Schopenhauer held that Kant’s work contains three great achievements.

- The overthrow of the “scholastic” philosophy beginning with Augustine and continuing up to Kant.
- The distinction between “phenomena” (what Kant called “appearances”) and things in themselves.
- The claim that moral significance is independent of phenomena and is “something directly touching the thing-in-itself” (WWR, Appendix).

These great achievements were accompanied by great errors.

As a result, philosophers have been unable to appreciate the real significance of Kant’s achievements, and in fact have perverted them.
Scholastic philosophy, for Schopenhauer, is devoting to proving the principal doctrines of the prevailing religion.

Even the philosophy of Descartes and his successors is scholastic in this sense (with the exception of Spinoza and Bruno).

Kant showed that the dogmas of speculative theology and rational psychology could not be proved.

These alleged sciences have been abandoned in German philosophy.

Natural science has, to its benefit, been liberated from them.
The distinction between phenomena and the thing-in-itself was Kant’s greatest achievement and as the fundamental characteristic of his philosophy.

Things are not known as they are in themselves because they are known only as they are represented by the intellect, as phenomena.

The phenomena, being representations, are ideal.

This doctrine overthrows realism, “the raising of the fleeting phenomenon to the real inner being of the world” (WWR, Appendix).

The claim that phenomena are not the fundamental reality had been made, without proof, by Plato and the philosophers of India.
In pre-Kantian realism, the phenomena are the underlying reality.

Therefore, the laws of the phenomena are apply to the moral qualities of human beings.

- Eudaemonistic ethics is concerned with the way in which happiness can be attained.
- Ethics based on divine will is concerned with the consequences of pleasing or displeasing God.

The notion of “perfection” is empty when applied to ethics: we ought to do that which makes us be what we ought to be.

Kant viewed the moral principle of human action as being significant for things in themselves.
Schopenhauer on Morality

- Schopenhauer agreed with Kant’s negative claim that morality cannot be eudaemonistic.
- But he claimed that Kant’s attempt to derive a moral law from pure reason turns out to be eudaemonsitic after all.
- Morality can be understood through an understanding of what is opposed to morality.
  - The fundamental anti-moral incentive is egoism, the desire for only one’s own well-being.
- The only way that egoism can be overcome is through compassion for one’s fellows.
- Thus, the basis of morality is compassion.
- Compassion is ultimately the result of the fact that all human beings are phenomena of one thing-in-itself.
Kant had argued that causality is a concept which the understanding applies universally and necessarily to appearances.

Schopenhauer rejected Kant’s argument for it, claiming instead that we have an unshakeable certainty in its truth.

He claimed that the “law of causality” is one of four specialized forms of the “principle of sufficient reason.”

“All our representations stand to one another in a natural and regular connection that in form is determinable A PRIORI” (*The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, Section 16).

The three other laws concern connections between:

- The “ground” of knowledge and what is known.
- The parts of space and time.
- The motivation for an action and the action.
Kant assumed, as did traditional metaphysics, that metaphysical judgments are *a priori*.

Kant correctly showed that if metaphysical judgments are *a priori*, there can be no knowledge of reality independent of the intellect.

But it also follows from this assumption that metaphysical knowledge cannot rely on experience.

This excludes the most important source of our knowledge of the world, which is our inner and outer experience.

The way to recapture this source is to deny the assumption that metaphysics is a purely *a priori* science.
Another major error in Kant’s philosophy was the way in which he tried to prove the existence of things in themselves.

The argument is as follows:

1. Appearances are the result of empirical perception.
2. Empirical perception depends on sensation.
3. Sensation must have a cause.
4. The cause of sensation cannot be appearance.
5. So, the cause of sensation is the thing-in-itself.

The problem, pointed out by Schulze, is that causality is an a priori category that cannot apply to things in themselves.
According to Schopenhauer, Kant reacted to the criticism of his deduction of things in themselves by radically revising the *Critique* in its second edition.

He attempted to de-emphasize the subjective character of causality and appearances.

He removed from the second edition the clear statements of idealism found in the first edition.

For example, “If I were to take away the thinking subject, the whole corporeal world would have to disappear, as this is nothing but the appearance in the sensibility of our subject and one more of its representations” (A383).

Scopenhauer held that this revision made the work inconsistent, and he successfully lobbied for the re-publication of the first edition.
Fichte’s Response to the Problem of the Thing-in-Itself

• Fichte concluded that because the argument for the thing-in-itself is faulty, there is no thing-in-itself.

• Accordingly, he constructed a system in which not only the formal elements of representation, but also its material elements, are deduced a priori from the subject.

• This system is nonsense, exploiting the lack of judgment of the public and deflecting attention from Kant to Fichte himself.

• It depends on the claim that we have an intellectual intuition of the subject, which Schopenhauer describes as a “vaporizing.”
Schopenhauer and Hegel

- Shopenhauer extended his criticism of Fichte to Schelling and, especially, Hegel.
- He regarded Hegel as an intellectual fraud, who seduced his students into following him by numbing their minds with incomprehensible verbiage.
- “[T]he so-called philosophy of this fellow Hegel is a colossal piece of mystification which will yet provide posterity with an inexhaustible theme for laughter at our times, . . . it is a pseudo-philosophy paralyzing all mental powers, stifling all real thinking, and, by the most outrageous misuse of language, putting in its place the hollowest, most senseless, thoughtless, and, as is confirmed by its success, most stupefying verbiage.” (On the Basis of Morality, Preface to the First Edition)
Rather than trying to make causality appear objective, Kant should have acknowledged its subjectivity.

Given that sensation, space, and time are subjective as well, all the elements of appearances are subjective.

So, nothing independent of the mind can be deemed necessary as a thing-in-itself.

The thing-in-itself is properly discovered in through the experience of ourselves.

There we discover will, as the thing-in-itself at the basis of ourselves as phenomena.

This will as thing-in-itself is entirely different from appearances and their elements.
The basic argument for idealism, “no object without a subject,” is attributed to Berkeley.

1. All knowledge is a relation between subject and object.
2. What knows is the subject and what is known is the object for that subject.
3. If something is known, then it exists for knowledge.
4. So, what exists for knowledge is the object for a subject.
5. The whole of the knowable world exists for knowledge.
6. What is object for a subject exists only as representation.
7. So, the whole of the knowable world exists only as representation.

The argument seems to be unsound.

It is true that what is knowable “exists for knowledge” in that it exists in a way that allows it to be known, but it does not follow that it “exists for knowledge” in that the object’s very existence depends on being known.
The basic argument for idealism purports to establish that the known world is my representation. Kant enhanced this argument by showing specifically how space, time, and causality are forms of representation. Material objects, then, are representations which are in space and time, and subject to causal laws. Following Kant, Schopenhauer held that the ideality of material objects is “transcendental” only, and not “empirical.” Only those representations which are subject to space, time and causality are empirically real and are not the inventions of the self.
An apparent problem for Schopenhauer is his claim to know that the thing-in-itself is will.

The basic argument for idealism concludes that the whole knowable world is representation.

The response is that a specific class of representations is encumbered by only one subjectively-contributed form.

Representations of ourselves are subject only to the form of time.

In this way, representations of ourselves are nearly “transparent” and reveal enough of the underlying reality of ourselves that we can know what it is.

What we discover in this self-representation is will.

However, due to the form of time, we know will only through our acts, and we do not know the underlying character responsible for them.
Will and Intellect

- All physical objects are “objectifications” for a subject of will, which is thing-in-itself.
- Thus, the organism that is the human body is an objectification of will.
- In this sense, the organism is “the primary phenomenon, that is, the immediate manifestation of the will.”
- A feature of the human organism is its complex brain and nervous system.
- The product of this brain is the intellect, which serves the ends of self-preservation of the body.
- Because the intellect depends on the organism, which is the primary phenomenon, the intellect is “the secondary phenomenon.”
- On this view, the intellect is physical, just as the organism is physical.
- Will, on the other hand, is metaphysical.
Will lies at the basis of all phenomena, including the intellect.

The intellect exists only as a tool at the service of the will.

In Section 19 of the first edition of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer argues for the thesis of the primacy of the will over the intellect.

His argument relies heavily on appeal to observation of the behavior of ourselves, other human beings, animals, and even plants.

Thus, Schopenhauer tries to confirm a metaphysical thesis by arguments *a posteriori*.

This is a methodological approach that had been ruled out by Kant (in ethics as well as metaphysics), which Schopenhauer regarded as Kant’s most fundamental error.
There is No Knowledge without Will

The first argument for the primacy of the will is conceptual.

Consciousness is by definition a subject which knows objects.

In order for there to be a knowing subject, there must be an object which is known.

Moreover, the known object must be distinct from the knowing subject, since there would be no knowing subject without there already being an object to be known.

So, if consciousness knows itself (is self-consciousness), there must be an object of consciousness which is distinct from the knowing subject.

The proper object of self-consciousness is will, which is not a knowing subject.

The knowing subject is only the “reflection” of will, so to speak.
The essential elements of any object are those which are common to everything of that kind.

The adventitious (inessential) elements are those which some things of that kind have and other things of that kind lack.

We know, nearly *a priori*, that every animal wills existence, life, well-being, and propagation.

So the willing of these things is essential to them.

The only consciousness required for this willing is the general capacity to have ideas.

What distinguishes conscious beings is ways of knowing: conceiving, thinking, judging.

The gulf between ourselves and the animals is due to the differences in ways of knowing.

For example, animals seem to lack the capacity for abstract thinking that humans have.
Intelligence serves as a tool to satisfy the needs of an organism.

The degree of intelligence is proportional to the complexity of the organism’s needs.
- The more complex the needs, the greater the intelligence required to satisfy them.

The degree of intelligence in an animal is correlated with the size of its brain relative to its body and the size of the cerebrum relative to the cerebellum.

Because intellect is so central to the success of the human organism, it is mistakenly thought that will is the product of the intellect.

But only in the rare case of genius does the intellect act freely and independently of the will.
We find that the degree of will is constant in all organisms, despite the range of complexity of their intellects.

In every organism, will acts egoistically, that is, exclusively for the well-being of the organism.

*How* any organism wills is constant across organisms.

*What* the organism wills varies according to its motive.

Willing is a simple act, so every act of willing is “complete” in that it is fully accomplished when it is undertaken.

Acts of knowing are generally incomplete.

Their success is improved through practice and education.

No matter how complex the process of deliberation, the intellect only proposes options the will either approves or disapproves.
The Roles of Will and Intellect in Action

- Will and intellect play different roles in human action.
- Apparently, intellect influences will, because what one is thinking of is followed by different moods.
  - One becomes sad upon thinking of a lost love.
- On the other hand, will can block altogether the intellect from having ideas abstractly known to be disagreeable.
- Intellect is indifferent with respect to its possible objects, but will is inclined toward some and away from others.
- Insofar as it pursues its own agenda, will is the force that determines the state of the intellect.
- The best image of the relationship between intellect and will is that of the sighted lame person carried on the shoulders of a strong blind person.
- The lame person may give direction to the blind person, but only the blind person can decide which way it will go.
The Inclinations of the Will

- Which way the will is inclined to act can be discovered only through experience.
  - For example, I conceive a plan, but I feel reluctant to carry it out because it involves some difficulty.
  - When the difficulty is removed, I find myself filled with joy.

- Despite the confusion in my intellect, my will may be inclined in a certain direction without my knowing it.

- The ancient Greek injunction, “Know thyself,” is thus quite difficult to carry out.

- Because we often do not know ourselves, the moral worth of our actions cannot be based entirely on our conscious intentions.

- Some of our motives are merely imagined, and action is required to determine whether they are real, and hence whether our actions are moral.
The Strength of Will and Weakness of Intellect

- The will is tireless and always ready for action, independently of the state of the intellect.
  - For example, infants whose intellects are undeveloped nonetheless indulge in “unlimited, aimless roaring and shrieking.”

- Intellect, on the other hand, is easily worn out as the result of its efforts.

- We act precipitously because the will is always ready to act, even when the intellect has provided it with scanty information on which to act.

- Intellect is able to reveal to us the causes of what annoys the will, and through instruction and other means it can lead the will.

- But when the will is aroused, it goes its own way.
  - In anger, the intellect’s role in action is limited.
  - In mania, the intellect plays no role at all.
The Perfection of Will and Imperfection of Intellect

- The will remains as strong in old age as in a child.
- Intellect can burn itself out if it is overused during the course of life.
- Those who fare best in old age are those who rest the intellect properly.
- The intellect rests in sleep, while the will works to restore the body to order.
- The ever-beating heart is the will’s symbol.
- If, as all the philosophers claim, intellect is primary, how can its weakness and imperfection be accounted for?
- We cannot understand how the original nature of human beings can break down so consistently.
- Will, on the other hand, is not weak and imperfect, and in this way it is more suitable as the true human nature.
An objection to the claim that the will is perfect is that the will is immoral.

It is true that will is egoistic in its actions and therefore opposed to morality.

But the sphere of morality is different from that of the natural will.

It lies in the overcoming of the individuality of the will, by making others’ well-being the object of our own desire.

Thus, the immorality of the will is based on a higher point of view and does not affect the perfection of the will as such.

The will’s perfection lies in its completeness, its tirelessness, and its constant activity.

The pursuit of morality leads to the abolition of the will altogether.
Interference by the Will with the Intellect’s Functions

- The intellect can function properly only when the will does not interfere.
- The activity of the will often corrupts the course of thinking.
  - In the short term, fright causes irrational behavior.
  - In the long term, hope leads to exaggeration of the probability of attaining one’s objectives.
- The activity of thinking has some, but only little, effect on the course of the will.
  - Coolness of mind silences the will.
  - Presence of mind is undisturbed mental activity under pressure.
- If will and intellect had the same source, the rousing of the will would heighten, rather than interfere with, the activities of the intellect.
More Interference by the Will

- The brain is a parasitic organ, so the effect of will is not necessarily favorable to the brain’s function, the intellect.
- The will forces the intellect to picture what it wants, so that the will might be comforted.
- This use of the intellect in the service of the will undermines the role of the intellect, which is the pursuit of truth.
- The will often moves the intellect to mask unpalatable possibilities.
- In a melancholy person, the apprehension of the will suppresses the use of the intellect, forcing it to picture the most unfortunate outcome.
- In in cases of love and hatred, judgement is falsified.
  - We tend to exaggerate the virtues and minimize the vices of those people and things that we love.
  - Conversely, we tend to exaggerate the vices and minimize the virtues of what we hate.
Attaining Impartiality

- Generally, our interests lead to prejudice, which undermines the proper functioning of the will.
  - For example, errors we make in accounting are usually in our favor.

- This occurs even in the sciences, where new ideas are opposed when they threaten entrenched interests.

- The most perfect knowledge exists when the person is able to overcome the will altogether and become a pure subject of knowledge.

- The knowledge of such persons is then completely objective, and its objects are Platonic forms.

- The overcoming of the will is possible only for people of very high intelligence.

- There is a price for such detachment: detached from the will, the knower is not suitable for action, especially leadership.
Reasons for the Will’s Inaction

While the will directly influences the intellect, there is no direct influence of the intellect upon the will.

There are some cases in which the intellect seems to influence the will, but these can be explained away.

It might be thought that if the intellect supplies the wrong motives, then the will is led astray.
  - But motives are only reasons for actions, and if the reasons lead to the wrong result, this has nothing to do with the preferences of the will.

It might be thought that if the intellect presents conflicting motives, then the will loses its resolution to act.
  - The reason for the inaction of the will in this case lies in the fact that it prefers several different external objects, which cannot all be realized by any given action.
The basis for irresolution is just as much the will as the intellect.

People with weak minds tend to be resolute, because they cannot picture any alternatives to a given course of action.

People with strong minds tend to be irresolute, because they can picture so many alternatives to a given course of action.

- If they are concerned for their own safety, they become anxious at every step.
- This shows that the basis of irresolution is in their will, in that they lack courage.

Very intelligent people with some courage are best suited for action, in that they understand the alternatives well and are disposed to act on the basis of the most probable outcomes.
How the Will Aids the Intellect

- The function of the intellect is to advance the desires of the will.
- There are cases in which a certain condition of the will improves the functioning of the intellect.
  - A strong motive may bring out a hitherto untapped creative ability. ("Necessity is the mother of invention.")
  - We may remember things we would otherwise forget if remembering serves our interests.
- In general, memory has value only insofar as it is of service to the will.
- It is hard to see what function memory would have in a pure knowing subject.
The intellect only presents options to the will, which then chooses which to act upon.

It follows from this that no system of ethics influences the will.

Teaching only results in knowledge, but knowledge does not determine the will.

Knowledge only clarifies the decisions the will might undertake.

This can be seen in the fact that people who know that their character is defective can nonetheless do nothing to improve it.

What condemns is the theoretical faculty of intellect, and what is condemned is one’s nature and personality, which is a property of will.

Our character never changes, although our knowledge increases as we mature and lessens as we decline.
If the will were the product of knowledge, then knowledge would increase with the force of will.

But in animals and humans, experience shows that this is not the case.

Plants have will but no knowledge at all.

Emotions such as anger would enhance knowledge.

But anger diminishes the rational capacity.

More generally, will often works against rationality.

Even scientific knowledge is opposed if it is contrary to one’s interest.

On the other hand, popular speakers recognize that when the will is favorable, their arguments are received as very convincing.
There are very few cases of excellence of either will or intellect.

We do not infer great will from great intellect or great intellect from great will.

A stupid person may be malicious due to envy of others.

But stupid people are often thought to be of good will.

The reason is that we prefer the company of people inferior to ourselves, and we mask the basis of this preference by attributing moral goodness to them.

Generally we attribute intelligence to morally bad people, as they need this to be effective in their evil actions.

Even the highest intellect could have the worst moral character.

The will is the expression of our true nature, and we try to hide our badness by attributing it to a defect in intellect.
Mental and Moral Capacities

- While we treat genius as a gift, we take moral character as “proceeding from the man himself.”
- All religions take good will to be rewarded, but none take great intellect to be rewarded.
- Social connections such as family, trade and party are based on common interests and do not depend on intellect.
- Social connections involving exchange of information require a certain equality of intelligence in each party.
- Great minds are admired, but not loved.
- Goodness of heart is valued more highly than great intelligence, as it pertains to something beyond this life.
- The good heart is one that identifies all natures with its own and treats others as one’s self, which is independent of having a good head.
Aristotle said that “to live well is better than to live.”

This is equivalent to saying that “not to live is better than to live badly.”

Most of life is suffering, which raises the question as to why we live at all.

The reason is that our very nature is the will to live.

The will to live is overcome in cases of suicide.

Such cases are in a sense admirable, because the presentation by the intellect of the badness of life overcomes the powerful will to live.
Another indication of the secondary nature of intellect is the way it shuts down during sleep, while will continues to act. Those who hold that intellect is prior to will must postulate that intellect is active during sleep. If one agrees with Kant that there is no proof of the existence of an enduring soul, then one will see that the postulate of continuous thinking is a sham. The reason most of the brain shuts down during sleep is that it needs to rest in order to be able to serve the will effectively. Children with growing brains need more sleep, while people in decline need less sleep. Philosophers (such as Descartes) need a great deal of sleep. The need for sleep to allows for the intellect to function properly supports the claim that intellect is in service of the will.