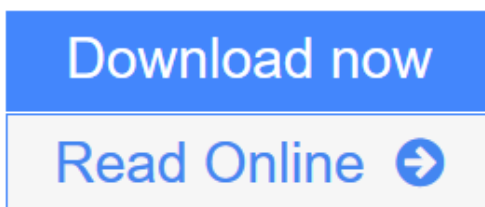




# On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason

*Arthur Schopenhauer , Mme. Karl Hillebrand (Translator)*



# On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason

*Arthur Schopenhauer , Mme. Karl Hillebrand (Translator)*

**On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason** Arthur Schopenhauer , Mme. Karl Hillebrand (Translator)

A disciple of Immanuel Kant, Arthur Schopenhauer took the Kantian concept that all knowledge derives from experience and broadened it to conclude that our experience of the world is necessarily subjective and influenced by our own intellect and biases, and that reality is but an extension of our own will. This is the basis of all of Schopenhauer's thinking, and here, he offers an essential foundation for understanding and appreciating all of his work. First produced as his doctoral dissertation in 1813, these two essays-"On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason" and "On the Will in Nature"-were revised and published by the author in 1847; this 1889 edition represents its first translation into the English language. Students of philosophy and of 19th-century culture will find this a demanding but satisfying read. The writings of German philosopher ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER (1788-1860) were a profound influence on art and aesthetics, music and literature in the 19th century. Among his many writings, *The World as Will and Idea* (1819) is considered his masterpiece.

## On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason Details

Date : Published 2007 by Cosimo, Inc. (first published 1813)

ISBN : 9781602063587

Author : Arthur Schopenhauer , Mme. Karl Hillebrand (Translator)

Format : Paperback 412 pages

Genre : Philosophy, Nonfiction, European Literature, German Literature, Metaphysics

 [Download On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Rea ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient R ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason** Arthur Schopenhauer , Mme. Karl Hillebrand (Translator)

---

## From Reader Review On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason for online ebook

### Josh Anderson says

I'm not going to give this a rating until I familiarize myself more with Leibniz and Kant's philosophies, and what exactly is Schopenhauer's polemic against Kant's Critique. Some chapters come alive with wild imagery, with no reference points needed. The only reason I read this is because I started to read *The World as W&R*, and he tells the reader to stop reading unless they're familiar with "On the Principle," so I went and found it online and read it a lot faster than I thought I would, but a lot of really defining what is being laid out here would take diagramming these Aristotelian principles and tracing their definition throughout modern philosophy. It is evident that Schopenhauer's body of work is more circular than linear, and I wouldn't mind coming back to this essay after reading *W as W&R*. I'd recommend this to anyone that enjoys Aristotle, which is probably not that many people, and certainly anyone who has enjoyed Nietzsche - as N. uses Schopenhauer as a starting point for a great many ideas in his philosophy. It really starts to get interesting in this essay when Schopenhauer starts referencing "idée occulte" from such thinkers as Pico de Mirandola and Giordano Bruno. The next essay, "On The Will of Nature" may be my next read instead of going straight to his core work. I have to admit that chapters with titles like "Animal Magnetism and Magic" right behind "Sinology" (the study of Chinese language, customs, etc.) have me very curious.

---

### Jake Yaniak says

There is probably no better explanation of Transcendental Idealism than Schopenhauer's *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*. Schopenhauer was an incredibly skilled philosopher, with a cutting wit as sharp as his intellect. He comes across a bit petty when he criticizes Hegel. But if you've ever tried to study Hegel you'll find his frustration with the other philosopher quite understandable.

---

### Frank Spencer says

has important information about causation

---

### Lucas Chance says

My brain hurts.

Phenomenology has never really been my favorite subject, but it is interesting seeing this connection develop here. I am going through all of Schopenhauer's works. He refers to this at the key to his system, but I am much more interested in his ethics and aesthetics work.

---

### Kamal says



classes of objects and corresponding intellectual constructs for which sufficient reason can be obtained by the subject. For Schopenhauer, the phenomenal world and the subject are inextricably linked or "inseparable correlates," a subjective condition paving the way for the centerpiece of his philosophical system: the thing-in-itself, or the Will. A powerful work of Kantian metaphysics by one of philosophy's most lucid minds.

---

### **MJD says**

Besides liking the book as a whole, I really enjoyed the asides here and there where he paused the book to either declare his love for Kant or his hatred for Hegel.

---

### **Alex Lee says**

Schopenhauer finds it necessary to rescue noumena causa from Kant by calibrating our human experience to these four grounds of causation. These four grounds for Schopenhauer arise naturally due to different cuts in reasoning's consistency. Admittedly these grounds are somewhat arbitrary, but he is unable to find much connection between these grounds except for their ability to highlight concepts. In this Schopenhauer is very much a follower of Kant.

I, too, do sometimes find Kant to be too airy. But that conceptual distant is necessary to highlight principle "noumenal" connection between disparate phenomenon. Schopenhauer can be thought of as being a half step so as to try and bring Kant back. In the process Schopenhauer seems to find the most objectional point being Kant's misuse of the term "ground". Ground here is another way of denoting various cuts, "levels" of rationality for Schopenhauer, so by no means is four the only way to arrange these levels, as we can provide a multitude of differing reasons, each of which Kant would most likely state as being chimeral and undecidable in isolation.

What is of interest though, is that like Kant, Schopenhauer calibrates human action to will (desire). Unlike Kant, Schopenhauer seems to find that will is more radically aligned to create objects as well, not just through the platitudes of a noumenon as a morality but also existentially. Schopenhauer seems to find that the actual physical world is created through repetition of various consistencies like a wheelbarrow traveling the same ground in the same way as to make a rut... this dissolving of the phenomenal eliminates the thing-in-itself from view as an independence of human will. As a result, Schopenhauer requires another ground (having eliminated Kant's ground) thus, Schopenhauer finds everything as emerging from reason as a geometry of which causation is but a mode of extension.

In some ways, Schopenhauer is like Descartes in seeing everything as a consistency constituted through a rational mentality. This is an interesting move which eventually finds its full expression with Husserl (perhaps independently of Schopenhauer) but the move to remap all in terms of rationality is perhaps too much, and allows Schopenhauer far too much freedom to disregard the world as excessive chimera, when in fact it becomes more likely that Schopenhauer falls prey to chimera himself. How else can he claim that his fourfold root is the actual calibration of that is an optimization of understanding?

He can't. He can only show us how this view is possible, not that it is all encompassing above all other views, in part because he can't really evaluate other views except through a neutral term, which he then goes forth and questions, as there can be no real ground as any one thing requires another thing.

In this Schopenhauer is correct, all is connected through conception and rationalization -- but rather than end

up with a Leibnizian monad or a Deleuzian rhizome, he reverts to a loose Kantian model of mid-modernism reasoning that cannot recognize that radical groundlessness that Schopenhauer is courting except to insist on it in terms of zero (void) or infinity (all).

What would help Schopenhauer in this, to find a quantized view of all through all else, is for him to give up the very instrument he cannot give up; to grasp that unlike Kant's insistence on a faculty of pure reason there are in fact an indeterminate number of reason(ing)s... that reason may be sufficient but it is not the only One.

---

## Nick says

Arthur told us to read this as the introduction to *The World as Will and Representation*, and boy was he right. Schopenhauer explains his treatment of Kant's philosophy so succinctly that WWR is really an exposition of what is written here. The strangest thing about Schopenhauer to me when I first approached him was his fixation on causality. You don't find a lot of thinkers so fascinated with the principle of sufficient reason. It is usually taken as a given. But it does form the basis of his whole system, which is why this is the proper introduction to his thought.

Before reading this, it is necessary to have some familiarity with Plato and Kant, as Schopenhauer also told us in the introduction to WWR. The two things that one must approach this work which are found in Plato and Kant are 1) there is a difference between how the world appears to us and how it really is (Plato) & 2) we cannot go from this appearance to the thing in itself; the division of subject and object is fundamental (Kant).

Given these two insights, the purpose of this work is to explore what Schopenhauer thinks is the general rule governing what we can know, which manifests itself in any attempt to understand "the world". It is also helpful to read Schopenhauer's criticism of Kant's philosophy to understand how Schopenhauer's treatment of the division of subject and object differs from that of Kant. The difference is that Arthur took the idealism associated with George Berkeley seriously. That is, an object is known by a subject and cannot be considered as just "out there". Without the subject the world as object disappears. The "external" world is in some way connected to us, as we are to it. It goes both ways.

Most importantly, it is downright foolish and misleading to say that objects "cause" our representations. For causality is something that our knowing mind projects onto reality. Again without the knowing subject this world as object disappears, and so we cannot say these objects cause our sensations. Rather they are responsible for them, we attribute to these objects a reason. But if we try that, we must then explain how it is they are responsible for these effects ad infinitum, and so we discover that the principle of sufficient reason itself is fundamental to understanding and cannot be invoked to explain "the world" or "the thing in itself". It is imparted by our own consciousness.

Kant described his philosophy as transcendental idealism and empirical realism, and George Berkeley's philosophy as material (empirical) idealism. Transcendental refers to knowledge beyond experience, empirical to the existence of objects known to the senses. Kant thought knowledge beyond experience is restricted to the subject (as phenomena), but that the objects of experience exist independently of the subject (as noumena, the thing-in-itself). Schopenhauer's philosophy I think can be described as transcendental idealism and empirical idealism: knowledge beyond experience is restricted to the subject and the objects of experience do not exist independently of the subject.

What the *Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* does is to ground sufficient reason as an explanation for various things we know, but not to invoke an explanation for it. That would require going to

this noumenal world (which is dealt with in WWR).

Sufficient reason is just that something is only explained with reference to something else of the same nature, sufficient to explain its existence, usually taken to mean causality. Nothing comes from nothing, something comes from something. This being based on the fundamental division of subject and object. Both have no meaning without the other. It is owing to the basic relation between different things that a reason is to be provided for something, which only is in relation to what else is.

Aristotle attempted to separate different uses of sufficient reason into four as did Schopenhauer. These were material, final, formal, and efficient.

Material- what the cause is made of. "Wood."

Final- the end or purpose to which a cause occurs. "Write on"

Formal- what is the essence, nature, of the cause. "Rectangle."

Efficient- what brought the cause into existence. "Carpenter."

Together we get the causes of "table."

Schopenhauer differs from Aristotle by distinguishing valid uses for phenomena as opposed to objects (Kant). Aristotle in contrast to Kant was an transcendental realist: knowledge of objects is independent of experience and we can know their essence through experience.

Schopenhauer's four roots are:

Becoming (law of causality)- physical causes and effects

Knowing (reason)- abstract representation of causal relationships

Being (space & time)- relation of representations

Motives (action or will)- internal motivation of causal agent, subject

I think one can sort of map Schopenhauer's four roots to Aristotle's:

Becoming (material)

Knowing (final)

Being (formal)

Acting (efficient)

Schopenhauer's roots I also think can be thought to correspond to what are called the classical laws of thought. Schopenhauer acknowledges the four:

1) a subject is equal to the sum total of its predicates. Law of identity,  $a=a$ .

2) no predicate can be attributed and denied to a subject at the same time. Law of non-contradiction,  $a=-a=0$ .

3) one of two opposite, contradictory predicates must belong to every subject. Law of the excluded middle. A is not A and B.

4) truth is the reference of a judgement to something outside of it, as its sufficient reason.

The class of becoming corresponds to identity as like things can only be explained by like things, which shall always demand explanation. The effect is known by its cause and can contain only that.

The class of knowing corresponds to non-contradiction. Among our representations, they may only follow from those of their type.

The class of being corresponds to excluded middle. Space and time which are a priori allow for multiplicity and coexistence (space) and succession (time), thus a relation between the two as well as a difference.

The class of motives corresponds to sufficient reason. This is because it is through the immediate object of the inner sense (time) alone that we come to know the principle of causality at first through the law of causality and then its other groundings.

(Notice how sequentially closer the four laws, roots, and Aristotle's classes come closer to Schopenhauer's will and away from phenomena...)

This connection of the four laws of thought with the four roots is largely mine, though Schopenhauer does list the four laws in this way, as what he calls metalogical truths, governing the second class (of reason). I hope this inference is accurate. If it is, then it is a splendidly easy way to understand this work. Together, the four laws of thought and the four roots explain everything. That I think Schopenhauer could assent to, even if I matched them incorrectly.

The big point to all this is that the principle of sufficient reason and therefore all we can know is a result of the division of world into subject and object. It is that simple. Without this division, things wouldn't follow one after another, they would just be. But they could not "be" in a meaningful way without this division.

The relevant part for his more popular ethical and aesthetic writings is the fourth class. This immediate motive power as will be shown in the *World as Will and Representation* is our direct access away from representation to the thing in itself.

If Schopenhauer is right about the principle of sufficient reason being "sufficient" to explain the different classes of knowing, then Kant's Procrustean table of judgements is reduced from twelve categories to one: causality. The end result of this is that it is possible to have intuitions without concepts (which Kant claimed would be blind). And thereby have access to the mysterious thing-in-itself through direct experience. The route to this is the inner sense of time, as opposed to the outer sense of space. Space gives us multiplicity via coexistence whereas time presents unity through duration. With time we experience an endless chain of causation where one thing becomes another, and an individual thing means nothing outside of its relation to other things. Just as the future makes no sense without a present or a past.

We can perhaps escape our own individuated existence and learn the true nature of things. Which is not God itself, whose existence is reasoned to by misapplying the principle of sufficient reason (cosmological and ontological arguments) outside of the universe itself whereas God is outside the world as a transcendental idea and not an empirical idea. The underlying nature of our world, noumena, however is knowable to us and all living things but unconsciously, not as individuated objects in the forms of space-time-causality which belong only to the knowing subject. It is not rational or at least known rationally. Yet it is intimately connected to our conscious life. Not as a cause, but as one in the same as the world as it appears to us.

Der Wille.

(Updated July 2 2017)

---

**Paul Adkin says**

Such an important book and Dodo Press must be applauded for re-editing it. However, the proof reading has been abominable. Examples: page 69 and 70, where the Greek text appears in some surrealistic gibberish, obviously translated by a computer into ASCII language, or whatever computers use. Translations of the Latin and French texts as well as the Ancient Greek would have been a useful addition as well.

---

### **Alina W. says**

Schopenhauer has some neat elaborations on Kant and corrects him on his negligence on the fact of our embodiment. However, this text wasn't the most gripping piece of canon work that I've read, and I've found that reading secondary literature on Schopenhauer is sufficient. Kant has made the primary contributions, and Schopenhauer adds a tiny bit, which can be learned through summaries.

---

### **Andrew Hunt says**

Going to the midnight premiere of this dressed as Ground of Being

---

### **Phillip says**

I have just finished reading both titles in this hideous volume that I bought through Amazon books titled "On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason" by Arthur Schopenhauer. I call it hideous because the printing standards are low. The publisher is such a nonentity that they don't have a webpage. The publisher hasn't even taken credit for their work anywhere on the book. It is just listed as Davies Press in the Amazon description. These are odd behaviors for any business wanting more business.

I am convinced that someone owns one of those print on demand machines that some libraries have. They have taken a file in which someone has scanned the book with the settings for 300 DPI and black and white and just printed it without looking at what they had. The letters of the words are often splotchy or missing so that I have had to halt my reading to figure out what many of the words were supposed to be. This happened often enough that it diminished the pleasure of reading the book.

Also, the second title in the volume is not mentioned on the cover or the title page. Nor is it mentioned in the Amazon description. I get the feeling that the publisher had no idea what their product was. Also, as I got into the second title there were places that looked like copies of hand drawn underlinings of words from a library book. I haven't contacted Amazon because I have had the book for a few months. My experience with the product just kept getting worse and worse the further in I got. Yuck.

About the first title "On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason" by Arthur Schopenhauer, which comprises the first 189 pages of this truly hideous edition. It is the 1855 revised 3rd edition of his Doctoral Thesis from the 1815. I read this book because the author tells us to in the introduction to his principle work "The World as Will and Representation". In the introduction of his principle work he tells the reader not to even bother with reading the book if we are not willing to do the following: 1) Read both volumes of "The World as Will and Representation" twice. 2) Before starting with that the reader is to have already read his "On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason". 3) The reader is required to be familiar with the works of Kant and Plato. According to him these are the minimum requisites for the reader to have any hope of understanding his philosophy at all. Of course, there are other things he recommends the

reader to have read ahead of time as well, but the above are the minimum requirements. He also wrote that he did not care if any individual reader became confused or frustrated or didn't like his writing because he didn't write for individual readers, instead he wrote for the ages. He was confident his readers would find him throughout the ages.

What a cute little old poop.

I finished reading "On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason" march 8th. It is a difficult volume. I immediately reread the book because the first reading became more a matter of getting my bearings within the work than an actual reading of the first 80 pages. I completed rereading the entire thing 4 days later on March 12.

I would recommend this book to someone with an interest in New Age philosophy. (view spoiler)

"On The Will in Nature" begins on p. 190 and runs through to p. 380 of As of today I have read the entire volume. That means I have read "On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason" Twice in the past few weeks and "On The Will in Nature" once.

The first 15 pages are bluster from the author. (view spoiler)

The reason I have been looking at Schopenhauer is because I listened to an audio book on "Life After Death" by Dinesh D'Souza last year and he said some intriguing things about Schopenhauer's philosophy. He (Schopenhauer) posed the possibility that our individual identities are an illusion and that in reality we are one person. If that were true then it gives a new meaning to Christ's injunction to love your neighbor as yourself. I found it to be an intriguing enough idea to look at Schopenhauer myself. After all, if D'Souza's interpretation of Schopenhauer is correct then "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" suddenly has a new force to it. It makes sense that we would be created so that our decisions to harm others is actually directly harming oneself, even if we don't realize that that is what is happening. The idea has the bizarre logic to it that I have come to expect from spiritual teachings.

In the end I wanted to see if Schopenhauer wrote what D'Souza said that he wrote. Last Summer I happened upon an inexpensive Dover set of "The World as Will and Representation" at a used bookstore. I snapped at the opportunity to satisfy my curiosity. The past few months have been slow reading as I tried to get through "On the Fourfold Root..." the first time. In Dec. my mother-in-law gave me a copy of "The Exegesis of Philip K. Dick" as a Christmas present. As it turns out PKD was a Schopenhauer fan. As I complete Schopenhauer's two titles in the hideous volume I can see the influence.

For me reading Schopenhauer is worth the time and effort.

