Schopenhauer, Arthur (2021)*.* Think for Oneself<https://uvu.instructure.com/courses/519617/assignments/5346044>

The price of original thought

Schopenhauer being a great German philosopher had some unique ideas as to what it took to be able to think for oneself. He believed that the key to becoming a free thinker capable of original thoughts was not from looking outside but inside oneself. He said that less knowledge was more useful than more knowledge in the sense of quality over quantity. It is better for a man to ponder the small amount of knowledge he has in order to get a complete understanding of it. Once he understands the truth of a knowledge, he can then compare it to other truths and then he “obtains a compete hold over it and gets it into his power.”

Schopenhauer’s philosophy seems to make sense, but it is slightly incomplete, this is because Schopenhauer is only telling us half of the story. Schopenhauer’s philosophy is idealistic in that it only sees the end result that is the ability to think for oneself and have original thoughts.

However nothing of use ever comes for free, and just like everything else there is a price to pay for these original thoughts. This price is knowledge, you have to give up the extensive knowledge that one would gain from simply reading and listening to other’s ideas and opinions. This is because if you listen to others before you gain an understanding for yourself your view will become tainted by that other’s view. This is a rather steep price, and the price only gets more and more inflated with time, as the world progresses, and knowledge becomes even more accessible the knowledge gets harder and harder to avoid. We are so heavily surrounded by other voices in this digital age that it is near impossible to do anything without hearing or reading about someone else’s view on it first, and this is only the *first* price.

The second price you have to pay is one of time, and time being one of the most valuable resources this is not a cheap cost. In order to be able to think for oneself and have original ideas you have to first take time and learn all about the subject on your own. No more quick Wikipedia sites or YouTube videos. This turns a five-minute process to gain some quick knowledge into hours of extensive research. You would soon learn that you would have to repress your curiosity on certain subject simply because you could not afford to take the time necessary to gain a complete understanding of it.

Once you start to add up the costs of original thoughts you begin to question whether or not it is really worth the price. There may be certain instances that you decide it is, sometimes it is worth it to take time to gain an understanding on a certain subject so that your view on it isn’t tainted by others. This would usually apply to knowledge that is very important to the person, this is because humans by nature are willing to pay higher prices for more valuable things. But for trivial knowledge, we don’t want to waste our precious time on something that we will be throwing into the back of our mind to never think of again until a specific instance requires it. Schopenhauer’s philosophy is correct in a sense, he is correct about the value of original thought and ability to think for oneself. He just doesn’t count the costs into the equation which is why in our modern age his philosophy is simply too pricey for most people on most topics.