To the Chair of the Examiners for Part C of the FHS of Computer Science and Philosophy,

A PHILOSOPHICAL EVALUATION OF THEORIES OF REPRESENTATION IN THE WRITINGS OF SCHOPENHAUER AND ŚAṄKARA.

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Contents

"Asato mā sat gamaya" (Lead me from the unreal to the Real)

— *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (1.3.28), c. 700 BCE, trans. Olivelle

"Let be be finale of seem."

— *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*, Wallace Stevens, 1922

1. Introduction

In this thesis, I compare two philosophers: the 19th century, post-Kantian philosopher Schopenhauer, and Śaṅkara, an ancient Indian philosopher from the 8th century. I examine their respective theories of representation and the arguments that they each give in defence. Śaṅkara's theory is that the world which we experience is illusory in nature, resulting from an individual's ignorance (*avidyā*) of their true nature. Schopenhauer's theory is a type of idealism, labelled by him as the 'representation' aspect of the world, or the 'world as representation.'

Examining the relationship between two philosophies can proceed in different ways. The first is by questioning whether one developed under the influence of the other. This is done by examining historical and textual evidence. The second is a comparative approach. This is done through a critical analysis of the arguments used to defend each philosophy; the strategies or flaws of each is used to strengthen or attack the other. Such a comparison can be undertaken without historical consideration. Much has been written on the influence of Indian philosophy on Schopenhauer's writings; this thesis instead proceeds using a comparative approach.[1]

I aim to analytically discuss and evaluate arguments given by Schopenhauer and Śaṅkara. Their respective styles of writing present a challenge: they write in different contexts and are guided by different motives. Here I aim to bring out the essence of their philosophical works in a way which allows them to be dissected and to be compared with each other: in the first part, I do this by enumerating the key tenets of their theories; in the second part, I do this by syllogising their arguments into premises, allowing for an examination of validity and assumptions made.

Schopenhauer had a lot in common with Indian philosophy. Magee writes that "[t]here is

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[1] See Berger (2004) and App (2006 and 2014) for more on the question of influence.

nothing controversial in saying that of the major figures in Western philosophy, Schopenhauer is the one who has most in common with Eastern thought."[2] Choosing Śaṅkara to compare him to is due to his influence and reputation. He is credited with establishing and unifying large sections Hindu philosophy,[3] and is labelled as one of the founding fathers of *Advaita Vedānta*.[4] His writings attempt to systematise early Hindu ideas; he also defends these ideas using methods of reasoning found in the earlier Buddhist *Mādhyamika* philosophy.[5] Furthermore, a comparative study of schools of philosophy can only be done meaningfully when working within a limited scope. There exists a huge range of Indian thought, and so by focussing specifically on Śaṅkara's writings and the *Advaita Vedānta* school, this discussion can take place.

I choose to focus on theories of representation due to their continuing relevance in philosophy. A theory of representation explains all experience of the empirical world by positing that we perceive one thing which is merely a representation of something else.[6] Both Śaṅkara and Schopenhauer claim that all we ever *do* perceive are representations; the underlying ultimate reality is something else entirely. Questioning whether our world of everyday objects could be unreal is something that challenges philosophers even now. Moreover, it is a question that has a relevance beyond philosophy: it inspires and challenges poets, artists and authors.

The Indian philosophical texts which Schopenhauer read were only available to him in a double-translation: from the original Sanskrit into Persian, and then into Latin. These translations are

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[2] Magee, 1987: 316. By 'Eastern thought,' Magee is referring specifically to Hindu and Buddhist philosophy.

[3] Kruijf and Sahoo, 2014: 105

[4] Bartley, 2015: 180

[5] Alston, 2004: 1, 23-26

[6] A theory of representation could also propose that we perceive *through* representations instead of perceiving representations. In both cases, the point is that we don't directly perceive an underlying thing as it is in itself.

considered to be outdated and inaccurate.[7] Thus, to facilitate the most accurate comparison, the primary sources I refer to are contemporary translations into English of both Śaṅkara's and Schopenhauer's writings.[8]

Translations given will prioritise philosophical clarity over accuracy of translation. Key Sanskrit terms will be transliterated and provided alongside their translation into English.[9] After their first use, I use English translations. The exception to this is my use of the term *avidyā*; as I explain in Section 4, it does not have a direct translation. Many Sanskrit terms have different meanings depending on context, and hence warrant different translations depending on the school of philosophy they are used in; in what follows I give the translation appropriate to their use in *Advaita Vedānta*.

This thesis proceeds in two parts: the first part examines the two theories, and the second part examines the arguments given to defend the theories. In the first part, Sections 2 and 3 cover the backgrounds of Śaṅkara and Schopenhauer in detail, providing a context for each of their theories. Sections 4 and 5 then explain each of their respective theories of representation, and Section 6 notes similarities and differences between the theories when examined in themselves. In the second part, Section 7 enumerates the arguments given by each to argue in favour of the theories; from this list, I choose five arguments to examine. Section 8 examines one of the arguments used by Schopenhauer, namely the dream argument, and Section 9 examines two similar arguments made by Śaṅkara. Then, Section 10 examines another one of the arguments that Schopenhauer uses, namely the argument

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[7] Here I am primarily referring to Anquetil-Duperron's *Oupnek'hat*, a Latin translation of the Persian *Sirr-i Akbar*, which in turn was a translation of fifty of the *Upaniṣads*. App (2006) argues that Schopenhauer's first encounter with Indian philosophy was actually with a translation of the *Bhagavad Gītā* by Majer. For more, see Cross, 2013: 9-36 and App, 2006.

[8] Primarily, I use the 6-volume Śaṅkara Source Book by A. J. Alston, and the translation of both volumes of The World as Will and Representation by E. F. J. Payne. In the List of References, I provide a note on abbreviations used for primary sources.

[9] A pronunciation guide for transliterated Sanskrit can be found in Bartley, 2005: 303.

from causality, and Section 11 examines a similar argument from Śaṅkara. Section 12 concludes with a summary of my findings. My examination reveals that, as Schopenhauer himself claimed, the two positions really are very close, to the extent that they even make use of structurally similar arguments. My conclusion lists a number of similarities and differences. Concerning the theories when examined in themselves, I argue that they are, in essence, identical, and that the main differences are about the knowability of the ultimate reality and Schopenhauer's pessimism. Concerning the arguments given to defend their theories, I list certain structural similarities in their styles of arguing, as well as uncovering one fundamental difference: Schopenhauer's arguments start from examining the limits of one's experience of the empirical world; from this, he draws conclusions about the thing-in-itself. Śaṅkara, however, starts from assumptions about the nature of ultimate reality, and uses these to draw conclusions about our experiences of the empirical world.

2. Śaṅkara and *Advaita Vedānta*

In this section I provide a background to Śaṅkara and his philosophy. His doctrine of *avidyā*, which explains how and why the empirical world is deemed to be illusory, is explained in Section 4 below.

Śaṅkara Bhagavatpada was a philosopher who likely lived around 700 AD. He wrote commentaries on the major Hindu scriptures, as well as writing some of his own original works.[10] These works synthesise teachings from Hindu scripture into one consistent interpretation, resulting in a school of philosophy called *Advaita Vedānta*.[11] Śaṅkara is known as one of the founding fathers of *Advaita Vedānta*.[12] Other schools of Hindu philosophy synthesise the same scriptures in different ways: for example, different schools of *Vedānta* place more importance on the devotional and ritualistic elements of the Hindu scriptures.[13] Śaṅkara's interpretation, however, is claimed by his followers to be the only one that can incorporate the wide variety of ideas from across the various texts.

Orthodox Hinduism is based around the *Vedas*: the *Upaniṣads* form a part of these and are frequently labelled as *Vedānta*, which literally translates as 'the end part of the *Vedas*.' Some of Śaṅkara's main commentaries were about the *Upaniṣads*. While the rest of the *Vedas* contain hymns, ritualistic practices, cosmogonies and mythological stories, the focus of the *Upaniṣads* is philosophical enquiry. There are many *Upaniṣads*, all composed between 700 BC and 100 BCE; traditionally, 12 of

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[10] Also referred to as Śaṅkarācārya (as *ācārya* means teacher). Many works which are attributed to him have their authenticity doubted. See Hacker, 1995: 57-100 and Alston, 2004: 1, 42-45.

[11] More precisely, and particularly to differentiate it from other forms of *Advaita Vedānta*, it is called *Kevaladvaita Vedānta*. Traces of this tradition go back to Gauḍapāda and his commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*.

[12] Bartley (2015: 181) claims the other founding father to be Maṇḍana Miśra. According to Hacker (1995: 29-30), Śaṅkara's influence and historical fame only occurred from the 14th century onwards when his works were republished; in the 10th century, it was Maṇḍana Miśra who served as a 'representative' for *Advaita Vedānta.*

[13] One such school is *Viśiṣṭadvaita Vedānta*, whose main proponent is Ramanuja.

them are deemed the major ones.

The primary philosophical teaching of the *Upaniṣads* is that the world which we experience is illusory, and beyond it lies a primary reality or underlying substratum.[14] That substratum is labelled variously as *'ātman,' or 'brahman:'* the meanings of these terms vary between schools of Hindu philosophy. Generally, *ātman* is interpreted as a person's inner consciousness or awareness,[15] and *brahman* is the substratum or world-soul, that lies beyond the empirical world. In what follows, I translate *'brahman'* as the Absolute; it is also frequently translated as the Infinite or the supreme Soul.

'Advaita' means 'non-dualistic,' as *Advaita Vedānta* interprets the *Upaniṣadic* teaching by advocating a monism (*ekatavāda*): *brahman* is identical with *ātman*. The infinite substratum that is the Absolute temporarily assumes the form of multiple objects in the world. The empirical world is granted an ephemeral reality, without any reality being lost from the infinite substratum.[16]

Removing any notion of duality also removes the possibility of having a devotee as separate from the Lord, which is a requirement of a theistic doctrine, which makes *Advaita Vedānta* a non-theistic doctrine.[17] At times this poses a problem: Śaṅkara has to reconcile the teaching of non-dualism without sacrificing the religious context of the texts he comments upon, the most notable

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[14] Although some may dispute that this is the primary doctrine of all of the *Upaniṣads*, it is certainly the idea that has had the most influence on subsequent thought.

[15] *'Ātman'* is also frequently translated as 'soul.' Here, I avoid this translation, as 'soul' has associated preconceptions that do not apply to the concept of *ātman* in *Advaita Vedānta*. Most notably is that a soul is differentiated or identified by its respective persons.

[16] There are different theories about the reality status granted to the empirical world; Śaṅkara defends a view which has come to be known as *vivarta-vāda* (apparent manifestation). This is explored in detail in Section 11.

[17] *Viśiṣṭadvaita Vedānta* tries to maintain a theistic aspect. Like *Kevaladvaita Vedānta*, it proposes a non-dualistic doctrine that identifies *brahman* with *ātman*. However, it argues that within *brahman* there is an internal distinction between God (*īśvara*) and the individual (*jīva*). For more, see Bartley, 2015: 222-247, particularly 240-242.

one being the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Śaṅkara does this by explaining that any reference to a personified form of God is just a way of referring to a suprapersonal Absolute. Alston points out that this is the benefit of the flexibility of Śaṅkara's system: he can make the texts conform to his view, allowing him to incorporate "…the *Gītā*'s … contribution to Indian spirituality … without abandoning … the great metaphysical teachings of the *Upaniṣads*."[18]

Bartley summarises Śaṅkara's teachings as follows:

Śaṅkara likened the phenomenology of normal experience to that of dreaming and claimed that in both cases it is only the fact of consciousness that remains constant. Individual entities (*bhava*) are mental constructs (*kalpanā*). The one Supreme Soul, the waveless absolute, imagines itself as conscious individuals.[19]

Here, Bartley translates *kalpanā* as 'mental constructs;' it is also often translated as 'imagination.' We must be careful here: there is a major difference between the conception of the mind in Western philosophy, which largely derives from the Ancient Greek view, and the conception of the mind in Indian philosophy. The Ancient Greek view does not distinguish between the mind, the intellect and the soul; these are instead seen as different faculties of the same entity. In contrast, Indian philosophy claims that the mind (*mana)*, the intellect (*buddhi)* and the ego or sense of individuality (*ahaṅkār*) are different energies of an individual,[20] and that these do not exist in the physical world but in a subtler realm.[21] This means that the above extract from Bartley is inaccurate: following Röer, it is better to

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[18] Alston, 2004: 1, 14

[19] Bartley, 2015: 182

[20] These terms are not strictly defined, and often mean different things in different contexts. The main difference between *mana* and *buddhi* is that while *mana* thinks thoughts and feels emotions, *buddhi* allows a person to think reflexively about those thoughts, as well as to make conscious choices. The *buddhi* only functions when awake, and a lack of sleep prevents it from operating as intended (leading to a person experiencing hallucinations); *mana* functions throughout an individual being awake and dreaming.

[21] In the *Ṛg Veda*, the term '*ātman*' is used to describe a person's physical body and all of these energies, but in later Vedas and subsequently in the *Upaniṣads* and U*panisadic* texts, *ātman* is refined to mean only that which is eternal, called

translate *kalpanā* as 'fictitious.'[22] Minds are counted as individual entities just as much as physical objects are, meaning that minds are also merely fictitious. Thus, Bartley's description of the Supreme Soul as 'imagining' itself is inaccurate, as it uses a term that has connotations of something mental. It is more accurate to say that a world of individuals is *projected* from the Supreme Soul. In Section 4 (below) I elaborate on the nature of that projection.

The essence of *Advaita Vedānta* can be concisely summed up by one of the *Upaniṣads'* peace mantras, as seen below. In the translation, the indefinite article 'That' is used to represent *brahman*, as, by definition, *brahman* is a concept which points to something that is un-representable.

<table>
<tr><td>

oṃ
pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidam
pūrṇāt pūrṇamudacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya
pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate
oṃ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

</td><td>

That (the Absolute) is whole.
This (the world of appearances) is whole.
Out of *That*, *this* arises.
Subtracting *this* from *That* leaves *That* unaltered.
Peace, peace, peace.[23]

</td></tr>
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Even more concisely, the essence is given by the declaration *tat tvam asi*, meaning "thou art That."[24]

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the Self, which *Advaita Vedānta* identifies as being identical to *brahman*.

[22] Röer, 1856: 72–73

[23] From the *Īśa Upaniṣad*. Translation adapted from Easwaran, 2009: 56.

[24] From the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. Translated in Deussen, 1906: 1, and in WWR 1: 374.

3. Schopenhauer's philosophy

In this section I provide a background to Schopenhauer and his philosophy, in order to provide a context for the following sections. I assume the reader has more familiarity with Schopenhauer than with Śaṅkara and so dedicate less time to introducing him.

Schopenhauer's main work was divided into five sections:[25] four main sections respectively about Schopenhauer's epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics and ethics, and an appendix entitled *Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy*. Schopenhauer's philosophy follows from Kant's distinction between the phenomenal world of appearances and the world as it is in itself: he labels this as a distinction between the world as representation, and the world as Will. Briefly, the empirical world that we have experiences of in is an 'object for a subject.' This means that it is conditioned by an individual's forms of cognition. Schopenhauer argues that these are the principles of individuation (*principium individuationis)*: space, time and causality. Everything that we experience and that we have knowledge of is a spatio-temporal representation, and therefore all knowledge is bounded by the limits of own experience. However, Schopenhauer claims that we have one type of knowledge that is not given solely as a representation: self-reflective knowledge of our own bodies. Such knowledge has a dual form. We know our bodies both as objects that exist in space and time and also through an internal awareness, distinct from the spatio-temporal representation. He writes that "[t]he act of will and the action of body … are one and the same thing."[26] Schopenhauer extrapolates from this, concluding that there is an inner nature or underlying awareness to every representation. He calls this 'will,' a blind, unconscious force. Some commentators differentiate between the human-will

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[25] *The World as Will and Representation*; the first volume was published in 1818, and a new edition including a second volume was published in 1844.

[26] WWR 1, 100

and the world-will (or 'Will' with a capital 'W') in his writing.

Schopenhauer synthesises this idea, primarily derived from Kant, with philosophical ideas from other Western philosophers, most notably those Plato and Berkeley, as well as with ideas of Indian philosophy. He writes that "[he] do[es] not believe [his] doctrine could have come about before the Upanishads, Plato and Kant could cast their rays simultaneously into the mind of one man."[27] Schopenhauer's fascination and praise of Indian philosophy is made clear from his frequent references to it in his writing. He kept a translation of the *Upaniṣads* by his bed and read it each night;[28] he calls it the "the most profitable and sublime reading that is possible in the world."[29]

Schopenhauer is also well known for his pessimism. His pessimistic outlook is a result of him characterising the inner nature of the world as blind, aimless striving. The will has no purpose or goal, meaning that it will never be satisfied; this dissatisfaction leads to sorrow. As the various parts of the world, from inorganic life to conscious organisms, are considered to be gradations of the will objectifying itself, all of existence is therefore deemed to be a dissatisfied striving or suffering. Moreover, due to the intellectual capacities of humans, human suffering is emphasised: any brief respite from suffering leads to a boredom that sets us in motion, leading to more suffering. Schopenhauer writes that

> …as soon as want and suffering give man a relaxation, boredom is at once so near that he necessarily requires diversion and amusement. The striving after existence is what occupies all living things, and keeps them in motion. When existence is assured to them, they do not know what to do with it. Therefore the second thing that sets them in motion is the effort to get rid of the burden of existence, to make it no longer felt, "to kill time," in other words, to

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[27] MR 1: 467. App makes a strong case for thinking that a translation of the *Bhagavad Gītā* was Schopenhauer's first encounter with Indian philosophy, rather than the *Oupnek'hat,* as was previously thought. Moreover, App writes that it was reading the *Gītā* which led to Schopenhauer's conception of the metaphysics of Will. For more, see App, 2006.

[28] Magee, 1987: 15

[29] PP, ii. 397

escape from boredom.[30]

But Schopenhauer does give an answer to this dilemma between suffering and boredom. He advocates artistic, moral and ascetic forms of awareness, as ways of overcoming the frustration of human existence.

The extent of the similarity between Schopenhauer's philosophy and Indian philosophy can be challenged. Some commentators accuse him of distorting Indian teachings, as well as those of Plato and Kant, in order to serve his own purpose by increasing the credibility of his own metaphysical system. Others disagree, however: with regards to Hindu philosophy, and specifically how it influenced Schopenhauer's theory of representation, Berger writes that "[while Schopenhauer] does not understand *māyā* … in the technical senses … employed by the Vedantins … his general understanding of the concept is strikingly adept."[31] In what follows, I argue that there is a close similarity between Schopenhauer and Śaṅkara's theories of representation, but Schopenhauer's pessimism is a lot closer to the Buddhist side of Indian philosophy, rather than the Hindu side.

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[30] WWR 1, 313

[31] Berger, 2004: 263

4. Śaṅkara's theory of representation

In this section I give an account of Śaṅkara's theory of representation, showing how it fits within the framework of *Advaita Vedānta*. I clarify some of the terminology and concepts used to explain the theory, notably the notions of mutual superimposition and the teaching of two standpoints, as well as clarifying the meanings of the Sanskrit words '*avidyā*' and '*māyā*.' Arguments that Śaṅkara gives in support of this theory are critically examined in the second part of the thesis.

Advaita Vedānta claims that (i) there exists a substratum, referred to as the Absolute, which is infinite, eternal, non-physical and non-mental, and which lies beyond all experience; (ii) the Absolute is the only real thing, and therefore (iii) the world of empirical experience is illusory. Here I examine arguments in support of claim (iii), but it is important to remember that any argument for claim (iii) is intrinsically linked to claims (i) and (ii) and must be examined within the context of this metaphysical system.

Śaṅkara's claim that the empirical world is illusory is best explained by comparing it with Berkeleyan idealism and showing how it differs. According to Berkeley, 'being' is the same as 'being perceived.'[32] All objects exist within a mind, and so all that exists are minds and mental objects (labelled 'ideas'). All objects have their existence guaranteed, even when not being perceived by a human mind, as everything is perennially perceived by the divine mind.

However, this sort of idealism is very different to Śaṅkara's claim that the world is illusory. For Śaṅkara, the empirical world is not contained within minds: as explained in Section 2, Śaṅkara counts minds as being a part of the empirical world. So when discussing Śaṅkara's claim that the empirical world is illusory, 'empirical world' refers both to the world that we experience physically, and the

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[32] "*Esse* is *percipi*," often written "*esse est percipi* (*aut percipere*)." See Berkeley, 2005/1710.

mental world.[33] Alston writes that "Śaṅkara did not teach that the world existed either inside the mind or outside it, as he taught that it did not exist at all."[34] The illusory nature of the empirical world is instead explained by something called *avidyā*, which can be loosely translated as nescience or ignorance. *Avidyā* is described as that which obscures the Truth, where the Truth is the knowledge that "the whole world is the Absolute" (*sarvaṃ kalvidaṃ brahman*);[35] because of *avidyā,* a person wrongly identifies themselves as being their body or mind.

Often the term '*māyā*' is used interchangeably with '*avidyā*,' as both roughly mean 'illusion.'[36] However, in Śaṅkara's time '*māyā*' would been closer to meaning 'hypnosis,' as it was most frequently used with reference to street performers that supposedly placed entire crowds under a mass hypnosis. Śaṅkara does use the term, but only rarely: in one place, he defines *māyā* as "the name for something that does not exist;"[37] in another he correlates the *māyā* (plural) of the Hindu God Indra with the false cognitions of an individual soul, thus using it to mean a divine, creative power of the Lord.[38] The term passed from the *Upaniṣads* into the *Oupnek'hat*, and from there into Schopenhauer's writings, who uses '*Maya*' synonymously with 'world as representation.' In what

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[33] In Śaṅkara's writing, this is signified by referring to the appearance of the experiencing-subject, the appearance of the experience and the appearance of the object of experience; the object of experience can be something either physical or mental.

[34] Alston, 2004: 1, 86

[35] From the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (3.14.1), translation adapted from Olivelle, 2008:202.

[36] Later writers in the *Advaita Vedānta* school use the terms differently to how I use them here. One example is Anubhutisvarupacarya, who writes in the *Prakatarthavivarana* (a commentary of Śaṅkara's commentary of the *Brahma Sūtras*) that *īśvara* ('god' or 'deity') and *jīva* (the human individual) are reflections of the infinite Brahman, and that the difference between the two can be explained by a difference in the reflecting mediums, which respectively are *māyā* and *avidyā*. *Māyā* has an infinite number of parts, each part being called an *avidyā*, and each *avidyā* has two powers: a veiling power and projecting power.

[37] G. K. Bh. 4.58, translated in SSB 2: 229.

[38] For more on the term *māyā*, see Alston 2003: 2,66-76; 2,229.

follows, I use the term '*avidyā*' instead of '*māyā*' to stay accurate to Śaṅkara's writings, and to avoid confusing with Schopenhauer's use of the word '*Maya*.'

Śaṅkara describes *avidyā* as similar to a perceptual error, where one thing is mistaken as something else that was seen in the past. An analogy of this that is given frequently is of a person who, when walking through a forest in the dark, sees a snake hanging from a tree in front of him. Upon further inspection, the snake turns out to be a rope. Śaṅkara writes that

> …when a rope has not been properly recognised for what it is in the twilight … it is falsely imagined in various ways with the thought 'Is it a snake? Is it a trickle of water? Is it a stick?' This is the example given by the Teacher Gauḍapāda [which illustrates that] the Self is imagined as the infinite variety of creatures…[39]

The past sense impression he had of a snake is uncontrollably recalled at that time. Alston writes that it is "stored in seed-like form and capable of manifestation upon an appropriate stimulus."[40] This is analogous to our experience of the world: the world is described as "no more than the revival of images derived from the past acts and experiences of its denizens."[41]

Alston highlights an ambiguity. Most of Śaṅkara's followers use the word *avidyā* to refer to the creative power that generates or projects the world. But, when looking strictly at Śaṅkara's own texts, the creative power is a *consequence* of *avidyā*, labelled *avidyā-kalpita*.[42] *Avidyā* itself is instead best classed as a state (*avasthā*) or a passion (*kleśa*) that affects an individual. It is a state of non-discrimination (*aviveka*): the individual fails to discriminate the Self (*ātma*)[43] from the not-self

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[39] G. K. Bh. 2.17, translated in SSB 1: 88.

[40] Alston, 2004: 1, 63

[41] Alston, 2004: 1, 63

[42] Alston, 2004: 1, 65

[43] As explained in Section 2 (above), according to *Advaita Vedānta*, the Self (*ātman*) is identical to the Absolute (*brahman*), so here the terms are used interchangeably.

(*anātma*), which leads to the projection of the empirical world.

This means that an individual being in the state of *avidyā* is an *a priori* condition for the existence of the empirical world. This is why I class *avidyā* as a theory of representation comparable to Schopenhauer's theory of the world as representation. A theory of representation is something that explains our perception of the empirical world by means of something that represents something else. In *Advaita Vedānta*, an individual being in a state of *avidyā* causes the projection of the empirical world which we experience. What one directly perceives is not something real: it is only a mere representation.

The projection of the empirical world that follows from *avidyā* is described as a mutual superimposition (*adhyāsa*). A superimposition is when one thing appears as having the attributes of another thing; as we are talking about a mutual superimposition, both appear as having taken on some of the attributes of the other. A person's mind or body appear to have the property of the Absolute, e.g. the property 'Being,'[44] when that person wrongly identifies themselves with their mind or body. The Absolute, i.e. the non-dual infinite substratum, appears to have properties that the empirical world has when a person is in a state of *avidyā* and experiencing the empirical world: it appears as being divided into many parts, for example.

In the snake/rope analogy, the snake and the rope are both objects that appear in the empirical world, and which are distinct, meaning that the conflation of the two can be corrected by an intellectual evaluation. However, this is where the analogy is limited. The conflation of the Absolute

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[44] The Self or the Absolute is something that cannot be positively described (*avyākyārtha*), but at times it is affirmed to have a nature (*svarupa*) or specific properties such as *cit* (which can be loosely translated as 'consciousness'). The purpose of describing the Absolute positively with such adjectives is part of a wider process of negating any superimposed features. Any empirical features attributed to the Absolute are meant as a heuristic device. For more, see Taitt. Bh. 2.8.5, translated in SSB 3: 145-146 and Alston, 2004: 4.

with the empirical world cannot be corrected by anything *internal* to the empirical world, such as one's intellect. It can only be corrected by attaining the realisation that one's identity is the Absolute.

Anything experienced from the standpoint (*dṛṣṭi*) of *avidyā* holds no reality of its own. Moreover, it is only from the standpoint of *avidyā* that it makes sense to distinguish two standpoints, as from the standpoint of Truth, no *avidyā* exists anywhere for anybody, as there is nothing other than oneself.[45] The two standpoints are mutually exclusive, and all the arguments, metaphors and descriptions that Śaṅkara gives are to be considered from the standpoint of *avidyā*, with the purpose of guiding the reader to the standpoint of Truth. As Śaṅkara writes:

> The Vedanta-texts declare that for him who has reached the state of truth … the whole apparent world does not exist… On the other hand, all those distinctions are valid, as far as the [empirical] world is concerned.[46]"

Although the two standpoints conflict, using them is the "only way in which the riddle of empirical existence and its relation to changeless final reality can be approached."[47]

The nature of *avidyā* is discussed when the teacher in Śaṅkara's dialectic is asked who it is that is subject to *avidyā*.[48] Where does it lie? Does it affect one person or many? Śaṅkara gives the answer that it does not affect the true Self, but just whoever is perceived as being the person afflicted by *avidyā*. Śaṅkara points out that in order to ask who is being afflicted by *avidyā*, that very person must be asking from the standpoint of *avidyā*; the nature of *avidyā* is non-rational when considered from the standpoint of the Absolute. As Śaṅkara's student Sureśvara writes, it is "without cause and violates

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[45] The two standpoints are called *paramārtha* (the standpoint of Truth) and *saṃvṛti* or *vyavahāra* (the standpoint of *avidyā*), however Śaṅkara is inconsistent with these terms, and at times also uses the term *prātibhāsika*, which means fictional. For more about this, see Cross, 2013: 82.

[46] B.S.Bh. 2.1.14, translated in Cross, 2013: 89.

[47] Cross, 2013: 89

[48] The following discussion draws from Alston, 2004: 1, 66-67.

all rules and reason."[49] Furthermore, as Śaṅkara's goal is to lead a pupil to realisation, Alston notes that it "is pointless to enquire into the unreal for its own sake … [because] one enquires into the nature of the unreal only for the sake of establishing the true nature of the Real."[50]

The removal of *avidyā* is the ultimate goal of a student of *Advaita Vedānta*; it is equivalent to attaining liberation (*mokśa*) or spiritual realisation. Realisation is described as a non-real event: from the standpoint of the Absolute, time is not a reality, and so the change from non-realisation to realisation cannot occur at a point in time. Alston writes that "The Self only appears to be deluded, and only appears to be liberated later on… [We cannot say that] the Self undergoes a change from bondage to liberation, as if they were two real states."[51] Bartley adds that "Liberation is not… brought about by religious strivings. It is simply the removal of an unenlightened mentality."[52]

Because Śaṅkara's aim as a writer is to lead a pupil to the understanding that everything is the Absolute, the practice of giving philosophical arguments and engaging in a dialectic of criticisms and responses (*tarka*) takes on a minor role. It is only one of many tools used by a teacher to guide their pupil to the ultimate Truth.[53] Śaṅkara claims this Truth to already be possessed by everyone in an internal, immediate way; it is only *avidyā* that obscures it and keeps one from knowing it. He writes that "[o]ne does not have to perform any special intuition to realise that one is the Self, as one is already identical with the Self by nature."[54] Therefore, the main role that philosophical reasoning

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[49] N. Sid. 3.66 (Sureśvara), translated in SSB 1: 94.

[50] Alston, 2004: 2, 213

[51] Alston, 2004: 1, 66-67

[52] Bartley, 2015: 188

[53] Other tools of the renunciate are, for example, control of the breath (*prānāyama*), meditation (*dhyāna*), and withdrawal from the senses (*pratyāhāra*).

[54] Bṛhad. Bh. 4.4.20, translated in SSB 1: 131.

plays is to prevent a student from succumbing to the arguments used by rival schools of thought, by drawing out logical fallacies in their arguments.[55] Nonetheless, some positive arguments *are* given by Śaṅkara, and in the second part of this thesis I make use of these to compare Śaṅkara's theory with Schopenhauer's.

To summarise, the following are three broad tenets that Śaṅkara's theory of representation relies upon:

1. The empirical world which we appear to have knowledge of is merely illusory: it is only real when considered from a subject in the state of *avidyā*; when considered from the standpoint of Truth, it is unreal.

2. The empirical world is not mind-dependent, rather, it is a superimposition on the Absolute. It is formally conditioned: all objects in the empirical world, including mental objects, are unreal appearances, which presuppose the existence of a subject being in the state of *avidyā*.

3. The Absolute is the infinite substratum which serves as a ground for the empirical world; it is knowable (in a sense) when a person attains a realisation of the Truth that they are the Absolute.

These three tenets will aid the comparison with Schopenhauer's theory of the world as representation. I discuss this next.

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[55] For example, self-contradiction and infinite regress. Śaṅkara builds on those listed in the *Brahma Sūtras*. For more on *tarka*, see Alston, 2004: 4, 169-174.

5. Schopenhauer and the world as representation

In this section I explain Schopenhauer's theory of representation. To understand it, we must first look at Kant, whose metaphysical picture serves as a background for Schopenhauer. Hence, here I first explore Kant's view, then Schopenhauer's criticisms of Kant, and finally Schopenhauer's view.

Schopenhauer denies that there is a mind-independent reality. he argues that the empirical world of physical objects exists only for a subject. The first volume of *The World as Will and Representation* opens with the matter-of-fact declaration:

> 'The world is my representation': – this holds true for every living, cognitive being… It immediately becomes clear and certain to [a human being] that he is not acquainted with either the sun or the earth, but rather only with an eye that sees a sun, with a hand that feels an earth, and that the surrounding world exists only as representation…[56]

Theories that hold that the world is mind-dependent are known as idealist theories; here I show why Schopenhauer's idealism is unique.

Wicks writes that Schopenhauer's view stems out of "conceptual difficulties found in Kant's … theories of perceptions."[57] Kant's theory of perception is a synthesis of the rationalist and empiricist schools that preceded him. Prior to Kant, "…it ha[d] been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects…" but Kant instead argues that we should proceed by "…assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition."[58] He argues that pure reason is involved in structuring our experience (contra the empiricist tradition) and that pure reason cannot work outside of experience (contra the rationalist tradition). Therefore, his philosophy is based on the idea that the limits of experience are the limits of cognition. Everything within these limits is labelled the 'phenomenal world.' The world

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[56] WWR 1: 3

[57] Wicks, 2008: 39

[58] Kant, 1998/1787: 110 (B xvi)

that lies behind it is independent of all minds and is referred to as the world as it is in itself. This latter world is never directly known or apprehended. Wicks provides a helpful analogy:

> …we can reflect that all flies have prismatic eyes and that any given fly's world is necessarily a prismatic world. If any fly happens to die, then the prismatic world of the remaining flies would nonetheless remain as the remaining flies' shared objective world. If all flies were to die, then the prismatic world of flies would disappear, since the fly-independent cause of the flies' prismatic world is not in itself prismatic.[59]

In this example, the flies' prismatic world is analogous to the spatio-temporal world that we live in. Space and time are features of our perception, and hence only objects of the phenomenal world are spatially and temporally located. Objects in the world as it is in itself do not have this structure, which is why Kant maintains that space and time would not exist if there were no people.

In Schopenhauer's appendix to the first volume of the *World as Will and Representation*, he writes that this distinction which Kant draws between the phenomenal world and the world as it is in itself is his "greatest merit"[60] and is of "infinite importance"[61]. However, part of Kant's picture is that that objects in themselves, i.e. the mind-independent objects of the world as it is in itself, are what ground the appearances that we perceive. Schopenhauer rejects this claim. This is on the basis that we only have knowledge of causal relationships that occur within the context of human experience, so it is illegitimate to claim that objects in themselves *cause* appearances. Kant uses the causal relation beyond its constraints. Schopenhauer writes that "…if a thing-in-itself is to be assumed, it cannot be an object at all."[62]

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[59] Wicks, 2008: 45

[60] WWR 1: 494

[61] WWR 1: 496

[62] WWR 1: 503

Wicks also points out that using the notion of causality in this way goes against the concept of an ultimate metaphysical oneness, which is a concept Schopenhauer wants to maintain. Kant's notion of causality, as interpreted by Schopenhauer, requires distinguishing between at minimum two things: the world as it is in itself and the phenomenal world. But "[t]he idea that 'all is seamlessly one' contradicts the very logic and application of causal relationships."[63] Claiming that 'A causes B' requires A and B to not be identical, so in claiming that objects in themselves cause our appearances, Kant implies that a reality could continue to exist without the existence of a perceiving subject. This removes the subject from its place as being essential to the existence of the world. This was rejected by many post-Kantian philosophers, leading many to criticise Kant's theory of knowledge.

Another of Schopenhauer's criticisms of Kant is more technical. Kant has a tripartite metaphysical picture. The three entities he conceives of are (i) phenomenal objects, i.e., spatio-temporal perceptual objects; (ii) noumenal objects, which are the non-experienceable transcendental objects that serve as grounds for any given perceptual object, and (iii) the thing-in-itself.[64] Schopenhauer argues that the second of these is not required as the other two are sufficient for a picture of reality. It is for this reason that Schopenhauer avoids the use of the term 'noumena' and its cognates.

Schopenhauer builds on Kant's view by expanding on his own type of idealism. Young distinguishes between two types of idealism: 'partial idealism,' which holds that some aspects of our experience are immaterial, and 'radical idealism,' which holds that all aspects of our experience are

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[63] Wicks, 2008: 49

[64] This tripartite interpretation of Kant is disputed; the contemporary debate among Kant scholars focusses on a 'one-world' view versus a 'two-world' view. Nonetheless, this is how Schopenhauer interprets Kant, which leads him towards his dual aspect view of the world.

immaterial.[65] Locke is an example of a partial idealist: he draws a distinction between primary qualities, that exist independent of our minds, and secondary qualities, that are mind-dependent. Primary qualities are things such as size and extension of objects. Berkeley would be an example of a radical idealist: he denies that *any* qualities have an existence beyond our minds, and so all qualities are secondary qualities.

Schopenhauer interprets Kant as a radical idealist who was afraid to commit fully to the consequences of his doctrine. There is evidence in Kant's writings to support this: at one point, Kant writes that "…if I were to take away the thinking subject, the whole corporeal world would have to disappear, as this is nothing but an appearance in the sensibility of our subject."[66] However, according to Schopenhauer, Kant tries to disguise the radical nature of his idealism by deciding to attack Berkeley in the later 'B' edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Schopenhauer thinks the later edition is "mutilated, spoilt, and … ungenuine"[67] and so bases his reading of Kant on the 'A' edition. He also remarks his surprise "…that [Kant] did not derive [the distinction of appearance and thing-in-itself] from the simple undeniable truth that lay so close at hand [in Berkeley's writing], 'No object without a subject.'"[68] Schopenhauer therefore says that he presents the real Kant, as he is someone who has truly understood the radical extent of what Kant meant.

Schopenhauer's picture of the world is a dual-aspect one: one aspect is called world as representation (*Vorstellung*), which corresponds to what Kant calls the phenomenal world; the second aspect is will (*Wille*), which corresponds to the thing-in-itself. Schopenhauer wants to maintain a

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[65] Young, 2005: 17

[66] Kant, 1998/1781: 433 (A 383)

[67] WWR 1: 435

[68] WWR 1: 514

connection between these two aspects of the world, despite rejecting Kant's claim of a causal relationship between them. This is done by identifying the two as being one and the same thing. He argues that two things which are apparently different can be *substantially* identical, by the relation of one 'objectifying' or 'manifesting' as the other. Examples from Wicks are helpful here.[69] An ice cube is a manifestation of the chemical substance H_2O; the different stages of metamorphosis of a caterpillar becoming a butterfly are all manifestations of the same underlying creature. In both of these cases, the manifestations are thought to be substantially identical to the underlying reality. Manifestation is an asymmetrical relation: if B is a manifestation of A, it does not follow that A is a manifestation of B. Schopenhauer holds that the world as representation is a manifestation of the world as will, meaning that he thinks they are metaphysically identical. This is not to suggest he endorses a philosophical monism, however. As Snow and Snow rightly points out, to do so would "not adequately capture his complex theory."[70] Rather, they argue that his idealism is best thought of as essentialist: there *is* a metaphysical hierarchy, in which the will is the essence of everything.

Schopenhauer's view can be summarised by the dictum "no object without a subject." Although separate, each requires the other. They are

> ...inseparable even in thought, for each of the two has meaning and existence only through and for the other; each exists with the other and vanishes with it. They limit each other immediately; where the object begins the subject ceases.[71]

Therefore, the empirical world arises in the consciousness of each individual as a continually changing pattern of representations. There are no objects without subjects, although there is a mode of being that is purely subjective, which is the will.

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[69] Wicks, 2008: 50-51

[70] Snow and Snow, 1991:644

[71] WWR 1: 5

McDermid identifies three broad tenets that Schopenhauer's idealism relies upon.[72] They are as follows:

1. Our knowledge of the empirical world is knowledge of a world of appearances, and not knowledge of objects in themselves lying beyond those appearances. Saying that 'the world is my representation' is saying that each and every object which we perceive as being within space and time is a mind-dependent entity, and each of their existences "hangs … on a single thread; and this is the actual consciousness in which it exists."[73]

2. This world of appearances is mind-dependent in two ways: each appearance is both *materially* and *formally* conditioned by a knowing subject.

   a. The subject *materially* conditions the object. This means that all objects external from a person are representations, and representations presuppose the existence of a subject.

   b. The subject *formally* conditions the object. This means that the object must conform to certain *a priori* forms or principles that come from the knowing subject. For subjects that are human beings, these principles are the spatio-temporal conditions: all objects that a human being perceives are spatially and temporally located.

3. As well as the world of perceptual knowledge, in which all objects are mind-dependent, there is another aspect of the world, which is mind-independent. This is the thing-in-itself. Schopenhauer claims that the thing-in-itself is not knowable through perceptual representations but is instead known imperfectly via one's self-consciousness.[74]

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[72] McDermid, 2003: 58-59

[73] WWR 2: 4

[74] The knowability of the thing-in-itself will be discussed in Section 6 (below) in the comparison with Śaṅkara's claims

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about the knowability of the Absolute.

6. Similarities and differences between the two theories

In this section I examine the similarities and differences between Śaṅkara's doctrine of *avidyā*, explored above in Section 4, and Schopenhauer's theory of the world as representation, explored above in Section 5. In the following part of this thesis, I conduct a close exploration of some of the arguments that each philosopher gives in favour of their respective theories: here the scope is limited to examining the theories in themselves.

The main similarity is three-fold: both Śaṅkara and Schopenhauer think that (a) the only world which we ever perceive, and ever can perceive, is a world made of appearances; that (b) the perceiving subject is what formally conditions that world of appearances; and (c) there is an ultimate reality that lies beyond what we perceive, which is non-dual in nature. The way that they describe and subsequently argue for these ideas are different, but their stances are fundamentally the same.

Here I disagree with Cross, who claims that the worldview of Schopenhauer is different to the view of Śaṅkara.[75] Cross writes that according to Schopenhauer's worldview, "something positive underlies existence… [but] this metaphysical presence, the *will,* falls short of the finality that Śaṅkara attributes to *Brahman*. Its ultimate nature is unclear, and its ontological status resists definition."[76] However, I disagree that this makes either their theories of representation or their worldviews different. Their fundamental beliefs about the nature of the empirical world and the underlying ultimate reality are the same. This is demonstrated at the end of the previous two sections when summarising their views: the three key tenets of both of their views are the same.[77]

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[75] Precisely, he claims that although "…a broadly similar conclusion…" is reached, the worldview of Schopenhauer "…falls between the two Indian positions…" of *Advaita Vedānta* and the *Mādhyamika* philosophy. See Cross, 2013: 90-102; quotations from p95 and p96.

[76] Cross, 2013: 96

[77] What they do disagree about is the extent of to which we can have knowledge of that ultimate reality; I expand on this

Additionally, both have similar notions of enlightenment and causality. For Śaṅkara, enlightenment is the cessation of *avidyā*; this aligns with the religious concept of liberation (*mokśa*) from the cycle of rebirth (*saṃsāra*). Enlightenment is achieved by identifying with the Absolute, which is aided by renouncing worldly pleasures. Schopenhauer writes about an equivalent state of mind: the denial towards our will-to-live. He identifies this with attitudes of a renunciate: resignation, composure and tranquillity. Both agree that these are states of non-duality. Śaṅkara writes that "[w]hatever you see as duality is unreal,"[78] and Schopenhauer writes that "complete denial of the will … denoted by the names ecstasy, rapture, illumination, union with God, and so on … cannot really be called knowledge, since it no longer has the form of subject and object."[79]

Śaṅkara argues that there is no causality, which I interpret as meaning that there is no causality from the standpoint of the Absolute, as Śaṅkara does acknowledge the existence of causal connections in the empirical world. I elaborate on his views about causality in Section 11. Schopenhauer argues that causality is one of the principles of individuation that shape the world and formally condition a subject's experience. This is outlined briefly in Section 3 (above) and expanded upon in Section 10 (below). Therefore, both philosophers conceive of causality as something limited to the world of empirical experience.

Moreover, neither philosopher conceives of the connection between the empirical world (or the world as representation) and the ultimate reality (or the world as Will) as a causal relation. Instead, both characterise the relation as an essentialism. For Schopenhauer, the Will is the inner nature or essence lying behind everything; the world as representation is a manifestation of Will. For Śaṅkara,

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below.

[78] Bṛhad. Bh. 4.3.15, translated in SSB 2: 238.

[79] WWR 1: 410

the Absolute is the kernel underlying everything; it even exists within each individual as an inner silent witness (*sākṣin*). The world that we experience is merely a manifestation of the Absolute.

While their fundamental worldviews are the same when considered broadly, there *are* differences when examining the details of their theories. Here I outline four.

The first difference is to do with the reality of other persons. The view of Śaṅkara is clear: from the standpoint of the Absolute, there is only the Absolute, and no other person exists. The person who has reached enlightenment (the *jīvan-mukta*) makes the declaration: "I am the Absolute" (*aham brahmāsmi*)[80] and nothing else exists. However, Schopenhauer's stance on the reality of other persons is ambiguous. At one point, he is dismissive of solipsism (which he calls theoretical egoism) saying that "[a]s a serious conviction … it could be found only in a madhouse: as such it would then need not so much refutation as a cure."[81] But at another point he writes that "if … a single being, even the most insignificant, were entirely annihilated, the whole world would inevitably be destroyed with in."[82] It is especially when discussing ethics that he seems to support the idea that there is only one person.[83] He frequently cites the *Upaniṣadic* statement "thou art That", writing that "Whoever is able to declare [this statement] to himself with … firm inward conviction about every creature with whom he comes in contact, is certain of all virtue and bliss…"[84] Young interprets Schopenhauer as claiming that "everyone's real self is identical with everyone and everything else's real self…" and so therefore that, "[not only] is the real self a transcendent entity, it is also the case that *there is only one* real

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[80] From the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, translated in Alston, 2004: 6, 113

[81] WWR 1: 104

[82] WWR 1: 128-129

[83] I.e., in the *Fourth Book* of Volume 1 of *The World as Will and Representation*.

[84] WWR 1: 374

self."[85] Jacquette concludes that this means that the world as representation "...begins to exist only when a first representing subject has a first representing experience [and] ceases to exist when any individual representing subject dies or ... becomes totally cognitively inactive."[86] On this interpretation, his stance is closer to Śaṅkara's, but he still posits a real creation and cessation of the representation aspect of the world. Śaṅkara, in contrast, simply designates the empirical world as being unreal.

The second difference is to do with the role of the mind. Schopenhauer's idealism is best characterised as saying that the empirical world or world of appearances is mind-dependent: it is a subject's mind which conditions the world, both materially and formally. This is explained above in Section 5. But for Śaṅkara, the mind forms part of the empirical world, and so characterising his theory of representation as claiming that the empirical world is mind-dependent is wrong. Many *do* incorrectly characterise Śaṅkara as thinking the world is an 'imagination,' however, this is due to frequent analogies and metaphors that make use of mental language, both in the source scriptures and in Śaṅkara's commentaries on those scriptures. This was explored above in Section 2.

The third difference is that Śaṅkara's writings have a religious component, whereas Schopenhauer was firmly atheistic. Śaṅkara's writings are a part of Hindu philosophy, and although his resulting school of philosophy (*Advaita Vedānta*) is best described as non-theistic,[87] the scriptures that he comments upon contain numerous ideas about God and religious practices, which consolidates in his philosophy. Conversely, Schopenhauer was "the first major Western philosopher

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[85] Young, 2005: 173 (emphasis his)

[86] Jacquette, 2005: 14

[87] See Section 2 (above) for more about this.

to make a point of atheism."[88] There is no place for God in Schopenhauer's metaphysics, where knowledge is bounded to the limits of experience, or in his pessimistic philosophy.

Schopenhauer's conception of the world is fundamentally pessimistic because he claims that all human existence is unsatisfactory, as we fluctuate between suffering and boredom. The solution he favours to this is a denial of man's insatiable will-to-live. Conversely, although Śaṅkara writes about the fleeting pleasures and sorrows of daily life, he adopts a more optimistic stance. As Alston notes, "Śaṅkara admits that the *bodha* (enlightened one) enjoys empirical experience, but is never deluded into believing it real."[89] Even his conception of enlightenment or liberation is portrayed in positive terms, whereas Schopenhauer's denial of the will is portrayed wholly negatively.[90] As is well known, Schopenhauer closes *The World as Will and Representation* by insisting that "…to those in whom the will has turned and denied itself, this very real world of ours with all its suns and galaxies, is – nothing,"[91] showing that for him, the maximum that is achievable is an absence or negation. For Śaṅkara, the ultimate goal is an identification with the Absolute, which is often described as an infinite bliss (*ānanda*).

The final difference is about the knowability of the ultimate reality. Śaṅkara argues that we can have complete knowledge of the Absolute, and moreover that everyone already has knowledge of the Absolute, but that knowledge is shrouded by *avidyā*. However, this is not knowledge in its

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[88] Magee, 1987: 263

[89] Alston, 2004: 1, 105

[90] Cross notes that, based on Schopenhauer's *Manuscript Remains*, Schopenhauer used the term 'denial of the will' to replace the terms 'Better Consciousness' and 'Pure Subject of Knowing,' both which have more positive connotations and are closer in meaning to *ātman*. All three of these refer to something beyond the distinction of subject and object and beyond the empirical world. Cross argues that Schopenhauer's 'denial of the will' is closer to the Buddhist teachings of *nirvāṇa* and the *śūnyatā*, and that he came to this after rejecting the theistic connotations the previous terms held. For more on this see Cross, 2013: 193-217, Nicholls, 2006 and Barua, 2013.

[91] WWR 1: 412

typical form: as there can be no distinction between a subject and object, there can be no distinction between a knower and something known. Śaṅkara writes that "...if the Absolute were [a] knower, or agent in any act of knowledge, it could not be infinite ... [therefore] 'knowledge' [is used] in the sense of a state (*bhāva-sādhana*)..."[92] This knowledge is better described as knowledge-by-acquaintance than as propositional knowledge, as it is a direct awareness or identification with the Absolute. This is shown where Śaṅkara writes that "[t]he enlightened man is himself the Absolute."[93]

In contrast, ultimate reality is unknowable for Schopenhauer.[94] This is confusing: it often seems that when talking about will, Schopenhauer is speaking of something equivalent to the Absolute. When reasoning that will is the inner nature of everything by use of the double-knowledge one has of one's body, Schopenhauer writes that "...we can never get at the inner nature of things *from without*."[95] From this, and other passages, many infer that Schopenhauer claims an inner knowledge of the thing-in-itself. The most famous of these is where he writes that:

> ...a way *from within* stands open to us as to that real inner nature of things to which we cannot penetrate *from without*. It is, so to speak, a subterranean passage, a secret alliance, which, as if by treachery, places us all at once in the fortress that could not be taken by attack from without.[96]

However, this passage is followed by him claiming that "...the thing-in-itself has to a great extent cast off its veils, but still does not appear quite naked..."[97] By this he is referring to the fact that the inner will, while not governed by the forms of space or causality, is still governed by time, as time governs

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[92] Taitt. Bh. 2.1, translated in SSB 1: 192.

[93] Taitt. Bh. 2.1, translated in SSB 6: 263.

[94] The following discussion stems from Magee, 1997.

[95] WWR 1: 99 (emphasis his)

[96] WWR 2: 195 (emphasis his)

[97] WWR 2: 197

both inner and outer experience. Thus, for Schopenhauer, the thing-in-itself is something distinct from the will, and is something that remains unknowable.[98] Young argues that this misunderstanding is due to an ambiguity in Schopenhauer's writing: the younger, naïve author of Volume 1 of WWR claims to have cracked the problem of Kant's thing-in-itself by identifying it as will, but the more mature author of Volume 2 argues that the will is distinct from Kant's thing-in-itself, which is something supra-natural.[99]

The preceding sections have examined and compared Śaṅkara and Schopenhauer's theories of representations; the second part of this thesis looks at some of the arguments used to defend their theories.

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[98] Schopenhauer makes the claim that he has gone further than Kant in unravelling the mystery of the thing-in-itself. This is not because he claims that the thing-in-itself is knowable, but because he claims to show that the thing-in-itself must be undifferentiated, and so not plural, as he interprets Kant as claiming.

[99] Young, 2005: 89-102

7. Arguments

In the second part of this thesis, I examine some of the arguments that Schopenhauer and Śaṅkara each give to defend their respective theories of representation. To my knowledge, no other work that compares *Advaita Vedānta* with the philosophy of Schopenhauer looks in detail at the level of arguments. Here I choose to do so, evaluating the arguments as I proceed. An evaluation of both sets of arguments has of course been conducted, separately, but by evaluating them concurrently, I am able to draw out similarities and differences at a closer level: logical structures that are used and assumptions that are made can be compared. Moreover, the strengths of one can be used to defend the other, and the weaknesses of one can be used to criticise the other.

Some commentators skim over Schopenhauer's arguments in favour of his doctrine of idealism, stating that they are merely Kant's arguments restated.[100] Others interpret Schopenhauer as claiming that his doctrine is self-evident, so that, instead of providing arguments in favour of his idealism, he simply describes it and proceeds to assert it to be true by definition. Atwell does this, citing the two following passages from each volume of *The World as Will and Representation* as evidence for this claim:[101]

> …no truth is more certain, more independent of all others, and less in need of proof than this, namely that everything that exists for knowledge, and hence the whole of this world, is only object in relation to the subject, perception of the perceiver, in a word, representation.[102]

> 'The world is my representation' is, like the axioms of Euclid, a proposition which everyone must recognize as true as soon as he understands it, although it is not a proposition that

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[100] For example, Magee

[101] Atwell, 1995: 35

[102] WWR 1:3

everyone under stands as soon as he hears it.[103]

However, these two passages can be interpreted as introductory statements which aim to convey Schopenhauer's certainty in his arguments' success. On this interpretation, he *does* give specific arguments in favour of idealism, albeit ones that need to be drawn out of the text. Two commentators who provide such an interpretation are Young and McDermid. Young identifies three arguments,[104] whereas McDermid goes further by distinguishing nine arguments that can be drawn out of the text.[105] I use three of the arguments which McDermid extracts, namely the analogy argument, the simplicity argument, and the argument from causality.[106]

The following three arguments are some of the ones that Śaṅkara uses to argue that the empirical world is only a projection.

1. The three worlds argument

2. The dream argument

3. The transformation argument

I directly compare and contrast these three arguments of Śaṅkara to some of the arguments that Schopenhauer gives. In Sections 8 and 9, I compare Śaṅkara's three worlds argument and dream argument with Schopenhauer's analogy and simplicity arguments, which I jointly label as Schopenhauer's dream argument. In Sections 10 and 11, I compare Śaṅkara's transformation argument with Schopenhauer's argument from causality. In both cases, I examine and evaluate each argument separately at first, then proceed by comparing them.

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[103] WWR 2:3

[104] These are arguments that draw from Kant, Berkeley, and an 'evolutionary idealist' argument. See Young, 2005: 52.

[105] McDermid, 2003

[106] In McDermid's paper these are respectively labelled arguments F, G and I.

8. Schopenhauer's dream argument

In this section I critically examine Schopenhauer's dream argument. This argument is based on these two passages from Schopenhauer:

> We have dreams; may not the whole of life be a dream? or more exactly: is there a sure criterion for distinguishing between dream and reality, between phantasms and real objects?[107]

> [T]he world must be recognized, from one aspect at least, as akin to a dream, indeed as capable of being put in the same class with a dream. For the same brain-function that conjures up during sleep a perfectly objective, perceptible, and indeed palpable world must have just as large a share in the presentation of the objective world of wakefulness. Though different as regards their matter, the two worlds are nevertheless obviously moulded from the same form. This form is the intellect.[108]

This argument has a structure typical of arguments from analogy. McDermid syllogises it in the following way:

1. The world I apprehend in my dreams is a function of my mind or intellect.
2. This dream-world is similar, at least in certain key phenomenological respects, to the world encountered in veridical perception.
3. Therefore, it is probable or likely that the external world is similarly fashioned by (and dependent upon) the human mind.[109]

This argument has been used in various forms by different philosophers. It famously forms part of Descartes' sceptical thought experiment.[110] The first premise claims that the dream-world is a function of a person's mind, and hence that the objects of the dream-world are mental images or representations. It is important to point out that this is not the same as claiming that dreams are

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107 WWR I: 16

108 WWR II: I, 4

109 McDermid, 2003: 70

110 Descartes, 1641/1949

unreal, or that dreams contain unreal object. For example, one could have a dream which contained the real objects that they encountered earlier that day when awake; indeed, most dreams do feature real objects. Moreover, the dreams themselves are real events: a person can remember having had dreams in the same way that they remember what they did a few days ago. So, in claiming that the dream-world is a function of the mind, the first premise here does not make the claim that dreams are in any way unreal.[111] The second premise claims that dreams are often (although not always) vividly realistic, so much so that they are sometimes qualitatively indistinguishable from waking experience. The conclusion is not a deductive conclusion, that is to say, it does not necessarily follow from the preceding premises. Rather, it is an abductive argument, meaning that it aims to show by inference that idealism is the best explanation.

There are three problems with Schopenhauer's dream argument.[112] Firstly, there are implicit premises contained within the argument that are required for the argument to be valid, and so far, these premises remain undefended. Secondly, Schopenhauer's reasoning does not explain how we can distinguish dreaming experience from waking experience. Lastly, the argument does not necessarily support a Schopenhauerian version of idealism, as outlined above in Section 5; more work is needed to show why it is not merely supporting partial idealism.

The implicit premises of the argument that are required to make it valid go directly after the first two premises; they are:

3. The world encountered in veridical perception is experienced via mental representations.

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[111] For this argument and other arguments of Schopenhauer, the phenomenal world, i.e. the world as representation, is classed as 'real.' This means something empirically real, but transcendentally ideal. This is in contrast to Śaṅkara, who argues that the Absolute is the only real thing, and it is wrong to refer to the empirical world as real.

[112] These draw from McDermid's discussion but include some additional points.

4. If two mental representations are qualitatively similar to a high enough degree, then we can reasonably assume that they are made of the same general sort.

Including these additional premises makes the conclusion valid. However, it can be shown that they are unsound. The third premise claims that we never directly perceive the empirical world, which is discussed momentarily when examining partial idealism. The fourth premise is unsound, so long as we subscribe to the multiple-realizability thesis. The multiple-realizability thesis has risen in popularity in the last century, alongside the rise of computers and research into cognitive science; it was first proposed by Turing in his 1950 paper,[113] and is the dominant view in describing the mind.[114] The thesis dictates that a given mental representation is able to be realised by multiple different implementations, where an implementation is a state, event or physical property that gives rise to that mental representation. If two mental representations A and B were qualitatively similar (say, both are vividly realistic), *each* could be realised by multiple different things x and y (say, by brains and circuit boards). Thus, although A and B are of the same general sort at the mental level, they do not necessarily have to be of the same general sort at the more fundamental physical level.[115]

The second problem is simply that Schopenhauer fails to point out how we *do* know that the waking world and dreaming world are different, just from our representations alone. Schopenhauer answers this problem by pointing out that the dreaming world could never be compared directly with the waking world, as "only the recollection of the dream could be compared with the present

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[113] Turing, 1950: 446. Restrepo notes that Turing describes this thesis at least a decade earlier than Putnam and Fodor, to whom it is usually attributed; see Restrepo 2009: 195.

[114] To be precise, non-reductive *physicalism* is the dominant view, compared to reductive accounts of describing the mind. The multiple-realizability thesis is an example of a non-reductive account

[115] A defender of Schopenhauer could respond to this criticism by pointing out that, at the time of his writing, the multiple-realizability thesis had not been postulated, so he would not have had to respond to this problem. Moreover, this criticism is reliant on a physicalist view of the mind, which Schopenhauer would have rejected.

reality."[116] He quotes Kant, who writes that "[the] law of causality distinguishes life from the dream"[117] meaning that "individual dreams are marked off from real life by the fact that they do not fit into the continuity of experience that runs constantly through life."[118] This is similar to the reasoning used in Descartes' Sixth Meditation as a response to the dream argument.[119] However, in contrast with Descartes, Schopenhauer wants to explain how we can distinguish between waking and dreaming experience, while still arguing that "[l]ife and dreams are leaves of one and the same book"[120] and that from a standpoint external to both, we would "find no distinct difference in their nature."[121]

The third problem is that the argument may not do what Schopenhauer wants it to. Even if the argument were both valid and sound, it would only support a partial idealism.[122] The conclusion that the waking world is fashioned by the human mind, in a way similar to how the dreaming world is fashioned by the human mind, at most means that all we directly perceive are mental representations. There is nothing to stop us from supposing that those mental representations are epistemic intermediaries, which are caused by a world of mind-independent objects. Thus, the argument does not necessitate the conclusion that the empirical world is mind-dependent. McDermid describes this as a trilemma of radical idealism, partial idealism and scepticism, and Schopenhauer's move from here is to eliminate partial idealism and scepticism as viable options. McDermid writes that

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[116] WWR I: 16

[117] WWR I: 16

[118] WWR I: 18

[119] Descartes, 1641/1949

[120] WWR I: 18

[121] WWR I: 18

[122] McDermid presents this problem, but labels what I have called (following Young) 'partial idealism' as 'representative realism.' Schopenhauer refers to the partial idealist view just as 'realism.'

Schopenhauer (rightly) thinks that scepticism will have few supporters, and so his task is to discredit partial idealism. This move is what McDermid labels the simplicity argument.

The partial idealist posits that there are two worlds which exist: an objective world of mind-independent objects, and a subjective world of representations. Schopenhauer argues that the former of these is redundant, making it unnecessary for a cohesive picture of the world. He shows this with the following thought experiment:

> [L]et us … remove from [the world] all knowing beings, and thus leave behind only inorganic and vegetable nature … But then let us subsequently put into the world a knowing being. That world then presents itself once more in his brain, and repeats itself inside that brain exactly as it was previously outside it. Thus to the *first* world a *second* has been added, which, although completely separated from the first, resembles it to a nicety … I think that, on closer conviction, all this proves absurd enough, and thus leads to the conviction that that absolutely *objective* world outside the head, independent of it and prior to all knowledge, which we at first imagined we had conceived, was really no other than the second world already known subjectively, the world of the representation, and that it is this alone which we are actually capable of conceiving.[123]

Hence, Schopenhauer argues that as his epistemological idealism does not propose the existence of anything outside of our mental representations, it avoids a duplicate world, and so gives a better explanation of our experience than partial idealism does. This inference is made by virtue of Occam's Razor: that which is simpler is more likely to be true.

The problem with this, as McDermid points out, is that simple arguments are not necessarily the ones that give the best explanation. While simplicity does serve as a mark of a good explanation, there are other markers for good explanations.[124] Moreover, the argument is not strong when compared with forms of direct realism which do not posit epistemic intermediaries, like that of

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[123] WWR II: 10 (emphasis his)

[124] Kuhn (1977) famously lists five: accuracy, consistency, scope, simplicity and fruitfulness.

Putnam's;[125] in fact, direct realism can use the exact same claim of having an ontologically simpler metaphysical picture in its favour. Direct realism is not without its own problems, but having an objective, mind-independent world may provide some explanatory power, the most obvious being that a mind-independent world could serve as the cause of perceptual experience.

While Schopenhauer's dream argument has some flaws, its best chance at success is when it is treated as an abductive argument, i.e. one that makes an inference to the best explanation. This will be useful in the next section, where I look at Śaṅkara's arguments related to dreaming.

[125] Putnam, 1999

9. Śaṅkara's arguments based on dreams

In this section I examine two arguments that are similar to Schopenhauer's dream argument, namely Śaṅkara three worlds argument and Śaṅkara's dream argument. These arguments both aim to show that the empirical world is illusory due to *avidyā*, in the manner explained above in Section 4.

<u>The three worlds argument</u>

The three worlds argument appears first in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, and then in Gauḍapāda's commentary on that *Upaniṣad*. Two references to it in Śaṅkara's writings are as follows:

> Having got rid of ignorance, the root of false imagination and the pre-condition of transmigration, one should know one's own Self, the Absolute, the free, the eternal fearless. One should give up the triad consisting of waking, dream and their seed called sleep, composed of darkness, reasoning that because each of them excludes the others they are unreal and do not exist.[126]

> …the purpose of the texts in expounding the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep is not to declare that the Self is subject to these states of transmigratory experience, but to show, on the contrary, that it is entirely bereft of these states and is not subject to transmigratory experience in any form.[127]

I syllogise this argument in the following way:

1. A subject can be in one of three states when having an experience; when having such an experience, the subject is said to be occupying one of three worlds respectively. The three worlds are the waking world, the dreaming world, and the world of dreamless sleep.

2. The subject's experience in each of these states happens independently to their experience in one of the other states.

3. The subject that is experiencing the three worlds remains changeless, whereas the experience

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[126] U.S. 16.17-18, translated in SSB 1: 89.

[127] B.S. Bh. 1.3.42, translated in SSB 3: 107.

being had is constantly changing.

4. Changing things are unreal, whereas changeless things are real.

5. Therefore, the empirical world is unreal – it is only a projection, which occurs due to the experiencing subject being in the state of *avidyā*.[128]

The first premise refers to three states that a subject can be in: awake, dreaming, and sleeping without dreaming.[129] The next two premises refer to the change in the subject's experience as they cross between the three states. The term 'subject' here does not refer to a specific person or a mind, but rather to the general awareness (*adhiṣṭhāna*) that persists in the three states. That awareness is what experiences being in the three states. It is important to remember that, for Śaṅkara, a subject's mind, including all their thoughts and memories, count as being a part of the empirical world.[130] A subject is not defined by any physical or mental capacities; they are something beyond both the physical and mental. While some thoughts or mental images about objects from the waking world continue from the waking state to the dreaming state, there is an absence of any mental activity at all in the state of dreamless sleep.[131] In concluding that the empirical world is unreal' I use 'empirical world' as denoting all three of the worlds that Śaṅkara lists.

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[128] This argument is also used to draw further conclusions about the nature of the experiencing subject, but here I focus on the claim that is being made about the nature of the world.

[129] A fourth state (*turīya*) is also listed; it occurs when one knows their own true nature to be the Absolute, i.e. when one has attained realisation (*mukti*). However, from the standpoint of the Absolute, it is not an individuated subject that experiences being in such a state, as, from the standpoint of the Absolute, there solely exists the Absolute without any distinctions. Hence, *turīya* is not listed here as one of the states an individuated subject can be in. For more on *turīya*, see Alston, 2004: 3, 164-169.

[130] I explain this difference between Eastern and Western conceptions of the mind in Section 2 (above).

[131] Śaṅkara claims that in dreamless sleep, "one becomes one with pure Being" (Ch. Bh. 6.8.1, translated in SSB 3: 200). I.e., there is no distinction between a person and the Absolute when they are neither awake nor dreaming, but *avidyā* pulls them back when they return to those states. This idea is present in the older *Upaniṣads* but drops out of the later ones; Śaṅkara maintains it but his followers reject it.

There are three problems with the three worlds argument. The first two of these are similar to problems with Schopenhauer's dream argument. As a reminder, the three problems with Schopenhauer's argument that I discussed were:

i. The syllogised argument was invalid in its original form, as it contained implicit undefended premises (that turned out to be unsound) that were required to reach the conclusion.

ii. Schopenhauer needed to explain how one distinguishes between waking and dreaming.

iii. The argument only seemed to support a partial idealism; extra work was needed to show why Schopenhauer's radical idealism was preferential.

The problems with the three worlds argument are as follows. Firstly, Śaṅkara needs to explain how a subject differentiates between being in each of the three states, and explain why he chooses to divide all experience into those three states. This is similar to problem (ii) with Schopenhauer's argument. Secondly, the three worlds argument is invalid in its current form: the premises given do not lead to the conclusion. This was the case in problem (i) of Schopenhauer's argument. The last problem is that Śaṅkara's fourth premise is unsound.

The first problem with Śaṅkara's argument is that he fails to point out why we *do* know a subject experiences three different states. A critic could argue that the dreaming and dreamless sleep states do not deserve to be classed as independent from the waking state; instead, both could simply be phases of waking experience. Waking experience would thus be as constant as the subject having that waking experience, and so, by virtue of the fourth premise, which claims that changeless things are real, waking experience would be real.

Śaṅkara acknowledges and addresses this problem. He writes that a critic might argue that dreaming experience

> …is not any special realm of its own … but rather belongs entirely to this world and is a phase of waking experience. [They say that] 'The individual only sees those things in dream – be they elephants or whatever – that he sees in waking.' But this idea is wrong. For in dream, the

sense-organs have ceased to function. One only sees dreams when the sense organs have ceased from functioning.[132]

This resembles Schopenhauer's explanation of how one distinguishes between waking and dreaming experience, which in turn is based on Kant's explanation and is similar to Descartes' explanation. All four of them point out that dreaming experience is discontinuous with waking experience. Śaṅkara does this by referring to the sense organs. Consider the experience of seeing things when dreaming. We do not have visual experience by means of light entering our eyes, as our eyes do not function when dreaming. Hence, the objects perceived when dreaming cannot be the same as those perceived when awake.

The point being made by Śaṅkara and Schopenhauer here is the same. They both show that waking and dreaming experience can be classed as different states, i.e., that there is a way of distinguishing between waking and dreaming experience.

The second problem is that the argument in its current form is invalid. The conclusion that the empirical world is unreal is too strong: the most that can be concluded is instead that:

5.   Therefore, the subject's *experience* of the empirical world is unreal.

This is because it is not the three worlds themselves that change, but rather it is the subject's experience of the three worlds that changes, as the subject moves between having an experience in each of the three states. The confusion arises because of the metaphor being used: the claim that 'a subject is occupying the waking world' is equivalent to the claim that 'the subject is having an experience in the waking state.'

A defendant of Śaṅkara could claim that he is arguing in a style similar to Descartes, in that he

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[132] Bṛhad. Bh. 4.3.7, translated in SSB 3: 113-4.

makes no assumptions about the existence of anything apart from his own direct subjective awareness. Claiming that one's experience of the three worlds is unreal *is* equivalent to claiming that the three worlds themselves are unreal, up until a proof is given that the three worlds exist independently of the subject. Moreover, to criticise Śaṅkara like this is to ignore the significance of the metaphor. The reason Śaṅkara equates the three states of experience to a subject existing in one of three worlds is precisely to point out that each of the worlds alternate between being in a realised or actualised state and a non-realised or non-actualised state. From the standpoint of the Absolute, the three worlds (as well as any individuated persons) are nothing more than unreal appearances. It is only from the standpoint of *avidyā* that the three worlds and the inhabiting individuals seem real. Moreover, a subject's true nature is the Absolute. The empirical world only arises by the subject being in the state of *avidyā*; it is a subject's experience of the empirical world that causes the existence of the empirical world. Hence, concluding that the mere experience of the three worlds is unreal amounts to a conclusion that the worlds *themselves* are unreal, making the argument valid.

This response is fallacious. It makes an appeal to the two standpoints, the standpoint of *avidyā* and the standpoint of the Absolute, and also appeals to a subject formally conditioning the world. Both of these are features of Śaṅkara's theory of representation, so an appeal to them in order to defend an argument which is in turn defending that theory is begging the question. Thus, the argument remains invalid and needs further justification to show that the empirical world is unreal, rather than just the subject's experience of the empirical world. The argument would be valid, however, if we accepted that everything is the Absolute as a starting point.

The third problem with Śaṅkara's three worlds argument is that the fourth premise is unsound, but the argument turns on this premise. It claims that:

4. Changing things are unreal, whereas changeless things are real.

This is reminiscent of Parmenides' worldview, which was that "any change in [reality is] impossible"

and therefore that "the world as perceived by the senses is unreal."[133] However, it is a controversial claim: whether or not it is sound depends on how the word 'real' is defined. When thinking about how the word real is used ordinarily in an everyday sense, the premise clearly seems false. For example, consider a cup of coffee. Ordinarily, one would think a cup of coffee is something that counts as real, as we can perceive it and interact with it. However, over time, attributes of the cup of coffee may change: its contents, its temperature, its position in space and time and so on. Does the fact that the cup of coffee undergoes these changes make it unreal? That seems unlikely.

However, we can try to defend the premise in three ways. We could deny that coffee cups and other physical objects *do* ever undergo any form of change, allowing us to retain the common-sense view that physical objects are real. We could do this by arguing that, when considered in a fundamental sense, no change occurs: all physical matter is composed of elementary particles, and such elementary particles never change, in accordance with the law of conservation of energy. But arguing in this way is flawed: it would mean defending the view that no physical objects undergo any change, whereas we ordinarily *do* think that physical objects undergo change. If we altered our understanding of what change is, we might be able to accept that changeless things are real, physical objects are real, and that physical objects are changeless. But as we were trying to pursue a common-sense notion of what it means for something to be real, by applying the premise to physical objects, it would be wrong to sacrifice the common-sense notion of change for that goal. A more significant problem with this line of reasoning is that Śaṅkara does not agree with the common-sense notion that physical objects are real: his whole argument is trying to show that the physical world is not real. Thus, using a common-sense approach as above to try to defend the premise is misguided.

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[133] Guthrie, 1965: 4-5

The second way of defending the premise is as follows. A particular cup of coffee may undergo many changes, but our idea of what a cup of coffee is remains changeless. All the cups of coffee in the world could be instantaneously destroyed, but we would still be left with our same idea of a cup of coffee. Our ideas are not something that are not subject to change. This is Plato's theory of Ideas:[134] an Idea is a substantial, non-physical entity that is never created nor destroyed, and is an entity by which we can gain knowledge. Compared to the changing world of particular objects, Platonic Ideas are unchanging and real; according to Plato, they "constitute permanent reality."[135]

While the theory of Ideas has been criticised for the last two millennia, it is worth pointing out that Schopenhauer subscribes to a version of this theory. He is careful to clarify, however, that the Ideas cannot play the role of ultimate reality as Plato wants them to: ultimate reality must be undifferentiated, and so the Ideas, being plural, cannot be ultimate. Schopenhauer instead assigns them the role of being a direct manifestation of the will, but still within the phenomenal world.[136] Therefore, Schopenhauer would defend premise 4; he writes that "[the Ideas] remain fixed, subject to no change, always being, never having become. The particular things, however, arise and pass away; they are always becoming and never are."[137]

However, a defence of the premise by appeal to the theory of Ideas is problematic, as Plato's theory is notoriously fraught with difficulties, and most contemporary critics are dismissive of Schopenhauer's version of the theory.[138] So, instead of presenting criticisms to the theory and

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[134] Modern English translations refer to this as the theory of Forms, but here I use the word 'Idea,' as Schopenhauer uses the German word for 'Idea.'

[135] Magee, 1987: 148

[136] There are differing interpretations of how the Ideas fit into Schopenhauer's system; here I follow Magee's explication.

[137] WWR 1: 129

[138] For example, Hamlyn (1980: 103) writes that Schopenhauer's entire discussion of Ideas is incoherent, and Magee (1987: 239) writes that the Ideas were introduced *ad hoc* and got out of hand. For more about various commentators'

pursuing this way of defending the premise, we shall move on to the final way of defending the premise. This is done by an examination of what 'real' and 'unreal' mean for Śaṅkara.

For Śaṅkara, the only real thing is the Absolute: speaking about reality is equivalent to speaking about the Absolute. Another word used synonymously with 'real' is 'being,' which is a translation of the Sanskrit verb *sat*.[139] Disciples of Śaṅkara have systematised his teachings about *sat* into four ontological levels.[140] These are:

1. *asat*, meaning necessarily non-existent

2. *prātibhāsika-sat*, meaning fictitiously existent

3. *vyāvahārika-sat*, meaning practically existent

4. *pāramārthika-sat*, or just *sat*, meaning supremely existent

The first of these refers to logically impossible things, for example, married bachelors. The second refers to dreams and other perceptual illusions, i.e., things that are inconsistent with our waking experience. The third refers to sensory experiences that are had when one is awake. The fourth refers to the Absolute.

Using these levels, Śaṅkara can defend the claim that the only real thing is changeless, by pointing out that only the Absolute is changeless. According to this distinction between degrees of reality, everything that is not the Absolute is ephemeral, and is therefore unreal. But defending the premise by use of this distinction once again begs the question: the distinction between the four

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views on the Ideas, see Chansky, 1988. Chansky is more sympathetic to Schopenhauer's theory of Ideas.

[139] There are actually two Sanskrit verbs that can translate to 'being,' the roots of which are '*sat*' and '*bhu*.' However, 'bhu' and its cognates cannot be used to mean 'Being' with a capital 'B,' as is required in discussions of ontology. For more on this, and more on the following discussion of *sat*, see Arapura, 1978.

[140] Here we follow the systematisation that Śaṅkara's followers give, as they are inconsistent in Śaṅkara's writings. See Cross, 2013: 82.

types of *sat* is again a consequence of the doctrine of *avidyā*. Using the distinction does not explain why changeless things are real or why changing things are unreal: it merely asserts that that is the case, without justification. The premise would be sound, however, if we accepted that the only real thing is the Absolute as a starting point.

Hence, Śaṅkara is unable to defend the claim that changeless things are real whereas changing things are not. However, this examination has revealed some similarities between Schopenhauer and Śaṅkara. Both accept the premise on the grounds that the ultimate reality must be undifferentiated. Above we saw how Schopenhauer rejected the notion of Platonic Ideas as the ultimate reality because they are plural, and Śaṅkara's whole philosophy is based on the notion of *advaita* (non-duality). Moreover, both subscribe to a metaphysical system that presents degrees of reality. Schopenhauer conceives of a three-tiered outlook, consisting of Will, the Platonic Ideas and individuated spatio-temporal objects; Śaṅkara conceives of a four-tiered outlook, corresponding to the four degrees of *sat*. While their ways of dividing degrees of reality are different, the final tiers, the Will and the Absolute respectively, arguably point towards the same thing.

Śaṅkara's dream argument

Śaṅkara's dream argument, like his three worlds argument, aims to establish that the empirical world is unreal due to a subject being in a state of *avidyā*. However, it bears a far stronger resemblance to Schopenhauer's dream argument. One place where Śaṅkara formulates it is where he writes:

> Before one awakens to the Self as reality, everything is real in its own realm, as the objects seen in a dream are real during the dream.[141]

Alston summarises this as follows:

> Dream-experience is known in the light of waking experience to have been unreal, but all the

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[141] Ch. Bh. 8.5.4, translated in SSB 2: 260.

characteristic features of waking experience and reproduced in a dream, so that it follows that waking experience is as false as dream [experience.] … [Therefore, the] whole world of waking experience can be seen to have been unreal on awakening to the true nature of the Self, just as the dream-world is rejected as unreal on emergence into the waking state.[142]

I syllogise this argument in the following way:

1. The world apprehended in dream experience is known to have been unreal in light of waking experience.

2. This world apprehended in dream experience is similar, at least in certain key phenomenological respects, to the world apprehended in waking-experience.

3. Therefore, it is probable that the empirical world is similarly unreal.

By formulating the argument like this, it is clear that it has the same format as Schopenhauer's dream argument. Thus, the problems with this argument are the same as the ones with Schopenhauer's argument. The first of these is that it requires an explanation of how Śaṅkara distinguishes between waking experience and dream experience; I show how Śaṅkara does this above in the context of the three worlds argument.

The second problem with Schopenhauer's dream argument was that it contains implicit premises to do with experiencing the world via mental representations. Schopenhauer's argument aims to show that the world experienced when awake is as mind-dependent as the world experienced when dreaming. Śaṅkara's dream argument aims to reach a different conclusion: Śaṅkara aims to show that the empirical world, including the mental world, is unreal. The analogy is not about mind-dependence; instead, it is about awaking from something ephemeral, and realising that something was unreal in light of discovering something real. Thus, Śaṅkara does not face the second problem

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[142] Alston, 2004: 2, 244

that Schopenhauer's dream argument faces.

However, because Śaṅkara's dream argument is about reality and unreality, rather than about mind-dependence, it again begs the question. Śaṅkara has to assume that a person will awaken to the true nature of the Absolute for his analogy to work. So, as with the three worlds argument, Śaṅkara's argument is only successful if we grant as a starting point that the Absolute has the nature of being the only real thing.

The third problem with Schopenhauer's argument can also be seen as a strength. Schopenhauer gives an abductive argument rather than providing a deductive proof: it is an inference that his idealism is the best explanation, by virtue of it being the simplest explanation. Śaṅkara's dream argument also has this structure. The conclusion is that it is *probable* that the empirical world is unreal. Although this may seem to be a weaker conclusion to draw, it can be seen to be a strength when compared to the three worlds argument. The three worlds argument aims to show deductively that the empirical world is unreal, yet it ends up being both invalid, as it can only support a weaker conclusion, and unsound, due to its reliance upon an indefensible premise. By using abductive reasoning, Śaṅkara's argument becomes more defensible.

In this section we have seen that there are many similarities between Śaṅkara's arguments and Schopenhauer's dream argument. Both Śaṅkara and Schopenhauer make arguments based around the intuition that "may not the whole of life be a dream?"[143] They both have similar notions of changelessness, similar ideas about the degrees of reality, and similar ways of distinguishing being awake from dreaming. Moreover, I show that Schopenhauer's use of an abductive structure is beneficial: Śaṅkara's abductive argument is stronger than his deductive one.

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[143] WWR 1: 16

10. Schopenhauer's argument from causality

In this section I critically examine Schopenhauer's argument from causality. I compare it with Śaṅkara's transformation argument in the next section. The argument from causality stems from this passage of Schopenhauer's writing:

> [T]he Kantian teaching… leads to the insight that things and their whole mode and manner of existence are inseparably associated with our consciousness of them. Therefore he who has clearly grasped this soon reaches the conviction that the assumption that things exist as such, even outside and independently of our consciousness, is really absurd. Thus we are so deeply immersed in time, space, and causality, and in the whole course of experience resting thereon; we (and in fact even the animals) are so completely at home, and know how to find our way in experience from the beginning. This would not be possible if our intellect were one thing and things another; but it can be explained only from the fact that the two constitute a whole; that the intellect itself creates that order, and exists only for things, but that things also exist only for it.[144]

It is unsurprising that Schopenhauer argues for idealism in a Kantian way. Schopenhauer considered Berkeley "the father of idealism,"[145] but Berkeley only aimed to show how a subject materially conditions objects, whereas Kant aimed to demonstrate how a subject formally conditions objects. That notion of formal conditioning is what this argument is based upon. McDermid syllogises the argument:

1. The world of which we claim perceptual knowledge is governed by the law of causality, according to which 'every change has its cause in another change immediately preceding it;'[146]
2. But the law of causality can only be known *a priori*, being supplied by the knowing subject.
3. Therefore, our knowledge must be confined to representation or phenomena.[147]

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[144] WWR 2: 9

[145] PP I: 77

[146] WWR 2: 42

[147] McDermid, 2003: 80; the ensuing discussion follows McDermid's commentary of the argument. A parallel argument can also be made based on knowledge of representations that are in time and space, as opposed to knowledge of

Schopenhauer interprets causality in terms of becoming: causes and effects are described as representations that appear and disappear. Moreover, he supports the view that everything has a cause, which makes the first premise of the argument is incontestable. Denying the first premise would mean denying the Principle of Sufficient Reason, which states that everything has a cause or reason. Schopenhauer defends this principle.[148]

However, the argument has two severe problems: the second premise is unjustified, and the conclusion does not follow from the premises. This makes the argument not only unsound, but also invalid.

The second premise is justified by the following reasoning: we either do have knowledge of causality or do not have knowledge of causality. If we do have knowledge of it, that knowledge must either be *a priori* knowledge or *a posteriori* knowledge.

The sceptical option, that we do not have knowledge of causality, is dismissed by Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer thinks of causality as one form of the Principle of Sufficient Reason; asking for a justification of why we have knowledge of the principle is pointless. He writes that "[causality] is ... the principle of all explanation, and hence is not itself capable of explanation; nor is it in need of one, for every explanation presupposes it..."[149] Thus, Schopenhauer claims that we *do* have knowledge of causality.

He then argues that our knowledge of causality is *a priori*. Following Reid,[150] he claims that

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representations that are governed by causality. Both arguments have the following structure: (1) Perceptual knowledge is possible only by supposing that knowledge of the form *x* is known *a priori* and is supplied by knowing subject; (2) *x* is 'ideal;' it only applies to appearances, and not to mind-independent knowledge; therefore (3) all perceptual knowledge is knowledge of mere appearances.

[148] See FR. Whether the principle holds or not is controversial.

[149] WWR 1: 73

[150] While Reid does make the same distinction that Schopenhauer makes here, Reid does so in order to criticise idealism.

perception is something distinct from sensation. Sensation is the raw material which reaches the body via the sense organs; perception is what is generated when sensation is interpreted by the understanding, one of the mental faculties. Schopenhauer claims that the sensations which get interpreted by the understanding count as an effect, i.e. as something which is caused by an object outside of the body. He therefore argues that, as a condition of their possibility, perceptions presuppose knowledge of the law of causality, and consequently, that the law of causality cannot be known by being derived from experience. Therefore, Schopenhauer concludes that the law of causality is known *a priori*.[151]

This defence is problematic. Even if we accept that we know, *a priori*, that a given change is due to some cause, it cannot be maintained that we know *which* cause that change is due to *a priori*. Hence, even if we accept Schopenhauer's distinction between sensations and perception, we still do not know *a priori* what causes the sensation.

Even more problematic is how Schopenhauer infers the conclusion from the first two premises. It is unclear how Schopenhauer justifies moving from the claim that the law of causality is known *a priori*, to the claim that the law of causality can only be legitimately employed in the mind-dependent world of appearances. He merely states that one claim follows from the other, rather than giving an explanation; he writes that "[if the law of causality] is given *a priori* … then it is of subjective origin; and so it is clear that with it we always remain in the subjective…"[152] However, this reasoning

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Schopenhauer makes it in order to defend idealism.

[151]A lot of the details which Schopenhauer give has been omitted here. Much of Schopenhauer's argument is based on the optics of his time; at one point, he defends his claim by arguing that the retina of the eye possess the faculty of immediately feeling from what direction the light that impinges on it comes from. For more on this see FR: 75-95 and Hamlyn, 1980: 13-15.

[152] WWR 2: 11

leads to a problem, as in this statement there are two senses of the term 'subjective' being used. One sense of it is weak: anything which is known *a priori* is automatically labelled as subjective, by virtue of it not being derived from something external to the subject. The other sense of it is stronger: nothing that is independent of the subject can be called subjective.

The defence that Schopenhauer gives for the second premise of the argument, that knowledge of causality is *a priori*, shows at most that the law of causality is subjective in the weak sense. But the idealist conclusion, that the law of causality only applies to phenomena, is subjective in the stronger sense. So, in order to reach the conclusion, Schopenhauer must either conflate these two senses of 'subjective,' or assume that anything subjective in the weak sense must be subjective in the second. Both of these are undesirable strategies. Schopenhauer does not write anything to support either of them, but moreover, he does not write anything that shows he acknowledges that there are two senses of 'subjective' in play.

Hence, Schopenhauer's argument is flawed, as it relies on the key assumption that anything that the mind shapes using causality (or using space and time, which are the other *a priori* forms of intuition) must be mind-dependent. However, despite the argument being flawed, this examination of it emphasises an important point of Schopenhauer's philosophy: as experiencing subjects, we shape the world we experience. In Kant's words, "we can cognize of things *a priori* only what we ourselves have put into them."[153] This notion of a subject shaping the world was the second tenet of Schopenhauer's idealism that I listed in Section 5. In the next section, I examine an argument of Śaṅkara's related to causality, showing that although their arguments are different, they reveal similarities in their respective theories.

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[153] Kant, 1998/1787: 101 (B xviii)

11. Śaṅkara's transformation argument

In this section I critically examine Śaṅkara's transformation argument, comparing it to Schopenhauer's argument from causality. This argument is intrinsically linked to Śaṅkara's arguments relating to dreams, and often appears entwined with them in Śaṅkara's writings. However, in the following two places it is made explicit:

> "If one cannot logically establish that duality can arise, it cannot be real. But in fact, it cannot come into being either from the real or the unreal. For if duality arose from the real, the latter would (undergo transformation and so) be unreal. And if duality arose from the unreal, the latter would be (its material cause and so) real. Hence [the world of duality] do[es] not exist. Only the one unborn Self exists."[154]

> "Of the non-existent, there is no coming into being; of the existent, there is no ceasing to be. The difference between the two is seen by those who understand the Truth."[155]

This argument can be syllogised as follows:

1. If the empirical world were real, it must have arisen from somewhere.

2. If the empirical world arose from somewhere, it would either have (a) arisen from something real, or (b) arisen from something unreal.

3. (a) is not tenable, because it would entail a real thing undergoing transformation, which real things do not do.

4. (b) is not tenable, because something unreal cannot give rise to anything else.

5. Therefore, the empirical world must be unreal – it is only a projection, which occurs due to the experiencing subject being in the state of *avidyā*.

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[154] U.S. 19.13-24, translated in SSB 2: 240. Alston notes that traditional commentators do not agree on the meaning of this passage, and that his translation is to be taken provisionally.

[155] B.G. Bh. 2.16, translated in Bartley, 2015: 204.

Here it is important to remember that the terms 'real' and 'unreal' are being used as was explained in the first half of Section 9. There are four levels of 'being' (*sat*), so something that is called 'real' refers to something at the highest level, i.e. the level of the Absolute. Although this argument may seem unrelated to Schopenhauer's argument from causality, the connection will be made clear by a brief exploration the different doctrines of causality from Śaṅkara's time.

Śaṅkara and his followers would have known about the following three theories of causality.[156] The first is the *satkārya-vāda* of the *Sāṃkhya* school, according to which an effect has a prior existence in its material cause. This means that a causal chain can be explained by each effect being a manifestation of the potential power that exists inherently in each of the effect's material causes. The power is the essence of the cause.[157] The second theory is *pariṇāma-vāda.* According to this, an effect must share the reality of a cause, so if a cause is real, its effect is also real, by means of a real transformation (*pariṇāma*). On this view, the world is not illusory, but is an actual and real transformation of its material cause, the Absolute. This claim is problematic for early Hindu philosophy: it means that the empirical world is as real as the Absolute, which poses a challenge to devotional theism. The third theory, *bhedābheda-vāda*, is a refinement of *pariṇāma-vāda* that overcomes that problem.[158] '*Bhedābheda*' can be translated as difference and non-difference. This theory admits that in one way, an effect is non-different from its cause, and so shares in the same level of reality. However, the effect and the cause are also different, by virtue of the effect being a manifestation of the cause and hence having a separate identity to the cause. An analogy used as an

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[156] The following discussion stems from Cross, 2013: 86-89 and Bartley, 2015: 149-150; 240

[157] In the *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya*, Śaṅkara defends this theory. Using it, he traces the existence of the universe back to the five elements, and further back to the ultimate cause (the Absolute).

[158] *Bhedābheda-vāda* was defended by Rāmānuja and Mādhva, two writers who succeeded Śaṅkara and were founding fathers of different schools of *Vedānta* distinct from *Advaita Vedānta*.

explanation of this is waves being compared to the ocean they are in. While the waves are non-different from the ocean, they are caused by the ocean, and so can be viewed as distinct from the ocean. According to *bhedābheda-vāda*, the same is true of the empirical world and the Absolute: the Absolute is the cause of the empirical world, so is distinct from it. However, it is also non-different from it, and so they both share the same reality.

Śaṅkara and his followers aim to refute *pariṇāma-vāda*, and its refinement, *bhedābheda-vāda*. They write that the nature of the Absolute as non-dual conflicts with the theory of simultaneous identity and difference.[159] Moreover, they consider it wrong to use an analogy that makes use of waves and the ocean to explain how causality relates to the Absolute, as both waves and the ocean exist in the world of duality and have many parts, whereas the Absolute is defined as something without divisions or parts. Śaṅkara writes that "...only that which has parts can undergo modification, because there can be differences among the various parts, as occurs, for instance, when clay undergoes transformation into various different pots and other objects... [From this we conclude that] that which is partless ... cannot undergo real change or modification..."[160] Śaṅkara instead argues that the ultimate cause, the Absolute, does not produce any effects, and any notion of real causation is only an illusion. The world of duality is instead only a projection or apparent manifestation of the Absolute; from the standpoint of the Absolute, it is wholly unreal. This theory was called *vivarta-vāda* by Śaṅkara's followers.

Thus, any notion of causality within Śaṅkara's metaphysical framework must be limited to the

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[159] Strictly speaking, the Absolute does not have a nature, as it does not have any positive characteristics. This is communicated by assigning the Absolute with properties and later showing them to be contradictory – a method known as *netivāda* or the *via negativa.*

[160] G.K. Bh. 4.42, translated in SSB 2: 231.

world of phenomenal appearances. In this way, causality becomes something that formally conditions a subject's perceptions. This is exactly how Schopenhauer explains what causality is: not something that exists within the world as it is in itself (i.e., not something real, to use Śaṅkara's terminology), but something that exists only in the phenomenal world. It exists as an *a priori* form of an individual, governing the individual's experience of the world. Thus, one only perceives casual relations because of one's nature as a human being, and not because they are anything real. Śaṅkara alludes to this when he writes:

> Because he imagined a cause formerly, he proceeds now to imagine an effect. Then he remembers cause and effect and later imagines them again in the same way, and imagines also the act… And in this way he imagines the internal and external phenomena in all their variety as if they were cause and effect.[161]

It is important to clarify that Śaṅkara *does* think causality exists, despite providing arguments against the existence of causality in various texts.[162] Such arguments are based on the impossibility of causal loops or infinite causal regress, for example. These are all to do with the non-existence of causality in an ultimate, cosmological sense. From the standpoint of ultimate reality or the Absolute, causality is unreal. However, from the standpoint of an experiencing subject in the state of *avidyā*, living in the world of duality, causality does exist.

There are three problems with the transformation argument in its current form. Firstly, under Śaṅkara's theory of *vivarta-vāda*, it is unclear how the empirical world does come about. Śaṅkara argues that the world is a projection or a superimposition, but also simultaneously claims that the Absolute cannot undergo any transformation. Intuitively, the empirical world must at least have some

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[161] G.K. Bh. 2.11-17, translated in SSB 2: 257-8.

[162] Many of these are based on arguments from Gauḍapāda. For more on this acosmic view, see Alston, 2004: 2, 213-260.

form of transactional reality: we all live and experience day-to-day life, and are able to interact with the world around us. Even if we accept the sceptical hypothesis which Śaṅkara gives, that the world does disappear each night when we dream, and subsequently agree that the world is not eternal, we would still grant it some form of reality. It is manifest in *some* sense. Hence, it is unclear if the theory of *vivarta-vāda*, which claims that the world of duality is only an *apparent* manifestation, is sufficient to explain this intuition.

Śaṅkara aims to explain apparent manifestation by using the snake analogy. The illusory appearance of the snake is superimposed on the real underlying rope. Upon realising that the snake was an illusion, it only makes sense to say that there only ever existed a rope, and there never was a snake. Analogously, from the standpoint of the Absolute, once *avidyā* is removed, the world of duality never existed. But this explanation is problematic. It is unclear why Śaṅkara and his followers claim that here it is valid to use an analogy in order to explain apparent manifestation, despite claiming that the analogy of the waves and ocean used by supporters of *bhedābheda-vāda* is invalid. Moreover, given that the Absolute is something beyond the empirical world, it is unclear how successful an explanation that uses examples from the empirical world could be.

The second problem with the argument is that its first premise is unsound. The first premise claims that:

1. If the empirical world were real, it must have arisen from somewhere.

No justification of this premise is given. Denying it means accepting the claim that if the empirical world were real, it could have *not* arisen from somewhere, that is, it could have arisen from nowhere.[163] This would entail accepting that something could come from nothing. However, in the

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[163] Provided that we accept 'not arising' means the same as 'arising from nowhere.'

context of Śaṅkara's writings, accepting that something could come from nothing is not problematic. The Absolute is something real, but it is also something eternal, meaning that it has not arisen from anywhere: this means that the Absolute came from nothing.[164] Therefore, it seems that Śaṅkara's own position goes against the premise.

The third problem with the transformation argument is the same as one of the problems discussed in Section 9: the third premise relies on the assumption that changeless things are real, whereas changing things are unreal. Three ways of trying to defend that premise were discussed above, and all were deemed unsuccessful. Śaṅkara's defence of the premise would be successful, however, if he assumed the nature of the Absolute as a real, unchanging thing.

In this section we have seen some similarities and differences between Schopenhauer's argument from causality and Śaṅkara's transformation argument. Śaṅkara has the same notion of causality as Schopenhauer: both claim causality to be an *a priori* form of the experiencing subject, and that it only has a legitimate application when considered within the context of the phenomenal world. Moreover, both use this notion of causality to argue that the empirical world is illusory. The arguments that they each use, however are structurally very different. Śaṅkara presents a *reductio* argument which aims to show that the empirical world must be illusory because the Absolute cannot undergo a transformation. Schopenhauer presents a transcendental argument, that aims to show that because our knowledge of causality is limited to what we perceive, all of what we perceive are only mere appearances, and hence the empirical world must be ideal.

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[164] This is called the doctrine of non-origination (*ajāta vāda*).

12. Conclusion

This thesis has undertaken a comparative analysis of Śaṅkara and Schopenhauer's theories of representation. In this section, I contextualise the significance of this thesis within the literature, and conclude by summarising my findings.

This thesis addressed a gap in the literature. Most works focus their comparison on the influence that Indian philosophy had on Schopenhauer, rather than comparing their philosophical ideas and arguments.[165] Of the works that do focus on comparing ideas, most draw conclusions about how the concepts *brahman*, *ātman* and *sat* compare to Schopenhauer's conception of the thing-in-itself. Cross's comparative treatment is one of the most recent and most notable, and, while he does discuss theories of representation in Indian philosophy as compared with Schopenhauer's, his main conclusions are about will.[166] Moreover, neither his work, nor any other work, examine the individual arguments that are given by Schopenhauer, and directly compare those with arguments from *Advaita Vedantā*. As I explained in Section 7, this is required for comparing two works at a close level.

In the first part of this thesis (Sections 4 to 6), I examined the theories of representation of Śaṅkara and Schopenhauer, and in the second part (Sections 8 to 11), I examined specific arguments made in support of these respective theories.

In the first part, I showed that Śaṅkara and Schopenhauer's theories of representation are, in essence, identical. Both claim that we only ever perceive a world of appearances, and that there is an ultimate reality underlying that world of appearances. This distinction leads to Śaṅkara's two

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[165] Some recent treatments about the influence of Indian philosophy on Schopenhauer are as follows. Berger (2004) examines the influence that the doctrine of '*māyā*' from the Oupnek'hat had on Schopenhauer. Nicholls (2006) makes conclusions about Schopenhauer's changing doctrine of the thing-in-itself due to his increasing knowledge of Indian philosophy. App (2006) investigates Schopenhauer's initial encounter with Indian thought.

[166] Cross, 2013

standpoints: the standpoint of *avidyā*, from which the empirical world seems to be real, and the standpoint of the Absolute, from which only the Absolute is real, and the empirical world is a mere illusion. In Schopenhauer's writings, this is paralleled by the empirical world being granted an empirical reality, but simultaneously being transcendentally ideal. Additionally, both have similar conceptions of causality and enlightenment. They both argue that causal relations are only real from within the world of appearances; from the standpoint of the Absolute, or in the world as it is in itself, there is no causality. Their notions of a state of enlightenment are similar, and both describe how an ascetic can reach such a state.

In the second part of this thesis, I showed that there are key similarities in the ways that Śaṅkara and Schopenhauer defend their theories. They both use intuitions about dreaming and causality as springboards for their arguments; they both make use of an abductive structure, which strengthens their respective arguments; they both explain how a person can distinguish between states of experience (i.e. waking from dreaming experience) in the same manner. I also showed in the second part that both accept as a premise that changeless things are real, whereas changing things are unreal, on the grounds that the ultimate reality must be undifferentiated. And, lastly, I showed that they both subscribe to a metaphysical picture that presents varying degrees of reality: Schopenhauer's picture features Will, the Ideas, and individuated spatio-temporal objects, whereas Śaṅkara's picture corresponds to the four degrees of *sat*.

Concerning differences, in the first part, I revealed four key places where their theories diverge. These are (i) the reality of other persons; (ii) the role of the mind; (iii) Śaṅkara's religious background compared with Schopenhauer's pessimism; and (iv) the knowability of the ultimate reality. I explained these in detail in Section 6; here I give a summary.

Firstly, the two disagree on the reality of other persons: Śaṅkara denies the existence of anything other than the Absolute, whereas Schopenhauer's stance about other persons is ambiguous.

Secondly, they disagree on the role that the mind plays: Schopenhauer, following Berkeley, claims that the empirical world is a product of the mind; for Śaṅkara, the mind forms a part of the empirical world. Thirdly, they also differ on the role that religion plays within their writing. Śaṅkara's philosophy is grounded within a religious context, whereas Schopenhauer is firmly atheistic. Lastly, they disagree about the knowability of the ultimate reality: for Śaṅkara, the Absolute is known wholly and immediately by a subject; the knowledge is merely shrouded by *avidyā*. For Schopenhauer, however, the thing-in-itself is fundamentally unknowable, and is only known partially in the form of Will.

In the second part, when examining how the two defend their theories, I demonstrated one fundamental difference.[167] In the way that I syllogise Śaṅkara's arguments, they all beg the question, as he relies upon claims about the nature of the Absolute to justify his arguments about *avidyā*. If I had included the nature of the Absolute as an infinite, perennial, real thing as a premise, his arguments would be valid. This shows that Śaṅkara argues from the starting point of the Absolute, and using that, draws conclusions about the nature of the empirical world. In contrast, Schopenhauer, following Kant, uses the limits of our own experience as starting point. He argues that these limits are what shape the empirical world that we perceive.

This difference in their styles of arguing can be explained by the difference in their theories about the knowability of ultimate reality (difference (iii), above). Śaṅkara thinks that the Absolute is wholly knowable, and in fact, is known to some extent already by everyone, so it is understandable that his arguments rely upon having the nature of the Absolute as a premise. He starts by assuming the nature of ultimate reality, and from there draws conclusions about the illusory nature of the

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[167] There are other differences in their styles of arguing, but they are minor. For example, Schopenhauer follows Kant in using arguments that have a transcendental structure, whereas none of Śaṅkara's arguments have that structure. These differences are understandable by virtue of the geographic and temporal difference between the two.

empirical world. Schopenhauer, in contrast, starts from the limits of our experience, and from there tries to conclude as much as he can about the nature of ultimate reality. Although the younger Schopenhauer thought he had found a way of knowing the thing-in-itself, the more mature Schopenhauer realised that he could not commit to a claim about the thing-in-itself being fully knowable. I think it is clear, though, that both are grasping at the same idea about our inner nature.

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MR 1-4: *Manuscript Remains* (1988-90). Trans. by E. F. J. Payne. 4 vols. Oxford: Berg.

WWR 1-2: *The World as Will and Representation* (1966). Trans. by E. F. J. Payne. 2 vols. New York: Dover.

PP: *Parerga and Paralipomena* (1974). Trans. by E. F. J. Payne. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Primary texts of Śaṅkara are mostly from the translations given in the second edition of the Śaṅkara Source Book; their translations are given using the abbreviation:

SSB 1-6: *Śaṅkara Source Book* (2004). Trans. by A. J. Alston. 6 vols. London: Shanti Sadan.

The location of the extract or quotation in the original work is also given, using the following abbreviations. '*Bhāṣya*' means commentary: Śaṅkara was not the author of the *Upaniṣads* listed below; he was the author of commentaries on them.

B.G. Bh.: *Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya*

B.S. Bh.: *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya*

Bṛhad. Bh.: *Bṛhadāraṇkyaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*

Ch. Bh.: *Chāndogya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*

G.K. Bh.: *Bhāṣya* on *Gauḍapāda's Kārikā* on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*

Taitt. Bh.: *Taittirīya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*

U.S.: *Upadeśa Sāhasri*

N.Sid.: *Naiṣkarmya Siddhi* (Sureśvara)

Importantly, any commentary given by Alston in the Śaṅkara Source Book is *not* referenced using the abbreviation SSB, but is instead referenced in the form 'Alston, 2004: …'.

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