DOI: 10.1080/01445340.2023.2172306

History and Philosophy of Logic

J. Lemanski (ed.). *Language, Logic, and Mathematics in Schopenhauer*. Springer Studies in Universal Logic. Cham: Birkhāuser, 2020. 1-326 pp., £64.99. ISBN 978-3-030-33089-7.

Reviewed by Christopher Ryan, *Department of Education, London Metropolitan University, 166-220 Holloway Road, London N7 8DB, England*.
christopher.ryan@londonmet.ac.uk

Schopenhauer is best known as the metaphysician of the will and ethicist of its negation. Studies of his thought naturally gravitate towards these two, dramatic portions of his system, regarding the epistemological framework he outlined in the first book of *The World as Will and Representation* as little more than the prelude or overture to the central acts concerning the will's objectification, its gradual withdrawal through art and morality, and his system's soteriological finale.

It is commendable, therefore, that the authors of the papers collected in this volume have decided to pause and linger awhile at the first part of Schopenhauer's system, his representation theory, to investigate the abiding value and contemporary relevance of his views on the origin and function of, respectively, language, logic and mathematics (especially geometry).

Stemming from the conference *Mathematics, Language and Logic in Schopenhauer*, held at FernUniversität in Hagen, Germany in December 2017, the papers are organised into the three sections denoted in the volume's title, though common motifs reappear throughout. One dominant motif addressed by all authors is the sharp distinction that Schopenhauer drew between perceptual or intuitive representations (*anschauliche Vorstellungen*), and conceptual or abstract representations (*abstrakte Vorstellungen*). Schopenhauer claimed that the latter received all their content from the former, being nothing but compressed reflections of original intuitions, with the result that rational or abstract thought tends to be given cursory attention in his published works.

That said, a strength of the volume is that, irrespective of Schopenhauer's theory of the thoroughly dependent nature of rational thought, the collected papers provide a corrective sense of the depth and range of Schopenhauer's engagement with topics related to language, logic and mathematics by supplementing the attention they receive in his published works with the extended treatment they are given in the 1820 manuscripts for his *Berlin Lectures*, yet to be translated into English.[1] By way of illustrating the contrast, whereas Schopenhauer's discussion of abstract representations takes up 61 pages of the Cambridge

[1] Schopenhauer's *Berlin Lectures* were originally edited and published by Franz Mockrauer in 1913 (*Schopenhauer 1913*) with a reprint edited by Volker Spierling reissued by the same publisher in 1986. A new edition in four volumes, edited by Daniel Schubbe, Judith Werntgen Schmidt and Daniel Elon, was released between 2017-2022 (*Schopenhauer 2017ff.*).

translation of volume I of *The World as Will and Representation*, 177 pages of Volker Spierling's edition of the *Berlin Lectures* is devoted to abstract cognition. As a result, the papers contain extended discussions of themes alighted upon briefly in Schopenhauer's more familiar, published works – such as the primacy of pictorial representations of spatial relations in geometry; Euler-type diagrams to illustrate logical relations between concepts; Schopenhauer's view of the history of logic, including his conviction, common in the 19th century, that it is an already-perfected science with a natural origin in reason; and his account of the relation between intuitive representations, concepts, and the sensory signs of language, with several papers relating their expositions of Schopenhauer's view on these topics to contemporary developments.

It is a reflection of the embryonic stage of research into Schopenhauer on language, logic and mathematics that the volume, informed by the material from Schopenhauer's *Berlin Lectures*, is the site of considerable debate: which is of course a virtue. The section on language opens with a trio of papers by Matthias Koßler, Michal Dobrzański and Jens Lemanski, which question, on different routes, the purely representationalist-instrumentalist account of linguistic meaning commonly attributed to Schopenhauer, finding evidence of a use-theory, which in the papers by Dobrzański and Lemanski is identified as a precursor to Wittgenstein's contextual / use theory of meaning in *Philosophical Investigations*. The following three papers by Gunnar Schumann, Sascha Dümig and Michel-Antoine Xhignesse tend to rebut this thesis, by reasserting Schopenhauer's references to the thorough dependence of conceptual thought, and hence language, on primary representations of perception.

The papers in the section on logic approach the topic from a variety of directions, including Schopenhauer's conviction that logic has no history proper, having been founded in its essentials since Aristotle (Valentin Pluder, Anna-Sophie Heinemann), and so merely tracks the natural operations of reason (Hubert Martin Schüler and Jens Lemanski). Schopenhauer was therefore convinced that the study of logic resulted in no practical benefits, but nevertheless commended its study using visual representations of logical relations between concepts in Euler-type diagrams, from which all judgements and inferences could be derived in accordance with the principle of sufficient reason of knowing (Amirouche Moktefi). Somewhat challenging Schopenhauer's conviction that logic is ahistorical, papers in this section also discuss contemporary developments in logic, while also illustrating how some of his own innovations might have anticipated these (Lorenz Demey, Jean-Yves Beziau). Specifically, papers in this section discuss Schopenhauer's relation to historical authors on logic, including Aristotle, Galen, and the logic of Port-Royal; near contemporaries of Schopenhauer, such as Euler, Lambert and Boole; and the relations between Schopenhauer's logic and subsequent or modern developments, instituted by the Lvov-Warsaw School, the Göttingen School, and the visual inference laboratory at Indiana, among others.

The final section, on mathematics, naturally focusses more on geometry rather than arithmetic, in recognition of Schopenhauer's striking challenge to the propriety of demonstrative proof in geometry, which latter method employs the principle of sufficient reason of knowing to deduct theorems from unquestioned axioms (Marco Segala). In accordance with his preference for intuition over reason, Schopenhauer was highly critical of both rationalism in philosophy as well as the standard view of geometry (Laura Follesa), and so contended that the axioms of Euclid are properly founded on pure a priori constructions of

spatial relations, and hence the principle of sufficient reason of being. Two papers in this section (Jason M. Costanzo, Michael J. Bevan) take opposing sides on Schopenhauer's position that use of pictorial representations of spatial relations is a trustworthy geometrical procedure, as opposed to merely a pedagogic tool (a debate that is similarly applicable to Schopenhauer's use of Euler-type diagrams in logic).

In sum, the volume is a highly commendable reminder to Schopenhauer scholars, especially those working in Anglophone philosophy, of the significance of the *Berlin Lectures* for research into Schopenhauer's account of reason. It will also be useful for convincing philosophers of language, logic and mathematics that Schopenhauer is more than a metaphysician of the will and ethicist of its denial, consultation of whose works may provide a source of inspiration for their current projects.

References

Schopenhauer, A. 1913. *Philosophische Vorlesungen*, in F. Mockrauer, P. Deussen (eds.). *Handschriftlicher Nachlaß. Vols. 9-10.* München: Piper.

Schopenhauer, A. 2017ff. *Vorlesung über Die gesamte Philosophie*, 4 Vols, ed. by D. Schubbe, J. Werntgen Schmidt and D. Elon. Hamburg: Meiner.

Schopenhauer, A. 2010. *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. I. Translated and edited by J. Norman, A. Welchman and C. Janaway, with an Introduction by C. Janaway. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.