

THE LONGMAN STANDARD HISTORY OF NINETEENTH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY

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◆ PREFACE ◆

Philosophy may not be the oldest profession, but it is the oldest discipline, the source of our views about reality, knowledge, and morality. To understand the revolutionary nature of the evolutionary history of philosophy is to understand ourselves and our world anew. Without the blinders of our answers and inspired by the intellectual intimacy that philosophy affords, the mind is broadened and refreshed. In that sense philosophy is always anything but old—awash with new possibilities for inquiry and understanding, the illuminating questions of philosophy liberate us from the blinding obviousness of present answers, the blinders of our individual and collective biases.

Philosophy progresses, evolves, and rarely stands still. Philosophers continually revise and often overthrow the views of their predecessors—sometimes even those of their own teachers. One of the most famous examples is the sequence of Socrates to Plato to Aristotle. And yet the evolution of thought that philosophy heralds remains much the same. It is the call to wonder, to dispute, to question, to liberate, to ponder, to inquire, to understand everything one can about the whole of our being—reality, knowledge, and morality—without allowing ourselves to become closed off. To behold the whole without being conquered by its vision is the sum and substance of the western intellectual tradition made possible by philosophy—a delicate balance that is anything but delicate when attained.

To see new wisdom in the old and old wisdom in the new is to be not just learned but wise. And to not merely tolerate such expansive openness but to *love* it is what it means to be a philosopher.

This book provides you with everything you need to understand the amazing world of nineteenth-century philosophy. With over 25 of the greatest works by 14 of the most important western philosophers of the nineteenth-century, this volume assembles into one book some of the most profound and edifying ideas from an astounding era of human thought. Suitable for a one-semester course on nineteenth-century philosophy, history of philosophy, history of ideas, or intellectual history, this book is a covert assembly with a covert purpose, to bring the profound philosophy of the nineteenth century to you, but even more importantly to bring you to a profound level of understanding of the ground-breaking ideas of this, one of the most fruitful eras of philosophical thought.

We have divided the book into six standard divisions: Part I, The Legacy of Kant: Avatar of Nineteenth Century Philosophy. Part II, The German Idealists, Part III, The Existentialists, Part IV, The Social Philosophers, Part V, The American Pragmatists and Idealists. Each part opens with a General Introduction that provides an overview of the standard major themes and historical developments of the era. A Prologue opens each chapter, and lets you in on what has come before, so you don't enter the conversation in the middle. Individual Biographical Histories give pertinent details about the life and times of each philosopher, such as Husserl. The purpose is to show you that philosophers are neither divine demigods nor depersonalized thinking machines, but individual human beings with a penchant for grappling with the perennial Big Questions, come what may. Often this has been

perceived as radical because it is. The purpose of the Philosophical Overviews to each philosopher is two-fold: first, to show how that philosopher's thinking about reality, knowledge, and morality integrates into a coherent view; second, to integrate each particular philosopher's ideas into a broader philosophical context. Each reading selection comes with its own concise introduction designed to quicken your entry into the issues and prepare you for what is to come. The selections themselves have been chosen for their profundity and edited to highlight the central importance, while leaving in the all-important methods, processes, and development of the views expressed therein. Where translations are involved, we have in each case selected the most lucid. The Study Questions at the end of each reading provide comprehension questions as well as wider discussion questions; these are for you to test yourself to see how well you understand what you have read. The Philosophical Bridges, such as Marx's Influence, show how what has come before makes possible what comes after, and that philosophy's perennial questions lead to ever-more evolving views.

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→ GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The history of philosophy is sometimes presented as a genealogy with three main roots: the ancient Greek period, the modern, and the twentieth century/contemporary period. To make the extraordinary developments, upheavals, and innovations of nineteenth century wisdom a mere offshoot is no less a mistake than to ignore the medieval era, for two reasons. First, to simply leap from modern to contemporary thought makes what is going on today in philosophy so unmotivated as to be virtually incomprehensible to students and novices. This is no less true in science and mathematics, since neither quantum mechanics nor, for example, intuitionistic mathematics can appear as anything but bizarre without a thorough understanding of advances in idealism and idealist-inspired thought of the nineteenth century. More specifically, the role of mind and consciousness in contemporary thought owes far less to Berkeley's subjective idealism than the objective idealism of Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling, which in the twentieth century crossed over into physics via Niels Bohr, while in England, T. H. Green and F. H. Bradley and B. Bosanquet in France

Second, to view philosophical works and the systems based on them merely as stepping stones in some great evolutionary scheme is no less grave an error than viewing artworks of a particular era as stepping stones to what happened in subsequent eras. It misses the intrinsic value of philosophy. Baroque art, no less so than Renaissance or nineteenth century art and music is not made irrelevant by Picasso or Pollock. On the contrary, they are and should be appreciated for their own value. This is no less true in philosophy.

The Origins of Nineteenth Century Thought: The Kantian Legacy

developed similar, absolute idealist, views of reality.

This having been said, it must be pointed out that philosophy in the nineteenth Century revolved one way or the other around the groundbreaking developments resulting from the work of the great German enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant. His rejection of the assumptions underlying both rationalist and empiricist traditions opened up entire new lines of philosophical inquiry. No less important are his powerful demonstrations that sensation (i.e., sensible intuition) and the understanding (i.e., concepts) are both necessary for the having of experience as we know it. In this way Kant managed to accommodate in his vast system a complex but profound synthesis of all previous systems. Part of his success lay in his extraordinary ability to resolve the apparent contradictions between those earlier, modern, opposing systems of thought. His metaphysics is a bridge between idealism and realism, his epistemology a bridge between empiricism and rationalism, and his moral theory a secular rendition of a rule-based (deontological) universalism.

Kant's vast influence extended well beyond philosophy and science. All of Europe waxed metaphysical after Kant. Writers and composers like Schiller, Goethe, and Beethoven studied and quoted him in their own works. Ficthe, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer were inspired by his works to develop their own vast subsequent philosophies. Kant's criticism of the limits of rationality and his integration of feeling and emotion, especially with regard to the primacy of the will, inspired Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's voluntarism, Bergson's intuitionism, and even the pragmatism of William James owes more to Kant than to any other philosopher.

Kant's transcendental idealism inspired all subsequent idealists, starting with the Germans, most notably Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. While all of these philosophers agreed with Kant's view of *phenomena*, broadly construed as appearances, perceptions, ideas, and representations as presented to consciousness, that is, "things in the mind," they disagreed with or in some cases rejected entirely his notion of *noumena*, broadly construed as what exists independently of consciousness, "things-in-themselves." The problem, as they saw it, is that there is a deep inconsistency in Kant's equivocation about whether anything can be said, known, or intuited about the noumenal world and the noumenal self, especially with regard to the will. Their notion of the Absolute as constituting by thought for the ideal objects in space and time resolves the inconsistency without falling into the solipsistic personal idealism of Berkeley. Schopenhauer, defending Kant, builds an elaborate scaffolding for the noumenal as constituted in and by the will, thereby altogether avoiding Hegel's notion of the Absolute.

The Influence of Hegel

In spite of Schopenhauer's brilliant efforts, Hegel's philosophy captured the thought of Britain and the United States. Ironically, however, the subsequent study of Hegel helped propel Kant's ideas forward, especially with regard to the idea that here was a way to save realism in philosophy without having to disregard phenomenalism or representationalism.

Especially after the French Revolution, some philosophers took a great interest in history: does history show a pattern of progress? Hegel proposed an idealist reading of history on a grand scale. He builds with Kantian thoroughness an idealist metaphysical system in which the mind does not merely structure and regulate reality but wholly generates and constitutes it, up to and including itself. What he calls "the Absolute," the world as it exists in itself, is mind or spirit, such that everything that is, was or will be is an evolving form within the world-mind, where the forces of evolution are driven not by events in the past or present, but by the still uncreated future.

Partly in reaction to the Enlightenment emphasis on reason, some nineteenth century thinkers stressed the importance of the non-rational side of human nature, such as feelings and the will. In the first half of the century, this took the form of Romanticism, which stressed the importance of the emotions. Later, it took the form of an emphasis on the will, especially in the works of Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche.

Mind and World: the Quest for Reality

Of no less importance was philosophy's influence on the thinking of the educated common man of the time. There are two commonly accepted philosophical views, shared by most ordinary individuals:

- 1. There exists a mind-independent real world and
- 2. This mind-independent real world is directly experienced.

These two beliefs tended to persist among the general public in spite of the various challenges posed to such "naïve realism" by those who called themselves the "new scientists" (Kepler, Galileo, Descartes) and the advent of modern philosophy and Kant, who even explained (with his notion of the transcendental illusion) why this should be so. But in the nineteenth century the wider public began to be affected by the various views in profound new ways, first mostly among the educated classes though this would soon filter down to ordinary citizens through the impact of a new breed of socially minded philosophers with an eye for revolution.

While many philosophers took different stands, pro and con, with regard to (1), hardly any philosopher accepted (2) at face value. Thus for instance subjective idealists, most notably Berkeley, denied wholeheartedly the existence of any such mind-independent world; whereas representationalists, most notably Kant, do not deny (1) but (2), arguing that there is a real world, in part created by mind—the phenomenal world—and created in part by things in themselves as they exist independently of the mind—the noumenal world. What all these views have in common is that any two-way relation between things in themselves and the mind must be explained in terms of individual minds affecting one and the same public reality. In other words, the underlying presupposition is that there exists one world, and that we all exist as different individuals in that one common world. The one real world is thus, ultimately, objective. Several extraordinary philosophers of the nineteenth century challenged this presupposition in a number of different ways, starting with Hegel and Schopenhauer, and followed by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. By arguing that the thing-in-itself is the will, that the body itself is an expression of the will, Schopenhauer will make the case that subjectivity itself can be transcended in the social arena. Reality is an agreement among minds.

The Social Philosophers

But more than that. Following Kant, these philosophers went on to inspire Marx, Mill, and others to argue that the ego can create reality first by convincing other minds to think as you do and, even more importantly, by creating the right sort of social institutions. The process of building a new sort of individual not just through new and improved epistemologies and metaphysics but through the design of social institutions, became the sort of rallying cry heard around the world, as for instance Marx insisted: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways: the point however is to change it." Thus the shift: in Marx's view it is not individual consciousness that makes reality but, rather, social reality that makes individual consciousness.

The impact of these philosophical systems thus helped herald the new industrial revolution. The traditional end goal of philosophy up until this time was thought, ideas, or the attainment of certain special sorts of cognitive or emotive states. The nineteenth century shift into the social arena was thus brought about in part by a philosophical sea change concerning the question of what reality itself is. Instead of manipulating thoughts, propositions, opinions, and so on, the task of philosophy becomes constructing the lived reality. Thus Marx's dialectical materialism "turns Hegel upside down." Philosophy becomes less the realm of introspective analysis and more the realm of social, political, and economic activity.

American Pragmatism and Idealism

At the same time, in the United States philosophy had begun to take new shapes in the literary works of Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, and took root in the profound new philosophical works of the first American philosophers, Peirce, James, Royce, and Dewey, the originators of two closely related movements: American pragmatism and American idealism. Before Kant, Hegel, and Nietzche, the common view among philosophers was that words are inert, ineffectual instruments employed by us to make meaning. Peirce, inspired by Kant, Hegel, and Nietzche, turns this relationship the other way around; the world, according to Peirce and his fellow pragmatists and idealists, is made, as are we ourselves, by signs, which are to words what numbers are to numerals, namely, logical functions. As such, they do not need to be created to exist. This is a notion inspired by Fichte's act (Section II).

It makes little sense, however, to delve further even in this most general introductory essay into any of these philosophies without first laying the groundwork for understanding the key concepts and ideas that either originated or came to a head in the work of Immanuel Kant. For this reason we begin, with Section I, with one of the best overviews of Kantian philosophy ever written, by his nineteenth century champion, Arthur Schopenhauer.



◆ THE LEGACY OF KANT: ◆ AVATAR OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY PHILOSOPHY

CRITIQUE OF KANTIAN PHILOSOPHY

Appendix to *The World as Will and Presentation*¹
Arthur Schopenhauer

In this, one of the best introductions to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant ever written, Schopenhauer explains Kant's extraordinarily innovative and original, albeit extremely difficult, ideas. His goal is to uncover the true greatness of Kant's genius obscured by the glosses of his contemporaries, many of whom you will meet in the first section. He lays out Kant's essential doctrines and shows why they will forever alter the way philosophy is, can, and should be done. The most important of these doctrines, what he calls Kant's greatest achievement, is the distinction between phenomena and things-in-themselves.

He is careful, however, to avoid the superficial ways in which the distinction can easily be mired, and thereby dismissed, by a cursory understanding of what Kant means and why the problem cannot be avoided. Moreover, Schopenhauer tries to put Kantianism in a broader, global perspective by making bold, dramatic explanatory comparisons between Kant's system and the Hindu philosophy of the Vedas and Puranas.

However, Schopenhauer is not content merely to elevate Kant to what he feels is Kant's rightful position as one of the greatest philosophers of all time. Schopenhauer is critical of what he perceives as varying degrees of mistakes that, had Kant not made them, would have made him less prone to the attacks of his contemporaries. For instance, he argues that Kant did not do proper justice to the great modern British empiricist George Berkeley's insight, "no object without a subject," the cornerstone of subjective idealism. Kant's "grave mistake" was his failure to distinguish properly between perceptual and abstract cognition. This provides the impetus to Schopenhauer's new and original Kant-

inspired philosophical system, expressed in the selection in the Schopenhauer section (4, Section I), where you will also find his biographical history and a general philosophical overview of his work.

It is much easier to display the failings and errors in the work of a great spirit than to articulate its value in explicit and complete terms. For the failings are something individual and finite, which therefore allow a complete survey. By contrast, it is precisely the mark that genius impresses on its works that what is excellent in them is unfathomable and inexhaustible; thus they indeed become never-aging teachers for many succeeding centuries. The masterpiece consummated by a truly great spirit will always have so deep and pervasive an effect on the whole of the human race that one could not calculate the distance of the centuries and lands within the reach of its illuminating influence. This will always be so. For however cultivated and rich the times may have been in which the work itself arose, yet genius always rises like a palm tree over the ground in which it is rooted.

But a deeply penetrating and widespread effect of this sort cannot occur suddenly, on account of the wide distance between the genius and ordinary humanity. The insight that this one individual has drawn immediately from life and the world in *one* lifetime—won and set forth for others as won and readied for them—can despite that fact not become the possession of humanity all at once; for the latter simply has no faculty for receiving as great as that which the former has for giving. Rather, even after surviving battle with unworthy opponents who would contest the life of the immortal from birth, and choke off humanity's salvation in the germ (comparable to the snake in the cradle of Hercules), that insight must then first wander the byways of countless false inter-

pretations and distorted applications, must survive attempts to unite it with old errors, and so live in a state of battle until there arises a new, unprejudiced generation for it that, even from its youth, gradually receives the content from the source in fragments through a thousand derivative channels, assimilates it bit by bit, and so comes to share in the benefaction which, proceeding from that great spirit, was destined to flow to humanity. Thus slowly goes the education of the human race, of that weak and yet recalcitrant pupil of the genius.

So too, only in time will the entire force and importance of Kant's doctrine become obvious, once the spirit of the times itself, gradually reshaped by the influence of that doctrine, altered in its most crucial and innermost features, comes to bear living witness to the power of that colossal spirit. But I would in no way here, in rash anticipation, take on the thankless role of Calchas and Cassandra.² Let it be but granted me, following what has been stated, to regard Kant's works as still most young, while many nowadays view them as already antiquated, indeed have laid them aside as over and done with or, as they put it, left them behind, and others, made bold by that fact, altogether ignore them and, with an iron brow, go on philosophizing about God and the soul under the presuppositions of the old realistic dogmatism and its scholasticism—which is as if one would have the doctrines of the alchemists apply in modern chemistry. In any case, Kant's works have no need of faint praises from me, but will of themselves eternally praise their master and, even if perhaps not in its letter, but in its spirit, live forever on earth.

Schopenhauer, from Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, translated by Richard E. Aquila, (Mannheim: F. A. Bockhaus, 1988). Copyright ©; Richard E. Aquila, 2005. Written especially for this volume.

¹Translation based on the third edition (1859) of Volume One of *Die Welt als Wille and Vorstellung* (first edition, 1819), according to the version of the text edited by Julius Frauenstädt, revised by Arthur Hübscher, and published as reviewed by Angelika Hubscher, as Volume Two of Schopenhauer's *Sämtliche Werke* (Mannheim: F. A. Brockhaus, 1988 [4th ed.]).

²Figures in Greek mythology possessed of prophetic gifts.

Of course, if we look back on the immediate upshot of his doctrines, thus on the efforts and doings in the domain of philosophy during the time since elapsed, we find confirmation of a most disheartening pronouncement of Goethe's: "Just as the water that is displaced by a ship immediately plunges back together behind it, so when preeminent spirits have pushed error aside and made way for themselves, it is by nature most rapidly recomposed behind them" (Poetry and Truth, Part III, p. 521).1 However, this period of time has been only an episode that, to be counted as part of the abovementioned fate of every new and great insight, is now unmistakably near its end, with its so persistently driven bubble now finally bursting. One is coming generally to be aware that actual and serious philosophy is still standing where Kant left it. In any case, I do not recognize anything as having happened between him and me; therefore, I take him as my immediate point of departure. . . .

I am altogether unable to justify the disagreements with Kant that nevertheless exist, however, except by accusing him of error on the particular points and exposing mistakes that he has made. Therefore, I must proceed in an altogether polemical manner against Kant in this appendix, and indeed with seriousness and with total engagement; for only thus can the error that clings to Kant's doctrine get sloughed off and its truth shine all the more brightly and stand more surely . . . So as nonetheless to avert any semblance of ill intent in the eyes of others, I would first further display my deeply felt reverence and gratitude toward Kant by briefly enunciating his

main achievement as it appears to my eyes, and in particular from such general points of view that I am not compelled to touch on the points on which I must later contradict him.

Kant's greatest achievement is his distinction between phenomenon² and thing-in-itself—on the basis of a demonstration that between things and ourselves there stands always the intellect,3 on account of which they cannot be cognized with respect to what they may be in themselves. He was led upon this path by Locke (see Prolegomena to any Metaphysics, § 13, Note 2).4 The latter had demonstrated that the secondary qualities of things, such as sound, odor, color, hardness, softness, smoothness, and the like, being grounded in affections of the senses, did not pertain to objective bodies, to things in themselves, to which he rather attributed only the primary qualities, that is, those which merely presuppose space and impenetrability, thus extension, figure, solidity, number, motility. But this easily discoverable Lockean distinction, which remains merely on the surface of things, was but a youthful prelude, as it were, to the Kantian. The latter, namely, proceeding from an incomparably higher standpoint, explains all of what Locke had allowed to count as qualitates primariae, that is, qualities of the thing-in-itself, as likewise pertaining only to its appearance in our faculty of apprehension, and indeed precisely for the reason that we are cognizant a priori of its conditions, space, time, and causality. Thus Locke had removed from the thing-in-itself the share that the sense organs have in their appearance. Kant, however, then additionally removed the share had by brain-functions (although

¹Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, from Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung and Wahrheit (From my Life. Poetry and Truth [1811–1814]), Book 15.

²Erscheinung. Following my translation of Schopenhauer's main work, I depart from standard recent translations of Kant as taken on his own, and use both "appearance" and "phenomenon" for Erscheinung. I use the former, however, only where the "appearing" of perceptual phenomena is in question.

³Intellekt. Both Schopenhauer and Kant also use this term interchangeably with Verstand ("understanding"). But they do not agree as to what it involves. Schopenhauer is also for the moment ignoring the role of Ansehaumg in Kant (See below for this term.) Unlike Kant, be consistently regards the latter as a function of "intellect," and he sees it as one of Kant's main failings that he was not only unclear as to why this should not be the case, but also inconsistent on the question.

⁴Prolegomena zu einer jeden kunftigen Metaphysk, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können (Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics that will be able to come forth as Science [1783]).

not under this name),¹ whereby the distinction between phenomenon and thing-in-itself now acquired an infinitely greater significance and a very much deeper sense. To this purpose, he had to take up the great distinction between our cognition that is a priori and that which is *a posteriori*,² which had not yet ever been done before him with fitting rigor and completeness, nor with distinct consciousness; this accordingly became the main subject of his profound investigations. . . .

If, in accordance with the above, the distinction between phenomenon and thing-in-itself, thus the doctrine of the utter diversity of the ideal and real, is the hallmark of the Kantian philosophy, the arrival soon thereafter of a declaration of the absolute identity of the two is a sad confirmation of the pronouncement by Goethe earlier mentioned: all the more so given that it rested on nothing but the windbaggery of [purely] intellectual perception,³ and was accordingly only a return to the crudeness of the common viewpoint, masked under the imposing ways of elegant airs, bombast, and sheer nonsense. It became the point of departure worthy of the still grosser nonsense of the plodding and spiritless⁴ Hegel.

As then Kant's distinction of the phenomenon from the thing-in-itself, understood in the manner set forth above, far surpassed everything that had ever gone before in the profundity and thoughtful awareness of its grounding, it was also infinitely consequential in its results. For entirely in its own terms, in an utterly new manner, in a new aspect, and found upon a new path, he depicted therein the same truth that Plato already tirelessly repeats and in his own terminology usually expresses thus: this world appearing to the senses has no true being but only a ceaseless becoming, it is and also is not, and apprehension of it is not so much a case of cognition as of delusion. . . .

The same truth, depicted again in an entirely different way, is also one of the main doctrines of the Vedas and Puranas, the doctrine of Maya, by which nothing other was understood than precisely what Kant calls phenomenon as opposed to thing in itself. For the work of Maya is said to be precisely this visible world in which we exist, a conjured illusion, an insubstantial semblance inherently without essence, comparable to optical illusions and dreams, a veil that envelops human consciousness, a something of which it is equally false and equally true to say that it is as that it is not....

All of this rests, however, on a fundamental distinction between dogmatic and *critical*, or *transcendental*, philosophy. Anyone who would form a distinct idea of this and render it present with an example can do it in all brevity by perusing, as a spec-

Kant himself did not attribute the functions by which things are determined to "appear" to us as brain-functions. He would at most have conceded they might be grounded in some "thing (or things) in itself' that appears to us, qua "phenomenon," as brain-functions. And despite often putting it in stronger-sounding terms, Schopenhauer at most holds that the matter composing brain-states is the essential medium for the cognitive functions in question. In turn, the inner being of that medium—Schopenhauer's "thing-in-itself"—is what he titles "will," meaning: an underlying force or energy that we are only able to describe in the misleading terms of what we call "our own" will. But over and above that medium and its inner being, there is also what Schopenhauer calls, in the main body of his work, the "pure" element in cognition, that is, precisely that by virtue of which any brain-state is indeed a medium for any sort of cognition in the first place. Thus in the main body of the work (e.g., § 24 in Book Two), Schopenhauer is forceful in his rejection of materialistic reductions of cognition, even precisely when attention is granted to the role of underlying forces.

²That is, cognition whose grounds have a "prior" or a "posterior" (derivative) status with respect to the possible appearance of anything to one's senses. The distinction has different connotations in different contexts (e.g., regarding the origin of "ideas," the grounding of judgments and knowledge-claims, etc.), but should in any case not be taken to rest, in either Kant or Schopenhauer, on the notion that we are actually *cognizant* of anything prior to our engagement in sensory experience.

³*intellektualer Anschauung*. Again, Anschauung essentially involves intellect for Schopenhauer himself. The objection here, aimed mainly against Fichte, is to the idea of perception *wholly* generated by way of the intellect (as opposed to intellect responding to sensation). Throughout, bracketed material in the text is interpolated by the translator.

⁴A joke in the light of the central role of spirit (Geist) in Hegel's philosophy.

⁵Sanskrit writings that provided the basis for much of Hinduism. As opposed to the Puranas, containing various myths of gods and heroes, the Vedas (of which the well-known *Bhagvadgita* is a part), were permitted only to the higher, Biahmanic, orders.