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978-0-521-87185-3 - Arthur Schopenhauer: *Parerga and Paralipomena*: Short Philosophical Essays: Volume 2

Edited by Adrian Del Caro and Christopher Janaway

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## ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

*Parerga and Paralipomena*

The purpose of the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Schopenhauer is to offer translations of the best modern German editions of Schopenhauer's work in a uniform format suitable for Schopenhauer scholars, together with philosophical introductions and full editorial apparatus.

With the publication of *Parerga and Paralipomena* in 1851, there finally came some measure of the fame that Schopenhauer thought was his due. Described by Schopenhauer himself as 'incomparably more popular than everything up till now', *Parerga* is a miscellany of essays addressing themes that complement his work *The World as Will and Representation*, along with more divergent, speculative pieces. It includes essays on method, logic, the intellect, Kant, pantheism, natural science, religion, education, and language. The present volume offers a new translation, a substantial introduction explaining the context of the essays, and extensive editorial notes on the different published versions of the work. This readable and scholarly edition will be an essential reference for those studying Schopenhauer, history of philosophy, and nineteenth-century German philosophy.

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# ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

*Parerga and Paralipomena*

*Short Philosophical Essays*

Volume 2

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY

ADRIAN DEL CARO

CHRISTOPHER JANAWAY

with an Introduction by

CHRISTOPHER JANAWAY



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Schopenhauer is one of the great original writers of the nineteenth century, and a unique voice in the history of thought. His central concept of the will leads him to regard human beings as striving irrationally and suffering in a world that has no purpose, a condition redeemed by the elevation of aesthetic consciousness and finally overcome by the will's self-denial and a mystical vision of the self as one with the world as a whole. He is in some ways the most progressive post-Kantian, an atheist with profound ideas about the human essence and the meaning of existence which point forward to Nietzsche, Freud and existentialism. He was also the first major Western thinker to seek a synthesis with Eastern thought. Yet at the same time he undertakes an ambitious global metaphysics of a conservative, more or less pre-Kantian kind, and is driven by a Platonic vision of escape from empirical reality into a realm of higher knowledge.

Schopenhauer was born in 1788, and by 1809 had gone against his family's expectations of a career as a merchant and embarked on a university career. He completed his doctoral dissertation *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* in 1813, then spent several years in intensive preparation of what became the major work of his life, *The World as Will and Representation*, which was published at the end of 1818, with 1819 on the title page. Shortly afterwards his academic career suffered a setback when his only attempt at a lecture course ended in failure. Thereafter Schopenhauer adopted a stance of intellectual self-sufficiency and antagonism towards university philosophy, for which he was repaid by a singular lack of reaction to his writings. In 1835 he published *On Will in Nature*, an attempt to corroborate his metaphysics with findings from the sciences, and in 1841 two self-standing essays on free will and moral philosophy, entitled *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*. A large supplementary second volume to *The World as Will and Representation* appeared in 1844, accompanied by a revised version of the original which now appeared as Volume One; then in 1851 another two-volume work,

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*Parerga and Paralipomena*, a collection of essays and observations. Only in the 1850s did serious interest in Schopenhauer's philosophy begin, with a favourable review appearing in an English journal, and a few European universities offering courses on his work. In this final decade before his death in 1860 he published a third edition of *The World as Will and Representation* and a second edition of *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*. After Schopenhauer's death his follower Julius Frauenstädt produced the first six-volume edition of his works in 1873, providing the basis for many subsequent German editions up to the *Sämtliche Werke* edited by Arthur Hübscher, which we use as the basis for our translations in the present edition.

Though Schopenhauer's life and the genesis of his philosophy belong to the early part of the nineteenth century, it is the latter half of the century that provides the context for his widespread reception and influence. In 1877 he was described by Wilhelm Wundt as 'the born leader of non-academic philosophy in Germany', and in that period many artists and intellectuals, prominent among them Richard Wagner, worked under the influence of his works. The single most important philosophical influence was on Nietzsche, who was in critical dialogue throughout his career with his 'great teacher Schopenhauer'. But many aspects of the period resonate with Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory, his pessimism, his championing of the *Upanishads* and Buddhism, and his theory of the self and the world as embodied striving.

Over the last three decades interest in Schopenhauer in the English-speaking world has been growing again, with a good number of monographs, translations and collections of articles appearing, where before there were very few. More general trends in the study of the history of philosophy have played a part here. There has recently been a dramatic rise in philosophical interest in the period that immediately follows Kant (including the German Idealists and Romanticism), and the greater centrality now accorded to Nietzsche's philosophy has provided further motivation for attending to Schopenhauer. Yet until now there has been no complete English edition of his works. The present six-volume series of Schopenhauer's published works aims to provide an up-to-date, reliable English translation that reflects the literary style of the original while maintaining linguistic accuracy and consistency over his philosophical vocabulary.

Almost all the English translations of Schopenhauer in use until now, published though they are by several different publishers, stem from a single translator, the remarkable E. F. J. Payne. These translations, which

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were done in the 1950s and 1960s, have stood the test of time quite well and performed a fine service in transmitting Schopenhauer to an English-speaking audience. Payne's single-handed achievement is all the greater given that he was not a philosopher or an academic, but a former military man who became a dedicated enthusiast. His translations are readable and lively and convey a distinct authorial voice. However, the case for new translations rests partly on the fact that Payne has a tendency towards circumlocution rather than directness and is often not as scrupulous as we might wish in translating philosophical vocabulary, partly on the fact that recent scholarship has probed many parts of Schopenhauer's thought with far greater precision than was known in Payne's day, and partly on the simple thought that after half a century of reading Schopenhauer almost solely through one translator, and with a wider and more demanding audience established, a change of voice is in order.

In the present edition the translators have striven to keep a tighter rein on philosophical terminology, especially that which is familiar from the study of Kant – though we should be on our guard here, for Schopenhauer's use of a Kantian word does not permit us to infer that he uses it in a sense Kant would have approved of. We have included explanatory introductions to each volume, and other aids to the reader: footnotes explaining some of Schopenhauer's original German vocabulary, a glossary of names to assist with his voluminous literary and philosophical references, a chronology of his life and a bibliography of German texts, existing English translations and selected further reading. We also give a breakdown of all passages that were added or altered by Schopenhauer in different editions of his works, especially noteworthy being the changes made to his earliest publications, *On the Fourfold Root* and the single-volume first edition of *The World as Will and Representation*. A further novel feature of this edition is our treatment of the many extracts Schopenhauer quotes in languages other than German. Our guiding policy here is, as far as possible, to translate material in any language into English. The reader will therefore not be detained by scanning through passages in other languages and having to resort to footnote translations. Nevertheless, the virtuoso manner in which Schopenhauer blends Latin, Greek, French, Italian and Spanish extracts with his own prose style is not entirely lost, since we have used footnotes to give all the original passages in full.

CHRISTOPHER JANAWAY

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Three kinds of notes occur in the translation:

- (1) Footnotes marked with asterisks (\*, \*\* and so on) are notes original to Schopenhauer's text. In the case of *Parerga and Paralipomena*, some of these notes are from the published text of 1851; others are incorporations by later editors of the German text, using handwritten material by Schopenhauer.
- (2) Footnotes marked with small letters (a, b, c) are editorial notes. These either give information about the original wording in Schopenhauer's text (in German or other languages), or provide additional editorial information. All (and only) such *additional* information is enclosed in brackets [ ]. All footnote material *not* in brackets consists of words from the original text.
- (3) Endnotes marked with numerals 1, 2, 3. The endnotes are collected at the end of the volume and indicate some variations between the published text of 1851 and the Hübscher text that has been used for this translation.

Schopenhauer's works are referred to by the following abbreviations. We give page references to those Cambridge editions published as of the date of the present volume. *BM* and *FW* are found in the volume *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*. *FR*, *VC* and *WN* appear collected in one volume. The Hübscher page numbers, which appear as marginal numbers in the Cambridge translations, are supplied in all cases, and can be used to locate passages in future volumes of the Cambridge edition.

Hübscher SW 1–7	<i>Sämtliche Werke</i> , ed. Arthur Hübscher (Mannheim: F. A. Brockhaus, 1988), vols. 1–7.
<i>BM</i>	<i>On the Basis of Morals</i> [Über die Grundlage der Moral].
<i>FR</i>	<i>On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason</i> [Über die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde].

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<i>FW</i>	<i>On the Freedom of the Will</i> [ <i>Über die Freiheit des Willens</i> ].
<i>PP</i> 1, 2	<i>Parerga and Paralipomena</i> [ <i>Parerga und Paralipomena</i> ], vols. 1 and 2.
<i>VC</i>	<i>On Vision and Colours</i> [ <i>Über das Sehn und die Farben</i> ].
<i>WN</i>	<i>On Will in Nature</i> [ <i>Über den Willen in der Natur</i> ].
<i>WWR</i> 1, 2	<i>The World as Will and Representation</i> [ <i>Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung</i> ], vols. 1 and 2.

Unpublished writings by Schopenhauer are referred to thus:

<i>GB</i>	<i>Gesammelte Briefe</i> , ed. Arthur Hübscher (Bonn: Bouvier, 1978).
<i>HN</i> 1–5	<i>Der handschriftliche Nachlaß</i> , ed. Arthur Hübscher (Frankfurt am Main: Kramer, 1970), vols. 1–5.
<i>MR</i> 1–4	<i>Manuscript Remains</i> , ed. Arthur Hübscher, trans. E. F. J. Payne (Oxford: Berg, 1988), vols. 1–4 [a translation of <i>HN</i> vols. 1–4].

Passages in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* are referred to by the standard method, using A and B marginal numbers corresponding to the first and second editions of the work. Other writings by Kant are referred to by volume and page number of the monumental ‘*Akademie*’ edition (Berlin: Georg Reimer/Walter de Gruyter, 1900–), in the form Ak. 4: 397. References to works of Plato and Aristotle use the standard marginal annotations.

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## Introduction

In June 1850 Schopenhauer had completed his two-volume work *Parerga and Paralipomena*, and was looking for a publisher. He sent a letter to F. A. Brockhaus, who had previously published his *The World as Will and Representation*, and explained how he viewed the new offering:

Now, after six years' work, I have completed my miscellaneous philosophical writings: the preliminary drafts of them stretch back 30 years. For in them I have set down all the thoughts that could find no place in my systematic works. Hence this one is, for the most part, also incomparably more popular than everything up till now, as you can see from the list of contents that I include. After this I do not propose to write anything more; because I want to prevent myself from bringing into the world weak children of old age who accuse their father and vilify his reputation.<sup>1</sup>

Schopenhauer was 62 years old and would live for another decade. But in that final ten years he produced only revised versions of the works that were already behind him in 1850: *The World as Will and Representation*, *On Will in Nature* and *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*. The contents of the new, popular work were already settled, and Schopenhauer requested only a small honorarium, but Brockhaus turned the proposal down, and Schopenhauer asked his friend Julius Frauenstädt for assistance in finding another publisher. As a result of Frauenstädt's efforts *Parerga and Paralipomena* was finally published in 1851 by A. W. Hayn of Berlin. Schopenhauer specified that there was to be a print-run of only 750, and no honorarium at all.<sup>2</sup>

In describing these writings as 'miscellaneous' Schopenhauer used the word *vermischt*, which might also be rendered as 'mixed'. Indeed his Latin phrase for them in his letters is *opera mixta*.<sup>3</sup> But his characteristic love of a learned phrase from an ancient language had led him to choose two Greek words for his title: *parerga* meaning 'subordinate works' or works 'apart from the main business', *paralipomena* things 'left aside' or 'passed over'. So this suggests a variety of pieces that for one reason or another did not fit

<sup>1</sup> Translation from *GB*, 242, letter to F. A. Brockhaus, 26 June 1850.    <sup>2</sup> See *GB*, 250.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. *GB*, 234.

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into the programme of *The World as Will and Representation*, the work that defined his philosophy, or pursued different tacks that interested him but were not essential to that programme. In the draft of a Preface that was never published (see I, 348) Schopenhauer gave a more precise explanation:

It can be said on the whole that the first volume contains the *Parerga*, the second the *Paralipomena*, the greatest portion of which are to be regarded as supplements to my chief work. – . . . Thus these chapters presuppose knowledge of my philosophy, while the rest of the second volume, and the whole of the first, are comprehensible without such knowledge, although those who have become attached to my philosophy will recognize many connections to it everywhere, and indeed elucidations of it.

The essays that cover similar ground to *The World as Will and Representation* are those concerning the nature of philosophy, idealism, the history of philosophy (some of these being in Volume I despite what Schopenhauer says), ethics, aesthetics, religion, and the ‘affirmation and negation of the will to life’, the central theme of the massive Fourth Book of *The World as Will*. Other pieces are more divergent, speculative pieces on topics such as the apparent fatedness of our lives and the phenomena of clairvoyance and hypnotism, or what was then known as animal magnetism. Some of the writings are decidedly popular in tone, for example the aphorisms on the wisdom of life, and the essays on noise, reading, physiognomy and the notoriously offensive ‘On Women’. In the latter case Schopenhauer is for the most part ranting, as he is at greater length in the well-known ‘On University Philosophy’, an impressive tirade against the careerism of professors making their living in the wake of Hegelianism and toeing the line of religious orthodoxy – favourite targets of Schopenhauer’s wrath and well-worked themes in his writings during the 1830s and 1840s.

*Parerga and Paralipomena* was the first work of Schopenhauer’s to gain a relatively wide audience, and with its publication in 1851 there finally came some measure of the fame that Schopenhauer thought his due. There were positive reviews in German journals, followed in April 1852 by one in English in *The Westminster Review*, and historical summaries of German philosophy started to make reference to him. The author of the English review was John Oxenford, who in 1853 wrote a much longer article on Schopenhauer, entitled ‘Iconoclasm in German Philosophy’ (*The Westminster Review*, April 1853).<sup>4</sup> This review generally pleased Schopenhauer, with its

<sup>4</sup> For publication details, and discussion of the reception and influence of this article, see David E. Cartwright, *Schopenhauer: A Biography* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 526–9.

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recognition of his attempt to ‘subvert the whole system of German philosophy which has been raised by university professors since the decease of Immanuel Kant’, and its fulsome description of

one of the most ingenious and readable authors in the world, skilful in the art of theory building, universal in attainments, inexhaustible in the power of illustration, terribly logical and unflinching in the pursuit of consequences, and – a most amusing qualification to everyone but the persons ‘hit’ – a formidable hitter of adversaries.

The translation of Oxenford’s article into German played an important role in spreading the news of what it called ‘this misanthropic sage of Frankfort’, and helped to set in train the increased intensity of his reception during the final years of his life. A number of books and articles on Schopenhauer appeared, as did the revised editions of *The World as Will and Representation*, *On Will in Nature* and *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*.

Oxenford found Schopenhauer ‘misanthropic’ and referred to his philosophy as ‘ultra-pessimism’, and the labels seem to have stuck ever since, although Schopenhauer was unhappy with the former epithet, and did not describe his own philosophy even as ‘pessimism’. But by the 1870s pessimism was what he was chiefly known for. In a survey of German philosophy in 1877 Wilhelm Wundt called Schopenhauer ‘the born leader of Non-Academic Philosophy in Germany’, saying that ‘the chief attraction of Schopenhauer’s philosophy [has been] simply his Pessimism’, in which ‘[he has] completely . . . fallen in with the current of his time’.<sup>5</sup> The view is echoed by Rüdiger Safranski: ‘Schopenhauer would at last make his breakthrough – but not by himself and not by his own strength: the changed spirit of the time met him half-way.’<sup>6</sup> Whether it was because of the aftermath of the failed revolutions of 1848, the decline in influence of the Hegelian philosophy he had railed against, or the growth of scientific materialism and the cultural recognition of what Nietzsche would later call the ‘death of God’, Schopenhauer’s work became well known and well received for the first time. The initial fame of his popular writings in *Parerga and Paralipomena* paved the way for a posthumous six-volume edition of Schopenhauer’s works, edited by Frauenstädt in 1873, and opened a period in which the systematic philosophy first developed over half a century earlier became more widely read and commented upon.

<sup>5</sup> Wilhelm Wundt, ‘Philosophy in Germany’, *Mind* 2 (1877), 503–4.

<sup>6</sup> Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, trans. Ewald Osers (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), 330.



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**Outline of *The World as Will and Representation***

The writings collected in the two volumes of *Parerga* are avowedly popular, and much that they contain can be approached without a thorough knowledge of Schopenhauer's metaphysics, ethics or aesthetics. However, he is writing against the background of his own systematic thought, and in some parts makes more substantial reference to it. So some awareness of that thought, as presented in *The World as Will and Representation*, will be of assistance to the reader of the present volume.

First published in 1818, then re-issued in 1844 with many textual changes and a large amount of supplementary material placed in a new second volume, *The World as Will and Representation* was always Schopenhauer's major work, and his other publications, *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, *On Will in Nature* and *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*, though they contain much that is of independent interest, are intended as elaborations and confirmations of it. Schopenhauer said that it contains a 'single thought'. But the nature of that thought has been the subject of some slightly perplexed debate.<sup>7</sup> If there is a single thought, it must be highly elusive or highly complex, or both. But we can perhaps make an initial approach towards what Schopenhauer means if we examine the framework of the four Books into which *The World as Will and Representation* is divided. Their titles and discursive subtitles are as follows:

- (1) The world as representation, first consideration. Representation subject to the principle of sufficient reason: the object of experience and science.
- (2) The world as will, first consideration. The objectivation of the will.
- (3) The world as representation, second consideration. Representation independent of the principle of sufficient reason: the Platonic Idea: the object of art.
- (4) The world as will, second consideration. With the achievement of self-knowledge, affirmation and negation of the will to life.

What we first notice here is an oscillation between the two key terms from the book's title. At the core of the single thought, then, is this: one and the same world has two aspects, and we can learn about it by considering it as representation, then as will, then as representation in altered fashion, then as will in altered fashion. The two alterations in question introduce two more vital oppositions. With the world as representation, we can either

<sup>7</sup> For one substantial discussion see John E. Atwell, *Schopenhauer on the Character of the World: The Metaphysics of Will* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 18–31.

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consider it subject to the principle of sufficient reason, or independently of that principle. With the world as will, we can consider it either descriptively for what it is, or on an evaluative dimension – with respect to its affirmation or negation. This, however, leaves us with an immense amount to explain. Let us next try to flesh out these bare bones a little, keeping in mind the four-part dynamic structure that any would-be ‘single thought’ really needs to have if it is to map on to the work as a whole.

Schopenhauer uses ‘representation’ (German *Vorstellung*) in the same way as his predecessor Kant uses it. It stands for anything that the mind is conscious of in its experience, knowledge, or cognition of any form – something that is present to the mind. So we first consider the world as it presents itself to us in our minds. In ordinary human experience, and in the extension of this in the realm of scientific inquiry, we encounter objects, and these are ordered for us, necessarily, by space and time, and by relations of cause and effect. All the ways in which the world is thus ordered for us are species of the single principle ‘Nothing is without a ground for its being rather than not being’, otherwise known as the principle of sufficient reason. Every object is experienced as related to something else which grounds it. Everything in space and time has a determinate position in relation to other things in space and time, everything that happens has a determinate cause, every action relates back to a motive and to its agent’s character, every truth is grounded in some other truth or in the evidence of the senses. So starting, as we must, from the world as we find it in everyday experience and empirical investigation, we see a multiplicity of objects related in necessary ways.

Schopenhauer allies himself with *transcendental idealism*. According to this doctrine, originally developed by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), the objects that we experience as outside of us constitute a world of *appearance*, and we do not experience them *in themselves*. Empirical objects, the objects of which any subject has conscious experience, are a species of the subject’s representations, and what this realm of objects can contain is necessarily limited, shaped by the form of the mind itself. So the familiar world of empirical things is a world of objects *for a subject*, which is to say a world consisting of the subject’s representations, and not a world that can be regarded as existing in itself, independently of the way it appears and must appear to an experiencing mind.

For Schopenhauer, the human mind, and indeed any conscious mind, receives data through the bodily senses and structures them using what he calls the understanding (*Verstand*) or intellect (*Intellekt*). Without this structuring we would register only a conglomeration of subjective

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sensations, but with it we attain a picture of material objects persisting in time, occupying space and serving as the causal origins of observed changes and of our sensations themselves. However, Schopenhauer's account of cognition differs quite markedly from Kant's in two principal ways. One is that the understanding or intellect cognizes the world in a manner that is not essentially conceptual. Adopting another technical term of Kant's, Schopenhauer maintains that what the understanding gives us is intuition (*Anschauung*), which essentially means perceptual awareness of particular objects in space and time. For Kant, the senses give us an array of intuitions, and the understanding provides concepts under which it actively orders the intuitions to produce an experience of a world of objects. Only creatures capable of forming concepts and making judgements could have such experience in the full sense. But for Schopenhauer animals such as a dog or a horse, who are incapable of forming concepts, are as much aware of a world of objects as any human subject: they perceive objects in space and time as we do, being simply incapable of making judgements, forming thoughts or carrying out reasoning, and hence being unable to comprehend anything more than what is immediately present in their perception.

The other, related feature that differentiates Schopenhauer from Kant is that the capacity to form and manipulate concepts discursively to frame thoughts and arguments, the capacity which for Schopenhauer is reason (*Vernunft*), though indeed unique to human beings, confers on them no special 'dignity', nor has any special connection with freedom or morality. Reason's concepts are secondary representations abstracted from the primary material given in intuition, and reason itself is merely instrumental in value: it enables us, unlike other animals, to be guided in our actions by a vast range of motives that involve thoughts about what is not present immediately in intuition. But a rationally motivated action is no more free than one motivated by fear, thirst or lust – it is just determined by a more complicated cause. The demotion of reason from any foundational role in characterizing human behaviour or explaining what has moral worth, and the consequent levelling that occurs between human beings and all other animals, are vital distinguishing features of Schopenhauer's ethics and of his philosophy as a whole.

In the Second Book of *The World as Will and Representation*, we find Schopenhauer maintaining that the idealist account of the world as representation, though true, is seriously inadequate. For by definition it does not tell us what we are in ourselves, nor what anything in the world apart from us is in itself. All this remains a 'riddle'. Schopenhauer proposes to solve that riddle by claiming that the essence, the very being in itself of all things

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is will (*Wille*). The world that appears to us as representation is, in itself, will. Representation gives us the world as it is empirically: diverse, plural, spatio-temporal, law-like and open to investigation. Will is what that same world and we ourselves are metaphysically – one and the same essence underlying all the many empirical appearances. We must make sense of the world and ourselves from within, not merely experience its manifestations in an ordered fashion from a standpoint detached from reality. This is the central message of the Second Book of *The World as Will and Representation*.

A guiding thought here is that there is one single essence that underlies all objects and all phenomena, ourselves included, one single way in which the ‘riddle’ of all existence can be deciphered. Arguing from our immediate cognition of our own actions, Schopenhauer suggests that whenever we are conscious of ourselves, we are conscious of ourselves as willing something. This unique inner consciousness is to give us the vital clue to our own essence: it is that we strive towards ends. The intrinsic core of our being is will. Schopenhauer uses this term ‘will’ very widely, including in it not only desires, but actions, emotions and affects, and non-conscious or ‘blind’ processes that can be described as end-directed. Human rationality and consciousness are extremely useful, and give us an instrumental superiority over other beings, but are really only a froth on the surface, and do not distinguish humanity from the rest of nature at the most fundamental level. Indeed, our advanced capacities for cognition can be explained, for Schopenhauer, as serving the ends of willing: our ability to perceive and investigate the world functions primarily to enable us to manipulate objects that confront us, in order to continue existing and to reproduce ourselves. If we are really to understand the world and our place within it, we must not remain at the surface of the world as representation, but must delve into this deeper and darker aspect of reality, the world as will – darker because everything that wills or strives is necessarily at the mercy of suffering, and because this suffering has neither point nor end. As long as we will, we suffer; but that we will, and ultimately what we will, is a function of our inescapable essence, not something rationally chosen, and not something we have the means to put an end to by willing. Schopenhauer then extends this idea to the whole of nature, claiming that we can make sense of the world as such by seeing its essence as a kind of blind striving manifesting itself in multiple instances within our experience. Thus the one world is both representation and will.

As *The World as Will and Representation* progresses the tone becomes more sombre. The individual’s existence is dominated by will: desires and

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needs are incessant, shaping all our perception and understanding of the world, ends can never finally be fulfilled, suffering is ever-present, but the will drives us on to strive and want more things that can never properly satisfy us even if we attain them. Willing goes on perpetually and without final purpose: it is built into us and into the whole fabric of the world. Throughout nature one being dominates and destroys another, the world-tearing itself apart, says Schopenhauer, because it is a hungry will and there is nothing for it to feed on but itself.

At the mid-point of *The World as Will and Representation* we return to a new, and brighter, consideration of the world as representation. It can happen, according to Schopenhauer, that we confront objects in a kind of experience that is out of the ordinary. We find all the usual kinds of relation – space, time and cause and effect – suspended, and lose ourselves in contemplation, forgetful of ourselves and of the distinction between ourselves and what we perceive. This is aesthetic experience, an extreme form of disinterestedness, a passive ‘mirroring’ of the world in which we cease to grapple with the world of objects, cease striving, and find temporary release from pain. While becoming as free as we can from subjectivity, we apprehend nature in a manner that takes our cognition as close as possible to the true essence of things: we perceive timeless features than run throughout nature, which Schopenhauer calls Ideas, intending us to take this notion in a sense close to Plato’s (or to what are often called Platonic Forms nowadays). Art provides the best opportunity for this kind of experience because it gives us a view of nature mediated through the exceptionally objective mind of a genius. Art enables in us as spectators a state of calm passivity and enhanced objectivity, and the various art forms allow us to recognize diverse aspects of the will’s manifestation in the world, from, as it were, a vantage point where our individual own will is not engaged.

The transition to the Fourth Book of *The World as Will and Representation* takes us back to the world as will, considered now with respect to its ‘affirmation and negation’, or at any rate the affirmation and negation of the ‘will to life’ that Schopenhauer finds to be the essence of each individual. This final part – by far the longest and, in Schopenhauer’s words, the ‘most serious’ – is concerned with ethics, in both a narrower and broader sense. Building on the descriptive account of the will from the Second Book, Schopenhauer gives his own answers to conventional ethical questions: What are morally good and bad actions and characters? What is the nature of right and wrong? What constitutes compassion, and the virtues of justice and loving kindness? In what sense, if at all, are our actions

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free? But the main thrust of the Fourth Book is a broader ethical treatment of the value of human existence as such – a profound and troubling discussion that borders on religious territory while remaining resolutely atheist in its conviction.

Although we exist as empirical individuals separate from one another and so naturally regard the good as consisting in what we can attain through the activity of our own individual wills, this is a mistaken view. When fully understood, the life of a human individual does not and cannot contain anything of true value. Worse, the existence of everything – as a manifestation of the pointlessly self-perpetuating and self-devouring will – is something ultimately to be lamented. To exist as a manifestation of will is to strive without fulfilment, and hence to suffer. Attaining an end through willing brings us nothing of positive value – it just temporarily erases a painful lack or absence. New desires flood in almost immediately to plague us with their non-satisfaction. And if no new desires arrive we are tormented by boredom. Because will is our essence, ‘All life is suffering’ – and consequently we need ‘salvation’ or ‘redemption’ from it. Such redemption can be achieved only by the will within us ‘turning’ and ‘denying itself’.<sup>8</sup> Schopenhauer has argued that the notion of a ‘highest good’ makes no sense.<sup>9</sup> But, he says, if we wish to bring that expression back from retirement and apply it to anything, then it must be to the denial of the will: cessation of desires and wants that relate to the individual we find ourselves as, detachment of identification from this individual, elimination of one’s personality, one’s natural self with its in-built attachment to the ends of living and willing, and contemplation of the whole world, with all its strivings and pains, as if from nowhere within it. Calling on mystical ideas from diverse cultural traditions, Schopenhauer argues that only such a radical transformation, occasioned by a deep and rare knowledge of the ubiquity of suffering and the illusoriness of the individual, can restore any value to our existence. The world in itself, outside of the forms of space and time that govern the world as representation for us, cannot be separated into individuals. The truly wise human being would comprehend this and would cease to be attached to the strivings of the particular individual manifestation of will he or she is. The will that is the human being’s essence would recoil from pursuing any of its goals, and the sense of individuality weaken to the point where reality could be contemplated with a serenity that is void of the usual pains of existence because the subject has become void of all striving and void of the usual sense of self.

<sup>8</sup> See *WWR* 1, §§56, 69 (*Hübscher SW* 2, 366, 472–3).    <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, §65 (*Hübscher SW* 2, 427–8).

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**The *Paralipomena* in relation to Schopenhauer's philosophy**

Schopenhauer referred to the chapters in the present volume as 'the *Paralipomena*', saying that the greatest portion of them are 'supplements to my chief work . . . [which] presuppose knowledge of my philosophy'. This remark applies to around half the chapters here. Chapters 1–15 concern recognizable topics from *The World as Will and Representation*, as does Chapter 19, 'On the metaphysics of the beautiful and aesthetics'. But in Chapters 16–18 Schopenhauer already makes a characteristic diversion into short speculative remarks on Sanskrit literature, archaeology and mythology, and in the later part of the volume he reverts to the more popular style of discussion that characterizes much of Volume 1. So here we find sage advice on matters such as 'Thinking for oneself', on 'Reading and books' (which can prevent thinking for oneself), on how to regard approbation and fame, and a range of grumblings and diatribes, including 'On noise and sounds', where Schopenhauer is much exercised about people's aggravating habit of cracking whips in the street, and 'On women', which makes up a tiny proportion of the book, but for which he has nevertheless become notorious.<sup>10</sup> First let us make a few comments on the more centrally philosophical parts of the book.

Schopenhauer opens with discussions of the method of philosophy, logic and dialectic, thoughts concerning the intellect, and a brief re-assertion of his distinction between thing in itself and appearance. Some parts of the early chapters are leisurely and lucid reflections on what it is to do philosophy at all, on the difference between philosophy and poetry, and the contrast between the mind that is used for intellectual inquiry and 'normal' or 'tedious, commonplace minds' (53, 60). Schopenhauer writes penetratingly in Chapter 2 about the ways in which arguments are conducted, and especially about the tricks and stratagems that can be used to win them. His thoughts on the intellect cover many psychological phenomena such as memory, attention, unconscious thought, inspiration and genius. Meanwhile the central philosophical framework on which all this hangs has not changed since *The World as Will and Representation*. Schopenhauer rehearses again in simple, straightforward form, without much by way of additional argument, his distinctions between thing in itself and appearance, his Kantian doctrine of the ideality of space and time, and his distinctions between intellect and will, and between intuitive and abstract representations.

<sup>10</sup> Note, however, that similar attitudes surface elsewhere, for example § 131.



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Schopenhauer introduces a new distinction in §10, between rationalism and what he now calls *illuminism*, ‘between the use of the objective and the subjective source of cognition’ (12). With a characteristic sweep of historical reference-points, Schopenhauer characterizes illuminism thus:

Directed essentially *inwards*, its organon consists of inner illumination, intellectual intuition, higher consciousness, immediately cognitive reason, divine consciousness, unification and so on, and it disparages rationalism as the ‘light of nature’. Now if it takes religion as its basis, it becomes *mysticism*, whose fundamental deficiency is that its cognition is *not communicable*. . . . As *not communicable* however this kind of cognition is also indemonstrable, whereupon, hand in hand with scepticism, rationalism once again enters the field. *Illuminism* can already be traced in certain passages of Plato, though it arises more decisively in the philosophy of the Neoplatonists, the Gnostics, Dionysius the Areopagite, as well as Scotus Erigena; furthermore among the Mohammedans, as the doctrine of the *Sufi*; in India it dominates in the Vedanta and Mimansa; most decisively Jakob Böhme and all Christian mystics belong to it. It always appears when rationalism has gone through a stage without reaching its goal; thus it arrived as mysticism towards the end of scholastic philosophy and in opposition to it, especially among the Germans, in Tauler and in the author of *Theologica Germanica*<sup>11</sup> among others; and again in most recent times in opposition to Kantian philosophy, in Jacobi and Schelling, likewise in Fichte’s last period. (13–14)

Schopenhauer respects illuminism, but states that he has kept his own philosophy free from it. To be engaged in philosophy as such one must stick to rationalism, in the broad sense of using empirical perception and reasoning, the tools fitted to objective cognition of the world.

Chapter 6, one of the longest in the book, concerns ‘Philosophy and natural science’. Schopenhauer ranges widely through many topics, including gravitation, atomic theory, mechanistic explanation, clouds, biological species, astronomy and cosmogony. In the background of the whole discussion is the presupposition of his own metaphysics, according to which scientific explanation is never complete in its own right but requires supplementing with an account of the thing in itself, which for him is the will. Thus, for example, in this passage he champions vitalism against the prevailing tendency to seek certain kinds of causal explanations throughout the sciences:

Polemicalizing against the assumption of a *life force* as today is becoming fashionable deserves to be called not only false but thoroughly stupid, despite its noble trappings. For whoever denies life force basically denies

<sup>11</sup> [An anonymous work, discovered and published by Martin Luther in 1516]



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his own existence, and therefore can boast of having reached the highest peak of absurdity. . . . If it is not a unique force of nature . . . that moves the whole complicated machinery of an organism, steering, ordering and manifesting itself in it . . . – well then life is a false illusion, a deception, and in truth every being is a mere automaton, i.e., a play of mechanical, physical and chemical forces brought to this phenomenon either by accident, or by the intention of some artist who simply likes it this way. – Of course physical and chemical forces are at work in the animal organism, but what holds them together and guides them so that a proper organism comes of it and exists – that is the life force; it accordingly controls those forces and modifies their effect, which is therefore only a subordinate one in this case. On the other hand, to believe that they alone could bring about an organism is not merely false, but as I said, stupid. – In itself that life force is the will. (146)

Schopenhauer is against other orthodoxies too, such as atoms, which he insists are merely ‘imaginary’, so that contemporary theorizing about them, especially in France, is ‘crass’ and ‘at best an unproven hypothesis’ (102). He is also against the ‘ridiculous veneration’ paid to Sir Isaac Newton. This hostility began in connection with Schopenhauer’s colour theory, to which Chapter 7 is devoted. In early adulthood Schopenhauer championed Goethe’s well-known theory of colour over Newton’s, and worked on it in collaboration with Goethe in 1813–14. He went on to publish his own theory which, though allied to Goethe’s rather than Newton’s, diverged from the former as well. Years later, in 1854, Schopenhauer republished his work *On Vision and Colours*, taking into it much of the material that appears here in Chapter 7. At the end of the chapter Schopenhauer reproduces a celebration of Goethe’s theory that he had written – ‘in opposition to the entire learned world’ – in an album celebrating the centenary of Goethe’s birth (see 180). Schopenhauer could never get past his impression that Newton had produced a manifest absurdity by claiming that a single white light was really at the same time a bundle of different coloured lights. He has no desire to reject Newton’s theory of gravitation, yet he does impugn Newton’s intellectual integrity to the extent of claiming that the theory should really be attributed to Robert Hooke (133–5).

Chapter 8 is a substantial chapter on ethics. Here Schopenhauer discusses a range of virtues and vices and revisits the themes of freedom, fate and character that he had dealt with in his *Prize Essay on the Freedom of the Will*, published in *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics* in 1841. The central claim of his ethics, which had been vividly presented in the companion essay, *On the Basis of Morals*, and in the Fourth Book of *The World as Will*, is that moral value resides solely in an agent’s seeing through

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the principle of individuation and recognizing his or her own essence in others. Schopenhauer consequently proposes the following moral rule:

[F]or every human being with whom one comes into contact . . . focus alone on his suffering, his distress, his fear, his pain – then you will feel kinship with him, sympathize with him and instead of hatred or contempt sense that compassion for him which alone is *agape*, and to which we are exhorted by the gospels. (184)

In Schopenhauer's view hatred, contempt, envy and the like are the more common attitudes, however, because in each of us dwells an egoism which he describes as 'colossal' and 'limitless' (194). In a remarkable passage in §114 he hammers home repeatedly the message that the human being is 'the evil animal *par excellence*' (*l'animal méchant par excellence*, quoting Gobineau). Schopenhauer characteristically finds analogues of his ethical views concerning compassion and individuation in Buddhism and Vedanta philosophy, and references to religion occur frequently in his discussion of ethics. His attitude to Christianity is not straightforward. While he approves of the gospels' exhortation to *agape*, he is contemptuous of the attempts by Christian missionaries to convert the adherents of Eastern religions. It is no wonder, he thinks, if the followers of Buddhism and Brahmanism are unimpressed, and the missionaries 'make such pitifully bad business' (202), because the other belief systems are far superior. Schopenhauer thinks it more likely that the missionaries themselves will in time become converts in the other direction, and says to them:

As teachers you went there;  
As pupils you returned.  
Once it was veiled, but now you share  
The meaning you have learned. (205)

Schopenhauer particularly dislikes Christianity's theistic metaphysics and its inherent optimism, but rather than merely dismissing Christianity for that reason, he is in vital and complex debate with it. One of the more striking passages in the book sees him use the term 'antichrist' in an attempt to state one of his own most fundamental claims:

That the world has a mere physical but no moral significance is the greatest, most ruinous and fundamental error, the real *perversity* of the mind and in a basic sense it is certainly that which faith has personified as the antichrist. Nevertheless, and in spite of all religions which assert the contrary of this and seek to establish it in their mythological ways, that basic error never dies

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out on earth, but always raises its head from time to time until universal indignation once again forces it into hiding. (183)<sup>12</sup>

Chapter 15 ‘On religion’ is one of the longest and most important chapters in this volume, and taken together with the chapter on ethics, and Schopenhauer’s treatments of death, suicide, suffering, the vanity of existence, and affirmation and negation of the will to life (see Chapters 10–14), constitutes the deepest philosophical theme of the book, and some of the more important writing of Schopenhauer’s intellectual maturity. Pantheism, incidentally, fares no better than theism and receives short shrift in an earlier chapter. To say that the world is God only has any point if one has a prior conception of God. Pantheism, Schopenhauer argues, is derivative from theism, and came about as a way of backing out of the latter when people ‘no longer knew what to do with this God’ (93). If one had no conception of God in the first place, then to call the world God is meaningless. Furthermore, an all-powerful, all-knowing God who *is* the world would look absurd:

It would obviously have to be an ill-advised God who knew no better way to have fun than to transform himself into a world such as ours, into such a hungry world, where he would have to endure misery, deprivation and death, without measure and purpose, in the form of countless millions of living but fearful and tortured beings, all of whom exist for a while only because one devours the other. (93)

‘On religion’ opens with a dialogue between Demopheles (‘of use to the people’) and Philalethes (‘friend of truth’). Schopenhauer presents a genuine debate, with Philalethes attacking religion from a philosophical point of view, and Demopheles defending its usefulness for the masses who are unable to comprehend philosophy. The debate is quite even-handed, ending with neither party persuaded, but at least in agreement that religion ‘has two faces, one very friendly and one very grim’ (324). The argument against religion is first that it relies not on rationality or the pursuit of the truth, but on faith and indoctrination, and second that it has evil consequences, the most grave of which are religious wars and the persecution of heretics. The counter-arguments are that religion does not oppose truth, but rather teaches truth in an allegorical sense (*sensu allegorico* as opposed

<sup>12</sup> There is a strong connection with Nietzsche here. In his 1886 Preface to *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche wrote: ‘Here, perhaps for the first time, a pessimism “beyond good and evil” is suggested. Here that “perversity of mind” gains speech and formulation against which Schopenhauer never tired of hurling in advance his most irate curses and thunderbolts’ (*The Birth of Tragedy*, ‘Attempt at a Self-Criticism’, sect. 5, trans. Walter Kaufmann, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Random House, 1968)).

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to *sensu proprio*, or in a literal sense), and that its beneficial consequences, through teaching people the value of virtues such as ‘loving kindness, compassion, beneficence, reconciliation, love of one’s enemy, patience, humility, renunciation, faith and hope’ (313), outweigh the cruelties and atrocities to which it has also given rise. While from a philosophical point of view it is right that religion is not a way of arriving at literal truth, it answers to a ‘metaphysical need’ in the vast mass of people. Demopheles’ defence, however, is based on a paternalistic and demeaning premise. To convince Philalethes that the practical usefulness of religion outweighs any philosophical scruples about its truthfulness, he retorts ‘You have no adequate concept of the miserable capacity of the masses’ (303). Religion must present itself as the literal truth, which it is not, to minds that are incapable of any greater sophistication:

For ‘it is impossible for the broad masses to be philosophically educated’, as even your Plato said, and you should not forget. Religion is the metaphysics of the people, which we must absolutely allow them and therefore outwardly respect; for to discredit it means to deprive them of it. Just as there is a folk poetry and in proverbs a folk wisdom, so too there must be a folk metaphysics. For mankind absolutely requires an *interpretation* [*Auslegung*] of life, and it must be suited to their power of comprehension. (293)<sup>13</sup>

Philalethes makes a shorter appearance in Chapter 10, pitted this time against the impatient Thrasy-machus (on loan, as it were, from Plato’s *Republic*). Schopenhauer here engages in some potentially profound reflections about the nature of individuality. Thrasy-machus will not be consoled by the Schopenhauerian thought, that although the human individual he identifies himself as dies, the essence that he truly is (the will) exists timelessly: ‘You, as an individual, end with your death. Only the individual is not your true and ultimate essence’ (252). Thrasy-machus replies, ‘Look, be it as it may, it is my individuality and that is what I am . . . I, I, I, want existence. *That* is what I care about, and not some existence for which I first have to figure out that it is mine’ (253). Philalethes replies:

That which cries out “I, I, I want existence” is not you alone, but everything, absolutely everything that has even a trace of consciousness. Consequently this wish in you is exactly what is *not* individual, but instead common to everyone, without distinction. It does not stem from individuality, but from existence as such; it is essential to everything *that is*, indeed it is that *whereby*

<sup>13</sup> There is another parallel here with Nietzsche’s later claim that ‘Christianity is Platonism for the people’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Preface, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)), and his claim that the ascetic ideal provides mankind with an *Auslegung* that it cannot live without (*On the Genealogy of Morality* III, sect. 28).

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it exists, and accordingly it is satisfied by existence *as such*, to which alone it refers, but not exclusively by any particular existence. (253–4)

Thrasymachus represents the egoistic viewpoint that Schopenhauer considers natural to any cognitive being: everything centres on the well-being and existence of *this* individual that I am. His higher viewpoint involves the realization that one individual rather than another is of no great significance. The survival of the individual beyond death is an absurdity. But, in Schopenhauer's view, if I can regard my essence as identical with the timeless essence of the whole world, then I do not have to think of what I am as ceasing with the death of the individual. Schopenhauer leans here to some extent on reflections about the ideality of time:

We sit together and talk and get excited, our eyes glow and our voices get louder; this is exactly how *others* sat a thousand years ago, it was the same and they are *the same ones*, and it will be just the same a thousand years from now. The contrivance that keeps us from realizing this is *time*. (249)

He holds the view that nothing that really exists can truly go out of existence, or indeed come into existence. One of his objections to theism is the idea that we have a 'maker' who 'makes' us from scratch, as though we are an 'animated nothing' (244). We can be consoled, he argues, by the thought that we never were a nothing and never will become a nothing, provided we can let go of the idea that the fleeting, spatio-temporal human individual is what we are. Nonetheless, what Christianity gets right, in Schopenhauer's eyes, is its conception of redemption from life, and its realization that only a negation of the will to life can provide such redemption (see §§162, 163). His philosophy is in sympathy with the self-negation and asceticism that he finds in the New Testament as opposed to the Old, and he goes so far as to say 'one could call my doctrine the genuine Christian philosophy – as paradoxical as this may seem to those who do not go to the core of the matter, but remain stuck at the outer skin' (283).

For Schopenhauer the ordinary, natural existence to which we are condemned is characterized by 'nothingness', *Nichtigkeit*, which we can also translate as 'nullity' or 'vanity'. There is nothing for us of any genuine worth in our existing as living human individuals. This doctrine from *The World as Will* is reiterated in Chapter II of this volume. Though Schopenhauer does not call his position pessimism, passages such as the following have seemed to many to merit the title:

That human existence must be a kind of mistake emerges sufficiently from the simple observation that the human being is a concretion of needs whose satisfaction, difficult as it is to achieve, provides him with nothing more

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than a painless state in which he is still abandoned to boredom, which simply proves that existence in itself has no value, for boredom is precisely the sensation of the emptiness of existence. (259)

What a difference there is between our beginning and our end! The former in the delirium of craving and the rapture of lust, the latter in the destruction of all organs and the musty odour of corpses. Blissfully dreaming childhood, cheerful youth, toilsome manhood, frail, often pitiful old age, the torments of final illness and finally the struggle with death – does it not look exactly as if existence were a blunder whose consequences inevitably and increasingly become apparent? (260)

**Didacticism and diatribe**

Schopenhauer usually writes with unshaken confidence that he is right, and often castigates both the public and the intellectuals of his day for their errors and stupidity. Just as Oxenford seems to have admired Schopenhauer as the ‘formidable hitter of adversaries’, today’s reader may sympathize with the wit and panache with which he deals out blows towards the ‘sophists’, ‘blockheads’ and ‘pachyderms’ he sees as prospering at the expense of genuinely able minds. On the other hand, Schopenhauer in his advanced years comes across as thoroughly conservative and obsessively critical about the modern European world as a whole, the world of the *Jetztzeit* (or ‘time of now’) – a word that he despises as much as what it signifies for him. In the present volume people’s usage of the German language comes in for stern criticism. Schopenhauer has collected hundreds of contemporary examples of what he regards as the mistaken use of vocabulary and grammar, and displays them at length in Chapter 25.<sup>14</sup> The detail of this chapter is impenetrable for a reader who does not know German, and presents something of challenge to the translator. But in general Schopenhauer’s conservative, dogmatic attitude to language appears to allow little room for diachronic change, and he tends to assume that classical Latin and Greek are standard and inherently superior languages. Here is a sample: ‘If you noble Teutons and German patriots impose ancient German doggerel in place of Greek and Roman classics, then you will be educating nothing but unwashed loafers’ (365). And

<sup>14</sup> In fact there are many more handwritten paragraphs on the same topic in Schopenhauer’s personal copy of the volume, which might have been included in some later edition of the *Paralipomena*, had there been one, as well as a long unpublished essay called ‘On the Mutilation of the German Language which has been Methodically Practised for Some Years’. See Hübscher *SW* 6, 726–9; *HN* 4/ii, 36–87 (*MR* 4, 395–450).