

If I were to take the results of my philosophy as the standard of truth, I would have to consider Buddhism the finest of all religion.

Amsterdam, Holland

Arthur Schopenhauer¹

I. Introduction

When the tenets of Buddhism became known in Europe during the third and fourth decade of the nineteenth century, Arthur Schopenhauer was delighted with the affinity they showed to his own philosophy. Having completed his main work *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* as early as 1818, he considered it an entirely new (and thus pure) expression of the wisdom once taught by the Buddha—at times he even called himself a “Buddhaist.”²

This conviction of being an original European Buddhist kept Schopenhauer from making a detailed philosophical comparison between his system and those of the Buddhist schools he had read up on.³ To him, the connection was obvious. In reprints of the main work and later writings, he did point out certain similarities, making comments on Buddhism that astonish the present-day reader with their adequacy (considering the immaturity of Indology in his time), but he never bothered to explain the exact philosophical nature of the link he put forward, causing it to remain a matter of atmosphere rather than content.

As a matter of fact, it can be disputed if Schopenhauer’s philosophy and Buddhism do indeed breathe the same atmosphere. Schopenhauer often put emphasis on Buddhism’s pessimistic outlook on earthly existence,⁴ but compared to his world view, which is very severe, Buddhism seems almost cheerful. The Sanskrit word *duḥkha*, by which existence is typified in the first of the Buddha’s Four Noble Truths, is usually translated as ‘suffering’, but it also has the connotation of ‘unrest’. In fact, the first Truth is about the transitoriness of life, and how this deprives man of inner peace. To be sure, this is not opposed to anything Schopenhauer said, but it lacks the sheer disgust of life that is characteristic of his doctrine. Yet again, it may be unfair to compare the mood of one man’s philosophy with the blended mood of Buddhist literature, with its countless authors. There will undoubtedly be Buddhist texts in which life is depicted in a Schopenhauerian or even more horrifying way. Still, this all goes to show that atmosphere, however crucial to any philosophy of life, should not be too big a factor in comparing two doctrines.

Both Schopenhauerian and Buddhist philosophy express a certain *Weltanschauung*; therefore cerebral analysis alone will not reveal the real meaning of either—a fair amount of hermeneutical proficiency is also required. But this does not alter the fact that both lines of thought

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should be compared as specifically as possible if philosophical connections or differences are to be established.

For one thing, the comparativist should be dealing with more than Buddhism *as such*,⁵ since there exists a variety of philosophical views within this religion. It is not even enough when a distinction is made between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism,⁶ because the history of the latter contains such diverging schools of thought as the Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra, both of which had a long and irregular development out of their common root, Prajñāpāramitā literature. Any worthwhile comparison must involve these four basic forms of Buddhist philosophy in their own right.

At the same time, the comparativist should only be concerned with the substantial features of these philosophies (there is no point, for instance, in mentioning details like the shared love of animals in Buddhist and Schopenhauerian philosophy).⁷

All of this considered, I take as a set of criteria for my own comparison the following account of the essentials of Schopenhauer's philosophy.

1. It is based on a critique of the intellect, from which it follows that time, space, and causality (the tripartite framework of the world of subjects and objects) are not real in an absolute sense.

2. This leads to the assumption of a transcendental reality (automatically making this a religious world view but, because of the ultimate unreality of any subject, and so, too, the unreality of a divine subject, not a theistic one).

3. This ultimate reality is by its nature incomprehensible to the intellect, yet is supposed to be 'sensible' in our experience of life (in other words: a reality transcending thought but *immanent* in life itself).

4. This 'recognition' of ultimate reality is related to the fact that life is inescapably ruled by passion, need, pain, and fear, all being promptings of the will, which therefore *symbolizes* the Real.

I will elaborate on these points as I use them in the following paragraphs.

II. Schopenhauer and the Old Wisdom School

"Old Wisdom School" is a collective name for the first group of sects to evolve out of early Buddhism. The most prominent of these, the Sarvāstivāda, fixed its philosophical attention on the Buddha's teaching that the five *skandhas*, or 'transitory factors of worldly existence', namely, material form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saṃjñā*), impulses (*saṃskāra*), and awareness (*vijñāna*) were not the self. Whereas the Buddha left it undiscussed whether a self exists at all (obviously regarding the question as pointless),⁸ the Sarvāstivādins radicalized his teaching into a doctrine that flatly denies all substance. All that we experience in the

world and in our minds is restless change; therefore, the idea that things have an imperishable essence 'behind' their ever-changing qualities (like the *ātman* of Hinduism) is untenable. But if there is no lasting self, then every change must involve total destruction. Everything comes into being as it wholly is, to vanish completely after an infinitesimally short moment. After this, something comes about that may look the same but is entirely new.⁹

In this doctrine, the *skandhas* are interpreted as five groups of *dharmas*, discrete existence-points constituting the internal and external world. Material things, feelings, thoughts, apperceptions, and impulses are nothing but swarms of *dharmas*, which, because they arise each time in more or less the same configuration, create the illusion of things that last while they change—and of a persistent 'I' beholding these changes and thus being tormented by transitoriness.

Salvation comes when asceticism and meditation bring about the ego-dissolving realization that reality is but a turbulence of *dharmas*.

In arguing that Buddhism could not have been influential on the writing of his main work, Schopenhauer stressed that, if anything, only the Burmese form was known at that time.¹⁰ From this, one gathers that he considered this form the least interesting.

Burmese Buddhism accords with the Old Wisdom School.

It is indeed hard to imagine that he could have found anything in his line in the doctrine above. Because of the rigorous empiricism that it basically is, the reality of time and space, for the *dharmas* to come about in, is a necessary presupposition. This goes directly against criterion (1), referring to the epistemological basis of Schopenhauer's philosophy—which I will now summarize in my own words.

"*Die Welt ist meine Vorstellung*" read the opening words of the main work. Something can only be said to exist if it is in some way perceptible; to exist is to be an object to a subject. And since I am the only subject the existence of which I cannot doubt, the world is *my* representation (in using this term in stead of 'perception' Schopenhauer wanted to stress the activeness of the subject).

At the same time, however, there is no subject without object. 'Subject' and 'object' are correlative concepts, deriving their meaning from each other; therefore, the one cannot be more real than the other. If the not-I is a mere representation, something to which no absolute reality can be attributed, this also goes for the I. Therefore, the world as representation embraces both the things that I behold and myself as their beholder. Or, in Schopenhauer's words: the opposition of subject and object is the "first, general and essential form" of the *Vorstellung*.¹¹

Who or what, then, is the true representer of this world in which I am an individual being? To find an answer, we must take a closer look at how the world is known.

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Just how is the world in which I am an individual subject of objects represented?—as a spatiotemporal universe, ruled by the fourfold Law of Sufficient Reason (*Satz vom zureichenden Grunde*). Whatever I perceive is in space and time, and for anything to exist or happen there must be either a physical, logical, mathematical, or motivational reason. My entire experience of the world, from discursive ideas down to basic perceptions, is based on these a priori conditions. Even the notion of being a physical entity is basically no more than the immediate assumption that vision, sound, touch, smell, and taste are the temporal effects that an outside world has on 'my body'.

Thus, for anything to be empirically real, it must be spatial, temporal, and causal. Yet space, time, and causality cannot be proven to be empirically real themselves! If space is thought of as an empirical entity, the insoluble problem arises whether it is finite or infinite. In the first case, there would have to be something 'outside' space, a metaspaces, which is an absurd notion; but in the second case it could never be differentiated of anything and would therefore have no identity. If time is finite, there would have to be something 'before' and 'after' it, which again is absurd; but if it is infinite, it would take an eternity to arrive at the present moment, which therefore could never come about. Finite causality would enhance an unimaginable 'first cause' of all events in the universe, while infinite causality poses, *mutatis mutandis*, the same problem as infinite time.

This *antinomic* character of time, space, and causality shows them to be not 'things' but the very cadres of our sensory and intellectual experience of the world. They are not experienced themselves, but the tripartite way in which we experience. Schopenhauer adheres to Immanuel Kant's maxim: *empirical reality is transcendental ideality*: as long as we consider ourselves personal beings (and we cannot do otherwise without going mad), we must take the empirical world to be quite real. But ultimately this causal universe in space and time must be seen as ideal, of intellectual origin.

Ultimate reality, or the *Ding an sich* as Schopenhauer calls it in tribute to Kant, must be transcendent to space, time, and causality—a transcendent One—having the world, including my person, as its representation.

True, the epistemology above shows the 'I' to be a mere representation, but it leads up to a monistic conclusion with which the utter pluralism of the Old Wisdom School is totally incompatible.

III. Schopenhauer and the Prajñāpāramitā

The Mahāyāna (Great Vehicle) first started as a countermovement to the Old Wisdom School, calling it Hīnayāna (Small Vehicle) because of its elitist character. Maintaining the doctrine of no-self only as a theory of

empirical phenomena, the reformists produced a vast body of sūtras, the Prajñāpāramitā ('Wisdom Gone Beyond'), which were claimed to hold the true exegesis of the Buddha's teachings.

Although most nineteenth-century Orientalists shunned Prajñāpāramitā literature because of its mysteriousness, Schopenhauer, a thinker of notorious independence, equated it to the gist of his doctrine.

Whatever remains after the Will¹² has vanished must seem to those who are still filled by it nothing. But to the man in whom the Will has turned and negated itself, this world, so real to us with all its suns and Milky Ways, is—nothing.

In the third edition, a footnote is added to these concluding words of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*:

This is precisely the "Pradschna-Paramita" of the Buddhists, the 'Beyond All Knowledge', i.e., the point where subject and object no longer exist. (See I. J. Schmidt, *Ueber das Mahayana und Pratschna-Paramita*.)

The exact words of Isaak Jacob Schmidt¹³ are no longer ascertainable, but these sūtras indeed reflect the insight that the world of subject and object is but a restless shadow play of true reality. Still, this alone is no proof of a specific relation (after all, the unreality of subject and object has been held by others, such as Hegel; and "Hegelei" was the very last thing Schopenhauer felt close to).

I will now comment on some characteristic excerpts of the Prajñāpāramitā, with regard to the criteria mentioned in section I above.

(A) The Lord: One who perceives form [feeling, perception, impulse, or consciousness], has duality. One who perceives anything has duality. As far as there is duality, there is existence. Insofar as there is existence, there are the karma-formations. And as far as there are karma-formations, beings are not liberated from birth, decay, sickness, death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness and despair.¹⁴

This summary of the consequences of our 'skandha fallacy' clearly shows the idea that earthly existence is based on the mutuality (duality) of subject and object.

Whereas Schopenhauer's world as Representation is governed by the *Satz vom Grunde*,¹⁵ the world according to the Buddhists is also causal to the core, insofar as it is *karmic*: no action or occurrence is without cause, or without effect on future actions and occurrences.

Schopenhauer made several remarks on the belief in reincarnation, which is quintessential for the *karma* doctrine. He assumed there had to be some truth in a belief as widespread as this, but he could not accept the idea of metempsychosis: the transmigration of a soul with personal hallmarks. He argued that one's personality, consisting mainly of opin-

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ions and memories, was basically intellectual and as such tied to the *Vorstellung* that is human existence. Thus it could never be carried over the threshold of death. Reincarnation could only be true in the sense of a palingenesis of the *Ding an sich* into the individual beings of the world as Representation.¹⁶ He was convinced, however, that the Buddhists used the concept of metempsychosis only as a myth for the common herd and, like him, really held the idea of palingenesis of the Absolute, especially since he had read about an “esoteric Buddhist doctrine”¹⁷—undoubtedly the doctrine of the metaphysical *ālaya* consciousness of the idealist Yogācāra school (discussed at length in § 5).

In fact, the matter is more complicated. Surely, knowing that the *skandhas* are not the self, no learned Buddhist could ever believe in the transmigration of an unchanging core bearing the imprint of his personality. In the narrow sense of the word, metempsychosis was never seriously considered in Buddhism. But it never completely abandoned the idea of rebirth, either. Even in the *Milindapañha*, a Hīnayāna text, the idea of rebirth for those who do not achieve *nirvāṇa* is somehow retained. The Yogācāra sects, in their turn, linked the *skandha vijñāna* to the idea of a subtle nucleus at the center of unenlightened mental activity, remaining within time and space after death and engaging a new mother’s womb at the moment of conception.

The Buddhist combination of the *skandha* critique with the ancient idea of rebirth may seem something of a tour de force, but within the context of the Prajñāpāramitā, more so than in Hīnayāna literature, it becomes clear that ideas like this were not just maintained as moral incentives for the common man. The philosophy of the Mahāyāna shows a fundamental and *well-considered* ambivalence toward the notion of self—and the relation between phenomenal and absolute reality.

(B) Form is like a mass of foam, it has no solidity, it is full of cracks and holes, and it has no substantial inner core. Feeling is like a bubble, which swiftly rises and swiftly disappears, and it has no durable subsistence. Perception is like a mirage. As in a mirage pool absolutely no water at all can be found [so there is nothing substantial in that which is perceived]. Impulses are like the trunk of a plantain tree: when you strip off one leaf-sheath after another nothing remains, and you cannot lay hand on a core within. Consciousness is like a mock show, as when magically created soldiers, conjured up by a magician, are seen marching through the streets.¹⁸

Again, an ambivalent attitude toward the notion of self can be detected. This survey of the *skandhas* shows the inner and extramental world to be wholly ephemeral. But who is fooled by the “mirage”?

It would be wrong to consider these texts the products of naïve minds, trying to make a purely nihilistic statement but, by putting the matter in an overly poetic way, inadvertently leaving open the possibility

of a 'dreamer' of the dream of life. It is not without significance that no more is said than that the constituents of the person are insubstantial. 'Someone' *is* still watching the bursting bubble that once was feeling, grasping the foam which was believed to be material form, and finding out that the impulses of the will stem from nothing.

And who is putting on the "mock show"?

A similar kind of deliberate ambiguity is found in the philosophy of Will and Representation.

Schopenhauer found it simply too unsatisfactory to stop short (as Kant had done) at the epistemological finding that the *Ding an sich*, transcending the a priori forms of the intellect, was unknowable.¹⁹ He insisted that a clue to the suprapersonal 'me', having the I-and-the-world as a *Vorstellung*, was to be found in an examination of the empirical 'me'.

So, to gain metaphysical insight, he resorted to introspection!—the results of which I will now summarize.

Commonsensibly, I think of myself as a body, endowed with reason, within the world. But prior to this objective self-image, preceding thought, action, and even the notion of 'I', my self-consciousness consists only of desires, emotions, and physical promptings (lumped together by Schopenhauer as manifestations of one thing: *will*).

Prereflectively, I am will.

As a mental phenomenon, the will has no extent in space, but unlike anything else it also has no cause! Whatever I desire may be explainable in some way or other, but this must be distinguished from the blunt fact *that* my will is continually active. The intellect presents the will with motives in time and space, but the will as such, this perpetual stream that is in fact one's sheer *will to live*, is as unexplainable as life itself.

At bottom, will and life are one.

Coming out of nowhere, the only a priori form in which my will presents itself is that of time, since it is known in the succession of its impulses. This makes it the most direct (that is, the least a priori mediated) of all phenomena, and therefore the preeminent phenomenon to serve as a *symbol* of the Real—a symbol, not an identification. Or, in Schopenhauer's own words:

We should realize that [with the word "Will"] we are only using a *denominatio a potiori* [best suitable designation], by which the original meaning of 'will' is considerably enlarged.²⁰

Here we touch on a vital clue for the correct understanding of Schopenhauer: in our will, ultimate reality glimmers through the *Vorstellung*—but this is not quite the same as saying that the psychological will is the only real thing in a world of phantasms. The will to live is the most accurate representation of true reality.

As *Will* my *will* is the Real.

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But it is not just its lack of a cause that gives the will its symbolic significance. Metaphysics can only be meaningful if it reflects the world we know. If the Real is to be discussed at all, this can only be done in terms of its appearance; tearing the former from the latter and dealing with it as an *ens extramundanum* would be stooping to dogmatism.²¹ Hence criterion (3).

[My philosophy] does not draw conclusions about what lies beyond experience, it only clarifies the things given in outer and inner experience; it thus restricts itself to understanding the essence of the world from its [empirical] connections. It is therefore *immanent* in the Kantian sense of the word.²²

The will is the first and the foremost. I may sometimes be able to curb a certain desire through the knowledge that its fulfillment will cause me harm, but this only shows the subservience of my intellect to the utmost (and most unreasoned) desire of all: to live and be free of pain and need—of which desire even suicide is an expression. I may lose all intellectual ability, but as long as I live I shall have psychological and physical needs. Therefore my will must be the closest thing to the Real. And if solipsism is to be avoided, I must presume that everybody and everything else has the same kernel of existence which in me appears as my will. Human and animal drive and vigor, the sprouting power of plants, and the sheer weight of inanimate objects are, from a metaphysical point of view, all the same thing: Will to Live.

This is why hunger, hatred, fear, and lust are the rulers of life.

Schopenhauer's observation that the impulses of the will come out of the blue is paralleled by the analogy of the *saṃskāra* with a coreless plaitain tree. Yet neither fragment (A) nor fragment (B) highlights the *saṃskāra* against the other *skandhas*. All five are mentioned in one breath, and this seems to be in stark contrast to Schopenhauer's assessment of the will.

It must be said that the early Buddhist text *Samyutta Nikāya* does depict the *saṃskāra* as the premier existence factor, the one *skandha* to make the five of them together appear as a person's self.²³ And this text has remained canonical throughout the history of Buddhism, so perhaps the authors of the *Prajñāpāramitā* would not have disagreed entirely with Schopenhauer's assessment, although not making it themselves. This assumption might be enhanced by the resemblance between Schopenhauer's suprapersonal Will and the Buddhist idea of an all-pervading Craving (*trṣṇā*), defined in the second Noble Truth as the principle of *saṃsāra*, the sorrowful world of birth and death. Some scholars indeed attach great significance to this resemblance,²⁴ but the present writer is having his doubts.

Whereas concepts like *saṃskāra* and *upādāna* ('grasping for existence')²⁵ are amply discussed in Buddhist literature, remarkably little is

said about *tṛṣṇā*, which seems to be a mere description of *saṃsāric* existence rather than a theoretical concept. In any case, *tṛṣṇā* was never presented as a straight metaphysical enlargement of the *saṃskāra* as is the Will to Live of the psychological will in Schopenhauer's philosophy. All that seems safe to say about it is this: whereas Peace is the mode of *nirvāṇa*, Craving is the mode of *saṃsāra*; and as far as the cycle of life and death is kept going by the impulses of the mortal's will, *saṃskāra* and *tṛṣṇā* are in some way related. Taking this rather loose connection as a parallel of Schopenhauer's step from epistemology to metaphysics would, in my view, involve so much 'hermeneutical proficiency' as to render the comparison meaningless.

On the other hand, it would be a waste of time to look for distinctive, Western-style philosophical arguments in the Prajñāpāramitā. These sūtra's were meant to be meditated upon in the pursuit of enlightenment. In the context of this pursuit, philosophical findings were made, but the student was to be prevented from taking these as positive truths. According to the Prajñāpāramitā, ultimate truth transcends reason; therefore, all its findings and concepts are tentative and must be enfeebled and contradicted to allow students to rid themselves of intellectual fixations.

This leads to a remarkable conclusion:

(C) A fully enlightened Buddha is like a magical illusion, is like a dream. . . . Even Nirvana . . . is like a magical illusion, is like a dream. . . . Even if perchance there could be anything more distinguished, of that too I would say it is like an illusion, like a dream. For illusion and Nirvana are not two different things, nor are dreams and Nirvana.²⁶

The world, as we perceive it, consists of nothing but ephemeral phenomena; it is devoid of substance, empty. Yet this world is all we know—which is to say that we are only fit to know what we perceive. Thus the blessed state of liberation from transitoriness transcends our mental ability; our conceptions of it are also empty.

All we ever know and imagine is empty. Therefore, *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* are indistinguishable!

This does not mean that true reality is a Void. The concept of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) is not the final answer to the question of existence, but a guideline for meditation. In fact, one of the eighteen kinds of emptiness distinguished in the Prajñāpāramitā is the *emptiness of emptiness*.²⁷ In the last stages of the meditation on emptiness, wisdom becomes perfect wisdom by surpassing both difference and identity of the world and the Real in contemplating the Suchness (*tathatā*) of emptiness.²⁸

This concept of emptiness has led many to believe that Buddhism is a nihilistic religion, but Schopenhauer knew better:

If *nirvana* is defined as nothingness, this only means there is no element of *saṃsāra* that could be used to define or construct *nirvāṇa*.²⁹

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It is easy to see why he felt close to such a view. He had put forward himself that the final truth, about the *Ding an sich*, could never be expressed in intellectual terms, that is, terms derived from the world as Representation.

It might look as if the sameness of *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* is inconsonant with the picture of a Representation brought forth by a metaphysical Will, since the latter seems indicative of a dualistic view. But Schopenhauer was the strictest of monists, rejecting all theories that separate reality into different ontological regions. Any such theory, he argued, presupposed the creation of this world by either a divine person or an emanating world soul, which amounted to letting the *Satz vom Grunde* exceed the Representation, and involved the absurd notion of an ultimate Subject of the subject-and-object that is the world in space and time. He considered the sheer idea of creationism silly, remarking: "Why didn't Creation stay at home, where It was comfortable and to which It must return anyway?"³⁰ Like "*saṃsāra*" and "*nirvāṇa*," the concepts of Representation and Will do not denote separate ontological 'spheres' but two aspects of the one reality there is. With those concepts Schopenhauer did not mean to give an overview of reality; he did not claim to have a transcendent vantage point from which the world could be seen to come about. His philosophy was the last of the great metaphysical systems of the West, but at the same time it was the first explanation of how we are always trapped within our own view. He tried to make this human view on reality as clear as possible by showing us the world both epistemologically and metaphysically—thus the dual perspective of Representation and Will.

Still, it cannot be denied that Schopenhauer often referred to the Will as if it was a supernatural entity, an evil godhead deceiving and tormenting its creatures. This is particularly the case in the *Parerga und Paralipomena*, the series of additional essays that first brought him fame and has remained the most popular part of his oeuvre. Despite the many explicit instructions on how to interpret his philosophy, even in the *Parerga*,³¹ this manner of mythologizing the Will may easily confuse the reader. It has indeed confused many scholars. . . . But if a philosophy of life is to be vital and penetrating, a literary manner of expressing the respective thoughts and ideas is a merit rather than a demerit. The ambiguities and literary digressions in Schopenhauer's work are part and parcel of his philosophical message—and I am sure he meant them exactly that way. Although he never wrote in so many words that his ambiguous style was intentional, he emphatically praised poets like Calderon de la Barca and such mystics as Jacob Böhme and Meister Eckhart. As a young man, he wrote:

He who speaks adversely about the paradoxicalness of a work, apparently thinks there already is a lot of wisdom about, and that all that is left to be done is to dot the i's and cross the t's.³²

All in all, in concluding this paragraph it must be said that a definite equation cannot be established.

The main difficulty in relating Schopenhauer's philosophy to the Prajñāpāramitā lies in the fact that the latter lacks the straightforward prevalence of the will, which prevalence is the hallmark of the former. So criterion (4) poses a problem. Exactly how big a problem is difficult to say; the sūtras of the Prajñāpāramitā may not be as nonsensical as they were once thought to be, but they do differ in style from the argumentative philosophies of the West, of which Schopenhauer's work, despite its literariness, is a true example.

But the history of Buddhism has produced a thinker whose style is very argumentative indeed: Nāgārjuna—to whom I will now turn.

IV. Schopenhauer and Nāgārjuna

For a long time, Nāgārjuna's philosophy was thought to be an elaboration of the Prajñāpāramitā,³³ mainly because the school which based itself on him, the *Mādhyamika* (They Who Go the Middle Way) became a cornerstone of the Mahāyāna. Modern Orientalists, however, stress the fact that in Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Verses of the Middle Way) no reference is made to the sūtras of Perfect Wisdom, and this seems to negate the old assumption.³⁴ Yet the Kārikā never really contradicts the Prajñāpāramitā either.

Like all Buddhist thinkers, Nāgārjuna tied in with the teaching that no self can be attributed to anything we know, our own personality included. But, unlike the Sarvāstivādins, he kept close to the original sūtras, in which nothing more is said than that the question of self is pointless. Not aiming for an ontological conclusion, he merely criticized our tendency to substantialize mental and worldly phenomena, which critique can be summarized as follows: whatever has substance (*svabhāva*) must exist independently of other entities, and whatever has independent existence must be uncreated and indestructible. But nothing we experience fits this description; nothing exists or happens on its own, and even the relations between things are far from clear-cut; all phenomena and ideas are thoroughly interdependent; thus nothing has *svabhāva*.

Nāgārjuna based himself on a formula that was first presented in the ancient Pali canon, to remain a key formula in all Buddhism: the Twelve-fold Chain of Dependent Arising, or *pratītyasamutpāda*.

If the one exists, then the other exists; from the origination of this that originates, namely from

1. ignorance (*avidyā*) as a condition
2. the dispositions (*saṃskāra*) arise; from these as conditions
3. perception (*vijñāna*) arises; from this as a condition
4. name and form (*nāma-rūpa*) arise; from these as conditions
5. the six sense organs (*ṣaḍāyatana*) arise; from these as conditions
6. contact (*sparsā*) arises; from this as a condition

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7. feeling (*vedanā*) arises; from this as a condition
8. thirst (*tṛṣṇā*) arises; from this as a condition
9. grasping (*upādāna*) arises; from this as a condition
10. existence (*bhāva*) arises; from this as a condition
11. birth (*jāti*) arises; from this as a condition
12. old age and death (*jarā-maraṇa*), distress, lamentation, suffering, dejection and disturbance arise. Thus is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.³⁵

The Old Wisdom School had seen this as the flowchart of the *dharmas*. Nāgārjuna took it literally—the phenomenal world (that is, reality as perceived in our ignorance) *is* Dependent Arising; having no substance, it is relative to the core, and therefore nullish, empty.

The ‘*svabhāva* tendency’ is not just an error of judgment but the very mode of life as we know it. In discursive thought as well as basic sensation, we automatically presume the substantiality of what we perceive. Yet we only know things in their myriad relations to other things. This breeds *duḥkha*: because of our intellectual and instinctive urge to fixate the world, its relativity appears as transitoriness. Even the idea of being an individual enhances the notion of plurality (*prapañca*), which is a distortion of the fleeting whole.

Schopenhauer’s philosophy can be reproduced in a similar vein: because of the way we represent the world (that is, as a spatiotemporal universe governed by the law of sufficient ground), its essence appears as a gruesome and everchanging Will. He, too, acknowledged the basic restlessness of life.

Our existence has no ground or bottom other than the ever-fleeting present. That is why life is continual *movement*, without a chance of achieving the tranquility we long for. It is like the course of someone running down a mountainside, who would fall if he tried to halt and can only stay on his feet by running along. . . . So, unrest is the type of all existence.³⁶

Both Nāgārjuna and Schopenhauer saw man’s suffering not as some divine punishment but as something bound up with our very experience of reality.

An important point is that Nāgārjuna refrained from speculating about the Absolute. The Kārikā consist almost entirely of reductio ad absurdum arguments against the *svabhāva* tendency. To exemplify his way of reasoning, I will summarize the argument on time in chapter 19.

Time is normally represented as a threesome of past, present, and future, with the latter two deriving their meaning from the first. Yet it would be absurd to conclude from this that present and future are ‘enclosed’ in the past. But if they would exist independently of it, in relation to what, then, were they present and future? Apparently, present and future are neither dependent nor independent of the past (nor both, nor

neither of both). In this manner each section of time becomes a problem in its relation to the other two.

Modern interpreters claim, very plausibly, that Nāgārjuna did not deny time as such, but was only criticizing our conception of it, and this proposition is often accompanied by the association of Nāgārjuna's thought with the transcendental idealism of Kant and Schopenhauer.³⁷ There is a lot to be said for this, since transcendental idealism is also a critique of reason rather than an ontological theory. Yet the association also bears the risk of turning the philosophies involved into the purely analytical lines of thought they are not. If a philosopher is averse to mysticism or dogmatic metaphysics, this does not necessarily mean that his work has no metaphysical purport at all. Kant's sole objective was to prepare the way for a new kind of metaphysics, of which Schopenhauer claimed to be the establisher. And I am convinced that Nāgārjuna had metaphysical inclinations as well.

True, Nāgārjuna countered the assumption that stripping all things from their presumed substance was the same as to propound the reality of emptiness:

If there were to be something non-empty,
there would then be something called empty.
However, there is nothing that is non-empty.
How could there be something empty?³⁸

Nothing exists absolutely, and this is why the concept of nonexistence is also meaningless; hence Nāgārjuna's reiteration of the Buddha's call to go the Middle Path, to seek neither yes nor no (nor both, nor neither of both). But, as we have seen, the emptiness of (the idea of) emptiness is also stressed in the Prajñāpāramitā, of which the metaphysical or religious purport is questioned by no one. It cannot be ruled out that Nāgārjuna, like the Prajñāpāramitā, merely wanted to abstain from attributing positive features to the Unknowable. That the Kārikā carry no definite statement whatsoever about the Real may be indicative of anti-mysticality, but it may also reflect the view that philosophy, although no integral part of religious insight, could very well be its preamble. This would make Nāgārjuna at least an 'implicit mystic'.

This last thought is not as bizarre as it may seem. If the critique of the *svabhāva* tendency is taken seriously, and everything is seen in its non-duality, then all limits and boundaries dissolve and our experience of the world is drastically altered. In a word, the difference between mysticism and an "empiricist and pragmatic philosophy"³⁹ could turn out to be not as big as had been expected.⁴⁰

What has been discussed above seems to link Nāgārjuna to Schopenhauer, whose work, in spite of being peppered with metaphysical terms, breathes the same ambiguity with respect to the relation of epis-

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temology and metaphysics *casu quo* the concrete and the transcendent. Yet an equation is not possible.

This also has to do with criterion (4) demanding the psychological and metaphysical primacy of the will. Nāgārjuna's position was, to say the least, more subtle. Even though the terms of Dependent Arising are related in a more dynamic way than as simple causes and effects, it is quite clear that *avidyā*, lack of insight, is the ultimate reason for the coming about of suffering.⁴¹ Accordingly, Nāgārjuna ascribes liberation from suffering to a close ensemble of wisdom (*jñāna*) and the nonarising of dispositions (*saṃskāra*), with the former being the most important:

When ignorance has ceased, there is no occurrence of dispositions. However, the cessation of that ignorance takes place as a result of the practice of that [nonoccurrence of dispositions] through wisdom.⁴²

As regards the comparison to Schopenhauer, it seems no oversimplification to say that Nāgārjuna considered suffering as well as the liberation of suffering rather a matter of (lack of) 'knowledge' than a matter of sheer will. This is also reflected in his view on the defilements (*kleśas*)—a concept already used by the Old Wisdom School, containing *avidyā*, *tṛṣṇā*, and *upādāna* (1, 8, and 9 of the Twelffold Chain) and signifying the coherence of ignorance, craving, and grasping as factors in the arising of suffering. From chapters 18 and 23 of the Kārikā, it follows that within this triad, ignorance is the most important:

When views pertaining to 'mine' and 'I', whether they are associated with the internal or the external, have waned, then grasping comes to cease. With the waning of that [grasping], there is waning of birth.⁴³

(Views have to wane in order for grasping to wane.)

On the waning of defilements of action, there is release. Defilements of action belong to one who discriminates, and these in turn result from obsession. Obsession, in its turn, ceases within the context of emptiness.⁴⁴

(Discrimination has its origin in obsession, which delusion is removed by the insight of its emptiness.)

Lust, hatred, and confusion are said to have thought as their source. Perversions regarding the pleasant and the unpleasant arise depending on these.⁴⁵

(Thought is the ultimate source of perversions.)

Every time, the 'intellectual is deemed more consequential than the 'passional'. And although *avidyā* is an elemental misconception, there could be no ignorance if there was no possibility of *gnosis*. Each of us has, by our ability to gain insight, the potency to cast off ignorance and attain freedom.

How different Schopenhauer's view is! Every entity and event is basically Will. The earth circles around the sun because of the elementary expression of the Will we know as gravity. The death of an organism is either the claiming of its physical material by nature or the result of another organism's violent will. All love is basically sexual and, as such, the Will of the species to preserve itself. And to all of this, the event of someone's salvation is no exception.

At first glance, Schopenhauer seems to have based salvation upon an insight. As all malevolence is grounded in the idea that one is absolutely separated from other beings ('someone else's pain is no matter of mine'), so gentleness is grounded in the unconscious knowledge that there is no ultimate reality in individuality; being kind to others is knowing supraintellectually that individuality is a distortion of true reality. As this silent awareness grows, gentleness passes into altruism, the subordination of one's own interests to those of all other beings. Finally, some altruists come to understand that even the will to advance the interest of others is to no avail, since any kind of will is basically a *Will to Live*: the metaphysical ground of all suffering. At this, the principle of individuality evaporates altogether and there is no longer a personal will which could have motives—this is the *quietive* of the Will itself. The altruist becomes an ascetic and calmly awaits death, the ending of the physical expression of the Will to Live. Then salvation is definite (like the Buddhist *parinirvāṇa*).⁴⁶

Many scholars have called this a glaring inconsistency; how could the almighty Will succumb to an insight of the saint?⁴⁷ The fact is, however, that Schopenhauer never asserted this.

Let us have a look at one of his more literary passages:

Think of life as a racetrack which is run continually, with most of it consisting of glowing coals. He who is under the illusion [of the *Vorstellung*] finds comfort in the few cool places onto which he hops while running his course. But he who knows the essence of things, and in that the whole of reality, is not amenable to this comfort anymore: he knows he really is on all parts of the track at the same time, and he steps out.⁴⁸

'Getting to know the essence of things' here is not the same as reaching the last link in a chain of discursive judgments. It is a result of compassion, thus an existential rather than an intellectual realization (or else the mere reading of *Die Welt als Wille* and so forth would lead to holiness, which is not what Schopenhauer, though not a very modest man, expected). But that is not all. The passage above is the literary depiction of an event, a *phenomenon*, without any metaphysical explanation added.

Unfortunately, Schopenhauer failed to devote any space in his work to such an explicit metaphysical explanation of salvation, but anyone willing to look can find numerous indications of what he really meant to say. Let me offer a few examples.

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Essentially nothing but a phenomenon of the Will, [the ascetic] no longer wants anything.⁴⁹

This could be read as: 'the ascetic escapes his essence', but it *should* be read as: 'although the ascetic is no longer wanting, he is still a phenomenon of the Will'. Or better still: 'the will-lessness of the ascetic shows that the Unknowable can also manifest itself as Will No More'. This interpretation seems corroborated by:

Sannyassins, martyrs, holy men of all creed and name, have voluntarily endured calvary, because in them the Will to Live had discontinued itself.⁵⁰

Finally, this passage in the *Parerga* leaves little room for doubt:

In answer to some foolish objections I would like to state that the *negation of the Will to Live* does not mean the destruction of a substance, but simply the act of not-willing: what up to now was *willing* is no longer *willing*. Because we know this essence, [that we call] the Will, the Thing in itself, only in and through the act of willing, we are unable to pronounce or grasp its being and doings after it has surrendered this act: that is why this negation *to us*, who are the phenomenon of the Will, appears a transition into nothingness.⁵¹

So the timeless *Ding an sich*, in its bizarrerie, turns out to have an aspect which is manifested temporally as will to live shifting into disengagement from the world: the sparse phenomenon of holy enlightenment. Hence Schopenhauer's approval of the Christian view of salvation as an act of divine *grace*:⁵² no achievement of the person in question but something which befalls him. As the utter mindlessness of the will to live can be seen in the involuntary floundering of a drowning man, so holiness, though seeming to spring from an insight, is also something that simply happens—being an act of the only free agent in the whole of reality: the motiveless Real itself.⁵³

All of this does not diminish the moral value of Schopenhauer's philosophy; 'good' remains 'good' as opposed to 'bad', and if thoughts like these were nihilistic, then religions demanding complete submission to God would also be nihilistic. Neither is it an entirely cynical view, since it excludes no one from salvation. But it does differ immensely from Nāgārjuna's view of salvation.

Both Schopenhauer and Nāgārjuna created a doctrine in which every man has a basic chance of deliverance, but the former embedded this chance in the capriciousness of the Will, while the latter ascribed it to the fundamental possibility of attaining insight. (Small wonder that Zen Buddhism, lacking any devotionism and relying solely on 'own-power' (*jiriki* in Japanese) names Nāgārjuna as its first patriarch.)

This soteriological difference forbids an equation.

V. Schopenhauer and the Yogācāra

Whenever Schopenhauer is specifically compared to Buddhism, the Yogācāra (or Vijñānavāda), is invariably pointed out as the school with

which his philosophy has the most in common.⁵⁴ No doubt, this connection is based on the resemblance between Yogācāra philosophy and nineteenth-century German idealism. But if Schopenhauer belonged to that tradition at all, he was at best a maverick member.

From the Prajñāpāramitā and Nāgārjuna's Kārikā, the Mādhyamika derived the view that ultimate reality could in no way be described. The Yogācārin found this tantamount to nihilism;⁵⁵ they argued that when the duality of subject and object was proven unreal, there was still something to be said about that 'wherein' this duality occurred (*avidyā*) and waned (*prajñā*). Taking the ancient Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra with its motto of *citta-mātra* (mind alone), as their basic text, they developed a theory of the Real as a nondual Mind (*ālaya-vijñāna* or 'storehouse consciousness').

According to this theory, ignorance is the distortion of *ālaya* into self-consciousness (*manas*), causing the seeds of subject and object, lying in store, to germinate and produce the *saṃsāric* world (*viśaya-vijñapti*). Salvation is attained through an ample protocol of meditation and yoga practices, cleansing the Mind back to its original state.

Ālaya is not to be understood as an equivalent of the *logos*, the ultimate Reason at the beginning of this world according to the book of Genesis. It has been called the "cosmic Unconscious,"⁵⁶ which description parallels it with the psychoanalytical concept to which Freud, in his turn, had been inspired by Schopenhauer's Will to Live. Others have described it in an even more Schopenhauerian manner as "creative act, Will."⁵⁷ Philosophical kinship is further suggested by the three stages of *ālaya*, *manas*, and *vijñapti* seeming to be in sync with Schopenhauer's threesome of Will, Platonic Idea,⁵⁸ and Representation.

Indeed, this is an almost systematic resemblance. Good reason, I would say, to be extra cautious in comparing the two.

Schopenhauer called himself a Kantian idealist, but his epistemology was also much inspired by the *Farbenlehre* of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe—from which theory he derived the view that the a priori forms of time, space, and causality, on the nature of which Kant had not dared to speculate, were not features of some Cartesian 'mind' but functions of the brain!⁵⁹ It seems a huge antinomy: the brain, an object in space and time, coming into existence through its own functions—but this should be seen in the context of the dual perspective of metaphysics and epistemology that I have mentioned already, in section III (C).

Metaphysically, only the Will is real, and things like the brain are but phenomena shaped by the ideal forms of space, time, and causality. But this metaphysical perspective derives its meaning entirely from the epistemology that shows the world to be a Representation. So if the Will is to be considered real, the Representation *as such* must also be real—that is to say: empirically real. There is nothing wrong, therefore, in admitting to the empirical fact that the brain is the physical precondition

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of all knowledge and experience, and hence the precondition of the *Vorstellung*.

In sum, we cannot evade empirical reality if we are to attain metaphysical insight.

This notion of two simultaneous perspectives on reality brings to mind the Two Truths of Buddhism: *saṃvṛti-satyam* or 'superficial truth' and *paramārtha-satyam* or 'ultimate truth'. The Buddha is said to have distinguished between the conventional truth of the *saṃsāric* world (the adequacy of facts and ideas) and the supraintellectual truth concerning *nirvāṇa*. A minor theme in the Old Wisdom School, this idea of Two Truths became well developed in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-sūtra* of the Prajñāpāramitā, wherein it is stressed that the Truths differ only in quality. *Saṃvṛti* applies to reality as perceived by the mortal, while *paramārtha* applies to reality as it truly is—thus both have the selfsame object. *Saṃvṛti* is empty because of the emptiness of phenomena; *paramārtha* is empty because it transcends thought—thus it is through emptiness that both truths are connected.⁶⁰ Later, Nāgārjuna put great emphasis on this last point, arguing that *paramārtha* was discovered only in the realization that all views, including those concerning the Buddha and the Four Noble Truths, were *saṃvṛti* and thus empty; this would at once reveal the liberating identity of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*:

Without relying upon convention, the ultimate fruit is not taught.

Without the understanding of the ultimate fruit, freedom is not attained.⁶¹

Not wanting to identify the respective concepts, I do claim that Schopenhauer made essentially the same thought-movement with his dual perspective of epistemology and metaphysics: if empirical reality is contemplated consequently on its own terms, it will at some point bear witness to the unspeakable truth 'behind' it. Or: the final truth is only discovered through an analysis of the *Vorstellung* as it presents itself. Hence the naturalistic streak in his idealist philosophy.

This also accounts for his demand that metaphysics be *immanent*. No metaphysics can be convincing if it neglects empirical facts. And it is an undeniable empirical fact that mental phenomena always depend upon physical states. Indeed, the distinction between the mental and the material is very unclear (hence his subsumation of mental desires and bodily longings like hunger under one concept, the will to live).

Finally, his naturalism simply follows from his epistemology! Being, in their correlation, the very basis of the Representation, subject and object cannot be subordinate to the universal Law of Sufficient Ground. Therefore, the subject should not be seen to spring from object (as in materialism) nor can the object be held to come forth from the subject (as in the idealism of the *esse est percipi* type).⁶²

Any philosophy proclaiming the world to be a Representation is by definition idealist. But in the Schopenhauerian view, matter and mind are equally important aspects of this Representation; the material is as much an expression of the Real as the mental. This is to say: the *Ding an sich* is neither material nor mental!

Like the Buddhist proponents of the Two Truths, Schopenhauer considered ultimate reality, which he symbolized by the term 'Will to Live', to be wholly unknowable. The Yogācārins, however, held a third Truth. According to them, salvation came with the insight into the sole reality of consciousness⁶³—a consciousness knowing neither itself nor any object, thus an unimaginable consciousness, but nevertheless something to be called 'Mind' as opposed to matter.

Salvation through an insight that concerns the true nature of the Real: criteria (3) and (4) forbid an equation of Schopenhauer and the Yogācāra.

VI. Epilogue

The comparison of any Western-style philosophy to the four basics of Buddhist philosophy is bound to be hindered by cultural and linguistic barriers (something which Schopenhauer himself, being a child of his time, sorely underestimated). Nevertheless, the preceding paragraphs have shown at least one parallel that surpasses mere atmosphere and must be considered truly philosophical: Schopenhauer's concepts of Will and Representation are related in the same way as *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* (or *paramārtha* and *saṃvṛti*) are related in the Prajñāpāramitā and Nāgārjuna's verses: namely, as a dual perspective on reality, which in itself remains unknowable.⁶⁴

But there is a clear difference, too—in the respective philosophical assessments of the will—and this is of profound soteriological significance. In every form of Buddhism, suffering is regarded primarily as a matter of ignorance; correspondingly, salvation is always linked to insight. Even Zen, with its proverbial disdain for reason, pictures *satori*, although achieved through discipline (thus willpower), as an intuitional *insight* into the Oneness of all things. Schopenhauer also held that earthly existence was basically a false perception, a mere Representation of true reality, but this he embedded metaphysically in the Will to Live. He did not base the world in a 'wrong view' but in a transcendent Will, manifesting itself in both the inner life and the material form of all creatures. No insight could cure this; on the contrary, the more of a philosophical understanding of reality we gained, the more we would realize that it was a case beyond human aid. . . . Like the Mahāyāna, Schopenhauer claimed that everyone could be liberated, but he categorically denied humanity's own influence in this instance. Phenomenally, salvation sprang from knowledge, but in reality it was an act of the *Ding an*

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sich. (In this respect, the only form of Buddhism coming near him would be the devotional *Amida* cult, although he would of course have called Amidism a theistic outrage, had he known of it.)

So, does this prove that Schopenhauer's idea of kinship cannot be maintained in the present day? Well, it is hard to equate a view of the world revolving around ignorance and insight with a view of the will as the first and last in all reality—even when both views do not pretend to lay bare the true nature of the Real. However, this difference should not be made absolute.

None of the Buddhist philosophies discussed above regards salvation as the finding of an articulate answer to the question of life, if only because Buddhist philosophy never leaves its meditative context. *Nirvāṇa* is not 'knowing something', but *knowledge in the form of stilled passion*. Thus the differences between intellect and will become slighter as truth is approached.

In its 'moral outcome', at least, the same goes for the philosophy of Schopenhauer. His theory of salvation shows that he did not *reject* the intellect. He considered the intellect to be of limited soteriological value, but this did not keep him from attaching the greatest value to the quest for truth. Hence his continual endeavor to let his work be *immanent*; hence the many adjustments and elaborations in the *Ergänzungen* and *Parerga* to bring the ideas of the main work in line with scientific progress and new personal experiences. As I hope to have made clear in the preceding paragraphs, this 'immanency' was not just a matter of style; it followed directly from the tenets of his philosophy. And, in this sense, his idea of kinship may not be untenable after all, despite the differences with respect to content. Buddhism and Schopenhauerian philosophy share, if anything, this very important view: Reality may not be 'rational', but it would be the worst thing if we reacted to this with empty-headed religious dogmatism, philosopher's jargon, or cynical acquiescence. Our capacity to gain understanding is really all we have to our advantage; so intellectual and moral truthfulness remain the key virtues in life.

NOTES

- 1 – Arthur Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II, (Ergänzungsband)*, Schopenhauer Sämtliche Werke (München: Piper Verlag, 1911), vol. 2, p. 186; my translation.
- 2 – *Arthur Schopenhauer: Ein Lebensbild in Briefen*, ed. Angelika Hübscher (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1987), p. 89.
- 3 – Schopenhauer listed his books on Buddhism in *Ueber de Willen in der Natur*, Werke, vol. 3, p. 411.

- 4 – See, for instance, *Parerga und Paralipomena* II, par. 179, Werke, vol. 5, p. 411.
- 5 – Examples: Heinz Bechert, “Flucht in den Oriënt?” in *Schopenhauer Jahrbuch 1981* (Frankfurt a. M.: Kramer Verlag, 1981), pp. 55–65; Freny Mistry, “Der Buddhist liest Schopenhauer,” *Schopenhauer Jahrbuch 1983*, pp. 80–92; Wilhelm Halfbass, “Schopenhauer im Gespräch mit der Indischen Tradition,” in *Schopenhauer im Denken der Gegenwart* (München: Piper Verlag, 1987), pp. 55–71.
- 6 – Examples: Heinrich von Glasenapp, the chapter on Schopenhauer in *Das Indienbild deutscher Denker* (Stuttgart: Köhler Verlag, 1960), pp. 68–101; Arthur Hübscher, “Schopenhauer und die Religionen Asiens,” in *Schopenhauer Jahrbuch 1979*, pp. 1–15; Yasuo Kamata, “Schopenhauer und der Buddhismus,” in *Schopenhauer Jahrbuch 1984*, pp. 233–237.
- 7 – Dorothea Dauer, “Schopenhauer as Transmitter of Buddhist Ideas,” in *European University Papers*, vol. 15 (Berne: Lang & Co., 1969), p. 28.
- 8 – See *Samyutta Nikāya* XXXIV.10 (in Erich Frauwallner, *Die Philosophie des Buddhismus* [Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1958], pp. 18–19).
- 9 – Extracted from Erich Frauwallner, *Die Philosophie des Buddhismus*, pp. 64–104.
- 10 – *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* II, Werke, vol 2, p. 186.
- 11 – *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Werke, vol. 1, p. 30.
- 12 – The capital “W” is meant to distinguish Schopenhauer’s metaphysical concept from the common psychological concept. In German such a distinction is, of course, impossible.
- 13 – (1779–1847), Scholar of Tibetan and Mongolian culture with the academy of St. Petersburg.
- 14 – From *Pancaviṃśatisāhasrikā* 501 (in Edward Conze, *Selected Sayings from the Perfection of Wisdom* [Boulder: Prajna Press, 1978], p. 102).
- 15 – First formulated by the eighteenth-century rationalist philosopher Christian Wolff.
- 16 – *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* II, Werke, vol. 2, p. 574.
- 17 – Ibid.
- 18 – From *Ashṭādaśasāhasrikā* LXXIV (Conze, *Selected Sayings*, p. 96).
- 19 – *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Werke, vol. 1, p. 5.
- 20 – Ibid., p. 132.
- 21 – *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* II, Werke, vol. 2, p. 203.
- 22 – Ibid., p. 733.

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- 23 – *Samyutta Nikāya* III.87 (in David Kalupahana, *The Principles of Buddhist Psychology* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987], pp. 18–19).
- 24 – Dauer, “Schopenhauer as Transmitter of Buddhist Ideas,” p. 15.
- 25 – A term to which the *skandhas* are linked directly in most versions of the first Noble Truth. As a matter of fact, Schopenhauer himself once wrote in a letter that he saw this concept, on which he had read in one of his books on Buddhism, as the direct equivalent of his own concept of Will to Live (see Von Glasenapp, *Das Indienbild deutscher Denker*, p. 92). Apart from the literal sameness, however, both concepts have little in common, since *upādāna* has to do with a mental disposition rather than a metaphysical entity.
- 26 – From *Ashṭādaśasāhasrikā* II.38–40 (Conze, *Selected Sayings*, p. 98).
- 27 – Conze, *Selected Sayings*, p. 21.
- 28 – *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 29 – *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* II, Werke, vol. 2, p. 696.
- 30 – *Schopenhauer: Der Handschriftliche Nachlaß* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1985), vol. 3, p. 467.
- 31 – See, for instance, the introductory words of the essay on the individual’s fate in *Parerga und Paralipomena*, Werke, vol. 4.
- 32 – *Der Handschriftliche Nachlaß*, vol. 1, p. 323.
- 33 – For instance, Conze, *Buddhism—Its Essence and Development* (New York: Harper, 1975), p. 124.
- 34 – Most notably David Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna: The Philosophy of the Middle Way* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986).
- 35 – Originally in the Pali text *Udāna* I.1 (in Tilmann Vetter, *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism* [Leiden: Brill, 1988], p. 46).
- 36 – *Parerga und Paralipomena*, bk. 2, p. 309.
- 37 – For instance, T.R.V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London: Unwin, 1955; reprint, 1987), pp. 123 ff.
- 38 – *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XIII.7 (in Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna*, p. 223).
- 39 – Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna*, p. 8.
- 40 – Vetter (“Die Lehre Nāgārjunas,” in *Epiphanie des Heils* [Vienna: Oberhammer, 1982], pp. 96 ff) maintains that Nāgārjuna’s arguments were in fact part of a meditative practice.

- 41 – “Literally it states that our ignorance in this life will predispose us for craving in the next life” (Vetter, *Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism*, p. 47).
- 42 – *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XXVI.11 (Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna*, p. 375).
- 43 – *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XVIII.4 (Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna*, pp. 265–266).
- 44 – *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XVIII.5 (Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna*, p. 266).
- 45 – *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XXIII.1 (Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna*, p. 312).
- 46 – See *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, paragraphs 66 and 68.
- 47 – The point is made with delightful sarcasm in the chapter on Schopenhauer in Bertrand Russell’s *A History of Western Philosophy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1946).
- 48 – *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Werke, vol. 1, p. 448.
- 49 – *Ibid.*, p. 449.
- 50 – *Ibid.*, p. 384.
- 51 – *Parerga und Paralipomena* II, Werke, vol. 5, p. 338.
- 52 – *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Werke, vol. 1, p. 479.
- 53 – I leave aside the momentary ceasing of the will in aesthetic contemplation. Supporters of the idea of kinship have presented this as the equivalent of meditation (for instance, Dauer, “Schopenhauer as Transmitter of Buddhist Ideas,” p. 23), but I find this rather farfetched. In any case, Schopenhauer himself shed no light on its relation to salvation.
- 54 – Von Glasenapp, *Das Indienbild deutscher Denker*, p. 98; Yasuo Kamata, “Schopenhauer, Hegel, Vasubhandu,” in *Zeit der Ernte* (Stuttgart: Fromann, 1982), pp. 234 ff.; Bryan Magee, “A Note on Buddhism,” in *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 319; Dauer, “Schopenhauer as Transmitter,” p. 23.
- 55 – Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, p. 319.
- 56 – Daisetz Suzuki, “On Zen Buddhism,” in *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Harper, 1960).
- 57 – Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, p. 316.
- 58 – The sheer division of subject and object; an intermediate phase in his system to account for his theories on aesthetics and sexuality.
- 59 – See *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, bk. 2 chap. 1.
- 60 – Extracted from Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, pp. 243 ff. Peter Abelsen

- 61 – *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XXIV.10 (Kalupahana, *Nāgārjuna*, p. 333).
- 62 – See *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, §7.
- 63 – Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, p. 224.
- 64 – In chap. 48 of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II* (Werke, vol. 2, p. 696), the respective terms are linked like this: *saṃsāra* is (endorsement of) the Will to Live; *nirvāṇa* is the negation of the Will to Live.