



The Philosophy of Schopenhauer

Bryan Magee

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This is a revised and enlarged version of Bryan Magee's widely praised study of Schopenhauer, the most comprehensive book on this great philosopher. It contains a brief biography of Schopenhauer, a systematic exposition of his thought, and a critical discussion of the problems to which it gives rise and of its influence on a wide range of thinkers and artists. For this new edition Magee has added three new chapters and made many minor revisions and corrections throughout. This new edition will consolidate the book's standing as the definitive study of Schopenhauer.

The Philosophy of Schopenhauer Details

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J.W. Dionysius Nicolello says

Goodreads is my digital public catalogue of books read and books to read with notes to self and others around the world with incoherent disregard to outwitting my way into winning Grand Prize of Thy Likes. In this bacchic orgy of invisible peoples, babeling senselessly of intellectual economics, esoteric folklore, archaic fairytales and Adult Coloring Books, there is a nebulous and naive uneasiness entwined unto dropping the apparent exterior world for the trusty written word (s); fall of man; fall of Lubrary(sic) Alexandrite; fall i.e. season; fall i.e. ashes; fall down i.e. up. You said the city was boring you and then when the naked albino was screaming about Willa Cather in Union Square you just kept on playing ping pong on your charlatan-phone 8. Then when the monk lit himself on fire at City Hall you just altered your profile picture to you wearing a monk's grabs along with two million other people. 'We R United W/ Munks (sic)' you said. And all the while you could have just turned off all of your electronics for the Sabbath and maranthon'd through Magee's Schopenhauer. Leonard Cohen has been dead for months. Yes, he has. No one's insulting you. We're just telling you that you're not going to see Leonard Cohen next time he's in New York because he's like dead. Just be purgatorial now and purgatorial later. That way you won't get slaughtered in the future. Expect the worst and you'll never be let down. I ran out of toilet paper but I can run to the Bodega in a minute. Then again some transvestites from Thailand left a bunch of secondhand Raymond Carver books out in the hall. It's a shame we don't have recordings of Schopenhauer playing the flute. Hegel was a repulsive and ignorant charlatan. Hegel was a clumsy and ignorant charlatan. I have no time for repulsive clumsy charlatans.

Fadi says

The definitive book on Schopenhauer's philosophy not written by Schopenhauer.

David says

My favourite philosopher. I found a very good discussion of him here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGwSe0...>

Exploring the confines of the cage, and eschewing the easy comforts of religion, and being unswervingly honest wherever it may lead. Regarded as a pessimist but I think a realist. I think that his independent dovetailing with buddhism and hinduism and recent scientific discoveries show that he was at least on the right track in this metaphysical detective story that has no end.

Kate says

Does an excellent job at explaining Schopenhauer's philosophy, particularly with regards to its influence on

Wittgenstein and in tracing the empiricist/rationalist tradition that converged on Kant, but desperately needs to be about 300 pages shorter. There's no retention of ideas between each chapter, making it feel less like a book than a compilation of articles.

Jamey says

A beautiful book.

Dan DalMonte says

Really good appreciation of Schopenhauer here. I really enjoyed learning about the key philosophical tents of Schopenhauer. He was a German philosopher who took the philosophy of Kant and brought it to a new level. I'm not sure I agree with his worldview, but it is certainly a gripping one. I want to think more about possible gaps and questions his system raises. This book is also very good at tracing the influences Schopenhauer had on artists like Richard Wagner and Thomas Mann.

I invite lunch says

Excellent book.

Arjun Ravichandran says

This is an epic length exposition/meditation by a quiet admirer of Arthur "Sour Grapes" Schopenhauer, the 19th century German philosopher renowned for his unrelenting pessimism.

More accurately, however, this can be considered a treatise on what the author quite fairly dubs the Kantian-Schopenhauerian paradigm, and he therefore begins his book with a treatment of Kant's Copernican revolution in philosophy, only then proceeding to adumbrate Schopenhauer's extension and completion of this work.

Schopenhauer takes over from Kant his fundamental insight ; that the ultimate reality is divided into noumena and phenomena i.e. things-in-themselves and the appearances of things. Schopenhauer embarks from this to make his original contribution to philosophy, i.e. enunciation of the fundamental Will which drives all things, living and non-living, and which is directionless, blind and unconscious ; a will that is, thus, forever unknowable to us.

His characterization of this will as blind, unconscious, and as thus, evil is the springboard for his famous (notorious?) pessimism, and also highlights his affinity with Eastern thought ; an affinity which Schopenhauer himself admitted to. From this formulation, follows many intriguing insights of rapier-sharp brilliance into human psychology, many of them anticipating scientific formulations of the same some 2 centuries hence.

The author is, like I mentioned, an admirer (though not an uncritical one) of the philosopher ; his book is divided into 2 parts. The first part is rather straightforwardly concerned with the exposition of Schopenhauer's philosophy, beginning with a mandatory synopsis of the Kantian revolution in philosophy, and only then proceeding to Schopenhauer's extension and completion of the same. The author is undoubtedly very well-versed with his material, and his exposition is both lucid and insightful, especially when he counters many of the misunderstandings that have attached to Schopenhauer's name and philosophy.

The second part is more loosely organized and deals with Schopenhauer's impact on philosophers after him, as well as a wide variety of artists, intellectuals, and scientists. His relationship with Buddhism and modern analytic philosophy is also briefly touched upon. In my opinion, this section of the book could have been more severely edited.

In conclusion, I found this a pleasant and easy-going reminder of Schopenhauer's fundamental 'rightness' (as one of his admirers, the great Wittgenstein himself, claims) regarding the nature of the world, of the fundamental unsayability of ultimate reality, of artistic creation and genius, and of the nature of true moral feeling.

Cameron says

A very carefully researched book, which I read avidly and greatly enjoyed.

Jason Greensides says

I own quite a few books on philosophy, but this is the one that completely blew my brain apart. Putting Schopenhauer's transcendental idealist philosophy into the context of the empiricism/idealism dichotomy, in particular relation to Kant, Bryan Magee takes you through the arguments in a far more lucid and engaging way than many of those other books dealing with the history of metaphysics.

Of course I was reading it because it's a brilliant insight into Schopenhauer's overall philosophy (his notion of the will to life, his aesthetics, his overall pessimism), but following and thinking about how we can perceive the world, is it ever knowable, and the ultimate mystery of the noumena world, really had me reeling from the seemingly obvious notion that we exist, things exist, and the crazy notion that anything exists to begin with.

This is a truly mind-bending book.

Ben says

I loved this book. Magee is such a great writer, and explains the views of Schopenhauer so well. I recommend it to anyone interested in knowing more about Schopenhauer's philosophy and the impact it has had.

Eric Burke says

Plays the advocate a little too much, but still a very good presentation, including on Schopenhauer's influence on later thinkers and artists. For more on Schopenhauer's influence on Wagner, Magee's *The Tristan Chord* is also very good.

Michael says

If you think you don't like Schopenhauer, this book may change your mind.
