

Chapter 1 : Pessimism - Wikipedia

Review of Bradley L. Herling, The German Gita: Hermeneutics and Discipline in the German Reception of Indian Thought. [REVIEW] Thom Brooks - - Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews (3). German Philosophy and Politics.

The first has been a fascination with the unique sophistication and profundity of the classical Indian darshanas visions , and the other a relentless search for self-understanding through comparisons and contrasts with South Asian thought. Each tendency has exhibited both awed appreciation of the insights and trajectories of Brahmanical and Buddhist systems as well as self-absorbed reactions and even contemptuous denigration and dismissal under the banner of European philosophical exceptionalism. For two and a half centuries, these tendencies of the European reception of classical Indian philosophical thought have followed several distinct phases, which are for the most part chronological but which sometimes overlap. The first phase, that of Orientalism and Romanticism, corresponding with the end of the eighteenth and the greater part of the nineteenth centuries, witnesses an ongoing attempt by European thinkers to familiarize themselves with Indian systems and to assess their meaning and significance for European self-understanding. The second phase, which roughly extends from the end of the nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth centuries, displays a growing ambivalence with and widening rejection of Indian thought from "proper" philosophical contemplation and history. The third phase, running from the middle of the twentieth century to the present, has seen a much more hermeneutically sensitive and professional treatment of classical Indian thought and a concerted attempt, significantly on the part of both Indians trained in European thought and Western philosophers, to incorporate Vedic and Buddhist traditions into analytic and continental paradigms. However, no positive evidence of extensive contact and interchange between the South Asian and Western intellectual worlds can be traced back farther than the aggressive Jesuit missionary ventures into India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thomas Colebrooke and A. Compton were the convictions that the Sanskrit language was the earliest manifestation of a "common source" of all European languages and an insistence that the study of classical Indian philosophy could enhance and renew the European philosophical tradition. These convictions were embraced by early nineteenth-century Romantic philosophers, specifically J. Herder and Friedrich Schlegel. Though both were committed Christians, they warned against the biased penchant of Europeans to see themselves as the standard of all culture, citing the antiquity and "pure theism" of the Vedic worldview. Their excitement was, however, tempered by skepticism over the removal of theistic associations from the idea of brahman, which in their views led to a nihilistic mysticism and dangerous moral indifference. Despite these reservations, both philosophers thought that the oldest forms of Vedic religious symbols and ethical "compassion" could serve as a remedy for what they perceived as the artificial and arid technicalism of Enlightenment post-Kantian Idealism and the mechanization of European society at large, set in motion by the industrial revolution. Without question the most fascinating contrast of receptions of Indian thought in nineteenth-century European philosophy can be found in G. Hegel and Arthur Schopenhauer. Hegel, whose philosophical progressivism depicted Europe, with its new democratic monarchies and "social" consciousness or spirit, as the culmination of both philosophy and civilization, rejected the common Romantic notion of India as some ideal "birthplace" of humanity from whose perfection society had long since strayed. India was a place where "substance" never became "subject," where brahman never became individuated, and consequently spirit never became social in Indian civilization. Schopenhauer was openly contemptuous of this philosophical Eurocentrism. He posited that human consciousness was deluded by its inbuilt Kantian schematization of experience what he labeled "the veil of maya" into the false metaphysical presumption of seeing the world as a collection of heterogeneous individualities rather than the unitary ground of being what he styled "Will". Concomitantly, rather than castigating yogic samyasis and Buddhist ascetics as nihilists, as earlier Romantics had, Schopenhauer hailed the "renunciation of Will" and "perspective of nirvana" that they attained as making possible true ethical selflessness and compassion. With this stance, Schopenhauer fully embraced the Romantic view of India so sharply challenged by Hegel, celebrating it as the birthplace of "perennial

philosophy. This confidence led him to write Indian thought into the larger history of world philosophy; half of the six volumes of his *General History of Philosophy* were devoted to the schools of the Indian tradition as these were categorized through the fifteenth-century Advaita doxography, the *Sarvadarshanasamgraha*. In the Romantic period then, we find a remarkable fascination with the histories and core concepts of Brahmanical and Buddhist thought. Nonetheless, this fascination seems firmly located within a larger self-reflection that, rather than investigating the treasures of classical Indian philosophical thought for their own sake, always took stock of the latter in view of a self-preoccupied assessment of the current state of philosophical affairs in Europe. Through studying Indian thought, Europe could learn more about its own origins, identity, and destiny. Buddhist nihilism was for Nietzsche too "passive," and it represented a spiritual tendency that might appear to a European to be opposed to Christianity, but at its heart is at one with it. One factor was the influence of Hegel on late-nineteenth-century historians of philosophy. While the most popular textbooks of the history of philosophy from mid-century all had chapters on Indian thought, the textbooks from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries omit it. The Hegelian contention that the dialectic of Being had its origins in Greek thought began to find its way into more and more late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century histories of philosophy, which led their authors to foregone conclusions that Asian and pre-Thalic Greek thought should be excluded from a historic appreciation of their topic. Edmund Husserl, the renowned founder of phenomenology, identified the single most characteristic mark of philosophy as its purely theoretical orientation; philosophy arose out of Aristotelian wonder, not from practical concerns, and its possibilities as a pure eidetic "science" were the legacies of Greek thought. For him, no traditions, such as the Indian or Chinese, where intellectual speculation was so closely tied to soteriological dogmas and concerns, could possibly give rise to genuinely philosophical reflection. Thinking could certainly take "other paths" in other traditions, but not the distinctly European philosophical path. In the end, Western philosophy proper is actually a tradition of which the cultures of the world should, in his eyes, beware in the face of the progressive intellectual colonization by the West, "the Europeanization of the Earth. Reasons for such dismissal were both historiographic and ideological. Ironically, however, the neglect to regard Indian thought as a genuine philosophical tradition was sparked in this phase by a motivation strangely similar to that which attracted Romantic Europeans of the first phase to either appropriate or take special note of it. This motivation was a preoccupation with the necessity of Europe to isolate the essence and fulfill the mission of its own philosophical tradition, or at least a particular and historically conditioned self-understanding of that tradition. Reincorporation through the Analytic and Continental Divide Against this onslaught of skepticism about the worth of Indian thought for Western philosophical reflection, translations and commentaries on the Brahmanical Buddhist traditions, openly advocating a rekindling of cross-cultural philosophical engagement, began to renew interest. Foremost among the early translators were Theodore Stcherbatsky, who interpreted the Buddhist epistemologies of Dignaga and Dharmakirti through Kantian categories, and Erich Frauwallner, whose treatments of scholastic Buddhism and even Vaisheshika insisted that both could, for at least certain periods in their histories, be considered purely theoretical and nonsoteriological systems. Perhaps the most exemplary contrast between the analytic and phenomenological appropriations of Indian thought can be found in two contemporary Indian philosophers trained by both native pandits and European professors, Bimal Krishna Matilal and Jitendranath Mohanty. Former colleagues at the Sanskrit College in Kolkata, both set themselves the task of ensuring that the classical darshanas of India receive proper acknowledgment among modern thinkers, though their approaches varied. Matilal began his career as a Sankritist in Kolkata but then studied under Ingalls and W. His representations of the classical scholastic debates in India schematized them according to more phenomenological themes. Striking in the cases of both Matilal and Mohanty is the extent to which the analytic and phenomenological debates are replayed in their respective presentations of classical Indian thought, but in addition how each of their presentations suggested native Indian rapprochements in this debate. Each brought vastly improved methodological and hermeneutic tools to bear on the explication of Indian philosophers. Neither saw hermeneutic implications to these presentations that should cause over-much concern, for while it is true, Mohanty concedes, that the Indian and Western philosophical traditions exhibit important differences, their many historical inquiries and debates

"overlap" in profoundly significant ways. The most recent reincorporations of Brahmanical and Buddhist thought into Western philosophy can be found in the works of scholars such as Harold Coward b. Just as twentieth-century Anglo-European thought seeks to shed the heritage of "Being"-centered metaphysics and the hierarchical, exclusivist, and imperialistic society it has fostered, so too, they suggest, did exemplary figures such as Bhartrhari, Nagarjuna, and Shankara challenge dualistic and socially corrupting ontologies, along with artificial intellectual boundaries, within their own heritage. Despite all the interpretive and cultural pitfalls against which such "comparative" or "cross-cultural" philosophy is constantly warned by its critics, however, it was under the circumstances perhaps inevitable that over the past two and a half centuries India has been gradually accepted as a major "conversation partner" for European thought.

Chapter 2 : Fatalism - Wikipedia

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In , when Danzig came under Prussian sovereignty , they moved to the free city of Hamburg. Arthur enjoyed a gentlemanly private education. He then attended a private business school, where he became acquainted with the spirit of the Enlightenment and was exposed to a Pietistic attitude sensitive to the plight of man. In he accompanied his parents for a year on an extensive journey through Belgium, England, France, Switzerland, and Austria. The sudden death of his father in April precipitated a decisive change in his life. His mother and his young sister Adele moved to Weimar, where his mother succeeded in joining the social circle of the poets J. Arthur himself had to remain in Hamburg for more than a year, yet with more freedom to engage in the arts and sciences. In May he was finally able to leave Hamburg. During the next two years, spent in Gotha and Weimar, he acquired the necessary academic preparation for attendance at a university. As early as his second semester, however, he transferred to the humanities, concentrating first on the study of Plato and Immanuel Kant. From to he attended the University of Berlin where he heard such philosophers as J. Active maturity The following winter 14 he spent in Weimar, in intimate association with Goethe , with whom he discussed various philosophical topics. In May he left his beloved Weimar after a quarrel with his mother over her frivolous way of life, of which he disapproved. His next three years were dedicated exclusively to the preparation and composition of his main work, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* ; *The World as Will and Idea*. The fundamental idea of this work—which is condensed into a short formula in the title itself—is developed in four books composed of two comprehensive series of reflections that include successively the theory of knowledge and the philosophy of nature , aesthetics , and ethics. The first book begins with Kant. The world is my representation, says Schopenhauer. But these constructs show the world only as appearance, as a multiplicity of things next to and following one another—not as the thing in itself, which Kant considered to be unknowable. The second book advances to a consideration of the essences of the concepts presented. Of all the things in the world, only one is presented to a person in two ways: The will is the thing in itself; it is unitary, unfathomable, unchangeable, beyond space and time, without causes and purposes. In the world of appearances, it is reflected in an ascending series of realizations. From the blind impulses in the forces of inorganic nature, through organic nature plants and animals to the rationally guided actions of men, an enormous chain of restless desires, agitations, and drives stretch forth—a continual struggle of the higher forms against the lower, an eternally aimless and insatiable striving, inseparably united with misery and misfortune. At the end, however, stands death , the great reproof that the will-to-live receives, posing the question to each single person: Have you had enough? Whereas the first two books present the will in an affirmative mode, the last two, dealing with aesthetics and ethics , surpass them by pointing to the negation of the will as a possible liberation. The arts summon man to a will-less way of viewing things, in which the play of the passions ceases. To the succession of levels achieved by the realizations of the will corresponds a gradation of levels in the arts, from the lowest—the art of building architecture —through the art of poetry to the highest of arts—music. But the arts liberate a person only momentarily from the service of the will. A genuine liberation results only from breaking through the bounds of individuality imposed by the ego. Whoever feels acts of compassion, selflessness, and human kindness and feels the suffering of other beings as his own is on the way to the abnegation of the will to life, achieved by the saints of all peoples and times in asceticism. In the many years thereafter, no further development of his philosophy occurred, no inner struggles or changes, no critical reorganization of basic thoughts. From then onward, his work consisted merely of more detailed exposition, clarification, and affirmation. In March , after a lengthy first tour of Italy and a triumphant dispute with Hegel , he qualified to lecture at the University of Berlin. Though he remained a member of the university for 24 semesters, only his first lecture was actually held; for he had scheduled and continued to schedule his lectures at the same hour when Hegel lectured to a large and ever-growing audience. Clearly, he

could not successfully challenge a persistently advancing philosophy. Even his book received scant attention. For a second time Schopenhauer went on a year-long trip to Italy, and this was followed by a year of illness in Munich. In May he made one last attempt in Berlin, but in vain. He now occupied himself with secondary works, primarily translations. Scholarly retirement in Frankfurt During his remaining 28 years, he lived in Frankfurt, which he felt to be free from the threat of cholera , and left the city only for brief interludes. He had finally renounced his career as a university professor and lived henceforth as a recluse, totally absorbed in his studies especially in the natural sciences and his writings. His life now took on the shape that posterity first came to know: His leisure, though, was not idle. He also published essays. Finally, a rather obscure Berlin bookseller accepted the manuscript without remuneration. In this book, which brought the beginning of worldwide recognition, Schopenhauer turned to significant topics hitherto not treated individually within the framework of his writings: During the last years of his life, he added the finishing touches to most of his works. Even a third edition of *The World as Will and Idea*, containing an exultant preface, appeared in and, in , a second edition of his *Ethics*. Influence During this time, the actual impact and influence of Schopenhauer began to spread. By turning away from spirit and reason to the powers of intuition , creativity , and the irrational, his thought has affectedâ€”partly via Nietzscheâ€”the ideas and methods of vitalism, of life philosophy, of existential philosophy, and of anthropology. The philosophy of history of Jacob Burckhardt , a Swiss cultural historian, also proceeds from Schopenhauer.

Chapter 3 : Optimism and Pessimism - New World Encyclopedia

Pessimism is a mental attitude in which an undesirable outcome is anticipated from a given situation. Pessimists tend to focus on the negatives of life in general.

This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. The same sources therefore make them out to be strict fatalists, who did not believe in karma. The future exists in the present, and both exist in the past. Time is thus on ultimate analysis illusory". Nothing is destroyed and nothing is produced. Not only are all things determined, but their change and development is a cosmic illusion. Gosala Mankhaliputta was an ascetic teacher of ancient India. He is regarded to have been born in BCE and was a contemporary of Siddhartha Gautama , the founder of Buddhism , and of Mahavira , the last and 24th Tirthankara of Jainism. Determinism and predeterminism[edit] This section does not cite any sources. January Learn how and when to remove this template message While the terms are often used interchangeably, fatalism, determinism , and predeterminism are discrete in stressing different aspects of the futility of human will or the foreordination of destiny. However, all these doctrines share common ground. Determinists generally agree that human actions affect the future but that human action is itself determined by a causal chain of prior events. Their view does not accentuate a "submission" to fate or destiny, whereas fatalists stress an acceptance of future events as inevitable. Determinists believe the future is fixed specifically due to causality ; fatalists and predeterminists believe that some or all aspects of the future are inescapable, but, for fatalists, not necessarily due to causality. Fatalism is a looser term than determinism. The presence of historical "indeterminisms" or chances, i. Necessity such as a law of nature will happen just as inevitably as a chance€"both can be imagined as sovereign. Likewise, determinism is a broader term than predeterminism. Predeterminists, as a specific type of determinists, believe that every single event or effect is caused by an uninterrupted chain of events that goes back to the origin of the universe. Fatalism, by referring to the personal "fate" or to "predestined events" strongly imply the existence of a someone or something that has set the "predestination. Idle Argument[edit] One famous ancient argument regarding fatalism was the so-called Idle Argument. It argues that if something is fated, then it would be pointless or futile to make any effort to bring it about. The Idle Argument was described by Origen and Cicero and it went like this: If it is fated for you to recover from this illness, then you will recover whether you call a doctor or not. Likewise, if you are fated not to recover, you will not do so whether you call a doctor or not. But either it is fated that you will recover from this illness, or it is fated that you will not recover. Therefore, it is futile to consult a doctor. The Stoics considered it to be a sophism and the Stoic Chrysippus attempted to refute it by pointing out that consulting the doctor would be as much fated as recovering. He seems to have introduced the idea that in cases like that at issue two events can be co-fated, so that one cannot occur without the other. Logical fatalism and the argument from bivalence[edit] Another famous argument for fatalism that goes back to antiquity is one that depends not on causation or physical circumstances but rather is based on presumed logical truths. There are numerous versions of this argument, including those by Aristotle [8] and Richard Taylor. So, for example, if it is true today that tomorrow there will be a sea battle, then there cannot fail to be a sea battle tomorrow, since otherwise it would not be true today that such a battle will take place tomorrow. The argument relies heavily on the principle of bivalence: As a result of this principle, if it is not false that there will be a sea battle, then it is true; there is no in-between. However, rejecting the principle of bivalence€"perhaps by saying that the truth of a proposition regarding the future is indeterminate€"is a controversial view since the principle is an accepted part of classical logic. Semantic equivocation[edit] The basic logical structure of logical fatalism is criticized as false. If it happens, there is nothing to be done to prevent it. Neither option by itself is certain, even though both options together are certain. The use of the word "if" in this way frames the sentence as "if the event is certain to happen, then there is nothing to be done to prevent it", but there is no certainty that the event will happen. Thus this type of fatalism relies on circular reasoning. And this seems entirely appropriate. An Essay on Free Will.

Chapter 4 : Arthur Schopenhauer (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Ideally, and if one read German, one would want to place Hawthorne in the context of the German 'Pessimism Controversy', recently rediscovered and studied by the distinguished Scholar of German nineteenth century philosophy, Frederick Beiser, Weltschmerz ().

Philosophically, optimism is linked to the notion that the world is fundamentally good, that it has purpose and meaning and that, therefore, one can reasonably expect fulfillment. It is also prevalent whenever there is a sense that humans can control their environment and their destiny. Historical circumstances that suggest our inability to reach these goals generally contribute to a pessimistic outlook. Even then, one is often surprised to see what lies below the surface. No one is a monolithic bloc of positivity or negativity. Pessimism and optimism in matters of opinion are even more complex. Religions are usually optimistic in their view of salvation but pessimistic in their assessment of human weakness and regarding those who do not go the way of redemption Christianity or liberation Buddhism. Extreme positions are difficult to hold: The almost unlimited optimism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the potential for human improvement through culture and progress has been strongly challenged by a twentieth century of wars and destruction. Clean-cut pessimism has its own difficulties. It is contrary to our natural tendency to entertain hope. Finally, there is the qualitative aspect of both views. Good and evil There is an obvious correlation between the question of good and evil and the positions of optimism and pessimism. A world ruled by goodness is more likely to elicit optimism than the opposite. Then, are human beings fundamentally good or fundamentally bad evil? But which is more fundamental? Since goodness and evil are a universal phenomenon, the optimistic and pessimistic options are represented with considerable consistency across cultures, with a third option, a neutral in-between, being equally widespread. There is, for instance, a strong tendency in Christian tradition to assume that humans are essentially evil because they are tainted by sin. That strain is particularly strong in Calvinism where man is primarily seen as a sinner destined for hell, unless he is chosen to be saved by grace. But, according to the same Christian teachings, humankind was created by God and inherited his goodness before falling into sin. There is a theological debate on whether some of that original goodness is left in us, in which case it should be even more basic than evil. Finally, many will insist on the importance of choice in heading for heaven or for hell. A percent optimistic view for believers of any faith would imply the belief in universal salvation. In Chinese thought and culture, there is no notion of sin as it exists in Christianity. The protagonists are human dispositions and the cultural environment. Starting with Confucius , Chinese civilization puts great stress on ethical education. Humans need to learn how to become virtuous and good citizens. But then, the ways part. Confucius himself believed that we are originally neither bad nor good "what we become depends on the moral control we are taught to gain over ourselves. Mencius gave this view an optimistic bend by adding that from the beginning we have sprouts of virtue within ourselves. Moral education can build upon our originally good nature. We simply need to prevent this nature from being corrupted by the environment. This resonates with the teachings of eighteenth century thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau , who believed that our original nature is good but has been corrupted by society. According to him, "By nature man departs from his primitive character and capacity as soon as he is born, and he is bound to destroy it. The result that is aimed at is the same in all three cases, but the perspective is different. Since he is more optimistic about human nature, Mencius can trust individuals to lead their life into the good direction through their own, internal moral control. Optimism Philosophical optimism Though optimism, like pessimism, tends to be known for its most famous proponents, it is a fact that every philosophy contains elements of both. A vast majority of past philosophers, while assessing the problems of our world and existence with various degrees of hope or despair, generally come under the umbrella of guarded optimism. They do so in that their thought provides a vision for the achievement of at least partial peace and happiness as they see it. Absolute pessimism, as defended by Arthur Schopenhauer , is a rarity in the history of thought. After a particularly deadly earthquake in Lisbon , Portugal , Voltaire felt the urge to discredit any idea that a good God could have willed such misery. The conclusion of his long philosophical reasoning is that, all

elements taken into consideration, the world as God created it is the best he could possibly have created, and that any other type of world, whatever the appearances, would have been worse. If God, however, had wanted to do more, he would either have had to give his creatures a different nature or perform other miracles in order to change their nature, something which was incompatible with the better plan. It is as if the current of a river had to be faster than the declivity would allow for boats to advance with greater speed. The original limitation of imperfection of creatures causes even the best plan for the universe to contain some evil, but this is for the greater good. The beauty of the whole is wonderfully revealed in the very disorder among its constituents. Similarly, in music, dissonances that are appropriately applied improve on the beauty of harmony. Utopia The British anarchist philosopher William Godwin demonstrated perhaps even more optimism than Leibniz, and certainly one that had an entirely different grounding. Godwin hoped that society would eventually reach the state where calm reason would replace all violence and force, that mind could eventually make matter subservient to it, and that intelligence could discover the secret of immortality. More than a mere optimist, Godwin was thus one of the many utopian thinkers that appeared during and after the age of 18th century Enlightenment. These social thinkers had in common a vision of a world where injustice and misery would forever disappear. Some attempted to realize their dream in experimental communities, but all failed. In other words, the optimistic vision of a possible ideal world on Earth has a long history. Often, the ideal is also seen as transcending the boundaries of earthly life, as in St. This can be compared with the so-called valence effect of prediction, a tendency for people to overestimate the likelihood of good things happening rather than bad things. Optimism bias is the demonstrated systematic tendency for people to be over-optimistic about the outcome of planned actions. Personal optimism correlates strongly with self-esteem, with psychological well-being and with personal health. Martin Seligman, in researching this area, criticizes academics for focusing too much on causes for pessimism and not enough on optimism. He points out that in the last three decades of the twentieth century journals published 46, psychological papers on depression and only on joy. Similarly, a search for articles on pessimism is likely to yield an incomparably higher number of entries than a search on optimism. But Seligman is not the first psychologist to present an optimistic outlook. Austrian psychoanalyst Victor Frankl, who survived the concentration camps of the Holocaust, emerged an active optimist. Optimism has been shown to be correlated with better immune systems in healthy people who have been subjected to stress. A number of scholars have suggested that, although optimism and pessimism might seem like opposites, in psychological terms they do not function in this way. Having more of one does not mean you have less of the other. The factors that reduce one do not necessarily increase the other. On many occasions in life we need both in equal supply. Antonio Gramsci famously called for "pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will": Hope can become a force for social change when it combines optimism and pessimism in healthy proportions. Pessimism, as it acts as a check to recklessness, may thus be viewed in a positive light. Pessimists see the world as uninviting and cruel. Philosophical pessimism Philosophical pessimism describes a tendency to believe that life has a negative value, or that this world is as bad as it could possibly be. It most famously describes the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer. However, the list of those who, in philosophy, literature, the arts, and other areas of human activity have defended some form of pessimism is long. The list is also varied in its nature, as it includes personalities who base their pessimism on a great variety of factors. Such a list might, for instance, include atheistic existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre and Neo-Orthodox theologian Karl Barth because of his emphasis on our sinful nature. Schopenhauer pointed to motivators such as hunger, sexuality, the need to care for children, and the need for shelter and personal security as the real sources of human motivation. Reason, compared to these factors, is mere window-dressing for human thoughts; it is the clothes our naked hungers put on when they go out in public. Schopenhauer sees reason as weak and insignificant compared to Will; in one metaphor, Schopenhauer compares the human intellect to a lame man who can see, but who rides on the shoulders of the blind giant of Will. Likening human life to the life of other animals, he saw the reproductive cycle as indeed a cyclical process that continues pointlessly and indefinitely, unless the chain is broken by too limited resources to make continued life possible, in which case it is terminated by extinction. Schopenhauer moreover considers the desires of the will to entail suffering: The business of biological life is a war of all against all. Instead of

asserting a personal opinion or viewpoint about the appearance of this world being the worst possible, Schopenhauer attempted to logically prove it by analyzing the concept of pessimism. But against the palpably sophisticated proofs of Leibniz that this is the best of all possible worlds, we may even oppose seriously and honestly the proof that it is the worst of all possible worlds. For possible means not what we may picture in our imagination, but what can actually exist and last. Now this world is arranged as it had to be if it were to be capable of continuing with great difficulty to exist; if it were a little worse, it would be no longer capable of continuing to exist. Consequently, since a worse world could not continue to exist, it is absolutely impossible; and so this world itself is the worst of all possible worlds. Other philosophical or literary pessimists Nietzsche believed that the ancient Greeks c. An intellectual predilection for the hard, gruesome, evil, problematic aspect of existence, prompted by well-being, by overflowing health, by the fullness of existence? How far removed I was from all this resignationism! He saw human existence as being under constant attack from both within the self, from the forces of nature and from relations with others. The following quote, from "Civilization and its Discontents," is perhaps the best example of his pessimism: We can cite many such benefits that we owe to the much despised era of scientific and technical advances. What good is a long life to us if it is hard, joyless and so full of suffering that we can only welcome death as a deliverer? The term has also been used to describe the position of the Norwegian philosopher Peter Wessel Zapffe, although he clearly states in his philosophical treatise *Om det tragiske* that pessimism is a term which cannot describe his biosophy. King later expressed his reservations about the work: A related term Engineers often use the term pessimal, although often ironically. It is the antonym of optimal, which literally means "as good as it gets. They often joke about using a "pessimizing compiler," which presumably produces maximally inefficient code.

Chapter 5 : Ellen M. Mitchell, Pessimism, The Philosophy of - PhilPapers

Among prominent Western philosophers, Arthur Schopenhauer is the figure most readily associated with an active, constructive engagement with Indian forms of thought. In Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy: A Dialogue between India and Germany, editor Arati Barua builds on the proceedings of a

The family moved to Hamburg when Schopenhauer was five, because his father, a proponent of enlightenment and republican ideals, found Danzig unsuitable after the Prussian annexation. His father wanted Arthur to become a cosmopolitan merchant like himself and hence traveled with Arthur extensively in his youth. His father also arranged for Arthur to live with a French family for two years when he was nine, which allowed Arthur to become fluent in French. From an early age, Arthur wanted to pursue the life of a scholar. Rather than force him into his own career, Heinrich offered a proposition to Arthur: Arthur chose the former option, and his witnessing firsthand on this trip the profound suffering of the poor helped shape his pessimistic philosophical worldview. After returning from his travels, Arthur began apprenticing with a merchant in preparation for his career. When Arthur was 17 years old, his father died, most likely as a result of suicide. Upon his death, Arthur, his sister Adele, and his mother were each left a sizable inheritance. He was an extraordinary pupil: In the meantime his mother, who was by all accounts not happy in the marriage, used her newfound freedom to move to Weimar and become engaged in the social and intellectual life of the city. She met with great success there, both as a writer and as a hostess, and her salon became the center of the intellectual life of the city with such luminaries as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the Schlegel brothers Karl Wilhelm Friedrich and August Wilhelm, and Christoph Martin Wieland regularly in attendance. At the same time, Johanna and Arthur never got along well: The tensions between them reached its peak when Arthur was 30 years old, at which time she requested that he never contact her again. Schultz insisted that Schopenhauer begin his study of philosophy by reading the works of Immanuel Kant and Plato, the two thinkers who became the most influential philosophers in the development of his own mature thought. Schopenhauer also began a study of the works of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, of whose thought he became deeply critical. Schopenhauer transferred to Berlin University in for the purpose of attending the lectures of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who at the time was considered the most exciting and important German philosopher of his day. Schopenhauer became disillusioned with both thinkers, and with university intellectual life in general, which he regarded as unnecessarily abstruse, removed from genuine philosophical concerns, and compromised by theological agendas. There Schopenhauer wrote his doctoral dissertation, *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, in which he provided a systematic investigation of the principle of sufficient reason. He regarded his project as a response to Kant who, in delineating the categories, neglected to attend to the forms that ground them. The following year Schopenhauer settled in Dresden, hoping that the quiet bucolic surroundings and rich intellectual resources found there would foster the development of his philosophical system. Schopenhauer also began an intense study of Baruch Spinoza, whose notion of *natura naturans*, a notion that characterized nature as self-activity, became key to the formulation of his account of the will in his mature system. During his time in Dresden, he wrote *On Vision and Colors*, the product of his collaboration with Goethe. He published his major work that expounded this system, *The World as Will and Representation*, in December of with a publication date of In , Schopenhauer was awarded permission to lecture at the University of Berlin. He deliberately, and impudently, scheduled his lectures during the same hour as those of G. Hegel, who was the most distinguished member of the faculty. Although he remained on the list of lecturers for many years in Berlin, no one showed any further interest in attending his lectures, which only fueled his contempt for academic philosophy. Not only did he suffer from the lack of recognition that his groundbreaking philosophy received, but he also suffered from a variety illnesses. He attempted to make a career as a translator from French and English prose, but these attempts also met with little interest from the outside world. During this time Schopenhauer also lost a lawsuit to the seamstress Caroline Luise Marguet that began in and was settled five years later. Marguet accused Schopenhauer of beating and kicking her when she refused to leave the antechamber to his apartment. As a result of the suit, Schopenhauer had to pay her 60

thalers annually for the rest of her life. In 1826, Schopenhauer fled Berlin because of a cholera epidemic and an epidemic that later took the life of Hegel and settled in Frankfurt am Main, where he remained for the rest of his life. In Frankfurt, he again became productive, publishing a number of works that expounded various points in his philosophical system. He published *On the Will in Nature* in 1836, which explained how new developments in the physical sciences served as confirmation of his theory of the will. In 1841, he received public recognition for the first time, a prize awarded by the Norwegian Academy, on his essay, *On the Freedom of the Human Will*. In 1841 he submitted an essay entitled *On the Basis of Morality* to the Danish Academy, but was awarded no prize even though his essay was the only submission. In 1841, he published both essays under the title, *The Fundamental Problems of Morality*, and included an introduction that was little more than a scathing indictment of Danish Academy for failing to recognize the value of his insights. Schopenhauer was able to publish an enlarged second edition to his major work in 1851, which more than doubled the size of the original edition. The new expanded edition earned Schopenhauer no more acclaim than the original work. He published a work of popular philosophical essays and aphorisms aimed at the general public in 1851 under the title, *Parerga and Paralipomena Secondary Works and Belated Observations*. This work, the most unlikely of his books, earned him his fame, and from the most unlikely of places: The review excited an interest in German readers, and Schopenhauer became famous virtually overnight. Schopenhauer spent the rest of his life reveling in his hard won and belated fame, and died in 1859. Perhaps most surprising for the first time reader of Schopenhauer familiar with the writings of other German idealists would be the clarity and elegance of his prose. Schopenhauer was an avid reader of the great stylists in England and France, and he tried to emulate their style in his own writings. Schopenhauer often charged more abstruse writers such as Fichte and Hegel with deliberate obfuscation, describing the latter as a scribbler of nonsense in his second edition of *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*. Even his dissertation, which he wrote before he recognized the role of the will in metaphysics, was incorporated into his mature system. For this reason, his thought has been arranged thematically rather than chronologically below. *The World as Will and Representation* i. In addition, he accepts the results of the Transcendental Aesthetic, which demonstrate the truth of transcendental idealism. Like Kant, Schopenhauer argues that the phenomenal world is a representation, i. At the same time, Schopenhauer simplifies the activity of the Kantian cognitive apparatus by holding that all cognitive activity occurs according to the principle of sufficient reason, that is, that nothing is without a reason for being. The principle of sufficient reason of becoming, which regards empirical objects, provides an explanation in terms of causal necessity: The principle of sufficient reason of knowing, which regards concepts or judgments, provides an explanation in terms of logical necessity: Regarding the third branch of the principle, that of space and time, the ground for being is mathematical: Finally, for the principle regarding willing, we require as a ground a motive, which is an inner cause for that which it was done. Every action presupposes a motive from which it follows by necessity. Schopenhauer argues that prior philosophers, including Kant, have failed to recognize that the first manifestation and second manifestations are distinct, and subsequently tend to conflate logical grounds and causes. Thus Schopenhauer was confident that his dissertation not only would provide an invaluable corrective to prior accounts of the principle of sufficient reason, but would also allow every brand of explanation to acquire greater certainty and precision. For Kant, the understanding always operates by means of concepts and judgments, and the faculties of understanding and reason are distinctly human at least regarding those animate creatures with which we are familiar. Schopenhauer, however, asserts that the understanding is not conceptual and is a faculty that both animals and humans possess. Schopenhauer incorporates his account of the principle of sufficient reason into the metaphysical system of his chief work, *The World as Will and Representation*. As we have seen, Schopenhauer, like Kant, holds that representations are always constituted by the forms of our cognition. However, Schopenhauer points out that there is an inner nature to phenomena that eludes the principle of sufficient reason. For example, etiology the science of physical causes describes the manner in which causality operates according to the principle of sufficient reason, but it cannot explain the natural forces that underlie and determine physical causality. We are aware of our bodies as objects in space and time, as a representation among other representations, but we also experience our bodies in quite a different way, as the felt experiences

of our own intentional bodily motions that is, kinesthesia. Since we have insight into what we ourselves are aside from representation, we can extend this insight to every other representation as well. Thus, Schopenhauer concludes, the innermost nature [Innerste], the underlying force, of every representation and also of the world as a whole is the will, and every representation is an objectification of the will. In short, the will is the thing in itself. Although every representation is an expression of will, Schopenhauer denies that every item in the world acts intentionally or has consciousness of its own movements. The will is a blind, unconscious force that is present in all of nature. Only in its highest objectifications, that is, only in animals, does this blind force become conscious of its own activity. The world is the world of representation, as a spatio-temporal universal of individuated objects, a world constituted by our own cognitive apparatus. At the same time, the inner being of this world, what is outside of our cognitive apparatus or what Kant calls the thing-in-itself, is the will; the original force manifested in every representation. For us, the will expresses itself in a variety of individuated beings, but the will in itself is an undivided unity. It is the same force at work in our own willing, in the movements of animals, of plants and of inorganic bodies. Yet, if the world is composed of undifferentiated willing, why does this force manifest itself in such a vast variety of ways? At its lowest grade, we see the will objectified in natural forces, and at its highest grade the will is objectified in the species of human being. The phenomena of higher grades of the will are produced by conflicts occurring between different phenomena of the lower grades of the will, and in the phenomenon of the higher Idea, the lower grades are subsumed. For instance, the laws of chemistry and gravity continue to operate in animals, although such lower grades cannot explain fully their movements. Although Schopenhauer explains the grades of the will in terms of development, he insists that the gradations did not develop over time, for such an understanding would assume that time exists independently of our cognitive faculties. Thus in all natural beings we see the will expressing itself in its various objectifications. Schopenhauer identifies these objectifications with the Platonic Ideas for a number of reasons. They are outside of space and time, related to individual beings as their prototypes, and ontologically prior to the individual beings that correspond to them. Although the laws of nature presuppose the Ideas, we cannot intuit the Ideas simply by observing the activities of nature, and this is due to the relation of the will to our representations. The will is the thing in itself, but our experience of the will, our representations, are constituted by our form of cognition, the principle of sufficient reason. The principle of sufficient reason produces the world of representation as a nexus of spatio-temporal, causally related entities. However, Schopenhauer asserts that there is a kind of knowing that is free from the principle of sufficient reason. To have knowledge that is not conditioned by our forms of cognition would be an impossibility for Kant. Schopenhauer makes such knowledge possible by distinguishing the conditions of knowing, namely, the principle of sufficient reason, from the condition for objectivity in general. To be an object for a subject is a condition of objects that is more basic than the principle of sufficient reason for Schopenhauer. Since the principle of sufficient reason allows us to experience objects as particulars existing in space and time with a causal relation to other things, to have an experience of an object solely insofar as it presents itself to a subject, apart from the principle of sufficient reason, is to experience an object that is neither spatio-temporal nor in a causal relation to other objects. Such objects are the Ideas, and the kind of cognition involved in perceiving them is aesthetic contemplation, for perception of the Ideas is the experience of the beautiful. Schopenhauer argues that the ability to transcend the everyday point of view and regard objects of nature aesthetically is not available to most human beings. Rather, the ability to regard nature aesthetically is the hallmark of the genius, and Schopenhauer describes the content of art through an examination of genius. The genius, claims Schopenhauer, is one who has been given by nature a superfluity of intellect over will. For Schopenhauer, the intellect is designed to serve the will.

Chapter 6 : Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy: A Dialogue Between India and Germany - Google Books

Friedrich Nietzsche () was the first major Western philosopher since Hegel to cast serious aspersions and skeptical doubt at the value of Indian philosophy for European thought, although for markedly different reasons than Hegel's.

Because of a major snowfall in Savannah, GA during the recent Eastern APA, the Blog of the APA will be hosting papers by people who missed the opportunity to present or who would like a larger audience for their work. If you were on the schedule for the Eastern and would like to take advantage of this opportunity, please fill out the submission form. Let us look at this remarkable paper. Hathaway begins her paper by acknowledging that the official Anglo-American attitude in toward Schopenhauer is disapproval. According to Hathaway, Schopenhauer borrows the Hegelian classification of the arts with the exception of music. His pessimism is only as valid as these are. She suggests it is because he had a bias toward pessimism, which limited his view. Wiping her hands feet? Necessarily, for a first encounter, the approach has been limited to exposition; in particular, I have not attempted a feminist reading. This is not to say one would not be useful; clearly it could help to account for the neglect of lecture and author, and also perhaps for certain peculiarities as a life and works of Schopenhauer. All this is regretfully for another day and a German speaking scholar. Insofar as Bowen is anti-Schopenhauer and Hathaway is pro-Schopenhauer, this makes them, in consistency, anti-misogynist and her pro-misogynist respectively. Hedge, the first Anglo-American to publish an essay on Schopenhauer, also had the opportunity to reject him, and did not. In truth, Hathaway does not really think Bowen is too negative. She really thinks he is too indifferent. She does not object to him because he rejected Hegel. Nor is misogyny out of line with it. So Hathaway had a delicate job. But she must not let women be persuaded that this is a pessimist cosmos, because in her view, it is not. In short, for Frances Bowen, Schopenhauer is a good philosopher but a bad man. She thinks that two social groups will benefit. Hathaway, she says, was born in Muhlhausen. This is a town in the state of Thuringia, Germany, a state which also included the university town of Jena. This detail may recall Jane Addams with her spinal problem, whose demeanor was remarked contrastingly as distant. HEI purports to quote Hathaway. This is Benjamin Cocker, a colorful English adventurer who became a Methodist minister in Michigan preoccupied with the popular theory of the Greek origins of Christian religion and who was appointed professor of philosophy at Ann Arbor. One day the Society was discussing a paper on German philosophy. Amalie Hathaway made a remark. Or perhaps HEI was angling her account to feminists. Of course a full estimation of the reception of Schopenhauer or even pessimism cannot be made based on women authors alone. Doing so can be defended on two counts. Shapshay herself evidently feels defensive about writing about Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer expressed himself loosely about gender, and as Helen Zimmern surmised, evidently generalized from a too-limited sample. More importantly, sexism, even if present, is not what these philosophical read and Amalie Hathaway in particular found to worry about in his writing. It was his philosophical errors, not his personal prejudices that concerned them. Carol Bensick has a Cornell Ph.

Chapter 7 : Johann Joachim Gastering (Author of German Pessimism and Indian Philosophy)

Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy: A Dialogue between India and Germany (review) Bradley L. Herling Philosophy East and West, Volume 62, Number 2, April , pp.

This is unexpected, since pessimism does not appear to be a particularly Kantian quality. The book reminds us, though, that a pessimistic aspect of Kant resides in a position he maintained in the later part of his career -- one reminiscent of the Christian doctrine of original sin -- that rooted in the human being is a corrupt propensity towards self-interest and evil. These can be understood as contending conceptions of freedom as self-determination. The first is permeated with rationality and has a social orientation: The second conception is independent of rationality and has an individualistic orientation: There is some insight in this observation. Schopenhauer himself, however, regarded the concept of the *liberum arbitrium indifferentiae* with hostility, tracing it back to the Book of Genesis and blaming it as the philosophical source for all of his troubles with academia. It remains that Will as thing-in-itself is non-rational, absolutely self-determining, and acts insofar as it manifests or objectifies itself. Since Will has no consciousness, though, it makes no sense to speak of it as "choosing" anything. In an letter to Johann Eduard Erdmann, Schopenhauer wrote that during the winter in Weimar "the orientalist Friedrich Majer introduced me, without solicitation, to Indian antiquity, and this had an essential influence on me. Ascetic awareness "numbs the will to life to sleep" p. Another way to understand ascetic awareness -- one where interpretations of the above kind cannot arise -- is to appreciate that the ascetic, like everything else, is a manifestation of Will as the thing-in-itself. When the ascetic denies the will, this amounts to a small reduction in the energy of Will itself, like a sunspot upon the shining sun, the darkness of which represents a cooler area. Unlike the compassionate person, whose field of moral activity is worldly and who helps reduce the suffering of other individuals, the ascetic strikes not at instances of suffering in the spatio-temporal world, but at the ultimate source of suffering, namely, Will itself, working with moral profundity to reduce suffering at its metaphysical root. The ascetic condition is consequently the highest and most hopeful good that a person can achieve as a living being in the hellish spatio-temporal world, for it dissolves the individual self for the sake of quietistically diminishing the morally repulsive energy of Will as thing-in-itself. The image of Orpheus confirms that the Greek myths recognize a relationship between aesthetic experience and the reduction of the suffering that arises from unfulfilled desire. The "Schopenhauer-as-Orpheus" theme is not rendered explicit in the book, but it is implicit in the discussion and is there for others to pursue. Most of the 19th-century idealists did read Kant as such. Kant planned a reply to Storr but never explicitly delivered this. There are occasions, though, where the conceptualizations are confusing. In reference to the awareness of the artistic genius, it is said that "the genius is able to appreciate the in itself of reality" p. The "in itself" of "reality" is Will, though, and according to Schopenhauer the artistic genius apprehends not Will directly, but the immediate objectifications of Will, namely Platonic Ideas.

Chapter 8 : Weltschmerz: Pessimism in German Philosophy, â€” - Oxford Scholarship

*Gestering, Johann Joachim - *German Pessimism and Indian Philosophy: A Hermeneutic Reading Gilbert, Daniel - Stumbling on Happiness Glasefeld, Ernst von - Radical Cosntructivism: A Way of Learning **

In March , when Schopenhauer was five years old, his family moved to the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg after the formerly free city of Danzig was annexed by Prussia. Schopenhauer toured through Europe several times with his family as a youngster and young teenager, and lived in France â€”99 [ages] and England [age 15], where he learned the languages of those countries. As he later reported, his experiences in France were among the happiest of his life. The memories of his stay at a strict, Anglican-managed boarding school in Wimbledon were rather agonized in contrast, and this set him against the English style of Christianity for the rest of his life. Her complete works total twenty-four volumes. Schopenhauer next enrolled at the University of Berlin â€”13 , where his lecturers included Johann Gottlieb Fichte â€” and Friedrich Schleiermacher â€” At age 25, and ready to write his doctoral dissertation, Schopenhauer moved in to Rudolstadt, a small town located a short distance southwest of Jena, where he lodged for the duration in an inn named Zum Ritter. Fichte, along with F. Schelling â€” and G. In that same year, Schopenhauer submitted his dissertation to the nearby University of Jena and was awarded a doctorate in philosophy in absentia. There he developed ideas from The Fourfold Root into his most famous book, The World as Will and Representation, that was completed in March of and published in December of that same year with the date, As we will see below, Schopenhauer sometimes characterized the thing-in-itself in a way reminiscent of panentheism. Two years later, in , he left his apartment near the University and travelled to Italy for a second time, returning to Munich a year later. He then lived in Mannheim and Dresden in before tracing his way back to Berlin in A second attempt to lecture at the University of Berlin was unsuccessful, and this disappointment was complicated by the loss of a lawsuit that had begun several years earlier in August, The dispute issued from an angry shoving-match between Schopenhauer and Caroline Luise Marguet d. The issue concerned Ms. Leaving Berlin in in view of a cholera epidemic that was entering Germany from Russia, Schopenhauer moved south, first briefly to Frankfurt-am-Main, and then to Mannheim. His daily life, living alone with a succession of pet French poodles named Atma and Butz , was defined by a deliberate routine: Schopenhauer would awake, wash, read and study during the morning hours, play his flute, lunch at the Englisher Hof â€” a fashionable inn at the city center near the Hauptwache â€” rest afterwards, read, take an afternoon walk, check the world events as reported in The London Times, sometimes attend concerts in the evenings, and frequently read inspirational texts such as the Upanishads before going to sleep. Featured in this work are chapters on animal magnetism and magic, along with Sinology Chinese studies. The Society claimed that Schopenhauer did not answer the assigned question and that he gravely disrespected philosophers with outstanding reputations viz. There soon followed an accompanying volume to The World as Will and Representation, that was published in along with the first volume in a combined second edition. In , Schopenhauer published a lengthy and lively set of philosophical reflections entitled Parerga and Paralipomena appendices and omissions, from the Greek , and within a couple of years, he began to receive the philosophical recognition for which he had long hoped. Schopenhauer donated his estate to help disabled Prussian soldiers and the families of those soldiers killed, who had participated in the suppression of the revolution. An assortment of photographs of Schopenhauer was taken during his final years, and although they reveal to us an old man, we should appreciate that Schopenhauer completed his main work, The World as Will and Representation, by the time he had reached the age of thirty. His dissertation, in effect, critically examines the disposition to assume that what is real is what is rational. A century earlier, G. Leibniz â€” had defined the principle of this assumption â€” the principle of sufficient reason â€” in his Monadology as that which requires us to acknowledge that there is no fact or truth that lacks a sufficient reason why it should be so, and not otherwise. Although the principle of sufficient reason might seem to be self-evident, it does yield surprising results. For example, we can appeal to this principle to argue that there can be no two individuals exactly alike, because there would otherwise be no sufficient reason why one of the individuals was in one place, while the other

individual was in another. The principle also supports the argument that the physical world was not created at any point in time, since there is no sufficient reason why it would be created at one point in time rather than another, since all points in time are qualitatively the same. Schopenhauer observed as an elementary condition, that to employ the principle of sufficient reason, we must think about something specific that stands in need of explanation. This indicated to him that at the root of our epistemological situation, we must assume the presence of a subject that thinks about some object to be explained. From this, he concluded that the general root of the principle of sufficient reason is the distinction between subject and object that must be presupposed as a condition for the very enterprise of looking for explanations *The Fourfold Root*, Section 16 and as a condition for knowledge in general. Kant characterized the subjective pole of the distinction as the contentless transcendental unity of self-consciousness and the objective pole as the contentless transcendental object, that corresponds to the concept of an object in general CPR, A He associates material things with reasoning in terms of cause and effect; abstract concepts with reasoning in terms of logic; mathematical and geometrical constructions with reasoning in reference to numbers and spaces; and motivating forces with reasoning in reference to intentions, or what he calls moral reasoning. In sum, he identifies the general root of the principle of sufficient reason as the subject-object distinction in conjunction with the thought of necessary connection, and the fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason as the specification of four different kinds of objects for which we can seek explanations, in association with the four independent styles of necessary connection along which such explanations can be given, depending upon the different kinds of objects involved. If we begin by choosing a certain style of explanation, then we immediately choose the kinds of object to which we can refer. Conversely, if we begin by choosing a certain kind of object to explain, we are obliged to use the style of reasoning associated with that kind of object. It thus violates the rationality of explanation to confuse one kind of explanation with another kind of object. We cannot begin with a style of explanation that involves material objects and their associated cause-and-effect relationships, for example, and then argue to a conclusion that involves a different kind of object, such as an abstract concept. Likewise, we cannot begin with abstract conceptual definitions and accordingly employ logical reasoning for the purposes of concluding our argumentation with assertions about things that exist. His frequent condemnation of German Idealism was advanced in light of what he considered to be sound philosophical reasons, despite his ad hominem attacks on Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. Schulze, who authored in , a text entitled *Aenesidemus*, that contains a criticism of the Kantian philosopher, Karl Leonhard Reinhold " Schulze shares this criticism of Kant with F. Schopenhauer concurs that hypothesizing a thing-in-itself as the cause of our sensations amounts to a constitutive application and projection of the concept of causality beyond its legitimate scope, for according to Kant himself, the concept of causality only supplies knowledge when it is applied within the field of possible experience, and not outside of it. Schopenhauer therefore denies that our sensations have an external cause in the sense that we can know there is some epistemologically inaccessible object " the thing-in-itself " that exists independently of our sensations and is the cause of them. Schopenhauer maintains instead that if we are to refer to the thing-in-itself, then we must come to an awareness of it, not by invoking the relationship of causality " a relationship where the cause and the effect are logically understood to be distinct objects or events since self-causation is a contradiction in terms " but through another means altogether. His position is that Will and representations are one and the same reality, regarded from different perspectives. They stand in relationship to each other in a way that compares to the relationship between a force and its manifestation e. This is opposed to saying that the thing-in-itself causes our sensations, as if we were referring to one domino striking another. Schopenhauer further comprehends these three and for him, interdependent principles as expressions of a single principle, namely, the principle of sufficient reason, whose fourfold root he had examined in his doctoral dissertation. In *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer often refers to an aspect of the principle of sufficient reason as the principle of individuation *principium individuationis* , linking the idea of individuation explicitly with space and time, but also implicitly with rationality, necessity, systematicity and determinism. He uses the principle of sufficient reason and the principle of individuation as shorthand expressions for what Kant had more complexly referred to as space, time and the twelve categories of the understanding viz. For as one is a part of the universe as is everything else, the basic energies of the

universe flow through oneself, as they flow through everything else. Among the most frequently-identified principles that are introspectively brought forth " and one that was the standard for German Idealist philosophers such as Fichte, Schelling and Hegel who were philosophizing within the Cartesian tradition " is the principle of self-consciousness. With the belief that acts of self-consciousness exemplify a self-creative process akin to divine creation, and developing a logic that reflects the structure of self-consciousness, namely, the dialectical logic of position, opposition and reconciliation sometimes described as the logic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis , the German Idealists maintained that dialectical logic mirrors the structure not only of human productions, both individual and social, but the structure of reality as a whole, conceived of as a thinking substance or conceptually-structured-and-constituted entity. As much as he opposes the traditional German Idealists in their metaphysical elevation of self-consciousness which he regards as too intellectualistic , Schopenhauer philosophizes within the spirit of this tradition, for he believes that the supreme principle of the universe is likewise apprehensible through introspection, and that we can understand the world as various manifestations of this general principle. Having rejected the Kantian position that our sensations are caused by an unknowable object that exists independently of us, Schopenhauer notes importantly that our body " which is just one among the many objects in the world " is given to us in two different ways: We can objectively perceive our hand as an external object, as a surgeon might perceive it during a medical operation, and we can also be subjectively aware of our hand as something we inhabit, as something we willfully move, and of which we can feel its inner muscular workings. From this observation, Schopenhauer asserts that among all the objects in the universe, there is only one object, relative to each of us " namely, our physical body " that is given in two entirely different ways. It is given as representation i. One of his notable conclusions is that when we move our hand, this is not to be comprehended as a motivational act that first happens, and then causes the movement of our hand as an effect. He maintains that the movement of our hand is but a single act " again, like the two sides of a coin " that has a subjective feeling of willing as one of its aspects, and the movement of the hand as the other. More generally, he adds that the action of the body is nothing but the act of Will objectified, that is, translated into perception. At this point in his argumentation, Schopenhauer has established only that among his many ideas, or representations, only one of them viz. When he perceives the moon or a mountain, he does not under ordinary circumstances have any direct access to the metaphysical inside of such objects; they remain as representations that reveal to him only their objective side. Schopenhauer asks, though, how he might understand the world as an integrated whole, or how he might render his entire field of perception more comprehensible, for as things stand, he can directly experience the inside of one of his representations, but of no others. To answer this question, he uses the double-knowledge of his own body as the key to the inner being of every other natural phenomenon: This precipitates a position that characterizes the inner aspect of things, as far as we can describe it, as Will. Hence, Schopenhauer regards the world as a whole as having two sides: A subsequent, but often highlighted inspiration is from the Upanishads c. Schopenhauer also probably met at the time, Julius Klaproth " , who was the editor of Das Asiatische Magazin. As the records of his library book withdrawals indicate, Schopenhauer began reading the Bhagavadgita in December or very soon thereafter, and the Upanishads in March Krause was not only a metaphysical panentheist see biographic segment above ; he was also an enthusiast of South Asian thought. It is also frightening and pandemonic: When anthropomorphically considered, the world is represented as being in a condition of eternal frustration, as it endlessly strives for nothing in particular, and as it goes essentially nowhere. It is a world beyond any ascriptions of good and evil. Like these German Idealists, however, Schopenhauer also tries to explain how the world that we experience daily is the result of the activity of the central principle of things. As the German Idealists tried to account for the great chain of being " the rocks, trees, animals, and human beings " as the increasingly complicated and detailed objectifications of self-consciousness, Schopenhauer attempts to do the same by explaining the world as objectifications of Will. For Schopenhauer, the world we experience is constituted by objectifications of Will that correspond first, to the general root of the principle of sufficient reason, and second, to the more specific fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason. This generates initially, a two-tiered outlook viz. The general philosophical pattern of a single world-essence that initially manifests itself as a multiplicity of abstract essences, that, in

turn, manifest themselves as a multiplicity of physical individuals is found throughout the world. It is characteristic of Neoplatonism c. According to Schopenhauer, corresponding to the level of the universal subject-object distinction, Will is immediately objectified into a set of universal objects or Platonic Ideas. These constitute the timeless patterns for each of the individual things that we experience in space and time. In these respects, the Platonic Ideas are independent of the specific fourfold root of the principle of sufficient reason, even though it would be misleading to say that there is no individuation whatsoever at this universal level, for there are many different Platonic Ideas that are individuated from one another. Schopenhauer refers to the Platonic Ideas as the direct objectifications of Will, and as the immediate objectivity of Will. When Will is objectified at this level of determination, the world of everyday life emerges, whose objects are, in effect, kaleidoscopically multiplied manifestations of the Platonic forms, endlessly dispersed throughout space and time. To that extent, Schopenhauer says that life is like a dream. As a condition of our knowledge, Schopenhauer believes that the laws of nature, along with the sets of objects that we experience, we ourselves create in way that is not unlike the way the constitution of our tongues invokes the taste of sugar. At this point, what Schopenhauer has developed philosophically is surely interesting, but we have not yet mentioned its more remarkable and memorable aspect. Before the human being comes onto the scene with its principle of sufficient reason or principle of individuation there are no individuals. It is the human being that, in its very effort to know anything, objectifies an appearance for itself that involves the fragmentation of Will and its breakup into a comprehensible set of individuals. The result of this fragmentation, given the nature of Will, is terrible: Adding to this, Schopenhauer maintains in *The World as Will and Representation* that we create the violent state of nature, for his view is that the individuation we impose upon things, is imposed upon a blind striving energy that, once it becomes individuated and objectified, turns against itself, consumes itself, and does violence to itself. His paradigm image is of the bulldog-ant of Australia, that when cut in half, struggles in a battle to the death between its head and tail. Our very quest for scientific and practical knowledge creates a world that feasts nightmarishly upon itself.

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Pessimism is a mental attitude in which an undesirable outcome is anticipated from a given situation. Pessimists tend to focus on the negatives of life in general. The most common example of this phenomenon is the "Is the glass half empty or half full?" situation; in this situation a pessimist is said to see the glass as half empty, while an optimist is said to see the glass as half full.

Click to share on Pocket Opens in new window If all is for naught, then why bother writing it down? Caught in a vicious circle, ensnared in the logical absurdities of awkward self-awareness. It seems there are one of two options: But the continual accumulation of that-which-cannot-be-put-into-words always points back to this one basic realization—that, when it comes to human beings, silence is the most adequate form of expression. There are, then, two paths. Ultimately writers dream of taking neither path, leaving all paths for the forest. The patron saints of pessimism watch over our suffering. Laconic and sullen, they never seem to do a good job at protecting, interceding, or advocating for those who suffer. Perhaps they need us more than we need them. There are patron saints of philosophy, but their stories are not happy ones. Even in cases where the entire corpus of an author is pessimistic, the project always seems incomplete, as if there was still one more thing to say, one last indictment. The list quickly expands, soon encompassing the entirety of literature itself, and beyond. All that remains are singular, anomalous statements, a litany of quotes and citations crammed into arborous fortune cookies read by no one. But a cursory look at the history of philosophy reveals something quite different. Philosophers that stumble and trip over their own feet. Philosophers that curse themselves. Philosophers that laugh at themselves. It was a time of loss and refusals. The year also saw the death of another close friend, the existentialist philosopher Gabriel Marcel. It was a period of refusals. All the while Cioran continued to live modestly in his rented apartment, working at his compact and cluttered desk, writing in his multi-colored notebooks, taking his frequent walks. He had been discharged from his military service due to exhaustion and fatigue. He had written several poems and literary works which remained unpublished. And, from the time he was a teenager, he had enthusiastically read Schopenhauer, in addition to Leopardi, Dante, and Heraclitus. In his Offenbach apartment, Batz gathered together the copies of his page book, but with how much premeditation it is impossible to know. He stepped up on top of his books, and hung himself from the ceiling beam of the room. Born near the Bordeaux region to a wealthy merchant family, he had been reared according to the highest standards of humanist education. As an adult Montaigne would also become a wine-grower, editor and translator, and would serve as Mayor of Bordeaux. He travelled extensively across the continent, sometimes making spiritual pilgrimages, sometimes seeking convalescence for health problems, sometimes out of curiosity. It is perhaps strange, then, that, at the age of 38, Montaigne would decide to refuse the world. He shut himself in his library in order to write. So decisive is this refusal that Montaigne christens it with an inscription made on the wall of his library: In the year of Christ , at the age of 38, on the last day of February, anniversary of his birth, Michel de Montaigne, long weary of the servitude of the court and of public employments, while still entire, retired to the bosom of the learned Virgins, where in calm and freedom from all cares he will spend what little remains of his life now more than half run out. If the fates permit he will complete this abode, this sweet ancestral retreat; and he has consecrated it to his freedom, tranquility, and leisure. What does he write? The diplomat so enamored of conversation now writes: It is comprised of a central tower and an adjoining smaller tower that serves as a staircase. On 46 of the 48 ceiling beams of the library Montaigne had inscribed almost 70 quotations in Latin or Greek, mostly from classical authors or the Bible. And nothing is more wretched or arrogant than man. Montaigne notes how he often paces around his library, occasionally glancing up at the beams for inspiration. His refuge is less a place of work, and more a space of wandering, in which the space of the library becomes the hollowed-out listlessness of the skull: There I leaf through now one book, now another, without order and without plan, by disconnected fragments. One moment I muse, another moment I set down or dictate, walking back and forth, these fancies of mine that you see here. With its mania for constructing elaborate systems, philosophy was perhaps too well-formed for Nietzsche. Perhaps what he sought was a philosophy with less integrity. An oft-repeated aphorism reads: The

will to a system is a lack of integrity. Just as it is not only adulthood but youth and childhood too that possess value in themselves and not merely as bridges and thoroughfares, so incomplete thoughts also have their value. That is why one must not torment a poet with subtle exegesis but content oneself with the uncertainty of his horizon, as though the way to many thoughts still lay open. Let one stand on the threshold; let one wait as at the excavation of a treasure: Used with permission of Repeater Books.