and of his future. According to him, a person must adopt his own new and opposite value that conflicts with conventional ones. An individual is with his own fate in his own hands. He needs not expect help from anybody in life or in future.

As regards politics, Schopenhauer proposed limited role of government in his book *On the Basis of Morality*. The essential need of government is that it should leave each individual free to work out his own salvation. Any agent can govern in so far as its powers are limited. He advocates a separation of powers among the levels of the government while Nietzsche posits the state as the greatest enemy of individualism; to order renunciation of life as the ideal of chastity. Thus, they are both united in the negative view they have of the state. Furthermore, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche differ as regards where they place their criterion for morality. Schopenhauer posits that the basis of morality is compassion, which enables us to care for people and strive to better the situation. On the other hand, for Nietzsche, morality is determined by ability of an act to satisfy the human will to power, the desire to dominate and control others.

Moreover, Schopenhauer's pessimism which stems from a view of the world as a place of blind aimless striving is strikingly similar to the concept of eternal recurrence of Nietzsche where the world is a certain finite combination of units of force that are randomly interacting to produce various combinations. Again, they believed so much on scientific reasoning and the power of their philosophical intuition that both of them did not use God in their philosophical expositions as can be seen in medieval philosophy. Although Nietzsche was more extreme in this regard, announcing the death of God to the world they also posited the Will to be the essence of all things. They believe the will to be the driving force of all things. However, as has been pointed out above, while Schopenhauer talked of the will to live; Nietzsche, on the other hand, believes in the will to power.

Furthermore, both of them have the view that there is an omnipotence of the will. There can never be an absolute freedom from the will. Nonetheless, Schopenhauer believes that there is an escape from the will but it is only a temporal one, achieved through ethics and aesthetics but then, there can never be total escape from the will. For Nietzsche, the superman fully realizes the omnipotence of the will and overcomes

all things except that which obstructs the will to power. This means, that he is free but not free from the will.

Lastly, the striking difference between Schopenhauer is the goal of life. Schopenhauer accepts the view that there is no end or goal for the will but Nietzsche believes that goal for the will is the superman. This makes us think that this superman is a myth and can never be realised.

#### **14. Conclusion**

From the discussion above we can now see that Schopenhauer and Nietzsche share many things in common especially the idea of the will. Both are ardent supporters of humanism and that gives them the picture of atheists. All the same, we can draw positive inferences from them as well as negative inferences as can be seen in their writings. The uniting point in their philosophies is their goal to freedom, trying to emancipate man from every form of slavery, be it physical or mental.

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