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ARTICLE

Schopenhauer's Berkeleyan strategy for transcendental idealism

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on Schopenhauer's idealism and investigates how its elaboration was related not only to Kant but also to Berkeley – a theme generally overlooked by scholars. Schopenhauer viewed Berkeley and Kant as those who had shown the advantages of idealism but were not able to reconcile it with a satisfying metaphysics: they had both set the path, but the work remained to be finished – and his system would provide the resolution. The paper analyses the presence of Berkeley in Schopenhauer's works (Section 2) and investigates why and how Berkeley became relevant for Schopenhauer's project (Section 3). Sections 4–5 revisit the debate on Kant's transcendental idealism and illuminate the role of Berkeley in both the first reactions to the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the genesis of German Idealism. Sections 6–7 contextualize and explain Schopenhauer's strategy of praising Berkeley and espousing idealism as a doctrine that defined his own originality in post-Kantian philosophy.

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1. Introduction

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the question of how to understand the doctrine of Idealism was one of the most urgent issues in philosophy. The many philosophers who responded to the *Critique of Pure Reason* focused on the novelty (or lack thereof) of transcendental idealism: some ignored its originality and viewed it as a mere repetition of Berkeley's immaterialism; others saw it is as a significant departure from early-modern idealism and developed Kant's approach into what is now called German Idealism. Schopenhauer was among those many philosophers who embraced transcendental idealism, but he held a unique position among German Idealists: he took seriously Kant's revolution but judged it as unfinished; he refuted the turn given by the speculative Idealists; he defined himself as an idealist in the

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wake of Berkeley and Kant, and considered the former as the authentic founder of the idealism developed by the latter; finally, he depicted himself as the only Kantian worthy of the name.

Generally, scholars have interpreted such a uniqueness as relating to the metaphysics of *The World as Will and Representation*, in which Schopenhauer claims to have discovered the 'thing-in-itself' of the world.[1] But I seek to stress here that (1) in his epistemology as well – specifically in his idealism – Schopenhauer conceived that he was offering both a solid theory and an original contribution to and improvement on Kant's transcendental approach; and (2) his interpretation of Berkeley effectively contributed to such an originality. My point is that commentators have neglected the fact that in the field of epistemology the relationship with Kant was not exclusive: Schopenhauer's theory of knowledge was also stimulated by the debate on Kant's first *Critique* and – even more importantly – by the role of Berkeley's philosophy in that debate.

In fact, the Irish philosopher assumed an important place in the work of Schopenhauer, who viewed Berkeley as offering a streamlined version of idealism that supported the existence of an external world – thanks to God, however. Once shorn of God, Berkeley's formulation of idealism appeared better than the overly convoluted one provided by Kant, who "makes the object dependent on the subject not through its being cognized as such and in general, but through the mode and manner of its being cognized" (WWR1V:106/592.27). Berkeley became strategic to Schopenhauer's project of a system where the will guaranteed the extra-mental reality of things and representation grounded an idealism that defeated scepticism and dismantled the metaphysical turn imposed by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel.

In this paper, I shall analyse a story that is generally overlooked: how Berkeley and his role in the polemics surrounding the *Critique of Pure Reason* contributed to Schopenhauer's refinement of an idealism that was intended to be as original as the metaphysics of the will. Berkeley was included in *The World as Will and Representation* (1819) at a time, after the rise of German Idealism, when he had almost disappeared from the pages of the major philosophers. While he had had an important role in the debate about Kant's first *Critique* (1781–92), Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel opposed Berkeley's immaterialism and his notion of mind as the passive receptacle of ideas; moreover, they developed idealism as an approach to reason and reality that left behind pre-Kantian philosophies and even Kant's.[2] By contrast,

[1]Then they have focused on the question of whether Schopenhauer's metaphysics of will might be considered as loyal to Kant's critical strictures on knowledge. See for example: Baum, "Ding an sich und Erscheinung"; Riconda, "Il 'criticismo compiuto' di Arthur Schopenhauer"; Malter, *Schopenhauers Transzendentalismus*; Koßler, "The Perfected System of Criticism".

[2]On the distance of German Idealism from Berkeley and Kant, see the first section of Thielke, "Recent Work on Early German Idealism (1781–1801)" and Mureşan, "Berkeley and German Idealism".

Schopenhauer found in Berkeley the clearest definition of idealism – "no object without a subject" (WWR1:35/52) – and the most fitting way to simplify and ground Kant's transcendental epistemology, thus giving support to his own view that "the world is my representation" (WWR1:3/23).[3]

I shall argue that Kant is not enough to elucidate Schopenhauer's idealism and that those apparently overt Berkeleyan themes must be considered as crucial to understanding it; for Schopenhauer analyzed and discussed Berkeley precisely in order to define his own idealism and its relationship with Kant and the post-Kantian philosophy. It was a choice encouraged by the debate on the first *Critique* and the *Refutation of Idealism* in its second edition, and Berkeley was instrumental to Schopenhauer's self-promotion as the sole heir to Kant and as the authentic interpreter of transcendental idealism. For Schopenhauer, the metaphysics of the will, plus the idealism of the *Vorstellung* – described as the legacy of both Berkeley and Kant – perfected Kant's project: "the world is, on the one side, completely *representation*, just as it is, on the other side, completely *will*" (WWR1:5/25).

2. Schopenhauer's assessment of Berkeley

In "Sketch of a History of the Doctrine of the Ideal and Real" and "Fragments for the History of Philosophy", the first two essays of *Parerga and Paralipomena* (1851), Berkeley was introduced as one of the many philosophers who wanted to solve the Cartesian "doubt concerning the existence of the external world" (PP1:15/15). He was unique, however: pushed by his antagonism towards Locke's realism (PP1:16/16), Berkeley became "the originator of the proper and true idealism" (PP1:14/14) and "the first to treat the subjective starting-point really seriously and to demonstrate irrefutably its absolute necessity. He is the father of idealism" (PP1:82/77). He

> reached the point of genuine *idealism*, i.e. the recognition that what is extended in space, and hence the objective, material world in general, exists as such only in our *representation*, and that it is false, even absurd to attribute to it *as such* an existence outside all representation and independent of the cognizing subject, and thus to assume a matter that is absolutely present and that exists in itself. (WWR2:5/7)[4]

Schopenhauer's appreciation of Berkeley is textually proven by some arguments Schopenhauer developed to claim the superiority of idealism over

[3]Schopenhauer's appreciation of Berkeley was also motivated by the formulation of the so-called 'likeness principle' in § 8 of *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*. As shown by Shapshay, "Did Schopenhauer Neglect the 'Neglected Alternative' Objection?", Berkeley's view was essential to Kant and Schopenhauer's thesis that the thing in itself must be aspatiotemporal.

[4]Schopenhauer enriched this portrait with his own definition of idealism as negating "a matter existing in itself" (PP1:14/14) and opposed to realism (PP1:14n/14n) – whereas in 1844 he had claimed that Berkeley's denial of matter established an antithesis between "idealism and materialism" (WWR2:15/16); see also WWR2:540/489.

realism. I list them following Douglas McDermid: only idealism guarantees certainty (Berkeley, *Treatise*, § 4; WWR2:5/8); realism denies access to knowledge and triggers scepticism (Berkeley, *Treatise*, § 86; WWR2:5/8); idealism provides conceivability, whereas realism admits mind-independent objects "existing unconceived or unthought of" (Berkeley, *Treatise*, § 23; WWR1:35/52); as knowledge is representation – "an idea can be like nothing but an idea" – it cannot refer to "copies or resemblances" which are not themselves ideas (Berkeley, *Treatise*, § 8; WWR2:217/205); by analogy with the dream, a mind-independent reality is not proven by its appearance (Berkeley, *Treatise*, § 42; WWR1:19–20/37–8); idealism is made preferable by its simplicity as the best explanation of our experience (Berkeley, *Treatise*, § 19–20; WWR2:11/12–13).[5]

Schopenhauer did not merely appropriate these arguments, he also used them strategically – by encapsulating them into the "no object without a subject" formula from WWR1 as support for his own doctrine of representation as true legacy of Kant's transcendental idealism (PP1:17/17, 20–1/20, 86–7/81, 100–1/93–4, § 14). They justified the central tenet of "my revival of *Berkeley's* findings, namely that all *objects* […] are essentially only the *representation* of the subject" and thus the necessity of grounding epistemology on the subject (WWR2:356/325–6). Moreover, the description of Berkeley as the founder of an idealism that Kant had "raised to a higher power" (FR:§ 19) thanks to transcendental idealism (FR:§ 12) makes clear that Schopenhauer's appraisal of Kant's transcendental project was accompanied by a genuine appreciation for Berkeley's contribution. McDermid acknowledges Berkeley's role but views Schopenhauer's idealism as eminently Kantian:

> Schopenhauer thinks idealism finds its highest expression not in the subjective idealism of Berkeley but in the transcendental idealism of Kant […]. Berkeley was only concerned with how the subject materially conditioned the object, whereas Kant was interested in uncovering the ways in which subjects formally condition objects.
>
> (McDermid, "The World as Representation", 75)

By contrast, I contend that Schopenhauer actually spotted in Berkeley those elements that triggered his intention to develop his own doctrine of representation as an improvement on Kant.

To better understand Schopenhauer's attitude, we must briefly recall Kant's intricate relationship with Berkeley.[6] Both shared the same concerns about the Cartesian and Lockean theory of ideas as source of atheism and scepticism, denied mind-independent objects in epistemology, and offered

[5]McDermid, "The World as Representation: Schopenhauer's Arguments for Transcendental Idealism", 62–75.

[6]Mattey, "Kant's Conception of Berkeley's Idealism" and Winkler, "Berkeley and Kant" analyse such a complicated relationship.

similar solutions through idealism.[7] And yet Kant distinguished his own epistemology from Berkeley's and judged Berkeley as threatening the inter-subjectivity of knowledge and the possibility of the natural science.[8] Transcendental idealism was the right answer, while Berkeley was described as a dogmatist.

My interpretation is that Schopenhauer's reading of the Kant-Berkeley affair was slightly different. His emphasized the latter's 'no object without a subject', which suggest that Schopenhauer referred directly to Berkeley as a source of his idealism, while he questioned Kant's way of formulating idealism, highlighting the tenuousness of his demonstration and the contradictions in his derivation of the thing in itself. My analysis of Schopenhauer's encounter with Berkeley (as described in the following section) and of Berkeley's role in the discussions about the first *Critique* (see below, Sections 4 and 5) will provide support to my reading. Evidence comes from the texts as well.

In December 1815 Schopenhauer borrowed a copy of Berkeley's *Works* from the Public Library of Dresden[9] and in 1816, at the beginning of the notebook *Against Kant*, he wrote:

> Kant's fundamental mistake is that he did not enunciate and acknowledge the proposition: "No object without a subject" which Berkeley had laid to his immortal merit.
>
> (MR2:398/462)

It was the first time he used the expression 'unsterbliche Verdienst'. He would utilize it again in the first edition of *The World as Will and Representation* (1819). Berkeley was the very first philosopher mentioned in the work – and right at the beginning: "he rendered an eternal service to philosophy" in expressing that the "world is representation", while "Kant's first mistake was to neglect this proposition" (WWR1:4/24).[10] He was the father of idealism who earned "himself an immortal place in our memory" but "did not draw the proper conclusions from this claim" (WWR1:514/461–2).

This iteration of combined praise and reproach of Berkeley and Kant's idealism is evidence of Schopenhauer's intention to improve on both of their conceptions. As I sketched above, he employed Berkeley's arguments and shared his battle against realism, but maintained that Berkeley could not accomplish the task (WWR1:XXIV/17; 502/451) and chastised his metaphysics, which lacked an ontology ("he did not know how to find the real"),

[7]Allison, "Kant's Critique of Berkeley", 51–2; Janaway, *Self and World*, 62–5; Emundts, "Kant's Critique of Berkeley's Concept of Objectivity", 141.

[8]A founded worry, according to Nitzan, "Externality, Reality, Objectivity, Actuality" and Morgan, "Kant and Dogmatic Idealism".

[9]See *Werke* (Deussen), 122. It was almost certainly the first collection of Berkeley's writings: *The Works of George Berkeley*, 1784.

[10]In the second edition (1844), Schopenhauer added "It was already present in the sceptical considerations that served as Descartes' point of departure" before the sentence on Berkeley (WWR1V:142/568.1). In the second volume, too, Berkeley was the first philosopher mentioned (WWR2:4/6).

separated willing from knowing (PP1:15/14), and postulated God as "objective in itself" (WWR1V:97/570.30). Kant's merits in establishing the transcendental laws that govern the phenomenal world were nonetheless mitigated by "his false deduction of the thing in itself" (WWR1:529/475) from causality, "namely that empirical intuition, or more precisely the *sensation* in our sense organs that generates empirical intuition, must have an external cause" (WWR1:516/463). And this error came precisely from neglecting Berkeley's "no object without a subject" (WWR1:515/461).

Schopenhauer condensed Berkeley's arguments for idealism together with Kant's 'Copernican revolution' into his own notion of *Vorstellung* – which he considered as the best elaboration of the genuine idealism. According to him, Berkeley had the right arguments for the mind-dependent character of the world and Kant had grounded them on the transcendental subject, that establishes space, time, and categories as conditions of the possibility of experience. He did not consider the complex relationship of Kant with Berkeley and seemed oblivious of what definitely distinguished Kant (and himself) from Berkeley, namely that the transcendental ideality of experience is only related to epistemology and not to ontology.[11] He blamed Berkeley's metaphysics for having identified God as the only real thing and reprimanded Kant for having inferred from the ideality of experience the reality of the external world.[12] His 'world as will and representation' was the right solution to the problems left open by both of them – and the following analysis will contribute to explain how Schopenhauer develop his conviction.

3. Berkeley, guest of honour

Why did Berkeley command Schopenhauer's attention? He was one amongst Kant's forerunners and did not have the stature of the founders of modern philosophy, like Descartes and Locke. He could have been mentioned *en passant*, like Malebranche, and instead both his name and his 'unsterbliche Verdienst' got a place of honour at the very beginning of *The World as Will and Representation*.

A reading that focuses on Berkeley's influence – as is the case with André-Louis Leroy and Robert Lamers, who emphasized the importance of Berkeley for the origin and development of Schopenhauer's metaphysics[13] – does not really answer this question. It is not the similarity between notions and arguments that defines Schopenhauer's debt to Berkeley. Rather, it is how

[11] McDermid, "The World as Representation", 59: "Schopenhauer wants to wed epistemological idealism to ontological realism in the manner of Kant (a move that would have been anathema to Berkeley, whose idealism was both epistemological and ontological)".

[12] "Kant grounded the presupposition of the thing in itself in an inference according to the law of causality, namely that empirical intuition […] must have an external cause" (WWR1:516/463).

[13] Leroy, "Influence de la philosophie berkeleyenne sur la pensée continentale"; Lamers, "Schopenhauer und Berkeley".

Schopenhauer used Berkeley that is important. My claim is that such use was strategic, and it is my intention in what follows to draw out what that strategy involved.

To ascertain the strategy, it is helpful to know when and how Schopenhauer met the writings of the Irish philosopher. Wolfgang Breidert suggested that Berkeley was brought to Schopenhauer's attention by the reading of Johann Gottfried Herder's *Verstand und Erfahrung* (1799) – the first volume of *Eine Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft* – which was mentioned in the 1813 *Dissertation* and was later purchased for his personal library.[14] It is true that Herder dedicated a few pages (403–11) to Berkeley in the chapter on idealism and realism, but in the *Dissertation* there is no indication that Schopenhauer was elliptically referring to Berkeley by mentioning Herder's criticism to Kant's view of mathematics as synthetics truths.[15] Moreover, the copy in his library shows a pencil mark on the pages 404–5, where Herder suggests referring to Berkeley's philosophy as 'Immaterialismus': such a mark, however, does not seem relevant for explaining Berkeley's presence in the *The World as Will and Representation*.[16]

Breidert's view stood on his research on the scarce presence and diffusion of translation of Berkeley's works in the eighteenth-century Germany.[17] But it did not consider two aspects of Schopenhauer's personal history: firstly, he was fluent in English and did not need German translations to read Berkeley – therefore he read not only the *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, translated into German in 1756 and 1781, but also *A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* and *An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*;[18] secondly, at the University of Göttingen, in the 1810–11 winter semester, he took Schulze's philosophy class and it was there that he learned of the very existence of a "Bischoff in Irrland" named "Berkley".

Gottlob Ernst Schulze, the author of the celebrated *Aenesidemus* (1792), had dedicated his lectures on metaphysics to authors of the modern philosophy, from Descartes to Fichte and Schelling. In the notebook where Schopenhauer took notes on the lectures, we see that he misheard the title of Berkeley's work cited by Schulze ("Dialogue between Hylas and Helologes"; but he admitted that "the names are maybe wrong") and we read this summary of the teacher's words:

[14]Breidert, "Schopenhauer und Berkeley", 374.
[15]See Herder, *Eine Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 325. Schopenhauer cited Herder in his *Dissertation*, § 40.
[16]It is probably related to Schopenhauer's late discussion of the apparent opposition between Berkeley's idealism and materialism in the *Parerga* (PP1:14n/14n) and in the *Supplements* (WWR2:540/489).
[17]Breidert, "Zur Rezeption Berkeleys in Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert" and "On the Early Reception of Berkeley in Germany".
[18]Besides Berkeley's *Works* borrowed from the Dresden Library in 1815, he purchased the 1843 edition of the Irish philosopher's works: *The Works of George Berkeley*. He also possessed the 1756 *Samlung*, Eschenbach's first German translation of the *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*.

> Kant differs from Berkley [*sic*] because as ground of phenomena he puts real things, which however we do not know as they are […]: instead, Berkley says that only a spirit can have representations, therefore matter cannot give them to the spirit, because one thing cannot give what it has not; and as the soul cannot be the source of all its representations […], thus only one spirit can give representations; we obtain ours from God: furthermore this is also proven by the *lex parsimoniae*: i.e. God achieves his purpose using the fewest means, thus there is no need of a real world, but its representations in us are enough.
>
> (Schulze, *Vorlesung über Metaphysik*, 88)

In a notebook dating back to the university years he compiled a note that demonstrates both his diligence in tracing down the *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* and his original interest in the notion that would become the leitmotiv of his appreciation of Berkeley:

> Especially from Hylas and Philonous III, pp. 187f. we see that Berkeley's philosophy in its characteristic way is nothing but the perfectly true statement 'no object without a subject'.
>
> (MR2:247/264)

On the basis of these documents, it seems that Schopenhauer was not affected by the 'sad story'[19] of the scarce resonance of Berkeley in Germany: he went directly to the source and took what it was of interest to him. We can also suppose that he collected other information on Berkeley by reading some handbooks of history of philosophy which he borrowed or purchased for his own library[20]: the 6th volume (1797) of Dieterich Tiedemann's *Geist der spekulativen Philosophie*, the 5th volume (1803) of Johann Gottlieb Buhle's *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*, and Wilhelm Gottlieb Tennemann's *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie* (1816) and *Geschichte der Philosophie* (1819).[21]

We have now some clues that could help answer the question of why Berkeley entered as a main character into the sphere of Schopenhauer's philosophy. More than the Kantian *Erscheinung*, Berkeley's *esse est percipi* conveyed Schopenhauer's 'die Welt ist meine Vorstellung', the *incipit* of *The World as Will and Representation*.[22]

[19] "Berkeley in Germany is a sad story": this is the beginning of Breidert, "On the Early Reception of Berkeley in Germany", 231.

[20] About the loans, see *Werke* (Deussen), 105, 120–1. The works of Tennemann and Tiedemann in his private library are listed in MR5, 177–8.

[21] Tiedemann, *Geist der spekulativen Philosophie*, 619–47; Buhle, *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*, 86–99; Tennemann, *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie*, 327–30 (Schopenhauer later purchased the 1812 edition of the *Grundriß*). Tennemann, *Geschichte der Philosophie* devoted a section to Berkeley (404–7) and one to Berkeley's Idealism (407–17).

[22] Schopenhauer commented "no object without a subject" as a sentence "which cannot possibly be denied by any reflective person and whose insight at once appears to be simple, certain and universal" (MR2:399n/463n).

4. The early discussions on Kant, Berkeley, and idealism (1782–92)

In the light of the great deal of research that has contributed to the contemporary interpretation of Kant's relation to Berkeley, Schopenhauer's position on the Kant-Berkeley divergence may appear naïve. In fact, his views were motivated by a peculiar reading of Kant as Plato *redivivus* that will be addressed below. At the moment, it is important to remember that when Schopenhauer assessed the delicate question of idealism in Kant, in the 1810s, he did not know the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and was acquainted only with Kant's firm replies to the charge of idealism in the *Prolegomena* (1783) and the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787).[23] He had no idea of the substantial work Kant had done to defend himself against the charge of being a follower of Berkeley's idealism and of the modifications on this subject after the first edition of the *Critique*; but he had a sufficient knowledge of the writings that had enriched the debate about the relation between epistemology and ontology in the *Critique of Pure Reason* after its publication in 1781 – exhausting quarrels which made Kant aware that some aspects of his transcendental idealism were confusing and certainly misunderstood.

Schopenhauer acquired familiarity with the main notions established by Kant on epistemology, metaphysics, and morality, from Schulze's classes, but his teacher did not linger on the post-Kantian debate – animated by Johann Georg Heinrich Feder, Moses Mendelssohn, Johann Georg Hamann, Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, Herder, and Schulze – that flared up before the rising of Fichte and Schelling in the mid-1790s. Afterwards, Schopenhauer would read and purchased some of the works that had marked the heated debate on the *Critique*[24] and as a student in Göttingen – this is a relevant contextual element – he was probably informed that it was from his university that Johann Georg Heinrich Feder had launched hard blows against Kant's *Critique*.[25] Even if we do not know whether he was aware that it had all started with the Garve-Feder review[26] – he never referred to it – we are able to reconstruct his readings of the texts which followed it, and which had an impact on his own understanding of the Kant-Berkeley affair, contributing to the incubation of his philosophy in the 1810s.

[23]Henry Sidgwick, "Kant's Refutation of Idealism" called the reply in the *Prolegomena* (§ 13, Annotations II and III) the "realistic answer" and the *Refutation of idealism* in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* the "transcendental answer".

[24]His library contains books by Feder, Hamann, Jacobi, Herder, and Schulze. On Jacobi he wrote in a notebook of 1812–13 (see MR2:366–71/425–32).

[25]Even if Feder had left Göttingen in 1782, his 1787 *Ueber Raum und Caussalität zur Prüfung der Kantischen Philosophie* was published at Göttingen by Dieterich.

[26]In *Zugabe zu den Göttingischen Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen*, 19th January 1782, 40–8.

As briefly sketched above, Schopenhauer's lack of knowledge of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* prevented him from correctly assessing Kant's reaction to the accusations of being a camouflaged Berkeleyan, whose idealism ultimately led to the negation of the reality of the external world.[27] After all, in 1781 Kant had not even mentioned Berkeley,[28] and it was the Garve-Feder review that pushed him towards a more explicit approach to the question of idealism – at first in the *Prolegomena* (1783) and eventually in the second edition of the *Critique*, with the remarkable addition of the *Refutation of Idealism*.[29]

The poor knowledge of Berkeley in Germany – the 1781 translation did not go further than the *Three Dialogues* and did not add much to the comprehension of the Irish philosopher – had certainly contributed to the faulty interpretation of Kant's transcendental idealism.[30] According to Breidert's inquiry, this 'sad story' of the reception of Berkeley in Germany was also responsible for Kant's anti-idealistic response in the second edition of the *Critique*[31] – which in turn prompted Schopenhauer's harshness against Kant in 1819.

At the end of the 1780s, it became common to equate Kant's epistemological view with the idealism of Berkeley. Philosophers more ingenious and charismatic than Feder – like Hamann, Jacobi, Schulze, and Herder – seemed to overlook the fundamental novelty of the *Critique* and considered it as a refined expression of the classical views of Cartesian scepticism and solipsism. As all of them played a relevant part in Schopenhauer's philosophical education, it is important to recall that they chose to confront the *Critique* with a 'metacritical' approach, thus giving Kant a taste of his own medicine.

Herder sought to vindicate Berkeley after the *Refutation of Idealism* and claimed that Kant's views were not too different from those of Berkeley (*Eine Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 363–6 and 403–11). Hamann

[27]This was the conclusion of the Garve-Feder review (48/58). On Feder's insistence that Kant's idealism did not differ from Berkeley's, see Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 171, 181–4.

[28]Winkler, "Berkeley and Kant" has suggested that Kant's reference to the *empirical* idealism (A:368–9/426) was probably not intended to confront the Irish philosopher.

[29]Mensch, "Kant and the Problem of Idealism: On the Significance of the Göttingen Review". The roughness of the review was probably encouraged by the publication of a new German translation of Berkeley's *Three Dialogues* in the same 1781: it contributed to bringing to the fore the traditional idealistic doctrine and its unwelcome sceptical outcomes at the exact moment of Kant's revolutionary approach to idealism (Förster, *The 25 Years of Philosophy*, 48–53), thus inflaming Feder, "the Lockean ringleader" (Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 180), who insisted on putting Kant together with Berkeley in *Raum und Kausalität* (1787).

[30]It is the case of Moses Mendelssohn, who misunderstood Kant's idealism and presumed that it ended up with the negation of the things-in-themselves and ultimately of the external world (Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 105–6).

[31]Breidert, "On the Early Reception of Berkeley in Germany", 231 speaks of "the scandal of Kant's refutation of idealism". It was not only a matter of ignorance, though. Around the years of the *Critique*, the philosophy of common sense transferred from Scotland to Germany a doctored rendition of Berkeley as a sceptic – which contributed to the hostility against Kant's idealism in different philosophical circles (Kuehn, *Scottish Common Sense in Germany*, 208–37).

contested Kant's transcendental method with the weapons of the sceptic, used the term 'idealism' to define the critical approach, and pointed out that Kant, the "Homer of pure reason", had developed an idealism that was capable of deriving "from the concept of reason the form of its empirical intuition" (*Metacritique on the Purism of Reason*, 216) – a view even more extreme than that of Berkeley. More importantly, for the purpose of contextualizing Schopenhauer's praise for Berkeley, Hamann referred to Berkeley as "a great philosopher" whose idealistic views had been "one of the greatest and most valuable discoveries" of the century (*Metacritique on the Purism of Reason*, 205–6).

A thesis had spread: that Kant had replicated, and maybe worsened, a Berkeleyan conception that rejected experience as reality and collapsed the distinction between idealism and scepticism. In a few pages of *Aenesidemus* (1792, 268–73) Schulze deployed the metacritical weapons against Kant's idealism in the second edition of the *Critique* and stated that the notion of *Erscheinung* corresponded to the core of Berkeley's idealism. He responded to Kant's pretence that "through criticism alone can we sever the very root of […] *idealism* and *skepticism*" (B, XXXIV/119) and judged Kant's refutation of the "dogmatic idealism of Berkeley" (B, 274/326) as a sophistry that did not even pertain to Berkeley's authentic doctrine. As he wittily summarized, "the *Critique of Reason* claims in the *Refutation of Idealism* what idealism has never denied and denies what idealism has never claimed" (*Aenesidemus*, 272).

Schopenhauer was impressed by these arguments and saw them reiterated by Jacobi in 1815, who confirmed the idealistic interpretation of Kant he had already expressed in *David Hume über den Glauben* (209–30/332–8) and made it stronger by recalling the name of Berkeley. He depicted the *Critique* as improving "the earlier incomplete or half-way idealism of Descartes, Malebranche, and Berkeley, through an idealism that was entire and complete, the Kantian Universal-Idealism", even though Kant would refuse to call it "Idealism" and choose the term of "Critical Philosophy" (Vorrede in *Jacobi's Werke*, 38–9/553). Moreover, he praised Berkeley in terms not very different from those used by Schopenhauer four years later: even if he admitted that Berkeley's philosophy was incomplete, "there is no defeating the clarity with which his [thesis] can be demonstrated" (Vorrede in *Jacobi's Werke*, 76/570).

5. From Kant and Berkeley to the idealists (1792–1809)

Notwithstanding their repeated misunderstanding of transcendental idealism, the importance of those polemical writings should not be overlooked insofar as we seek to appreciate Schopenhauer's assessment of Berkeley's idealism and its relationship with Kant's. They nourished Schopenhauer's

critical attitude; they taught Schopenhauer that accessing the sources – in this case Berkeley's original writings – was not only recommendable, but indisputably necessary; and they contributed to his reflection on some key notions of the *Critique* relating to the theory of knowledge which became the cornerstones of his own interpretation of the idealistic view.[32] It was the case with the more balanced comparisons between Kant and Berkeley that he found in Karl Leonhard Reinhold's *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* (1786–89), Salomon Maimon's *Briefe des Philaletes an Aenesidemus* (1794), and Shulze's *Kritik der theoretischen Philosophie* (1801).

Reinhold's *Letters* – which had practically become mandatory reading at the time and whose collected edition (1790–92) eventually entered in Schopenhauer's own library – had imparted a view of Berkeley that Schopenhauer would adopt in his own writings. In the ninth letter, added in the second volume of the 1790 edition of the work, Reinhold introduced Berkeley as founder of a spiritualistic system opposing Descartes' dualism. Berkeley's 'monistic idealism' maintained that the bodies do not exist besides representations and avoided the problem of the relationship between the spiritual substance and something that was not spiritual (*Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, 337–41). Also, Berkeley had anticipated Kant's criticism of reason as a faculty that cannot deal with the things in themselves (*Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, 343).

Maimon's seventeen *Letters* were published together with the *Versuch einer neuen Logik oder Theorie des Denkens* (1794), a book which Schopenhauer mentioned in both the manuscripts of 1813 (MR1:§ 94) and the *Dissertation* (§§ 12 and 24). Maimon addressed the Kant-Berkeley theme in the fourteenth letter, where Philaletes-Maimon opposed Aenesidemus-Schulze's for having equated Kant with Berkeley and not having acknowledged that Kant's treatment of space and time as conditions of sensibility distinguished his critical idealism from Berkeley's dogmatic idealism (*Briefe des Philaletes an Aenesidemus*, 373–9).

Schulze's *Kritik der theoretischen Philosophie* (1801), which was quoted in Schopenhauer's main work, reversed the interpretation on the Kant-Berkeley relationship as discussed in the *Aenesidemus*. In the last chapter of the part devoted to the Transcendental Aesthetic, he discussed the "Transscendentaler oder kritischer Idealismus" with an approach and arguments that recalled Maimon's. He explained idealism as the notion that things are merely representations and made crystal clear that Kant's critical idealism was completely different from Berkeley's version, which he qualified as "mystical and enthusiastic" – thus referring to the typical terms abhorred by the rationalists:

[32]Two examples show the importance of those books: WWR1:562n/502n refers to Schulze's *Kritik der theoretischen Philosophie* (1801) and Feder's *Über Raum und Causalität* (Schopenhauer misquoted the title as *Ueber Zeit, Raum und Kausalität*); WWR1, 48/63 mentions Herder's *Metakritik*, 274–5 and refers to Hume as quoted by Herder.

Mystik and *Schwärmerei*. It was the nature of space and time in Kant, which guaranteed the notion of truth and objectivity and prevented the confusion between *Erscheinung* and illusion (*Schein*) (*Kritik der theoretischen Philosophie*, 239–44).

Pondering the heated debate over Kant's idealism after having read Berkeley's works provided a broader perspective that Schopenhauer ingeniously explored. Moreover, he nourished his reflection with the reading of the most valued authors – Hegel excluded – who had contributed to philosophy since 1794: Fichte, Schelling, and Fries.

Together with Plato and Kant, Fichte and Schelling were extremely important during Schopenhauer's formative years. Schopenhauer attended Fichte's classes *On the Facts of Consciousness and on the Doctrine of Science* at the University of Berlin in the winter semester 1811–12 and left a voluminous transcript (in MR2) that has become a standard source for Fichte's scholarship, too.[33] Moreover, in 1812 he began a comprehensive reading of Fichte's works (on the doctrine of science, moral philosophy, and natural right) and filled several pages of his notebooks with analysis, critical observations and harsh or even sarcastic comment. Something similar happened with Schelling: he read almost the entirety of his publications and wrote extensively on him in the notebooks of 1811–12, where the tones were critical and often combative.

He was puzzled by the deep transformation of the notion of idealism in the hands of Fichte and Schelling.[34] His first introduction to their philosophies was provided by Schulze's lectures at Göttingen, which were unambiguous about their infidelity to Kant's criticism and their transformation of transcendental idealism into metaphysics – of the 'I' for Fichte (Schulze, *Vorlesung über Metaphysik*, 188) and of the absolute for Schelling (Schulze, *Vorlesung über Metaphysik*, 190–4).

Schopenhauer was struck by this alteration of the notion of idealism, analysed the two philosophers' works, and expressed his opposition to their views.[35] An assistance to this negative evaluation was also provided by Jakob Friedrich Fries' *Neue Kritik der Vernunft* (1807), a book that Schopenhauer read and annotated in 1812–13 and quoted in the 1813 *Dissertation* (§ 24). Fries was critical of Kant's notion of idealism – an alternative to empiricism that nevertheless was grounded on sensuous perception – but he observed that Fichte and Schelling had moulded an "absurd" version of it by making the 'I' not only the legislator of reality but also the creator of itself (Fries, *Neue Kritik der Vernunft*, xxxvii). The question of the relationship

[33]See Schopenhauer's transcript in Fichte, *Die späten wissenschaftlichen Vorlesungen II: 1811*.
[34]On such a revision, see Rockmore, "Kant, Fichte, and Transcendental Idealism".
[35]He read and commented on Fichte's *Grundriß der Wissenschafstlehre* (1795) and Schelling's *Abhandlungen zur Erläuterung des Idealismus der Wissenschaftslehre* and *Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie*: see MR2:343–4/395; 311/349; 308/345.

between knowledge and object – answered by Kant's critical idealism – had found its solution in "the principle of generation of the world, the self-knowledge of the absolute, the universe, and the Deity, the elevation of the duality into the pure ideality" (Fries, *Neue Kritik der Vernunft*, 40). Schopenhauer was not kind in his comments of Fries' work (MR2:361–3/417–20) but he certainly shared that polemical view.

6. Reinstating idealism

In his annotations of the lectures *On the Facts of Consciousness*, Schopenhauer commented that Fichte's view of idealism was "a consequence of his individual failure to understand Kant's teaching" but also admitted that "such misunderstanding is possibly due to a defect in Kant's doctrine" (MR2:60/64). It was thoughts of this kind that led Schopenhauer to seek to restore a reliable image of Berkeley and to revive the authentic spirit of idealism: Kant's *Refutation of Idealism* had been partly responsible for obscuring the merits of the Irish philosopher and leading to confusion about the most fundamental truth of idealism – no object without a subject.

We can reconstruct Schopenhauer's view at this juncture as follows: the first critics of Kant had failed to appreciate the genuine novelty of transcendental idealism and mentioned Berkeley in order to paint Kant as a follower of the 'dogmatic' Irish philosopher; Fichte and Schelling had transformed idealism into a metaphysics of the 'I' – so far from the original idealistic view that neither of them was interested anymore in an honest recognition of Berkeley. Fichte did not mention him often and when it was the case, the dismissive tone was more than evident: in the *Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der senschafstlehre*, Berkeley was the philosopher "whose system is a dogmatic, and not at all an idealistic one" (Fichte, *Versuch*, 198). Schelling's writings showed the same pattern and Berkeley was even recalled as one "who is very falsely counted among the idealists" (Schelling, *Philosophische Schriften*, 72).

Finally, we are in a good position to answer the initial question on why Berkeley became a key touchstone for Schopenhauer's approach to Kant and idealism. Notwithstanding his marginal position in the history of early-modern philosophy and a system heavily relying on the religious tradition, Berkeley acquired importance in Schopenhauer's eyes because of his role during the heated debate on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* ongoing since 1782. According to Schopenhauer, idealism was one great legacy of Kant's that deserved to be cherished, but polemics and then the metaphysical drift had almost annihilated the genuineness of the view. Idealism needed a fresh perspective, which could be gained by reinterpreting Berkeley's original contribution and focusing on its merits. The fact of having read Berkeley's works in original had made Schopenhauer aware that a lot of what had been

written about him – Kant's *Refutation of Idealism* included – was either unreliable or partisan, and ultimately blinded philosophers to the merits of the *Critique*.

Wayne Waxman's analysis of Kant's relationship to Berkeley[36] can help to better focus Schopenhauer's view. According to Waxman, Kant opposed Berkeley because of his immaterialism and aimed to combine epistemic idealism with the ontological realism of "subjectively unconditioned things in themselves" (Waxman, 213). The real question, then, was "whether and how" Kant's inference to things in themselves was grounded, otherwise his refutation of Berkeley's idealism "would have to be deemed a failure even on his own terms" (216). Schopenhauer's answer was negative: Kant's demonstration of the thing in itself appeared in "contradiction to the resolutely idealistic fundamental insight" of the *Critique* (WWR1:516/463). Having overlooked the "simple" Berkeleyan "no object without a subject" was at the origin of both the contradiction and the convoluted way of demonstrating transcendental idealism – otherwise Kant would have seen the obvious consequence that the object is "conditioned by the subject" (WWR1:514/461). Kant had seen the truth – "his greatest merit is to distinguish between appearance and thing in itself" (WWR1:494/444) – but his arguments were not up to the task.

Recalling Berkeley and his 'immortal merit' was strategic to Schopenhauer's specific goals: to reinstate Kant into his rightful position after misunderstandings and falseness, vindicate Kant's (and Berkeley's) idealism against the degeneration of the "three famous sophists of the post-Kantian period" (WWR1:XX/14), and support his claim that his own view of the world as representation was the most faithful actualization of Kant's legacy.

Notwithstanding Schopenhauer's pride about having perfected idealism as "the foundation of all true philosophy" (PP1:82/77), his accomplishment has been underestimated. Generally, scholars have considered his metaphysics of the will as defining Schopenhauer's originality,[37] but this view misses the point of Schopenhauer's actual novelty with respect to Kant's transcendental idealism: his own notion of representation.

The opening line of his main work – "the world is my representation" (WWR1:3/23) – immediately followed by the acknowledgement of Berkeley as "the first to express it definitely" and of "Kant's first mistake" in having neglected it (WWR1:4/24) made clear where Schopenhauer was positioning himself: he stood with Berkeley on idealism. He shared the simplicity of the view that an object is never independent from a subject and renovated Kant's epistemology to accommodate such a simplicity: he eliminated the

[36]Waxman, *Kant's Anatomy of the Intelligent Mind*, chap. 8.
[37]Snow and Snow, "Was Schopenhauer an Idealist?", 633 even claimed that his metaphysics of the will took him "far beyond the conceptual framework of idealism".

categories, combined space and time together with causality as intellectual forms of the experience, and transformed reason into the faculty of conceptual reasoning. Inspired by Berkeley, who did not distinguish between sensory perception and intellectual activity because both are mental operations of the subject, Schopenhauer rejected Kant's distinction between passive sensibility and an active, intellectual process. According to Schopenhauer, there is no passivity: the object is always constructed by the intellectual activity, which combines the forms of space, time, and causality.[38]

Such a simplified Berkeleyan idealism had a non-negligible advantage: it was in stark contrast to the scepticism about the external world. Schopenhauer blamed Descartes' solipsistic interpretation of idealism and followed Kant in claiming that transcendental idealism "is the only means for securing the application to actual objects of one of the most important bodies of cognition – namely, that which mathematics expounds a priori – and for preventing it from being taken for nothing but mere illusion" (*Prolegomena*, 292/43). Admitting objects without a subject was 'meaningless'. On the contrary, the represented world:

> is completely real. […] This is its empirical reality. […] But this is also why the world is not a lie or an illusion: it presents itself as what it is, as representation […]. Only a mind distorted by sophistry would think to argue about its reality. (WWR1:17/36)

Insisting on the term *Vorstellung*, instead of *Erscheinung*, had the same task: *Erscheinung* shared the same root of *Schein* (illusion), and it was time to avoid a linguistic evocation of solipsism. It was not a hypothetical risk: Kant's adversaries had attacked transcendental idealism for its alleged confusion between epistemology and ontology. Schopenhauer's predilection for the term *Vorstellung* is confirmed by his sample English translation of the second annotation of § 13 of the *Prolegomena* (288–9/40–1), which he proposed in a letter from 21 December 1829 (GBr, 122–3). He translated *Erscheinung* as *appearance* and *Vorstellung* as *idea*, which obviously recalled the British empiricist tradition *and* Berkeley. Significantly, it was a passage preceding the one – in the third annotation of § 13 – where Kant contended that only his idealism both prevented the reduction of the world to illusion and grounded scientific knowledge.

As in Kant, Schopenhauer's notion of *Vorstellung* took a stand against scepticism and expressed what the world is to the intellect – or, as Schopenhauer's Berkeley had suggested, object to a subject. Better than in Kant, who had lost himself in the complexity of the categories, representation was explained as stemming from a simple seed – the principle of sufficient reason (WWR1:17–

[38] Another element which specifies Schopenhauer's epistemology and makes it very different from Kant and the philosophical tradition is the role of the body. But discussing this aspect would take far from the main subject of this paper.

18/36–7). This added another advantage over Kant: the explanation of the persistent dispute about the reality of the external world – which originated from an "error of reasoning" related to the "confusion of two forms of the principle of sufficient reason in which the principle of sufficient reason of cognition is transferred into an area in which the principle of sufficient reason of becoming applies" (WWR1:21/40). Finally, the notion of *Vorstellung* suggested the correct way to pose the question about the existence of a mind-independent reality: "What is this world of intuition, apart from being my representation?". The answer would require focusing on "my body of which I am conscious twice over, once as representation and once as will" (WWR1:22/40).

7. Conclusion: Berkeley's role in Schopenhauer's philosophy

In the first edition of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer's vehement criticism of Kant for having missed Berkeley's simple and evident truth 'no object without a subject' expressed a genuine concern: once having revived Plato's view, the only way to escape from the nullification of the world without consenting to a comeback of dogmatic realism was the notion of *Vorstellung* – as *idea* formed by the intellectual activity integrating space, time, and causality. Recalling Berkeley – the Berkeley purged of his less appealing religious notions – was the antidote against the sceptical folly inaugurated by Descartes, or at least could indicate the right direction towards a sane idealism without scepticism. With respect to Kant, Schopenhauer was certain that the appreciation of Berkeley – and not the misinterpretation and refutation of his thought – would have contributed to a coherent critical idealism that would have denied its adversaries any pretext for making their point.

The importance of Berkeley, however, was not only related to a defence of Kant and the vindication of transcendental idealism against its enemies. There were other philosophers – self-proclaimed followers and heirs of Kant's criticism – who actually had perverted the honest idealism of the *Critique* and transformed it into a metaphysical nonsense: the 'sophists' Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. In fact, Berkeley had been a forerunner to Kant as a defender against early-modern dogmatic realism and irrefutable scepticism, but he could even be an ally against the gravest danger that had appeared after the *Critique*: a new metaphysics based on the 'I' as creator.

The references to Berkeley in *The World as Will and Representation* speak in favour of this reading. He was mentioned when a precise definition of the true nature of idealism – in relation to Kant and the post-Kantians – was required. In the Preface to the second edition, for example, Schopenhauer mentioned Berkeley to introduce the discussion of the philosophical generation following Kant, which had betrayed criticism and transcendental idealism (WWR1:XXIV/17). In the case of the extensive analysis of the superiority of

the notion of representation compared to the traditional philosophy conformed to the objects, in § 7, the second edition presented a modified text with respect to the first one and among the variations there was the exclusion of the reference to Berkeley and idealism. It was a choice that strengthened the negative judgement of Fichte's philosophy of the 'I', described as dogmatic, metaphysical, and inauthentic. Notwithstanding the criticism, in the first edition Fichte was credited of being "an idealist in the strict sense of the word (*eigentlich*)" in the context of a brief historical survey of idealism where the specification of its true nature was related to Berkeley (WWR1V:97/569–70.30). The withdrawal of such a historical survey in the second edition – and the elimination of the name of Berkeley – worsened the rebuke of Fichte, now defined as the author of an "illusory philosophy" (*Schein-Philosophie*) starting "from a subject" but deprived of the merit of belonging to the idealistic doctrines (WWR1:38/54).

The role of Berkeley in Schopenhauer's battle against the post-Kantians who perverted idealism is even more evident in the long passage of the Appendix, in the second edition of *The World as Will and Representation*, where he took back the accusation of incoherency against Kant's idealism after having read the first edition of the *Critique* and realized its more genuine idealistic character.[39] Schopenhauer noted that entire passages not included in the second edition offered "a beautifully clear presentation of his [Kant's] resolute idealism" (WWR1:515/462), insisted that Kant's view was very close to Berkeley's, and concluded that the confusion generated by the second edition – with the condemnation of Berkeley in the *Refutation of idealism* and the "the flawed deduction of the thing in itself" – was the occasion for the birth of the pseudo-philosophies of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel (WWR1:517/464).

The theme of Kant's legacy, the question whether an interpretation of Kant should follow the letter or the spirit, and the legitimacy of a research towards the perfecting of criticism were common elements whose different characterization contributed to defining each post-Kantian doctrine. Schopenhauer's importance in those exciting years is generally ascribed to his metaphysics of the will, even because of its importance in the second half of the nineteenth century and as a source for Nietzsche. This view, however, does not do justice to Schopenhauer's project of perfecting Kant with a system whose theory of knowledge was an essential piece. Idealism was a sensitive issue for Schopenhauer: it expressed the originality of his theory of knowledge as representation and defined his place as an authentic Kantian in

[39]The story is quite entertaining and is partially narrated by Schopenhauer himself, who proudly recalled having convinced Johann Karl Friedrich Rosenkranz, at the time editor of Kant's works, of the importance of the 1781 edition of the *Critique*. Actually, Rosenkranz published the first edition and presented the second's variations in appendix. The story is narrated by several biographies of Schopenhauer. See the most recent: Cartwright, *Schopenhauer. A Biography*, 424–9.

contrast to the philosophers of his time. His view was actually quite original: it described Kant as a new, improved Plato; it measured the success of Kant's idealism in the terms of its relationship to Berkeley; it presented the notion of *Vorstellung* as an improvement of both Berkeley's *esse est percipi* and Kant's *Erscheinung*. Schopenhauer insisted that only his idealism had really preserved Kant's transcendental approach and turning to Berkeley was functional to prove his point, for Berkeley had become important during the discussions about the first edition of the *Critique* and the target of Kant's reply to his critics.

Berkeley played a role in guiding both Kant and Schopenhauer to claiming the aspatiotemporal nature of the thing in itself[40] and represented the crossroads where the legacy of Kant's transcendentalism had been decided: *esse est percipi* could become either the germinal philosopheme of a mature idealism that defeated scepticism (as in Kant) and fruitfully combined with metaphysics (as in Schopenhauer) or an outdated dogmatic notion that would destroy Kant's criticism from the inside. The three 'sophists' had chosen the second horn of the alternative and reformulated idealism by repudiating any reference to Berkeley – and thus betraying Kant.

An interpretation of Schopenhauer that satisfies the condition of appreciating the originality of the stance proclaimed by the title of his main work – the world as will and representation – requires the acknowledgement of Berkeley as a pivotal figure in Schopenhauer's view of philosophy and its history. To him, revisiting Berkeley meant reviving the loyalty to Kant and displaying a path of progress from *esse est* percipi to *Erscheinung* and finally to the superior notion of *Vorstellung* – superior because it responded to the sceptical challenge, gave a solution of the real-ideal counterposition, and, last but not least, revealed the subtle betrayal perpetrated by the post-Kantian philosophers of the 'I'.

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Abbreviations

References to Schopenhauer's works are abbreviated according to the Bibliography below. Page numbers refer to the German edition and are followed by reference to the page number of the English translation as listed in the Bibliography.

[40]As shown by Shapshay, "Did Schopenhauer Neglect?".

Citations from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, by page numbers in the original first (A) and second (B) editions, and *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* refer the Akademie edition as listed in the Bibliography.

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