

Metadata of the chapter that will be visualized in SpringerLink

Book Title	The Palgrave Schopenhauer Handbook	
Series Title		
Chapter Title	Schopenhauer and Gotama on Life's Suffering	
Copyright Year	2017	
Copyright HolderName	The Author(s)	
Corresponding Author	Family Name	Ryan
	Particle	
	Given Name	Christopher
	Prefix	
	Suffix	
	Division	
	Organization	London Metropolitan University
	Address	London, England
	Email	Christopher.Ryan@londonmet.ac.uk
Abstract	This chapter outlines the significant continuities between Schopenhauer's pessimistic account of life's suffering and that formulated by Siddhattha Gotama. In the process, however, it detects an important divergence within their phenomenological analyses of suffering, which reflects a metaphysical opposition between them and that ultimately impacts their respective solutions to life's suffering.	



18

Schopenhauer and Gotama on Life's Suffering

Christopher Ryan

Introduction

In the middle of the first millennium B.C.E., Siddhattha Gotama, recently awakened, delivered his first sermon in the Deer Park at Isipatana, in the form of Four Noble Truths:

1. The noble truth of suffering¹ (Pāli, *dukkha*; Sanskrit, *duḥkha*).
2. The noble truth of the arising of suffering.
3. The noble truth of the cessation of suffering.
4. The noble truth of the eightfold path for the cessation of suffering.

This event has subsequently become known as “The Setting in Motion of the Wheel of the *Dhamma*,”² and the point of origination for the historical religion of Buddhism.

Two and a half millennia later, Arthur Schopenhauer cited the Four Noble Truths, commenting that “[i]n Brahmanism and Buddhism...all improvement, conversion, and salvation to be hoped for from this world of suffering (*Welt des Leidens*), from this *Samsāra*, proceed from knowledge of the four fundamental truths” (WWR II, 623).³ He also remarked that, of all religions, Buddhism was closest to his own philosophy (WWR II, 169) and in later

A1 C. Ryan (✉)
A2 London Metropolitan University, London, England
A3 e-mail: Christopher.Ryan@londonmet.ac.uk



2 C. Ryan

works, availed himself of every opportunity to draw attention to Buddhism's independent confirmation of his atheism, idealism, pessimism, and asceticism.

This initial meeting of horizons between western and eastern philosophy has produced some very valuable scholarly works, but evaluations of Schopenhauer's perception of an independent convergence between his philosophy and Buddhist pessimism has tended to swing between either total affirmation or equally total denial. Whereas earlier generations seemed blithely content to confirm Schopenhauer on this point,⁴ more recent scholarship has seen disputants piling up to challenge him from a multiplicity of viewpoints. The latter development can only partially be attributed to more detailed and accurate scholarship on Buddhism, since many of these works have avoided constructing a detailed analysis that utilizes the wealth of scholarship on classical Buddhism to which they are the heir and have instead more usually confined themselves to reprimand and censure. The tone often suggests less a milieu of improved knowledge than a shift in political and cultural attitudes, with Schopenhauer cast in the role of rapacious enlightenment exploiter, enacting an intellectual colonization of India for his own benefit. Commentators from a hermeneutical stable have seemed especially keen to present Schopenhauer's pessimistic interpretation of Buddhism as not merely wrong, but attributable to suspect causes: J.J. Gesterling claims that Buddhism is "not pessimistic and has no concept of pessimism,"⁵ and contends that Schopenhauer's attribution of the concept was motivated by "German ethnocentrism,"⁶ while Douglas Berger maintains that Schopenhauer is likely to strike contemporary readers "as an ethnocentric, even racist, Orientalist,"⁷ and confesses to be

at a loss as to why *Schopenhauer* feels compelled to label these religions [Hinduism and Buddhism] as "pessimistic." Would it not make more sense to feel as if, insofar as the Indian religious traditions offered *mokṣa* at all from a world seen as so irredeemably terrible, they were rather "optimistic?"⁸

Swinging to the opposite extreme, other commentators seem to have set out to rescue Schopenhauer from himself, by showing how a comparison between his notion of the denial of the will-to-live and Buddhist soteriology demonstrates that neither are pessimistic! Charles Muses's comparative study of Schopenhauer and the *Lañkāvatāra Sūtra* leads up to the conclusion that it is "a grave and prejudicial error to call Schopenhauer's philosophy pessimism,"⁹ while David E. Cooper argues that Schopenhauer may have obtained from his Buddhist studies "the thought that an initial immersion in *saṃsāra* is a precondition of the emergence of the kind of knowledge that is constitutive of liberation or salvation," with the result that "it is inappropriate to categorize the tone of Schopenhauer's overall philosophy as 'pessimism.'"¹⁰



We have, therefore, two recent positions concerning the relation between Schopenhauer and Buddhism on the topic of pessimism: one, that pessimism characterizes Schopenhauer's philosophy alone, stemming from a German or European disposition that does not apply to Buddhism; second, that neither worldview is pessimistic because they developed soteriological solutions to the problem of life's suffering. The debate calls to mind Hume's observation that a great number of philosophical disputes "are commonly, at the bottom, verbal, and admit not of any precise determination,"¹¹ for whether we set out to separate Buddhism from Schopenhauerian pessimism or unite both in soteriological optimism, the concealed assumption is that terms such as "pessimistic" and "pessimism" have fixed and precise outlines. Both positions might be said to reach their conclusions by "playing with concept-spheres and shifting them about" (WWR II, 71), for they turn on either reducing the concept-sphere of pessimism so that it applies to Schopenhauer alone, or expanding the concept-spheres of optimism and soteriology so that they merge. Not much is changed thereby, apart from rescuing either a favored religion or a favored philosopher from a dirty word and an accusation regarded as ugly and unfortunate.

In this chapter, I propose to take a different route, narrowing my range by looking at the argumentative cases for life's suffering formulated by both Schopenhauer and Gotama, with a view to pinpoint both their similarities and differences. By doing so, I hope to find a middle way between prior tendencies to confirm Schopenhauer's claim of a convergence with Buddhism (united in either pessimism or soteriological optimism) or to reject his claim as both false and objectionable. There are complex structural affinities as well as contrasts between the two philosophies on the topic of life's suffering and hence pessimism, so that it is equally true to say with Edward Conze that the analogies between Schopenhauer and Buddhism are "essential, and the discrepancies fortuitous,"¹² as it is to agree with Peter Abelson that Schopenhauer's pessimism is more "severe" than that of Buddhism.¹³

However, the possibility of a philosophical pessimism needs further elaboration, especially in light of Bryan Magee's contention that pessimism is a personal disposition logically independent of a factual philosophical account of the world.¹⁴ Magee instances the dispute between pessimism and optimism in terms of the half-bottle empty and half-bottle full opposition, in order to show how both positions are not disputes about facts, but are inseparable from a "vision" or specific evaluative response to the world.¹⁵

While Magee's example is valuable for showing how a *dispositional* optimism or pessimism might be independent of facts, it misses the mark when applied to the *philosophical pessimism* articulated by both Schopenhauer and Gotama. This is because both thinkers challenged the common



4 C. Ryan

102 conception—entertained by billions in the past, present, and future—that
103 life is capable of bearing relatively enduring, desirable properties—such as
104 comfort, satisfaction, happiness and pleasure, health, flourishing, and well-
105 being. Although very few people have imagined that an affirmative stance
106 toward life necessarily requires the absence of suffering, pain, insecurity,
107 need, and distress, these are usually regarded as unfortunate but tolerable
108 exceptions, or perhaps byways to even greater levels of comfort, satisfaction,
109 happiness and pleasure, flourishing, or well-being. The analyses of life's suf-
110 fering formulated by Schopenhauer and Gotama seek to unveil just how
111 delusory and mistaken these expectations are, by showing that pain and suf-
112 fering are omnipresent in ways that people do not clearly grasp, and con-
113 tribute to nothing. Comparable to optimistic schemes of social and political
114 progress, therefore, a pessimistic philosophy is a kind of prediction that chal-
115 lenges the expectation that if I do x , then y will ensue, and this is a factual
116 rather than evaluative issue.

117 In addition to this, Schopenhauer and Gotama were not pessimistic about
118 a particular subset of expectations, aims, or desires, but set out to expose
119 how a life lived in the pursuit of any goal is vain, painful, deeply flawed, and
120 replete with suffering. If the term “pessimism” is taken in its non-esoteric
121 sense, then both Schopenhauer and Gotama have constructed *pessimistic*
122 *philosophies of life*, and this stands irrespective of whether this constitutes
123 only their point of departure rather than their final word on the mat-
124 ter. Indeed, it is difficult to know how else to characterize the thought of
125 a founder of a world religion whose opening proposition was the pervasive
126 reality of suffering (*dukkha-sacca*) and a philosopher who aimed to show his
127 readers “how essential *suffering is to all life*” (WWR I, 337). To claim that
128 either, or both of them, were optimists because they offered a soteriological
129 solution to life's suffering that turns on the abandonment of all life-goals is
130 akin to saying that an optimistic doctor is one who, upon examining my
131 ingrown toenail, recommends the removal of my entire leg, insofar as it is
132 preferable to diagnosing my condition as hopeless.

133 Schopenhauer on Suffering

134 Schopenhauer depicts the human individual as originally bereft of either
135 knowledge or satisfaction, standing “upon the earth, left to his own devices,
136 uncertain about everything except his needs and wants” (WWR I, 338). This
137 needy animal springs into action to satisfy two kinds of wants: those that
138 satisfy the needs of the body, first nourishment then procreation, and then



18 Schopenhauer and Gotama on Life's Suffering 5

139 the rational intellect's need for a kind of knowledge that will give meaning
140 to life and account for its vicissitudes. Satisfaction of the first kind involves
141 the individual in conflict with nature's miserliness and the equally insistent
142 needs and wants of others, while satisfaction of the second presents a differ-
143 ent set of problems. This is because experience or representation is separable
144 into a material and a formal part, the latter contributed by the subject, and
145 hence knowable with certainty a priori. By contrast, intimate knowledge of
146 the material part escapes the intellect, standing outside of it as an objective
147 residue that is an inscrutable riddle. But the inscrutability of the material part
148 of experience is an objection to individuals cast into a strange world, because
149 the human knower, as *animal metaphysicum*, requires a consoling interpreta-
150 tion that tells us more than why the world exists, but also and mainly why "it
151 is such a miserable and melancholy world" (WWR II, 172), for "undoubtedly
152 it is the knowledge of death, and therewith the consideration of the suffering
153 and misery of life, that gives the strongest impulse to philosophical reflection
154 and metaphysical explanations of the world" (WWR II, 161).

155 In Schopenhauer's view, philosophy's search for this inscrutable, metaphys-
156 ical something can never be satisfied on the objective path, since this presents
157 the subject with infinite series of representations connected horizontally by
158 one of the four forms of the principle of sufficient reason, none of which ter-
159 minate in a first cause. Fortunately, however, the bodily needs and wants that
160 plague the abandoned individual provide a subterranean route to knowledge
161 of the inner side of phenomena. For embodiment discloses its dark interiority
162 to the intellect when an external object impacts on the body's sense organs,
163 whereby arises a mental representation accompanied by a pleasurable or
164 painful impression (*Eindruck*), which elicits the response of either willing or
165 not-willing the body's reception of it (WWR I, 125). It is the latter response
166 to bodily impressions that Schopenhauer takes as the raw data for his meta-
167 physical account of the inscrutable inner essence of phenomena, according
168 to which the entirety of nature is animated from the inside by a blind and
169 monstrously insatiable principle whose nature and activity Schopenhauer
170 models on the striving (*Streben*) of the human will. Once the forms of the
171 phenomenon—particularly space and time, the principles of individuation—
172 have been removed from this insatiable principle modeled on the will, then
173 we find that it is singular, so "needs to live off itself because there is nothing
174 outside of it and it is a hungry will" (WWR I, 179). This metaphysical dis-
175 covery greatly circumscribes the life possibilities of human individuals that
176 are the visible objectification of this insatiable principle, for as Ivan Soll com-
177 ments, Schopenhauer's metaphysics entails that humans "are not beings who
178 just perform acts of willing in addition to doing other sorts of things, or who



6 C. Ryan

179 have wills in addition to other sorts of faculties, but creatures whose entire
180 being is will and nothing but will.”¹⁶

181 Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of will provides the framework for his phe-
182 nomenological analysis of life’s suffering and the vanity of goal-oriented
183 behavior—whether satisfaction of the desire for pleasure or cultivation of the
184 virtues for the supremely good end (*τάγαθὸν καὶ τὸ ἄριστον*) of Aristotelian
185 *eudaimonia*. This analysis of the suffering that attends striving to attain goals
186 is only a portion of the variable elements he assembles in his pessimistic phi-
187 losophy of life, but given the constraints of space in this chapter, I cannot
188 provide a comprehensive survey of his case for pessimism. I will instead focus
189 on his analysis of how suffering springs from willing, since this is most rel-
190 evant to the account in the following section of the Buddha’s analysis of suf-
191 fering in relation to desire or craving, as presented in the Pāli Canon.

192 For Schopenhauer, the suffering of life is not simply a theoretical prob-
193 lem, but something that proclaims itself immediately to embodied feel-
194 ing. The present moment bears the character of “need, lack, and thus pain”
195 (WWR I, 338), which motivates the human animal to strive to satisfy need
196 or lack, in order to eliminate pain. This project issues in strivings to assert
197 ourselves against the operations of the forces of nature and involves us in
198 conflict with other organisms fighting over matter in order to imprint on
199 it the variable ends of their own strivings. This conflict, combined with the
200 stinginess of nature, entails that only a few strivings will be successful, the
201 others having only the additional pain of frustration as their reward.

202 However, in Schopenhauer’s view, even when our strivings are rewarded
203 by victory, we experience suffering, for the successful agent soon learns that
204 “the goal was only apparent: possession takes away the stimulus: the desire,
205 the need re-emerges in a new form” (WWR I, 340). Schopenhauer’s point is
206 not merely that the objects of our striving fall short in unforeseen ways, so
207 that the overly-priced house for which we had saved so long turns out to be
208 damp and breezy in winter and stifling in summer, and so disappoints the
209 legitimate expectations we entertained while overcoming obstacles to obtain
210 it. It is that, even when our happy expectations of the house are met or even
211 exceeded, need, want, and pain return in another form. While investing all
212 our energies in the considerable hurdles—economic, geographical, legal,
213 etc.—to finding and purchasing a suitable dwelling, we delude ourselves
214 into imagining that, once obtained, we will have ascended a kind of pla-
215 teau and brought our sense of need, lack, or general dissatisfaction with our
216 lot to an end. However, as Schopenhauer says, when we bring one episode
217 of painful striving to a close, “it immediately appears in a thousand others,



218 varying, according to age and circumstances, as sex drive, passionate love,
219 envy, jealousy, hatred, anxiety, ambition, greed, illness, etc.” (WWR I, 341).
220 The natural inference is that all these painful feelings, whose appearance we
221 tie into the lack of a specific object or desirable state of affairs, were either
222 actually or potentially present throughout our striving to obtain a house.
223 Our focus on this over-riding goal obscured our awareness of them, so that
224 once the goal is attained, they re-emerge, pushing us toward another object,
225 which, again, assumes the status in our minds of another plateau upon
226 which we can finally rest and survey our accomplishments once we attain
227 it. But this will never occur, for as embodiments of an insatiable will, the
228 source of our desires is akin to a sieve. When we find that our successful
229 strivings have failed to bring the sense of permanent satisfaction we expected
230 of them, we delude ourselves into imagining that we have been pursuing the
231 wrong objects, and set off on another path, all the time avoiding the recog-
232 nition “that suffering is essential to life, and thus does not flow in upon us
233 from the outside, but that all people carry within themselves an unconquer-
234 able source of suffering” (WWR I, 344).

235 Life, however, for Schopenhauer provides innumerable lessons to con-
236 vince us that we suffer because of what we are, quite apart from the suffer-
237 ing that attends want, the striving to eradicate it, and its inevitable return.
238 The most palpable evidence that we ourselves are the source of our suffering
239 is, for Schopenhauer, the torture of boredom. Boredom arises when the will
240 has been satiated and lacks objects, which—by all accounts—ought to bring
241 peace and contentment with our lot. However, boredom wears “sad grey
242 garments” (WWR I, 341) and is as equally painful as want (WWR I, 340).
243 If this seems paradoxical, then the paradox derives from our nature, for as
244 Schopenhauer remarks, only two things keep living organisms in motion—
245 “the striving to exist” and the “striving to get rid of the burden of existence,”
246 or to eradicate boredom (WWR I, 339). The pain of boredom indicates how
247 the will, as our inner nature, is unceasingly active and pushes us onward,
248 even when there is nothing obvious that we lack. Boredom for Schopenhauer
249 is such a threat to human life that were we to be

250 transported to a *fool's paradise*, where everything grew on its own and the
251 pigeons flew around already roasted, and everyone found his dearly beloved
252 and held on to her without difficulty...some would die of boredom, or
253 hang themselves, but some would assault, throttle and murder each other,
254 and thus cause more suffering for themselves than nature now places on
255 them. (PP II, 264)



8 C. Ryan

256 The character of existence as swinging “back and forth like a pendulum
257 between pain and boredom” (WWR I, 338) is made possible by its tempo-
258 ral form—a further source of suffering insofar as temporality is the means
259 by which “everything at every moment turns to nothing in our hands,
260 whereby it loses all true value” (PP II, 255). If we return to the earlier exam-
261 ple of our newly-acquired house, we have seen how its possession does not
262 bring striving to an end, even when it lives up to our expectations, for we
263 soon find ourselves lacking other objects. Time, however, ensures that after
264 a short period, the house will require our attention again, reassuming the
265 aspect of an object of our need, want, and hence pain, as the carpet wears
266 out, the roof springs a leak, or—more in keeping with Schopenhauer’s view
267 of the insatiability of willing—we decide that it is simply not large enough
268 and begin to plan an extension. We may escape from our present burdens
269 by projecting ourselves into the past when we were carefree and renting or
270 even into the future when all the repairs have been done, but when we con-
271 jure up scenes of the past or future as enjoyable consolations for the troubles
272 of the present, we conveniently absent what was and will be most real in
273 them—our inner strivings and hence our will. As a result, we pass through
274 life thinking that

275 happiness lies always in the future, or else in the past, and the present may be
276 compared to a small dark cloud driven by the wind over the sunny plain; in
277 front of and behind the cloud everything is bright, only it itself always casts a
278 shadow. (WWR II, 573)

279 But Schopenhauer thought that this habit of fleeing present suffering by pro-
280 jecting ourselves into a brighter future can only veil our condition from us for
281 a certain period, for we all know that the stream of all-devouring time leads
282 necessarily to the grave and that a life marked at every point by need, want,
283 and hence suffering is but “a short postponement of death” (WWR II, 358).

284 Schopenhauer’s account of willing as motivated only by suffering
285 (*Leiden*), pain (*Schmerz*), and misery (*Elend*) often gives the impression that
286 he uses these terms in an overly promiscuous manner, subsuming vastly dis-
287 tinct feeling-states under them—from the mild impatience that accompa-
288 nies waiting to hear whether one’s car has passed its annual road-test and
289 up to the extreme anxiety attendant on waiting in a hospital while a loved
290 one undergoes surgery. As David Cartwright notes, many cases of willing
291 lack “the vital tone which is associated with misery.”¹⁷ Cartwright is surely
292 correct, since Schopenhauer tends to expand the range of concepts such as
293 suffering, pain, and misery in order to make an association with lesser states,



18 Schopenhauer and Gotama on Life's Suffering 9

294 such as dissatisfaction, boredom, unease, irritation, and discomfort. His
295 main concern is to show how these lesser states are continuous with severe
296 pain and great distress, and that they differ only in degree rather than kind,
297 insofar as they spring from the same permanently yearning source—the will
298 as thing-in-itself. By so doing, however, Schopenhauer's case for life's suffer-
299 ing tends to overlook the differences in tone of the qualitative feeling-states
300 which ought to form his starting point, greatly expand the range of spheres
301 of concepts such as suffering or pain in the process. This seems unfortunate,
302 given his opposition to the tendency to rely on concepts with little concrete
303 content, "because an infinite amount is thought through such wide abstrac-
304 tions, only extremely little can be thought in them; they are empty husks"
305 (WWR II, 84). We shall see in the next section that a similar debate has
306 been generated by the Buddha's term *dukkha* and whether it is properly
307 translated as suffering or whether a less excessive term is preferable.

308 But if Schopenhauer's extension of the concept of suffering strikes one
309 as counterintuitive, even more so his analysis of the concept of happiness
310 (*Glück*). According to this, happiness is not a self-sufficient state of enduring
311 contentment, but arises only with the successful termination of an episode
312 of striving or willing. But happiness and cognate terms such as well-being,
313 flourishing, and contentment are not merely relative in Schopenhauer's view,
314 but empty of reference, insofar as they have no further content than the
315 eradication of the need, lack, and hence pain and suffering that motivate
316 and accompany willing. Happiness therefore denotes an absence rather than
317 a positive presence, applicable to the momentary elation of successful striv-
318 ing, before need, lack, and hence pain kick in once again:

319 All satisfaction, or what is generally called happiness, is actually and essentially
320 only ever *negative* and absolutely never positive. It is not something primor-
321 dial that comes to us from out of itself, it must always be the satisfaction of
322 some desire. This is because a desire, i.e. lack, is the prior condition for every
323 pleasure. (WWR I, 345)

324 An implication of this is that persons who, on surveying their life thus far,
325 judge that it has been overall happy, have been seduced into thinking that
326 their relatively successful attempts at maintaining a rapid tempo between
327 desire and its satisfaction denotes something positive, rather than a perpetual
328 suspension over the twin abysses of suffering and boredom (WWR I, 340).
329 Alternatively, such a person may simply be exaggerating the happiness of
330 their life in order to avoid cutting a sorry figure before others, for the cheery
331 outlook of optimism, though a "pernicious doctrine," is an impulse of an



332 intellect shot through with will, being “the unwarranted self-praise of the
333 real author of the world, namely of the will-to-live which complacently mir-
334 rors itself in its work.” This complacency will naturally appear on the level of
335 social discourse, prompting those who have suffered greatly to underestimate
336 this fact, in order to appear as one of the “normal” or “lucky” ones who have
337 attained the happiness and pleasure that optimism regards as life’s “aim and
338 object” (WWR II, 584).

339 This short summary of Schopenhauer’s account of the suffering that
340 motivates and accompanies all goal-oriented behavior constitutes an une-
341 quivocal case for characterizing his philosophy as pessimistic in relation to
342 the expectations of natural life. In the following section, we will see that
343 Siddhattha Gotama offers a similar analysis in the First Noble Truth. But
344 after having shown the continuity of their viewpoints, in the penultimate
345 section of this chapter, I will show how contrasting metaphysical assump-
346 tions issue in important divergences between them, even at the level of
347 their phenomenology.

348 Gotama on Suffering

349 Whereas Schopenhauer’s philosophy is safely contained within the published
350 and unpublished works he penned during his lifetime, Buddhism is a var-
351 iegated phenomenon that has proliferated into a variety of forms during
352 the two and a half millennia since the Buddha set in motion the wheel of
353 the *Dhamma*. As a result, the word “Buddhism” denotes no readily identifi-
354 able essence, so that within the diversity it presents, it is just as possible to
355 find optimistic strains or motifs as it is to find pessimistic ones. Scholars who
356 have contested Schopenhauer’s claim to a convergence with Buddhism have
357 too often made use of the latter’s wealth of forms to trump Schopenhauer by
358 finding an element that seems to escape his characterization.¹⁸ This is unfor-
359 tunate, as his claim to a convergence between Buddhism and his own phi-
360 losophy does not always consist of interpretative constructions from his own
361 side, but often has a point of contact in Buddhist texts. In order to make a
362 cogent case for this claim, I have restricted my discussion of Buddhism in this
363 chapter to Gotama’s account of life’s suffering as it appears in the Pāli Canon.
364 I justify this selection on two grounds.

365 The first reason stems from the fact that Gotama’s concern in the Pāli
366 Canon is rigorously focussed on the phenomenological relation between
367 attachment and suffering, which makes it the most fruitful source for
368 comparison with the preceding survey of Schopenhauer’s account.



369 At many points, Gotama emphasizes that he teaches only “suffering and
370 the cessation of suffering,”¹⁹ and although the schools that grew up within
371 Mahāyāna—as Buddhism developed from a pure soteriology into a com-
372 munal religion²⁰—tended to dilute the pessimism of the Buddha’s origi-
373 nal teaching by paying less attention to suffering and more to the union
374 of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* in emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and the perfections of the
375 Bodhisattva, none of them could avoid acknowledging, even if only at the
376 level of lip-service, the foundational character of Gotama’s original interests.

377 The second reason relates to Schopenhauer’s recorded knowledge of the
378 tenets and overall atmosphere of Pāli Canon or Theravāda Buddhism. I have
379 already mentioned his acquaintance with Fausbøll’s Latin *Dhammapada*,
380 and although this acquaintance came late in the 1850s, from the begin-
381 ning of his encounter with Buddhism, he was as familiar with Theravāda
382 as he was with Mahāyāna. His first *substantial* encounter with the key con-
383 cepts, values, and practices of Buddhism that endured throughout his
384 authorship occurred in 1816, when he read Francis Buchanan’s article on
385 Burmese Theravāda in volume VI of *Asiatick Researches*.²¹ Schopenhauer’s
386 notes from the article pick up on the topics of atheism, belief in transmi-
387 gration, and the concept of *Nieban* (*nirvāṇa*), defined as liberation from
388 the miseries of “weight, old age, disease, and death.”²² From that time
389 onward, Schopenhauer devoured sources on Buddhism as they appeared,
390 but Buddhology’s infancy in the first half of the nineteenth-century and
391 the difficulty of obtaining original texts entailed that its development was
392 unsystematic, with translations and scholarly works emerging in hotch-
393 potch fashion.²³ As a result, it is inaccurate for Stephen Cross to claim that
394 Schopenhauer’s “relatively early contact with Mahāyāna thought, and the
395 ‘wonderful correspondence’ with his own ideas he found in this...deter-
396 mined his view of Buddhism.”²⁴ Schopenhauer clearly derived his convic-
397 tion that Buddhism was *idealist* from the scholarly works on Mahāyāna
398 by I. J. Schmidt and Csoma Körösi, but insofar as Mahāyāna plays down
399 the topic of life’s suffering, when Schopenhauer referred to this aspect
400 of Buddhism, he more often cited Theravāda sources, such as Fausbøll’s
401 Latin *Dhammapada*. The truth is that Schopenhauer tended to regard
402 Buddhism—as well as Indian thought generally—as a seamless garment,
403 so cherry-picked from sources to suit his purposes. This often cut messily
404 across schools, tendencies, and vehicles, so that Cross’s study of the episte-
405 mological and metaphysical parallels between Buddhism and Schopenhauer
406 is appropriately confined to Mahāyāna, whereas this chapter on equivalences
407 between their accounts of life’s suffering takes its bearings from Gotama’s
408 teaching as it appears in the Pāli Canon.



12 C. Ryan

409 Gotama did not preface his first sermon with any statement of metaphysical
410 need or attempt to solve the riddle of the world. His repeated insistence,
411 referred to above, that he taught only suffering and its cessation, is the for-
412 mulaic response that appears when he is depicted eluding transcendent ques-
413 tions concerning the origin of worlds or fate after death. For the Buddha,
414 speculative debates are an idle diversion from the reality of present suffering
415 and its elimination, akin to the example of someone who, shot by a poi-
416 soned arrow, insists on being told the caste, clan, height, skin-tone, and vil-
417 lage of the man who shot him before he permits the arrow and poison to be
418 removed.²⁵ Eschewing the search for the metaphysical Self (*ātman*) that was
419 the central concern of his intellectual environment, Gotama was continually
420 keen to emphasize that his teachings originated from “direct knowledge in
421 the here and now,”²⁶ including introspective knowledge of the fine processes
422 of consciousness, gained through insight meditation.

423 The Buddha’s analysis of life’s suffering has been telescoped into the First
424 Noble Truth of *dukkha*, recorded in the Pāli Canon as

425 Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering, ageing is
426 suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; union with what is displeasing
427 is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one
428 wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering.²⁷

429 This is a very condensed formula whose style betrays its origins as a mne-
430 monic before it was written down, and variations can be found throughout
431 the Pāli Canon. It also contains some terms and assumptions that require
432 unpacking and elaboration.

433 Initially, the notion of birth as a state of suffering may not seem too odd
434 to anyone who has witnessed the trauma with which newborns emerge
435 into the world, but hardly a case for life’s suffering. Birth is transient and
436 the conduit that opens up the possibility of more desirable states of well-
437 being as the baby grows and develops into an adult. Gotama’s mention
438 of birth, however, is a contracted reference to rebirth, and hence the doc-
439 trine of *karma*.²⁸ Contrary to Gotama’s insistence that his teachings were
440 based on “direct knowledge in the here and now,” rebirth is not something
441 given immediately in phenomenological experience, but it was *the* domi-
442 nant metaphysical assumption of the Buddha’s time, rejected only by the
443 materialistic Cārvākas. For Gotama and the other founders of the religious
444 movements that extolled meditative renunciation during the late Vedic age—
445 including the Upaniṣadic seers as well as Mahāvīra, founder of Jainism—the
446 orderly revolution of time and the cosmos, consciously affirmed as a positive



447 effect of the fire sacrifice (*yajña*) by Vedic tradition,²⁹ was *saṃsāra*, an eter-
448 nally crushing round of live, die, repeat, ever beginning again from point
449 zero, like a hamster in a wheel. From this perspective, all intentional action
450 (*karman*) that seeks to produce future outcomes indirectly affirms both the
451 meaninglessness and suffering of the cycle, insofar as it not only brings rebirth
452 in another life, but also—as is said in an early *Upaniṣad*—“recurrent death.”³⁰
453 In the Pāli Canon, all sentient beings are subject to *karma*'s impersonal mecha-
454 nism, with Brahmā, traditionally regarded as the creator-god, being merely the
455 first being to be reborn into this world-cycle according to prior merit, but who
456 thereby deludes himself into thinking that the evolution of the world below
457 him is a product of his creative agency.³¹ Buddhism traces these world-cycles of
458 contraction and expansion to infinity, thereby placing the *dukkha* of suffering
459 existence within a meaningless and endless process, without termination in a
460 highest good or summum bonum.

461 Apart, however, from birth or rebirth, the Buddha's First Noble Truth
462 next mentions incontestable states of suffering, such as aging, illness, and
463 death. Hardly anyone would be likely to object that our inevitable loss of
464 vitality, vulnerability to minor and major ailments, and the inevitability of
465 the grave are occurrences that cast a long shadow over life. However, many
466 might object that such inevitabilities hardly warrant the claim that life as
467 such is suffering, since for most people, they constitute its extremes, or occur
468 only as life wears down, appearing as sullied spots on an otherwise desirable
469 existence. However, this part of the Buddha's analysis of life's suffering does
470 call to mind that the happiness, pleasure, and achievement that are made
471 possible by youth and good health are inevitably framed by crises concern-
472 ing sorrow, physical pain, and eventual destruction, to which all people are
473 heir as the conditions of life change.

474 The next examples of life-experiences accompanied by suffering come
475 much closer to Schopenhauer's instances, insofar as they correct the optimis-
476 tic tendency to limit suffering to life's calamities by spreading it through-
477 out life. Everyday episodes of petty irritation, discomfort, and dissatisfaction
478 concerning “union with what is displeasing,” “separation from what is pleas-
479 ing,” as well as frustration, or “not to get what one wants,” show how *duk-*
480 *kha* is always present and knitted into the fine detail of conscious existence.
481 To return to the example of my newly-purchased house, obtained by hur-
482 dling innumerable obstacles, I am likely to find that my new-found and
483 dearly-won status as a property-owner leaves me with hardly any time to
484 enjoy it. My life undergoes a revolutionary change that obliges me to sep-
485 arate myself from the pleasing environment of my abode, spending long
486 hours at and commuting to and from my workplace, in order to pay my



14 C. Ryan

487 mortgage. Spending long hours on crowded buses or trains, negotiating
488 confined spaces with other commuters, or the arcane instructions of pub-
489 lic transportation employees, are generally displeasing experiences, and for
490 many, the same is true of their working environments, requiring them to
491 negotiate the psychologies of people they would not ordinarily choose to
492 spend time with. But union with these displeasing environments has become
493 a necessary evil given my unskillful choice to invest in a residence I can
494 hardly afford. Paradoxically, therefore, this change in my circumstances, so
495 previously ardently desired, means that I failed to get what I wanted when I
496 was surmounting obstacles to purchase my house. I had envisaged long days
497 enjoying my new acquisition, but find myself separated from what is pleas-
498 ing and united with the displeasing.

499 Given the range of the possible experiences that can bring suffering
500 recounted in the First Noble Truth, many commentators have questioned the
501 propriety of translating the Pāli word *dukkha* as “suffering”: Abelson prefers
502 “unrest,”³² Mark Siderits suggests “Dis-ease,”³³ while Walpola Rahula objects
503 that the translation is “limited, free and easy” and has led to the “superficial
504 interpretation” that Buddhism is pessimistic.³⁴ Śrī Rahula does acknowledge
505 that *dukkha* “in ordinary usage means ‘suffering’, ‘pain’, ‘sorrow’ or ‘misery’,
506 in opposition to *sukha* with which it is often paired, meaning ‘happiness’,
507 ‘comfort’ or ‘ease,’” but points out that the Buddha’s employment of *dukkha*
508 “has a deeper philosophical meaning and connotes enormously wider senses.”
509 Alongside the literal meaning of *dukkha* as pain or suffering, Śrī Rahula notes
510 that it also carries the connotations of “imperfection,” “impermanence,”
511 “emptiness,” and “insubstantiality,” which leads him to argue that “Buddhism
512 is neither pessimistic nor optimistic. If anything at all, it is realistic, for it
513 takes a realistic view of the life and of the world.”³⁵

514 The point is well put and the analysis of the range of Gotama’s meaning
515 sound, but the conclusion seems unwarranted. This is because terms such as
516 pessimism and realism are hardly exclusive: Indeed, one cannot imagine a pes-
517 simist (or optimist) making a case for their worldview and then declaring it
518 unrealistic. As we saw Schopenhauer do earlier with *Leiden*, *Schmerz*, and
519 *Elend*, the Buddha is taking a term in common usage, which unequivocally
520 covers undesirable states, such as aging, illness, and death, in order to establish
521 a continuity between the high points of life’s inevitable miseries and its mun-
522 dane disappointments and failures. By establishing homologies between states
523 that we normally regard as merely irritating but tolerable and those we regard
524 as suffering and to be avoided at all costs, the Buddha may well be realistic, but
525 in relation to our expectation that life is capable of bearing relatively endur-
526 ing desirable states, he is undoubtedly pessimistic, insofar as his analysis tends



527 to show us that rebirth (and hence life) can never satisfy. Indeed, some of the
528 Buddha's narrative examples suggest that we are in for suffering even when we
529 get what we want: such as the clansman who, after working hard, is rewarded
530 with property, but experiences only "pain and grief in protecting it" and then
531 sorrow, grief, lamentation, weeping and beating his breast when he loses it.³⁶

532 The last clause of Gotama's statement of the First Noble Truth that "the
533 five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering" extends his analysis of life's
534 suffering, but requires some initial explanation. The term "aggregate" is the
535 standard English translation of the Pāli term *khandha*, which refers to those
536 clusters of elements into which the Buddha analyzed the human individual.
537 They are, as the quote indicates, five in number: bodily form, feelings or sen-
538 sations, perceptions, the mental formations or thoughts that we construct
539 on the basis of perceptions (including volitions which, once acted upon,
540 produce karmic effects and feed the cycle of rebirth), and consciousness. As
541 the basic elements that constitute a human individual or person (*puggala*),
542 they—like everything else in *samsāra*—bear the three marks (*ti-lakkhaṇa*)
543 of impermanence (*aniccā*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*). The
544 *khandhas* are thus internal sources of suffering because they both, as imme-
545 diate objects of experience, as well as the mediate, external reality with
546 which they make contact, are foci for clinging, grasping, or attachment
547 (*upādāna*). But since they are conditioned by temporal change (*aniccā*), and
548 hence unworthy of being regarded as a Self or enduring substance (*anattā*),
549 the nīsus to cling or attach to them inevitably issues in the different species
550 of *dukkha* outlined in the First Noble Truth.

551 Gotama's analysis of the changing clusters that make up a person as imper-
552 manent, not-Self, and suffering takes his analysis of life's suffering in a new
553 direction, for whereas the previous sources of suffering in the First Noble
554 Truth came to us from the outside, as a result of causal adventitiousness, trac-
555 ing suffering to the *khandhas* indicates that—as with Schopenhauer—we
556 carry the source of our misfortunes around with us. The flux of elements was
557 reality for the Buddha, not appearance, and renders our tendency to cling
558 to changing clusters that have no substance a tragic and futile passion, and a
559 cause of suffering in addition to those that come from external causes.

560 Divergences

561 The natural question arises concerning Gotama's view of the origin of
562 our fundamental tendency to grasp after or attach ourselves to chang-
563 ing elements. Despite prima facie similarities, Gotama's identification of



16 C. Ryan

564 the cause of suffering is where his analysis begins to diverge from that of
565 Schopenhauer. The arising or cause of *dukkha* is explained in the Second
566 Noble Truth:

567 Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the origin of suffering: it is this crav-
568 ing which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and lust, seek-
569 ing delight here and there; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for
570 existence, craving for extermination [or, more properly, craving for the exter-
571 mination or non-existence of objects that excite aversion].³⁷

572 Craving (*taṇhā*) is the more general principle in the universe of which
573 clinging, grasping, or attachment are local manifestations in human psy-
574 chology, especially at the level of mental formations and volitions. Much
575 like Schopenhauer's will-to-live, craving thrusts us into life at rebirth, and
576 impels us to seek sense-pleasures and avoid pains, thereby fueling the cycle
577 of *samsāra* by prompting us to act in unskillful ways that issue in karmic
578 effects. In some Pāli texts, craving appears as a cosmological principle, meta-
579 phorically referred to as the “builder of the house.”³⁸ Robert Morrison, in a
580 comparative study of Nietzsche and Pāli Canon Buddhism, has contended
581 that *taṇhā* is “the affective ground underlying the whole of *samsāric* exist-
582 ence” and hence “the primary reason why we experience *samsāra* as ulti-
583 mately *dukkha* or ‘unsatisfactory.’”³⁹ If true, then the Buddha's case for life's
584 suffering was grounded on a singular principle, akin to Schopenhauer's
585 will-to-live.

586 That said, however, Morrison's study strives rather too hard to establish
587 an ironic affinity between Buddhist *taṇhā* and Nietzsche's will-to-power, and
588 often appears as a case of creation rather than discovery. This is because the
589 Pāli Canon indicates clearly that *taṇhā* or craving is not a primary, meta-
590 physical cause, but one among several causes operating together to bring
591 about attachment and therefore suffering, as outlined in the doctrine of con-
592 ditioned origination, or *paṭicca-samuppāda*. This consists of twelve causes
593 conspiring together to produce the round of *samsāra* characterized by imper-
594 manence, suffering, and no-Self. The Buddha focussed on two of these—
595 craving or thirst (*taṇhā*) and ignorance or delusion (*avijjā*)—not because
596 they are first causes or primary metaphysical principles, but because they are
597 the easiest to tackle for those seeking to escape suffering. As a result, whereas
598 for Schopenhauer, as Ivan Soll says, we are “creatures whose entire being is
599 will and nothing but will,” for the Buddha, ignorance of reality afflicts us
600 as much as craving, so that the propositional knowledge contained in the
601 Buddha's *Dhamma* constitutes the first rung on the ladder to salvation.



602 This contrast between will as the metaphysical thing-in-itself and craving
603 as one phenomenal cause among many is not merely a subtle, theoretical
604 difference between Schopenhauer and the Buddha, but displays itself at the
605 phenomenological level of their respective accounts of life's suffering, given
606 above. We have seen how, for Schopenhauer, the emphasis is on want, need,
607 and lack, which drives the human individual through life, always wanting
608 more. By contrast, for the Buddha, the main issue is clinging or attachment
609 to things that are present which give delight and sensual pleasure or sat-
610 isfy lust, but whose impermanent character deprives them of the power to
611 cause these states from one moment to the next. To put it another way, for
612 Schopenhauer, suffering stems from the fact that we can never be satiated,
613 while for the Buddha, it stems from our failure to reify states that we regard
614 as pleasing before they change. Although Schopenhauer recognized the ten-
615 dency of time to reduce things to nothing, and Gotama included "not to get
616 what one wants" among the sources of suffering, these overlapping points
617 are taken in different directions on account of their contrasting assumptions.
618 For Schopenhauer, time is that by which we pass from one instance of need,
619 lack, and hence pain to another, reducing prior satisfaction to nothing. For
620 the Buddha, failure to get what one wants is a matter of acting upon a reality
621 that we assume is constituted by a plurality of static substances, but which
622 has moved or changed by the time our action takes effect, so that the out-
623 come is not what we intended.

624 This contrast between endless striving after absent objects and clinging to
625 present objects appears in the examples our two thinkers select to illustrate
626 their analyses. In the previously mentioned story from the Pāli Canon, con-
627 cerning the clansman who overcomes several obstacles to obtain property—
628 cold, heat, gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and creeping things⁴⁰—his
629 suffering reaches a crescendo only when he has obtained his object. It does
630 not, as with a Schopenhauerian agent, assume another form in needy lack of
631 a completely unrelated object, but initially manifests itself as worry that he
632 might lose his property and then when he finally loses it, in the lamentation
633 "What I had I have no longer!"⁴¹ This is in keeping with my argument that,
634 for Gotama, suffering manifests itself as clinging to states and objects that
635 are impermanent and no-Self.

636 By contrast, Schopenhauer's example of a fool's paradise (*Schlaraffenland*)
637 in which instant satisfaction is always available, but people go mad from
638 boredom and hang themselves or kill others, locates suffering in the will's
639 striving after objects (want), or its lack of a specific object to strive after
640 (boredom). The example suggests that, for Schopenhauer, we would suffer



641 even in a universe without change, for we would still feel the pain of need-
642 ing more than we have. It is therefore significant that Gotama's account of
643 life's suffering lacks any account of the pain of boredom, or the negativity
644 of happiness, since the latter—as Schopenhauer informs us—presupposes
645 lack as “the prior condition for every pleasure” (WWR I, 345), and hence
646 an unquenchable will, as opposed to a changing reality that frustrates our
647 tendency to cling to it.

648 Conclusion

649 It seems, therefore, that the central divergence between Schopenhauer
650 and Gotama can be traced to their opposing metaphysical accounts of
651 the subject, with Schopenhauer approaching the topic of suffering from
652 the perspective of his *Willensmetaphysik* and Gotama starting out from the
653 reality of suffering in the here and now and working from thence to crav-
654 ing as an empirical and hence corrigible cause. Many commentators have
655 previously noted this contrast between the two bodies of thought: Edward
656 Conze who—as noted previously—thought that the similarities between
657 Schopenhauer and Buddhism were “essential,” remarked elsewhere that
658 “Schopenhauer teaches that the Will is the Thing-in-itself, whereas in
659 Buddhism ‘craving’ operates within the conditioned and phenomenal
660 world.”⁴² But although much has been made of the metaphysical contrast in
661 previous commentaries, it has not been noted how it translates into a differ-
662 ence at the phenomenological level, with Schopenhauer tracing suffering to
663 striving and Gotama to clinging.

664 The metaphysical opposition between Schopenhauer and Gotama gives
665 rise to further divergences in their pessimistic philosophies. Gotama's
666 reductive analysis of all objects into clusters of changing elements entails
667 that there is no original metaphysical unity or Self, from which individ-
668 ual existence emerged. Contrary therefore to Schopenhauer, Gotama did
669 not regard individuation as a sinful Fall from a primal metaphysical soup,
670 or a debt (*Schuld*) to be repaid by death. Although Schopenhauer regu-
671 larly maintained that Buddhism, alongside Christianity and Hinduism,
672 “teach a heavy guilt (*Schuld*) of the human race through its existence itself”
673 (WWR II, 604), Gotama's opposition to metaphysical substantialism meant
674 that he traced suffering to unskillful (*akusala*) acts of clinging to imper-
675 manent objects in a previous life. As Nietzsche realized, Buddhism's main
676 concern is with suffering not sin,⁴³ in keeping with Gotama's rejection of a
677 Supreme Being. But the concept of sin is an oddity even in Schopenhauer's



678 philosophy, for as Christopher Janaway argues in this volume, in the absence
679 of a transcendent Godhead, it is “misconceived and unnecessary...to assimilate
680 the ill of our suffering-ridden individuated existence to *sin*.”⁴⁴

681 In addition, Schopenhauer’s philosophy of the will as thing-in-itself
682 sets up what Luis Navia calls a *Widerspruch* or contradiction between
683 Schopenhauer’s account of life’s suffering and his soteriology. Navia says
684 that Schopenhauer’s awareness of “the inherent evil of existence and of the
685 ethical imperative to reject it,” combined with his conviction of “the ineludible
686 determination of all things and events,”⁴⁵ compounded his pessimistic
687 evaluation of existence and rendered his soteriological solution an “ethical
688 fiction.”⁴⁶ By contrast, for Gotama salvation comes from a knowledge that
689 things are impermanent, no-Self (and hence suffering), which, as propositional
690 knowledge, is absorbed on the emotional or intuitive level through
691 insight meditation, leading to detachment.

692 In sum, whereas both Schopenhauer and Gotama proclaimed pessimistic
693 philosophies that aimed to alert us to the sheer extent of suffering
694 spread throughout life, their contrary metaphysical stances gave rise to distinct
695 accounts of what it is about ourselves and reality that makes us suffer. For
696 Schopenhauer, it is the bottomless pit of willing, which thrusts us through
697 existence, always pushing us to seek more; for Gotama, it is clinging to
698 objects and the fear of losing what we have. The asymmetry, even at the
699 level of phenomenology, gives life and its suffering a very different depth: It
700 is difficult to see how a Schopenhauerian might resolve the problem while
701 embodied, even with propositional knowledge of the human dilemma,
702 whereas understanding and meditative insight into life’s impermanence
703 enables Buddhists to attain detachment daily.

704 Notes

- 705 1. The propriety of translating *dukkha* in the context of the Four Noble Truths
706 as *suffering* has been disputed. I discuss this in Sect. 3 of this chapter.
- 707 2. A record of the Buddha’s first sermon has been preserved in the *Samyutta-*
708 *Nikāya*, 56.11 (published as *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New*
709 *Translation of the Samyutta-Nikāya* vol. II, trans. Bhikku Bodhi (Boston:
710 Wisdom Publications, 2000), 1843–47).
- 711 3. Schopenhauer quoted the Four Noble Truths in Latin, as “(1) *dolor*, (2) *dol-*
712 *oris ortus*, (3) *doloris interitus*, (4) *octopartita* via *ad doloris sedationem*,” taken
713 from a translation of the *Dhammapada* by Viggo Fausbøll (Copenhagen:
714 Havniae, 1855).



20 C. Ryan

- 715 4. For a commentator, see Franz Mockrauer, "Schopenhauer und Indien,"
716 *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch*, 15 (1928), 3–26. For a theorist, see Albert Schweitzer,
717 *Civilization and Ethics*, 3rd edition (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1949),
718 171–2.
- 719 5. Johann Joachim Gesterling, *German Pessimism and Indian Philosophy: A*
720 *Hermeneutic Reading* (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1986), 216.
- 721 6. *Ibid.*, 59.
- 722 7. Douglas Berger, "*The Veil of Māyā: Schopenhauer's System and Early Indian*
723 *Thought* (Binghamton, New York: Global Academic Publishing, 2004), xi.
- 724 8. *Ibid.*, 253.
- 725 9. Charles Muses, *East-West Fire: Schopenhauer's Optimism and the* *Lañkāvatāra*
726 *Sūtra* (London, John M. Watkins, 1955), 63.
- 727 10. David E. Cooper, "Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy," in *A Companion*
728 *to Schopenhauer*, ed. Bart Vandenabeele (Malden & Oxford: Wiley-
729 *Blackwell*, 2012), 276.
- 730 11. David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion and Other Writings*,
731 edited by D. Coleman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007),
732 94n.b.
- 733 12. Edward Conze, "Spurious Parallels to Buddhist Philosophy," *Philosophy East*
734 *and West* 13, no. 2 (July 1963), 108.
- 735 13. Peter Abelson, "Schopenhauer and Buddhism," *Philosophy East and West* 43,
736 no. 2 (April 1993), 255.
- 737 14. Bryan Magee, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,
738 1983), 13.
- 739 15. *Ibid.*, 14.
- 740 16. Ivan Soll, "Schopenhauer on the Inevitability of Unhappiness," in *A*
741 *Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Bart Vandenabeele (Malden & Oxford:
742 Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 311–12.
- 743 17. David E. Cartwright, "Schopenhauer on Suffering, Death, Guilt, and the
744 Consolation of Metaphysics," in *Schopenhauer: New Essays in Honor of his*
745 *200th Birthday*, ed. Eric von der Luft (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press,
746 1988), 59.
- 747 18. For example, Richard Wright questions Schopenhauer's characterization of
748 Buddhism as pessimistic by referring to the contemporary phenomenon
749 of "engaged Buddhism," which encourages participation in "detailed poli-
750 cies of social involvement and concern." (Richard Wright, "Schopenhauer
751 and Indian Philosophy: On the Limits of Comparative Philosophy,"
752 *International Philosophical Quarterly* 50, no. 1, Iss. 197 (March 2010),
753 74). However, Schopenhauer could hardly anticipate developments in
754 Buddhism as it was drawn into contact with modernity after his death, and
755 it might also be said that social activism hardly excludes pessimism about
756 life. Indeed, the Fourteen Precepts of engaged Buddhism, penned by Thích
757 *Nhật Hạnh*, presupposes the ubiquity of suffering in the world (see [http://
758 viewonbuddhism.org/resources/14_precepts.html](http://viewonbuddhism.org/resources/14_precepts.html)).



- 759 19. *Majjhima-Nikāya*, I.140 (published as *The Middle Length Discourses of*
760 *the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima-Nikāya*, trans. Bhikku
761 Ñāṇamoḷi and Bhikku Bodhi (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1995),
762 234).
- 763 20. For the contrast between a pure soteriology and a communal religion, espe-
764 cially relevant in this context, see Richard Gombrich, *Theravāda Buddhism:*
765 *A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo* (London & New
766 York: Routledge, 1988), 25–9.
- 767 21. Francis Buchanan, “On the Religion and Literature of the *Burmas*,” *Asiatick*
768 *Researches* vol. VI (London: P. Elmsly, 1801), 163–308. I say *substantial*
769 because, although the scholarship of Urs App has shown that Schopenhauer
770 had previously *heard* of Buddhism, it also proves that Schopenhauer
771 was ignorant of the most important positions and concepts he associ-
772 ated with Buddhism from the time he read Buchanan’s article (see Urs
773 App, “Schopenhauers Begegnung mit dem Buddhismus,” *Schopenhauer-*
774 *Jahrbuch* 79 (1998), 35–56 & “Notizen Schopenhauers zu Ost-, Nord-, und
775 Südostasien vom Sommersemester 1811,” *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch* 84 (2003),
776 13–39).
- 777 22. Francis Buchanan, “On the Religion and Literature of the *Burmas*,” 266.
778 Schopenhauer’s notes from Buchanan’s article can be found in Case 29 of
779 the handwritten manuscripts in the Schopenhauer-Archiv, Frankfurt am
780 Main, 218–21.
- 781 23. A list of Schopenhauer’s references to Buddhist sources in both published
782 and unpublished works can be found in the Appendix to Moira Nicholls’s
783 chapter “The Influences of Eastern Thought on Schopenhauer’s Doctrine
784 of the Thing-in-Itself,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed.
785 Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999),
786 200–4. Schopenhauer himself recommended a selection of his favored
787 works on Buddhism, which cuts across the divide between Theravāda and
788 Mahāyāna (WN, 432–3n.).
- 789 24. Stephen Cross, *Schopenhauer’s Encounter with Indian Thought: Representation*
790 *and Will and their Indian Parallels* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press,
791 2013), 45.
- 792 25. *Majjhima-Nikāya*, I.429 (*The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 534–5).
- 793 26. *Ibid.*, I.284, 375.
- 794 27. *Samyutta-Nikāya*, 56.11 (*The Connected Discourses of the Buddha* II, 1844).
- 795 28. I use the Sanskrit *karma* rather than the Pāli equivalent *kamma* in this
796 chapter, on account of the former’s greater familiarity.
- 797 29. See Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravāda*
798 *Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 41f. The late
799 Vedic association between fire sacrifice and the production of an orderly
800 temporal cosmos gives an additional poignancy to the etymology of
801 Buddhist *nirvāṇa* as extinction or blowing out.
- 802 30. *Punar-mṛtyu*: see for example *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.10.



22 C. Ryan

- 803 31. *Dīgha-Nikāya*, I.18–19 (published as *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A*
804 *Translation of the Dīgha-Nikāya*, trans. Maurice Walshe (Boston: Wisdom
- 805 Publications, 1996), 76).
- 806 32. Peter Abelson, “Schopenhauer and Buddhism,” 255.
- 807 33. Mark Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy: An Introduction* (Aldershot: Ashgate,
- 808 1997), 20n.
- 809 34. Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, revised edition (Bedford: Gordon
- 810 Fraser, 1972), 16.
- 811 35. *Ibid.*, 17.
- 812 36. *Majjhima-Nikāya*, I.86 (*The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 181).
- 813 37. *Samyutta-Nikāya*, 56.11 (*The Connected Discourses of the Buddha II*, 1844).
- 814 38. *Dhammapada*, 153–4 (trans. S. Radhakrishnan (Delhi: Oxford India
- 815 Paperbacks, 1996) 110).
- 816 39. Robert Morrison, *Nietzsche and Buddhism: A Study in Nihilism and Ironic*
- 817 *Affinities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 136.
- 818 40. *Majjhima-Nikāya*, I.85 (*The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 180).
- 819 41. *Ibid.*, I.86 (181).
- 820 42. Edward Conze, “Buddhist Philosophy and its European Parallels,”
- 821 *Philosophy East and West* 13, no. 1 (April 1963), 19.
- 822 43. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist* §20 (*Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-*
- 823 *Christ*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), 129).
- 824 44. Christopher Janaway, “Schopenhauer’s Christian Perspectives,” [PAGE
- 825 NUMBER TO BE INSERTED AT THE PROOFS STAGE].
- 826 45. Luis E. Navia, “Reflections on Schopenhauer’s Pessimism,” in *Schopenhauer:*
- 827 *His Philosophical Achievement*, ed. Michael Fox (Sussex: The Harvester Press,
- 828 1980), 179.
- 829 46. *Ibid.*, 175.

UNCORRECTED PROOF

Author Query Form

Book ID: **394587_1_En**

Chapter No: **18**



Springer

the language of science

Please ensure you fill out your response to the queries raised below and return this form along with your corrections.

Dear Author,

During the process of typesetting your chapter, the following queries have arisen. Please check your typeset proof carefully against the queries listed below and mark the necessary changes either directly on the proof/online grid or in the 'Author's response' area provided

Query Refs.	Details Required	Author's Response
AQ1	Please confirm if the inserted city name is correct. Amend if necessary.	
AQ2	Please check whether the edit made in the sentence 'The khandhas are thus...or attachment (up?d?na).' conveys the intended meaning.	

MARKED PROOF

Please correct and return this set

Please use the proof correction marks shown below for all alterations and corrections. If you wish to return your proof by fax you should ensure that all amendments are written clearly in dark ink and are made well within the page margins.

<i>Instruction to printer</i>	<i>Textual mark</i>	<i>Marginal mark</i>
Leave unchanged	... under matter to remain	Ⓟ
Insert in text the matter indicated in the margin	∧	New matter followed by ∧ or ∧ [Ⓢ]
Delete	/ through single character, rule or underline or ┌───┐ through all characters to be deleted	Ⓞ or Ⓞ [Ⓢ]
Substitute character or substitute part of one or more word(s)	/ through letter or ┌───┐ through characters	new character / or new characters /
Change to italics	— under matter to be changed	↙
Change to capitals	≡ under matter to be changed	≡
Change to small capitals	≡ under matter to be changed	≡
Change to bold type	~ under matter to be changed	~
Change to bold italic	≈ under matter to be changed	≈
Change to lower case	Encircle matter to be changed	≡
Change italic to upright type	(As above)	⊕
Change bold to non-bold type	(As above)	⊖
Insert 'superior' character	/ through character or ∧ where required	Υ or Υ under character e.g. Υ or Υ
Insert 'inferior' character	(As above)	∧ over character e.g. ∧
Insert full stop	(As above)	⊙
Insert comma	(As above)	,
Insert single quotation marks	(As above)	ʹ or ʸ and/or ʹ or ʸ
Insert double quotation marks	(As above)	“ or ” and/or ” or ”
Insert hyphen	(As above)	⊥
Start new paragraph	┌	┌
No new paragraph	┐	┐
Transpose	└┐	└┐
Close up	linking ○ characters	○
Insert or substitute space between characters or words	/ through character or ∧ where required	Υ
Reduce space between characters or words		↑