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THE SHELL

LIFE IS A SENTENCE OF NEVER ENDING SUFFERING, EVERY DAY WILL BE WORSE THAN THE NEXT UNTIL THE WORST OF ALL. ON THE WHOLE IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THE EARTH WAS LIKE THE MOON, DEVOID OF LIFE.

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

In early youth, as we contemplate our coming life, we are like

children in a theatre before the curtain is raised, sitting there

in high spirits and eagerly waiting for the play to begin. It is a

blessing that we do not know what is really going to happen. Could we

foresee it, there are times when children might seem like innocent

prisoners, condemned, not to death, but to life, and as yet all

unconscious of what their sentence means. Nevertheless, every man

desires to reach old age; in other words, a state of life of which it

may be said: "It is bad to-day, and it will be worse to-morrow; and so

on till the worst of all."

If you try to imagine, as nearly as you can, what an amount of misery,

pain and suffering of every kind the sun shines upon in its course,

you will admit that it would be much better if, on the earth as little

as on the moon, the sun were able to call forth the phenomena of life;

and if, here as there, the surface were still in a crystalline state.

Again, you may look upon life as an unprofitable episode, disturbing

the blessed calm of non-existence. And, in any case, even though

things have gone with you tolerably well, the longer you live the more

clearly you will feel that, on the whole, life is \_a disappointment,

nay, a cheat\_.

THE SHELL

OUR VIEW OF THE WORLD IS NOT A RECIPE FOR MORE SUFFERING BUT FOR LESS, IT IS THE ONLY WAY WE CAN BEGIN TO EXERCISE FORBEARANCE AND REALIZE THAT THE FAULTS OTHERS SHOW ARE OUR OWN. THIS VIEW HELPS TO LOVE AND ACCEPT OTHERS.

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

\_Pardon's the word to all\_! [1] Whatever folly men commit, be

their shortcomings or their vices what they may, let us exercise

forbearance; remembering that when these faults appear in others, it

is our follies and vices that we behold. They are the shortcomings of

humanity, to which we belong; whose faults, one and all, we share;

yes, even those very faults at which we now wax so indignant, merely

because they have not yet appeared in ourselves. They are faults that

do not lie on the surface. But they exist down there in the depths of

our nature; and should anything call them forth, they will come and

show themselves, just as we now see them in others. One man, it

is true, may have faults that are absent in his fellow; and it is

undeniable that the sum total of bad qualities is in some cases very

large; for the difference of individuality between man and man passes

all measure.

In fact, the conviction that the world and man is something that had

better not have been, is of a kind to fill us with indulgence towards

one another. Nay, from this point of view, we might well consider the

proper form of address to be, not \_Monsieur, Sir, mein Herr\_, but \_my

fellow-sufferer, Socî malorum, compagnon de miseres\_! This may perhaps

sound strange, but it is in keeping with the facts; it puts others in

a right light; and it reminds us of that which is after all the most

necessary thing in life--the tolerance, patience, regard, and love

of neighbor, of which everyone stands in need, and which, therefore,

every man owes to his fellow.

THE SHELL

LIFE IS DOMINATED BY THE NEED FOR CHANGE, BY THE PASSAGE OF ONE INSTANCE INTO ANOTHER, THIS MEANS THAT ALL ATTEMPTS AT CHANGE WILL ONLY BRING MORE MISERY AND DISSAPPOINTMENT, WHILE ANY GOODS THAT ACCRUE FROM ACTION ARE FLEETING

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

Of every event in our life we can say only for one moment that it

\_is\_; for ever after, that it \_was\_. Every evening we are poorer by a

day. It might, perhaps, make us mad to see how rapidly our short span

of time ebbs away; if it were not that in the furthest depths of our

being we are secretly conscious of our share in the exhaustible spring

of eternity, so that we can always hope to find life in it again.

Consideration of the kind, touched on above, might, indeed, lead us to

embrace the belief that the greatest \_wisdom\_ is to make the enjoyment

of the present the supreme object of life; because that is the only

reality, all else being merely the play of thought. On the other hand,

such a course might just as well be called the greatest \_folly\_: for

that which in the next moment exists no more, and vanishes utterly,

like a dream, can never be worth a serious effort.

The whole foundation on which our existence rests is the present--the

ever-fleeting present. It lies, then, in the very nature of our

existence to take the form of constant motion, and to offer no

possibility of our ever attaining the rest for which we are always

striving. We are like a man running downhill, who cannot keep on his

legs unless he runs on, and will inevitably fall if he stops; or,

again, like a pole balanced on the tip of one's finger; or like a

planet, which would fall into its sun the moment it ceased to hurry

forward on its way. Unrest is the mark of existence.

In a world where all is unstable, and nought can endure, but is swept

onwards at once in the hurrying whirlpool of change; where a man, if

he is to keep erect at all, must always be advancing and moving, like

an acrobat on a rope--in such a world, happiness in inconceivable.

How can it dwell where, as Plato says, \_continual Becoming and never

Being\_ is the sole form of existence? In the first place, a man never

is happy, but spends his whole life in striving after something which

he thinks will make him so; he seldom attains his goal, and when he

does, it is only to be disappointed; he is mostly shipwrecked in the

end, and comes into harbor with masts and rigging gone. And then, it

is all one whether he has been happy or miserable; for his life was

never anything more than a present moment always vanishing; and now it

is over.

THE SHELL

THE ONLY TRUE COMPASS TO GUIDE US THROUGH LIFE IS THE REALIZATION THAT LIFE IS PRISON. THIS WILL ELIMINATE OUR SURPRISE AND THE EMOTIONS THAT WE FEEL TOWARDS EACH NEW MISERY AND DISSAPPOINTMENT.

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

If you want a safe compass to guide you through life, and to banish

all doubt as to the right way of looking at it, you cannot do better

than accustom yourself to regard this world as a penitentiary, a

sort of a penal colony, or [Greek: ergastaerion] as the earliest

philosopher called it.[1] Amongst the Christian Fathers, Origen, with

praiseworthy courage, took this view,[2] which is further justified by

certain objective theories of life. I refer, not to my own philosophy

alone, but to the wisdom of all ages, as expressed in Brahmanism and

Buddhism, and in the sayings of Greek philosophers like Empedocles and

Pythagoras; as also by Cicero, in his remark that the wise men of old

used to teach that we come into this world to pay the penalty of crime

committed in another state of existence--a doctrine which formed

part of the initiation into the mysteries.[3] And Vanini--whom his

contemporaries burned, finding that an easier task than to confute

him--puts the same thing in a very forcible way. \_Man\_, he says, \_is

so full of every kind of misery that, were it not repugnant to the

Christian religion, I should venture to affirm that if evil spirits

exist at all, they have posed into human form and are now atoning for

their crimes\_.[4] And true Christianity--using the word in its right

sense--also regards our existence as the consequence of sin and error.

If you accustom yourself to this view of life you will regulate your

expectations accordingly, and cease to look upon all its disagreeable

incidents, great and small, its sufferings, its worries, its misery,

as anything unusual or irregular; nay, you will find that everything

is as it should be, in a world where each of us pays the penalty of

existence in his own peculiar way. Amongst the evils of a penal colony

is the society of those who form it; and if the reader is worthy of

better company, he will need no words from me to remind him of what he

has to put up with at present. If he has a soul above the common, or

if he is a man of genius, he will occasionally feel like some noble

prisoner of state, condemned to work in the galleys with common

criminals; and he will follow his example and try to isolate himself.

In general, however, it should be said that this view of life will

enable us to contemplate the so-called imperfections of the great

majority of men, their moral and intellectual deficiencies and the

resulting base type of countenance, without any surprise, to say

nothing of indignation; for we shall never cease to reflect where we

are, and that the men about us are beings conceived and born in

sin, and living to atone for it. That is what Christianity means in

speaking of the sinful nature of man.

THE SHELL

A/T LIFE IS INTRINSICALLY VALUABLE

LIFE IS MEANINGLESS, ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR AIMS CAN ONLY RESULT IN A LIFE NAGATING BOREDOM, WHICH PROVES THAT LIFE HAS NO INTRINSIC MEANING

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

Life presents itself chiefly as a task--the task, I mean, of

subsisting at all, \_gagner sa vie\_. If this is accomplished, life is a

burden, and then there comes the second task of doing something with

that which has been won--of warding off boredom, which, like a bird

of prey, hovers over us, ready to fall wherever it sees a life secure

from need. The first task is to win something; the second, to banish

the feeling that it has been won; otherwise it is a burden.

Human life must be some kind of mistake. The truth of this will be

sufficiently obvious if we only remember that man is a compound of

needs and necessities hard to satisfy; and that even when they are

satisfied, all he obtains is a state of painlessness, where nothing

remains to him but abandonment to boredom. This is direct proof that

existence has no real value in itself; for what is boredom but the

feeling of the emptiness of life? If life--the craving for which

is the very essence of our being--were possessed of any positive

intrinsic value, there would be no such thing as boredom at all: mere

existence would satisfy us in itself, and we should want for nothing.

But as it is, we take no delight in existence except when we are

struggling for something; and then distance and difficulties to be

overcome make our goal look as though it would satisfy us--an illusion

which vanishes when we reach it; or else when we are occupied with

some purely intellectual interest--when in reality we have stepped

forth from life to look upon it from the outside, much after the

manner of spectators at a play. And even sensual pleasure itself means

nothing but a struggle and aspiration, ceasing the moment its aim is

attained. Whenever we are not occupied in one of these ways, but cast

upon existence itself, its vain and worthless nature is brought home

to us; and this is what we mean by boredom. The hankering after what

is strange and uncommon--an innate and ineradicable tendency of human

nature--shows how glad we are at any interruption of that natural

course of affairs which is so very tedious.

That this most perfect manifestation of the will to live, the human

organism, with the cunning and complex working of its machinery,

must fall to dust and yield up itself and all its strivings to

extinction--this is the naïve way in which Nature, who is always so

true and sincere in what she says, proclaims the whole struggle of

this will as in its very essence barren and unprofitable. Were it of

any value in itself, anything unconditioned and absolute, it could not

thus end in mere nothing.

LINX-FUTURE HARMS

THE CHIEF SOURCE OF OUR SUSCEPTIBILITY TO SUFFERING IS AN ORIENTATION TOWARDS FUTURE HARMS. THE UNDERMINES OUR PLACIDITY IN THE FACE OF SUFFERING AND MAKES US MERCURIAL, OVERJOYED AT ONE MOMENT, SUICIDAL AT THE NEXT.

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

The chief source of all this passion is that thought for what is

absent and future, which, with man, exercises such a powerful

influence upon all he does. It is this that is the real origin of

his cares, his hopes, his fears--emotions which affect him much

more deeply than could ever be the case with those present joys

and sufferings to which the brute is confined. In his powers of

reflection, memory and foresight, man possesses, as it were, a machine

for condensing and storing up his pleasures and his sorrows. But the

brute has nothing of the kind; whenever it is in pain, it is as though

it were suffering for the first time, even though the same thing

should have previously happened to it times out of number. It has

no power of summing up its feelings. Hence its careless and placid

temper: how much it is to be envied! But in man reflection comes in,

with all the emotions to which it gives rise; and taking up the same

elements of pleasure and pain which are common to him and the brute,

it develops his susceptibility to happiness and misery to such a

degree that, at one moment the man is brought in an instant to a state

of delight that may even prove fatal, at another to the depths of

despair and suicide.

LINX-FUTURE HARMS

TRYING TO AVOID SO CALLED UNNATURAL DEATH CREATES MORE SUFFERING THAN IT CAN ALLEVIATE AND CREATES SUCH STRESS AND VIOLENCE THAT IT FAILS IN ITS END

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

It is, however, a wonderful thing that the mere addition of thought

should serve to raise such a vast and lofty structure of human

happiness and misery; resting, too, on the same narrow basis of joy

and sorrow as man holds in common with the brute, and exposing him

to such violent emotions, to so many storms of passion, so much

convulsion of feeling, that what he has suffered stands written and

may be read in the lines on his face. And yet, when all is told, he

has been struggling ultimately for the very same things as the brute

has attained, and with an incomparably smaller expenditure of passion

and pain.

But all this contributes to increase the measures of suffering in

human life out of all proportion to its pleasures; and the pains of

life are made much worse for man by the fact that death is something

very real to him. The brute flies from death instinctively without

really knowing what it is, and therefore without ever contemplating it

in the way natural to a man, who has this prospect always before his

eyes. So that even if only a few brutes die a natural death, and most

of them live only just long enough to transmit their species, and

then, if not earlier, become the prey of some other animal,--whilst

man, on the other hand, manages to make so-called natural death the

rule, to which, however, there are a good many exceptions,--the

advantage is on the side of the brute, for the reason stated above.

But the fact is that man attains the natural term of years just as

seldom as the brute; because the unnatural way in which he lives, and

the strain of work and emotion, lead to a degeneration of the race;

and so his goal is not often reached.

LINX-FUTURE HARMS

OUR ABILITY AND INSISTENCE IN PROJECTING THE FUTURE IS THE ROOT OF MUCH OF OUR UNHAPPINESS, WE SHOULD ACCEPT WHAT IS WITH TRANQUILITY. THIS WILL MULTIPLY THE PLEASURE WE GAIN FROM ANYTHING POSITIVE THAT HAPPENS IN THE FUTURE WHILE AVOIDING THE DESPAIR THAT INEVITABLY FOLLOWS WHEN THE FUTURE CANNOT MEET OUR ANTICIPATIONS

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

The brute is much more content with mere existence than man; the plant

is wholly so; and man finds satisfaction in it just in proportion as

he is dull and obtuse. Accordingly, the life of the brute carries less

of sorrow with it, but also less of joy, when compared with the life

of man; and while this may be traced, on the one side, to freedom from

the torment of \_care\_ and \_anxiety\_, it is also due to the fact

that \_hope\_, in any real sense, is unknown to the brute. It is thus

deprived of any share in that which gives us the most and best of our

joys and pleasures, the mental anticipation of a happy future, and the

inspiriting play of phantasy, both of which we owe to our power of

imagination. If the brute is free from care, it is also, in this

sense, without hope; in either case, because its consciousness is

limited to the present moment, to what it can actually see before

it. The brute is an embodiment of present impulses, and hence what

elements of fear and hope exist in its nature--and they do not go very

far--arise only in relation to objects that lie before it and within

reach of those impulses: whereas a man's range of vision embraces the

whole of his life, and extends far into the past and future.

Following upon this, there is one respect in which brutes show real

wisdom when compared with us--I mean, their quiet, placid enjoyment of

the present moment. The tranquillity of mind which this seems to give

them often puts us to shame for the many times we allow our thoughts

and our cares to make us restless and discontented. And, in fact,

those pleasures of hope and anticipation which I have been mentioning

are not to be had for nothing. The delight which a man has in hoping

for and looking forward to some special satisfaction is a part of the

real pleasure attaching to it enjoyed in advance. This is afterwards

deducted; for the more we look forward to anything, the less

satisfaction we find in it when it comes. But the brute's enjoyment

is not anticipated, and therefore, suffers no deduction; so that the

actual pleasure of the moment comes to it whole and unimpaired. In the

same way, too, evil presses upon the brute only with its own intrinsic

weight; whereas with us the fear of its coming often makes its burden

ten times more grievous.

LINX-THE INTELLECT

THE GAINS WE MAKE FROM INTLLECT ARE MERE TRIFLES THAT CANNOT COMPARE TO THE SUFFERING THAT OUR INTELLECTUAL CAPABILITY IMPOSES UPON US.

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

And above and beyond all this, there is a separate and peculiar source

of pleasure, and consequently of pain, which man has established for

himself, also as the result of using his powers of reflection; and

this occupies him out of all proportion to its value, nay, almost more

than all his other interests put together--I mean ambition and the

feeling of honor and shame; in plain words, what he thinks about the

opinion other people have of him. Taking a thousand forms, often very

strange ones, this becomes the goal of almost all the efforts he makes

that are not rooted in physical pleasure or pain. It is true that

besides the sources of pleasure which he has in common with the

brute, man has the pleasures of the mind as well. These admit of many

gradations, from the most innocent trifling or the merest talk up to

the highest intellectual achievements; but there is the accompanying

boredom to be set against them on the side of suffering. Boredom is

a form of suffering unknown to brutes, at any rate in their natural

state; it is only the very cleverest of them who show faint traces

of it when they are domesticated; whereas in the case of man it has

become a downright scourge. The crowd of miserable wretches whose one

aim in life is to fill their purses but never to put anything into

their heads, offers a singular instance of this torment of boredom.

Their wealth becomes a punishment by delivering them up to misery of

having nothing to do; for, to escape it, they will rush about in all

directions, traveling here, there and everywhere. No sooner do they

arrive in a place than they are anxious to know what amusements it

affords; just as though they were beggars asking where they could

receive a dole! Of a truth, need and boredom are the two poles

of human life. Finally, I may mention that as regards the sexual

relation, a man is committed to a peculiar arrangement which drives

him obstinately to choose one person. This feeling grows, now and

then, into a more or less passionate love,[1] which is the source of

little pleasure and much suffering.

DEATH LINKS

DEATH IS THE ONLY GIFT GIVEN TO US BY LIFE

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

The ancients, moreover, were very far from regarding the matter in

that light. Pliny says: \_Life is not so desirable a thing as to be

protracted at any cost. Whoever you are, you are sure to die, even

though your life has been full of abomination and crime. The chief

of all remedies for a troubled mind is the feeling that among the

blessings which Nature gives to man, there is none greater than an

opportune death; and the best of it is that every one can avail

himself of it.[1]\_ And elsewhere the same writer declares: \_Not even

to God are all things possible; for he could not compass his own

death, if he willed to die, and yet in all the miseries of our earthly

life, this is the best of his gifts to man.[2]\_ Nay, in Massilia

and on the isle of Ceos, the man who could give valid reasons

for relinquishing his life, was handed the cup of hemlock by the

magistrate; and that, too, in public.[3] And in ancient times, how

many heroes and wise men died a voluntary death. Aristotle,[4] it is

true, declared suicide to be an offence against the State, although

not against the person; but in Stobaeus' exposition of the Peripatetic

philosophy there is the following remark: \_The good man should flee

life when his misfortunes become too great; the bad man, also, when

he is too prosperous\_. And similarly: \_So he will marry and beget

children and take part in the affairs of the State, and, generally,

practice virtue and continue to live; and then, again, if need be,

and at any time necessity compels him, he will depart to his place of

refuge in the tomb.[5]\_ And we find that the Stoics actually praised

suicide as a noble and heroic action, as hundreds of passages show;

above all in the works of Seneca, who expresses the strongest approval

of it. As is well known, the Hindoos look upon suicide as a religious

act, especially when it takes the form of self-immolation by widows;

but also when it consists in casting oneself under the wheels of the

chariot of the god at Juggernaut, or being eaten by crocodiles in the

Ganges, or being drowned in the holy tanks in the temples, and so on.

The same thing occurs on the stage--that mirror of life. For example,

in \_L'Orphelin de la Chine\_[6] a celebrated Chinese play, almost

all the noble characters end by suicide; without the slightest hint

anywhere, or any impression being produced on the spectator, that

they are committing a crime. And in our own theatre it is much the

same--Palmira, for instance, in \_Mahomet\_, or Mortimer in \_Maria

Stuart\_, Othello, Countess Terzky.[7] Is Hamlet's monologue the

meditation of a criminal? He merely declares that if we had any

certainty of being annihilated by it, death would be infinitely

preferable to the world as it is. But \_there lies the rub\_!

LINX- LIEBNIZ

LIEBNITZ LINK

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

Even though Leibnitz' contention, that this is the best of all

possible worlds, were correct, that would not justify God in having

created it. For he is the Creator not of the world only, but of

possibility itself; and, therefore, he ought to have so ordered

possibility as that it would admit of something better.

ALT SOLVENCY

OUR VIEW IS THE ONLY ONE THAT CAN BE SQUARED WITH THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE. A VIEW OF LIFE THAT ADMITS THAT WE ENTER THIS LIFE BURDENED BY SIN AND LIFE IS A PERPETUAL ATONEMENT FOR THIS. NEVERENDING MISERY.

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

There are two things which make it impossible to believe that this

world is the successful work of an all-wise, all-good, and, at the

same time, all-powerful Being; firstly, the misery which abounds in

it everywhere; and secondly, the obvious imperfection of its highest

product, man, who is a burlesque of what he should be. These things

cannot be reconciled with any such belief. On the contrary, they are

just the facts which support what I have been saying; they are our

authority for viewing the world as the outcome of our own misdeeds,

and therefore, as something that had better not have been. Whilst,

under the former hypothesis, they amount to a bitter accusation

against the Creator, and supply material for sarcasm; under the latter

they form an indictment against our own nature, our own will, and

teach us a lesson of humility. They lead us to see that, like the

children of a libertine, we come into the world with the burden of sin

upon us; and that it is only through having continually to atone for

this sin that our existence is so miserable, and that its end is

death.

ALT SOLVENCY

ONLY BY DENYING THE WILL TO LIVE AND TURNING OUR BACK ON THE WORLD CAN WE PURSUE JUSTICE AND LOVE

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

The contrast which the New Testament presents when compared with the

Old, according to the ecclesiastical view of the matter, is just that

existing between my ethical system and the moral philosophy of Europe.

The Old Testament represents man as under the dominion of Law, in

which, however, there is no redemption. The New Testament declares

Law to have failed, frees man from its dominion,[1] and in its stead

preaches the kingdom of grace, to be won by faith, love of neighbor

and entire sacrifice of self. This is the path of redemption from the

evil of the world. The spirit of the New Testament is undoubtedly

asceticism, however your protestants and rationalists may twist it to

suit their purpose. Asceticism is the denial of the will to live; and

the transition from the Old Testament to the New, from the dominion

of Law to that of Faith, from justification by works to redemption

through the Mediator, from the domain of sin and death to eternal life

in Christ, means, when taken in its real sense, the transition from

the merely moral virtues to the denial of the will to live. My

philosophy shows the metaphysical foundation of justice and the love

of mankind, and points to the goal to which these virtues necessarily

lead, if they are practised in perfection. At the same time it is

candid in confessing that a man must turn his back upon the world, and

that the denial of the will to live is the way of redemption. It is

therefore really at one with the spirit of the New Testament, whilst

all other systems are couched in the spirit of the Old; that is

to say, theoretically as well as practically, their result is

Judaism--mere despotic theism. In this sense, then, my doctrine might

be called the only true Christian philosophy--however paradoxical a

statement this may seem to people who take superficial views instead

of penetrating to the heart of the matter

LIFE=S MISFORTUNE

THERE IS NO PURPOSE TO LIFWE UNLESS IT IS SUFFERING. ALTHOUGH EACH NEW MISFORTUNE SEEMS UNIQUE TO US, MISFORTUNE IS THE RULE, NOT THE EXCEPTION

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

Unless \_suffering\_ is the direct and immediate object of life, our

existence must entirely fail of its aim. It is absurd to look upon

the enormous amount of pain that abounds everywhere in the world, and

originates in needs and necessities inseparable from life itself, as

serving no purpose at all and the result of mere chance. Each separate

misfortune, as it comes, seems, no doubt, to be something exceptional;

but misfortune in general is the rule.

MUST ACCEPT MISFORTUNE

MISFORTUNE IS GOOD, WITHOUT IT WE WOULD LOSE OUR MINDS AND CREATE ENDLESS WAR MASSACRE AND MURDERS

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

But misfortune has its uses; for, as our bodily frame would burst

asunder if the pressure of the atmosphere was removed, so, if the

lives of men were relieved of all need, hardship and adversity; if

everything they took in hand were successful, they would be so swollen

with arrogance that, though they might not burst, they would present

the spectacle of unbridled folly--nay, they would go mad. And I may

say, further, that a certain amount of care or pain or trouble is

necessary for every man at all times. A ship without ballast is

unstable and will not go straight.

Certain it is that \_work, worry, labor\_ and \_trouble\_, form the lot of

almost all men their whole life long. But if all wishes were fulfilled

as soon as they arose, how would men occupy their lives? what would

they do with their time? If the world were a paradise of luxury and

ease, a land flowing with milk and honey, where every Jack obtained

his Jill at once and without any difficulty, men would either die of

boredom or hang themselves; or there would be wars, massacres, and

murders; so that in the end mankind would inflict more suffering on

itself than it has now to accept at the hands of Nature.

A/T PLEASURE =S VALUE TO LIFE

HAPPINESS IS NO MORE THAN THE END OF PAIN, IT HAS NO POSITIVE QUALITIES. BUT PLEASURE IS ALWAYS OUTWEIGHED BY PAIN, AND THE ONLY REAL PLEASURE TO BE HAD IS THE CONTEMPLATION OF OTHER’S MISFORTUNE’S THE REAPER STANDS OVER US ALL, AND EVEN IF FREED FROM THE CONTEMPLATION OF OUR OWN MISERY WE WILL BE RELEGATED TO UNSPEAKABLE TORTURES OF BOREDOM

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

I know of no greater absurdity than that propounded by most systems of

philosophy in declaring evil to be negative in its character. Evil is

just what is positive; it makes its own existence felt. Leibnitz is

particularly concerned to defend this absurdity; and he seeks to

strengthen his position by using a palpable and paltry sophism.[1]

It is the good which is negative; in other words, happiness and

satisfaction always imply some desire fulfilled, some state of pain

brought to an end.

This explains the fact that we generally find pleasure to be not

nearly so pleasant as we expected, and pain very much more painful.

The pleasure in this world, it has been said, outweighs the pain; or,

at any rate, there is an even balance between the two. If the reader

wishes to see shortly whether this statement is true, let him compare

the respective feelings of two animals, one of which is engaged in

eating the other.

The best consolation in misfortune or affliction of any kind will

be the thought of other people who are in a still worse plight than

yourself; and this is a form of consolation open to every one. But

what an awful fate this means for mankind as a whole!

We are like lambs in a field, disporting themselves under the eye of

the butcher, who chooses out first one and then another for his prey.

So it is that in our good days we are all unconscious of the evil Fate

may have presently in store for us--sickness, poverty, mutilation,

loss of sight or reason.

No little part of the torment of existence lies in this, that Time is

continually pressing upon us, never letting us take breath, but always

coming after us, like a taskmaster with a whip. If at any moment Time

stays his hand, it is only when we are delivered over to the misery of

boredom.

A/T PLEASURE =S VALUE TO LIFE

ALL FORMS OF HUMAN HAPPINESS SPRING FROM MATERIAL NEEDS, YET INTELLECT INTERTWINES THEM WITH EMOTION SO THAT FOR ALL THE PLEASURE WE GAIN FROM OUR MENTAL FACULTY WE GAIN MUCH MORE PAIN

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

However varied the forms that human happiness and misery may take,

leading a man to seek the one and shun the other, the material basis

of it all is bodily pleasure or bodily pain. This basis is very

restricted: it is simply health, food, protection from wet and cold,

the satisfaction of the sexual instinct; or else the absence of these

things. Consequently, as far as real physical pleasure is concerned,

the man is not better off than the brute, except in so far as the

higher possibilities of his nervous system make him more sensitive to

every kind of pleasure, but also, it must be remembered, to every kind

of pain. But then compared with the brute, how much stronger are the

passions aroused in him! what an immeasurable difference there is in

the depth and vehemence of his emotions!--and yet, in the one case,

as in the other, all to produce the same result in the end: namely,

health, food, clothing, and so on.

ALL ATTEMPTS AT CHANGE ARE FOLLY, THEY CAN NEVER GRANT US HAPPINESS, BUT INSTEAD ALLOW HAPPINESS IN THE FLEETING MOMENTS OF EXISTENCE ITSELF TO SLIP PAST US WHILE WE HURRY INTO THE ARMS OF DEATH.

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

The scenes of our life are like pictures done in rough mosaic. Looked

at close, they produce no effect. There is nothing beautiful to

be found in them, unless you stand some distance off. So, to gain

anything we have longed for is only to discover how vain and empty

it is; and even though we are always living in expectation of better

things, at the same time we often repent and long to have the past

back again. We look upon the present as something to be put up with

while it lasts, and serving only as the way towards our goal. Hence

most people, if they glance back when they come to the end of life,

will find that all along they have been living \_ad interim\_: they will

be surprised to find that the very thing they disregarded and let

slip by unenjoyed, was just the life in the expectation of which they

passed all their time. Of how many a man may it not be said that hope

made a fool of him until he danced into the arms of death!

A/T LIFE HAS VALUE

JUSTIFICATIONS OF LIFE AS VALUABLE ARE ALL LIES DESIGNED BY PHILOSOPHERS AND PRIESTS

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

I shall be told, I suppose, that my philosophy is comfortless--because

I speak the truth; and people prefer to be assured that everything the

Lord has made is good. Go to the priests, then, and leave philosophers

in peace! At any rate, do not ask us to accommodate our doctrines to

the lessons you have been taught. That is what those rascals of sham

philosophers will do for you. Ask them for any doctrine you please,

and you will get it. Your University professors are bound to preach

optimism; and it is an easy and agreeable task to upset their

theories.

A/T FUTURE GENERATIONS

A/T FUTURE GENERATIONS, THE PASSAGE OF GENERATIONS IS LIKE WATCHING THE SAME MAGIC TRICK OVER AND OVER AGAIN, IT REVEALS THE DECEPTION OF LIFE.

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

He who lives to see two or three generations is like a man who sits

some time in the conjurer's booth at a fair, and witnesses the

performance twice or thrice in succession. The tricks were meant to

be seen only once; and when they are no longer a novelty and cease to

deceive, their effect is gone.

WE SHOULD SPARE FUTURE GENERATIONS THE BURDEN OF EXISTENCE

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

If children were brought into the world by an act of pure reason

alone, would the human race continue to exist? Would not a man rather

have so much sympathy with the coming generation as to spare it the

burden of existence? or at any rate not take it upon himself to impose

that burden upon it in cold blood.

A/T GOD IS GOOD

A/T GOD IS GOOD. THE THOUGHT THAT GOD WILLINGLY CREATED THIS WORLD OF SUFFERING IS INDEFENSIBLE. THE WORLD CAN ONLY BE VIEWED AS AN UNPLEASANT ACCIDENT THAT INTERRUPTS THE HAPPY STATE OF BEING.

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

\_Brahma\_ is said to have produced the world by a kind of fall or

mistake; and in order to atone for his folly, he is bound to remain

in it himself until he works out his redemption. As an account of the

origin of things, that is admirable! According to the doctrines

of \_Buddhism\_, the world came into being as the result of some

inexplicable disturbance in the heavenly calm of Nirvana, that blessed

state obtained by expiation, which had endured so long a time--the

change taking place by a kind of fatality. This explanation must be

understood as having at bottom some moral bearing; although it is

illustrated by an exactly parallel theory in the domain of physical

science, which places the origin of the sun in a primitive streak of

mist, formed one knows not how. Subsequently, by a series of moral

errors, the world became gradually worse and worse--true of the

physical orders as well--until it assumed the dismal aspect it wears

to-day. Excellent! The \_Greeks\_ looked upon the world and the gods as

the work of an inscrutable necessity. A passable explanation: we may

be content with it until we can get a better. Again, \_Ormuzd\_ and

\_Ahriman\_ are rival powers, continually at war. That is not bad. But

that a God like Jehovah should have created this world of misery and

woe, out of pure caprice, and because he enjoyed doing it, and should

then have clapped his hands in praise of his own work, and declared

everything to be very good--that will not do at all! In its

explanation of the origin of the world, Judaism is inferior to any

other form of religious doctrine professed by a civilized nation;

and it is quite in keeping with this that it is the only one which

presents no trace whatever of any belief in the immortality of the

soul.[1]

A/T WE DO EXIST IPSO FACTO EXISTENCE=GOOD

THE MISERY OF THE WORLD ARISES FROM THE SIN OF EXISTENCE ITSELF, FROM AN UNKNOWN SIN THAT WE ARE ALWAYS PAYING THE PENALTY FOR.

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

There is nothing more certain than the general truth that it is the

grievous \_sin of the world\_ which has produced the grievous \_suffering

of the world\_. I am not referring here to the physical connection

between these two things lying in the realm of experience; my meaning

is metaphysical. Accordingly, the sole thing that reconciles me to the

Old Testament is the story of the Fall. In my eyes, it is the only

metaphysical truth in that book, even though it appears in the form of

an allegory. There seems to me no better explanation of our existence

than that it is the result of some false step, some sin of which

we are paying the penalty. I cannot refrain from recommending the

thoughtful reader a popular, but at the same time, profound treatise

on this subject by Claudius[1] which exhibits the essentially

pessimistic spirit of Christianity. It is entitled: \_Cursed is the

ground for thy sake\_.

A/T-YOU=TOO BLEAK

A/T SUICIDAL SHIT IS BAD. NO ITS GOOD.

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

Suicide, as I have said, is actually accounted a crime; and a crime

which, especially under the vulgar bigotry that prevails in England,

is followed by an ignominious burial and the seizure of the man's

property; and for that reason, in a case of suicide, the jury almost

always brings in a verdict of insanity. Now let the reader's own moral

feelings decide as to whether or not suicide is a criminal act. Think

of the impression that would be made upon you by the news that some

one you know had committed the crime, say, of murder or theft, or been

guilty of some act of cruelty or deception; and compare it with your

feelings when you hear that he has met a voluntary death. While in the

one case a lively sense of indignation and extreme resentment will be

aroused, and you will call loudly for punishment or revenge, in the

other you will be moved to grief and sympathy; and mingled with your

thoughts will be admiration for his courage, rather than the moral

disapproval which follows upon a wicked action. Who has not had

acquaintances, friends, relations, who of their own free will have

left this world; and are these to be thought of with horror as

criminals? Most emphatically, No! I am rather of opinion that the

clergy should be challenged to explain what right they have to go into

the pulpit, or take up their pens, and stamp as a crime an action

which many men whom we hold in affection and honor have committed;

and to refuse an honorable burial to those who relinquish this

world voluntarily. They have no Biblical authority to boast of,

as justifying their condemnation of suicide; nay, not even any

philosophical arguments that will hold water; and it must be

understood that it is arguments we want, and that we will not be put

off with mere phrases or words of abuse. If the criminal law forbids

suicide, that is not an argument valid in the Church; and besides, the

prohibition is ridiculous; for what penalty can frighten a man who is

not afraid of death itself? If the law punishes people for trying

to commit suicide, it is punishing the want of skill that makes the

attempt a failure.

A/T-YOU SHOULD COMMIT SUICIDE

SUICIDE THWARTS THE HIGHEST MORAL AIM BY ALLOWING ONLY AN APPARENT ESCAPE FROM THIS WORLD RATHER THAN AN ACTUAL ONE

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

In my chief work I have explained the only valid reason existing

against suicide on the score of mortality. It is this: that suicide

thwarts the attainment of the highest moral aim by the fact that, for

a real release from this world of misery, it substitutes one that is

merely apparent. But from a \_mistake\_ to a \_crime\_ is a far cry; and

it is as a crime that the clergy of Christendom wish us to regard

suicide.

THE HIGHEST ETHICAL AIM CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED BY DENYING THE WILL TO LIVE, SUICIDE IS IN FACT AN ASSERTION OF THIS WILL.

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

[Footnote 1: \_Translator's Note\_.--Schopenhauer refers to \_Die Welt

als Wille und Vorstellung\_, vol. i., § 69, where the reader may find

the same argument stated at somewhat greater length. According to

Schopenhauer, moral freedom--the highest ethical aim--is to be

obtained only by a denial of the will to live. Far from being a

denial, suicide is an emphatic assertion of this will. For it is in

fleeing from the pleasures, not from the sufferings of life, that this

denial consists. When a man destroys his existence as an individual,

he is not by any means destroying his will to live. On the contrary,

he would like to live if he could do so with satisfaction to himself;

if he could assert his will against the power of circumstance; but

circumstance is too strong for him.]

A/T-I LIKE BEING ALIVE

A/T I LIKE BEING ALIVE.

YOUR LIKING LIVING IS NOT A MANIFESTATION OF INDIVIDUAL PREFERENCE, BUT INSTEAD THE WILL TO LIFE THAT ANNHILATES THE INDIVIDUAL

Schopenauer in 1904 (Arthur [philosopher] *THE ESSAYS OF ARTHUR SCHOPENAUER; STUDIES IN PESSIMISM*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10732/10732-8.txt> ACCESSED 8/1/05)

\_Philalethes\_. Think what you're doing! When you say \_I, I, I\_ want

to exist, it is not you alone that says this. Everything says it,

absolutely everything that has the faintest trace of consciousness. It

follows, then, that this desire of yours is just the part of you that

is \_not individual\_--the part that is common to all things without

distinction. It is the cry, not of the individual, but of existence

itself; it is the intrinsic element in everything that exists, nay, it

is the cause of anything existing at all. This desire craves for, and

so is satisfied with, nothing less than existence in general--not any

definite individual existence. No! that is not its aim. It seems to be

so only because this desire--this \_Will\_--attains consciousness only

in the individual, and therefore looks as though it were concerned

with nothing but the individual. There lies the illusion--an illusion,

it is true, in which the individual is held fast: but, if he reflects,

he can break the fetters and set himself free. It is only indirectly,

I say, that the individual has this violent craving for existence. It

is \_the Will to Live\_ which is the real and direct aspirant--alike and

identical in all things. Since, then, existence is the free work, nay,

the mere reflection of the will, where existence is, there, too,

must be will; and for the moment the will finds its satisfaction in

existence itself; so far, I mean, as that which never rests, but

presses forward eternally, can ever find any satisfaction at all.

The will is careless of the individual: the individual is not its

business; although, as I have said, this seems to be the case, because

the individual has no direct consciousness of will except in himself.

The effect of this is to make the individual careful to maintain his

own existence; and if this were not so, there would be no surety

for the preservation of the species. From all this it is clear that

individuality is not a form of perfection, but rather of limitation;

and so to be freed from it is not loss but gain. Trouble yourself no

more about the matter. Once thoroughly recognize what you are, what

your existence really is, namely, the universal will to live, and the

whole question will seem to you childish, and most ridiculous!

A/T-FRAMEWORK-EDUCATION

A/T EDUCATION

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The human intellect is said to be so constituted that \_general ideas\_

arise by abstraction from \_particular observations\_, and therefore

come after them in point of time. If this is what actually occurs, as

happens in the case of a man who has to depend solely upon his own

experience for what he learns--who has no teacher and no book,--such

a man knows quite well which of his particular observations belong to

and are represented by each of his general ideas. He has a perfect

acquaintance with both sides of his experience, and accordingly, he

treats everything that comes in his way from a right standpoint. This

might be called the \_natural\_ method of education.

Contrarily, the \_artificial\_ method is to hear what other people say,

to learn and to read, and so to get your head crammed full of general

ideas before you have any sort of extended acquaintance with the world

as it is, and as you may see it for yourself. You will be told that

the particular observations which go to make these general ideas will

come to you later on in the course of experience; but until that time

arrives, you apply your general ideas wrongly, you judge men and

things from a wrong standpoint, you see them in a wrong light, and

treat them in a wrong way. So it is that education perverts the mind.

A/T EDUCATION AND LINK TO FRAMEWORK

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It follows that an attempt should be made to find out the strictly

natural course of knowledge, so that education may proceed

methodically by keeping to it; and that children may become acquainted

with the ways of the world, without getting wrong ideas into their

heads, which very often cannot be got out again. If this plan were

adopted, special care would have to be taken to prevent children

from using words without clearly understanding their meaning and

application. The fatal tendency to be satisfied with words instead of

trying to understand things--to learn phrases by heart, so that

they may prove a refuge in time of need, exists, as a rule, even in

children; and the tendency lasts on into manhood, making the knowledge

of many learned persons to consist in mere verbiage.

A/T-FRAMEWORK-EDUCATION

ANY SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE ONLY INVITES CHARLATANS WHO DESTROY IT

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The Cathedral in Mayence is so shut in by the houses that are built

round about it, that there is no one spot from which you can see it

as a whole. This is symbolic of everything great or beautiful in the

world. It ought to exist for its own sake alone, but before very long

it is misused to serve alien ends. People come from all directions

wanting to find in it support and maintenance for themselves; they

stand in the way and spoil its effect. To be sure, there is nothing

surprising in this, for in a world of need and imperfection everything

is seized upon which can be used to satisfy want. Nothing is exempt

from this service, no, not even those very things which arise only

when need and want are for a moment lost sight of--the beautiful and

the true, sought for their own sakes.

This is especially illustrated and corroborated in the case of

institutions--whether great or small, wealthy or poor, founded, no

matter in what century or in what land, to maintain and advance human

knowledge, and generally to afford help to those intellectual efforts

which ennoble the race. Wherever these institutions may be, it is not

long before people sneak up to them under the pretence of wishing to

further those special ends, while they are really led on by the desire

to secure the emoluments which have been left for their furtherance,

and thus to satisfy certain coarse and brutal instincts of their own.

Thus it is that we come to have so many charlatans in every branch

of knowledge. The charlatan takes very different shapes according

to circumstances; but at bottom he is a man who cares nothing about

knowledge for its own sake, and only strives to gain the semblance

of it that he may use it for his own personal ends, which are always

selfish and material.