

Schopenhauer's Political World
European Monarchies, the American Republic, and
Imperial China

Europe, America, and China

Schopenhauer never wavered in his support for monarchy. He believed that kingship ensured the most stable and dependable rule over an always latently restive population, and he was never attracted by republicanism or democracy. Even though he did not quite endorse an autocratic sovereign, a ruler subject to no restrictions at all, and conceded that a people must enjoy protection “against the protector,” he still seems to have preferred a relatively authoritarian state to a relatively liberal and democratic one (WWR II: 610). Hereditary leaders were far superior to elected ones, and the “regal dignity” of kings served stability and security better than “mere presidency” (WWR II: 611).

Yet Schopenhauer's arguments for monarchy's superiority changed over time. His early work provided a condensed Hobbesian account of statehood, according to which rational egoists fearful of each other contract to establish a center of force for the preservation of public peace and security. At least mildly influenced by general debates over the relationship between religion and politics in the decades after the publication of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer then began to express some qualified acceptance of rulers who shore up their power by cultivating an aura of piety and even divine right. In his late work, Schopenhauer made another slight turn and formulated an alternative genealogy of statehood. The state, he argued in the section on politics and jurisprudence in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, originated not in a social contract but in a history of occupation and domination. Its ultimate source was typically an act of military conquest rather than a contractual agreement. Over time, however, a succession of rulers, a dynasty of kings, could achieve genuine rightfulness through the continued exclusion of the force of all others and in this way ensure peace and security. Interestingly, Schopenhauer developed this affirmative, evolutionary account of traditional royal regimes, as an observer of a modern republic – the United States.

In the United States, Schopenhauer discerned a state that sought to realize a “pure constitution or rights” or “pure and abstract justice” (PP II: 228), that is, a condition in which free citizens coexist peacefully with one another, and the integrity and liberty of one independent agent is reconciled with the integrity and liberty of all others. Yet Schopenhauer immediately noted that the American republic was highly volatile and violent, and he attributed this anarchic instability to its abstract, even philosophical quality. As the recent result of a collective agreement, with a well-documented founding and transparent foundation, the American republic did not seem able to contain turmoil and, Schopenhauer argued, even shamefully depended on the exercise of cruel and coercive violence in the form of enslavement of Black people. For Schopenhauer, then, a close look at a republic, defined by the rule of a plurality of (white) men, demonstrated the superiority of monarchy, defined as the rule of “one human being” alone (PP II: 228). The contrast between the American republic and older monarchies showed that the ostensibly repressive and backward system of rule was paradoxically less injurious, less prone to instability, and perhaps even more humane.

Yet Schopenhauer ultimately found neither a volatile and cruel modern republic nor a calmer Christian monarchy deserving of complete endorsement. In a few comments he instead suggested that imperial China more closely approximated an ideal state. The immensely populous and culturally advanced Chinese empire had two commendable features: unlike the United States, it was hierarchical and monarchical, but unlike Europe, it was resolutely nontheist. For Schopenhauer, China demonstrated the viability of his particular combination of political and philosophical preferences – political stability and indifference to theism – on a civilizational scale.

Violence and the Pure Constitution of Right: Schopenhauer’s America

Schopenhauer was quite familiar with civic life in the United States. He read travel accounts such as Archibald Montgomery Maxwell’s *A Run through the United States during the Autumn of 1840* (1841), or Franz Löher’s *History and Conditions of the Germans in America* (1848), and of course he was also an avid reader of English-language newspapers such as the *Times* (WWR II: 642), which featured reports from America. Judging from his references to American society, he viewed the colonies that had declared independence from Great Britain a little more than a decade before his birth as a place for institutional renewal and experiment.

In a passage in his book on the freedom of the will, for example, he stated that the American penitentiary system correctly recognized that all improvement must take place in the sphere of knowledge rather than the sphere of moral character. US prisons of the era, Schopenhauer noted, did not attempt to reform the “*heart*” of criminal individuals but instead tried to persuade the “*head*” by showing them how to achieve their ends with other, more socially acceptable means (FW: 71).¹ A similarly appreciative comment on American trends and insights is found in *On the Basis of Morals*. Here, Schopenhauer noted the existence of an Animal Friends Society in Philadelphia and added that the English activist Thomas Forster (1789–1860) dedicated his book *Philozoia* (1839) to its president (BM: 231). A religious community, the Shakers, also received a detailed treatment in the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation*. In a page-long description of their creed and communal life, Schopenhauer described the size of the Shaker communities (around 6,000 people), their locations (thirteen villages in two states), their communal life, their repudiation of private property, and their exuberant behavior during church services. The significance of this sect for Schopenhauer lay in its commitment to asceticism, which for him represented a reaffirmation of fundamental Christian principles, and even a confirmation of the essentially world-denying character of Christianity. In North America, a continent without a dominant, established church, the essence of Christian teachings could emerge with greater “distinctness” than ever before, in the norms and habits of sects such as the Shakers (WWR II: 641).

Schopenhauer's comments on features of American life – its institutions, associations, and religious communities – indicate that the United States was partially relieved of the arrangements and prejudices of the past. It could therefore function as a place for social reform and perhaps even moral advancement. In his understanding of the United States, the country allowed new views and practices to shape the domains of legal punishment, charity, and religious life.

This freedom from the past and commitment to new ideas were also traits, Schopenhauer thought, of the American political system. The “United States in North America,” he wrote in the second volume of *Parerga and Paralipomena*, embodied the endeavor to found and maintain a “pure and abstract” constitution of rights built on the recognition of each person's worth instead of the privileges of high birth, and on “reasoned research” instead of religion and superstition (PP II: 228). Rather than being burdened by accumulated prerogatives and traditions, the US political and legal system was erected on a “purely natural” foundation (PP II: 228),

which means on reason alone. Most prominently, the United States featured a “republican constitution” (PP II: 229) rather than a hereditary king understood as a ruler “by God’s grace” (PP II: 228).²

Yet Schopenhauer was far from convinced that the rational purity of the US republic was advantageous. According to him, the problem with the “pure” political and legal system was its harmful instability and endemic brutality. This was plain for everyone to see, Schopenhauer implied, as he launched into a long enumeration of all kinds of interpersonal and institutional violence that could be observed in the nineteenth-century United States. In a list intended to horrify the reader, he referred to the lynching of Black Americans, frequent and unpunished assassinations, duels, and a general disrespect for established legal norms throughout society. Similar pathologies recurred, he continued, at the level of the state and its foreign policy. The United States was known for repudiation of its public debts, dishonesty in diplomatic dealings with other states, greedy raids into neighboring countries, and mob rule at the highest level. For Schopenhauer, the United States was a constant spectacle of disorderly and dishonorable behavior, illegality, and viciousness. This record constituted a damning judgment on the very attempt to implement, in the real world, an abstract philosophy of right in the form of a republic. (In the 1915 issue of the *Schopenhauer Yearbook*, a New York-based Schopenhauer admirer noted the philosopher’s critique of the “republican constitution” and its “abstract justice” but added that, should the wise man “to-day sail for America,” he would be “inclined to alter” his views.³)

The connection between violence and the pure constitution of right in Schopenhauer’s argument is complex, partly stated through ellipsis and allegory, and fully visible only through implied contrasts with traditional monarchies. He even introduced the issue of disparate levels of violence in different political systems as a kind of puzzle. Monarchies, he wrote in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, are established by force. The first king, he quoted Voltaire (1694–1774) as saying, was simply a soldier who was “lucky” and gained the upper hand over all rivals (PP II: 224). Royal rule quite obviously did not have its origin in a consensually created system meant to allow free agents to coexist with one another without injustices; instead, it originated in “force” alone (PP II: 224). The prince or lord over a certain area and population was only the most successful among combative and conquering “army commanders” (PP II: 224). Over time, however, a violently achieved monopoly of violence can nonetheless serve to maintain peace, stability, and order by precluding any further contest over power.⁴ In this way, a military campaign, or sheer force, can set up the conditions

for a system of right, at least over a long history. For monarchies, an illegitimate beginning can slowly transform into a legitimate order as it begins to provide its subjects with order and security.

In the case of republics or at least the United States, however, Schopenhauer noted the reverse development. The pure system of right is founded precisely to recognize the dignity and freedom of each person regardless of birth and thus involves no great injustice, such as a military subjugation of others or treatment of the people as a mere "means" (PP II: 224). Yet precisely such a system soon proves to be convulsive and dangerous: it fails to ensure the basic goods of a functioning political system, namely, peace, calm, and lawfulness, and hence comes to betray its own purpose. Rights are, Schopenhauer believed, paradoxically less well-protected in a system with the declared purpose of respecting individual rights.

Schopenhauer's explanation of the peculiar transformations of illegitimacy into legitimacy and legitimacy into volatility and chaos is, again, dispersed, partly implied, and relies on analogy. In one passage, he suggested a curious parallel between the philosophy of right and a chemical phenomenon. A chemical substance presented "purely and in isolation" will, he wrote, prove to be unstable and quickly disintegrate (PP II: 227). When the unadulterated substance combines with some other element to form a composite, however, it settles down and gains greater consistency; even a "slight admixture" to a substance, typically something less precious, prevents evaporation or explosion (PP II: 227). A similar development, Schopenhauer continued, can be observed in the realm of politics. A "pure" system of rights needs a "supplement of arbitrariness and violence" to become effective and to endure in the real world (PP II: 227). On paper, Schopenhauer implied, an ideal system of constitutionalized rights, resting on the equal dignity and freedom of all individuals, does constitute a superior order from a strictly philosophical standpoint; he did not dispute that the arbitrary and unjust exercise of violence with which monarchies are founded is precisely that – arbitrary and unjust. Yet he insisted that pure constitutions of rights must somehow be alloyed or mixed to persist, presumably by means of the concentration of force in one human being understood as the bearer of an "*inborn* prerogative" to rule (PP II: 225). Such inegalitarian or reactionary features of a traditional monarchy cannot ultimately be reconciled with the demands of a purely rational system of rights, in which nobody must accept a legally inferior position or obey a ruler authorized by religion. Still, political systems that feature traditional inequalities and rely on nonrational beliefs about

majesty and privilege will, Schopenhauer thought, prove more stable and allow for a more consistently maintained protection of rights and administration of justice. Monarchies allow individuals a more predictably peaceful existence in a more durable state of justice because and not despite of their murky origins and archaic features.

Why were republics founded on reason alone more violent than monarchies? Schopenhauer suggested more than one answer to this question. Republican volatility is, he first argued, tied to the relative lack of an exclusive, unrivaled center of power that can ensure compliance with the law. Although he did not specify in detail how republican systems work, he seems to have understood them in a conventional way as involving the rule of many rather than the rule of one: governments by a plurality of persons are republics and governments by one person alone are monarchies.⁵ He then claimed that republics, which allow the “participation of the many” in the exercise of rule, tend to weaken and fragment the “concentration and power” of the state (PP II: 226). To keep peace and order effectively, however, Schopenhauer felt that rule should be consolidated in a “unifying point [*Einheitspunkt*]” rather than dispersed, and must therefore be exercised by a single uncontested sovereign rather than a citizenry.⁶ This does not mean that Schopenhauer attributed the right to rule to a princely sovereign without reservation. In one passage, Schopenhauer acknowledged the rightfulness of popular sovereignty – in theory: a ruler cannot “reasonably” dominate a people against its will (PP II: 224). Given the great danger of broader political participation, however, the people also cannot be granted full political participation. They, the people, must therefore be seen as the rightful sovereign, but one that is eternally immature and in need of a (royal) guardian (PP II: 224).

For Schopenhauer, monarchies prevent violence through the concentration of power in one person but also by investing that person with transcendent authority; the “one human being” who rules must be regarded as a “being of a higher kind” (PP II: 228). The problem with republics, Schopenhauer implied, is not simply the *diffusion* of power among a plurality of people but also *disenchantment* of this power. Considering hereditary monarchs, Schopenhauer first claimed that people let themselves be ruled by a figure who stands apart from themselves, or rather stands above them, like a ruler by divine grace. In his mind, the members of a polity do not simply need to be deterred from criminal activity and chaotic behavior by a ruler in complete control of the means of coercion; they need to have someone before whom everyone and everything “bows” (PP II: 228). Only an almost instinctual reverence vis-à-vis a

majestic sovereign and “father of the land” secures lasting obedience (PP II: 224). By contrast, the members of a republic are not sufficiently awed by an authority to comply with the law, and this lack of respect can at least partially explain the eruptions of violence. Schopenhauer did not claim that Americans are intrinsically more brutal than Europeans but, as republican citizens, they were nonetheless more prone to deride the legal apparatus and the laws, quick to take justice in their own hands and settle conflicts by duels, or to act extralegally in other ways. Schopenhauer seems to have believed that laws and conventions deduced solely from human reason and based on the equal standing of all individuals fail to command the respect that people almost automatically pay one elevated ruler. A pure system of right, Schopenhauer believed, is not sufficiently protected by mystical fictions of majesty; as a result, its members do not shy away from ignoring or exploiting it.

Finally, Schopenhauer believed that monarchies make better use of a country's pool of talent than republics. For him, it was axiomatic that mediocre people always and everywhere treat the small number of superior intellects as threats, to both their careers and their self-conceptions. This tendency explained his own failure in German academia: uncreative, second- and third-rate philosophers organized themselves into cliques, parties, and schools to keep great minds out of the academic game. Schopenhauer then claimed that, in a republic with its politically egalitarian spirit and citizen participation, little prevents the mediocre from seizing control of the political system. The mass of undistinguished, parochial people can come together to exclude the few truly eminent individuals from positions of consequence because the equal standing of all means that the unremarkable majority can exploit their crushing size – they benefit from being “always fifty to one” (PP II: 229). In language reminiscent of Alexis de Tocqueville's (1805–59) critique of the “omnipotence of the majority” as the “great peril” of the American republic,⁷ Schopenhauer even observed that the “majority” would always side against the few “eccentric minds” in a political republic as well as in a republic of letters (PP II: 434). Republican governments and universities both suffered from the preponderance of mediocre minds.

Monarchies, by contrast, can better protect and make use of the natural aristocracy of intelligence. Schopenhauer did not think that monarchs themselves were necessarily intelligent. Rather, he thought that their uncontested positions as sole rulers remove them from the everyday competition of individuals for positions and resources; kings simply do not feel threatened by the existence of intellectual giants in the way that

regular mediocre people do. Following a common rationalization of authoritarian rule in early nineteenth-century Germany,⁸ he argued that the unrivaled royal ruler is better suited to recruit and use intelligent subjects as “capable tools” for the benefit of himself and his country (PP II: 229). Consequently, meritocracy was, somewhat paradoxically, a more likely feature of monarchies than of republics. In this context, too, Schopenhauer’s conception of effective leadership hinged on conferring all the authority, and all the glory, upon one person. When the highest status and the ultimate decision-making ability become completely unavailable to all but one figure, society quiets down: people become less eager to take matters in their own hands and they have fewer opportunities to silence and sideline the truly intelligent among them. With the elevation of a glorified king over all others and the transfer of all coercive power into the hands of one sovereign figure, Schopenhauer argued, norm compliance increases, extra-legal violence drops, and the dubious power of the majority and its organized mediocrity is neutralized. If peace, order, calm, and security are the primary goods to be delivered by any political regime, then monarchies are superior to republics.

American Slavery and Schopenhauer's Conception of Politics

Schopenhauer’s comparative view of republics and monarchies fits neatly with his conception of the fundamental problem of society and the purpose of politics. In his view, people are egoistic, unreliable, unfair, ruthless, and malicious, all of which makes society anarchic and unsafe, and hence politics must above all impose restraints on individual behavior. Monarchies fulfil this mission better than republics. To Schopenhauer, then, his comments on the volatility and violence of the American republic reflected the core belief in his political philosophy: the state exists to control disruptive social strife. Even though the examination of the United States may have prompted him to develop a more evolutionary, historical account of monarchies and their strengths, he still regarded the ineradicable war of all egoists against all other egoists as the major danger of society.

Yet Schopenhauer’s discussion of the United States also hinted at the limits of his conception of politics as a shield against the dangers of anarchy. According to him, the problem of the American republic was not simply the state’s inability to maintain internal order, which is to say its failure to perform the central or even the sole task of politics. The feature of antebellum American society he most often commented on was

instead its oppressive and exploitative system of slavery. American slavery was, one can even say, one of the most frequently invoked examples of large-scale human cruelty throughout his work.

There are many passionate indictments of slavery in Schopenhauer's work, dispersed over his main texts. In a chapter on pantheism in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, he observed the sadistic injustice of American enslavement in which six million enslaved Black people had to endure "sixty million lashes a day" (PP II: 93). In the essay on nothingness and suffering in the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation*, he invoked "Negro slavery" as undeniable evidence of the total moral indifference and brutality with which "human beings treat other human beings" (WWR II: 593). The civilized world is generally a great masquerade, Schopenhauer stated in the chapter on ethics in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, with ferocious egoism hiding behind the façade of respectability, patriotism, and piety. Yet in American society, he added, the contrast between the performance of religiosity and shocking inhumanity had assumed a hellish quality. The churchgoing, strictly observant members of the slave-owning society, including Anglican ministers, were "devils in human form" with "infernal claws" sunk into the bodies of their "innocent black brothers" (PP II: 193).⁹

In his tract on ethics, Schopenhauer likewise wrote about slavery. Among the many crimes of Christianity he included the capture and violent displacement of 150,000 Africans annually for "endless convict labor" in America (BM: 222).¹⁰ In the New Testament, he pointed out, "no word is spoken against slavery," and American proponents of slavery invoked slave-owning Old Testament figures such as Jacob and Abraham (BM: 219).¹¹ Across his different texts, then, Schopenhauer presented slavery as proof of the moral indifference and physical brutality of human beings. For him, the subjugation and permanent domination of millions of people stood out as a horrific injustice – the slaveholding states of North America were, he declared, an "infamous stain" on the "whole of humanity" (PP II: 193).¹²

The repeated comments on slavery in the American republic were informed by Schopenhauer's acquaintance with British abolitionist literature. In *Parerga and Paralipomena* he cited the 1841 report by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (a philanthropic organization formed in 1839),¹³ *Slavery and the Internal Slave Trade in the United States of North America* (PP II: 193).¹⁴ In *On the Basis of Morals* he mentioned the work of one of the society's founding members, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton's (1786–1845) *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy* (1839) (BM: 222).¹⁵

Schopenhauer's frequent invocations of slavery fit his philosophy in one obvious way. He deemed the world a place of pervasive pain, and the

enslavement of millions of people certainly illustrated this belief. One could even make the claim that Schopenhauer began his journey toward philosophical pessimism through his “deeply affecting encounter with the mass suffering engendered by organized captivity”¹⁶ in the shipbuilding yard in Toulon.¹⁷ As an older philosopher, he returned to the issue of captivity and slavery to declare that the world was a hellish place, and that white slave owners and religious slave apologists in the United States acted like devils to Black people.

Yet Schopenhauer's preoccupation with slavery does not appear entirely consistent with his basic conception of politics, which took individual egoistic behavior to be the main source of social problems and suggested the construction of a strong state as the main response. Slavery was not, at least not superficially, a problem of anarchy. In his discussions of North American slavery, Schopenhauer did try to connect it to egoism by pointing out that the root cause of slavery was the greedy desire for luxurious consumption. In *The World as Will and Representation*, he observed that the “final purpose” of enslavement in his era was enrichment and enjoyment of goods: the enslaved people of the New World produced much-desired commodities such as “sugar and coffee,” which means that the moral scandal of slavery originated in the egoistic desire for luxuries (WWR II: 593). In *Parerga and Paralipomena*, too, he characterized American slavery as a thoroughly modern, commercially motivated phenomenon. The system of slavery was a form of production geared toward supplying an international market with “sugar, coffee, tea,” and other “superfluities” (PP II: 222). For Schopenhauer, slavery illustrated how people's craving for profits and goods causes them to exploit others or ignore the plight of the exploited.

Yet despite Schopenhauer's understanding of slavery as rooted in egoism, its systematic quality nonetheless makes it stand out in his reflections on politics. Slavery renders visible that humans cause other humans suffering in large-scale systems of production “backed by the force of law”¹⁸ and not just through isolated criminal acts. Individual desire and greed may be the underlying pathologies of a slave society, but these dispositions do not simply become apparent in the form of acts of violence perpetrated against some individuals by others. Rather, they pervade or structure society in the form of institutionalized and routinized domination on slave plantations. In his comments on slavery, then, Schopenhauer seemed to acknowledge that some groups are tyrannized by others under supposedly non-anarchic conditions, and that the tyrants are protected by law. The most pressing problem of the American republic

was not its high levels of interpersonal violence in the form of “frequent and unpunished” assassinations, duels, and public derision of the law, but the “unjust oppression” of Black people, or the “Negro slavery that cries to heaven” (PP II: 228). In his general comments on politics, Schopenhauer mostly addressed the ever-present danger of a war of all against all, whereas in his comments on the contemporary world, he acknowledged the reality of one racial group’s exercise of cruel and unjust tyranny over another racial group. Oppression, not anarchy, emerged as a grave problem, perhaps even the gravest.

The collective and systemic character of modern slavery, Schopenhauer also argued, required a special remedy. When he addressed the case of US slavery as an example of human cruelty and implacability, he imagined not the construction of a centralized state able to discipline ferocious individuals but instead a veritable military campaign against the American South. With the report of the British Anti-Slavery Society in hand, he wrote, one could preach a “crusade for the subjugation” of the “slaveholding states” (PP II: 193). This proposed “subjugation [*Unterjochung*]”¹⁹ (PP II: 193) of the slaveholding states even echoes the wrong of slavery itself, which he defined as the “subjugation [*Unterjochung*] of other individuals” (WWR I: 361).²⁰ The “oppressed” rarely see an “avenger or vindicator” in the fragmented world of representation, he wrote in *The World as Will and Representation*, but in the case of American slavery, he seemed to hope that one would materialize (WWR I: 380).

In passages like this, it appears that Schopenhauer’s political imagination is broader than his evident concern for the problem of the war of all and the solution of centralized statehood. His remarks on slavery indicate that he recognized the specificity of oppression and articulated, however laconically, the need for militant struggle against it. Without explicitly modifying his conception of politics as rational conflict management, he envisaged, at least in passing, a kind of politics that would consist not in the enforcement of law against egoists or the prudent performance of interpersonal politeness, but in the armed intervention or “crusade” against an unjust enemy class, even if he understood it as a gigantic act of policing within a state rather than an attack on a foreign state. He would likely have approved of the Union Army’s military rule over the Confederacy, but he did not live to see it; he passed away in September 1860, a little over half a year before the outbreak of the American Civil War in April 1861.

The concept of subjugation and oppression did not only appear in Schopenhauer’s treatment of North American slavery. As Robert Wicks has pointed out, Schopenhauer persistently depicted the intellect’s

relationship to the will as one of coercive servitude.²¹ For Schopenhauer, the intellect is a “hired hand assigned to a miserable task,” a “bondsmen of the will,” or even a “slave” condemned to near-endless labor under the will as its “demanding master.”²² Judging by his dramatic metaphoric language, the metaphysical core of the world – the indefatigable, “inexorable” will (WWR I: 301) – can be seen as a “master” (WWR II: 228) and oppressor, forcing the intellect to carry out “penal servitude” in an enduring state of “slavery to the will” (WWR I: 220). Correspondingly, the accomplishments of “highly gifted people” depend on their ability to break free of or liberate themselves from the will (WWR II: 397). Schopenhauer explicitly understood these moments as an “emancipation of the intellect from the service to the will,” although of course this was an emancipation without a dimension of collective coordination (WWR II: 397). One commentator even refers to the ascetic’s systematic effort to “mortify the will” (WWR I: 415) as a kind of “revolt,” although the aim is not further action and the exercise of power by a new regime but a total pacification of all desire.²³

In a sense, Schopenhauer’s model of society and his model of the self did not fully match each other. He tended to see the default state of society as one of anarchic war rather than tyranny, but he pictured the fundamental internal structure of the individual as one of oppressive enslavement rather than chaotic competition. Within the individual, the intellect is typically overpowered by and subservient to the will, but within society, the fragmented will clashes with itself in the form of warring egoists. The genius’s great achievement is prepared by breaking the “solid chains” that bind the intellect to the will (WWR II: 397), whereas the business of politics consists precisely in the reconstruction of an unassailable hierarchy of authority among will-driven individuals.

Cruel Republic: American Anarchy and American Oppression

Interestingly, however, Schopenhauer’s discussion of the US system of slavery as a blatant form of oppression did not prompt him to depart from his core conception of politics as a necessary response to a fractured empirical world of egoists. Instead, he sought to integrate his emphatic antislavery position into his set of arguments for a strong sovereign. He did so by associating slavery with volatile republics rather than stable monarchies. When Schopenhauer addressed the topic of slavery in various contexts and works, it was mostly with the intent to illustrate broader claims about the moral depravity of Christianity, civilization, or humanity

in general, and to deny the idea of a good world or benevolent divine creator. Yet in the section on politics in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, he moved away from the general accusation against the immorality of humankind and instead treated slavery as a political institution, tying it more closely to the pure realization of a philosophy of right in the form of a republican constitution. Indeed, he believed that the enslavement of Black people was the shameful foundation of a republican system of government built on the explicit repudiation of dynastic inheritance, absolutist rule, and royal sovereignty. Ultimately, Schopenhauer viewed American republicanism, and thus republican anarchy, as entwined with rather than distant from American oppression.

The correlation between republicanism as a form of government, on the one hand, and slavery as a way of organizing production, on the other, is explicit in Schopenhauer's argument. He noted as a matter of fact that most historical republics have relied on large-scale enslavement. In the Greek, Roman, or Carthaginian republics, he stated, "five-sixths or perhaps seven-eighths of their population consisted of *slaves*" (PP II: 231). It was therefore not terribly surprising to him that, in 1840, there were "three million slaves" among the "sixteen million inhabitants" in the United States (PP II: 231). To him, republics, "artificially made" and stemming "from reflection," were dependent on enslavement in a way that monarchies were not (PP II: 230).

The discussion of republicanism and slavery was not new in 1850, and Schopenhauer's observations were not original. For decades, observers had remarked that modern supporters of republicanism often countenanced enslavement. Already in 1781, the Welsh churchman and writer Josiah Tucker (1713–99) noted that the "most eminent republican writers" tolerated slavery while "pleading so warmly for Liberty for themselves."²⁴ And in 1775, the author and lexicographer Samuel Johnson (1709–84) had summed up the matter in a simple, sharp question: "how is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?"²⁵ Schopenhauer was hardly saying something novel when he pointed out that the American champions of the struggle against absolute monarchy tended to justify and practice the "white master's absolute power over the black slave."²⁶

Yet Schopenhauer's resolutely antirepublican, antislavery stance nonetheless deserves attention because it does not align with either side of the era's dominant political polarity. For an American antislavery politician such as Abraham Lincoln (1809–65), the "monstrous injustice" of slavery was incompatible with true republicanism and undermined its purpose

and strength. "I hate it [slavery]," Lincoln declared in his speech at Peoria, Illinois (1854), "because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world – enables the enemies of free institutions, with plausibility, to taunt us as hypocrites."²⁷ For a proslavery figure such as the Virginia planter and lawyer George Fitzhugh (1806–81), however, a large population of free white men demanded the presence of enslaved Black people who carried out menial labor. Writing in the same year as Lincoln, in 1854, he proudly claimed that our "citizens [in the South], like those in Rome and Athens, are a privileged class."²⁸ For the South Carolina senator John C. Calhoun (1782–1850), "civilized society" required one portion of the community – white men – to live on "the labor of the other" and hence slavery was not a contradiction of republican freedom (for white men) but instead its very foundation and condition of possibility.²⁹ A less public figure, the Virginia planter surgeon and diarist Richard Eppes (1824–96), made a similar argument in his private notes: "A Republic could not endure where the law of universal suffrage existed without a slave basis."³⁰ For Lincoln, the republic was hollowed out by the injustice of slavery, whereas for the Southern writers, slavery enabled republicanism by supporting the liberty and independence of white men. Schopenhauer sided with Lincoln's position in rejecting the monstrosity of slavery, but he shared the analysis of Southern slavery apologists who understood enslavement as an integral part of (white) republicanism. Hence, he rejected slavery *and* republicanism and considered the two entangled with one another.

Schopenhauer clearly believed that his fierce moral opposition to slavery and his repudiation of modern republicanism were mutually supportive. But how did he explain the close relationship between republicanism and slavery? The link becomes a little clearer when one examines the contrast he drew between republics and monarchies. To be ruled by one figure, Schopenhauer first stated, comes easily to all: "the monarchical form of government is the one natural to mankind" (PP II: 229). Apparently untroubled by the very frequent and liberal use of the term "natural," he argued, in one and the same section of *Parerga and Paralipomena*, that the pure constitution of right in the United States can be called the "natural one" (PP II: 228) in the sense that it was based solely on reason, but that the near-instinctual propensity of people everywhere to follow and obey one leader and hence to live in a monarchy was entirely "natural" in the sense that it was habitual or instinctual (PP II: 229).

In a list of disparate examples all meant to confirm this supposed naturalness of a royal rule, Schopenhauer then claimed that any human

enterprise associated with danger is typically headed by one general or commander-in-chief. In the animal kingdom, he continued, most cooperative animal species have one and only one individual at the top, such as a queen bee in a beehive or the leader wolf in a wolf pack. Finally, even animal organisms are “constructed monarchically” with the brain in the position of the regent and the other organs such as the heart or the lungs in the roles of loyally contributing “philistines” themselves incapable of rule (PP II: 229). With this partly whimsical-sounding naturalization of monarchy in place, Schopenhauer could argue that republics are downright “anti-natural” (PP II: 230). Since the rule of a single person renders kingdoms natural, the unnaturalness of republics lies in the way they raise a greater number of people to political influence and leadership. The obvious consequence of this broader political participation, Schopenhauer then also claimed, is the rule of the mediocre, or worse, “ever-increasing ochlocracy” (PP II: 228).

Yet in his indictment of republican pathologies, he also assumed a link between the elevation of more than one person to the level of leadership and the domination of others. Republics, he wrote, must constantly maintain a perversely artificial and “anti-natural” political order in which many people engage in the business of rule (PP II: 230). To facilitate the creation of a large class of leaders relieved from labor, he further implied, both ancient and modern republics force large groups of people into personal servitude. The proudly independent republicans who shared political power in the United States simultaneously acted as despots *in their households*, ruling over groups of enslaved people who worked for them and enabled them to pursue other activities. Schopenhauer's underlying assumption here seems to be that some form of stark political and economic hierarchy is inevitable, and that societies that choose not to elevate one figure to a position of uncontested authority must allow for another kind of stratification. Monarchy turns one person into a supreme being and all others into lowly subjects. This may seem like an unacceptably inequalitarian arrangement, inconsistent with the pure philosophy of right, but monarchical rule still embodies a comparatively simple and efficient hierarchy; one and only one person needs to be raised above all others. Republics, by contrast, induct a much larger group of independent individuals into political leadership, but, in Schopenhauer's account, the republican wish to remove and replace the single monarch correlates with a proliferation of petty oppressors – with the existence, in other words, of a class of slaveholders, each one strengthened by the labor of others and eager to resist a royal tyrant. As the Southern slavery apologists argued in

the 1850s, US republicanism required that the “working class be political eunuchs and enslaved”;³¹ not coincidentally, very few slaveholders were monarchists.³² Schopenhauer to some extent agreed with their analysis of the preconditions of republican government, but of course rejected the system of slavery as scandalously inhumane.³³

Schopenhauer’s contention that “anti-natural” republics demand enslavement is associated with his critiques of the republican dispersal of centralized power and the parallel empowerment of a mob of mediocrities. For him, slavery was the most egregious consequence of emphasizing the liberty of (white) citizens and distributing power among them. The assault on the central political hierarchy – the one involving the mystically authorized king and the people – was linked to the multiplication of masters, petty rulers whose ability to engage in republican politics was based on their personal domination of groups of Black people. Schopenhauer would presumably have been unsurprised to learn that for “thirty-two of the United States’ first thirty-six years of existence, slave-owners from Virginia occupied the post of president.”³⁴

In writings not related to the situation in the United States, Schopenhauer claimed that republics tend toward anarchy, and monarchies tend toward despotism. He defined anarchy as an “a collection of independent savages,” and despotism as the rule of one mighty lord over people degraded to a “group of slaves” (WWR I: 370). Both situations are deeply undesirable and represent defective political conditions. In anarchic circumstances without any concentration and centralization of power, individual humans can still do too much violence to each other, and social life remains unpredictable and dangerous. In a despotic condition, in which a tyrant rules over everyone, most humans are too vulnerable to the arbitrary coercive power of one master who then rules over *de facto* enslaved people; as such, they are deprived of rights, frequently wronged, and suffer injustice.

In Schopenhauer’s late analysis of the United States, however, this earlier distinction between the opposite tendencies of anarchy and despotism seems to have broken down. In effect, Schopenhauer presented the American republic as both more anarchic *and* more despotic than a monarchy. To him, anarchy and despotism were entwined in America since the republican system that failed to reduce violence to an acceptable level also featured brutal racial oppression. The tendentially anarchic proliferation of politically independent agents in a republic was even combined with, and sustained through, the proliferation of small despotic fiefdoms in the form of slave plantations. Schopenhauer noted the

remarkable material prosperity of the United States, but still concluded that this prominent example of a pure constitution of rights and true republicanism should not be emulated; it was defiled by violence and cruelty that stemmed both from anarchic volatility and from despotic racial enslavement. For him, the United States demonstrated that anarchy (high levels of interpersonal violence) and oppression (one group tyrannically dominating another) were not necessarily opposites but could be corresponding consequences of fragmented power.

The Ideal of Imperial China

Schopenhauer preferred monarchy, and kept defending it throughout his writings, but his arguments for it changed slightly over time. In the first volume of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer focused on the contractually based legitimacy of rule. Egoistic individuals, indifferent to the losses and injuries of others but fearful of attacks on their person and their property, come to understand that they would benefit more from a condition of lawfulness than an anarchic one. Influenced by debates about politics and theology in the age of Hegelian philosophers and reactionary royalists, Schopenhauer then gradually became more aware of religious supports for the state, captured in the conservative motto “altar and throne.” In his discussion of monarchies and republics, which was influenced by the example of the United States, Schopenhauer appeared to put even more emphasis on the state’s need for popular belief in consecrated rule, divine election, dynastic inheritance, and royal blood. Monarchies are less fissiparous than republics because of their greater concentration of power, but also because they elevate the king and thereby activate people’s instincts of reverence and obedience. Republics, by contrast, explicitly rely on the consent of their citizens but then remain more vulnerable to the energies of egoism.

None of this means that Schopenhauer slowly turned into a conservative-religious royalist of the kind that still existed in the early nineteenth century. He never made an argument for monarchy that would have been entirely satisfying to contemporary courts and their reactionary defenders, who typically rejected social contract theories and believed that the state and church together carried out God’s work by curbing human sinfulness.³⁵ In his early works, Schopenhauer’s emphasis on contractual agreement as the basis for genuine statehood bracketed any sacralizing account of kingship. In his later works, he presented the alliance between the altar and the throne as politically expedient, not as theologically

appropriate. He preferred mature monarchies not because he considered their mystical justifications substantively true, but because he thought their qualities allowed them to achieve the aims of statehood more robustly than other regimes. Schopenhauer's defense of monarchies is a distinctly modern, postrevolutionary, and instrumentalist one, rooted only in the conviction that they will serve security.

In his treatment of the American republic, Schopenhauer might seem to side more resolutely with European monarchies, but he thought there was a third alternative on the horizon: imperial China. Even though Schopenhauer's comments on China are not extensive, they still suggest that the empire in the East avoided both the republican volatility and the traditional monarchical alliance with the Christian church. In other words, China's example demonstrated that a polity could achieve a good degree of stability without depending on a Christian political theology; it could be free from both modern-republican and monarchical-reactionary pathologies.

Schopenhauer expressed great respect for Chinese society. Beginning with the premise that "civilization keeps pace with population," he concluded that China, with its "almost unbelievable" population size, must be one of the most civilized countries in the world (WN: 431). Imperial China was, Schopenhauer also noted, clearly a monarchical state. For the Chinese, he claimed, alternatives to monarchical government were in fact so alien that they could not "understand at all what a republic is" (PP II: 230). On the basis of the Dutch traveler and diplomat Jean Nieuhof's (1618–72) memoir about his experiences in China, Schopenhauer reported that a 1658 Dutch delegation to China decided to call the Prince of Orange the Dutch king, since the Chinese would have seen Holland as nothing but a "nest of pirates" if it had been presented truthfully, as the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands (PP II: 230). As other thinkers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, such as Edmund Burke (1729–97) and Friedrich Schiller (1759–1806), Schopenhauer tied China closely to monarchism³⁶ and thought this association made the country admirable.

China's civilizational maturity was further visible in its low levels of interpersonal violence. Like Hindus and Muslims, Schopenhauer claimed in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, the Chinese possessed no concept of feudal-chivalric honor and were not plagued by unnecessary duels among members of a foolish aristocracy; the chivalric code was "endemic just in Christian Europe" and not in Asia (PP I: 324). Even better, the Chinese regarded politeness as a "cardinal virtue" (PP I: 406), which in

Schopenhauer's mind meant that they were committed to the "conventional and systematic denial of egoism . . . in everyday intercourse" and hence to the prudential prevention and de-escalation of hostilities (BM: 191). China thus supplemented its stable monarchical political system with an "emphatic attention" to good manners³⁷ as a means to mute and avert conflict. Like other European philosophers before him, including Montesquieu (1689–1755), Schopenhauer believed that China featured a "multilayered, tightly integrated system of values" that effectively coordinated government power and societal conventions, or "laws, mores, and manners," in a way that made the regime "practically unassailable."³⁸ All in all, this meant that China closely approximated his political ideal of a strong sovereign state coupled with prudently polite subjects; the empire in the East neatly enacted the two-pronged program of harm reduction that he prescribed in his political thought. As European observers of China noted, there were few cracks in the Chinese "civilizational edifice."³⁹

Violence was not miraculously extirpated from Chinese culture, however. Schopenhauer referred to strokes with a bamboo cane as a "very frequent civil punishment," applied even to Chinese officials (PP I: 337). Yet in these cases, it was the military and the government apparatus that decided on and administered the punishments "in Chinese fashion" (PP I: 342). In China, the monopoly of violence belonged firmly to the state. In sum, Schopenhauer saw China as a country with a high civilizational "standing" thanks to a strong state ruling over a population of politically circumspect individuals (WN: 431).

At the same time, Schopenhauer made it clear on several occasions that China was a non-Christian and even nontheistic empire, without a concept of a divine being in the style of the monotheistic religions. In the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation*, he wrote that the Chinese language had no noun for God, as humbled Christian missionaries sent to the East found out (WWR II: 640). China was not, Schopenhauer claimed in the second edition of *The Fourfold Root of Reason* (1847), an irreligious empire, but its three religions – Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism – were all "atheistic" (FR: 121). The Chinese evidently did not believe in, and did not even possess a vocabulary for, a divine creator and lord of the universe. In consequence, any lazy identification of "religion and theism" was prejudicial and false (FR: 120). In *On Will in Nature*, Schopenhauer likewise pointed out that the Chinese, contrary to early European expectations, did not worship a single supreme god, but instead practiced a nontheist religiosity. The Chinese emperor

professed all three religions, but their very character seems to have prevented a politically exploitable analogy between the supreme ruler and the godhead. The largest of the three religions, Buddhism, did not receive, but also did not need, any special “protection of the state” (WN: 434), and the wisdom of Confucius, which Schopenhauer deemed a “broad, commonplace, and predominantly political and moral philosophy,” was “without a metaphysics” (WN: 432). In other words, Schopenhauer felt that the mutual support between a monarchical state and a theist church, which was characteristic of European or German kingdoms, was absent in China. The Chinese state did not prop up the majority religious community (Buddhism), and the most politically adapted creed (Confucianism) did not impose constraints on metaphysical speculation. While Schopenhauer did not discuss the situation of philosophy – and of philosophers – in China, he confidently claimed that philosophically rigorous “attacks on theism” would not scandalize the Chinese state and not be subjected to repression and censorship (FR: 120). Since Buddhism contained a doctrine of the “merely apparent existence of the world,” the Chinese would even be friendly to the tradition of idealism to which he himself was committed (FR: 120–1).

It is well-known that Schopenhauer felt that his own metaphysical teachings were corroborated by the authority of Chinese sources. The “striking” agreement of accepted ideas in the East and his independently developed philosophy supplied a welcome confirmation of his thought that nonetheless did not detract from its great originality (FW: 438). Looking at China, Schopenhauer also discerned a combination of strong political hierarchy and nontheistic religion that he could not find in the transatlantic West. To him, China proved that a choice between deeply flawed American republicanism and religiously propped-up European monarchism was false. He did not need to accept a “pure” constitution of right as the highest political stage (the United States), nor did he need to embrace the customary alliance between royal sovereignty and Christian political theology (Europe). Instead, China demonstrated how a non-republican, centralized state ruling over a peaceful country could work without a theistic system of beliefs.

If anything, Schopenhauer judged imperial China almost too successful in keeping peace over long time spans and dangerously complacent in the face of unexpected mass aggression from the outside. In a footnote in the section on jurisprudence and politics in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, Schopenhauer noted briefly that the Chinese may have mistakenly cultivated only the “arts of peace” and not the “arts of war” and that,

consequently, they stood defenseless against “rebels within and the European without” (PP II: 219). The Chinese imperial state and its prudently polite subjects approximated Schopenhauer's political ideal, but, as the precarious mid-century situation of the “biggest empire in the world” revealed (PP II: 219), the existence of ruthless, predatory egoists still required never-ending vigilance. In a world of international aggression and colonial conquest, an internal commitment to centralized statehood and a culture of prudent politeness would not be sufficient to keep the peace. As Schopenhauer pointed out, politics as the active management of strife would never come to an end, and Eris, the goddess of strife and discord, would always reappear: “when she [Eris] has been banished in the form of a conflict between individuals through the institution of the state, she will return externally as war between nations” (WWR I: 377).

Notes

- 1 The late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century prison reforms were often based on the idea of criminals as potentially rational actors who could be educated. The idea of educability was coupled with a stricter type of incarceration, involving the prohibition of visitors from the outside world and the greater separation of prisoners from one another. For a brief overview of rationalist prison reforms in the United States, England, and the rest of Europe, see Daniel Yveta, “The Cultural History of Crime,” in *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Europe 1789–1914*, ed. Stefan Berger (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 353–68; 357. For a discussion of Schopenhauer's critique of solitary confinement as an unusually cruel modern punishment frequently leading to suicide, see Woods, “Seriously Bored.”
- 2 Schopenhauer ignored or was unaware of the pronounced monarchy-like element of the US governmental system, that is, the strong presidency, which some of the Founding Fathers saw as similar to an elective monarchy. On the early United States as a “monarchical republic,” see Gordon Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789–1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 53–94.
- 3 B. A. Ladd, “Schopenhauer and America,” *Viertes Jahrbuch der Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft* (1915): 90–6; 90.
- 4 Neil Jordan briefly notes that Schopenhauer offered a more “evolutionary” view of state formation in his late writings. See Jordan, “Schopenhauer's Politics,” 179. In a 1917 lecture on Schopenhauer and Hegel, a professor Joh. Schubert argued that rightful conditions of rule evolve out of relationships of domination thanks to the emergent strategic self-restraint of rulers – enduring “power over others” presupposes “power over oneself [*die Herrschaft über sich selbst*].” Inspired by Schopenhauer's antipode Hegel, he implied that Schopenhauer likewise thought that rule by “pure physical violence” alone

- cannot last and that the character of rule must change over time. See Joh. Schubert, "Die Auffassung vom Staat bei Schopenhauer und Hegel," *Siebentes Jahrbuch der Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft* (1918): 240–4; 242. My translation.
- 5 For a recent discussion of ancient and modern conceptions of republics, see James Hankins, *Virtue Politics: Soulcraft and Statecraft in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2019), 63–102.
- 6 Arthur Schopenhauer, *Werke in zehn Bände (Zürcher Ausgabe)*, vol. 9, ed. Arthur Hübscher (Zurich: Diogenes, 1977), 272. My translation.
- 7 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Isaac Kramnick (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007), 157.
- 8 See Hajo Holborn, "Der deutsche Idealismus in sozialgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung," *Historische Zeitschrift* 174.2 (1952): 359–84; 367.
- 9 It should be added that Schopenhauer's genuine and repeated critique of Black enslavement does not mean that he was free from racist ideas and conceptions. In *Parerga and Paralipomena*, he claimed that Black people are "the most sociable human beings" because they are "intellectually definitely inferior" (PP I: 289). However, Schopenhauer did not seem to have been a crude race essentialist who believed in an inalterable hierarchy between eternally distinct races. In the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation* he impatiently declared that "there is no white race, however much has been said about it; instead every white person is bleached" (WWR II: 563). As Christopher Janaway argues, Schopenhauer viewed whiteness as an accidental result of migration into northern regions and climates: the white people of Europe appear as "an off-centre, peripheral type of human, deviant from an original common blackness." See Janaway, "Schopenhauer, Europe, and Eurocentrism," in *The Schopenhaurian Mind*, ed. David Bather Woods and Timothy Stoll (London: Routledge, 2023), 342–56; 346–7.
- 10 Schopenhauer takes this figure from Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy* (London: John Murray, 1840), 15.
- 11 Schopenhauer was correct to claim that religious figures in the American South justified slavery with reference to Christianity. See, for instance, Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 60–1.
- 12 Schopenhauer was aware of the customary distinction between ancient slavery and modern plantation-based enslavement of Africans in North America. In the dialogue on religion in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, one of the interlocutors, the critical Philateles, attacks modern American slavery geared toward large-scale production of goods such as sugar and compares the plight of enslaved Black people to the better-treated servants of ancient masters (PP II: 315).
- 13 James Heartfield, *The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1838–1956: A History* (London: Hurst, 2016).
- 14 British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, *Slavery and the internal slave trade in the United States of North America, being replies to questions transmitted by the*

- Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-slavery Society for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade throughout the world* (London: T. Ward, 1841).
- 15 Fowell Buxton, *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy*.
 - 16 Jared Sexton, "Affirmation in the Dark," *The Comparatist* 43 (2019): 90–111; 95.
 - 17 See the Introduction to this book.
 - 18 Sexton, "Affirmation," 95.
 - 19 Schopenhauer, *Werke in zehn Bände*, vol. 9, 231. My translation.
 - 20 Schopenhauer, *Werke in zehn Bände*, vol. 2, 418. My translation.
 - 21 Wicks, *Schopenhauer*, 165.
 - 22 Wicks, *Schopenhauer*, 164–5.
 - 23 Günter Zöller, "Schopenhauer on the Self," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 18–43; 38.
 - 24 Josiah Tucker cited in Danielle Charette, "David Hume and the Politics of Slavery," *Political Studies* (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00323217231157516>.
 - 25 Samuel Johnson, *Taxation No Tyranny: An Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress* (London: Printed for T. Cadell, 1775), 89.
 - 26 Losurdo, *Liberalism: A Counter-History*, 32.
 - 27 Abraham Lincoln, *Collected Works*, vol. 2 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 255.
 - 28 George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South, or The Failure of Free Society* (Richmond: A. Morris, 1854), 93.
 - 29 Calhoun quoted in Robert Elder, *Calhoun: American Heretic* (New York: Basic Books, 2021), 338.
 - 30 Shearer Davis Bowman, *Masters & Lords: Mid-19th-Century U.S. Planters and Prussian Junkers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 150.
 - 31 Bowman, *Masters & Lords*, 150.
 - 32 Eugene D. Genovese, *The Slaveholder's Dilemma: Freedom and Progress in Southern Conservative Thought, 1820–1860* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2021), 77.
 - 33 Edmund Morgan has suggested that slavery enabled Virginia republicanism because strictly coerced and supervised slave labor made republican politics attractive to wealthy Virginia landowners who would otherwise have feared the rebelliousness of the free poor. When the poor were caged through enslavement, forced to work for private masters, and did not appear as an uncontrolled "leveling mob," those private masters were happy to make politics more participatory among the nonslave population. See Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), 380–6. In light of Morgan's portrait of antebellum Virginia, one can see proslavery republicanism and Schopenhauer's antislavery monarchism as two different responses to the threat of the restive poor. Schopenhauer vehemently rejected the institution of slavery but then endorsed a strong monarchical sovereign able to put down any rebelliousness among the poor masses that

would threaten the property-owning class. Virginia republicans, by contrast, celebrated republicanism as a form of government – but then felt that they had found a way to control the working population, namely, through slavery.

- 34 Losurdo, *Liberalism: A Counter-History*, 12.
- 35 For a characterization of German or Prussian conservative noblemen and their preference for sacralized royal rule in a still-feudal setting, see Robert Berdahl, *The Politics of the Prussian Nobility: The Development of a Conservative Ideology 1770–1848* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 231–63.
- 36 Chunjie Zhang, “Garden Empire or the Sublime Politics of the Chinese-Gothic Style,” *Goethe Yearbook* 25 (2018): 77–96; 80.
- 37 For a discussion of the significance of etiquette in the Confucian tradition, see Amy Olberding, “Etiquette: A Confucian Contribution to Moral Philosophy,” *Ethics* 126.2 (2016): 422–46; 422.
- 38 Jürgen Osterhammel, *Unfabling the East: The Enlightenment’s Encounter with Asia*, trans. Robert Savage (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 386.
- 39 Osterhammel, *Unfabling the East*, 386.