



Research Paper

The Role of Schopenhauerian Philosophy of the “Will” And Its Implication for Suicide in Contemporary Society

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ABSTRACT

The moral permissibility of suicide has been striking yet recurrent in its presence as it affects humankind in their daily lives. There have been categories of debates in past and present by philosophers, psychologists, etc. in the bid to decipher if suicide should be seen as immoral action and such condemnable in its practice. Many have fortified the claim that once one has lost the meaning of life due to perplexities, the solution to ease pain is suicide. However, no one especially those who held suicide wrong and problematic, has tried to give a lasting solution from the root of the problem. It is against this backdrop the 19th century philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer conceived the notion of suicide from a different angle though accepting that the decision to commit suicide is impregnated by unbearable and incurable circumstances that makes life's meaning lost. In his notion, he debunked the arguments of some monotheistic philosophers who held suicide as an immoral act and suicidal persons as cowardice. For him, they have failed to give convincing reasons for calling them so and that the only moral argument against suicide is that it is egoistic and it does not serve the highest moral goal that considers others. He held that suicide is an elusive way of ending suffering, considering that suffering is the result of the Will's constant striving to live. To end suffering he said, one needs to indulge himself in 'Aesthetic experience' and 'Denial of the will'. Hence, the crux of this work is to understand Schopenhauer's notion of suicide and his tenet to suffering especially as conceived in his philosophy of the 'Will'.

Key words: Will, Suicide, Morality, Philosophy

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I. INTRODUCTION

It is an indisputable fact that most times life circumstances can be so opaque and befuddling such that one finds himself in a fix as to what decision or solution may seem appropriate to the problem in context and as such, he sees no meaning in life. This being the case, one feels the only option left in a meaningless life is suicide (the act of one intentionally taking or terminating his or her life through whatever means). Flowing from this, suicide has been considered as the only means of escaping from the incurable pains of man, in a world where experience has revealed man's life to be full of continuous struggle and suffering, where life has become hell – peace only but a moment. Thus, is such a life what living? No is the answer many people give and as such, suicide is warranted. On the other hand, there are many who consider suicide as an act against morality; for them, suicide is a cowardice act, an act against God, man as well as the state. To this, they condemn suicidal persons with some kind of derogatory terms as well as punishment if their attempt to commit suicide fails. Meanwhile, if the act is successful, refusal of burial or burial with no respect is their fate.

Against the above views of suicide, the German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer well known in his pessimism wrote an essay “On Suicide”. In it, he maintains that suicide neither free one from suffering nor is it an immoral or a cowardice act. Although, he conceived the world to be that full of suffering and striving and to him, suicide would have been an act worth commendable if it were to really free man from his unending miseries but since the act is only but a futile way of putting an end to life miseries, he condemned suicide

though with the stance that, it is one's right to do whatever he or she wishes to do with his or her life since there is no other thing that man has full right to than his life. Suicide to him is an affirmation of the will to live and it is equally an awkward experiment. There he went further to presenting us with the solutions to the unending sufferings that makes life not worth living, as aesthetic experience and the denial of the will. Consequently, this work aims at giving a better understanding of Schopenhauer's notion of suicide and exploring his tenets to ending suffering. To succeed in this, we shall try to lay bare his philosophy especially that which informed his notion of suicide.

SCHOPENHAUERIAN PHILOSOPHY: THE SEEMING ANALOGY

The philosophy of Schopenhauer is that among other philosophies that tries to lay bare the true nature of the world. Consequent upon this, his philosophy is mostly focused on discussions bothering on the themes; 'Will', 'Sufferings' of the world and or 'Absurdity' of life (Pessimism). These themes he justly discussed in his major work, *The World as Will and Representation, vols. I and II*. Here, Schopenhauer saw his philosophy as a continuation of Kant, and used the results of his epistemological investigations, that is, transcendental idealism, as starting point for his own. He states thus:

My philosophy is founded on that of Kant, and therefore presupposes a thorough knowledge of it. Kant's teaching produces in the mind of everyone who has comprehended it, a fundamental change which is so great that it may be regarded as an intellectual new birth. It alone is able really to remove the inborn realism which proceeds from the original character of the intellect, which neither Berkeley nor Malebranche succeed in doing, for they remain too much in the universal, while Kant goes into the particular, and indeed in a way that is quite unexampled both before and after him, and which has quite a peculiar, and, we might say, immediate effect upon the mind in consequence of which it undergoes a complete un-deception, and forthwith looks at all things in another light. Only in this way can anyone become susceptible to the more positive expositions which I have to give (Schopenhauer, 41a).

Schopenhauer starting point was certainly Kant's division of the universe into the Phenomena – "things as they appear" and which can be perceived using our senses, and the Noumena – "the thing-in-itself", which is dependent of us and which can only be thought or imagined by humans. Furthermore, from the above view Kant had argued the empirical world is merely a complex of appearances whose existence and connection occur only in our representations (Kant, 52). Schopenhauer reiterates this in the first sentence of his main work by saying, "the world is my representation. We do not draw empirical laws from nature, but prescribe them to it" (Schopenhauer, 52 a). This claim admits that the stuff in which the world is made up of is not all existing and material things put together, rather it is composed of representations of each and every knowing and living being, although only human beings receive this representation thoughtfully. Thus, Schopenhauer praises Kant for his distinction between appearance (Phenomena) and the things-in-themselves (Noumena) that appear; whereas the general consensus in German Idealism was that this was the weakest spot of Kant's theory (David, 36). This is because, according to Kant causality can find application on objects of experience only, and consequently, things-in-themselves cannot be the cause of appearances, as Kant argued. The inadmissibility of this reasoning was also acknowledged by Schopenhauer. He insisted that this distinction was a true conclusion, drawn from false premises. Schopenhauer took an extra step beyond Kant, though, by suggesting that, because multiplicity was part of the phenomenal experience, Noumena reality must be singular, a single, undifferentiated, indistinguishable thing. He concluded that the Noumenal was the same as that in us which we call "Will" (or at least, that Will was the most immediate manifestation of the "thing-in-itself" that we can experience) – "the thing-in-itself, for him, is "Will", the cause of everything. The universe is a result of Will" (Frost, 46).

Schopenhauer then expanded on what this Will actually is, by stating that the Will is "that primary and original force itself, which forms and maintains the animal body, in that, it carries out that body's unconscious as well as conscious functions"(Schopenhauer, 293b). However, it is only possible to perceive will in its manifestations and human being is one of such manifestations. With regard to this, Ivan Lapshin notes in defining Schopenhauer's thoughts: "It is thus the case that will as the thing-in-itself, as the basis of the world, the cosmic energy or God (even though it is not completely knowable), manifests itself in the individual and, therefore, can be perceived through individual actions"(95). Consequently, Schopenhauer writes:

Everyone knows his Will only in its successive individual *acts*, not as a whole, in and by itself. Accordingly, the act of will is indeed only the nearest and clearest phenomenon of the thing in itself; yet it follows from this that, if all the other phenomena could be known by us just as immediately and intimately, we should be obliged to regard them precisely as that which the will is in us. Therefore in this sense I teach that the inner nature of everything is Will, and I call the will the thing-in-itself (197b).

Consequent upon this definition of Will, Schopenhauer describes the world around us, its perception and its representation. It is this definition of will that is a part of the overall will as the thing-in itself and also seen in human actions. Thus, Schopenhauer identifies Will with life or desires for life – 'longing for life' a

hunger for existence. This he called Will-to-Live; "this Will-to-be, will to live, is the cause of all the struggles in the world and thus all evil and suffering" (Frost, 96).

THE VANITY AND SUFFERINGS OF LIFE

Schopenhauer trusts that the human being is a phenomenon of the "Will" that is always goal oriented and has purposes which it is striving to undertake unremittingly in all levels of its' manifestation. Everything is striving to realize its nature and since 'Will' brings goals and enthusiasm to all things, it fills them with boundless striving. Due to this endless dissatisfaction of man's needs, life becomes absurd and as such, man's life is vanity – pointlessness or futile.

In order to ground this position of the vanity of life or existence, Schopenhauer maintains that life is futile. Schopenhauer wrote in his book titled "*Essay and Aphorisms*":

The vanity of existence is revealed in the whole form existence assumes: in the infiniteness of time and space contrasted with the finiteness of the individual in both; in the fleeting present as the sole form in which actuality exist; in the contingency and the relativity of all things; in the continual becoming without beings; in continual desire without satisfaction; in the continual frustration of striving of which life consists. Time and that perish ability of all things existing in time that time itself brings about is simply the form under which the will to live, which as things in itself is imperishable, reveals to itself the vanity of its striving. Time is that by virtue of which everything becomes nothingness in our hands and loses all real value (51).

It is this striving in man that Schopenhauer calls "Will" – a term indicating an endless desire. When the Will is hindered through obstacles between it and its temporary and or immediate goal, it is called "Suffering". Thus, in his book, *Schopenhauer; a Guide for the Perplexed*, Sindh R. Raj defined suffering as hindrances placed in advance of the will towards its immediate and presumed aims (40).

Furthermore, Schopenhauer in Schirmacher claimed that 'Suffering' and 'Misfortune' are the general rule of life. "If suffering is not the first and immediate object of our life, then our existence is the most inexpedient and inappropriate thing in the world" (1). Following this assertion, one will come to agree that whenever gazed into yesterday, we only remember the disappointments, pains, sufferings and the sorts of life, more than the present and then making the present, unhappy moments. This being the case then, what then is life? – It is a task where we always 'Will' (strive) to sustain our lives and avoid boredom and endless striving. Such a life is a mistake and an illusion. To this, Schopenhauer states in his *Essays and Aphorisms*:

History shows us the life of nations and finds nothing to narrate but wars and tumults; the peaceful years appear only as occasional brief pauses and interludes. In just the same way the life of the individual is a constant struggle, and not merely a metaphorical one against want or boredom, but also an actual struggle against other people. He discovers adversaries everywhere, lives in continual conflict and dies with sword in hand... That human life must be some kind of mistake he sufficiently proved by the simple observation that man is a compound of needs which are hard to satisfy; that their satisfaction achieves nothing but a painless condition in which he is only given over to boredom; and that boredom is a direct proof that existence is in itself valueless, for boredom is nothing other than the sensation of the emptiness of existence (41-50).

THE SCHOPENHAUERIAN SUICIDE: AN UNDERSTANDING

Prior to the Schopenhauerian notion of suicide, the moral permissibility of suicide has always been a prevalent discussion among scholars and even common men in the society. Socrates, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Aquinas, Kant, and many others to mention but few, have almost had in one way or the other, same view against suicide as they considered Suicide as immoral, a cowardice act and a rebellion against God, man and the society. Also, monotheistic religions have held the disposition of one's own life as a revolt against God and therefore taken suicidal act as impious and the foulest of all immoralities and as such, they believe that suicidal persons will be penalized after death because of their sacrilegious offense. In addition, it is believed that suicide is a horrible offence against nature, a lack of self-love and disrespect to human life. Again, it is believed that suicide is an escape from our responsibilities and duties to both our families and the society. However, amidst the above views against suicide, David Hume stood out arguing in favour of suicide in his essay "*On Suicide*". Hume maintains that "suicide is never an immoral act neither is it an action against God, man or society" (Ekoru, 7).

Furthermore, it has been conceived generally that the reason why suicide is committed is to free one from the unbearable and the incurable agonies of life, that is, after much attempt of man to free himself from this woes or sufferings. With this, self-destruction has been seen as a viable option instead of living in continuous suffering. Sufferings made up of physical or emotional (mental) pain. The question remains, does suicide really free one from suffering?

It was from the above background that Schopenhauer's notion of suicide arose. He explored his notion of suicide in his essay "Uber Den Selbismord" (On Suicide). He started this essay by reproving the monotheistic religions especially Jewish religions, for arguing that suicide – self-destruction is crime or impious. In his

Essays and Aphorisms Schopenhauer states "As far as I can see, it is only the monotheistic, that is say Jewish religion whose members regard self-destruction as a crime"(Schopenhauer, 77). He was surprised at this religious declaration of suicide as crime and or impious because for him there is no proof in the sacred scripture that grounded their declaration. "This is all the more striking in that neither in the Old Testament nor in the New is there to be found any prohibition or even merely a definite disapproval of it" (Schopenhauer, 77). He further considers religious teachers as being abusive in their argument. He further states "... but their arguments are in such a bad way that they try to make up for their abhorrence and thus by being abusive" (Schirmacher, 179). He went further to remind us that suicide was regarded by many Greeks (Stoics) as noble; "we find suicide extolled as a noble and heroic action even by the Stoics, as can be proved from hundreds of passages, the most vigorous of which are from Seneca" (Schirmacher, 180). He further gave instance where suicide is seen as a religious act in Hinduism. Schopenhauer states;

Further with the Hindus, it is well known that suicide often occurs as a religious action, particularly as window-burning, self-destruction under the wheels of the Juggernaut Car, self-sacrifice to the Crocodiles of the Ganges or the sacred temple tanks and otherwise (Schirmacher, 180-81).

Furthermore, in his *Essays and Aphorisms* Schopenhauer finds nothing morally objectionable in suicide because for him, there is nothing in the world which a man has right to than his own person and life. To this he states; Thus we hear that suicide is the most cowardly of acts, that only a madman would commit it, and similar insipidities, or the senseless assertion that suicide is 'wrong', though it is obvious there is nothing in the world a man has a more incontestable right to than his own life and person" (Schopenhauer, 77).

In accordance with an individual right to his person or life, Schopenhauer commends David Hume on his essay "On Suicide" as the most thorough refutation of the feeble arguments put forth by religion against suicide. In the essay Hume puts forward a framework for conceptualizing suicide by arguing implicitly that "individual freedom is the factor which justifies suicide and that all created beings have received the power, authorization, and freedom to change the natural course of things in order to guarantee their well-being" (Ekoro, 10).

Schopenhauer believed that Christianity as one of the monotheistic religions have misjudged suicide to be immoral because for him Christians believed that suicide is committed out of the motives of freeing one from suffering, since Christians saw the real purpose of life to be suffering. He wrote; "Christianity carries in its innermost heart the truth that suffering (the Cross) is the true aim of life: that is why it repudiates suicide, which is opposed to this aim" (Schopenhauer, 78). He went further to argue that it is only natural to attempt to free oneself from suffering and that few, if any, persons would voluntarily choose to live their lives over again if encountered with unquenchable sufferings. In his, *World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer wrote:

But perhaps at the end of his life, no man, if he be sincere and at the same time in possession of his faculties, will ever wish to go through it again... Rather than this, he will much prefer to choose complete non-existence... Similarly, what has been said about the father of history (Herodotus) has not been refuted, namely that no person has existed who has not wished more than once that he had not to live through the following day. Accordingly, the shortness of life, so often lamented, may perhaps be the best thing about it (Schopenhauer, 324-325a).

However, contrary to his former stance of not having any moral objection to suicide because of one's right over his or her own life or person, he equally believed that the only moral objective argument worth having against suicide is that suicide does not serve the highest moral goal. He states that "the only cogent moral argument against suicide is that it is opposed to the achievement of the highest moral goal, inasmuch as it substitutes for a true redemption from this world of misery a mere apparent one. But it is a very long way from a mistake of this kind to a crime, which is what the Christian clergy want to call it" (Schopenhauer, 78). Schopenhauer held that a person who commits suicide is egoistic in nature, pursuing only his selfish interest without a consideration for others. For he considers 'Egoism' - the theory that states that actions are moral only when they promote our own best interest, to be an unworthy theory for judging moral actions. In his *The Basis of Morality*, Schopenhauer considers actions of genuine moral worth to be those free from self-centered motives. Genuine moral actions, exceptional mark he states:

...is that it rejects and excludes the whole class of motives by which otherwise all human action is prompted: I mean the self-interested motives, using the word in its widest sense. Consequently the moral value of an act is lowered by the disclosure of an accessory selfish incentive; while it is entirely destroyed, if that incentive stood alone. The absence of all egoistic motives is thus the Criterion of an action of moral value (98).

Thus, he considers any action with egoistic motive including suicide to be immoral. Although he considers every other action free from egoism to be moral, he held 'Altruistic principle' of always considering or putting others before the self to be the highest moral goal originating from compassion, since for him compassion is the basis or foundation of morality. This will mean that at the point or thought of committing suicide, one needs to consider others; his family and the society, what they will pass through.

Although Schopenhauer debunked Christians for arguing that suicide is wrong because it tries to do away with one's suffering, he still believed that suicide is caused by the terrors (sufferings or misfortunes) of life: "It will generally be found that where the terrors of life come to outweigh the terrors of death a man will put an end to his life. But the terrors of death offer considerable resistance: they stand like a sentinel at the exit gate" (Schopenhauer, 78-79). With this he acknowledged that suicide would be worth carrying out if it were a means to achieving this goal. Dale Jacquette writes that "Schopenhauer maintains that suffering makes life so miserable that only the fear of death restrains the individual from self-destruction, while if life as a whole were enjoyable, the idea of death as the culmination of life would be intolerable" (301).

Contrary to the general view that suicide frees one from the unquenchable sufferings or striving of man, Schopenhauer held that suicide can never annihilate the sufferings of man in the world. To him, it is only illusive to conceive suicide as a means of ending suffering. Instead, he maintains that suicide is an affirmation of the Will to live and also an experiment.

- **AN AFFIRMATION OF THE WILL-TO-LIVE**

Schopenhauer's views on suicide, goes in line with his general teaching about the "Will". From the ongoing discussion, it has been noted that due to the continuous striving of the Will which is seen as the thing-in-itself, manifesting itself in the phenomena (which is the individual physical body), suffering arises. He went further to offering a thought-provoking explanation on the concept suicide, relating it to the notion of "will-to-live" and life circumstances. Schopenhauer believes that a person who wants to commit suicide deep down really wants to live, in fact he wills life, but is tormented by great suffering caused by his life circumstances. Suffering from the unfavorable circumstances of life teaches him about voluntary self-denial:

... the arbitrary doing away with the individual phenomenon, which differs from the denial of the will-to-live, which is the only act of its freedom to appear in the phenomenon... Far from being a denial of the will, suicide is a phenomenon of the will's strong affirmation. For denial has its essential nature in the fact that the sorrows of life, not its sorrows, are shunned. The suicide wills life, and is dissatisfied merely with the conditions on which it has come to him. Therefore he gives up by no means the will-to-live, but merely life, since he destroys the individual phenomenon (Schopenhauer, 398a).

This however shows that suicide is only affirming the "Will-to-Live" (life) – a contradiction upon itself. The individual wishes to be free from striving (suffering), but ended up destroying the self (phenomena) rather than the will, since the will (Noumena) produces suffering and itself cannot be destroyed. For this Janoway writes, "the question whether Schopenhauer's higher view of death would be consoling is a difficult one. He tries to inculcate the thought that one's own death has no great significance in the order of things. But if one accepted his reasons for taking this attitude, ought one not to think that one's life has just as little significance? And is that a consoling thought? Schopenhauer appears to think so..." (89). Thus, an individual cannot consciously annihilate himself as a means of absconding the sufferings resulting from willing. Because, Suicide ends life, but as the result of a willful decision in the service of the individual will-to-live, it cannot by its very nature outdo willing.

- **AN EXPERIMENT**

Schopenhauer also described suicide as an experiment through death – that in which with death we pose certain questions to nature, questions bothering on existence and knowledge of the world: "suicide can also be regarded as an experiment, a question we put to nature and try to make her answer, namely what change the existence and knowledge of man undergo through death" (Schirmacher, 183). This type of experiment is a very foolish one – an experiment that has no regard for life; that which after conducting it, you will not be alive to see or the result or outcome. To this he further state thus: "But it is an awkward experiment, for it abolishes the identity of the consciousness that would have to listen to the answer" (Schirmacher, 183). Indeed it is a very awkward and I would equally like to describe it a cowardice act. If one may ask, where do suicidal persons even got the impression that self-destruction or suicide can free them from suffering? How do they come to know that in the world beyond, they will experience peace? Is there anyone who has ever died and then come back to life to tell us that the world beyond is a peaceful one – devoid of suffering or striving. Until these questions are answered and with certainty, suicide will always remain an awkward and a cowardice act.

Consequently, since suicide can never free man from the sufferings of this world caused by a throng desires with allied futile hopes, Schopenhauer went further to giving us solutions to suffering through the following:

- **AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE**

From the foregoing discussion, Schopenhauer's points out that human life under the enslavement of the 'will' is for most part full of struggling and suffering interspersed with momentary breaks of gratifications of small achievements resulting in quests of newer and newer worldly goals. In a bit of being free from these

sufferings, Schopenhauer held that an authentic delving into art enables the human entity to know its world as it is through an objective observation and contemplation, he thought that one has to be conscious of the operation of the will, and it is through 'aesthetic experience' in which the artist contemplative ideas of things in their purity (things in themselves) that one is pulled out of suffering and illusory gratifications. He believed that these ideas are the immediate and adequate objectivity of the 'will'. Schopenhauer states: only ... the eternal ideas, the original forms of all things can be described as truly existing, since they always are but never become and never pass away (Schopenhauer, 171a). In elucidating Schopenhauer's aesthetic experience Singh writes, "in his art work, the artist reproduces or 'repeats' his original apprehension of ideas" (Singh, 56). Consequently, it is in knowing the ideas of the thing-in-itself (the will) that one can avoid his or her attention being directed to the motives of the will and as such, one can no longer see interest in things, and being free from willing, a state of peace and painlessness arrives. He sates:

When, however, an external cause or inward disposition suddenly raises us out of the endless stream of willing, and snatches knowledge from the thralldom of will, the attention is now no longer directed to the motives of willing, but comprehends things free from their relation to the will. Thus it considers things without interest, without subjectivity, purely objectivity (Schopenhauer, 196a).

Thus, the aesthetic experience is a glimpse of salvation which must be a state of will-lessness. However, Schopenhauer considers the moments of aesthetic experience as that which offers a "temporary respite from the tyranny of the ongoing willing, cravings and neediness" (Singh, 60). Consequently, Schopenhauer advanced the aesthetic experience with what he saw to be the authentic or profound suffering annihilation known as 'the denial of the will'.

• **THE DENIAL OF THE WILL**

It has been noted before now that Schopenhauer conceived suicide to be an affirmation of the will to live because the suicidal person wills life but the unbearable sufferings of the world caused by the endless striving of the will, teaches him or her to commit suicide. Since suicide however is caused by suffering and suffering by the endless cravings or desires of the will, Schopenhauer believed there is need to put an end to suffering by denying the will's willing. This denial of the will to live is a radical and uncommon toning down of the will's usual projects in an enlightened human existence. "The denial of the will is a controlling of the blind will that proceeds from a holistic knowledge of the machinations of the will and of the nature of the world in which the will is omnipresent" (Singh, 133). Schopenhauer describes it as an absolute transformation from 'willing everything' to 'willing nothing at all', Singh noted.

Furthermore, human existence is a unique one in that it has the possibility of knowing the overall nature of the will as 'endless striving' and then acting against it (denying the will). This is a holistic and superior knowledge which enable the will to turn against itself, to go against its own nature that is, willing and striving for worldly gains: "... that knowledge of the whole, of the inner nature of the thing in itself becomes the 'quieter' of all and every willing... Man attains to the state of voluntary renunciation, resignation, true composure and complete will-lessness" (Schopenhauer, 379a). Thus, knowledge becoming 'quieter of all and every willing' must mean for practical purposes, the calming down or reduction of the willing to a bare minimum. The point of this denial Schopenhauer argues is to "deprive desires of their sting, close the entry to all suffering, purify and sanctify ourselves" (Schopenhauer, 397a).

However, Schopenhauer maintains that a total annihilation of the will is not possible and as such, he envisaged '**Asceticism**' as the highest form of life, capable of constantly resisting the temptations of the world and struggle, to stay detached from the allurements of the will from moment to moment: "But the illusion of the phenomenon soon ensnares us again and its motives set the will in motion once more... the allurements of hope, the flattery of the present, the sweetness of pleasure, the well-being that falls to the lot of our person amid the lamentations of a suffering world governed by chance and error, all these draw us back to it, and rivet the bonds anew" (Schopenhauer, 397a). Consequently, the denial of the will to live is not and cannot be achieved in just a moment, but in a continuous struggle to suppress the will's willing. To this he states thus, "It must be achieved afresh by constant struggle" (Schopenhauer, 397a).

Schopenhauer went further to holding Ascetics, Saints and Monks as practitioners of will to live denial and as well, he described the practice as the summit of ethical life. Schopenhauer has condemned suicide before now because it is an act that confirms the will and since the will is egoistic in nature; "will to live beget selfishness. Each individual will struggle to preserve himself despite what happens to others" (Frost, 96). Thus, he did project altruism to be the highest moral standard which suicide does not meet. So, he believed that ascetics, saints and monks are not egoist; instead, they live a life of altruism which is expressed in sympathy or pity for others. Consequently, living a life in conformity with the lives of the above mentioned set of people, one will definitely find the nature of this world and its sufferings unacceptable, and he or she will no longer wish to

chase the motives of his selfish projects through endless willing but give the will up in self-denial, where he or she is being indifferent to the sufferings he is going through because the self-will has been denied and as such, he or she sees no sufferings or miseries in his sufferings that would have warranted suicide.

CONCLUSION

The Schopenhauerian notion of suicide as seen above, centers on the questions arising from suicidal actions; whether suicide frees one from suffering and whether it is morally wrong to commit suicide. Following the insightful argument of Schopenhauer on the crux of this work, 'suicide', it therefore means that suicide is a 'futile escape' from suffering rather than being a 'freedom'. This is because in his philosophy, the human will through a continuous striving or desires that is never attained, suffering is resulted and suicide only confirms this will's continuous willing since the suicidal person wills the opposite of suffering, leading to life and he is thought by life experience that what he seeks cannot be achieved, the will then suggest to him that ending his life will end his suffering thus he is only making 'an affirmation of the will to live' because it is still the will's desire that he is fulfilling by committing suicide. Schopenhauer also considers suicide to be a foolish experiment – that in which the suicidal person is posing to nature to know if peace will be attained through suicide, and of course it is foolish because no dead person has ever come back to life to express the peace he attained through peace.

While holding that suicide cannot free one from suffering, he gave us the tenets to suffering by first directing us to the root of the problem "human will to live". To this, Schopenhauer held that an authentic delving into art enables the human entity to know its world as it is through an objective observation and contemplation, he thought that one has to be conscious of the operation of the will, and it is through 'aesthetic experience' in which the artist contemplative ideas of things in their purity (things in themselves) that one is pulled out of suffering and illusory gratifications. However, since he did not well-defined how aesthetic experience can free one from suffering, he advanced it with the "denial of the will" which he saw to be a radical continual, paying no attention to the willings of the will through asceticism.

On the moral permissibility of suicide, Schopenhauer considered suicide to be an immoral action because the suicidal act is egoistic in nature to him as it does not consider others. He made this assertion clear in his *The Basis of Morality*, where he saw compassion for others to be the foundation of morality, as against selfish motives - the reason he held ascetics, saints and monks to be practitioners of the denial of the will to live.

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