

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S VEDĀNTIC CRITIQUE OF SCHOPENHAUER'S DOCTRINE OF THE WILL



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Recently, there has been a burgeoning of interest in the relationship between Schopenhauer's philosophy and Indian thought.¹ One major reason for this trend is the growing conviction among scholars that a careful understanding of Schopenhauer's complex—and evolving—engagement with Indian thought can help illuminate crucial aspects of Schopenhauer's own philosophy.² The late nineteenth-century German scholars Paul Deussen (1845–1919) and Max Hecker (1870–1948) are widely acknowledged to be the pioneers in the field of Schopenhauer's relation to Indian thought. Deussen, thoroughly trained in both indology and Western philosophy, was the first to bring Schopenhauer's philosophy into dialogue with Indian thought, especially Vedāntic philosophy. Hecker, drawing on Deussen's work, wrote *Schopenhauer und die indische Philosophie* (1897), the first book-length comparison of Schopenhauer's philosophy and the philosophies of Vedānta and Buddhism.

It is far less widely known that Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), an Indian Sannyāsin monk in the tradition of Advaita Vedānta, made a number of brief but pregnant critical remarks on Schopenhauer's philosophy mostly in the course of lectures on Indian philosophy and religion delivered in America and England between 1895 and 1896. Vivekananda, who was not a Schopenhauer scholar and had no knowledge of German, likely only read textbook summaries of, and excerpts from, Schopenhauer's philosophy and parts of Haldane and Kemp's 1886 English translation of Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*.³ Moreover, Vivekananda's comments on Schopenhauer do not contain any close textual analysis or any discussion of the details of Schopenhauer's philosophical system. It is not surprising, therefore, that scholars have paid scant attention to Vivekananda's comments on Schopenhauer.⁴ I will argue, however, that Vivekananda's critical remarks on Schopenhauer's philosophy not only have intrinsic historical value but also resonate strongly with some recent critical approaches to Schopenhauer.

One of the most controversial issues in Schopenhauer scholarship is the ontological status of the will, the "endless striving" (*WWR* 1, p. 164; *WWV*, p. 229) that Schopenhauer identifies as the underlying essence of the world as well as ourselves (*WWR* 1, p. 162; *WWV*, p. 227).⁵ Borrowing a term from Kant's philosophy, Schopenhauer repeatedly identifies the will with the "thing-in-itself" (*Ding an sich*), which Kant defined as the unknowable noumenal reality beyond time, space, and categories such as causality. This raises two urgent interpretive questions. First, does Schopenhauer simply equate the will with Kant's noumenal thing-in-itself? Second,

to what extent is Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will compatible with Vedāntic philosophy, according to which the holy Ātman/Brahman is the noumenal essence of ourselves and the universe? Vivekananda, as we will see, provides nuanced and sophisticated answers to both these questions that are substantially different from the answers given by Deussen and Hecker. On this basis, I will make the case that Vivekananda occupies a unique place in the late nineteenth-century reception of Schopenhauer's philosophy.

To set the stage, section I outlines briefly the respective views of Deussen and Hecker on these two interpretive issues regarding Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will. Both Deussen and Hecker are eager to demonstrate the internal consistency of Schopenhauer's philosophy, so they reconstruct Schopenhauer's position on the will in such a way that Schopenhauer is not committed to what they take to be the obviously untenable thesis that the will that we discover through introspection is the noumenal thing-in-itself. As we will see, however, while Deussen emphasizes the fundamental affinities between Vedānta and Schopenhauer's philosophy, Hecker argues that Schopenhauer and Vedānta hold diametrically opposed views on the nature of ultimate reality.

In section II, I discuss Vivekananda's critical remarks on Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will and place them in dialogue with the views of Deussen and Hecker. In contrast to Deussen and Hecker, Vivekananda claims that Schopenhauer does equate the will with the noumenal thing-in-itself. According to Vivekananda, Schopenhauer's conception of the will as the noumenal reality is mistaken for two main reasons: first, the will is at least subject to time and hence cannot be identified with the Kantian thing-in-itself beyond time, space, and causality; second, Schopenhauer's conception of the will as the noumenal thing-in-itself conflicts with his own soteriological thesis that the will can be transcended through self-denial and asceticism. Moreover, Vivekananda reproaches Schopenhauer for misinterpreting Vedānta, which conceives the noumenal reality not as the evil will but as the transcendental Ātman/Brahman beyond all willing and suffering. Vivekananda then goes on to offer some significant speculations regarding why Schopenhauer might have misinterpreted Vedānta. In section III, I argue that many of Vivekananda's views on Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will and its relationship to Vedānta and Buddhism find echoes in recent scholarly interpretations of Schopenhauer's philosophy.

I. Deussen and Hecker on Schopenhauer's Will and Its Parallels in Indian Thought

As numerous scholars have pointed out, Schopenhauer's views on two key aspects of his philosophy are quite ambiguous, if not ambivalent: first, the will's ontological status, and second, the closest parallel to his concept of the will in Indian thought. Regarding the first issue, Schopenhauer suggests at least three different views on the will's ontological status in the course of his career.⁶ In the first volume of *The World as Will and Representation* (1818; hereafter *WWR* 1), Schopenhauer frequently equates the will with the Kantian thing-in-itself, yet he departs from Kant in maintaining that we can become directly aware of the will through introspection.⁷ In 1820,

J. F. Herbart accused Schopenhauer of committing a flagrant contradiction: if the will is the Kantian thing-in-itself, then the will must be unknowable and hence cannot be made available to us through introspection, which necessarily involves the phenomenal form of time.⁸ In chapter 18 of volume 2 of *WWR* 2 (1844), Schopenhauer seeks to defuse this Herbartian objection by qualifying his earlier thesis: since the will is known through introspection, it is subject to time and hence cannot be identical to the “thing-in-itself that lies outside time” (*WWR* 2, p. 197; *WWV*, p. 228).

However, Schopenhauer seems to vacillate in chapter 18 between two incompatible views on the degree of affinity between the will and the Kantian thing-in-itself. On the one hand, he claims that the will is a *very close approximation* to the strictly unknowable Kantian thing-in-itself, since the will is only under the single “veil” of time and not under the veils of space and causality (*WWR* 2, p. 197; *WWV*, p. 228). On the other hand, when he emphasizes the soteriological aspect of his philosophy, Schopenhauer goes so far as to claim that the will is “only phenomenon” and is hence radically different from the “inner nature of the thing-in-itself”—that is, the blissful, will-less ultimate reality known only to mystics and sages who have abolished the will in themselves (*WWR* 2, p. 198; *WWV*, pp. 229–230).⁹ His letters written between 1844 and 1853 suggest that he moved in the direction of the latter view in the years following the publication of volume 2 of *WWR*. In these letters, Schopenhauer explicitly contrasts the unknowable Kantian thing-in-itself with the “thing-in-itself . . . in its relation to appearance,” which he identifies with the “will to life.”¹⁰ These letters reveal that the late Schopenhauer was increasingly willing to sacrifice his ambition to surpass Kant for the sake of saving the soteriological aspect of his philosophy, which requires that the noumenal reality be radically different from the will.¹¹

Schopenhauer is also quite ambiguous in his suggestions of parallels to his concept of the will in Indian thought.¹² On the one hand, at various places in *WWR* 1 and 2, Schopenhauer clearly aligns the will with Brahman, the ultimate reality propounded in the Upaniṣads, while he aligns the illusory world of appearance with the Vedāntic concept of *māyā*.¹³ On the other hand, in some of his remarks on soteriology—such as in chapter 48 of *WWR* 2—he aligns Brahman not with the will but with the “denial” of the will (*WWR* 2, p. 608; *WWV*, p. 707). Similarly, toward the end of his life, he finds parallels to his concept of the will in the *prakṛti* of Sāṃkhya philosophy¹⁴—the unmanifested and insentient causal matrix of everything in the universe—and the Buddhist concept of *upādāna*, the clinging or attachment to life.¹⁵ Since neither the Sāṃkhyan concept of *prakṛti* nor the Buddhist concept of *upādāna* denotes our noumenal essence, the late Schopenhauer’s views on the parallels to the will in Indian thought appear to conflict with his earlier alignment of the will with the noumenal Brahman of Vedāntic philosophy.

Faced with Schopenhauer’s decidedly ambiguous views on the will’s ontological status and its parallels in Indian thought, Deussen and Hecker—both of whom were eager to defend the coherence of Schopenhauer’s philosophy—attempted to reconstruct consistent positions on these two issues. Deussen, a specialist in both Schopenhauer and Advaita Vedānta, discusses Schopenhauer’s philosophy and its relation to

Vedānta in a number of works. I will focus here on two of his books, *Die Elemente der Metaphysik* ([1877] 1902) and *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie: Die neuere Philosophie von Descartes bis Schopenhauer* (1917). Regarding the question of how to interpret Schopenhauer's thesis that the will is the "thing-in-itself," Deussen is as ambivalent as Schopenhauer himself. Schopenhauer, as we have just seen, adopts at least three distinct positions on the will's status as the thing-in-itself in the course of his thinking.¹⁶ Deussen asserts all three of these positions at different points in his work without admitting the incompatibility of these positions. At several places, Deussen uncritically accepts Schopenhauer's oft-repeated claim in volume 1 of *WWR* that the thing-in-itself, which Kant claimed to be unknowable, is immediately accessible to us through introspective awareness of our own willing.¹⁷

At one point, however, Deussen explicitly addresses Herbart's well-known objection to Schopenhauer's equation of the will with the thing-in-itself. Deussen paraphrases Herbart's objection as follows: "If the will were the thing-in-itself, then it could not be known; if, on the other hand, it were knowable, then it could not be the thing-in-itself."¹⁸ In response to Herbart's objection, Deussen echoes Schopenhauer's own ambiguous qualifications in chapter 18 of volume 2 of *WWR*. On the one hand, Deussen repeats verbatim Schopenhauer's own "fewer veils" argument: the thing-in-itself is strictly unknowable, but in the introspective awareness of our own willing, the thing-in-itself appears to us only under the veil of time, and not under the veils of space and causality, and hence the will is the closest approximation to the unknowable thing-in-itself available to us.¹⁹ On the other hand, in the same paragraph, Deussen also pursues Schopenhauer's other line of thought, first suggested in chapter 18 of volume 2 and later developed in letters written between 1844 and 1853: while the thing-in-itself under the veil of time appears to us as the will, the thing-in-itself *apart* from the phenomenal form of time is an unknowable noumenal reality that is radically different from the will. As Deussen puts it, the will has two "sides" or "poles": the "pole of the will, or willing [*Pol des Willens, das Wollen*], which is the principle of the entire world of appearance," and the pole of "not-willing" (*Nichtwollen*), the "principle of a divine supersensuous world, knowledge of which remains denied to us" (*das Prinzip einer goettlichen Ueberwelt . . . , deren Erkenntnis uns versagt bleibt*).²⁰ According to this line of thinking, the will known to us through introspective awareness, far from being a close approximation to the thing-in-itself, is in fact the diametrical *opposite* of the unknowable thing-in-itself, which Deussen characterizes precisely as "not-willing," the redemptive divine principle beyond all willing and suffering.

Deussen clearly inherits Schopenhauer's extreme ambiguity about the will's status as the "thing-in-itself." When emphasizing Schopenhauer's advance from Kant, Deussen tends to equate the will straightforwardly with the Kantian thing-in-itself. At other times, however, Deussen admits that the will is only the thing-in-itself under the veil of time, but he vacillates between the position that the will is a very close approximation to the unknowable thing-in-itself and the position that the unknowable thing-in-itself—what he calls the will's "pole of not-willing"—is diametrically opposed to the will.

When Deussen establishes parallels between Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will and Indian thought, he consistently favors this latter position that the will is entirely different from the unknowable thing-in-itself. This should not be surprising, since Deussen is eager to bring Schopenhauer's philosophy close to Vedānta, which posits the Ātman/Brahman as the pure, blissful ultimate reality beyond all willing and suffering. For instance, in § 170 of *Elemente*, Deussen equates "the will" with "the Deity, the Brahman, the thing-in-itself" and then immediately goes on to add that he means the "will" in "its original nature, which is Denial—without sin, without sorrow, without existence."²¹ In § 171, he explicitly contrasts the "pure, painless, and will-less bliss of denial" with the "affirmation of the will to life," which clearly corresponds to the pole of willing.²² In other words, although it might seem as if Deussen straightforwardly equates the will with Brahman in § 170, he makes clear that he is identifying Brahman only with the will's aspect as "Denial"—what he elsewhere calls the will's "pole of not-willing"—which is none other than the unknowable "thing-in-itself." Similarly, in *Allgemeine Geschichte*, Deussen equates the will's aspect as the unknowable "thing-in-itself" with "the Brahman, the Ātman."²³ On the other hand, Deussen, as far as I am aware, nowhere suggests a Vedāntic parallel to the will's other aspect as the affirmation of the will to life. It is also worth noting that Deussen restricts himself to considering parallels between Schopenhauer's will and Vedāntic thought, while he refrains from suggesting parallels with Buddhist thought.

Instead of acknowledging the ambiguities in Schopenhauer's views, Deussen tacitly reconstructs Schopenhauer's position in such a way as to bring it very close to Vedānta. Accordingly, while Schopenhauer himself never consistently distinguished phenomenal and noumenal aspects or "poles" of the will, Deussen claims repeatedly that Schopenhauer presupposes a sharp distinction between the will's pole of affirmation (the will to live) and the will's pole of denial (the unknowable thing-in-itself). Moreover, while Schopenhauer was ambivalent about whether the will corresponds to Brahman or to concepts such as *māyā* or *prakṛti*, Deussen quietly resolves this ambivalence by equating only the will's *pole of denial* with Ātman/Brahman, the ultimate reality of Vedāntic philosophy.²⁴

Like Deussen, Hecker adopts an apologetic approach to Schopenhauer in *Schopenhauer und die indische Philosophie*. Presupposing the consistency of all Schopenhauer's philosophical views, Hecker strives to defend Schopenhauer's philosophy against various possible objections and conspicuously refrains from criticizing Schopenhauer. Significantly, however, Hecker does not share Deussen's predilection for Vedānta. Hence, while Deussen is eager to establish parallels between Schopenhauer's will and the Vedāntic concept of Ātman/Brahman, Hecker accentuates the fundamental *differences* between Schopenhauer's will and the ultimate reality of Vedānta and, on this basis, goes on to argue for the superiority of Schopenhauer's metaphysics to Vedāntic philosophy. Moreover, unlike Deussen, Hecker discusses Schopenhauer's philosophy in relation not only to Vedānta but also to Buddhism.

Hecker points to an apparent contradiction between Schopenhauer's claim in volume 1 of *WWR* that the will is the noumenal thing-in-itself beyond time, space,

and causality and Schopenhauer's more qualified claim in chapter 18 of volume 2 of *WWR* that the will is still subject to the phenomenal form of time. However, Hecker argues that "there is no contradiction" between these two claims.²⁵ Hecker's strategy for defending Schopenhauer against the charge of self-contradiction resembles Deussen's response to Herbart's objection. According to Hecker, Schopenhauer employs the term "will" in two different senses—as "genus" and as "species." In volume 1, when Schopenhauer claims that the will is the thing-in-itself beyond all phenomenal forms, he is referring to the will as genus. By contrast, in chapter 18 of volume 2, when Schopenhauer claims that the will is subject to time, he is referring to the will as species. Hence, according to Hecker, once we determine whether, in a given passage, Schopenhauer is referring to the will as genus or to the will as species, we will find that there is no contradiction in Schopenhauer's claims about the will.²⁶

Of course, Schopenhauer himself does not consistently distinguish the will as (noumenal) genus from the will as (phenomenal) species, so it is clear that Hecker, like Deussen, engages in tacit reconstruction in order to save the coherence of Schopenhauer's position on the will. In order to explain the relationship between the will as genus and the will as species, Hecker appeals explicitly to Schopenhauer's "fewer veils" argument in chapter 18 of volume 2 of *WWR*: in the introspective awareness of our own willing, the thing-in-itself has "cast off two veils"—those of space and causality—but still remains under the veil of time.²⁷ Accordingly, for Hecker, since the "act of willing" is only subject to the form of time, it is the "most immediate and clearest appearance of the thing-in-itself."²⁸ In other words, Hecker claims that the will as species—which we know through introspection—is the closest approximation to the will as genus, the unknowable thing-in-itself, available to us.

Hecker also fleetingly mentions Schopenhauer's alternative suggestion in chapter 18 of volume 2 of *WWR* that the "true thing-in-itself" may have, "apart from the attribute of will, still other qualities, determinations, properties, modes of being, which lie outside all possible appearance, and which are absolutely unknowable and ungraspable."²⁹ As we have seen, Deussen favors precisely this position on the will, since it implies that the unknowable thing-in-itself is radically different from the will and hence comes very close to the Vedāntic position that the ultimate reality, Ātman/Brahman, is beyond all willing and suffering. Hecker, by contrast, *downplays* Schopenhauer's suggestion that the unknowable thing-in-itself may be entirely different from the will. Hecker mentions Schopenhauer's suggestion only to dismiss it, claiming that "this thought plays no important role" in Schopenhauer's philosophy.³⁰ Indeed, throughout his book, Hecker consistently reconstructs Schopenhauer's position on the will in terms of the "fewer veils" argument, according to which the will is a very close approximation to the unknowable thing-in-itself. Even Hecker's taxonomical language of "genus" and "species" implies that the will as species is intimately akin to the will as genus.

For Hecker, the fundamental similarity between Schopenhauer's philosophy and Vedānta consists in the fact that both philosophies posit the existence of a noumenal thing-in-itself beyond time, space, and causality. In other words, the Schopenhauerian will and the Vedāntic Brahman have the same noumenal ontological status.

However, Hecker claims that the *nature* of Brahman, the Vedāntic thing-in-itself, is radically different from the will, Schopenhauer's thing-in-itself. As Hecker puts it, "In Brahman all suffering, all pain, birth, and death are not present. The case is entirely different with Schopenhauer. According to him, the will is itself directly connected with suffering and bound up with guilt and evil."³¹ Hence, Hecker explicitly criticizes Deussen for drawing a parallel between Schopenhauer's will and Brahman: "one must do some violence to the concept of Brahman if one wishes to interpret it as the Schopenhauerian will."³² It must be said, however, that Hecker oversimplifies Deussen's position, since Deussen usually equates Brahman only with the will's pole of "denial" or "not-willing" and not with the will as such. Moreover, by sharply contrasting Brahman with Schopenhauer's will, Hecker in effect rejects Schopenhauer's own claims in *WWR* that his concept of will parallels the Vedāntic concept of Brahman.

Once Hecker establishes the fundamental difference between the Vedāntic and Schopenhauerian conceptions of ultimate reality, he proceeds to argue for the superiority of Schopenhauer's philosophy to Vedānta. According to Hecker, Vedānta makes the mistake of conceiving man's ultimate essence as "pure spirituality" (*reine Geistigkeit*) or pure "intellect" (*Intellekt*), which is devoid of all desiring and suffering.³³ Schopenhauer, Hecker argues, is the first to demonstrate that the truth of the matter is exactly the reverse of this Vedāntic scheme: man's ultimate essence is the will, which is the root of all suffering, and the intellect is a mere by-product of the will. For Hecker, Schopenhauer's great advance from Vedānta consists precisely in his recognition that our true nature is the evil will.

According to Hecker, while Schopenhauer and Vedānta are similar in positing a noumenal reality beneath appearances, Schopenhauer's concept of the will comes very close in substance to the Buddhist concept of "thirst" (Pāli, *taṇhā*), the craving for worldly pleasures. As Hecker puts it, "This 'thirst' [in Buddhism], like the will, is an amoral power—the liberation from which amounts to blessedness and salvation—but it [thirst] is no thing-in-itself."³⁴ Hecker is quick to point out here that while Buddhist "thirst" is similar in nature to Schopenhauer's will, it nonetheless differs radically from Schopenhauer's will in its ontological status: the Buddhist concept of "thirst," unlike Schopenhauer's will, is not the noumenal thing-in-itself but rather an "unholy power that has validity only in the sphere of conscious human action."³⁵ Hence, for Hecker, Buddhism's primary failing is its inability to provide metaphysical grounding for its concept of thirst. As he puts it, "Had Buddhism moved toward a positive metaphysics, it would have found desire—which it only seeks in man—also in the universe. . . ."³⁶ According to Hecker, Schopenhauer's metaphysics of the will provides the crucial metaphysical grounding for desire that is conspicuously absent in Buddhism.

In Hecker's account, then, Schopenhauer's philosophy is a "synthesis" and "higher unity" (*höhere Einheit*) of Buddhism and Vedānta in that it combines what is best in both philosophies and corrects for their respective defects.³⁷ Vedānta, according to Hecker, correctly posits a noumenal thing-in-itself behind appearances but mischaracterizes this noumenal reality as a purely spiritual or intellectual principle.

Buddhism, on the other hand, correctly recognizes the importance of “thirst” or desiring in human life but fails to lend metaphysical dignity to this concept of thirst. Schopenhauer, Hecker argues, synthesizes Buddhism and Vedānta by conceiving the evil will as the noumenal thing-in-itself underlying both human nature and the natural universe.

II. Vivekananda’s Vedāntic Critique of Schopenhauer’s Will

With this background in place, we can now examine Vivekananda’s critical remarks on Schopenhauer and bring them into dialogue with the views of his contemporaries Deussen and Hecker. Narendranath Dutta, who later became Swami Vivekananda, first studied Schopenhauer’s philosophy as an undergraduate at Scottish Church College in Calcutta, which he attended from 1881 to 1884. Although detailed information about his coursework at Scottish Church College is not available, it is clear that Narendranath took numerous courses in philosophy, many of them taught by Reverend William Hastie. In these courses, he studied such philosophers as Descartes, Hume, Kant, Fichte, Spinoza, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Auguste Comte.³⁸ Narendranath did not know German and the first English translation of Schopenhauer’s *WWR* by Haldane and Kemp appeared between 1883 and 1886, so he could not have read the full English translation of Schopenhauer’s masterpiece while he was an undergraduate. Hence, Narendranath’s knowledge of Schopenhauer was likely limited to summaries of Schopenhauer’s philosophy provided in the lectures he attended and the textbooks he read, which may also have contained some translated excerpts from Schopenhauer’s *WWR*, although I have not been able to determine which textbooks he might have used.

In early 1887, Narendranath took the formal vows of Sannyāsa and eventually adopted the name of Swami Vivekananda. After wandering India as an itinerant monk from 1887 to 1893, Vivekananda preached Vedānta in America and Europe from 1893 to 1896 and again from 1899 to 1900. In his lectures and writings during his first trip to the West, Vivekananda made at least three explicit references to particular statements of Schopenhauer in volumes 1 and 2 of *WWR* and in *Parerga and Paralipomena*.³⁹ In fact, in an article on “Reincarnation” published in the *Metaphysical Magazine* in 1895, Vivekananda cites a lengthy passage on palingenesis from Haldane and Kemp’s English translation of chapter 41 of volume 2 of *WWR*.⁴⁰ In light of these references, it is likely that Vivekananda read at least parts of Haldane and Kemp’s translation of volumes 1 and 2 of *WWR* during his stay in the West.

In a letter written to E. T. Sturdy in 1895, Vivekananda criticizes Deussen for accepting Schopenhauer’s thesis that the will is the thing-in-itself: “The will is in the mind. So it is absurd to say that will is the last analysis. Deussen is playing into the hands of the Darwinists.”⁴¹ It is clear from this remark that by 1895, Vivekananda was well aware that Deussen was an ardent supporter of Schopenhauer’s philosophy. As we have seen in section I, while Deussen does sometimes simply equate the will with the noumenal thing-in-itself, he more often interprets Schopenhauer’s will as having

both noumenal and phenomenal “poles,” the noumenal pole of which he aligns with the Vedāntic Ātman/Brahman. Vivekananda’s 1895 remark about Deussen suggests that he was not yet aware of Deussen’s Vedāntic interpretation of Schopenhauer.

Interestingly, just one year later, between July and October 1896, Vivekananda met, and had extended discussions with, Deussen in Kiel, Amsterdam, and London. The two met daily for two weeks while they were in London, mostly discussing Vedānta but likely discussing Schopenhauer’s philosophy as well.⁴² Indeed, Vivekananda later wrote a glowing tribute to Deussen, whom he described as an “ardent Vedantist” who “plunged boldly into the metaphysical depths of the Upanishads, found them to be fully safe and satisfying, and then—equally boldly declared the fact before the whole world.”⁴³ During his extended stay in London in 1896, Vivekananda delivered a lecture on “The Absolute and Manifestation” in which he criticized Schopenhauer’s philosophy for making a “mistake in its interpretation of Vedānta.”⁴⁴ Since he was regularly meeting Deussen in London at this time, it is possible that Vivekananda learned of Deussen’s efforts to bring Schopenhauer close to Vedānta by aligning the will’s pole of “denial” or “not-willing” with Ātman/Brahman. However, as will become clear from his critical remarks on Schopenhauer, Vivekananda himself, unlike Deussen, continued to maintain that Schopenhauer’s conception of the will was incompatible with the Vedāntic view of reality.

It must be said that in comparison to Deussen and Hecker, both native German scholars who read Schopenhauer’s work in the original, Vivekananda’s limited knowledge of Schopenhauer’s philosophy pales in comparison. On the other hand, Vivekananda’s knowledge of Indian philosophy and religion as well as Sanskrit was deeper and more extensive than either Deussen’s or Hecker’s. Moreover, Vivekananda did not share the apologetic agenda of Deussen and Hecker, who were eager to prove the internal consistency and supremacy of Schopenhauer’s philosophy. It should also be noted that Deussen and Hecker discussed Schopenhauer’s philosophy in book-length studies, so they had ample scope to provide textual support for their interpretive claims by citing passages directly from Schopenhauer’s work. Vivekananda, by contrast, discussed Schopenhauer’s philosophy primarily in public lectures delivered to non-specialist audiences, so it would have been inappropriate for him to have cited statements from Schopenhauer’s work to support his claims. In the ensuing discussion, therefore, I will not only discuss Vivekananda’s main criticisms of Schopenhauer but also suggest relevant passages from Schopenhauer’s corpus that Vivekananda might have had in mind.

Vivekananda makes five main claims regarding Schopenhauer’s doctrine of the will, which I will elaborate in detail in the course of this section:

1. The term “will” implies conscious volition, but Schopenhauer wrongly employs the term to denote unconscious forces as well.
2. Schopenhauer mistakenly equates the will, which is phenomenal, with the noumenal thing-in-itself. Vivekananda, at various places, explains the phenomenality of the will in four subtly different ways:

- (a) The will is changeable and phenomenal.
 - (b) The will is in the mind.
 - (c) The will is subject to all three phenomenal forms of time, space, and causation.
 - (d) The will is at least subject to the phenomenal form of time.
3. Schopenhauer's thesis that the will is the noumenal thing-in-itself conflicts with Vedāntic soteriology, according to which one can transcend the will through self-denial and meditation and realize one's noumenal nature as the pure, blissful Self (Ātman).
 4. Schopenhauer's equation of the will with the noumenal thing-in-itself is rooted in a misinterpretation of Vedānta.
 5. Schopenhauer may have been led to a mistaken interpretation of Vedānta for two reasons:
 - (a) Schopenhauer did not know Sanskrit, so he had to rely on the *Oupnek'hat*, an unreliable translation of the Upaniṣads.
 - (b) The explicitly Vedāntic strain in Schopenhauer's philosophy conflicts with a largely implicit Buddhist strain, which makes the will fundamental and that refuses to posit a noumenal reality beyond the will. Vivekananda's argument takes three forms, the first historical and the latter two conceptual:
 - (i) Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will in *WWR* was influenced by Buddhism.
 - (ii) Schopenhauer's concept of the will bears strong affinities with the Buddhist concept of *taṇhā* ("thirst").
 - (iii) Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will represents an unsatisfactory conceptual synthesis of Vedānta and Buddhism.

Objections 1, 2a, 2b, 2c, and 4 are all contained in a compressed passage from Vivekananda's lecture on "The Absolute and Manifestation," delivered in London in 1896:

I think Schopenhauer's philosophy makes a mistake in its interpretation of Vedānta, for it seeks to make the will everything. Schopenhauer makes the will stand in the place of the Absolute. But the Absolute cannot be presented as will, for will is something changeable and phenomenal, and over the line, drawn above time, space, and causation, there is no change, no motion; it is only below the line that external motion and internal motion, called thought, begin. There can be no will on the other side, and will therefore, cannot be the cause of this universe. Coming nearer, we see in our own bodies that will is not the cause of every movement. I move this chair; my will is the cause of this movement, and this will becomes manifested as muscular motion at the other end. But the same power that moves the chair is moving the heart, the lungs, and so on, but not through will. Given

that the power is the same, it only becomes will when it rises to the plane of consciousness, and to call it will before it has risen to this plane is a misnomer. This makes a good deal of confusion in Schopenhauer's philosophy.⁴⁵

According to Vivekananda, it is a "misnomer" to designate by the word "will" both the "power that moves the chair" and the power that moves "the heart, the lungs, and so on." For Vivekananda, the term "will" necessarily implies conscious volition, but Schopenhauer wrongly conceives it in a broader sense to include unconscious forces as well (Objection 1).

Apart from this relatively minor terminological objection, Vivekananda makes the more substantive criticism that Schopenhauer mistakenly equates the will with the "Absolute" (Objection 2). Vivekananda clearly has in mind Schopenhauer's fundamental thesis that the will is the "thing-in-itself" beyond time, space, and causation. According to Vivekananda, the "will is something changeable and phenomenal," so it cannot be identified with the noumenal reality beyond time, space, and causation (Objection 2a). In fact, he repeatedly suggests that since the will is a mental phenomenon, it is subject to all three phenomenal forms of "time, space, and causation" (Objections 2b, 2c). Accordingly, he states that "thought" occurs "below the line" of "time, space, and causation," and he later asserts that the will, as conscious volition, belongs on the "plane of consciousness." Similarly, in the 1895 letter cited above, he claims that the "will is in the mind" (Objection 2b).

One could object here that Vivekananda misses the subtlety of Schopenhauer's account of our introspective awareness of the will. Schopenhauer claims in chapter 18 of volume 2 of *WWR* that through introspection we gain "inner knowledge" of the "thing-in-itself" only under the single veil of time, since it has "cast off" the other two veils of space and causality. Hence, Vivekananda seems mistaken in his assumption that the will is subject to all three phenomenal forms of time, space, and causality.

However, in his lecture on "Buddhism and Vedanta" (1896), Vivekananda makes a subtly different claim about the phenomenality of the will that cannot be so easily dismissed by Schopenhauer:

We do not agree with the will-theory of these German philosophers at all. Will itself is phenomenal and cannot be the Absolute. It is one of the many projections. There is something which is not will, but is manifesting itself as will. That I can understand. But that will is manifesting itself as everything else, I do not understand, seeing that we cannot have any conception of will, as separate from the universe. When that something which is freedom becomes will, it is caused by time, space, and causation. Take Kant's analysis. Will is within time, space, and causation. Then how can it be the Absolute? One cannot will without willing in time.

If we can stop all thought, then we know that we are beyond thought. We come to this by negation. When every phenomenon has been negated, whatever remains, that is It. That cannot be expressed, cannot be manifested, because the manifestation will be, again, will.⁴⁶

Vivekananda makes a number of significant claims in this rich passage, but for the moment, I wish to focus on his objection to Schopenhauer's equation of the will with the "Absolute." Just after asserting that the will is "within time, space, and causation," Vivekananda makes the more nuanced claim that "[o]ne cannot will without willing in time." In other words, he claims here that the will is at least subject to the phenomenal form of time, if not also to the forms of space and causality (Objection 2d). Formulated in this manner, Vivekananda's objection resembles Herbart's early objection to Schopenhauer that the will is subject to time and hence cannot be the noumenal thing-in-itself. Indeed, Vivekananda's explicit reference to Kant ("Take Kant's analysis") suggests that his objection—like Herbart's—should be taken as an *internal* critique of Schopenhauer's philosophy. As Vivekananda was aware, Schopenhauer himself accepts Kant's distinction between the noumenon and the phenomenon, so he contradicts himself when he identifies the will—which is at least subject to time—with the noumenal reality beyond time.

In the paragraph following this Herbartian objection in the passage cited above, Vivekananda provides another very interesting and original argument for why Schopenhauer is wrong to equate the will with the thing-in-itself. Schopenhauer's identification of the will with the Absolute, Vivekananda argues, is belied by Vedāntic soteriology: through self-denial and meditation, we can "stop all thought" and thereby attain mystical knowledge of our true nature "beyond thought" and willing altogether (Objection 3). Since Vivekananda was an accomplished Vedāntic practitioner himself, he is likely referring here both to his own spiritual experience and to the Upaniṣadic teaching that through renunciation and meditation one can attain mystical knowledge of the pure, blissful Ātman beyond the reach of the mind. If it is possible to transcend the will, Vivekananda reasons, then our ultimate nature must be radically different from the will, and hence Schopenhauer's thesis that our ultimate essence is the will must be wrong.

I would argue, however, that Vivekananda's soteriological objection, like his earlier Herbartian objection, is intended not merely as an external critique of Schopenhauer from the standpoint of Vedānta but also as an internal critique of Schopenhauer's philosophy. Although Vivekananda's knowledge of Schopenhauer's work was limited, he was almost certainly aware that Schopenhauer's own philosophy has a prominent soteriological dimension, articulated in Book IV of the first volume of *WWR*, which tellingly bears an epigraph from the *Oupnek'hat*: "*tempore quo cognitio simul advenit amore medio supersurrexit*" ("the moment knowledge appeared on the scene, thence did desire abate") (*WWR* 1, p. 269; *WWV*, p. 355). According to Schopenhauer, when the will gains insight into its "own inner being"—that it is the root of all suffering—then the will denies itself (*WWR* 1, p. 383; *WWV*, p. 493). This "denial of the will to live," Schopenhauer claims, is epitomized in the lives of Christian, Buddhist, and Hindu saints who overcame the will and achieved a state of unshakeable tranquility and holiness through self-renunciation and asceticism.

That Schopenhauer believed that his own soteriological claims about the possibility of overcoming the will are consistent with Vedāntic soteriology is clear from his numerous references to the *Oupnek'hat* and Vedāntic thought in Book IV as well

as in the supplements to Book IV in volume 2 of *WWR*. In a revealing passage from chapter 48 of volume 2, Schopenhauer clarifies the soteriological doctrine of the denial of the will in which his philosophy culminates:

[W]hen my teaching reaches its highest point, it assumes a *negative* character, and so ends with a negation. Thus it can speak here only of what is denied or given up; but what is gained in place of this, what is laid hold of, it is forced (at the conclusion of the fourth book) to describe as nothing; and it can add only the consolation that it may be merely a relative, not an absolute, nothing. (*WWR* 2, p. 612; *WWV*, p. 711)

Schopenhauer's philosophy "ends with a negation" in the sense that it can only explain salvation negatively as the denial of the will but cannot explain "what is gained in place of this." Shortly thereafter, however, he adds that mysticism begins precisely where philosophy leaves off: "Now it is precisely here that the mystic proceeds positively, and therefore, from this point, nothing is left but mysticism. Anyone, however, who desires this kind of supplement to the negative knowledge to which alone philosophy can guide him, will find it in its most beautiful and richest form in the *Oupnek'hat* . . ." (*WWR* 2, p. 612; *WWV*, p. 711).

In these soteriological speculations, Schopenhauer in effect admits that the ultimate reality is not the will: in mystical experience, saints of various traditions have attained positive knowledge of a blissful reality beyond the will. Notice that Schopenhauer acknowledges the *Oupnek'hat* as one of the richest sources of such mystical knowledge of the ultimate reality. One page earlier, Schopenhauer claims that "Brahmanism"—by which he means the Vedāntic philosophy of the Upaniṣads—inculcates the "required suspension of all thought and perception for the purpose of entering into the deepest communion with one's own Self, by mentally uttering the mysterious *Om*" (*WWR* 2, p. 611; *WWV*, p. 710). He then goes on to hint at the nature of the ultimate reality perceived by the mystic: "The mystic starts from his inner, positive, individual experience, in which he finds himself as the eternal and only Being, and so on" (*WWR* 2, p. 611; *WWV*, p. 710). What he seems to have in mind here is the mystical knowledge of the Ātman that is repeatedly mentioned in the *Oupnek'hat*.

Schopenhauer then makes a bold venture into comparative mysticism, claiming that mystics of various religious traditions all agree that the "primary source of existence" is not "outside us, as an object" but rather constitutes our own inner nature (*WWR* 2, p. 612; *WWV*, p. 712). He refers illustratively to the Christian mystic Meister Eckhart's spiritual daughter, who expressed her mystical knowledge to Eckhart as follows: "Sir, rejoice with me, I have become God!" (*WWR* 2, p. 612; *WWV*, p. 712). Schopenhauer makes abundantly clear in passages such as these that the ultimate reality directly experienced by self-denying mystics, far from being the will, is better understood as the God of Christian mystics and the Ātman or Brahman—what Schopenhauer calls the "eternal and only Being"—of the Vedāntic sages.

Whether or not Vivekananda was aware of such passages from Schopenhauer's work, he was almost certainly aware of the general thrust of the soteriological dimension of Schopenhauer's philosophy, which strongly suggests that the ultimate reality

is not the will. Hence, although Vivekananda's objection does not explicitly refer to Schopenhauer's soteriology, I believe it is likely that Vivekananda intended his objection as an internal critique of Schopenhauer's philosophy. In other words, we can plausibly assume that Vivekananda takes for granted that the Vedāntic soteriology to which he appeals in his objection is accepted more or less *in toto* by Schopenhauer himself. We need only note the remarkable similarity between Vivekananda's Vedāntic claim that "[i]f we can stop all thought, then we know that we are beyond thought" and Schopenhauer's approving reference to the Vedāntic teaching that one is able to enter "into the deepest communion with one's own Self" by means of the "suspension of all thought and perception." Seen in this light, Vivekananda's objection isolates a tension internal to Schopenhauer's philosophy: Schopenhauer's thesis that the will is the noumenal thing-in-itself is incompatible with his own soteriological thesis that the denial of the will culminates in the mystical experience of an ultimate reality *beyond* the will. It is also worth noting the originality of Vivekananda's argument in the early reception history of Schopenhauer's philosophy. Vivekananda was one of the first commentators to argue that Schopenhauer's conception of the will as the thing-in-itself is incompatible with the soteriological thesis that the will can be transcended in mystical experience.⁴⁷

In contrast to Vivekananda, both Deussen and Hecker believe that Herbart's objection misses its mark because Schopenhauer does not straightforwardly identify the will with the thing-in-itself. Unlike Deussen and Hecker, Vivekananda does not refer anywhere to Schopenhauer's more qualified statements about the will's relation to the thing-in-itself in chapter 18 of volume 2 of *WWR*. Indeed, Vivekananda may not even have been aware of chapter 18 (although, as I mentioned above, he does cite a long passage on palingenesis from Haldane and Kemp's translation of chapter 41 of volume 2 of *WWR*, so he may very well have read chapter 18 of volume 2 as well). Hence, it might seem easy for Deussen and Hecker to defend Schopenhauer against Vivekananda's Herbartian and soteriological objections: they need only point out that Vivekananda fails to address the crucial chapter 18 of volume 2, where Schopenhauer explicitly denies that the will is the noumenal thing-in-itself.

I would argue, however, that such a dismissal of Vivekananda's objections to Schopenhauer would be overhasty. Although Vivekananda does not explicitly refer to Schopenhauer's qualifications in chapter 18, the passage cited above from his "Buddhism and Vedānta" lecture hints at how Vivekananda might have responded to Schopenhauer's more qualified assertions had he explicitly addressed chapter 18. In that passage, Vivekananda expresses his preferred Vedāntic view of the relation of the will to the thing-in-itself in a single sentence: "There is something which is not will, but is manifesting itself as will." In other words, the Absolute, which is entirely different from the will, *manifests* itself as the will in the phenomenal universe. In stark contrast to Deussen, Vivekananda claims that Schopenhauer should have consistently adopted this Vedāntic position on the relation between the will and the thing-in-itself but in fact adopts the quite different position that the will is the noumenal "Absolute" that is "manifesting itself as everything else." Of course, we cannot be sure whether Vivekananda was aware of Schopenhauer's more Vedāntic statement

in chapter 18 that the “inner nature” of the thing itself is different from the will. However, even if he had been aware of this statement, I believe Vivekananda still would have felt justified in maintaining that there is “a good deal of confusion in Schopenhauer’s philosophy.”⁴⁸ From Vivekananda’s perspective, while there is an undeniably Vedāntic strain in Schopenhauer’s philosophy—especially in his soteriological doctrine that it is possible to abolish the will—this Vedāntic dimension conflicts with the equally fundamental post-Kantian strain in Schopenhauer’s philosophy that leads him to equate the will with the noumenal reality.

The “Buddhism and Vedanta” lecture also hints at how Vivekananda would have responded to Schopenhauer’s “fewer veils” argument. The statement from the “Buddhism and Vedanta” lecture already cited—“One cannot will without willing in time”—strongly suggests that he would take the “fewer veils” argument to be invalid. For Vivekananda, whether the will is only under the single veil of time or under all three veils of time, space, and causality, the will, in *either* case, must be radically different from the noumenal thing-in-itself. In other words, Vivekananda would reject outright Schopenhauer’s argument that the will is a very close approximation to the thing-in-itself because it is only subject to time and not to space and causality. Hecker, by contrast, uncritically accepts Schopenhauer’s “fewer veils” argument and claims that it represents Schopenhauer’s true position on the will’s relation to the thing-in-itself.

From Vivekananda’s perspective, had Schopenhauer adopted the genuinely Vedāntic position that the noumenal reality is radically different from the phenomenal will, he could have avoided two fatal problems plaguing his philosophy: first, the Herbartian problem that the noumenal thing-in-itself is beyond time, space, and causation and hence cannot be identified with the will known through introspection, which is at least subject to time; and second, the soteriological problem that Schopenhauer’s equation of the will with the thing-in-itself conflicts with his insistence on the possibility of achieving mystical knowledge of a holy, blissful ultimate reality beyond all willing and suffering.

In the long passage from the “Absolute and Manifestation” lecture cited above, Vivekananda claims that Schopenhauer’s mistaken equation of the will with the noumenal reality is rooted in a misunderstanding of Vedānta: “I think Schopenhauer’s philosophy makes a mistake in its interpretation of Vedanta, for it seeks to make the will everything. Schopenhauer makes the will stand in the place of the Absolute” (Objection 4). Significantly, Vivekananda was one of the first commentators to question the adequacy of Schopenhauer’s understanding of Vedānta. Since both Deussen and Hecker were eager to defend the internal coherence of Schopenhauer’s philosophy, they conspicuously refrained from inquiring into the adequacy of Schopenhauer’s understanding of Vedānta. Vivekananda, a Vedāntic Sannyāsin who did not share the apologetic orientation of Deussen and Hecker, was able to adopt a more critical approach to Schopenhauer’s philosophy, raising questions and objections that Deussen and Hecker never did.

In particular, Vivekananda points to a curious paradox in Schopenhauer’s appropriation of Vedānta: although Schopenhauer repeatedly claims that his own

philosophy is in perfect agreement with Vedānta, he departs radically from Vedānta in identifying the noumenal thing-in-itself with the will. That Vivekananda was aware of Schopenhauer's admiration of the Upaniṣads is clear from the fact that he quotes two of Schopenhauer's well-known remarks about the Upaniṣads in his "First Public Lecture in the East" (1897). Vivekananda first cites Schopenhauer's famous remark from *Parerga*: "In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death."⁴⁹ He then adds that "[t]his great German sage foretold that 'The world is about to see a revolution in thought more extensive and more powerful than that which was witnessed by the Renaissance of Greek Literature,' and today his predictions are coming to pass."⁵⁰ This is a loose translation of part of a famous sentence from Schopenhauer's Preface to the First Edition of *WWR*, in which he notes the profound affinity between the Upaniṣads and his own philosophy:

But if he [the reader] has shared in the benefits of the *Vedas*, access to which, opened to us by the *Upanishads*, is in my view the greatest advantage which this still young century has to show over previous centuries, since I surmise that the influence of Sanskrit literature will penetrate no less deeply than did the revival of Greek literature in the fifteenth century; if, I say, the reader has also received and assimilated the divine inspiration of ancient Indian wisdom, then he is best of all prepared to hear what I have to say to him. It will not speak to him, as to many others, in a strange and even hostile tongue; for, did it not sound too conceited, I might assert that each of the individual and disconnected utterances that make up the *Upanishads* could be derived as a consequence from the thought I am to impart, although conversely my thought is by no means to be found in the *Upanishads*. (*WWR* 1, pp. xv–xvi; *WWV*, p. 11)

In this tonally complex passage, Schopenhauer expresses admiration for—and indebtedness to—the Upaniṣads while at the same time asserting the originality and superiority of his own philosophical system, which not only systematizes the "disconnected utterances" of the Upaniṣads but also constitutes a major *advance* from the thought of the Upaniṣads. Presumably, one fundamental aspect of Schopenhauer's original "thought"—which, he claims, is "by no means to be found in the *Upanishads*"—is that the noumenal reality is none other than the will. Schopenhauer seems to imply here that his noumenal metaphysics of the will provides the unifying ontological basis for the scattered insights of the Upaniṣads.

From Vivekananda's perspective, however, Schopenhauer's equation of the will with the "Absolute," far from lending philosophical support to Vedānta, flagrantly contradicts Vedāntic philosophy. Vivekananda's point is that from a Vedāntic standpoint the Absolute is the Ātman/Brahman, the holy noumenal reality beyond time, space, and causation, while the will is merely phenomenal, since it falls within time, space, and causation (or at least within time). Schopenhauer, in stark contrast to Vedānta, accords noumenal status to the will, even though he occasionally admits that the will is subject to the phenomenal form of time. As I pointed out in section I, Schopenhauer's appropriation of Vedāntic concepts such as "*Tat tvam asi*" and *māyā* in *WWR* largely bear out Vivekananda's charge against Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer repeatedly aligns the Vedāntic Brahman with the will and aligns the Vedāntic

concept of *māyā* with the world as representation, hence implying that the will is the noumenal reality.

In an 1895 letter to E. T. Sturdy, Vivekananda clarifies what he takes to be the fundamental difference between Schopenhauer's philosophy and Vedānta: "We also admit that it [willing] is the *cause* of all manifestations which are, in their turn, its effects. But, being a cause, it must be a combination of the *Absolute* and *Maya*."⁵¹ In Vedānta, according to Vivekananda, willing is the Absolute under the veil of *māyā*, since it is subject to the phenomenal forms of time, space, and causation. In contrast, in *WWR*, Schopenhauer usually aligns the will with Brahman and aligns the phenomenal world with *māyā*. From Vivekananda's perspective, this is a gross misunderstanding of Vedāntic philosophy, which aligns willing with *māyā* and the noumenal reality with Ātman/Brahman. It is worth noting that Vivekananda's Vedāntic thesis that the will is a "combination of the *Absolute* and *Maya*" comes remarkably close to Deussen's claim that the will has two "poles," the phenomenal pole of willing and the noumenal pole of not-willing. However, the crucial difference between Vivekananda and Deussen is that Deussen attributes this position to Schopenhauer himself whereas Vivekananda argues that this is the Vedāntic position Schopenhauer failed to adopt but *should* have adopted.

Interestingly, Hecker agrees with Vivekananda that Schopenhauer's will should not be identified with Vedāntic Brahman. However, while Hecker assumes that Schopenhauer himself never actually identifies the will with Brahman, Hecker claims that Deussen makes the mistake of aligning Schopenhauer's will with Brahman/Ātman because Deussen is overeager to establish parallels between Schopenhauer's philosophy and Vedānta. Hecker's apologetic orientation blinds him to the fact that Schopenhauer himself makes precisely the mistake of aligning the will with Brahman that Hecker attributes to Deussen. Meanwhile, Deussen silently reconstructs Schopenhauer's position in such a way as to make Schopenhauer's philosophy appear much closer to Vedānta than it actually is: Schopenhauer, according to Deussen, consistently identifies Brahman only with the will's pole of denial. While Schopenhauer does align Brahman with the "denial" of the will in chapter 48 of volume 2, he certainly does not consistently hold this position. In fact, in most places in volumes 1 and 2 of *WWR*, Schopenhauer straightforwardly equates Brahman with the will as such. Hence, Deussen misrepresents—or at least drastically oversimplifies—Schopenhauer's position by maintaining that Schopenhauer consistently aligns Brahman with the will's pole of denial. The apologetic orientation of Deussen and Hecker prevents them from questioning the accuracy of Schopenhauer's interpretation of Vedānta. Vivekananda takes an enormous step forward in Schopenhauer exegesis by challenging Schopenhauer's understanding of Vedānta and pointing out that Schopenhauer departs drastically from Vedānta in aligning the will with Brahman rather than with *māyā*.⁵²

Vivekananda also offers some significant speculations about why Schopenhauer might have been led to a mistaken interpretation of Vedānta. In his "First Public Lecture in the East," Vivekananda points out that Schopenhauer relied on "a not very clear translation of the Vedas made from an old translation into Persian and thence

by a young Frenchman into Latin.”⁵³ Vivekananda suggests that one reason why Schopenhauer misinterpreted Vedānta is the unreliability of the *Oupnek’hat* on which Schopenhauer relied (Objection 5a). In an 1895 letter, Vivekananda suggests another reason why Schopenhauer might have been led to misinterpret Vedānta:

Schopenhauer caught this idea of willing from the Buddhists. We [Vedāntists] have it also in *Vasana* or *Trishna*, Pali *tanha*. We also admit that it is the *cause* of all manifestations which are, in their turn, its effects. But, being a cause, it must be a combination of the *Absolute* and *Maya*. . . . The Buddhist analysis of everything into will is imperfect, firstly, because will itself is a compound, and secondly, because consciousness or knowledge which is a compound of the first degree, precedes it.⁵⁴

Vivekananda provocatively suggests here that Schopenhauer was caught between the competing pulls of Vedānta on the one hand and Buddhism on the other, and as a result his own philosophy ended up being a kind of unsatisfactory hybrid of Vedāntic and Buddhist ideas (Objection 5b). In the first sentence, Vivekananda claims that Schopenhauer “caught” the idea of the will “from the Buddhists” (Objection 5bi). Vivekananda was not aware that Schopenhauer only seriously studied Buddhist philosophy in the years following the publication of volume 1 of *WWR* in 1818, so it is unlikely that Schopenhauer’s doctrine of the will was influenced by Buddhist thought.⁵⁵ Apart from his historical claim that Schopenhauer was influenced by Buddhism, Vivekananda also makes two significant *conceptual* claims concerning the relationship between Schopenhauer’s philosophy and Buddhism. First, Vivekananda, like Hecker, plausibly suggests in this passage that the Buddhist concept of *taṇhā* bears strong affinities with Schopenhauer’s concept of the will (Objection 5bii). Vivekananda’s claim finds striking confirmation in a letter written by Schopenhauer in 1856, where he identifies the Buddhist concept of *upādāna* with his own concept of the “will to live” and notes that “[a]ltogether the agreement with my doctrine is wonderful.”⁵⁶

Second, Vivekananda makes a subtle and highly original claim regarding the relationship between Schopenhauer’s philosophy and Buddhism that Hecker would by no means have endorsed: Schopenhauer’s doctrine of the will can be seen as a confusion or muddling of Vedāntic and Buddhist ideas (Objection 5biii). After suggesting an affinity between Schopenhauer’s will and Buddhist *taṇhā*, Vivekananda goes on to claim that the “Buddhist analysis of everything into will is imperfect,” both because the will is a “compound” and because “consciousness or knowledge” precedes the will. Vivekananda’s claim that Buddhism fails to conceive the will as a “compound” refers back to his earlier statement that the will “must be a combination of the *Absolute* and *Maya*.” From Vivekananda’s Vedāntic standpoint, the will is a compound of the Absolute and *māyā*; the will, in other words, is the Absolute as seen through the veil of *māyā*, the phenomenal forms of time, space, and causation. What Vivekananda implies here is that Buddhism, in contrast to Vedānta, does not appeal to any noumenal substratum—any “Absolute”—in order to account for the phenomenon of the will or *taṇhā*. Vivekananda makes this point explicit in his “Buddhism and Vedānta” lecture, where he remarks: “Buddhism does not want to have anything

except phenomena. In phenomena alone is desire. It is desire that is creating all this. Modern Vedantists do not hold this at all. We say there is something which has become the will. Will is a manufactured something, a compound, not a 'simple.'⁵⁷ Here, Vivekananda argues that the fundamental mistake of Buddhism is to seek desire "in phenomena alone," thereby failing to acknowledge that desire or will is actually a "compound" of the noumenal (the "Absolute") and the phenomenal (*māyā*).

In a later passage from the "Buddhism and Vedanta" lecture already cited above, Vivekananda makes clear how his criticism of the Buddhist approach to desire applies to Schopenhauer's account of the will: "We do not agree with the will-theory of these German philosophers at all. Will itself is phenomenal and cannot be the Absolute. It is one of the many projections. There is something which is not will, but is manifesting itself as will."⁵⁸ From Vivekananda's perspective, Schopenhauer's account of the will lies somewhere *between* Buddhism and Vedānta. While Schopenhauer follows Vedānta in distinguishing noumenon (the "thing-in-itself") from phenomenon, he follows Buddhism in refusing to posit a noumenal reality apart from the will. Hence, Schopenhauer ends up adopting a highly idiosyncratic position on the will that neither Buddhism nor Vedānta would accept: namely, that the will itself is the noumenal reality. It is worth contrasting Vivekananda's approach to Schopenhauer's philosophy with Hecker's approach. According to Hecker, Buddhism recognizes the centrality of will in human life but fails to lend it metaphysical dignity, while Vedānta correctly posits a noumenal reality behind appearances but mischaracterizes this noumenal reality as the pure, blissful Ātman/Brahman rather than as the will. Hence, Hecker argues that Schopenhauer's philosophy represents a "higher unity" of Buddhism and Vedānta that combines what is best in both philosophies and corrects for their respective defects. From Vivekananda's perspective, by contrast, Schopenhauer's philosophy represents an untenable compromise between Vedānta and Buddhism that fails to do justice to either.

III. The Contemporary Relevance of Vivekananda's Views on Schopenhauer

The twentieth-century reception of Schopenhauer's philosophy reflects a marked shift away from the apologetic orientation of Deussen and Hecker. Numerous commentators begin to point out tensions and contradictions in Schopenhauer's philosophical system, and even those who attempt to reconstruct an internally consistent philosophy from Schopenhauer's work admit that Schopenhauer himself was sometimes confusing—or confused—in the extreme.⁵⁹ Moreover, some recent scholars, such as Moira Nicholls and Julian Young, have argued that Schopenhauer's views on certain key aspects of his philosophy—such as the ontological status of the thing-in-itself—actually evolved in the course of his career. Hence, at a very general level, we can say that Vivekananda's critical stance toward Schopenhauer's philosophy is far more in consonance with the trend of Schopenhauer scholarship in the past century than the apologetic approach of Deussen and Hecker.

One of Vivekananda's fundamental criticisms of Schopenhauer, as we have seen, is that Schopenhauer wrongly equates the will with the noumenal thing-in-itself.

Vivekananda, like Herbart, argues that Schopenhauer's equation of the will with the thing-in-itself is self-contradictory: since the will is subject at least to the phenomenal form of time, it cannot be the noumenal thing-in-itself beyond time, space, and causality. By contrast, both Deussen and Hecker claim that Schopenhauer uses the term "will" in two different senses: while the will as the noumenal thing-in-itself is strictly unknowable, the will understood as the will to live is known to us through introspection of our own acts of volition. On this basis, Deussen and Hecker defend Schopenhauer against Herbart: Schopenhauer is not guilty of committing a self-contradiction because the will to live is *not* the thing-in-itself, while the will conceived as the ultimate reality beyond time, space, and causation *is* the thing-in-itself.

Interestingly, this debate about the ontological status of the will between Vivekananda on the one hand and Deussen and Hecker on the other has reappeared in contemporary scholarship. Like Deussen and Hecker, both John Atwell and Stephen Cross have attempted to reconstruct Schopenhauer's position on the will so as to avoid committing Schopenhauer to the problematic thesis that the will is the noumenal thing-in-itself. Cross' reconstruction of Schopenhauer's position bears an especially close resemblance to Deussen's interpretation. Cross argues that Schopenhauer distinguishes two senses of "will"—the will as "ineffable final reality" and the will as "the immanent principle and inner being of the world."⁶⁰ According to Cross, when Schopenhauer identifies the will with the noumenal thing-in-itself, Schopenhauer takes the will to mean the unknowable "final reality" and not the will to live that we discover through introspection.⁶¹ Hence, Cross, like Deussen and Hecker, claims that the Herbartian problem is "found to melt away" once we distinguish these two senses in which Schopenhauer employs the term "will."⁶²

Meanwhile, Atwell argues that Schopenhauer presupposes two distinct conceptions of the thing-in-itself: the "thing-in-itself in appearance" and the "mystical" thing-in-itself, which is equivalent to the Kantian noumenal reality.⁶³ According to Atwell, Schopenhauer conceives the will as the thing-in-itself in appearance—that is, the non-noumenal "essence of the world as appearance"—and *not* as the mystical thing-in-itself, which is only known to mystics and ascetics who have denied the will in themselves.⁶⁴ In effect, Atwell reads Schopenhauer's post-1844 position on the will as the "thing-in-itself . . . in its relation to appearance" back into *WWR* 1 and 2, although Atwell admits that in *WWR* itself, Schopenhauer "does not explicitly say that he has two very different conceptions of the thing-in-itself."⁶⁵

In contrast to the sympathetic reconstructions of Atwell and Cross, many recent scholars—including Frederick Copleston, Patrick Gardiner, David Hamlyn, Young, and Nicholls—point out that the confusions and ambivalences in Schopenhauer's view on the will's ontological status simply cannot be reconstructed away.⁶⁶ Hence, these scholars would side with Vivekananda in arguing that the Herbartian objection poses a genuine problem for Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will, since Schopenhauer does at least sometimes identify the will with the Kantian thing-in-itself.

Of course, as we have seen, Schopenhauer himself responds to this Herbartian objection in volume 2 of *WWR* by claiming that the will, which remains under the single veil of time, is only a very close approximation to—but not identical with—the

noumenal thing-in-itself. It must be said, however, that Schopenhauer nowhere provides a convincing argument for why the fact that the will is subject only to the veil of time justifies the assumption that the will is a close approximation to the thing-in-itself. Indeed, scholars such as Young and Nicholls have pointed out major flaws in Schopenhauer's "fewer veils" argument.⁶⁷ Young makes two especially strong objections to Schopenhauer's "fewer veils" argument. First, Young argues, "Since, for example, a yellow filter superimposed over a blue one produces a more accurate representation of the colour of objects than a blue one alone, it cannot in general be argued that the fewer the filters ('veils') through which one views something the closer one comes to experiencing it as it is in itself."⁶⁸ Second, he points out that the "very idea of an atemporal will seems self-contradictory," so Schopenhauer's claim that the noumenal reality beyond time, space, and causality somehow resembles the will borders on incoherence.⁶⁹ Vivekananda would have welcomed such arguments against Schopenhauer's "fewer veils" argument, since they lend strong support to the Vedāntic view that the will—whether it is subject only to time or to all three phenomenal forms of time, space, and causation—must be radically different from the noumenal reality.

Vivekananda, as we have seen, also argues that Schopenhauer's equation of the will with the noumenal thing-in-itself is incompatible with the soteriological thesis that we can attain salvation from the will through self-denial and meditation. Both Young and Nicholls have raised objections to Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will that are remarkably similar to Vivekananda's. As Young puts it, Schopenhauer's soteriological thesis about the possibility of salvation from the will "demands, at least, that 'will', should *not* be the final word on the character of the (Kantian) thing-in-itself, that there should be a domain 'beyond the will.'"⁷⁰ Young's objection amounts to a powerful internal critique of Schopenhauer's philosophy: Schopenhauer's thesis that the will is the Kantian thing-in-itself contradicts the soteriological dimension of his philosophy, which insists that salvation from the will is possible. Vivekananda, I have argued, articulated a version of this soteriological objection to Schopenhauer's philosophy over a century ago.

According to Vivekananda, Schopenhauer could have met both the Herbartian and soteriological objections to his philosophy if he had consistently maintained the Vedāntic position that the will is merely phenomenal and the ultimate reality is entirely different from the will. Deussen, on the other hand, claims—rather dubiously—that Schopenhauer *does* consistently maintain this Vedāntic position on the will, adducing as evidence Schopenhauer's remarks in chapter 18 of volume 2 that the "inner nature of the thing-in-itself" is radically different from the will. This debate between Deussen and Vivekananda on the question of how close Schopenhauer's philosophy comes to Vedānta has played out again in contemporary scholarship in the contrasting views of Cross and Nicholls. Cross argues that while Schopenhauer does sometimes *seem* to hold the un-Vedāntic position that the will is the ultimate reality, the position he *really* holds is that "will is not final reality . . . but only the power bringing about manifestation."⁷¹ On this basis, Cross claims that Schopenhauer's concept of the "*denial of the will* . . . has much in common with the

ineffable final reality of Indian thought, whether this is described in positive terms as the *Ātman* of Hinduism or in negative terms as the ‘blowing out’ (*nirvāṇa*) or ‘emptiness’ (*śūnyatā*) of Buddhist teaching.”⁷² Evidently, Cross comes close to Deussen’s position in claiming that Schopenhauer’s philosophy is perfectly consistent with Vedānta, although Cross is willing to admit—unlike Deussen—that some of Schopenhauer’s statements might lead us to think otherwise. Cross, however, is only able to bring Schopenhauer’s philosophy close to Vedānta by downplaying or explaining away Schopenhauer’s numerous statements to the effect that the will *is* the noumenal reality or, at the very least, that the will is a very close approximation to the noumenal reality.

In contrast to Cross, Nicholls proposes an intriguing new interpretation of the relationship between Schopenhauer’s philosophy and Vedānta that lends strong support to Vivekananda’s interpretation. Nicholls claims that Schopenhauer’s “increasing knowledge of and admiration for Eastern thought”⁷³—in particular, the Vedāntic notion of ultimate reality as the blissful *Ātman*/Brahman and the Buddhist notion of *nirvāṇa*—led him to modify his view on the will in the course of his thinking. According to Nicholls, in volume 1 of *WWR* Schopenhauer holds the view that the will is identical to the noumenal thing-in-itself, while in volume 2 and in subsequently written letters Schopenhauer leans toward the view that the “thing-in-itself has multiple aspects, only one of which is will.”⁷⁴ Nicholls claims, however, that even in his later writings, Schopenhauer vacillates between two incompatible views on the will: on the one hand he continues to maintain his early view that the will is the noumenal thing-in-itself, while on the other hand he suggests that the noumenal thing-in-itself is quite different from the will.⁷⁵ Nicholls goes on to make a provocative speculation: “[H]ad Schopenhauer lived longer, he may well have embraced the view that the thing-in-itself is not will at all; rather it is the object of awareness of saints, mystics and those who have denied the will.”⁷⁶ Nicholls plausibly claims, in other words, that under the influence of Vedāntic and Buddhist thought, Schopenhauer moved increasingly close to a Vedāntic position on the will in the course of his thinking, yet he was never quite willing to embrace the consistently Vedāntic view that the “thing-in-itself is not will at all.” Vivekananda, I would suggest, deserves to be considered an early forerunner to Nicholls: he was one of the first commentators on Schopenhauer—if not the first—to claim that Schopenhauer falls into contradictions because he fails to adopt the Vedāntic position that “[t]here is something which is not will, but is manifesting itself as will.”

Vivekananda was equally prescient in his claim that “Schopenhauer’s philosophy makes a mistake in its interpretation of Vedānta, for it seeks to make the will everything.”⁷⁷ Unwittingly taking Vivekananda’s lead, numerous recent scholars—such as Wilhelm Halbfass, Urs App, Günter Zöllner, and Gary Cooper—have argued that Schopenhauer mistakenly equates the Vedāntic *Ātman*/Brahman with the will.⁷⁸ Zöllner, for instance, refers to the “instrumental and frankly manipulative character of Schopenhauer’s reception of Indian materials” and claims that Schopenhauer misinterprets the “*Tat*” in the Vedāntic statement “*Tat tvam asi*” as the evil will lying at the root of all suffering.⁷⁹ In his philologically pioneering book, *Schopenhauers Kompass*

(2011), App arrives at a similar conclusion through a careful examination of Schopenhauer's own annotated copy of the *Oupnek'hat* and his early notebooks.⁸⁰

Finally, Vivekananda's canny recognition of the uneasy tension between Vedāntic and Buddhist strains in Schopenhauer's thought anticipated recent debates about whether Schopenhauer is closer to Buddhism or Vedānta. Cross claims that Schopenhauer's early notions of "better consciousness" and the "subject of knowing"—which eventually morphed into the negative doctrine of the "denial of the will" in *WWR*—bear strong affinities with the "Ātman of Hinduism."⁸¹ As Cross puts it, "Both the Self or *Ātman* and the better consciousness are ineffable, blissful, untouched by empirical experience, and as the innermost kernel of our true being survive death."⁸² In *Schopenhauer and Buddhism* (1970), by contrast, the Buddhist scholar-monk Nānājīvako argues that Schopenhauer's philosophy agrees fundamentally with Buddhism. In Schopenhauer's hands, according to Nānājīvako, Kant's "'thing-in-itself' loses all attributes of its 'transcendent' and 'absolute' nature" and "becomes the principle of all ill and suffering which therefore should be repudiated. . . ."⁸³ For Nānājīvako, Schopenhauer rejects the very idea of a transcendent ultimate reality akin to the "*sat-cit-ananda* ('being-consciousness-bliss') of Śaṅkara," so Schopenhauer's philosophy comes much closer to Buddhism than to Vedānta.⁸⁴

Helmuth von Glasenapp, meanwhile, echoes Vivekananda's claim that Schopenhauer's view on the will is neither Vedāntic nor Buddhistic but stands somewhere *in between* Vedānta and Buddhism. According to Glasenapp, while Schopenhauer adopts the Vedāntic doctrines of *māyā* and the oneness of all reality, he departs from Vedānta in conceiving the ultimate reality as the will rather than as the "eternal Spirit which is of the nature of being, consciousness, and bliss."⁸⁵ On the other hand, according to Glasenapp, while Schopenhauer embraces the atheism of Buddhism and finds a kinship between his notion of the will and the Buddhist concepts of *taṇhā* and *upādāna*, Schopenhauer nonetheless departs from Buddhism in giving noumenal status to the will instead of treating it as a causally conditioned phenomenon subject to *pratītya-samutpāda* (the principle of dependent origination).⁸⁶

Glasenapp's position on this issue seems to me to be more balanced and convincing than the somewhat forced interpretations of Cross and Nānājīvako. Cross, as I argued above, reconstructs Schopenhauer's position on the will in such a way as to bring it close to Vedānta, but this reconstruction comes at the cost of downplaying or distorting Schopenhauer's decidedly *un-Vedāntic* claim that the will is, or at least closely approximates, the noumenal reality. Meanwhile, Nānājīvako's Buddhistic interpretation of Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will is based on the dubious assumption that Schopenhauer consistently conceives the "thing-in-itself" as a non-noumenal principle. Hence, I would side with Vivekananda and Glasenapp against Cross and Nānājīvako: Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will undoubtedly bears *affinities* with both Vedānta and Buddhism but cannot be fully or coherently explained within either a Vedāntic or a Buddhistic framework alone.

While contemporary Schopenhauer scholars routinely acknowledge the pioneering work of Deussen and Hecker, they hardly ever refer to Vivekananda's views on Schopenhauer. The irony of this situation, I hope to have shown, is that many of

Vivekananda's critical views on Schopenhauer's philosophy have proven to be far more timely and enduring than the views of Deussen and Hecker, whose apologetic approach to Schopenhauer has fallen out of favor.

Notes

I am grateful to Sinem Kiliç, Research Assistant at the Schopenhauer-Forschungsstelle in Frankfurt, for kindly sending me a number of articles published in the *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch* (*Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft*). I would also like to thank Ryan Sakoda, Millie Das, and Vivek Karmakar for sending me texts I urgently needed. Finally, I am grateful to Swami Nityasthananda for giving me helpful feedback on an earlier draft of the manuscript.

Abbreviations are used in the Notes as follows:

CW Vivekananda, Swami. (1907) 2007. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda: Mayavati Memorial Edition*. Vols. I–IX. Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama.

WWR 1 Schopenhauer, Arthur. (1818) 1969. *The World as Will and Representation*. Vol. 1. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. New York: Dover.

WWR 2 Schopenhauer, Arthur. (1844) 1969. *The World as Will and Representation*. Vol. 2. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. New York: Dover.

WWV Schopenhauer, Arthur. (1859) 1998. *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I und II: Gesamtausgabe*. Edited by Ludger Lütkehaus. München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.

1 – See, for instance, Cross 2013, App 2011, App 2006, Barua et al. 2013, Barua 2008, Barua 2012, Zöllner 2012, Berger 2004, and Nicholls 1999.

2 – See Halbfass 1988, p. 119; Nicholls 1991, pp. 152–155; Nicholls 1999; App 2011; and Cooper 2012, pp. 274–278.

3 – See the first paragraph of section II of this essay for details on Vivekananda's acquaintance with Schopenhauer's philosophy.

4 – Dasgupta (1996, pp. 173–175) discusses briefly Vivekananda's criticisms of Schopenhauer's philosophy, but the discussion is quite general. Sarin (2013) compares the ethical doctrines of Vivekananda and Schopenhauer, but she does not discuss Vivekananda's own remarks on Schopenhauer's philosophy.

5 – All references to Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* are included as parenthetical citations in the body of the text. Parenthetical citations refer to the page number of E.F.J. Payne's two-volume translation, *The World as Will and Representation* (WWR 1 and WWR 2), followed by the page number of the German edition, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I und II* (WWV),

edited by Ludger Lütkehaus (Schopenhauer [1859] 1998). All translations of passages from German secondary sources are my own.

- 6 – This is not the place to enter into the scholarly controversy regarding whether Schopenhauer’s views on the will’s ontological status are consistent. Some recent scholars such as Atwell and Cross have attempted to reconstruct from Schopenhauer’s scattered remarks a consistent position on the will’s ontological status. See Atwell 1995, pp. 113–128, and Cross 2013, pp. 181–192. By contrast, Nicholls and Young argue that Schopenhauer’s view on the will’s ontological status evolves in the course of his career. See Nicholls 1999 and Young 2005, pp. 89–102. However, virtually all recent scholars agree that Schopenhauer’s views on the will’s ontological status—whether or not they are ultimately consistent—are ambiguous and confusing in the extreme.
- 7 – See, for instance, § 23 of *WWR* 1, p. 112; and *WWV*, p. 166. For helpful discussions of Schopenhauer’s equation of the will with the thing-in-itself in *WWR* 1, see Young 2005, p. 90 and pp. 251–252 n. 2; Nicholls 1994, pp. 257–258; and Nicholls 1995, pp. 64–65.
- 8 – For Herbart’s review, see Piper 1917, pp. 89–117.
- 9 – See the useful discussion in Young 2005, pp. 92–101.
- 10 – Cited in Atwell 1995, p. 115 (letter dated August 21, 1953). Also relevant is Schopenhauer’s letter to Johann August Becker dated September 21, 1844 (cited in Atwell 1995, p. 113). For a thorough discussion of some of the most important of these letters, see Atwell 1995, pp. 113–128.
- 11 – See Nicholls 1999 and Young 2005, pp. 92–102.
- 12 – See Glasenapp 1960, pp. 68–101, and Halbfass 1990, pp. 105–120, for helpful discussions of the hermeneutic and orientalist assumptions informing Schopenhauer’s interpretation and appropriation of Indian thought.
- 13 – See, for instance, § 3 and § 66 of *WWR* 1 and chapter 25 of *WWR* 2 (pp. 325–326; *WWV*, p. 381). Also see Cooper 2012, pp. 271–274.
- 14 – See § 187 of volume 2 of *Parerga and Paralipomena* (Schopenhauer [1852] 1974), where Schopenhauer suggests that the distinction in Sāṃkhyan philosophy between *prakṛti* (“nature”) and *Puruṣa* (“Soul”) corresponds to his own distinction between the will and the “subject of knowing” (ibid., p. 400). For a helpful explanation of the Sāṃkhyan concept of *prakṛti*, see Chatterjee and Datta 1968, pp. 258–259.
- 15 – See Schopenhauer’s comment on *upādāna* in his letter to von Doss dated 27 February 1856, cited in Cross 2013, p. 165.
- 16 – Since Deussen edited Schopenhauer’s complete works, he was certainly aware of the entire range of Schopenhauer’s published and unpublished corpus, which reflects Schopenhauer’s evolving view on the will’s ontological status.

- 17 – See Deussen (1877) 1902, pp. 82–84, 106–107; and Deussen 1917, pp. 379, 427.
- 18 – Deussen 1917, pp. 488–489: “Wäre der Wille das Ding an sich, so könnte er nicht erkannt werden, wäre er hingegen erkennbar, so könnte er nicht das Ding an sich sein.”
- 19 – Deussen 1917, p. 486.
- 20 – Ibid.
- 21 – Deussen (1877) 1902, p. 110.
- 22 – Ibid.
- 23 – Deussen 1917, p. 505.
- 24 – See Marchand 2009, pp. 300–311, for an extremely interesting discussion of how Deussen’s Schopenhauerian apologetics was bound up with—and in the service of—an “implicitly racist form of Christian apologetics” (p. 307).
- 25 – Hecker 1897, p. 104.
- 26 – Ibid., pp. 104–105.
- 27 – Ibid., p. 80.
- 28 – Ibid., p. 81.
- 29 – Ibid.
- 30 – Ibid.
- 31 – Ibid., p. 76: “In brahman ist alles Leid, aller Schmerz, Geburt und Sterben geschwunden. —Ganz anders Schopenhauer. Nach ihm ist der Wille selbst unmittelbar mit Leid behaftet, mit Schuld und Uebel verbunden.”
- 32 – Ibid., pp. 81–82: “Darum muss man immerhin dem Begriff des Brahman einige Gewalt anthun, wenn man ihn als den Schopenhauer’schen Willen interpretieren will.”
- 33 – Ibid., pp. 81–86. Hecker seems to me to be mistaken in treating “Geistigkeit” and “Intellekt” interchangeably, since the Vedāntic Ātman is a spiritual reality beyond the reach of the intellect.
- 34 – Ibid., p. 82: “Dieser ‘Durst’ ist ebenso wie der ‘Wille’ eine unmoralische Potenz, von der sich zu befreien Glück und Erlösung bedeutet, aber er ist kein Ding-an-sich.”
- 35 – Ibid.
- 36 – Ibid.: “Wäre der Buddhismus zu einer positiven Metaphysik durchdegrungen, er würde die Begier, die er so nur in Menschen sucht, auch im Weltall wiedergefunden haben. . . .”
- 37 – Ibid., p. 254.

- 38 – Rolland ([1929] 1970, p. 225) points out that Vivekananda, as a student at Scottish Church College, likely read only textbook summaries of, and perhaps excerpts from, the works of these philosophers and not the works in full. For detailed information on Vivekananda’s studies at Scottish Church College, see Prabhananda 1979; Basu 1980; and Dhar 1975, pp. 51–61.
- 39 – See CW III, p. 109, and CW IV, pp. 266–267. No English translation of *Parerga* was available during Vivekananda’s time, so he must have found the excerpt from *Parerga* in another source.
- 40 – CW IV, pp. 266–267.
- 41 – CW VIII, p. 362.
- 42 – Rolland 1928, p. 162.
- 43 – CW IV, pp. 276–277.
- 44 – CW II, p. 131.
- 45 – Ibid.
- 46 – CW V, p. 281.
- 47 – As far as I am aware, the only commentator who raised something like this soteriological objection prior to Vivekananda is Julius Frauenstädt. As early as 1853, Frauenstädt argued that the will cannot be equated with the noumenal thing-in-itself, because while the will is eliminable, the thing-in-itself is ineliminable and indestructible, “since we understand by the *thing-in-itself* that which remains over after everything else, everything merely relative, transitory, appearing is eliminated” (cited in Atwell 1995, p. 114). Vivekananda was almost certainly unaware of Frauenstädt’s objection.
- 48 – CW II, p. 131.
- 49 – CW III, p. 109.
- 50 – Ibid.
- 51 – CW VIII, p. 362.
- 52 – Interestingly, in an 1814 note from the *Manuscript Remains*, the early Schopenhauer identifies “willing” with “*maya*,” which suggests that by the time of writing *WWR* 1, Schopenhauer had moved away from his early Vedāntic conception of the will as *māyā*. See Schopenhauer (1804) 1988, p. 120; the original German is cited in App 2011, p. 157.
- 53 – CW III, p. 109.
- 54 – CW VIII, p. 362.
- 55 – Through a careful study of the two articles relating to Buddhism that Schopenhauer read and annotated between 1813 and 1816, App (2011, p. 211) claims that Buddhism played no role in shaping Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of the will. See also App 1998a; App 1998b; and Cross 2013, pp. 37–40.

- 56 – See Schopenhauer’s letter to von Doss dated 27 February 1856 (cited in Cross 2013, p. 165).
- 57 – CWV, p. 280.
- 58 – *Ibid.*
- 59 – See, for instance, Copleston 1965, pp. 275–276; Gardiner 1963, pp. 171–174; Hamlyn 1980, pp. 92–94; Nicholls 1991, p. 142; Nicholls 1994; Young 2005, pp. 89–92; Janaway 1989, pp. 192–193; Cross 2013; and Atwell 1995.
- 60 – Cross 2013, p. 188.
- 61 – Cross, however, does not acknowledge that Deussen and Hecker anticipated this position over a century ago.
- 62 – Cross 2013, p. 188.
- 63 – Atwell 1995, p. 126.
- 64 – *Ibid.*
- 65 – *Ibid.*, p. 127.
- 66 – See Nicholls 1991, p. 142; Nicholls 1994; Copleston 1965, pp. 275–276; Gardiner 1963, pp. 171–174; Hamlyn 1980, pp. 92–94; Young 2005, pp. 89–92; and Janaway 1989, pp. 192–193.
- 67 – See Young 1987, p. 30; Young 2005, pp. 93–94; Nicholls 1995, p. 153; and Gardiner 1963, pp. 171–174.
- 68 – Young 2005, p. 94.
- 69 – *Ibid.*
- 70 – Young 2005, p. 99. Nicholls (1991, p. 151) seconds Young’s objection.
- 71 – Cross 2013, p. 173.
- 72 – *Ibid.*, p. 204.
- 73 – Nicholls 1999, p. 171.
- 74 – *Ibid.*, p. 174.
- 75 – See Nicholls 1991, pp. 154–155, and Nicholls 1999.
- 76 – Nicholls 1999, p. 196. Cooper (2012, p. 275) supports her view.
- 77 – If I had the space, I would have shown how Vivekananda’s critique of Schopenhauer also enriches our understanding of the range and complexity of indigenous Indian responses to German orientalism—an issue addressed by recent scholars such as Herling (2010) and King (1999).
- 78 – Halbfass 1988, p. 119; App 2011; Zöllner 2012; Cooper 2012, p. 274; and Mall 1995.
- 79 – Zöllner 2012, p. 87.

- 80 – App 2011, p. 209.
81 – Cross 2013, p. 204.
82 – Ibid.
83 – Nānājīvako 1970, p. 63.
84 – Ibid.
85 – Glasenapp 1961, p. 56.
86 – Ibid.

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