

# THE CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY OF A. SCHOPENHAUER AND COGNITION TO THE ABSOLUTE

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## Abstract

In Western, mainly German, literature, the study of A. Schopenhauer's work is very intensive (a complete collection of works and letters is published, a yearbook is published, the Schopenhauer Society works, many articles and monographs are published annually).

In the second half of the 80s, updated translations of a number of the thinker's works were published, as well as introductory articles to them. Special monographs, however, are still missing. The influence of Schopenhauer on philosophy and literature has not yet been studied, either in the West or here.

This research aims to introduce new materials into the domestic scientific circulation, revealing hitherto unknown aspects of Schopenhauer's teaching, to reveal the humanistic aspects of his work, to explore the features of the reception of his ideas in foreign and domestic philosophy.

The author considers the main elements of the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer. The author reveals the philosopher's theory of knowledge in its connection with his metaphysics, views on the unfreedom of man and freedom of will, the metaphysics of will and the related philosophy of nature.

In addition, the article deals with the problems of the absolute, where Schopenhauer sees in the criticism of the naive understanding of the connection between the Absolute and the world through the category of causality; with such a naive understanding, the Absolute was most often thought of on a par with the world and was actually equated with individual things, differing from them quantitatively, but not qualitatively.

In general, the article is based on the philosophy of Schopenhauer and reflects the point of view on the main provisions of his concept.

**Keywords:** Schopenhauer, German idealism, philosophy of the XIX century, classical philosophy, the problem of the Absolute,

## Introduction

In the late nineteenth and early twenty — first centuries, the problem of man became the central problem of philosophy. Experiencing a total crisis, humanity at the turn of the millennium is revising the usual guidelines of its existence and development. In the information and discussion polemics that fill modern society, the usual ideas about worldview coordinates are lost.

What is a person like today? What motives struggle and prevail within his soul? What connects him to the world around him? How to achieve what you want in this world? And is it possible to unconsciously trust all signals coming from outside, acting on the principle of "stimulus-response"? Man is still trying to explore himself, to understand his purpose, to reveal his place in the universe. The matter is complicated by the fact that new models of this universe itself raise new, unconventional questions and provoke their new solutions. [1]

Schopenhauer's life is both difficult and easy to describe: he did not leave his own biography, but soon after the philosopher's death, intensive publications of his legacy began,

including far from fully preserved letters, diaries of his early years and draft notes, which allow us to see the genesis of his ideas and his lifelong commitment to the worldview that emerged from his youth, to understand many, but far from complete, realities of his existence.

A year after Schopenhauer's death, the work of his young friend and executor Wilhelm Gwinner, "Arthur Schopenhauer, presented in personal communication" (1861), appeared. Based on this work, Schopenhauer's appearance was considered very unattractive by his subsequent biographers. In order to rehabilitate the thinker, two of his admirers — E. O. Lindner and Yu. Frauenstedt published a joint book as a word of defense, based on memoirs, letters, and drafts.

Along with these works, in the late 60s of the XIX century, his students D. Asher and A. von Doss published letters and notes, and in the 70s, collections of Schopenhauer's letters were published, addressed to his publishers F. Schopenhauer. Brockhaus and I. A. Becker, as well as his admirers Yu. Frauenstedt et al.

Of great importance are the texts of his lectures, prepared by him for students of the University of Berlin, but remained unclaimed at that time: students simply did not sign up for his course, preferring to listen to Hegel, whose lectures were published posthumously on the basis of student notes. Schopenhauer's lectures were published only in the mid-80s of the XX century. Their development is ahead.

Since the second half of the nineteenth century, Schopenhauer's philosophy has been increasingly recognized. In 1890, E. Grisebach published the complete collection of his works in six volumes. By this time, his fame had become worldwide. For new times have come, requiring "new songs". At the end of the XIX century. Kuno Fischer, who created a multi-volume history of philosophy, dedicated an entire volume to him.

Schopenhauer had a significant influence on German literature in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in particular on the work of the then famous writers Wilhelm Busch, Theodor Fontane, and Wilhelm Raabe. Richard Wagner, who was fond of Feuerbach in his youth, became an ardent adherent of Schopenhauer. As for the philosophy of the late 19th century, Schopenhauer was involved in the formation of such powerful philosophical currents of Western thought as philosophy of life, personalism, existentialism, and philosophical anthropology.

**Influence.** The teachings of A. Schopenhauer influenced many artists and writers (p. Wagner, A. Strindburg, L. N. Tolstoy, A. Fet, I. Turgenev, G. Hesse, T. Mann, S. Beckett, S. Baudelaire, H. L. Borges, T. Bernhardt, H. von Hofmannsthal, J. Conrad, A. Gide, S. Mallarme, R. Musil, W. B. Yates, etc.) and thinkers (F. Nietzsche, J. Banzen, O. During, E. Garthman, P. Doissen, Ya. Burchard, A. Bergson, L. Wittgenstein, G. Feichinger, M. Horkheimer, E. Junger, etc.). [2]

## Philosophical teaching

A. Schopenhauer argued that his philosophy expresses "a single thought", and the disclosure of this thought forms a systematic whole, which has an organic character: "A system of thoughts must constantly have an architectonic connection, that is, one where one part always supports the other, but is not supported by it, where the cornerstone supports, finally, all the parts, not supported by them, and where the top is supported by itself, without supporting anything. On the contrary, a single thought, no matter how large its scope, must preserve a perfect unity, connected by systematic threads" [3].

Schopenhauer divides philosophy into the doctrine of the world as representation and the doctrine of the world as will; at the same time, his philosophical system should be thought of as the connection of these worlds and as the highest point of self-knowledge of the will through knowledge.

Schopenhauer was a contemporary of the turbulent era of world history. This was the time of the Great French Revolution, numerous European wars, the hostages and victims of which were tens of thousands of people, when states and kingdoms collapsed and new ones

appeared in their place. When the peoples of Europe groaned under the heel of the new Napoleonic order, when they, inspired by the victorious Patriotic War of the Russian people against Bonaparte, rose to national resistance to the invader. When, in the post-revolutionary era, a new economic and political order and a new way of life were formed.

This was the era of the wild flowering of German philosophy, begun by Kant's Critique of Pure Reason in 1781 and later called classical, when great philosophical systems were created, marked by the pathos of the glorification of reason and the justification for the coming triumph of human thought in solving the highest problems of life and in the realization of human vocation.

The cult of reason and rational knowledge, a deep belief in the progressive development of mankind, in the progress and happiness of the human race as the highest goal of nature (Kant), as the highest wisdom of the absolute spirit (Hegel), the postulation of the reasonableness of human behavior, the rationalistic or religious justification of morality — these are the main achievements of the German classics. It is marked by historical optimism and high humanity. [4]

The results of classical German philosophy were:

1) comprehensive development on the basis of dialectics of the concept of historicism as a principle that justifies the developing contradictory whole. The ancient conjecture about the identity of opposites has become an axiom. A specific language of philosophy was developed, operating with extremely broad concepts that reflect not only the various aspects of reality, but also their development, mutual connections, transitions, and mutual influence;

2) a radical rethinking of the problem of the relationship between subject and object: the German classics for the first time proclaimed the activity of consciousness, the intrusion of the subject into the object and their continuous interaction;

3) justification of the broader scope of the sphere of consciousness. The system of thought also included spontaneous unconscious components of thinking, which are not controlled by the mind and mind, and which are important for the act of creativity;

4) the affirmation of the idea of historical social regularity as the progressive development of humanity, which, through creative activity and productive labor, moves towards the common good;

5) the introduction of art into the sphere of historical consideration; aesthetics appears in this case as a mediating link between theory and practice, science and morality;

6) in the field of ethics, the idea of duty as the absolute motive of moral behavior has emerged.

From a methodological and methodological point of view, he is alien to the desire to create a philosophical system that embraces the universality of being and thinking.

It is no accident that he treated with contempt and dislike the system-creating luminaries of the German classics — Fichte, Schelling, and especially Hegel, calling them the famous sophists of the post-Kantian period, who should be expelled from the realm of philosophers for their quackery.

Although Schopenhauer proclaimed his rejection of system-creation, modern researchers rightly insist that his philosophy, due to its distinctness, consistency of argumentation and versatility, and, above all, due to the attempt to find a single beginning for the world and man, is precisely a system, and he himself is a "systematic thinker". [5]

Despite the fact that the only subject of his interests and his teaching was man-concrete, empirical, really acting, immersed in the vale of his own physical and spiritual imperfection, unfavorable external circumstances and fear of the mortal destiny, the structure of his teaching acts as a kind of system that embraces the world, and the person in it is only a part of it. Although Schopenhauer's aspirations are humanistic, although he is concerned about the problem of human happiness, although he wants to teach people true knowledge, he promises them not happiness, but only peace.

Schopenhauer's main work, *The World as Will and Representation*, was published at a time when the great systems of Hegel and Schelling were not yet complete, when Fichte's legacy



generating being by its original. This generation has often been understood in the most straightforward, physical sense, in the same way that one thing in our world generates another. We find this idea already in the Milesian philosophers (Thales, Anaximander), in Heraclitus, in Plato, and in Aristotle. In the Neoplatonic idea of emanation and in the Christian concept of the creation of the world out of nothing, at first glance, there is a significant complication of the idea of generation. However, in essence, these changes are not so fundamental.

The refusal to use specific physical models for the act of generating being by the Absolute (similar to the Ionians' model of "thickening-rarefaction" or Plato's model of cutting "elementary geometric shapes out of empty space") does not change anything, the general scheme of the causal relationship between the Absolute and the being generated by it remains unchanged. At the same time, a natural question arises here: is the category of causality universal enough for us to extend it beyond the sphere where it is originally born - the sphere of concrete natural phenomena - to a sphere that lies beyond everything concrete and natural. Kant first thought about this and came to the well-known conclusion that the category of causality, being the a priori form of our understanding, applies only to the sphere of possible experience.

Schopenhauer sees the great significance of Kant's philosophy in the criticism of the naive understanding of the connection between the Absolute and the world through the category of causality; in this naive understanding, the Absolute was most often thought of on a par with the world and was actually equated with individual things, differing from them quantitatively, but not qualitatively. [8]

According to Kant, the Absolute must be radically different from everything real, objective; it must be transcendent to the world. It is this character that Kant attributes to the world of things in itself. However, Kant himself did not pay due attention to the consequences arising from his understanding of causality. Believing that things in themselves "affect our consciousness, causing it to generate the world of phenomena, he twice applies the category of causality beyond the limits of possible experience - in relation to the relationship of things in themselves" and consciousness and in relation to the connection of consciousness with the world of phenomena."

Kant would probably have objected to this reproach in the sense that the category of causality presupposes the obligatory use of the form of time and the separation of cause and effect in time, and therefore in the case of the relationship of things in themselves", consciousness and the world of phenomena", it should not be about causality, but about a more general form of generation" and justification" of one by another.

In fact, it is against this possible objection that Schopenhauer's arguments on the law of sufficient reason, which he considered to be the source and foundation of his entire system, are directed. Kant's immediate successors in German philosophy followed the path he had outlined, defining the Absolute as something superempirical, incomprehensible in direct experience. However, they recognized even more clearly and directly than Kant that the transcendent Absolute,

first, directly determines the existence of the objective world (Kant, as is well known, avoids such statements in relation to the world of things in itself)

- secondly, it can be rationally known by a person. Both of these propositions are false, and in their falsity they complement each other. [9]

In asserting that the Absolute determines "the being of all phenomena of the objective world, these philosophers (meaning Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel) returned to Kant's condemned way of thinking of the Absolute through the generalized category of causality. At the same time, they represented the Absolute as radically different from all earthly reality, as transcendent. Insisting on its rational cognizability, Kant's successors were forced to portray this cognition as a system of complex procedures carried out by reason.

Indeed, the transcendent for any philosopher of the classical era is opposed to the immanent, it cannot be given to human consciousness directly, as the immanent is given; if its knowledge is possible, it is possible only through a complex system of mediations, in which we

restore" the essence of the transcendent by its consequences", actions" in the sphere immanent to consciousness. [10]

The result was that the Absolute could only be expressed through complex abstractions that went far beyond what could be obtained in real experience, in direct contemplation. It was on this path that Modern European rationalism came to the need to use certain concepts to describe the Absolute: absolute substance, absolute causality, absolutely necessary being, absolute Self, absolute spirit, etc. Schopenhauer sharply criticizes both of these propositions in his first major work "On the fourfold root of the law of sufficient justification" (1813), which he repeatedly called the key to his entire philosophical system. Causality, Schopenhauer argues in this work, is only a variation of the more general principle of sufficient reason, according to which we look for a basis for each element of being in another element of being.

It is thanks to this principle that the being that appears to our consciousness is whole and coherent, but at the same time, by virtue of the same principle, all the elements of being are relative, not self-sufficient, since each of them is dependent on the other, which in turn is dependent on the third, and so on.

In addition, this principle determines the dependence of all the elements of being on consciousness, since in its own sense, according to Schopenhauer, the law of sufficient reason (like Kant's causality) determines the a priori forms of action of our understanding. "All our representations," writes Schopenhauer, " are objects of the subject, and all the objects of the subject are our representations. [11,12]

Schopenhauer's main idea about the law of sufficient reason is not at all what he himself puts in the foreground-not in the different concretisation of this law in different spheres of reality. Schopenhauer develops and reinforces" Kant's above-mentioned idea of causality. No matter how obvious the necessity of using the principle of sufficient reason in every reasoning and act of thinking may seem, it is applicable, Schopenhauer argues, only in the sphere of representation "- in the sphere of concrete being, which appears to us in the form of an external" and internal " world, but not in relation to the relationship of being with its primary source, the Absolute.

The most important point of Schopenhauer's work is that the principle of sufficient reason is a universal constitutive principle of the world of phenomena, it applies only to the relative elements of being, dependent on each other and on the subject, but not to the Absolute.

Therefore, any attempt to assume the relation of the Absolute to the world in the system of concepts defines", depends", conditions" must be recognized as false. At the same time, Schopenhauer recognizes as false all attempts at a rational description of the Absolute, which were characteristic of the previous philosophy and used the above-mentioned abstract constructions such as absolute substance" and absolute causality".

In such constructions, the qualities of absoluteness and unconditionality are combined with the concepts of substance, necessity, causality, etc., which in their essence exclude any absoluteness and are applicable only within the continuum of the correlative elements of being. As Schopenhauer writes, to be necessary and to follow from a given foundation are interchangeable concepts that, as such, can replace each other everywhere. [13]

The concept of an absolutely "necessary being", which is favored by philosophizing talkers, therefore contains a contradiction: the predicate "absolutely" (i.e., "absolutely"). "independent of anything else") destroys the definition by which "necessary" is conceivable and has meaning.

Here again we have an example of the misuse of abstract concepts as a metaphysical trick, similar to those I have cited when talking about the concepts of "immaterial substance", "absolute ground", "cause in general", etc.»

In these fundamental arguments, Schopenhauer outlines a well-known trend of criticism of abstract principles," which was developed by V. Solovyov at the end of the XIX century and which was of fundamental importance for the development of Russian philosophy at the beginning of the XX century.

Following Schopenhauer, Solovyov sharply criticized the entire preceding rationalist tradition for the fact that it was dominated by a completely false way of explicating the Absolute-through abstract constructions of our mind, completely detached from the direct grasp of being.

The problem that Schopenhauer brought to the fore concerns the starting point of philosophical reasoning about the world, the starting point of metaphysics. [14]

As Descartes correctly noted, it is possible and necessary to start here only with the self-evident, with what is no longer amenable to further analysis and cannot be attributed to something simpler, cannot be decomposed" into something simpler. It is necessary to examine all our experience, all that is given to us in one way or another, and, without thinking of something that goes beyond the immediate given, to find in it those elements"-the foundations", the origins", from which one can start in understanding the entire system of being.

Nevertheless, if we accept Schopenhauer's logic, there must be such a possibility. It is given by the law of identity, applied in a broad, dialectical sense: if some different elements of reality cannot be considered as correlating and justifying each other, then they can still be considered as identical, despite all their differences.

Only in this case do we avoid the need to apply the law of sufficient reason to understand the elements in question. Although, of course, such a possibility seems unthinkable within the framework of the "ordinary", rational-scientific understanding of the concrete reality that lies before us.

### Result

As a result, we come together with Schopenhauer to the following statement: a philosophical, metaphysical understanding of the relation of the Absolute and the world (concrete being) is possible only within the framework of the model of the direct identity of the Absolute and the world. [15]

When considering phenomena within the "world" we must use the law of sufficient reason to justify this phenomenon through other phenomena and through the world in its general structure. However, when we try to find the source of the" being "of a particular phenomenon in metaphysical consideration, we must look for it according to the law of identity" in itself, in its immediate unity" with the specified source". The source of "being" must, as it were, appear" in the phenomenon itself, be itself in its distinct hypostasis."

In contrast to the classical tradition, in which the transcendent being, the Absolute, cannot be directly manifested in the immanent sphere of human consciousness, Schopenhauer insists on such an immediate manifestation of the Absolute.

Because of its immanent appearance, it does not need to be searched for intensely, much less constructed with the help of reason, it just needs to be noticed, because the Absolute is the Absolute because it justifies everything and is present as an integral basis in everything, and it is present and justifies in immediacy, non-concealment." [16]

As we will see below, Schopenhauer similarly overcomes the classical dichotomy of "part of the whole", especially in understanding the relationship of man to the Absolute and the objective world. However, let us return to the passage in the book *The World as Will and Representation*, where Schopenhauer asserts the direct manifestation of the Absolute in any element of world existence.

### Conclusion

So, Schopenhauer's conclusion could be formulated as follows: The Absolute is directly fixed by a person in any experience, as a different form of the given elements of this experience. But Schopenhauer does not speak of the Absolute in general, nor of every element of experience: the absolute principle that can be revealed in direct experience is the will, and it is not revealed directly in all the elements of experience (representation), but only in the appearance to each person as a representation of his own body. These limitations of the principle

here implied are very important to Schopenhauer, as they lead to important consequences that have become the most famous and popular theses of his philosophy. [17]

However, we must admit that they are the main mistakes of Schopenhauer. First of all, it is quite incomprehensible why the unconditional principle found in phenomena should be identified with one of the particular manifestations of man. Schopenhauer in this case, of course, is under the influence of Kant, who contrasted the sphere of volition, practical reason, with the sphere of knowledge, theoretical reason, and considered it as the area where the world of things in itself (i.e., the Absolute) is revealed to us.

In addition, the will is most opposed to reason with its lawfulness and necessity; believing the essence of man and the world in the will, Schopenhauer realized the most important intention of his philosophy - the rejection of the rationalist tradition of classical philosophy. Schopenhauer is undoubtedly right in believing that an absolute, unconditional beginning can be given to man only in the form of a perception of himself, of his being-ground. But by singling out one particular ability, the side of the personality, as such, he makes a mistake. [18]

But in making this generalization, Schopenhauer, without noticing it, returns to the tradition he rejected, in which the Absolute was presented as a kind of construction of our mind. For he himself admits that the immediate presence is characteristic only of the will, which manifests itself in bodily movements; the will, which manifests itself in all other elements of experience, becomes a secondary, abstract assumption of consciousness. It is easy to see that in a large part of his main book, when speaking about the will and its appearance in the world, Schopenhauer is referring to this abstract will in general, and not to the directly given principle (the will of an individual) from which he began his reasoning.

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