

PHILOSOPHICAL PESSIMISM-
A QUESTION OF VALIDITY

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ABSTRACT

Pessimism is a mental condition or intellectual approach in which suffering dominates pleasure. Pessimism assumes that everything is inclined to maliciousness, immorality, hazardousness and injury. It preconceives the things in a negative and bleak way, and expects bad if not worst consequences of any action. When it is taken as a consistent and systematic pattern of thought to explain various phenomena of life and universe; it is called philosophical pessimism. Philosophical pessimism treats life in a very rigid manner where there is no leniency. It challenges the optimistic belief of thinkers and takes life as a continuous stream of grief, misery, pain, distress and suffering. The famous German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer is the most relevant personality in this regard who earned fame for his unflinching philosophical pessimism. This paper intends to elaborate pessimism as a philosophy which interprets life and world not in a negative way as such, but the way as it is. According to pessimism the world is inherently bad wherein sorrow dominates happiness; rather so-called happiness itself is the result of pain and misery of the others. Various forms of pessimism are also discussed in detail and are analyzed in the contemporary scenario as well.

I

Pessimism in its true nature and stance in philosophy has touched several aspects of life. In this context its four forms are formulated as Epistemological Pessimism, Political and Cultural Pessimism, Technological and Environmental Pessimism and Legal Pessimism. Philosophical pessimism and its foundations in philosophy eliminated all the irrational hopes and expectations. It generated a new dimension of thinking rationally and to hunt for reality realistically. It discouraged the concept of hope without cause and stressed on the view of possibility without emotions. The relevant literary work closely relevant to pessimism is *Dialogue of Pessimism*.

Pessimism in philosophy has its own place and value which cannot be denied at any cost. The contribution of western philosophers is immense and great in this regard who worked as a group of thinkers with similar ideas and approach. Their thinking style was coherent, but against the traditional style with respect to other philosophers. This was the reason that their work or contribution is termed as romanticism, counter-enlightenment, misanthropy and existentialism on account of their related ideas to these ones.

Philosophical pessimists draw parallels and admit progress by man on certain levels, but deny overall progress. They consider something good done in the field of science only. The same scope of thinking is adopted by Rousseau, "our souls have become corrupted to the extent that our sciences and our arts have advanced towards perfection." ¹ The pessimistic concepts describe human condition as "absurd." This absurdity further rules over accomplishment of desire by man and inability of sustaining in the world. Alike Camus situates it; "a divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting."² Discussing the view of Socrates, he believes that rational approach is the cause of man's progress and is the base of several forms of western optimistic philosophers. On the other side pessimists claim that human freedom is the reason for man's unhappiness.

The concepts of philosophers vary from person to person in this regard. Some thinkers, especially Schopenhauer treats it as a shape of resignation or self-negation. Nietzsche, Camus, Leopardi and Rousseau have different opinions or describe it in their own way. They regard life as permanent distress in which there is no space of

development. Philosophical pessimism is often matched with arts and literature. The reason for this is the view given by some of the philosophers or great thinkers who match this area of study. The pessimists that come into this category are Miguel de Carvantes, Joseph Conrad, Fyoder Dostoyevsky, Eduard von Hartmann, Thomas Mann, Leo Tolstoy, Nietzsche, Samuel Beckett, Sigmund Freud and some others, they were mostly inspired or motivated by the concept of Schopenhauer.³ Tolstoy, however, came out of the spell of Schopenhauer in his later life; yet the traces of pessimism are found frequently in his later works.

Philosophical pessimists associated the time with pain, burden, irony, bondage and unhappiness. Human existence is bizarre, absurd and has no worth; it is the source of pain and suffering. They raised different facts and realities of life. They highlighted the enormous human suffering rather than physical pain or bodily torture. They oppressed that man has no power to control everything or change it, and cannot change it according to his own desire or will. As man cannot rule or command his destiny in his own way. In the name of so called "progress" they have denied and negated this perspective which is the main reason of man's deterioration over the centuries. As per philosophical pessimism the scientific progress too has received heavy price from mankind in the form of health, happiness and life itself. The purposelessness of human life and immense but worthless pain associated with it led them to believe that tragedy and sorrow are gist of existence. It is most interesting to note that Oriental Philosophy is thoroughgoing and consistent pessimism in nature. The classic and ancient Indian philosophy, perhaps most splendid and dignified, is profoundly pessimistic of which the culminating point is Buddhism, wherein, the Indian sage identifies existence itself with evil and root-cause of misery. This paper, however, will focus on Occidental pessimism. It must be noted that Pessimism has made its appearance in a systematized form in Western Thought in Stoicism, a Greek School of Philosophy which appeared in the age of decline. Stoicism as such is a vast philosophy and is itself a topic of distinct and thorough research. This paper will focus on one representative philosopher from modern Western tradition that, is, Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860).

How valid, Pessimism is as a philosophy, we are going to examine in the pages to come.

Some Forms of Pessimism

Political and Cultural:

Philosophical Pessimism is contradictory to optimism or

utopianism of Hegelian philosophy and Marxism. Hegel is considered by some thinkers to be the pioneer of modern optimism. Political pessimism differs from other political ideologies, because it does not have any standard political plan. Pessimism of cultural and political type is regarded as an outcome of man's social decline. Spengler claimed that modern Western civilization was a "winter age" of depression. His theory became famous in Europe, especially in war days and in Germany. In the same manner, Julius Evola, a traditionalist regarded world was in a *Kal- yug*, a dark age of moral fall. Opposite to traditionalists, the conservatives usually take politics as a negative thing and handle it pessimistically.

They further think that a state is to be ruled by a government facing challenges by its opponents with a fighting spirit. The freedom of man thus cannot be exercised properly as they have to be ruled by government authorities. The big example of political pessimism is a dictatorship, where only one person is controlling the whole nation. Democracy brings hope to the masses but soon becomes a muddle of corrupt run- of- the -mill politicians who may rise to the power with the help of wealth alone.

Technological and Environmental

This concept is against human progress and development on the basis of science and technology and is termed as technological pessimism. This approach aroused during the industrial revolution with the Luddite movement. He was against industries and technology and accused these of snatching man's job opportunities. At one side technology creates ease and comfort for humanity, but on the other way, it proves very disparaging and destructive. Technology, mainly social media have eliminated ethics and moral values of society; consequently man has lost his past innocence and nobility. While technology makes the life easy, but on the other it has made many problems in society. People misuse the technology like social media and other electronic devices. When technology was not developed as much as today, the people had some respect and moral values and worked harder than today. Many people misuse this technology to create disputes between different sects. In terrorism this technology is also playing a main role. Internet and cellular phones have facilitated the criminals very much.

In social pessimism, technology has played very important role. Technology has made many disasters in the world like (Chernobyl and Three Mile Island), in the traumas (the Vietnam War), technology has lost its faith generally as "*the driving force of progress.*" Somehow, many people perceive the Technological pessimism in a

dangerous way, in the sense of disappointment and anxiety, this approach is rising day by day because technology has detached them from nature and purity. In the modern era, there are huge series of remarkable scientific and technological breakthroughs; considering there were some spectacular technical innovations of the previous span in medicine, microchip technology, nuclear energy, genetic engineering and space exploration. These are the some major reasons and unforeseen consequences of the misuse and bad impact of the technology.

The Romantic Movement also did not favour technology as it considered it loss of man's simplicity and neutrality due to it. Famous English poets also blamed industrialization as the ultimate cause of nature's polluting and losing its purity. Some social thinkers are against world's globalization, population growth and so called scientific progress since these factors have disturbed the socio-economic and ecological equilibrium of the planet. This aspect will affect world's ideal climate among the masses for the survival of the fittest. ⁴ The pessimists advise to prohibit modern technology to keep the balance intact. Amongst the 19th century thinkers, Leo Tolstoy, John Ruskin and Henry David Thoreau belonged to this School of Thought despite the fact that environmental changes and global warming had not raised their ugly heads at that time. Their influence may be seen in the life and views of M. K. Gandhi in India.

The traditionalist followers of the Sophia Perennis, such as Rene Guenon, Frithjof Schuon, Martin Lings, Titus Burckhardt and Seyyed Hossein Nasr also uphold similar views. They are not pessimists; but consider over-growth technology as the main reason behind moral, spiritual and cultural decline of modern man as well as of environmental balance. Hossein Nasr has expressed himself on the outcome of scientific development and industrial growth in these words:

Modern man has burned his hands in the fire he himself has kindled by allowing himself to forget who he is. Having sold his soul, in the manner of Faust, in order to gain dominion over the natural environment, he has created a situation in which the very control of the environment is turning into its strangulation, bringing in its wake not only ecocide but also ultimately suicide⁵.

Pessimism as a Viable Philosophy:

If we see the historical background of Pessimism, an Armageddon about the first idea has been traced back to us in 1400 BC. In Leo Marx's view "the boundless optimism that strengthened the hopes of Americans until the Second World War debauched into pervasive Social Pessimism⁶." Dystopian literature was an aftermath

the post-war of the fifties.

A poem by T.S Eliot, named "*The Waste Land*, Kafka's *The Trial*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and 1984, come into this category. In his poem Samuel Beckett expressed pessimism in the best way. Communism also has played an important role for the social pessimism. Where reason was conceded a perfect thing, but now it is facing the different questions and challenges of Post-modernism and Post-structuralism. What is power? Science and technology have their own identity which could not be denied, but now we are the victim of these problems, population growth and misuse of technology, chemical factories and buildings are the chief reasons of environmental decline and natural disaster. If we see in the history, according to some scholars, these things in general are bad and are a reason for environmental decline.

A close relationship between pessimism and existentialism is clear. Much as epistemology is driven by the encouragement of the skeptic, so the provocations of the pessimists implicitly lie behind many existential concerns: the meaning and value of life, the disvalue or value of death, and the nature of happiness and well-being etc.

It is interesting to note that many post-modernist writings contain existentialist thoughts and perspectives, perhaps as some critics have termed it, "neo-existentialism." Certainly, it seems that existentialism in literature has extended the influence of pessimism in our times, making it one of the major literary trends in the last hundred years. The philosophical strand gathers the ideas of existential pessimism, dissolution and nihilism. There are various existentialist ideas too which are connected with the philosophical pessimism.

Pessimism as a regular and consistent system of philosophy in Western Thought was brought to its culminating point by Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), the celebrated German philosopher who is noted equally for his immense contribution in art and aesthetics. His struggle regarding evolution and psychology through the concept of the *Will* is splendid. His concept was also followed by Nietzsche. His work has got common ideas from Eastern thought. He urges that human desires are limitless and thus are incredible and impossible to satisfy. These desires are affected by *Will* and have the basic features of sex, hunger and thirst. He evaluates man's life lingering between pain and boredom just as a pendulum. Thus man's existence in its intrinsic value is based on suffering and pain.

The idea of biological life is just like a war in which everyone is working against others for personal survival. These things are not

controlled by reason and the idea of *Will* dominates man's affairs. *Will* is responsible for innumerable desires of man but is quite helpless in finding means to satisfy them. Schopenhauer kept his focus on the investigation of individual's motivation. Before Schopenhauer, Hegel's concept of *Zeitgeist*, the idea that society consists of a collective consciousness which moves in a distinct direction and also controls the actions of its members, was already promulgated. Schopenhauer criticized the logical optimism of both Kant and Hegel. He rejected the notion that the individual morality could be determined by society or reason. Schopenhauer was of the view that humans are motivated by only their own basic desires. The "*Will to Live*", is directing the whole of humanity.⁷

Schopenhauer used the word "*Will*" as the most familiar designation for the concept that can also be represented by other words such as "desire," "wanting," "effort," and "urging." Schopenhauer's philosophy holds that everything including man, is nothing but the countenance of an insatiable *Will to live*. It is due to this *Will* that mankind faces all the suffering. Desire for more and more is what perpetuates this suffering and thus the process goes on.

According to Schopenhauer, human desire is meaningless, illogical, directionless, and futile and, therefore, all human action as caused by this pointless *Will* is also absurd. He wrote: "Man can indeed do what he wants, but he cannot *Will* what he wants".

The *Will* of Schopenhauer is a metaphysical existence, malicious and wicked in its nature, controlling all the actions of an individual, the intelligent agents, and then ultimately all observable phenomena. This menacing evil can only be got rid of through asceticism and chastity. These are declared as the responsibilities of mankind by Schopenhauer. One may listen to Freud resonating in these assertions of Schopenhauer; whose *Id* is a further development of the *Will*. He is credited with one of the most famous opening lines of philosophy: "*The world is my representation*". Schopenhauer derived the concept of *Will* from Kant's "thing-in-itself" but made some amendments for his philosophy.⁸

The World as Will and Representation

Arthur Schopenhauer believed that Immanuel Kant had either made, or greatly re-in forced, uniquely important breakthroughs in human understanding - these included the Kant's division of reality into what was susceptible of being experienced, (the phenomenal), and what was not, (the noumenal).

Schopenhauer was greatly influenced by Kant's key insistence that the forms and frameworks of all possible experience were dependent

on the contingent nature of our bodily apparatus, and would have been so whatever that apparatus had been. It follows from this that people are unable to envisage what anything was like independently of being received, and consequently that the nature of independent reality must remain a permanently closed book to us, being un-conceptualizably and unimaginably different from anything we could pick up. The Sciences, meanwhile, could be utilized to provide us an understanding of the Empirical World of time and space, and causally interconnected material objects.

Schopenhauer's principal work, *The World as Will and Idea / Representation*, consists of four books. The first and third treating with the World as Representation (or Idea) and being largely based on Kant, the second and fourth treating with the World as *Will* which, based on his own speculations, considered the notion that the *Will* is the key to all existence. The human body and all its parts are the visible expression of the *Will* and its several desires. The teeth, throat, and bowels for example being "objectified" hunger.

Starting from the principle that the *Will* is the inner nature of the body as an appearance in time and space, he concluded that the inner reality of all material appearances is *Will*. Where Kant had concluded that ultimate reality - the "thing-in-itself" (*Ding ansich*) - lay beyond being experienced, Schopenhauer postulated that the ultimate reality is one universal *Will*. This *Will* is the inner nature of each experiencing being and assumes in time and space the appearance of the body, which is an Idea. Accordingly existence is the expression of an insatiable and pervasive *Will* which generates a world with such negative features as conflict and suffering, senselessness, and futility as well as many positive aspects. It is the "*Will* to live" that perpetuates this cosmic spectacle. For Schopenhauer, who is considered to be a pessimistic philosopher, the tragedy of life arises from the nature of the *Will*, which constantly urges the individual towards the satisfaction of successive goals, none of which can provide permanent satisfaction for the infinite activity of the life force, or *Will*. This will keeps man on a permanent hedonistic treadmill; as soon as he achieves one success, starts planning and dreaming for the next.

"From these recollections, Lieutenant Captain Mikhaylov involuntarily passed to dreams and hopes." How surprised and pleased Natasha will be," he thought as he passed along a narrow side-street, "when she reads in *Invalides* of my being the first to climb on the cannon, and my receiving the Saint George! I ought to be made a full Captain on that former recommendation. Then I may

easily become a major this year by seniority, because so many of our fellows have been killed and no doubt many more will die during this campaign. Then there will be more fighting and I, as well known man, shall be entrusted with a regiment....then a Lieutenant Colonel, the order of Saint Anna..... A Colonel”.....and he was already a General, calling on Natasha, the widow of his comrade (who would be dead by that time according to his daydream). When the sounds of the music on the boulevard reached his ears more distinctly, a crowd of people appeared before his eyes, and he realized that he was on the boulevard and still only a Lieutenant Captain in the infantry”⁹.

Then how to face the reality that you are still a Lieutenant Captain and not a General? Art definitely is a good refuge and successful asylum .Such things as an interest in the Arts, and a moral life based on sympathy, tend to alleviate the suffering experienced in people's lives are positive aspects of the *Will*. A more telling alleviation is to be found through the denial, or suspension, of the *Will* through asceticism. This was further endorsed by Freud.

Death itself is one of the phenomena of *Will*; therefore, suicide does not actually damage *Will*, neither any part of it nor as a whole. Death is just the end of one particular phenomena of the *Will*, which is then succeeded by other phenomena. Schopenhauer recommends asceticism for the ultimate denial of the *Will*. To slowly weaken the individual *Will* is far more significant than violent suicide; former is in some sense an affirmation of the *Will*. They tell us that Suicide is the greatest piece of cowardice. That suicide is not correct; when it is quite obvious that there is nothing in the world to which every man has a more unassailable title than to his own life and person. Schopenhauer propounded that rejection of the *Will* to live is the way to salvation from suffering. According to him when the *Will* is denied, the sage without actually dying turns into nothingness.

In Schopenhauer's view, existence is the expression of our *Will* where we are always searching or finding something better to fulfill our dreams and desires. If we do not fulfill our desires or wishes then *Will* will remain unfulfilled and unsatisfied. We are all caught up in a hopeless cycle of wanting things, getting them, and then wanting more things. It does not stop until we die. Whenever we seem to get what we want, we start wanting something else. You might think you would be content if you were a millionaire, but you would not be for long. You would want something you had not got yet. Human beings are like that; we are never satisfied, never stop craving for more than we have. See reference 8 above. It is

all very depressing. Thus, life is a motion towards a goal. If we are successful in satisfying our desires; the life seems to reach its end; moreover, we very soon get fed up with the things we have really achieved. Ideal, as soon as actualized, no more remains an ideal. On the contrary, if we do not get the desires of our heart; again we remain sad, dejected and feel a terrible sense of failure, guilt and experience inferiority in our own eyes and also in the society.

The same is true of sensual pleasure, it repeatedly frustrates us, and still we cannot reach or gain it. After achieving our destiny, it is laid off as soon as it is reached. Schopenhauer's ideas are not as strange and morbid as they first appear, this philosophy is actually very close to the Buddha's message that "all life involved suffering, but that at a deep level, there was no such thing as "the self": if we recognize that, we can achieve enlightenment". Schopenhauer was in fact well-versed in Eastern philosophy, he even had a sculpture of the Buddha on his writing table.¹⁰

II

At this stage, it is necessary to have a thorough look into the fact that why pessimism as a common state of mind and as a philosophical outlook has strengthened itself and has taken a vigorous stance during and after 19th century. Whereas 19th century was a turning point in the history of mankind and after Industrial Revolution, human civilization never saw backward. The current scientific and technological progress has no match in the entire known human history. Then why did this progress fail to yield happiness? Why did it give rise to anxiety, anguish, depression, loneliness, hypertension, cardiac diseases, diabetes mellitus and cancer? Why did it gift humanity with the Nazi concentration /death camps, the minarets of skulls in Cambodia by Khmer Rouge, purges of Stalin, prisons of Siberia and countless corpses in China during Cultural Revolution? Why were Palestinians displaced and dispossessed? Why the world has turned into the inferno of terror and suicide bombing? If the revolution in telecommunication has reduced the distances and made the world a village, why the number of broken homes is at a rise; why there is an alarming increase in the rate of divorce? Whither went the dreams of civilized, tolerant, healthy and joyful existence? If we talk about genomic science, where it saves our life; it is ruining the social fabric and life as well. Abortion of female fetus is one such example which is decreasing the number of women and disturbing gender balance in society and subsequently leading mankind towards sexual perversion, pedophilia

and homosexuality. America is backing and supporting the Israel's brutality with its sophisticated technology. How can a person be optimistic in this situation and can rest his life in the hope for the best. No sensible person, in the current scenario, can deny the possibility of pessimism as a viable philosophy.

The age of 24 hour news marked a typical pattern shift for coverage of war and conflict. Rather than updates dispersed throughout the day, there is now a constant stream of death and destruction. And now, war in the era of Face book and YouTube means the images of violence and bloodshed embedded in the online spaces. There are high quality graphic videos which would be deemed far too violent for mainstream networks, showing the miserable pictures of refugees, charred bodies of Palestinian kids, burnt to death with white phosphorus by Israel, ruins of Syria, and, atrocities of IS are so crushingly depressing. These produce not only grief and sorrow but severe resentment, hatred and will to revenge.

Every invention, discovery and things have their own merits and demerits. At times the thing itself is not bad instead its use can be. Rapid industrialization resulted into high production, better job-opportunities, women empowerment and good standard of living; but on the other hand it led to urbanization, slum-dwelling, health and sewerage issues, contagious diseases, prostitution, HIV/AIDS, crimes and environmental pollution. The technology also has its some drawbacks that compel the people to be pessimistic. Mobile phone with its complete applications has made the modern man extra busy and far off from its near and dear ones. One sees that people do not sleep at night, do not take their meals with attention and are busy either with text-messaging or some other application. There is an increase in the instances of neck /shoulders/eye-pain due to this device. It has destroyed some other industries completely such as radio, DVD, CD, torch, calculator, camera, public call offices, post offices, greeting cards of all sorts, letters, dairy, telephone directory and many other things etcetera.

When it comes to the medical field, the medicines that are taken for the cure of the diseases have many adverse effects as well. Due to these side effects, a medicine is not always successful to save the patient's precious life, e.g., chemotherapy in cancer, is good, but not good enough to save the patient's life in every case. Cancer is the typical product of industrial development and over use of chemicals, pesticides, fertilizers and genetically modified foods in our life and agriculture. Besides the symptoms of the disease, its medication is painful beyond imagination and makes the patient miserable. Moreover, World Health Organization is worried that resistant

strands of virus and bacteria have evolved and anti-biotics are losing their efficacy day by day. Better the drugs, stronger the pathogens; the first order drugs, once very effective, now have virtually become useless. The day is not far when to control tuberculosis will be as difficult as it had been in first half of twentieth century. According to a latest report of WHO, 300 million people would die by 2050 of curable diseases due to inefficacy of anti-biotic drugs.

20th century revolutionized the human life with vaccination, effective medication, transplantation and amazing surgical techniques; an unprecedented ascend was witnessed in child survival and span of human life increased immensely. Then what happened? Are all these people living happily on the planet?? They are starving due to their un-arrested number, living below poverty line, are drinking poisonous and polluted water, eating genetically engineered food which is playing havoc with the chemistry of their cells and mutated genes are producing malignant disease at a horrifying rate. Immigration is a necessity since local resources are unable to support them; resultantly ethnic, racial, social, civil, religious and sectarian strife, animosity and bloody clashes are the order of the day. Globalization has added to alienation, destitution, devastation of small cultures and languages besides clash of civilizations and subsequent hatred and violence.

The optimist may take here a genuine opportunity to intervene and say that this is all exaggeration; progress is not as bad as has been depicted. Modern era has so much to amuse man and to provide him pleasure. The modern mode of transportation is easy, swift and safe. Remember the times, when men travelled on camels in caravans and most of them died during the journey of hardship, weather and diseases; and the rest were robbed of their belonging by the gangs of dacoits. Today we have vehicles, aircrafts, metro buses, ships, bullet trains and what not; every mode so pleasant, speedy, safe and full of comfort and leisure. No doubt ; just stop and think for a moment that these transports are an efficient means of mass extermination; people beyond counting are killed annually in roadside traffic accidents, trains fall into rivers, collide with each other , get derail, plains crash, boats capsize and big ships sink. No one is unaware of the ill-fated RS Titanic. The fuel used in these transports has converted the entire earth into battlefield. The imperial powers have created persistent unrest in Middle East and oil rich countries only to possess the deposits of their fuel. The air pollution and related disorders like asthma, chest infection, bronchitis and deafness are only a few of the diseases which are

caused by contaminated air and noise. Kids inhale the poisonous smoke of buses and rickshaws. Huge traffic jams have devastated the urban citizens; at times even ambulances do not get their way and the patients die on the roads helplessly. We have lost our trees, greenery, plants, play ground and flowers in order to widen the roads. Leo Tolstoy has written in his famous essay, “What is Religion, of What Does Its Essence Consists?”

No one would argue that iron-clads, railroads, printing presses, tunnels, phonographs, Rontgen rays and so forth are very fine things. Indeed they are, but what are also fine, as Ruskin says, finer beyond comparison with all else, are human lives, of which millions are now destroyed for the acquisition of iron-clads, roads, tunnels etc., all of which disfigure rather than beautifying life¹¹.

Last but not the least; the over-industrialization and advanced capitalism have not only given rise to extreme class-divide, economic inequality and exploitation, they have increased the temperature of the earth to a horrifying extent. The people, who out of their hubris and lust of power disturbed the environmental equilibrium, now are arranging conferences to “save” the earth. Global warming has become the greatest threat for the planet and the entire life residing on it. The green house effect and depletion of ozone layer are causing devastation. Glaciers are melting, sea-level is on rise, floods have become unleashed and rapid weather changes may lead to widespread drought, famines and hunger.

Perhaps all this appears too exaggerated, everything is not as bad and negative, as portrayed in this essay. There are so many developments which may be called proud achievements of mankind. Only a century ago millions died of cholera and tuberculosis, but now they are perfectly curable. The day is not far when HIV/AIDS and cancer will also have remedies. May be vaccination is also available for the prevention of cancer. Life may not be founded on utter hopelessness. Man has faced hardships in every age but has not lost heart; he had overcome the hurdles and made his way to Moon and Mars. So why this gloomy attitude; while hope has supported us in the worst days and has illuminated the dark paths? This argument is strong and has weight, but pessimist, too, possesses cogent answers. Pessimist does believe in hope and has a strong faith in the industrious researchers who will, one day, definitely find the swift, painless and cost-effective treatment of cancer and in centuries to come patients would not suffer as much as they suffer today. But----
--what benefit will these medicines yield to those who had died already in pain and misery? What was the fault of those who were born earlier and could not avail the later treatment? Why were they

born in the year in which they were born? Is there any atonement for the distress of those who have endured it? Suppose Palestinians get a State of their own, would this be able to compensate the agony and grief of those who were displaced and dispossessed in 1948, the anguish of those who died helplessly in refugee camps, torments of those who faced inhuman Lebanon Wars I & II, who were slaughtered in Sabra and Shatila, who endured the siege of Beirut without food, water, drugs, fuel and electricity? Would those children be brought back to life, who were charred to ashes by white phosphorus in 2009 Gaza assault of Israel?

We have not mentioned yet the suffering of animals; that we devour daily to fill our stomachs. Whom we use as beasts of burden and beat cruelly; those having some sensitivity to animal pain must read Fyodor's Dostoevsky's all-times classis, *The Brothers Karamazovs*. Briefly speaking the life preys upon life in this world; there is no concept of harmonious co-existence. We have to kill poisonous and injurious animals, otherwise they would kill us. We have to fight vigorously against flies, mosquitoes, bacteria, viruses and other pathogens in order keep us healthy and alive. Moreover, how much brutality we show towards those animals which are used for scientific experimentation. They are infested with horrible diseases and then very painful drugs are tested on them. Have we ever thought about the tortured animal when we either eat a roasted chicken wing or swallow a tablet to relieve our pain?

Dostoevsky especially mourned and lamented on the suffering of kids and children in the world, who according to him, did not participate in the sin of Adam and Eve; they did not taste the fruit of forbidden tree. Despite they are made the fuel of the furnace of the earth. Children pay for the sins of their elders and parents. There are not only horrible diseases but very many other torments the innocent children bear without any fault of their own. Orphaned and disabled in wars, cramped in refugee camps, dying of hunger, shivering with cold, enduring torture on their tender bodies, abducted and sexually abused, murdered ruthlessly, working as slaves and labourers; which Divine plan they are fulfilling? How can one be happy and satisfied in a world which is so insecure, brutal and atrocious for little souls? Just see his existential agony in the following lines:

Listen, I spoke of children to make my case clearer. Of the other tears of humanity with which the earth is soaked from its crust to its center, I will say nothing. I have narrowed my subject on purpose and I recognize in all humility that I cannot understand why the world is arranged as it.¹²

And the sufferings of children go to swell the sum of sufferings which was necessary to pay for truth, then I protest that the truth is not worth such a price.....Besides, too high a price is asked for harmony; it is beyond our means to pay so much. And so I give back my entrance ticket, and I am an honest man I give it back as soon as possible. And that I am doing. It's not God that I don't accept, Alyosha, only I most respectfully return the ticket to Him¹³

These are not the exhaustive facts, but we may not quote all the examples of human and animal misery in this paper. In short, it may be said that pessimism still exists in our life and no sentient being may avoid/deny it. We are not in a position to eradicate it from our lives. Men would go on falling prey to pessimism due to their circumstances, priorities, environment, technology and their life style. Hence, Pessimism is a genuine, concrete, profound and viable philosophy and is not merely an approach or outlook.

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 - ¹⁰ Ibid, P.148.
 - ¹¹ Leo Tolstoy, *A Confession and Other Religious Writings*, translated by Jane Kentish, (London: Penguin Books), 1987, P. 101.
 - ¹² Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazovs*, translated by Constance Garnett, (New York: New American Library, Inc.), 1957, P. 224.
 - ¹³ Ibid, P.226