

The Making of a Thought in the Flow of History

Manuel Fiori

Kant verstehen, heie hinter ihn zurckgehen

Lothar Kreimendhal¹

This monographic issue of «dianoia» comes out on the third centenary of Immanuel Kant's birth. To commemorate the author of the *Critiques*, we have chosen to focus on the relationship between Kantian philosophy and its sources, taking a stand in a *querelle* that has been vividly developing in recent decades.

The importance of the study of sources, and, more generally, of Kant's relationship to the authors and debates of his time, in order to understand his work, has long been questioned within the *Kantforschung*. As asserted in a recent study by Andree Hahmann and Stefan Klingner, especially in the Anglo-American tradition, the «dogma» that «Kant's philosophy should be understood solely from within itself»² – regardless of the cultural context in which it developed – was strongly established. Related to this, in particular, was the idea (or, should we say, the prejudice) that the influence of contemporary thinkers would be essentially irrelevant or at any rate negligible, to the point that none of Kant's albeit numerous and prolific interlocutors could have given a veritable contribution to the extraordinarily innovative enterprise of Critical philosophy.

As Corey Dyck and Falk Wunderlich point out, the heavy underestimation of the post-Leibnizian German philosophical tradition is traceable, at least in part, to the Hegelian interpretation of Wolffism (in his *Vorlesungen ber die Geschichte der Philosophie* Hegel considers Wolff's philosophy as a mere «systematizing of Leibniz»³). Another reason given by the scholars, with reference to the uniqueness of

¹ Lothar Kreimendahl, *Kant – Der Durchbruch von 1769*, Dinter, Kln 1990, p. 266.

² Andree Hahmann, Stefan Klingner, *Kant in the Context of Eighteenth-Century German Philosophy: Some Preliminary Reflections*, in Id., *Kant and Eighteenth-Century German Philosophy: Contexts, Influences and Controversies*, De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston 2023, pp. 1-9: p. 2.

³ Robert F. Brown (ed.), *Hegel: Lectures on the History of Philosophy (1825-6)*, Vol. 3: *Medieval and Modern Philosophy*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1990, p. 198.

Immanuel Kant und die Antike

Thomas Leinkauf

This article discusses Kant's reception of main-streams of Ancient Philosophy, namely Plato-Platonism, Aristotle, Epicurus, Stoicism and Skepticism (Sextus Empiricus), together with the critical transformation of central concepts (for example 'idea', the 'good', 'virtue' and so forth) of these traditions.

Keywords: *Plato, Aristotle, Stoicism, Epicurus, Skepticism.*

1. *Allgemeine Voraussetzungen*

Es stellt sich mittlerweile immer deutlicher heraus, daß Kants Verhältnis zur antiken Philosophie eine Komplexität aufweist, die fast über das ganze 19. Jahrhundert bis hinein in die zweite Hälfte des letzten Jahrhunderts nicht deutlich und genau genug gesehen worden ist: Man hat in durchaus verdienstvollen Anläufen versucht, den sperrigen, innovativen Idealismus Kants mit den großen Leuchten des klassischen Denkens in ein (durch Kants Umgang mit diesen Autoren selbst provoziertes) Verhältnis zu setzen, also meist verschiedene Muster eines Dualis, z. B. Platon-Kant (dies die überwiegende Diagnose), Aristoteles-Kant oder Epikur-Kant – *et vice versa* – zu konstruieren unternommen (dies lag der Perspektive näher, die der gesamte Idealismus und das 19. Jahrhundert auf die Entwicklung des Denkens eingenommen hatte), anstatt mit größerer Präzision auf die nachweislich direkter Lektüre entnommenen Kenntnisse und Einflüsse der hellenistischen Schulen, also der Stoa, des Epikureismus und der Skepsis (vgl. *Refl.* 1623, AA XVI 23; 4449, AA XVII 555-6) einzugehen. Die größere Wirkung des Hellenismus und seine unabweisliche Präge-Wirkung auf Kant traten erst (von wenigen Ausnahmen abgesehen¹ mit der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahr-

¹ William T. Jackson, *Seneca and Kant, or: Exposition of Stoic and Rationalistic Ethics*, United Brethren Pub. House, Dayton 1881; Willi Schink, *Kant und die stoische Ethik*, «Kant-Studien», 18 (1913), S. 419-75; Id., *Kant und Epikur*, «Archiv für Philosophie» (= Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie, Neue Folge), 20 (1914), S. 257-72; Katharina Franz, *Der Einfluß der stoischen Philosophie auf die Moralphilosophie der deutschen Aufklärung*, Brühlsche Universitätsdruckerei, Halle 1940.

hundreds in die Sichtlinie der Forschung². Nicht zu übersehen ist ja auch das starke Eigenlicht des Kantischen Denkens, das eher dazu neigt andere Ansätze in den Lichtkegel seines eigenen, als definitiv verstandenen transzendentalen Idealismus oder Kritizismus zu stellen, als sich sozusagen selbst einem Fremdlicht auszusetzen – man muß sagen, daß etwa Schelling und auch Hegel dagegen in ganz anderer Weise den Einfluß antiken Denkens auf ihre eigenen systematischen Ansätze betont auch gelten gelassen haben³. Das Interesse Kants an der Geschichte des Denkens ist kein genuines

² Zum Beispiel, in alphabetischer Reihenfolge: Pierre Aubenque, *Kant et l'épicurisme*, in *Actes du VIIIe Congrès de l'Association G. Budé*, Paris 5-10 avril 1968, Paris 1969, S. 293-303; J. Benoist, *Sans amour: Platon avec et contre Kant*, in Partene-Murr, *Kant et Platon* (Anm. 2), S. 65-83; Émile Bréhier, *Les Stoiciens, Cicéron et leur influence*, in Id., *Études de Philosophie antique*, PUF, Paris 1955; Reinhard Brandt, *D'Artagnan und die Urteilstafel. Über ein Ordnungsprinzip in der europäischen Kulturgeschichte 1, 2, 3/4*, dtv, München 1998; Id., *Selbstbewusstsein und Selbstsorge. Zur Tradition der oikeiôsis in der Neuzeit*, «Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie», 85 (2003), S. 179-97; Gregory Desjardins, *Terms of De officiis in Hume and Kant*, «Journal of the History of Ideas» 28 (1967), S. 237-42; Klaus Düsing, *Kant und Epikur. Untersuchungen zum Problem der Grundlegung einer Ethik*, «Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Philosophie» 2 (1976), S. 39-58; Maximilian Forschner, *Guter Wille und Haß der Vernunft*, in Otfried Höffe (Hg.), *Kants Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten. Ein kooperativer Kommentar*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M 2000, S. 66-82; Jean-Marie Gabaude, *La volonté dans le stoïcisme et chez Kant*, «Annales publiées par l'Université de Toulouse – Le Mirail», 9 (1973), S. 51-73; Heinz Heimsoeth, *Kant und Plato*, «Kant-Studien» 56 (1965), S. 349-72; Id., *Plato in Kants Werdegang*, in Heinz Heimsoeth, Dieter Heinrich, Giorgio Tonelli (Hg.), *Studien zu Kants philosophischer Entwicklung*, Olms, Hildesheim 1967, S. 124-43; Michael Kuehn, *Kant and Cicero*, in Volker Gerhardt et al (Hg.), *Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung*, De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 2001, S. 270-8; John C. Laursen, *Kant in the History of Skepticism*, in Martyn P. Thompson (Hg.), *John Locke und Immanuel Kant. Historische Rezeption und gegenwärtige Relevanz*, Berlin 1991, S. 254-68; Martin A. López, *El stoicismo en el pensamiento kantiano*, «Revista de Filosofía de la Universidad de Costa Rica», 14 (1976), S. 85-98; Rudolf Makkreel, *Kant's Responses to Skepticism*, in Johan van der Zande, Richard H. Popkin (eds.), *The Skeptical Tradition around 1800. Skepticism in Philosophy, Science and Society*, Dordrecht-Boston-London 1998, S. 101-9; Gerhard Mollowitz, *Kants Platoauffassung*, «Kant-Studien» 40 (1935), S. 13-67; Klaus Reich, *Kant und die Ethik der Griechen*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 1935; Elena Partene, Dimitri L. Murr (eds.), *Kant et Platon. Lectures, configurations, héritages*, Vrin, Paris 2022; Jerome B. Schneewind, *Kant and the Stoic Ethics*, in Stephen Engstrom, Jennifer Whiting (eds.), *Aristotle, Kant and the Stoics. Rethinking Happiness and Duty*, UP, Cambridge 1996, S. 285-301; Michael J. Seidler, *The role of Stoicism in Kant's Moral Philosophy*, Dissertation, St. Louis University 1981; Giorgio Tonelli, *Kant und die antiken Skeptiker*, in Heimsoeth et al., *Studien*, S. 93-123; Sylvain Zac, *Kant, les stoiciens et le christianisme*, «Revue de métaphysique et de morale», 77 (1972), S. 137-65. Neuerdings vor allem Arbogast Schmitt, *Die Moderne und Platon*, Metzler, Stuttgart-Weimar 2003; Ulrike Santozki, *Die Bedeutung antiker Theorien für die Genese und Systematik von Kants Philosophie*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2006; Michael N. Forster, *Kant and Skepticism*, UO, Princeton 2008; Abraham Anderson, *Skeptizismus*, in Marcus Willaschek, Jürgen Stolzenberg, Georg Mohr, Stefano Bacin (Hg.), *Kant-Lexikon*, 3 Bde., De Gruyter, Berlin 2015, III, S. 2126-8.

³ Thomas Leinkauf, *Schelling als Interpret der philosophischen Tradition. Zur Rezeption und Transformation von Platon, Plotin, Aristoteles und Kant*, LIT, Münster 1998; Jens Halfwassen, *Hegel und der spätantike Neoplatonismus. Untersuchungen zur Metaphysik des Einen und des Nous in Hegels spekulativer und geschichtlicher Deutung*, Bouvier, Bonn 1999.

Copernicus as a Source for the Kantian Transcendental Turn. On Kant's Tricentennial (1724), 550 Years After the Birth of Copernicus (1473)

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I start from what I call Ptolemaism, that is, the objection according to which Kant is more akin to Ptolemy and his geocentrism than to Copernicus – an objection common among the proponents of neorealism (Meillassoux, Ferraris, Gabriel). I argue that this objection also points to an anthropocentrism, subjectivism, and even a speciesism in Kant's proposal regarding the conditions that make knowledge possible, essentially at the core of his transcendental approach to analyzing knowledge. Besides clearing up the fundamental misunderstanding of this interpretation, based on Copernicus' work and Kant's own words, I will attempt to show the close connection that the philosopher himself saw with the astronomer, and how this extended to crucial passages in his Critique of Pure Reason, like the Transcendental Deduction, especially in its 1787 reformulation. Finally, in challenging the anthropocentrist objection, I unveil the meaning of the references to human nature and knowledge and how, in the author's project, these references involve the transcendental perspective – this time clarified alongside the observational strategy of the revolutionary Copernican perspective.

Keywords: Kant, Copernicus, Transcendental Deduction, Neorealism, Anthropocentrism.

1. Introduction

It is not uncommon to come across assertions about Kant's subjectivism, often linked to a supposed and unsuccessful analogy with Copernicus. In this analogy, Kant is portrayed as more Ptolemaic than Copernican, more geocentric than heliocentric, and thus, more reactionary than revolutionary. Over the past two decades, such statements have become not only frequent but nearly unanimous among proponents of the so-called neorealism¹. This move-

* This work stems from the research project on Kant's Transcendental Deduction (code 7271), supported by the Research Division at Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá campus. I extend special thanks to Tiziana Laudato for her careful and diligent translation of the text into English.

¹ For example, Maurizio Ferraris, *Good Bye, Kant! What Still Stands of the Critique of Pure Reason*, SUNY Press, Albany 2013 (original in Italian 2004) and Maurizio Ferraris, *Manifest*

ment stands in opposition to postmodernism, constructivism, and antirealism, which emerged at the end of the last century and currently dominates several realms of philosophical discourse. Neorealists collectively argue that these latter philosophical currents are a sequel, whether deviant or legitimate, to Kant's thesis of Transcendental Idealism. This neorealist objection extends beyond mere subjectivism, raising questions about the feasibility of resolving the problem of objectivity through intersubjectivity² or narrowing down the issues of knowledge and truth to interactions among human subjects. This perspective tends to veer towards a specific relativism or anthropocentrism, often characterized as *correlationism*: the notion that it is impossible to step outside the relationship and consider the related terms independently of the relationship³. Essentially, it suggests that nothing exists outside this relational framework, interpreting Kant's conclusion about the unknowability of the thing-in-itself in this light. The problematic and controversial nature of Kant's conclusion cannot be denied, nor can the continuous debate on this matter, which has persisted for over two centuries, be overlooked. Neorealism now invites us to revisit and continue this discussion within the current intellectual context. Rather than directly contesting the thesis of neorealism and the problems it poses, this contribution seeks to dispel the common interpretation that paints Kant's position as more closely aligned with Ptolemy and his geocentrism, than with Copernicus. By clarifying the misconceptions in the interpretation of the analogy between Kant and Copernicus, we aim to steer the confrontation between transcendental idealism and neorealism in a direction distinct from that of antirealism, constructivism, and postmodernism.

In the upcoming discussion, we will begin by characterizing the perspective known as Ptolemaism, intended to undermine the self-proclaimed revolution of Kantian criticism. We highlight the misunderstandings and errors associated with it, particularly in relation to the texts of both Kant and Copernicus. We will then discuss the relevance of Copernicus in understanding and illustrating Kant's thought, especially his transcendental perspective. We will show how this undermines objections related to subjectivism, anthropo-

on *New Realism*, SUNY Press, New York 2014 (original in Italian 2012); Quentin Meillassoux, *Après la finitude. Essai sur la nécessité de la contingence*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris 2006.

² Meillassoux, *Après la finitude*, p. 18.

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 18-9.

Kant's Admiration for and Disagreement with Newton

Katherine Dunlop

Kant holds Newton's scientific achievement in the highest esteem, but distances himself from Newton's thought in several respects. As is well-known, Kant rejects Newton's view of space as absolute; this rejection may explain the absence of Newton from Kant's most prominent discussion of physics' attainment of the "sure path" of science. Kant also charges Newton with failing to own up to his own metaphysical commitments regarding the immediacy of attraction and the necessity of attractive force for matter. Kant characterizes Newton's view of space and his matter theory as "mathematical", in contrast to the "metaphysical" approach Kant favors. These labels can be traced to the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence, and Kant appears more firmly committed to his approach in the case of space than of matter. Finally, Kant's engagement with Newton is shown to predate his Critical writings and to extend to Newton's optical and mathematical writings.

Keywords: *Kant, Newton, Space, Matter Theory, Hypotheses.*

1. Introduction

In both pre-Critical and Critical writings, we find Kant praising Newton's scientific achievement in the strongest terms. Kant writes in *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (1755) that Newtonian philosophy gives incomparable insights into «the true constitution of the universe on the large scale, the laws of motion, and the internal mechanism of the orbits of all the planets», so that these inquiries into nature have been «resolved» with surpassing «accuracy and certainty» (1:229). And in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant tells us that to «adequately come to know [...] organized beings and their internal possibility in accordance with merely mechanical principles of nature» would require «a Newton», who alone could succeed in explaining «even the generation of a blade of grass according to natural laws» (5:400). But as much as Kant admires Newton's theory of motion, his own "foundations" for physics diverge from Newton in ways that seem to reflect an opposing Leibnizian heritage. And on questions of metaphysics, such as the ontology of space and the essence of matter, Kant sharply disagrees with Newton. My aim in this chapter is to give an

overview of what Kant took from Newton's writings and what he rejected, with some attention to the context of his acquaintance with Newton's work.

For the most part, I will discuss major texts of the Critical period. I first focus on Kant's contrast between his idealist view of space and Newton's realist alternative. I argue (in §2) that this contrast explains the curious omission of Newton from the first *Critique's* account of how physics was set on the «sure path of a science», and (in §3) that it reflects the influence of Leibniz's characterization of his own and Newton's positions, namely as “metaphysical” and “mathematical”. Kant contends for the overall superiority of what he calls the “metaphysical” or “dynamical” approach to natural science over the “mathematical” or “mechanical” approach; but as I explain in §4, he thinks we have stronger reasons to adopt the former approach in the theory of space than in the theory of matter. Kant's evident concern to remedy the metaphysics underlying Newton's theory of motion raises the question of whether his dissatisfaction extends to the theory itself. §5 discusses some ways in which Kant seems to depart from Newton within physical theory, and how these departures can be seen to reflect Continental influences.

Newton's influence on Kant is, however, not limited to the theory of motion and its underlying metaphysics, nor confined to writings of the Critical period. In §6 I consider how the tradition of experimental philosophy stemming from Newton's *Opticks* appears important for Kant's thought, in particular his pre-Critical attempt to explain the origin and constitution of the universe «according to Newtonian principles». I close by briefly discussing Kant's engagement with Newton's mathematical writings.

2. *The Omission of Newton from the “B” Preface to the Critique of Pure Reason*

A striking indication of Kant's unease regarding Newton is the latter's absence from the main text of the “B” edition Preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. There, physics features as «the benchmark for investigations» and «marker for what it means for a research program to “travel the secure path of a science”», so on Kant's view

John Keill and the Pre-Critical Kant*

Marco Sgarbi

This paper focuses on John Keill's influence on Kant's pre-critical thought, as well as on his early understanding of Newtonianism. The first section reconstructs the spread of Newtonianism in Königsberg during Kant's university years. The second deals with Keill's method of philosophizing and its impact on Kant's methodological reflections in his early scientific writings. The third and fourth examine how Keill's conceptions of inverse square law, solidity, extension, and divisibility helped Kant find his own eclectic way in combining metaphysics and mathematics.

Keywords: Kant, Keill, Newton, Metaphysics, Mathematics.

1. Newtonianism in Königsberg

The eighteenth century is usually characterized as the age of Newton for the impact his thought had on many research fields from natural philosophy to ethics, from legal theories to literature, from mathematics to metaphysics. However, the “Newtonian moment” arrived very late in Germany¹, and in particular in Königsberg in comparison to other countries like France and Italy, and other university towns like Paris and Padua. Of Newton and his followers’ reception and influence in Germany we know almost nothing. There are no serious studies like those of J.B Shank for the French Enlightenment, or of Maria Laura Soppelsa for Italy, or of that edited by Eric Jorink and Ad Maas for the Dutch Republic². In spite of

* All references to Kant's works are cited in the body of the text according to the volume and page number, given in Arabic numerals separated by a colon, in the critical edition of *Kants gesammelte Schriften* (=KGS), edited by the Royal Prussian (later German, then Berlin-Brandenburg) Academy of Sciences (Georg Reimer, later Walter de Gruyter & Co. 1900). The one exception to this rule is the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where passages are referenced by numbers from “A,” the first edition of 1781, and/or “B,” the second edition of 1787. Unless otherwise noted, the translations of Kant's writings are from the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1992) and those of Aristotle's from the *Complete Works* (Princeton University Press, Princeton 1984).

¹ Mordechai Feingold, *The Newtonian Moment: Isaac Newton and the Making of Modern Culture*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2004.

² Maria Laura Soppelsa, *Leibniz e Newton in Italia: il dibattito padovano, (1687-1750)*, LINT, Trieste 1989; John B. Shank, *The Newton Wars and the Beginning of the French Enlightenment*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2008; Eric Jorink, Ad Maas (eds.), *Newton and the Netherlands: How Isaac Newton Was Fashioned in the Dutch Republic*, Leiden University Press, Leiden

the great effort of Thomas Ahnert in reconstructing the impact of Newton in the German-Speaking Lands, there are only feeble traces of interest in Newton's philosophy and mathematics before 1750, and most of these are in relation to the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence, to Christian Wolff's appropriation and rejection of Newton's ideas, or to Leonhard Euler's alleged Newtonianism³.

The focus of my research is to assess Newton's impact in Königsberg, especially by reconsidering the role of the Scottish mathematician and natural philosopher John Keill. As far as the archives would indicate, there are no clues as to Newton's presence in Königsberg before 1745. The only trace that we can find of Newton in the *Vorlesungsverzeichnisse* comes from Johann Christoph Bohl, professor of medicine, who mentions Newton along with Mariotte and many others for his theories on vision. This was the period in which Immanuel Kant was a student at the Albertina and began the composition of his *Thoughts on the True Estimation of Living Forces*⁴. However, no other relevant university document reveals Newton's presence – hence no dispute, no dissertation, no academic program neither in mathematics nor in natural philosophy. None of the professors at Königsberg taught Newton in their classes, as far as we know.

The main textbooks for mathematics were Christian Wolff's *Elementa matheseos universae* (1713-1715) and *Auszug aus den Anfangsgründen aller mathematischen Wissenschaften* (1717), and this also in the period in which Wolffianism was temporarily banished from Königsberg. Wolff's mathematics dominated at the Albertina. For natural philosophy, or physics, in contrast, it is possible to list a range of manuals – from Christian Wolff's *Vernünfftige Gedancken von den Wirkungen der Natur* (1723) to Johann Christoph Sturm's *Physi-*

2013; John B. Shank, *Before Voltaire: The French Origins of Newtonian Mechanics, 1680-1715*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2018.

³ Ronald S. Calinger, *The Newtonian-Wolffian Controversy*, «Journal of the History of Ideas», 30 (1969), pp. 319-30; Thomas Ahnert, *Newtonianism in early Enlightenment Germany, c. 1720 to 1750: Metaphysics and the Critique of Dogmatic Philosophy*, «Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part A», 35 (2004), pp. 471-91; Marius Stan, *Newton and Wolff: The Leibnizian Reaction to the Principia, 1716-1763*, «The Southern Journal of Philosophy», 50 (2012), pp. 459-81; Marius Stan, *Euler, Newton, and Foundations for Mechanics*, in Chris Smeenk, Eric Schliesser (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Newton*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2017, pp. 1-22. Marius Stan, *Newton's Concepts of Force among the Leibnizians*, in Mordechai Feingold, Elizabethanne Boran (eds.), *Reading Newton in Early Modern Europe*, Brill, Leiden 2017, pp. 244-89; Thomas Ahnert, *Newton in the German-speaking Lands*, in Scott Mandelbrote, Helmut Pulte (eds.), *The Reception of Isaac Newton in Europe*, Bloomsbury, London 2019, pp. 41-58.

⁴ Manfred Kuehn, *Kant. A Biography*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001, p. 86.

Kant's Appropriation of Wolffian Faculty Psychology

J. Colin McQuillan

This article argues that Kant was engaged in an ongoing critical appropriation of Wolffian faculty psychology throughout his career. It provides an overview of Wolffian faculty psychology, emphasizing the distinction between rational psychology and empirical psychology; the relationship between the soul's power of representation and the cognitive faculties; and the criteria Wolff uses to distinguish sensibility and the understanding. It also tracks Kant's appropriation of Wolffian faculty psychology through his published writings and the transcripts of his lectures from the 1760s and 1770s. Although he modifies and transforms many of the central doctrines of Wolff's faculty psychology during the pre-critical period, the article concludes that many of the positions Kant defends in the Critique of Pure Reason are still indebted to Wolffian faculty psychology.

Keywords: Immanuel Kant, Christian Wolff, Empirical Psychology, Rational Psychology, Metaphysics.

1. Introduction

Christian Wolff first articulated the principles of his faculty psychology in his *German Metaphysics (Rational Thoughts Concerning God, the World, and the Human Soul, and also All Things in General, 1720)*, though he reformulated and expanded upon them in later works like the *Empirical Psychology (1732)* and *Rational Psychology (1734)*. Immanuel Kant rarely cites these works directly, but he would have been familiar with their contents through Baumgarten, Meier, and other works that he read and used in his teaching. In what follows, I will argue that Kant was engaged in an ongoing critical appropriation of Wolff's faculty psychology throughout his career. Although he modifies and transforms many of the central doctrines of Wolff's faculty psychology during the pre-critical period, the conceptions of sensibility, understanding, reason, and the soul that Kant employs in the *Critique of Pure Reason (1781/1787)* are still indebted to Wolffian faculty psychology.

To explain the nature of this debt, and Kant's appropriation of Wolffian faculty psychology, I will begin with an overview of Wolffian faculty psychology, emphasizing Wolff's accounts of the

soul's power of representation and the difference between the higher and lower cognitive faculties. Then I will survey Kant's publications and the transcripts of his lectures from the pre-critical period, which show that Kant relied upon and endorsed many aspects of Wolffian faculty psychology, while rejecting and modifying others – especially the criteria Wolff used to distinguish sensibility and the understanding and his proofs of the simplicity, immateriality, and immortality of the soul. I conclude by briefly indicating how Kant extends his appropriation and transformation of Wolffian faculty psychology in the first *Critique*.

2. Wolffian Faculty Psychology

The distinction between empirical and rational psychology is one of the most basic and one of the most novel features of Wolff's psychology¹. Rational psychology is for Wolff the part of metaphysics that is concerned with the nature of the soul – its metaphysical essence. Empirical psychology is also a part of metaphysics, but it deals with those aspects of the human mind that can be known from observation and experience. Empirical psychology includes discussions of the "faculties" of the mind, which, according to the literal meaning of the German (*Vermögen*) and Latin (*facultates*) terms, refer not to parts of the mind, but the kinds of activity the mind is capable of undertaking. For Wolff and his followers, the human mind has both cognitive and volitional faculties, depending on whether we are simply conscious of a representation or whether our consciousness is accompanied by an inclination or desire for the object of our representation². The mind also has higher and lower cognitive and volitional faculties, depending on whether the cognition or volition of the faculty in question is confused (sensibility, pleasure) or distinct (understanding, will)³. This framework proved enormously influential among Wolff's followers, including Thümmig, Bilfinger,

¹ See Corey W. Dyck, *Kant and Rational Psychology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014, pp. 3-8.

² Corey W. Dyck, *Early Modern German Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2020, pp. 108-9, 116 (§197, §492); Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Metaphysik*; Eng. trans. edited by Courtney D. Fugate and John Hymers, *Metaphysics*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London 2013, §519, §663.

³ Dyck, *Early Modern German Philosophy*, pp. 114-5 (§372, §404, §492); Baumgarten, *Metaphysics*, §520, §624; §676, §689.

On the Sources of the Kantian Distinction between Voluntary and Involuntary Imagination: Remarks on Platner, Meier and Tetens

Manuel Fiori

*The purpose of this article is to highlight some possible sources of Kant's theory of empirical imagination, with particular reference to the distinction between its voluntary and involuntary use. It will be shown that in Kant the discussion of the subject is not limited to the mere repetition or extension of Baumgarten's conception, but is affected by other influences, unified by the importance they attach to the psycho-physiological investigation of mental phenomena. Through the analysis of the reflections and the transcripts of the anthropology lectures, the contribution stresses how, not only Platner, but also Meier's *Anfangsgründe aller schönen Wissenschaften* may have offered relevant insights to the first elaboration of the above distinction. Moreover, the Kantian conception of fantasy, as involuntary imagination, is compared with some passages of Tetens' *Philosophische Versuche*, before being described in its peculiar characters.*

Keywords: Kant, Imagination, Free will, Meier, Tetens.

1. *Introductory note*

The faculty of imagination certainly represents one of the core problems of 18th-century German philosophy and artistic-literary criticism, as well as one of the most controversial, to the extent that it constitutes an authentic dilemma¹. The highly ambivalent nature of this concept – confirmed by the difficulty in distinguishing its various forms and functions on the semantic level² – fascinates and repels

¹ Götz Müller, *Die Einbildungskraft im Wechsel der Diskurse. Annotationen zu Adam Bernd, Karl Philipp Moritz und Jean Paul*, in Hans-Jürgen Schings (Hg.), *Der ganze Mensch: Anthropologie und Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert*, DFG-Symposium (Stuttgart 1992), Metzler, Weimar 1994, pp. 697-723: p. 710; Rudolf Meer, Giuseppe Motta, Gideon Stiening, *Vom „Poison de l'imagination“ zur Essenz des Schematismus: Die Einbildungskraft in der Philosophie, den Wissenschaften und den Künsten des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, in Id., *Konzepte der Einbildungskraft in der Philosophie, den Wissenschaften und den Künsten des 18. Jahrhunderts*, de Gruyter, Berlin 2019, pp. 1-8: p. 2.

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² In the main philosophical Lexica of the period the terms *Einbildung*, *Einbildungskraft* and *Phantasie* are still used as synonyms. See, in this regard, Gabriele Dürbeck, *Einbildungskraft und Aufklärung. Perspektiven der Philosophie, Anthropologie und Ästhetik um 1750*, Niemeyer, Tübingen 1998, pp. 17-21. For a reconstruction of the conceptual history, see Jochen Schul-

at the same time, arousing in the intellectuals of the *Aufklärung* the most heartfelt praise, along with the most scathing criticism. Indeed, on the one hand, it is recognized – for instance in Johann Georg Sulzer’s *Lexikon* – as «one of the most excellent characteristics of the soul, the lack of which would bring the human being down to a rank even lower than that of animals». Not only that, but with respect to artistic production, Sulzers even refers to it as «the mother of all fine arts»³. Within a few lines, however, he hastens to point out that it is «in itself superficial, unrestrained and bizarre (*an sich leichtsinnig, ausschweifend und abentheuerlich*)» and as such must be accompanied «unceasingly» by a «delicate feeling of order and agreement», disciplined by a «penetrating faculty of judgment» and by sentiments «always grounded in truth»⁴. Toward the end of the century, in an essay significantly titled *Gefahren der Einbildungskraft*, the physician Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland would argue that it «has been given to us as our most beneficial friend in this earthly life», but only «as long as we know how to keep it within proper limits; as soon as it exceeds them, it can become our most terrible tyrant (*unser fürchterlichster Tyrann*)»⁵.

The need to control the imagination so that it remains under the domain of the will is a theme that runs through all the treatises of the time⁶. Returning briefly to the Sulzerian *Lexikon*, under the heading «Künstler» we find another interesting element: here, in fact, the inadequacy of the psychological knowledge so far achieved on this faculty and its effects is openly denounced, and it is hoped that it will soon be overcome:

In no part is psychology so incomplete as in this one. A wide and little-cultivated field is here open to philosophers for glorious work. Leibniz and Wolff

te-Sassen, *Einbildungskraft/Imagination*, in Barck Karlheinz, Martin Fontius, Friedrich Wolfzettel u.a. (Hg.), *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe. Bd. 2. Dekadent–Grotesk*, Stuttgart u.a. 2001 pp. 88-120; Id., *Phantasie*, in Barck Karlheinz, Martin Fontius, Friedrich Wolfzettel u.a. (Hg.), *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe. Bd. 4. Medien–Populär*, Stuttgart u.a. 2002, pp. 778-98; Hendrick Heimböckel, *Einleitung: Vom blinden Trieb zum Höchsten im Menschen. Tendenzen der Einbildungskraft in der Ideengeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts*, in Id., *Einbildungskraft um 1800. Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf ihre Begriffe, Phänomene und Funktionen*, Fink, Paderborn 2022, pp. VI-XXVII.

³ Johann G. Sulzer, *Einbildungskraft*, in Id., *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, Bd. 1, Weidemanns Erben und Reich, Leipzig 1771, pp. 291-2.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 292.

⁵ Christoph W. Hufeland, *Gefahren der Einbildungskraft*, in Id., *Gemeinnützige Aufsätze zur Beförderung der Gesundheit, des Wohls und vernünftige medicinischer Aufklärung*, Göschen, Leipzig 1794, p. 209. Where not otherwise stated, the English translation is by the author.

⁶ In this regard, the psychologist Johann G.E. Maaß, in his *Versuch über die Einbildungskraft* (1792), Ruff, Halle-Leipzig 1797², advocates the development of a «theory on the discipline of the imagination» (*ibidem*, p. 115).

Hume and Kant on Liberty and Necessity

Andrew Ward

Kant agrees with Hume that an agent's voluntary actions must be seen as causally determined by its character and beliefs. Yet Kant also affirms, contra Hume, that it is possible to assert, even at the point at which an agent commits an immoral act, that the agent could have acted otherwise, i.e., could have acted for the sake of morality. An attempt is made to explain Kant's defence of his position and to assess its plausibility in the light of Hume's alternative theory and some claimed findings of neuroscience.

Keywords: *Hume, Kant, Causality, Freedom, Phenomena/Noumena.*

1. *Introduction*

Hume and Kant agree that we can possess the liberty or freedom required for moral responsibility (moral freedom) despite – as they both hold – everything that happens, including all our decisions and actions, being the necessary causal consequence of prior states or events in the spatio/temporal world. But beyond this agreement, there is sharp divergence. Hume contends that our moral freedom cannot be compatible with the ability to act otherwise in situations of moral conflict. Kant disagrees. He contends not only that moral freedom requires this ability, but that it is possible we possess it. The main grounds offered by Hume and Kant, in support of their respective positions, are set out in sections 2-4 before, in section 5, some assessment is made of the plausibility of these grounds, principally in the light of contemporary neuroscientific claims.

2. *Hume*

Hume maintains that unless our actions are the necessary causal consequence of our character, together with our beliefs about the surrounding circumstances, we cannot justifiably think of ourselves as possessing moral freedom. Far from moral freedom being incompatible with our actions arising with causal necessity from our character, the very possibility of our being responsible for any action,

even a non-moral one, depends upon it – as, he emphasizes, we (tacitly) acknowledge in our everyday dealings with each other.

His grounds for these conclusions stem, on the one hand, from his analysis of causation and necessary connection and, on the other, from his observations of how we manage successfully to predict the actions of others from their past behaviour. As is well known, Hume holds that our ascription of a cause and effect relationship between two objects depends on the experience of a constant conjunction between these (or similar) objects; and the idea of a necessary connection between them is one and the same as the feeling we are conscious of in inferring the existence of one of these objects (as the effect) from the other (as the cause), where this inference itself is consequent upon having found these objects to have been constantly conjoined in our past experience. On this account, anyone who denies that there is a necessary connection between two distinct objects must be denying that there is a constant conjunction and, thereby, a causal relationship between them. Hence, in any case where we judge an agent to be responsible for having produced an action, we must be implying that the action is necessary under the circumstances. For, by denying the necessity, we would be implying that the action was not caused by the agent and, consequently, that the agent could not be held responsible for it.

Hume further contends that when we hold an agent responsible for any given action, we do so from the belief that the desire which, under the circumstances, motivated the agent expresses some character trait or disposition of the agent. Our knowledge of character traits is itself founded on observing the regularity of the agent's behaviour in the various circumstances of its life. For instance, we may identify someone as honest with money through having observed the agent's frequent and invariable honesty when dealing financially with others in the various circumstances of its life. By observing a constant conjunction between the many disparate financial situations involving others and the agent's invariably honest dealings with them, we come to ascribe the character trait of financial honesty to the agent; and we go on from there to predict with confidence the agent's continuing financially honest behaviour in similar circumstances. This prediction, this inference, exemplifies our belief in the necessity of an agent's actions: by inferring the agent's behaviour from its character and circumstances, we are (tacitly) admitting that the agent's actions are causally necessary (since our ascription of character is

Species, Variety, Race: Vocabularies of Difference from Buffon to Kant

Jennifer Mensch*

Eighteenth-century German writers with broad interests in natural history, and in particular, in the kind of ethnographic reports typically included in travel and expedition narratives, had to be able to access and read the original reports or they had to work with translations. The translators of these reports were, moreover, typically forced more than usual into the role of interpreter. This was especially the case when it came to accounts wherein vocabulary did not exist or was at least not settled, and more importantly where scientific understanding was uncertain or altogether lacking, a situation that could only make the creation of semantic categories all the more significant. With this state of affairs in mind, this essay concentrates on Immanuel Kant's work to develop a specialised racial vocabulary, and does so in a manner that reveals the importance of Buffon's account of variation as a resource for Kant, even as Kant sought to position the new vocabulary as an improved template for transforming taxonomy or Naturbeschreibung into a genuine historical science or Naturgeschichte.

Keywords: *Buffon, Kant, Species, Race, Natural History.*

We have borrowed race from the French; it seems very closely related to *racine* and *radix* and signifies descent in general, though in an indeterminate way. For one talks in French of the race of Caesar in the same way as of the races of horses and dogs, irrespective of the first origin, but nevertheless always with tacit subordination under the concept of a species. It would be a great mission for an individual who had nothing else to do, to develop in what sense each writer has possibly used this word.

Georg Forster¹

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¹ Georg Forster, *Noch Etwas über die Menschenraßen* (1786); Eng. trans. by Jon Mikkelsen in Jon Mikkelsen (ed.), *Kant and the Concept of Race: Late Eighteenth-Century Writings*, SUNY

1. Introduction

There are by now numerous studies of Kant's work to develop a scientific account of human difference, of the manner in which this account fits into his system of progressive human history, of the means for understanding his racism in tandem with his moral theory, and finally of Kant's relation to some of the key interlocutors in the debates regarding these issues at the time, most notably Herder, Forster, and Blumenbach². In this investigation I want to take a different tack, one that is tightly focused on the shifting vocabularies of difference in play in Kant's racial taxonomy. German writers with broad interests in natural history, and in particular, in the kind of ethnographic reports typically included in travel and expedition narratives, had to be able to access and read original texts, or they had to work with translations. And the translators of these sorts of reports – typically working under immense time-pressure – were forced more than usual into the role of interpreter. This was especially the case when it came to accounts wherein vocabulary did not exist or was at least not settled, and more importantly where scientific understanding was uncertain or altogether lacking, a situation that could only make the creation of semantic categories all the more significant. With this in mind then, it might be useful to develop something like a mapping strategy when approaching Kant's racial taxonomy. This would entail a set of basic questions regarding Kant's sources, reception, translation, and modification of not just terms but indeed the conceptual framework associated with the language of species, variety, and race. For my purposes here I will focus on the singular importance of Buffon as a resource for Kant since we know that Kant was a careful reader of Buffon's works, and that

Press, Albany 2013, pp. 143-67, pp. 163-4. Mikkelsen is translating *Rasse* as «race» and *Gattung* as «species», the latter as per Forster's own comment on the proper German term for the Latin *species*, p. 156. For Forster's text in German, see Siegfried Scheibe (ed.), *Georg Forsters Werke: Kleine Schriften zu Philosophie und Zeitgeschichte*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 1974, vol. 8, pp. 130-56.

² The literature here is large. For discussion of these topics with broad attention to primary sources and secondary debates, see Jennifer Mensch, *Kant's Four Examples: On South Sea Islanders, Tahitians, and Other Cautionary Tales for the Case of "Rusting Talents"*, «Goethe Yearbook», 31 (2024), pp. 115-26; *Kant and the Skull Collectors: German Anthropology from Blumenbach to Kant*, in Corey Dyck, Falk Wunderlich (eds.), *Kant and his German Contemporaries*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2018, pp. 192-210; *Caught between Character and Race: "Temperament" in Kant's Lectures on Anthropology*, «Australian Feminist Law Journal», 43 (2017) 1, pp. 125-44; and *From Crooked Wood to Moral Agent: Connecting Anthropology and Ethics in Kant*, «Estudios Kantianos», 2 (2014) 1, pp. 185-204.