

Abstract

This Ph.D. thesis aims to clarify the notion of will of Arthur Schopenhauer in a historical context. The understanding of will in Schopenhauer's predecessors – Descartes, Leibniz, Kant and Hegel – will also be covered. The paper will try to discover what impact their notion of will had on Schopenhauer's philosophy, which is the topic of the second, most important part of the thesis. It will present Schopenhauer's understanding of the world as will and idea. According to Schopenhauer, everything in the world is subordinate to causal laws, which the thesis also presents. There are even more topics to be covered – the partition of the world to subject and objects, which exist only for the subject, examples of manifestation of the will in nature and different branches of science, the impossibility of freedom and so on. Our attention will also be focused on what impact Schopenhauer's notion of will had on his aesthetics and ethics.

The last part deals with the voluntarism of Friedrich Nietzsche, who transforms Schopenhauer's pessimistic notion of a cruel will to life to an optimistic will to power. In relation to this, several topics will be covered – resentment as a consequence of the massive spread of slave morality, the critique of Christianity and Nietzsche's expectation of the overman's arrival.