CHAPTER I

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER  "THE WORLD AS WILL AND ART"
In his doctoral Thesis "The Four Fold Root of Sufficient Reason", Schopenhauer had cast doubts upon the prevailing opinion that Reason was the instrument for discovering the nature of Reality. Before him, Hegel had stated that the universe manifested the force of Spirit. The Hegelian explanation of the Spirit was very popular in German Philosophy and Hegel's authority almost reigned supreme till Schopenhauer challenged him. In The World As Will and Idea, Schopenhauer says that blind and irrational 'Will' is the ultimate reality. He differs from Hegel's view for he maintains that it is the Will and not the Spirit which unfolds itself. Schopenhauer makes 'Will' supreme over everything and Hegel's doctrine of the Spirit is devalued when he states that the Spirit is only a tool for the all powerful Will.

Schopenhauer sees the working of blind Will in the universe. This Will, which he identifies as the
Will to live, is the very kernel of reality itself. It is a powerful urge without sense or reason and it is active even without the guidance and control of knowledge. It appears in everything and is not affected by birth or death. It is a 'thing-in-itself' for it is above time and space and exists independently of our perception. The Will lies outside the province of the 'Principle of Sufficient Reason' for it is groundless. It differs from its manifestations which are entirely subject to it.

Schopenhauer finds that the whole world of phenomena, including man, is the manifestation of the one Will. Each species, each organism is determined by the Universal Will. Schopenhauer's cosmic will is self-determined and is free. It is:

the ultimate irreducible primeval principle of being, the source of all phenomena, the begetter present and active in every single one of them, the impelling force producing the whole visible world and all life.¹

This Will is the impelling force which produces the world and life and is the source of all phenomena. Like Shelley’s 'West Wind', the Will is wild, uncontrollable and ruthless. It demands objectivation and this objectivation appears faintly in inorganic things, more fully in plants and in animals and most completely in man. The Will's objectivation occurs in such a way that its original unity becomes a multiplicity and the process receives the appropriate name of the 'principle of individuation'. The Will thus disperses itself into the varied parts of the phenomenal world existing in time and space, but, at the same time it remains in full strength in each single and smallest of those parts. It is absolute, free and all powerful and is a striving, yearning force which takes the various forms according to its will.

In Thomas Mann's Buddenbrooks, a novel which receives its intellectual plot from Schopenhauer, the novelist depicts Will in the personality of the Consul’s father — old Buddenbrooks. In him we see the picture of "a lantern illuminating the way of the Will". Neither the imaginary theory about the respective activities of lightning and thunder formed by his grand-child Tony, nor, the romantic fancies of
Consul Buddenbrooks -- his son -- could assail the Will of old Buddenbrooks to be a Buddenbrook. The old man remains the embodiment of "the perfect object of the Will".

According to Schopenhauer, the Will is, because it wills, and it wills because it is, and there is no other external power or force to check it.

Schopenhauer's Will differs from Theism which:

represents the world as proceeding from a will . . . [and] puts this will outside the universe and causes it to act on things only indirectly . . . With [him] on the other hand, the will acts not so much on things as in them, indeed they themselves are simply nothing but the very visibility of the will².

Schopenhauer's Will is the inside of the world and the world is only the mirror of this willing. In his conception of the world, Schopenhauer echoes Plato who says that the things found in it:

have no real existence
they are always becoming,
they never are. The only things that have real existence, that always are and never pass away, are the actual originals of those shadows, the eternal ideas, the primeval forms of all things . . . they are timeless and truly existent.\(^3\)

According to Schopenhauer also, the 'eternal becoming endless flux' characterises the inner nature of Will. The very fact that nature continues to maintain the forms and repeats the life process throughout infinite time proves that its core is the very will to live. To Schopenhauer, therefore,

\(^3\) Thomas Mann, The Living Thought of Schopenhauer, op. cit., p. 2.
everything is an expression of the primordial Will to live, which may be characterised as irrational and blind impulse. The blind will to live appears as an unconscious striving in the whole of unorganised nature, but the unsatisfied striving shows itself more revealingly in man's incessant fight for happiness. Inspite of this ceaseless strife, man as an objectivation of the will fails to reach a permanent Eldorado in life. Like an animal or an inorganic matter, he is also the product of blind will. But he differs from them because he possesses certain qualities which have accrued to him in the course of his evolutionary development. Thus knowledge, intellect or reason are those qualities which differentiate man from a beast or a plant.

The irrational will is more naked in the plant which reveals nothing but the mere striving for existence. In it, the struggle for existence is blind for it is not guided or directed by any motive. In the same way also, the animal appears more naive than man, for knowledge or intellect makes the latter "capable of a high degree of dissimulation".
Schopenhauer is of the opinion that knowledge and intellect are totally different from Will. He finds that Will is independent of knowledge and can exist without it. Will as the dominant factor is not, therefore, conditioned by the mind, intellect or reason. The intellect is not the master and it thus occupies the second position to the Will. As servant to the Will, "it is originally quite a stranger to the decisions of the Will". The Will is ever active even without any knowledge, for the latter is completely subject to the Will. Like sensibility, nerves, brain, the sex organs, knowledge too is an expression of Will at a given phase of its objectivation. This Will is not susceptible to any satisfaction and so it goes on forever.

The plant and the animal, for example, reveal a restless and never satisfied striving. We find the same strife in man. Man seeks satisfaction, but it is beyond his reach. His desires are always thwarted and he remains unfulfilled. In life's struggle he achieves nothing but pain and suffering. In this view, Schopenhauer comes very close to what the Buddha said 500 years before Christ. According to the Buddha, life contains
little but pain and suffering which are the products of desire. Schopenhauer also arrives at the conclusion that desire leads to nothing but pain and suffering. He finds that man is a creature of pain and sorrow. His Will drives him to want or desire one thing after another. But the moment his desire is fulfilled, a terrible boredom and void follow. Life becomes unbearable again and he once more strives for something new. In this way life swings between pain and emptiness, desire and boredom. Satisfaction and happiness are a negative quality but suffering or pain is a positive state.

The desire of the 'Will to live' can never be satiated and even death or suicide fails to put an end to its continual wish. The Will to live triumphs over death through the reproductive organs of the species and sexual love is the affirmation of the 'Will to live'. Man comes again and again to the position of being able to preserve his own life. So the error which has brought him into being -- the original sin of his birth can never be set right by death or suicide.

In Buddenbrooks, Hanno's father, Thomas, is perturbed by the premonition of death. He poses this question -- 'Do I hope to live on in my son . . .
Where shall I be when I am dead"? The answer he receives is "I shall be in all those who forever will say 'I'. This is the Schopenhauerian belief in the power of the cosmic will to safeguard the species.

It is in sex that Schopenhauer finds the forms of the 'Will to live' and it is this discovery which anticipates Freud's libido. A man in love is, according to Schopenhauer, a slave of the will which is indifferent to the individual's self-hood. Here all 'I saying' must come to a stop for the all powerful will goes on endlessly without regard for the individual as member of the species. As there is no place for logic and reason in the Darwinian's struggle for survival, so also there is none in Schopenhauer's world of blind Will.

But as accidents take place in this world, so also an accident occurs when the will exerts its power to express itself. The Will in its blind and irrational struggle produces the mind, and this accidental product, the mind, brings to man what is called knowledge. What the mind sees in the will is utter senselessness, an almost frightening absence of

logic. The mind then rejects the Will and knowledge which proceeds originally from the will itself and:

originally destined for the service of the Will for the accomplishment of its aims ... remains almost throughout entirely subjected to its service. It can deliver itself from this bondage, throw off its yoke and free from all the aims of will exist purely for itself simply as a clear mirror of the world.\(^5\)

Erich Heller rightly points out that the plot of Schopenhauer's philosophy is based on a conflict between the will and the mind. This conflict starts because the mind, finding the world meaningless and utterly blind, cannot accept the irrational will. The mind thus tries to free itself from the tyranny and bondage of the will. It, therefore, creates its own world and leaps into it. This world is what Schopenhauer calls the world of 'contemplation'. It is in this world that all stirvings and desires cease. The world is the world of nothingness and all that it stretches before us is

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nothingness. The mind thus liberates itself and passes into a void where it experiences emancipation. The world of contemplation has no substance, for all substance has been left behind in the world of Will. This is a paradox which even Schopenhauer himself would not solve. It underlines the plot of his philosophy and prepares the ground for his celebrated philosophy of aesthetic contemplation.

Schopenhauer admits that the will can will against itself and when this takes place, there is no more will, no idea, and, therefore, no world. By denying itself, the will has willed against itself and abolishes its itselfness and so 'nothing' is left. Negation is thus a passport to 'nothing' and in a state of resignation, perfect willlessness prevails. At this stage the individual who is an objectivation of the will ceases to will anything and confirms in himself the greatest indifference to everything. The assertion of the will is denied and so the will stops. When the will ceases, man achieves inward joy and peace. The denial of the will ultimately brings tranquility and freedom from cares and suffering. Hence Resignation delivers the undividual from pain and anxiety for:
the aesthetic pleasure in the beautiful consists in great measure in the fact that in entering the state of pure contemplation, we are lifted for the moment above all willing i.e. all wishes and cares; we become as it were, freed from ourselves.

When the will to live is rendered ineffective, a great change takes place for the individual and the subject no longer remains an object of the will. A will-less subject appears in his place and this subject enjoys a rest from being a tool for the satisfaction of the will. He adopts a purely objective and disinterested point of view. He stops considering the 'where, the when, the why and the whither of things' and looks simply at the 'what'. In the state of contemplation he loses himself in the object forgetting his own individuality and becomes the clear mirror of the object or fuses into one with it. Now as a pure will-less, painless, time-less subject of knowledge, he contemplates only the essential in an object. He ceases to be an individual and has lost

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6 Thomas Mann, The Living Thoughts of Schopenhauer, op. cit. pp. 110, 111.
himself in his contemplation. In contemplation, the world as will has vanished and what remains is the idea. When the perceived particular thing is raised to the Idea of the whole species and the knowing individual to the subject of will-less knowledge, an aesthetic state has been reached by him and the attention is no longer blurred by any motive or purpose. This painless aesthetic state is praised by Epicurus as the greatest achievement of life. Schopenhauer finds that at a particular juncture when the mind takes a leap into the world of contemplation, something new is born and the new-born child is Art.

Art is a kind of anaesthetic for the will to live and it acts as a liberator. It brings about a kind of nirvana from life - from the world of will. So for the first time, the life of will has its negation and, therefore, its enemy in Art. No one before Schopenhauer had seen this point, for everyone thought that Art was a mere representation of life. It is Schopenhauer who comes to the conclusion that Art is the mind's leap which involves a rejection of life and the soul's passing into a world of nothingness and void.

Schopenhauer is the first philosopher to bring out the conflict between Will and Mind. Out of
the dramatic conflict between Will and Mind is born Art and it becomes the most effective adversary of life. "Art is everywhere at its goal" and in this respect it differs from Sciences which never attains its end. This is possible for Art because it arrests the object of contemplation and makes it a representation of the whole. It does this without any dependence on the use of rational methods.

According to Schopenhauer, the artist as a will-less subject identifies his suffering with that of other people and recognises in others his true self. He vividly sees the suffering humanity and shudders at his own existence. Turning away from life he ceases to will. He now enters into the state of contemplation and experiences inward peace and joy. He recognises the ideas of things and becomes momentarily impersonal. His achievement is to make people look into the world through his eyes. Aesthetic pleasure in contemplation proceeds from the recognition of the individual object. It also proceeds from the fact that the knower recognises himself not as individual but as a pure will-less subject of knowledge.

Worringer rightly points out that according to Schopenhauer:
the felicity of aesthetic contemplation consists precisely in the fact that in it man is delivered from his will and remains only as pure subject, as the pure mirror of the object ... he who is immersed in such contemplation ceases to be an individual for the individual has lost himself in this contemplation. He is the pure will-less, painless, timeless subject of cognition.

The artist as a pure will-less subject no longer hates or desires but simply contemplates on the idea of the object before him. A work of art or the perceived object is not related to desire. It, therefore, enables the beholder to liberate himself from the bondage of the will. As the knowing subject, the artist takes the help of knowledge to reproduce by means of Art what he has apprehended in contemplation.

According to Schopenhauer, the sense of beauty is associated with the contemplation of phenomena agreeable to the beholder. In their presence he

loses himself spontaneously in the object of his contemplation. But when he contemplates the Ideas of phenomena hostile to himself, self-forgetfulness is difficult and he requires efforts to lose himself in them. However, in rising above the hostile aspects of the phenomenon to contemplation of its idea, the will-less subject has a sense of victory over the terror inspired by the idea of the phenomena. A feeling of sublime is achieved when the sense of triumph is injected into the pleasure of contemplation.

Schopenhauer finds that everything is beautiful because at some stage of the will's objectivity, 'everything' is an expression of an idea. Since the Will is above time, space and causality, it is self-determining and wills freely to objectify itself. In its irrational striving, the Will follows a fixed line of development in which we can see successive grades of objectivation rising step by step from the level of inanimate and blind forces of nature to the highest level attained in the conscious life of man. In aesthetic contemplation of inorganic and vegetative life, the Ideas represent only low grades of the objectivation of the will and are, therefore, not manifestation of deep significance and rich intent. If, on the other hand, man
or animals are the objects of aesthetic contemplation, pleasure will consist in the object or the comprehension of these ideas which are the nearest revelation of the will.

Thus in these successive grades we find the will objectively presenting with more and more distinctness till at last in human beings we get our closest view of it.

In classifying and arranging the different Arts, Schopenhauer points out the successive grades of objectivation of the Will. At the lowest level are the blind mechanical forces of nature.

Architecture is the art which reveals the Ideas manifested in the inanimate world. In it the Will is manifested in the conflict between rigidity and gravity. Architecture also contemplates other properties of matter such as fluidity, cohesion and the reflection of light. It achieves beauty only when it succeeds in revealing a balance and harmony between these material forces and properties of matter.

Landscape painting comes one step above architecture. As an Art, landscape painting reveals
the hidden forms and laws of inanimate nature. Animal painting and sculpture show the Ideas exemplified in the lower order of animate things.

Next come painting and sculpture of human form. Sculpture has more to do with man's outward grace and virtue but it cannot successfully portray his inner life and character. In delineating the nature and Idea of an individual person, portraiture as an Art has to work within the limits of its materials like painting and canvas.

Music as an Art satisfies Schopenhauer and he finds it as direct an objectivation and copy of the will as the world itself. As a copy of the Will it does not speak of the shadow but of the thing-in-itself. In Schopenhauer's opinion, music is unique. Unlike other Arts, it is not a revelation of some definite idea or ideas. Its works are not copies of copies, but first hand imitation of the original. As an Art, music liberates the human mind from the servitude of the Will. Schopenhauer finds that it can do so because of the peculiar relation which it bears to the Will. The universal language used by the music composer is not discursive but still it expresses the deepest secrets of human willing and feeling and also discloses the kernel of the world.

Irwin Edman (ed.), The Philosophy of Schopenhauer, op cit., p. 201.
Music, therefore, is according to Schopenhauer, the only art to penetrate to the core of the Will and to express directly its essence without the need of Ideas.

Schopenhauer holds the view that Poetry as a great Art represents the ideas of man in all their complexity. The poet's language objectifies the Ideas of man and its aim is to manifest these Ideas. These Ideas constitute the highest grade of the objectivation of the Will. The poet, therefore, is the mirror which reveals to us what man feels, thinks and does. In creating and developing his characters, the poet has transformed himself into them and speaks out of each of them.

Schopenhauer detects in Tragedy the summit of poetical Art. Tragedy is, therefore, the highest kind of poetry. Through it, we feel most intimately and directly the irrationality and blindness of the Will and the strife and suffering with which its objectivations are infected.