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THE PALGRAVE HANDBOOK OF GERMAN IDEALISM (edited)

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The Palgrave Schopenhauer Handbook

palgrave
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Palgrave Handbooks in German Idealism
ISBN 978-3-319-62946-9 ISBN 978-3-319-62947-6 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-62947-6

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017947737

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Cover illustration: Li Ding/Alamy Stock Photo

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Series Editor's Preface

The era of German Idealism stands alongside ancient Greece and the French Enlightenment as one of the most fruitful and influential periods in the history of philosophy. Beginning with the publication of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781 and ending about ten years after Hegel's death in 1831, the period of "classical German philosophy" transformed whole fields of philosophical endeavor. The intellectual energy of this movement is still very much alive in contemporary philosophy; the philosophers of that period continue to inform our thinking and spark debates of interpretation.

After a period of neglect as a result of the early analytic philosophers' rejection of idealism, interest in the field has grown exponentially in recent years. Indeed, the study of German Idealism has perhaps never been more active in the English-speaking world than it is today. Many books appear every year that offer historical/interpretive approaches to understanding the work of the German Idealists, and many others adopt and develop their insights and apply them to contemporary issues in epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, politics, and aesthetics, among other fields. In addition, a number of international journals are devoted to idealism as a whole and to specific idealist philosophers, and journals in both the history of philosophy and contemporary philosophies have regular contributions on the German Idealists. In numerous countries, there are regular conferences and study groups run by philosophical associations that focus on this period and its key figures, especially Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer.

As part of this growing discussion, the volumes in the *Palgrave Handbooks in German Idealism* series are designed to provide overviews of the major figures and movements in German Idealism, with a breadth and depth of

11. As far as I can see, it would not be inconsistent for a mere pessimist to believe in an evil or sadistic God who created sentient beings in order to torture or destroy them: 'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods/They kill us for their sport' (*King Lear* IV.1. 44–45).
12. To say that everyone wears shoes that pinch does not mean that everyone feels the pinch in the same place or to the same degree. Barbara Hannan rightly calls our attention to Schopenhauer's recognition of this fact: 'Mild distress, temporary relief from mild distress, boredom, and temporary relief from boredom constitute the great part of human existence for the most fortunate. The less fortunate have it even worse' (*The Riddle of the World: A Reconsideration of Schopenhauer's Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 124).
13. Note that if Schopenhauer is right, the Cartesian starting-point in philosophy—one's immediately known subjectivity or self—ultimately leads to a metaphysic which relegates that starting-point to the level of mere appearance.
14. I thank Sandra Shapshay for her helpful comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

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Schopenhauer's Two Metaphysics: Transcendental and Transcendent

Alistair Welchman

Introduction

"The world is my representation" (WWR I, 23; SW 2:3). With this opening line of *The World as Representation*, Schopenhauer positions himself squarely within the tradition of Kant's transcendental idealism. This is the doctrine according to which the best explanation of our experience of objects is that several crucial aspects of that experience, including space and time, are formal structures of human cognition that make experience possible.¹ Objects of experience are empirically real but transcendently ideal. As a corollary, we possess *a priori* knowledge of the basic spatiotemporal properties of empirical objects because these formal structures make experience of objects possible in the first place; but by the same token, we do not know what things are in themselves, only as they appear to us. Schopenhauer's first sense of the metaphysical comprises the synthetic cognition *a priori* that makes experience possible. This is Schopenhauer's *transcendental* metaphysics, which he never officially abandons, but which is much more prominent in his earliest work, like the 1813 *Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*. As he developed philosophically however, Schopenhauer devised a second sense of the metaphysical. This second sense also depends, albeit negatively, on transcendental idealism because its central claim—that the thing in itself should be identified with will—looks like precisely a

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S. Shapshay (ed.), *The Palgrave Schopenhauer Handbook*, Palgrave Handbooks
in German Idealism, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-62947-6_7

species of *transcendent* metaphysics, a claim that goes beyond the possibility of experience into the cognitively forbidden realm of things in themselves. I shall argue however that this second sense of the metaphysical can be formulated much more independently of transcendental idealism, following a recent similar interpretation of Kant due to Rae Langton.² This makes for some surprising connections to contemporary metaphysics.

Transcendental Metaphysics

In §2 of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer identifies with the main thrust of Kant's transcendental philosophy, enumerating a number of "forms of cognition" (WWR I, 25; SW 2:6) that he describes in "Kantian terms" by saying that they "lie in our consciousness *a priori*." Schopenhauer's list of transcendental conditions is similar to Kant's, with some simplifications and additions of his own. The forms of space, time, and causality come fairly directly from Kant. But Schopenhauer adds the division of experience into subject and object (WWR I, 23; SW 2:3). In his *Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (1813/1847), he argues that the ancient principle of sufficient reason provides the basic structure of all necessary relations between representations (objects), including those that make experience possible.

Kant's critique of transcendent metaphysics is well-known, but the *Critique of Pure Reason* is a *critique* of metaphysics and not a complete rejection of it: Kant identifies metaphysics in general with synthetic propositions that can be known *a priori* (e.g., B18).³ He does deny the possibility of synthetic knowledge *a priori* that goes beyond the possibility of experience, but his grounds for doing so are developed from a positive doctrine, transcendental idealism, that is based on the truth of a set of just such synthetic *a priori* propositions: the conditions of possibility of experience itself. Thus, according to Kant, while transcendent metaphysics is impossible, *transcendental* metaphysics is not.

Schopenhauer, especially early in his career, understood his version of the positive doctrines of transcendental idealism as a species of metaphysics. For instance, in the first (1813) edition of *The Fourfold Root*, §34 is entitled "Metaphysical Truth" and runs as follows:

The conditions of all experience can be a ground of a judgement, which is then a synthetic *a priori* judgement. Such a judgement also has material truth and, indeed, *metaphysical truth*. For such a judgment is determined through just that which determines experience itself. (EFR 181; 7:57)

So, the first sense in which Schopenhauer's metaphysics is to be understood is in terms of his commitment to transcendental idealism and hence to the synthetic *a priori* knowledge that makes experience possible. Here, Schopenhauer modifies Kant in important ways by eliminating the tripartite Kantian distinction between sensibility, understanding, and reason in favor of a dichotomy between intuitive knowledge and conceptual/rational knowledge while greatly diminishing the importance of reason.

Schopenhauer describes intuitive knowledge as "intellectual perception" or "intellectual intuition" (the German term is *Anschauung*). This has nothing to do with Schelling's notorious notion of intellectual intuition, a faculty for supersensible cognition. What Schopenhauer has in mind is instead just the view that intuition of spatiotemporal particulars is mediated by significant information processing: As directly sensed modifications of the body are treated as an "effect" and "referred back to its cause, the intuition arises of this cause as an *object*" (WWR I, 32–3; SW 2:13).

This view gives Schopenhauer a wonderfully compact version of Kant's critique of Hume's empiricist account of causality and positive transcendental argument for the apriority of causation. Hume claims that we obtain our concept of causality from experience, i.e., from the constant conjunction and temporal contiguity of our experiences of pairs of objects or events. But Schopenhauer demonstrates that it is only through the application of an *a priori* cognitive structure of causation that the mere "data" of sensation can be an object of experience in the first place. Thus, Hume's account is self-defeating: The experience from which he wants to derive causation in fact presupposes it. And this result of course corresponds to a proof of the *apriority* of causation, given that we do in fact have experience of objects (FW 50; SW 4:27).

A noteworthy feature of Schopenhauer's transcendental idealist metaphysics is the extent to which he values and privileges intuitive/perceptual knowledge (*Erkennen*, often translated as cognition) as opposed to conceptual/rational knowledge (*Wissen*). Reason is the faculty of concepts, for Schopenhauer, and he defines concepts very simply: A concept is the representation of one or more other representations, and it is a "representation of a representation" (WWR I, 2:49/64). This makes concepts (and reason) wholly dependent on intuitive knowledge (and understanding), something that vividly colors Schopenhauer's account of reason, which is very much more modest than his idealist compatriots.

Science, for instance, is concerned with causation, and our apprehension of causes is intuitive, and indeed, intuition just is (a form of) causal positing (of objects as the causes of the effects we experience directly in sensation). So, "the understanding's knowledge of cause and effect is indeed intrinsically deeper, more complete, and more exhaustive than an abstract thought

of cause and effect" (WWR I, 78; SW 2:63, tm) and natural laws and forces must be "grasped intuitively by the understanding" before being expressed in conceptual-propositional form.

Scientific knowledge in general is not metaphysical because it contains an empirical component and is not wholly *a priori*. But, Schopenhauer maintains a similar view about the role of reasoning in the metaphysical, i.e., *a priori* and transcendental aspects of reasoning in the metaphysical, e.g., the persistence of matter. "This truth" he says "has been evident to everyone, everywhere and at all times," and so our conviction cannot stem from "hair-splitting" arguments like Kant's, even if those arguments are correct (WWR I, 93; SW 2:80). This idea I think is important for understanding Schopenhauer's own philosophical methodology. Argument has some value, but intuitive perception is more important, even for metaphysical and philosophical truths: To use Schopenhauer's image from his analysis of geometry, metaphysical truths are grounded in a certain kind of *seeing*: The *schauen* from which *Anschauung* (intuition) is derived is strongly visual.⁴ This idea is well-known to have had an important impact on Wittgenstein; but perhaps the equally well-known argumentative paucity of Schopenhauer's texts can be in part made up for by understanding them in the broadly *phenomenological* tradition, where appropriate description plays as important a role as rational argumentation.⁵

Transcendent Metaphysics

After 1813, Schopenhauer increasingly comes to think of metaphysics in a different way, as describing things as they are in themselves, beyond representational experience. "If we want to get beyond this representation, we come to the question of the thing in itself; and the answer to this question is the theme of my entire work, as it is the theme of all metaphysics in general" (WWR I, 473; SW 2:527). This second conception of the metaphysical is more familiar since it corresponds roughly to Kant's understanding of *transcendent* metaphysics.

The metaphysical view for which Schopenhauer is of course famous is that Kant's thing in itself should be identified with the will: After "the world as representation, or appearance" is subtracted, "all that remains is the purely metaphysical, the thing in itself which we will recognize in the second book as the will" (WWR II, 18; SW 3:22). This signature doctrine—whose exact meaning is not as clear as its bald statement would make it seem—was developed by Schopenhauer between the publication of his doctoral dissertation, *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (1813), and his main work *The World as Will and Representation* (1819). As a result, later edi-

tions of the *Fourfold Root* replace the word "metaphysical," used to describe conditions of possibility of experience, with the word "transcendental" to indicate a shift in meaning of the term "metaphysics."

Schopenhauer's Argument

The whole first book of the *World as Will and Representation*, which is officially devoted to the world as representation, is constantly interrupted by references to the world as will, and it is instructive to consider the anxiety Schopenhauer experiences about the inadequacy of the world as representation. In the very first section of the first volume of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer describes an "inner reluctance" (WWR I, 24; SW 2:5) he expects the reader to feel at the idea that the world is (only) representation, a reluctance that is particularly acute in the case of our own bodies (WWR I, 40; SW 2:22).

Schopenhauer is clear about the root cause of this reluctance: It is because the world as representation "exists only relatively" (WWR I, 28; SW 2:8–9), that is objects (representations) "can be exhaustively traced back to the necessary relation of objects to each other, so that the being [*Dasein*] of objects consists in nothing but this relation" (WWR I, 27; SW 2:7). These claims are compressed references back to *The Fourfold Root*, where Schopenhauer follows Kant in arguing that space (FR 124–5; SW 1:132–3), time (FR 12–16; SW 1:133–4), and causation (FR 147–9; SW 1:155–8), i.e., the three sources of metaphysical knowledge in the first sense, are all relational.

At first glance, Schopenhauer seems just to be saying that empirical objects have some relational properties, i.e., their spatiotemporal-causal properties (spatiotemporal properties are relational because each part of space and time is related to the whole; causal properties are relational because they involve relations to other objects—*x* is the cause of *y* and the effect of *z*). But Schopenhauer's view, like Kant's, is more radical than this. In his account of matter, Schopenhauer argues that "matter is, in its entirety, nothing other than causality" (WWR I, 29; SW 2:10). Thus Schopenhauer's claim is not just that empirical objects have *some* relational properties, but that *all* their material, i.e., physical, properties are relational.

Sometimes Schopenhauer seems to have in mind a kind of short-circuit argument for this view: Empirical objects are exhausted by their relational properties simply because empirical objects are representations, i.e., related to a subject. For instance, he argues that representations are things whose "existence ... is just relative to a subject," effectively making objects

relational merely in virtue of being objects, i.e., representations (WWR I, 144; SW 2:142; see also 461; SW 2:514). But, Schopenhauer's own arguments suggest that the purely relational nature of objects of experience can be established independently of this argument, since material properties are inter-objectively relational independently of the subject/object relation.

Schopenhauer is uneasy about the world as representation because that world is exhaustively relations. What could help respond to this unease? At the start of WWR Book II, Schopenhauer outlines several desiderata.

First, Schopenhauer interprets our "reluctance" to treat the world as only representation as an indication that the theory that the world is only representation is false: If it were true, things would not be as we in fact agree that they are. If the theory were true, he argues "images [i.e. representations]" would "pass by us strange [*fremd*] and meaningless [*nichtsagend*]" (WWR I, 119; SW 2:113); "if this world is nothing more than representation; in which case it would have to pass over us like an insubstantial dream or a ghostly phantasm, not worth our notice" (WWR I, 123; SW 2:118).

Second, Schopenhauer argues that all scientific explanations end up postulating inexplicable fundamental forces. The argument depends on Schopenhauer's view of causal explanation in general. He thinks that the behavior of any empirical object is exhaustively predictable from two factors: the situation the object is in and its "character" or inner propensities (we might say causal or dispositional powers). Sometimes we can explain the causal powers of an object on the basis of the causal powers of its constituent parts. But such explanations have to come to an end at some point in unanalyzed powers or fundamental forces. These *Naturkräfte* are what is missing from the world (considered only) as representation.

Third, Schopenhauer distinguishes between what things are like "*from the outside [von außen]*" (WWR I, 123; SW 2:118) and their "inner essence [*inneres Wesen*]" (WWR I, 121; SW 2:116). This is, of course, more or less what one would expect from Schopenhauer's Kantian heritage, which distinguishes how things appear (to us) from how they are in themselves. But Schopenhauer then goes on in unKantian style to identify the inner essence of things with the fundamental forces (*ibid.*).

Humility

There is some debate about whether Schopenhauer violates Kant's epistemic strictures, but before addressing this issue in Schopenhauer, I think it is important to see what the significance of those strictures in Kant is.

Like Schopenhauer scholarship, Kant scholarship has a skeptical (post-positivist) stance toward metaphysical entanglements. For instance, two of the most influential strands of Kant interpretation treat the "metaphysical" doctrine of the thing in itself, even an epistemically inaccessible thing in itself, as a weak point. On one view, typified by Allison, but based on Prauss, the thing in itself is not a metaphysically separate object, but rather just the theoretical result of subtracting the various transcendental forms from an empirical object: We merely *consider* something as it is in itself.⁶ On the other view, typified by Guyer, the Kant of the *Critique of Pure Reason* does have a "metaphysical" commitment to the existence of thing in themselves, but this is a result of trying to graft his critical views onto his precritical ones, and the critical project should return to Kant's earlier commonsense realist lines, eradicating the idea that there are thing in themselves beyond ordinary empirical things.⁷ Thus, either Kant isn't really a transcendent metaphysician or he is, and his philosophy should be reconstructed to either eliminate or rehabilitate those elements.

But there is a third way. Rae Langton has developed an important interpretation of Kant according to which our necessary ignorance about things in themselves, the thesis she calls Humility,⁸ is a substantive metaphysical claim (unlike the Allison/Prauss deflationary reading), while at the same time being quite defensible (not something that must be rejected, as in Guyer's reconstruction). On this view, only the extrinsic, relational, properties of objects are cognitively available, their intrinsic properties are not. Importantly, Langton's interpretation is neutral about transcendental idealism. Recall that transcendental idealism is first and foremost the view, established by Kant in the transcendental aesthetic, that space and time are subjective forms and *not* properties of things as they are in themselves. The non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves is, for traditional commentators, the unacceptable metaphysical dogma to be rejected in favor of a commonsense realism or accepted but deflated, according to taste. On these readings, transcendental idealism drives the distinction between cognitively available and unavailable properties. On Langton's reading, this distinction is motivated independently in terms of relational or extrinsic and intrinsic properties. This reading is consistent with transcendental idealism (as one way of distinguishing extrinsic from intrinsic) but it does not imply it. If Kant and Schopenhauer are wrong about space and time, and these are transcendently real, objects of experience would *still* possess cognitively inaccessible intrinsic properties. In fact, the view is not just an interpretation of Kant, but a viable contemporary option in the philosophy of science (where it is known as epistemic structural realism).⁹ So first, I am going to argue

that Schopenhauer's understanding of the role of the thing in itself in his system is close to the role that Langton's Kant interpretation gives to the thing in itself in Kant.

This is clearly an unstable situation, for if the thesis is correct, the properties of things in themselves are cognitively inaccessible, which is just what Schopenhauer denies. Here again, I am going to appeal to contemporary developments in metaphysics to make Schopenhauer's metaphysics more plausible than it might otherwise seem, specifically to a contemporary defense of panpsychism asserting that we do have cognitive access to the intrinsic properties of at least some things, namely ourselves.¹⁰ Schopenhauer is regularly cited as an influential figure in the history of panpsychism.¹¹ But in fact, I am going to conclude, Schopenhauer is not a panpsychist, although his argument can still be made plausible by the fact that it is structurally analogous to an important argument for panpsychism.

Langton frames her account of Kant in terms of Leibniz's substance metaphysics. A case can be made that Schopenhauer does too, although it does not matter because the argument can be made just as well without reference to substances. Thus, Langton phrases the difference between phenomena and things in themselves, which she calls "the Distinction," like this: "Things in themselves are substances that have intrinsic properties; phenomena are relational properties of substances."¹² The problem that her view of Kant is designed to solve is that Kant appears to think that the "Receptivity" of our cognition entails that we have no cognitive access to things in themselves. She describes this conclusion as "Humility" and defines it as follows, in accordance with the substance talk of the Distinction: "We have no knowledge of the intrinsic properties of substances."¹³ But Receptivity does not entail Humility, at least not without a further premise: As Peter Strawson (and Paul Guyer) has pointed out, commonsense realism based on a causal theory of perception includes Receptivity but excludes Humility.¹⁴ Langton supplies the wanted extra premise ("Irreducibility"): "The relations and relational properties of substances are not reducible to the intrinsic properties of substances."¹⁵ Now Receptivity blocks phenomenalism, showing that there must be something mind-independent "behind" the phenomenon; the Distinction asserts that receptive cognition gives us access only to relational properties of substances, and Irreducibility now entails that the intrinsic properties of substances cannot be inferred from relational ones, i.e., Humility.

Langton's interpretation of Kant focuses on his precritical substance metaphysics, which Schopenhauer does not share. But she also shows the extent to which relevant parts of Kant's early views still inform his critical works,

and I am going to show that Schopenhauer can also be understood from the same point of view.

For instance, Schopenhauer's anxiety about the world as representation is precisely that it gives us access only to the relational properties of things: This is what he means by repeatedly claiming that objects are merely "relative."

Schopenhauer is not famous for talking about substance, but in fact he does use the terminology fairly consistently in relation to the thing in itself, calling it, for instance, the "substance of nature" (WWR I, 166; SW 2:168). Similarly, in WWR II, he identifies the "intrinsic essence [*Wesen an sich*] of appearances" with their "intelligible substrate [*Substrats*]" (11, SW 3:13, tm), and later on, talking specifically about the body, he describes the will as the "metaphysical substrate, as the in-itself of the body's appearance" (WWR II, 214; SW 3:240, tm).

But this does not matter too much as Langton's claims can be reformulated without loss omitting the term "substance": *Distinction*, for instance, would be: "Things in themselves ... have intrinsic properties; phenomena are relational properties of things in themselves." And so on for the others.

The crucial issue concerns the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic or relational properties. Langton uses the English terms "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" to translate Kant's "etwas Inneres" (A265/B321; A274/B330), literally "something inner" and "äußere Verhältnisse," literally, "external relations."¹⁶ Langton uses "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" rather than the more obvious "inner" and "outer" because she wants to argue that Kant's endorsement of Humility does not depend on his transcendentalist account of space. Transcendental idealism about space still entails Humility, but "outer" or "extrinsic" relations are best understood in a more general sense, including but not limited to external spatial relations.

There is some contemporary debate about how to define intrinsic and extrinsic, but Langton uses definitions from Lewis and Kim: x is an intrinsic property of y iff y 's possession of x does not entail the existence of anything except y ; in Kim's and Lewis's argot, iff it does not entail y 's "accompaniment" or equivalently is consistent with y 's "loneliness."¹⁷

On this definition, both Kant and Schopenhauer argue that spatial properties are extrinsic (because the parts of space reciprocally imply each other). But Langton wants to resist the claim that extrinsic properties are restricted to spatial properties, in part because she wants her analysis of Kant to be consistent with a rejection of transcendental idealism about space: As it stands, Humility is not idealism, just, humility.¹⁸

Schopenhauer's understanding of relational properties shares Kant's ambiguity. He relies very importantly on an inner/outer distinction that is clearly

narrowly concerned with the spatially external experience of a subject. For instance, he says “we can never reach the essence of things *from the outside* [*von außen*]” (WWR I, 123; SW 2:118). Correlatively, it is through a kind of *inner* experience that we can, he thinks, gain ultimate access to the intrinsic properties of things, i.e., thing *in* themselves. But this very use of inner experience to access intrinsic properties implies that the larger notion of intrinsic is also at play. For instance, when discussing the fact that materialists (incorrectly) posit matter as a thing in itself, he describes what they do (and hence the thing in itself) as something that “exist[s] intrinsically and absolutely [*an sich und absolut existierend*]” (WWR I, 50; SW 2:33). We have already seen that *external* experience is extrinsic not (just) because it is spatially external to the body, or the object for a subject, or causally connected to a subject, but because matter, the constitution of external objects, is *itself* relational or extrinsic. And this is a point that applies even if transcendental idealism is false.

Receptivity is a potential obstacle to understanding Schopenhauer along the lines of Langton’s Kant. Kant appears to be committed to the idea that things must “affect” us. Schopenhauer is critical of this view, arguing that in the doctrine of affection Kant “makes an inference to the thing in itself as the cause of appearance, applying the principle of sufficient reason in a way he himself forbids as transcendent” (WWR I, 596). Thus, on the face of it, Schopenhauer seems to deny Receptivity.

This obstacle can however be overcome. Consider the picture that Schopenhauer does endorse: (non-representational) sensations are referred to an object as their cause. This object is a representation, an element of the world as representation. But Schopenhauer’s worry about extrinsic properties is just that there appears to be something wrong with thinking that this object is *just* representation. It must also be something in itself. Thus, empirical receptivity is enough to generate Humility, at least as far as Schopenhauer takes Humility. Note though that the same thing would be true even if objects were not representations: Our external experience of them would still be of them as purely relational; what they are in themselves would still be inaccessible.

Finally, we come to Langton’s missing premise, Irreducibility (of extrinsic properties to intrinsic ones). For Langton, the issue depends crucially on how one interprets causal powers, i.e., the dispositions that make it such that an object has the behavioral profile that it does. One intuitive suggestion would be that such powers or dispositions are intrinsic. Although the exercise of a causal power would be an extrinsic property (since it would imply the existence of what the power was exercised on), the mere disposi-

tion to have an extrinsic property might be thought to be intrinsic. But then intrinsic properties are perfectly cognitively accessible. But there is another interpretation of intrinsic properties that would make powers non-intrinsic: The guiding intuition is this: “things could be just as they are with respect to their intrinsic properties, yet different with respect to their causal powers,” in particular if the laws of nature were different.¹⁹ In this case, intrinsic properties cannot be read off from (reduced to) extrinsic properties like causal powers.

At issue here is a large metaphysical doctrine, which I cannot hope to decide. So, I am just going to address the question of which intuition Schopenhauer has. Interestingly, and perhaps unfortunately, I think he has both. To see this, let us return to Schopenhauer’s account of empirical explanation: The behavior of anything is (causally) explicable by the combination of its circumstances and its “character.” Here, we might say: it’s dispositions or causal powers. Following Kant, however, Schopenhauer distinguishes between “empirical” and “intelligible” characters, an account that he elaborates mostly in relation to human conduct, but which applies universally. Empirical character lies in the empirical realm as the set of dispositions that determine behavior; intelligible character is the “*thing in itself*” (or more specifically the act of will) that lies at the basis of this [empirical character], situated as it is outside of space and time, is free from all succession and plurality of acts, one and unalterable” (OBM, 173; SW 4:175). Similar metaphysical views are all over Schopenhauer and follow from his commitment to transcendental idealism: Space, time, and causality (and in general the principle of sufficient reason in any of its forms) are exclusively conditions of representation (grounding the first sense of the metaphysical), but they do not apply to the in-itself of things, which is therefore non-spatial, non-temporal, non-causal, and “free,” as he puts it, from necessitation by the principle of sufficient reason (WWR I, §55). Intelligible character is therefore a non-temporal act of will that fixes the content of the phenomenally accessible empirical character, an act that also grounds moral responsibility, for Schopenhauer, because it shows that individuals are (transcendentally) responsible for, have chosen, their own intelligible characters.

Empirical character is fairly clearly the locus of causal powers. So, could “things could be just as they are with respect to their intelligible characters, yet different with respect to their empirical characters?” A clear case can be made that Schopenhauer’s answer is no: Intelligible character is what determines empirical character; their content is the same. So, if empirical character is different, then intelligible character must be too. In the register of

human conduct, Schopenhauer says that no one could have done otherwise (because of empirical determinism) but one “could have *been* another” (OBM, 174; SW 4:177, tm). This is where Schopenhauer’s account of moral responsibility comes in: I am not responsible for my actions directly but because I am responsible for my intelligible character. So Schopenhauer thinks one could have had a different empirical character only if the non-temporal choice comprising one’s intelligible character had been different.

But perhaps this is not the end of the story. For the very fact that intelligible character and empirical character have the same content makes it implausible that the one could have intrinsic properties and the other not. Perhaps a better model would be to say that a determinate set of causal powers comprising something’s character is always something extrinsic; it is redundant to duplicate this set of powers at the level of the thing in itself. Rather the thing in itself, the will, remains “free” with respect to empirical character, which could always have been something else. Langton’s characterization of this view of intrinsic properties as being properties “compatible with loneliness and lawlessness” is particularly Schopenhauerian: The freedom of the will just is its independence from all law, in the form of the principle of sufficient reason.

This touches on a point of contention in Schopenhauer interpretation: Schopenhauer argues that space and time together make up the “*principium individuationis*,” principle of individuation (WWR I, 138; SW 2:134). It follows straight away that the thing in itself cannot be individuated. And this, as many commentators have noticed, vitiates his notion of an intelligible character that is individuated along the same lines as empirical character. The present argument might then be taken as a separate rationale, unconnected with Schopenhauer’s transcendental idealism, for thinking that the will, as an intrinsic property of the thing in itself, is not individuated.²⁰

The Will: Kantian Limitations

Schopenhauer’s conception of transcendental metaphysics can be understood therefore along the same lines as Langton’s interpretation of Kant: We have cognitive access only to extrinsic properties of things, but things must also have an in-itself side or possess intrinsic properties that we have no cognitive access to. But, of course, Schopenhauer *does* think we have access to the thing in itself. How does he think this is possible?

The crucial factor is the body. If we really were just representation, then we would experience the body too as “a representation like any other, an object

among objects” (WWR I, 123; SW 2:118). Its “movements and actions” would be “as foreign [*fremd*] and incomprehensible as” the movements of any *external* object, and we would see our “own actions as following from motives ... with the constancy of natural law, just like the alterations that occur in other objects due to causes, stimuli and motives. But [we] would not understand the motives’ influence any more intimately than the connection between any other effect and its cause” (WWR I, 123; SW 2:119). As Young points out, the argument is intended as a “thought experiment,”²¹ more specifically, a *reductio*: “none of this is the case,” (ibid.) Schopenhauer claims, and therefore, we are not just empirical, representational objects.

Recall that fundamental forces are incomprehensible: There is no ultimate reason why a fundamental force should act one way rather than another. They are, as again Young puts it, “black boxes” connecting events.²² But we do not experience or inhabit our own bodies from such a perspective, we have an inside view on the contents of this black box, at least in our own case: We have awareness of what it is like to undertake an action, to be inside the black causal box that mediates between an experience and our active response to it. This is what Schopenhauer terms will.

Perhaps the *reductio* can be made clearer by considering the phenomenology of autism: Someone with autism experiences other people in something like the purely “objective” or external way that Schopenhauer describes.

This is what it’s like to sit round the dinner table. At the top of my field of vision is a blurry edge of nose, in front are waving hands ... Around me bags of skin are draped over chairs, and stuffed into pieces of cloth, they shift and protrude in unexpected ways. ... Two dark spots near the top of them swivel restlessly back and forth. A hole beneath the spots fills with food and from it comes a stream of noises. Imagine that the noisy skin-bags suddenly moved toward you, and their noises grew loud, and you had no idea why, no way of explaining them or predicting what they would do next.²³

Simon Baron-Cohen’s explanation for autism is that people suffering from the disorder lack the ability to attribute mental states to others: As a result, human behavior becomes a cognitive black box (perhaps the above passage is a description of a guest asking me how I’m doing). The counterfactual that Schopenhauer is describing is more radical still, since he suggests that, without awareness of what he calls will, we would have the same ‘mindblind’ experience even of our own behavior, not just other people’s.

Schopenhauer has an admirably pithy slogan for his basic metaphysical result: Awareness of our own willing is “*causality seen from within*,”

an insight that is “cornerstone of my whole metaphysics” (FR 137–8; SW 1:145). Since causality is matter, the character of anything, as it is in itself, is will. But to get to this result, he must overcome two formidable barriers. First, he must show how it is possible for us to have any knowledge about the intrinsic properties of anything, given the Kantian background we have discussed. Second, even if one concedes that *my* awareness of willing gives insight into *my* intrinsic properties, Schopenhauer must show (what to many seems the weakest link of his philosophy) that the same will is the in-itself of everything.

There is little doubt that Schopenhauer has trouble making his metaphysical view about the nature of intrinsic properties consistent with his broadly Kantian principles, i.e., his first metaphysical view, and he seems aware of the difficulties.

In Volume II of WWR, Schopenhauer attempts to equate “*objective knowledge*,” “*representation*,” and external cognition, i.e., cognition gained “*from the outside*” (WWR II, 195; SW 3:218, tm). This frees him up to claim that our awareness of ourselves as willing is not representational (and hence not objective) because it is internal.²⁴ This of course contradicts Kant’s claim that even in inner experience I do not experience myself as I am in myself, but only as I appear to myself (B153). Still this isn’t necessarily a reason to think *Schopenhauer* is inconsistent, just that he disagrees with Kant; indeed in the very next paragraph, Schopenhauer summarizes Kant’s position and declares that Kant’s epistemic strictures apply to “everything except the cognition everyone has of his own *willing*” (WWR II, 196; SW 3:219, tm). Unfortunately, Schopenhauer then goes on to say that “becoming-known” at all excludes (“contradicts”) “being-in-itself,” (WWR II, 198; SW 3:221, tm) which looks *prima facie* inconsistent with the view he has just expressed that we do possess cognition of the will as the in-itself or intrinsic nature of representations.

In the secondary literature, there are three basic positions that attempt to resolve this tension:²⁵ Some commentators develop a tripartite view, distinguishing between full representation, thing in itself as representation and full unknowable thing in itself (WWR II, 197; SW 3:220).²⁶ A second strategy is to distinguish different “amounts” of representation. Inner experience possesses *fewer* of the forms of representation than outer experience, and it “breaks down into subject and object” and additionally “the form of *time* still remains.” But it lacks spatial form and causal connection. So, deploying a “veil of perception” metaphor, Schopenhauer argues that inner perception “has thrown off the greater part of its veil” but not all of it (WWR II, 196–7; SW 3:220, tm).²⁷ Lastly, there are what might be termed, somewhat

misleadingly it turns out, figurative interpretations. The term is not misleading for views that treat the term “will” as frankly metaphorical.²⁸ But it is, arguably, for Shapshay’s own view, which is that Schopenhauer is using a different literary device, metonymy, or part for a whole. On this view, what we have cognitive access to, the will in the case of our own intentional action, is a *part* of the will that is being in itself. Here, the epithet “figurative” definitely gives the wrong impression because we really do (literally) have cognitive access to the thing in itself in awareness of willing (and several other “experiences” Shapshay describes); we are limited only by the fact that we experience a part of the whole.

That Schopenhauer ultimately intended some non-metaphorical cognitive access to intrinsic properties is clear from the distinction between inter-object relations and the “being-known” cognitive relation. If the latter is allowed to drive the merely relational nature of objective experience and science, if “becoming-known” simply “contradicts being-in-itself” (WWR II, 198; SW 3:221, tm), then clearly no non-relational properties of the thing in itself are cognitively accessible under any circumstances. But this makes the cognitive inaccessibility of intrinsic properties merely analytic. I have emphasized above that Schopenhauer has a more substantive view that depends on inter-object relations.

In relation to the question of the subject/object form, I think it is important to note that the term “objective” is ambiguous after Kant. On the one hand, it is a way of expressing mind-independence. This cannot be what it means in the context of transcendental idealism, since objects are representations, which are mind-dependent. But it also has a second interpretation: Something is objective if it has the form of an object. After Kant, this claim is non-trivial, for Kant argues that the form of an object is transcendental (the *a priori* site of multimodal integration, in contemporary parlance). So, one can also interpret Schopenhauer this way. Inner experience of the will is not objective because the will does not have the form of an object, but perhaps something more like a process. Here, it would be the lack of conformity of the accusative of this inner experience to the object form that makes it possible for it to be objective in the sense of mind-independent.

Schopenhauer also claims that inner experience is structured by the form of time, which is relational. Some strategy such as Shapshay’s might work here to make cognitive access to the will consistent with his Kantianism. But I would also like to suggest the possibility of simply dropping Schopenhauer’s transcendental idealism while maintaining his concern about the external inaccessibility of intrinsic properties. Then Schopenhauer’s position looks similar to other views in recent metaphysics.

In 1927 for instance, Bertrand Russell writes “[a] piece of matter is a logical structure composed of events; the causal laws of the events concerned, and the abstract logical properties of the spatio-temporal relations, are more or less known, but their intrinsic character is not known.”²⁹ Schopenhauer would quibble with the term “logical” (since, at least in uncomplicated cases, we have intuitive not rational knowledge of causation) but would otherwise be in agreement. Furthermore, Russell thinks that we *do* have insight into the intrinsic properties of at least one kind of thing, what he calls “percepts”: “[p]ercepts are the only part of the physical world that we know otherwise than abstractly. As regards the world in general, both physical and mental, everything that we know of its intrinsic character is derived from the mental side.”³⁰ Here, there is an important similarity to Schopenhauer and an important difference. The similarity is that something “inner” or broadly “subjective” that yields insight into intrinsic properties. The difference is that what Russell identifies as inner nature is what would now be called the *qualé* of a conscious experience, what it is like to have that experience. This is not what Schopenhauer means: He is concerned not with our awareness of the conscious features of awareness, but rather with the content, the accusative, of a particular kind of awareness, that directed inside to ourselves.

The Will: Generalization

Now, I would like to turn to the second of the formidable barriers to the full flowering of Schopenhauer's second metaphysics: Will is the in-itself of the world. The basic problem is this: Even if the first formidable barrier is removed, all that Schopenhauer has established is that I have insight into the intrinsic properties of *one* object, i.e., my body. My body is will. How can this insight be generalized? Schopenhauer appears to use a kind of argument from “analogy”: My body is a representation; I have special insight into its intrinsic properties (it is will); other things are also representations; so, they have the same intrinsic property as my body, “after all,” Schopenhauer writes, “what other sort of existence of reality could we attribute to the rest of the corporeal world?” (WWR I, 129; SW 2:125).

On the face of it, this sounds absurd. Schopenhauer is however careful to forestall one misunderstanding: In itself, intrinsically, a stone is indeed will, but “this should not be given the absurd meaning that the stone is moved by a motive in cognition just because that is how the will appears in human beings” (WWR I, 130; SW 2:126). Motives are unambiguously representations (that's how Schopenhauer defines them). So, they are extrinsic properties of willing,

which can't therefore belong to the will insofar as it characterizes the intrinsic nature of things.

This is an important claim for several reasons. First, it is the premise of one of Schopenhauer's arguments for pessimism: We think of willing as being satisfied when it reaches its goal, but goals are representations, and in itself the will has no goals so that “the absence of all goals, of all boundaries, belongs to the essence of the will in itself, which is an endless striving” (WWR I, 188, 2:195). Second, it shows that consciousness is not an intrinsic property of the will; in itself the will is “blind” (WWR I, 135; SW 2:135, and many other places). As a result, Schopenhauer is not a panpsychist, in contemporary terminology.³¹ Lastly, it marks the point of difference with Russell: Since will isn't intrinsically conscious, consciousness cannot be the exceptional intrinsic property we have access to.

Nevertheless, there are structural argumentative similarities to some versions of contemporary panpsychism that shed light on Schopenhauer's analogy. Strawson agrees that “physics can't characterize the intrinsic non-structural nature of concrete reality in any respect at all.”³² And he endorses Russell's claim that “we know nothing about the intrinsic quality of physical events except when these are mental events that we directly experience.”³³ He goes on to define panpsychism as extending “the claim that everything is energy by saying ‘intrinsic nature of this energy is experientiality.’”³⁴ Here, Strawson shares Russell's interpretation of extrinsic, relational, or structural properties and intrinsic properties. Strawson's extrinsic properties are more or less the same as on Schopenhauer's view (modulo transcendental idealism), but Strawson's intrinsic property is conscious awareness as such, whereas for Schopenhauer the importance of inner experience is that it gives us access to a very general content: The in-itself is will. Still, Strawson's rationale for generalizing from my or human inner experience to everything is instructively similar to Schopenhauer's. Strawson argues that our reluctance to do so is based on a mistaken “picture” that distorts our weighing of the evidence: “we tend to revert to a conviction that we have a basic grasp on things that allows us to be sure that the matter/energy whose spatiotemporal manifestations are all around us couldn't literally be nothing but experientiality.”³⁵ In other words, we tend not to have (appropriate) Humility,³⁶ and so we tend to think that science and outer experience in general in fact give the basic, i.e., intrinsic nature of things. Then, it seems as if it is just obvious that the intrinsic properties of things cannot be anything other than what science (and common sense) tells us. But outer experience (science) tells us exactly nothing about intrinsic properties, most especially not that there

aren't any, and so "we have ... no idea of the intrinsic nonstructural stuff nature of the physical"³⁷ except in the one case of ourselves.

Schopenhauer's analogy looks weak because of a similar distorted picture. If we accept the fundamental asymmetry between inner and outer experience that Schopenhauer grounds phenomenologically in our double awareness of the body, then generalization by "analogy" is natural because outer experience both tells us exactly nothing about the intrinsic properties of things while also committing us to the existence of such properties. Inner experience gives us the only evidence we have about intrinsic properties, that they are will or non-intentional activity, and so its generalization is the best evidence we have about the in-itself of everything. What makes the analogy seem implausible can only either be a tacit denial that external objects possess intrinsic properties, or a tacit belief that we already know them through science. But both of these claims are false. So if Schopenhauer's phenomenological analysis of the will is convincing, it is a significant datum.

Conclusion

Schopenhauer has two important metaphysics, one transcendental, the other transcendent. I think the second increasingly comes to supplant the first, even to the extent that the transcendental idealism on which the first is based becomes less significant. Schopenhauer is anxious that our experience of objects leaves us alienated from their intrinsic properties because it gives us access only to their extrinsic properties, not primarily because they are only representations. Schopenhauer's view that it is ultimately only *external* experience that is so limited is challenging, especially within a Kantian framework, but original in its analysis of the problem and phenomenological description of inner experience of willing as an intrinsic property. His further generalization of this view can be illuminated by perhaps surprising structural connections with contemporary metaphysics. Perhaps not least among these connections, which make an important thread through his work and connect both his accounts of metaphysics, is the importance of intuitive perception in metaphysics: He emphasizes this in his first metaphysical views, treating philosophical insight itself as ultimately intuitive in nature; he returns to a species of intuitive or phenomenological insight in his account of the will; and, as Strawson indicates, it is perhaps because we are in the grip of a "picture" that we cannot fully appreciate the pattern of Schopenhauer's thought when he claims that will is the in-itself of everything.

Notes

1. According to Kant, there are 12 more conditions of possibility of experience, corresponding to the categories of Aristotle. These have a different status to space and time: They are conceptual rather than intuitive, and although they apply *a priori* to experience (because they make it possible), we do not know whether they apply to things in themselves or not. Schopenhauer retains only the category of causation and treats it more like Kant treats space and time.
2. Rae Langton, *Kantian Humility: Our Ignorance of Things in Themselves* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
3. References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* will be to Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998) and use the standard A/B format to refer to the page numbers of the first and second German editions, respectively (these are in the margin of the cited edition, as well as many others).
4. Sophia Vasalou, *Schopenhauer and the Aesthetic Standpoint: Philosophy as a Practice of the Sublime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 18 note 8 criticizes the translation of *Anschauung* by "intuition" because it thereby loses its visually perceptive flavor.
5. Vasalou, *Schopenhauer*, 4 makes a similar point, describing Schopenhauer's arguments as "vulnerable to multiple stress fractures upon the lightest probing" but suggests a rather different, fundamentally expressive, way of interpreting Schopenhauer (7).
6. Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale University Press 2004); Gerold Prauss, *Kant und das Problem der Dinge an Sich* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1974).
7. Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
8. Langton, *Kantian Humility*, 21.
9. James Ladyman, "Structural Realism," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ed. Edward N. Zalta (Winter 2016 Edition), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/structural-realism/>.
10. Galen Strawson, "Mind and Being: The Primacy of Panpsychism" in *Panpsychism: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Godehard Bruntrup and Ludwig Jaskolla (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 75–112.
11. David Skrbina, *Panpsychism in the West* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2005), Chap. 5.
12. Langton, *Kantian Humility*, 20. Schopenhauer is explicit about the fact that space and time make individuation possible so that there cannot be a multiplicity of substances/things in themselves (although Schopenhauer also regularly violates this requirement, e.g., by invoking individuated intelligible characters or Platonic Ideas of species). Kant assumes things in themselves

- can be individuated, but does not explain how. Langton follows Kant without addressing the issue. Below I show that Langton's argument may provide Schopenhauer with an independent rationale for the conclusion that there can be no individuation at the level of the thing in itself.
13. Langton, *Kantian Humility*, 21.
 14. Peter Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, (London: Methuen, 1966), 250, says the assumption that Receptivity entails Humility is "a fundamental and unargued premise of the *Critique*" (cited by Langton, *Kantian Humility*, 44).
 15. Langton, *Kantian Humility*, 124.
 16. *Ibid.*, 18.
 17. *Ibid.*, 18 and 18–9 note 6 where she traces some of the complications of these definitions (one nice wrinkle is that 'lonely' is intuitively an extrinsic property, but comes out intrinsic on the definition since nothing can in fact have the property of being lonely and be accompanied).
 18. *Ibid.*, Chap. 10 where she opens the way for a non-transcendentally idealist reading of Kant. It is probably helpful to note however that nothing Langton says is *inconsistent* with the transcendently idealist reading of Kant (or Schopenhauer).
 19. *Ibid.*, 118.
 20. Of course, the issue is a complex one because it is not clear that the contradiction in Schopenhauer's thought is best resolved in favor of the unindividuated nature of the in-itself. Perhaps it is better to preserve the theory of Ideas and intelligible character and argue for some non-spatiotemporal account of individuation. The argument presented here weighs against this interpretation.
 21. Julian Young, *Schopenhauer* (Abingdon, Oxon., and New York: Routledge 2005), 61–2.
 22. Young, *Schopenhauer*, 65.
 23. Alison Gopnik, from an unpublished manuscript cited by Simon Baron-Cohen *Mindblindness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1995), 4–5.
 24. This is where Schopenhauer uses this memorable metaphor: "an *inside path* remains open for us to this ownmost and inner essence of things which we cannot access *from the outside*. It is, as it were, an underground passage, a secret connection that suddenly transfers us, as if by treachery, into the citadel that it was impossible to take by attacks from without," (WWR II, 195, SW 3:218–9) making implicit reference back to the view from §17 of WWR I that "we can never reach the essence of things *from the outside*" (WWR I, 123, SW 2:118).
 25. I adapt this breakdown of the literature from Sandra Shapshay "Poetic Intuition and the Bounds of Sense: Metaphor and Metonymy in Schopenhauer's Philosophy," *European Journal of Philosophy* 16 (2008):214–6.
 26. Young, *Schopenhauer*, 96–8 and Atwell *Schopenhauer on the Character of the World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), Chaps. 3–4 defend somewhat different versions of this view. See Christopher Janaway, "Will and Nature" in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 158f for discussion.
 27. This view is defended in Robert Wicks *Schopenhauer* (Oxford: Blackwell 2008), 76–9.
 28. See White, F. C., *On Schopenhauer's Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (Leiden: E.J. Brill 1992), cited by Shapshay "Poetic Intuition," 215–6.
 29. Bertrand Russell, *Analysis of Matter* (Nottingham: Spokesman Books, 2007), 384.
 30. *Ibid.*, 402.
 31. Skrbina, *Panpsychism*, argues the contrary, but his citations are often misleading. For instance, on p. 118 he quotes (using an older translation) the following passage from Schopenhauer: 'the force which attracts a stone to the ground is ... in itself ... will.' But the context for this quotation is the passage at WWR I §19 130, SW 2:126 where Schopenhauer denies precisely that this means that the stone is *consciously* willing!
 32. Strawson, *Mind and Being*, 85.
 33. Bertrand Russell, "Mind and Matter," in *Portraits from Memory* (Nottingham. Spokesman 1956/1995), 153. Cited in Strawson, *Mind and Being*, 97.
 34. Strawson, *Mind and Being*, 94.
 35. *Ibid.*, 96.
 36. Humility says we know nothing about intrinsic properties; appropriate (Schopenhauerian) Humility says we know nothing except in the case of inner experience of our own body.
 37. *Ibid.*, 100.