SYMPTOMS OF WITHDRAWAL:
THE THREEFOLD STRUCTURE OF
HEGEL’S AND SCHOPENHAUER’S INTERPRETATION OF
HINDU RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

German Romanticism and its enthusiasm about India produced significant research, translations, and comparative analyses of ancient Indian literary, religious, and philosophical texts. Among the German philosophers, who interpreted and commented upon this material, this dissertation investigates G. W. F. Hegel’s and Arthur Schopenhauer’s interpretation and structuring of Hindu religion and philosophy.

The analysis of their interpretations reveals that Hegel and Schopenhauer imposed a threefold conceptual structure, within which they approached, interpreted, and presented Hindu religion and philosophy. Hegel and Schopenhauer identified and isolated three aspects as fundamental and defining concepts of Hindu religion and philosophy: 1. the metaphysical universal principle, 2. the world and its particular entities, and 3. the non-duality of the particular with the universal principle. They both argued that Hindu religious thought contemplates upon the concept of brahman as the singular sustaining universal principle, considers the world and its particular entities as illusory, temporary, and secondary, and
recommends complete withdrawal into the non-duality with brahman as the religio-
philosophical goal.

This dissertation further demonstrates that the threefold structure is
inherently connected and directly derives from Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s own
philosophies. This threefold structure is a result of their attempt to incorporate,
place, and fit Hindu religion and philosophy within the presuppositions of their
systems. Hegel analyzed Hindu religious thought in terms of his own triadic
dialectical structure and criticized it as primitive and unsophisticated, belonging to
the early stages of Spirit’s development. Schopenhauer attempted to establish
kinship with it by seeking analogous explanations in Hindu religion and philosophy
for his overarching rubric of representation, will, and denial of will. Upon
comparing their interpretation with the information given in their own sources, this
analysis ascertains that Hegel and Schopenhauer imposed the threefold conceptual
structure by selectively reading their sources, restructuring schools of Indian
philosophy, isolating and recontextualizing Hindu quotes and explanations, and
reconfiguring the connotations and meanings of concepts. This dissertation further
exposes the discrepancies and conceptual tensions in their interpretations of Hindu
religion and philosophy that potentially challenge the consistency of their own
systems.
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INTRODUCTION

G. W. F. Hegel and Arthur Schopenhauer established extraordinary but very different philosophies. Hegel introduced a remarkable idealism, which argued for a teleological dialectic development of the “Geist’s” self-cognition that claimed to necessitate and account for the entire history of human civilization. To put it more simply, Hegel argued that the history of human civilization embodied the Spirit’s dialectical development. Schopenhauer, launching an open attack on the “Unsinn der Hegelei,” declared that history was inconsequential to philosophy.¹

Schopenhauer, instead, presented a bleak vision of our “miserable” universe driven by the unstoppable force of “Wille.” Schopenhauer argued that the world we experience is not what it seems; it is only “Vorstellung” – representation and it is perpetuated by will, which is the essence of everything.²

¹ Arthur Schopenhauer, Zürcher Ausgabe: Werke in Zehn Bänden, ed. Arthur Hübscher and Angelika Hübscher, vol. 1 (Zürich: Diogenes, 1977) 21. Schopenhauer’s work Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I occupies the Band 1 and 2 of the Zürcher Ausgabe with continuous page numbers; correspondingly Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II occupies Band 3 and 4 with continuous page numbers. Henceforth I will refer to this specific work as Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I or II.

² Throughout this document the philosophical concepts, such as Spirit, representation, will, thing-in-itself, brahman, and māyā are italicized to specify them as philosophical concepts. According to the
Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s philosophies both used Hindu religion and philosophy in their thought. Given the statements expressed in their own philosophies, their respective evaluations of India were very different. Hegel’s interpretation of India was marked by negative assessment. India occupied only a small, albeit important, part of Hegel’s complex and comprehensive philosophical system. More importantly, Hegel did not have a high opinion of India: he argued that India had no concept of history, that Indian social and political structures displayed no concept of individual freedom, and that India did not produce evolved religious or philosophical concepts of metaphysics or of ethics and morality. Hegel strongly criticized Romanticism for its glorification of Indian wisdom. For him India was but a “childhood” stage in the development and self-realization of the Spirit; the Indian mind was primitive, savage, amoral, and unfree. For Hegel there was no point for the enlightened European to go back to the East.

In contrast with Hegel, no other Western philosopher of his era is as well known as Schopenhauer for his enthusiasm and admiration for Eastern philosophy. Schopenhauer greatly admired Indian thought, both Hindu and Buddhist religions and philosophies, and argued that his own philosophy had much in common with them. Unlike the case of Hegel, Hindu religion and philosophy permeated

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MLA style handbook the names of Eastern scriptures, such as the Upaniṣads, the Bhagavadgītā, and the Vedas are not underlined. These scriptures are not specific publications, therefore they cannot be underlined, and they are not philosophical concepts, so they have not been italicized.

3 His admiration was not only philosophical in nature but also personal: his dog’s name was Ātman; he acquired a statue of the Buddha, gilded it and proudly displayed it in his house. He considered the Upaniṣads to be the comfort for his life and the solace of his death.
Schopenhauer’s entire system. In his works Schopenhauer constantly commented on what he thought the commonalities were between his thought and ancient Indian wisdom. He declared that Hindu and Buddhist religious philosophies made profound epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical statements that transcended cultural and temporal differences, and were echoed in great European philosophers such as Plato and Kant. He believed that the Europe of his time had much to learn from ancient Indian wisdom.

Hegel believed India embodied the early, primitive stage of the linear teleological progress of human history. Schopenhauer believed his philosophy, so far apart in time and culture from Hindu religion and philosophy, was similar to ancient Indian wisdom. While Hegel argued that Indian religious and philosophical concepts were primitive and immature, Schopenhauer argued that they were sophisticated and profound. While Hegel argued how different his concepts were from Indian concepts, Schopenhauer drew parallels between his and Indian philosophical statements.

The reason why they did and could incorporate India and Indian culture into their own thoughts is related to German Romanticism’s great interest for India. German Romanticism criticized the Age of Enlightenment for its conviction in reason and progress and its rational analysis of all things. Romanticism sought a sense of wonder, wholeness and harmony, for which it called for a “spiritual return”
to “forgotten origins.” In this context Romanticism viewed India as the cradle of humanity and civilization, as the land of original wisdom, and of perfect harmony between man and nature. British and French colonial interest in India initiated and facilitated access to Indian culture. As opposed to the British and French, the German intelligencia prided itself as being “open, disinterested and intrinsically inclusivist,” and hence in a better position to analyze, understand, and appreciate Indian culture more than their colonial neighbors.

Whatever their particular interest, colonial or otherwise, the English, French and German intellectuals—writers, historians, linguists, philologists, philosophers, and translators—were producing voluminous material on India. This included translations, studies, commentaries, and comparative analyses in Indian religions, mythology, philosophy, literature, linguistics, history, law, social structure, traditions, and customs. A substantial amount of research on India was being produced and discussed among intellectuals. Both Hegel and Schopenhauer felt compelled to participate and respond to this Indology.

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5 Saverio Marchignoli explains that “German discourse on India began primarily as a project connected to German culture’s self-understanding.” This self-understanding emphasized that, as opposed to England or France, Germany was the “homeland of European thought,” that the British acquired Indian texts, but the Germans had the “eclectic character” to be able to interpret and evaluate them, without being concerned about personal colonial gain. Saverio Marchignoli, “Canonizing an Indian Text? A. W. Schlegel, W. von Humboldt, Hegel, and the Bhagavadgītā,” Sanskrit and Orientalism Indology and Comparative Linguistics in Germany, 1750-1958, ed. Douglas McGetchin, Peter Park and Damodar SarDesai (New Delhi: Manohar, 2004) 247-49.
What justifies a comparison between Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s interpretation of India is the fact that both Hegel and Schopenhauer had access to the same material, to the same critical analyses, and to the same debates on India in general and on Hinduism in particular. However, as noted earlier, their philosophical approaches to India and how they related India to their thought were very different. Hence, despite the availability of common sources they had very different preferences regarding those sources. Some sources were more important than others and some were more suited to their particular agenda than others. While Ignatius Viyagappa and Moira Nicholls give a comprehensive list of Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s sources, I will briefly discuss here the most important sources Hegel and Schopenhauer used.

1. Important English Scholars and Sources:

Sir William Jones is arguably the most important pioneer of studies in Indology and in comparative linguistics, mythology, and religion in the late 18th century. It is indeed true that Schopenhauer was 18 years younger than Hegel and lived 29 years longer than Hegel. It is also true that 13 years passed between Hegel’s death in 1831 and the second edition of Schopenhauer’s Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung in 1844. However, it was the Indology research published between 1784 and 1831 that shaped Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s interpretation of India, specifically of Hindu religion and philosophy, which is the focus of this dissertation.

century. In 1784 he founded the “Asiatic Society” in Bengal, which published a journal called *Asiatick Researches*. He himself contributed several articles, comparative analyses, translations, and poems on Hindu religion, philosophy, mythology, history, law, literature, and astronomy. In addition to displaying great admiration for ancient Indian wisdom, Jones’s scholarship is marked by a comparative agenda. Jones continually made connections between Hindu and Greek gods, Sanskrit and European languages, and Indian and European philosophies. Hegel and Schopenhauer both referred to Jones’s scholarship. Hegel thanked him for bringing studies on Indian culture to Europeans. Hegel also referred to his translations of the Laws of Manu while commenting on the Indian caste system and Hindu cosmogonies. Schopenhauer especially benefited from Jones’s comparative analysis and his explanation of the concept of māyā. In fact, Jones is a first and frequently recurring reference throughout Schopenhauer’s work.

Henry Thomas Colebrooke also lived in India around the same time and continued Jones’s work on Hindu law. He studied Sanskrit and translated large portions of the Vedas, Upaniṣads, and the Brahmasūtras, among other works. He published several articles in the journal *Asiatik Researches* on Hindu religious

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8 Before venturing into India, he had already produced extensive research on Persian and Arabic language, poetry, and history. His passionate and scholarly work on Indian languages, culture, religion, mythology, and literature inspired and laid the foundation of many contemporary and subsequent scholars, including Charles Wilkins, Wilhelm von Humboldt and Friedrich Schlegel, H. T. Colebrooke, and Franz Bopp.

scriptures, religious ceremonies and rituals, Hindu law and social customs, and Indian schools of philosophy—Sāṅkhya-Yoga, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, and Vedānta.\textsuperscript{10} Colebrooke’s comments and analysis, which were always accompanied and illustrated by several translated passages from Indian works, were austere.

Compared to William Jones’s enthusiasm, his style was very cautious, careful, and scientific.\textsuperscript{11} As we will see later, Schopenhauer used and quoted Colebrooke as a reference. However, Hegel relied exclusively on Colebrooke’s essays on Indian philosophies, translating and quoting large portions of those essays in his elaboration on Indian philosophies in his Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie. For Hegel, Colebrooke was the most reliable source. Hegel used Colebrooke’s scientific rigor to counter what he saw as excessive German Indomania. Hegel preferred Colebrooke’s analysis to that of German scholars, claiming that his analysis was scientific and impartial, while excessive Indomania compromised German scholars’ objectivity. Hegel used Colebrooke, claiming that he knew more about Indian thought than his German colleagues, especially

\textsuperscript{10} The word “Sāṅkhya” is often spelled as “Sāṃkhya,” the symbol “m” indicating an anusvāra or a nasal sound. However, the Devanāgarī script has five different nasal sounds for five consonant groups. Each nasal sound has its own symbol of transliteration. The word “Sāṅkhya” requires the nasal sound from the velar group of consonants, which is indicated by putting a ‘.’ on the letter n. Throughout this work I have indicated specific nasal sounds by using electronically available symbols.

Friedrich Schlegel, who, according to Hegel, had not read much more than the table of contents of the Rāmāyaṇa.\textsuperscript{12}

Charles Wilkins is said to be the first Englishman to master Sanskrit. His projects included a Sanskrit grammar, a Sanskrit dictionary, and a translation of the Mahābhārata. He only partially completed these projects, but his The Bhāgvāt-Gēētā or Dialogues of Krēēshna and Ārijōōn—a translation of the Bhagavadgītā, which is a part of the Mahābhārata—was published in 1785 and was widely read.\textsuperscript{13} Wilkins is important for Hegel and Schopenhauer because of his Bhagavadgītā translation. Both mention that particular work, but Hegel in particular specifically references some aspects of Wilkins’s translation of the Bhagavadgītā when he discusses the problem of translating Sanskrit terms into European languages.

Unlike the previous three scholars, political philosopher James Mill had never been to India, a quality he believed lent his three-volume History of British India of 1818 greater objectivity. However, his work is charged with harsh and derogatory judgments on Indian culture and society, religion, and mythology.\textsuperscript{14} Schopenhauer did not have much use for Mill’s work and its unsympathetic


treatment of India, since it did not suit his own appreciation for Indian thought. Hegel, however, used James Mill in his *Philosophie der Religion*, especially Mill’s elaboration of the concept of *brahman* and his evaluation of Hindu mythology and religion as confused, vague, and excessive.

2. Important French scholars and works:

Anquetil Duperron is the most important source among the French scholars and an absolutely invaluable source for Schopenhauer. In 1775 Duperron traveled to India to acquire Persian Zoroastrian manuscripts, particularly the Zend-Avesta, which he translated into French. His plans to learn Sanskrit did not materialize, but he managed to obtain a Persian translation of the Sanskrit Upaniṣads by Muhammad Dara Shukoh in 1656-1657.¹⁵ Duperron translated this Persian translation into Latin and published it in two volumes in 1801-1802 under the title *Oupnek’hat id est, Secretum Tegendum*.¹⁶ This work is an interesting blend of distorted phonetic spellings of Sanskrit words, much of Dara Shukoh’s Persian vocabulary, and Latin translation and explanations. To summarize Upaniṣadic teachings, Duperron singled out a Mundaka Upaniṣad quotation: “Quisquis Deum intelligit, Deus fit” [The one who understands God, becomes God].¹⁷ He held the

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view that all religions contained the same basic truth. He also argued that the philosophy in the Upaniṣads was compatible with European philosophy, especially with that of Kant and Plato. Hegel disagreed with any such comparative connections between India and Europe, either in religion or philosophy. In his *Philosophie der Religion* and his review of the Bhagavadgītā, however, Hegel consulted Duperron’s *Oupnek’hat*, specifically to paraphrase some assertions on the god Śiva from the Atharvaśiras Upaniṣad.

For Schopenhauer, Duperron was the single most important source; he had a very high opinion of Duperron’s accuracy of translation and of the “profound veneration” with which he handled *Upaniṣadic* teachings. Schopenhauer considered *Oupnek’hat* the solace of his life and of his death. Duperron’s comparative analysis greatly influenced Schopenhauer, and he frequently quoted from it to argue for the compatibility of his thought with ancient Indian wisdom.

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18 Schopenhauer states that he has a high opinion of Dara Shikoh’s capabilities to translate Sanskrit Upaniṣads into Persian:

Further, when I see with what profound veneration, in keeping with the subject, Anquetil-Duperron handled this Persian translation, rendering it word for word into Latin, accurately keeping to the Persian syntax in spite of the Latin grammar, and content merely to accept the Sanskrit words left untranslated by the Sultan in order to explain these in a glossary, I read this translation with the fullest confidence, which is at once delightfully confirmed. For how thoroughly redolent of the holy spirit of the Vedas is the *Oupnekhat*. How deeply stirred is he who, by diligent and careful reading, is now conversant with the Persian-Latin rendering of this incomparable book. How imbued is every line with firm, definite, and harmonious significance. From every page we come across profound, original, and sublime thoughts, whilst a lofty and sacred earnestness pervades the whole. Here everything breathes the air of India and radiates an existence that is original and akin to nature. And oh, how the mind is here cleansed and purified of all Jewish superstition that was early implanted in it, and of all philosophy that slavishly serves this. With the exception of the original text, it is the most profitable and sublime reading that is possible in the world; it has been the consolation of my life and will be that of my death.

Other French sources included Marie Elizabeth Polier’s *Mythologie des Indous* and Alexander Langlois’s articles on the Bhagavadgītā.

3. Important German scholars and sources:

Friedrich Schlegel and August Wilhelm Schlegel learned Sanskrit in Paris. Friedrich Schlegel published *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* in 1808, which included chapters on comparative historical linguistics between Latin, Greek, German, Persian, and Sanskrit, a chapter on poetry, an essay on Indian philosophy, and translated excerpts from the Rāmāyaṇa, Bhagavadgītā, and Śakuntalā. August Wilhelm Schlegel translated into Latin the Bhagavadgītā, parts of Rāmāyaṇa, and Hitopadeśa. He also published a journal called *Indische Bibliothek*.

Hegel disagreed with the Schlegel brothers regarding their notion of the decline of human civilization from ancient times to the present, and he disliked their sympathetic view of India. However, Hegel recognized the Schlegels for their work in Indology, even though he deemed them incapable of philosophical analysis. Both Hegel and Schopenhauer referred to and quoted from A. W. Schlegel’s translation of the Bhagavadgītā.

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Wilhelm von Humboldt published an essay “Über die Bhagavad-Gita” in A. W. Schlegel’s *Indische Bibliothek* in 1827 and wrote another essay entitled “Über die unter dem Namen Bhagavad-Gita bekannte Episode des Mahā-bhārata” in two parts.21 In these essays Humboldt discussed key philosophical terms, such as ātman, dharma, and karma. He intended to discuss faithfully the philosophical content of the Gītā, which, he believed, consisted of the notion that “God brought everything into existence, God is everything and everything is in God.”22 As a response to Humboldt’s essays on the Bhagavadgītā, Hegel wrote an essay in which he appreciated Humboldt’s important and difficult study but criticized his assessment of the philosophical worth of Hindu concepts. Schopenhauer was aware of Humboldt’s work, but he did not use it as extensively as Hegel.

Other German sources included Franz Bopp’s translations and works on Sanskrit philology and grammar, and Friedrich Creuzer’s *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker*.

Both Hegel and Schopenhauer had this and other material at their disposal. However, depending upon how they placed India in their thought, they drew more heavily on certain sources. Two of the above sources stand out in this respect.

Hegel declared his trust and exclusive reliance on Colebrooke, especially for

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22 Viyagappa, Hegel’s Concept of Indian Philosophy 46.
schools of Indian philosophy.\textsuperscript{23} In his exposition of Indian philosophy in the 
\textit{Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie} Hegel translated and quoted solely from Colebrooke’s essays. This preference of an English source had its roots in Hegel’s intention to refute German Romantic enthusiasm about India. Schopenhauer praised and preferred Duperron above all others. This is perhaps because he was introduced to Duperron’s work during the formative years of his exposure to Indian thought; moreover, Duperron’s work suited Schopenhauer’s tendency to extract the similarities among philosophies and religions.

From the discussion of the available material, it becomes clear that the material on India was being published at different times (from approximately 1784 to 1831), in different languages (English, German, French, and Latin), in different fields and on different topics (religion, mythology, philosophy, law, social structures, scriptures, rituals, astronomy, history, linguistics, and literature), and in different genres (historical overviews, critical essays, commentaries, translations, and comparative analyses). The scholars themselves were exploring this new and diverse field of study and were trying to assess its new findings. Hence in this material there was yet no coherent or structured picture of what constituted the basic tenets of Indian religion and philosophy.

In the following two chapters I focus specifically on what Hegel and Schopenhauer understood as Hindu religion and philosophy and argue that Hegel

\textsuperscript{23} Hegel, \textit{Geschichte der Philosophie} 1 376.
and Schopenhauer structured this varied material, identified certain aspects, and presented them as fundamental tenets and concepts defining Hindu religion and philosophy. I demonstrate that by doing this they structured the given fragmented material into a picture, a basic notion of what constituted Hindu religion and philosophy. In addition, I argue that the structure Hegel and Schopenhauer extracted or imposed on Indian material is a threefold structure of three fundamental concepts or tenets, declaring that Hindu religious thought philosophizes about 1. the singular universal principle; 2. the particular, i.e., the world and particular entities; and 3. the non-duality between the particular and the universal principle. The ‘singular universal principle’ refers to the metaphysical entity that is conceived as the substance and essence of everything. The ‘particular’ denotes the world and the multiplicity of individual things and beings. Finally, the term ‘non-duality’ indicates the philosophical realization that the ‘universal’ and the ‘particular’ are in essence ‘non-dual.’

I also demonstrate that this threefold structure is inherently connected and directly derives from Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s philosophies. This threefold structure is a result of their attempt to incorporate, place, and fit Hindu religion and philosophy within their systems of thought. Hegel attempts to place India in the

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24 Much discussion over how to articulate these three concepts or tenets has yielded this terminology. Especially, in the case of the third concept, the term ‘non-duality’ is used instead of the term ‘identity.’ In Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Hindu thought, rather than the notion that the ‘universal’ and the ‘particular’ are identical or one and the same, the discussion is more about philosophically realizing the non-duality of the two. Moreover, the term ‘non-duality’ also offers a literal translation of the Sanskrit term a-dvaita (a meaning a negation akin to “non” and dvaita meaning “duality”). Advaita Vedānta is a school of Indian philosophy, the doctrines of which characterize both Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy.
primitive stages of history; he tries to capture Hindu religion and philosophy within the triadic conceptual framework of his own dialectics. Triadic dialectics is an effective hermeneutic tool for Hegel, the very structure of reality and thought, the only structure through which to comprehend anything. Schopenhauer, by contrast, argues that Indian thought is very close to his philosophy; he attempts to draw parallels with Indian thought for his three overarching arguments about Vorstellung, Wille, and Verneinung des Willens. I demonstrate that Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s philosophies prompt them to extract and impose the above mentioned threefold structure on Hindu religion and philosophy.

In addition, I compare Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s interpretations of Hindu religion and philosophy with their own sources and demonstrate that they selectively read and quoted their sources to be able to impose the threefold structure and to fit Hindu religious thought into their philosophies. Unlike the case of Hegel, some scholars have argued that Indian thought may have influenced the very formulation and revision of Schopenhauer’s philosophical concepts.25 These scholars question the notion that Schopenhauer first formulated his thought and then imposed it on Indian philosophy by selectively reading his sources. However, I argue that in Schopenhauer’s case influence and selective reading are not mutually exclusive. The possibility that he was influenced by Indian thought does not discount the fact that he sought and selected certain elements of Indian philosophy

and disregarded others. I demonstrate that both Hegel and Schopenhauer selectively read their sources and identified three fundamental ideas or concepts, within which they structured Hindu religion and philosophy.

I investigate Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s sources, even the sources of their own choice, and demonstrate that there are elements in their own preferred sources about their own selected concepts that refute their interpretations. As we shall see later in more detail, it is crucial to compare Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s interpretations with their own sources. This is because “Hinduism” and “Indian philosophy” are not homogeneous terms. They bring with them millennia of development and a number of sects and schools coexisting at any given time. Moreover, in the context of Eastern traditions, it is often questionable whether religion and philosophy are separable.\textsuperscript{26} It is, therefore, not fair to Hegel and Schopenhauer if one argues for some classic or present-day understanding of Hindu religion and philosophy, measuring Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s “misunderstanding” or “misrepresentation” against it. It is more fruitful to examine if and how Hegel and Schopenhauer selectively read their own information to create a certain notion of Hindu religion and philosophy that suited their purposes. In this

\textsuperscript{26} For example, in the case of Hindu religion and philosophy it is argued that religious practices and philosophical expositions of different schools base themselves on common authoritative texts, which themselves serve equally as religious scriptures and as philosophical treatises. This problem is often addressed and rarely resolved. For the purposes of this work I have chosen to describe their correlation as well as Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s amalgamations of religious and philosophical notions mostly as “Hindu religion and philosophy,” sometimes as “Hindu religious philosophy,” and occasionally as “Hindu thought.” These terms embody the ongoing comparative philosophical debate regarding the separation of religion and philosophy by bringing religion and philosophy together and, at the same time, maintaining their difference.
context I also discuss the discrepancies in their interpretation and the discrepancies in their own philosophy that result from their use of Hindu religion and philosophy.
CHAPTER 1
HEGEL’S INTERPRETATION OF HINDU RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

Hegel, who was philosophically concerned with chronology and historical development, isolated his remarks about India to discrete sections, designating a specific space for India in his chronological and thematic organization. To discuss how Hegel interpreted Hindu religion and philosophy I concentrate on his Philosophie der Religion, Geschichte der Philosophie, and his response to Humboldt entitled “Über die unter dem Namen Bhagavad-Gita bekannte Episode des Mahabharata von Wilhelm von Humboldt” included in his Berliner Schriften.27 Hegel’s interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy included various elements,

ranging from the concept of *brahman*, various Hindu gods, and religious customs and practices, to the ethics of the Bhagavadgītā, the Sānkhya school of philosophy and the concept of *yoga*. I analyze Hegel’s remarks on all these aspects to determine which elements he identified as basic to Hindu thought. My analysis abstracts and extracts a cohesive composition of a threefold conceptual structure, within which, I claim, Hegel approached, understood, and used Hinduism.

In section one of this chapter I will first review Hegel scholarship to investigate how various scholars have examined Hegel’s remarks on India in general and on Hindu religion and philosophy in particular. I will categorize them in groups, depending upon their approaches and conclusions, and I will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments. In the light of the appraisal of Hegel scholarship I will state my contribution and claims about Hegel’s threefold structuring and selective reading of Hindu religion and philosophy. In section two I will discuss the precepts of Hegel’s philosophy. I will not discuss every part and aspect of his enormous body of work but only the relevant parts to demonstrate how threefold dialectical structures emerge out of them, particularly those imposed onto Hindu concepts and ideas. In section three I will demonstrate that the precepts of Hegel’s philosophy prompt him to recognize three fundamental aspects of what constitutes for him Hindu religious thought: 1. the metaphysical universal principle, 2. the particular, i.e., the particular entities and the world, and 3. non-duality with the universal. I will reveal how Hegel’s comments on Hinduism can be classified and categorized under these three concepts. To put it conversely, I will demonstrate
how Hegel’s comments on Hinduism reveal the above-mentioned threefold structure. In section four I will illustrate how Hegel imposes this threefold structure on Hindu thought by reading his sources selectively and restructuring concepts and schools of Hindu religion and philosophy. In this context I will also show the discrepancies in Hegel’s interpretation and in his own philosophy that result from his use of Hindu religion and philosophy.

In chapter two I will proceed in the same manner to analyze Schopenhauer’s interpretation. This will maintain the consistency of the chapters and will make it easier to compare and contrast Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s views of Hindu religion and philosophy.
Section 1

Overview of Hegel Scholarship
Classification and Appraisal of Their Approaches and Conclusions
My Contribution to the Scholarship

1.1 Chronological development of scholarship on Hegel and Hindu religion and philosophy: an overview

Scholarship on Hegel and India has been consistent through the years in its evaluation of how Hegel viewed India. This differs from Schopenhauer scholarship, in which earlier scholars deemed his interpretation of Indian thought sound and reliable and later scholars criticized his inaccuracies. For Hegel, by contrast, most scholars agree that his interpretation of India was unfavorable and unsympathetic.

Generally, Hegel’s view of Indian thought has been part of broad survey books and short articles. Initially, scholars such as Schwab explored the overall character of Europe’s reception of India and the East. Schwab’s extensive survey briefly discusses how Hegel portrayed India as primitive for his “pro-Germanic organization of history” and for “a universal and perpetual totality.”28 Helmuth von Glasenapp’s study may be said to be the pioneering work on German philosophers’ analyses of India.29 He, too, discusses Hegel’s negative evaluation of India.

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according to the preconceived supremacy of Europe. While Glasenapp’s work discusses German philosophers, Willson’s work explores the image of India in German Romanticism. Willson argues that Romanticism created a “mythical image” of India, to which Hegel, however, did not contribute.\(^3\)

In the 1970s and 1980s scholars were particularly interested in comparative philosophical analysis of Hegelian and Eastern thought. Most scholars compare Hegelian and Eastern concepts to ascertain how far they are philosophically compatible. Viyagappa may be the only scholar who, in his above mentioned published dissertation *G. W. F. Hegel’s Concept of Indian Philosophy*, deals exclusively with Hegel’s interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy, via a thorough textual analysis of Hegel’s assertions.

The best known scholar since the 1980s in the field of cross-cultural philosophical encounter and exchange is Wilhelm Halbfass. Questioning the very notion of intercultural comparison and neutral understanding, Halbfass urges the reader of Hegel to be sensitive to his hermeneutical situation and to understand Hegel’s assertions in the context of his time, resources, and his own philosophy.

One would think that Halbfass’s call not to condemn Hegel’s statements on India as a simple Eurocentric bias might restrain the postcolonial criticism of Hegel’s reception of India. That may be true for the works focusing on Hegel, but for general survey works of the 1990s, Hegel’s writings serve as examples for

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exploring the Western image of India as the other. Harvey Goldman’s article “Images of the Other,” Ronald Inden’s *Imagining India*, Kamakshi Murti’s *India: The Seductive and Seduced “Other” of German Orientalism* are a few examples. These works emphasize the widely accepted fact that Hegel saw India and Indian religion and philosophy as primitive, fantastic, savage and confused. Only recently Bernasconi and Herling have argued that Hegel might have fluctuated in his evaluation of India, and that he later may have been more appreciative of Indian religion and philosophy than scholars generally believe.

To summarize, be it larger surveys, postcolonial approaches, or philosophical analyses, Hegel scholarship has been dominated by the notion that Hegel viewed India, its sociopolitical structures, religion, and philosophy as full of fantasy, randomness and unevolved notions. This has been qualified by only a few, who do not themselves deny that Hegel held this view, but ask us to examine carefully the hermeneutic context or minor modifications in Hegel’s interpretation of India. In contrast with Schopenhauer, whose philosophy carries out comparative analyses of Eastern and Western philosophies and encourages scholars to do the same, Hegel discourages comparative analyses that find parallels between his thought and ancient Indian thought; for him such a statement of compatibility would be detrimental to his teleological philosophy of linear development of the *Geist*. Hence, unlike Schopenhauer scholars, only a few scholars have attempted comparative philosophical analyses in Hegel’s case.
1.2 Classification and categorization of the scholarship and the appraisal of their approach:

In this section I classify Hegel scholarship into four groups according to the scholars’ approach and stance on Hegel and Hindu religion and philosophy. I discuss each group and appraise their approach and findings. It has to be noted that there is some overlap among these groups, as all of them mention Hegel’s negative evaluation of India, which comes to the surface in any aspect under discussion. I categorize the discussion and the scholars in the following groups:

Group 1: Scholarship that only peripherally mentions Hegel’s interpretation of India.

Group 2: Scholarship that emphasizes Hegel’s Eurocentric bias in his labeling of India as savage, fantastic, and unevolved.

Group 3: Scholarship that raises issues beyond Hegel’s Eurocentric bias and that does a critical, analytical or focused study on specific aspects of Hegel’s interpretation of India, such as Hegel on the concept of yoga, Hegel’s correlation of religion and philosophy, and so forth.

Group 4: Scholarship that does analytical and constructive philosophical analysis of Hegel and India, including both analysis of Hegel’s interpretation of Indian philosophy and comparative analyses between Hegelian and Indian philosophies.
Group 1: Scholarship that only peripherally mentions Hegel’s interpretation of India.

As we shall see in the next chapter on Schopenhauer, Indian religions and philosophies have a much larger and much more crucial role in the content, structure and approach of Schopenhauer’s philosophy. Hence it is significant to ascertain if and how much attention is paid to India within general Schopenhauer scholarship, which examines his philosophy as a whole. Hegel’s case is different. India is not as crucial to the expanse of Hegel’s philosophical writings. Hence it is not surprising that general Hegel scholarship, which discusses Hegel’s philosophy as a whole, does not mention India. Even the scholarship on Hegel’s philosophy of religion, which should have more reason to discuss India and Hinduism in some detail, also seems to mention Hinduism only marginally. Scholarship on Hegel’s philosophy of religion focuses on Christianity, while discussing other religions only briefly.

Let us consider some important examples of scholarship that discusses Hegel’s philosophy as a whole and Hegel’s philosophy of religion in particular, to determine if and how they examine India and Hinduism. The book length studies, anthologies and articles of Fackenheim, Christensen, Lauer, Pinkard, Rocker, Plant, Calton, Beiser, and Dickey do not mention India or Hinduism.  

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that Hegel interpreted the Hindu concept of the divine absolute – *brahman* – as a simple and pure abstraction.\(^{32}\) Reardon briefly relates that Hegel viewed the concept of *brahman* and the practices of Hindu worship as abstract and empty.\(^{33}\) Stewart reiterates Hegel’s view of the indeterminateness of the concept of *brahman* and adds that Hegel considered Hinduism as a religion of fantasy.\(^{34}\) In articles edited by John Walker only one article simply mentions that Hegel was skeptical about the philosophical worth of the *Bhagavadgītā*.\(^{35}\) Merklinger comments that Hegel detected a kind of pantheism in Hinduism, which “blurs the difference between finite subjectivity and God.”\(^{36}\)

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Magnus, paying relatively more attention to Hinduism than other scholars, discusses Hegel’s interpretation of Hinduism as the religion marked by imagination and fantasy.\textsuperscript{37} Houlgate, in the context of Hegel’s analysis of human freedom, briefly discusses that Hegel considered Indian civilization devoid of the consciousness of human activity as self-determining, and considered the Hindu caste system as a civilization that considers itself “caught up in a fixed natural order.”\textsuperscript{38}

While Reardon states that despite Hegel’s “harsh” judgment, “his understanding of India’s ancient religion was by no means ill-informed…,” Findlay deems it “singularly ill-informed and unsympathetic.”\textsuperscript{39} Findlay is only interested in Hegel’s judgment of Hinduism as a religion of “Fantasy.”\textsuperscript{40} However, it has to be specifically noted here that without giving further explanation Findlay calls India and Hinduism as “one of the most Hegelian of peoples and religions.”\textsuperscript{41}


\textsuperscript{40} Findlay says that Hegel considers Hinduism as a religion containing “the polluting multiplicity of the Indian religious fancy, which, though it may at times show itself in the peaceful innocence of flowers, more often expresses itself in the murderous, guilty forms of warring animal species each representing some particular national spirit.” Findlay 134.

\textsuperscript{41} Findlay 134.
Hegel’s negative view of Hinduism as a religion of fanciful and empty concepts and his evaluation of Indian society as a civilization devoid of freedom are closely linked with his placement of India in the early stages of the Spirit’s development. Some scholars in this group are particularly interested in this aspect of Hegel’s interpretation. Schlitt, for example, discusses Hegel’s concept of religion and the early placement of Hinduism in Hegel’s chronological ordering of world religions.\textsuperscript{42} Wood, too, is interested in “oriental” civilizations as far as Hegel’s “historicized universalism” is concerned.\textsuperscript{43} Hegel’s placement of Hinduism in the early stages of history is also of interest to Jaeschke who rightfully adds that Hegel ignored the development within Hinduism and its historical connections with other religions in favor of establishing a “gedankliche Ordnung” of world religions.\textsuperscript{44} In an anthology on Hegel’s philosophy of religion, Hinduism finds only three short mentions, one of which discusses the ordering of Hinduism and Buddhism in


\textsuperscript{43} Wood mentions that Hegel considered that “oriental” civilizations can never be truly ethical because they do not grasp individual freedom. Allen Wood, \textit{Hegel’s Ethical Thought} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 204-06. Wood argues that sometimes cultural relativism can be self-defeating and defends Hegel’s “historicized universalism” to some extent, by saying that even if it displays a European bias, it shows “Hegel’s commitment to universal standards of rationality and right.” Wood 204.

Hegel’s philosophy and finds that “his treatments of Hinduism and Buddhism are surprisingly perceptive, considering the scarcity of sources at his disposal.”

Appraisal of group 1:

The above examples illustrate that, for scholarship on Hegel’s thought in general and on Hegel’s philosophy of religion in particular, India and Hinduism have not been very important. The discussion of India and Hinduism is restricted primarily to India’s placement in the early stages of the Spirit’s development and to Hinduism as a religion of empty concepts and fantasy. General Hegel scholarship gives an overview of his philosophy from a European perspective; it is not within the scope of its work to discuss his engagement with Indian thought in detail, if at all. It is understandable for this group, which discusses Hegel in general, not to pay close attention to India, which plays a small (even if significant) part in Hegel’s enormous body of work.

Surprisingly, the scholarship that specifically examines Hegel’s philosophy of religion also only peripherally, if at all, mentions India and Hinduism. India, especially aspects relating to Hinduism, is significant to Hegel in his explanations of the teleological historical development of the Geist. Hinduism represents an

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important early stage in the development of the concept of religion, until it culminates in the “consummate” religion of Christianity.\textsuperscript{46} However, with a few exceptions, most scholars of this group who examine Hegel’s philosophy of religion discuss primarily Christianity in detail. While it is true that Hegel himself discussed Christianity in much more detail than other religions, the scholars’ exclusive treatment of Christianity might give an impression that Hegel’s philosophy of religion consisted predominantly in showing the development of the absolute concept within Christianity. The scholars’ marginal treatment of Hinduism and other religions may significantly underestimate the extent to which they were essential to Hegel’s philosophy in laying the foundation of the notion of the development of religion.

Group 2: Scholarship that emphasizes Hegel’s Eurocentric bias by discussing his treatment of India as savage, fantastic, and unevolved.

What is peripherally discussed in group 1 is more detailed in group 2, namely Hinduism as the religion of fantasy and the placement of India in the primitive stages of historical development. This is the most well-known, much exposed, and prominent aspect of Hegel’s evaluation of India. The evaluation of

\textsuperscript{46} Hegel’s philosophy argues that the concept of religion, God, and of man’s connection and relationship with God has evolved through history. Different religions, which Hegel calls “bestimmte” or “determinate” religions, chronologically embody this development. This development culminates in Christianity, which is for Hegel the fully evolved, perfect “vollendete” or “consummate” religion, after which there is no further development (possible or needed).
India as unevolved and irrational, compared to evolved and rational Europe, is the underlining assumption of any aspect of India that Hegel discusses at a given time. It is this underlying assumption that is accentuated by this group of scholars to expose Hegel’s Eurocentric bias. It is useful for this group, for the benefit of their discourse, to concentrate on some assertions in Hegel’s *Philosophie der Geschichte*, which implicitly and explicitly stress the supremacy of the West over the East by describing India as a primitive, savage, disorganized, dreamy, irrational, and unfree mind. In *Philosophie der Geschichte* Hegel describes India as a beautiful somnambulic woman in a dreamy emotional state of dissolution and vagueness, as opposed to the cultivated European mind possessing awareness, clarity and rationality. Hegel also argues that due to India’s complete lack of political existence it is India’s necessary fate to be subjected to British rule. He further states that Indian religion is characterized by wild fantasy and imagination, which randomly assigns divinity to things in nature.47

Scholars of this group use these and other examples to illustrate Hegel’s negative evaluation of India and his Eurocentric bias. Glasenapp, for example,

47 Hegel’s much quoted metaphor for India is an extraordinarily beautiful, unearthly, radiant woman, with transparent skin, soft features, a roseate hue, and an inner soulful glow, much like women who have just given birth, or women who lie in magical somnambulic sleep, or even like the dying Mary. These women are somehow connected to some blessed superterrestrial world. To this description, which is perhaps a mocking reference to German Romanticism, Hegel adds, “Solche Schönheit finden wir auch in der lieblichsten Gestalt bei der indischen Welt – eine Schönheit der Nervenschwäche, in welcher alles Unebene, Starre und Widerstreben aufgelöst ist und nur die empfindende Seele erscheint, aber eine Seele, in welcher der Tod des freien und in sich begründeten Geistes erkennbar ist.” Hegel comments on India’s lack of political existence by stating, “Die Inder haben keine Eroberungen nach außen gemacht, sondern sind selbst immer erobert worden….denn es ist das notwendige Schicksal der asiatischen Reiche, den Europäern unterworfen zu sein.” Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Werke 12: Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970) 175-79.
declares that Hegel was a prototype of a Westerner who created an inadequate and distorted image of India according to his preconceived notions. Glasenapp laments that, despite his universal education, Hegel measured everything relative to European thought and failed to elevate himself to a universality which embraces the world.48

To highlight Hegel’s negative evaluation of India as primitive and unsophisticated scholars explore a number of aspects. Schoeps, for example, discusses Hegel’s association of India with dream, fantasy, pantheism, and empty religious concepts, as well as the lack of freedom and morality of the caste system.49 Schulin, too, discusses Hegel’s evaluation of the dream state of Indian existence, the fantastic nature of Indian religion, and the negative notion of salvation to emphasize how Hegel viewed India as a stagnant entity outside the progress of history.50 Cowan also examines India’s ahistoric, apolitical existence, irrational fantastic religion, and exaggeration of symbolic art.51 McGetchin briefly

48 Glasenapp mentions Hegel’s comments on the unfree non-political existence of India, especially given its caste system, which in turn puts India outside of history. He also mentions Hegel comments on the feminine existence of India, with incredible beauty but a somnambulic, dream state, in which there is no free and self reliant spirit. Glasenapp comments on Hegel’s categorization of Indian religion as religion of nature, where there is extreme sensuousness in the fantastical representations of divinity. Glasenapp mentions Hegel’s reliance on British sources, which supported and fed his negative assessment of India. Glasenapp 33-54.


50 Ernst Schulin, Die Weltgeschichtliche Erfassung des Orients bei Hegel und Ranke (Göttingen: Vandenboeck & Ruprecht, 1958) 81-84.

discusses Hegel’s “dismissive view” of Indian thought and Hegel’s portrayal of it as tedious, unscientific, wild, and superstitious.52

These recurring aspects of Hegel’s assessment of India are indicative of Hegel’s attack on German Romanticism through his strictly rational philosophy. Some scholars draw attention to this by reiterating the above examples. Willson repeats that Hegel viewed India as a land of “Blumenvolk,” much like dreaming somnambulic women without self-awareness; that Hegel viewed Indian religion as one destroying the individual’s vitality, Indian poetry as pantheistic, and its art as grotesque. Willson focuses on these examples to argue that Hegel stands in opposition to the Romantic mythical image of India.53 Harten, too, discusses Hegel’s interpretation of India in the context of his criticism of Romantic “indomania.” By discussing Hegel’s interpretation of some key terms in the Bhagavadgītā and Hegel’s view of the Hindu caste system Harten emphasizes Hegel’s evaluation that the Indian mind is marked by the lack of conceptual categories of understanding.54

Hegel argued that India lacked conceptual and rational categories of understanding, which were essential and fundamental to his own philosophy.


53 Willson 117.

54 Harten concludes that Hegel’s bafflement and hostility towards India seem to embody some of the unresolved problems that Hegel found within the dialectic itself, as Hegel attacked India in the same terms as his opponents attacked him. Stuart Harten, “Raising the Veil of History: Orientalism, Classicism, and the Birth of Western Civilization in Hegel’s Berlin Lecture Courses of the 1820s,” diss., Cornell University, 1994, 245.
Figueira declares that Hegel created a “conscious fiction” of India, as “Hegel was unconstrained in offering imprecise and fragmentary renditions that also happen to support a judgment on Indian philosophy that was grounded in a defense of his own philosophical system.” Song also states that Hegel subsumed the Eastern world under the category of “substantiality” to reiterate the East’s inability to think in rational categories placing it in the early stages of teleological progress of history. Kang, too, emphasizes Hegel’s judgment of the “Orient’s inability to progress,” lack of rationality, and the dominance of imagination. Bhatt, likewise, argues that “Hegel can be said to have instituted a paradigm in which the possibility of rational, humanist subj ecthood – and consequently freedom – for the Indian subaltern is perpetually theoretically inconceivable.”

Hegel’s criticism India as fantastic and irrational is further connected with Hegel’s conviction in the supremacy of the West and his treatment of the East as the other. Some scholars of his group, especially those with a postcolonial approach, reiterate Hegel’s negative assessment of India to highlight the “otherness” of India in Hegel’s interpretation. Goldman, for example, comments that Hegel’s assessment


of India as a land of inadequate philosophy, dreamlike existence, and spiritual
degeneration is caught up in racial and cultural stereotypes displaying “Western
narcissism” and its encounter with the “alien.”

Rajan’s article further explores India’s otherness and attempts to explain the
reasons behind the “astonishing magnitude” of “injustice” that Hegel does to India.
Rajan states, “correcting Hegel’s misrepresentation of India would involve us in
many pages of pained and pointless protest. It is more important to identify and
trace the forces that control the misrepresentations. Only an extraordinary
dedication to the imperialist agenda could enable Hegel to write as he does of
India.” Rajan ascribes Hegel’s devaluation of India to his “imperialism of
thought,” which treats India as the feminine irrational other and “dignifies existing
stereotypes by blessing them with a philosophical ennoblement.”

“imperialism of thought” consists in “the superiority of the Occident over the

59 In order to discuss India as Hegel’s other, Goldman adds that the problem with Hegel’s
interpretation of India is not due to his sources but due to Hegel’s totalizing history, which displays
the Spirit’s journey from east to west, from blindness, astonishment, to contemplation and activity,
from immediacy to self-awareness. Goldman briefly comments that Hegel considered Islam’s
rejection of the caste system as advancement over the East, but still criticized its tendency toward
fatalism. Harvey Goldman, “Images of the other: Asia in nineteenth-century Western thought: Hegel,


61 Rajan adds, “Hegel finds nothing in India that has not been found by Mill and the missionaries but
he would be less important if he were more original. He dignifies existing stereotypes by blessing
them with a philosophical ennoblement. Mill initiates that ennoblement by placing the stereotypes
within a view of history. Hegel carries the process further by placing history in turn within a
completely inclusive frame of understanding.” Explaining Hegel’s view of India as the feminine
other, banished outside of history, Rajan adds, “History is written by men and the wrong gender
must be kept in the margin with its allurements held in check.” Rajan, Indian Literature 173. Also
see the same article in Balachandra Rajan, Under Western Eyes: India from Milton to Macaulay
Orient… as the triumph of measure over excess, of individual beauty over proliferation and, explicitly, as the victory of self-critical reason over Asiatic splendour.”62

Inden, too, concentrates on Hegel’s perception of India as the primitive, feminine other. Inden mostly draws upon Hegel’s philosophy of history and stresses how Hegel banished India from it, declaring that India was overwhelmingly characterized by dream, imagination, and a lack of political existence. He mentions that Hegel believed Indian religion to be dictated by unstable and unaware imagination, fantasy, the final goal of self-annihilation, and an illusionary variety of pantheism, in which natural elements, such as the sun, moon, and rivers, are immediately taken as gods. Inden also comments on Hegel’s criticism of the caste system. Inden, thus, uses all of these often repeated examples, appropriate for his postcolonial discourse, to argue that Hegel’s viewed India as the primitive land of dream and imagination.63

Finally, the more well known scholars in German studies – Anil Bhatti and Kamakshi Murti – also fit in this group. Bhatti states that given the excitement about India in German Romanticism “Hegel tritt als Therapeut auf, der Hysterie eindämmen will.”64 Bhatti refers to Hegel’s disappointment in the arbitrariness and

62 Rajan, Indian Literature 182.

63 Ronald Inden, Imagining India (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000) 94.

repetition of Indian “Poesie” in general and of the Bhagavadgītā in particular.

Bhatti’s sense of humor comes through when he adds, “Hegel muss viel ertragen, er
langweilt sich, und das ist neu.”65 Bhatti explains Hegel’s stance as an educated,
careful and critical evaluator, whose approach to India is marked by “Distanz” and
“grundsätzliche Fremdheit.”66 To Hegel’s deliberately distanced and therefore
rationally clear European mind, India reveals itself as characterized by “Willkür der
Phantasie.” Bhatti adds:

Das ist Hegels Bild für das “Taumeln,” das er dann in seiner
Geschichtsphilosophie als charakteristisch für den indischen Geist
herausstellen wird. Das Beharren auf einer durchgängigen Verschiedenheit
ist wohl das wichtigste Moment der kulturellen Verfremdung, das hier als
wissenschaftlich legitimierte Hierarchisierung sich festsetzt und als eine
radikale Form der kulturellen Distanzierung dann für die kolonialistische
Kulturwissenschaft dominant wird.67

Bhatti comments on Hegel’s characterization of India as a land ruled by the whims
and flights of fantasy. Bhatti argues that Hegel’s negative evaluation of India and
his cultural alienation is radical and crucial because he legitimizes cultural
hierarchization as a result of a thorough, scientific, rational investigation. As he
states in the above quote, this then becomes the basis of “kolonialistische
Kulturwissenschaft.”

Kamakshi Murti, as well, emphasizes Hegel’s negative evaluation of India.

She mentions India’s placement outside of history, its fantastic, dreamy and

65 Bhatti 185.
66 Bhatti 185.
67 Bhatti 186.
irrational existence, and its indeterminate religious and philosophical principles. She concludes her comments on Hegel by saying that “[t]he general conceptual framework within which all these discourses work, be they religious, philosophical, or literary, always contains the claim of objectivity, of ‘value-free’ scholarship, reinforcing silently the supremacy of the strong, progressive, advanced West over the weak, primitive, degenerate East.” 

Appraisal of group 2:

Group 2 accentuates Hegel’s underlying attitude and outlook toward India pervading all aspects of Hegel’s discussion on Indian religion, philosophy, history, art, and the social structure. This group emphasizes Hegel’s evaluation of India as the disorganized, unsophisticated, primitive and savage other. This group establishes that which is hard to miss: Hegel evaluated India negatively. Criticizing German Romantic “indomania,” Hegel declared that India was not what the Romantics made it seem. By emphasizing Hegel’s negative evaluation of India as the primitive irrational feminine other, this group of scholarship is interested in exposing Hegel’s Eurocentric bias, which lies at the same time at the assumption and the conclusion of Hegel’s teleology and typology.

The approach and focus of this group are important in drawing attention to Hegel’s denial of cultural relativism, which is not a topic that springs to the

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68 Kamakshi Murti, India: The Seductive and Seduced “Other” of German Orientalism (Westport: Greenwood, 2001) 27.
forefront when Hegel’s philosophy is generally discussed. But, there is more to say about this group. First, even if this group discusses Hegel’s interpretation of India in detail, it resembles the first group in drawing similar conclusions. This is because both groups limit themselves to Hegel’s placement of India in the early stages of *Spirit*’s development and to his evaluation of Hinduism as a primitive nature religion, marked by irrational fantasy. Second, for its postcolonial agenda, this group tends to rely on Hegel’s assertions about India in his *Philosophie der Geschichte* and his early notions of “nature religion” in his *Philosophie der Religion*, both of which stress India’s apolitical, ahistoric, dreamy, and irrational existence. Their examples become repetitive, and their evaluation of Hegel remains “monolithic.” They do not take into account the changes and revisions in Hegel’s own evaluations. Finally, some of these scholars try to refute Hegel’s judgment of India by our current research and understanding of Hinduism or by historical and political developments occurring in India after Hegel died. While that may be important to revise India’s image, it does little to reevaluate Hegel.

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Group 3: Scholarship that raises issues beyond Hegel’s Eurocentric bias and that carries out a critical, analytical, or focused study on specific aspects of Hegel’s interpretation of India.

We have discussed that the first and the second group of scholars emphasize Hegel’s negative evaluation of India as the “childhood” of the Spirit’s development and as a land of feminine irrational fantasy. The third group raises issues beyond Hegel’s Eurocentric bias, discussing specific aspects of Hegel’s interpretation of India from different perspectives and from larger contexts.

Wilhelm Halbfass is the most important scholar in this group and in the field of the philosophical reception of India in Western thought at large. Halbfass clearly has great admiration for the systematic enterprise of Hegel’s philosophy. In his work, the section on Hegel lays out the most broad-ranging, and yet most concise, account of Hegel’s interpretation of Indian religion, philosophy and society, as well as of the changes that occurred in Hegel’s appreciation of Hindu religion and philosophy. Halbfass places this in the context of Hegel’s time and Hegel’s own philosophy. He argues how Hegel’s criticism of India is contained in his criticism of Romanticism and rooted in his commitment to the linear development of history.

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70 Halbfass discusses all of the most important points contained in Hegel’s criticism: India’s lack of historical self-awareness, its lack of dynamics of progress, the concept of brahman as spiritless abstract substantiality without subjectivity, the mutual exclusion of finite and infinite, the impossibility of reconciliation of the two, the stupefaction and suppression of individuality in favor of the absolute, yoga as absorption without content, the withdrawal into emptiness, the identity of pure being with nothingness, and mokṣa as abstract negative liberation. Halbfass, India and Europe 84-99.
and Spirit.\textsuperscript{71} He agrees that Hegel is a prototype of a Westerner, but at the same time makes the reader aware that he was the ‘son of his time’ and displayed clear and explicit awareness of his own historical position and European identity. Halbfass states that Hegel “is not just part of the European philosophical tradition, but makes a conscious effort to comprehend and fulfill it in his own thought. He is one-sided, but his one-sidedness is not a simple bias: it is a matter of intense historical and systematic reflection.”\textsuperscript{72} He concludes that in and through his philosophy Hegel challenges the very idea of intercultural understanding:

Hegel tries to comprehend Indian thought as something that is superseded by, and contained in, modern Western thought. This is obviously incompatible with the neutrality and openness which the advocates of the ‘comparative method’ – Comparative Religion, Comparative Philosophy, and so forth – postulate. However, it is also a challenge to some of the unquestioned hermeneutic assumptions of the ‘comparative’ and ‘coordinating’ disciplines: It challenges the very ideas of ‘comparison and neutral ‘understanding’.\textsuperscript{73}

In an article specifically focusing on Hegel’s interpretation of Hindu practices of meditation, Halbfass discusses Hegel’s interpretation of Hindu yoga in conjunction with Buddhist nirvāṇa and draws attention to the fact that Hegel

\textsuperscript{71} Halbfass states, “Hegel’s interest in India is inseparable from that of the Romantics: He was one of the heirs, but also the most rigorous critic of the Romantic conception of India. What distinguishes his approach above all from that of the Romantics is his commitment to the present, and his sense of an irreversible direction of history. He does not glorify origins and early stages…We cannot and need not return to the Orient: It is a matter of the Past…we notice a negative attitude to Romanticism, and this includes a negative response to the Romantic glorification and mystification of the Orient. The anti-Romantic perspective provides the background and an important point of departure for Hegel’s approach to India.” Halbfass, India and Europe 85.

\textsuperscript{72} Halbfass, India and Europe 84-5.

\textsuperscript{73} Halbfass, India and Europe 99.
identified “pure being” with “nothingness,” in an attempt to “neutralize and domesticate” the concept of “nothingness.” Halbfass states that Hegel perhaps failed to see that Eastern meditation combined a higher awareness with a full and free acceptance of being in the world, but admits that the question of the significance of the world for itself or for liberation (away) from the world remains debatable.

J. J. Clarke agrees with Halbfass by discussing Hegel’s interpretation and placement of India in the context of his commitment to historical development. Some scholars, however, question the rigidity of India’s placement in Hegel’s thought. In his articles, Bernasconi challenges the idea that the “non-place” of India in the history of philosophy was already decided. In other words, Bernasconi points out a revision in Hegel’s evaluation of Indian philosophy: Hegel had proposed earlier that Indian thought could not qualify as “philosophy,” but later he indeed revised that position and granted the status of “philosophy” to the Sāṅkhya school.

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75 Halbfass, *Zen Buddhism* 75-8. From here the article takes a surprisingly genuine and personal turn: Halbfass is very concerned about the role of yoga or Eastern practices of meditation in the modern world, dictated and stressed by the demands of modern science and technology, consumerism and objectification. He is aware that meditation is coming into fashion as an alternative practice to cope with the modern life. But he wonders whether yoga and meditation are themselves being subjected to consumerism, with their promised altered state of consciousness as a consumable product, replaceable by drugs and tranquilizers. He finally concludes that in our increasingly Western modern societies, East and West have to respond to each other, question themselves and each other, being fully aware of their own historical heritage.

of Indian philosophy. Bernasconi concentrates on Hegel’s view of Sāṅkhya and Yoga and states that Hegel viewed Sāṅkhya as a full doctrine of thought, separate from religion, and attempted to capture the philosophical meaning of the Yoga-teachings. Bernasconi discusses Hegel’s concern about defining and separating philosophies from religions. In order to write a history of philosophy, Hegel had to decide what to include and what to exclude from it. In favor of a proper “form” needed to be called philosophy, Hegel excluded those “thoughts,” which were not explicit but only implicit within religion, especially within Eastern religions. But this task of separating religion from philosophy seemed increasingly difficult and became a real challenge for his system. Bernasconi concludes that Hegel, especially in his later lectures, did give the status of “philosophy” to Indian thought, but still decided to exclude it from “philosophy proper,” which he concluded to have started in Greece. Bernasconi sees some arbitrariness in Hegel’s approach and irresponsibility on Hegel’s part to pass judgments based on minimal material. But he appreciates Hegel’s openness and willingness to consider and reevaluate Indian thought as philosophy, which he believes is more than one can say about Western scholars even today.

Herling, too, questions the “monolithic” depiction of Hegel’s interpretation of India. Herling states,

Hegel’s anti-Indian monument, supposedly erected within the history lectures, is only reinforced by obsessive theoretical pilgrimage to it: the challenge is to see its relation to a whole system of textual markers, and to take the course that puts the miserable proclamations, which can so easily be seen as central, in their proper place.78

Simply put, Herling states that Hegel scholars have overwhelmingly relied upon his Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte and have reinforced a “monolithic” negative image of India, without taking into consideration his other works, which relativize his negative remarks by showing some modifications and revisions. Herling traces some changes in Hegel’s interpretation of Hinduism and especially of the concept of brahman in his Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion from 1824 to 1831. He argues that Hegel allowed Hinduism progressively “higher dignity within his system.”79 Herling also discusses Hegel’s interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā and his take on key terms such as yoga and dharma to conclude that Hegel’s interpretation of the Bhagavadgītā may be “Eurocentric,” but it definitely embodies the provocations and challenges that the foreign text presents to Hegel and to Western philosophy.80

Gipper also discusses in detail the philosophically complex term yoga and its translations. Hegel dedicated much thought and analysis to the different

78 Herling 224.
79 Herling 252.
80 Herling 250.
translations in order to explain the intricacies of the term yoga and the difficulty in achieving an appropriate correlation for it in European terminology. Gipper’s approach, however, is linguistic and is concerned about methods and compromises of translation practices.81

Menze, as well, concentrates on the Bhagavadgītā and discusses that it became a platform for Hegel and Humboldt to criticize each other by expressing their polemical views of the worth of Hindu religion and philosophy.82 Marchignoli also analyzes the Bhagavadgītā and Hegel’s interpretation of the terms yoga and dharma, and concludes, as Herling does, that there is more to it than Eurocentrism or “orientalist perspective.”83 Marchignoli proposes an interesting argument: he argues that it was actually the possibility of integrating an Indian text into the European cultural canon that was central to the process of Indology in Germany.84

81 Gipper concludes from these discussions and from the various approaches the translators took that there are three ways to go about it: one can use several words to translate the same expression, which would explain the concept better but threaten the unity of that concept; one can use one word to translate different connotations, which would have the opposite effect; or one could keep the term untranslated accompanied by commentary and explanation. He concludes with the acknowledgement that language carries the people’s Weltanschauung and hence the task of translation is always a compromise. Helmut Gipper, “Verstehen als sprachlicher Annäherungsprozeß am Beispiel der Übersetzbarkeit des Begriffs Yoga in der indischen Bhagavad Gita und der Diskussion zwischen A. W. v. Schlegel, S. A. Langlois, W. v. Humboldt und G. W. F. Hegel,” Sprachwissenschaft 12.1 (1987): 24-44.

82 Menze discusses that Humboldt took Hegel’s review as a personal attack on himself and thought that Hegel wanted to argue that Humboldt was not a philosopher at all. Humboldt, in response to Hegel’s review, criticized Hegel by saying, “Die lange Recension über mich kann ich am wenigsten billigen. Sie mischt Philosophie und Fabel, Aechtes und Unächtes, Uraltes und Moderne; was kann das für eine Art der philosophischen Geschichte geben?” Clemens Menze, “Das Indische Altertum in der Sicht Wilhelm von Humboldts und Hegels,” Hegel-Studien 27 (1986): 245-94.

83 Marchignoli 259.

84 Marchignoli 246.
He argues that the Bhagavadgītā had a great deal of potential to be part of the literary, religious and philosophical canon, especially in Schlegel’s and Humboldt’s views. He proposes that Hegel’s severe criticism of the Bhagavadgītā was an attack on the very idea of integrating non-European texts into the European canon.\(^8\) Furthermore, says Marchignoli, Hegel’s criticism of the Gītā “is an explicit challenge to the very idea of interpretation across cultural boundaries, and a strong attack on the project of integrating (let alone canonizing) non-European texts. Above all, it was a confutation of the very notion of translation as a legitimate means of appropriation (*Aneignung*).”\(^8\)

Hegel’s severe criticism of Hindu religion and philosophy, his scrutiny of the Bhagavadgītā, or his reluctance to translate Hindu philosophical terms into European languages are all indicative of the fact that Hegel perceived India as a platform for European intellectual arguments. As King suggests, “[r]epresentations of India functioned as a screen on which European debates could be projected and played out,” especially between Schelling, Schlegel and Hegel.\(^8\) Interestingly, as

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\(^8\) Marchignoli 246, 264.

\(^8\) Marchignoli 259. Marchignoli explains that Hegel wanted to show that translation is “(involuntary) *misinterpretation,*” especially of the Bhagavadgītā, because translations, in European languages, europeanized the text and misled the readers. Moreover, rather than translating, Hegel saw himself in a better position *philosophizing* on Indian concepts, and hence he saw no problem ignoring the linguistic problem of not knowing Sanskrit and proceeding directly to conceptual understanding. 259-62.

\(^8\) Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion Postcolonial Theory, India and ‘The Mystic East,’* (London: Routledge, 1999) 125. An important point that King mentions, which I will discuss later, is that “[t]hrough his reading of Colebrooke, Hegel was made aware of the diversity of Indian philosophical thought, but he remained firm in his association of Hindu thought with a Vedāntic type of monism. King 124.
Hegel used India to argue against his contemporaries, at least one scholar of this group – Gasche – uses Hegel’s criticism to argue against his contemporary – Edward Said. Gasche states that “a radical critique of Orientalism must, indeed, face up to Hegel’s objections of Romanticism.”88 Gasche compares Said’s approach with that of German Romanticism and adds that Said essentially wants to bring back Romantic categories to approach the East, and by that token is “falling behind Hegel.”89

Westphal’s excellent article discusses Hegel’s interpretation of India from a political perspective. Westphal sets out to demonstrate that for Hegel Hinduism is “irremediably a religion of unfreedom.”90 Westphal divides Hegel’s criticism of India into three parts: metaphysical critique, cultic critique, and political critique.91 Metaphysical critique, in turn, involves two-fold categories: unity/plurality, identity/difference, and abstract/concrete. According to Westphal, Hegel’s cultic critique also involves two types of Hindu cults or religious practices: those advocating the elimination of self-consciousness, even sometimes death and suicide, and those promoting excessive sensual worship. Westphal argues that Hegel’s metaphysical and cultic critique leads to political critique, which involves the caste

89 Gasche 26.
91 Westphal 137.
system, external laws, and lack of genuine freedom. Westphal maintains that “Hegel’s prejudice is not “merely” conceptual or logical but in the broadest sense political.” Westphal adds, “His treatment of Hinduism invites the suggestion that the ultimate test for any religion is neither theological, nor ritual, but political.” Finally, Westphal finds it unfortunate that Hegel does not critically consider Christian cultures in the same way and thus does not apply to his own tradition the criteria by which he judges others.

Appraisal of group 3:

In comparison to groups 1 and 2, this group explores deeper into Hegel’s negative evaluation of India to raise issues beyond exposing Hegel’s Eurocentric bias. This group investigates Hegel’s interpretation of India in the context of European philosophical traditions and of the intellectual debates of his time. As the above examples illustrate, the scholars of this group examine Hegel’s interpretation from historical, cultural, philosophical, political, and linguistic perspectives. They understand Hegel’s criticism of India through his commitment to the notion of teleological progress of history and in the framework of Hegel’s entire work, which includes changes and revisions in Hegel’s appreciation of Hindu religion and philosophy, which are often ignored by scholars in group two. Group three opens a

92 Westphal 147.
93 Westphal 147.
challenging dialogue with group two by expanding the context, deepening the
investigation and varying the perspectives to analyze Hegel’s interpretation of India.

However, this group runs a few risks: by using Gadamer’s hermeneutic
approach and by explaining Hegel’s interpretation of India in the context of his own
system and of European intellectual debates of the time, this group risks exempting
Hegel from being criticized for his ethnocentrism. By closely reading changes and
revisions in the details of Hegel’s interpretation of India, this group at times loses
sight of how Hegel himself reacted to his revisions and how far these details
affected the larger picture of Hegel’s evaluation, if at all.

Group 4: Scholarship that does analytical and constructive philosophical
analyses of Hegel and India, including both analysis of Hegel’s
interpretation of Indian philosophy and comparative analyses
between Hegelian and Indian philosophies.

In this group Viyagappa is the only scholar who offers a detailed textual
analysis of Hegel’s assertions about Hindu religion and philosophy. As he is the
first to do such a detailed study exclusively of Hegel’s statements on Hindu religion
and philosophy, he himself declares that the purpose of his study is not to offer any
criticism, but simply to understand Hegel’s comments on Hindu religion and
philosophy. In his other work too, which is a concise version of the first one, he
declares that, rather than criticizing Hegel’s negative evaluation of India, he wants

94 Viyagappa, Hegel’s Concept of Indian Philosophy 9.
to understand his interpretation in the overall statement of Hegel’s own philosophy, especially Hegel’s notion of how theories and practices of a community are inseparable, and how their actual existence, socio-political structures and practices bear witness to their religio-philosophical concepts. Viyagappa’s detailed and thorough study of Hegel’s interpretation of Hinduism laid the basis for most studies in this field, including those by scholars such as Halbfass and Westphal.

The other set of scholars in this group, who do comparative philosophical work discussing issues in Hegel’s thought vis-à-vis Indian thought, are not concerned with Hegel’s interpretation of Hindu thought at all. They are concerned with finding out how far Hegel’s philosophy is compatible with Indian philosophies, where they may intersect, and where they depart. They compare Hegelian and Indian concepts to ascertain the similarities and differences between the two philosophies.

Brück’s excellent article, for example, conceptually compares Hegel’s trinitarian structure and his philosophy of religion with Advaita Vedānta. Brück attempts to determine how far Hegel’s concept of tripartite dynamic movement of

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95 Ignatius Viyagappa, G. W. F. Hegel’s Critique of Indian Religion and Philosophy (Madras: University of Madras, 1983) 71-72. Viyagappa says, “any meaningful discussion with Hegel would involve his comprehensive system and particularly his theory of dialectical relationship of art, religion and philosophy and his basic category of “togetherness” of logic and history.” Viyagappa 71-72.

96 Viyagappa’s above mentioned concluding remark about understanding Hegel’s criticism of India in the context of his own philosophy is the prominent thesis in Halbfass’s work. Also Viyagappa hints at the political significance of Hegel’s interpretation by saying “what matters ultimately in human history is mankind’s collective struggle towards freedom and its realization in a living community which recognizes the equality of man as man.” Viyagappa 72. This, as we have seen, forms the basis also of Westphal’s analysis of Hegel.
Absolute Spirit lends itself to being expressed in Advaita Vedānta terms. In effect he tries to explore the comparability and compatibility of Hegelian and Advaitic notions of the absolute, its manifestation in the world and its reconciliation with itself. He concludes that they are not compatible on account of the way they describe the process of experiencing non-dualism:

For Hegel, non-dualism is the result of a real process, in Christian terms: non-dualism is the eschatological result of the history of God in its Trinitarian process. For Advaita Vedānta non-dualism is the experience of the true nature of reality which is, has been and will be. It is achieved when the veil of our dualistic understanding is removed by the advaitic experience.  

Gier, too, compares dialectics, specifically two types of dialectics: “both-and” (e.g. brahman is both with qualities and without qualities) and “neither-nor” (e.g., a person reborn is neither the same nor different). Gier examines these dialectics mostly in Buddhist schools, some times in Śankara with only occasional

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97 Michael von Brück, “Trinitarian Theology: Hegelian vis-à-vis Advaitic,” *Journal of Dharma* 8 (1983): 293. This is a good article for those who are interested in conceptual comparison between Hegel and Advaita. Here is an example of how he compares the two philosophies: Brück says, “The doctrine of Trinity is for Hegel a possibility to overcome ontological dualism.” He adds, In the terminology of Advaita Vedānta this could mean: The eternal self-movement of the Absolute (brahman) goes through the moments of nirguṇa brahman and saṅguṇa brahman in order to know itself in a third mediated state in order to negate the objectivity of the saṅguṇa brahman into pure subjectivity of the Whole which is reflected in itself but now perfectly at rest. This third step is significantly enough, not known to Advaita Vedānta, and it would be also hardly possible to speak of a “self-movement” of brahman, since these appearances are due to māyā. Therefore, they cannot be conceived of as history of the Absolute. But for Hegel, the Absolute is subject, which is self-movement, whereas the nirguṇa brahman in Hegel’s sense would be substance, which rests in itself and is always for itself…However, there are sufficient indications that in Advaita Vedānta the absolute could be regarded as subject in Hegel’s sense, namely, when the Absolute is saī (Being) which is at the same time cit (pure consciousness) and – in this reflection in itself – ānanda (bliss). Yet as far as I can see, these self-expressions of the Absolute are not meant to be taken with regard to the relationship of the nirguṇa and saṅguṇa brahman. Brück 291-92.
comparison with Hegel. Nanajivako also carries out comparative analysis, especially between Vedāntic, Buddhist and Hegelian concepts of being, non-being and nothingness. He proposes that a Hegelian interpretation of Hinduism and Buddhism attempts to bring together the concepts of being and nothing. But he maintains that such attempts, which equate nothingness to absolute being to argue that Hinduism and Buddhism are philosophically similar, are reductionist and incorrect.

Appraisal of group 4:

This group is small, especially compared to Schopenhauer scholars who do such comparative work. This is because, unlike Schopenhauer, who himself invites, encourages, and lays the foundation of such comparative philosophical analyses in this own work, Hegel explicitly stresses the differences and the irreconcilable incompatibilities between his thought and Hindu religion and philosophy.

In this group Viyagappa’s detailed and close analysis of Hegel’s interpretation has been an essential groundwork for all scholars thereafter. However,

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99 Nanajivako states, for example, “An apparent analogy of Hegel’s idea of the Absolute to the Vedāntic idea of Brahman may have misguided them to this further inadequate analogy of two methods of dialectical logics dealing both with the relation of Being to Nothingness. The ultimate intention in following this false pointer appears to be the re-absorption / “sublation” in the meaning of Hegel’s untranslatable German term Aufhebung / of the primeval / ontological and not epistemological / nihilism of the Buddhist sūnya-vādāḥ into a quasi-Vedāntic absolutism, interpreted as the principle of a wider ontological and cosmological synthesis.” Bhikkhu Nanajivako, “Hegel and Indian philosophy,” Indian Philosophical Quarterly 3 (1976): 307. Between Advaita Vedānta and Hegel, he finds three possibilities: similarities, complete opposites or no possibility of comparison. Nanajivako 310.
since it aims for a basic understanding of Hegel’s interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy, it refrains from offering a criticism or making an overarching critical statement or thesis.

The comparative philosophers in this group, generally speaking, pursue a different field of study. They do not concern themselves with Hegel’s interpretation of Indian thought, but rather the compatibility or incompatibility of philosophical concepts by themselves. They do not bring any larger contextual or cultural background or implications. Most of the time, their attempts to compare or equate Hegel’s concept of *Spirit* with the Vedântic concept of *brahman* can only go so far – as far as they are concepts of the absolute. But Hegel’s fundamental and indispensable notion of historical development of *Spirit* renders the attempts to equate *Spirit* with *brahman* extremely difficult.

In the light of the above four groups, in which I have categorized the scholarship that examines Hegel’s interpretation of India and Hinduism, I proceed in the next section to discuss my contribution to the field. Within the categorization, my research would have to be placed in the third group, as my claims extend beyond reiterating Hegel’s ethnocentrism. I intend to reveal and disclose the nature of Hegel’s appropriation and incorporation of Hindu religion and philosophy in his thought. My examination of Hegel’s understanding of Hindu religion and philosophy can be said to resemble that of Viyagappa’s in group 4, in so far as it involves close and careful textual analysis. However, as will be clear later, unlike
Viyagappa, my analysis proposes to organize Hegel’s assertions into a threefold structure, in which, I claim, Hegel understood Hindu religion and philosophy. My research, however, is not a comparative analysis of Hegel’s thought and Hindu religion and philosophy. Hence it cannot be associated with other scholars in group 4 who attempt a one-to-one correspondence between Hegelian and Hindu concepts.
1.3 My Contribution to the scholarship and the field:

My research focuses on Hegel’s understanding and structuring of Hindu religious philosophy. As we discussed earlier, the designation “Hindu religious philosophy” would evoke much debate among scholars of Eastern thought, due to the homogenizing term “Hindu” and due to the problem of equating or separating religion and philosophy in the Eastern traditions. The term “Hindu” consists of various developmental stages, various paths and practices, and various philosophical and theological interpretations, which often disagree with each other and yet coexist. Furthermore, Hindu religion and Indian philosophies may not be argued as identical: Indian philosophy includes various schools and sub-schools, which argue against each other on key issues. Hindu religion, too, incorporates millennia of development and a variety of beliefs and practices dependent upon specific communities and sects. However, Hindu religion and Indian philosophies cannot be completely separated from each other, as they often base themselves on common scriptures and other religious and philosophical texts, whose theoretical and practical interpretations can as much be categorized as religious as philosophical. The terms “Hindu religious philosophy” or “Hindu religion and philosophy” thus raise complicated issues that scholars continue to explore.

However, the question here is not whether today’s research and debates on Eastern thought and comparative philosophy would judge the designation “Hindu religious philosophy” appropriate. It is important to ascertain whether and how
Hegel unifies certain aspects under “Hindu,” and how he closely associates Hindu religion and philosophy, as a thought that incorporates both religious and philosophical notions and aspects. In his own philosophy Hegel devoted much thought to the relationship between religion and philosophy. He himself argued that religion and philosophy differ only in form – the latter having a more self-reflexive form than the former – but that they both have the same content, namely the concept of the absolute.\(^{100}\) However, as Bernasconi says, there is indeed an

\(^{100}\) In his own philosophy Hegel was defending speculative thought against the charges of pantheism as well as atheism. That is to say, on the one hand, the pietists, who emphasized feeling and personal subjective relationship with God, brought too much God into philosophy. On the other hand, the rationalists, who defined the boundaries of reason, brought too little God into philosophy. Hegel himself held that philosophy is too evolved to have a merely vague and empty and abstract all-one-doctrine of pantheism and to reduce God to a merely subjective feeling. Philosophy is also too evolved to banish God outside the finite and limited reflection of thought and reason. Hegel argued that thought is infinite and can conceive and articulate God. See John Macquarrie and F. Stoeffler’s articles on pietism. "Pietism," Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2006 ed. and "Pietism," Encyclopedia of Religion, 2005 ed. Jaeschke discusses Hegel’s criticism of the Enlightenment’s declaration that God is unknowable. Both notions that God is unknowable or God is personal and present in immediate knowledge make philosophy weak. Hegel stated that by the demands of modern sophisticated consciousness, where reason is the ultimate criterion, philosophy should cast religion in a new form through reason and rationality. God is Absolute Spirit and religion is the self-knowing of Spirit. Philosophy of theology should define God as Spirit, and then it must become philosophy of religion and understand Spirit as an absolute subject going through the process (embodied in religion) of arriving at self-knowledge. The end of religion is the completion of the process of religion, where the absolute content is given absolute form, which itself means that religion is expressed in and as philosophy. Religion is elevated to the form of philosophy. For Hegel speculative philosophy presented the religious content in an elevated, self-aware form. Walter Jaeschke, “Philosophical Theology and Philosophy of Religion,” New Perspectives on Hegel’s Philosophy of Religion, ed. David Kolb (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) 1-18. As Viyagappa quotes Hegel from the Encyclopedia, “philosophy is able to re-cognize its own forms in the categories of the religious manner of representation as well as therewith its own content in the religious content and can do justice to the religious content. However the opposite is not true, since the religious manner of representation does not apply criticism of thought to itself and does not conceive itself, and therefore is exclusive in its immediacy.” Viyagappa, Hegel’s Concept of Indian Philosophy 66. That is to say that religion and philosophy have the same content, namely to represent (religion) and explain (philosophy) the absolute and its self-cognition. Religion accomplishes it by means of representation. But philosophy has a more self-aware form. It contains the religious content in it but corrects and fulfils the religious form and gives the absolute content an absolute form. This is why philosophy is the next and final stage, after religion, in the process of Absolute Spirit’s self-cognition.
“occasional perplexity” in Hegel’s designations of religion and philosophy for Hinduism.\textsuperscript{101} Hegel has some difficulty in separating philosophy from religion, especially within Eastern religions, because he is confronted with “thought” that is implicit within “religion.” Especially in the case of Hinduism, he is confronted with “thought,” – specifically the school of Sāṇkhya philosophy – that, according to Hegel, displays some attempts of reflection, systematization, and philosophization of religion. Hegel does separate his discussion of Hindu philosophy and religion, in different works. In his Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion he discusses Hinduism, and in his Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie he incorporates two schools of Indian philosophy – Sāṅkhya and Nyāya. Separating religion and philosophy into different works is part of his attempt to establish rational categorization and hierarchy among fields and disciplines; in this case, compared to religion, philosophy is a higher, more self-aware intellectual pursuit.

However, Hegel declares that Indian philosophy is included within the scope of Hindu religion; he even asserts that Hindu religion and philosophy are one and the same: “Die indische Bildung ist sehr entwickelt und großartig, aber ihre Philosophie ist identisch mit der Religion, so daß die Interessen der Religion dieselben sind, die wir in der Philosophie finden.”\textsuperscript{102} According to Hegel Indian religion and philosophy are identical; they have the same concerns and pursuits. Moreover, he states that the congruence between Hindu religion and Indian

\textsuperscript{101} Bernasconi, Bulletin of the Hegel Society 45.

\textsuperscript{102} Hegel, Geschichte der Philosophie 1 374.
philosophies is contained in the fact that they refer to the same scriptures: according to Hegel the scriptures of the Vedas, which he believes the Europeans “kennen…ziemlich gründlich,” are the authority and the basis of all theistic as well as atheistic philosophies of India. Indian atheistic philosophy has gods, whereas the divine principle of *brahman*, for Hegel, at the same time, “ist allerdings eine philosophische Idee…” Hegel declares that, on the one hand, in Eastern thought religion and philosophy have the same content, and on the other hand, Eastern thought cannot make a distinction between philosophy and religion:


Hegel thus understands Eastern, and specifically Hindu religion and philosophy as having the same world-view and the same concerns. As I will discuss later, in his summaries and analyses he brings Hindu religion and philosophy conceptually together. What he extracts from Indian philosophical schools is quite similar to his interpretation of Hindu religion. Moreover, he gives both religion and

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103 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Werke 18, Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971) 148. Hegel gives credit to Colebrooke for describing that the religious scriptures – the Vedas – are also the basis for Hindu philosophy. Hegel displays his acquired knowledge about Hindu scriptures by saying that they contain prayers, descriptions of religious ceremonies and sacrifices. He adds that the scriptures were not all written at one time; different books come from different times, e.g., the scriptures about God Viṣṇu are a later development. Hegel, *Geschichte der Philosophie* 1 375. Hegel is aware that in early Vedic texts and mythology Viṣṇu and Śiva do not appear.

104 Hegel, *Geschichte der Philosophie* 1 375, 368.

105 Hegel, *Geschichte der Philosophie* 1 365.
philosophy the general designation of “Hindu” or “indisch,” and he declares that Eastern philosophy is actually to be considered “religiöse Philosophie,” as in it religion and philosophy merge together.

Thus, my research focuses on what Hegel understood and presented as the basic tenets of Hindu religious philosophy. I primarily analyze Hegel’s interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy in his Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie, his Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion, specifically the later 1827 and 1831 lectures, by which time Hegel incorporated the new material that was being published and, more importantly, revised his understanding of some key Indian concepts. I also examine his review of Humboldt’s article on the Bhagavadgītā entitled “Über die unter dem Namen Bhagavad-Gita bekannte Episode des Mahabharata von Wilhelm von Humboldt.”

In this chapter I argue the following:

1. I analyze Hegel’s references to India, specifically to Hindu religion and philosophy and extract a coherent picture and structure of what Hegel understood and presented as Hindu religion and philosophy. I argue that Hegel understood and structured Hindu religion and philosophy in terms of three fundamental notions. I call them 1. the metaphysical universal principle; 2. the particular, i.e., the particular entities and the world; and 3. non-duality of the particular with the universal.

2. I demonstrate that this threefold structure is dictated by Hegel’s own philosophy and his triadic dialectical structures.
3. I demonstrate that Hegel selectively read his sources, combining different elements from Hindu religion and philosophy and reconfiguring schools of Indian thought given in his sources to establish this threefold structure, in order to fit it into the precepts of his own philosophy. In this context I also discuss the discrepancies that result from Hegel’s use of Hindu religion and philosophy.

1. Unlike Schopenhauer, Hegel devotes specific sections or chapters to India, Hinduism and Hindu philosophies within his works. However, he works with a variety of material: works on Hindu polytheism and mythology, Hindu traditions, customs and ritualistic religious practices, analyses of religious texts like the Vedas, Upaniṣads and the Bhagavadgītā, and commentaries on philosophical schools like Sāṅkhya-Yoga and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, as well as on Indian history and contemporary colonial existence under the British, Indo-European linguistic connections, and socio-political structures of Hindu culture such as the caste system.

Among scholars, emphasis on Hegel’s interpretation of these various aspects of India remains distributed among various approaches. As we have seen above, depending upon their approach and conclusion, scholars concentrate on one or two aspects of Hegel’s interpretation. Scholars, such as Inden, focus on Hegel’s association of fantasy and imagination with Hinduism. Hegel’s devaluation of the caste system is also a much discussed aspect of Indian culture. Bernasconi examines whether Indian thought earns the “status” of philosophy in Hegel’s eyes, whereas
Herling studies the shifts in Hegel’s interpretation. A few scholars, such as Herling, Marchignoli or Gipper focus on Hegel’s review of the Bhagavadgītā, some of whom extensively discuss Hegel’s criticism of two specific terms: yoga and dharma.

Scholars such as Glasenapp and Halbfass, who cover most aspects of Hegel’s interpretation, discuss those aspects one by one, but do not attempt to ascertain if those aspects reveal any conceptual structure of Hegel’s understanding of Hindu religion and philosophy. Those who specifically investigate Hegel’s interpretation of Hinduism either emphasize the notion of Hinduism as a religion of fantasy or concentrate on the Hindu concept of the divine absolute brahman. Viyagappa, for example, organizes his analysis by following the concept of brahman as it is explained by Hegel in different works. Viyagappa divides his work into chapters such as “Brahman in Philosophy of Religion,” “Brahman in Art,” “Brahman in Philosophy of History,” and so forth. The concept of brahman thus leads the entire analysis of Hegel’s interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy. Viyagappa’s later, more concise version of the earlier study organizes Hegel’s interpretation of Hinduism in two parts – “Hindu consciousness of god” and “God-Consciousness revealed in community-consciousness.” Viyagappa’s argues that the rationale behind this two-fold analysis is the Hegelian interdependence between theory and praxis: theory of religion, in this context, is how Hinduism conceives divinity, and praxis is its expression in the community. But here too, the concept

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106 Viyagappa, *Critique of Indian Religion and Philosophy* 23, 40, 70.
of the divine absolute dictates Viyagappa’s analysis, which mixes elements and aspects of Hegel’s interpretation that are conceptually separate.

General or focused studies in Hegel scholarship have thus not recognized a conceptual structure of Hegel’s interpretation, which I claim underlies his analysis of Hindu religion and philosophy. I argue that Hegel conceptualized and structured both Hindu religion and philosophy as being composed of three basic tenets understood under three fundamental rubrics: 1. universality – the metaphysical universal principle, 2. particularity – particular multiple entities and the world, 3. non-duality – non-duality of the particular with the universal principle. Hegel identified, first, a metaphysical concept of one singular all-encompassing abstract universal principle, namely brahman. Second, Hegel understood that vis-à-vis this singular universal absolute, the particular multiple entities and the world have only a secondary status as a temporary and fleeting or as an illusion or a distraction away from brahman. Third, Hegel ascertained that the Hindu religio-philosophical goal of man is realizing the non-duality in essence with the universal principle, i.e., non-duality with brahman.

2. I argue that this threefold structure of universality – particularity – non-duality is dictated by Hegel’s own philosophy as Hegel’s philosophy bases itself on triadic structures. Hegel argues for triadic dialectics as the logical structure and the very composition of reason and reality. He applies this threefold dialectical development to God and Absolute Spirit, as their very definition. As we shall see
later in more detail, his triadic dialectic structure proposes that an initially implicit universal principle concretizes itself in particularity until it finally arrives at complete self-awareness sublating the opposition between the universal and the particular. Hegel imposes this same threefold dialectic structure, in order to analyse and evaluate Hindu religion and philosophy.

Scholars, as I have demonstrated above, have not recognized or explicitly analyzed this threefold structure in Hegel’s interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy. Viyagappa, for example, divides Hegel’s interpretation into two aspects – theory and praxis. Westphal has indeed identified three aspects of Hegel’s interpretation, which he calls metaphysical, cultic, and political critique. However, his three aspects are different from the threefold structure that I propose. First of all, Westphal’s three aspects are for our understanding of Hegel’s critique of Hindu religion and philosophy; my threefold structure explains how Hegel himself understood it. Moreover, Westphal approaches Hegel’s interpretation primarily from a political perspective, arguing that Hegel did not find any notion of freedom in Hinduism. Westphal maintains that Hegel’s critique of Hinduism is metaphysical, cultic, as well as political. My threefold structure, on the other hand, is conceptual. It corresponds to Hegel’s triadic, logical, dialectical structure. I demonstrate that the triadic dialectical structure inherent in Hegel’s philosophy – the implicit universal concept, its concretization in particularity, and the sublation of

107 Westphal 137, 144.
their opposition – dictates Hegel’s understanding and structuring of Hindu religion and philosophy.

3. I proceed to examine closely Hegel’s various explanations and evaluations of Hindu religion and philosophy and to compare his explanations with information in his sources, especially in Colebrooke, who is declared in all primary and secondary literature as Hegel’s most trusted source for Indian thought. I examine in what contexts or philosophical schools those elements occurred in Indian thought, how they were presented to Hegel by his sources and how he assembled and structured them to be recognized as the fundamentals of Hindu religion and philosophy. My study demonstrates that, in order to place India in the primitive stages of the Spirit’s development, and in order to impose his threefold structure on Hindu religious thought, Hegel selectively read his sources, picked and chose elements, concepts and explanations from the available material, and restructured schools of Indian philosophy to fit his notions. He excluded, neglected, or contested other elements that would not suit his preconceived notions. In this context, I also demonstrate inconsistencies in Hegel’s interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy along with problems and discrepancies that Hindu thought posed to Hegel’s own system.

My analysis challenges assertions such as those of Hodgson, who asserts that, “far from imposing an abstract, preconceived, a priori structure on the history
of religion, [Hegel] approached this subject matter as an experimental field, in which virtually nothing should not be tried, at least once." Moreover, my analysis also reveals that it was not inadequate information, but Hegel’s own shaping and molding of the available information, that rendered his structuring and interpretation of Hinduism. To the postcolonialists and others, my analysis will also show that Hegel’s representation of Hinduism is not limited to associating it with “irrational fantasy,” but that there might be other, more subtle aspects of imposition and distortion, such as enforcing triadic structures, that need to be taken into consideration.

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Section 2

Precepts of Hegel’s Philosophy

It is not the purpose of this section to summarize Hegel’s enormous body of work. Discussing every aspect of Hegel’s philosophy would deviate from the task at hand, which is to understand which aspects of Hegel’s philosophy directed and dictated his understanding of Hindu religion and philosophy. As I argue for a threefold understanding and structuring of Hindu religious thought, it is important to understand Hegel’s triadic structures of dialectical development as well as his philosophy of religion. The next section will demonstrate that Hegel’s threefold conceptual structure is necessarily and directly applied to his understanding of Hinduism.

Hegel’s philosophy and his works are organized in triadic conceptual structures. The most prominent examples of his works that display tripartite structures are his Phänomenologie des Geistes, Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften, and his Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion.109 Hegel’s Phenomenologie des Geistes, for example, first discusses the concepts of Bewuβtsein, Selbstbewuβtsein, and Vernunft. It proceeds to discuss the concept of Geist, which is explained in the triadic structure of Sittlichkeit, Bildung, and

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Moralität. Each of these three aspects of Geist further subdivides into three features. After the concept of Geist, the work expounds the concept of Religion, which subdivides into three types, namely “Natürliche Religion,” “Kunst-Religion,” and “Offenbare Religion.”

Hegel’s *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* is firmly grounded in and built upon triadic structures. It contains one fundamental triad: 1. “Die Wissenschaft der Logik,” 2. “Naturphilosophie,” and 3. “Philosophie des Geistes.” Each component of this triad is constituted of three elements: “Die Wissenschaft der Logik” discusses the concepts of “Seyn,” “Wesen,” and “Begriff;” “Naturphilosophie” constitutes of “Mechanik,” “Physik,” and “organische Physik;” and “Philosophie des Geistes” introduces “Der Subjective Geist,” “Der Objective Geist,” and “Der Absolute Geist.” Each of the three subdivisions is further constituted of three aspects; all of which are in turn analyzed as triads.

Hegel’s *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion* has three component parts: 1. “Der Begriff der Religion,” 2. “Die bestimmte Religion,” and 3. “Die vollendete Religion.” The first part establishes the concept of religion; the second part analyzes various world religions and places them in historical and conceptual progression; and the third part argues for Christianity as the consummate religion embodying the fulfillment of the concept of religion.

The threefold structure of Hegel’s works illustrated above is not merely an organizational tool; it is, for Hegel, the fundamental and necessary structure of
reality as well as of thought. Hegel correlates reality with thought by arguing that reality reveals itself progressively concretely only in and through thought. Reality’s self-manifestation, which is at the same time thought itself, proceeds in three stages or moments of Hegelian dialectic. First thought postulates an entity, which it attempts to comprehend in itself. However, as it examines the entity, it realizes that the entity is not self-sufficient and hence cannot be comprehended in itself; it needs to posit its negation, upon which it depends, in order to be comprehended. In the second moment, thus, it posits the opposition of the first entity. To give an example, thought first tries to comprehend the concept of being. However, it realizes that, to understand the concept of being, it needs to put forth the concept of nothing, without which the former cannot be conceived. As Jaeschke explains,

Um einen Begriff zu denken, darf man nicht im Gedanken bei ihm stehenbleiben, bei seiner bloßen Identität mit sich, sondern muß notwendig zu seinem Negativen übergehen. Dadurch wird die negative Beziehung auf sein Anderes einem Begriff immanent, und somit wird sie zu einem konstitutiven Moment des ersten Begriffs selbst. Dasjenige, was die Negation eines Begriffs ist, muß in diesen Begriff selbst hineingedacht werden; ein Begriff enthält somit sich und zugleich sein Negatives in sich, Identität und Nichtidentität.\footnote{Jaeschke, Hegel Handbuch 230-31.}

\footnote{Lauer explains that for Hegel “it simply was not true that the locus of concreteness was in the immediacy of reality’s presence to sensation… reality was more concretely present (more real) in thought, in ideas.” Lauer explains further that the “totality of reality” itself is its “progressively concrete manifestation” into thought. “[T]his involves a realization that man will find the very reality of reality only in the awareness of reality which is at the same time reality’s progressive self-manifestation.” Lauer summarizes this correlation of reality and thought by stating that “Hegel’s system is his Logic, which penetrates thought and finds in it the revelation of reality.” Lauer, Idea of Philosophy 2-3.}
Jaeschke’s explanation implies that the concept of *being* requires an antithetical concept – its negation *nothing* – as its own “constitutive moment.” However, with *being* and *nothing* thought has a contradiction. This contradiction of the two neither results in mutual elimination, nor is it simply left alone as a “Schaukelsystem paarweise aufzustellender Negationsbeziehungen,” a constant back-and-forth of contradictory concepts.\(^{112}\) The contradiction is resolved in the third moment of Hegelian dialectic by rising to a higher standpoint of the whole, of which the contradictory entities are only parts. In the case of *being* and *nothing* thought ascends to the concept of *becoming*, in which the concepts of *being* and *nothing* are preserved, and yet their contradiction is aufgehoben or overcome.\(^{113}\)

Hegelian dialectic thus involves that thought first establishes an entity, which proceeds to posit to its negation or opposite entity. The contradiction or opposition between the entity and its negation is sublated or aufgehoben in an elevated state of their resolution, which at once includes and yet overcomes the difference between the entity and its negation.\(^{114}\) The dialectical movement is not simply the process of comprehending a concept, but rather the self-movement of the

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\(^{112}\) Jaeschke, *Hegel Handbuch* 231.

\(^{113}\) For clear and concise explanation of Hegelian dialectic, see Beiser 167-68.

\(^{114}\) This process of Hegelian dialectic is often termed as the progression from *thesis* to *antithesis* to *synthesis*, however, as Findlay points out, Hegel himself rarely employs these terms. Findlay states that these terms are more characteristic of Fichte than Hegel. Findlay 70.
concept itself; it is a “kontinuierlich auf ein höchstes Prinzip fortschreitende ‘Selbstbewegung des Begriffs’.”

Thus Hegelian dialectic consists of the first moment of an entity, the second moment of its negation, and the third moment of Aufhebung of their opposition. However, Hegelian dialectic does not only pertain to abstract concepts such as being and nothing. It permeates reality and, as explained earlier, reality’s progressively concrete self-manifestation in thought. Triadic composition is the structure of reality and of thought, hence triadic structure is also constitutive of science and philosophy, which attempt to articulate and expound reality and thought. Hegel explains that the threefold structure is “immer der Gang in aller Wissenschaft: zuerst der Begriff, dann die Bestimmtheit des Begriffs, die Realität, Objektivität und endlich dies, daß der erste Begriff sich selbst Gegenstand ist, für sich selbst ist, sich selbst gegenständlich wird, sich zu sich selbst verhält.” In this quote, too, Hegel explains the triadic structure as the “Selbstbewegung des Begriffs,” but he presents it as the process of concretization of an abstract concept. The above quote explains that the first moment of the triad is an abstract implicit concept – “zuerst der Begriff.” The second moment of negation consists in opposing its abstractness or implicitness by an examination of its “Bestimmtheit,” “Realität,” and “Objektivität.” This means that the initial abstract and implicit concept develops

115 Jaeschke, Hegel Handbuch 231.
into and is studied in its concreteness or particularity, its reality, and objectivity. Finally in the third moment the concept becomes its own “Gegenstand” by relating to itself – “sich selbst gegenständlich wird, sich zu sich selbst verhält.” This entails that the concept cognizes itself as object. The abstract “Begriff” concretizes itself in “Bestimmtheit,” and finally fully cognizes and relates to itself in a higher synthesis of the “Begriff” and its “Bestimmtheit.” The process of concretization of the abstract concept culminates into the concept’s self-cognition, in which it, having concretized itself in reality, now relates and reconciles to itself, fully conscious of itself.

Hegelian dialectic thus encompasses both a necessary conceptual structure, as well as a movement toward self-cognition. Findlay explains the various “levels” on which Hegelian dialectic functions:

In Dialectic one-sided abstractions demand to be complemented by alternative abstractions, which are often as much antithetical as complementary…At higher stages, however, Dialectic becomes a reflective shuttling to and fro between notions known to be interdependent and correlative, and at a yet higher level it becomes a simple development of our notions, the more narrowly abstract merely growing into the more ‘concrete’ or rich in ‘sides’. In all these processes contradiction is most evident: it is implicitly present in the original products of Understanding, it becomes explicit when these products break down, and start passing into their complements, or being referred to their correlatives, or growing into more ‘concrete’ forms, and it is ‘preserved’ in the result of all such processes.¹¹⁷

Hegelian dialectic thus also implies that first there is an abstract concept, which, in the second moment, particularizes itself in concrete forms, and in the third

¹¹⁷ Findlay 63.
moment, preserving and overcoming its abstraction and concrete form, reconciles with itself with complete self-cognition.

Hegelian triadic movement of concepts can incorporate yet another dimension, namely that of time or history. History is closely associated with the above mentioned process of a concept’s self-cognition through its concretization in reality. A concept concretizes and develops itself through time in progressively more self-aware stages. The developmental stages of concretization constitute history. This historical development of the concept culminates into the last stage, in which the concretization embodies the fulfillment of the concept, through which it achieves complete self-cognition and complete reconciliation with itself. The progressively more self-aware developmental stages advancing toward the concept’s complete fulfillment in self-cognition necessarily imply a linear teleological progress of history. This suggests that the earlier stages of history embody the concept only in an imperfect and primitive manner, and each next step is more evolved than all the previous ones.

As the tripartite movement is the necessary structure of reality and thought, and of their progressive self-cognition, every concept must be analyzed in terms of a triadic development. Geist – the Hegelian absolute concept – must also develop through triadic structures. The grand triadic structure of Hegel’s Enzyklopädie yields the concept of Geist as the third moment sublating Logik and its manifestation in Natur. Geist, as the absolute concept, is not mere substance, self-
identical, self-subsistent and unchanging.\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Geist} itself has to progress dialectically in triadic steps to achieve complete self-awareness as \textit{Absoluter Geist}.\textsuperscript{119}

Hegelian triadic development as \textit{Selbstbewegung} and selfcognition of \textit{Geist} or \textit{Spirit} necessarily evokes the notion of self-determinacy. This indicates that \textit{Spirit} determines its own triadic development, its own concretization, and ensures its own reconciliation with itself. In this sense, \textit{Spirit} is not a mere passive universal \textit{substance}, but rather an active self-determining universal \textit{subjectivity}. This active subjectivity concretizes itself in human consciousness and activity. As \textit{subjectiver Geist} it manifests itself in human psychology. As the second moment of opposition it exhibits itself as \textit{objectiver Geist} evident in human conceptions that govern social interactions, such as law, ethics and morality. The third moment of \textit{absoluter Geist} preserves the subjective and objective aspects of human consciousness and activity by progressively actualizing itself in art, religion, and philosophy. Art, religion, and philosophy themselves are a triad of progressively more self-aware and self-reflexive modes of the \textit{Absolute Spirit}’s self-knowledge.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{119}] Jones describes Hegel’s notion of self-awareness, self-consciousness, self-identity as follows: “To be aware of self…is to be aware of whatever content I happen to be aware of as other. Self-awareness is simply awareness of the object as more sharply distinguished than it once was, as more emphatically not \textit{me} but other-than-me…At every level, therefore, self-consciousness (self-identity) is the reciprocal, or reflection, of the degree of structure, order, complexity, and variety of the ‘other’.\textquotedblright” Jones 112-13. In the case of \textit{Absoluter Geist}, the self and the other, or the subject and object of awareness is \textit{Geist} itself. As earlier explained, \textit{Geist} itself is the \textit{Subjekt} as well as the \textit{Gegenstand} of cognition.
\end{enumerate}
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The aforementioned historical dimension of triadic developments invariably applies to the modes of *Absolute Spirit*’s self-knowledge. Art, religion, and philosophy as modes of human consciousness and activity act as vehicles for *Absolute Spirit*’s self-knowledge. Consequently the history of art, religion, and philosophy reveals the progressively more evolved stages in *Absolute Spirit*’s self-knowledge. The examination of the art, religion, and philosophy of a certain time period in history and critical analysis of *Absolute Spirit*’s self-portrayal in those three modes in that time period would reveal the developmental stage of *Absolute Spirit*’s self-awareness. It follows that the study of history discloses the different stages of *Absolute Spirit*’s journey to self-awareness. It follows that the farther into the past one looks, the less evolved are the concepts of art, religion, and philosophy. The earlier in history one investigates, the less sophisticated would one find the concepts, ideas, theories, and their actualizations in life. The earlier stages would be primitive, passive, and confused where *Spirit* is not yet conscious of itself as an active subject. The later stages will reveal that it is slowly cognizing and concretizing its own subjectivity. The earlier religious notions of God and nature, or philosophical concepts of universality and particularity, would be wild, confused, unsophisticated, and unorganized. The later ones will progressively display more and more insight into the true nature of *Spirit*, until history culminates into the fulfillment and complete self-awareness of *Absolute Spirit*. 
Religion and philosophy both are modes of *Absolute Spirit*’s self-cognition. Religion is a relatively less self-reflexive mode of *Spirit* than the mode of philosophy. However, both philosophy and religion concern themselves with the same content, namely the absolute. Philosophy articulates the concept of absolute as *Spirit*, whereas religion conceives it as God. Fackenheim explains the common content of religion and philosophy and argues for the dependence of the latter on the former:

It is a central Hegelian doctrine that the true religion already is the true ‘content’, lacking merely the true ‘form’ of speculative thought; that philosophy could not reach truth unless its true content preexisted in religion; that philosophic thought therefore requires religion as its basis in life, and that the true philosophy, in giving the true religious content its true form of thought, both transfigures religion and produces itself.

God, then, is simply a religious designation of *Absolute Spirit*. Hence as *Spirit*, God is also subject to triadic dialectical development. This implies that God, as the absolute substance, as infinite divine universality, is, at first, only implicit, abstract, and indeterminate. The dialectical movement of God necessitates that God – this abstract divine universal principle – concretizes itself. God concretizes itself by becoming an object of human consciousness. Human consciousness implicitly

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120 Dickey explains Hegel’s controversial correlation between religion and philosophy: “Hegel begins by defining religion as ‘a mode of consciousness’ that seeks to establish the truth of the relationship between man and God.” Hegel maintains that this truth has been expressed in different ways at different times. Speculative philosophy is trying to articulate this truth in a way that suits the advanced consciousness of the modern world. Dickey adds that Hegel complained that protestant demagogues in Berlin should not stigmatize philosophy, because it told the same truth in a non-religious philosophical language. Dickey 309.

121 Fackenheim 23.
knows, feels, represents, or thinks about God, thereby giving the abstraction of divine universality some concrete determinate form. The implicit universality thus particularizes or concretizes itself in human consciousness. The third moment of God’s dialectical movement is achieved when human consciousness elevates itself to God, thereby sublating the opposition between human finiteness and divine infinity, human particularity and divine universality.¹²²

However, this third moment is not simply a process of human consciousness comprehending God; it is a process of God knowing himself.¹²³ Hegelian dialectic is a selfmovement of concept toward complete self-cognition. The concept of God moves from the first moment of implicit universality to the second moment of concretization in human consciousness. In the third moment, in the act of human consciousness elevating itself to infinite divinity, God arrives at complete self-awareness, reconciles with himself with complete self-cognition. As Schlitt explains, “[i]n Hegel’s philosophy God is a dynamic movement of inclusive divine subjectivity.”¹²⁴ As this quote suggests, first, God is a subjectivity. This suggests that God is not an object merely reflected upon by man. God is not passive; rather, God is an active subject acting on its own account, determining its own dialectic development. This subjective activity or self-movement of the divine absolute is a

¹²² Hegel, Philosophy of Religion I 365-450.

¹²³ Taylor quotes Hegel to explain the necessary dialectic development of God toward self-knowledge: “God is God only insofar as he knows himself; his self-knowledge of himself is moreover his self-consciousness in man, it is man’s knowledge of God that goes on to become the self-knowledge of man in God.” Taylor 481.

¹²⁴ Schlitt xiv.
very important aspect for Hegel. As we shall see later, this precept of Hegel’s philosophy prompts him to criticize the Hindu concept of God as a passive entity lacking any subjectivity or self-determination. Second, as Schlitt suggests in the above quote, God is an inclusive subjectivity: in the third moment of self-cognition God contains within himself the sublation of particularity and universality, of finiteness and infinity. Third, the concept of God is a movement: it is not an abstract static entity; it is a dynamic self-determining dialectical movement: God is abstract universality, which concretizes itself in the particularity of human consciousness, and returns to itself with complete self-knowledge.

Hegel, as he revised his own philosophy of religion, applied his tripartite structure, not only to the concept of God, but also to the concept of religion. Religion is also a concept, which itself is subject to its own triadic dialectical selfmovement, which involves the concept of religion, its concretization, and its fulfillment in complete self-cognition. Hegel’s philosophy of religion, thus also displays the triadic structure, which corresponds to the three stages of the dialectic development of a concept. These three parts of Hegel’s philosophy of religion are entitled 1. “Der Begriff der Religion,” which explores the concept of religion; 2. “Die bestimmte Religion,” which examines the concretization of the concept of religion in actual determinate world religions; and 3. “Die vollendete Religion,” which argues that Christianity is the consummate religion, which contains and

125 Initially, in his 1821 lectures Hegel formulates the concept of religion in a more dyadic form as objective and subjective arguing that religion is the unity of the object or God and the finite subject who is conscious of the object. Schlitt 104.
perfects both the concept itself and its concretization and achieves complete self-
knowledge and self-fulfillment.

The first part – “Der Begriff der Religion” – explores religion as an implicit abstract concept, as an embodiment of the process of God’s development toward self-cognition.\textsuperscript{126} According to Hegel, given the dialectic development of God, the concept of religion also necessarily displays three aspects – 1. the concept of God, i.e., an implicit abstract notion of divine absolute universality; 2. the knowledge of God, i.e., a theoretical way in which human consciousness concretizes or represents absolute universality in some form; 3. cultus, i.e., a practical way in which human consciousness elevates itself to infinite divinity, sublating their difference in “the knowing of myself within God and of God within me.”\textsuperscript{127} The first part of Hegel’s philosophy of religion thus examines the abstract concept of religion as a tripartite structure constituting of the divine absolute concept, its representation and the cultus.

The second part – “Die bestimmte Religion” – explains the concept’s particularization and concretization in actual world religions. Given the tripartite structure, every determinate religion of the world must be investigated for its three aspects: 1. how a given religion conceives the divine universal principle; 2. how it

\textsuperscript{126} Since God, as \textit{Spirit}, is determined to go through the dialectic process and come to complete self-cognition, Hegel rejects the Romantic notion of the unknowability of God. Hegel did not agree with Romantic spirituality, which focused on the devotee or the worshipper, made religion completely subjective and accepted “the conclusions of Enlightenment epistemology that nothing can be known about God…but that he is.” Taylor 481.

\textsuperscript{127} Hegel, \textit{Philosophy of Religion} I 443.
represents and concretizes it in theoretical knowledge; and 3. how it conceives the practical relationship between human and divine, i.e., if at all and how man practically seeks union with God. For Hegel, any religion, Eastern or Western, ancient or modern, lends itself to being examined in terms of these three aspects. However, the religions are not to be examined in isolation disregarding their chronological and other connections. This is because the second moment of concretization in Hegel’s dialectic development necessarily entails a teleological progress of a concept toward self-fulfillment. This teleological progress is embodied in history which displays the developmental stages of a concept. For the concept of religion, therefore, the determinate or “bestimmte” religions of the world embody the historical developmental stages, until religion reaches its perfection and self-cognition in the consummate or “vollendete” religion of Christianity. In Christianity the concept of religion attains perfection, fulfillment and complete self-cognition. Hence, all the religions, except Christianity, are only stages of the journey, within which the concept has not yet reached perfection. Consequently all determinate religions are imperfect and flawed. They attempt to display the concept of religion and the triadic development of God, but they do so only inefficiently and insufficiently. In every determinate religion, representing the stage of the concept of religion at its time, the triadic structure – universality, its concretization, and cultus – is to be examined. The determinate religions reveal this structure with more or fewer imperfections depending upon where a particular religion stands in time within the development of the concept of religion.
Hegel researched thoroughly the available material about world religions, ordering them historically and philosophically by analyzing the level of realization of the concept of religion in them. For Hegel’s concept of religion and for Hegel’s philosophy in general, one cannot discard history. Hegel proposes that the conceptual or philosophical development of religion coincides with the historical progression of religions. He proposes that the philosophical analysis of a religion’s triadic structure can locate a religion within a particular stage of historical development. As the philosophical examination reveals a religion’s historical placement, the historical placement of a religion indicates its philosophical worth.

This necessarily implies that the more ancient (and for Hegel, also the more Eastern) the religion, the less evolved it is. Eastern religions, including Chinese religions, Hinduism, and Buddhism are, for Hegel, the earliest and therefore the least advanced and most primitive religions, which he entitles “unmittelbare” or “immediate” religions. Their primitiveness consists primarily in the inconcreteness of their divine principle. From here the concept of religion moves through Persian and Egyptian religions and advances to more developed stages of Greek and Jewish religion, in which the concept of God becomes progressively more concrete. Finally the Roman religion enables the transition into the consummate religion of Christianity.

The third part of Hegel’s philosophy of religion – “Die vollendete Religion” – discusses Christianity as the consummate religion. For Hegel, the defining aspects of Christianity consist in God creating the world and creating man in his own image,
the fall of man from paradise, God begetting his son, his death, resurrection and 
ascension, and finally the Holy Ghost enabling humans to elevate their finitude to a 
spiritual union with divine infinity. These aspects, according to Hegel, perfectly 
embody and fulfill the dialectical development of the self-determining God who 
concretizes himself in man and through man sublates the opposition of human 
finitude and divine infinity, thereby reconciling with himself. In Christianity both 
the concept of God and the concept of religion find their fulfillment and perfection.

In all of Hegelian threefold structures that we have discussed so far, the first 
moment of triadic dialectic is an implicit concept, the second moment is its negation 
and the third moment is a synthesis sublating their opposition. Differently put, in all 
of the above triads, the first is an implicit abstract universal principle, the second is 
its explicit concretization or particularization and the third is the self-aware return 
of the concept to itself, its fulfillment and self-cognition.

Hegel argues that any concept under investigation reveals this threefold 
structure and is to be analyzed to understand its inherent threefold structure. For 
Hegel, Reality is and hence is comprehended in a triadic dialectic movement. 
Specifically in the case of religion, as we have discussed above, Hegel explains that 
the threefold structure of a religion is analyzed by examining the divine universal 
principle, its concretization in the particular and the cultus of raising the particular 
to the universal. If religion is concerned with the divine universal principle – God – 
philosophy is concerned with the same principle and its threefold development;
philosophy only examines it in a more self-aware, secularized form as Spirit. Philosophy discusses how the absolute universal principle concretizes and particularizes itself in the world through activities of human consciousness and, through it, comes to its complete self-awareness, self-cognition.

Hegel imposes this triadic conceptual structure on Hindu religion and philosophy by examining: 1. how God / philosophical universal principle is conceived; 2. how God is represented and the real world is apprehended; 3. if and how the concrete representations and the real world elevate themselves back to the universal principle. Hegel imposes his triadic structure on parts of Indian material as well as on Hindu religion and philosophy in general. He carefully examines any triadic structures that he encounters in Hindu religion and philosophy, such as the trinity of the gods – Brahmā-Viṣṇu-Śiva – or the three gunas or qualities composing the world – satva, rajas, and tamas. He judges their philosophical worth by examining how much they comply with his conceptual triadic structure and dialectic development. He also understands and judges Hindu religion and philosophy by the same criteria and through the same structure.

In the next section I will demonstrate that the threefold structure in the case of Hindu religious philosophy consists in the following tenets: 1. the singular highest, divine and philosophical, universal principle is brahman, 2. the particularization consists in the multiplicity of divine powers and in the actual world, 3. the particular returns to the universal as non-duality with the universal.
Hegel evaluates the above structure this way: 1. the universal principle *brahman* is a simple abstraction of substantiality, 2. the particular world of multiplicity, vis-à-vis the universal principle, only has a secondary status; it is temporary, fleeting; it is an illusion or a distraction away from *brahman*, and 3. as the return of the particular to the universal, the philosophical goal is non-duality with *brahman*, which results in complete dissolution of the particular.
Section 3:

Threefold Structure
Hegel’s Understanding and Use of Hindu Religious Thought

3.1 Overview of the threefold structure in Hindu religion and philosophy

In this section I demonstrate that Hegel actually identifies and evaluates three aspects in Hindu religion and philosophy. In his 1827 lectures in the Philosophie der Religion, “indische Religion” finds its place under the early developmental stages of “unmittelbare Religionen.” In the introduction of Indian religion – Hinduism – Hegel declares the following:

Das erste also, was wir hier finden, ist dieselbe Substantialität, an der alles andere, das Bestimmte, Besondere, das Subjekt nur ein Akzidentelles ist, das sogar sterblich ist. Das zweite aber ist das, was hier hinzukommt, das Konkrete, der Reichtum der Welt, die Besonderung jener allgemeinen Substanz, die sich in Beziehung auf die Substanz, die allgemeine Macht, auch für das Bewußtsein vorstellt,…Das dritte ist, daß diese besonderen Gestaltungen, geistigen Naturmächte, zurückgekehrt vorgestellt werden, gehalten von dem Einen. 129

128 In 1824 Hegel defines Hinduism as “die Religion der Phantasie.” By 1827, although he maintains all the claims that he makes under his Phantasie title, he nevertheless removes this designation and just entitles it “die indische Religion.” Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 219, 475. Hodgson states that this may be because of the change of emphasis. Hodgson explains that the notion of fantasy is in reference to the various multiple powers or gods. By 1831 the emphasis is placed on the concept of the universal substantiality rather than the multiple fantastic gods. Thus, Hodgson argues that the 1827 lectures play “a transitional role” between 1824 and 1831 lectures. Hegel, Philosophy of Religion II 579n.

129 Hegel, Philosophy of Religion II 579.
In the above quote, Hegel clearly states that he finds three features in Hinduism and numbers them: 1. the “Substantialität,” i.e., the one universal substantiality; 2. “das Konkrete,” which includes “der Reichtum der Welt” and “die Besonderung jener allgemeinen Substanz,” i.e., the concretization, the richness of the world, or the particularization of the universal substantiality; and 3. the “Zurückkehrung,” i.e., the return of the particularized entities into the one universal principle. Hegel elaborates within this quote that 1. the first thing is the “Substantialität” or “allgemeine Substanz,” the general universal substance; 2. the “Bestimmte” “Besondere” “Konkrete,” i.e., the particular is accidental and transitory, and the particular is that which puts itself forth for the consciousness; 3. this particularity returns to the one universal substance.

In his 1831 lectures, too, Hegel states that Hinduism contains all three moments: “Es ist nun zuerst dieses abstrakte Eine, sodann die Wildheit der ausgelassenen Phantasie und dann drittens die Zurücknahme in das Eine, woran sich der Kultus knüpft, zu betrachten.”¹³⁰ Hegel elaborates that these three aspects are 1. “dieses abstrakte Eine,” the abstract One, by which Hegel means the one abstract universal principle; 2. “die Wildheit der ausgelassenen Phantasie,” by which, as will be clear later, Hegel means the wild and fantastic depiction of the multiplicity of gods; and 3. the “Zurücknahme in das Eine,” the taking back or return into the One, which is associated with Kultus. Kultus is the third aspect of the triadic structure of religion, which displays the ways in which the human

¹³⁰ Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 620.
particularity attempts to elevate itself to divine universality. *Kultus*, thus, is defined as the practical relationship of man with the divine universal principle. *Kultus*, specifically in the case of Hinduism is associated with the ways in which man seeks non-duality with *brahman* – the universal principle.¹³¹

The above two quotes summarize Hegel’s triadic structuring of Hinduism in his *Philosophie der Religion*. He imposes the same triadic structure on Indian philosophy in his *Geschichte der Philosophie*:

Es ist eine allgemeine Substanz, welche abstrakter oder konkreter gefaßt werden kann, aus der alles entsteht, und diese Produktionen sind dann die Götter, Naturkräfte, Gestaltungen, Erscheinungen, und auf der anderen Seite Tiere und die unorganische Natur. Zwischen beiden steht der Mensch. Das Höchste in der Religion wie in der Philosophie ist, daß der Mensch als Bewußtsein sich identisch macht mit der Substanz: durch Andacht, Opfer, strenge Büßung und durch Beschäftigung mit dem reinen Gedanken, d.h. mit Philosophie.¹³²

Here too, Hegel addresses three aspects: 1. “eine allgemeine Substanz” – the universal substance; 2. “die Produktionen” – the particular entities or productions arising out of the substance – gods, powers of nature, and other figures on one side, man in the middle, and animals and inorganic nature on the other side; and 3. the highest religio-philosophical goal – man’s identity with the universal substance “als Bewußtsein.” This identity with the universal principle is achieved by religious devotion, rites and rituals or by philosophizing – engaging oneself with pure thought.


¹³² Hegel, *Geschichte der Philosophie* 1 375.
In Hindu religion and philosophy, thus, Hegel identifies three basic fundamental tenets – 1. The universal principle: one singular universal abstract substance, 2. The particular / concrete or particularization/ concretization of the substance: gods, nature powers, man, actual world, and 3. The return or non-duality with the universal principle.

As I have argued earlier, the threefold structure is not recognized by scholars of Hegel’s works. Moreover, it is important for Hegel to maintain the integrity of the triadic concept and the order in which the three elements should occur and should be discussed. This integrity is also not maintained in scholarship. In the editorial annotation under the first quote mentioned above, editor Peter Hodgson comments that Hegel “views Hinduism as having two characteristics: the unity of substance and the multiplicity of powers.”133 As I mentioned before, Viyagappa makes a twofold organization of Hegel’s interpretation of Hinduism – theory and praxis. In the “theory” part of Viyagappa’s twofold structure, he collapses the abstract concept of brahman and its concrete manifestation in various gods into one notion of Hegel’s understanding of the Hindu divine principle. Then in “praxis” Viyagappa mentions the cultic practices. Westphal, as well, collapses the first two aspects of Hegel’s understanding – unity/ plurality, abstract/ concrete – into one rubric of “metaphysical critique,” and separates “cultic critique” from it.134

133 Hegel, Philosophy of Religion II 579n.

134 Westphal 140.
Hodgson sees the first two aspects – universal and particular – and does not see the third aspect – non-duality with the universal. Both Viyagappa and Westphal collapse the first two aspects in one rubric of “theory” or “metaphysical critique” respectively and create a different rubric, “praxis” or “cultic critique” respectively, for the third aspect.

In the following section I will analyze Hegel’s interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy maintaining the Hegelian triadic structure. As the above quotes suggest, he indeed imposed that structure by identifying three aspects of Hindu religion and philosophy as the defining or fundamental characteristics. In the following sections I will discuss, one by one, the three aspects as interpreted by Hegel, namely 1. the metaphysical universal principle; 2. the particular entities and the world; and 3. non-duality with the universal.
3.2 The metaphysical universal principle:

Given the precepts of Hegel’s philosophy, it is understandable that Hegel first examines the metaphysical universal principle in any religion or philosophy he evaluates. He studies how the metaphysical universal principle is defined and then proceeds to ascertain if and how it particularizes itself and thirdly if and how it reconciles with itself. Hence, unlike Schopenhauer, who begins with epistemological concerns about the physical world of particular entities, Hegel begins with the universal concept and then proceeds to its particularization.

Hegel is aware that Hindu religion includes several gods and goddesses, from Indra in the Vedic texts to Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavadgītā. Hegel is also aware that in Hindu philosophies, too, there is not simply one concept that represents the absolute; in different schools of Indian philosophies several concepts are proposed and discussed. However, as we saw above, Hegel identifies one concept as the concept of the universal absolute principle, both in religion and philosophy. That concept is brahman. For Hegel, the Hindu religio-philosophical universal absolute principle is characterized in the following ways:

3.2.1 The universal principle is called brahm (or brahmā) or brahman.

3.2.2 It is an abstract indeterminate inconcrete principle of “substantiality.”

3.2.3 It is not a self-determining subject; it is passive.

3.2.4 It is pure thought/thinking.
3.2.1 The universal principle is called *brahm* (or *brahmā*) or *brahman*:

Hegel argues that, even in what he calls “nature religions” (Hinduism being one of them), in which there might be several gods or several elements in nature to which divinity is assigned, there is one singular universal principle. Assigning divinity to natural elements does indeed exist, but it is secondary to the sense of a higher spiritual element that unifies all the nature gods. This spiritual element is the highest; the singular universal principle is higher than the multiplicity of gods.\(^{135}\) In Hinduism Hegel finds this highest universal principle, both in Hindu religion and philosophy, in the concept of *brahman*. Hegel describes *brahman* as follows: “[E]s [ist] im ganzen dieses Eine, schlechthin Unsinnliche, dieses höchste Wesen, l’être supreme, wie es der Verstand nennt.”\(^ {136}\) Thus *brahman* is the one singular universal principle, the highest supreme being or essence, which is beyond anything that pertains to the senses.

\(^{135}\) Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion* II 531.

\(^{136}\) Hegel, *Geschichte der Philosophie* 1 378. The last part of this sentence – “wie es der Verstand nennt” – is a very unusual and odd addition to the sentence. This is because, first, Hegel does not discuss *Verstand* immediately preceding or following this sentence. Second, as we will see later, Hegel argues that in the abstractness of the concept of *brahman* “Verstand” has no place. In the notions of the concrete world, too, Indian thought hardly displays any “Verstand,” according to Hegel. Hence the above reference to “Verstand” is probably to be understood in this way: since *Verstand* cannot extend itself into the metaphysical realm, it can only go so far as naming the universal principle and describing it as the highest, beyond the sensible.
Hegel uses three variant spellings of this concept: “Brahman,” “Brahma,” or “Brahm.” 137

Der Grundinhalt ist also die eine, einfache, absolute Substanz; dies ist das, was die Inder ‘Brahm, Brahma, Brahman’ nennen; ‘Brahm, Brahman’ ist das Neutrum, die Gottheit, wie wir sagen; ‘Brahma’ drückt das allgemeine Wesen mehr als Person, Subjekt aus. Es ist übrigens ein Unterschied, der nicht constant angewendet wird, und schon in den verschiedenen casibus verwischt er sich von selbst, da masculinum und neutrum viele gleiche casus haben. 138

Hegel is thus aware that there is a distinction between the three variants he uses. Brahman or brahm is the neuter noun signifying the universal principle. 

Brahmā is a male god. However, as the above quote says, Hegel thinks that Brahmā – as a male god – is only a personification, so to speak, of the universal principle – brahman; it is simply “das allgemeine Wesen als Person.” Besides, as he is informed by Colebrooke, Hegel maintains that the neuter-masculine gender difference between the two nouns does not hold, because in many grammatical cases masculine and neuter forms look the same. Colebrooke provides Hegel with this information and himself prefers to use the masculine noun everywhere to

137 Brahman is the all-encompassing universal principle. Brahmā is one of the gods of the Hindu trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. The concept of the Hindu trinity is generally understood as three essential processes: creation, maintenance, and destruction. Brahmā is in charge of creating the universe, Viṣṇu is supposed to maintain it. Hence he keeps reincarnating himself whenever the need arises. Śiva is supposed to be the principle of destruction, although with his symbol of the Lingam, which represents union of male and female genitals, Śiva also represents the creative power. Brahman with the letter n at the end is a neuter noun. Brahman is the absolute universal principle. Brahmā, on the other hand, is a masculine proper noun, the name of the one of the gods in the trinity, in charge of creating the universe (every time a new cycle begins). As we will see in the next quote, Hegel is aware of this distinction.

138 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 481-82.
maintain consistency.\textsuperscript{139} When Hegel is reminded by Humboldt and Schlegel about the grammatical distinction between Brahm and Brahmā, Hegel very strongly insists that they are the same: “Bhra

ma bleibt seiner inneren Bestimmung nach das abstrakte \textit{Sein}, das Allgemeine…Mit seinem Gehalt, welcher vielmehr Gehaltlosigkeit ist, ist in der Tat jenes Maskulinum nicht ein individuelles Subjekt…”\textsuperscript{140} Hence Hegel declares that “dann ist auch in dieser Rücksicht kein großer Akzent auf diesen Unterschied zu legen.”\textsuperscript{141}

Hegel, thus, considers \textit{brahman} and \textit{Brahmā} as the same, namely the universal principle. Having conflated these two terms, Hegel proceeds to criticize them. He finds it strange and random that the same term – \textit{brahman} or \textit{Brahmā} – is used to designate both the one singular absolute principle and one of the deities of the trinity. He finds it strange that \textit{brahman} as the absolute or the universal principle has to stoop down to the level of a mere personification, to the subordinate position of just one of the gods in the trinity, one of the functions (that of creation)

\textsuperscript{139} Hegel himself did not know Sanskrit. But he was informed by translators and linguists. Colebrooke, for example, is aware of the distinction between neuter \textit{brahman} and masculine \textit{Brahmā}. But he chooses to use the masculine form to denote both: “\textit{Brahman is, in this acceptation, a neuter noun (nom. Brahma or Brahma); and the same term in the masculine (nom. Brahmā), is one of the three gods who constitute one person. But it is more conformable with our idiom to employ the masculine exclusively, and many Sanskrit terms of the same import are masculine; as \textit{Paramātmā}, \textit{Paramēśwara}, &c.” Colebrooke 340n.

\textsuperscript{140} Hegel, Werke 11: Berliner Schriften 186.

\textsuperscript{141} Hegel, \textit{Philosophie der Religion} 2 482n.
in the enterprise of the universe. Hegel finds it random, and therefore immature, to name the absolute in several different ways or to use the same name to designate different entities. Finally blurring over the confusion, Hegel states hastily, “Im allgemeinen ist Brahma diese eine, absolute Substanz.” Thus, with spelling variants, Hegel still understands the term brahman as designating the Hindu metaphysical universal principle.

3.2.2 It is an abstract indeterminate inconcrete principle of “substantiality.”

At least twice in the above mentioned quotes, Hegel calls brahman as “absolute Substanz” – “Der Grundinhalt ist also die eine, einfache, absolute Substanz,” and “Im allgemeinen ist Brahma diese eine, absolute Substanz.” Hegel often interprets the universal principle – brahman – as “Substantialität” or “allgemeine Substanz,” or “absolute Substanz.” As scholars point out Hegel uses the term “substantiality” or “substance” to hint at his criticism of Schelling and Spinoza. Hegel uses the word “substance” to explain brahman as a singular self-

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142 Hegel believes, because the term brahman is used in such a random way, both as the universal principle and as one of the personified gods, there arises the need to name the absolute in yet another way, namely as Parabrähmā: beyond Brahmā. The Brahma-Brahmā conflation also seems to be the reason behind Hegel’s mention that there are no temples for “Brahm.” Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 483, 491.

143 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 485.

144 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 481, 485.

145 Inwood explains the philosophical connotation of the term Substanz: a “Substanz” in pre-Hegelian philosophy means “a persisting, independent thing, in contrast to its dependent ‘accidents’
sustaining entity. By “substantiality” he means that which is the essence or basis of all things. In other words, brahman is the entity that sustains itself and exists on its own account: it needs no cause to come into being; it is eternal and infinite. This self-sustaining entity is the “substantiality” or the essence and basis of all that exists. All individual things subsist by it.

However, Hegel’s description of brahman as “allgemeine Substanz” has more to it than that. For Hegel “substance” is the most basic, most general, most abstract designation of all. It does not assert anything concrete about the absolute concept. Hegel agrees that as substance and substantiality Brahman is the “Macht” or “Grund” of all particular things and beings. However, even that for Hegel is the most abstract or general description of it:

Die Bestimmung, auf welche es nun hierbei ankommt, ist, daß diese Macht zunächst eben nur als Grund der besonderen Gestaltungen oder Existenzen gesetzt ist und das Verhältnis des in sich seienenden Wesens zu denselben das Substantialitäts-Verhältnis ist. So ist sie nur Macht an sich, Macht an das Innere der Existenzen, und als in sich seielendes Wesen, oder als Substanz ist sie nur als das Einfache und Abstrakte gesetzt.\footnote{Hegel, \textit{Philosophie der Religion} 2 477n}

As this quote says, the universal principle is posited “nur als Grund” or as “nur Macht an sich.” Saying \textit{simply} that a universal principle is the sustaining power or

\textit{(Akzidenz(en)), attributes, and/or ‘modes’}.\footnote{Inwood elaborates that Descartes defines Substance as “‘a thing that exists in such a way that it needs no other thing for its own existence.’ Spinoza defined it as “that which is in itself and is conceived through itself, i.e., that whose concept does not need the concept of another thing, in order to be formed from it.” Inwood adds that Hegel usually has Spinoza in mind when he uses the term \textit{Substanz}. Inwood elaborates that Hegel “saw Spinozism as \textit{Akosnismus}, a ‘denial of the world’, which holds that only God or substance is fully real, while worldly things are only \textit{appearances} (\textit{Scheine}).” M. J. Inwood, \textit{A Hegel Dictionary} (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 29 March 2007 <http://www.netlibrary.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/Reader/>.}

\textit{146 Hegel, \textit{Philosophie der Religion} 2 477n}
basis of all things is, for Hegel, positing that substance “nur als das Einfache und Abstrakte.” Furthermore, as this quote says, this substance is “das in sich seiende Wesen” – the “being-within-self.” It is the self-sustaining but self-enclosed entity. The “Substantialitäts-Verhältnis” between the sustaining power and the sustained particular things of the world is the simplest and most abstract explanation of a universal principle.

_Brahman_, therefore, is for Hegel a simple abstraction as divine universality. The multiplicity of Hindu gods has, for Hegel, some concreteness. Hegel is aware that the gods are said to arise out of _brahman_ and return to _brahman_. But according to Hegel, they cannot make _brahman_ itself concrete. That is because, in Hegel’s view, _brahman_ does not encompass concreteness. When the concreteness or multiplicity of gods arises out of _brahman_, in a strange way it gains some notion of independence and falls outside of _brahman_:

> Indem die besonderen Mächte in die substantielle Einheit zurückgehen, wird diese aber nicht konkret, sondern bleibt abstrakte substantielle Einheit, und indem diese Bestimmtheiten aus ihr heraustreten, wird auch dadurch die Einheit nicht konkret, sondern sie sind außer ihr, Erscheinungen mit der Bestimmung der Selbständigkeit gesetzt.147

Not only particular gods, but the world itself, and the concrete tangible things and beings of the world themselves are said to arise out of this principle and to return to it. However, even that is for Hegel not indicative that _brahman_ itself is concrete. The concreteness of the world arises out of the universal principle, but the

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147 Hegel, _Philosophie der Religion_ 2 498-99.
concreteness is not contained within the universal concept of *brahman*; it falls outside of it; *brahman* itself remains indeterminate:

Jene Einheit, die oben steht, ist wohl die Macht, aus der alles hervor-, in die alles zurückgeht; aber sie wird nicht konkret, nicht zum Band der mannigfachen Kräfte der Natur, ebenso nicht konkret im Geist, nicht zum Band der vielerlei Geistestätigkeiten, Empfindungen… [J]ene Einheit des Brahms bleibt einsam, für sich.\footnote{Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 495. In order to explain what he means by what a concrete bond of and for the multiplicity in nature, Hegel gives an example: *Notwendigkeit* or necessity is a bond that brings the multiplicity of nature into a unity. The individual separate things in nature hang together and cohere in the unity of *Notwendigkeit*. “Gesetze, Verstand ist in der Natur, daß die Erscheinungen so zusammenhängen.” Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 495. This sounds strikingly similar to Schopenhauer’s explanation of causality as one of the categories that establish connections among individual things and beings. This is a good example as far as Hegel wants to explain how a rational explanation, a higher principle or a theoretical abstraction unifies the concrete multiplicity within it. One could potentially argue against this: one could say that the concept of *Notwendigkeit* should not be used as comparison and opposition to the concept of *brahman*. After all *Notwendigkeit* applies to the physical world and *brahman* is a metaphysical principle. But that would be, in a way, thinking like Schopenhauer. For Hegel, the absolute (metaphysical, if you wish) principle is the absolute, ultimate *rational* principle. So the difference and separation between *Notwendigkeit* and the ultimate principle is that of degree of abstraction, not of realms of functions.}

As the above quote says, even if *brahman* is the one power sustaining the multiplicity, for Hegel, *brahman* cannot be conceived as an entity concretely bonding or unifying the multiplicity of the world. Simply put, Hegel asserts that there is indeed one single universal principle – “Einheit,” but that it stands somewhere above – “Einheit, die oben steht.” It sustains everyone and everything, but it does not suggest anything about how things or beings are connected with each other. All things come out of *brahman* and return into it, but that does not establish or explain what the connection or relationship is of one thing with another.

As we will see later, unlike Hegel, Schopenhauer indeed sees a concrete connection between individual things and beings, precisely from the notion that

\footnote{Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 495. In order to explain what he means by what a concrete bond of and for the multiplicity in nature, Hegel gives an example: *Notwendigkeit* or necessity is a bond that brings the multiplicity of nature into a unity. The individual separate things in nature hang together and cohere in the unity of *Notwendigkeit*. “Gesetze, Verstand ist in der Natur, daß die Erscheinungen so zusammenhängen.” Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 495. This sounds strikingly similar to Schopenhauer’s explanation of causality as one of the categories that establish connections among individual things and beings. This is a good example as far as Hegel wants to explain how a rational explanation, a higher principle or a theoretical abstraction unifies the concrete multiplicity within it. One could potentially argue against this: one could say that the concept of *Notwendigkeit* should not be used as comparison and opposition to the concept of *brahman*. After all *Notwendigkeit* applies to the physical world and *brahman* is a metaphysical principle. But that would be, in a way, thinking like Schopenhauer. For Hegel, the absolute (metaphysical, if you wish) principle is the absolute, ultimate *rational* principle. So the difference and separation between *Notwendigkeit* and the ultimate principle is that of degree of abstraction, not of realms of functions.}
brahman is the singular metaphysical essence of all things. As we shall see later, from the Upaniṣadic statement – tat tvam asi – you are that – which argues for the non-duality of essence of all individual things with brahman, Schopenhauer deduces primarily an ethical connection between one thing and another, one being and another.

But for Hegel, brahman does not link or bond the multiple things of the concrete world among one another. Even if the abstract universal principle is the determinative principle, determinative of all individual things that exist, it itself is indeterminate and inconcrete. It does not encompass the concreteness that arises out of it. Hegel goes so far as to call the universal substance a general bare space: “Die Substanz ist sozusagen ein allgemeiner Raum, der das, womit er erfüllt ist, die Besonderung, die aus ihm hervorgegangen ist, noch nicht organisiert, idealisiert, sich unterworfen hat.”149 As Hegel asserts in the above quote, “[J]ene Einheit des Brahnm bleibt einsam, für sich.”

For Hegel, this lack of concreteness, this indeterminateness of the universal concept, this designation of brahman as a simple substantiality and nothing else, is a sign of the unevolvedness of the concept:

Aber auf der Stufe, wo wir jetzt stehen und wo das Allgemeine zuerst als das Bestimmende, als Prinzip hervortritt, ist es noch nicht der Geist, sondern abstrakte Allgemeinheit überhaupt. Indem das Allgemeine so gewußt wird

149 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 481.
als Denken, bleibt es als solches in sich eingeschlossen. Es ist die Quelle aller Macht, die aber nicht selbst sich als solche äußert.150

As in the above quote, Hegel constantly reminds the reader of the “Stufe” – stage – of Spirit’s development that Hinduism is placed. At this early stage, Hegel states, the universal principle is not yet Spirit; it is not yet defined in concrete terms. There is some notion of the universal principle as one singular absolute, but that is all that the notion states. Hence the universal principle remains a simple abstraction. By being a simple pure abstraction, Hegel argues, it banishes all the concreteness out of itself, and hence loses real, actual connection with the concreteness (of the world or of the particular gods and goddesses). Hence, despite being the source, the power, the essence, by which everything exists and subsists, brahman fails to actually express – “äußern” – being the source, power, and essence. Brahman remains closed off and closed in; it remains indeterminate and inconcrete.

3.2.3 It is a primitive concept lacking in self-determinacy:

For Hegel, an evolved concept of the universal principle would have determinacy or concreteness if it has a concrete consciousness of itself and, more importantly, if it is self-determining. In other words, an evolved concept of the universal principle would be an acting subject, conscious of its own subject-hood and acting in such a way that it determines its own development, concretizing itself

150 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 476n.
and then reconciling with itself. To be evolved, the concept thus needs to be conscious of itself as an acting subject. Hegel explains the notion of power associated with an acting subject as follows: “Ich erscheine als Macht, insofern ich Ursache und bestimmter, insofern ich Subjekt bin – indem ich einen Stein werfe usf.”¹⁵¹ Hegel explains that the notion of being a subject is associated with a notion of *I*, which brings with it a certain consciousness of oneself. From the example of throwing a stone, Hegel wants to explain that some concrete act has to occur, so that the *I* is an “Ursache” that brings about an effect. The conscious action, then, is at the same time determined by the *I* and it is what determines the *I*. In other words the subject has to be self-determining; otherwise there is no sense in calling it a subject.

For Hegel, there is no sense in calling *brahman* a subject. *Brahman* is indeed “Macht,” as Hegel earlier points out. That is because, according to Hegel, even in the crudest of religions, the universal concept is posited as the power by which the finite is sustained: “Nämlich die Macht überhaupt ist sogleich in der Religion überhaupt und in der ganz unmittelbaren, der rohesten Naturreligion die Grundbestimmung, als die Unendlichkeit, welche das Endliche als aufgehobenes in sich setzt...”¹⁵² However, this is not sufficient for Hegel to call this “Macht” a subject: “Aber die an sich seiende Macht wirkt auf allgemeine Weise, ohne daß diese Allgemeinheit für sich selbst Subjekt ist.”¹⁵³ Hegel explains in this quote that

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¹⁵² Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 477n

¹⁵³ Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 477, 478n.
the power associated with brahman is simply “an sich seiend,” which, as explained in the earlier section, is power only in an implicit and unexpressed sense. This kind of power works only on the most general level, only in so far as it can be claimed as a sustaining power. But that is not enough to ascribe it self-determining subjectivity. It remains, as Hegel often calls, “abstrakte Einfachheit.”

Hegel is certainly aware of the Hindu cosmogonies, in which brahman is said to be actively concretizing itself and bringing forth the worlds. However, that too, does not qualify for Hegel as subjecthood. It does not eliminate brahman’s “abstrakte Einfachheit:” “Brahm ist die allgemeine Seele, als schaffend geht er selbst als ein Hauch aus sich hervor, er betrachtet sich und ist nunmehr für sich selbst. Aber dadurch verschwindet nicht zugleich seine abstrakte Einfachheit...”\textsuperscript{154}

Note here that Hegel uses the variant “Brahm,” and not “Brahmā,” the former of which he had described as the neuter noun and the latter as the masculine god. He, still, uses the pronoun “er” in this quote, as per his earlier declaration that the neuter and masculine difference is insignificant. Furthermore, he discovers, through James Mill, that in the Bhagavadgītā there is a “feminine” connotation to brahman.\textsuperscript{155} Brahman is not an active principle; it is a passive entity, not in charge of its own unfolding. It is not a subject; it is an inert, inactive principle with feminine passivity:

\textsuperscript{154} Hegel, \textit{Philosophie der Religion} 2 477, 478n.

\textsuperscript{155} Mill 183.
So erscheint das Brahm, das Eine, sich selbst gleiche Wesen als das Träge, zwar das Erzeugende, aber zugleich passiv sich Verhaltende, gleichsam als das Weibliche. Wischnu sagt: Brahm ist mein Uterus, in welchen ich meinen Samen hineinlege, so daß alles erzeugt wird. Aus Brahma geht alles hervor, Götter, Welt, Menschen; aber es kommt zugleich zum Vorschein, daß dies Eine untätig, das Träge ist.\textsuperscript{156}

In this reference Hegel finds it part of the general randomness and inconsistency of the Hindu concepts, that \textit{brahman}, which is supposedly the highest principle, plays a subordinate role here to another god, namely Viṣṇu. The subordination of \textit{brahman} to Viṣṇu consists in the gender roles that they are assigned in the metaphors of uterus and semen. It is Viṣṇu here who plays an active male role, positing the seed, while \textit{brahman} plays a passive female role, receiving the seed. \textit{Brahman} is here a feminine, passive principle; only there as a receiver of the productive seed of the subject, the role of which is assigned to Viṣṇu.

References like this reiterate for Hegel the evaluation that the concept of \textit{brahman} is a primitive concept as far as being a self-determining subject is concerned, because it does not seem to be in charge and in control of its concretization in and as the concrete world. Even if the concrete world is said to arise from it and return to it, that does not occur as \textit{brahman}’s own self-determining activity.

However, in 1831, there is one sentence which seems to grant a little more self-determination to the concept of \textit{brahman} than Hegel would allow earlier: as Hegel starts to discuss \textit{brahman}, he states, “Hier ist ein bestimmtes und sich selbst

\textsuperscript{156} Hegel, \textit{Philosophie der Religion} 2 484.
bestimmendes Allgemeines das Prinzip…"\textsuperscript{157}

Hegel calls brahman a “selbst bestimmendes” principle; however, he quickly relativizes this description by adding, “aber bei diesem formellen Wissen bleibt es.”\textsuperscript{158}

Here, Hegel wonders how much self-determinacy to grant to the concept of brahman. As we will see in the next point, Hegel ponders the notion that brahman is conceived as “Denken,” which is said to bring itself forth in the acts of cosmogonies. Hegel opts, in the above quote, in favor of stating both “sich selbst bestimmendes” and “Allgemeines,” thereby acknowledging that there is some self-determinacy to the concept; but at the same time it remains an “allgemeines” principle, on a general, universal level, without revealing its self-determinacy in concrete terms. Moreover, Hegel adds an “aber” in the above quote, stressing that the principle remains “bei diesem formellen Wissen,” i.e., at the formal nominal level of knowing or acknowledging its self-determinacy, without advancing much beyond it or actualizing its self-determinacy in reality.

\textbf{3.2.4} It is pure thought/ thinking.

It is a remarkable advance in Hegel’s understanding of Hinduism that later in his lectures Hegel starts to recognize that the universal principle brahman is conceived as \textit{thought} or \textit{thinking}. In his \textit{Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der}

\textsuperscript{157} Hegel, \textit{Philosophie der Religion 2} 620.

\textsuperscript{158} Hegel, \textit{Philosophie der Religion 2} 620.
Philosophie. Hegel calls brahman “intellektuelle Substantialität.”\textsuperscript{159} In his Philosophie der Religion he recognizes that brahman is Denken: “Die Macht als diese einfache Tätigkeit ist das Denken. In der indischen Religion steht diese Bestimmung an der Spitze, sie ist die absolute Grundlage und das Eine, Brahm.”\textsuperscript{160} The substance or substantiality, then, which sustains the particularity or concreteness of the world, is thought.

In 1831 Hegel developed this notion of thought further. He specified, more explicitly, that this universal thought is inherently connected with “our,” i.e., human thought: “Der Anfang des indischen Pantheismus ist, daß die Substanz ein Denken ist und in unserem Denken existiert… Dieses erste heißt Brahm, von dem es heißt, wir denken dieses Allgemeine, und unser Denken selbst ist dieses Allgemeine. Brahm kommt zur Existenz als dieses Denken.”\textsuperscript{161}

This advancement in Hegel’s characterization of brahman is due to Hindu cosmogonies, in which the eternal principle is often said to have brought forth the worlds through the power of contemplation. Hegel states that even if there are several more or less “wild” cosmogonies in Hinduism, he is willing to recognize an element of “thought” in them:

Die einfache Macht, als das Tätige, hat die Welt erschaffen: dieses Schaffen ist wesentlich ein Verhalten des Denkens zu sich selbst, eine sich auf sich beziehende Tätigkeit, keine endliche Tätigkeit…Die Inder haben eine Menge Kosmogonien, die alle mehr oder weniger wild sind, und aus

\textsuperscript{159} Hegel, Geschichte der Philosophie 1 396

\textsuperscript{160} Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 485n.

\textsuperscript{161} Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 619-20.
denen sich nichts Festes herausfinden läßt...jedoch ein Zug ist immer wesentlich darin, daß dies bei sich selbst seiende Denken Erzeugen seiner Selbst ist.

Dieser unendlich tiefe und wahre Zug kehrt in den verschiedenen Weltschöpfungsdarstellungen immer wieder... 162

In this quote Hegel does not eliminate the notion that brahman is a simple abstract power – “die einfache Macht,” however, he recognizes some notion of activity in the act of creating the world – “als das Tätige, hat die Welt erschaffen.” Moreover, he explains that the act of creating the world is essentially an infinite activity of thought relating to itself – “Verhalten des Denkens zu sich selbst.” Even if the Hindu cosmogonies are wild and variable, they all depict that it is thought that bears itself in the act of creation. It is indeed a pleasant surprise to see Hegel uttering praise, such as “dieser unendlich tiefe und wahre Zug,” describing something in Hindu thought, as he does not otherwise express much admiration for Hinduism. However, as we will see later, he relativizes his praise for the concept of thought with bringing back the abstractness of brahman.

Hegel proceeds to relate Hindu cosmogonies, in which the eternal principle is said to have created the waters with thought, deposited productive seed in the waters, which brought forth an egg, in which the eternal principle is born as Brahmā. The egg is again divided by the power of thought or contemplation into a masculine half and a feminine half. Hegel also refers to the hymn of creation in the

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162 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 485n.
Rgveda, without acknowledging it as the “Hymn of Creation” in the Rgveda. In this hymn, too, Hegel sees that the “One” “brütete” – brooded in solitude, and it is through the “Kraft der Kontemplation” – energy of contemplation that it brought forth the world out of itself. In all these cosmogonies, Hegel recognizes that there is much discussion about the power of thought, contemplation and of “Konzentration der Abstraktion.” Hegel adds, therefore, that in all the cosmogonies, “Der Gedanke ist also das Hervorbringende, und was hervorgebracht wird, ist das Hervorbringende selbst, nämlich die Einheit des Denkens mit sich.” It is *thought* that brings everything forth and what is brought forth is *thought* itself.

However, Hegel relativizes this important and profound connotation of the concept of *brahman*, by continuing to associate it with the inconcreteness of the notion of “substantiality:”

Es ist in der indischen Religion eben diese eine Substantialität, und zwar als reines Denken, reines Insichsein vorhanden, und dies ist unterschieden von der Mannigfaltigkeit der Dinge, ist außerhalb der Besonderung, so daß es an den besonderen Mächten nicht als solchen seine Existenz, Realität hat. Es ist nicht so, wie Gott an dem Sohn seine Existenz, Dasein hat, sondern das Insichsein bleibt abstrakt in sich, rein für sich, als abstrakte Macht, aber als Macht über alles zugleich, und die Besonderung, der Unterschied fällt außerhalb dieses Insichseins.  

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163 Hegel gives a synopsis of the Rgvedic hymn of creation: “Es war weder Sein noch Nichts, weder Oben noch Unten, sondern nur das Eine eingehüllt und dunkel: Außer diesem Einen existierte Nichts, und dieses brütete einsam mit sich selbst, durch die Kraft des Kontemplation brachte es aus sich eine Welt hervor; in dem Denken bildete sich zuerst das Verlangen, der Trieb, und dies war der ursprüngliche Samen aller Dinge.” Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 486n.

164 Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 485n.

165 Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 486n.

166 Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 478.
Even if the Indian concept of substantiality is “reines Denken,” it still does not have “Existenz,” “Realität” or concrete presence in the particularity. The concept of thought remains pure “reines Denken,” and hence it remains “reines Insichsein,” without being concrete.

_Brahman_ is pure thought, but it is not a self-determining thought; neither is it concrete in such a way that the concrete particularity is sublated and contained in its universality: “Daß sich das Denken in sich bestimmt und das Bestimmte in diese Allgemeinheit aufgehoben ist, das reine Denken als konkret, das ist, was wir Vernunft nennen…Aber solche konkrete Einheit, Vernunft, Vernünftigkeit wird jenes Eine des Brahm, jene einsame Einheit auch nicht.”

In summary, Hegel identifies _brahman_ as the highest divine and philosophical universal principle in Hindu religion and philosophy. It is important to note that he identifies one principle, despite the polytheism of the multiplicity of Hindu gods. In that sense, Hegel certainly chooses to understand Hinduism essentially as a monism of _brahman_. He interprets _brahman_ as one singular metaphysical entity, the highest _being_ or _essence_ – _Wesen_. He identifies _brahman_ as the universal principle, posited as the ground or power of the finite, more importantly as the substance and substantiality, by which everything is sustained. By substantiality Hegel implies that _brahman_ is the most abstract generality,

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167 Hegel, _Philosophie der Religion_ 2 495.
simplicity, the inconcrete, indeterminate “being within self.” By that token, brahman is for Hegel inert, inactive and not a self-determining subject. Even though Hegel later discovers a connotation of brahman as pure thought, he maintains that even such pure thought is indeterminate and does not have real concrete presence within the particularity. Hence, overall, brahman is a primitive concept for Hegel, not measuring up to his self-determining concept of Geist.
3.3 The particular entities and the world:

For Hegel the necessary next step after examining the universal principle is to investigate how the universal principle concretizes or particularizes itself. This involves two aspects. For Hegel it is important not only to see how the universal principle – God – particularizes itself in (more or less) concrete terms, forms or manifestations, it is also important for him to see how the concrete real world itself is comprehended and dealt with. Both are aspects of concretization of the universal principle. From the perspective of religion, it is to be seen how God manifests himself, and, from the perspective of philosophy, it is to be seen how the universal absolute principle concretizes itself in the real world. In other words Hegel wants to examine two things: 1. how God manifests himself concretely, and 2. how man sees the concrete real world and man’s place in it. Both aspects are included in Hegel’s evaluation of the concretization or particularity. Both aspects inform Hegel about the stage of development, to which a particular religion or philosophy should belong. As we shall see, he finds the concretization of God in the multiplicity of divine powers, gods and goddesses, which are characterized by randomness and fanciful flights of imagination. Hegel finds that Hindu religion and philosophy give only a secondary status to the real world as accidental, fleeting, distracting and illusionary.

According to Hegel, the particular world or rather the particularization of the universal principle in Hinduism is characterized by the following aspects:
3.3.1. Elements in nature are regarded as divine powers.

3.3.2. The universal principle is embodied in triadic structures, such as the trimūrti of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva and the qualities of satva, rajas and tamas.

3.3.3. The particularization is “phantastisch” and irrational, accidental and secondary.

3.3.4 Human life and freedom have no worth.

3.3.1. Elements in nature are regarded as divine powers:

When Hegel discusses Hinduism in his Philosophie der Religion, after discussing the first aspect, namely brahman as the substantiality of all that exists, Hegel proceeds to discuss the multiplicity of divine powers: “das zweite ist dann der Unterschied als viele Mächte, und diese vielen Mächte als viele Götter – ein ungebundener Polytheismus.”168 As Hegel’s triadic concept of religion suggests, after exploring the abstract concept of divine universality, the necessary next moment is examining how it is concretely represented. Since in the case of Hinduism the universal principle is “abstrakte Macht,” which is, by definition,

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168 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 479.
beyond the senses, what comes in the realm of the concrete are the tangible representations of the divine power in various gods and other natural elements.

According to Hegel Hinduism can be categorized as an “unmittelbare Religion” – an immediate religion, within which, until 1827, it is regarded as “nature religion.” However, Hegel warns that even in nature religions it is not the case that elements in nature are considered God. In any religion, the spiritual is the highest element:

Damit ist ausgeschlossen die Vorstellung, daß die Naturreligion dies sei, daß der Mensch natürliche Gegenstände als Gott verehrt – das spielt wohl auch hinein, aber auf untergeordnete Weise. Auch in der schlechtesten Religion ist dem Menschen als Menschen das Geistige doch immer höher als das Natürliche; die Sonne ist ihnen nicht höher als ein Geistiges. Naturreligion ist also nicht Religion, in der äußerliche, physische Gegenstände für Gott gehalten und als Gott verehrt werden, sondern dies, daß dem Menschen als Geistige wohl das Höchste ist, aber das Geistige zunächst in seiner unmittelbaren, natürlichen Weise.\(^{169}\)

This means that elements in nature such as the sun, rivers, and mountains are not God themselves, but they are the highest spiritual element recognized in immediate natural mode. This is precisely the reason why Hegel considers the multiplicity of gods in Hinduism, including natural elements, not as the divine absolute itself, but rather its representations.

In Hinduism, too, then, the divine absolute is personified as elements in nature. Objects in nature such as the river Ganges, the sun, and the Himalayas are considered divine powers. Animals such as cows and apes are gods. Even abstractions such as arising or generation, passing away or perishing and sentiments

\(^{169}\) Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 428-29.
of love, deceit, theft, cunning, and vengeance can be divine powers. These particular entities are all considered personifications of the divine. This is how an unending number of divine powers emerge in Hinduism.

3.3.2. The universal principle is embodied in triadic structures like the trimūrti of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva and the qualities of satva, rajas and tamas:

Hegel knew that, in addition to elements in nature, there are also multiple gods who are personifications of the absolute divine concept. According to Hegel Hindu mythology is the particularization of the absolute abstract concept, because mythology presents several gods and incarnations of specific gods (Viṣṇu for example) as personification of the divine absolute. The concept of “incarnation” itself implies the manifestation or concretization of the divine absolute. Hegel understands mythology and mythological gods as the concretization, “incarnation,” or “individualization” of the abstract principle.

Specifically among the different gods of Hinduism Hegel concentrates on the Trimūrti or triad of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. This is an excellent example of the

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170 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 479, 489. Hegel adds much to the reader’s amusement that in India there are no hospitals for sick people but there are hospitals for sick cattle. Hodgson finds that this reference comes from James Mill, from a footnoted reference about a certain Dr. Tennant, who does not say that there are no hospitals for sick people, but for sick poor people. See Hegel, Philosophy of Religion II 594n.

171 Hegel, Werke 18 148.

172 Hegel, Werke 18 148.
fact that Hegel cannot but comment on a tripartite structure that he encounters in a religion and philosophy other than his own. He is struck by wonder to see a tripartite structure, which, for him, by virtue of being triadic, displays an inkling of Christian conceptual sophistication: “Das Auffassendste und Größeste in der indischen Mythologie ist unstreitig diese Dreieinigkeit. Wir können sie nicht Personen nennen: denn es fehlt ihnen die geistige Subjektivität als Grundbestimmung. Aber es hat die Europäer aufs höchste verwundern müssen, dieses hohe Prinzip der christlichen Religion hier anzutreffen.”

For Hegel, the Hindu concept of absolute, in the most abstract sense, is “bloß Brahm, das leere Wesen,” but in its determinate form, expressed in concrete terms, it is the triad of the *trimūrti*. Hegel translates *mūrti* as “Seele,” and “überhaupt alle Emanation.” By 1831 Hegel used a better translation, namely “Gestalt.” The idea of *trimūrti* is that while concretizing and particularizing the divine absolute in three different forms, the forms together represent the totality: “Jene Drei als Totalität, die ein Ganzes und Einheit ist, heißt bei den Indern Trimurti.” This totality of the three gods – Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva – are the three processes – generation, preservation and destruction respectively.

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174 Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 482n.
175 Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 483, 483n.
The first god of the trimūrti is Brahmā. Here, Hegel is aware that the triad of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva is a later religious development, that the early Vedic scriptures did not have this triad. In Vedic scriptures, says Hegel, Brahmā alone was the highest God. But here in the triad, Brahmā is one of the three gods. He is the god responsible for creation. As we saw above, Hegel finds the phonetic and grammatical correlation between brahman and Brahmā a sign of the immaturity of the concept. On the one hand, the same title is given to the universal principle, and on the other hand, it is a determinate, personified god, it is a particular entity.
Brahmā has linguistic similarity to brahman; and it is the first god in the triadic structure of trimūrti. Therefore, Hegel considers Brahmā the first step in the triadic conceptual structure, namely the concept of universal principle.

The second god of the triad is Viṣṇu. Kṛṣṇa is Viṣṇu’s incarnation. Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa are for Hegel “Inkarnieren des Brahm überhaupt; es ist das Dasein der Erhaltung, die Manifestation, die Erscheinung auf Erden, die ganz vollständig ausgebildet ist, das Erscheinende, Mensch, besondere Menschen.” Hegel considers Viṣṇu the incarnation or rather the incarnating of brahman. This is because Viṣṇu is designated to be responsible for the maintenance and preservation of the universe, for which he manifests himself, even as man, appearing concretely on the earth. Viṣṇu is then the principle of concrete manifestation. Moreover, he is the second step of the triadic structure of the trimūrti. As a second step, it is in

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177 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 488.
178 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 486.
accordance with Hegel’s triads, that it should embody the notion of concretization or manifestation, even concretization in the form of man. Moreover, if Viṣṇu is the second step of the triad, according to Hegel’s triadic concept, he should be the concretization of the universal principle – “Brahm.” Hence, Hegel interprets Viṣṇu as the “Inkarnieren des Brahm überhaupt.”

According to Hegel’s concept of a triadic structure, if the second step of Viṣṇu is the concretization of the universal principle, the third step of Śiva should represent the return of the universal principle to itself. Here Hegel is disappointed. He views Śiva not as a return to the universal principle, but simply as “die Veränderung überhaupt… Zeugen und Zerstören.”¹⁷⁹ The reason why Hegel associates both “Zeugen” and “Zerstören” to Śiva is that Śiva is traditionally linked with the notion of destruction. Destruction completes the order of processes of (Brahmā’s) generation and (Viṣṇu’s) maintenance. In the cyclical notion of Hindu time, generation and maintenance must be followed by destruction in order to start the whole cycle again. Thus Śiva is traditionally associated with destruction. However, the symbol of Śiva poses a problem of discrepancy for Hegel. Śiva’s symbol is a combination of lingam and yoni – phallus and female genitalia. This symbolizes cosmic generation or generative power. Hence Hegel finds Śiva associated both with generation and destruction – “Zeugen und Zerstören.” For Hegel this indicates that Śiva cannot represent the reconciliation of the universal principle with itself:

¹⁷⁹ Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 487.
Mahadewa, der große Gott, oder Rudra: Dies müßte die Rückkehr in sich sein; das Erste nämlich, Brahm, ist die entfernte, in sich verschlossene Einheit; das Zweite, Wischnu, die Manifestation (die Momente des Geistes sind insoweit nicht zu verkennen), das Leben in menschlicher Gestalt. Das Dritte müßte die Rückkehr zum Ersten sein, damit die Einheit gesetzt wäre als in sich zurückkehrende: Aber gerade dies ist das Geistlose; es ist die Bestimmung des Werdens überhaupt joder des Entstehens und Vergehens.\(^\text{180}\)

For Hegel, the moments of a triadic structure are present in the first two gods Brahmā and Viṣṇu, namely universal principle and its manifestation respectively. However, Śiva does not represent the return or reconciliation of the universal principle, as the Hegelian triadic progression would have required. The Hindu triad is not conceptually fulfilled and Hegel finds this disappointing.

The religious triadic structure corresponds to the philosophical triadic structure of \textit{guna}s, or qualities. Hegel mentions that Indian philosophy, specifically Sāńkhya, proposes three qualities, through which the concrete world is said to be composed. These three qualities or \textit{guna}s are for Hegel moments of the absolute idea, “[m]omente der absoluten Idee, welche Guna heißen [und] welche als Modifikation der Natur dargestellt werden.”\(^\text{181}\)

The three \textit{guna}s are called \textit{satva}, \textit{rajas}, and \textit{tamas}: \textit{Satva} is connected with enlightenment, bliss, and virtue. It is the affirmative, positive side. \textit{Rajas} is linked with passion, drive and foulness and associated with evil and misery. \textit{Tamas} is heavy and obstructive, connected with sorrow, dullness and stupidity. According to

\(^{180}\) Hegel, \textit{Philosophie der Religion} 2 487n.

\(^{181}\) Hegel, \textit{Geschichte der Philosophie} 1 385.
Hegel, in the Vedas the three qualities are represented by Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva.\textsuperscript{182} Hegel states that *Satva* is the quality of good representing the principle of unity within itself. *Rajas* is the principle of differentiation, manifestation. The third one, *tamas*, however, is only a principle of negation and destruction. Just as Śiva, it fails to complete the triadic structure. An evolved tripartite structure, according to Hegel, would bring the concept back to a unity with itself in the third moment. But the third element here remains merely destruction. As the triad of the Hindu gods, the elaboration of the three qualities, too, remains superficial for Hegel. They do not fulfill the Hegelian concept of a triadic structure.

Hegel identifies triadic structures in Hindu religion and philosophy. However, within those structures, he argues, the universal principle advances only to the step of differentiating or unfolding itself. The progression of the universal principle abruptly stops at that point; it does not return to itself, does not reconcile with itself. For Hegel the triad falls apart: the moments occur in an isolated fashion alongside one another. Thus the triadic unfolding that is necessary in the concept of *Geist* is in Hindu triads devoid of *Spirit*. “Es fehlt hier nicht von den Momenten der Idee des Geistes, es ist in diesem Fortgang die Idee der Vernünftigkeit vorhanden; aber doch machen diese Momente den Geist nicht aus, die Entwicklung vollendet sich nicht zum Geist.”\textsuperscript{183} Therefore, Hegel deems the triads of Hindu religion and

\textsuperscript{182} The trinity does not appear in the Vedas, but rather is a later development of the Brahmanic period, post Vedic times. Hegel’s statement that Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva are in the Vedas, suggests that Hegel used the term “Vedas” as a general name for Hindu philosophical and religious scriptures.

\textsuperscript{183} Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 476n.
philosophy as primitive structures worthy only of the beginning stages of Spirit’s development.

3.3.3 The particularization is “phantastisch” and irrational and secondary:

As mentioned earlier, the multiplicity of divine powers in Hinduism are represented both as elements in nature and as particular gods like Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. In this concretization of the divine universal principle Hegel finds no rational systematization, but only “phantastisch” and wild, random and fanciful depictions. Everything is “durch die Phantasie oberflächlich personifiziert.”¹⁸⁴ Not only are the Ganges, the sun, the Himalayas, cows, and apes, but also love and cunning, and even nature’s powers in plants and animals are personified as deities. For Hegel, this is clearly a work of “Phantasie.” Hegel is aware that Hindu religion and philosophy do not assert that elements in nature fantasy in the sense that do not exist. Hegel criticizes it because he views it as the work of irrational wild fanciful imagination that divinity is assigned randomly to elements in nature. It is a fantastic comprehension of the world around man.

This irrational or fantastic nature of the particularity has to do with the fact that the concept of the universal principle in Hindu religion and philosophy remains a completely abstract substance, which, as we have discussed above, cannot contain

¹⁸⁴ Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 489n.
its concretization within itself. Because brahman is a complete abstraction, it banishes any concretization outside of it. “Was Brahmm heißt, hat die Bestimmtheit außer ihm.”185 Because of this the concretization is not internally coherent; it is not held coherently together from within by the universal principle. It falls outside of the universal principle and is then left exposed to flights of fantasy.

Da nun aber das Prinzip, das auf dieser Stufe auftritt, noch nicht so weit gediehen ist, daß diese Entwicklung in ihm selbst geschehen könnte, da es vielmehr nur in der einfachen, abstrakten, Konzentration festgehalten wird, so fällt die Entwicklung, der Reichtum der wirklichen Idee außerhalb des Prinzips, und damit ist die Unterscheidung und die Mannigfaltigkeit in die wildeste Äußerlichkeit der Phantasie ausgelassen.186

Hegel adds, “es geht alles durcheinander.”187 There is no system, no organization, and no rational explanation to assigning divinity to different elements. “Von Wundern kann man gar nicht sprechen, denn Alles ist ein Wunder, Alles ist verrückt, und nicht durch einen vernünftigen Zusammenhang der Denkkategorien bestimmt. Allerdings ist sehr vieles symbolisch.”188 Even if Hegel admits that most of this is symbolic, he nevertheless reiterates that the “wilde Besonderheit” is “kein System…noch weniger vernünftige Totalität, Systematisierung, sondern Vielheit in

185 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 498.
186 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 476n.
187 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 479, 489.
188 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 489n.
In addition to this, writes Hegel, the particularization is accidental and secondary vis-à-vis the universal principle. It does not have a secure, solid existence; it always stands under the possibility of being completely dissolved in the pure abstractness of brahman. Since all that is particular subsists by means of brahman, the particular itself is not seen as self-subsisting. It is finite, contingent. The particularization, the concretization of the universal principle has only a secondary status. Not only are the different divine powers all fleeting and perishable and subject to complete dissolution, this world itself has no solid existence. Everything can disappear, be changed, and even be replaced.

Brahman is conceived as thought, it is “intellktuelle Substantialität.” However, because it is completely abstract, in and for itself, concreteness cannot have any place in it. Hegel explains that in his and European thought generally “[d]as Denken ist der wahrhafte Boden, der erreicht werden soll, der sich selbst
entfaltet, bestimmt und auf diese Weise dem besonderen Inhalt einen Platz gibt, und
ihn in sich gewähren läßt, ihn in sich enthält.”\textsuperscript{190} Hegel explains further that in the
European concept of \textit{Verstand} and \textit{Vernunft}, the particular is firmly grounded and
even rooted in the act of thinking. However, “[i]n der orientalischen Anschauung
taumelt das Besondere nur; es ist bestimmt vorüberzugehen bei den Indiern.”\textsuperscript{191}

Hegel states further that, because the Eastern concept of \textit{brahman} as thought
is not concrete like the concept of \textit{Verstand}, the particularity of the world is not
comprehended in terms of categories of understanding and reason: in Hindu religion
and philosophy “ist das Denken nur diese Substanz, dies Beisichsein, ist noch nicht
angewendet, die Gegenstände werden noch nicht in der Form dieser Kategorie
betrachtet, als äußerliche, als Zusammenhängend, als Ursache und Wirkung.”\textsuperscript{192}
Philosophizing about the particular world is equally without systematization: “die
Betrachtung des Besonderen [ist] ganz trocken, gedankenlos, ohne
Systematisierung…Das Besondere hat so nur die hölzerne Form des Räsonnements,
Schließens…”\textsuperscript{193} This remark from Hegel clearly comes from his general notion
and evaluation of the philosophies of Sāṅkhya and Nyāya, in which the former
seems very disorganized to Hegel and the latter only concerned with logic.

\textsuperscript{190} Hegel, \textit{Geschichte der Philosophie} 1 399.
\textsuperscript{191} Hegel, \textit{Geschichte der Philosophie} 1 399.
\textsuperscript{192} Hegel, \textit{Philosophie der Religion} 2 480n.
\textsuperscript{193} Hegel, \textit{Geschichte der Philosophie} 1 399.
To summarize all this, Hegel understands that the particular in Hindu religion and philosophy is devalued to a secondary status: “alles Besondere und alle Naturmacht [ist] zu einem Ohnmächtigen, Unselbständigen und Verschwindenden herabgesetzt.”¹⁹⁴ For Hegel, this notion of a flimsy and feeble existence of the world is especially disturbing. This means, for Hegel, that in Indian thought the real world has absolutely no real value. This notion is absolutely unacceptable for Hegel’s own philosophy. In Hegel’s philosophy the abstract has no means to come to self-awareness without the concrete. The real world and human consciousness is where Spirit actualizes itself, concretizes itself, and develops itself through history. So to strip the concrete of any significance is not acceptable to Hegel. Hegel argues that in Hindu religion and philosophy concrete reality is rejected as insignificant and distracting, standing in the way of absolute knowledge, that concrete reality always stands on the verge of complete dissolution in the simple abstraction of brahman.¹⁹⁵ In Hegel’s own philosophy, one cannot discard this concretization and

¹⁹⁴ Hegel, Werke 11: Berliner Schriften 171.

¹⁹⁵ In his Philosophie der Geschichte, Hegel explains that the Indian mind is overwhelmingly characterized by a sense of “begriffloser Einbildung” and “Traum.” Dream for Hegel is the general principle of Indian nature. Now it is very curious how Hegel deciphers this concept, especially when one compares it with Schopenhauer’s use of “dream” as he understands it in Indian thought. Schopenhauer uses “dream” in an epistemological context. For him the dream concept is connected with sense perception, its organization in the faculty of understanding with the help of the categories of space, time and causality and its final inability to access the Ding-an-sich. Schopenhauer understands that for an Indian mind the world is a dream or the individual is dreaming because he perceives and understands the world through a priori categories of space, time and causality. Such a perception and understanding is a dream because it does not allow the understanding individual to reach the timeless, infinite reality, the Ding-an-sich, which is singular and in and for itself. “Indian dream” for Schopenhauer is very much an epistemological concept. This means that the individual considers itself separate from his/her surroundings and the surrounding nature, which is the object of knowledge, is outside of the individual. The individual is the subject who understands and knows and the outside nature is the object of understanding. For Schopenhauer the individual, in the act of
consequently discard history. Hegel believes that India is completely incapable of thinking historically.\textsuperscript{196} The fact that India does not have any notion of chronology and history presumably has to do with the fact that Hindu religion and philosophy does not give any importance to the concrete world.

3.3.4. Human life and freedom have no worth:

Hegel mentions in \textit{Geschichte der Philosophie} that in Indian philosophy particular entities such as gods, human beings, and animals are said to arise out of the universal substance.\textsuperscript{197} Human beings and human life are thus an integral part of the particularization of the universal substance. However, he argues disapprovingly that Hindu religion and philosophy do not give any special status to human beings. “Im Orient ist das Hauptverhältnis dies, daß die eine Substanz als solche nur das

\textsuperscript{196} It is amazing to Hegel that a people who produced so many works on literature, philosophy, astronomy, and mathematics can be so incapable of thinking in terms of history. Hegel complains that in India there are confusing records of everything and everyone, so much so that any attempt to place historical figures and events is constantly frustrated. Hegel, \textit{Geschichte der Philosophie} 1 374.

\textsuperscript{197} Hegel, \textit{Geschichte der Philosophie} 1 375
Wahrhaft sei und das Individuum keinen Wert in sich hat und nicht gewinnen kann, insofern es sich erhält gegen das Anundfürsichseitende…”\(^{198}\) Moreover, Hegel asserts that, in Hindu religion and philosophy, humans consider themselves equal to elements in nature, and they consider elements in nature equal to them. Human beings are the same as other animals, trees, rivers and so forth: “mit allen Gebilden der Natur setzen sie [Menschen] sich auf die gleiche Stufe.”\(^{199}\) As we shall see later, for Schopenhauer this equality arises out of a metaphysical insight into the oneness of all. Hegel, however, asserts that in Hinduism human beings are rather generous to share their humanness, “ihre Weise des Seins” with animals, birds, plants and other things in nature. This generosity, so to speak, is one of the fanciful features of their polytheism. But that stems from “einer schlechten Vorstellung von sich selber.”\(^{200}\) It stems from the fact that man “seinen Inhalt, seine Bestimmung noch nicht höher weiß als den Inhalt einer Quelle, eines Baumes… bei den Indern ist kein höheres Selbstgefühl ihrer selbst vorhanden.”\(^{201}\) Man has no sense of being on a higher level than animals and plants. In fact, in Hindu religion and philosophy, Hegel believes, human life is despicable, worthless and only gains value if life is negated. Hegel believes that this lack of human worth is what is at the root of all the

\(^{198}\) Hegel, Geschichte der Philosophie 1 367.

\(^{199}\) Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 496.

\(^{200}\) Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 496.

\(^{201}\) Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 496.
ritualistic sacrificial practices, including widow burning. Since human life is worthless, worth can only be gained by denying it:

[D]as Leben des Menschen [hat] keinen höheren Wert als das Sein von Naturgegenständen, das Leben eines Natürlichen. Das Leben des Menschen hat nur Wert, wenn er selbst höher in sich selbst ist; bei den Indern aber ist das menschliche Leben etwas Verachtetes, Geringgeschätztes… Das Leben erhält Wert nur durch Negation seiner selbst.\(^{202}\)

The irrational view of life and the worthlessness of it are based in the notion that the particular world is not concrete or solid. This is deeply rooted in the fact that there is no notion of self-determinacy, which is in turn rooted in the lack of freedom. If there is no freedom and no self-determinacy, there cannot be a truly ethical existence. “[D]as indische Volk [ist] in die tiefste Unsittlichkeit versunken.”\(^{203}\) Hegel understands that the ethics of the Hindus are completely based on the caste system, a closed off system, in which everything is determined at birth, without any possibility of freedom and self-determination. He reads that the highest caste the Brahmans can neither be taxed nor punished for crimes. Brahmans are not supposed to help a dying man from a lower caste; in fact, they should kill him if he comes too near.\(^{204}\) For Hegel, this is obviously a degenerate sense of morality. The notion of morality does not come from within; it comes from without, from the caste system. Hence it is not morality at all, in the true sense of the term.

\(^{202}\) Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 497.

\(^{203}\) Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 498.

\(^{204}\) Hegel, *Werke 11: Berliner Schriften* 172.
Hegel views the caste system as an integral part of Hindu religion. This is because he understands that it is amply discussed in the Bhagavadgītā, which is part of the Hindu epic Mahābhārata. Mahābhārata is a saga of a royal family, in which two branches of the royal family (cousins) grow up to be enemies. Their conflict culminates in the final war over the throne. Before the war begins, Arjuna, one of the greatest warriors, questions, in deep distress, the whole ethics of war, in which he would have to kill his relatives, friends and teachers. Kṛṣṇa, who has agreed to be his charioteer, at that point imparts to Arjuna divine wisdom. This wisdom is contained in the Bhagavadgītā. For Hegel Kṛṣṇa’s advice is completely based on the caste system: Arjuna is from the warrior caste of Kṣatriya and his duty is to fight, not just social duty but religious and moral duty, regardless of death and destruction of his loved ones. For Hegel, even Kṛṣṇa does nothing but maintain castes and their differences. There is no equality before god. The religious duties and achievements are dependent on castes.205 According to Hegel, “[d]er Sinn und Wert indischer Religiösität und der damit zusammenhängenden Pflichtenlehre bestimmt und versteht sich aber nur aus dem Gesetz der Kaste, - dieser Institution, welche Sittlichkeit und wahre Bildung ewig unter den Indern unmöglich gemacht hat und macht.”206

The caste system in the deepest sense is symptomatic of man’s lack of freedom and self-determinacy. This lack of freedom and self-determinacy comes

205 Hegel, Werke 11: Berliner Schriften 156.
from the fact that vis-à-vis the universal principle of *brahman*, the particular, the concrete, or the real, which includes human life, has no stability, no significance and no worth. For Hegel’s own philosophy this is not acceptable. For him only a human being has the capacity, unlike anyone else, to be conscious of and to realize his own free subjectivity. That is why the universal principle, be it God or *Spirit*, can only concretize itself in human existence and human consciousness. But in Hindu religion and philosophy life has no significance; consequently man is not aware of his own self-determinacy.
3.4 Non-Duality with the universal principle:

If life and the whole particular world have no significance and no worth, the only thing left to do is completely dissolve oneself, one’s particularity, in the abstractness of brahman.

So far I have demonstrated that Hegel first analyzes the universal principle brahman and then studies the notion of concreteness or particularization of brahman in multiple divine powers and in the world. As we have seen, for Hegel the third step is crucial, namely to see how the particular elevates itself to the universal, and what the relationship is between the particular and the universal. In Hindu religious philosophy Hegel finds that the ultimate and the highest in religion and philosophy is non-duality with the abstract universal principle of brahman.

For Hegel, the third fundamental aspect of Hindu religious philosophy, namely the non-duality with the universal, is to be understood in the following way:

3.4.1 The highest goal is non-duality with brahman.

3.4.2 Non-duality with brahman requires and results in indifference to and renunciation of everything concrete and in withdrawal from activity.

3.4.3 Renunciation is also connected with severe mortification of the body.

3.4.4 Yoga is pure inward concentration, withdrawal from nature, “Vertiefung ohne Inhalt.”

3.4.5 Yoga entails dissolution of particularity, consciousness and thought.
3.4.1 The highest goal is non-duality with *brahman*.

As we have seen, Hegel views *brahman* as particularized in many divine powers, from natural elements to the triad of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. In the overview of the triadic structure that Hegel finds in Hindu thought, he identifies “Zurücknahme” of all these particular divine powers into the simple abstraction of *brahman*: “Dieses Viele, das wild Auseinander gelassene, wird wieder zurückgenommen in die erste Einheit…Wir haben also das abstrakte Eine und die Wildheit der ausgelassenen Phantasie, welche zwar wieder gewußt wird als identisch bleibend mit dem Ersten, aber nicht zur konkreten Einheit des Geistigen erweitert wird.”207 The wild and fanciful multiplicity of gods and goddesses are considered “identisch” with the one universal principle. They are taken back into the abstract unity of *brahman*; however, this return or identification with *brahman* consists in becoming completely non-dual with *brahman* by dissolving any concreteness in the abstractness of *brahman*.

However, non-duality with *brahman* is not only limited to the divine powers. It is also the highest goal of man’s relationship with *brahman*. Hegel understands, “Das Höchste in der Religion wie in der Philosophie ist, daß der Mensch als Bewußtsein sich identisch macht mit der Substanz.”208 As this quote states, both from the religious perspective and from the philosophical perspective, the highest

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207 Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 476n.

208 Hegel, *Geschichte der Philosophie* 1 375.
notion is to become “identisch” with the substance, i.e., brahman. In this sentence the words “als Bewußtsein” are rather uncharacteristic of Hegel while describing Indian thought. In this sentence Hegel states that man is supposed to make himself identical with the universal substance as Bewußtsein, as consciousness. This may seem like Hegel is ascribing the notion of consciousness to brahman and to nonduality with brahman. However, Hegel is very quick in discarding that notion, or at least separating it from a concrete Selbstbewußtsein: “Das Höchste, was so im Kultus erreicht wird, ist diese Vereinigung mit Gott, welche in der Vernichtung und Verdampfung des Selbstbewußtseins besteht.” As he states here, the notion of oneness with god is indeed the highest in Hinduism, but it consists in the destruction of self-consciousness.

Since Hegel evaluates brahman as complete and utter abstraction, with no concreteness to the concept, he further associates the non-duality with brahman also with complete and utter abstraction: “Das ist nun die höchste Weise des Kultus, daß der Inder diese Abstraktion vollkommen zu seiner Gewohnheit macht.” Hegel understands that “[d]iese abstrakte Konzentration ist nun die Seligkeit,” that this complete abstraction is brahman and withdrawing or concentrating oneself in that abstraction is described in Hindu religion and philosophy “ewige Seligkeit” or

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209 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 490n.

210 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 490n.
eternal bliss.\textsuperscript{211} Hegel states that “Colebrooke sagt: Der Zweck aller indischen Schulen und Systeme der Philosophie, der theistischen und atheistischen, ist, die Mittel anzugeben, wodurch die ewige Seligkeit vor und nach dem Tode zu erlangen ist.”\textsuperscript{212} All Hindu philosophy and religion is oriented toward finding ways to achieve this eternal bliss, i.e., to achieve non-duality with the complete abstraction of \textit{brahman}.

\subsection*{3.4.2 non-duality with \textit{brahman} requires and results in indifference to and renunciation of everything concrete and withdrawal from activity:

Jetzt wollen wir vom Kultus sprechen, von der Beziehung des Menschen zu Brah. Der absolute, höchste, Kultus ist jene vollkommenste Ausleerung des Menschlichen, Entsagung, wo die Inder auf alles Bewußtsein, Wollen, alle Leidenschaften, Bedürfnisse verzichten (Nirvana), oder diese Vereinigung mit Gott auf die Weise, sich mit sich zu konzentrieren (Yoga). Ein solcher, der nur der Beschauung lebt, der allen Begierden der Welt entsagt hat, heißt ein Yogi.\textsuperscript{213}

If \textit{brahman} is complete and utter abstraction, which does not incorporate or encompass any concreteness within it, and if the particular world has only a secondary status, it must follow that non-duality with \textit{brahman} translates into

\textsuperscript{211} Hegel finds several expressions from his sources: “das Eingehen in die Gottheit oder wörtlich zunächst in Krishna, das Verwehen in Brahman, die Verwandlung in Brahman…Schlegel: >>ad extinstionem in numine (d.i. Brahman) pervenit<<, Wilkins: >>obtain the incorporeal Brahm<<” Hegel, Werke 11: Berliner Schriften 182.

\textsuperscript{212} Hegel, Geschichte der Philosophie 1 377.

\textsuperscript{213} Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 490. However, Hegel reports that his source Wilford did not find anyone who wanted to find eternal bliss by taking the Yoga path. They cannot imagine leaving the earthly pleasures for something they cannot make an image of. Hegel, Werke 11: Berliner Schriften 175.
giving up anything and everything that is concrete, which includes consciousness, desires, and needs. It also includes all human activity:

diese Abstraktion [erscheint] auch als bleibend für das ganze Leben, so daß vollkommene Gleichgültigkeit für alles Sittliche, für alles, was würdig ist, den Menschen zu beschäftigen, herrscht...in vollkommener Gleichgültigkeit gegen sittliche Interessen, gegen die Bande der Menschen untereinander, der Gesellschaft, gegen das, was würdig ist seiner Aufmerksamkeit und Beschäftigung damit. Wenn er sich in dieser Abstraktion überhaupt hält, allem entsagt, der Welt überhaupt abgestorben ist, ist er ein Yogi.\textsuperscript{214}

It requires complete indifference toward all human activity, society, and all morality. For Hegel, this is inherently connected with the call in the Bhagavadgītā for indifference toward the results or, as the Bhagavadgītā says, “fruits” of one’s actions. The Bhagavadgītā asks that action is not to be done with any reference to thinking about the fruit of that action. In other words one should always act, as per one’s (caste appropriate) duty, without thinking about the fruit of that action. This requires complete indifference toward the consequence of the action, in favor of simply doing one’s duty. Hegel calls this “Verzichtleistung.”\textsuperscript{215} As much as Hegel appreciates the call for action for the sake of action, he argues that “Erfolg” is necessary condition of “handeln,” because of which he calls the Hindu “Verzichtleistung” a “sinnlos und stumpf” notion of “negative Gleichgültigkeit.”\textsuperscript{216}

Hegel argues that in Hindu religion and philosophy a step higher than not anticipating any fruit for one’s action is giving up all action, advancing from

\textsuperscript{214} Hegel, \textit{Philosophie der Religion} 2 491, 490n.

\textsuperscript{215} Hegel, \textit{Werke} 11: \textit{Berliner Schriften} 152.

\textsuperscript{216} Hegel, \textit{Werke} 11: \textit{Berliner Schriften} 152.
detached action to complete inaction. He states this aspect is the most noticeable feature of Indian culture.\textsuperscript{217} Hegel finds a discrepancy, but no reconciliation, between either a spiritlessly indifferent but continued action or a violent withdrawal into inaction and thoughtlessness. From Colebrooke Hegel learns about mental and physical withdrawal exercises of Patañjali’s \textit{Yoga-Śāstra}, in which one chapter exclusively gives instructions of bodily and mental exercises, deep meditations, along with the holding of breath and withdrawal into inactivity of senses.\textsuperscript{218}

\textbf{3.4.3 Renunciation is also connected with severe mortification of the body:}

This brings us to mortification of body. For Hegel the notion of renunciation is also inherently connected with mortification of the body. This is because in the pursuit of the total abstraction of \textit{brahman}, if everything concrete has to be renounced, then even the concrete body has to be annihilated. Hegel learns that a \textit{yogi} who is striving to ultimately achieve non-duality with \textit{brahman} undergoes severe practices, which include harsh exercises done over long periods of time, even years on end: sleeping in standing position for twelve years, keeping hands folded over the head for another twelve, sitting in the midst of five fires, hanging suspended by one foot over a fire, being buried alive. Some devotees or \textit{yogi} even

\textsuperscript{217} Hegel, \textit{Werke 11: Berliner Schriften} 156-58.

\textsuperscript{218} Hegel, \textit{Werke 11: Berliner Schriften} 159.
commit suicide under the wheels of the Jagannath chariot, a procession carried out for the particular deity.\textsuperscript{219}

Hegel learns from Colebrooke that these are not just religious practices, they are also an integral part of Hindu philosophy, specifically the Sānkhya school of philosophy, which recommends severe physical practices. Hegel states, without specifying his source, that an Englishman found a man who had traveled most of Asia for ten years holding one arm upright. Hegel mentions several such instances which illustrate for him that there are in fact Hindus who practice harsh austerities such as standing and not lying down for ten years, or sitting in one place without moving and look at the tip of their nose. Both for Hindu religion and philosophy these “ungleheuren Büßungen” are ways of “Befreiung vom Übel.” Hegel adds, “In dieser Zurückgezogenheit in sich finden sie Seligkeit.”\textsuperscript{220}

3.4.4 Yoga is pure inward concentration, withdrawal from nature, “Vertiefung ohne Inhalt.”

The above mentioned “Zurückgezogenheit” of a \textit{yogi} brings us to the teachings of Yoga, which, for Hegel, is the most important and most concise description of non-duality with \textit{brahman}. In the Bhagavadgītā Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna

\textsuperscript{219} Hegel, \textit{Werke 11: Berliner Schriften} 162-63.

\textsuperscript{220} Hegel, \textit{Geschichte der Philosophie} I 378. In Sānkhya and Patañjali’s Yoga doctrines, says Hegel, such severe practices are recommended. Beside being recommended to achieve non-duality with \textit{brahman} these practices are also supposed to give the yogi transcendent supernatural powers like knowing past and future, flying in the air, diving in the earth, climbing a sunray, assume smallest and biggest forms etc. Hegel, \textit{Werke 11: Berliner Schriften} 166.
that “Joga” is the “Innerste und Höchste;” it is the purest path.\textsuperscript{221} Hegel believes that the “Joga-Lehre” of the Bhagavadgītā, which, Hegel argues, is a “Geheimlehre” rather than a science or a system, is the “Grundbestimmung” of Hindu religious and philosophical teachings.\textsuperscript{222}

Hegel confronts many translations of the term \textit{yoga}: Humboldt’s “beharrliche Richtung des Gemüts auf die \textit{Gottheit}” or “Vertiefung,” Schlegel’s “devotio, applicatio, destinatio, exercitation,” Langlois’s and Wilkins’s “devotion,” or “application of the mind in spiritual things.”\textsuperscript{223} Wilkins states that in the Bhagavadgītā, the term \textit{yoga} “is generally used as a theological term, to express the application of the mind in spiritual things, and the performance of religious ceremonies.” However, Hegel disagrees with all of them and argues that all European translations, by virtue of their culture-specific religious and philosophical connotations, misinterpret the term \textit{yoga}. For Hegel,

\begin{quote}
Joga ist vielmehr eine Vertiefung \textit{ohne allen Inhalt}, ein Aufgeben jeder Aufmerksamkeit auf äußere Gegenstände, der Geschäftigkeit der Sinne ebensosehr als das Schweigen jeder inneren Empfindung, der Regung eines Wunsches oder der Hoffnung oder Furcht, die Stille aller Neigungen und Leidenschaften wie die Abwesenheit aller Bilder, Vorstellungen and aller bestimmten Gedanken…Die Joga könnte man darum nur \textit{abstrakte Andacht} nennen, weil sie sich nur in die vollkommene Inhaltslosigkeit des Subjekts und des Gegenstandes und damit gegen die Bewußtlosigkeit hin steigert.\textsuperscript{224}
\end{quote}

\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{221} Hegel, \textit{Werke 11: Berliner Schriften} 179.
\item\textsuperscript{222} Hegel, \textit{Werke 11: Berliner Schriften} 145.
\item\textsuperscript{223} Hegel, \textit{Werke 11: Berliner Schriften} 148-50.
\item\textsuperscript{224} Hegel, \textit{Werke 11: Berliner Schriften} 151. It is extremely interesting that Hegel decides to designate \textit{yoga} with the feminine article “die Joga.” He even explains in a little footnote allowing himself to give the feminine gender to the word \textit{yoga}: “Es mag erlaubt sein, \textit{die} Joga zu sagen…mit dem Qualitäten meist bezeichnet zu werden pflegen.”
\end{enumerate}
Yoga, for Hegel, is complete inward concentration to the point of complete abstractness, and total lack of content. To rid oneself of all content one must withdraw completely from nature.\(^{225}\) Withdrawal from nature is an essential aspect of both Hindu religious and philosophical teachings. Hegel learns that Sāṅkhya school of philosophy describes nature as a female dancer who is reproached for her shamelessness for repeatedly exposing herself in front of the crude gaze. But she withdraws when enough is shown and enough is seen.\(^{226}\)

Hegel understands that the aim of all theistic and atheistic Indian philosophies is to withdraw the soul from nature and withdraw into pure concentration. This withdrawal from nature is not only for a short period of inner concentration, but for all times and all lives. In other words, it is a withdrawal from nature to the extent of escaping from metempsychosis, to the extent that one does not come back to nature in a form of a body.

Die Vedas sagen, was zu erkennen ist, ist die Seele; sie muß von der Natur abgeschieden werden, so wird sie nicht wiederkommen, d.h. so ist sie der Metempsychose entnommen, der Versenktheit in die Körperlichkeit; sie erscheint dann nicht wieder als anderes Individuum. Die Befreiung von

\(^{225}\) Hegel states, withdrawing from nature and inward concentration is not the oneness or state of harmony between man and nature or the unmediated consciousness that the Romantics glorified. This thought of abstracting away from nature is much more profound. It contains the moment of negation of nature. The *Geist* posits nature as its opposite, as negative. Hegel argues that this is a great speculative moment in Indian thought, which the Romantics failed to realize. Abstracting away from nature is an advancement from the stage of existing immediately with nature. It is a moment of mediation. Hegel, *Geschichte der Philosophie* I 382.

\(^{226}\) Hegel, *Geschichte der Philosophie* I 391.
The basic concept of yoga, for Hegel, is this contentless pure withdrawal into oneself. This is both a religious and a philosophical notion: “Dies Zurückziehen in den Gedanken ist in der indischen Religion wie in der indischen Philosophie. Die Philosophie will die Seligkeit erlangen durch das Denken, die Religion durch die Andacht.”²²⁸ Both from the religious perspective and from the philosophical perspective, when one withdraws into oneself to the point of complete and utter abstraction, that itself is non-duality with brahman. Brahman is this abstraction. From the religious perspective, “[w]enn ich zur Ehre irgendeines Gottes meine Andacht verrichte, mich ganz in mich konzentriere, so sage ich innerlich zu mir selbst: ‘Ich bin selbst Brahm, ich bin das höchste Wesen.’…Das reine Beimirsein ist Brahm.”²²⁹ From the philosophical perspective, “[w]enn nun so der Inder in der Andacht sich sammelt, sich in seine Gedanken zurückzieht, sich in sich konzentriert, so ist das Moment dieser reinen Konzentration Brahman; dann bin ich Brahman.”²³⁰

3.4.5 Dissolution of particularity, consciousness, and thought:

²²⁷ Hegel, Geschichte der Philosophie 1 377.

²²⁸ Hegel, Werke 18 151.

²²⁹ Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 491.

²³⁰ Hegel, Werke 18 151.
“Dann bin ich Brahman.” But is this sublation? Is this elevating “Ich” to \textit{brahman} and thereby elevating concreteness to the universal principle? Is this elevating finite consciousness to infinity? Not for Hegel. Sānkhya informs him that through spiritual knowledge the truth is learnt that ‘I am not, nothing is mine, I don’t exist.’ In non-duality with abstractness “Ichheit” or “Selbstbewußtsein” disappears. In complete opposition to the European notion of understanding, reason, and thought, the Indian concept of \textit{brahman}, as “intellektuelle Substantialität” is “hierzu das Extrem.” In the concept of \textit{brahman}, argues Hegel, “vergeht alle Subjektivität des Ich.”\textsuperscript{231}

Hegel uses an interesting combination of consciousness and self-consciousness by describing the withdrawal or non-duality with \textit{brahman} as “Bewußtlosigkeit im Bewußtsein.”\textsuperscript{232}

\begin{quote}
Diese Vollendung bestimmt sich als dauernder Zustand der Abstraktion… perennierende Einsamkeit des Selbstbewußtseins, die alle Sensationen, alle Bedürfnisse und Vorstellungen von äußeren Dingen aufgegeben hat, somit nicht mehr Bewußtsein ist, - auch nicht ein erfülltes Selbstbewußtsein, welches den Geist zum Inhalte hätte und insofern auch noch Bewußtsein wäre; ein Anschauen, das nichts anschaut, von nichts weiß, - die reine
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{232} Hegel, \textit{Werke 11: Berliner Schriften} 175.
Leerheit seiner in sich selbst. Nach modernen Ausdrücken ist die Bestimmtheit dieses Zustandes die absolute Unmittelbarkeit des Wissens zu nennen.\textsuperscript{233}

This non-duality with \textit{brahman} in the act of saying ‘I am \textit{brahman}’ is a “lonely self-consciousness.” But since \textit{brahman} is completely abstract and this yogic non-duality is without any content, it cannot really be termed as ‘consciousness’ at all, even not a concrete fulfilled consciousness. Consciousness requires an object to be conscious of. But this yogic consciousness has no content, no object, even no self to be conscious of. In the above quote, after deliberating on whether the non-duality with \textit{brahman} can be called “lonely self-consciousness” or “lack of consciousness” at all, Hegel settles for the term “immediacy of knowledge.”

Since \textit{brahman} is complete abstraction, when the particular declares that ‘it is \textit{brahman}’ it completely loses its particularity. The particular seizes to be itself; it dissolves itself into the universal. The ultimate fulfillment of the particular, which is seen in recognizing its non-duality with the universal, results in total elimination of the particular. Since the concept of \textit{brahman} does not make a way into the concreteness and the concreteness cannot make a way into \textit{brahman}, there is no sublation, no “Versöhnung.”\textsuperscript{234}

Es ist nicht die affirmative Befreiung und Versöhnung, sondern vielmehr nur die ganz negative, die vollkommene Abstraktion. Es ist diese vollkommene Ausleerung, welche auf alles Bewußtsein, Wollen, Leidenschaften, Bedürfnisse Verzicht tut. Der Mensch, so lange er in seinem eigenen Bewußtsein verbleibt, ist nach indischer Vorstellung das

\textsuperscript{233} Hegel, \textit{Werke} 11: \textit{Berliner Schriften} 181.

\textsuperscript{234} Hegel, \textit{Werke} 11: \textit{Berliner Schriften} 183.
Hegel reiterates here that there is no possibility of sublation of the particular with the universal, but only a complete sinking, emptying and elimination of particularity and of consciousness. Hegel again describes how un-European and unfree this notion is. Yogic abstraction is an escape, a “Flucht” in emptiness, in which all particularity collapses.²³⁶

This non-duality with contentless emptiness has no worth for Hegel: “Das indische Vereinsamen der Seele in die Leerheit ist vielmehr eine Verstumpfung, die vielleicht selbst den Namen Mystizismus gar nicht verdient und die auf keine Entdeckung von Wahrheiten führen kann, weil sie ohne Inhalt ist.”²³⁷ Hegel’s own concept of Geist is a self-determining universal subject, which comes to complete self-awarness through concretizing itself and then sublating – overcoming yet containing – the particular within the universal. In relation to this self-cognizing concrete universality, yogic non-duality with the completely empty abstraction of brahman is an extremely lacking concept completely devoid of spirit. For Hegel it does not even deserve the name mysticism, because such emptiness cannot lead to truth.

²³⁵ Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 490-91n.
²³⁶ Hegel, Geschichte der Philosophie 1 397.
Section 4

Selective Reading, Restructuring, and the Resulting Discrepancies

4.1 The nature of Hegel’s appropriation of Indian thought

Indological research consisted of essays and chapters, pieces, and segments that presented a general but not necessarily a homogeneous picture of Indian literature, religion or philosophy. Hegel was only too aware of this when he commented that from his sources, one could see “daß man überall nur partikuläre Darstellungen vor sich gehabt und nichts weniger als eine Kenntnis von allgemeiner indischer Lehre gewonnen hat.”\(^\text{238}\) He was also aware that the reader needed to be skeptical about the sources because the information they provided could often be very unreliable or inconsistent.\(^\text{239}\) In addition to the sources, Hegel believed, much like Schopenhauer, that Hindu religious scriptures themselves were “abgerissen” and “ohne Zusammenhang.”\(^\text{240}\)

\(^{238}\) Hegel, Werke 11: Berliner Schriften 133.

\(^{239}\) Hegel tells the story of Captain Wilford’s encounter with a Hindu pundit. Wilford states that the pundit falsified the sources and manuscripts in order to prove that what his knowledge of Hinduism was right. In order to further prove himself he brought ten witnesses for his support and declared that he would incur the worst curse from the heavens if he was wrong. Besides retelling this story Hegel also mentions that among different scholars and writers about India, there is much inconsistency of information. Hegel, Werke 11: Berliner Schriften 132-33.

\(^{240}\) Hegel, Geschichte der Philosophie I 375.
Hegel assembled the pieces, made connections among them, and imposed a threefold structure to make them understandable for himself and his readers. The precepts of his own philosophy, specifically the triadic dialectical structures that define his concept of God and of religion, dictate Hegel’s ordering and interpretation of Hindu religious and philosophical material. As I have demonstrated, Hegel separates, yet correlates the entire complex of Hindu religion and philosophy and organizes it in a threefold structure. Moreover, within the larger complex of Hindu religious philosophy, any specific threefold structures that Hegel encounters are of particular interest to him. As we have seen, the triad of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva and the triad of the three guṇas or qualities satva, rajas and tamas, are excellent examples. Hegel devotes much attention to them, simply because they are triadic structures. He evaluates and devalues them because they do not measure up exactly to his three moments of dialectic development. Moreover, he establishes a one-to-one correspondence between the two sets of Indian triads where such correspondence may not hold. For Hegel a triadic structure means or should mean one and only one thing, namely three moments of dialectical self-movement of a concept’s concretization and reconciliation. Hence, be it a specific Hindu religious triad or the overall complex of Hindu religion and philosophy, Hegel measures anything that he encounters by how well it matches his dialectical triadic concepts.

241 Inden compares “indological texts” which claim to “explain or interpret” the given Indian material to “what Freud called ‘secondary revision’.” This means that their interpretation “provides the confused dream text with an orderly façade.” Inden adds that “The Indologists themselves take credit for providing the orderly façade for Indian practices… They all claim that their ordering of the patient’s material to be rational and not merely a rationalization. Inden 41-42.
Hegel’s approach creates a profound chasm between his thought and Hindu religion and philosophy that cannot be overcome. As Bhatti says, Hegel’s approach to India is marked by “Distanz” and “grundsätzliche Fremdheit.” That distance and alienation is clearly expressed in all of Hegel’s utterances about India. Hegel accompanies his interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy with a constant comparison of Hindu concepts with his or Western philosophies. However, unlike Schopenhauer, Hegel’s comparison only serves to argue how radically different Hindu religious philosophy is from the Western. He always states his comparison by adding words such as “aber wir…,” “während bei uns…,” or “der europäische Begriff dagegen…” to emphasize the irreconcilable philosophical differences between European and Eastern traditions. Constantly he emphasizes the historical and cultural disconnect, by arguing for the evolved nature of European religion and philosophy and the immaturity of Indian concepts.

Hegel goes to great lengths in his essay on the Bhagavadgītā to address the issue of translation and language in general. He refers to several English, German, French, and Latin translations of Indian concepts such as yoga and dharma and discusses several words including ‘duty’ and ‘morality,’ but he declares that Indian concepts are untranslatable into European languages. He argues that they are untranslatable not out of respect for the cultural difference or to preserve the indigenous meaning, but to prevent the Indian concepts from evoking a

242 Bhatti 185.

243 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 491.
misleadingly nobler or higher conceptual and philosophical worth in European minds. Despite not knowing Sanskrit, Hegel finds himself in a better position as a philosopher to evaluate Indian concepts and their translations.

Hegel’s approach to and analysis of Hindu religion and philosophy is thus dictated by his presuppositions of structure and philosophical worth: he considers Indian material fragmented and disorganized and in need of being structured under different disciplines, categories, and concepts. Not any structure, but specifically Hegel’s triadic dialectical structure serves as his hermeneutical tool for interpretation and evaluation of the material. Finally for Hegel, teleological progress of Spirit deems ancient Indian concepts philosophically primitive, crude, and inferior to advanced European ones.

244 Hegel, Werke 11: Berliner Schriften 188-90.
4.2 Selective reading and restructuring of schools of Hindu religion and philosophy

Hegel’s threefold structure encompasses both Hindu religion and philosophy. However, Hegel intends to establish a well categorized, organized structure of knowledge, in which every discipline has its proper place and purpose. He, therefore, attempts to separate Hindu religion from Indian philosophy, although, as we have seen, not always without difficulty. In his Geschichte der Philosophie he decides to rely exclusively upon Colebrooke’s essays and to present the Indian philosophical schools of Sāṅkhya-Yoga and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika as actual philosophical schools separate from mere religious representations.

He separates these schools as philosophy, different from religion, for at least two reasons other than establishing boundaries of disciplines: on the one hand, he intends to show his contemporary Romantic German thinkers that he knows more than they, that he has read about actual Indian philosophical schools, as opposed to his colleagues’ mere research of Hindu religious ideas. He implies thereby that his own approach to Indian material is more scholarly and objective as opposed to the Romantic scholars’ euphoria about India. On the other hand, Hegel does indeed want to demonstrate that in Indian philosophy one could detect some traces of actual reflection and thought in establishing definitions, differentiations, categories, and principles. Yet he wants to argue that they are still primitive and completely divorced from the spiritual idea of substantiality. Indian philosophy, for Hegel, is completely dry, spiritless, only on a level of understanding, and completely
disconnected from the inner spiritual side. That is “etwas höchst Jämmerliches, Leeres, Pedantisches, Geistloses…”\textsuperscript{245} Hegel argues that in Indian tradition religion is devoid of the rigor of reflection and philosophy is devoid of the warmth of spirituality.

Hegel intends to demonstrate that, on the one hand, Indian philosophy consists of schools of Sāṅkhya-Yoga and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, and, on the other hand, Hindu religion consists of a divine substance, multiple gods, and cultic practices. Sāṅkhya and Nyāya philosophies, as Hegel understands them from Colebrooke, are indeed presented as systems or branches of philosophies, concerned with epistemology, metaphysics, and logic, presented in a form more suitable for Hegel’s formal and structural distinction between religion and philosophy.

Let us examine Colebrooke’s essays on the philosophical schools of Sāṅkhya-Yoga and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and summarize the key aspects of these schools that are given to Hegel: Colebrooke’s essay on the Sāṅkya-Yoga school informs Hegel that

1. Sāṅkhya and Yoga are branches of the same philosophical school; the former is an atheistic branch concerned with philosophical exposition, reasoning, and investigating principles; the latter is the theistic side prescribing devotion, physical and mental exercises to achieve transcendent powers and abstraction. Both

\textsuperscript{245} Hegel, \textit{Geschichte der Philosophie} 1, 369.
branches are interested in ways to achieve eternal beatitude contained in “absorbed contemplation” and exemption from metempsychosis.\textsuperscript{246}

2. Sānkhya argues that knowledge is achieved through judgment and reasoning which consists in discriminating and analyzing twenty-five principles. The twenty-five principles include nature, intelligence, consciousness, five subtle elements, eleven organs of sense and activity, five elements (ether, air, fire, water, and earth), and soul.\textsuperscript{247}

5. The first of the twenty-five principles, namely nature, termed as \textit{prakṛti}, is the “root or plastic origin of all;” it is “the universal material cause.” It is identified in the cosmogony of the \textit{Purāṇas} as \textit{māyā} or illusion and in mythology as \textit{brāhmaṇa} as the power or energy of the god of creation – Brahmā. “It is eternal matter.” It is “productive, but no production.”\textsuperscript{248} The three qualities or \textit{guṇas} – \textit{satva}, \textit{rajas}, and \textit{tamas} – are the essence and composition of nature.\textsuperscript{249}

6. The last of the principles, namely soul, termed as \textit{puruṣa}, is neither produced, nor productive. It is “multitudinous, individual, sensitive, eternal, unalterable, immaterial.”\textsuperscript{250} That is to say, there is not one soul but numerous souls, which are all eternal. Theistic interpretation of this school recognizes all individual

\textsuperscript{246} Colebrooke 228, 250-51, 253, 237.

\textsuperscript{247} Colebrooke 241-44.

\textsuperscript{248} Colebrooke 242.

\textsuperscript{249} Colebrooke 249.

\textsuperscript{250} Colebrooke 244.
souls as well as Isvara as one God. However, the atheistic philosophical doctrine of Sāṅkhya disavow this notion. It puts forth several arguments to claim that there is not one single soul for all things and beings, but, in fact, numerous souls.

7. It is through the equal union of nature and soul that creation takes place. The union of nature and soul is necessary for contemplation of nature and for abstraction from it. When nature, like a female dancer, has shown herself enough, and soul, the spectator, has seen enough, both nature and soul desist and withdraw. Yet the connection of soul and nature still subsists until final deliverance is accomplished.

8. Spiritual knowledge through the study of the principles conveys the single truth, “neither I AM, nor is aught MINE, nor I exist.”

In addition to the school of Sāṅkhya-Yoga Hegel also refers to Colebrooke’s essay on the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophies. Colebrooke’s essay informs Hegel that Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika concern themselves with “metaphysics of logic” and “physics” respectively. Colebrooke extensively discusses Nyāya philosophy of logic, which enumerates sixteen topics for discussion. These include two main topics, namely proof and that which is to be proven, which concern themselves with

251 Colebrooke 251-52.
252 Colebrooke 256.
253 Colebrooke 244.
254 Colebrooke 259.
255 Colebrooke 259.
proving such things as soul, body, and organs of sensation. This school argues that there is one supreme soul (paramātmā) as well as numerous souls (jīvātmā) which have qualities such as quantity, intellect, pain, pleasure, and imagination. Nyāya logic also examines fourteen other topics such as doubt, motive, members of syllogism, reasoning by reduction to absurdity, thesis, and fallacious reasoning. Colebrooke discusses the above sixteen points in detail elaborating upon their sub-topics and arguments.256

In addition to these schools of Indian philosophy, Colebrooke also writes essays about the schools of Mimāṃsā and Vedānta, to which Hegel may not have had access due to their later date of publication. Hegel does, however, have brief information about those schools from Colebrooke’s earlier essays. Hegel mentions Mimāṃsā briefly and considers Vedānta only as the theology of the Vedas, aiming to escape the cycle of birth and death. 257

In his Geschichte der Philosophie Hegel explains Sānkhya-Yoga and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika schools by translating directly from Colebrooke. Hegel includes most of the exposition of Sānkhya philosophy given in Colebrooke, however, he does not find it important to give a detailed account of the Nyāya school. He omits significant parts from Colebrooke’s essay on Nyāya and condenses it to only a few pages, as opposed to Sānkhya, to which he devotes considerably more pages. At the beginning and end of the translated excerpts Hegel also provides his summarizing

256 Colebrooke 261-94.
257 Hegel, Werke 11: Berliner Schriften 147.
commentary distilling and criticizing the main ideas contained in Indian philosophies.

Colebrooke informs Hegel about the intricacy and variety of Indian philosophical schools. Hegel is aware that, despite referring to the same religious and philosophical scriptures, these schools have different foci of philosophical inquiry, use their own school-specific terminology, and arrive at different epistemological, metaphysical, or logical conclusions. However, in his summarizing accounts Hegel homogenizes Indian philosophical schools as well as Hindu religion by declaring that they have more or less the same ideas, conclusions, and aims. As we have seen, for Hegel, the fundamental ideas of Hindu religion and philosophy consist in three concepts: the concept of one single universal substantiality, the secondary status of the particular world, and the final aim of withdrawing into absolute abstraction.

In order to extract these three tenets Hegel emphasizes certain elements in Colebrooke’s essays and ignores others. He emphasizes, for example, that all Indian philosophical schools strive to achieve eternal beatitude contained in absorption into abstraction. He reiterates in several places the severity of yogic mental and physical exercises and austerities. He particularly accentuates and reiterates the Sāṅkhya argument that the soul ultimately abstracts and withdraws from nature. Sāṅkhya’s final spiritual message – “neither I AM, nor is aught MINE, nor I exist” – also contributes to Hegel’s argument that Indian withdrawal practices aim at completely dissolving individuality and self-consciousness.
Hegel overlooks or criticizes other philosophical elements and intricacies that do not feature into his overall understanding and structuring of Hindu religion and philosophy. Even though he mentions the twenty five principles of Sāṇkhya and sixteen topics of Nyāya in his translated excerpts, he understands them in his commentary as “die ersten Anfänge der Reflexion” and criticizes them as “unordentlich.” As we have seen above, they prove for him that the Indian mind is incapable of conceiving particularity in a philosophically sophisticated manner; they reiterate that “die Betrachtung des Besonderen ganz trocken, gedankenlos, ohne Systematisierung [ist]…”

More importantly, Hegel makes one very crucial and glaring modification in Sāṇkhya terminology. Rightfully, in the context of Sāṇkhya philosophy Colebrooke does not use the word brahman, a term which, as Hegel himself knows, is more associated with the school of Vedānta than Sāṇkhya. Sāṇkhya does not use the concept of brahman, but rather argues for the concept of puruṣa. Even thought brahman and puruṣa are both terms designating the metaphysical universal principle, their crucial difference lies in the fact that brahman is said to be one, singular, while puruṣa is numerous, individual. Colebrooke translates puruṣa as soul and Hegel in turn as Seele. There is indeed further discussion in both Colebrooke and Hegel on the concept of soul in Sāṇkhya. Hegel also mentions in his translated excerpts that in Sāṇkhya souls are said to be numerous. However, in

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258 Hegel, Geschichte der Philosophie 1 381.
259 Hegel, Geschichte der Philosophie 1 398-99.
his summaries and comments on Indian philosophies, including on Sāṅkhya, Hegel chooses to use the term *brahman* to designate the pure abstraction of the singular universal substance.\(^{260}\)

This poses a philosophical problem. Even though theistic interpretations of Sāṅkhya and Nyāya allow for the notion of one divine being, they still acknowledge that souls are numerous. As Hegel is himself aware, especially the Sāṅkhya school does not agree with the monism of *brahman*. Sāṅkhya has a dual conception of reality, in which *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, soul and nature, have equal status as eternal principles effecting creation. Even though in the translated excerpts Hegel mentions this aspect, in his own understanding and comments he disregards the Sāṅkhya dualism and terminology and homogenizes everything under the Vedāntic monism of *brahman*.

Hegel makes several references to “Patandschalis Joga-Sastra,” which, as Colebrooke informs him, is associated with the Sāṅkhya-Yoga school. In his review of the Bhagavadgītā Hegel considers Patañjali’s Yoga school as the middle point of Indian religion and philosophy by announcing that “[w]ir dürfen daher mit Recht das, was Joga heißt, für den allgemeinen Mittelpunkt indischer Religion und Philosophie betrachten.”\(^{261}\) As we have seen, Hegel disagrees with his colleagues’ translations of the term *yoga* and claims to correctly interpret what the “Joga-Lehre” philosophically entails. He establishes that yogic practices base themselves

\(^{260}\) Hegel, *Geschichte der Philosophie* 1 378.

philosophically on the concept of *brahman* – the pure abstraction of universal substantiality. This again results in the risk of restructuring different schools of Indian philosophy: as we have seen above, Hegel is aware that the Yoga teachings are associated philosophically with the Sānkhya school, which does not agree with the monism of *brahman*. However, by making the Vedāntic concept of *brahman* the philosophical basis of Yoga, Hegel effectively risks associating Yoga with Vedānta rather than with Sānkhya, thereby risking the restructuring of the schools of Indian philosophy.

Thus, in the case of Sānkhya and Nyāya, Hegel’s excerpts translated from Colebrooke stand in isolation. Their content and their studies in epistemology, metaphysics, logic, and physics actually do not affect or revise Hegel’s overall understanding of the basic tenets of Indian philosophy. Hegel simply ignores and rejects some of the crucial aspects of those two philosophies when he summarizes their teachings. His summaries and analyses of those philosophies suppress the range of their philosophical inquiry, the specificity of their terminology, and the variety of their arguments. His overall understanding and presentation of the fundamental tenets of Hindu thought follow his preconceived triadic structure.
4.3 Selective reading, shifts and revisions, and the resulting discrepancies

In the later years of his analysis Hegel revises his interpretation of Hinduism to some extent. Hegel’s earlier lectures on his philosophy of religion define Hinduism as “Religion der Phantasie” subsumed under “unmittelbare” or “Naturreligionen.” By 1827 Hegel replaces the title “Religion der Phantasie” with a more neutral designation of “Die indische Religion,” which, however, still belongs to “Naturreligionen.” By 1831 within immediate religions Hegel recognizes a significant conceptual advancement, which he introduces as a new category called “Die Entzweiung des religiösen Bewußtsein in sich.”

Hinduism is promoted, so to speak, from the level of nature religion, which is marked by excessive fantasy and imagination and irrational polytheism, to a religion, which, while still in the primitive stages, displays an internal advancement. In 1831 Hegel is even inclined to state that in the Indian religion, “Die Substanz als abstrakte Einheit [ist] dem Geiste verwandt; der Mensch erhebt sich zu dieser abstakten Einheit.”

As I demonstrated in my analysis, Hegel’s interpretation of brahman also undergoes some significant changes. Generally speaking Hegel considers brahman a simple abstract substantiality, which is inactive, feminine-passive, and not self-determining. For such an evaluation Hegel relies excessively on Mill, from whom Hegel adapts such notions as the Brahmā – brahman conflation, the subordinate

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262 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 615.
263 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 618.
role of Brahmā to Viṣṇu, and the fanciful and senseless inconsistency of divine concepts. Mill’s History of British India caters to British colonial interests; his language is skewed to prove that the colonized people are uncivilized and savage, and that their religion and society are unsophisticated and primitive. Mill specifically criticizes the concept of brahman by stating that it is not at all “indicative of refined notions of the unity” but “is a mere unmeaning epithet of praise.” Mill, also equating brahman and Brahmā, asserts that it “involves the most enormous inconsistency… as if the same people could at once be so enlightened as to form a sublime conception of the Divine nature, and yet so stupid as to make a distinction between the character of God and his modes of action.” Mill is full of such verdicts, and it suits Hegel to draw upon such remarks, as Hegel himself is interested in proving that Indian religious and philosophical concepts and practices are savage, confused, fantastic, and irrational, lacking philosophical maturity.

However, by 1827 and 1831 Hegel increasingly realizes that in Hindu religion and philosophy brahman is conceived as consiousness or thought. While Colebrooke constantly refers to brahman as “pure thought,” and “profound

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264 Hegel often consults Mill who states, “Vishnu is denominated the supreme Brahma in the Bhagvad Gita. Nay, we find this Brahma, the great, the eternal ONE, the supreme soul, employed in a rather subordinate capacity. ‘The Great Brahma,’ says Krishna, ‘is my womb. In it I place my foetus; and from it is the production of all nature…” ” Mill 183. Hegel borrows from Mill the entire interpretation of Brahman, the critical remarks about the lack of credibility and consistency in the so-called unified concept of One Brahman, and the crude and wild mind of the people who think up such concepts. Generally about the several ancient Indian texts, Mill asserts that “It is all vagueness and darkness, incoherence, inconsistency and confusion. It is one of the most extravagant of all specimens of discourse without ideas. The fearless propensity of a rude mind to guess where it does not know, never exhibited itself in more fantastic and senseless forms.” Mill 163.

265 Mill 183.
contemplation,” Hegel also recognizes the connotation of Denken in Hindu cosmogonies. In the context of cosmogonies, Hegel is now prepared to give brahman some notion of activity and self-determinacy: “Die einfache Macht, als das Tätige, hat die Welt erschaffen: Dieses Schaffen ist wesentlich ein Verhalten des Denkens zu sich selbst, eine sich auf sich beziehende Tätigkeit, keine endliche Tätigkeit. Dies ist auch in den indischen Vorstellungen ausgesprochen.”266 Hegel finds it to be a profound notion and a great advancement to essentially correlate the universal principle with pure consciousness or thought.

However, I disagree with Herling that “Hegel was coming to peace with these internal and external alterities by allowing them some higher dignity within his system.”267 On the contrary, Hegel seems to struggle with the challenge such revisions pose to the consistency of his system. While admitting revisions such as that of brahman, from inactive emptiness to active thought, Hegel does not recant his earlier evaluations. Both evaluations remain side by side in his explanations. As we have seen, in order to describe brahman both as empty abstraction and as thought, Hegel finds himself drawing together terms such as “Bewußtsein,” “Selbstbewußtsein,” “Einsamkeit des Selbstbewußtseins,” and “Bewußtlosigkeit,” to describe non-duality with brahman. While acknowledging that “die Substanz ein Denken ist und in unserem Denken existiert,” Hegel immediately adds, “[a]ber der

266 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 485n.

267 Herling 252.
The most important and significant example of Hegel’s struggle to keep revisions under control is that of the very triadic structure that Hegel imposes on Hindu religion and philosophy. Increasingly, Hegel realizes that perhaps Hindu religion does display, in a much evolved manner, the three moments of the triadic concept. Hegel acknowledges this by stating that in Hindu religion “Diese Form ist der logischen Entwicklung gemäß.”\(^{269}\) He also states that “Es sind alle Momente der Geistigkeit vorhanden,” and the Indian notion of universal substance is, in fact, “dem Geiste verwandt.”\(^{270}\) Moreover, Hegel describes that in Hindu religion and philosophy “der Mensch erhebt sich zu dieser abstakten Einheit.”\(^{271}\) Hegel contemplates the notion that in Hinduism the individual does, in fact, elevate his finite subjectivity to the infinite universal principle, thereby not dissolving particularity but truly displaying sublation. However, to confront this, Hegel falls into the subjunctive mode: “Man könnte den Einwurf machen, die Inder hätten dem Einen eine zufällige Existenz zugeschrieben, da es dem Zufall überlassen bliebe, ob das Individuum sich zu dem abstrakten Allgemeinen, (... zu dem abstrakten

\(^{268}\) Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 619.

\(^{269}\) Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 485n.

\(^{270}\) Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 620, 618.

\(^{271}\) Hegel, *Philosophie der Religion* 2 618.
Selbstbewuβtsein) erhebe.”

Hegel suggests that perhaps the elevation of the individual to abstract self-consciousness does occur, but this process may be said to be left to chance, thereby not ensuring that the sublation takes place as a necessary third moment of the concept’s progression. If not the subjunctive mode, Hegel quickly adds his favorite and simple sentence, for which he does not feel compelled to give any explanation: “Es sind alle Momente der Geistigkeit vorhanden und doch machen sie nicht den Geist aus.”

The most important other example of how Hegel deals with elements that threaten the integrity of his system is his comments on Islam. Historically, as Islam came after Christianity, in Hegel’s historical development of Spirit, Islam would have to be more advanced than Christianity. But Christianity, as the consummate religion, already symbolizes the perfection of the concept of religion for Hegel. In order to maintain the philosophical superiority of Christianity, Hegel considers Islam limited to a certain community, setting itself a purpose – that of “world dominion,” which is “external to the individual.” According to Hegel the individual in Islam is “merely subordinated to the purpose,” merely “serves” it. For Hegel Islam is only “directed outwards, a conquering religion... inherently fanatical.”

272 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2, 486n.
273 Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 620.
274 Hegel, Philosophy of Religion II 500, 742.
275 Taylor 497.
Hence it does not embody any particular development over the absolute consummate religion – Christianity.

It is indeed true that Hegel’s interpretation of Hinduism is not limited to describing it as the ‘religion of fantasy.’ His analysis of Hindu religious and philosophical concepts indeed undergoes noteworthy revisions. However, his revisions betray, that perhaps Hegel sees a potential in Hindu concepts, which could indeed be “dem Geiste verwandt,” to challenge the structure and consistency of the Spirit’s historical development.\(^{276}\) Hegel’s system argues that history displays Spirit’s progressively advanced stages, and hence, what is ancient is philosophically primitive. To maintain that notion, Hegel never intends to drastically alter his overall evaluation of Hindu religion and philosophy or place it significantly higher in Spirit’s development. Instead, he struggles to keep his revisions and shifts within the boundaries of his set overall negative evaluation and of his placement of Hinduism in the early stages of Spirit’s journey.

This chapter has critically analyzed and demonstrated that Hegel employs his triadic dialectical structure and Spirit’s teleological progress as effective hermeneutic tools, with which he interprets and defines Hindu religion and philosophy. I have demonstrated that Hegel’s triadic structuring yields that Hindu religion and philosophy essentially propose a monism of brahman, in which the universal principle constitutes of the substantiality of brahman; the concept of the

\(^{276}\) Hegel, Philosophie der Religion 2 620, 618.
particular consists of multiplicity of gods, man, and other elements in nature and the world; and the final religio-philosophical goal is seen as the realization of non-duality with brahman. Hegel’s interpretation of these three elements consists in evaluating brahman as empty abstraction lacking self-determinacy, in criticizing the secondary, fleeting, and unfree status of man and of the world of particularity, and in lamenting the dissolution of particularity in the withdrawal practices of achieving non-duality with brahman. I have also demonstrated that in order to impose this threefold structure and evaluate it negatively Hegel selectively chooses and reads his sources, homogenizes the variety of Hindu religious and philosophical doctrines subsuming them under the monism of brahman. I have also disclosed the revisions, tensions and discrepancies that result in Hegel’s interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy, which in turn challenge his own philosophy of religion. In this context I can only agree with Hodgson who states, “Hegel himself provides the clue to the deconstruction of his own logical construction of the history of religion. By following this clue, we may yet discover what hermeneutical treasures are hidden in these lectures.”

277 Hodgson, Philosophy of Religion II 90.
CHAPTER 2

SCHOPENHAUER’S INTERPRETATION OF HINDU RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

Schopenhauer differed from Hegel significantly in the way he located Indian thought within his work. Hegel, in his systematic and chronological attention to world religions, had a discrete section for India and Hindu religion and philosophy. Conceptually, too, he kept Hinduism more or less separate, because he wanted to argue that Hindu religious and philosophical concepts were significantly different from the concepts of his philosophy. Schopenhauer’s agenda was the opposite. He wanted to demonstrate how similar Indian religious concepts were to his philosophy. In fact, he wanted to use Hindu and Buddhist philosophy to explain, elaborate, and clarify his own philosophy. In addition, Schopenhauer tried to associate his philosophy with ancient Indian wisdom, in order to legitimize his own philosophy. Hence, references to Hindu religion and philosophy are sprinkled throughout Schopenhauer’s work, often accompanied by Buddhist thought. It becomes challenging to isolate his understanding of Hindu religion and philosophy because
he interweaves and merges it with his own philosophy in its concepts, explanations, and vocabulary.

In the following chapter, I analyze these scattered references to Hindu religion and philosophy and the contexts in which Schopenhauer frames them. My analysis tries to give a coherent picture of what constitutes Hindu religion and philosophy for Schopenhauer. Examining Schopenhauer’s own philosophy and his use of Hindu religious thought, I extract a threefold conceptual structure, within which, I claim, Schopenhauer approached, understood and used Hindu religion and philosophy. I demonstrate that the precepts of Schopenhauer’s philosophy prompt him to recognize three fundamental aspects of what constitutes for him Hindu religious thought: 1. the physical world and its particular entities, 2. the metaphysical universal principle, and 3. the non-duality of the particular with the universal. Conversely, the analysis of Schopenhauer’s structuring of Indian thought, will give this new threefold perspective to structure his own philosophy.

Section one of the chapter reviews Schopenhauer scholarship to examine how various scholars have handled his interpretation of Eastern thought. I categorize them in four groups, depending upon their approach and conclusions, and I discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments. Then, in the light of this appraisal, I state my approach and claims about Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy involving the above given structure. Section two discusses the precepts of Schopenhauer’s philosophy to demonstrate how this
threefold structure emerges within it. Section three argues how Schopenhauer’s comments on Hindu religion and philosophy reveal the same threefold structure. In section four I demonstrate how Schopenhauer uses selective reading and creative appropriation to impose this structure on Hindu religious philosophy.
Section 1

Overview of Schopenhauer Scholarship
Classification and Appraisal of Their Approaches and Conclusions
My Contribution to the Scholarship

1.1 Chronological development of scholarship on Schopenhauer and Indian Thought: an overview

Let us first give a chronological overview of the scholarship dealing with Schopenhauer and India. Generally speaking, the scholarship has been dominated, from as early as 1897 to as recently as 2002, by comparative analyses of Schopenhauer’s philosophy with Eastern religions and thoughts. “Comparative analyses” refers to scholarship trying to compare concepts in Schopenhauer’s philosophy with those in Hindu and Buddhist philosophies. With such comparisons, they try to determine the extent of compatibility between Schopenhauer’s philosophy as a whole and Hindu or Buddhist thought. Most works compare Schopenhauer with both Hinduism and Buddhism together, but some works give exclusive attention to Schopenhauer and Buddhism, focusing on the notions of human suffering and the ethics of compassion. However, hardly anyone devotes exclusive attention to Schopenhauer and Hinduism per se.

Until 1982 scholars have praised Schopenhauer for having a sound or accurate understanding of Indian thought, admiring him for having an eye for the fundamental tenets of Eastern philosophy. Schopenhauer’s philosophy has also been seen to be comparable, compatible, and in agreement with Eastern thought on
several aspects and assertions. Scholars become increasingly aware of the difficulty involved in making simple cross-cultural philosophical comparisons. High praise and overwhelming compatibility give way to finding a balance of similarities and differences between Schopenhauerian and Eastern thought. Sometimes (starting with J. J. Gesterling in 1986) the differences and incompatibilities are emphasized. Occasionally (starting with Halbfass in 1988), scholars urge that the inadequacies of Schopenhauer’s engagement with Indian thought be understood in the context of his unique hermeneutic situation as an European Idealist philosopher and as a critic of rationalism. Generally, scholars agree that Indian thought did not influence the formation and shape of Schopenhauer’s own philosophy. This notion is hardly challenged, except by two scholars – Nicholls and Berger.

To summarize, the scholarship on Schopenhauer and India have included philosophical analyses, one-to-one conceptual comparisons and larger discussions about Schopenhauer’s placement between Eastern and Western traditions. There is no doubt that Schopenhauer initiates an excitement among scholars that philosophies, so far apart in time and space and arising out of such completely different cultures, can be so similar. This excitement opens a venue for scholars to explore these cross-cultural connections. This excitement is later questioned by other scholars who argue that these seeming similarities between Schopenhauer and Eastern thought disappear after deeper and more careful study of the philosophies, their arguments, and implications. This deeper and more careful study gives rise to questions other than finding whether the philosophical concepts are compatible.
Scholars investigate the extent of the impact and influence of Eastern philosophy on Schopenhauer and his role in bringing Eastern thought with such rigor into the West. Let us now turn to categorizing these different kinds of response.
1.2 Classification and categorization of the scholarship and the problems of their approach:

In this section I classify Schopenhauer scholarship in four groups according to their approach and stance on Schopenhauer and Indian thought. I categorize the discussion and the scholars into the following groups:

Group 1: Scholarship that only peripherally mentions Schopenhauer’s engagement with Indian thought.

Group 2: Scholarship that considers Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Indian religion and philosophy sound and accurate and that finds several similarities between Schopenhauer’s thought and Hindu and Buddhist philosophies.

Group 3: Scholarship that critically analyses Schopenhauer’s interpretation and that raises questions about compatibility, correspondence, influence, and consequence of Schopenhauer’s use of Eastern thought.

Group 4: Scholarship that strikes a balance between praise and criticism in favor of understanding Schopenhauer’s unique contribution to European philosophy.
Group 1: Scholarship that only peripherally mentions Schopenhauer’s engagement with Indian thought:

First, let us examine the works that deal with Schopenhauer’s philosophy as a whole, strictly from a European perspective, as a European Idealist philosopher, follower and critic of Kant, critic of rationalism, and philosopher of pessimism. Gardiner, Copleston, Janaway, Malter, Atwell, Magee, Neeley, Cartwright, Jacquette, and Young discuss Schopenhauer’s epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, and ethics, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of his system. They only peripherally mention Schopenhauer’s engagement with Indian thought, his enthusiasm about the Upanisads and Buddhism. Their comments on Schopenhauer’s use and affiliation with Eastern thought are often evoked by Schopenhauer’s statements themselves. That is, they repeat Schopenhauer’s claims

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279 For example, Gardiner sees the connection between Schopenhauer and Indian thought as far as the mystical element is concerned. Gardiner, Schopenhauer 103. Malter calls Eastern religions, i.e., Hinduism and Buddhism, as “die gottlosen Religionen des Ostens.” In Malter’s book Eastern religions find only few mentions and those too only in and as Schopenhauer’s quotes and use. Malter 369.
about the affiliations between his philosophy with Hinduism and Buddhism.\textsuperscript{280}

Some scholars surpass mere mention of Schopenhauer’s enthusiasm about Eastern thought to address concerns arising from Schopenhauer’s use of it: for example, they briefly state whether Schopenhauer was influenced by Eastern philosophy or whether his philosophy was favorably or unfavorably affected by it.\textsuperscript{281} However, it does not lie in the comprehensive scope of their works to critically examine Schopenhauer’s use of Indian thought or go into the details of the implications of his use.

Other works focus not on Schopenhauer’s philosophy in general, but on specific aspects of it, such as religion, ethics, or pessimism. Even though these aspects are often said to be most connected with Eastern thought, such works peripherally mention but do not necessarily critically examine the connection.\textsuperscript{282}

\textsuperscript{280} For example, on the note on Schopenhauer and Buddhism Magee mentions that it would be a mistake to consider that Schopenhauer was greatly influenced by Eastern thought, because that would undermine his place in Western philosophy and German Idealism and undermine the different path he took to arrive at the conclusions that are strikingly similar to Eastern philosophies. Schopenhauer himself mentions in the preface of his book that he followed a different path but arrived at the strikingly similar conclusions as Eastern philosophy. Magee points out the similarities between Buddhism and Kantian-Schopenhauerian philosophy: the transitory nature of phenomenal world, insight into the common essence which would lead to ethics, happiness in detachment and the four noble truths correspond very well with Schopenhauer’s own thought. Magee is convinced that Schopenhauer and Buddhism say the same basic things; however, that Schopenhauer arrived at them independently of Buddhism. These are all Schopenhauer’s claims, with which Magee essentially agrees. Magee 340-45. Jacquette, in his mentions about Eastern thought, does not distinguish between Hinduism and Buddhism. Jacquette 212.

\textsuperscript{281} Young recognizes that Eastern thought might have had a slow effect on the development of Schopenhauer’s philosophy. Young 10. Neeley tries to see if the concept of \textit{nirvāṇa} can resolve some confusing statements Schopenhauer makes. Neeley 159-81. Janaway mentions that Schopenhauer’s obsession with the concept of \textit{māyā} and the connotation of illusion attached to it, has adverse effect on his Kantian epistemology. Janaway 168-69.

\textsuperscript{282} Discussing nineteenth century religious thought in the West, Richard Taylor mentions simply that Schopenhauer’s pessimism leads invariably to ethics of compassion and salvation through asceticism,
Since these scholars mostly repeat Schopenhauer’s claims, they agree that Schopenhauer’s thought has much in common with Eastern thought; they do not distinguish clearly between Hinduism and Buddhism and disregard the consequent philosophical implications.

There are only a few works which critically assess Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Hinduism and Buddhism. Naegelsbach, for example, while examining Schopenhauer’s concept of Vorstellung, discusses how problematic it is that Schopenhauer associates Kantian idealism with Indian “Illusionism” of māyā.283 In discussing Schopenhauer’s pessimism, Fromm argues that Indian concepts are for Schopenhauer “geborgte Weisheiten.”284 Fromm states that when Schopenhauer discussed Indian concepts,

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283 Naegelsbach says, “Schopenhauer versucht in einer Synthese beides, Kants Schüler und indischer Weiser zu sein, ohne sich über den Ursprung des Kantschen Idealismus in einer streng erkenntnistheoretischen Fragestellung und über den Ursprung des Illusionismus in einer metaphysisch-religiösen Grundüberzeugung klar zu sein... Bald hat seine Welt der Vorstellung empirische Realität im Sinne Kants, bald ist sie Traum und Illusion...” Hans Naegelsbach, Das Wesen der Vorstellung Bei Schopenhauer (Heidelberg: Winter, 1927) 151-52. As I also mention above, Janaway agrees with this criticism. I will come back to this important point when I discuss Schopenhauer’s use of māyā. It suffices here to see some scholars do display some critical analysis, however brief.

284 Fromm adds that the “geborgte Weisheiten,” i.e., aspects of Hinduism and Buddhism, did have some impact on certain aspects of Schopenhauer’s philosophy, but the “Qualität” and “wesentliche
bei ihm handelte es sich nicht um ein Erschließen dieser Ideen aus ihrem Umfeld, ihrer Entwicklung, ihrer eigenen Geschichtlichkeit heraus. Vielmehr nahm er die Ansichten und Aussagen als aktuellen Beleg für eine außerhistorische, allgemeine Erkenntnis, Wahrheit oder auch moralische Lehre... Schopenhauer löste also die ihm zusagenden, für ihn brauchbaren Positionen, Bilder und Kategorien des indischen Denkens von ihrem Unter-und Hintergrund ab; diese Schicht baute er sodann in sein System ein.\textsuperscript{285}

However, it is not in the scope of Fromm’s book to give examples and details of such “borrowings” on Schopenhauer’s part.

Surprisingly enough, scholars with postcolonial interests, which include Murti, Bhatti, Inden, or King, also do not devote much attention to Schopenhauer. Figueira does not mention Schopenhauer much in her article on Vedic interpretations, and only mentions Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Buddhism in \textit{The Exotic}. King only mentions Schopenhauer’s enthusiasm for the Upaniṣads. Inden, despite devoting a chapter to Hinduism, does not mention Schopenhauer at all, except for a footnote about Paul Deussen being a proponent of Schopenhauer.\textsuperscript{286}

The better known scholars in German studies, such as Willson, Murti or Bhatti, do not much discuss Schopenhauer. Willson’s survey, which explores the “mythical image” of India in German Romanticism, only mentions Schopenhauer’s

\textsuperscript{285} It seems that Fromm reiterates what Halbfass states, namely that Schopenhauer loosened or disconnected the aspects, that interested him, from their Indian context and background and placed them in his philosophy. Fromm 130-31.

enthusiasm and admiration of the Upaniṣads and specifically of the doctrine of metempsychosis. Beyond this, Willson does not actually examine Schopenhauer’s use of Indian thought and does not explore why and how Schopenhauer might have contributed to creating or countering the “mythical image” of India. Murti and Bhatti, who specifically discuss German orientalism, also do not mention Schopenhauer. Murti argues that India was objectified in German orientalism as the feminine other. In chapter two of her book, she discusses how during and after Romanticism “philosophers, historians and fiction writers” such as Hegel, Schlegel, and Novalis were collectively “inventing the Orient.” However, even in this context where she discusses how philosophers of the late 18th and early 19th century contributed to making a certain image of India, she does not mention Schopenhauer. For her argument that India was objectified as the “feminine other,” Hegel is an excellent example and she discusses him at length. However, Schopenhauer poses a serious challenge to her argument: Schopenhauer claims to treat India, not as an irrational feminine other, but as a wise philosophizing kin. Hence, she does not include Schopenhauer at all and does not explore if there might be other ways in which Schopenhauer might have “objectified” India.

Bhatti, who explores the ambivalent character of German orientalism in the 19th century, also surprisingly does not mention Schopenhauer. Bhatti explains that

287 Willson 124-126.
288 Murti 11.
at the time when England and France were at the forefront in the colonial race, the German intelligentsia saw them as benefiting only materially from India, while it saw itself proudly at the forefront of intellectual and cultural acquisition. In other words, Bhatti describes the early German attempt to prove its intellectual superiority over England’s colonial success in India: German intellectual and cultural interest in India was a better replacement for British and French colonial interest. Bhatti further argues that the initial Romantic enthusiasm and intellectual prestige about India was answered by “Heines Ironie, Goethes Reserve und Hegels Schroffheit.” Bhatti explains Hegel’s view and “distance” from India in some detail in this context. However, he does not mention Schopenhauer at all. In fact, in my opinion, Schopenhauer would have served as an excellent example for Bhatti’s argument: Bhatti is interested in showing the ambivalent nature of German interest in India, how German characterization of India fluctuated between affinity and distance, kinship and strangeness and praise and criticism. In this context Bhatti could have argued that Hegel’s criticism, which replaced the initial Romantic praise of India, was in turn followed by Schopenhauer’s renewed praise and sense of kinship with India.

To summarize, group one includes two types of scholarship: general Schopenhauer scholarship discussing the basic ideas of his philosophy from a European perspective, and postcolonial scholarship examining the image of India in the West. These scholars do not pay much attention to Schopenhauer’s use of

289 Bhatti 175-90.
Indian religion and philosophy. They find it marginal, tangential, irrelevant, or detrimental to their arguments.

Appraisal of group 1:

These scholars who view Schopenhauer’s philosophy as a whole discuss the basics of his epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, and ethics. They give an overview of his philosophy from a European perspective and do not consider it part of their scope to discuss in detail Schopenhauer’s engagement with Indian religion and philosophy. They refer to it only marginally. This approach may imply that these scholars, studying Schopenhauer only from the European perspective, do not realize the extent to which Indian religion and philosophy were essential to Schopenhauer’s thought.

The more serious problem with this group is that they do not critically examine Schopenhauer’s statements about Indian religion and philosophy. They mostly take at face value Schopenhauer’s own claims about the affiliation between his philosophy and Indian thought. They simply repeat, for example, that Schopenhauer’s concepts and ideas are compatible with those in Hinduism and Buddhism, that Schopenhauer’s concept of Vorstellung or representation is synonymous with Vedāntic concept of māyā or Schopenhauer’s ethics is akin to Hindu and Buddhist ethics. They do not make much distinction between Hinduism and Buddhism and treat them as similar branches of essentially one Eastern
philosophy. In a way, then, they uncritically help perpetuate Schopenhauer’s image of Indian thought.

As mentioned above, postcolonialists, such as Bhatti and Murti, exclude Schopenhauer for similar reasons. They also take Schopenhauer’s statements at face value. Schopenhauer embraces India by claiming to find kinship with Indian religion and philosophy. As explained above, this does not fit the postcolonialists’ scholarship, which explores those who treat India as the “other.” They, therefore, do not include Schopenhauer in their analysis. They do not examine his use of Indian thought deeper to investigate if there may be other ways in which Schopenhauer may have “objectified” India. Especially because these scholars want to investigate the “image” of India created by the West, Schopenhauer warrants much more attention than they give him, as his image of India influenced many subsequent thinkers and writers.

Group 2: Scholarship that considers Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Indian religion and philosophy sound and accurate and that finds several similarities between Schopenhauer’s thought and Hindu and Buddhist philosophies.

The second group of scholarship includes scholars like Hecker, Dauer or Sedlar who find Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Indian thought accurate. They accept his authority as a reliable researcher and interpreter of Indian philosophy. Hence, as Schopenhauer, they also find Schopenhauer’s thought as having striking
similarities with Hinduism and Buddhism. In their comments on Schopenhauer’s use of Indian thought most scholars conflate Hinduism and Buddhism. They collapse Hindu and Buddhist concepts and examine their compatibility with Schopenhauer’s philosophy. Some scholars concentrate on Buddhism to compare its concepts with Schopenhauer’s, but hardly anyone separates Hinduism in the same way.

It is well known that Nietzsche admired Schopenhauer, at least initially, and considered him a great authority on Indian thought, especially on Vedānta and Buddhism. Paul Deussen, a schoolmate of Nietzsche and Wagner, also admired Schopenhauer and was tremendously influenced by him. Max F. Hecker is the first scholar to have explicitly taken up a comparative task in his 1897 work Schopenhauer und die indische Philosophie. In his book Hecker’s intention is to show the (astonishing) fundamental agreement among Schopenhauer’s philosophy

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290 Trusting Schopenhauer Nietzsche also believed and wrote in his Morgenröte that Indian thought was “the only great parallel” to European philosophy. Glasenapp 93. Again as per Schopenhauer’s own opinion, Nietzsche took the names Buddha and Schopenhauer in the same breath, declaring in Jenseits von Gut und Böse that their philosophies were “world-renouncing” and “under the domination and delusion of morality.” Glasenapp 94.

291 Deussen came to Indian thought through Schopenhauer and, like Nietzsche, considered Schopenhauer a great authority on Indian thought. His understanding of Hindu religion and philosophy was influenced by Schopenhauer, which shaped his major works on history of philosophy, metaphysics, Vedānta, Brahmaśūtras, Upaniṣads and so on. Deussen attempted to show that “Schopenhauer’s philosophy brought with Śankara’s a perfect revival of the “idealism” of the Upaniṣads from the “atheism of the Sāṃkhya system and apsychism of the Buddhists.” Berger 4.

292 As a whole in his book Hecker takes one concept or issue after another, e.g. idealism, empirical reality, metaphysics, atheism, psychology, intellect and perception, body, pessimism, moral condition of the world, freedom of will, nothingness, asceticism, salvation, even women and animals. Then he sees separately how Vedānta, Buddhism and Schopenhauer explain it. Hecker states some differences between Vedānta and Buddhism and argues that Schopenhauer was not always clear about the distinction between the two thoughts. Max F. Hecker, Schopenhauer und die indische Philosophie (Köl: Hübscher & Teufel, 1897) 14.
and Vedānta and Buddhism. He, therefore, does not want to concentrate on the minor details of the three systems but wants to highlight the commonalities. He argues that Schopenhauer’s philosophy is a synthesis of Vedānta and Buddhism; it brings the two Indian traditions into a higher unified system which encompasses both metaphysics and ethics.²⁹³ Hecker’s analysis is impressive for the time it was written; however, it remains problematic because Hecker uses Paul Deussen’s translations and interpretations for his understanding of Vedānta, which itself is influenced by Schopenhauer’s interpretation. Hence Hecker, too, uses Schopenhauerian, Kantian and Vedāntic vocabulary interchangeably and therefore has no difficulty finding Schopenhauer in agreement with both Vedānta and Buddhism,²⁹⁴ or even sometimes stating that Schopenhauer knew better than Vedānta or Buddhism.²⁹⁵

Franz Mockrauer also acknowledges Schopenhauer as an authority on Indian philosophy and he praises Schopenhauer for discovering the essential traits and tenets of Indian thought. He states that there were eight affinities between Schopenhauer’s and Indian thought, which include Idealism, ethics of sympathy,

²⁹³ Hecker 254.

²⁹⁴ For example, Hecker states that what brahman is for Vedānta, Wille is for Schopenhauer. Even if they are different concepts, they occupy the same position in both systems and they are both Ding-an-sich. Hence saying ‘I am brahman’, and ‘I am will’ are one and the same thing. Hecker 48, 72.

²⁹⁵ For example, using Deussen’s translation Hecker states that the Upaniṣads state that man is built from “Will” or “Begierde” and still fail to acknowledge will and give the intellect the absolute status. Hecker argues that Schopenhauer, in contrast, knew better. Hecker 74-75.
denial of will, and asceticism.\textsuperscript{296} Charles Musès compares Schopenhauer’s thought with the Lankāvatāra Sūtra of the Mahāyāna Buddhism and its teaching of two-fold egolessness.\textsuperscript{297} This is a comparative study, much in the same vein as Schopenhauer’s own: as Schopenhauer believed Indian philosophy could aid in the understanding of his own philosophy, Musès argues that \textit{Lankāvatāra} will give an enlightening comparison, and will also help in interpreting Schopenhauer in his “vaguer parts” like ‘denial’ and ‘beyond-denial.’\textsuperscript{298}

Glasenapp is considered the first scholar to have assembled a list of German scholars discussing their engagement with India. He is more critical of Schopenhauer compared to the earlier scholars in acknowledging that Schopenhauer “was much too subjective a man, not to pick out from the foreign systems particularly that which was in conformity with his own ideas.”\textsuperscript{299} Even so, in this statement itself, Glasenapp states that there are indeed things in “foreign systems” that were “in conformity” with Schopenhauer’s ideas. Glasenapp proceeds to show

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{296} Friedrich Mockrauer, “Schopenhauer und Indien,” \textit{Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch} 15 (1928): 9. Mockrauer thinks that because of the distance Schopenhauer had from India, he was able to abstract the essential tenets of Eastern thought rather than getting lost in the details of it. Mockrauer 18.
  \item \textsuperscript{297} Charles Musès, \textit{East-West Fire; Schopenhauer's Optimism and the Lankavatara Sutra: An Excursion toward the Common Ground between Oriental and Western Religion} (London: Watkins; Indian Hills: Falcon’s Wing, 1955). This is a comparative study to examine how far Schopenhauer’s philosophy is compatible with the Sūtra. There is no question of Schopenhauer’s understanding of the Buddhist text, because Musès declares that Schopenhauer did not know this work.
  \item \textsuperscript{298} Musès 23. The almost one-to-one correspondence that is argued here between the two philosophies, leads Musès to apply connotations and judgments of one philosophy to the other: Hence he has no problem concluding that if Lankāvatāra is optimistic, “Schopenhauer must surely, ipso facto, also be.” Musès 59.
  \item \textsuperscript{299} Glasenapp 70.
\end{itemize}
similarities between Schopenhauer and Indian thought, which includes both Vedānta and Buddhism but also some differences. Glasenapp, however, applauds Schopenhauer’s genuine enthusiasm, which elevated the awareness of Indian thought in the West. Glasenapp also believes that Schopenhauer had an “eye of a genius” to have recognized and advocated “two fundamental ideas which appear ever in new forms in the Indian systems of philosophy,” namely \textit{ahimsā} and \textit{śūnyatā}, which “is in complete harmony with the essence of Schopenhauer’s doctrine.”

Hübscher’s article seems very similar to Glasenapp’s analysis, showing similarities and minor differences between Schopenhauer’s philosophy and Indian thought. Dorothea Dauer claims that Schopenhauer has a clear understanding of

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300 The similarities include statements about pain and suffering in life, asceticism, ethics, endlessness of time etc. The differences include Schopenhauer’s notion of \textit{will} which fails to correspond to Vedāntic notion of \textit{brahman}. Glasenapp 70-76. Sometimes he makes ambivalent statements where he declares that an Indian concept is in perfect accordance with Schopenhauer but how far in accordance is a matter of investigation: Glasenapp says, “The fact that the doctrine of Maya is in accord with the transcendental idealism of Schopenhauer is by no means subject to doubt. An investigation as to how far it agrees with Schopenhauer’s point of view and to what extent the latter again agrees with that of Kant… and in what relation the doctrine of Maya stands to that of Kant is out of place here, as the speculations of the Indians about Maya are by no means uniform and differ widely from each other not only within the different trends of Vedanta but even within the school of Shankara.” Glasenapp 80. This is an ambivalent statement because in the first line Glasenapp states that the accordance between \textit{māyā} and transcendental idealism is beyond doubt. And in the following sentences he questions their accordance and the extent of it.

301 Glasenapp 91.

302 Hübscher, like Glasenapp, briefly speaks of the difference between the concepts of \textit{brahman} and \textit{will} and how these two concepts cannot be compatible. He too makes a list of ten (not twelve like Glasenapp) aspects of Indian thought (which includes Buddhism and Hinduism together) which, he argues, agree with Schopenhauer. This list for the most part corresponds to Glasenapp’s list, including historyless (timeless) conception of the universe, atheism, existence as suffering, compassion, and salvation. Arthur Hübscher, "Schopenhauer und die Religionen Asiens," Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch 60 (1979): 8-10.
the distinctions between Hinduism and Buddhism and even so he is justified in making simultaneous parallels with them and his own philosophy.  

The high regard for Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Indian thought continues in Sedlar. Sedlar argues that compared to Schelling, Schopenhauer “also showed notably more respect for his Indian sources, and did not distort them in the interest of a preconceived scheme. His misunderstandings of Indian ideas can be largely attributed to the incompleteness and inadequacy of extant information on India in his time.” Sedlar maintains that Schopenhauer was surprisingly accurate in extracting the meaning from Indian texts; he did inestimable service to European understanding of India; and he defended Indian ideas and rendered them comprehensible to European mind.

Some works concentrate on Schopenhauer’s use of Buddhism exclusively, rather than dealing with Hinduism and Buddhism together. Kishan, Mistry and

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303 For example, Dauer thinks nirvāṇa plays the same role as brahman, and samsāra plays the same role as individual existences, i.e., nirvāṇa – samsāra are equal pairs with brahman – ātman. Dorothea W. Dauer, Schopenhauer as Transmitter of Buddhist Ideas (Berne: Lang, 1969) 13. Dauer finds Schopenhauerian and Vedāntic concepts equivalent. Dauer finds even more correlation, rather equivalence, between Schopenhauer and Buddhism and proceeds to find quotations from Schopenhauer that would fit Buddhist notions and concepts.

304 Sedlar believes Schopenhauer was a more systematic thinker than Schelling and much more philosophically honest and uncompromising. Generally speaking, Sedlar argues that Indian thought was in no way influential or constitutive to his philosophy. Schopenhauer’s philosophy was clearly in line with the European tradition, Plato Descartes, Kant and others. His parallels with Indian thought were only to show that his ideas were not eccentric but other ancient wise civilizations had arrived at them independently. Jean W. Sedlar, India in the Mind of Germany: Schelling, Schopenhauer, and their Times (Washington, D.C: University Press of America, 1982) 231.

305 Sedlar 229.

306 Sedlar 230.
Kamata, for example, find many similarities between Schopenhauer and Buddhism, especially concerning the human condition given to suffering and ways of rising above it.\textsuperscript{307}

Appraisal of group 2:

The second group, as we have seen above, finds Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Indian thought accurate. It finds extraordinary similarities, and only minor differences, between Schopenhauer’s philosophy and Hindu and Buddhist thought.

However, when I scrutinize this group’s techniques and methods of argument, it becomes clear that the approach of these scholars is problematic: their explanations of Hindu and Buddhist concepts are sometimes stated matter-of-factly, without reference, thereby suggesting that the explanations are the obvious, unambiguous, and universally accepted meaning of those concepts. Sometimes the

\textsuperscript{307} B. V. Kishan, “Schopenhauer and Buddhism,” \textit{Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch} 53 (1972): 185-90. Mistry states, “Der Buddha und Schopenhauer teilen eine Grunderfahrung: das Leben ist leidvoll.” However, Mistry also argues that “die Affinität zwischen der Ethik Schopenhauers und der des Buddhismus [ist] nicht so stark, wie der Philosoph selbst meinte,” further explaining that Schopenhauer’s ethics is subsumed under metaphysics. Freny Mistry, "Der Buddhist liest Schopenhauer," \textit{Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch} 64 (1983): 88. Kamata, however, finds remarkable affinities between Schopenhauer and Buddhism. Kamata says, “Die Schopenhauersche Philosophie und der Mahayana-Buddhismus stimmen darin überein, daß sie beide einen Idealismus vertreten, welcher die durchgängige Abhängigkeit des erkennenden Subjekts und des erkannten Objekts voneinander lehrt. Weiterhin kommen sie sich darin nahe, daß sie sich vom Überwindungsgedanken lossagen... Hinter der Welt gibt es kein Wesen an sich. Das Wesen der Welt ist die Wesenlosigkeit der Selbsterhaltung der Welt.” Yasuo Kamata, "Schopenhauer und der Buddhismus," \textit{Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch} 65 (1984): 236. Kamata argues in this quote that Schopenhauer and Buddhism both share the view that behind this world there is no “Wesen an sich.” This statement is obviously problematic since Schopenhauer cannot be said to have that view. Kamata serves here as an example of scholars who find strong affinities between Schopenhauer and Buddhism.
explanations are taken from scholars like Paul Deussen, who is himself influenced by Schopenhauer’s interpretation. The methods and approach of this group also resemble that of Schopenhauer:

In order to show similarities, these scholars isolate quotes both from Schopenhauer and from Hindu and Buddhist texts that resemble one another. Doing so ignores the larger contexts and implications of these philosophies, in which the similarities cannot hold. Moreover, they disregard that the Schopenhauerian quotes that they find similar to Indian quotes, may themselves have been formulated by Schopenhauer under Indian influence. Hence, such comparisons become tautologous.

Second, like Schopenhauer, they also believe that Kantian, Schopenhauerian, and Hindu and Buddhist concepts are compatible. In fact, such compatibility among concepts is their presupposition at the outset, upon which they build their arguments. So, they do not find it problematic to use Kantian, Schopenhauerian, and Hindu and Buddhist vocabulary interchangeably, using, for example, the word representation while explaining Hindu concept of māyā, or Ding-an-sich while explaining Hindu brahman.

Third, as Schopenhauer, the scholars of this group deal with Hinduism and Buddhism together as if they were essentially the same, as if their philosophies made the same assertions and drew the same conclusions. Consequently, they ignore crucial differences between Hinduism and Buddhism and disregard the
philosophical implications of statements ascribing, for example, *noumenon* both to *brahman* and *nirvāṇa*.

Group 3: Scholarship that critically analyzes Schopenhauer’s interpretation and that raises questions about compatibility, correspondence, influence and consequence of Schopenhauer’s use of Eastern thought.

We have seen that the first two groups of scholars have shown admiration for Schopenhauer’s “accurate” interpretation and for the similarities between his and Indian thought (with only some minor differences). In group 3 scholars become much more critical of Schopenhauer’s use of Indian thought and investigate thoroughly the contexts and implications of Schopenhauer’s philosophy as well as of Hindu and Buddhist thought. Their analysis leads them to conclude that superficially Schopenhauer’s concepts may seem similar to Hindu and Buddhist notions, but a deeper examination of Schopenhauer’s hermeneutic techniques and of the complexity of Hindu and Buddhist thought raises many questions about the compatibility of their concepts and about the process of Schopenhauer’s appropriation of Indian thought.

In this group, too, most scholars discuss Schopenhauer’s philosophy in relation to Hindu and Buddhist thought together, although some concentrate on Buddhism alone. Only very few scholars give separate treatment to Hinduism;
however, they focus on one or two concepts of Hinduism rather than discussing Schopenhauer’s representation of Hinduism as a whole.

The turning point from the early admiration to this critical examination comes with J. J. Gestering. Gestering makes philosophical comparisons between Schopenhauer’s and Hindu and Buddhist concepts and reveals crucial differences and incompatibilities. These comparisons lead him to state that Indian concepts are in fact not pessimistic, but Schopenhauer and his “ethnocentrism” is essentially responsible for the association of Indian thought with (German) pessimism. Gestering concludes that “India was no departure point of Schopenhauer, neither could it strengthen the conceptual content of his philosophy, although it obviously had a very stimulating influence on its form.”

Abelsen’s article focuses on Buddhism to examine if and how much Schopenhauer’s philosophy agrees with it. Abelsen argues that even if Schopenhauer considered himself and his philosophy “Buddhaist,” his parallels with Buddhism remain “a matter of atmosphere rather than content.”

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308 Schopenhauer’s own parallels and Gestering’s analysis of them prompts Gestering to rephrase Schopenhauer’s thought in order to ask of it a crucial question: is the evil, which is responsible for life’s miseries, in the illusion or in the will? The attempt to answer this question leads further into incompatibilities between Schopenhauer’s vs. Indian concepts. Johann Joachim Gestering, German Pessimism and Indian Philosophy: A Hermeneutic Reading (Delhi: Ajanta, 1986) 59-60.

309 Gestering 35. Gestering believes that by treating India “as if it were some other European philosopher, i.e., as a source of knowledge accessible on his own level and by his own standards – but without any hermeneutic…” Schopenhauer exposes his “ethnocentrism.” Gestering 59.

310 Gestering 59-60.

311 By “atmosphere, rather than content” Abelsen means crucial differences surface if one compares Schopenhauer’s concepts with Buddhist concepts carefully, analyzing their content and connotations. For example, if one compares the “content” of the notion of suffering in Schopenhauer and in
continues and extends the comparative approach begun by Max Hecker. Meyer states that Schopenhauer did not see much difference between Hinduism and Buddhism and proceeds to determine how far Schopenhauer’s concepts can be compared to Vedānta and Buddhism, and where the parallels cannot be sustained.312 Meyer examines Indian concepts in their own contexts to ascertain and add to the compatibilities and incompatibilities between Schopenhauerian and Eastern thought.313

Hacker demonstrates Meyer’s approach in a focused manner in his article. Hacker’s article is the best and most concise demonstration of how Schopenhauer relocates quotes from Indian philosophical contexts into the context of his philosophy. Hacker focuses on Chāndogya Upaniṣad’s grand statement – ‘tat tvam asi’ (you are that) – and two verses from the thirteenth chapter of the Bhagavadgītā. Using these two examples Hacker explains how Schopenhauer changes the Indian Buddhist thought, it becomes clear that in Buddhist schools suffering is a matter of ignorance, whereas in Schopenhauer suffering is embedded metaphysically in the will, thereby making his philosophy much graver, so to speak. But the “matter of atmosphere” here is the general association of suffering with Buddhism, which Schopenhauer takes up, without content analysis. Moreover, content analysis would mean for Abelsen considering all four schools of Buddhism. Abelsen points out that the term “Buddhism” is not a homogenous one, but that it consists of different schools of thought. In his article Abelsen does such content analysis by comparing Schopenhauer’s philosophy separately in four sections with four Buddhist schools. Peter Abelsen, "Schopenhauer and Buddhism," Philosophy East & West XLIII.2 (1993): 255-78.


313 For example, Meyer argues that brahman can be compared with Wille in so far as both are the metaphysical absolute essence of the phenomena, but the crucial difference is that brahman has nothing to do with pain and suffering, while Wille, which Meyer says, can be called “dämonisch,” is the cause of all pain and suffering. Meyer 169-71. Meyer adds that salvation in the Upaniṣads is in the identity with the absolute, while in Schopenhauer it is in negation of the absolute. Meyer 147.
ontological context to fit his ethical statements. Hacker is also unique in Schopenhauer scholarship, because he further suggests that Schopenhauer’s creative appropriation of Indian concepts, which Hacker thinks as a misrepresentation of it, actually might have influenced the 19th and 20th century Indian neo-Vedāntic thinkers, particularly Vivekananda (1863-1902).

Kapani’s approach resembles that of Meyer and Hacker. Kapani argues that, although there is astonishing agreement between Schopenhauerian and Indian thought, occasionally Schopenhauer’s use of Indian concepts is not in accordance with their actual contexts. However, Kapani maintains that Schopenhauer’s change of context is certainly “pardonable,” given the limited access and knowledge of Indian sources at the time. Kapani states that Schopenhauer’s interpretation was

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314 Hacker states that Schopenhauer used these two statements and quotes from Indian thought in his own philosophy to explain ethics of non-violence and compassion. Hacker demonstrates how both the quotes in their Hindu context are not used in an ethical context but rather to show the ontological relation between the individual and the universal. He further argues that it would not only be inconsequential and irrelevant but rather illogical and sometimes unfavorable for Hindu metaphysics to have ethical implications. Wilhelm Halbfass, ed., Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedanta (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995) 275-86.

315 Hacker states that Vivekananda met with Paul Deussen in September 1896. Paul Deussen was an ardent admirer of Schopenhauer. Vivekananda learnt about, what Hacker calls, Schopenhauer’s “tat-tvam-asī-ethics” from Deussen and incorporated it in his writings. This way Schopenhauer’s interpretation, which Hacker argues is a misrepresentation of the concept, found its way back into neo-Hindu thought. Halbfass, Philology 297.

316 She investigates both Hindu and Buddhist sources to examine to what extent Schopenhauer’s use of concepts like māyā or the upaniṣadic statement of tat tvam āsi corresponds to the Indian use of those concepts in their Indian contexts. She, for example, argues that the definition of māyā in Sarvasārāpaniṣad would correspond to Schopenhauer’s use of the concept. Laxmi Kapani, “Schopenhauer et l’inde,” Journal Asiatique 290.1 (2002): 192. Or, like Hacker, she discusses how Schopenhauer translates the original ontological use of tat tvam āsi in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad into an ethical interpretation of it. Kapani 208-14.

317 Kapani 281.
an active and creative assimilation of Indian thought in his own philosophy as he tried to seek confirmation and justification of his thought in it.\textsuperscript{318}

Moira Nicholls is the first person to have raised the question whether Indian philosophy influenced Schopenhauer in formulating or shaping his own thought. Earlier scholars had agreed with Schopenhauer’s own claim that he was not influenced by Eastern thought, that he arrived at his philosophy independently of it, but found remarkable similarities between the two. Nicholls argues that between the first and the second edition of Schopenhauer’s Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung Schopenhauer’s notion of the \textit{thing-in-itself} – its knowability, its nature and the limitations of language to describe it – underwent significant shifts. Nicholls argues that Hindu and Buddhist philosophies influenced Schopenhauer to shift from his initial post-Kantian understanding of the \textit{thing-in-itself} to a position which is more aligned with Eastern thought.\textsuperscript{319}

The most recent work in this field is Berger’s examination of Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Hindu thought, in which Berger revisits Nicholls’s earlier question of influence. He claims that the concept of \textit{māyā} influenced Schopenhauer’s epistemology tremendously, which in turn shaped his metaphysics and ethics.\textsuperscript{320} Berger argues that Schopenhauer’s epistemology is not Kantian but

\textsuperscript{318} Kapani 165.

\textsuperscript{319} Nicholls 171-212.

\textsuperscript{320} Berger’s work tries to restore thematic priority to Schopenhauer’s epistemology. In Schopenhauer’s case it is often argued that his metaphysics of \textit{will} is the priority of his system, his epistemology does not necessarily lead to \textit{will} as the \textit{thing-in-itself}, but rather his moral evaluation of human character motivates the formulation of the concept of \textit{will}, which in turn leads to his ethics.
rather Kantianism seen through the eyes of Duperron (whose translation of the Upaniṣads Schopenhauer admired). Berger maintains that māyā as a theory of “falsification,” (not “illusion”), is the key that holds the parts of Schopenhauer’s philosophy together.321

Hacker, Nicholls, and Berger are those few who focus on Hindu concepts. As mentioned above, majority of scholars either discusses Eastern thought as a whole, or examine Buddhism separately. This group too includes works that deal more or exclusively with Buddhism. Along with Abelsen, as we saw above, scholars such as Wöhrle-Chon, Son and Droit focus on the notions of empathy, compassion, ethics, or the concept of nirvāṇa, which they discuss more in connection with Buddhism rather than Hinduism.322

Berger wants to restore the importance of Schopenhauer’s epistemology and make it the central thought that makes his metaphysics and ethics possible and dictates their content.

321 Berger argues, “Epistemologically, māyā entails an erroneous perception of things and a fallacious assessment of their nature; axiologically, it is the inauthentic valuation of world and other; metaphysically, it is the mere phenomenal appearance of a noumenal reality; and ethically, it leads to an unjustifiable alienation of other from self.” Berger 63.

322 Wöhrle-Chon finds that Zen experience of immediacy, “wenn Innen und Außen eins werden,” leads in Zen Buddhism as well as in Schopenhauer to sympathy and to allencompassing altruistic love. Roland Wöhrle-Chon, Empathie und Moral (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001) 109. Son focuses on Schopenhauer’s ethics and explores the relationship between compassion and resignation as two forms of denial of will to see if the insight into the nature of the will and the consequent denial of will would serve as the basis of the ethics of compassion. This analysis mostly comes from Meyer (sometimes even verbatim). Giok Son, Schopenhauers Ethik Des Mitleids Und Die Indische Philosophie: Parallelität Und Differenz (Freiburg (Breisgau): Alber, 2001) 179. Droit focuses on one aspect of comparison between Schopenhauer and Buddhism, namely “nothingness” — nirvāṇa. Droit’s book argues that Schopenhauer turned the concept of nothingness into a positive one, because he interpreted it “as the sign of an ignorance that is impossible to take away, of an insurmountable limit to our speech, and not as the affirmation of the absolute inexistence of anything.” Roger-Pol Droit, David Streight, and Pamela Vohnson, The Cult of Nothingness: The Philosophers and the Buddha (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003) 97.
Appraisal of Group 3:

Compared to the first two groups the third group is certainly more aware of the hermeneutical complexity involved in the investigations of comparative philosophy. The scholars of the third group are more critical of Schopenhauer’s interpretation as they find the differences between Schopenhauerian and Eastern thought much more crucial than the similarities. They find that the differences reveal that Schopenhauer’s philosophy and Eastern thought are conflicting in their larger contexts and essential characteristics. Even in dealing with specific quotes, such as the Upaniṣadic statement tat-tvam-asi (you are that), these scholars carefully examine the overall contexts, in which such quotes are placed. The scholars want to argue the larger context and the defining aspects of Eastern philosophies are incompatible with the metaphysics of will that is the central theme of Schopenhauer.

The approach of the third group is very fruitful, especially in case of Schopenhauer, who perpetuated the claim that his philosophy was in agreement with Eastern philosophies. However, some scholars of the third group compare Schopenhauerian philosophy with Hindu and Buddhist concepts, as understood at the time of their analysis. They do not consider whether the explanations of Hindu and Buddhist concepts they employ, especially to argue against Schopenhauer, were available and given to Schopenhauer himself at the time of his own analysis. Hence the comparative analysis of these scholars serves only the purpose of discussing the
incompatibilities between Schopenhauer and Eastern philosophy. They are forced to conclude, as Kapani writes, that Schopenhauer’s misinterpretations are “pardonable,” since at his time Schopenhauer probably would not have known more or better about Eastern philosophy.

Finally, as in the first two groups, here too most scholars discuss Hinduism and Buddhism together as one cohesive complex of Eastern thought, while some scholars give exclusive treatment to Buddhism. There are indeed scholars who separate their discussion of Hinduism from Buddhism, however, they concentrate only on certain concepts, such as māyā or tat tvam asi, rather than examining Schopenhauer’s understanding of Hinduism as a whole.

**Group 4:** Scholarship that strikes a balance between praise and criticism in favor of understanding Schopenhauer’s unique contribution to European philosophy.

This approach has been famously inaugurated and led by Wilhelm Halbfass. His significant work in the field of cross cultural encounter has countered charges of “ethno-” or “eurocentrism,” made by scholars such as Gestering, in the previous group. Halbfass insists that Schopenhauer, as any other thinker, must be understood in the context of his unique hermeneutic situation. For Halbfass “it is

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323 As a counter argument to Gestering’s comment about the association of Indian thought with pessimism, Halbfass states that “the association of Schopenhauer’s thought with ‘pessimism’ and ‘irrationalism’ has not been conducive to an appreciation of the more subtle and ambivalent elements of his approach to the Indian tradition.” Halbfass, *India and Europe* 120.
not sufficient to examine the philological “correctness” of his usage of Indian terms, or to balance the “Indian” against the “non-Indian” elements of his thought,” because such studies “cannot do justice to the philosophical and hermeneutic dimensions of Schopenhauer’s response to India.”\textsuperscript{324} Halbfass suggests that doing justice to Schopenhauer’s unique hermeneutic situation consists in recognizing that

Regardless of the adequacy of Schopenhauer’s interpretations and conceptual equations, he showed an unprecedented readiness to integrate Indian ideas into his own, European thinking and self-understanding, and to utilize them for the illustration, articulation and clarification of his own teachings and problems. With this, he combined a radical critique of some of the most fundamental presuppositions of the Judeo-Christian tradition, such as the notions of a personal God, the uniqueness of the human individual and the meaning of history, as well as the modern Western belief in the powers of the intellect, rationality, planning and progress...Schopenhauer’s doctrine of will implies a critique of the European tradition of representational and rational thinking, of calculation and planning, science and technology which foreshadows much more recent developments.\textsuperscript{325}

In addition to Halbfass, who is doubtlessly the most prominent proponent of this approach, there are others who also appreciate Schopenhauer’s amalgamation of Western and Eastern thoughts. Scholz, for example, argues that Schopenhauer is as much in dialogue with Kant, as a follower and critic, as he is in dialogue with Eastern philosophical concepts.\textsuperscript{326} J. J. Clarke, following Halbfass’s approach, also

\textsuperscript{324} Halbfass adds, “Moreover, we should not only rely on Schopenhauer’s own programmatic claims and statements, or on his explicit self-interpretation. In order to do justice to his historical and philosophical potential, it may occasionally be necessary to defend him not only against his successors and devotees, but also against his own idiosyncratic self-presentation.” Halbfass, \textit{India and Europe} 116-17.

\textsuperscript{325} Halbfass, \textit{India and Europe} 120.

\textsuperscript{326} For Scholz clearly Schopenhauer’s “Willenmetaphysik” is the constitutive and unique aspect, rather the core of Schopenhauer’s philosophy. Scholz discusses how far “Willensmetaphysik” can be
understands Schopenhauer’s interpretation within the context of its implications to European philosophy. Clarke mentions (but does not elaborate on his statement) that in Schopenhauer’s interpretation Hindu teachings were “torn loose from their cultural matrix,” textual fragments were reconstructed, and inadequate philological methodologies were employed.327 Yet, Clarke admires Schopenhauer because “Schopenhauer’s own understanding of Indian philosophy, however inadequate, is an outstanding representative of the orientalist aspiration to use Eastern thought in pursuit of a fundamental rethinking of the Western intellectual tradition.”328 Chetan Bhatt also asks that Schopenhauer’s interpretation be taken not as “uncomplicated identifications” but as a “more complex and fruitful expansion and negotiation with Hinduism and Buddhism through his own philosophy.”329

As in the first three groups it is again to be noted here that here, too, scholars discuss Hinduism and Buddhism together to examine how his unique hermeneutic situation affected his interpretation of Eastern thought in general.

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327 Clarke 69.

328 Clarke 69.

329 “Negotiation” seems to be Bhatt’s key word on Schopenhauer’s comparative philosophizing, but Bhatt does not actually go into the nature and scope of such negotiations. Bhatt 50-51.
Appraisal of Group 4:

The fourth group tries to reconcile the arguments of group two and three by balancing praise and criticism of Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Indian thought. However, this group ends up being more aligned with the first group, with those who discuss his philosophy in the European context. That is because this group of scholars suggests comparative analysis is not sufficient, as Schopenhauer has to be ultimately understood from the European perspective. The scholars of this group conclude and urge that Schopenhauer’s “negotiations” with Indian thought be appreciated for what they meant to European philosophy: as a serious challenge to and a revision of European idealism and rationalism.

Those scholars of the first group, who examine Schopenhauer from a strictly European perspective, also reach this same conclusion without discussing Indian concepts at all. In other words, they do not need to discuss his use of Indian thought to conclude that his philosophy poses a challenge to Idealism and rationalism of the time. That is because they argue that Schopenhauer’s challenge or revision of European idealism arises out of his ‘metaphysics of will.’ It is the concept of will, the irrationality rooted in metaphysics, that challenges the rationalism of Schopenhauer’s time. This metaphysics of will is a uniquely Schopenhauerian concept. Will, as a metaphysical principle, is neither found in Hinduism nor in Buddhism. It is not particularly necessary to investigate Schopenhauer’s use of
Hinduism and Buddhism to realize that his concept of *will* challenged European rationalism. The scholars of the fourth group, then, do indeed analyze Schopenhauer’s use of Indian thought, but eventually do away with the significance of such analysis to reach their conclusions.
1.3 My Contribution to the scholarship and the field:

My research neither intends to determine if Schopenhauer’s interpretation was “accurate,” nor if his philosophy is compatible with Indian thought. I critically analyze the nature of Schopenhauer’s appropriation and creative assimilation of Indian thought in his philosophy to reveal the motivations and implications of his use.

In my research I concentrate on Schopenhauer’s understanding and use of Hinduism. I am aware, as Abelsen says, that Hinduism is not a homogenous term, that there are several branches, sects and schools of Hinduism which argue against each other, occasionally on key philosophical issues. Schopenhauer himself uses three terms – Hinduism, Brahmanism and Vedānta. He is aware that these three terms are in increasing order of specificity, and he is well informed that Vedānta is

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330 Hinduism is a comprehensive term, which finds its roots in the ancient Indus Valley and encompasses its development from Vedism of second millennium BCE to current religious and philosophical thought and practices, schools and sects. Vedism refers to the religious practices of the Indus valley communities, who regarded the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, Āranyakas and Upaniṣads as sacred texts. Brahmanism is the later development of Vedism, which carried out a systematization of ritualistic practices and which included more texts in their scriptures, such as the Dharmasūtras, Dharmaśāstras, non-Vedic myths of the Purāṇas and the epics of Rāmaṇyaṇa and Mahābhārata. However Brahmanism accepted the earlier Vedic texts as the “revealed” or “heard” scriptures. Vedānta, literally Veda-anta, i.e., the end of the Vedas, usually refers to the Upaniṣads, Brahmaśūtras and the Bhagavadgītā, claiming to contain the culmination and all knowledge of the Vedas. Vedānta is also the name of an orthodox school of Indian philosophy, with sub-schools of its own. Vedānta school claims to explain and elucidate the philosophy contained in the above mentioned Vedānta scriptures. See Jan Heesterman, “Vedism and Brahmanism,” Encyclopedia of Religion, 2005 ed. Gale Virtual Reference Library, Gale, Ohio State University Libraries, Columbus, 10 Mar. 2007 <http://find.galegroup.com.proxy.lib.ohiostate.edu/gvrl/infomark.do?&contentSet=EBKS&typ e=retrieve&tabID=T001&prodId=GVRL&docId=CX3424503260&source=gale&userGroupName= colu44332&version=1.0>.
a school of Indian philosophy. Yet, he uses these three terms interchangeably mostly to mean the philosophy, which he believes is contained primarily in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads and related texts such as the Bhagavadgītā. Within Vedānta, as will be clear later, Schopenhauer is inclined to draw on the school of non-duality, namely, Advaita Vedānta, the school that proclaims brahman as the undivided universal principle and the non-duality between the individual self (ātman) with the universal self (brahman). However, along with such specifications as Brahmanism and Vedānta, Schopenhauer understands and designates the relevant references, be they epistemological or metaphysical or ethical, as Hindu concepts or notions. That is to say, he presents his explanations of Indian religion and philosophy (excluding Buddhism), as Hinduism. In my research I concentrate on what Schopenhauer understands and presents as the basic tenets of Hinduism.

As I showed above, some scholars have given exclusive attention to Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Buddhism; however, very few have exclusively handled Schopenhauer’s use of Hinduism. Scholars have subsumed Hinduism and Buddhism under one complex of “Indian” or “Eastern” thought. Moreover, as we saw above, scholars, especially of the first and second group, who agree with and repeat Schopenhauer’s statements, have themselves blurred together Hindu and Buddhist concepts. Most scholars of the third group have also discussed Hinduism and Buddhism side by side, while some have focused on Buddhism exclusively. Those few who examine Hinduism exclusively have chosen only certain aspects or concepts of Hinduism for investigation. I intend to provide a coherent and complete
picture of Schopenhauer’s understanding and use of Hinduism that has been lacking in the scholarship. I present my analysis of Schopenhauer’s creative assimilation of Hinduism in the following way:

1. In order to concentrate on Hinduism I analyze Schopenhauer’s references to Hindu religion, philosophy, and mythology and extract a cohesive picture and structure of what Schopenhauer understood and presented as Hinduism. I demonstrate that Schopenhauer understood Hinduism in terms of a threefold structure of basic fundamental notions. I call them 1. The physical world and its particular entities; 2. The metaphysical universal principle; and 3. The non-duality of the particular with the universal.

2. I explain that this threefold structure is prompted by the precepts of Schopenhauer’s philosophy. In fact, this threefold structure provides a reciprocal restructuring in Schopenhauer’s own philosophy.

3. I demonstrate that to assimilate and integrate Hindu religion and philosophy in his own thought Schopenhauer selectively read and quoted his sources, isolated quotes from their Hindu contexts, and inserted them in his own contexts. I also reveal the discrepancies that result from Schopenhauer’s recontextualizing of Hindu thought, that affect his use of it and his own philosophy.

1. Unlike Hegel, who devotes separate sections to his treatment of Hinduism, Schopenhauer places references to Hindu thought throughout his work interweaving
them with Buddhism and with his own philosophy. Hence it becomes challenging to piece the scattered references together to understand how Schopenhauer conceived Hindu philosophy as a whole. Scholars have thus far proposed differing number of aspects that Schopenhauer identified in Indian thought: Hecker discusses seventeen aspects that he compares between Schopenhauerian, Hindu and Buddhist philosophies: idealism, empirical reality, metaphysics, atheism, the absolute, identity of particular with absolute, psychology, intellect and perception, body, pessimism, moral condition of the world, freedom of will, nothingness, asceticism, salvation and its process, women, and animals. Mockrauer states that there are eight affinities between Schopenhauer’s and Indian thought: “1. der illusionistische Idealismus, 2. der Gedanke der All-Einheit, 3. die Beziehung von transscendentalem Subjekt des Erkennens und Wille zum Leben, 4. die Palingenesie, 5. das Mitleid mit allen lebenden Wesen, 6. die Askese, als die letzte Stufe der Ethik, 7. die erlösende Verneinung des Willens zum Leben, 8. das ‘Nichts.’”

Glasenapp identifies twelve Vedāntic and Buddhist aspects and two fundamental ideas that he believes correspond to Schopenhauer’s thought. They include aspects, such as world and life as pain, asceticism as means to salvation, rebirth as an expression of moral law, beginning and endlessness of time, and the ideas of *ahimsā* and *śūnyatā*. Hubscher’s similar list consists of ten aspects. Meyer presents five topics that he sees interpreted in Schopenhauer, which he describes as

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331 Mockrauer 9.

332 Glasenapp 70-76.
“Themen indischer Religionen und Philosophien im Rezeptionsversuch Schopenhauers.” They are “Pessimismus, das Leiden und die Befreiung,” “Brahman und Māyā,” “Mythologie,” “Metempsychose oder Palingenesie,” and “Askese und Entsagung aufgrund der Erkenntnis.”333 While the above scholars identify varying number of aspects in Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Indian thought, some scholars, such as Hacker or Berger, concentrate on one or two concepts or statements, such as the concept of māyā or the philosophical statement of tat tvam asi.

Scholars, who list varying number of aspects, do not provide a system or an explanation that justifies their number and choice of aspects. These given aspects also do not display a particular structure or progression in their order. Often within one list of one scholar, two or more aspects conceptually or thematically overlap, which could be subsumed under one category. Four of Mockrauer’s eight aspects – Mitleid, Askese, Verneinung des Willens, and “Nichts” could be subsumed under at least two aspects, if not one. Glasenapp divides the ‘beginning – and endless world’ into at least two points, which could be discussed as one point; he also separates ‘palingenesie’ and ‘rebirth’ which, too, need to be brought together. Hubscher’s list is similar to that of Glasenapp. Halbfass makes fragmented mentions of Schopenhauer’s interpretations of Indian concepts and notions. Meyer and Son put “brahman and māyā” together, whereas, I believe, these concepts need to be discussed separately. But then Meyer separates “Pessimismus, das Leiden und die

333 Meyer 130,149, 179, 190, 208.
Befreiung” and “Askese und Entsagung aufgrund der Erkenntnis,” while these aspects clearly belong together. Meyer also separates “Mythologie” and “Metempsychose oder Palingenesie;” while Schopenhauer himself views metempsychosis as part of mythology. Kapani devotes most of her analysis to the three ways of salvation; Hacker concentrates on tat-tvam-asi, while Nicholls and Scholz pay attention to brahman, and Berger discusses māyā. All these lists of aspects lack conceptual consistency by mixing together abstract philosophical concepts with myths, mythology, and religious practices.

Schopenhauer scholarship, thus, lacks a clear and conceptually well-structured picture of how Schopenhauer understood Hindu thought. My research provides that conceptual structure, within which all aspects of Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy can be subsumed and contained. I argue that Schopenhauer identified and understood Hindu religion and philosophy under three fundamental rubrics: 1. the physical world and its particular entities; 2. the metaphysical universal principle; and 3. the non-duality of the particular with the universal.

2. This threefold structure is dictated by the precepts of Schopenhauer’s own philosophy. In fact, this threefold structure provides this same level of conceptual abstraction in which to understand Schopenhauer’s philosophy. Schopenhauer’s philosophy is said to include four “parts:” epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics and ethics. However, there is disagreement among scholars as to which of these
parts are crucial or even necessary to define Schopenhauer’s philosophy or how these four fit together. Hauskeller believes the ethical dimension is the whole purpose of Schopenhauer’s philosophy, and it carries all the other parts, while Fromm argues that Schopenhauer’s statement is contained in his metaphysical pessimism.\textsuperscript{334} Scholars such as Copleston and Atwell maintain that Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of \textit{will} does not flow from his epistemology, but rather stems from his evaluation of the human condition.\textsuperscript{335} Berger demonstrates that Schopenhauer’s epistemology does have thematic priority. Kapani does not mention epistemology and states that Schopenhauer’s philosophy has three parts: aesthetics, metaphysics and ethics.\textsuperscript{336} Most scholars who examine the Indian component in Schopenhauer pay little attention to Schopenhauer’s aesthetics; they seem to believe that Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Indian notions pertains only to the other three parts; yet, Schopenhauer actually does quote the \textit{Upaniṣads} in his aesthetic context. Trying to contain Schopenhauer’s philosophy in these four parts also leaves loose ends: Schopenhauer’s discussion of Plato’s Ideas in the aesthetic context comes in conflict with his metaphysics of \textit{will} as \textit{Ding-an-sich}.\textsuperscript{337} Schopenhauer’s notion of asceticism is deeply related with metaphysics and ethics, but it cannot be subsumed under them. Hence, scholars discuss asceticism separately from ethics.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{334} Hauskeller 19, Fromm 77-79.
\item \textsuperscript{335} Berger xvi.
\item \textsuperscript{336} Kapani 165.
\item \textsuperscript{337} Magee 239.
\end{itemize}
The threefold structure – physical world and particular entities, metaphysical universal principle, and the non-duality of the two – in which I claim Schopenhauer understands Hindu religion and philosophy, provides a higher level of abstraction than the above four parts of his philosophy. The threefold structure provides a more organized way to analyze Schopenhauer’s own philosophy. In fact, this is a reciprocal restructuring: It is through the understanding of his philosophy that the threefold structure of his interpretation of Hinduism emerges, and it is through the analysis of his interpretation of Indian thought that Schopenhauer’s philosophy gains a threefold structure. Hence, both these philosophies and their reciprocal relation are to be understood not in terms of epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, and ethics, but in terms of more abstract notions of the particular, the universal, and the non-duality of the two.

3. I proceed to examine Schopenhauer’s references to Hindu religion and philosophy closely. I examine their Indian context and the context in which Schopenhauer’s sources present them, as well as the contexts in which Schopenhauer situates them. I examine how far the meanings, connotations and contexts of Hindu philosophical concepts get appropriated in this process. My examination demonstrates that Schopenhauer selectively read and quoted from Indian texts, detached quotes from their Indian contexts, and inserted them in different contexts of his philosophy. Schopenhauer’s own philosophy prompted and dictated his interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy. Scholars have
rightfully argued that, contrary to what Schopenhauer himself believed, Schopenhauer’s philosophy was probably not fully formulated as he approached Indian thought, and that Indian thought may very well have influenced Schopenhauer’s concepts and their revisions. This argument questions the bifurcation of Schopenhauer’s own philosophy and Indian thought; it also raises hermeneutic questions about the tension between influence and preconceptions. However, I argue, that in Schopenhauer’s case both influence and preconception may coexist. The possibility of influence does not discard his selective reading; he may indeed have been influenced by the Indian concepts he sought and selected to incorporate in his thought. As he intended to establish affiliation between his philosophy and Eastern thought, he chose concepts and attributes of concepts that would fit his own notions and disregarded the attributes that would not. Moreover, he recontextualized certain quotes to illustrate his conceptual transitions from metaphysics to aesthetics, from metaphysics to ethics, and from ethics to asceticism. He recontextualized Hindu quotes also to argue that his philosophy drew the same conclusions as Eastern thought.

My analysis obviously challenges assertions such as Sedlar’s, who claimed that Schopenhauer “showed notably more respect for his Indian sources, and did not distort them in the interest of a preconceived scheme.”338 But I also contribute to those scholars like Hacker, who have done such contextual analysis before: I add

338 Sedlar 229.
significantly to the number of examples, illustrations and explanations of Schopenhauer’s appropriation of Hindu religious and philosophical concepts.

Moreover, and more importantly, I show that these are not just “misunderstandings” in Schopenhauer’s interpretation. Contrary to what many scholars, including Kapani, believe, I demonstrate that it is not the case of inadequate information. I demonstrate that within the sources available to Schopenhauer there was considerable amount of information elaborating on the meanings, attributes, and contexts of the concepts he used. Despite the given information, Schopenhauer often molded and recontextualized them to fit them in his own philosophy.

Scholars such as Willson, Murti, or Inden have discussed the mythical, seductive, and exotic “image of India” in general, but they have not explored the image of Hindu religion and philosophy in particular. With the example of Schopenhauer my study examines that particular image, demonstrates how it was created, and provides a structure of elements that were viewed as the fundamental tenents of Hindu religion and philosophy.

My study also provides a different perspective to the postcolonial scholars, who do not devote much attention to Schopenhauer. They do not include Schopenhauer in their analyses, because he appears not to fit their paradigm: Schopenhauer did not look at India as an exotic and savage other; he endorsed and embraced Indian thought by drawing parallels with his own. My study examines
this opposite image (not other but *kin*) that Schopenhauer created and demonstrates that such an image is as much a result of selective representation as was the image of India as primitive and exotic.
Section 2

Precepts of Schopenhauer’s Philosophy

Here I briefly summarize the basic precepts of Schopenhauer’s philosophy. First I discuss the main aspects of Schopenhauer’s thought, accompanied by quotes from his writings. This is followed by a discussion of how Schopenhauer scholars, who study his philosophy as a whole, interpret these basic points and appraise their implications. This section is not merely a summary of Schopenhauer’s thought; it gives the threefold conceptual framework that emerges out of Schopenhauer’s philosophy, which is necessarily and directly applied to his interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy.

In Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung Schopenhauer intends to combine various philosophical fields under one single idea. He argues to have brought together epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics and ethics under his single grand thesis of the world as will and representation.

The very first sentence of his work opens his epistemological inquiry:

Die Welt ist meine Vorstellung:” – dies ist eine Wahrheit, welche in Beziehung auf jedes lebende und erkennende Wesen gilt;…Es wird ihm dann deutlich und gewiß, daß er keine Sonne kennt und keine Erde; sondern immer nur ein Auge, das eine Sonne sieht, eine Hand, die eine Erde fühlt; daß die Welt, welche ihn umgibt, nur als Vorstellung daist, d.h. durchweg nur in Beziehung auf ein Anderes, das Vorstellende, welches er selbst ist…Alles, was irgend zur Welt gehört und gehören kann, ist unausweichbar
mit diesem Bedingteyn durch das Subjekt behaftet, und ist nur für das Subjekt da. Die Welt ist Vorstellung.\footnote{Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung} I 29.}

What does this mean? This means that the way the world appears is only a picture, a representation of the one who perceives it. He is the subject who perceives the world; the world is the object of his perception. He perceives the world as being constituted by many individual things and beings separate and yet related to each other by time, space and causality. But the world appears that way not because the world is in fact ontologically that way, but because the subject cannot perceive and understand it any other way. The basic epistemological premise of Schopenhauer’s thought, which bases itself on Kant’s philosophy, is that the knowing subject has an \textit{a priori} apparatus in his \textit{Verstand} or faculty of understanding. This \textit{a priori} apparatus is the categories of time, space and causality.\footnote{Kant actually argues that time and space are the \textit{a priori} forms of sensibility in addition to the twelve categories of understanding. But Schopenhauer argues that all of them can be reduced to three main categories, namely time, space and causality. Magee 103-04n.} What the subject’s senses perceive in vision, smell, sound, touch, and taste is only the raw data. The categories of space, time, and causality organize this data by essentially separating and yet connecting objects with each other. The world appears to the subject as made of individual beings and objects, characterized, thus, by multiplicity. The knowledge of the phenomenal world that the subject acquires is necessarily mediated through the filters of time, space, and causality. Schopenhauer calls the world, mediated through these filters, the world as \textit{representation}. Because
these are the perceiving subject’s categories which mediate the data and present it in a certain way, it is *his representation*. It is not the unmediated world as it is in itself, it is mediated through the *a priori* filters in the subject’s faculty of understanding (*Verstand*); it is how the subject represents the world to himself; in Schopenhauer’s terms, it is *die Welt als Vorstellung*.

Schopenhauer, like Kant, is no extreme idealist or solipsist: he does not propose that the subject spins the world of objects out of himself, or that the *self* is the only thing that exists or can be known. For Schopenhauer, an important aspect of his epistemology is the correlativity of subject and object. There is no object without a subject that apprehends it and no subject without an object of apprehension. Neither precedes the other; they are simultaneous.\(^\text{341}\)

So is the world anything beyond *Vorstellung*? If it were only *representation* then it would pass by us like “wesenloser Traum” or “gespensterhaftes

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\(^{341}\) Magee 109-10. Magee elaborates on this point: The word *Vorstellung* is carefully chosen by Schopenhauer, in order to set himself apart from any connotations other terms might bring, that had been used by other philosophers. *Vorstellung* brings together subject and object. There cannot be one without the other. Since Descartes, Schopenhauer argued, there had been a bifurcation in nature between subject and object. They were considered entities independent of each other, which then gave rise to problems such as how a subject can reproduce the object within itself and if and how the subject could possibly have any degree of accuracy. Locke, the empiricist, tried to solve the problem from the object side, arguing that there are objects which cause their representations in the subject. Fichte went the opposite way and started with *ego* to argue it is *ego* that spins the world of external objects out of itself. In both extremes there is a causal connection between the two, one of which exists independently of experience. But for Schopenhauer, causal connection has to be within experience, hence subject and object had to be correlative and simultaneous; nothing came before the other. For more elaboration on this also see Atwell 38. On a related note Dale Jacquette comments that Schopenhauer is “more empirical than most empiricists, at least where the world as representation is concerned, for he is not only or primarily an empiricist. He is also more transcendental than most transcendentalists, because he is not only or primarily a transcendentalist.” Jacquette 262.
Luftgebilde,” and it would not be worth much of our consideration. But the world is certainly something beyond representation. If the world is not the way it is represented, how is it in itself? Behind this representation is, what Kant refers to as, the Ding-an-sich. A thing, an object, as it appears to us, is representation, in the confines of time and space and causality. But these categories lie within the subject, and we cannot know whether they pertain to the object. The object outside of the subject’s confines of a priori categories is what the object is for itself, in itself, i.e., the thing-in-itself. According to Kant the knowing subject, by default, cannot go beyond the a priori categories, and hence he cannot ever grasp what the thing-in-itself is. The nature of thing-in-itself lies beyond the limitations of the subject’s understanding. This thing-in-itself cannot be understood.

This is where Schopenhauer departs from Kant. Schopenhauer believes that his own greatest philosophical achievement is to philosophize on what this thing-in-itself is. This noumenon behind the phenomenon is what Schopenhauer terms the world as will:


342 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 141.
Schopenhauer argues that the *thing-in-itself* can be reached, not through understanding, not through reason, not through intellect, but through intuition, through immediate self-awareness. This is because the subject is not merely a knowing subject (like a “geflügelter Engelskopf ohne Leib”), but rooted in the world as an active subject with a body. If I, as subject, look at myself, I can see that the body can be an object of perception, i.e., body and its actions are given to space, time, and causality. But beyond the body I am aware that I am much more than the spatial, temporal, causal, i.e., phenomenal body. In my most intimate, immediate experience, “I am also aware of myself from within as a self-moving, active being whose overt perceptible behavior directly expresses my will.” That is, the subject is aware that he is will, which expresses itself in the actions of the body. But at the same time his will and the actions of his body are not two different things. The body is the “objectification” of will. It is the same thing seen from two different perspectives. From one perspective the world is *representation*, from another it is will.

If the subject can experience his most immediate essential nature as will and the body as the objectification of that will, then it can be deduced that everything

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and everyone, all nature is such an objectification of will. As Atwell puts it, I have
to understand nature from myself, not understand me from nature. In other words
the key to understanding nature is self understanding.345

The metaphysical basis of the world is not a rational or moral principle; it is,
in fact, will. Will does not serve reason or intellect, intellect serves will. Will is a
blind, striving, irrational force, which has no other design or purpose than gratifying
itself. In its objectification in nature every individual, living or non-living, and the
world as a whole is serving the will by struggling to exist and to continue to exist.

So sehn wir in der Natur überall Streit, Kampf, und Wechsel des Sieges, und
werden eben darin weiterhin die dem Willen wesentliche Entzweigung mit
sich selbst deutlicher erkennen. Jede Stufe der Objektivation des Willens
macht der andern die Materie, den Raum, die Zeit streitig. Beständig muß
die beharrende Materie die Form wechseln, indem, am Leitfaden der
Kausalität, mechanische, physische, chemische, organische Erscheinungen,
sich gierig zum Hervortreten drängend, einander die Materie entreißen, da

345 Atwell x.

346 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 148-49.
jede ihre Idee offenbaren will. Durch die gesammte Natur läßt sich dieser Streit verfolgen, ja, sie besteht eben wieder nur durch ihn.\textsuperscript{347}

The nature of this metaphysical singular \textit{will} is eternal striving.

Schopenhauer also often terms this striving \textit{will} as “Wille zum Leben,” because what the \textit{will} wants, even in the inorganic world, is ultimately life or existence as its own \textit{representation}: “da was der Wille will immer das Leben ist, eben weil dasselbe nichts weiter, als die Darstellung jenes Wollens für die Vorstellung ist.”\textsuperscript{348} This ever striving \textit{will} is what is common to, inherent in, and at the core of all phenomena.

Applied to the human condition, the “Wille zum Leben” gives rise to desires and, owing to its very nature, can never be fully satisfied. Willing or wishing gives rise to pain. The attainment of the wish is short-lived, which is replaced by more wish and need. Or it is replaced by boredom, which is equally painful.\textsuperscript{349} Different desires and desires of different individuals are also mutually exclusive, in the sense that the satisfaction of one requires conflict with another. This whole predicament is the cause of suffering and of oppression of one by another.

\textit{Will} causes desire; desire causes suffering. So to end suffering, one has to find a way to quiet the \textit{will}. Schopenhauer argues that there are three ways to quiet

\textsuperscript{347} Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I} 197.

\textsuperscript{348} Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I} 324

\textsuperscript{349} Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I} 370
the *will*: 1. by genuine appreciation of a work of art (aesthetics), 2. by compassion towards others (ethics), 3. by complete denial of *will* (asceticism).

In aesthetic appreciation of a work of art, Schopenhauer claims that the object of aesthetic appreciation rises above the temporal, spatial, and causal world and displays the pure *idea*, as Plato called it. Correspondingly the subject also rises above time, space, and causality and becomes pure *will*-less subject of aesthetic experience. But this aesthetic sensibility is rare among people and short-lived.

In the realm of ethics the *will*-less elevated state above suffering is more lastingly accessible. When one realizes that every individual is the objectification of the same *will*, when one gains insight into the fact that the innermost essence of everyone and everything is the same, when the oppressor recognizes that his *will* is the same as that of the one being oppressed, when the oppressor realizes that if he inflicts pain on another, it is the same as inflicting pain on himself, then he does not inflict pain upon another:

Der Quäler und der Gequälte sind Eines. Jener irrt, indem er sich der Quaal, dieser, indem er sich der Schuld nicht theilhaft glaubt. Giengen ihnen Beiden die Augen auf, so würde der das Leid verhängt erkennen, daß er in

350 Scholars have wondered about the status of platonic *ideas* in Schopenhauer’s entire system. Magee, for example, finds the placement of platonic *ideas* rather odd: they are not phenomenon, because they are abstractions not subject to time and space. But they are not *Ding-an-sich* either, because their existence is rooted in phenomenon, and in and through specific phenomena at that. Hence, Magee argues that Schopenhauer does not really know how to fit them in his system and ends up adding an unnecessary layer to *will* and *representation*. Magee 239. Young responds, “The point of introducing Plato’s terminology is not to add a new layer to Schopenhauer’s account of what there is, but rather to emphasize, contra Plato, that art, as well as philosophy, can provide valuable, that is universal, knowledge of existence. Beauty in art is bringing forth what is universal in the particular. But it only does so implicitly whereas philosophy does it explicitly.” Young 156.
Allem lebt, was auf der weiten Welt Quaal leidet... und der Gequälte würde einsehen, daß alles Böse, das auf der Welt verübt wird, oder je ward, aus jenem Willen fließt, der auch sein Wesen ausmacht...  

Egoism, which is the product of epistemological individuation of the world and of the striving nature of the will, disappears. This results in compassion as ethical behavior and consequently less suffering.

But in the third way of asceticism the insight into the nature of will and the resulting elevation above suffering is ultimate. The one who gains genuine and deep insight into the nature of will realizes how it strives, and causes desire and suffering. With that deep insight, he is so appalled by will that he denies the will (will-to-live) completely, renounces all desire and leads an ascetic existence:


351 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 419.

352 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 448-49.
In the central idea of the world as *representation* and the world as *will*, Schopenhauer combines epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, and ethics: the temporal, spatial, and causal world as we know it (epistemology) is *Erscheinung*, phenomenon, *representation*. Behind it (metaphysics), the *Ding-an-sich*, is the *will*. *Will* is eternally striving and gives rise to desire and suffering. To rise above suffering one needs to experience *will*-less existence. *Will*-less existence can be facilitated by the act of appreciation of a genuine work of art (aesthetics). But the genuine insight into *will* as the one essence of everything and everyone, leads to ethical behavior (ethics) and finally to ascetic existence.

The scholarship on Schopenhauer’s philosophy (which studies Schopenhauer’s philosophy in general but does not necessarily examine its connections to Indian thought) agrees and praises Schopenhauer for putting forth some extraordinary ideas.\(^{353}\) Atwell believes that Schopenhauer was indeed not a child of his time: he gave no importance to history in the realm of philosophy, demoted reason from dominance, planted experience based, pessimistic portrait of

\(^{353}\)Jacquette, for example, has great admiration for Schopenhauer’s “rich and beautiful works of genius,” his remarkable ability to provide one single metaphysical system as a powerful answer to everything from physical to biological to human social questions. He admires the analytical rigor of Schopenhauer’s philosophy, its strength and flexibility to accommodate and explain everything from science to aesthetics. He resorts to Schopenhauer to understand even today why the world is divided into opposite camps. He praises Schopenhauer’s clarity and consistency and constancy of one single thought throughout his life and philosophy. Jacquette 262-65. Other scholars disagree with Jacquette, especially regarding the strength, clarity and consistency of Schopenhauer’s philosophy.
the world in the middle of speculative idealism.\textsuperscript{354} Schopenhauer’s ideas continued and yet questioned the trends of philosophy of his time and anticipated much that was to come. This is because “[t]he central task Schopenhauer set himself was to incorporate both the idealist conception of the subject as the non-worldly focal point of objective experience, and a vision of the self as a material, organic product of nature, within one all-embracing metaphysical system.”\textsuperscript{355} Schopenhauer expounded upon Kantian Idealism, which made a distinction between how things appear to us and how they are in themselves. He restated that the knowledge of the world we have is ‘ideal,’ i.e., constructed as and in our own idea. He argued that there are \textit{a priori} categories of time, space, and causality in our own faculty of understanding that we impose on the sense perception. He recognized that we are “wedded” to these categories and to the structure that they create for us. But Kant was satisfied is saying \textit{that} we are “wedded to this scheme,” Schopenhauer proceeded to ask \textit{why}.\textsuperscript{356} For him, the answer lay in recognizing that we are not just “erkennende” beings, subjects of knowledge, but “handelnde,” active beings, subjects of action.\textsuperscript{357} It is for this aspect, for the action, motivated by the \textit{will}, that

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Atwell} Atwell ix.
\bibitem{Janaway} Janaway 3.
\bibitem{Gardiner} Gardiner, \textit{Schopenhauer} 302.
\bibitem{One} One could say that here Schopenhauer brings together Kant’s \textit{pure reason} and \textit{practical reason}, \textit{will} being the regulative transcendental category for the latter. One could also bring in Fichte’s \textit{Tathandlung}, in which the \textit{I} acts, in that it posits itself. Fichte combines the theoretical and the practical side of the \textit{I}, as the subject of knowledge and the subject of action respectively and this way brings together knowing and willing. Fichte, too, argues for a transcendental willing to explain the codependence of knowledge and will. However, the difference between Kant and Fichte on the one

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the intellect, the mind, and its categories are structured the way they are. In other words, the categories exist, and they structure the world in a particular way to make it convenient for us to act, to assert the will.

Schopenhauer, thus, departed (both in the sense of taking something as a starting point and then moving away from it) from his Kantian background. He dispelled intellect or reason from its status of being the absolute concept or the guiding principle explaining and dictating the working of the world and specifically of human nature. In order to have a deep understanding of human nature with all its complexities Schopenhauer sought other ways than rational. “[T]o reach a true understanding of what we are it was necessary… that we should see how deeply we are involved in the living dynamic unconscious processes of nature…” Instead of rationality, Schopenhauer declared that an unconscious blind force was what drove the universe. He made an irrational force into a metaphysical principle, which explained human behavior, conflict, and suffering. Consequently with the denial of the same metaphysical principle he explained morality and ethics.

hand, and Schopenhauer on the other, lies in the ethical aspect. For both Kant and Fichte this transcendental will is inherently connected with the moral good; whereas for Schopenhauer will is connected with the exact opposite. In fact, in Schopenhauer’s case, will has to be denied for morally good action to occur.

Ironically this was the direct “antithesis” of Hegel’s philosophy, enormously popular at that time, which declared that the absolute spirit, objectifying itself in the world, is a rational principle.

Gardiner, Schopenhauer 302.

This was to become the impetus for much of the thought that followed, including Nietzsche’s take on the will to power and Freud’s centrality of the unconscious to human activity. As Janaway puts it, there are things close to 20th century than to first half of 19th in Schopenhauer’s philosophy: absence of god, unconscious drive, pessimism about possibility of human progress, and absurd and strenuous predicament of individual subject. Janaway 13.

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Thus, as Janaway argues, the unity of Schopenhauer’s thought “is a unity built out of tensions carefully sustained: self as subject – self as object, self as knower and actor, rational center of consciousness and blind organism.”\(^{361}\) Atwell reiterates this more radically by stating that Schopenhauer was a “rationalist and irrationalist, moralist and amoralist, metaphysician and antimetaphysician.”\(^{362}\) Schopenhauer was a rationalist in his epistemology, irrationalist in his metaphysics, moralist in his ethics, amoralist in his inevitable metaphysical basis of vice, metaphysician in his will, and antimetaphysician in the denial of will.

Schopenhauer’s philosophy is also often characterized as deeply pessimistic. From its metaphysical rigor it turns into “lament on the human condition.”\(^{363}\) Suffering defines the human condition. If the metaphysical principle, of which the world is an objectification, is itself irrational, striving, and arousing conflict, pain and suffering; that is, if the nuomenon behind the phenomenon is itself the cause of conflict and pain, then the world is essentially rooted in suffering and misery. In this regard we are supposed to “abhor” the metaphysical reality, not “wonder or venerate” it.\(^{364}\) Copleston describes this as Schopenhauer’s “metaphysical pessimism” and adds that “if a man held the philosophy of Schopenhauer, he would

\(^{361}\) Janaway 358.

\(^{362}\) Atwell 183.

\(^{363}\) Janaway 8.

\(^{364}\) Janaway 8.
be debarred from any…optimistic outlook…true happiness would be an illusion, life a mockery, a tragico-comedy.”

However, it is important that, unlike Magee, Atwell mentions that Schopenhauer proposed a solution to the condition of suffering. Part of Schopenhauer’s important insight has to do with proposing a way to reconcile with the misery of life. This “possibility of salvation” constitutes “one bright spot” in Schopenhauer’s philosophy. This possibility is open despite will as the metaphysical basis of suffering. This possibility can only exist by denying the metaphysical basis, i.e., denying the will. Magee here raises the objection that, given Schopenhauer’s philosophy, denial of will should not be possible: if the mind is a creation of the will, created to serve the will, mind cannot control and direct will into denial.

As can be seen in Magee’s criticism, scholars lament the problems that permeate Schopenhauer’s system. Conflicts and confusions arise in Schopenhauer’s

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365 Copleston 74-75. Copleston does not agree with Schopenhauer that happiness is impossible for man. Copleston believes that, if at all it is impossible, it is not because of the reasons Schopenhauer gives, but because man is too great to be satisfied with finite good. Copleston 103-04. On a related note Schulz elaborates on Schopenhauer’s notion of hope: Schopenhauer criticizes hope as a wish mistaken for probability. Hope is a kind of consolation or a daydream; it plays with the intellect, reason, and memory: it makes the things that are not true, probable, or even possible seem true. But hope and fear are very closely connected. This means that the one who has lost all hope has also lost all fear. He is free both from hope and from fear. If elimination of suffering is the goal, fear has to be eliminated, which implies that hope must also be eliminated. Giving up hope is to save oneself from future pain of disappointment. Schulz 59-63, 73-76.

366 Atwell 184.

367 Magee 242.
system as he uses Kantian vocabulary to go beyond, indeed, to subvert Kant.³⁶⁸

Atwell warns that Schopenhauer’s philosophy is not confused by itself; the cause of
the confusion is the fact that both Schopenhauer and his critics rely upon Kantian
vocabulary. There is no way to avoid it other than looking deeper into
Schopenhauer’s radically different assertions.³⁶⁹ Gardiner emphatically suggests
that Schopenhauer was too committed to Kantian Idealism for his own system to be
solid. His adherence to Kant compelled him to accept the implications of the limits
of knowledge. Consequently he had to struggle to expand the boundaries of possible
experience and possible knowledge. In Gardiner’s own words:

> It would be easy to maintain that, had Schopenhauer not committed himself
so unreservedly to the implications of Kantian Idealism, and had he also
adopted a more flexible view of the function of human knowledge and of the
potentialities and resources of ordinary thought, he would have been able to
express his dissatisfaction with customary ways of describing and
interpreting our experience in a less puzzling and vulnerable form…³⁷⁰

One of the most prominent criticisms of Schopenhauer’s philosophy
concerns his characterization of will. Initially, again, because Schopenhauer uses
Kantian vocabulary, he characterizes will as Ding-an-sich, the (ultimate) reality
underlying the appearance that is the phenomenon. If will is the metaphysical
absolute, the ultimate reality, where does one stand when one (e.g., the ascetic) has

³⁶⁸ Janaway 360.
³⁶⁹ Atwell 184.
³⁷⁰ Gardiner, Schopenhauer 301-3.
successfully denied the will? In what reality is the individual, in whom the will has ceased? The answer that Schopenhauer gives to this problem is that will is Ding-an-sich only so far as it explains the phenomenon, only in relation to appearance.

Schopenhauer states that what will is outside of this relation is not what his philosophy discusses. Young points out that Schopenhauer earlier tended to describe will as the ultimate reality but later realized “that the claim that his metaphysical will represents ultimate reality commits him to an absolute nihilism – existence is both evil and inescapable – in which case there would be no point in his bothering to write his philosophy.” Schopenhauer intended to keep open the possibility of salvation or deliverance from the world of suffering, which would have been impossible if the will was the absolute ultimate reality. Hence, Schopenhauer later explained that will is the only coherent way in which we can explain the miserable nature of the world; will must understood, not as an explanation of ultimate reality, but only so far as it explains, both metaphysically and psychologically, our experience of the world and the inner nature of things involved in the world. However, even in saying so, Schopenhauer never withdrew the claim that will is thing-in-itself. Thus, according to Young, Schopenhauer had intended to present a two-tiered picture of the world – representation and will – but

371 Young 97.
372 Young 101.
373 Young 97.
he, in fact, presented a “three-tiered picture” – *representation*, “penultimate” *will*, and ultimate unknowable reality.374

It is important to point out here how Young’s “three-tiered picture” differs from my threefold structure. Young believes that Schopenhauer’s philosophy implies a three-tiered constitution of the world: the world constitutes of *representation*, *will*, and, even beyond *will*, an ultimate unknowable reality. “Implies” is a key word here. Schopenhauer himself does not explicitly present a three-tiered picture; neither does he explicitly state anything about the so called “ultimate unknowable reality.” This is Young’s attempt to resolve the tension in the concept of the *will*. As above mentioned, the tension in the concept of the *will* arises from the possibility of denying it: if *will*, even being *Ding-an-sich*, can be denied, then where does the individual end up, in whom the *will* has been denied? Hence, there must be another level beyond the *will*, a level of ultimate unknowable reality.

My threefold structure is not of the constitution of the world, but of the tenets of Schopenhauer’s thought and of Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy. In my threefold structure I structure Schopenhauer’s statements not just about his view of the world as *representation* and *will*, but also about aesthetics, ethics, and asceticism. I organize them in the rubrics of 1. the physical world and particular entities; 2. the universal metaphysical principle; and 3. the non-duality between the particular and the universal. Young’s three-tiered picture provides an ascending order of *representation*, *will*, and ultimate reality, in

374 Young 98.
which the third aspect is the ultimate level of abstraction. My third aspect – non-duality between the particular and the universal – is not an addition level of abstraction beyond will, but rather the relationship between the first and the second aspect.

Scholars also criticize Schopenhauer’s characterization of will as “blind” or “without knowledge.” Young argues that, given Schopenhauer’s description of will as the force that drives the universe, and dictates how it functions, will cannot be completely without knowledge, as it knows the means and procedures by which to execute the will-to-live. If will is blind, how is it capable of making its objectification so orderly, i.e., how does the world operate according to certain laws or produce purposeful activity? If will is blind, would the world not be chaotic? Moreover, how is a blind will capable of producing a self-conscious human mind?

Scholars repeatedly raise these and other objections against Schopenhauer’s philosophy. They agree on the most prominent ones, such as those mentioned above, and disagree or do not dwell upon minor ones. Other than Atwell, at least one scholar – Neeley – has tried to argue that Schopenhauer is in fact consistent. Neeley’s argument consists in saying that the great merit of Schopenhauer’s philosophy consists in “forcing the reach of human knowledge to its ultimate point

375 Magee 238
376 Janaway 362.
of collapse…” and then giving “an intellectually honest recognition and embrace of the inherent limitations of the human mind…”\textsuperscript{377} Even scholars who criticize the inconsistencies in Schopenhauer’s thought always moderate their criticism with praise by stating that the problems and confusions of his system must be understood in conjunction with the extraordinary philosophical vision of the human condition that Schopenhauer put forth “arising out of drastic changes in the structure of the thought of his time…”\textsuperscript{378}

As earlier mentioned, scholars disagree on containing and prioritizing Schopenhauer’s philosophy under the rubrics of epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, and ethics. Janaway argues that the starting point of Schopenhauer’s philosophy is his epistemology which later turns into the lament on human condition. Atwell actually perceives the lament as the starting point, the impetus for Schopenhauer’s entire philosophy. Hauskeller agrees that Schopenhauer’s ethical dimension, which follows from the inevitability of human suffering, is the actual intention of his entire philosophy.\textsuperscript{379} Atwell divides Schopenhauer’s philosophy

\textsuperscript{377} Neeley 190.

\textsuperscript{378} Gardiner, \textit{Schopenhauer} 301.

\textsuperscript{379} Hauskeller 19. Hauskeller argues that the one who understands Schopenhauer’s philosophy as a metaphysics that follows an epistemology “dem entgeht die ethische Dimension und damit die eigentliche Absicht des Schopenhauerschen Philosophierens, welche nicht nur die Argumentation des vierten Buches, sondern die aller vier Bücher seines Hauptwerks trägt und ohne die sie überhaupt nicht adäquat verstanden werden kann.”
into three main parts: 1. an observation: world and life is suffering, 380 2. diagnosis: it is so because the world is the manifestation of a blind will, 3. cure: the world must cease to will. 381 Interestingly, Atwell changes the order in which Schopenhauer presents his philosophy. Schopenhauer begins with epistemology and goes on to arguing that the thing-in-itself is will. He then presents the misery of existence as a necessary outcome of the metaphysics of will and proceeds to find a solution for it. Atwell ordering implies that Schopenhauer begins at the misery of existence, retrospectively finds will as its cause, and then returns to find a cure for it. This ordering, however, does not incorporate Schopenhauer’s epistemology. 382 Berger prioritizes epistemology, whereas Kapani believes that epistemology not crucial to define Schopenhauer’s philosophy. Moreover, in prioritizing the aspects of Schopenhauer’s philosophy, asceticism, which is an essential statement of Schopenhauer’s thought, falls outside the rubrics of epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, and ethics.

380 Here Eberhard Fromm would argue that Schopenhauer’s pessimistic observation that the world is suffering “erwächst keineswegs aus einer gründlichen Analyse der sozialen und politischen Verhältnisse. Nicht auf empirischer Basis kommt er zu der Feststellung von der schlechtesten aller Welten, sondern er leitet diese Bewertung aus dem Wesen des Menschen, aus seiner Menschenauffassung ab.” Here Fromm states that Schopenhauer’s pessimism is not due to the frustration or desperation arising from hopelessness about one’s society or life. It is an abstract metaphysical pessimism and a statement on essential human character; hence, it is an anthropological pessimism. But this also implies that for Schopenhauer there is no possibility of change for the better. Fromm 77-79.

381 Atwell 17.

382 Moreover, this type of prioritizing and reordering aspects of Schopenhauer’s philosophy actually evokes its affiliation with Buddhism: the first three of the four Noble Truths of Buddhism are 1. Dukkha: life is suffering, 2. Samudaya: the uprising (or cause) of suffering is desire (or craving), 3. Nirodha: cessation of suffering is achieved by cessation of desire.
Let us formulate the precepts of Schopenhauer’s philosophy using the threefold structure that I have proposed, namely in the rubric of 1. the physical world and particular entities, 2. the metaphysical universal principle, and 3. the non-duality between the particular and the universal. This structure primarily explains how Schopenhauer approached Hindu religion and philosophy, how he structured it, and which aspects he found analogous to his thought. The above threefold structure formulates the tenets of Schopenhauer’s philosophy as follows: the physical world appears to be fragmented in or composed of particular entities, i.e., individual things and beings, separated and connected by time, space, and causality. However, the world is not as it appears. Time, space, and causality are the categories of our Verstand that cause the world to appear that way. This physical world and its separated, yet connected, particular entities are representation. Behind this plural world is one singular metaphysical universal principle – will. The world is an objectification of the universal principle, which resides in every individual phenomenon. Because the physical world is fragmented in particular entities being subjected to time, space, and causality and because its metaphysical basis is will, the world is characterized by suffering. In order to reduce or eliminate suffering it is necessary to gain insight into the one universal principle and to understand the essential non-duality of particular entities with the universal principle. In other words, it is necessary to realize that particular entities, including oneself, are in essence the same as everyone and everything else, which is one with the
metaphysical universal principle. The insight into this non-duality leads, in ascending order, to aesthetic experience, ethical behavior, and ascetic disposition.

This discussion of the precepts of Schopenhauer’s philosophy and their threefold arrangement helps reveal what elements Schopenhauer identifies as the fundamental tenets of Hindu religion and philosophy, and how he structures and presents them. Schopenhauer applies this structure to Hindu religion and philosophy as follows: The physical world and its particular entities display an apparent multiplicity, separation, and individuation of things and beings, brought about by human cognitive process. This, for Schopenhauer, is contained in the concept of māyā. This individuation is inherently connected with the sense of ego, which is at the base of desire and suffering. The metaphysical universal principle – brahman – is the eternal, indivisible, ever-present, imperishable entity, which is the actual inner nature, inner being, essence, or ‘das eigentlich Wesentliche’ of all things. The non-duality of the particular and the universal is given, and it is illustrated in statements such as “tat tvam asi.” But this non-duality must be intuitively known and experienced. Schopenhauer further argues that the non-duality of the particular with the universal translates into the non-duality in essence of one particular with another. For Schopenhauer, Indian religious texts, myths and mythology, and ascetic practices signify the philosophical implications of the above three aspects.
3.1 Introduction

In this section I analyze Schopenhauer’s references to Hindu religion and philosophy in his work *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, in which he expounds upon the entire system of his philosophy. Schopenhauer maintained that he had successfully formulated one cohesive philosophical system which contained one single idea that explained everything. The first edition of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* was published in the year 1818, and the second edition appeared in 1844. The first edition was published as one volume, with four books explaining epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, and ethics-asceticism contained in his main idea of the world as *representation* and as *will*. The second edition was published as two volumes – a revised first volume and a second volume of comments and elaborations on the first.

Schopenhauer claimed that his system was completely thought out and formulated before 1813 and the main idea remained unchanged throughout his subsequent writings. Contrary to Schopenhauer’s own claim, Nicholls detects some conceptual “shifts” in his philosophy through the years and argues that Schopenhauer “withdraws” certain earlier claims and modifies his concepts.\(^{383}\) Schopenhauer, however, never intended to alter his concepts; neither did he

\(^{383}\) Nicholls 171-72.
“withdraw” any claims or characterizations. The first edition of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* contained a considerable number of references to Hindu and Buddhist texts. The second edition displayed much greater sense of familiarity, more quotes, and more comments on the similarities between Schopenhauer’s and Indian thought. Between the two editions, however, his overall understanding of Hindu religion and philosophy did not undergo significant changes. He, indeed, gathered more examples, explanations, and formulations of Indian concepts for the second edition, but the examples served only to reinforce his interpretation and understanding of Indian thought, not to change it. Hence, most certainly, new material published after Hegel’s death in 1831 did not change Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Indian thought, specifically of Hindu religion and philosophy.

Within Indian thought, I concentrate on Hindu religion and philosophy. Schopenhauer’s references to Hindu religion and philosophy include quotes, examples, and explanations ascribed by Schopenhauer to Hindu texts, schools, gods, myths, and rituals. They include the Vedas, Upaniṣads and the Bhagavadgītā, philosophical schools of Vedānta and Sāṅkhya, gods, such as the *trimūrti* and Kṛṣṇa, myths of metempsychosis and rebirth, and fire sacrifices and death rituals. Schopenhauer uses every example of Indian thought to elaborate his own concepts and to demonstrate that his own thought finds echoes in wise ancient philosophies throughout the world. Whenever Schopenhauer provides an Indian example, he establishes it as a parallel, compatible, and a conceptually analogous concept to his
own. For example, he considers the concept of māyā as a synonym for his concept of *representation*; he frequently repeats the Upaniṣadic statement “*tat tvam asi*” (“you are that”) in various contexts; he often evokes Śiva to explain the generation and destruction of the physical world; and he intermittently evokes the Hindu notion of “the highest and profoundest knowledge” to explain “Erlösung.” Such references, isolated from their own contexts and inserted into his, occur throughout his philosophy. As Hindu religious and philosophical references are scattered all over his work interwoven with his own concepts, it becomes challenging, especially compared to Hegel, to provide a cohesive picture of Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy.
3.2 Schopenhauer’s appreciation of and approach to Hindu religion and philosophy:

Within Indian philosophy Schopenhauer specifically admired the school of Vedānta philosophy. He held the Upaniṣads in high esteem and argued that they contained the true wisdom of mankind which transcended time and cultural specificity. Unlike Hegel, Schopenhauer shared the Romantic notion of original wisdom and harmony, believing that the older the civilization, the closer it was to a harmonious, intuitive knowledge of the universe:

Doch will es scheinen, ...daß die, welche der Entstehung des Menschengeschlechts und dem Urquell der organischen Natur bedeutend näher standen, als wir, auch noch theils größere Energie der intuitiven Erkenntnißkräfte, theils eine richtiggere Stimmung des Geistes hatten, wodurch sie einer reinieren, unmittelbaren Auffassung des Wesens der Natur fähig und dadurch im Stande waren, dem metaphysischen Bedürfniß auf eine würdigere Weise zu genügen: so entstanden in den Urvätern der Brahmanen, den Rischis, die fast übermenschlichen Konceptionen, welche später in den Upanischaden der Veden niedergelegt wurden.384

As this quote suggests, Schopenhauer believed that the writers of the Upaniṣads were closer to the origin of mankind and hence possessed an extraordinary ability to comprehend the pure immediate essence of nature and an intuitive metaphysical vision, which they expressed in their scriptures.

Schopenhauer not only admired Indian thought, but also claimed that his own philosophy was very similar to, even exactly the same as, Hindu and Buddhist timeless wisdom. He claimed that his philosophy drew the same epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical conclusions as Hindu and Buddhist thought; so much so

384 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 189.
that in the preface of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* he suggested that those who were familiar with Plato, Kant and Indian thought would be better equipped to understand his philosophy

> [H]at also, sage ich, der Leser auch schon die Weihe uralter Indischer Weisheit empfangen und empfänglich aufgenommen; dann ist er auf das allerbeste bereitet zu hören, was ich ihm vorgetragen habe. Ihn wird es dann nicht, wie manchen Anderen fremd, ja feindlich ansprechen, da ich, wenn es nicht zu stolz klänge, behaupten möchte, daß jeder von den einzelnen und abgerissenen Aussprüchen, welche die Upanishaden ausmachen, sich als Folgesatz aus dem von mir mitzuteilenden Gedanken ableiten ließe, obgleich keineswegs auch umgekehrt dieser schon dort zu finden ist.385

There are several assertions in this quote which reveal Schopenhauer’s approach and the nature of his appropriation of Hindu religion and philosophy. First, Schopenhauer believes that his thought will not appear strange or hostile to the reader who is acquainted with Indian thought and that the reader will find a certain semblance between the two philosophies.386 Second, as the above quote mentions, Schopenhauer considers the Upanisads to be constituted of utterances that are “einzeln” and “abgerissen.” Third, he states that those individual disconnected utterances can serve as conclusions that could follow from his arguments; but that his thought and his arguments are not to be found in the Upanisads. With this statement Schopenhauer intends to emphasize his self-sufficiency by implying that his thought came about autonomously without being influenced by Indian thought.


386 Berger points out that the remark about those, who find Indian thought strange and hostile, may have been meant for Herder, Schlegel and Hegel. Berger 74. I believe that the remark might have been especially meant for Hegel, as many other comments in Schopenhauer’s work are.
By stating that Upaniṣadic statements can serve as conclusions to his philosophy, but his philosophy is not to be found in the Upaniṣads, Schopenhauer asserts that he and the Upaniṣads have explored philosophical issues in different ways, with different approaches and arguments, but that they both have independently arrived at the same conclusions.

Let us now examine how Schopenhauer understands and incorporates Hindu religion and philosophy in his work. As we discussed in the earlier section, the precepts of Schopenhauer’s own philosophy dictate the threefold structure in which he analyzes Hindu thought and incorporates it in his philosophy: he first investigates the particular world and its epistemological explanation in the concept of representation; he then discusses the universal principle, namely will as the singular metaphysical thing-in-itself, the essence of all things; he further advocates a deep insight into the nature of the will and into the non-duality of the particular with the universal in essence, leading to denial of will in aesthetic experience, ethical behavior, and ascetic tendencies. Accordingly, in Hindu religion and philosophy Schopenhauer first seeks epistemological explanation in the concept of māyā which declares the world composed of particular entities as an illusion; he then examines the concept of brahman as the metaphysical entity that is the essence of all; finally, he discusses “tat tvam asi” (“you are that”) as a statement of nonduality of the particular with the universal. Interpreting these concepts and statements as analogous to his thought Schopenhauer considers māyā practically as
a synonym for his *representation*, uses explanations of *brahman* to elaborate on the concept of *will*, and understands “*tat tvam asi*” as the deep insight into the non-duality of all things, leading to the denial of *will*.
3.3 **The physical world and its particular entities**

Schopenhauer’s philosophy begins by investigating why the world appears to us in a particular way, namely, as composed of individual things and beings, connected and separated with each other in time, space, and causality. Hence, unlike Hegel, who begins with the universal principle and then proceeds to its particularization, Schopenhauer begins with particular entities and their cognition by the subject’s faulty of understanding.

For Schopenhauer, Indian, especially Vedānta philosophy expounds upon the physical world and its multiple particular entities as follows:

3.3.1 **It is māyā:** that means for Schopenhauer:

- **a.** The world as it appears is not independent from its mental perception. The appearance of the world is a consequence of our perception and cognition. *Māyā* is philosophically a synonym for *principium individuationis*.

- **b.** *Māyā* is analogous with Plato’s ever-becoming world, Kant’s *Erscheinung* and Schopenhauer’s own *Vorstellung*.

- **c.** *Māyā* is characterized as a veil, a dream, and an illusion. It is deceptive.

- **d.** *Māyā* is all of the above because it upholds the illusion of individuation, of *principium individuationis*, i.e., of multiplicity that hides the oneness of all things.
3.3.2 Arising and passing, generation and destruction are ascribed to the world of particularity.

3.3.3 Māyā is inherently connected with ego, as the illusion of individuality gives rise to the sense of ‘I’ that is separate from others.

3.3.4 The illusion of individuality and ego gives rise to desire and constant willing which causes suffering. Hence, the world of individuality, “the veil of māyā” is marked by suffering.

Schopenhauer explicitly explains point one in the first epistemological context. Point two arises from the metaphysical context, explained indirectly, in opposition to the eternity of the absolute. That is, arising and passing cannot be ascribed to the absolute brahman; they are the features of the empirical world. I derive and connect points three and four from the ethical context, which discusses the alleviation of suffering through denial of will.

3.3.1.a The world as it appears is not independent from its mental perception. The appearance of the world is a consequence of our perception and cognition. Māyā is philosophically a synonym for principium individuationis.

The opening statement of Schopenhauer’s work – “Die Welt ist meine Vorstellung” opens his epistemological inquiry into the world as representation. He argues that the world as it appears is the subject’s own representation. As Schopenhauer promises in the preface of his work, he immediately offers an Indian, specifically Vedāntic philosophical concept as a parallel:
Wie früh hingegen diese Grundwahrheit von den Weisen Indiens erkannt worden ist, indem sie als der Fundamentsatz der dem Vyasa zugeschriebenen Vedantaphilosophie auftritt, bezeugt W. Jones…: the fundamental tenet of the Vedānta school consisted not in denying the existence of matter, that is of solidity, impenetrability, and extended figure (to deny it would be lunacy), but in correcting the popular notion of it, and in contending that it has no essence independent of mental perception; that existence and perceptibility are convertible terms. Diese Worte drücken das Zusammenbestehen der empirischen Realität mit der transscendentalen Idealität hinlänglich aus.387

This paragraph not only introduces Vedānta in Schopenhauer’s work, it also offers the first explanation of his concept of representation. Schopenhauer states that the Vedānta school proposes the working together of empirical reality and transcendental idealism. Vedānta does not argue that the world does not exist or that it is a complete creation of the mind. That, for Schopenhauer, would be extreme idealism, which he strongly criticizes. The world and its objects and beings indeed exist, but their existence is inherently dependent on the subject’s mental perception of them. This, Schopenhauer agrees with Jones, is the fundamental tenet of the Vedānta school. According to Schopenhauer then, the Vedānta school declares that the world does exist, but its appearance is due to our mental perception. Schopenhauer argues that Kant’s Erscheinung and his own Vorstellung express this exact statement, namely that the a priori framework of time, space, and causality

dictate our perception and understanding, and in turn shape the appearance of the world.

Schopenhauer argues that the forms of space and time and the category of causality are defining aspects of the principle of sufficient reason. The principle of sufficient reason indicates that every fact has a sufficient reason why it is so. The inquiry into any fact and its sufficient reason involves ascertaining necessary connections between things that render the fact (under investigation) as it is. This inquiry necessarily presupposes that there is a distinction or separation between the subject (doing the inquiry) and objects (which and whose sufficient reason is being investigated). In the case of human empirical understanding of the world, the individual is the subject and the world (its things and beings) is the object. To determine the sufficient reason of the world one needs to determine and establish the necessary connections among all things and beings. Given the way human faculty of perception (Wahrnehmung), understanding (Verstand) and reason (Vernunft) functions, these connections among things and beings are provided by the categories of time, space, and causality. In other words time, space, and causality establish the principle of sufficient reason.

The principle of sufficient reason is an epistemological inquiry, in which context Schopenhauer often calls it “the principle of individuation,” or principium.

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*individuationis*, for which he often uses the term *māyā* as a synonym. He argues that the term aptly describes that the categories of understanding as much separate and distinguish individual things from one another as they connect them. In other words, it is only when things are separate from one another that the need for connections arises, or making connections only makes sense when things are perceived to be separate in the first place. *Māyā*, thus, “individuates” the world by dividing it into particular things and then establishing temporal, spatial, and causal connections among them.

For Schopenhauer, thus, *Māyā* is an epistemological concept, which argues that the empirical reality of the world is inherently dependent upon the subject’s perception of it. Furthermore, *māyā* describes the cognitive enterprise, which divides and disconnects individual things and being from one another.

3.3.1. b *Māyā* is analogous with Plato’s ever-becoming world, Kant’s *Erscheinung* and Schopenhauer’s own *Vorstellung*.

Schopenhauer equates the Vedāntic concept of *māyā* with Plato’s “ever becoming and never being world,” Kant’s *phenomenon*, and his own *representation*. For Schopenhauer, Plato argues that “diese, den Sinnen erscheinende Welt habe kein wahres Seyn, sondern nur ein unaufhörliches Werden, sie sei und sei auch nicht, und ihre Auffassung sei nicht sowohl eine Erkenntniß, als ein Wahn.”

Schopenhauer illustrates this further with Plato’s famous allegory of the cave and explains that

Die selbe Wahrheit, wieder ganz anders dargestellt, ist auch eine Hauptlehre der Veden und Puranas, die Lehre von der Maja, worunter eben auch nichts Anderes Verstanden wird, als was Kant die Erscheinung, im Gegensatze des Dinges an sich nennt: denn das Werk der Maja wird eben angegeben als diese sichtbare Welt, in der wir sind, ein hervorgerufener Zauber, ein bestandloser, an sich wesenloser Schein, der optischen Illusion und dem Traume zu vergleichen, ein Schleier, der das menschliche Bewußtseyn umfängt, ein Etwas, davon es gleich falsch und gleich wahr ist, zu sagen daß es sei, als daß es nicht sei.390

Schopenhauer explains that the concept of māyā deems the perceivable world as a magical appearance, a dream or an illusion, about which one can neither say that it is; nor that it is not. For Schopenhauer, Kant formulates this same truth in a clear, dispassionate, and philosophical way. According to Schopenhauer, “Zauber,” “Schein,” “Illusion,” and “Traum” are poetic and mythical ways of philosophically expressing the concept of Erscheinung or Vorstellung to explain the cognitive apparatus of man perceiving and understanding empirical reality. As we have seen, Hegel also argues that the Indian mind is perpetually in a dream state; conversely, that the physical world is considered a dream. However, by the term dream, Hegel suggests that the subject has no differentiating consciousness and that he cannot perceive himself to be different from anything else. For Hegel, therefore, the concept of dream cannot be associated with Verstand. For Schopenhauer, the Indian notion of “dream” contained in the concept of māyā refers precisely to Verstand and to the differentiating individuating consciousness that separates the subject from all

390 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 516.
objects of perception. It is a dream because it conceals the reality of the undifferentiated oneness of all things.

3.3.1.c  Māyā is characterized as a veil, a dream, and an illusion. It is deceptive.

Schopenhauer often reiterates the characterization of māyā as a veil of deception or a dream, which is, for him, simply a poetic way of explaining the process of mental cognition:

Kant setzte das so Erkannte als bloße Erscheinung dem Dinge an sich entgegen; endlich die uralte Weisheit der Inder spricht: „Es ist die Maja, der Schleier des Truges, welcher die Augen der Sterblichen umhüllt und sie eine Welt sehnsützt, von der man weder sagen kann, daß sie sei, noch auch, daß sie nicht sei: denn sie gleicht dem Traume, gleicht dem Sonnenglanz auf dem Sande, welchen der Wanderer von fern für ein Wasser hält, oder auch dem hingeworfenen Strick, den er für eine Schlange ansieht.“ (Diese Gleichnisse finden sich in unzähligen Stellen der Veden und Puranas wiederholt.) Was alle diese aber meinten und wovon sie reden, ist nichts Anderes, als was auch wir jetzt eben betrachten: die Welt als Vorstellung, unterworfen dem Satze des Grundes.  

This quote aptly expresses the dynamics of subject-object correlation in the process of cognition. In the first sentence Schopenhauer states that it is māyā that “umhüllt” mortal eyes; it is māyā that “läßt” them see the world in a particular way. In both these expressions, it is māyā that covers the eyes of the perceiver, who himself is passive in the process. Conversely, in the next sentence, it is the wanderer who “hält” the sunshine to be water and “ansieht” the stick as snake. Here the perceiver is active in producing the illusions of water and snake. For Schopenhauer, then, in

391 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung 1 34.
the concept of māyā the perceiver is both passive and active in bringing about the illusion of the world. The quote explains further that one can neither state that the world is, nor that it is not. Schopenhauer emphasizes here that the deceptive nature of māyā raises questions about the existence of the world itself: although the world indeed exists, it cannot be said to exist other than in the subject’s perception.

Schopenhauer finally reiterates in the above quote that the similes and metaphors such as stick and snake say nothing other than what he explains as representation.

The reason why Schopenhauer can bring together dream and empirical reality is because, for Schopenhauer, dream is not very different from reality. Schopenhauer argues that there is nothing about a dream that keeps one from feeling it is reality, while within the dream. One can say that dreams are not exactly vivid and clear, and the chain of events does not exactly follow time, space, and causal laws. But Schopenhauer argues that the events in the dream have no causal connection only when the dream is compared to reality, or only when the recollection of the dream is compared to reality after having woken up. However, while one is dreaming, the events seem well-connected to the dreamer. The connection is only broken between two dreams or between dreaming and waking up.

Moreover, even in reality it is not possible to know all causal connections between things and events. When one recalls the events of one’s (waking) past, there is no way to ascertain all causal links between a past event and the present. In other words, while within a dream, the connections are in place, and within the so-called reality the connections are not always in place. Hence, the criteria of time,
space, and causal connection are of no use for distinguishing dream from reality. The only way one can tell the difference between dream and reality is through of the act of waking up. But even that sometimes does not work, one can start dreaming and feel it to be a continuation of the day, or one can wake up into another dream, or one can wake up and still feel one is dreaming. It is hard to tell where break between dream and reality is: dream and reality flow into each other and can potentially never be separated. Life could as well be a long dream.

Hier tritt nun in der That die enge Verwandtschaft zwischen Leben und Traum sehr nahe an uns heran: auch wollen wir uns nicht schämen sie einzustehen, nachdem sie von vielen großen Geistern anerkannt und ausgesprochen worden ist. Die Veden und Puranas wissen für die ganze Erkenntniss der wirklichen Welt, welche die das Gewebe der Maja nennen, keinen besseren Vergleich und brauchen keinen häufiger, als den Traum.392

Dream or the web of māyā, then, is not an individual-less, indistinguishable, irrational, and intuitive flowing-together of everything, as Hegel interprets it. As the above quote says, dream, for Schopenhauer, is the “Erkenntniss der wirklichen Welt.” It is the knowledge of the actual world, precisely because it distinguishes between subject and object, follows time, space, and causality, and because Verstand plays a crucial role in deciding its form and structure. Calling the world a dream is, for Schopenhauer, an epistemological statement and not a psychological judgment, as it is for Hegel.

392 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 45.
3.3.1. d Mayā is all of the above because it upholds the illusion of individuation, of principium individuationis, i.e., of multiplicity that hides the oneness of all things.

Something can only be called a dream if there is at least the possibility of waking. It can be called a dream only if there is at least the awareness of something “real” beyond it. If the world as it appears to us is a dream, then, there must be some reality beyond the appearance, even if one cannot reach it. As Schopenhauer equates māyā with Kantian concepts, he does not hesitate to explain one in terms of the other: if māyā, the dream, is the same as Kant’s Erscheinung, then the “reality” is the Ding-an-sich. Erscheinung or māyā does not reveal the innermost real nature of things, and the perceiver cannot reach the real inner nature of things through māyā.393

Schopenhauer understands that Māyā is the veil that covers the eyes and keeps one from penetrating through the veil to recognize the inner real nature of things. It keeps one dreaming within the ordinary temporal, spatial, and causal knowledge of the world and keeps one from “waking” to a “better knowledge.” One is “getäuscht durch den Schleier der Maja… solange nicht eine bessere Erkenntniß ihm die Augen öffnet.”394 The “Täuschung” consists in believing that all there is to the world is the ordinary knowledge through the principium individuationis.

393 It is to be noted here and remembered throughout that E. F. J. Payne, translator of Schopenhauer’s works in English, translates Schopenhauer’s “Wesen” or “eigentliches Wesen” as “real inner nature.” Arthur Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, 2 vols, trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1969).

through our *a priori* categories of time, space, and causality. The “better knowledge” is the knowledge of the innermost nature of things, beyond the principle of individuation, beyond māyā. Waking up from the dream, penetrating through the veil of māyā is to penetrate through time, space, and causality, through principium individuationis. It is to realize that the individuation, particularity, or multiplicity of the world is only an appearance beyond which there is something eternal (timeless), infinite (spaceless), and self-sufficient (cause-effect-less). Māyā hides this behind the appearance of multiplicity. The one, who is deluded by the veil of māyā, cannot reach the eternal inner nature of things. The one deluded by māyā is only involved in the *phenomenon*, in the *principium individuationis*. He does not see the inner nature of things, which is not multiple, but only one. He sees not “das Wesen der Dinge, welches Eines ist, sondern dessen Erscheinungen, als gesondert, getrennt, unzählbar, sehr verschieden, ja entgegengesetzt.” Thus, for Schopenhauer, māyā is the individuation that keeps the true singular nature of things hidden. Māyā keeps the perceiver’s eyes covered and occupied with appearance of individuation, particularity, or multiplicity; it keeps the singular, eternal, infinite, and self-sufficient essence of all things hidden.

3.3.2 Arising and passing, generation and destruction are ascribed to the world of particularity.

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396 Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II* 705.
Now let us move to the metaphysical context. Schopenhauer, having discussed the process of our knowledge acquisition, now moves from the epistemological context to the metaphysical, speculating about the actual inner nature of all things. Schopenhauer discusses in this context, that the universal concept is conceived to be eternal, infinite, self-sufficient, and singular. It is beginningless and endless. It always was and it always will be. In fact, there is no was and will be, it is. Thus, in opposition to this eternal universal entity, the world of particularity is subject to production and destruction, to generation and passing away, or simply put, to birth and death.

In the context of metaphysics, the eternal universal concept that Schopenhauer discusses is not just any eternal universal concept but his own: the will. In this context the physical world of particular entities is discussed as the objectification of will, and nature and human life is discussed as the manifestation of constant willing. The actualization of the will or will-to-live is first, sexual impulse and generation; second, maintenance and continuance of the species; and third, death and destruction. Sexual impulse is the strongest affirmation of life and hence affirmation of the will-to-live. In this context Schopenhauer also mentions that māyā, “deren Werk und Gewebe die ganze Scheinwelt ist,” is paraphrased as “amor.” As love and sex are closely associated with the concept of māyā, māyā also stands for affirmation of the will-to-live.397 On a related note Schopenhauer discusses suicide. He argues that suicide, on the surface, seems to be the denial of

397 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 412.
the will-to-live. But it is actually a display of affirmation of it. Suicide is committed when the person’s will believes that there is absolutely no way within the phenomenal existence that the will can be asserted anymore. In other words, will finds itself so hampered in life and finds that it can no longer assert itself when the individual is living. Hence, will decides to end the individual. As suicide seems to be an apparent stark contradiction of the will-to-live with itself, Schopenhauer describes it as the “masterpiece” of māyā. Schopenhauer, thus, also understands māyā as a trickster, who creates contradictions and tricks in life, which delude our understanding and judgment.398

Thus arising and passing, love and suicide, birth and death are all applicable to the world of particularity. For elaboration Schopenhauer discusses the trimūrti, the triad of gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva. For Schopenhauer, Hindu mythology in general and the trimūrti in particular signify the objectification of will into the world of particularity. Brahmā stands for generation, Viṣṇu for maintenance, and Śiva for destruction (both for death and suicide):

Der Wille zum Leben also erscheint eben so wohl in diesem Selbsttödten (Shiwa), als im Wohlbehagen der Selbsterhaltung (Wischnu) und in der Wollust der Zeugung (Brahma). Dies ist die innere Bedeutung der Einheit des Trimurtis, welche jeder Mensch ganz ist, obwohl sie in der Zeit bald das eine, bald das andere der drei Häupter hervorhebt.399

In respect to birth and death, Schopenhauer argues that generation and destruction are not so much opposites as correlatives of each other. Birth and death, both as

398 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 493.

399 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 493.
abstract concepts and actual events, presuppose and ensure each other.

Schopenhauer concentrates especially on Śiva to demonstrate the reciprocity of birth and death. According to Schopenhauer, wise mythologies like the Indian, are able to assign attributes of birth and death, of generation and destruction to the same god, namely Śiva. In this sense Śiva also symbolizes the life of the species, their constant generation and destruction, i.e., their continuance, or in Schopenhauer’s words, their “immortality.”

Śiva has lingam and yoni – the union of male and female genitalia – as his symbol. Lingam, the symbol of sexual impulse, is, for Schopenhauer, the symbol of the strongest affirmation of will-to-live. At the same time, Śiva also wears a necklace of skulls as the designated god of death and destruction:

Die weiseste aller Mythologien, die Indische, drückt dieses dadurch aus, daß sie gerade dem Gotte, welcher die Zerstörung, den Tod, symbolisiert (wie Brahma, der sündigste und niedrigste Gott des Trimurtis, die Zeugung, Entstehung, und Wischnu die Erhaltung), daß sie, sage ich, gerade dem Schiwa, zugleich mit dem Halsband von Todtenköpfen, den Lingam zum Attribut giebt, dieses Symbol der Zeugung, welche also hier als Ausgleichung des Todes auftritt, wodurch angedeutet wird, daß Zeugung und Tod wesentliche Korrelate sind, die sich gegenseitig neutralisieren und aufheben.

It is interesting that Schopenhauer considers Brahmā to be the lowest of the three gods, as he associates him with the “sin” of generation. Śiva, despite his association with the phallic symbol, is not, however, associated with sin in Schopenhauer’s

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400 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 598.
401 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 413.
402 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 348.
system. In contrast with Schopenhauer, as we have seen, Hegel actually considers Brahmā to be the highest of the three, owing to the phonetic closeness to brahman, the universal principle. Unlike Schopenhauer, Hegel does not consider Śiva as a sophisticated religious or philosophical notion, because he does not detect in him the fulfillment of the triadic structure.

3.3.3 Māyā is inherently connected with ego, as the illusion of individuality gives rise to the sense of ‘I’ that is separate from others.

From the metaphysical context Schopenhauer moves onto the ethical context. In this context he discusses will-to-live more in detail and especially from the perspective of human behavior and human suffering. Schopenhauer explains that human life is characterized by three extremes. For this, he sets aside Vedānta and turns to Sāṅkhya philosophy without mentioning it by name. To explain the three extremes of human behavior Schopenhauer draws upon the three guṇas – satva, rajas and tamas:

Erstlich, das gewaltige Wollen, die großen Leidenschaften (Radscha-Guna)... Sodann zweitens das reine Erkennen, das Auffassen der Ideen, bedingt durch Befreiung der Erkenntniss vom Dienste des Willens: das Leben des Genius (Satwa-Guna). Endlich drittens, die größte Lethargie des Willens und damit der an ihn gebundenen Erkenntniss, leeres Sehnen, lebenerstarrende Langeweile (Tama-Guna). Das Leben des Individuums, weit entfernt in einem dieser Extreme zu verharren, berührt sie nur selten, und ist meistens nur ein schwaches und schwankendes Annähern zu dieser oder jener Seite, ein dürftiges Wollen kleiner Objekte, stets wiederkehrend und so der Langeweile entrinnend. – Es ist wirklich unglaublich, wie nichtsagend und bedeutungsleer, von außen gesehen, und wie dumpf und
besinnungslos, von innen empfunden, das Leben der allermeisten Menschen dahinfließt.\textsuperscript{403}

*Rajas* signifies, for Schopenhauer passion, which is extreme willing, *satva* is pure *will*-less knowing, and *tamas* is lethargy and boredom. The three *guna*s, which the Sāṇkhya philosophy discusses as the three qualities of nature, denote, for Schopenhauer, the extremes of human activity, within the span of which human life oscillates.

Human behavior and suffering leads Schopenhauer to discuss denial of *will* as a necessary precondition of ethical behavior and ascetic tendencies. In this context Schopenhauer’s understanding of the notion of particularity and multiplicity of the physical world is not discussed as explicitly and obviously as it is in the epistemological context. What Schopenhauer does discuss explicitly in this context is that Hinduism and Buddhism both believe life is suffering and they both advocate asceticism. But the reason I include this context into the rubric of particularity is because both suffering and asceticism have to do with the individuating quality of *māyā*, by which the world seems to be composed of individual particular things and beings. The connection between suffering and particularity is as follows: particularity, individuation, or the plurality of the world arises out of our faculty of understanding with its categories of time, space, and causality and out of the necessary condition of rational knowledge, i.e., the split between subject and object. As we have seen before, this, for Schopenhauer, is *māyā*. The necessary and serious

\textsuperscript{403} Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* I 402.
implication of this is that each individual being perceives himself as an individual, as a separate entity unto himself, separate from everything and everyone else. Our particular existence in this world of particularity is given to this individuating perception and understanding. In other words our particular existence necessarily creates and separates the “I” from the others. Particularity, thus, necessarily gives rise to ego.

3.3.4 The illusion of individuality and ego gives rise to desire and constant willing which causes suffering. Hence, the world of individuality, “the veil of māyā” is marked by suffering.

Māyā and the individuating self-consciousness produce ego. This, in turn, has serious consequences for the ethical context. For Schopenhauer, the particular world is an objectification of will. Hence, each particular “I” displays its will-to-live, which implies that each particular “I” is in constant conflict with all other “I”s trying to assert its will over all others. Thus, each individual perceives himself not only separate from but in opposition to all others. From this springs willing and desire, and anxiety and dread. Each individual strives and suffers to fulfill one desire after another. To assert one’s will-to-live one person fights and inflicts pain on another. The particularizing perception and understanding of the world – and consequently, ego – is at the base of all pain and suffering. Moreover, the particularizing perception views pleasure and pain as different things, murderer and victim as different people. It does not understand opposing things as different
aspects of the manifestation of the same one will-to-live. Schopenhauer calls such a person, caught up in the particular world and given to ego, as someone “getäuscht durch den Schleier der Maja.” Schopenhauer calls such a person, caught up in the particular world and given to ego, as someone “getäuscht durch den Schleier der Maja.”  

Māyā, then, i.e., particularity of the world is necessarily characterized by suffering. Suffering is a necessary feature of māyā, the particularizing perception and understanding of the world. “Schleier der Maja,” thus, gains two implications: the original epistemological and the consequent ethical. Epistemologically the categories of understanding and the subject-object divide individuate the world. Individuation means separation of one thing from another. Separation gives rise to ego (and vice versa); ego leads to suffering. The end of suffering requires ethical behavior. Ethical behavior necessitates the denial of one’s own individual will. Schopenhauer considers this an important aspect of Hinduism, or as he specifies it here, of Brahmanism. Schopenhauer argues that Brahmanism proposes a way to salvation through denial of will, through opposing nature, which is given to individuation and particularization.  

404 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 438.  
405 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 737.
3.4 The metaphysical universal principle

The necessary next step after philosophizing about the world and its particular entities is to move to the universal principle. For Schopenhauer, the enterprise of philosophy itself involves wondering about the particular, to propose general ideas unifying the particular instances, and to problematize the universal behind the particular: “Auch besteht die eigentliche philosophische Anlage zunächst darin, daß man über das Gewöhnliche und Alltägliche sich zu verwundern fähig ist, wodurch man eben veranlaßt wird, das Allgemeine der Erscheinung zu seinem Problem zu machen.”406 For Schopenhauer, the entire endeavor of philosophy lies in metaphysics, and the terms Philosophie and Metaphysik are, in fact, interchangeable. The point of philosophy or meta-physics is, by default, to go beyond the physical, beyond empirical experience to find the metaphysical principle that explains the physical:

Unter Metaphysik verstehe ich jede angebliche Erkenntniß, welche über die Möglichkeit der Erfahrung, also über die Natur, oder die gegebene Erscheinung der Dinge, hinausgeht, um Aufschluß zu ertheilen über Das, wodurch jene, in einem oder dem andern Sinne, bedingt wäre; oder, populär zu reden, über Das, was hinter der Natur steckt und sie möglich macht.407

Thus the goal of philosophy in general and metaphysics in particular is to seek a universal principle beyond the particular. For Schopenhauer, the Hindu, or specifically the Brahmanist, concept of the universal is explained as follows:

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406 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 187.
407 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 191.
3.4.1 It is called “Brahm,” the original being or “Urwesen.”

3.4.2 It is one singular universal essence or being, “Wesen,” which resides in the multiple particular.

3.4.3 Arising and passing, beginning and end cannot be attributed to the universal principle. It is eternal, indivisible, ever-present, and imperishable.

3.4.4 It is pure subject of knowledge, pure will-less consciousness, absolute I, absolute self-consciousness.

Schopenhauer argues that if one ponders the ephemeral nature of things, the constant arising and passing away of things and beings, the flux, and the change, one naturally comes to the thought that this tentative, relative existence of things cannot be the true inner being of the world, that the true inner being, which may be elusive to the ordinary glance, must be eternal and constant, such that this arising and passing do not affect it. This thought begins to investigate the universal principle in the individual and the particular.\textsuperscript{408}

Moreover, Schopenhauer argues, that to investigate the universal within the particular, one must only look inward. Inwardly or intuitively one can know only

\textsuperscript{408} Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II} 556-57.
one’s inner being immediately. The other objects of knowledge in the outer world are known only in mediated forms:

Jeder erkennt nur ein Wesen ganz unmittelbar: seinen eigenen Willen, im Selbstbewußtseyn. Alles Andere erkennt er bloß mittelbar, und beurtheilt es dann nach der Analogie mit jenem, die er, je nachdem der Grad seines Nachdenkens ist, weiter durchführt. Selbst Dieses entspringt im tiefsten Grunde daraus, daß es eigentlich auch nur ein Wesen gibt: die aus den Formen der äußern, objektiven Auffassung herrührende Illusion der Vielheit (Maja) konnte nicht bis in das innere, einfache Bewußtseyn dringen: daher dieses immer nur Ein Wesen vorfindet.409

Multiplicity and particularity cannot reach the simple, singular self-consciousness.

On the one hand, the subject achieves objective comprehension of the outer world (in which one’s body and mind are also included as part of the principium individuationis). Inwardly, on the other hand, one finds the inner Wesen immediately and intuitively. The inner being is one, singular, and undivided. There is, as Schopenhauer says in the above quote, “nur ein Wesen”.

The quest to find the universal essence within particular things culminates into one singular, eternal essence or being, i.e., “Wesen.” In Schopenhauer’s view, the authors of the Vedas and Upaniṣads comprehended the universal inner essence of things, intuitively, clearly, and profoundly.410 They called it “Brahm”—“das Urwesen selbst,” “welchem alles Entstehn und Vergehn wesentlich fremd ist.”411

409 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 376.

410 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 557.

411 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 543. Schopenhauer is aware of the translation and interpretation issues as well, especially in the case of the religious and philosophical concept of the universal absolute. He questions whether it is fair to designate “Brahm,” as “God,” since the latter term is associated with the Judeo-Christian tradition and understanding. Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 594.
3.4.2 It is one singular universal essence or being, “Wesen,” which resides in the multiple particular.

Schopenhauer employs every example of Hindu religion and philosophy as a parallel to his own thought. Here, too, he mentions “Brahm,” “Brahman,” or “das eigentliche Wesen” to illustrate his own concept of will as the inner essence of everything. Consider the next reference:


Here Schopenhauer explains that “der Wille als Ding an sich” is whole and undivided. He argues that the dynamics between representation and will resembles a wheel and its center: the periphery is subject to rotations and thereby all points on the periphery are subject to ascending and descending, to arising and passing, consequently, to time. It is the center alone that sustains the entire wheel, its motion,

412 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 381.
and all of the ascending and descending points on the periphery. The sustaining center, however, is not subject to arising and passing; it is beyond time and its restless rotations. It is rather curious that after the radius metaphor Schopenhauer chooses to refer to the lines from the Bhagavadgītā. In fact, Schopenhauer’s radius metaphor itself might have been inspired by a similar wheel metaphor from the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad (chapter II, section 5, verse 15): the wheel metaphor illustrates that “[t]his very self (ātman) is the lord and king of all beings. As all the spokes are fastened to the hub and the rim of a wheel, so to one’s self (ātman) are fastened all beings, all the gods, all the worlds, all the breaths, and all these bodies (ātman).”

However, Schopenhauer does not mention Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad; instead he quotes from the Bhagavadgītā. The particular quote that Schopenhauer mentions refers to the supreme brahman as the undivided principle sustaining, destroying, and recreating the particular. Three aspects bring the radius metaphor and the Bhagavadgītā quote together: first, the universal principle is “ganz and ungetheilt;” second, it is whole and undivided “in jedem Wesen,” or it “wohnt in jedem Wesen inne;” and third, there are two seemingly contradictory aspects to the same entirety: the center is at peace in eternity while the periphery is in constant motion in time; similarly, the above quote argues that the universal principle is undivided, and yet it lives in every being as if it were divided. This explanation further corresponds to

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Schopenhauer’s notion that the one singular will appears to be divided and individualized (in things and beings) in the phenomenal particular world. To sum up Schopenhauer’s quote, Schopenhauer understands brahman, the Hindu concept of universality, as 1. one singular undivided, indivisible principle; 2. residing in and within the particular, in every being;\textsuperscript{414} 3. residing in the particular, hence appearing to be divided in things and beings in the world; and 4. the principle that sustains, annihilates, and (re)creates the particular.

3.4.3 Arising and passing, beginning and end cannot be attributed to the universal principle. It is eternal, indivisible, ever-present, and imperishable.

According to Schopenhauer the phenomenal existence is fleeting, but the true inner nature or the universal essence of everything is eternal, indivisible, ever-present, and imperishable. The individual may be born and die, but the real inner nature of the individual, which is also the real inner nature of everything and everyone, is imperishable and has no beginning or end. To reiterate this point Schopenhauer refers to Colebrooke’s explanation. Colebrooke uses the word “soul” to indicate the eternal inner essence of the individual. Schopenhauer quotes Colebrooke who offers Vyāsa’s argument about the eternity of the innermost essence: “[T]he soul would not be eternal, if it were a production, and consequently

\textsuperscript{414} This is especially interesting compared to Hegel who understands brahman to be outside of the particular; Hegel views brahman as an entity that eliminates and dissolves any particularity, which, therefore, falls outside of the universal principle.
had a beginning. This argument, if one reads carefully, is a tautology. The assumption here is that the soul is eternal, and hence, by definition, it cannot be produced, and it cannot have a beginning.

Schopenhauer states that Brahmanism does not consider birth of an individual to be his absolute beginning and death to be his absolute end. To agree to such a notion, to say that birth is an absolute beginning and death is the absolute end, would be to imply that the individual arises out of nothing at birth and goes into nothing after death. But that which is could never come out of nothing and could never become nothing. That which is must be for all times. In Schopenhauer’s words, “Genau betrachtet ist es undenkbar, daß Das, was ein Mal in aller Kraft der Wirklichkeit daist, jemals zu nichts werden und dann eine unendliche Zeit hindurch nicht seyn sollte.” All of the above statements argue that, first of all, there is something. Moreover, that something is for all times. That eternal something is at the base of the apparent birth and death of the individual phenomenon. An individual thing or being is a temporal and spatial objectification of it, which occurs and recurs.

Schopenhauer argues that Hindu or other religious

415 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 572.

416 To make this point Schopenhauer mentions three statements: “Ex nihilo nihil fit, et in nihilum nihil potest reverti” meaning “Nothing comes out of nothing, and nothing can again become nothing;” “Quod enim est, erit semper” meaning “For that which is must always be;” and a statement by Theophrastus Paracelsus, “Die Seele in mir ist aus Etwas geworden; darum sie nicht zu Nichts kommt: denn aus Etwas kommt sie.” Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 571-75.

417 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 573.

418 Approached with a modern scientific understanding, I interpret these statements in terms of the constancy of energy as a whole. The law of conservation of energy is that energy is neither created
notions of the ever recurring universe express this very philosophical statement: “Hieraus ist die Lehre der Christen von der Wiederbringung aller Dinge, die der Hindu von der sich stets erneuernden Schöpfung der Welt durch Brahma…” For Schopenhauer, the ever new and recurring creation of the world by the creator god Brahmā is a mythical way to state that the actual Wesen of the world is beginningless and endless, and its objectification is subject to time. The birth and death of individual phenomena does not affect the actual inner being. Schopenhauer evokes the Bhagavadgītā to reiterate that the elimination or end of one phenomenon does not in the least affect the universal absolute. The death of the individual is of no consequence to the absolute. Moreover, the destruction of the individual does not mean the annihilation of the individual’s inner being, as the individual’s inner being is the same as the universal principle. In other words, the real inner being, “das eigentlich Wesentliche der Dinge,” is eternal and imperishable. Phenomenal existence can only be the objectification of that eternal essence in time.

The universal principle is not only eternal, but ever-present. For Schopenhauer, representation and will are not two different things but two different

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419 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 573-74.

420 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 555.
perspectives to look at the same world.\textsuperscript{421} On the one hand, the world is temporal and spatial; on the other hand, it is the eternal universal principle. As in the radius metaphor, what is revolving in time on one side is an ever-present motionless central point and on the other:

\begin{quote}
Das große Geheimnis unseres Seyns und Nichtseyns, welches aufzuklären diese und alle damit verwandten Dogmen erdacht wurden, beruht zuletzt darauf, daß das Selbe, was subjektiv eine unendliche Zeitreihe ausmacht, subjektiv ein Punkt, eine untheilbare, allezeit gegenwärtige Gegenwart ist…daß das eigentlich Wesentliche der Ding, des Menschen, der Welt, bleibend und beharrend im Nunc stans liegt, fest und unbeweglich…\textsuperscript{422}
\end{quote}

3.4.4 It is pure subject of knowledge, pure \emph{will}-less consciousness, absolute \emph{I}, absolute self-consciousness.

Thus far we have discussed one complex of related aspects assigned to the Hindu concept of universality: \emph{brahman} is a singular, indivisible, eternal, ever-present, imperishable \emph{Wesen} that resides in and sustains (and destroys and recreates) the particular. Another very important complex of aspects relates to the concept of universality as a “pure subject of knowledge,” and conversely the pure subject of

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{421} There is no doubt that Schopenhauer proposed \emph{two} concepts: \emph{representation} and \emph{will}. The \emph{three}fold structure that I put forward is not of Schopenhauer’s concepts, but of the main statements of his philosophy and of his interpretation of Hinduism. The first two of these three are Schopenhauer’s two concepts, and the third is their relationship of non-duality and the implications of that relationship.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{422} Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung} II 574. Here Schopenhauer uses the words “\emph{objektiv}” and “\emph{subjektiv}” to mean the following: “\emph{objektiv}” here pertains to the world of objects and things, in other words, to the physical world of particular entities, which is given to the categories of space, time, and causality. In the epistemological sense, “\emph{objektiv}” refers to the world that serves as an object of knowledge. “\emph{Subjektiv},” needless to say, means the opposite. It refers to the undivided, unobjectified universal principle. The word “\emph{subjektiv}” also ties in with Schopenhauer’s notion of the “pure subject of knowledge,” which is discussed in the next subsection.
\end{quote}
knowledge is universal, beyond time, space, and causality. The world of phenomena is the representation of the pure subject of knowledge. The world presents itself to be known to the subject, and the subject represents the world to himself with the help of his faculty of understanding. The world is the subject’s representation. The pure subject of knowledge is, thus, at the creative and at the same time receiving end of the representation of the world. But the subject himself, as the consciousness that receives and creates the representation, is outside of that representation. It is a “rein erkennendes Subjekt;” it is pure consciousness. As pure consciousness, one realizes that the world is absolutely dependent on him, in fact, that the world is an “Accidenz” of his being. As pure consciousness, then, the knowing subject sees the world in himself and comprehends himself as eternal. To explain this Schopenhauer quotes from the Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad:

Wer nun besagtermaßen sich in die Anschauung der Natur so weit vertieft und verloren hat, daß er nur noch als rein erkennendes Subjekt daist, wird eben dadurch inmittelbar inne, daß er als solches die Bedingung, also der Träger, der Welt und alles objektiven Daseyns ist, da dieses nunmehr als von dem seinigen abhängig sich darstellt. Er zieht also die Natur in sich hinein, so daß er sie nur noch als ein Accidenz seines Wesens empfindet… Wie aber sollte, wer dieses fühlt, sich selbst, im Gegensatz der unvergänglichen Natur, für absolut vergänglich halten? Ihn wird vielmehr das Bewußtseyn dessen ergreifen, was der Upanischad des Veda auspricht: Hae omnes creaturae in totum ego sum, et praeter me aliud ens non est.423

A few lines further Schopenhauer reiterates this:

Aber zugleich erhebt sich… das unmittelbare Bewußtseyn, daß alle diese Welten ja nur in unserer Vorstellung dasind, nur als Modifikationen des ewigen Subjekts des reinen Erkennens, als welches wir uns finden, sobald

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423 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung 1 234-35.
wir die Individualität vergessen, und welches der nothwendige, der bedingende Träger aller Welten und aller Zeiten ist. Die Größe der Welt, die uns vorher beunruhigte, ruht jetzt in uns: unsere Abhängigkeit von ihr wird aufgehoben durch ihre Abhängigkeit von uns. – Dieses Alles kommt jedoch nicht sofort in die Reflexion, sondern zeigt sich als ein nur gefühltes Bewußtseyn, daß man, in irgend einem Sinne (den allein die Philosophie deutlich macht), mit der Welt Eines ist und daher durch ihre Unermeßlichkeit nicht niedergedrückt, sondern gehoben wird. Es ist das gefühlte Bewußtseyn Dessen, was die Upanischaden der Veden in so mannigfaltigen Wendungen wiederholt aussprechen, vorzüglich in dem schon oben beigebrachten Spruch: Hae omnes creaturae in totum ego sum, et praeter me aliud ens non est [Alle diese Geschöpfe insgesamt bin ich, und außer mir ist kein anderes Wesen] (Oupnek’hat, Bd. 1, S. 122). Es ist Erhebung über das eigene Individuum, Gefühl des Erhabenen.424

Schopenhauer finds this particular quote in Duperron’s translation and paraphrasing of the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.425 It refers originally to a cosmogonical context. The “Self,” who alone exists before anything else, first creates a woman and then with her creates the entire world. The above lines paraphrase that this “Self,” also termed as ātman, realizes about himself that he is the entire creation and beside him there is no being. Schopenhauer draws upon this quote to depict the sublime feeling one has in realizing the eternity of his being as the pure subject of knowledge, as pure consciousness. For Schopenhauer, the Hindu concept of universality implies an “absolute I”—an absolute self-consciousness. The absolute self-consciousness includes everything in such a way that there is no other thing than the I. Unlike Hegel’s interpretation of brahman as an empty concept of pure abstraction lacking

424 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 263-64.

425 Duperron, Oupnek’hat I 122.
subjectivity, for Schopenhauer, it is a *consciousness* nevertheless, and a self-*consciousness* at that, as pure *Subjekt*.

In the pure abstraction of *brahman* Hegel equates absolute universality with absolute nothingness. Schopenhauer has a different interpretation of the concept of nothingness, especially as it can or cannot be applied to Hindu and Buddhist notions of the absolute universality. For Schopenhauer *Brahman*, and the “reabsorption” into it, correspond to the state (“Zustand”), which, those who have completely and freely denied *will* in themselves, have experienced (“erfahren haben”). According to Schopenhauer, this state can be denoted as “Ekstase, Entrückung, Erleuchtung, Vereinigung mit Gott u.s.w.” In this state there is no distinction between subject and object, and hence it cannot be called “Erkenntniß” or knowledge, in the conventional epistemological sense of those terms. It can perhaps be termed as accessible to “Erfahrung,” which is not communicable to anyone else’s experience. Schopenhauer argues that since, in this experience, there is no *will*,

426 On a related note, it should be mentioned here that reabsorption into *brahman* does not mean for Schopenhauer a return to an unconditioned cause. In other words, *brahman* is not an “unbedingte Ursache.” According to Schopenhauer, in Brahmanism and Buddhism there is no such assumption of “Zurückgehn zu einer unbedingten Ursache, zu einem ersten Anfang.” Instead, there is an infinite series of “Erscheinungen” that condition each other. Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* I 592.

427 “Erfahrung” is the term Schopenhauer himself uses. This notion may seem to resemble Meister Eckhart’s notion of ineffability of mystical experience. Eckhart stated that by contemplation it is possible to realize that the “Ground” or “Spark” of the soul is the ground of God (or Godhead). This is a mystical experience of pure unity, and hence it is indescribable in terms of thought, image, or language. See Ninian Smart’s article, in which he also compares Eckhart with Śankara. Ninian Smart, "Eckhart, Meister (c. 1260–1327/1328), "Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2006 ed., Gale Virtual Reference Library, Thomson Gale, Ohio State University Libraries, Columbus. 27 Feb. 2007 <http://find.galegroup.com.proxy.lib.ohio-
no *representation*, and no subject-object distinction, it appears (“erscheint”) to us that reabsorption into *brahman* is a transition into empty nothingness (“Übergang in das leere Nichts”). But nothingness is a relative concept and always refers to its opposite positive concept—something. If x is something, only then can not-x be termed as nothing. If the world as *will* and *representation* is something, then the experience where there is no *will* and no *representation* is called nothing. That does not imply it is absolute nothingness. Moreover, word and language are inherently positive and positing in nature, i.e., if something is named, it is posited. Word and language, being positing in nature, belong to the world of *representation*. Hence, language cannot capture the state beyond *representation*, experienced through the denial of *will*. Hence, language cannot but describe it negatively, namely as *nothing*. This nothing is not an absolute nothingness, but a nothingness in reference to the positive and positing nature of word. Given our representational linguistic abilities, the experience of reabsorption into *brahman* or denial of *will* can only be expressed negatively. Any attempt to give it a name would be misjudging language and evading its very relative nothingness. Hence, ultimately words and expressions like “Resorption in das Brahm” or even “Nirwana” are meaningless for Schopenhauer:

> Vor uns bleibt allerdings nur das Nichts…statt selbst es zu umgehn, wie die Inder, durch Mythen und bedeutungsleere Worte, wie Resorbtion in das Brahm, oder Nirwana der Buddhisten. Wir bekennen es vielmehr frei: was nach gänzlicher Aufhebung des Willens übrig bleibt, ist für alle Die, welche noch des Willens voll sind, allerdings Nichts. Aber auch umgekehrt ist
Denen, in welchen der Wille sich gewendet und verneint hat, diese unsere so sehr reale Welt mit allen ihren Sonnen und Milchsträßen – Nichts.428

As Schopenhauer further states, if *will* and *representation* is something, then beyond *will* and *representation* is nothing. But conversely if this is approached from the other side, and if the experience of the state beyond *will* and *representation* is termed as something, then *will* and *representation* are nothing. Philosophically and linguistically one has to term it negatively, as “nothing.”

The next section examines in more detail Schopenhauer’s comparison of this notion of nothingness with mysticism or mystical experience. The mystical experience of oneness with god is, for Schopenhauer, comparable to *will*-less-ness. Philosophy and language have to denote it negatively, but mystics can denote it positively. The language of philosophy, or language itself, cannot describe that experience. But mystical experience is beyond language, so a mystic can denote it in positive terms, because a mystic belongs to a different paradigm than a philosopher. Mysticism can identify it in positive terms, what philosophy must depict in negative terms relative to the positing nature of language. A philosopher can explain it, but a mystic experiences it.429

428 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 507-8.
429 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 716.
3.5 The non-duality of the particular and the universal

So far we have examined Schopenhauer’s understanding of the Hindu notions of the physical world and its particular entities and the metaphysical universal principle. We ascertained that the primary impetus of his interpretation of the particular world is his concept of representation and that of the universal principle is his concept of will. Now we come to the third aspect, namely the non-duality of the particular with the universal. The primary impetus for this is Schopenhauer’s explanations of the denial of will. Even though the non-duality of the particular with the universal is already given and not really achieved by the particular, one must philosophically comprehend it and seek to realize it.

For Schopenhauer in Hinduism, or specifically in Brahmanism, the non-duality of the particular with the universal has the following aspects:

3.5.1 Mysticism is associated with quietism and asceticism. Mysticism is the consciousness of the identity of one’s own inner essence with 

\textit{brahman}.

3.5.2 The eternity of \textit{brahman} translates into our own eternity.

3.5.3 Thus, fear of death disappears.

3.5.4 Death literally demonstrates the identity of particular with universal. It eliminates one particular instance but the universal principle lives on in another.
3.5.5 *Tat tvam asi*—you are that—is the most precise statement of non-duality.

   a. The non-duality of the particular with the universal translates into the non-duality between two particulars.

   b. *Tat tvam asi* applies to aesthetic contemplation to understand the non-duality of the subject and object.

   c. In the ethical context *tat tvam asi* demonstrates the non-duality between the tormentor and the tormented.

   d. The philosophical statement *tat tvam asi* is translated into practical terms in the myth of metempsychosis (transmigration of souls).

3.5.6 *Tat tvam asi* ethics necessarily leads to denial of *will*, mortification of body and *will*, and complete renunciation.

3.5.7 Non-duality with *brahman* is the ultimate knowledge that leads to salvation.

3.5.1 Mysticism is associated with quietism and asceticism. Mysticism is the consciousness of the identity of one’s own inner essence with *brahman*.

As mentioned earlier, Schopenhauer compares the experience of *will*-lessness with mysticism. Schopenhauer associates Hindu ascetic practices with
mysticism, which he defines as the “consciousness of the identity of one’s inner being with that of all things.” Schopenhauer’s philosophy inseparably ties his own notion of the denial of will with the non-duality of the particular and the universal. The transition is as follows: the world is representation. But the thing-in-itself is will. Will is constant striving; it is what drives our every move, evokes desires in us, and makes our lives miserable. When we realize that we are that will, in other words, when we realize the non-duality of our phenomenal, individual, particular existence with the universal will, we are so abhorred by what will is and what it does to us, that we voluntarily deny it, renounce it. For Schopenhauer’s philosophy, thus, the non-duality of the particular with the universal necessarily leads to renunciation. In Schopenhauer’s philosophy there is indeed a progression from realization of non-duality to denial of will, but often he states that they are so integrally connected that either one can lead to another. Under denial of will he recognizes two degrees: quietism, i.e., giving up desire, and asceticism, i.e., purposeful mortification of will. Finally, the realization of the identity or non-duality of the particular with the universal is, for Schopenhauer, mysticism:

Quietismus, d. i. Aufgeben alles Wollens, Askesis, d. i. Absichtliche Ertödtung des Eigenwillens, und Mysticismus, d. i. Bewußtseyn der Identität seines eigenen Wesens mit dem aller Dinge, oder dem Kern der Welt, stehn in genauester Verbindung; so daß wer sich zu einem derselben bekennt allmäßlig auch zur Annahme der andern, selbst gegen seinen Vorsatz, geleitet wird.431

430 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 717-18.

431 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 717-18.
Schopenhauer terms mysticism as “pantheistisches Bewuβtseyn.”

According to Schopenhauer, the first two of the above mentioned interconnected aspects in Hinduism, namely quietism and asceticism, emerge as strong themes. The third aspect, namely mysticism, emerges secondarily, as a consequence of quietism, as union with God. Even so, Hinduism qualifies very much as mysticism and “jenes pantheistische Bewuβtseyn,” namely the consciousness of the identity of one’s own being with all things and with the essence of the universe is crucial to all forms of mysticism. Theism puts the “Urquell des Daseyns” outside of us, as an object; mysticism, however, “zieht ihn, auf den verschiedenen Stufen ihrer Weihe, allmählig wieder ein, in uns, als das Subjekt, und der Adept erkennt zuletzt, mit Verwunderung und Freude, daß er es selbst ist.” To elaborate on this, Schopenhauer cites the example of Sufism and states that “Eben diesem Geiste gemäß äußert sich durchgängig auch die Mystik der Sufi hauptsächlich als ein Schwelgen in dem Bewuβtseyn, daß man selbst der Kern der Welt und die Quelle alles Daseyns ist, zu der Alles zurückkehrt.”

Hinduism, and more specifically Brahmanism, is definitely mysticism because it asks the individual to consider himself as brahman itself:

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432 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 717.

433 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 717.

434 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 717. As seen here, Schopenhauer often uses Brahmanism and Buddhism together. Here it is especially problematic, since Schopenhauer attributes the concept of “Brahm” both to Brahmanism and Buddhism. He is elsewhere aware, however, that brahman is not a Buddhist concept.
“Brahmanismus und Buddhaismus, die den Menschen lehren, sich als das Urwesen selbst, Brahm, zu betrachten, welchem alles Entstehn und Vergehn wesentlich fremd ist…”

Schopenhauer elaborates further that “Mystik, im weitesten Sinne, ist jede Anleitung zum unmittelbaren Innewerden Dessen, wohin weder Anschauung noch Begriff, also überhaupt keine Erkenntnis reicht…Der Mystiker nämlich geht aus von seiner innern, positiven, individuellen Erfahrung, in welcher er sich findet als das ewige, alleinige Wesen…” Schopenhauer argues that sense perception, thought, and knowledge, in other words, that which has the form of subject and object, belong necessarily to the world of representation. Hence that which is beyond representation, i.e., thing-in-itself, is beyond perception or thought; it is beyond subject-object divide. All religions demonstrate this by peaking into a mystical point in which all “Erkenntnis” ends. For Schopenhauer, Hinduism demonstrates this by “die geforderte Einstellung alles Denkens und Anschauens, zum Behuf der tiefsten Einkehr in den Grund des eigenen Selbst, unter mentaler Aussprechung des mysteriösen Oum.” However, it should be noted here that in both the above quotes, going beyond Erkenntnis, Anschauung, and Begriff is, for Schopenhauer, going beyond the subject-object divide. That is not to say that it is going into absolute emptiness as Hegel views it. To utter “oum” is to empty oneself

435 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 529.

436 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 715.

437 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 715.
of (in Schopenhauer’s sense) *representative* thought but not to empty oneself absolutely. It is “in das eigene Innere versenken;” the sinking oneself into the depths of one’s own being, where the divide of subject and object ceases and all that remains or becomes is oneness.438

Mysticism, Schopenhauer argues, stops one from searching for the universal principle outside of oneself. Hinduism, which is, without a doubt, mysticism, also seeks to turn inward and find the universal principle within the particular. Schopenhauer understands that in Hinduism, one finds *brahman* identical with one’s own inner nature. Inwardly, intuitively, and immediately one realizes, “I am *brahman*.”

3.5.2 The eternity of *brahman* translates into our own eternity.

If *brahman* is eternal, ever-present, and imperishable, and if we are *brahman*, then we are eternal. In the same context that Schopenhauer discusses the eternity of *brahman* and Colebrooke’s explanation of the beginning-less unproduced soul, Schopenhauer also discusses our non-duality with *brahman*. As our inner essence is non-dual with universal eternal essence, we need not look upon birth as our beginning and death as our end. Schopenhauer explains that if we conceive our existence as accidental, then there would be the possibility of abruptly coming into it (at birth) and falling out of it (at death). It would merely be

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438 Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* II 715n.
accidental to gain existence and lose it. Schopenhauer elaborates further that if we consider the infinity of time lapsed before and after us, we would see that all possible states and conditions of existence have elapsed, and yet we exist.\textsuperscript{439} The fact that we exist now, despite all other possibilities of existence, means that our existence is a necessary one. The necessity of our existence has to do with our non-duality with the universal eternal \textit{Wesen}.

\begin{quote}
Denn die Unendlichkeit der bereits abgelaufenen Zeit, mit der darin erschöpften Möglichkeit ihrer Vorgänge, verbürgt, daß was existiert nothwendig existiert. Mithin hat jeder sich als ein nothwendiges Wesen zu begreifen… Daraus, daß wir jetzt dasind, folgt, wohlerwogen, daß wir jederzeit da seyn müssen. Denn wir sind selbst das Wesen, welche die Zeit, um ihre Leere auszufüllen, in sich aufgenommen hat: deshalb füllt es eben die ganze Zeit, Gegenwart, Vergangenheit und Zukunft auf gleiche Weise…\textsuperscript{440}
\end{quote}

As discussed earlier, for Schopenhauer, “brahm”—the eternal \textit{Wesen}—designates an absolute “Selbst-bewußtseyn.” Therefore, the particular “I” should also view itself as non-dual with the universal eternal absolute “I.” Schopenhauer argues that if we ourselves are the eternal \textit{Wesen}, and if our existence is a necessary one, then “es [muß] wahr seyn zu sagen: ‘Ich werde stets seyn’ und ‘Ich bin stets gewesen.’”\textsuperscript{441} Here Schopenhauer is careful enough to mention the difference between the “knowing I” and the “willing I,” i.e., der “erkennende und der wollende

\textsuperscript{439} Rephrasing Schopenhauer’s words, if time could make us happy, we would have been happy long ago, and we would be happy now, and if time could destroy us, we would have ceased to exist long ago, and we would not exist now. Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II} 573.

\textsuperscript{440} Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II} 573.

\textsuperscript{441} Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II} 575.
Theil unsers Wesens,” the latter of which goes together with ego, which is tied to
the phenomenal existence. The “knowing I,” by contrast, is pure subject of
knowledge. Due to the non-duality of the particular with the universal essence, the
individual must also view himself as pure subject of knowledge, as pure self-
consciousness.

3.5.3 Thus, fear of death disappears.

In recognizing the universality and eternity within the particular, death
occupies an interesting position in Schopenhauer’s philosophy. The context is the
apprehension of death, in both senses of the term—fear of death and understanding
of death. Schopenhauer is concerned with the apprehension of death both to explain
the elimination of the particular phenomenal existence and the realization of the
non-duality of the particular with the universal principle.

Schopenhauer explains that the one who is caught up in the veil of māyā
fears death. But the fear of death disappears when the nature of the universal is
understood, as this knowledge places the knower at a higher standpoint.442 To
elaborate on this, Schopenhauer evokes the Bhagavadgītā, Arjuna’s dilemma, and
Kṛṣṇa’s advice to go forth and wage war. Schopenhauer states that Kṛṣṇa’s advice
is analogous to Schopenhauer’s argument on the apprehension of death:

442 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 357.
Schopenhauer maintains that the one who truly understands that he himself is the universal will is no longer afraid of death:

[G]ewaffnet mit der Erkenntnis, die wir ihm beilegen, sähe er dem auf den Flügeln der Zeit heraneilenden Tode gleichgültig entgegen, ihn betrachtend als einen falschen Schein, ein ohnmächtiges Gespenst, Schwache zu schrecken, das aber keine Gewalt über den hat, der da weiß, daß ja er selbst jener Wille ist, dessen Objektivation oder Abbild die ganze Welt ist, dem daher das Leben allezeit gewiß bleibt und auch die Gegenwart, die eigentliche, alleinige Form der Erscheinung des Willens, den daher keine unendliche Vergangenheit oder Zukunft, in denen er nicht wäre, schrecken kann, da er diese als das eitle Blendwerk und Gewebe der Maja betrachtet, der daher so wenig den Tod zu fürchten hätte, wie die Sonne die Nacht. – Auf diesen Standpunkt stellt, im Bhagavat Gita, Krischna seinen angehenden Zögling den Ardschun, als dieser beim Anblick der schlagfertigen Heere (auf etwas ähnliche Art wie Xerres), von Wehmuth ergriffen wird, verzagen und vom Kampfe ablassen will, um den Untergang so vieler Tausende zu verhüten: Krischna stellt ihn auf jenen Standpunkt, und der Tod jener Tausende kann ihn nicht mehr aufhalten: er giebt das Zeichen zur Schlacht.443

Hegel also uses this episode of Kṛṣṇa’s conversation with Arjuna on the battlefield.

Hegel, however, refers to a different part of Kṛṣṇa’s argument, namely his statement on Arjuna’s warrior caste. Hegel argues that Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to follow the specific duty of his warrior caste, namely to fight. Hegel extracts from this advice that Hindu ethics is based on the caste system. Schopenhauer restricts his interpretation of this episode, however, to the insight of identity or non-duality of the particular with the universal, which, as a result, eliminates the fear of death. He argues that as Kṛṣṇa brings Arjuna to higher knowledge, Arjuna realizes that his own essence and that of all the warriors present in the battlefield is non-dual with the eternal universal principle. Schopenhauer argues that, with the realization of

443 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 358.
non-duality with the eternal and the infinite, Arjuna no longer fears death and proceeds to fight in the war. Schopenhauer’s interpretation of the war scenario, as we shall see later, conflicts directly with Schopenhauer’s ethics. Schopenhauer’s ethics is also based directly on the non-duality of the particular with the universal. For him, however, non-duality with the universal principle translates into ethics of compassion: insight into the unity of the particular with the universal results in compassion, which stops one from harming another. Arjuna’s insight, by contrast, enables him to start the war.

3.5.4 Death literally demonstrates the identity of particular with universal. It eliminates one particular instance but the universal principle lives on in another.

It is important to remember that Schopenhauer draws on Hindu thought to explain his own concepts. Here too, Schopenhauer employs the Hindu notion of the universal principle as much to mean a will-less pure consciousness as he has used it before to illustrate will itself. Elaborating on apprehension of death, Schopenhauer explains that death eliminates the “I.” According to the earlier mentioned distinction between the “knowing I” and the “willing I,” in the context of death Schopenhauer argues that it is the “willing I,” the ego, the phenomenon, that is eliminated by death. Death eliminates the “I,” which implies that it eliminates the distinction between I and you, one and another. Schopenhauer elaborates that as it is the same will that dwells in all, will of the one who dies lives on in another. For
Schopenhauer, that is the actual sense of immortality, however contradictory it sounds. In this context of death’s connection with immortality Schopenhauer invokes Hinduism again. He gives two examples of death rituals, which for him signify the elimination of the particular phenomenon, but the eternity and immortality (in the above explained sense) of existence in general: as a first example he refers to the Vedas, in general, (actually quotes, however, from the Upaniṣads), and explains that when a man dies his vision becomes one with the sun, smell with earth, taste with water, hearing with air, speech with fire, and so on.⁴⁴⁴ Schopenhauer evokes this example to illustrate that death ends the particular phenomenon to better reveal the non-duality of the phenomenon with the thing-in-itself. In case of the Upaniṣadic example, it is illustrated in terms of an image. The dead person’s sense organs and sensory faculties become one with the corresponding elements that symbolize the corresponding elements of the universe. The sun is the vision of the universe, earth is supposed to signify smell, water signifies taste, and so on. The particular phenomenal existence is eliminated by death but it still lives on in another form and as a whole. The other example that he refers to is a Hindu ritual in which the dying man gives his senses and faculties to his son, in whom they continue to live.

In both examples one phenomenal existence dies, but it lives on in another form. Death eliminates the particular; but will that lived in it, now lives in another. As these examples refer to sense organs, it is not surprising that Schopenhauer

⁴⁴⁴ Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 356n.
selects them in particular. As we know, for Schopenhauer sensory perception is the defining aspect of the phenomenal world, i.e., the world as representation. It is the sensory perception and the resulting epistemological understanding of the world that represents the world as plurality, as individuals divided in space and time. The Hindu examples reinforce this aspect of Schopenhauer’s philosophy. They illustrate for him that with death the individual has to give up his sense organs, i.e., the faculty that defines his particularity. But that defining faculty is restored into someone else, thereby ensuring the continued existence of particularity, of the phenomenal world.

The non-duality of the universal with the particular quickly translates for Schopenhauer into the non-duality of one particular with another particular. In other words, if one is non-dual with the universal, and if another is non-dual with the universal, then both are non-dual with each other. For Schopenhauer death physically demonstrates the non-duality between individual and individual, and between individual and universal. It physically removes the illusion of ego that separates the “I” from everything else.

Der Egoismus besteht eigentlich nur darin, daß der Mensch alle Realität auf seine eigene Person beschränkt, indem er indieser allein zu existieren wähnt, nicht in den andern. Der Tod belehrt ihn eines Bessern, indem er diese Person aufhebt, so daß das Wesen des Menschen, welches sein Wille ist, fortan nur in andern Individuen leben wird…Sein ganzes Ich lebt also von jetzt an nur in Dem, was er bisher als Nicht-Ich angesehen hatte: denn der Unterschied zwischen Außerem und Innerem hört auf. Wir erinnern uns hier, daß der bessere Mensch der ist, welcher zwischen sich und den Andern den wenigsten Unterschied macht, sie nicht als absolut Nicht-Ich betrachtet… Gehn wir aber davon aus, daß der Unterschied von Außer mir und In mir, als ein räumlicher, nur in der Erscheinung, nicht im Dinge an
Schopenhauer discusses death as a physical eliminator of ego, of phenomenal existence. Death literally demonstrates the non-duality of the individual with the universal will and thereby the non-duality of one individual with another. Schopenhauer further argues that death also liberates will itself from the phenomenon. Will, as it manifests in man, is unfreely bound to man; it acts according to man’s “unalterable character,” according to the “chain of motives.” In order to make will free again, the phenomenal existence and its unalterable character have to cease in order for will to begin again: “Demnach muß er aufhören zu seyn was er ist, um aus dem Keim seines Wesens als ein neues und anderes hervorgehn zu können.”

Death liberates will from this phenomenal bond and will becomes free again. In that sense, death is a restoration to a former state. In this context Schopenhauer quotes the Upaniṣads: “Finditur nodus cordis, dissolvuntur omnes dubitationes, ejusque opera evanescent. [Zerspalten wird des Herzens Knoten, aufgelöst werden alle Zweifel, und seine Werke werden zu nichts].”

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446 Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II* 595.

447 Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II* 596.

448 Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II* 595-96. For paraphrasing of this quote see Duperron 340, 356, 360.
placement of this quote in this context suggests that Schopenhauer probably thinks of the Hindu notion of the chain of rebirths, where death eliminates one phenomenal appearance, but another phenomenal form appears, anew, obliterating the works of the previous unalterable character. Hence, Schopenhauer’s focus in the above quote seems to be on the last sentence, namely that all of the works come to be nullified, so that a new beginning is possible. It should be noted here that a few lines from this quote, in the same context, Schopenhauer also brings up the concept of nirvāṇa to reiterate and add to the notion that death “extinguishes” the phenomenal existence; it is the “Erloschen” of the phenomenal existence.449 Thus Schopenhauer believes that in both Hindu and Buddhist thought death dissolves or extinguishes the phenomenal existence nullifying the knots and bounds associated with that existence, thereby making the inner essence free again.

3.5.5.a Tat tvam asi—you are that—is the most precise statement of non-duality. The non-duality of the particular with the universal translates into the non-duality between two particulars.

So far we have seen that Schopenhauer refers to Hindu rituals and Upaniṣadic statements concerning death to demonstrate the non-duality of the

particular with the universal principle, and to illustrate that the universal principle
lives on or begins anew in another particular phenomenon. From the non-duality of
the particular with the universal, Schopenhauer infers the non-duality between two
particulars, an inference that proves to be very crucial for his aesthetics and ethics.
Non-duality between two particulars entails that if two individuals are non-dual
with the universal principle, then, it logically follows that they are non-dual with
each other. Schopenhauer argues that this thought is expressed in the Upaniṣadic
statement \textit{tat tvam asi}—literally, “you are that.” This statement, which
Schopenhauer acknowledges as a \textit{Mahāvākyā}, i.e., a great sentence, is an assertion
from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. As we discuss later, in this sentence the pronoun
“that” refers to the innermost essence of all things and beings. In asserting “you are
that,” the statement argues that “you” are the same as the innermost essence of all
things. Consequently, for Schopenhauer, that means that you, I, and every thing and
being is \textit{brahman}. Schopenhauer argues that in Hinduism the non-duality with
\textit{brahman} implies the non-duality of all things and beings with one another: when I
realize that ‘I am \textit{brahman},’ and understand that ‘you are \textit{brahman}’ as well, I
comprehend that ‘you and I are the same.’ This interpretation has tremendous
potential for Schopenhauer’s philosophy, especially for his notion of the denial of
\textit{will}. Schopenhauer gives extraordinary importance to \textit{tat tvam asi} and uses it
frequently in at least two different contexts, aesthetics and ethics; it features much
more prominently in the latter context than in the former.
3.5.5.b  *Tat tvam asi* applies to aesthetic contemplation to understand the non-duality of the subject and object.

In the aesthetic context Schopenhauer employs *tat tvam asi* to discuss aesthetic contemplation. He presents an example of an observer viewing animals or appreciating a painting of animals that shows them in their primal disposition. By primal disposition Schopenhauer means that the animals appear in their most natural state, in which their *will* or, as Schopenhauer emphasizes, *will* of the species is evident in their form and action. What interests and attracts the observer’s glance to animals is precisely this primal depiction of *will*. It is the same *will* that resides in the observer, but in him it is moderated by thought. In animals it is unmoderated and natural. But both animal and man possess the same *will*, which is our innermost nature:

[W]ir sehn in ihr die vielfachen Grade und Weisen der Manifestation des Willens, welcher, in allen Wesen der Eine und selbe, überall das Selbe will, was eben als Leben, als Daseyn, sich objektiviert, in so endloser Abwechselung, so verschiedenen Gestalten, die alle Akkommodationen zu den verschiedenen äußeren Bedingungen sind, vielen Variationen des selben Themas zu vergleichen…so würden wir am besten jene Sankrit-Formel, die in den heiligen Büchern der Hindu so oft vorkommt und Mahavakya, d. h. das große Wort, genannt wird, dazu gebrauchen können: “Tat twam asi”, das heißt: “Dieses Lebende bist du.”

In this context, for Schopenhauer, *tat tvam asi* means “[d]ieses Lebende bist du,” i.e., ‘you are that living being,’ specifically given Schopenhauer’s example, it

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means, ‘you are that animal.’ In other words, argues Schopenhauer, the statement implies that that the will that you see depicted in that animal is the same will that is in you, therefore, that animal is the same as you. *Tat tvam asi* denotes, for Schopenhauer, the non-duality between two particulars on account of their non-duality with the universal. Conversely, the non-duality of two particulars is a reminder of the non-duality of the particular with the universal: it is as if to state that the primal unmoderated will in that animal is also your essence, and, therefore, you and the animal are the same.

Schopenhauer chooses to translate the word *tat* as “dieses Lebende” to emphasize the non-duality of the observer with the animal. As we discuss later, Schopenhauer is aware that the sentence *tat tvam asi* does not contain any word that would warrant the translation “dieses Lebende.” Schopenhauer’s aesthetic context and his example of the animal prompt him to translate it that particular way. By doing that, it is clear that Schopenhauer uses *tat tvam asi* to reiterate the non-duality among all particular entities.

3.5.5.c In the ethical context *tat tvam asi* demonstrates the non-duality between the tormentor and the tormented.

*Tat tvam asi* plays a very crucial role in Schopenhauer’s ethical context. Schopenhauer explains that the inner essence of everyone is one, namely *will*. This insight into the oneness of everyone leads to ethical behavior. The tormentor realizes that he is the same as the tormented. In effect, he realizes that by
tormenting others, by harming others, he torments himself; he inflicts pain on his own self. This insight produces in him a sense of empathy for others, and prevents the tormentor from harming others. The metaphysical insight into the oneness of will leads, thus, to an ethical insight. Schopenhauer interprets this transition from metaphysics to ethics in the Upanīṣadic statement *tat tvam asi*, which he now translates as “Dies bist du.” Schopenhauer explains that *tat tvam asi* is a formula, it is a Mahavākya (“great sentence”), that summarizes all the wisdom of Vedas and Upanīṣads, which pronounce this formula to all living and non-living things, declaring their non-duality with one another. Schopenhauer compares this statement with Kant’s postulate of practical reason and adds that *tat tvam asi* contains an inherent ethical statement that is bestowed upon every Hindu.

3.5.5.d The philosophical statement *tat tvam asi* is translated into practical terms in the myth of metempsychosis (transmigration of souls).

Schopenhauer states that the philosophical, more specifically, ethical statement *tat tvam asi* is made more accessible to everyone by expressing it in terms of a myth. It is the myth of the transmigration of souls—“Metempsychose”—which, according to Schopenhauer, is the “Kern” of Brahmanism and Buddhism. Schopenhauer understands metempsychosis or the transmigration of souls in terms

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452 Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* I 443.

453 Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* II 592.
of the cycle of rebirths. Schopenhauer explains the myth of rebirth, popularly known as the Hindu notion of reincarnation, as follows: if one harms another being, then, in the next life, he is reborn in the form of that same being to suffer the same pain. To prevent being reborn and suffering the same pain, a person, thus, refrains from hurting others in his life. The myth of metempsychosis, then, works as an ethical postulate. Schopenhauer argues that *tat tvam asi* explained in terms of metempsychosis means ‘you are that (whom you harm),’ or ‘you are the same as the one you harm.’ (In the myth of metempsychosis, though, you realize your non-duality with another in your next life.)


Schopenhauer argues in this quote that *tat tvam asi* translates metaphysics into ethics. The metaphysical insight that you and I are one *will* necessarily translates into an ethical postulate that I should not harm you. The metaphysical insight of non-duality lies, thus, at the basis of all virtue.

[D]aß nämlich der Wille das Ansich jeder Erscheinung, selbst aber, als solches, von den Formen dieser und dadurch von der Vielheit frei ist: welche Wahrheit ich, in Bezug auf das Handeln, nicht würdiger auszudrücken weiß, als durch die schon erwähnte Formel des Veda: “*Tat*

454 Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II* 704.
"tvam asi." ("Dieses bist Du.") Wer sie mit klarer Erkenntnis und fester inniger Überzeugung über jedes Wesen, mit dem er in Berührung kommt, zu sich selber auszusprechen vermag; der ist eben damit aller Tugend und Säeligkeit gewiß und auf dem geraden Wege zur Erlösung.455

If the myth of rebirth suggests it is, in fact, punishment to be reborn to suffer the same pain, then the ultimate reward is never to be born again. The more virtuous a person is in this life, the better next life he will have. And if he is the most virtuous in this life, then he will not be born again.


Schopenhauer believes, thus, that tat tvam asi and the myth of rebirth are two ways to express the same ethical postulate. Tat tvam asi is a postulate true for all time; for the sake of the myth, it is simply transferred to the future. Instead of stating ‘you are that,’ it simply states ‘you will be that’ in your future birth. But

455 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 464.

456 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 443.
both of these statements summarize the same metaphysical insight on non-duality translated into an ethical postulate.

3.5.6 *Tat tvam asi* ethics necessarily leads to denial of will, mortification of body and will, and complete renunciation.

Schopenhauer explains that the realization that one is the same as another evokes the sentiment of sympathy for all. Individuals, who are all disconnected in the world of *representation*, are connected through sympathy. He argues that sympathy is the empirical demonstration of the metaphysical connection of all. The metaphysical non-duality of all as will manifests itself as sympathy in the phenomenal world. It shows the connection between individuals that is otherwise not evident in the world of individuation.457

However, for Schopenhauer, Hindu ethics does not limit itself to sympathy and compassion for others. It quickly translates into love for others. It is possible only for the one “der die Werke der Liebe übt” to penetrate through the veil of māyā.458 Love for others, however, in turn translates into denial of self-love, denial of *will-to-live*, and purposeful mortification of one’s body and will:

Nun aber noch weiter entfaltet, vielseitiger ausgesprochen und lebhafter dargestellt, als in der Christlichen Kirche und occidentalischen Welt geschehn konnte, finden wir Dasjenige, was wir Verneinung des Willens zum Leben genannt haben, in den uralten Werken der Sanskritsprache… In der Ethik der Hindus nun, wie wir sie schon jetzt, so unvollkommen unsere

457 Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* II 705.
Kenntniß ihrer Litteratur auch noch ist, auf das mannigfaltigste und kräftigste ausgesprochen finden in den Veden, Puranas, Dichterwerken, Mythen, Legenden ihrer Heiligen, Denksprüchen und Lebensregeln, sehn wir vorgeschrieben: Liebe des Nächsten mit völliger Verleugnung aller Selbstliebe; die Liebe überhaupt nicht auf das Menschengeschlecht beschränkt, sondern alles Lebende umfassend; Wohlthätigkeit bis zum Weggeben des täglich sauer Erworbenen; gränzenlose Geduld gegen alle Beleidiger; Vergeltung alles Bösen, so arg es auch seyn mag, mit Gutem und Liebe; freiwillige und freudige Erdulung jeder Schmach; Enthaltung aller thierischen Nahrung; völlige Keuschheit und Entsagung aller Wollust für Den, welcher eigentliche Heiligkeit anstrebt; Wegwerfung alles Eigenthums, Verlassung jedes Wohnorts, aller Angehörigen, tiefe gänzliche Einsamkeit, zugebracht in stillschweigender Betrachtung, mit freiwilliger Buße und schrecklicher langsamer Selbstpeinigung, zur gänzlichen Mortifikation des Willens, welche zuletzt bis zum freiwilligen Tode geht durch Hunger, auch durch Entgegengehn den Krokodilen, durch Herabstürzen vom geheiligten Felsengipfel im Himalaja, durch lebendig Begrabenwerden, auch durch Hinwerfung unter die Räder des unter Gesang, Jubel und Tanz der Bajaderen die Götterbilder umherfahrenden ungeheuren Wagens. Und diesen Vorschriften, deren Ursprung über vier Jahrtausende weit hinausreicht, wird auch noch jetzt, so entartet in vielen Stücken jenes Volk ist, noch immer nachgelebt, von Einzelnen selbst bis zu den äußersten Extremen.459

After giving examples of what constitutes Indian ethics, which according to Schopenhauer comes essentially out of denial of will, he proceeds to state that the very fact that these practices have survived for thousands of years shows that these practices and their inherent ethics are not random and arbitrary, whimsical and fanciful, but are founded on the very nature of mankind. Christianity and Vedānta philosophy, despite their cultural and temporal difference, believe in the ethics of denial of all that brings comfort and worldly pleasure. This connection between Christianity and Vedānta is an added proof for Schopenhauer that the practices of renunciation are not a product of an eccentric or insane mind, but a mind that has

deep insight into human nature.\textsuperscript{460} This is perhaps Schopenhauer’s response to Hegel’s objection that Indian practices seem to be completely random, fanciful, whimsical, and unchristian. Schopenhauer states that the ethics of New Testament Christianity is the same as Brahmanism and Buddhism, because it rests in the notion that our existence is essentially a result of a guilty desire and hence should be seen and lived as a punishment and reparation of that guilt.\textsuperscript{461}

For Schopenhauer, Hindu ethics of compassion necessarily lead into ascetics of denial of \textit{will}. Schopenhauer’s philosophy proceeds from realizing the nonduality with \textit{will} to denying \textit{will} completely, i.e., it moves from ethics onto asceticism:

\begin{quote}
Jener aber, der, das \textit{principium individuationis} durchschauend, das Wesen der Dinge an sich und dadurch das Ganze erkennt, ist solchen Trostes nicht mehr empfänglich: er sieht sich an allen Stellen zugleich, und tritt heraus. – Sein Wille wendet sich, bejaht nicht mehr sein eigenes, sich in der Erscheinung spiegelndes Wesen, sondern verneint es. Das Phänomen, wodurch dieses sich kund giebt, ist der Übergang von der Tugend zur Askesis. Nämlich es genügt ihm nicht mehr, Andere sich selbst gleich zu lieben, und für sie soviel zu thun, wie für sich; sondern es entsteht in ihm ein Abscheu vor dem Wesen, dessen Ausdruck seine eigene Erscheinung ist, dem Willen zum Leben, dem Kern und Wesen jener als jammervoll erkannten Welt. Er verleugnet daher eben dieses in ihm erscheinende und schon durch seinen Leib ausgedrückte Wesen, und sein Thun straft jetzt seine Erscheinung Lügen, tritt in offenen Widerspruch mit derselben. Wesentlich nichts Anderes, als Erscheinung des Willens, hört er auf, irgend etwas zu wollen, hütet sich, seinen Willen an irgend etwas zu hängen, sucht die größte Gleichgültigkeit gegen alle Dinge in sich zu befestigen… Freiwillige, vollkommene Keuschheit ist der erste Schritt in der Askese oder der Verneinung des Willens zum Leben. Sie verneint dadurch die über das individuelle Leben hinausgehende Bejahung des Willens und giebt damit die
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{460} Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I} 481.

\textsuperscript{461} Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II} 679.
Schopenhauer’s progress from ethics to asceticism is unquestionably related to his metaphysics of *will*. *Will* is what makes life miserable; hence, to alleviate misery and suffering, one must deny *will*, give up all desire, and purposefully mortify one’s *will*. As mentioned earlier, Schopenhauer argues that mysticism goes hand in hand with quietism and asceticism. That is, mystic insight into the oneness of all things necessarily leads to renouncing desires (quietism) and purposefully mortifying one’s body and *will* (asceticism). For Schopenhauer, the insight into the true nature of the absolute, i.e., *will*, which at the basis of all suffering, leads one to renounce and deny *will*.

Schopenhauer justifies the step from ethics to asceticism in Hindu thought as follows: seeing through the veil of *māyā* and understanding the true nature of *brahman* is, for Schopenhauer, realizing the vanity of worldly happiness, which leads directly to developing contempt for it and turning away from it. Turning away or withdrawing from the world is renunciation and asceticism. Schopenhauer states that withdrawal and renunciation is the spirit of Hinduism that is also shared by Christianity. Hinduism moves from ethics to asceticism also because in Hinduism morality is not an end in itself. It is only a step towards “Selbstverleugnung,” “Resignation,” and “allgemeine Entsagung.” Non-duality with *brahman* is the

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463 Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* II 522.
ultimate and true knowledge. The one, who achieves this true knowledge, becomes completely indifferent to the morality or immorality of conduct. Here again, Schopenhauer quotes the lines once quoted before: “\textit{Finditur nodus cordis, dissolvuntur omnes dubitationes, ejusque opera evanescunt, viso supreme illo}” "[Zerspalten wird des Herzens Knoten, alle Zweifel lösen sich auf, und seine Werke werden zu nichts angesichts jener höchsten Stunde].”

Schopenhauer quotes this very passage while explaining how death nullifies the works of the phenomenal existence. In this context he employs the same quote to argue that the ultimate knowledge of non-duality with \textit{brahman} nullifies the works of the phenomenal existence.

3.5.7 Non-duality with \textit{brahman} is the ultimate knowledge that leads to salvation.

It is through the ultimate unity with \textit{brahman} that the balance of deeds done throughout rebirths gets nullified. If salvation is defined as an escape from rebirths and unity with the universal essence, then it is through the realization of non-duality with \textit{brahman} that salvation is possible.\textsuperscript{465} “[N]ach der Veda-Lehre, durch alle Wiedergeburten, welche die Folge der jedesmaligen Werke sind, bis die rechte Erkenntniß und mit ihr die Erlösung (\textit{final emancipation}), Moksha, d.i.

\textsuperscript{464} Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II} 711.

\textsuperscript{465} Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II} 711.
Wiedervereinigung mit dem Brahm, eintritt."466 "Die rechte Erkenntniß,” i.e., the knowledge non-duality with brahman, leads one to complete resignation and to final emancipation in unity with brahman, after which one is not reborn in any form. Thus, the one who gains insight into the universal principle denies will, renounces everything, and mortifies his body. Not only does the body soon perish, the person is never born again. Schopenhauer wonders, if everyone and everything accomplishes this, then it follows that the entire phenomenal world ceases to exist:

Die Natur, immer wahr und naiv, sagt aus, daß, wenn diese Maxime allgemein würde, das Menschengeschlecht ausstürbe: und nach Dem… glaube ich annehmen zu können, daß mit der höchsten Willenserscheinung auch der schwächere Wiederschein derselben, die Thierheit, wegfallen würde… Mit gänzlicher Aufhebung der Erkenntniß schwände dann auch von selbst die übrige Welt in Nichts.467

While painting this scenario, Schopenhauer refers to Colebrooke to invoke an example from the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣadic scenario portrays a man performing a fire sacrifice, around whom all of nature gather to take part in the ritual, as hungry children gather around their mother: “Ich möchte sogar hierauf eine Stelle im Veda beziehn, wo es heißt: „Wie in dieser Welt hungrige Kinder sich um ihre Mutter drängen, so harren alle Wesen des heiligen Opfers.” Schopenhauer finds this example analogous to his thought as he equates Hindu “Opfer” with his notion of “Resignation.”468 Schopenhauer understands Hindu rituals of fire sacrifice as

466 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 712.
467 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 471.
468 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 471.
symbolic of resignation and renunciation. Schopenhauer interprets the above scenario as the symbolic renunciation of man and nature, i.e., of the entire world. The entire world symbolically renounces its phenomenal existence to achieve final emancipation. In effect, for Schopenhauer, the Hindu ritual is symbolic of the annihilation of the entire world, and thereby its salvation. According to Schopenhauer, thus, the symbolic fire sacrifice in Hinduism proposes and embraces the annihilation of phenomenal existence as “Erlösung.”

Schopenhauer argues that the fact that Brahmanism and Buddhism suggest the possibility of salvation, of “endgültige Befreiung,” means that we, indeed, need salvation from our present existence. This implies that we act in a way we ought not to act; we are what we ought not to be (operari sequitur esse). Schopenhauer maintains that the possibility of salvation presupposes a guilt-ridden existence. He believes that Brahmanism and Buddhism presuppose a “schwere Verschuldung des Menschengeschlechts durch sein Daseyn selbst.”

Hence, the only way life is worthwhile is by living it as reparation, by renouncing everything, by mortifying body and will. For Schopenhauer, there is no point in setting virtue and morality as the ultimate goal of life, as we are highly unsuccessful in achieving and maintaining virtue and morality. Instead, the goal of life should be set in complete resignation and complete reversal of our being:

Setzt man ihn [den ganzen Zweck des Daseyns] hingegen in die gänzliche Umkehrung dieses unsers Wesens (welches die eben besagten schlechten Früchte trägt), herbeigeführt durch das Leiden; so gewinnt die Sache ein

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469 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 707.
Ansehn und tritt in Uebereinstimmung mit dem thatsächlich Vorliegenden. Das Leben stellt sich als dann dar als ein Läuterungsproceß, dessen reinigende Lauge der Schmerz ist. Ist der Proceß vollbracht, so läßt er die ihm vorhergegangene Immoralität und Schlechtigkeit als Schlacke zurück, und es tritt ein, was der Veda sagt: *finditur nodus cordis, dissolvuntur omnes dubitationes, ejusque opera evanescunt* [Zerspalten wird des Herzens Knoten, alle Zweifel lösen sich auf, und seine Werke werden zu nichts].

This Upaniṣadic quote finds yet another mention here. This time it appears in a related context: when one purposefully attempts the reversal of one’s inner nature, i.e., *will*, one steps beyond any concerns about the morality or immorality of previous deeds. For Schopenhauer, “vollkommene Resignation” is “der innerste Geist des Christenthums wie der Indischen Weisheit,” which defines salvation as “das Aufgeben alles Wollens, die Zurückwendung, Aufhebung des Willens und mit ihm des ganzen Wesens dieser Welt, also die Erlösung.”

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Section 4

Selective Reading, Recontextualizing, and the Resulting Discrepancies

4.1 The nature of Schopenhauer’s appropriation of Indian thought

In the preface of his work Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung Schopenhauer insists that his ideas are not influenced by Indian thought, but coincidentally his philosophy and Indian thought arrive at the same epistemological, metaphysical, ethical, and other conclusions. As discussed earlier, Schopenhauer states further that a reader who is familiar with Indian philosophical traditions would be better equipped to understand his own philosophy. He further comments on his kinship with, and yet independence from, Indian thought by stating that his thought is not to be found in the Upaniṣads, even though the latter’s philosophical statements can serve as his own conclusions:

[D]a ich, wenn es nicht zu stolz klänge, behaupten möchte, daß jeder von den einzelnen und abgerissenen Aussprüchen, welche die Upanishaden ausmachen, sich als Folgesatz aus dem von mir mitzuteilenden Gedanken ableiten ließe, obgleich keineswegs auch umgekehrt dieser schon dort zu finden ist.472

This particular quote brilliantly exposes the very nature of Schopenhauer’s appropriation of Indian thought. Berger argues that “Schopenhauer is aware in this passage of the nature of his appropriation insofar as he realizes that the Upaniṣads espouse a philosophy distinct from his own.”473 Berger is also rightfully concerned

472 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 11.

473 Berger 75.
that Schopenhauer downplays the notion that the Upaniṣads influenced his philosophy. \(^{474}\) How else, asks Berger, could Upaniṣadic statements serve as his conclusions if his philosophy had nothing in common with them? \(^{475}\) I argue, however, that this passage reveals much more than what Berger extracts from it, and it asserts much more than perhaps Schopenhauer himself intends. First of all, the passage reveals that Schopenhauer views the Upaniṣads as composed of “einzelnen und abgerissenen Aussprüchen.” Moreover, Schopenhauer declares that even though his thought is not to be found in the Upaniṣads, the individual and disconnected Upaniṣadic utterances can serve as his own conclusions. In the attempt to deny Upaniṣadic influence on his thought Schopenhauer practically exposes the plan of action for his appropriation process: he already implies that he has no particular regard for the context of the Upaniṣadic statements since he considers that they are, by themselves, isolated and disconnected in their own texts and traditions. Moreover, by stating that they can serve as the “Folgesatz” or conclusions of his thought, he already suggests that the Upaniṣadic statements are to be read in his context; their meaning is to be derived from his arguments. He, in effect, declares that he will project his own context and his own arguments onto statements and concepts of Indian thought, and that he will offer them in an isolated

\(^{474}\) Not agreeing with Berger, Kapani states that Schopenhauer’s knowledge of Indian material was not good enough to be decisive in the genesis of his own philosophical system. Kapani 165.

\(^{475}\) Berger 74-75.
way to be understood in accordance with his philosophy, regardless of the differently espoused thought in the Upaniṣads.

Let us now investigate Schopenhauer’s appropriation of Hindu religion and philosophy by examining the concepts and quotes he employs, their Hindu contexts and attributes, and Schopenhauer’s modifications and recontextualization. In this section I first demonstrate how Schopenhauer displaces quotes from their Hindu contexts and resituates them in his own. I also demonstrate how Schopenhauer selectively chooses certain attributes of concepts such as māyā or brahman and omits others that conflict with his philosophy. Within this discussion I also address the discrepancies in his interpretation as well as in his own arguments that result from Schopenhauer’s appropriation of Hindu religion and philosophy.
4.2. Displacement of Hindu quotes in different contexts and the resulting discrepancies

Rather than writing elaborate passages to explain Hindu religion and philosophy, Schopenhauer often quotes succinct statements, short examples, or, at the most, two or three lines from Upaniṣadic verses. His concise references serve not to explain Hindu religion and philosophy but to establish parallels with his own thought. While referring to an Upaniṣadic quote, Schopenhauer does not explain the context in which those lines occur in the Upaniṣads. Rather, as his declared intention, he furnishes it as a conclusion or parallel to his own statements. Hence, the reader does not gain any Indian contextual information about the reference but only finds Schopenhauer’s philosophy as its explanation. Upon investigation of the context and connotation of Upaniṣadic references, it becomes evident that Schopenhauer isolates them from their own contexts and stories and resituates them in (sometimes very) different contexts of his own thought.

In the following subsections I discuss some crucial examples to demonstrate Schopenhauer’s resituating of Upaniṣadic references in the contexts of his own philosophy. These examples are particularly important in revealing the nature of Schopenhauer’s appropriation, as their specific Indian contexts are given to Schopenhauer in his sources. As Schopenhauer is aware of their contextual background, his interpretation of them is not simply a matter of misunderstanding. It is rather an informed and deliberate act on his part to isolate and resituate Indian references within his contexts.
4.2.1 *Tat tvam asi*—you are that

As we have seen, Schopenhauer fondly and frequently evokes the Upaniṣadic quote *tat tvam asi*, which he uses in his aesthetic and ethical contexts. He believes that it is the most concise and “great” sentence, which declares the non-duality between particular entity and the universal principle.\(^{476}\) We have also discussed that the non-duality between the particular and the universal quickly translates for Schopenhauer into non-duality between two particular entities.

Let us examine the statement in its Upaniṣadic context. The statement *tat tvam asi* can be literally translated as “you are that.” *Tat* means “that;” *tvam* means “you;” and *asi* is the second person singular conjugation of the verb “to be.” Thus, it means “you are that.”\(^{477}\) This statement occurs in Chāndogya Upaniṣad, which narrates, among other things, a conversation between a father and a son about the true essence of everything. Uddālaka Āruṇi teaches his son and student Śvetaketu about the “subtle” or “finest essence” of everything, and about *sat*, which means

\(^{476}\) As Kapani points out Schopenhauer is aware of the difference between the duality of Sāṅkhya and the singularity of Advaita Vedānta. Kapani 178.

\(^{477}\) The word for word literal translation of *tat tvam asi* would be “that you are.” However, to a reader “that you are” may mean “the fact that you exist.” Hence, usually the word order is changed in its English translation. The original word order is very important. By putting *tat* (“that”) in the beginning of the sentence, it rightfully puts the emphasis on the universal principle *brahman*, rather than the particular instance *tvam* (“you”).
both *Being* and the *True*.\(^{478}\) Uddālaka Āruṇi gives several examples to Śvetaketu so that he may comprehend the imperceptible subtle essence that permeates everything, including himself. He explains that even if bees gather nectar from different plants, their essence is the same homogeneous honey that is collected. He further explains that even if different rivers flow in different directions, they all become one with the same ocean. Uddālaka Āruṇi asks his son to bring a fruit of the banyan tree and asks him to break it. Upon doing so, Śvetaketu finds seeds in them. Upon further breaking one of the seeds, he finds nothing. Uddālaka Āruṇi explains that even if that which is in the seeds is imperceptible and intangible, it is the essence, out of which the banyan tree has grown. Uddālaka Āruṇi asks Śvetaketu to add salt to water and bring it the next morning. The next morning Śvetaketu finds that the salt is invisible and imperceptible, but it has permeated the entire water, and the water is salty no matter if he drinks from the surface, middle, or bottom of the container. Uddālaka Āruṇi again explains to Śvetaketu that even if the essence is imperceptible, it is certainly present everywhere. Uddālaka Āruṇi gives eight such examples; at the end of each example he explains, “*sa ya eṣo’nimaitdāṃtmyamidi sarvaṃ | tattsatyam | sa ātmā | tatvamasi śvetaketo iti |*”—that which is the

\(^{478}\) Paul Hacker explains the association of Being with Truth: “The reason why truth is identified with Being seems to be that the ancient Indians knew nothing more powerful than truth, and that the all-encompassing, all-pervading, all-effective, universal Being must naturally include this power also. This is at the same time the starting-point of the progressive abstraction by which the universal One came to be called True Being.” Halbfass, *Philology* 276.
finest/subtle essence, that is the self of all; that is the truth; that is ātman; you are that, śvetaketu.\footnote{Olivelle decides to translate \textit{tat tvam asi} as “that’s how you are.” Olivelle explains that given the rules of Vedic syntax, this would be a better translation. He argues that this translation would capture two connotations: “that is how you came to be,” and “that is how (the way) you exist,” i.e., by means of the subtle invisible essence. However, Olivelle acknowledges that traditionally the sentence has been translated as “that art thou.” Olivelle 560-61. Hacker points out that Āruṇi does not simply teach general monism. By saying “you are that,” he includes oneself, i.e., tells his son Śvetaketu to include himself, into the monism of Being. Halbfass, \textit{Philology}, 276.}

\textit{Tat} or “that” is understood as referring to the True, the Self, to the imperceptible subtle essence of everything. \textit{Tvam (“you”) is the particular entity, while tat is the universal principle. The sentence argues for the non-duality of the essence of the particular with the universal. The discussion between Uddālaka Āruṇi and Śvetaketu concerns the connection of particular entities with the universal principle. In their conversation itself, there is no mention or inference of the connection between two particular entities. The conversation is not in an aesthetic or ethical context, nor is any connection established with metempsychosis or myth of rebirths.

Schopenhauer’s knowledge of the Upaniṣads primarily comes from Duperron’s \textit{Oupnek’hat}. Duperron’s translation of the above lines reads, “O Sopatkit. tatoumes, id est, ille ātma tu es.”\footnote{Duperron, 60-65. “Sopatkit” is of course Duperron’s transliteration of Śvetaketu, and “tatoumes” is his transliteration of \textit{tat tvam asi}.} Schopenhauer translates \textit{tat tvam asi} in three different ways: “Dieses Lebende bist du,” “dies bist du,” and “dieses bist...
Note that in all three translations Schopenhauer uses “dies” or “dieses,” but never “das.” By using the demonstrative pronoun “this” and not “that,” Schopenhauer linguistically makes the pronoun *tat* more tangible and accessible than it is in the original context. In one of the translations Schopenhauer even adds the word “dieses Lebende,” thereby assigning it to a living being. By choosing the demonstrative pronoun and by adding the notion of a living being, Schopenhauer connotes the non-duality between two particular entities—“dies” and “du.” In other words, Schopenhauer expands the original non-duality between the universal and particular to include a non-duality between two particular entities.

In his aesthetic context Schopenhauer employs *tat tvam asi* to illustrate the non-duality between the subject and the object. Schopenhauer gives the example of an observer looking at an animal or a painting of an animal in its most natural, primal state, so that the observer recognizes the animal as a manifestation of the same *will*, which governs the observer himself. Thus to the observer Schopenhauer says, ‘you are this living being.’ In the ethical context, Schopenhauer again mentions this quote to argue that the tormentor is the same as the tormented. He additionally ties this Upaniṣadic formula to the myth of metempsychosis or cycle of rebirth, by which Schopenhauer understands that the individual is reborn as the person or animal that he has hurt in the previous life. In a mythical way the notion of rebirth shows the tormentor to be the same as the tormented. Schopenhauer adds

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that this formula—\textit{tat tvam asi}—should be pronounced over every thing and being that one comes in contact with. Only then would one treat another as oneself and ethical behavior would result from it.\footnote{Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung} II 704. Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung} I 464.} Again Schopenhauer translates the non-duality of the universal into the non-duality between two particulars—tormentor and tormented. The realization of this non-duality stops the tormentor from inflicting pain on others, because it would be the same as inflicting pain on himself.

Thus Schopenhauer expands the Hindu context and connotation of the quote \textit{tat tvam asi} in two ways: from the given Hindu non-duality between particular and universal Schopenhauer infers the non-duality between two particular entities; and he expands the Upaniṣadic ontological context to include aesthetics and ethics. The transition from the metaphysics of \textit{will} to aesthetics of non-duality and ethics of empathy is very important for Schopenhauer. His interpretation of \textit{tat tvam asi} in the above manner helps Schopenhauer make that transition.

Hacker criticizes Schopenhauer’s expansion of the Upaniṣadic ontological statement to include ethics:

True Being, Brahman, or the Self was essentially spiritual. It is “self-illuminating,” objectless, subsistent cognition, or consciousness. The metaphysic of Vedānta became a radical monism of the spirit, a monism of consciousness… \textit{Tat tvam asi} was thus drawn completely into the service of a radical monism of consciousness and a purely intellectual program of salvation. As far as we know, there was no trace of its being used ethically, as Schopenhauer used it. Such a use would be logically impossible. Schopenhauer…did not clearly recognize or fully estimate the fundamental difference between his monism of the will and the Vedāntic monism of cognition or consciousness… Vedāntic monism, however, has explicitly
banished all volition and all action to the realm of the unreal. Sympathetic identification with another, which according to Schopenhauer is the essential attitude of a good person, would be seen by Vedântins of all schools as straying from the path of salvation. The universal One is to be reached not by ethical identification, but by intellectual abstraction. There is no route from the monism of consciousness to ethics.\textsuperscript{483}

Other scholars agree with Hacker. Sedlar points out that Schopenhauer’s ethics was not based on \textit{tat tvam asi}, as Schopenhauer himself believed. Sedlar believes \textit{tat tvam asi} is the basis of mysticism, not ethics.\textsuperscript{484} Kapani, too, argues that metaphysics and ethics are not as intimately related to each other in Indian thought as they are in Schopenhauer’s.\textsuperscript{485}

Schopenhauer’s use of “\textit{tat tvam asi}” conflicts with many other Upaniṣadic explanations that Schopenhauer is aware of and even with his own ideas. Other explanations particularly conflict with Schopenhauer’s inference of non-duality between two particular entities. For example, at least in two instances, Schopenhauer is aware that even if the essence of the particular, ātman, is the same

\textsuperscript{483} Halbfass, \textit{Philology} 277. Hacker also says that, for Schopenhauer, ethics is the “light” to the path of the ultimate end. Between will-to-live and denial of will lies morality. But Hacker believes that ethics is not even a “light” for Hindu and Buddhist thoughts. Ethics can serve as a preparation but can also be an obstacle in achieving true knowledge. The only light is cognitive realization. Halbfass, \textit{Philology}, 274-75.

\textsuperscript{484} Sedlar, 228.

\textsuperscript{485} Kapani, 166. She says further that “There is a qualitative and hierarchical separation between \textit{dharma} and \textit{moksa}.” \textit{Dharma}, here, would refer to ethical duty and \textit{moksa} would be salvation. Hacker argues that Schopenhauer’s \textit{tat tvam asi} ethics, which is originally not part of the Upaniṣadic statement, has found its ways back into neo-Vedântic thought. He argues that PaulDeussen, who was influenced by Schopenhauer, may have in turn influenced Vivekânanda during his visit to him. Hacker also says that Bankim Chandra Chatopadhyay (1838-1894) included “love” in the Hindu metaphysical insight, and thereby ethics, to give a Hindu ideal to counter the Christian one. Halbfass, \textit{Philology}, 288-91.
as the universal essence, *brahman,* that does not translate into equality among all particular entities.

Ironically, the first of the two conflicting examples is the Upaniṣadic explanation of the ethics of rebirth, which Schopenhauer actually equates with *tat tvam asi.* It occurs in Chāndogya Upaniṣad (Schopenhauer’s favorite), a few paragraphs before the reference of the fire sacrifice that Schopenhauer uses.486 It is also a few pages before the explanation of *tat tvam asi* itself. The episode explains what happens when people pass away and how they come back in different forms as different beings, depending upon their previous behavior.

Now, people here whose behavior is pleasant can expect to enter a pleasant womb, like that of a woman of a Brahmin, the Kṣatriya, or the Vaiṣya class. But people of foul behavior can expect to enter a foul womb, like that of a dog, a pig, or an outcaste woman. Then there are those proceeding on neither of these paths—they become tiny creatures revolving here ceaselessly… A man should seek to protect himself from that. On this point there is this verse:

A man who steals gold, drinks liquor, and kills a Brahmin;  
A man who fornicates with his teacher’s wife—  
- those four will fall,  
As also the fifth—he who consorts with them.487

From this passage it seems that there is a set hierarchy both for wrong deeds and for the kinds of beings one can be reborn as. It does not say, as Schopenhauer argues, that one is reborn in the next life as the being one hurts. More importantly, it

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486 This reference is of a man performing a fire sacrifice, which Schopenhauer uses to explain his notion of resignation and renunciation. I discuss this reference in detail in section 4.2.4.

487 Olivelle 237.
does not imply that the ontological non-duality of an individual with brahman translates into equality of all individuals, beings, and things.

The second example is from Colebrooke, when he explains Vedānta and suffering. Colebrooke quotes from the Brahmasūtras, “As the sun’s image reflected in water is tremulous, quaking with the undulations of the pool, without however affecting other watery images nor the solar orb itself; so the sufferings of one individual affect not another, nor the supreme ruler.”488 This contradicts Schopenhauer’s formulation, as he bases his ethics on the Vedāntic statement tat tvam asi. It is beside the point here whether we want to agree with Colebrooke or with the statement in the Brahmsūtras. What is important is that Colebrooke’s writings indicate to Schopenhauer that Vedāntic non-duality of the particular with the universal does not translate into non-duality or transferability of suffering between two individuals. However, the very notion of transferability of suffering, i.e., another’s suffering is one’s own suffering, is the basis of Schopenhauer’s ethics.

Schopenhauer himself sometimes makes a distinction between human suffering and animal suffering. Schopenhauer believes that humans have a right over the life and power of animals. He argues that the more advanced the consciousness, the greater the suffering. Hence, humans suffer the most, and insects the least. The pain that an animal suffers by death is less than the pain man suffers by being deprived of meat. In effect, humans are justified in killing some of the

488 Colebrooke 355.
animals. Schopenhauer adds that Hindus do not understand this gradation of pain and suffering in the animal kingdom.\textsuperscript{489}

To summarize, \textit{tat tvam asi} is an ontological statement demonstrating the non-duality of the particular entity with the universal principle. Schopenhauer resituates it into aesthetic and ethical context inferring the non-duality between two particular entities and their suffering. But this relocation and interpretation comes in conflict with other Indian references available to Schopenhauer as well as with Schopenhauer’s own ideas.

\textbf{4.2.2 “Finditur nodus cordis, dissolvuntur omnes dubitationes, ejusque opera evanescent [Zerspalten wird des Herzens Knoten, aufgelöst werden alle Zweifel, und seine Werke werden zu nichts].”}

Schopenhauer quotes the above passage three times. First, he uses it when he explains that death liberates will from the phenomenal bond of the body, so that from that will, something new and different could be brought forth. Schopenhauer’s context explains death dissolving the bond of particularity, nullifying its deeds, and will becoming free again.\textsuperscript{490} With the second mention of this quote Schopenhauer explains that ethics is not a goal in itself, but rather a step towards complete renunciation. He explains that upon the acquisition of “true knowledge” one

\textsuperscript{489} Schopenhauer, \textit{The World as Will and Representation} 373n.

\textsuperscript{490} Schopenhauer, \textit{Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II} 595-96.
becomes indifferent to morality or immorality. With its third occurrence he explains that the goal of life is the complete reversal of one’s inner being, namely of will, and life must be considered as a purification process by means of suffering. Once this purification by means of suffering is complete and the will has denied itself, one leaves aside all concerns about past moral or immoral deeds. Thus, according to Schopenhauer, “heart’s knots and doubts get dissolved” either by death or by complete denial of will by means of suffering and renunciation. At complete denial of will ‘all works,’ i.e., good and bad deeds, ‘become nothing,’ i.e., become unimportant and irrelevant. In all three places where Schopenhauer quotes this passage, he focuses on “ejusque opera evanescent” or “seine Werke werden zu nichts,” indicating that the previous deeds, moral or immoral, are nullified.

This quote appears in the Upaniṣads in Muṇḍka Upaniṣad. The context is contemplation on brahman to achieve knowledge of brahman. Brahman, the imperishable, the true, the omnipresent, is under discussion: “What is smaller than the smallest and intensely bright, in which rest these worlds and those who live therein—It is the imperishable brahman…” One is asked to contemplate and meditate undistracted on brahman. Upon such intense contemplation, the wise are supposed to behold brahman “as the immortal in the form of bliss.”

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491 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 712.
492 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung II 749-50.
493 Olivelle 445.
494 Olivelle 447.
point that the lines appear: “When one sees him—both the high and the low; the
knot of one’s heart is cut, all doubts are dispelled; and his works come to an
end.”495 The section containing these lines in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad concludes by
declaring that it is brahman alone that extends and radiates in all directions, over
the whole universe. Thus, in the actual Upaniṣadic context, there is no discussion of
death releasing the true essence from the bonds of phenomenal body, as
Schopenhauer uses it; there is no mention of complete renunciation or mortification
of the body; and there is certainly no statement about suffering as a means of
purification of life. In fact, as mentioned above, brahman is said to be bliss.

This notion of brahman as bliss is given in Schopenhauer’s source of
Duperron’s translation of the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad: “Et ille ātma forma gaudii
est…”496 The context is also clearly given in Duperron, namely that of
contemplation of brahman as the imperishable, the true, and the omnipresent.

Schopenhauer’s resituating of this quote in the context of death and of
indifference to the morality or immorality of action is influenced, at least partially,
by how Colebrooke presents this quote. In his essay on Vedānta, Colebrooke
presents a collage of quotes collected from different texts along with his own
commentary. The passage that includes this quote also quotes from the
Brahmasūtras, Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, and Muṇḍaka
Upaniṣad, as well as Colebrooke’s own comments:

495 Olivelle 447.
496 Duperron 387.
In the like manner, the effect of the converse (that is, of merit and virtue) is by acquisition of knowledge annulled and precluded. It is at death that these consequences take place. He traverses both (merit and demerit) thereby. The heart’s knot is broken, all doubts are split, and his works perish, when he has seen the supreme being. All sins depart from him: meaning good works as well as misdeeds...497

In this passage the reference to death comes from the Brahmasūtras and the following line comes from the Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad. The main quote, describing the breaking of the heart’s knot, is from the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad. The next line, “All sins depart...,” is from Chāndogya. The parentheses and last “meaning” come from Colebrooke himself and from unspecified Vedānta commentators, which Colebrooke intentionally blends with the text, in order to give an “intelligible summary of the doctrine.”498

As we examine here, Colebrooke’s collage of quotes may have influenced Schopenhauer’s interpretation of the above mentioned passage from the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad. It is Colebrooke who places the quote in association with death; and it is Colebrooke who emphasizes the annulment of “merit and demerit,” “good works and misdeeds” upon acquisition of the knowledge of brahman. Schopenhauer’s (dis)placement of the quote in his contexts thus can, at least partially, be traced back to Colebrooke.

497 Colebrooke 362-363.

498 Colebrooke 337.
4.2.2 “Hae omnes creaturae in totum ego sum, et praeter me aliud ens non est [Alle diese Geschöpfe insgesamt bin ich, und außer mir ist kein anderes Wesen].”

Schopenhauer mentions the above quote twice. In both cases Schopenhauer’s context is epistemology, as he explains the notion of “rein erkennendes Subjekt.” Schopenhauer explains that, on the one hand, there is the pure-knowing subject, and, on the other hand, there is the world as the object of knowledge. While the world as the object of knowledge is given to time, space, and causality, the pure subject of knowledge is outside of those confines. The pure subject of knowledge must be considered as the “Träger aller Welten,” and the worlds are to be considered only as “Modifikationen des ewigen Subjekts des reinen Erkennens.” The worlds are to be considered completely dependent on the subject and existing only in the subject’s “Vorstellung.”499 In this epistemological context Schopenhauer employs the above quote to explain the status of “pure knowing subject.”

Schopenhauer finds this quote in Duperron’s translation of the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad.500 The context is not epistemological, but cosmogonical. The episode containing these lines explains the creation of various species; it opens by stating that in the beginning there was one single being and there was nothing and no one other than that being. For his very first act, the being calls himself “I,”—

499 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 234-35, 263-64.
500 Duperron 122.
in Schopenhauer’s Duperron source, “Tùm aham dixit.”501 Duperron places the above quote, “Hae omnes creaturae in to tum ego sum…,” at a point where the being alone exists and no other creatures have been created yet. Duperron’s placement of this quote here is, therefore, a little premature. It should be noted that Duperron does not give a literal translation, but rather paraphrases the passage. The episode further explains that the being splits his body into two and creates a woman, copulates with her in different forms, and creates all the species and creatures. In Duperron’s paraphrasing, after the creation of all species the being again exclaims, ‘I alone am the creation.’502 Schopenhauer’s quotation is, however, Duperron’s first premature precreation mention of the utterance.

This cosmogonical passage contains a small allusion to fear. I believe, that it is this reference to fear that attracts Schopenhauer’s attention: in the beginning, when the being is alone, he becomes afraid. He then asks himself, ‘if there is no one but me, of what am I afraid?’ Thus, his fear goes away. Schopenhauer adopts this aspect into his interpretation. He states that if one recognizes oneself as the pure subject of cognition, as “Träger aller Welten,” on whom the world is dependent, then the restless feeling of being overwhelmed by the enormity of the world goes away, and one feels elevated with the “Gefühl des Erhabenen.”503 However, the fear in Schopenhauer’s context comes from the feeling of the world being in opposition

501 Duperron 121. In Sanskrit “so’hamasmītyagre vyāharat.” Olivelle 44.
502 Duperron 125.
503 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 263-64.
to the subject.\textsuperscript{504} There is no world to oppose in the Upaniṣadic context, when fear first arises in the first being.

Even if the notion of fearlessness connects the Upaniṣadic quote to Schopenhauer’s passage, it is clear to Schopenhauer that the Upaniṣadic context of the quote is of cosmogony. The first being is literally alone and he literally creates all creatures. Schopenhauer uses this episode effectively as a metaphor for his epistemological context, in which the pure subject of cognition does not create the world. The subject is rather called upon to consider the world as if it were the subject’s creation, since as per the concept of representation, the existence of the world is inseparably connected to the subject’s cognition of it. The world is thus dependent on the pure subject of cognition. Schopenhauer, thus, uses cosmogonical creation to explain his epistemological cognition by the pure subject of knowledge.

Arguably here, though, by using the example of cosmogonical creation, Schopenhauer seems to come dangerously close to the notion that the subject creates the object-world out of his mind. This would be the subject-oriented extreme idealism, to which Schopenhauer is otherwise vehemently opposed.

\textsuperscript{504} Berger 48.
4.2.3 “Wie in dieser Welt hungrige Kinder sich um ihre Mutter drängen, so harren alle Wesen des heiligen Opfers.”

This is another excellent example of recontextualization of Upaniṣadic lines. Schopenhauer translates a Chāndogya Upaniṣad reference from Colebrooke’s essay.\(^505\) The quoted lines portray humans and animals, in effect, all of nature, gathering around the fire for the symbolic ritual of fire sacrifice. Chāndogya Upaniṣad says “yatheha kṣudhitā bālā mātaram paryupāsate evaṁ sarvāṇi bhūtāni agnihotramūpāsat ityagnihotram upāsata iti.”\(^506\) Olivelle translates it as “As around their mother here hungry children gather; so at the fire sacrifice, do all the beings gather.”\(^507\) Colebrooke translates it in his essay “On the Vedas or Sacred Writings of the Hindus” as “As, in this world, hungry infants press round their mother; so do all beings await the holy oblation: they await the holy oblation.”\(^508\) Schopenhauer, in turn, translates Colebrooke’s quote into German.

For these lines Schopenhauer’s context is denial of will, complete resignation, and mortification of the body. He explains that the one who gains insight into the nature of will renounces everything and mortifies the body, so that

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\(^{505}\) Schopenhauer himself says that it is a reference from the Vedas, whereas in fact it is from an Upaniṣad, acknowledged by name as an Upaniṣad also in the Colebrooke reference. This is one of the many places where Schopenhauer does not make any distinction between Vedas, Upaniṣads, or other scriptures and calls everything generically as the Vedas.

\(^{506}\) Olivelle, 244.

\(^{507}\) Olivelle 245. S. Radhakrishnan translates it as “As hungry children sit (expectantly) around their mother, even so do all beings sit around the fire sacrifice, yea they sit around the fire sacrifice.” S. Radhakrishnan, The Principle Upaniṣads (London: Allen & Unwin, 1953) 445.

\(^{508}\) Colebrooke 88.
the phenomenal existence gradually gets eliminated. In other words, the person, i.e.,
the body, dies. He expands this one example to contemplate whether the whole
world would eliminate itself if everyone denied will and renounced and mortified
the body. It is at this point that he quotes the above Upaniṣadic lines, declaring that
all beings gather around the ritual fire and await the holy sacrifice. Continuing his
own context of renunciation and mortification of the body, he equates the word
“Opfer” in the above quote with “Resignation,” and states, “Opfer bedeutet
Resignation überhaupt, und die übrige Natur hat ihre Erlösung vom Menschen zu
erwarten, welcher Priester und Opfer zugleich ist.” Schopenhauer envisions the
man performing the fire sacrifice, thereby declaring his resignation or renunciation;
and the entire animal world gathering around this man in order to declare its own
resignation through him and at his hands. In effect, Schopenhauer states that in the
act of denial of will in man, the total annihilation of the world as representation is
contained and initiated. He confers upon man the status of the potential annihilator
of the world and quotes in this context the above lines from the Upaniṣads.

In the original context, which is very clearly given in Colebrook’s essay,
however, these lines appear in the chapter dedicated to food and eating as a
ritualistic, symbolic act of sustaining life. Hunger is a fire and food is the sacrifice
to this fire. The one who has recognized the innermost essence of his own self and
that of the entire universe also recognizes that the two are the same. He recognizes
that ātman—his own essence—is the same as brahman—the essence of the entire

509 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 471.
universe. This insight prompts him to consider himself, a representative, a microcosm of the universe. He then eats food not as an individual, but as the microcosm of brahman: “He, however, who meditates on the Universal Self as of measure of the span or as identical with the self, eats food in all worlds, in all beings, in all selves.”\textsuperscript{510} In its discussion of the eating ritual, the text elaborates specifically on parts of the body. With food, the one who eats satisfies his body—his eye, his ear, his breath, his mouth, his skin—all sense organs. Through that he satisfies the parts of the body of the universe: the sun, the moon, the rain, and the air. Colebrooke very clearly translates and elaborates on this discussion just before quoting the lines that Schopenhauer singles out:

“The food, which first reaches him, should be solemnly offered: and the first oblation, which he makes, he should present with these words: “Be this oblation to breath efficacious.” Thus breath is satisfied; and, in that the eye is satiate; and in the eye, the sun in content; and in the sun, the sky is gratified; and in the sky, heaven and the sun, and whatever is dependant, become replete: and after that, he himself [who eats] is fully gratified with offspring and cattle; with vigour proceeding from food, and splendour arising from holy observances.…But whoever makes an oblation to fire, being unacquainted with the universal soul, acts in the same manner, as one who throws live coals into ashes: while he, who presents an oblation, possessing that knowledge, has made an offering in all worlds, in all beings, in all souls… He, who knows this, has only presented an oblation to the universal soul, even though, he knowingly give the residue to a Chándála.\textsuperscript{511}

For, on this point, a text is [preserved]: “As, in this world, hungry infants press round their mother; so do all beings await the holy oblation: they await the holy oblation.”\textsuperscript{512}

\textsuperscript{510} Radhakrishnan, Principle Upanisads 440.

\textsuperscript{511} A person from a lower caste. He is traditionally the keeper of crematoriums.

\textsuperscript{512} Colebrooke 87-88.
The reason that all of nature and all beings gather around the fire is for the holy oblation of food that they will receive, possibly at the hands of the eater, who performs the food-eating ritual. As the food sustains the eater’s body, it literally and symbolically at the same time guarantees the sustenance of nature, of the body of the universe. Eating becomes a religious ritual, in which man finds the universal soul in him and sacrifices food in its honor, for its sustenance. Feeding, sustaining, and maintaining the body as the representative of the universe becomes a religious duty. In Schopenhauer’s terms it would be an affirmation of will-to-live.

Schopenhauer, however, inserts it in the exact opposite context of denial of will-to-live. Through his context Schopenhauer believes that the quoted Upaniṣadic lines give man the status of the potential annihilator of the world, whereas the original context confers upon man the responsibility of feeding himself and others, thus symbolically ensuring the preservation, maintenance, and continuation of the world.

The enlightened man for Schopenhauer “mortificiert... den Leib: er nähert ihn kärglich... greift er zum Fasten, ja er greift zur Kasteiung und Selbstpeinigung...”\textsuperscript{513} The Upaniṣads, however, state, “Eat, and then you will learn from me...for the mind, son, is made up of food...”\textsuperscript{514} Schopenhauer is familiar with this sentence, because it appears in the paragraph immediately preceding the Chāndogya explanation of tat tvam asi. In Schopenhauer’s reference of Duperron’s


\textsuperscript{514} Olivelle 251.
text it is given as “Nunc aliquid ut comederis, à me audi, ut tibi etiam cum memoriâ (ad memoriam) veniat...quod del (cor) corma (aaïn) alimenti est...”

From isolating and relocating Upaniṣadic quotes into different contexts we move to Schopenhauer’s selective reading of Hindu religious and philosophical concepts.

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515 Duperron 57-58. It is very interesting that Duperron keeps the Persian word del in his Persian-to-Latin translation. Del means heart, however, Duperron supplies an alternate word—cor—which can mean both heart and mind.
4.3  Selective reading of concepts and the resulting discrepancies

In addition to the isolated quotations, Schopenhauer also uses predominantly two Hindu religious and philosophical concepts, māyā and brahman, to illustrate his philosophy. As we have seen, Schopenhauer considers the concept of māyā as a synonym for principium individuationis and for his own concept of representation. He also invokes the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavadgītā for their elaborations on brahman as the universal principle, in order to explain his concept of will. For both of these concepts Schopenhauer finds various definitions and explanations in his sources. However, in order to fit them into his philosophy as analogous concepts to his own, Schopenhauer selects those explanations that suit his analogies and leaves aside the attributes and aspects that seem irrelevant to or conflicting with his own concepts.

4.3.1  Māyā

Before having sufficiently defined and discussed his concept of representation, Schopenhauer mentions his affiliations to the Vedānta school. By alluding to Vedānta very early on in his work, he encourages his readers (especially those familiar with Eastern thought) to think of Vedānta as parallel to Schopenhauer’s own system. He asks the reader to consider the concept māyā as a synonym for his own concept of representation. His comparisons with Vedānta
thought are, thus, not merely peripheral or accidental; he insists on them from the onset of his work, which encourages the reader to access, assess, and understand his philosophy parallel to Indian thought.

Schopenhauer’s knowledge of the concept māyā comes from various sources. From Colebrooke, for example, he knows that:

1. When Colebrooke explains the “Hymn of Creation” from the Rgveda, he states that māyā is equivalent to Swad’hā, a female principle, which is sustained within the one “Supreme Being,” which alone breathed at the beginning when there was “no entity, nor nonentity; no world, nor sky…” Colebrooke explains that swad’hā is made “equivalent to māyā, or the world of ideas.” In effect, according to Colebrooke, māyā is the world of ideas that is sustained within the absolute universal principle.

2. Nature or prakṛti of Sāṅkhya is identified in the cosmogony with “Māyā or illusion” and in the mythology with “Brāhmī, the power and energy of Brahmā”

3. “[T]he versatile world is an illusion (māyā),…all which passes to the apprehension of the waking individual is but a fantasy presented to his imagination, and every seeming thing is unreal and all is visionary.” Colebrooke does not think,

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516 Colebrooke 33-34.
517 Colebrooke 242.
however, that the notion of \textit{māyā} is part of the original Vedānta doctrine of Śankara. He considers it a later development.\textsuperscript{518}

Schopenhauer is more enthusiastic, however, about Jones’s explanations of \textit{māyā}. From Jones’s essay “On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India” Schopenhauer understands that:

1. “Indian Máya, or as the word is explained by some \textit{Hindu} scholars, “the first inclination of the Godhead to diversify himself (such is their phrase) by creating worlds,” is feigned to be the mother of universal nature, and of all the inferior Gods…”\textsuperscript{519}

2. More philosophically speaking:

   …the word Máya or \textit{delusion}, has a more subtile and recondite sense in the Védánta philosophy, where it signifies the system of \textit{perceptions}, whether of secondary or of primary qualities, which the Deity was believed by Epicharmus and Plato and many truly pious men, to raise by his omnipresent spirit in the minds of his creatures, but which had not, in their opinion, any existence independent of mind.\textsuperscript{520}

3. Jones elaborates on this point in his “Eleventh Anniversary Discourse:”

The fundamental tenet of the Vedanti school, to which in a more modern age the incomparable Sancara was a firm and illustrious adherent, consisted, not in denying the existence of matter, that is of solidity, impenetrability, and extended figure (to deny which would be lunacy), but in correcting the popular notion of it, and in contending, that it has no essence independent of mental perception, that existence and perceptibility are convertible terms, that external appearances and sensations are illusory, and would vanish into

\textsuperscript{518} Colebrooke 377.


\textsuperscript{520} Jones 349.
nothing, if the divine energy, which alone sustains them, were suspended but for a moment; an opinion, which Epicharmus and Plato seem to have adopted.521

4. Further elaborating on the illusory nature of māyā Jones explains:

the Védántis, unable to form a distinct idea of brute matter independent of mind, or to conceive that the work of Supreme Goodness was left a moment to itself, imagine that the Deity is ever present to his work, and constantly supports a series of perceptions, which, in one sense, they call illusory, though they cannot but admit the reality of all created forms, as far as the happiness of creatures can be affected by them.522

For Schopenhauer’s sources there are at least three aspects to the concept of māyā. First, it is the power and energy sustained within the one supreme being. Māyā is the creative power by virtue of which the one supreme being diversifies itself and multiplies itself, thereby creating the world. Māyā is creation in general, both (divine) creativity and its result. In this context this creative power is attributed to the absolute principle, the supreme being, not to the creatures and their cognitive faculty. Schopenhauer is not much interested in this aspect of the concept because it does not exactly work with his system.523 It would work with a system, for example, in which the absolute principle is the pure axiom, the unconditional postulate, the

521 Pachori 194.
522 Jones 351.
523 Kapani also says that Schopenhauer was not able to linger on the theistic aspect of māyā, namely as the energy of manifestation (śakti), which is identical with prakṛti, or describe it as the empirical world as the universal mirage, comparable to divine play (līlā), or descended from divine wish (icchā). Rather than that, the double perspective—metaphysical and epistemological—of the power of illusion dominates Schopenhauer’s interpretation. Kapani 182.
self-evident truth, which comes at the absolute beginning of any philosophizing. Schopenhauer’s system concerns itself first with multiplicity and then arrives at the absolute. In other words, his epistemology precedes his metaphysics. As a minor point, Colebrooke explains मयाः as the “world of ideas,” which might sound similar to Plato and hence of interest to Schopenhauer. But for Schopenhauer, Plato’s “ideas” are precisely not what representation is: ideas are universal forms that transcend the time-space bound perceptual image of an object. For Schopenhauer मयाः is representation, hence it is not “world of ideas” in Plato’s sense.

Schopenhauer is thus not interested in the concept of मयाः as a creative power that makes the singular absolute principle multiple. Rather, he is more interested in the next two aspects, especially in Jones’s interpretation, which appeal to his epistemology. Unlike Colebrooke, Jones’s scholarship is strongly dictated by

524 I disagree with Berger, who says, “What his ‘main work’ is meant to provide is a satisfactory explanation of how the will becomes representation, how the will ‘objectifies’ itself and in the process is spun into the phenomenal world of our experience… to describe the mediation through which the will becomes represented.” Berger 66. I disagree that this is what Schopenhauer’s work is meant to do. The way will becomes representation is by the process of epistemological understanding. This process and the explanation of this process is in a way an axiom for Schopenhauer. It is already given by Kant. It is the starting point, which Schopenhauer’s philosophy gets as a spring board, from which Schopenhauer jumps to his explanation of will. This is why Schopenhauer starts his work with epistemology and not metaphysics. To turn Berger’s sentence on its head, I believe, what Schopenhauer’s “main work” is meant to provide is a satisfactory explanation of how representation is in fact will. It is not the case, as Berger’s quote suggests, that will is given and what remains to be discussed is how it becomes the phenomenal world of our experience. It is in fact the opposite. The phenomenal world of our experience is given (given in the sense that it has been already explained by Kant) and what remains to be discussed is what lies behind it, namely will and how it is will and what the implications of it being will are. That is why Schopenhauer first starts with the particular, the phenomenal world of our experience, and then moves on to the universal, to will. If he had started with the universal and then gone on to describe how the universal becomes particular, I am afraid, that would have been the Hegelian order of approach. Hegel is the one who starts with the universal and demonstrates how that universal is manifested in the particular concrete world.
his comparative agenda. His pioneering work inaugurated the entire field of comparative linguistics, mythology, and religion. The aim of his scholarship was to make comparisons between Indian and European concepts and to search for their similarities rather than differences. This agenda fits Schopenhauer’s own cross-cultural philosophical comparison very well.

Māyā’s Vedāntic meaning, which has persisted throughout the development of Indian thought, includes the notion of deception, or as Berger terms it, “falsification.” It is often argued that māyā is the false or deceiving appearance of things and of the world in general. It is the enigma of the material world, which, behind its deceptive and illusive cover, hides the single absolute truth: brahman. Māyā entails that the world is illusory, as one can neither say that it is, nor that it is not. The ultimate reality, however, is ascribed only to brahman. The illusion of māyā lasts only until the moment that true knowledge of brahman is acquired.

Scholars have criticized Schopenhauer’s use of māyā as a synonym for his concept of representation. Naegelsbach comments on the problem of placing Kantian idealism and illusionism of māyā together to explain Schopenhauer’s representation:

So deutet Schopenhauer den Kantschen Idealismus und den indischen Illusionismus um, indem er sie in ein korrelatives Verhältnis setzt…In Indien eint sich im klarsten Bewußtsein höchste Erkenntnis mit dem Begriff letzter Realität. Vor der sichersten Gewißheit der Einheit wird die Vielheit zur Illusion; der Illusionismus leitet sich her von dem von stärkstem religiösen Gefühl getragenen metaphysischen Gedanken von der Einheit aller Dinge…auf der anderen Seite gibt es für Kant keinen Illusionismus, der aus dem Bewußtsein des All-Einen stammt. Schopenhauer versucht in einer Synthese beides, Kants Schüler und indischer Weiser zu sein, ohne
sich über den Ursprung des Kantschen Idealismus in einer streng erkenntnistheoretischen Fragestellung und über den Ursprung des Illusionismus in einer metaphysisch-religiösen Grundüberzeugung klar zu sein. Vom konsequenten Idealismus Kants aus betrachtet ist die Verbindung des Ding-an-sich-Begriffs mit dem All-Einheitsgedanken unmöglich, also der Illusionismus erkenntnistheoretisch nicht haltbar; vom Standpunkt des Illusionismus aus wird die Identität Kants zur 'sekundären Realität’. Beide Standpunkte, aus gänzlich verschiedenen Bewußtseins-Verhältnissen stammend, laufen bei Schopenhauer nebeneinander her; sie durchkreuzen sich widerspruchsvoll, indem sie sich wechselseitig aufeinander beziehen. Bald hat seine Welt der Vorstellung empirische Realität im Sinne Kants, bald ist sie Traum und Illusion; der Wille ist bald Ding an sich, also ein völliges Negativum...bald gewinnt er Realität im Sinne des brahmanischen Weltgefühls; bald ist Schopenhauer naturalistischer Pessimist, dann wiederum getragen von der erlösenden Kraft des Geistes, der ihm von Indien herüberweht.”

I agree with Naegelsbach that due to its affiliation both with Kantian idealism and with Indian māyā, Schopenhauer’s representation ends up being defined both as reality and illusion. Berger contests this point and insists that even if Schopenhauer tried to make a synthesis, “this synthesis did not involve a conflation of illusionism and transcendental idealism.” Berger proposes and insists that there should be a distinction made between two terms: illusionism and falsification. He argues,

“Illusion is a mistake concerning the existence of a thing, or a particular state of its existence. Falsification, on the other hand, is an error, not about the particular existence of something at a certain place or time, not a false assessment of a certain characteristic that a thing may or may not possess, but rather is an error concerning the nature of a thing. Put more simply, an illusion is an error that something is, or that something is or is not the

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525 Naegelsbach 151-52.

526 Berger 100.
present case, while falsification is an error about what something is, about its nature.527

I believe Berger’s “more simple” distinction between that something is” and “what something is” is not as simple as he argues, especially not in the Vedāntic context regarding māyā, to which he tries to apply it. In māyā both questions collapse into one overarching question about the validity of empirical perception in the wake of an assumption of a metaphysical absolute. In māyā the inquiry into what things are and what they aren’t yields to the conclusion that they are and are not at the same time. In māyā there is neither an affirmation nor a denial of the existence of something. As Dasgupta puts it:

The world is said to be false—a mere product of māyā. The falsehood of this world-appearance has been explained as involved in the category of the indefinite which is neither sat “is” nor asat “is not.” Here the opposition of the “is” and “is not” is solved by the category of time… Since it exists for a time it is sat (is), but since it does not exist for all times it is asat (is not).528

Schopenhauer himself is aware of this aspect when he explains the concept of māyā as something about which it is true as well as false to say that it is, or that it is

527 Berger 96. Berger groups together “the existence of something” and “certain characteristic that a thing may or may not possess.” I believe that they cannot be grouped together, because once one looks at a certain characteristic of a thing, the existence of that thing is already presupposed. Moreover, Berger wants to separate “certain characteristic of a thing” from “the nature of a thing.” Such a clear-cut distinction between the two cannot hold unless Berger were to define clearly what he means by “nature of a thing,” which he does not. Even if he were considering only empirically perceived characteristics of things, it would still be a subset of “nature of a thing,” which would include both empirical and metaphysical inquiry into it.

Berger’s distinction is also irrelevant, because Schopenhauer himself does not separate illusion from falsification. He calls both of them “Schein,” which is translated by Payne as “illusion.” Schopenhauer means “Schein” to be both a mirage of water (illusion) and a distorted stick in water (falsification).

Both illusion and falsification collapse into one question for the concept of māyā. Hence, I believe, that defining illusion and falsification separately makes no difference in clarification of either Schopenhauer’s concept of representation or even the Vedāntic concept of māyā. Moreover, as earlier mentioned, Schopenhauer gives Jones’s definition of māyā, in which he clearly mentions that māyā does not deny that things physically exist. Thus, both Schopenhauer and his critics, from Max Hecker to Urs Meyer, are aware that there is no question of illusionism here; māyā is a concept of relation and not of ontology.531

Strictly speaking, Schopenhauer draws his understanding of māyā neither from the Vedas nor from the Upaniṣads, as he himself believes.532 Vedas and

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529 Schopenhauer, Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I 516.

530 Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation I 24. Schein for Schopenhauer is when one and the same effect is produced by two different causes, one of which happens to be more frequent. Hence the understanding presupposes the more frequent cause. Young has a different classification of illusion. What Berger calls falsification, Young calls illusion. He gives the example of the portion of a stick immersed in water. He calls this illusion, as opposed to dream or hallucination, in which the things being dreamt and hallucinated are not there at all. Young 20-21. Young states that Schopenhauer himself does not consistently make such distinctions, which sometimes makes his philosophy radically idealist, sometimes partially idealist. Young 20.

531 Meyer 175. Hecker argues that both Schopenhauer and Vedānta give the status of reality, not absolute reality but relative reality, to the world. Hecker 33. Musès, too, states that illusion is not non-existence but misinterpretation. It is not ontological but epistemological. Musès 23.

532 Berger 62-63.
Upaniṣads both emphasize the aspect that māyā is the creative and magical power of the gods. But Schopenhauer, although being aware of this aspect through his sources, is not interested in this notion. Schopenhauer’s reading of māyā is restricted to the Advaita Vedānta as described by Jones, which is accompanied with a conviction of its compatibility with European concepts.

4.3.2 Brahman

Schopenhauer’s reading and use of the concept of brahman has been even more problematic. He invokes brahman chiefly to explain his universal principle—will. The explanations Schopenhauer offers to describe brahman are, for the most part, clear. Brahman is the singular metaphysical principle that is eternal, indivisible, ever-present, and imperishable. It is said to reside within the particular, and the essence of the particular—ātman—is the same as the universal essence—brahman.

Having said that, in order to be able to use brahman as a parallel to his concept of will, Schopenhauer’s selective reading of the concept concerns the descriptions of brahman as pure consciousness and pure bliss.

Schopenhauer does peripherally touch upon the notion of the absolute principle as “rein erkennendes Subjekt” —pure subject of knowledge or pure
consciousness. Schopenhauer explains this in the context of the subject-object relationship in aesthetic contemplation: the subject is raised to the level of will-less pure consciousness and the object is raised to the level of Platonic ideas. It is here that Schopenhauer gives Duperron’s paraphrased Upaniṣadic lines, “all these creatures I am, other than me, there is noone.”

However, as earlier explained, the Upaniṣadic context of this quote is not that of aesthetic contemplation or pure subject of knowledge; it is cosmogony. Schopenhauer does not quote or refer to any actual Hindu or Brahmanic quote or explanation that describes brahman as pure consciousness. Schopenhauer uses cosmogonical assertion to designate pure subject of knowledge, but he never uses an Indian reference that itself refers to pure consciousness. Colebrooke makes countless references describing brahman as consciousness, intelligence, and contemplation. Consider, for example, the following quotes: “On intellect [everything] is founded: the world is the eye of intellect, and intellect is its foundation. Intelligence is (Brahme) the great one.” Elsewhere, Colebrooke explains that “Brahme” is “profound contemplation,” or “profound meditation.” In his essay specifically on Vedānta, Colebrooke states that “the supreme being” “is pronounced

533 Giok Son believes that the concept of “Bewusstseins-Selbst” or of pure knowing subject is in fact found in Brahmanism, namely a pure eternal consciousness. Schopenhauer, too, says that the recognizing subject and his “Bewußtsein” must have something beyond the changing world of time, space, and causality, otherwise we would not be able to perceive change. Son 178.

534 Colebrooke 52. This line is from the Aitareya Upaniṣad, which uses the word “Prajña.” Radhakrishnan also translates it as “intelligence.” Radhakrishnan, Principle 524. Olivelle translates this as “knowledge” and “cognition.” Olivelle 323.

535 Colebrooke 77.
to be sheer sense, mere intellect and thought.”

Rather than using these direct references, Schopenhauer chooses to use the cosmogonical metaphor for his explanation.

But this notion of *brahman* as pure thought, intellect, or consciousness only interests Schopenhauer so far as he describes his concept of pure subject of knowledge. But this use of *brahman* to discuss pure subject of knowledge conflicts with his use of *brahman* to discuss *will*. This is because Schopenhauer describes pure subject of knowledge as *will*-less. In effect, Schopenhauer employs the concept of *brahman* to explain both *will* and *will*-lessness.

When Schopenhauer needs *brahman* to explain and support his concept of *will*, he leaves aside *brahman*’s connotation of *will*-less pure consciousness or pure subject of knowledge. *Will*, as we have seen, is described by Schopenhauer as blind and without knowledge. To describe *will*, some scholars believe that Schopenhauer may have drawn upon Max Müller’s understanding of *brahman* as “force, will, wish and the propulsive power of creation.”

Schopenhauer, however, does not actually name Max Müller for acquiring this connotation for *brahman*. As we have seen, he uses mostly Upaniṣads and the Bhagavadgītā for his quotes and explanations. Within them, too, Schopenhauer prefers metaphors and “mythische Bildersprache,” to avoid, in the correlation of *will* and *brahman*, the kind of

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536 Colebrooke 359.

synonymity he establishes between *representation* and *māyā*. In order to explain *will*, Schopenhauer restricts his references to *brahman* so far as it is explained as the actual inner being or essence of all particular entities. He selectively reads the concept of *brahman* and restricts its meaning to be able to use it as a parallel to *will* as the actual *Wesen* of all things and beings.

To maintain the *will–brahman* correlation Schopenhauer also downplays or leaves aside the connotation of *brahman* as pure bliss. *Will*, as we have seen, can never be associated with bliss; for Schopenhauer it is the metaphysical basis of pain and suffering. It is certainly not the case that Schopenhauer is simply not aware

538 Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* II 381.

539 Scholz, while discussing similarities between Schopenhauer and Hindu thought says, “Schopenhauers Denkweise [gleicht] prinzipiell der Upanischadischen Gedankenwelt darin, daß es sich in beiden Fällen grundsätzlich um *monistische* Weltbilder handelt.” Scholz 54.

540 Earlier, for scholars like Hecker, this was sufficient argument to equate *brahman* and *will*. For Hecker, it was the same thing to say ‘I am *brahman*’ and ‘I am *will*.’ Hecker 72. Dauer, too, finds Schopenhauerian and Vedāntic concepts equivalent. Sometimes she finds Schopenhauer’s terms better suited to express the concepts. For example, she says, “Schopenhauer himself knew that his “will” was an equivalent of the *brahman*; only the term “will” is better chosen than the term *brahman*.” Dauer 13. Kapani, however, points out that no exact equivalent of *will* can be found either in Brahmanism or in Buddhism, even if some features may be said to resemble that concept. Kapani 166.

541 As Son argues, “[D]ie Einheit eines metaphysischen Willens kennen die Upanishaden nicht…Soweit also für Schopenhauer der eine metaphysische Wille gleichwohl “an sich betrachtet, erkenntnislos und nur ein blinder, unaufhaltsamer Drang” ist, entspricht er dem Brahman der Hindus ganz und gar nicht. Das Brahman ist keineswegs Ursache oder Ausdruck eines *blinden* Strebens in irgend eine Richtung ohne Rast und Ziel. Der grösste Gegensatz zwischen dem Brahman und Schopenhauers metaphysischem Willen besteht mithin darin, dass das Brahman der Vedānta-Lehre “ein Prinzip des Lichtes” ist und als das Göttliche schlechthin angesehen wird, während Schopenhauer im irrationalen Willen gerade das Gegenteil davon erkennt.” Son 178-79. Meyer also states that *brahman* and *will* can be parallel to a certain extent, but *brahman* does not have pain and suffering, while *will* is associated with “leid.” *Brahman is sat chit, ānanda and will is blind, irrational, and “dämonisch.”* Meyer 160-71.
of *brahman*’s blissful connotation, as it were.\(^{542}\) Duperron himself refers to *brahman* as bliss in several places by using the words “*anandā*” (*ānanda*) or “*pram anandā*” (*paramānanda*) and translating them as “*gaudium*.”\(^{543}\) Colebrooke, too, mentions this explanation of *brahman*.\(^{544}\)

In the spirit of using metaphors and “Bildersprache,” however, Schopenhauer sometimes uses an *Upaniṣad*ic metaphor, which arguably poses a conflict with his own concept of *will*. The metaphor bears repeating:

> Der Wille als Ding an sich ist ganz und ungetheilt in jedem Wesen, wie das Centrum ein integrierender Theil eines jeden Radius ist: während das peripherische Ende dieses Radius mit der Oberfläche, welche die Zeit und ihren Inhalt vorstellt, im schnellsten Umschwunge ist, bleibt das andere Ende, am Centro, als wo die Ewigkeit liegt, in tiefster Ruhe...\(^{545}\)

As earlier mentioned, this wheel metaphor might be inspired by *Brāhāranyaka* *Upaniṣad*, which explains *brahman*. *Brahman* can certainly be described by the words “in tiefster Ruhe.” But Schopenhauer uses these words to explain not *brahman*, but *will*. This very “tiefste Ruhe” is what sets *brahman* apart from Schopenhauer’s *will*.\(^{546}\) According to his numerous explanations of *will* throughout his work, *will* is never in “tiefster Ruhe.” “Ruhe” (peace) would be fundamentally

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\(^{542}\) It is certainly not “neuere Forschung” that brought this “Korrektur,” as Hübscher says. Hübscher 7. This information was available to Schopenhauer.

\(^{543}\) See Duperron’s translation of the *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, which was one of Schopenhauer’s most quoted *Upaniṣads*. Duperron, *Oupnek’hāt* I 244-46. Also see *Munḍaka Upaniṣad*, Duperron, *Oupnek’hāt* I 387.

\(^{544}\) Colebrooke 77.

\(^{545}\) Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* II 381.

\(^{546}\) Son agrees that with “Ruhe” the metaphor loses any similarity with the concept of *will*. Son 178.
inconsistent with what will is, namely forever striving, unsatisfied, and unsettled. Will cannot be at the same time in deepest peace and in constant striving. Brahman in Hindu philosophy can only be a state of complete bliss of eternal ānanda.

Suffering, pain, desire, and striving are therefore affects of māyā, not of brahman. Scholz points out that according to Vedāntic conception of brahman, if one were to talk about Schopenhauer’s will, then it would have to be itself part of māyā.547 However, Schopenhauer insists that one would have “gänzlich unrecht, wenn man Schmerz und Wollust Vorstellungen nennt: das sind sie keineswegs, sondern unmittelbare Affektionen des Willens, in seiner Erscheinung, dem Leibe...”548

The will–brahman parallel also collapses because of the possibility of the denial of will. Schopenhauer insists that will, despite being the metaphysical universal principle, can be denied. However, Schopenhauer is aware that there can be no question of denying brahman. Hence, in his aesthetic, ethical, and ascetic contexts of discussing denial of will, he does not speak of denying brahman, but conversely, draws upon oneness or non-duality with brahman, argued in tat tvam asi. Here he leaves aside the will–brahman association and modifies tat tvam asi to suit his contexts.

Contrary to what Berger believes, discussing Schopenhauer’s selective reading of Hindu religion and philosophy does not necessarily rule out the argument

547 Scholz 59.
548 Schopenhauer, Sämtliche Werke 120.
that Hindu religion and philosophy may have influenced the shaping or
development of Schopenhauer’s own philosophy.\textsuperscript{549} Beside the fact that
Schopenhauer had at least some idea about his thought, \textit{as} (if not before) he
approached Indian thought, it is absolutely possible that Schopenhauer was
influenced by his own misunderstandings and selective readings. Berger rightfully
warns against arguing that Schopenhauer did not understand the “original” meaning
of Indian thought. I do not compare Schopenhauer’s concepts with some “original”
meaning of Hindu religion and philosophy, or some supposedly ahistorical constant
meaning of Hindu concepts, and certainly not with our current scholarly
understanding of Hindu religious and philosophical concepts, which was
unavailable to Schopenhauer. I demonstrate Schopenhauer’s organization and
selective reading of Hindu religion and philosophy from the material that was
available to him, the material he read and quoted.

\textsuperscript{549} Berger 1.
CONCLUSION

Hegel’s philosophy, which proposed the historical teleological progress of *Spirit*, created a profound chasm between the East and the West, which, Hegel argued, the East could not and the West had no reason to overcome. The *Spirit*’s culmination into the consummate religion of Christianity left Eastern religious philosophy behind in the primitive and confused stages of history. By contrast, Schopenhauer’s philosophy, which conceived the miserable world as *representation* and *will*, embraced the East with a genuine sense of kinship and respect. His search for deliverance from suffering sought Eastern religious philosophies for their profound timeless wisdom.

Hegel’s severe criticism and Schopenhauer’s great admiration of the East are well known and well discussed among scholars of cross-cultural connections. Specifically in the case of India and Hinduism, scholars have often examined Hegel’s long list of negative evaluations to explore his Eurocentric bias, but also his unique hermeneutic situation as an idealist and a rationlist in the period of German Romantic “indomania.” In the case of Schopenhauer, scholars have predominantly tried to ascertain the extent of compatibility between his philosophy and Hindu and
Buddhist thought and to examine the nature of his appropriation of their ideas. Hegel and Schopenhauer have appeared together as part of larger studies exploring the image of India in Germany, such as works by Willson and Murti, or of analyses focusing on philosophers, such as those by Glasenapp and Halbfass. However, other than a few comparative remarks about their opposing views of India, there has not been an attempt to discuss Hegel and Schopenhauer together and in greater detail, nor an attempt to weigh their interpretations of India with and against each other. This is chiefly because Hegel and Schopenhauer are great adversaries, both in their own philosophies and their evaluations of India.

My analysis demonstrates that there is indeed common ground that brings them together: first, both Hegel and Schopenhauer had access to the same material on Indian religions and philosophy. Their preferences within the common material only reiterate their selective reading. Second, for Schopenhauer “India became the bludgeon with which to slay all monsters, all traitors to philosophy, such as Hegel…”550 For Schopenhauer, establishing kinship with Indian thought was definitely a platform to criticize Hegel’s historicism, as for Hegel, India was a means to criticize his Romantic colleagues. Most importantly, however, my analysis demonstrates that there is common ground in Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s defining and structuring of Hindu religion and philosophy.

Focusing specifically on Hindu religion and philosophy, my analysis demonstrates that Hegel’s negative evaluations and Schopenhauer’s philosophical

550 Schwab 147.
comparisons do not simply contain a list of aspects discussed one after another, but actually display a threefold conceptual structure, within which Hegel and Schopenhauer understood, interpreted, and presented Hindu religion and philosophy. I have argued that Hegel and Schopenhauer identified three aspects as fundamental concepts of Hindu religion and philosophy: 1. the metaphysical universal principle, 2. the world and its particular entities, and 3. the non-duality of the particular with the universal principle. Demonstrating that Hegel and Schopenhauer identified these three aspects as defining characteristics of Hindu religious thought is also important in the light of some Indian scholarship, asserting that Indian thought is regarded in the West to be “primarily concerned with mokṣa, that is, liberation from the very possibility of suffering, which is a quintessentially practical end and has hardly anything theoretical about it.”551 Although Hindu symptoms of withdrawal, and thereby concerns of mokṣa, permeate Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s interpretations, they are indeed understood within the threefold conceptual structure of universality, particularity, and non-duality, which provides their theoretical and philosophical basis.

My analysis works on two levels: first, on the level of structure I argue that Hegel and Schopenhauer imposed the same basic threefold conceptual structure on Hindu thought. They both identified that Hindu religious thought philosophizes about 1. brahman as the sustaining universal principle, 2. the particular world as

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temporary and secondary, and 3. the non-duality with brahman as the religio-
philosophical goal. Second, on the level of evaluation, I demonstrate that Hegel and
Schopenhauer interpret these three aspects differently in accordance with the
precepts of their philosophies: 1. brahman as an empty substance (Hegel) versus as
a driving force (Schopenhauer), 2. the fleeting particular world as an irrational
notion (Hegel) versus as an epistemological statement (Schopenhauer), and 3. non-
duality with brahman as escape into emptiness from concrete life and ethical
concerns (Hegel) versus as the reinforcement of ethical behavior (Schopenhauer).

My analysis of Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s interpretations as a threefold
conceptual structure of fundamental tenents involves two further inquiries, namely
to understand what prompted Hegel and Schopenhauer to conceive a threefold
structure, and to examine how they actually achieved it. I have demonstrated that
the precepts of Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s own philosophies have prompted them
to identify a similar threefold structure in Hindu religion and philosophy. Hegel
analyzed and evaluated Hinduism in terms of his own triadic dialectical structure of
a concept, its concretization, and its self-cognizing reconciliation. Schopenhauer
sought analogous explanations in Hindu religion and philosophy for his overarching
rubric of representation, will, and denial of will. Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s
appropriation of Hindu religion and philosophy consists of imposing the threefold
structure of universal principle, particular entities, and their non-duality in order to
fit Hindu thought in the presuppositions of their own philosophies. My analysis has
also demonstrated that Hegel and Schopenhauer actually imposed and achieved this
threefold structure by selectively reading their sources, restructuring schools of Indian philosophy, isolating and recontextualizing Hindu quotes and explanations, and reconfiguring the connotations and meanings of concepts. My analysis has further discussed the discrepancies in their interpretation and also the potential discrepancies that challenge the consistency of their own thought.

Gadamer declares that the interpreter’s hermeneutic situation and preconceived notions dictate his understanding of a given text. His expanding “horizons” that encompass the interpreter’s “prejudices” renders useless an offensive stance against the interpreter’s so called misunderstanding. Hegel and Schopenhauer undeniably approached Hindu religion and philosophy with the baggage of their own hermeneutic situation. However, my study does not remain on the general level of making that statement. That general statement has been made by scholars such as Halbfass and Clarke, who urge the readers to understand these interpretations from the perspective of their unique hermeneutic context. My study provides a detailed analysis of how Hegel and Schopenhauer hermeneutically approached Hindu religion and philosophy, and specifically which aspects, concepts, and statements of their philosophies dictated their appropriation and evaluation of Hindu religious thought. Moreover, my analysis demonstrates the process and outcome of their appropriation, namely that selective structures, definitions, and fundamental tenets were formed, within which Hindu religious philosophy was, and perhaps therefore still is, understood. To speak in Ricoeur’s terms, by their dynamic
encounter with Indian thought, Hegel and Schopenhauer are “broadened in their capacities to project themselves.” However, I demonstrate that in that dynamics, perhaps the expanse of Indian religion and philosophy is constricted and confined.

An expansion of my analysis could delve further and deeper into addressing the concerns of the field of comparative or cross-cultural philosophy. By comparative philosophy I do not suggest ascertaining the extent of conceptual correspondence of Hegelian and Schopenhauerian philosophies with those of Indian philosophies, although it is, indeed, a challenging and fascinating enterprise. By expanding the project further into comparative philosophy I mean understanding the severity and gravity of Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s structuring of Hindu religion and philosophy in the wake of some fundamental questions of cross-cultural connections. Scholars in the field have been occupied with questions such as “is there ‘philosophy’ in the East, or is that a Western division of discipline within which both Eastern and Western scholars feel compelled to capture Eastern traditions?” Or “can there be a middle ground between universalists, who extract and emphasize similarities between cultures and thoughts, and relativists, who declare comparisons impossible because of cultural specificity?” Hegel and Schopenhauer both become excellent venues to explore these questions: as they both attempt to separate and bring together Hindu religion and Indian philosophy, Schopenhauer’s universalism seeks similarities between Western and Eastern

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552 Quoted in Berger 38.
thought, and Hegel’s idiosyncratic blend of relativism and universalism emphasizes differences while applying one universal standard of evaluation to all cultures.

My study can also initiate some further research projects. It can encourage an investigation of the process of transfer of information from one culture to another, especially through translation. For example, linguists, translators, and philosophers could together study the various Upaniṣads through their journey from Sanskrit to Persian to Latin to German to examine how religio-philosophical concepts acquire progressively different connotations through their association with different languages and cultures. Finally, to address our present day cross-cultural understanding, my analysis may also be expanded to examine if and how Hegel’s and Schopenhauer’s threefold outline of Hindu religious thought—pantheistic universal principle, illusory world, and severe withdrawal practices of non-duality—permeate and shape both intellectual and popular understanding of Hinduism even today.
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