

PDF - PSYCHOLOGY OF GENIUS IN ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER - researchcub.info3 In the philosophy of Schopenhauer, German idealism took a new turn. While, for example, Hegel identifies the ultimate reality, the absolute, with *Reason*, Schopenhauer identifies it with the *WILL*. For Hegel, the absolute is Reason, but for Schopenhauer, the *Absolute* is the *Will*. In Schopenhauer's idealism, the absolute is not an intelligent being developing consciously towards its goal but rather a blind irrational impulse for life, the will-to-live. His idealism is more directly derived from Kant than those of the three idealists before him, for in his own idealism the absolute is precisely the thing-in-itself (the noumenon) of Kant.4

After the failure of the Revolution of 1818, a revolution for which Schopenhauer had no sympathy at all, people were ready to pay attention to a philosophy that emphasized the evil in the world and the vanity of life and preached a turning away from life to aesthetic contemplation and asceticism. And in the last decade of his life, Schopenhauer became a famous man. Visitors came to see him from all sides. And although the German professors had not forgotten his sarcasm and abuse, lectures were delivered on his system in several universities, a sure sign that he has at last arrived. He died in September 1860. May his soul rest in peace. So be it.

### 1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Among so many problems unravelled in the mystery of the mind, stands most prominently, the question and the concept of genius. And to make matters worse is the modern usage of the word "genius". Genius is conceived hitherto as a "gift of heaven" or a remarkable character imposed on some individuals. Often, geniuses are seen as extra-ordinary being or super-humans. This ideology would to some extent arouse the mind of a philosopher and a critical thinker to inquire why such gift (if it is) to one, and dullness of intellect, or even idiocy to the other.

**The problem is really philosophical** as it questions the one and universal essence of humanity, of which every human being is made of.

Baffled with the above problem, I, therefore as a matter of fact, invite the philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer into the intellectual stage to know what he has to say. We must acknowledge the fact that Schopenhauer's view of life is grim and pessimistic. For him, life is an endless strife for the unattainable. The world is a world of endless strife, conflict, suffering and evil. It is impossible to stop any of these because they are manifestation of the Will. This notion makes Schopenhauer the most celebrated philosopher of pessimism. He, however, recommends only two ways by which the pain and suffering of life can be minimized. And these are: "Aesthetic contemplation and asceticism, especially as it is practiced in Buddhism"

5 Schopenhauer went further to assert that the ideas that are the immediate and adequate objectivity of the thing-in-itself, of the *Will*, are *Arts* - **the work of genius**. Consequently, only through pure contemplation through which these eternal ideas are comprehended that constitutes the nature of genius. An immediate question then would be: Is a genius consists only in pure contemplation and apprehension of the immutable truths as we see in Schopenhauer? And if so, is everybody given that ability of contemplation and apprehension? However, this is just the statement of the problem.

### 1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Among so many puzzles and mysteries in the universe, hitherto, unravelled in the Mystery of Mind stands prominently the question of genius. More often than not, you hear some people say: "Beethoven was a genius". Albert Einstein was a genius". "Goethe was a genius". An obvious observation is the fact that the honour of genius, if so, is only appreciated and accorded to great minds - the *Mahatmas*, of past generations.

Well acclaimed are those people, that, it seems there is no existing genius in every present generation. Would it not be a superficial judgment or observation to measure genius until only after his or her departure from existence?

Again, the concept of genius and the cognition of the same appear vague and enigmatic when considered from the threads of history. This is so, insofar as people still question the concept. And even, until now, Werner Reyneke in his article, has once more raised some questions on that phenomenon: "What is genius? Where does it come from? Where is it going to? Is genius just the imagination of the genius himself and the unimaginable bewilderment in the empty hearts of his expectators?" 6

Our study of the psychology of genius, we tend also to raise such similar questions as:

What is genius, and who is a genius? Is genius a natural or a supernatural gift to individuals and not all? Of which benefits is genius to its subject and society in a whole? Again, is one born a genius? Or, is it developed or achieved in the course of life and existence? Is everybody a genius, or is it reserved to few individuals? Besides, what makes a genius, a genius? Does it consist of so many knowledge and highly intelligent quotients? In fact, how do we recognize a genius? Do we know a genius by his or her character and behaviour? If so, of which character does a genius exhibit? And finally, is one a genius just by conventional recognition and a standard measurement? These critical questions and more are what we intend to investigate and explore in our research.

Furthermore, this project is an attempt at formulating and exposing the nature and concept of genius and creativity. It geared also to enlighten the bright ones as it is supposed to help those who consider themselves less intellectually fortunate. In short, it will reiterate the fact that training and persistence can do miracles in one's life as in genius.

Again it goes without saying that people seem to have so much regard or repute for the great minds - the geniuses. They tend to go extra-miles to emulate them. But all things being equal or unequal, they lack the means or knowledge for such attainment. The quest for such endowment of the ambitious-seekers who would like to rise above the sky, shining like a bright morning star and soaring like the eagle is another ultimate purpose of this study.

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The gift of genius whether by nature or nurture remains the flower of civilization and development of humanity. Any country, race, nation that involves itself in the massacre of genius would be very remote. Thus, the wail of humanity is checked by the activities of genius in their creative mindedness.

All things being equal or unequal, our study of the psychology of genius is not to be solely in an abstract or abstruse manner. The Schopenhaurian idealistic concept of genius in terms of aesthetic contemplation must be revisited to have a practical and useful relevance. It goes without saying that our study will not only add to our knowledge, it will go further to enable students and all lovers of knowledge to adopt the way and the secret of the great minds or the geniuses.

Once more, the study would go a long way towards self-knowledge, auto-realization and auto-actualization. Of course, we cannot neglect the fact that the project would also pave way for understanding, as a necessary virtue in inter-human relationship.

### **1.6 SCOPE OF STUDY**

This work will not as a matter of truth dwell solely on Schopenhaurian idealistic concept of genius. Neither will this work pretend to present the whole psychological investigation on genius, nor promise to

exhaust its concept, for this would bring to a halt our further knowledge. Therefore, this work will not as a matter of fact close any intellectual window to the further knowledge of genius. However, the work would be articulated in five chapters as in the table of contents. Finally, there would be a critical reappraisal of Schopenhauerian's concept of a genius.

## **1.7 METHODOLOGY OF THE WORK**

For the purpose of this work, the method to be employed would be expository, critical and mildly evaluative. This method is aimed to approach the topic in a philosophical manner for proper comprehension

1 S. J., Copleston, "*A History of Philosophy*", Image books, pg. 34

[1] Ibid. pg.35

3 S.J. Copleston, "*A History of Philosophy*", Image books, 1963, vol.7, pg. 26.

4 J. I. Omoregbe, "*A simplified History of Western philosophy*", "Joja Press, 1991, vol. II, pg.143.

5 J. I. Omoregbe, Ibid., pg. 144-45

6 W. Reyneke, "What is genius", Article in Internet, Jan. 3, 2005

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