

HZT4UE – Theory of Knowledge

UNIT 4: LANGUAGE

4.7 Phenomenology and Schopenhauer

Arthur Schopenhauer (1778 – 1860)

A Prussian (German) philosopher and part-time academic

1818 published *The World as Will and Representation*

Schopenhauer accepted Kant's "*Phenomena / Noumena*" distinction and added "subject – object" to Kant's synthetic a priori

Schopenhauer felt, however, that we could know some of the noumena. He felt that the way we experience ourselves was beyond the synthetic a priori = subject

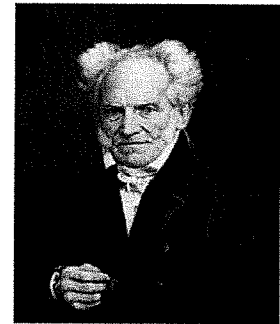
Blended Western and Eastern philosophy: Influenced by the teachings of Buddha and the Vedas (the oldest scriptures of Hinduism).

The way we experience ourselves is through the will. All objects contain will, although living objects contain more.

Viewed life as largely the **Will to Live** (*Wille zum Leben*) – human desires that overpower reason.

The will is used to desire. Desires uncover the nature of will. Emotional, physical, and sexual desires can never really be fulfilled and, since the will is often denied, much of life is suffering.

Schopenhauer's pessimism can only be made better through aesthetic experience—especially music (influenced Wagner).



The will – building on Kant's idea of phenomena – affects interpretations. *It is like a structure of the mind that filters how we perceive the world.*

Question: How do we "view" things? What filters do we (un)consciously apply in the way we perceive and interpret the world? What "lenses" affect perception? How does this then mold our reality?

If we choose to focus on different things, how does this change reality?