

An Introductory Analysis About the Conception of Death in Schopenhauer¹

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Abstract—*This article aims to explain, in a propaedeutic way, the fundamentals about the conception of death in Schopenhauer. Thus, it is dedicated to the book *The World as Will and Representation* (1966), precisely in these manuscripts: *The World as Will, First Aspect: The Objectification of the Will and On Death and Its Relation to the Indestructibility of Our Inner Nature*. Hence, this research adopts the following methodological plan: initially it exposes the concept of will and representation regarding the phenomenon of death which throughout philosophical tradition proves to be one of the earliest man's metaphysical anguishes. Subsequently it displays the author's philosophical argumentation in relation to the phenomenon of death that is relevant for understanding all Schopenhauerian philosophy. Schopenhauer (1966) demonstrates this fact, in the discourse about death, as something inherent to man's phenomenal existence that is a manifestation of the will to live.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

This article aims to clarify, through a propaedeutic way, some of fundamentals on the conception of death in Arthur Schopenhauer's view. Therefore, it adopts as a basis the texts *On Death and Its Relation to the Indestructibility of Our Inner Nature* and *The World as Will, First Aspect: The Objectification of the Will* both from *The World as Will and Representation*. Accordingly, it seeks to understand the role of death and of the dying process as the main ways of human predisposition for philosophical reflection on the meaning of life.

Thereby, throughout the text a following theoretical and methodological plan is adopted: at the beginning it shows a brief approach about the concept of will from the book *The World as Will and Representation* (1966), since, the world is beyond sensible as well as the will is a force that moves bodies in this world; hence, this notion interacts with the philosophical conception of death in Schopenhauer, especially, when it exhibits the will as a force which acts in relation to the phenomenon of death.

The introduction of the paper should explain the nature of the problem, previous work, purpose, and the

contribution of the paper. The contents of each section may be provided to understand easily about the paper.

II. BRIEFS CONSIDERATIONS ON THE WORLD AS WILL AND REPRESENTATION

The research discusses, in this topic, important concepts for the understanding of Schopenhauerian philosophy, namely, will and representation. These terms are in one of Arthur Schopenhauer's main works that is under the title of *The World as Will and Representation* (1966) in which he presents the following philosophical proposition: the world just as it is would be a duality that presents itself as will and representation. As a representation the world would be of visible things, of forms, and of matter that is continuously in motion; the other world as a will would be the inner force that moves and transforms others. According to Torres Filho (2005), Schopenhauer himself makes clearest this idea considering the point of view that the world as representation has two essential, necessary, and inseparable halves. One half is the object; its forms are space and time for this reason the plurality. The other half is the subject; it is not placed in time and space because it exists, as entire and indivisible, in every being who perceives it. Consequently, just one of these beings with the object completes the world as representation just perfectly as the millions of similar human beings that exist; However, if this being disappears, the world as representation does not exist anymore.

Specifically in *The World as Will, First Aspect: The Objectification of the Will* which is the second book of *The World as Will and Representation*, the link between philosophy and natural science is explicit, first, as it justifies the sensible things in cause and effect relationship which depends on space and time to happen; second, as these things submit themselves to the inner force that exists in all being, to will, to our inner essence, and to natural law in addition to all law of causality.

Besides this holistic view on man and his space, Schopenhauer (1966) also presents the metaphysical dimension of things inner essence through the concept of will which is perceptible, mainly, when the author brings to light the life cycle dimension and the cosmic interconnection that is a result of the natural force which moves and exists in all beings. Accordingly, Torres Filho (2005) says the starting point of Schopenhauer's thought is in Kantian philosophy who set the distinction between phenomenon and thing in itself that he named *noumenon*. In other words, what appears to us and what exists in itself. The thing-in-itself or *noumenon* could not be an object of scientific knowledge, conforming to Kant, as classical metaphysics intended until that moment. In order that the

science would be restricted to the world of phenomena and constructed by the categories of understanding as by the forms of sensibility (space and time). Schopenhauer concludes, from these distinctions, that the world would be nothing any more than representations which the author understands as the synthesis between subjective and objective as well as between external reality and human consciousness.

In this regard, the philosopher under consideration expresses the human being through reason has the certainty about does not know the elements around, but he just feels them using his sense; as " an eye that sees a sun, a hand that feels an earth", the world around exists by the representation that personifies all over, considering the relation with who perceives it. Schopenhauer (1966) reveals that appearances make the reality.

According to the previous reasoning, the things that exist and are perceptible are forms of matter in eternal permanence which is called phenomenon, what the sense organs can perceive and be affected; since, the content of all organic matter in the human body is in constant motion and changing from one state to another, as in an eternal cycle that always tends to happen. On the phenomenon of death and the changes of matter, Schopenhauer (1966) ponders that the concepts of disappearance and permanence cannot apply themselves to our true essence or to the thing-in-itself that is in our phenomenon. It occurs once they are taken from time which is simply the form of the phenomenon. It is possible, nonetheless, only imagine the indestructibility of that core of our phenomenon as the permanence of its own and, considering the scheme of matter, also as a permanence that persists in time under all alterations of forms.

Then, the philosopher expresses that the human being, through reason, obtains the certainty of not knowing the elements around him; he only has sensations of the forms that exist. We know that this phenomenal existence is the representation of the relationship between will and its objectification. In this case, Torres Filho (2005) notes that science would restrict itself to the world of phenomena. The forms of sensibility and the categories of understanding would constitute science. Therefore, Schopenhauer affirms, according to Torres, that the world would be no more than representations which he sees as a synthesis between subjective and objective as between external reality and human consciousness.

The concept of will that Arthur Schopenhauer proposes is important to the metaphysics of nature, specifically in the work *The World as Will and Representation* (1966). The author manifests will in the

thing-in-itself² and in the essence of the vital force such as a wanting to live that is not only about the man but also extends to all beings in general. In Schopenhauer's (1966, 138-140) words:

It is the innermost essence, the kernel, of every particular thing and also of the whole. It appears in every blindly acting force of nature, and also in the deliberate conduct of man, and the great difference between the two concerns only the degree of the manifestation, not the inner nature of what is manifested. [...] The will as thing-in-itself is quite different from its phenomenon, and is entirely free from all the forms of the phenomenon into which it first passes when it appears, and which therefore concern only its objectivity, and are foreign to the will itself.

It understands that will also involves the meaning of thing-in-itself that Plato recognizes as eternal ideas or immutable forms and which Kant emphasizes in the phenomenal relation of effect to cause. The objectivity of will in relation to the phenomenon of death is in the maintaining of vital force that keeps the existence. The Will also involves the meaning of thing-in-itself that Plato recognizes as eternal ideas or immutable forms and which Kant emphasizes in the phenomenal relation of effect to cause. The objectivity of will in relation to the phenomenon of death is in the maintaining of vital force that keeps the existence. Schopenhauer, reflecting on the inner essence governing each *anima*, concludes that in the inner of being there is a force animating, moving, and giving impulse to bodies, externally and internally, which we call Will. (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966).

Regarding to this, the access to phenomenon is the representation of the objectification of the will that acts in all beings; since, it is not from the outside that one must arrive at the essence of things, this is an unsuccessful searching that finds only ghosts or formulas; as a man who goes around a castle looking in vain for an entrance, and sometimes drawing the façades. The author uses this metaphor as an example of the illusion that physical forms can capture. (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966)

² This term is an appropriation of Kant's doctrine as a result of the conceptual approach between both authors. The thing-in-itself is nothing more than representation, it only exists in relation to the phenomenon according to Schopenhauer's immanent philosophy. The author's greatest concern, however, is not explaining the thing-in-itself, but determining that the will to live is in this; on the other hand, the phenomenon only exists in relation to the thing-in-itself. Another important point for Kant is the knowledge of the world that is perceived by the senses and behind that would be the thing-in-itself which is the true essence.

The example that Schopenhauer (1966) gives about the act of drawing a façade in an attempt of reaching reality is the opposite of searching for real knowledge, as it is only possible achieving through an understanding beyond the surface of things that is not merely on visible things or accessible for the subject who knows. In fact, it is necessary an inner knowledge about phenomena to understanding the duality of beings in general.

For Schopenhauer (1966), the key to all human existence is in the recognition of this relationship between will and representation and the inner force with its visible manifestation present in the body, thus:

He would then also call the inner, to him incomprehensible, nature of those manifestations and actions of his body a force, a quality, or a character, just as he pleased, but he would have no further insight into it. All this, however, is not the case; on the contrary, the answer to the riddle is given to the subject of knowledge appearing as individual, and this answer is given in the word Will. This and this alone gives him the key to his own phenomenon, reveals to him the significance and shows him the inner mechanism of his being, his actions, his movements (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 128).

Every voluntary movement that the body produces comprising animal functions is the phenomenon of an act of will, in other words, a representation of the whole that organizes animal life in its development and unfolding of the species. This is nothing more than a phenomenon of will manifestation.

Sensibility, nerves, brain, just like other parts of the organic being, are only an expression of the will at this grade of its objectivity; hence the representation that arises through them is also destined to serve the will as a means (*μηχανή*) for the attainment of its now complicated (*πολυτελέστερα*) ends, for the maintenance of a being with many different needs. (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 202)

In its most complex definition, we can consider will as "the innermost essence, the kernel, of every particular thing and also of the whole. It appears in every blindly acting force of nature" (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, 138). The will extends to the individual represented in the species that organizes the biological complexity of the phenomenal existence which acts independently of all

forms of phenomenon. Regardless of any action of bodies, there is always the will.

For the individual finds his body as an object among objects, to all of which it has many different relations and connexions according to the principle of sufficient reason. Hence a consideration of these always leads back, by a shorter or longer path, to his body, and thus to his will. (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 176-177).

The phenomena that occur are independent of time and space as they are a manifestation of will in the hybrid duality as will and representation. For example, with the phenomenon that happens when a hair comes off the body, it is perceptible to the senses when it falls on the floor that rests and it is moved by a force independent of the time it takes to fall and space. However, the will always exists, whether in the form of the growth or renewal of the hair fiber resulted from this entire infinite cycle and remaining independent of the circumstances of time and space as it is an action of the will. Therefore, the will as a thing-in-itself that is different and independent from the phenomenon is only objectified in the manifestations of the body as the "inner essence of any striving and operating force in nature" (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 139).

Considering the aspects of previous discussions, it is clear that modern sciences largely influenced Arthur Schopenhauer's ideas such as Charles Darwin's theories about the study of species, the knowledge of the world reality associated with natural sciences, and biological thought. We can compare the basic principles of Charles Darwin's ideas with some propositions of Schopenhauer's philosophy, especially when it gives attention to the reproduction of species and the maintenance of life through the renewal of beings as a consequence of a cycle. In this cycle, the importance of whole, which is the continuity of lives through species, overlaps the individual.

Another starting point for Schopenhauer's thought is the Kantian philosophy. Immanuel Kant's³ philosophy, indeed, faced two important sciences for that time: mathematics and physics. The two sciences became a

path for those who wanted to know the absolute and universal systems as well as the natural phenomena. Next to the development of these empirical sciences were the metaphysical theories. In Germany Kant excelled, according to him the problems on possible ways of knowing the world were important. This idea relates to physical phenomena because it is linked to the knowledge of forms in the natural phenomena.

Kant distinguishes two ways of knowing the world: *a priori*, the pure knowledge that does not depend on any experience; *posteriori*, the knowledge that sensible experiences provide. Yet on the Kantian critique of two forms of sensibility that come close to physical phenomena yet: time and space, as conditions of things that we can know. They are independent of experience that are *a priori* knowledge and earlier to experience; however, nothing is known outside this relationship.

From this perspective, the natural sciences have a close relationship with the immanent metaphysics proper to Schopenhauer when he relates the understanding of the world together with its physical phenomena which the existence depends on forms, space, and time. About this, Kant adds: "I shall here take account of natural science only insofar as it is founded on empirical principles" (KANT, 1996, p. 18). Then:

When approaching nature, reason must hold in one hand its principles, in terms of which alone concordant appearances can count as laws, and in the other hand the experiment that it has devised in terms of those principles. Thus reason must indeed approach nature in order to be instructed by it; yet it must do so not in the capacity of a pupil who lets the teacher tell him whatever the teacher wants, but in the capacity of an appointed judge who compels the witnesses to answer the questions that he puts to them. (KANT, 1996, p. 19).

On the other hand, metaphysics opposes ready-made laws and knowledge that are simple classifications. The metaphysics "rises entirely above being instructed by experience" (KANT, 1996, p. 20). It arrives at the conclusion that science only knows the world superficially, in the order of phenomena, which is also the limit of its knowledge.

Metaphysics needs natural phenomena to recognizing, nonetheless, what is behind every movement of bodies. The Philosophy of Nature seeks its bases in a science that knows objects *a priori*, as they are independent of experience in order to appropriate the inner forces that move and transform these others.

³ The Kantian principle that Schopenhauer refers to is the *transcendental Idealism* that is a form of idealism which recognizes knowledge through the senses. Kant develops this notion in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that considers the sensible world where all knowledge is restricted as mere forms that appear to the subject who knows, in other words, an appearance [representation], determined by the forms of sensibility and our intellect; what appears, however the-thing-in-itself, outside this relationship with the subject would remain completely unknown (SCHOPENHAUER, 2017).

In view of the phenomenal relationship between body and will that the author's metaphysics of nature expresses, there is also a deep connection between Schopenhauer's philosophy and the discourse of the natural sciences that study life in its physical and phenomenal aspect. In the broad field of the natural sciences and their numerous ramifications, morphology is revealed as a science that describes the forms and the etiology that observes the changes in these forms. The first analyzes fixed forms and the second considers matter in motion, according to the laws of nature and the passage from one form to another. (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966).

Also, about the study of fixed forms, botany and zoology, in which the different forms are classified in an immutably way, despite all changes, these forms remain fixed in their classification of species. Then, we can classify every biological world in natural and artificial systems and calculate them in the form of concepts capable of defining life from the part to the whole (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966).

Etiology and natural sciences, that study the cause and effect relationships, are responsible for the changes in these forms in which others conditionate the states of matter. In that order, the laws of physics, mechanics, chemistry, and physiology are conditioned. We recognize the phenomena in these laws of causes and effects which are produced in space and time.

Natural sciences correspond to the entire content of the phenomenon, which the law of causality generates, depending on experience. We can see and feel it only in its representation, but the inner essence, the "force itself that is manifested, the inner nature of the phenomena that appear in accordance with those laws, remain for it an eternal secret, something entirely strange and unknown, in the case of the simplest as well as of the most complicated phenomenon." (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p.125).

The laws of cause and effect linked to phenomena are in the field of sensible experience that is capable of producing content for phenomenal forms of existence. As for the unknown inner essence remains to the natural sciences, since, "the inner nature of the forces that thus appear was always bound to be left unexplained by etiology, which had to stop at the phenomenon and its arrangement, since the law followed by etiology does not go beyond this" (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 126)

We must also not conceal the fact that what the sciences consider in things is essentially nothing more than all this, namely their relations, the connexions of time and space, the causes of natural changes, the comparison of forms, the motives of events,

and thus merely relations. (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 203).

The etiological sciences only present the phenomena that appear as representations, their primordial chaining is going to be only the laws and the respective order of their production in time and space. But it does not teach us about the inner essence of the phenomena themselves as on the thing-in-itself. "Moreover, the law of causality has validity only for representations (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 126).

Therefore, the individual who knows his relationship with the body also knows this in two ways: through representation in phenomenal knowledge and in the will, because "every true act of his will is also at once and inevitably a movement of his body (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 128)". It is in the body that the will finds shelter for its objectification, it does not apprehend any act of will dissociated from bodily movement, nor from the representation of perceptible bodily phenomena such as hunger and the process of dying.

The body is the immediate object and the will is the *a priori* knowledge of the body; the body is the *a posteriori* knowledge of the will. Every effective act of the will is directly a phenomenal act of the body; and, in contrast, every action performed on the body is immediately an act performed on the will: as such, "it is called pain when it is contrary to the will" (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 129). As Cacciola states (2007), the recognition of the body as an essential mark of the individual and of their actions as expressing acts of will makes unhappiness and suffering facilitates the path to death although the pleasure and happiness complicates it. The struggle between opposing impulses manifests itself in the body as an immediate phenomenon of the will which instead of being closed in itself, is split. This will, therefore, as the source of a struggle at all levels of nature from matter inert (such as the struggle between weight and resistance) until the man and his two opposite impulses (conservation and himself destruction).

In this case, death is an action that exerts on the body causing pain and suffering, "every stronger or heterogeneous affection of these sense-organs is painful, in other words, is against the will; hence they too belong to its objectivity" (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 129). The identity of the body and the will manifests itself in the fact that any violent and exaggerated movement of the will, namely, any affection immediately agitating the body and the entire interior organism disturbs the course of vital functions. This considers the body being the condition of knowledge of the will as a thing-in-itself. As Schopenhauer (1966) emphasizes: as other parts of the

organic being, nerves, brain, and sensibility are expressions of will. Then, the representation arising through them has as destiny serving the will as means for achieving it.

Pain or pleasure is an immediate affection of wanting; and the subject's manifestation of wanting conditionate the will. The body and the will are one; what we call representation we also call will, while we are aware of this, we know the totality of the individual and what affects him. When we reflect on the essence of bodily activity, soon, we will arrive at the essence that could not be felt without its pure and visible manifestation through the body.

Schopenhauer (1966) proposes the doubt stating that there is no way to think about anything outside will and representation. Thus, we call will the body outside the representation; moreover, the essence in itself of any phenomenal form and the representation would have no force without the action of the will. The will manifests itself in the voluntary movements of the body, insofar as they are only visible acts of will in the form of phenomena; the will, this continuous essence that rules over beings in general even the inanimate and irrational beings. This force is also irrational and spontaneously it is an unique desire.

It assumes this invisible force acts as a guide of animals in nature being pure extinction of survival, or rather, will to live. In *Metaphysics of love* the author marks love as the pure will of perpetuating species and desire for procreation, through reproduction that is the choice of a merely selective partner, according to the characteristics that best represent the traits for giving rise to a new being of the healthiest and strongest species possible. Procreation and death as objects of the will are one of the ways to perpetuate species as acts of will objectified in the body. About this Schopenhauer (1966, p. 1034) expresses:

[...] birth is an arising out of nothing, and accordingly that its death is an absolute annihilation, and this with the further addition that man has also come into existence out of nothing, yet has an individual and endless future existence, and that indeed with consciousness, whereas the dog, the ape, and the elephant are annihilated by death-is really something against which the sound mind must revolt, and must declare to be absurd.

However, the body is a representation, and all that we can perceive are the phenomena and the body being "an object among objects" (1966, p. 127). The part that death affects is only the body while the will remains intact in the perpetuation of the species and the origin of

new life through the process of putrefaction and reintegration of the body into the life cycle, this, without doubt, affects us generating repulsion and fear, since:

For the individual finds his body as an object among objects, to all of which it has many different relations and connexions according to the principle of sufficient reason. Hence a consideration of these always leads back, by a shorter or longer path, to his body, and thus to his will.

(SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, 202).

On the other hand, Schopenhauer seeks an interpretation of the world beyond the senses that means beyond the sensible world; and, he finds in the body the foundation of the subject-object relationship which is what we note in the book *The World as Will and Representation*. It is in the body that all "will-to-live" is objectified and manifested as a phenomenon of the world accessible to our senses.

III. DEATH: "MUSAGETES OF PHILOSOPHY"

This topic addresses the issue of man and the certainty of death, then the conceptions that mitigate the insurmountable truth of the dying process articulated to the understanding of how man reflects on this process of reintegration into the life cycle. It demonstrates, at the same time, how we can consider this phenomenon as one of the metaphysical anxieties that accompany human existence along with the condition for philosophizing. Thereupon, Schopenhauer begins his essay on death stating that it is the inspirational genius of philosophy. According to him, "without death there would hardly have been any philosophizing" (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 1021).

The author's thought approaches Eastern religions through the holistic understanding of reality and the integration of man into a universal cosmic order that interconnects bodies in an endless life cycle. One of the purposes of religions and philosophy, says Schopenhauer, is making man faces the death with serenity. From this point, he analyzes Indian beliefs, Brahmanism and Buddhism, that address this issue: the author finds the path in religions Eastern for man, over the course of his life, seeing himself as a primordial being who is independent of any birth or death.

This thought for Schopenhauer is much more effective than other beliefs that other religions launch in which the being is born from nothing and obtains another being own existence (these teachings would make people unable to assimilate in the future more correct and solid concepts). Hence, Schopenhauer (1966, p.1021 -

1022) affirms that “we find in India a confidence and a contempt for death of which we in Europe have no conception”.

The issue of death that the philosopher addresses, accordingly, will find other issues beyond the observation of nature and the preservation of the human species. Otherwise, the ethical⁴ aspect with regard to the fear of death that is the attitude of man in face of the apparent finitude of himself and the other conducts the philosophical discourse. Schopenhauer discusses man's anguish when he learns that he is going to die and not only for his own death, but also for the death of the other, out of compassion. As man's first contact with the phenomenon of death is through the death of others.

As the research discussed earlier, man is the only being who knows he is going to die and as an antidote to this evil he creates consolations to mitigating this truth. He fears death, yet, as something that will end his phenomenal existence and all his memories whether good or bad. When a life finds its end in the circle of nature, all the stories, dreams and other facts created by the intellect are also lost. Nonetheless, this can generate fear, the fear of losing the individuality of the self in the immensity of the plurality of the species.

Every living being carries the fear of death, the *fuga mortis* (escape from death) inherent in nature and in blind will. The organism that is going to disappear with death will be reintegrated into the soil from which it came, and this is the very will walking through the phenomenal world. This is the will itself walking through the phenomenal world. The organism will be extinguished with death, but things will always be in the same place, there will always be men, plants, and the will that keeps these things exactly where they are. Jean Lefranc (2007) on these issues argues that the fear of death can come not from reason or knowledge, but, in fact, this fear is unfounded. Clinging to life is neither rational nor the result of reasoning: it, which is animated by a blind desire, arises from the depths of our being. In other words, it is the immortal part of our being that makes death fearful and it is the mortal who does not really fear it.

The fear of death is unfounded because the annihilation of the body will not disappear with the life-

⁴Schopenhauer's (1966, p. 1022) ethics of compassion towards death addresses that: “Here we have primarily before us the undeniable fact that, according to natural consciousness, man not only fears death for his own person more than anything else, but also weeps violently over the death of his friends and relations. It is evident, indeed, that he does this not egoistically over his own loss, but out of sympathy for the great misfortune that has befallen them. He therefore censures as hard-hearted and unfeeling those who in such a case do not weep and show no grief.”

giving essence. As it shown previously, there is nothing to fear since the individual with death will not be led to nothing, in contrast, he will find shelter inside the nature⁵. We cannot see the death, however feared it may be, as an evil, it often comes to seem like a good thing, an expected friend, if we think about those who throughout their lives and encountered insurmountable obstacles such as incurable diseases or who suffer from a profound sadness, having as a refuge this concept of returning to nature⁶, although few have these pre-established ideas (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966).

Throughout the texts on the *Metaphysics of Death* Schopenhauer talks about the fear of death and compassion for the death of the other. The fear of death in this case is related to the metaphysics of the will, it is through the will to live that the fear of the annihilation of the body is caused by the unconscious will to live. It reaffirms the will to live materializes itself in the body. There is no doubt that the will to live, being blind and irrational as approaches death, fears the annihilation of the individual superimposed on the entire species. On the other hand, reason realizes that the death of an individual is not exactly the death of the species and, in a rational way, Schopenhauer (1966, p. 1036 - 1037) clarifies:

Know your own inner being, precisely that which is so filled with the thirst for existence; recognize it once more in the inner, mysterious, sprouting force of the tree. This force is always one and the same in all the generations of leaves, and it remains untouched by arising and passing away. [...] Therefore, what forces itself on us more irresistibly than the thought that that arising and passing away do not concern the real essence of things, but that this remains untouched by them, hence is imperishable, consequently that each and

⁵ According to Schopenhauer (2020) the duration can be ensured to humanity, and not to individualities which are insignificant and miserable. What sleep is for the individual is death for species. Only the will is indestructible, as eternity of matter or supreme indifference of nature to the ruin of beings who, through death, fall back on its.

⁶ On this eternal return Schopenhauer (1966, p. 1028 - 1029) in the chapter On Death and Its Relation to the Indestructibility of Our True Nature, he adds: “That return is the *cessio bonorum* of the living. Yet even here it is entered into (surrender of property) only after a physical or moral conflict, so hard does everyone struggle against returning to the place from which he came forth so readily and willingly to an existence that has so many sorrows and so few joys to offer. [...] So much the less, then, should it come into our mind to regard the ceasing of life as the annihilation of the living principle, and consequently death as the entire destruction of the man”.

every thing that wills to exist actually does exist continuously and without end.

Accordingly, in essence and substance we are like animals. There is an effort in Schopenhauerian philosophy of proving the existence of man as a phenomenon and as a will to live. The man disappears with death only in space and time, but the living principle as a thing-in-itself is not totally lost at this time, the same force that once moved this life will continue to exist. The vital forces will be related to changes in the state of organic matter in living beings and the species' occupation is fear death, as it does not have enough knowledge⁷ of understanding that it will not be affected by death. Schopenhauer (1966, p. 1042) elucidates:

Now death is the temporal end of the temporal phenomenon; but as soon as we take away time, there is no longer any end at all, and the word has lost all meaning. But here, on the objective path, I am now trying to show the positive aspect of the matter, namely that the thing-in-itself remains untouched by time and by that which is possible only through time, that is, by arising and passing away, and that the phenomena in time could not have even that restless, fleeting existence that stands next to nothingness, unless there were in them a kernel of

eternity.

According to Schopenhauer (1966) it is more the "thirst for existence" than the hope for a "better world" that makes us want to live eternally, because existence in this world is not something so pleasant to the point of wanting to extend this existence to eternity. Regarding to this, Schopenhauer (1966, p. 1026) says: "what makes death so terrible for us is not so much the end of life-for this cannot seem to anyone specially worthy of regret-as the destruction of the organism, really because this organism is the will itself manifested as body."

⁷In this perspective, the author discusses the struggle between knowledge and will to live. He defines that knowledge wins and, therefore, man faces death with courage and serenity, this action is honored as great and noble: we celebrate then the triumph of knowledge over the will to live, which, however, is the core of our own essence (SCHOPENHAUER,1966). In another passage he reaffirms that from the point of view of knowledge there is no reason to fear death: as consciousness consists of knowledge, for it the death is not an evil. In fact, it is not this knowing part of our SELF that fears death, as the *fuga mortis* [the fear of death] that fills every living being is part of the blind will (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966).

Schopenhauer (1966) also emphasizes that the denial of death is a distorted idea of the real meaning of existence considering how we can be afraid of something we do not know, if the only certainty we have is the physical phenomenon, otherwise, the same experiences must be experienced when reflecting on the moment before birth when the individual was nothing. The feeling of nothing being the same as we have when we are confronted with the idea of death; there is nothing to fear. This duality between death and birth is something present in the author's texts, he sees it as a way of comfort since death leads the life. We can see due to procreation and death, as well as the evident composition of individuals in will and intellect and their further dissolution, however the physical element may predominate in a singular and disturbing way; the metaphysical element, that constitutes its basis, has such a heterogeneous essence that it cannot be disputed, but we can be consoled (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966).

Thus, this fear of death conception is interpreted as an irrational way of being in the world, an incomplete understanding of what would be the phenomenal existence of the subject in the world, restricted in relation to the real knowledge of the parallel between life and death as the research discussed previously. However, death is representation, content that fills the forms of existence, and the reality behind the essence of things. The parts that affects us are merely the shapes, the configurations, the outward appearance of matter or the changes in the organic states of matter⁸ that is "necessarily followed by another definite state; how one definite change necessarily conditions and brings about another definite change" (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 125).

Schopenhauer (1966) saw death as the greatest repression that nature causes to the "will to live". He sees egocentric selfishness as a limitation that man imposed around himself and precisely the death would educate this posture, as death comes to fulfill its final role, the essence of man, which is also his " will" that is going to exist only in other individuals.

An critic of human egoism, Schopenhauer (2020) offers the definition of death as the occasion of liberation from the narrowness of an individuality that must be considered the opposite of the true essence such as the totality constitutes us, this self is a loan of life that

⁸We should not consider death as a passage to a totally new and strange state, but rather just as the return to the state that is our own since the beginning and of which life was only a brief episode. In death, consciousness certainly perishes, on the other hand, in no way perishes what has produced it until then. (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966).

death takes back. Happy is who takes advantage of this singularity without so much anguish and fear. The philosopher illustrates this individuality: most men are so miserable and insignificant that they lose nothing with death. What may still have some value in them, that means the general traits of humanity, subsists in other men. It is to humanity, not to the individual, that the duration can be guaranteed.

Schopenhauer (2020) considers death as the greatest repression that nature causes to the "will to live". He faces egocentric selfishness as a limitation that man imposed around himself, and precisely death would educate this posture, as death comes to fulfill its final role. The essence of man which is also "will" only is going to exist in other individuals. In critical considerations of human selfishness, he presents us with the illustrious definition of death as the last great occasion to let go of the self, since death is the moment of liberation from the narrowness of an individuality that we must not consider as the innermost core of our being.

In short, the philosopher believes that man fears his own death, and consequently of his closest ones. He sees death as the greatest possible punishment capable of being applied to the other, in other words, death as a great evil is an almost universal idea, especially in the West. In many passages of Schopenhauer's essays, he starts from an empirical fact to philosophically deepen the phenomenon of death, an example is that man is not only afraid of his own death, but feels with deep pain the death of others, as the author suggests: what makes death so fearful in our eyes is not so much the end of life, but the destruction of the organism, since, in fact, it is the will that presents itself as a body (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966).

The fact of having fear about death is independent of all knowledge, as the animal also escapes when someone threatens it with death, although it is not aware, for Schopenhauer (1966) everything that is born brings with it the idea of preservation, that is what he calls as the reverse of "will to live" which we are. According to Schopenhauer's expressions, it is evident that:

[...] death cannot really be an evil, however much it is feared, but that it often appears even as a good thing, as something desired, as a friend. All who have encountered insuperable obstacles to their existence or to their efforts, who suffer from incurable disease or from inconsolable grief, have the return into the womb of nature as the last resource that is often open to them as a matter of course. (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 1027).

In this case, only knowledge of the metaphysics of nature can triumph over the blind and irrational will to live that is capable of unraveling the insignificance of attachment to the body putting an end to the fear of death and making man a being able to face death with courage and serenity. It would be man's victory over his own essence. On the other hand, according to the relationship between the body and the will to live, not all body fears death because it is constituted by will, as the philosopher explains:

Man alone carries about with him in abstract concepts the certainty of his own death, yet this can frighten him only very rarely and at particular moments, when some occasion calls it up to the imagination. Against the mighty voice of nature reflection can do little. In man, as in the animal that does not think, there prevails as a lasting state of mind the certainty, springing from innermost consciousness, that he is nature, the world itself. By virtue of this, no one is noticeably disturbed by the thought of certain and never distant death, but everyone lives on as though he is bound to live for ever. (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 305).

Based on this relationship, man, as well as the animal, is born with the need of staying alive as well as the fear of being destroyed. The animal runs away and tries to protect its offspring since it is pure will to live in this man is equal by nature, being "the greatest of evils, the worst thing that can threaten anywhere, is death; the greatest anxiety is the anxiety of death". (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 1023).

Reason can place us in a higher point of view, from which we look not at the individual but at the whole, not at the single body but the species to which it belongs. Only the philosophical knowledge of the essence of the world would make us overcome the fears of death and "whoever fears death as his absolute annihilation cannot afford to disdain the perfect certainty that the innermost principle of his life remains untouched by it" (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p.1029).

The man without knowledge is insistently attached to life, opposes the approach to death and desperately perceives every step he takes towards it. However, Schopenhauer approaches the two parallels, both of death and the stage before birth, giving a cyclical idea to life. Schopenhauer (1966) considers that it implies the absurdity of pretending that the kind of existence that has a beginning must not have an end; but it contains the

allusion to the fact that there could be two types of existence and, therefore, two types of nothingness. However, in the same way, one could also answer: regardless of what you are after death, and even if you are nothing, the existence you will have will be as natural and adequate for you as the individual and organic existence you have now. At the most, you would have the moment of passage to dread.

In this context, fear of death is related to the fact of loss of intellect. It links to the fact that consciousness does not depend on the phenomenon, but on the organism, and just as it is extinguished with sleep and any fainting, it is also lost with death (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966). It follows that with death we lose the intellect, we are placed in the original state, devoid of knowledge, however, it would be interesting if the intellect⁹ was not extinguished with death, we would take the consciousness to our next phenomenal existence. According to Schopenhauerian metaphysics, “for the subject, death itself consists merely in the moment when consciousness vanishes, since the activity of the brain ceases [...] death concerns only consciousness” (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 1026). Schopenhauer (1966) says: the loss of intellect that the will suffers with death here is the core of the phenomenon that disappears and, as a thing in itself, it is indestructible. In fact, the individual will would remember the many phenomena of which it was once at the core.

In view of this, these experiences of loss of intellect are experienced with falling asleep, with deep sleep or even with fainting, because “sleep is the brother of death, so is the fainting fit its twin-brother” (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966 p. 1026). Sleep is a daily loan that death gives and the same sensation someone has when falling asleep can be compared to the phenomenon of death. This way of softening death compared to a common act such as falling asleep demonstrates how unnecessary is the fear of death, since we die a little each day. The doctrine of indestructibility taught by nature reveals a profound connection between death and sleep demonstrates that neither endangers existence.

On this proximity of death and loss of intellect experienced daily with sleep Schopenhauer (2020) poetically reflects how long is the night of limitless time compared to life's short dream. This phrase also ponders man's attachment to eternity through a prolongation of the soul as if consciousness persisted into new existences, but as the author reminds us, life is a short dream.

⁹For Durant (1996) the intellect is the only one affected by death, it gets tired but the will never. This is the reason why the intellect needs sleep; however, the will keeps itself alive even during sleep.

The representation of the Pyramids of the Egyptians and the preparation of the body through mummification, demonstrating a whole belief in the preparation of life beyond the grave, illustrates this idea of searching for eternity. As we can see the Schopenhauerian philosophy contradicts this notion, the idea of the permanence of matter differs from the belief in eternity.

Schopenhauer (1966) exemplifies the types of death from empirical facts of loss of consciousness that occurred in these phenomena, namely, violent death as a quick death and natural death. In violent death, consciousness will end before death, external signs are perceived, but the time of suffering is less, even if the body feels the pain, consciousness will no longer exist.

The natural death resulting from old age or euthanasia is a “gradual vanishing and passing out of existence” (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 1027). In this case, the author elucidates the loss of passions, of desires that are fading away along with the stimuli related to them, the capacity for imagination and its images become increasingly distant throughout the life process.

In Schopenhauer's (2020) conception, this irrational attachment to life is meaningless, demanding the immortality of the individual in the face of life's sufferings such as old age and pain is like an attachment to nothingness, and it is better to get rid of this life so full of misery and agony and even if this world were free from misery and pain, life becomes an easy prey to boredom. In this case, the way out would be to face death as a painful solution of the bond formed by generation with voluptuousness is the violent destruction of the fundamental error of our being which the great disillusionment. It seems, according to Schopenhauer, that the end of all vital activity is a wonderful relief to the force that sustains it. This is perhaps what explains this expression of sweet serenity spread over the faces of the majority of the dead.

As we approach to the true knowledge that death can be a relief from this transitory and suffering existence, then, we do not lose anything, but the intellect and the memories associated with it, our inner being, remains unshaken. Therefore, someone can think about the reasons why we should not fear death, as a result the philosopher proposes the fact of not fearing death and points out the ways:

But it will be asked: “How is the permanence of mere dust, of crude matter, to be regarded as a continuance of our true inner nature?” Oh! do you know this dust then? Do you know what it is and what it can do? Learn to know it before you despise it. This matter, now lying there as dust and

ashes, will soon form into crystals when dissolved in water; it will shine as metal; it will then emit electric sparks. [...] It will, indeed of its own accord, form itself into plant and animal; and from its mysterious womb it will develop that life, about the loss of which you in your narrowness of mind are so nervous and anxious. Is it, then, so absolutely and entirely nothing to continue to exist as such matter? (SCHOPENHAUER, 2020, p. 119).

Thus, Schopenhauer shows the paths of physical and metaphysical death as something beyond human comprehension and proposes throughout the text not a manual on dying well, but a reflection of the truth about the things of the world, as he is an observer of empirical nature, of the physical and organic phenomena of matter, since man, once a body, will return to the cycle of nature as dust or in other forms perpetuated in the species. But should this be a consolation for the fears that surround human existence?

For Schopenhauer (1966), the attachment to life and the consequent escape from death occurs as a result of the will to life that promotes to existing beings which move and animate their actions. It appears in the instinct of self-preservation, in the fear of death and in the act of procreation, and in an attempt to reproduce the species. About the author's thought we can think that, in essence, man is from the same nature of other animals, in fact, he is himself the manifested nature and all men are equal by nature.

According to Schopenhauerian thought reason is the only fact that differentiates men from other animals, the fact that animals live without knowing they are going to die makes them enjoy immortality while man for the certainty of this fact differs, however, the rise of reason also brought the dismal certainty of death. In this regard Schopenhauer (1966, p. 1021):

The animal lives without any real knowledge of death; therefore the individual animal immediately enjoys the absolute imperishableness and immortality of the species, since it is conscious of itself only as endless. With man the terrifying certainty of death necessarily appeared along with the faculty of reason. But just as everywhere in nature a remedy, or at any rate a compensation, is given for every evil, so the same reflection that introduced the knowledge of death also assists us in obtaining metaphysical points of view. Such views console us concerning death, and the

animal is neither in need of nor capable of them.

Reaffirming the differentiation of the complex human life with the life of the animal that lives in the ignorance of death, we can say that the two are made of the body and, as a consequence, they fear and flee from death, since, in essence, they are from the same nature that is the will and the will to live as long as possible. This force is so indestructible capable of overcoming even death, hence, everything that dies does not die forever, but lives in the species.

Conforming this thought, it would be important thinking on the time before birth as something similar to the time after death, before there is an individual, thousands of others will have already existed and, just as after death, certainly others continued to exist in the human species, however, human understanding boils down to the spectacle of birth and death, what is behind the curtains is still unknown, what Schopenhauer (2020) reveals is that birth and death belong equally to life and form a counterweight, in this case one is a condition of the other. They are the two ends, the two poles of all manifestations of life. This is what Hindu mythology, the wisest of all mythologies, expresses by a symbol, giving as tribute Shiva that is the God of Destruction, a necklace of skulls. For them love is the compensation of death, its essential counterpart; they neutralize, suppress each other. That is why the Greeks and Romans adored these precious sarcophagi that are still seen today depicting in festivals, dances, weddings, hunting, animal fights, bacchanals; they are, in general, images of a happier, more animated, more intense life, even voluptuous, satyrs joined to goats. Its end evidently tended to concern the spirit more sensitively with the contrast of the weeping man, shut up in the tomb, and the immortal life of nature.

Life and death go hand in hand in the "spectacle" of life watched by spectators, sometimes with joy of the emergence of a new being in the world, sometimes with sadness at the illusion of its complete disappearance. However, the metaphysics of nature unveils this *Maya*¹⁰ veil that exists between the human senses and the real meaning of existence that acts as an affirmation of life, because according to Schopenhauer (2020) nature

¹⁰The idea of this expression refers to Schopenhauer's influence with the book of Vedas, classical Hindu sacred works. According to Schopenhauer (1966, p. 37): "it is *Mâyâ*, the veil of deception, which covers the eyes of mortals, and causes them to see a world of which one cannot say either that it is or that it is not; for it is like a dream, like the sunshine on the sand which the traveller from a distance takes to be water, or like the piece of rope on the ground which he regards as a snake."

never lies, however, it says that the individual's life or death does not matter to it. This is expressed by handing over the life of the animal and also of man to all hazards, without making the slightest effort to save them.

In addition, it is undeniable to reflect on the return of matter to nature, giving rise to new beings, every time an individual dies, new living organisms appear not with the same form, because this is renewed, what is not lost is the essence that he made every living thing be born perish and die. About this eternal return of matter Schopenhauer (2020) clarifies that the matter, by its absolute persistence, assures us an indestructibility by virtue of which anyone who was incapable of conceiving another could console himself with the idea of a certain immortality.

In fact, death as it exists only in the physical phenomenon accessible to our eyes, felt daily through the process of aging, getting sick, and dying. Apart from that, the organism will always exist in its essence, as the author reiterates:

Now if the universal mother carelessly sends forth her children without protection to a thousand threatening dangers, this can be only because she knows that, when they fall, they fall back into her womb, where they are safe and secure; therefore their fall is only a jest [...] we must attribute nature's careless and indifferent attitude concerning the life of individuals to the fact that the destruction of such a phenomenon does not in the least disturb its true and real inner being. (SCHOPENHAUER, 1966, p. 1032).

Thus, both man and the other elements of nature are constituted in their essence of pure will to live. Starting from an empirical fact, every animal flees when it is threatened with death, trying to protect itself and gaining time even if it does not have the rational element in its nature. As stated by Schopenhauer (1966, p.1023):

The fear of death is, in fact, independent of all knowledge, for the animal has it, although it does not know death. Everything that is born already brings this fear into the world. Such fear of death, however, is a priori only the reverse side of the will-to-live, which indeed we all are.

Consequently, the fear of death is nothing more than the manifestation of the blind and irrational will to live devoid of rationality. The will to live clings to life in a way that escapes from death itself. If what makes us different from other animals is rationality, what brings us together is precisely the essence that is the will to live, this is not aware of the "indestructibility" of being by death for

this reason, it either flees or creates appeals for this purpose.

IV. CONCLUSION

It is important to return the general aim proposed in this article: explaining, in a propaedeutic way, some fundamentals on the conception of death in Arthur Schopenhauer's view. Therefore, it identified the following results: at first, death only exists as a phenomenon, which is a mere representation, as a spectacle to our senses. Otherwise, it exists in the form of will as something that responds to the longings of nature. Also, it is the denial of the will to live, which flees from death in every moment for pure survival instinct.

Schopenhauer, in the manuscript on death, deals with this event as something natural and, he also uses some empirical facts for the discussion about man's condition. Throughout these lines, the death, under a naturalistic perspective, is always regarding the individual and never the species. The species belongs to the totality and is represented by the will to live that is always blind and irrational; the only thing that is lost with death is the intellect which vanishes with matter that is constantly changing. Therefore, the species, that is the will to live, for maintaining the instinct of self-preservation flees from death and fears this end as an evil. It does not have knowledge of the essence that moves things, as a result, it suffers and flees to protect itself.

Accordingly, it is not the conscience that fears death, but the will to live manifested in the species and objectified in the body and there is nothing to do, man is an ephemeral creature, his memories die, his desires also fade every day, as the vital impulses they need renewing themselves in a new existence. On the other hand, Schopenhauerian philosophy and Vedanta philosophy propose overcoming the fear of death, it is insofar as you have the knowledge of the will that is in everything and in everyone that you can see over the *Veil of Maya*, thus the illusion of this world and the physical pains can be overcome.

Death is definitely a surprise, something expected and unexpected, whose certainty does not despise the fear and pain in front of it, however, without this would be difficult philosophizing as Schopenhauer (1966) proposes, it would be complex for men to measure their actions if this was conceived as an infinite being which knows that someone does not have all the time for questioning the meaning of life. It is in old age, in the process of wasting the body through we go in the various stages of life that we walk towards death, day after day we take a loan from the sensation of death with sleep, because the intellect tires and renews itself with the falling asleep,

only the wish that even with drowsiness continues to persist for life.

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