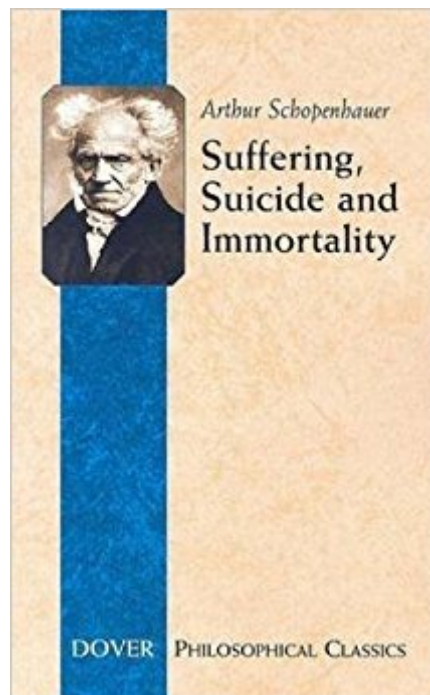




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Suffering, Suicide And Immortality: Eight Essays From The Parerga (The Incidentals) (Philosophical Classics)



Synopsis

One of the greatest philosophers of the nineteenth century, Arthur Schopenhauer is best known for his writings on pessimism. In this 1851 essay collection, he offers concise statements of the unifying principles of his thinking. Schopenhauer, unlike most philosophers, expressed himself in simple, direct terms. These essays offer an accessible approach to his main thesis, as stated in *The World as Will and Representation*. Schopenhauer's reasoning encompasses the influence of the Upanishads and Buddhist teachings, as well as the works of Plato and Kant. His philosophy had an enormous impact on contemporary philosophy and literature, and on subsequent thinkers such as Nietzsche, Freud, and Wittgenstein. Published toward the end of his life in a collection called *Parerga und Paralipomena*, these essays include "On the Sufferings of the World," "On the Vanity of Existence," "On Suicide," "Immortality: A Dialogue," "Further Psychological Observations," "On Education," "On Women," and "On Noise," plus "A Few Parables." They remain among Schopenhauer's most popular works, offering insights into his philosophy as a whole as well as the human condition.

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Customer Reviews

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) elabore dans sa jeunesse un systeme philosophique dont il explore les consequences dans le domaine de la morale et de la religion. Il passe l'essentiel de sa vie a son discours.

For those desiring to place smileys everywhere and see the world through rose-coloured glasses, this book is not for you. Then again, maybe it is. Schopenhauer believes that optimism is really a wicked construction; making a mockery of the unspeakable sufferings of man and animal. If one can't see the truth in this, then another more cogent explanation for evil must be posited. A book for thinking.

Without question - a valid argument of our time

These eight texts from the Parerga are an excellent introduction to Schopenhauer's work, his pessimistic worldview ('the burden of existence'), his phenomenal psychological and philosophical insights, his stances on reason, religion, commerce and education, and his unacceptable misogyny.

Man's life, good and evil

Man's life is a task, the task of subsisting at all. Its material basis is simply health, food, protection from wet and cold, the satisfaction of the sexual instinct. It is full of pain, with a few pleasures and with a continually pressing Time, like a taskmaster with a whip. Man is a continual Becoming, never a Being and it all ends in vain with a sure death.

Evil is what is positive, while good is negative. Happiness and satisfaction always imply some desire fulfilled, some state of pain brought to an end.

Man, reason, suicide, commerce

The real meaning of 'persona' is mask: nobody shows himself as he really is. The whole of our social arrangements may be likened to a perpetual comedy.

For man, reason is a prophet, because it shows the consequences and effects of his actions.

There is nothing in the world to which every man has a more unassailable title than to his own life and person (habeas corpus).

Those whose one aim in life is to fill their purses are miserable wretches.

Religion, ascetism

There are two things which make it impossible to believe that this world is the successful work of an all-wise, all-good, and all-powerful Being: firstly, the misery which abounds in it everywhere; and secondly, the obvious imperfection of its highest product, man.

Ascetism is the denial of the will to live.

Education

Instead of developing the child's own faculties of discernment and of teaching it to judge and think for itself, the teacher uses all his energies to stuff its head full of ready-made thoughts of other people, in order to imprint prejudices which will paralyze it forever.

Misogyny

Schopenhauer's vision on women as being lifelong big children was the main theme in Guy de Maupassant's brilliant bundle of short stories "Le Verrou".

A club of indulgent fellow-masks

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 our fellow-sufferers. The most necessary things in life are tolerance, patience, regard and love of neighbor, of which everyone stands in need and which, therefore, every man owes to his fellow-masks.

The influence of

Schopenhauer's vision on man, on art and more specifically on literature, cannot be overestimated. Highly recommended to all fellow-masks and fellow-sufferers.

This short work contains translated excerpts of the thought of Schopenhauer. It includes a misogynistic section on women in which he argues that women are incapable of real creative work or intellectual activity. It also includes his discussion of Life in which he expresses the opinion that it is largely a loser, a mistake. In fact his whole conception is that mankind's creation was a kind of mistake. In this regard he argues against a basic tenet of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and sings the praises of suicide. Schopenhauer seems to lack an appreciation of the variety and richness of human activity and capacity for pleasure. He sees humans as perpetually dissatisfied, fundamentally unhappy, miserable. He who was so bent on prophesying the Decline of the West, did not foresee any of the remarkable signs of human progress, including lengthening and healthier life spans which are part of the twentieth century story. There is a tremendous amount of suffering in the world. It is right to believe that each and every human being suffers disappointment in life. But there is also much happiness and goodness and well-being in human life which this man was simply incapable of seeing. As a guide to life he is a very poor guru.

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