CHAPTER 2

The World as War
Schopenhauer's Political Philosophy

Schopenhauer's Political Philosophy

Schopenhauer is not seen as a political philosopher. He wrote no stand-alone work of political thought, unlike his Berlin-based rival Hegel, with the *Philosophy of Right* (1821), or his Berlin-based teacher Fichte, who authored *Foundations of Natural Right* (1797) as well as many other treatises on political topics such as revolution, state regulation of commerce, and nationhood.[1] A section of Schopenhauer's late work *Parerga and Paralipomena* is devoted to "jurisprudence and politics," but the chapter is relatively short (PP II: 217). In *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer did dedicate a significant number of pages to the "*doctrine of right*" (WWR I: 368), but it is embedded in the fourth book that features wide-ranging discussions of freedom and fate, choice and character, justice and injustice, good and evil, compassion and malice; the section is, as Christopher Janaway puts it, "ethical in the broadest sense."[2] Schopenhauer was, in other words, not entirely silent on topics in political philosophy, but his reflections were not terribly elaborate or detailed, and they have been eclipsed by his investigations of epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, and ethics.

Yet Schopenhauer's writings on politics are not simply underdeveloped; they are deliberately and indeed polemically brief. His explicit disquisitions on the aims and means of politics were sometimes paired with critical comments on contemporary German professors who, according to him, were incapable of speaking about law and rights without indulging in grandiose rhetoric of "broad and vacuous concepts" (PP II: 217). Writing in the first half of the nineteenth century, an age that had witnessed an epoch-making revolution and drawn-out war for supremacy in Europe as well as sweeping geopolitical consolidation in German lands and efforts toward codification and constitutionalization, Schopenhauer thought that German philosophers were prone to view politics as the most significant

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human activity and the state as the "highest purpose" of humanity (PP II: 219). Speaking out against the German predisposition to "seek in the clouds for what lies at their feet" (PP II: 217), Schopenhauer assured readers that the actual character of politics was "quite simple and comprehensible" (PP II: 217) and did not require a laborious treatment cloaked in "pompous phrases" (PP II: 219). Schopenhauer was not so much disinterested in the realm of politics as he was eager to define this realm more narrowly and analyze it more soberly. The relative brevity and simplicity of his comments were precisely the point.

Except politics is not simple and easy even in Schopenhauer's works. His basic conception of politics can be found in concentrated, labeled areas in his oeuvre and is comprehensible enough. He associated politics with the construction and maintenance of a centralized state that uses its monopoly over the means of coercion to keep its subjects safe from the harm they would inflict upon each other in its absence. In this respect, Schopenhauer is an early nineteenth-century German Hobbesian. But over time, he started observing that the state can fulfil its defined function more reliably if it inspires acceptance and even reverence in its subjects, something it can achieve by addressing not just their desire for material safety but also their existential and spiritual needs. To do this, Schopenhauer observed, leaders ally themselves with the institutions, practices, and idioms of religion and even philosophy. This strategic pursuit of political legitimacy presented a problem for Schopenhauer. He first assigned a specified mission of protection to the state but then admitted that it could fulfil this mission more effectively and enduringly when it professed loftier, nonpolitical ideals. As a consequence of the state's entanglement with other needs and aims than the regulation of interpersonal conflict, Schopenhauer's characterization of the state started to verge on the paradoxical, and he could not easily contain his doctrine of politics in one designated spot in his system. Symptomatically, the role of the state appears as a minor topic in various sections on reason, metaphysics, religion, and philosophy.

For Schopenhauer himself, however, the price of this paradox of state effectiveness turned out to be high. In carrying out the task of protection that he clearly endorsed, German governments of his own time considered philosophy a discipline suited to elite training and a source of additional support. This prompted them to intervene in the argumentative contests between schools of philosophy, to take control of university appointments, and to make sure that their favored philosophical camp achieved institutional dominance, all measures that, in Schopenhauer's own estimation,

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played a role in his exclusion from the academic world. In the end, Schopenhauer understood himself as a casualty of the instrumental attitude of state elites whose strategy he understood and explained. For this reason, Schopenhauer's analytical treatment of the state as a necessary device of society-wide stabilization must be read together with his fulminations against governmental supervision of philosophy.

The War of All against All

According to Schopenhauer, most years in human history are years of war. "History," he wrote in a section on the will to live in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, "shows us the life of peoples and can find nothing to report but wars and uprisings; the peaceful years appear only as short pauses, interludes occurring now and then" (PP II: 263). Millions of individuals united into peoples, he stated in the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation*, are led to "fight each other" through "senseless delusions" and "political intrigues," at great sacrifice (WWR II: 372). The same pattern of perpetual strife, Schopenhauer also claimed, recurs in the life of the individual, whose existence he described as nothing less than warlike: "The life of the individual is a continuous struggle, and not merely metaphorically with distress or with boredom but also in reality with others. He finds antagonists everywhere, lives in constant struggle, and dies, weapon in hand" (WWR II: 263). Schopenhauer characterized human life not simply as unsatisfying and unhappy, but as inescapably *martial*; the world is a battlefield, existence is a war. Human life, Schopenhauer famously observed, is plagued by suffering, but we must add that he saw human conflict as its major cause: "the main source of the serious evils that afflict human beings are human beings themselves: man is a wolf to man" (WWR II: 593).

Pain is endemic to life because humans are predatory beasts to one another. The constant infliction of pain on humans by other humans can assume a multitude of forms. Schopenhauer noted that suffering could be rooted in unjust social institutions such as slavery or entailed by the sheer struggle for existence in a world of scarcity.[3] Yet even admitting such variety, he consistently traced suffering back to the fundamental dispositions of humans vis-à-vis each other. That is, he believed that humans are not generally good and kind but regrettably trapped in corrupt institutions that cause them to treat each other unjustly. Humans themselves are the problem, not the organizations they find themselves in. Nor did he hold that societies can eliminate mutual human aggression once they satisfy the

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basic human needs of all; the insatiable desire for ever greater luxuries, or sheer malice, will still make humans cause each other harm. In Schopenhauer's view, the "gross unfairness, hardness, and cruelty" of humans will never cease to come to the surface, even when they are no longer fighting for their survival at the brink of starvation (WWR II: 593). Life is hell, Schopenhauer believed, because humans are devils to each other.

To encapsulate this condition of constant conflict, Schopenhauer referred to human society as a *bellum omnium contra omnes*, a war of all against all, a phrase he drew from the first chapter of Hobbes' *De Cive* (WWR I: 359).[4] People might seem calm and orderly as long as the law is enforced, but this social peace is always shadowed by the prospect of violent anarchy. Conflict appears "as soon as any group of people is released from all law and order; then at once we clearly see the war of all against all that Hobbes described so perceptively" (WWR I: 359). The default condition of the human collective is the violent struggle of everyone against everyone else.

A favored formulation of Schopenhauer's, the phrase "the war of all against all" appears frequently across his writings and not simply in reference to conflicts among human individuals. For him, strife emerged as the constant refrain of the universe. In *Parerga and Paralipomena*, he invoked it to describe the natural world: the person who observes nature will only see "momentary comfort, fleeting pleasure conditioned by lack, much and lengthy suffering, constant struggle, the war of all, each a hunter and each hunted, distress, lack, need, and anguish, cries and howls" (WWR II: 369). Yet at the very highest level of human intelligence and achievement, in the realm of philosophy, we again encounter a war of all against all. Each philosophical system, Schopenhauer wrote in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, is as murderous as a newly ascended sovereign, "plotting the downfall of all its brothers" to achieve uncontested dominance (PP II: 9). The history of philosophy consists of a never-ending battle, and this fierce "'war of all against all' of philosophical systems" makes it difficult for any philosopher to achieve a lasting reputation; everyone else in the field is constantly trying to tear rival systems apart (PP II: 9).

Some form of war, Schopenhauer contended, is found on every level, every rung of life. The world is a "battleground of tormented and anxious beings who survive only by devouring one another"; in nature "every predatory animal" is the "living grave of thousands of others" (WWR II: 596). Human beings generally act like enemies to one another, but commanders and conquerors are especially adept at turning human society

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into a veritable hell by pitting "several hundred thousand men" against each other to kill each other off with "cannon and flint" (WWR II: 593). Religions, too, stand in "an antagonistic relation" to one another, and conflicts among them are ultimately decided by "fire and swords" (WWR II: 174). Monotheistic systems are especially prone to wage "religious wars," set up tribunals of faith, and convert entire peoples "by the sword" (PP I: 17). Even philosophers go to battle, although in wars "fought only with words and writing" (PP II: 174).

Schopenhauer's message could not have been clearer: to exist is to find oneself in a state of perpetual war. Sometimes this condition is subdued or briefly interrupted, but, fundamentally, the world is never at peace. This vision of the world's "schismatic," inherently conflictual nature emerged from the fundamental tenets of his philosophy.[5] It is not the case that Schopenhauer simply observed a tumultuous empirical reality and then thought it was best encapsulated in the phrase of "the war of all against all." Rather, he believed that the reality that presents itself to cognizing human beings must necessarily do so in the form of war. The martial character of reality has, he claimed, deep metaphysical and epistemological roots; when the world appears, *it must appear as war*.

The claim is explained by the two central principles of Schopenhauer's thought, captured in the title *The World as Will and Representation*. Metaphysically speaking, everything consists of a unitary will that ceaselessly and blindly strives, without any final purpose.[6] This is the world "as will."[7] In his treatment of epistemology, however, Schopenhauer claimed that perceiving human beings encounter the will not in its singularity and unity but broken up into millions of facets through the medium of perception. The human cognitive apparatus serves to locate everything in a specific time, a specific space, as well as in a specific place in a chain of causality, and thus perceiving human beings always encounter individualized items – sequenced in time, adjacent in space, and causally linked to one another. Through its imposition of temporality, spatiality, and causality, human perception itemizes the world, such that it appears as a plural and relational whole, consisting of a myriad of contoured figures and things. This is the "world as representation." But the world converted into a pattern of particularized entities by the means of representation still consists of the indivisible and indefatigable will, the "restless and insatiable striving" that has no "final goal or purpose" (WWR I: 335). When humans open their eyes, they see separable things, defined individuals, but all of them are animated by the very same will and therefore ceaselessly and irrepressibly striving. The world as both will *and* representation is a world

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of apparently bounded entities, located in time and space, but with one undivided will pulsating through all, driving their activity.

For Schopenhauer, this cognitive constitution of plural objects (representation) out of the metaphysical substrate (will), generates an appearance of constant conflict. The individuating perception fragments the preperceptual, nonindividuated unity of will but pits the resulting pieces against one another. As an incarnation of will, each being naturally seeks to sustain itself and reproduce itself. The will, "wholly and inseparably present" in all beings, prompts each one of them to preserve and expand their own existence (WWR I: 358). But as a perceiving being, the individual subject simultaneously views the world as consisting of multiple objects, all unable to compete with the supreme priority of the individual's own self. Each being thus grasps itself as separate from all others, naturally values itself higher than all others, and uses them, consumes them, clashes with them, and fights them. In short, all beings tend toward egoism. Prevented from understanding their metaphysical unity by the very process of perception, or "trapped in *principium individuationis*" (WWR I: 400), each being strives to survive and thrive *at the expense of* all inter-species and intra-species others. This natural and near-universal egoism, Schopenhauer thought, entails a terrible, "constant struggle between the individuals of all species" that can take the form of outright mayhem (WWR I: 357). The war of all against all has a metaphysical-epistemological source; it is the spectacle of the will battling itself in the domain of representation. It is precisely because human beings are metaphysically the *same* – fragments of one inexhaustible, insatiable will – that they combat each other so ferociously.[8] When one being does violence to another, Schopenhauer concluded, it is only the will that "sinks its teeth into its own flesh" (WWR I: 381).

As simultaneously willing and perceiving beings, animated by will but epistemically divided from one another, humans come to understand themselves as engaged in lifelong battle. Every relationship is latently hostile, and every interpersonal encounter may lead to "appropriation, competition, exploitation, or destruction."[9] To Schopenhauer, this is a deplorable condition. The war of all against all is a source of endless suffering, especially for humans, whose heightened sensitivity to their own pain and awareness of their future death add anxiety to their burden. In this hedonistic sense, the world is simply defective.

Yet the fact that life takes place on a crowded battleground also constitutes a distortion of the will's underlying oneness. The conflictual structure of existence is not attributed to the will alone; it is the effect of

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the will filtered through the medium of representation.[10] Egoism is, Julian Young writes, "mandated by the human epistemological situation."[11] In this philosophical sense, the world is caught in a permanent condition of "mis-expression."[12] Viewed from the position of rare metaphysical insight that Schopenhauer himself claimed to have attained, the display of competition, domination, and destruction in the realm of representation ultimately reveals itself as a will that has turned on itself and must "*devour its own flesh*" (PP II: 291). The struggle of all against all that plays out endlessly in the visible universe consists in the dispersed and distributed will tearing itself to pieces. Yet the combatants themselves almost never understand their underlying sameness; their very mode of perception locks them into an endless war with one another.

Schopenhauer's Leviathan

Schopenhauer sought to shed philosophical light on the perpetual strife that defines human life, but he also explored how humans can overcome or at least moderate this grim condition. To his mind, there were a few different exit strategies. In genuine compassion or co-suffering with others, the individual breaks out of the shell of egoism and grasps the commonality and unity of all. In this way, compassion for others allows for a release from individuality, with its petty, futile desires, and facilitates a sublime recognition of the shared predicament of all.[13] Compassion is a spontaneous ethical attitude, but one that Schopenhauer thought was ultimately rooted in an inchoate realization that individuality is metaphysically inessential and the warlike appearance of the world a regrettable deception.

The practice of asceticism provides another path out of the perpetual war. The ascetic does not primarily or only gaze beyond perceptual individuation or fragmentation, but instead targets the metaphysical will and seeks to tranquilize it by a program of "voluntary self-negation" including chastity, poverty, and fasting (WWR I: 409).[14] The ideal in this case is not the person who suffers with others and in this act of identification overcomes the distortive individualization, but the person who systematically and rigorously renounces desires and needs and thereby detaches from the ultimate source of all frustrations in the world, namely, the will. The compassionate, saint-like figure sheds the form of individuality and in this way ceases to participate in war *against* others; the ascetic gives up willing, resigns, and in this way retreats from the war altogether.[15] The latter even welcomes the insults of others and "cheerfully sides with everyone hostile to the expression of the will that is his own person" (WWR I: 409).

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Yet these two forms of self-denial are strategies embodied by singular individuals. Saintly compassion and disciplined self-mortification are viable for a handful of remarkable figures but far too demanding for a much larger population of incurable egoists. The war of all against all is, in Schopenhauer's estimation, too deep-rooted and too large-scale a problem for it to be comprehensively addressed by anthropologically "exceptional" forms of sainthood and holiness.[16] Everything of excellence, Schopenhauer agreed with Spinoza, is as "difficult as it is rare" (WWR I: 411). Fully aware of the uncommonness of compassion and ascetic resignation, Schopenhauer instead developed a more generally applicable solution to the war of all against all, one that depended neither on de-individualization through co-suffering nor on negating the metaphysical will through asceticism. Briefly put, the war of all against all can be contained, although not eliminated, through institutionalized constraints on aggression.

In Schopenhauer's account, the large-scale pacification depends on a method by which the egoistic individuals constituted by a will "splintered" into a "multiplicity" are once again reunited, but then "externally," by means of an explicit mutual agreement (WWR I: 365). The agreement takes the form of a contract that binds and restrains the acting parties but does not dissolve or merge them. The dispersed individuals fearful of each other voluntarily decide to disarm and to transfer the means to protect them into "the hands of a force . . . infinitely superior to the power of each individual," a figure able to compel everyone to respect the integrity of others (BM: 188). As a result of this calculated and coordinated act of concentrating force in one figure by means of a mutual contract, an act enabled by "*reciprocity*" among otherwise belligerent egoists, individuals together exit the condition of war (BM: 157). In short, they achieve unity through mutual restraint by contractually founding a state that rules them all. It is through this establishment of a state that assumes responsibility for the protection of all individuals, Schopenhauer further claimed, that humanity enters the "civilized stage" (PP I: 333). Civilization is based, then, on the mutually authorized and institutionalized restraint of interpersonal violence.

Schopenhauer's solution to the problem of perpetual strife among natural egoists comes from Hobbes. It was Hobbes who argued that human beings can overcome the "condition of war of everyone against everyone"[17] by establishing a "mutual covenant"[18] that transfers the right to govern to a sovereign entrusted with keeping the peace. By this act, a civic unity is formed from a multitude of individuals, and the contracting parties protect themselves from injury through their shared subjection to a centralized organ of compulsion, a "*Mortal God*" or a Leviathan able to

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quell manifestations of anarchy.[19] To quote a Hobbesian formulation that sounds quite congruent with Schopenhauer's terminology, a plurality of individuals finds a way to "reduce all their wills . . . unto one will."[20] The individual agents do not thereby cease to have their own wills; instead, through the submission of all to one authority, they begin to restrain their multiple wills. Their unity then resides in the artifice of statehood that represents the many,[21] not in a compassionate merging with others or a metaphysical insight into the illusory nature of their individuality. The multitude remains a multitude, but one represented in the unity of an artificial person, namely, the sovereign with the authority to wield power over all subjects for the sake of order and security.[22] For Schopenhauer, the contractually constructed state was a way to deal pragmatically with the empirical and social manifestation of disunity. The sovereign state does not mystically manage to unite all egoists into one body and does not constitute a genuine metaphysical breakthrough, but instead subdues these egoists as particular willing individuals by using the threat of force.

In the realm of political thought, Hobbes was Schopenhauer's idol, but his judgment on the Hobbesian Leviathan was, if not ambivalent, at least dual in nature. Schopenhauer did view the state as a feat of reason, a faculty exclusive to human beings. In his tract on the freedom of the will, Schopenhauer explicitly grounded the construction of statehood in linguistically mediated rationality. In contrast to animals, humans possess the ability to condense their sensory perceptions into "universal concepts" or subsume many individual phenomena under general notions and then designate these notions with words, which in turn can be combined in countless configurations (FW: 56). In a word, humans *think*. Their thinking, Schopenhauer held, allows humans to distance themselves from immersion in the immediate situation and engage in circumspection, retrospection, and prognostication. While this wider "mental horizon" means that humans suffer from worries about the future and regrets about the past, both of which amplify anxiety,[23] it also increases chances for survival. As thinking beings, humans are not motivated solely by whatever they encounter in the moment but can make cross-situational plans for their long-term self-preservation and prosperity. Programmed responses to present temptations are replaced with strategies for delayed but more lasting and secure gratification.

Specifically, rational thought enables the egoistic individual to understand that the pleasure gained from taking something from another person is "outweighed" by the pain of attacks suffered at the hands of others (WWR I: 369). As the Schopenhauer-reader Richard Wagner (1813–83)

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pointed out in an 1864 essay on the state, the egoist can be persuaded to give up some egoistic satisfactions for the sake of enjoying greater ones more safely over time.[24] The assessment of the personal risks of anarchy compels the individual to join with others and establish a collectively agreed-upon scheme of mutual protection, that is, the state. And thanks to conceptuality and language being shared among humans, this plan of action can be collectively coordinated. First on Schopenhauer's list of the achievements that are facilitated by the human capacity for abstract thought was in fact the state, understood as a marvelous result of the power of human anticipation of future outcomes and negotiation with other humans. In a chapter on reason in the first book of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer presented a condensed summary of reason's achievements and singled out the construction of a state as a veritable culmination point: "Reason accomplishes its greatest feats only by means of language: the co-ordinated action of many individuals, the systematic interplay of many thousands, civilization, the state" (WWR I: 60).[25] In the context of Schopenhauer's discussion of rationality, statehood is not ranked as a low-level or incidental human response to the existential predicament of strife and suffering. Instead, state construction represents the most significant human use of reason to address the greatest source of human agony, namely, the war of all against all. Statehood may not perfect human existence, but by civilizing collective life through restraint backed by coercion, it makes it much more bearable. It is a triumph of rationality.

Yet despite Schopenhauer's praise of statehood as the most consequential product of human conceptuality and rationality, he also pointed to its limits. State formation serves to contain the ubiquitous aggression of egoistic individuals by means of a negotiated, synchronized delegation of force. However, it remains the result of self-interest rationally pursued, not self-interest abandoned. At no point does the state that creates and enforces law help its egoist subjects to overcome their narrow commitment to their own interests. They remain unfair, egoistic, hard, and ill-natured. The state has its origin in the desires of individuals and is constructed to allow them to satisfy their egoistically focused needs in the safer setting of mutual protection. With a state in place, Schopenhauer suggested, the "boundless egoism of almost all, the malice of many, the cruelty of some" can no longer come into prominence, but this is only because "compulsion has bound all" (BM: 188). Individuals have united for an instrumental reason, and their aggressions are organized by reason rather than transcended. Even though they are disarmed, supervised, and sanctioned, they remain particles of the metaphysical will.

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The project of state formation thus treats the existence of belligerent individuals as an obdurate fact. The state puts a "strong muzzle" on its otherwise dangerous subjects (BM: 188), but even if a properly muzzled beast seems "just as harmless as a grass-eating animal" (WWR I: 372), its innate constitution has not changed. In this way, the state manages symptoms without treating the disease. It is by no means "directed against egoism," Schopenhauer wrote, but only against "the detrimental effects of egoism" (WWR I: 372). Schopenhauer did deem the state a necessary precondition for the stage of civilization, but then "our entire civilized world," he reminded his readers, is nothing but a "great masquerade" (PP II: 192). In contrast to morally or spiritually gifted individuals, the great mass of people who enter a social contract to form a state neither shed their selves through compassion nor engage in self-abnegation; they only participate in a gigantic project of self-preservation.

In Schopenhauer's account, the state has two faces. In the chapter on the philosophy of right in *The World as Will and Representation*, he focused on how ineradicable egoism can find a stable collective form in the state. In the earlier chapter on reason in the same work, however, the state is the primary example of the feats of human conceptuality and rationality. The state is of course both these things. Its successful construction depends on an alliance of self-interest and reason, in which linguistically mediated strategic thinking serves an irrepressible egoism. The pithiest of Schopenhauer's encapsulations of Hobbesian thought combines these two aspects: the state is a "masterpiece of the self-comprehending, rational, accumulated egoism of all" (BM: 188). From the perspective of the history of endless human suffering, the state that keeps order and peace stands as a formidable achievement. Yet from the perspective of Schopenhauer's metaphysics, it still comes across as something of a makeshift solution, a stop-gap measure designed for the majority who cannot overcome individualization and the impulses of will in a more radical manner. Called upon to regulate and mitigate the always-latent war of all against all, the state handles the effects of a defectively and incoherently structured world but does not seek to resolve the fundamental problem. Statehood provides relief but not salvation.

The Critical Delimitation of Politics: The State as an Instrument of Mere Protection

Schopenhauer's integration of key ideas and formulations from Hobbes has contributed to his reputation as a political thinker who is conventional,

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and even borderline derivative.[26] Schopenhauer did not have a political philosophy, commentators have concluded; he only copied Hobbes's political philosophy. But Schopenhauer's contribution partly consisted in providing Hobbesian ideas with a new philosophical environment, and a much bleaker one than the original setting. As the political theorist Joshua Foa Dienstag observes, Hobbes was less of a pessimist than Schopenhauer because he had faith in the ability of the "proper set of institutions" to cure the social disunity he had diagnosed.[27] Schopenhauer did not quite share this faith in politics. He did take Hobbes to have captured a fundamental problem of collective human existence, namely, the anarchic war of all, and to have suggested the most viable and enduring solution, namely, the erection of statehood. But Schopenhauer incorporated these linked ideas into his own system by supplying the war of all with an underlying, severe metaphysics and then setting statehood within a broader range of contrasting human responses to an unforgiving world of suffering. The war of all against all arises, Schopenhauer argued, because of the cognitive fragmentation of the will's unity, and it can be managed through the aggregation of the apparently pluralized wills. Yet this solution does not recover the shattered metaphysical unity. Schopenhauer thus gave Hobbesian ideas a new foundation but also indicated the limits of statehood. To him, human beings possess more philosophically satisfying and more complete but also less generalizable solutions to the problem of the schismatic character of collective existence.

Deliberately austere, Schopenhauer understood politics to be synonymous with a specified function, that of keeping order and peacefulness among chronic egoists. This is the exclusive task of the state as well as its only task; the state, Schopenhauer claimed, is a "mere institution of protection" (PP II: 218). Its sole purpose is security. The state is founded on the premise that people generally do not behave well in the absence of any constraints, but it should also never demand anything more from them than the minimum of lawful and orderly behavior required for mutual protection. Specifically, it should ensure that its subjects comply with the law without asking if they are morally virtuous or authentically sensitive to the plight of others. Whether individuals refrain from violations of the rights of others because they are truly good or because they are deterred by punishment is of no significance to a state apparatus.[28] The state, Schopenhauer wrote, does not forbid anyone from "thinking incessantly about murdering and poisoning" as long as it knows for certain that the "fear of sword and wheel will keep this will constantly in check" (WWR I: 371). Homicidal fantasies are irrelevant unless they materialize in the realm

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of the "*deed*" (WWR I: 370). Focused on the state as an instrument of protection, Schopenhauer added that "political science" follows an "inverted" morality in that it does not ask how best to cultivate the good but only how to contain anarchy and limit suffering (WWR I: 370–1).

To insist on the separation of legality and morality was customary in the political philosophy of Schopenhauer's time. Fichte, for example, argued that the doctrine of right stands as a branch of philosophy separate from ethics and does not supply moral guidance. Its focus lies on how to structure a community of free individuals, that is, on how to reconcile the freedom of one individual with that of another. How any one individual should act to meet the obligations of morality is a separate issue.[29] As an organ meant to regulate interaction in a community of multiple free beings, the state concentrates on what must be prohibited and what can be permitted for the freedom of all to persist; it does not concern itself with moral excellence.

In Schopenhauer's writings, however, the well-established distinction between political and moral realms was heightened because he so clearly cast humans as naturally egoistic, defined the state as constructed out of self-interest, and then identified moral action with pure selflessness. The state arises out of rational egoism, and since it restrains its subjects by deterrence and punishment, its activities remain grounded in everyone's rational grasp of their own self-interest. As an arrangement that embodies and perpetuates egoism, it would be incongruous of the state to suddenly require moral virtue from its subjects. But if the state does not expect selflessness and cannot demand it, Schopenhauer added, then it should not try its hand at "fostering morality" either (WWR I: 371); it should not mandate altruism. State-sponsored inculcation of morality would be inconsistent with the premise of the state, but such an attempt to promote the good on a large scale would also likely fail.[30] For Schopenhauer, virtue was ultimately rooted in the individual's congenital and permanent character, and this "inner disposition that alone can be moral or immoral" can therefore not be "modified from the outside" or "induced to change" (WWR I: 371). As an instrument of protection, the state should limit itself to the effort of mitigation rather than dabble in futile attempts at reeducation. As David Woods has summarized Schopenhauer's characterizations of the state: its construction is not morally motivated, it is not obeyed on moral grounds, it cannot concern itself with the moral significance of actions, and, finally, it should not seek to reform the morality of its subjects.[31]

Against the backdrop of Schopenhauer's sharp distinction between morality and lawfulness one can speak of his critical delimitation of the state: it is an

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organization with the clearly defined purpose, the "principal goal" of ensuring "public security," and it should assume no further tasks (WWR I: 376). Schopenhauer even indicated that a state burdened with an educative mission would not just fail with this mission but also face broader jeopardy:[32] "If we assign [the state] other aims besides that of protection," he stated, "this can easily endanger its true aim" (WWR II: 611). How exactly additional state tasks would weaken the execution of its core assignment Schopenhauer never quite spelled out. In his tract on morality, he suggested that a state focused on moral edification would threaten people's "personal freedom and individual development" (BM: 208), but as Neil Jordan points out, this local and quite isolated invocation of liberal-sounding freedom was uncharacteristic, to say the least.[33] If Schopenhauer was truly committed to a vision of how civic rights promote the free development of all, he probably would have written about it and explained it at some length, which he never did. In a late letter to his friend, the jurist Johann August Becker, Schopenhauer praised Wilhelm von Humboldt's (1767–1835) conception of the state's character and purpose in the posthumously published treatise *The Limits of State Action* but admitted that he had read only a single passage.[34] Schopenhauer's conception of delimited state ambitions was primarily motivated not by a Humboldtian ideal of freedom from state interference as a condition of genuine individual flourishing and voluntary social cooperation but rather by a wish to keep government exclusively and vigilantly focused on the dangers of anarchy, on the always-latent war of all against all.

Schopenhauer's worry about the corruption of the state emerges more clearly in his comments on politics and religion. Concerned, like Hobbes, with the terror of religious wars, Schopenhauer believed that the alignment of a state's monopoly of violence with religious demands for orthodoxy would create a combined "machine of state and religion" determined to impose a conformity of beliefs (BM: 208). When intransigent zealots controlled the levers of state power, Schopenhauer indicated, one could expect tribunals of faith, forced conversions, and gruesome killings of nonconformists. A state that set out to defend a particular religious faith and silence heretics would likely come to betray the purpose for which it had been constructed, namely, the protection of its own subjects. As the conservative thinker and Hobbes scholar Michael Oakeshott notes in a 1975 essay in which he draws on Schopenhauer, the state should aim to be an instrumentally oriented association that "mitigates conflict" without "imposing uniformity."[35]

Yet even in moments when Schopenhauer conjured the specter of violent state campaigns for religious orthodoxy, one can nonetheless spot

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moments of ambivalence toward religion. It is not clear that he consistently disapproved of the alliance between religion and politics, the church and the state, because he also recognized the state's interest in shoring up its authority by endowing itself with a halo of piety and faith. Schopenhauer could recall the menace of "inquisitions, autos da fé, and religious wars," but he also cited the Roman historian Quintus Curtius' claim that "[n]othing rules the masses as effectively as superstition," and that fickle people, once captured and calmed by religion, are more likely even to obey their "priests . . . than their leaders" (BM: 208). Under certain circumstances, a close relationship between the state and a religious caste could, Schopenhauer conceded, be beneficial to governments that wish to pacify restive crowds. Despite the memory of religious wars, he could observe that politics and religion might be combined in different ways to various effects, not all of them destructive. If zealotry infiltrates the state and leads it to impose a homogeneity of faith, the result might be interrogations, purges, and armed conflicts, and hence the end of the state as the guarantor of peace. But if a government can coordinate with a priestly caste to harness the persuasive force of superstitions and delusions, it may succeed better in its task of providing order and security.

Schopenhauer's goal was thus not to separate religion from the state for the sake of some abstract purity. Instead, he was concerned with the state's overarching aim of protection and how it could most easily and lastingly be achieved under different circumstances. If religious teachings helped render a population more compliant, the state could put them to use for the purpose of societal stabilization. Schopenhauer thus defined the purpose of the state narrowly as one of maintaining general order and mutual security, but implied that it could fulfil this function more efficiently by claiming – or rather feigning – to represent religious values and ideals that transcend those of "mere" protection. As Schopenhauer would experience himself, however, a purely instrumental display of religious commitment on the part of the state could not be completely insulated from corrupting effects on state practice, and his most vehement criticisms of contemporary governments targeted their attachment to religious doctrines, an attachment that he himself had explained.

The Throne and the Altar: The Political Strategy of State Sanctification

In *The World as Will and Representation* (1818), Schopenhauer presented a rationalistic account of the state as constructed by wary egoists for the

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purpose of mutual protection; he did not explore the relationship between politics and religion. Starting with *On the Basis of Morals* (1841) and continuing in the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation* (1845) and *Parerga and Paralipomena* (1851), however, he did address the interconnections between politics, religious doctrines, and popular faith. When Schopenhauer discussed the issue, he mostly referred to ancient and pre-modern authors such as Curtius (BM: 208) and Machiavelli (PP II: 323); the question of the state's prudent reliance on religious institutions and practices was an old one. Yet he may also have been influenced by currents in his own era, especially in the 1830s and the 1840s, decades that witnessed contentious debates about the scriptural justification for governmental authority and the idea of a Christian state.[36]

Leading conservative thinkers of this time, such as the Protestant political and legal theorist Friedrich Julius Stahl (1802–61), claimed that the state, even though a secular and human institution, was nonetheless authorized by God to maintain order and law among people.[37] As such, it stood in an intimate relationship with the church as the guardian of the Christian faith.[38] Indeed, the "outrage" of modern revolutions from 1789 and on threatened to subvert both "throne and altar."[39] In this situation, strong political and religious commitments were inseparable, and one could not claim to be conservative vis-à-vis the state but liberal vis-à-vis the church, not stand "for the order that comes from God but against the faith that comes from God."[40] Living in an age of revolt, Stahl declared that there were only two opposing political positions: one "for throne and altar together [*Thron und Altar ungetrennt*]" and one for "revolution."[41]

By contrast, radical philosophers of the era demanded that the bond between state and church must be subjected to criticism and even severed completely. In reaction to the conservative Stahl, the critical Hegelian Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–74) argued that the very idea of an orthodox Christian philosophy of law was incoherent. In an 1835 review of one of Stahl's major works on the history of jurisprudence, Feuerbach pointed out that the concept of property is central to the doctrine of right and that legal and political philosophy must ground the distinction between yours and mine. The essence of Christianity, however, is love, which is indifferent to possession and property, free of egoism and greed, and has no concept of contractual exchange.[42] Given this contrast, Feuerbach continued, there could be no meaningful coalition between a state that guaranteed legal entitlements, on the one hand, and a giving and caring community of Christians, on the other hand; throne and altar were

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incompatible. Feuerbach's article was harsh but, in 1835, he still restrained himself to a conceptual critique of the conservative position and did not call for political action. Over the course of the 1830s and 1840s, however, other Hegel-inspired radicals would deepen Feuerbach's critique of Christian statehood, reject authoritarian governments draped in theological justifications, and instead imagine a broad social community of non-egoists.[43] In other words, they would agree with Stahl that one must choose between a church-state alliance and revolution, but they would opt for the latter.

Schopenhauer did not participate directly in the debate involving orthodox conservatives and radical secularists, and he dismissed prominent representatives of both fronts. When he read Stahl's work on the doctrine of right in the 1850s, he dismissed it as nothing but "stupid, miserable gossip" in a letter to his philosophical ally Julius Frauenstädt.[44] Schopenhauer espoused something close to a neo-absolutist monarchist position but viewed it as an expedient arrangement, not a manifestation of divine order, and hence he stood apart from influential, "legitimist-mystical" conservative coteries of his own time.[45] Although Schopenhauer may have appreciated Feuerbach's distinction between the principle of the state and the principle of New Testament Christianity, he was equally dismissive of the Young Hegelian, whose main work, *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), he characterized as the writing of an inebriated man.[46]

While Schopenhauer dismissed the opposed camps in the theological-political debate, he nonetheless appreciated the core issue, namely, the proper relationship between political leadership and religious sources of legitimacy. In a long dialogue that he placed in the beginning of his section on religion in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, he let the interlocutor who was critical of religious claims to truth acknowledge the utility of religion as a support for government. In Schopenhauer's dialogue, the friend of truth, Philalethes, first notes how intolerant monotheistic religions have unleashed religious wars, persecutions, and the destruction of other cultures. But with reference to Machiavelli, he also admits that religious feelings can be of great value for political purposes. Specifically, "every wise prince" presents himself as a "model of true religiosity" (PP II: 323). Invoking the motto of nineteenth-century reactionary political thought, Philalethes concludes that "altar and throne" are "strictly related" (PP II: 323).

After the 1830s, then, Schopenhauer pondered the association of state and church and even invoked the formula of throne and altar, but he was neither a believing defender of the Christian state (like Stahl) nor a radical intent on debunking theological justifications for political hierarchies (like

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Feuerbach). His concern, rather, was the government's strategic deployment of religious beliefs for the sake of stability, which made him too pragmatic and instrumentalist for the conservatives and too fearful of a thoroughly secularized state and society for the radicals. At bottom, Schopenhauer's comments on how sovereign rule could be supported by religious institutions indicate that he may have had some doubts about the efficacy of any state that openly presents itself as an instrument of protection and nothing beyond that, even though this was his conception of its mission. The state may at its core be a rational construction for the benefit of its self-interested subjects, but to ensure its effectiveness, it should perhaps not be understood as such among the population. Schopenhauer seems to have suspected that a state viewed as a configuration of egoists could fail to inspire awe and adherence.

Schopenhauer's more elaborate account of the religious legitimation of state power is based on his analysis of the function of religion in human society. According to him, the state can ensure its effectiveness by means of an alliance with religion because the latter addresses "the metaphysical need" of large groups of people (BM: 208). This "metaphysical need" arises in humans because of their advanced intelligence and capacity for linguistically mediated reflection. Afflicted by the agonies of life, human beings are struck by the enigmatic nature of existence, and the more prone to reflection they are, the more they will crave some illumination. It is this puzzlement born of reflection that Schopenhauer termed the "metaphysical need" (WWR II: 169), because what stands at the beginning of a search for an ultimate, metaphysical explanation for the existence and constitution of the world is wonder, rather than knowledge of any particular phenomenon or the "given appearance of things" (WWR II: 173). While wonder spurs metaphysical reflection in philosophy, religions also purport to uncover the meaning of an opaque existence; they, Schopenhauer acknowledged, provide an "*interpretation of life*" meant to explain, guide, and console (PP II: 293). In contrast to philosophy, however, religions satisfy the persistent human existential quest with the help of allegorical stories more suited to the intellectual capacity of the great majority.[47] Just as there is "folk poetry" or "folk wisdom," there is popular metaphysics, or "folk-metaphysics" (WWR II: 174).

Religions can function as instruments of governance, Schopenhauer further believed, because their exponents cater to the strong and ineradicable metaphysical need in a way that inspires popular reverence. In his account, religious elites can wield an unmatched influence over peoples because humans everywhere look for beliefs that will give meaning to the

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pain of their lives. They will also be grateful, loyal, and even obedient to those who can satisfy this need by means of narratives, symbols, and practices. It is, Schopenhauer argued, the "fundamental secret and age-old cunning of all preachers everywhere" to have correctly detected and found ways to fill the metaphysical need of humans and then to use the faith of their followers to "lead and rule them to their heart's content" (PP II: 325). It is, finally, for this reason that the "more clever" regents will ally themselves with priests (PP II: 235). Governments, Schopenhauer indicated, are more likely to be accepted by subjects when they are seen as affiliated with an institution that clarifies the meaning of life and offers guidance and solace. If a prince presents himself as a model of religiosity, or even as a divinely ordained ruler, his rule will align with a system of beliefs and practices designed to illuminate existence and render suffering bearable. In Schopenhauer's view, then, regimes can try to consolidate state power, and thereby improve the protection of their subjects, by means of reliance on religion as the popular form of existential consolation. The willingness of subjects to live law-abidingly under a particular regime can be enhanced when the state stands together with religious institutions that teach human beings to accept hardships and pain more generally.

As a mere device of protection, the state is of course already designed to satisfy fundamental needs, such as the desire for personal safety, security of possessions, and a sense of order and predictability in a world shadowed by strife among belligerent egoists. According to Schopenhauer, however, it may not be quite enough for the state to ensure order and provide mutual protection and thereby *reduce* suffering; a more robust allegiance to the rule of the state can be achieved if the state enters an intimate association with an institution that *bestows meaning upon* suffering. Paradoxically, the basic needs of safety and security are more effectively and sustainably satisfied by a state that understands the significance of seemingly higher-order needs arising out of existential puzzlement. To best achieve the minimalist aim, the state might have to go beyond it.

Yet it was precisely Schopenhauer's anthropological explanation for the political effectiveness of the altar-and-throne alliance that put him at odds with ideological networks of his time. Contrary to those conservatives of his time who espoused the idea of a Christian state with the monarch representing God's will in the world,[48] Schopenhauer viewed religious claims as politically useful but not, philosophically speaking, true. Contrary to contemporary radicals who wished to humanize and historicize the sacred and fully demystify and democratize the authoritarian

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state,[49] he did not passionately reject religious means of forging regime loyalty among the ruled.

State Sanctification and University Philosophy: Schopenhauer's Dilemma

Schopenhauer defined politics in contrast to morality and religion and cautioned against transgressions of the boundaries of state action: the state should enforce legislation and not seek to edify subjects. Under the influence of traditional Machiavellian counsels and contemporary debates, however, he recognized that canny rulers could benefit from performances of religious piety. Yet despite this limited acceptance of the state-church alliance, Schopenhauer also registered its negative consequences, even though he did not quite admit them in the sections on politics. Most importantly, Schopenhauer himself experienced, through the obstructed reception of his own system of thought, how the close association of "altar and throne" came to compromise the integrity of philosophy. In other words, a political strategy he acknowledged as potentially useful interfered with the conditions of philosophical debate in a way that enraged him; his political suggestion and philosophical preference could not be reconciled.

In Schopenhauer's analysis, state reliance on religious support typically ends up affecting philosophy because of the age-old rivalry between theologians and philosophers, religious communities and philosophical schools. As discussed above, religion and philosophy share a goal, namely, to respond to the "metaphysical need" of humankind. Yet they use different means and speak to different audiences: philosophy is argumentative, oriented toward the truth, and addresses an intellectual elite, whereas religion uses symbols and stories to capture the human condition and speaks to the great majority whose capacity for abstract reasoning is limited. Despite having distinct target groups, religious leaders nonetheless tend to want to supervise and constrain the open-ended search for truth that is constitutive of philosophy and to strive, greedily, for what Schopenhauer called a "monopoly of metaphysical knowledge" (WWR II: 195). To the priestly caste interested in complete control of the supply of metaphysical insight, he added, philosophers even appear as a group of unauthorized and "undocumented workers" or even as a shady "horde" on the margins of society, and hence in urgent need of control (WWR II: 196).

When the state draws on doctrines and rituals of organized religion for its legitimacy, Schopenhauer further noted, it tends to adopt religion's suspicion of philosophy and likewise begins to watch out for and stifle

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dissidence. This does not mean that the state will forbid philosophy, but Schopenhauer thought that governments will seek to advance the philosophical teachings that happen to be most suitable to their own exercise of power, which in practice means the philosophies most closely aligned with the religion from which the state elites draw support. The typical German state of Schopenhauer's time allowed philosophy to be taught at university, but then selected for special "protection" the philosophical system it deemed most useful for its purposes and deployed its "powerful, material means" to silence all its rivals (PP II: 9). In his detailed account of university philosophy, this promotion of a state-friendly philosophy centrally involved government control of the system of education: ministries and bureaucracies of ecclesiastical matters ensured that the ideas taught at universities would conform with the religiously inflected self-presentation of the state. No unpredictable truth-seeking was allowed to undermine the teachings of the established religion, which supplied the government with metaphysical resources. In Germany, Schopenhauer wrote, university philosophy was a "philosophy by government order" and as such little else than a "paraphrase and apology for the religion of the land" (PP I: 125–6). Schopenhauer himself experienced quite closely how the Prussian government put an end to the open battle of rival philosophies and awarded the Hegelian school with academic supremacy in order to promote a uniform mode of thought throughout the educated professional class. To return to Schopenhauer's formulation, states rule not just by controlling the means of coercion but by granting favored systems of thought a "monopoly" on metaphysics.

In Schopenhauer's view, the problem of state interference with the pursuit of truth was compounded by the dynamics of institutionalized, university-homed philosophy. It was bad that states censored adversarial voices in philosophy, but, once entrenched at an institution of higher learning with salaried professionals, philosophy furthermore attracted individuals completely unsuited for rigorous, unbiased thought. The professionalization of philosophy meant that careerists flocked to the discipline, and careerists are always docile, since they will tend to adopt and develop the doctrines most beneficial to their careers. And most beneficial to their career will be a philosophy approved and promoted by the state, and hence also a philosophy aligned with the established church, which is what the state demands. A typical German professor of philosophy, claimed Schopenhauer in his long diatribe against the university, did not care much about the internal consistency or illuminating power of a new philosophical system, but instead determined whether it harmonized with

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the "doctrines of established religion" and the "interests of the government" (PP I: 134). In an 1832 notebook, Schopenhauer provided an even more detailed list of considerations, a series of checkpoints for official thought. For every sentence and every judgment, the anxiously career-oriented philosophy professor will, Schopenhauer noted, first imagine the reactions of the "minister of education and culture" and his council of advisors, then those of other superiors, as well as academic colleagues and close allies, and finally the book and journal editors and the book sellers.[50] Once philosophy has become a university discipline and is supervised by the state, thought will be filtered through a multilevel system of approval.

Schopenhauer's lifetime coincided with an unprecedented flowering of university philosophy. Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel were all professors, and the latter three all taught at reformed institutions designed to reward innovative research.[51] The story of philosophy in this period can be told as a triumphant narrative of how major thinkers secured positions at the very top of a stable structure of interlocking educational institutions, freed from personal dependence on wealthy patrons and insulated from the vicissitudes of a book and magazine market.[52] But with the personal experience of being prevented from a position of any relevance in the academy, Schopenhauer looked at the university and saw only new dependencies, or a veritable system of state-supervised gatekeeping in combination with opportunistic self-censorship, all ultimately rooted in the government interest in robust "metaphysical" support. To successful contemporaries, philosophy had secured an economic base and even advanced to a location of great societal influence at the apex of a credentializing institution entwined with the state. To Schopenhauer, however, philosophy had become a "tool" of a government that controlled professorial "employment" to manufacture conformity.[53] Ideologically propped-up political authority, the strategic political purpose of which Schopenhauer understood, came to correlate with engineered philosophical mediocrity, which he detested.

When he discussed the state's reliance on religious sources of support, Schopenhauer remained calm and analytical; it was reasonable to at least consider "the use of religions as supports for thrones" (PP II: 323). From the perspective of politics, the cooperation between an institution of material protection and an institution of metaphysical satisfaction might help maintain law and order. Yet when he considered how German governments brought philosophy in line with the state-supportive official religion through control of the university system, he could become agitated and launch into rants: a philosophy "bound to established religion as the

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chained dog to the wall," he exclaimed, "is only the exasperating caricature of the highest and noblest endeavor of humankind" (PP I: 129). The state's use of philosophy, he wrote in a notebook in 1832, defiled a holy vocation of humanity and thus amounted to "sacrilege."[54]

As a proud philosopher, Schopenhauer reacted indignantly to restrictions on the unbiased quest for metaphysical truth, but what upset him so deeply was only the natural outcome of the state's effort to consolidate itself by treating philosophy as a means of persuasion directed at the "future educated class, which actually controls state and society" (PP I: 173). In this context, he could not avoid the question of why his own philosophy was rejected or "cast out."[55] In his notebook from the early 1840s, he admitted that he himself never trimmed his philosophy to fit the "needs of the state," and that, as a consequence, his thought was of no use to the government.[56] "I have," he acknowledged, "been of no use to the ministries of education."[57] More specifically, he understood that his frank ideas about irrepressible sexual desire and the will to life would strike a university audience as "downright indecent."[58] His philosophical ideas were correct, he obviously believed, but he could still admit that they were not suitable lecturing material. More broadly, Schopenhauer's deflationary account of the indispensable but morally and metaphysically limited benefits of statehood would likely have been too honest for any government seeking to fortify itself with theological justifications. Schopenhauer understood the state's use of religion but did not himself profess that religion; like some modern conservatives, he observed the political utility of religious practices and beliefs but offered no further grounds for holding them.[59] No wonder, then, that the governments of German states found no real use for him.

Schopenhauer wanted a state equipped to fulfil its purpose of providing protection, and he also wanted freedom for philosophers to pursue fundamental questions without restrictions. As a reconstruction of his own arguments shows, he could not quite have both, since his positive attitude toward the idea of a theologically justified state ran counter to his vision of philosophy as an uncompromised investigation of metaphysical truth. The resulting tension between Schopenhauer's political and philosophical preferences structured his life and career, or his non-career. As a rentier in the first half of the nineteenth century, made anxious by political volatility and violent transformations, the mature Schopenhauer approved of a state ready to use any instrument of governance, any "tool of the state" (PP I: 151), for the sake of maintaining order and peace. Yet as an aspiring academic who had repeatedly tried and failed to establish himself as a

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university scholar, especially in Prussia in the 1820s, he resented the government-controlled educational system focused on instilling reverence toward the state. In a roundabout way, Schopenhauer himself was a casualty of the Leviathan he envisioned.

Critical contemporaries noticed the contradiction in Schopenhauer's political thought. In an 1852 amendment to his will, Schopenhauer stated that funds from his estate would go to a foundation, set up by conservatives in Berlin, that supported Prussian soldiers who had been wounded during the 1848 revolution, as well as the survivors of those who had fallen in the tumult.[60] This donation, he explained, served to recognize soldierly sacrifices for the maintenance and restoration of the legal order, a gesture in line with his conception of the fundamental task of the state. For Schopenhauer, lawfulness and public order were the paramount political aims, and revolution meant descent into violent anarchy. When news of the will came out in the press after his death, however, some Schopenhauer readers were surprised, since the philosopher had consistently and publicly attacked the Prussian universities and the state-friendly Hegelian philosophy that pervaded them. To a sarcastic contemporary such as the liberal author and publicist Karl Gutzkow, Schopenhauer's last will revealed a great irony:[61] the deceased thinker had berated the Prussian university system but apparently also wanted to honor the Prussian soldiers who had fought democratic rebels in German cities – state repression was needed in the streets but state control was loathsome in the university lecture halls. The irony encapsulated the tensions of Schopenhauer's political philosophy. Schopenhauer wanted a stable authoritarian state as well as freedom for philosophy, but since religion was simultaneously an indispensable government tool of popular pacification *and* a jealous rival to philosophy intent on monopolizing metaphysics, his two demands could not be easily satisfied together.

Notes

1 Fichte's major philosophical work on politics or the doctrine of right is *Foundations of Natural Right According to the Principles of the Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. Frederick Neuhouser, trans. Michael Baur (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Yet his most famous tract on a political topic is likely his nationalist lectures *Addresses to the German Nation*, ed. and trans. Gregory Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
2 Christopher Janaway, "Introduction," in *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman,

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and Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), xii–xlvi; xxxiii.

3 Shapshay, *Schopenhauer's Ethics*, 74.

4 See Thomas Hobbes, *Man and Citizen (De Homine and De Cive)*, ed. Bernard Gert (Cambridge: Hackett, 1991), 118.

5 David Ruggieri, "The Metaphysics of Conflict: Some Reflections on Schopenhauer's Politics," *Revista Voluntas: Estudos sobre Schopenhauer* 7.1 (2016): 140–54; 140.

6 Schopenhauer's idea that everything consists of will qualifies him a monist. His monism has inspired scholars to explore his relationship to Baruch Spinoza (1632–77), characterized by obvious philosophical affinity and earnest critical engagement, but also anti-Jewish invectives. See Yitzhak Y. Melamed, "Schopenhauer on Spinoza: Animals, Jews, and Evil," in *The Schopenhaurian Mind*, ed. David Bather Woods and Timothy Stoller (London: Routledge, 2023), 390–400. For a recent discussion of Schopenhauer's and Spinoza's monistic idea that the inner essence of all things is one and the same, see Mor Segev, "Schopenhauer's Critique of Spinoza's Pantheism, Optimism, and Egoism," in *A Companion to Spinoza*, ed. Yitzhak Y. Melamed (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2021), 557–67; 558. Spinoza's and Schopenhauer's shared commitment to monism has even moved one commentator to declare Spinoza the most important influence on Schopenhauer. In a 1972 article, Henry Walter Brann concludes that "there is more Spinozism than Kantianism in his [Schopenhauer's] system." See Brann, "Schopenhauer and Spinoza," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 10.2 (1972): 181–96; 196. This Spinozist connection is of interest in the context of Schopenhauer's politics because of Spinoza's importance to the politics of the radical Enlightenment. As the historian Jonathan Israel has argued, Spinoza's monist assumptions led him to challenge all religious authorities in a way that served as a major inspiration for radical egalitarians for the next century and a half. According to Spinoza, "the world must be interpreted in this-worldly terms" and "all reality is governed by a single set of rules," which in turn means that there are "no supernatural realities or forces, no miracles or revelation, and thus no theology." See Israel, *The Enlightenment That Failed: Ideas, Revolution, and Democratic Defeat, 1748–1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 898. The resulting attack on religious claims to authority, Israel argues, paved the way for a more secular and democratic political order: the philosophical claims about the "oneness of substance" were tightly interlinked with the "attack on priestcraft" and the "preference for democracy." See Israel, *The Enlightenment That Failed*, 17. However, the Spinoza-inspired Schopenhauer clearly follows Hobbes politically; there is, in Schopenhauer's works, no straight path from antitheological monism to democratic republicanism. In Israel's 1,000-word volume covering the Spinoza-inspired radical Enlightenment from 1748 to 1830, Schopenhauer is not mentioned.

7 There are numerous critical treatments of how Schopenhauer explains his discovery of the will as the metaphysical substance of the world. Early critics

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immediately identified his conception of the metaphysical will as an obvious weakness of his philosophical system. See, for instance, Haym, "Arthur Schopenhauer," 23–53. For an accessible recent overview of the question of Schopenhauer's claim about philosophical access to the will, see Mara van der Lugt, *Dark Matters*, 338–9. For a brief discussion of why Schopenhauer chose the term "will" for the perpetual striving that he understood as the inner essence of the world, see Neeley, "The Consistency of Schopenhauer's Metaphysics," in *A Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Bart Vandenabeele (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 105–19; 108–9. Some current commentators seek to reconcile Schopenhauer's metaphysical position (the world is will) with his Kant-inspired, restrictive account of the bounds of conceptuality and the unknowability of the thing-in-itself. See, for instance, Sebastian Gardner, "Schopenhauer's Contraction of Reason: Clarifying Kant and Undoing German Idealism," *Kantian Review* 17.3 (2012): 375–401, and "Schopenhauer's Metaphilosophy: How to Think a World without Reason," in *Schopenhauer's Fourfold Root*, ed. Jonathan Head and Dennis Vanden Auweele (London: Routledge, 2017), 11–31. Sandra Shapshay likewise deals with the question by introducing a *hermeneutics* of the will in *Reconstructing Ethics*, 63–4.

8 Simmel, "Schopenhauer und Nietzsche," 228.

9 This list is drawn from Paul Buchholz' reflections on the absence of community in Schopenhauer's non-dialogical philosophy. See Buchholz, *Private Anarchy: Impossible Community and the Outsider's Monologue in German Experimental Fiction* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2018), 37.

10 Simmel, "Schopenhauer und Nietzsche," 308.

11 Julian Young, *Schopenhauer* (London: Routledge, 2005), 179.

12 Sebastian Gardner, "Schopenhauer (1799–1860)," in *The Oxford Handbook of German Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Michael N. Forster and Kristin Gjesdal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 108–36; 114.

13 See, for instance, Robert Wicks, *Schopenhauer* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 123.

14 Wicks, *Schopenhauer*, 127–28.

15 On whether these two ideals – resignation and compassion – are continuous with one another or opposed, see Shapshay, *Schopenhauer's Ethics*, 32.

16 David Wellbery, "Schopenhauer," in *The Routledge Companion to Nineteenth Century Philosophy*, ed. Dean Moyar (Milton Park: Routledge, 2010), 327–46; 337.

17 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Cambridge: Hackett, 1994), 80.

18 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 109.

19 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 109.

20 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 109.

21 Howard Caygill, *The Art of Judgement* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 29.

22 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 109. Note here that Hobbesian political "representation" is different from Schopenhauer's *Vorstellung*, translated as "representation" in

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English. Germans often translate the English representation as "Repräsentation."

23 Joshua Foa Dienstag, *Pessimism: Philosophy, Ethic, Spirit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 87.

24 Richard Wagner, *Dichtungen und Schriften*, ed. Dieter Borchmeyer (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1983), vol. 8, 225. See also Herfried Münkler, *Marx, Wagner, Nietzsche: Welt im Umbruch* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2021), 535.

25 Schopenhauer made the same point in the *Prize Essay on the Freedom of the Will*, in which he wrote that linguistic mediation of concepts enables the "great advances of the human species . . ., namely speech, thoughtfulness, reflection on what is past, care for what is to come, intention, design, the planned collective action of many, the state, sciences, arts, and so forth" (FW: 56).

26 On the tendency of commentators to treat Schopenhauer as a "Hobbesian political thinker," see Robin Winkler, "Schopenhauer's Critique of Moralistic Theories of the State," *History of Political Thought* 34.2 (2013): 296–323; 304.

27 Dienstag, *Pessimism*, 35.

28 Marcin, "Schopenhauer on Law and Justice," 313.

29 Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Foundations of Natural Right According to the Principles of the Wissenschaftslehre*, trans. Michael Baur (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 11.

30 Jordan, "Schopenhauer's Politics," 177.

31 Woods, "Schopenhauer on the State and Morality," 312.

32 On the reactionary strategy of arguing that reforms are hampered by jeopardy, see Albert O. Hirschman, *The Rhetoric of Reaction: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1991).

33 Jordan, "Schopenhauer's Politics," 176.

34 Schopenhauer, *Gesammelte Briefe*, 424. My translation.

35 Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1991), 460. Oakeshott here characterizes a purpose-oriented association in which all members are supposed to pursue the same substantive aim with a civil association in which members are merely obliged to follow rules of conduct but have no shared, unitary aim. It is the latter that mitigates conflict without imposing uniformity, and Oakeshott finds that Schopenhauer captures its character well in his parable of the porcupines. Yet as Chapter 4 of this book will show, Schopenhauer introduced the parable of the porcupines to illustrate the thorny dilemmas of human sociability and not the formation or function of a state understood as a civil association. Oakeshott encapsulates the spirit of Schopenhauer's political thinking well but does so on the basis of Schopenhauer's allegory of the social companionship, not his reflections on statehood.

36 Beiser, *David Friedrich Strauß*, 11.

37 Warren Breckman, *Marx, the Young Hegelians, and the Origins of Radical Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 89.

38 Hans-Christof Kraus, "Stahl, Friedrich Julius," in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 2013, www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118616641.html#ndbcontent.

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39 Friedrich Julius Stahl, *Der Protestantismus als politisches Prinzip: Vorträge auf Veranstaltung des evangelischen Vereins für kirchliche Zwecke* (Berlin: Wilhelm Schulte, 1853), 29. My translation. On the circulation of the slogan "throne and altar" in nineteenth-century Germany, see, for instance, Johannes Michael Schmidt, "Thron und Altar: Bemerkungen zum neuzeitlichen deuschen Protestantismus und zu seiner Stellung zwischen Revolution und Reaktion," *Kerygma und Dogma: Zeitschrift für theologische Forschung und kirchliche Lehre* 19 (1973): 305–27.
40 Stahl quoted in Golo Mann, *Deutsche Geschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: S. Fischer, 1992), 277. My translation.
41 Stahl quoted in Mann, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 277. My translation. As a conservative Protestant, Stahl wanted to defend the evangelical church against the idea that the reformation was an inherently revolutionary movement and that Jesus was a radical figure whose message prefigured socialism. According to him, the fact that the inaugural event of the revolutionary period, the French Revolution, had taken place in a Catholic rather than a Protestant country showed that Protestantism was not to blame for the upheavals. See *Der Protestantismus als politisches Prinzip*, 3 and 29.
42 Ludwig Feuerbach, "Die Philosophie des Rechts nach geschichtlicher Ansicht von Friedr. Jul. Stahl," *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik* 9.2 (July 1835): 1–7 and 9–20; 15. For a comment on the centrality of love in Feuerbach's philosophy, see Löwith, *Von Hegel zu Nietzsche*, 94.
43 See Chapter 4.
44 Schopenhauer, *Gesammelte Briefe*, 339. My translation.
45 Weigt, *Die politischen und sozialen Anschauungen Schopenhauers*, 37. My translation.
46 Michael Jeske, "Ludwig Feuerbach," in *Schopenhauer Handbuch: Leben – Werk – Wirkung*, 2nd ed., ed. Daniel Schubbe and Matthias Koßler (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2018), 264–70; 268.
47 Peter Welsen, *Grundriss Schopenhauer: Ein Handbuch zu Leben und Werk* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2021), 294.
48 Thornhill, *German Political Philosophy*, 159.
49 John Edward Toews, "Church and State: The Problem of Authority," in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, ed. Gareth Steadman-Jones and Gregory Claes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 603–48; 637.
50 Schopenhauer, *Der handschriftliche Nachlaß*, vol. 4.1, 128. My translation.
51 For a discussion of a university professoriate distinguished by competitive research productivity, see Charles McClelland, *State, Society, and University in Germany 1700–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 163–76.
52 Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, 638–9.
53 Schopenhauer, *Der handschriftliche Nachlaß*, vol. 4.1, 98. My translation.
54 Schopenhauer, *Der handschriftliche Nachlaß*, vol. 4.1, 98. My translation.
55 Schopenhauer, *Der handschriftliche Nachlaß*, vol. 4.1, 202. My translation.

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56 Schopenhauer, *Der handschriftliche Nachlaß*, vol. 4.1, 288. My translation.
57 Schopenhauer, *Der handschriftliche Nachlaß*, vol. 4.1, 273. My translation.
58 Schopenhauer, *Der handschriftliche Nachlaß*, vol. 4.1, 288. My translation.
59 Edmund Fawcett, *Conservatism: The Fight for a Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 19.
60 Cartwright, *Schopenhauer*, 517; Houben, "Der Fall Gutzkow/Schopenhauer," 472.
61 Houben, "Der Fall Gutzkow/Schopenhauer," 473.

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