

# ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER AND MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER Y LA EDUCACIÓN SOBRE SALUD MENTAL

TRINO BAPTISTA<sup>1</sup>, ELIS ALDANA<sup>2</sup>,  
LAURA BAPTISTA ARAUJO<sup>3</sup>, FÉLIX ÁNGELES<sup>4</sup>

RESUMEN: En el continente americano, la obra de Arthur Schopenhauer está ausente en los programas académicos de profesiones relacionadas con la salud mental, tales como como psicología, psiquiatría, psicoterapia, trabajo social y enfermería. En el presente trabajo nos proponemos desarrollar recursos pedagógicos para difundir el pensamiento del filósofo. En la primera parte, describimos una lista de temas abordados y/o anticipados por Schopenhauer que, pensamos, pueden contribuir a tal proyecto educativo: a) sus modelos de la mente, de la dinámica, de la voluntad y la representación (idea) y su relación con el inconsciente psicoanalítico; b) su concepción sobre el origen de las especies; c) el cuerpo y sus deseos como vía de acceso a la voluntad, lo que puede considerarse como un precursor filosófico del concepto contemporáneo de «mente corporeizada»; d) los tres estados fundamentales de la mente humana (egoísmo, compasión, y maldad), junto al desarrollo de la contemplación estética, la compasión y el ascetismo, como experiencias centrales en la psicoterapia y el apoyo social integral. En la segunda parte, presentamos los resultados de una conferencia magistral sobre el pensa-

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<sup>1</sup> MD, PhD, Psychiatrist. Department of Physiology, Los Andes University Medical School, Mérida, Venezuela, 5101-A.

<sup>2</sup> PhD, Laboratory of Entomology «Herman Lent», Department of Biology, Los Andes University School of Sciences, Mérida, Venezuela.

<sup>3</sup> Clinical Psychologist, Psychology and Psychiatry Unit B & B, Mérida, Venezuela.

<sup>4</sup> MD, PhD, Psychiatrist. Department of Criminology, Los Andes University Law School, Mérida, Venezuela.

miento del filósofo, la cual fue dictada a un grupo de estudiantes de Medicina de pregrado. Analizamos, mediante una escala tipo Likert, la opinión de los participantes acerca de aspectos relevantes de la obra de Schopenhauer, y evaluamos tal opinión de acuerdo con el tipo de personalidad que cada participante se autoasignó de acuerdo al modelo del eneagrama. Encontramos que la opinión global sobre la información brindada fue «moderadamente positiva» (acuerdo moderado); no observamos diferencias de acuerdo al sexo; la valoración positiva sobre los conceptos de levantar el «Velo de Maya», la compasión y el ascetismo se correlacionó directamente con la edad, pero solo en las mujeres. La puntuación global en la escala varió de acuerdo al tipo de personalidad, pero no de manera significativa. Sin embargo, los resultados permiten predecir asociaciones de interés pedagógico. Este estudio empírico preliminar demuestra la viabilidad de un proyecto educativo sobre la obra de Schopenhauer, y aporta ideas para llevar a cabo investigaciones más sofisticadas para beneficio de los profesionales involucrados en la salud mental y sus usuarios.

PALABRAS CLAVE: educación, medicina, psicología, psicoterapia, psiquiatría, Schopenhauer.

ABSTRACT: In the American continent, Arthur Schopenhauer's work is formally absent in the academic programs for mental health-related professions, such as psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy, social work, and nursing. This study aims at developing pedagogical resources to disseminate the philosopher's thought. In the first section of this essay, we present a summary of topics addressed and/or anticipated by Schopenhauer that, we posit, could contribute to the educational project we propose: a) his models of the mind and the dynamics of the will and representation (idea) in relation to the psychoanalytic unconscious; b) his conceptions of the species' origin; c) the physical body and its desires as a way of accessing the will. This notion may be considered as a philosophical forerunner of the contemporary concept of the «embodied mind»; d) the three fundamental springs of human actions: selfishness, compassion, and malice, along with the development of compassion and asceticism as core experiences in any integral psychotherapy and social assistance. In the second section of this essay, we present the results of a lecture about the philosopher's thought that had been delivered to a group of undergraduate medical students. Through a Likert-type scale, we analyzed the participants' opinion about several relevant issues of Schopenhauer's work, and its association with the students' self-assigned personality type according to the Enneagram model. We found that the general opinion or attitude toward the information provided in the lecture was «moderately positive» (moderate agreement). No significant differences in individual questions or global scores were observed between women and men, and a more positive attitude towards the notions of lifting the Veil of Maya, compassion, and asceticism as age increased was observed, but in women only. The global scores varied (but non-significantly) according to the students' personality type. However, our results allow us to predict associations of pedagogical relevance. This preliminary empirical study supports the feasi-

bility of an educational program on Schopenhauer's thought and provides suggestions for conducting more sophisticated investigations that could be useful for mental health professionals and their beneficiaries.

KEYWORDS: education, medicine, psychiatry, psychology, psychotherapy, Schopenhauer.

## INTRODUCTION

Commemorating the 200<sup>th</sup> years of the publication of *The World as Will and Representation* is a fine occasion to revise the role of Arthur Schopenhauer's thought in education<sup>5</sup>. While the current issue of *Schopenhaueriana* focuses on the «Psychology» province, we will rather refer here to the «Mental Health» field comprising *ad hoc* professional training in our country, that is, psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, social work, and nursing in order to have a wider scope and reach a wider audience.

Schopenhauer is formally absent in the academic programs of the above-mentioned disciplines; he is in fact barely mentioned in iconic educative American texts<sup>6</sup> and is even vilified. For example, the following statements appear in the Foreword of a recent textbook on «Positive Psychiatry»: «This is what Freud and Schopenhauer told us. In their views, the best that we can ever hope for in life is to hold suffering and misery as close to zero as possible. I have come to believe this view is empirically false, morally insidious, and a therapeutic dead end»<sup>7</sup>.

This essay is divided into two main sections: the first describes the topics in Mental Health education where we think Schopenhauer's thought could make a significant contribution. In the second section, we present the attitude of a group of medical students who attended a lecture on several key topics of Schopenhauer's work. These sections are followed by a general discussion.

<sup>5</sup> Schopenhauer, A., *The World as Will and Representation I* (WWR I), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Kaplan, H. I., Freedman, A. M. y Sadock, B. J., *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry I-III*, Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, 1980. Hundert, E. M., *Philosophy, psychiatry and neuroscience; three approaches to the mind*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1989. Person, E. S., Cooper, A. M. y Gabbard, G. O., *Textbook of Psychoanalysis*, American Psychiatric Association Publishing, Washington DC, 2005. Pinker, S., *How the mind works*, W. W. Norton, New York, 1997. Pinker, S. *The blank slate*, Penguin Books: New York, 2003. Pinker, S., *The stuff of thought*. Penguin Books, New York, 2007. Lakoff, G. y Johnson, M., *Philosophy in the flesh: the embodied mind ant the challenge to western thought*, Basic Books, New York, 1999. Cloninger A. R., *Feeling Good: The Science of Well Being*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2004. Marinoff, L., *Plato not Prozac: applying eternal wisdom to everyday problems*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Jeste, D. V. y Palmer, B. W., *Positive Psychiatry: A Clinical Handbook*, American psychiatric Association Publishing, Washington DC, 2015, Foreword, p. xvii.

## 1. WHAT CAN SCHOPENHAUER'S THOUGHT OFFER TO THE FORMAL EDUCATION OF CONTEMPORARY MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS?

Pedagogical strategies are needed to introduce Schopenhauer's thought to mental health professionals. With his metaphysical epistemology, the philosopher explored many areas of interest for the mental health field, such as the origin of life and of species, a model of mind, art, aesthetics, ethics, individual freedom, the origin of mental disorders, and a path for individual salvation, among many others. We will briefly discuss the educational potential of each one of these topics.

### 1.a. The origin of life and species

The origin and evolution of species is a central topic in contemporary science. The evolutionary field explores how evolution yields vulnerability to disease and the adaptive value of symptoms<sup>8</sup>. Schopenhauer did not read Darwin (he died one year after the publication of the *Origin of the Species*)<sup>9</sup>, but his interest in the species' origin can be observed throughout his work<sup>10</sup>. The philosopher set the display of the will's levels in geological time, following the work of Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), and, like Cuvier, he accepted the species' extinction. Schopenhauer conceived species' evolution, but not as Darwin and Wallace postulated, since he did not consider inter-individual variations and population mathematical analysis. Schopenhauer's approach to evolution is closer to orthogenesis than to natural selection, since he considered each species as a Platonic Idea. The orthogenetic movement plays a key role in the development of the ongoing evolutionary synthesis<sup>11</sup>.

### 1.b. Schopenhauer's model of mind

Schopenhauer simplified Kant's cognition scheme into three areas: a) the Senses which arrange object succession and position under the innate conception of time and space; b) the Understanding, which sets the also innate notion of causality, and, c) Reason which allows concepts, as the maximal cognitive human capacity<sup>12</sup>. The philosopher addressed the important topic of «causality» by organizing the principle of sufficient reason, which expresses the fact «that with regard to anything that can enter into our idea we must always ask for

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<sup>8</sup> Baptista, T., Ángeles, F., Aldana, E. y Beaulieu, S., «Applications of evolution theory in contemporary psychiatry», *Psychopathology*, 2008, 41, pp. 17-27.

<sup>9</sup> Soria Estevan, F., «Filosofía de Schopenhauer y Síndrome de Asperger», *Schopenhaueriana. Revista española de estudios sobre Schopenhauer*, 2016, 1, pp. 9-52.

<sup>10</sup> Lovejoy, A. O., «Schopenhauer as an evolutionist», *The Monist*, 2011, 21 (2), pp. 195-222.

<sup>11</sup> Baptista, T. y Aldana, E., «Arthur Schopenhauer y Charles Darwin: el origen de la vida y de las especies», *Schopenhaueriana. Revista española de estudios sobre Schopenhauer*, 2017, 2, pp. 265-296.

<sup>12</sup> Safranski, R., *Schopenhauer and the wild years of philosophy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1990, § 11.

reasons, for a connection»<sup>13</sup>. For Schopenhauer, the four roots of the principle of sufficient reason are: becoming (causality), cognition (logic), being (existence in space and time), and acting (moral and ethical issues)<sup>14</sup>. It is important to mention that the philosopher considered the intellect as subordinated to the will<sup>15</sup>.

Schopenhauer may have anticipated the contemporary concept of the *embodied mind* when, for example, he asserted that we could access the unknowable Kantian's *thing-in-itself* through «the knowledge which each of us has of his own willing»<sup>16</sup> and, when referring to Lamarckian evolution, he stated: «... and the ox does not butt because it happens to have horns: it has horns because it intends to butt»<sup>17</sup>. The *embodied mind* concept was introduced by the philosophers Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) and John Dewey (1859-1951) and was recently assimilated as a core notion of modern cognitive science by Varela, Thompson and Rosch<sup>18</sup> and by Lakoff and Johnson<sup>19</sup>. In this context, embodiment means that human cognition is based on our physical body development, functioning and organization, in a co-construction (reciprocal or *enactive*) interaction with the environment. Consequently, the most abstract and elaborated concepts, such as moral, causality, the self, time, and events would not be the product of a transcendent reason, but are conceptualized as metaphors or metonymies related to our bodily configuration and requirements.

At a more theoretical level, students will benefit from realizing that, by conceptualizing knowledge as «representation», Schopenhauer appears to stand in sharp contrast with non-representational models of cognition, such as the enactive program proposed by Varela et al. This important topic is beyond the scope of this essay, but the interested reader should bear in mind the strong metaphysical basement of the philosopher, whereas Varela et al., are supported by phenomenology. Such a differential philosophical foundation poses particular difficulties when comparing both cognitive models.

### 1.c. The origin of mental illness

Schopenhauer acknowledged organic and experiential causes of mental disorders. With his analysis of the will, the philosopher may have anticipated several core features of

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>14</sup> Schopenhauer, A., *On the fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason and on the will in nature*, George Bell and sons, London, 1903.

<sup>15</sup> Schopenhauer, A., *The World as Will and Idea II (WWR IIa)*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., London, 1909, § 19.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, § 18, p. 405.

<sup>17</sup> Schopenhauer, A., *On the fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason and on the will in nature*, 1903, p. 261.

<sup>18</sup> Varela, F. J., Thompson, E. y Rosch, E., *The embodied mind: cognitive science and human experience*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London England, 1991.

<sup>19</sup> Lakoff, G. y Johnson, M., *Philosophy in the flesh: the embodied mind and the challenge to western thought*, Basic Books, New York, 1999.

psychoanalysis<sup>20</sup>: a) the irrational nature of some aspects of the unconscious; b) the pronounced role of sexuality in psychic life; c) free association, the psychological significance of tongue's slips, and the interpretation of dreams, and d) mental activities that could be interpreted as «defense mechanisms» in contemporary terms.

A celebrated example of the latter concept is 'repression' that the philosopher considered as the cause of madness:

... the origin of madness given in the text will become more comprehensible if it is remembered how unwillingly we think of things which powerfully injure our interests, wound our pride, or interfere with our wishes; with what difficulty do we determine to lay such things before our own intellect for careful and serious investigation; how easily, on the other hand, we unconsciously break away or sneak off from them again. In that resistance of the will to allowing what is contrary to it to come under the examination of the intellect lies the place at which madness can break in upon the mind<sup>21</sup>.

### 1.d. Schopenhauer and psychotherapy

Many psychotherapy practitioners have some level of formal or informal philosophical knowledge. Moreover, philosophical principles are in the root of some standard schools of psychotherapy, as is the case with Stoicism for Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy. But it was around the publication of the Lou Marinoff's iconic book *Plato not Prozac* that philosophical counseling found its niche in America.

Given the notable heterogeneity of psychotherapies (29 major types according to a United Kingdom Organization)<sup>22</sup>, which principles of Schopenhauer's philosophy are expected to provide a significant impact in psychotherapy theory and practice?

For the time being, we are not suggesting specific Schopenhauerian techniques for any type of psychotherapy nor are we encouraging typical psychiatric patients to read the philosopher's work. Rather, one of us (TB)<sup>23</sup> has argued elsewhere that some of the philosopher's insights could be organized as a sort of «meta-therapy» educational material towards the completion of specific psychotherapies. We thus emphasize the pedagogical nature of Schopenhauer's thought as a complement to general psychological education.

<sup>20</sup> Luepnitz, D., *Schopenhauer's Porcupines. Intimacy and its Dilemmas. Five stories of psychotherapy*, Basic Books, New York, 2002. Young, J., *Schopenhauer*, Routledge, New York, 2005. Vázquez Rocca, «A., Schopenhauer: el descubrimiento de lo inconsciente, la metafísica de la voluntad y la etiología de las neurosis. Influencia sobre Freud y contribuciones a la psiquiatría moderna», *Errancia*, 2016 (noviembre), pp. 1-34.

<sup>21</sup> Schopenhauer A., *The World as Will and Idea*. Vol. IIb, sixth edition. London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1909, § 32, pp. 168-169.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/about-ukcp/>, downloaded in February 18, 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Baptista, T., «Psychotherapists: should we meet Arthur Schopenhauer?», *Investigación clínica*, 2016; 57 (4): 410-427.



Psychotherapy, as both a theoretical and a practical endeavor, finds its roots in many sources: psychology, ethics, esthetics, art, religion, neuroscience, sociology, anthropology, among many others. Schopenhauer explored most of those sources with his metaphysics of the will and representation, and most of his ideas had been expressed by other authors and are well acknowledged by the general public. In psychotherapy, the originality of Schopenhauer's thought specifically lies in a creative mixture of his main principle (*The world as will and representation*), his original prose often stated as aphorisms, his critical and honest attitude towards himself and society, his model of the mind, and, of course, his path to existential salvation. What follows is then, a distillate of his thought that, we argue, could assist psychotherapists in research and clinical practice. Schopenhauer's *verbatim* selected excerpts will be presented in the second section.

- Plato, Kant and the Hinduism as foundations of Schopenhauer's philosophy.
- The «will» denoting the source of the entire universe; «representation» signifying knowledge.
- The a-rational nature of the will. The heuristic (although simplistic) analogy between the will with the emotional mind and desire, and representation with the rational mind. In deep psychological terms, how we «represent» objects and other creatures as «motives» to be pursued or avoided.
- The three fundamental springs of human actions: selfishness (omnipresent), malice (common), and compassion (exceptional).
- The absolute dependence of human actions on the causality chain. Expressing this concept as the absence of «individual freedom» may be a very sensitive issue. The Buddhist concept of *Karma*, as habitual and highly stereotyped cognitive and behavioral patterns, may assist a serene realization of that concept.
- The three character dimensions: intelligible, empiric, and acquired.
- The insatiability of desire and, hence, the ubiquity of suffering.
- The pendulum between desire and boredom.
- The individual (existential path to salvation): the *denial of the will* as a unique expression of individual freedom.
  - The aesthetic experience of dissociating contemplation from desire. The value of art and nature.
  - The ethical experience of lifting the «Veil of Maya» and realizing the Unity of the universe and its creatures.
  - The metaphysical experience of denying the will and turning to compassion and asceticism.

In the following section we describe how this philosophical information was presented in an educational activity with medical students.

## 2. A LECTURE ON SCHOPENHAUER

Our research group is disseminating Schopenhauer's work in Venezuela, and our main audience target are mental health professionals<sup>24</sup>.

An initial step in our project was to explore the feasibility of a lecture about some aspects of Schopenhauer's thought that could be of potential interest for these professionals. Towards that purpose, we organized a two-hour lecture with undergraduate medical students at Los Andes University Medical School, Mérida, Venezuela, in November of 2017.

Following Johann Gottlieb Fichte's statement that the philosophy one chooses depends on the kind of person one is (cited by Sloterdijk<sup>25</sup>) we pondered about the relationship between these students' attitude or opinion about Schopenhauer's thought and their personality type.

### 2.1. Subjects

The study was conducted with medical students attending a medical physiology course during their second year of medical education.

### 2.2. Methods

The authors invited the students to a non-mandatory single lecture about Schopenhauer's work to be delivered at the regular physiology class schedule. The students did not know in advance the specific day for the lecture.

A two-hour lecture (the agenda of which is described below) was delivered to 120 students. We projected slides with key sentences from Schopenhauer texts translated into Spanish by Aramayo<sup>26</sup>, some of them being expressed as aphorisms or short sentences.

After the lecture, a random sample of thirty subjects received a questionnaire asking for their opinion about the lecture content (see below). In addition, the students were asked to select the personality type that best fitted their self-perception, according to the Enneagram model<sup>27</sup>. The only personal information requested in the form was gender and age. Participants returned the questionnaire the next day at class time.

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<sup>24</sup> Baptista, T., *Mi psicoterapia con Schopenhauer: una historia fabulada*, Producciones Editoriales, Mérida, Venezuela, 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Sloterdijk, P., *Philosophical temperaments: from Plato to Foucault*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2013.

<sup>26</sup> Schopenhauer, A., *El mundo como voluntad y representación*. Vols. I y II, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 2010, trans. R. R. Aramayo.

<sup>27</sup> Riso, D. R., *Enneagram Transformations: releases and affirmations healing your personality type*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1993.



### 2.3. Agenda

- Schopenhauer's biography, education, and texts. The influence of Plato, Kant and the Hinduism.
- His doctoral thesis. Psychological relationship between *On the fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason* and the Buddhist's *karma* principle.
- The concepts of «will» and «representation». Levels of the will.
- The *principius individuationis*.
- Phenomena as inherently self-centered. The three fundamental springs of human actions: selfishness, malice, and compassion.
- Schopenhauer's model of mind: the primacy of the will in self-consciousness. What follows are some key sentences<sup>28</sup>:

If the intellect presents a simple, perceptible object to the will, the latter expresses at once, its approval or disapproval of it, and this even if the intellect has laboriously inquired and pondered, in order from numerous data, by means of difficult combinations, ultimately to arrive at the conclusion as to which of the two seems to be most in conformity with the interests of the will. The latter has meanwhile been idly resting, and when the conclusion is arrived at it enters, as the Sultan enters the Divan, merely to express again its monotonous approval or disapproval, which certainly may vary in degree, but in its nature remains always the same.<sup>38</sup>

- The insatiability of desire: key aphorisms: «Introspection always shows us to ourselves as willing»<sup>29</sup> and «... but for every wish that is fulfilled, at least ten are left denied»<sup>30</sup>.
- The ubiquity of suffering. The contact of Schopenhauer with the world's suffering as a teenager. Here are some key sentences:

No achieved object of willing gives lasting, unwavering satisfaction; rather, it is only ever like the alms thrown to a beggar that spares his life today so that his agony can be prolonged until tomorrow. Thus, as long as our consciousness is filled by our will, as long as we are given over to the pressure of desires with their constant hopes and fears, as long as we are the subject of willing, we will never have lasting happiness or peace.<sup>31</sup>

When I was seventeen years old, I was moved by life's calamities, as it happened to Buddha in his youth, when he discovered sickness, old age, pain and death. Human experience proclaims the

<sup>28</sup> Schopenhauer, A., WWR IIa, § 19, p. 419.

<sup>29</sup> Schopenhauer, A., *On the fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason and on the will in nature*, George Bell and sons, London, 1903, p. 168.

<sup>30</sup> Schopenhauer, A., WWR I, § 38, p. 219.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220.

destiny of suffering; this appears as the purpose of life, as if the world were made by a devil; but that purpose is not the ultimate one, but it's instead a way to achieve the optimal end.<sup>32</sup>

- Denial of the will: contemplation, raising the Veil of Maya, compassion and asceticism. Here are some key sentences:

Why has the sight of the full moon such a beneficent, quieting, and exalting effect? Because the moon is an object of perception, but never of desire. Quoting Goethe: «The stars we yearn not after Delight us with their glory».<sup>33</sup>

The essence of this work has finally come to us in the Upanishads, which are the greatest gift of this century; it is expressed in many forms, but particularly when all the beings of the world, living and lifeless, are led in succession past the gaze of the disciples, while a certain word is pronounced over each of them, a word that has become a formula and as such is called Mahavakya: 'Tatoumes, or more correctly tat tvam asi, which means: «You are that»<sup>34</sup>.

If the veil of maya, the principium individuationis, is lifted from a human being's eyes to such an extent that he no longer makes the egoistic distinction between his person and that of others, but rather takes as much interest in the sufferings of other individuals as he does in his own, and is not only exceedingly charitable but is actually prepared to sacrifice his own individual as soon as several others can be saved by doing so, then it clearly follows that such a human being, who recognizes himself, his innermost and true self in all beings, must also regard the endless suffering of all living things as his own, and take upon himself the pain of the whole world.<sup>35</sup>

## 2.4. Instruments

### a) Questionnaire

The first section requested the students to indicate their sex, age and whether they had ever heard of Schopenhauer and/or read any of his texts.

The second section consisted of nine questions headed: *How much do you agree with...?*

- The fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason is useful in my personal life.
- This principle is useful in my academic work.
- Suffering is unavoidable and omnipresent.
- The desire is insatiable and selfish.
- How much sense do the three springs of human actions make for you?

<sup>32</sup> Adapted from Aramayo, R. R., *Introducción a El mundo como voluntad y representación*. Vol. I, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Schopenhauer, A., WWR IIb, § 30, p. 136.

<sup>34</sup> Schopenhauer, A., WWR, I, § 63, p. 382.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, § 68, p. 405.

- ... the aesthetical experience; the Platonic Ideas.
- ... the ethical experience.
- ... the metaphysical experience (compassion and asceticism).
- ... the whole path of existential salvation.

Each question had to be answered through a Likert-type scale as follows: 1 = complete disagreement; 2 = moderate disagreement; 3 = mild disagreement; 4 = mild agreement; 5 = moderate agreement; 6 = complete agreement.

Scores were calculated for individual questions and for the sum of all the questions (minimum = 9, maximal = 54). Hence, a higher score reflected a favorable attitude toward the concepts presented in the lecture.

#### *b) The Enneagram*

This is a personality typology probably originated in the Naqshbandi order of Sufism. George Gurdjieff studied it in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and it was contemporarily spread by Oscar Ichazo and Claudio Naranjo<sup>36</sup>. According to the enneagram, each individual is inherently disposed to experience and respond to reality in one of nine styles. Each style has received several, but related names, and there are several enneagram models, such as the inventories of Cohen-Palmer (1988); Wagner (1981); Zinkle (1974), Riso-Hudson (2000), and others.

We used the following terminology: 1) The Reformer; 2) The Helper; 3) The Motivator; 4) The Artist; 5) The Thinker; 6) The Loyalist; 7) The Generalist; 8) The Leader, and; 9) The Peacemaker. The enneagram types have an acceptable association with standard personality factors such as the «Five Personality Dimensions» that comprise Neuroticism, Extroversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, and to classic personality traits, as follows: 1) Obsessive-compulsive; 2) Histrionic; 3) Type A personality, «work-addicted»; 4) Depressed, Cyclothymic; 5) Schizoid; 6) Paranoid; 7) Narcissist; 8) Sociopath, and; 9) Passive-Aggressive<sup>37</sup>. The enneagram has also acceptable validity and reliability when compared to other personality inventories, such as the NEO-P-R, Myers-Briggs and Millon instruments.

But even more relevant for our study of linking the attitude towards Schopenhauer's thought to personality types, the enneagram typology is correlated to several psychological constructs<sup>38</sup>: a) «Empathy levels» (negative empathy [types: 1, 3, 8]; apathetic [types 4, 5, 9] and empathetic [types 2, 6, 7]); b) Self-assessing of comparison to other fellows as regards as

<sup>36</sup> Newgent, R. A., Parr, P. E., Newman, I. y Higgins, K.K., «The Riso-Hudson enneagram type indicator: estimates of reliability and validity», *Measurement and evaluation in counseling and development*, 36, pp. 226-237, 2004.

<sup>37</sup> Palmer, H., *El eneagrama*, Ediciones Continente, Buenos Aires, 2006.

<sup>38</sup> Wagner, J. P. y Walker, R. E., «Reliability and validity study of a Sufi personality typology: the Enneagram», *Psychodiagnostic Processes: Personality Inventoried and Scale*, 39 (5), pp. 712-717, 1983.

possessing a given positive trait: (superior to other [types 2, 5, 8]: equal to others [types 3, 6, 9] and inferior to others [types 1, 4, 7]). Both constructs may be cross-tabulated: for example type one displays negative empathy and inferior self-assessment.

Another constructs are correlated to «sociability levels»: (low levels [types 5, 6, 9]; intermediate levels [types 1, 2, 4]; high sociability levels: [types 3, 7, 8] and «Placement of Centers»: (heart center [types 2, 3, 4]; head center [5, 6, 7] and body center [1, 8, 9]).

### *c) Statistical analysis*

We obtained scores for each question and a global score. Comparisons were conducted between scores according to sex (Mann-Whitney test) and personality types (ANOVA, Median and Kruskal-Wallis tests). The Spearman' correlation coefficient was used to assess the association between age and scores. Statistical significance was set at the 0.05 alfa level.

### *d) Results and Discussion*

- Twenty eight of the thirty subjects (93.3%) returned the questionnaire. They were 17 women (age:  $22.8 \pm 2.7$  years; range: 20-29 yrs.) and 11 men (age:  $22.4 \pm 1.7$  years; range: 20-26 yrs.).
- Two students (7%) had heard of Schopenhauer, and one (3.5%) had read some texts of the philosopher.
- Global scores ranged between 15 and 54: mean  $\pm$  S.D.:  $38.0 \pm 10.8$ ; median: 39; mode: 44. The general opinion or attitude toward the lecture was thus «mild to moderately positive» (mild to moderate agreement).
- No significant differences in individual questions or global scores were observed between women and men: total scores: (women:  $36.9 \pm 11.1$ ); (men:  $39.6 \pm 10.1$ ),  $p = 0.5$ .
- Significant positive correlations were observed between age and scores but in women only: ethical experience ( $r = 0.55$ ,  $p = 0.021$ ); metaphysical experience ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ); the three experiences ( $r = 0.58$ ,  $p = 0.014$ ); global score ( $r = 0.6$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ). Hence, a more positive attitude towards the notions of lifting the Veil of Maya, compassion, and asceticism as age increased was observed in women only.
- Global scores varied according to personality type, but no statistical significance was observed. What follows is a description in ascending order of such an association. No subject identified him/herself with the «Motivator» 3-type (Table 1).
- It is impossible to analyze every component of the questionnaire, but, as a heuristic example, we will describe the items where the lowest and highest scores were recorded in subjects in the hierarchy poles (Reformer and Leader) and in an intermediate level (Thinker). The analysis that follows will benefit from presenting the key psychological features of these three personality types according to Riso:

**Table I**  
**Global scores according to the enneagram type**

Enneagram type (number of subjects)	Global score
Type 1 Reformer (4)	31.8 ± 14.9
Type 2 Helper (2)	34.5 ± 13.2
Type 7 Generalist (7)	33.6 ± 10.6
Type 9 Peacemaker (9)	36.7 ± 10.0
Type 5 Thinker (2)	42.5 ± 6.4
Type 6 Loyalist (4)	42.8 ± 9.8
Type 1 Artist (1)	46.0
Type 8 (Leader) (2)	48.0 ± 1.4

- Type 1, The *Reformer* is rational, principled, orderly and self-righteous. His key emotion is rage.
  - Type 5, The *Thinker* is perceptive, original, provocative and eccentric. One of his key emotions is avarice.
  - Type 8, The *Leader* is self-confident, decisive, dominating and combative. One of his key emotions is lust.
- The items where the subjects displayed the lowest (LS) and highest (HS) scores were:
- Type 1 (Reformer): LS, *The fourfold principle and work*; HS, *The desire is insatiable and selfish*.
  - Type 5 (Thinker): LS, *The three springs of human actions*; HS, *The aesthetical experience*.
  - Type 8 (Leader): LS, *The desire is insatiable and selfish*; HS, *The aesthetical experience*.
- Following the same method as that of the previous example, we will describe how the three selected types theoretically qualify in the above-mentioned composite psychological constructs (sub-section [b] above):

- Type 1 (Reformers): they have negative empathy, tend to feel inferior concerning some personal traits, show intermediate sociability levels and are bodily centered.
- Type 5 (Thinkers): they may be apathetic, feel superior to others, have low sociability levels and are head centered.
- Type 8 (Leaders): they have negative empathy, feel superior, have high sociability levels and are bodily centered.

- An analysis about which personality traits favor or disfavor a personal identification with Schopenhauer's thought is complicated by the fact that the same personality trait may be suitable either for solidarity/compassion or malice. This was expressed by the philosopher as follows:

These might turn out very differently, even if the content that is essential to this appearance remains the same: so, for instance, it does not matter whether we play for matches (nuts) or for crowns; but whether we cheat at the game or go about it honestly, that is the essential thing; the latter is determined by the intelligible character, the former by external influences.<sup>39</sup>

- Then, why would a Reformer-type subject score low in Schopenhauer's thought evaluation? Because his rational nature rejects the a-rational nature of the will? Because his principled character makes him suspicious of the notion of lack of individuality freedom or of the capricious causality path that leads to human actions? Because his negative empathy, inferiority feelings and rage hinder compassion? Did they score high about the insatiability of desire because they tend to be bodily-centered and have insight about it?

- Why would a Leader-type subject score high, if he is dominating and have negative empathy? However, since he displays high sociability levels, could such a combination lead him to manipulate in the name of compassion? Did they score high in the *aesthetic experience* because they are aware of the insatiability of their body and thus would admire contemplation without desire?

- Only more sophisticated studies can answer these questions for educators aiming to critically discuss and spread Schopenhauer's thought.

#### e) *Limitations and strengths of the study*

##### e.1. Methodological limitations

- The Enneagram is an Ipsative scale, that is, it «forces» responses. Therefore, a positive selection for a given trait forcefully rejects another trait. Such a type of scales is better

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<sup>39</sup> Schopenhauer, A., WWR I, § 28, p. 183.



suited for *intra-individual* comparisons. On the contrary, *inter-individual* comparisons are more properly achieved with dimensional scales, for example, those using Likert-type scoring.

- Our sample size was too small, which led to non-representative numbers for each personality type.
- We did not discuss the character dimensions and asceticism, as described by Schopenhauer.

#### e.2. Essential limitations

- Can the depth of Schopenhauer's thought be properly transmitted in a two-hour lecture?
- Which are the strengths and feebleness of assessing the impact of a philosophical proposal with the terms 'agreement or disagreement' even in a dimensional scale?
- Since the will's denial is not forced or intentional, how can it be accurately explained in such an academic context? As Schopenhauer stated:

Now as we have seen, the self-abolition of the will begins with cognition, but cognition and insight as such are independent of free choice; consequently, that negation of the will, that entrance into freedom cannot be forced by any intention or resolution, but rather emerges from the innermost relation of cognition to willing in human beings, and thus arrives suddenly, as if flying in from outside. That is precisely why the church calls it the effect of divine grace...<sup>40</sup>

- Do analogies, such as the *karma* for the *Fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason*... contaminate the purity of Schopenhauer's thought?
- We did not find any published study to compare its findings with those of the present investigation.

#### e.3. Strengths

- Participants were randomly selected.
- They felt comfortable with the lecture's spirit, and most of them expressed gratitude for having the opportunity to become acquainted with the philosopher's thought.
- The Enneagram is a very friendly inventory for personality trait self-assessment.

### 3. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Schopenhauer is formally absent in mental health education in America. We posit that the philosopher anticipated relevant topics for contemporary professionals. Besides, his elegant and precise prose style can prepare students for a better comprehension of the present-day themes he anticipated.

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<sup>40</sup> Schopenhauer, A., WWR I, § 70, p. 432.

It should not be expected that the standard student in any mental health career read *The World as Will and Representation*, but it should be stimulated. Educators could thus organize *ad hoc* lectures and workshops to place Schopenhauer's work in a heuristic perspective.

Peter Sloterdijk stated: «It may be that his doctrine of the resignation of the Will must sound even stranger to the hunger for life among the inhabitants of the First World today than it would have to Schopenhauer's contemporaries»<sup>41</sup>.

Accordingly, in spite of violating the purity of the philosopher's metaphysics and disregarding his historical context, we suggested elsewhere that Schopenhauer's key message—the «will denial», compassion, and asceticism development—could be expressed in current terms as «intense cooperation with fellows» and a «healthy austerity». We moreover strongly believe that the present approach to cooperation, for example the *Tit for Tat* model of human interaction<sup>42</sup> and the Ayn Rand's ideas about the virtues of self-interest<sup>43</sup>, could set the basis for an honest and *down-to-earth* discussion of the omnipresence of desire and suffering, with Schopenhauer always remembering us about the dark and bright sides of our nature.

The strictly preliminary of the lecture supports the feasibility of *ad hoc* pedagogical activities aimed to spread Schopenhauer's work.

The issue of establishing a relationship between personality traits and response to Schopenhauer's thought has theoretical and practical value. It can indeed help educators and psychotherapists to better identify subjects who could benefit from his philosophy. This pilot study also confirms the viability of such a proposal which should be confirmed and extended by a more rigorous research protocol.

Finally, any comprehensive pedagogical project about Schopenhauer's thought in mental health education should comprise an *ad hoc* discussion of the following issues, among many others: a) the metaphysical and «Platonic» nature of most Schopenhauer's key postulates, that is their «prototypical» quality; b) Friedrich Nietzsche's evaluation of the philosopher's work<sup>44,45,46</sup>; c) the contemporary analysis of aesthetics, for example the proposal that contemplation in art (as in lyrical poetry) and nature (and the sublime experience) is not will-less but transcends individual emotions and connect with the whole humankind's sentiments<sup>47</sup>. To discuss these topics is beyond the scope of this article, but we invite readers to address such important issues.

<sup>41</sup> Sloterdijk, P., *Philosophical temperaments: from Plato to Foucault*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2013.

<sup>42</sup> Ridley, M., *The origins of Virtue. Human Instincts and the Evolution of Cooperation*, Penguin Books, London, 1996, pp. 60-66.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted by Marinoff, L., *Plato not Prozac: applying eternal wisdom to everyday problems*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 1999, p. 116.

<sup>44</sup> Nietzsche, F. W., *La Gaya Ciencia*, Edicomunicación, Barcelona, 2003.

<sup>45</sup> Nietzsche, F. W., *Mi hermana y yo*, C. S. Ediciones, Buenos Aires, 2007.

<sup>46</sup> Nietzsche, F. W., *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Dodo Press, USA, 2016.

<sup>47</sup> Young, J., *Schopenhauer*, Routledge, New York, 2005, pp. 120-121.

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