

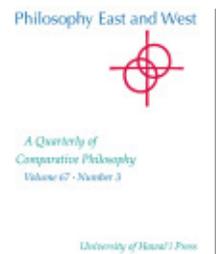


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*Schopenhauer's Compass: An Introduction to
Schopenhauer's Philosophy and Its Origins* by Urs App
(review)

Ayon Maharaj

Philosophy East and West, Volume 67, Number 3, July 2017, pp. 942-948 (Review)



Published by University of Hawai'i Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2017.0078>

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idea, that does not mean that others within the same culture do not. On the other hand, the thesis that he does present plausibly throughout the book is that translation may impose an idea on the Chinese that is not really present in quite the same way as it is in European cultures, and I much prefer using the plural here to the singular. That is a point about translation, though, and far too weak to bear the burden of the main argument of the book.

There are a few minor problems in the book—for example the erroneous German terms used by Hegel on page 54, and, annoyingly, there is no index in either book. It is a stimulating read, though, and raises many issues about comparative work in philosophy.

Schopenhauer's Compass: An Introduction to Schopenhauer's Philosophy and Its Origins. By Urs App. Wil, Switzerland: University Media, 2014. Pp. 351. ISBN 978-3-906000-03-9.



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In the past several decades of scholarship on Arthur Schopenhauer, a cottage industry has emerged that investigates the relationship between Schopenhauer and Indian thought. Studies on Schopenhauer and Indian thought usually fall into one (or more) of three categories: comparative studies of Schopenhauer's views and Indian philosophies such as Advaita Vedānta and Buddhism,¹ studies on Schopenhauer's reception of Indian thought,² and studies examining the extent to which Indian sources might have influenced the development of Schopenhauer's philosophical views.³

As early as 1816, Schopenhauer himself gave impetus to studies of this third type with his famous remark: "I confess, by the way, that I do not believe that my theory could have come about before the *Upanishads*, Plato, and Kant could cast their rays simultaneously into the mind of one man."⁴ To this day, however, scholars have been puzzling over precisely how—and to what extent—the "*Upanishads*" influenced the development of Schopenhauer's philosophy. Of course, as is well known, the young Schopenhauer in 1814 studied not the Sanskrit Upaniṣads themselves but the *Oupnek'hat* (1802), Anquetil-Duperron's Latin rendering of Prince Dara Shikoh's Persian translation of—and commentary on—the original Sanskrit Upaniṣads. Hence, careful examination of the *Oupnek'hat* is clearly indispensable both for studies of Schopenhauer's complexly mediated reception of Indian thought and for studies on the possible influence of Indian thought on Schopenhauer's philosophical views.

Strangely, however, very few studies have discussed the *Oupnek'hat* in any detail or examined Schopenhauer's own heavily annotated copy of the *Oupnek'hat*

now held in the Frankfurt Archives. All of this changed with Urs App's philologically pioneering book, *Schopenhauers Kompass: Die Geburt einer Philosophie* (Rorschach/Kyoto: UniversityMedia, 2011), the centerpiece of which is a sustained and painstaking examination of Schopenhauer's annotated copy of the *Oupnek'hat*. While numerous Schopenhauer scholars have acknowledged the significance of App's book, it has not yet received the wide attention it deserves, perhaps in part because it was written in German and in part because the publisher is somewhat obscure.

We should all be grateful to App for translating his own German book into English as *Schopenhauer's Compass: An Introduction to Schopenhauer's Philosophy and Its Origins*, thereby making it accessible to a much wider audience. As App points out in the book's preface, the English edition is on the whole a literal translation of the original German book, but he did take the liberty to modify sentences and arguments at certain places and to discuss some relevant publications that appeared after 2011 (such as Stephen Cross' important book, *Schopenhauer's Encounter with Indian Thought*). The new English edition also contains two valuable appendices. Appendix 1, "Schopenhauer's Favorite Book," is entirely new, and Appendix 2, "Research Perspectives," is an expanded and updated version of the concluding chapter of the original German edition. In light of these changes, even those who have already read the German edition of the book would benefit from reading at least the two appendices to the English edition.

In chapter 1, App employs the apt metaphor of a compass as a hermeneutic framework to help illuminate the genesis and evolution of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of the will. Just as a compass needle simultaneously indicates the "two diametrically opposed directions" of South and North, Schopenhauer's thought—throughout his life—exhibits an antipodal structure, a simultaneous concern with the "South" end of suffering and the "North" end of salvation or liberation from suffering (p. 11).

In the ten remaining chapters of the book, App carefully tracks how Schopenhauer's terms for—and explanations of—the twin poles of suffering and salvation subtly evolved in the course of his early thinking from 1806 to 1816, culminating in Schopenhauer's mature conception of the affirmation and abolition of the will. In the course of his fascinating discussion, App provides the most detailed and rigorous account to date of the decisive role played by the *Oupnek'hat* in the development of Schopenhauer's early thought. App makes a convincing case that "in the gestation period of Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will the *Oupnek'hat* was his most crucial single source *tout court*" (p. 6).

In chapters 2 to 5, App examines in detail some of the major early influences on the young Schopenhauer's thought between 1806 and 1813, a year prior to Schopenhauer's first encounter with the *Oupnek'hat*. App's wide-ranging discussions, which are too rich and detailed to be summarized here, show how the young Schopenhauer was influenced by the creative work of the poets Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, Ludwig Tieck, and Zacharias Werner (chapter 2); the philosophical ideas of G. E. Schulze, J. G. Fichte, and the pre-1800 F.W.J. Schelling (chapters 3

and 4); and the metaphysical systems of Spinoza, the post-1800 Schelling, and Jakob Böhme (chapter 5).

In chapter 6, App discusses Dara Shikoh's Sufi thought and Dara's effort to demonstrate the fundamental unity of Islam with Indian religion. In both the *Confluence of Oceans (Majma-ul-Bahrain)* and his Upaniṣad translation, *Sirr-i Akbar*, Dara tellingly equates the Sufi concept of *ishq* ("love") with the Indian concept of *māyā*. According to App, Dara is led to make this equation because he interprets *māyā* on the basis of the Sufi master Ibn Arabi's doctrine of creation, according to which "the origin of multiplicity in creation lies in the desire of the One to be known" (p. 136). App contrasts Dara's Sufi interpretation of *māyā* with the conception of *māyā* found in "the developed Vedānta system," according to which *māyā* is "not an act of love" but a "cosmic illusion" (pp. 137–138). App's discussion here is somewhat imprecise and misleading, since by "the developed Vedānta system" he seems to mean only the school of Advaita Vedānta. As is well known, the word "Vedānta" is notoriously ambiguous, since it could mean the Upaniṣads themselves, the *prasthānatraya* (that is, the Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and the *Brahmasūtras*), or any one of the many later philosophical systems of Vedānta, such as Advaita Vedānta, Viśiṣṭādvaita, Bhedābheda, and Dvaita. Instead of registering this complexity, App follows Paul Deussen in mistakenly equating Vedānta with Advaita Vedānta. App thereby missed the opportunity to examine, say, how the Upaniṣads themselves conceive "*māyā*," such as in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 4.10.

In the last few pages of chapter 6, App provides a helpful discussion of the unique textual status of Dara's final work, the Upaniṣad translation titled *Sirr-i Akbar*. Far from being a "pure translation project," *Sirr-i Akbar* is a composite work that includes not only the Persian translation of the original Sanskrit Upaniṣads but also extensive explanations and interpretive glosses in Persian that were sometimes provided by Dara himself and more often provided by "the learned experts who consulted various Upaniṣad commentaries and often relied on Shankara" (pp. 141–141). Crucially, in the *Sirr-i Akbar*, the explanations and glosses were not clearly distinguished from the Upaniṣad texts; accordingly, Anquetil-Duperron's Latin translation of the Persian *Sirr-i Akbar*—which Schopenhauer read—presented these explanations and glosses as part of the Upaniṣad text. Hence, Schopenhauer must have assumed that the voluminous explanations and glosses in the *Oupnek'hat* were part of the Upaniṣad texts. To illustrate the composite nature of the *Oupnek'hat* and its implications for Schopenhauer scholarship, App examines the beginning of the *Eischavasieh (Īśā) Upaniṣad* along with Schopenhauer's handwritten annotations to that section. As App masterfully points out, the first few paragraphs of the *Eischavasieh Upaniṣad* contain not the text of the Upaniṣad itself but Dara's own extensive explanation of key terms and ideas from this Upaniṣad. Schopenhauer, who heavily annotated these paragraphs, took Dara's explanations to be part of the *Eischavasieh Upaniṣad*.

In chapter 7, App discusses in detail the circumstances of Anquetil-Duperron's translation of *Sirr-i Akbar* first into French in 1787 and then into Latin in his two-volume *Oupnek'hat*, published in 1801 and 1802. As App points out, Anquetil-Duperron's Latin *Oupnek'hat*—which Schopenhauer studied—"features an incredible

number of notes and explanatory essays whose total volume exceeds the translation part” (p. 158). For instance, in the nearly one-hundred-page *Dissertatio* at the beginning of the first volume of the *Oupnek’hat*, Anquetil-Duperron presents Upaniṣadic views on four key themes—God, emanation and creation, the suprasensory world, and the relationship of macrocosm and microcosm—and finds striking parallels in the views of European theologians and philosophers such as Pseudo-Dionysius, Origen, Thomas Burnet, and the Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth (p. 158). In the remainder of the chapter, App briefly discusses the reception of Anquetil-Duperron’s Latin *Oupnek’hat* by his contemporaries, including Lanjuinais, Arnold Kanne, Joseph Görres, and Adolph Wagner. App notes, for instance, that in Wagner’s 1813 review of the Latin *Oupnek’hat*, Wagner sums up the *Oupnek’hat*’s main message in a striking slogan that Schopenhauer would have wholeheartedly endorsed: “A pure heart is without will” (*ein reines Herz ist willenlos*) (p. 172).

In chapter 8, App discusses Schopenhauer’s initial study of the *Oupnek’hat* in the spring of 1814. On the one hand, App militates against the approach of scholars such as Rüdiger Safranski who deny “any influence of the *Oupnek’hat* on the formation of Schopenhauer’s system” (p. 182 n. 319). On the other hand, App notes that most scholars who *do* claim that the *Oupnek’hat* influenced Schopenhauer’s thought—such as Werner Scholz, Icilio Vecchiotti, and Douglas Berger—have failed to examine the *Oupnek’hat* itself, let alone Schopenhauer’s own annotated copy of it, relying instead on “modern Upanishad translations from Sanskrit that did not exist in Schopenhauer’s time” (p. 182).

On the basis of a careful examination of Schopenhauer’s manuscript remains and his annotated copy of the *Oupnek’hat*, App argues that “Schopenhauer found the key to his metaphysics of will in Anquetil-Duperron’s Latin rendering of Prince Dara’s *Oupnek’hat*” (p. 183). In chapter 8, App makes two specific arguments about the influence of the *Oupnek’hat* on Schopenhauer’s thought. First, App claims that Schopenhauer’s study of the *Oupnek’hat* played a crucial role in his shift away “from a psychological *two-fold nature of consciousness* to a metaphysical *two-fold nature of will*” (p. 195).⁵ According to App, the “empirical consciousness” of Schopenhauer’s early writings is transformed into the “affirmation of will,” and the better consciousness into the “negation” of will (p. 195). Second, App claims that Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of the will was heavily influenced by Dara’s concept of *māyā*. For Dara, *māyā* signifies both the creative will (*voluntas aeterna*) of God and “the ground of appearance of what is without reality” (*quod causa ostensi sine fuit . . . est*) (p. 190). Schopenhauer, as an atheist, rejects Dara’s appeal to God while accepting the double meaning of *māyā* as creative will and as the ground of illusion. By examining Schopenhauer’s annotations to Dara’s glossary of Sanskrit terms such as “*Maïa*,” “*Oum*,” and “*Brahm*,” App also provides a convincing explanation of why Schopenhauer is led to equate *māyā* / will with Brahman (pp. 190–191).

Chapter 9 focuses on the second phase of Schopenhauer’s study of the *Oupnek’hat* in the spring of 1814, shortly after he arrived in Dresden. App makes a convincing case that note #213, which Schopenhauer wrote in the early summer of 1814, is the single strongest piece of evidence for the direct influence of the *Oupnek’hat* on

Schopenhauer's metaphysics of the will. In note #213, as App puts it, "the two poles of Schopenhauer's compass are for the first time wholly defined on the basis of will, that is, as *affirmation of will* (empirical consciousness that obeys will) and *negation of will* (better consciousness that does *not* will)" (p. 201). Crucially, note #213 also contains Schopenhauer's first reference to the *Oupnek'hat*: Schopenhauer equates "willing" with "*amor*" and "*Maya*" of the *Oupnek'hat* and claims that willing / *Maya* is "the origin of evil and of the world" (p. 202). App also traces Schopenhauer's key distinction between the "Subjekt des Wollens" and the "Subjekt des Erkennens" in note #220 to the *Oupnek'hat*.

In chapter 10, App examines the developments in Schopenhauer's thinking from mid-1814 to mid-1816. Militating against scholars who claim that Kant and Plato were the primary influences on Schopenhauer's thought, App argues that the *Oupnek'hat* was a much greater influence on Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will and philosophy of nature than either Kant or Plato. App devotes about half the chapter to a detailed discussion of Schopenhauer's study of the first ten volumes of the *Asiatick Researches* between November of 1815 and May of 1816. App points out that in volume 6 of the *Asiatick Researches*, Schopenhauer first learns of the "Nirvana" (or "*Nieban*") of the Buddhists, which he appropriates as another term for the salvation pole of his compass (pp. 237–238). Moreover, in Schopenhauer's notes on Henry Thomas Colebrooke's long essay on the Vedas contained in volume 8 of the *Asiatick Researches*, Schopenhauer tellingly equates the "*Brahme*" of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* with the "will-to-live" (*Wille zum Leben*) (pp. 238–239).

In chapter 11, App focuses on Schopenhauer's 1817 notes, which provide insight into Schopenhauer's thinking just as he started writing *The World as Will and Representation*. According to App, Schopenhauer's study of mystics such as Fénelon, Swedenborg, Madame Guyon, and Pseudo-Tauler "reinforced the conviction that Asian and European mystics are confirming his metaphysics of will" (p. 252). App specifically notes that what Guyon described as her "first death"—namely, the abandonment of will—corresponds to Dara's death of self (*fanā*) (p. 253). App also sheds new light on Schopenhauer's well-known but enigmatic remark in note #662 that "[m]y entire philosophy can be summarized in a single expression: the world is the will's cognition of itself" (p. 257). According to App, what Schopenhauer calls "the will's cognition of itself" includes the salvation pole of his compass. Drawing on notes #468 and #532, App points out that at the highest stages of the "will's cognition of itself"—as in art, philosophy, and saintly asceticism—the will turns against itself, and what remains is only, as Schopenhauer puts it, the "*will-free pure subject of knowing* which contemplates that will in this mirror, and in doing so attains salvation" (p. 257).

The very important Appendix 1 is a detailed philological discussion of the textual status and importance of Schopenhauer's annotated copy of the *Oupnek'hat*. While I cannot go into the details of App's discussion here, App makes a persuasive case—on the basis of numerous philological arguments—that Schopenhauer's annotated copy of the *Oupnek'hat* "must become . . . required reading" for Schopenhauer scholars (p. 275).

And last but not least, App's Appendix 2 begins to explore some of the many philosophical implications of the philological arguments presented in the course of his book. He begins the Appendix with a provocative question: "Could various 'antinomies,' 'vicious circles,' and 'contradictions' that Schopenhauer has been accused of, be due to hitherto neglected influences such as the *Oupnek'hat* and structural problems or apparent fissures caused by them?" (pp. 302–303). App acknowledges that an adequate answer to this extremely important question would require another book in its own right—one that I hope App considers writing in the future. In lieu of such an answer, App all too briefly refers to a few interpretive controversies regarding Schopenhauer's philosophical views—such as his theory of salvation and his understanding of Kant's *Ding an sich*—that could be illuminated, or even resolved, by considering the influence of the *Oupnek'hat* on Schopenhauer's thought. I only wish that App had elaborated at somewhat greater length the considerable philosophical stakes of his detailed philological arguments.

Schopenhauer's Compass is a philological treasure-trove that should be required reading for anyone interested in Schopenhauer and Indian thought or in the development of Schopenhauer's philosophical views.

Notes

- 1 – See, for instance, Stephen Cross, *Schopenhauer's Encounter with Indian Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013); the essays by R. C. Pradhan, Indu Sarin, Arati Barua, Yasuo Kamata, and Sitansu Ray, in Arati Barua, ed., *Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy* (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 2008); Arati Barua, "Schopenhauer in the Light of Indian Philosophy: With a Special Reference to Śāṅkara's Advaita Vedānta," *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch* 93 (2012): 101–114; David Cooper, "Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy," in Bart Vandenabeele, ed., *A Companion to Schopenhauer* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), pp. 266–279; Peter Abelsen, "Schopenhauer and Buddhism," *Philosophy East and West* 43, no. 2 (1993): 255–278.
- 2 – See Gunter Zöller, "Anerkennung: Der außerindische Ursprung von Schopenhauers unindischer Auffassung des 'tat twam asi,'" *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch* 92 (2012): 87–100; Cooper, "Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy"; Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and the "Mystic East"* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 119–120; R. A. Mall, "Wie indisch ist das Indienbild Schopenhauers?" *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch* 76 (1995): 151–172; Kris Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement: German and Indian Intellectual Encounters across Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), pp. 61–62; Urs App, "Schopenhauers Begegnung mit dem Buddhismus," *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch* 79 (1998): 35–56; Urs App, "Notes and Excerpts by Schopenhauer Related to Volumes 1–9 of the *Asiatick Researches*," *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch* 79 (1998): 11–33; Urs App, "Schopenhauer's Initial Encounter with Indian Thought," *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch* 87 (2006): 35–76.
- 3 – See, for instance, Douglas Berger, *"The Veil of Māyā": Schopenhauer's System and Early Indian Thought* (Binghamton, NY: Global Academic Publishing, 2004); Douglas Berger, "A Question of Influence: Schopenhauer, Early Indian Thought and a Critique of Some Proposed Conditions of Influence," in Barua, *Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy*, pp. 92–120; Moira Nicholls, "The Influences of Eastern Thought on Schopenhauer's Doctrine of the Thing-in-Itself," in Christopher Janaway, ed., *Cambridge Companion to*

Schopenhauer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 171–212; Cooper, “Schopenhauer and Indian Philosophy,” pp. 274–277; and the three articles by Urs App cited in the previous note.

- 4 – Arthur Schopenhauer, *Manuscript Remains: Early Manuscripts (1804–1818)*, vol. 1, trans. E.F.J. Payne (Oxford: Berg, 1988 [1804]), p. 467.
- 5 – As App points out, Hans Zint was the first to recognize this important shift in Schopenhauer’s thinking, but Zint did not claim that Schopenhauer’s study of the *Oupnek’hat* played any role in accounting for this shift. See Hans Zint, “Schopenhauers Philosophie des doppelten Bewußtsein,” *Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch* 10 (1921): 3–45.

The Philosophical Challenge from China. Edited by Brian Bruya. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015. Pp. 432. Hardcover \$45.00, ISBN 978-0-262-02843-1. eBook \$32.00, ISBN 978-0-26-232361-1.



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The Philosophical Challenge from China, edited by Brian Bruya, undoubtedly occupies an important place in the discourse about what practices and authorities are relevant to Philosophy as an academic discipline. Its confident reorientation of philosophical relevance in the context of Anglophone academics will hopefully speak meaningfully to any remaining skeptics of the usefulness of Chinese philosophy. The intended audience of this effort, however, is shrinking, or, more accurately, those willing to be convinced are increasingly few, and what remains is simply and happily the staunch traditionalists of the so-called Western paradigm. This evokes the thought that anthologies that strive to show relevance, while at the same time being philosophically nuanced enough to please a moderately specialized audience, are without appropriate readership. Most readers, I think, will appreciate the alternately playful, scoffing, earnest, and inventive essays that comprise this volume from the meta-philosophical perspective of comparative methodology, and in so doing overlook the challenge that is the supposed force of the collection. That said, whether a particular comparative methodology is advantageous and oriented toward the complex future that comparative philosophy gives way to is a conversation that this anthology is specially poised to host.

Following an introduction from the editor chronicling the crisis of Anglophone Chinese philosophy, namely the sore lack of institutional recognition, respect, and support, this volume is divided into three sections, each featuring a handful of pieces with little overlap in terms of authoritative material, though each makes dutiful reference to the formative texts of the Chinese philosophical tradition.

The first section, Moral Psychology, speaks to those familiar with moral and ethical theory as well as contemporary cognitive science and psychology about