

noi stessi"<sup>61</sup> – egli ha visto nella filosofia, nel suo significato cosmopolitico, l'unico modo di esercitare il pensiero da uomini maturi. Il che significava, per lui, anche da "cittadini maturi", come ancora è stato ripetuto, in tempi a noi più vicini, da una voce critica nei confronti della fede ingenua e per questo anche incondizionata nella scienza.<sup>62</sup>

- 61 Cfr. Fichte, Johann Gottlieb: "Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre (1797–1798)". In: *J.-G. Fichte-Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*. A cura di R. Lauth – H. Gliwitsky. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1970, I,4: 194; tr. it. di C. Cesa: "Prima Introduzione alla dottrina della scienza". In: *Prima e Seconda Introduzione alla dottrina della scienza*. A cura di C. Cesa. Roma – Bari 1999, 18 s.
- 62 Cfr. Feyerabend, Paul: *Against Method. Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*. London 1975; tr. it. di L. Sosio: *Contro il metodo*. Milano 1979 (2002), 251. "L'unica cosa a cui [l'anarchico epistemologico] si oppone decisamente, e assolutamente, sono i criteri universali, le leggi universali, le idee universali come Verità, Giustizia, Onestà, Ragione, e i comportamenti che esse generano, anche se egli non nega che spesso sia una buona politica agire come se tali leggi (criteri e idee) esistessero e come se vi credesse" (Id.: "Science". *The Mith and its Role in Society*. Afterword: *Theses on Anarchism*". In: *Inquiry* 18, 1975, 176–181; tr. it.: "Tesi sull'anarchismo" (1973). In: *Sull'orlo della scienza. Pro e contro il metodo*. A cura di M. Motterlini. Milano 1995, 165 s., mio il corsivo).

## Kant's Conception of Philosophy, 1764–1765

Robert R. Clewis

This paper examines Kant's notion of philosophy in texts that were published in 1764 or 1765 and a set of unpublished notes that were written during that period. It analyzes *Inquiry concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality* (the so-called Prize Essay, published in 1764), *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (published in 1764), the unpublished *Remarks in the Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (written circa 1764–1765), *Essay on the Maladies of the Head* (published in 1764), and *Announcement of the Organization of His Lectures in the Winter Semester 1765–66* (published in 1765). I look at these texts with one specific theme in mind: Kant's conception of philosophy.

This task seems to be worth undertaking for several reasons: 1) to make up for the relatively little attention these early texts have received in the literature (especially when considered together and with this theme in mind), 2) to decipher the origins of the Critical conception of philosophy (KrV, A 837/B 865), and 3) to depict the interesting position that Kant defends during this period. After all, the Kant of this period is an intriguing thinker and writer.

Kant has several diverse influences during the period under consideration: Rousseau, Shaftesbury, Hume, Hutcheson, Meier, Baumgarten, Crusius. It is therefore important not to reduce his view of philosophy to one simple position. Moreover, we should be sensitive to the role of genre, audience, authorial intention, tone, and style when interpreting these diverse texts and attributing a position to Kant.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, I assume in this paper that nothing in the tone or style of any of these five texts makes it impossible to characterize Kant's conception of philosophy. In any case, it would be beyond the scope of this paper to examine how these literary features shape these texts.

What does Kant think of the nature, method, and relevance of philosophy? For Kant, philosophy includes metaphysics (which encompasses

<sup>1</sup> On Kant's style, see Goetschel, Willi: *Constituting Critique: Kant's Writing as Critical Praxis*, translated by Eric Schwab. Durham and London 1994.

both empirical and rational psychology), logic, ethics, and aesthetics. Kant questions the method and conclusions of German school metaphysics; in order to reform metaphysics, he offers his own method. He thinks that philosophy should be grounded in experience as well as practical and useful for life.<sup>2</sup> How does this vision of philosophy play out in the texts considered here? In the *Inquiry*, Kant claims that philosophy should start with what is given in experience and should avoid fabricating unnecessary definitions of metaphysical concepts (such as Leibniz's slumbering monad). In the *Observations*, Kant makes empirical claims about human beings; the work should be interpreted as an empirical expression of his 1762/3 system and thus as consistent with the method of the *Inquiry*. Likewise, in the notes to the *Observations*, Kant applies the *Inquiry's* distinction between the analytic method, which he employs in the notes, and the synthetic method that he finds in Rousseau's description of natural man. The *Maladies* praises natural man for being close to experience, sound understanding, and common sense, and for avoiding the artificial, subtle reasonings of academic philosophy. This is consistent with the *Inquiry*. Finally, the *Announcement* employs a pedagogical approach that is based on the Prize Essay's method that recommends starting with concepts given in experience, for the *Announcement* begins with the philosophical claims that are most intuitive and easiest to understand.

Kant holds views of philosophy that carry over in some form into the Critical philosophy. Mathematical and philosophical cognition differ in significant ways (KrV, A 712–738/B 740–766): metaphysics is the science of the limits of human reason, the metaphysical foundations of aesthetics and ethics are distinct, and philosophy has primarily a practical aim. Nevertheless, Kant does not yet distinguish between empirical and transcendental approaches to metaphysics, ethics, and aesthetics. Although the Critical philosophy retains a practical orientation and the notion of experience plays an indispensable role, transcendental Critical philosophy *per se* has no room for empirical psychology and pragmatic anthropology, and Kant removes them from the domain of pure philosophy.

Let us now turn to the texts, which will be discussed in the order in which the writings were listed in the first paragraph.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the interpretation defended here to Zammito, John: *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology*. Chicago 2002.

### 1 Inquiry concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality

Kant wrote the *Inquiry* by the end of December 1762, but it was not published until April 1764. Kant presents the “substantial and essential” differences that are found between cognition in mathematics and that in theoretical and practical philosophy (UD, AA 02: 283.17; 256).<sup>3</sup> By examining Kant's views of method, we can learn about his conception of philosophy. He claims that his treatise contains nothing but certain yet empirical propositions (*sichere Erfahrungssätze*) and the inferences drawn immediately from them. Kant repudiates relying on the “doctrines of the philosophers” and on definitions (*Definitionen*), since he thinks the latter often lead to error (UD, AA 02: 275.17–21; 247).

In the first of four “Reflections,” Kant distinguishes the synthetic method of mathematics from the analytic method of philosophy. Synthesis is a stipulative (*willkürlich*) combination of concepts, whereas analysis makes a cognition or concept distinct through the process of separation (*Absonderung*). In mathematics, a definition comes into being as a result of synthesis. This is definition in the strict sense; unlike philosophical definition, it is unproblematic. Philosophical definitions (*Erklärungen*) are the product of analysis. They admit of less distinctness and completeness than mathematical definitions because they are not created by stipulation but by analysis of a given concept. In philosophy, the concept of a thing is already given, even if confusedly (UD, AA 02: 276.21; 248). Mere determinations of the meaning of a word are never philosophical definitions; if they must be called definitions at all, they should be called only “grammatical” ones (UD, AA 02: 277.13; 249). Kant finds fault here with Leibniz, who Kant alleges invents concepts such as the slumbering monad out of thin air.

Kant maintains that philosophy examines the universal by means of linguistic signs, or words, rather than through visual signs such as algebraic symbols and geometrical figures (UD, AA 02: 278.31 ff.; 251). The use of language poses a potential problem for the philosopher. The dis-

<sup>3</sup> Citations of the *Inquiry* and the *Announcement* are from David Walford and Ralf Meerbote's translations, found in Kant, Immanuel: *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*, edited and translated by David Walford and Ralf Meerbote. Cambridge 1992, respectively, 243–286 and 287–300. When quoting from works by Kant in translation, I indicate the pages and lines in the original text published in the Akademie-Ausgabe, followed by the pages in the translated edition.

tinctness of any cognition, and the possibility of valid inferences based on them, depend upon analysis (UD, AA 02: 280.11 ff.; 252). But analysis, which requires the employment of words, only works up to a certain point. It leads to and stops at unanalysable concepts in metaphysics, of which Kant thinks there are many. Analysis of the partly analyzable concepts leaves one with a stock of unanalysable concepts. Examples of concepts that are partially analyzable include not only space and time, but also the feelings of the sublime, beautiful, and disgusting.<sup>4</sup> He calls the latter feelings the “springs [*Triebfedern*] of our nature” (UD, AA 02: 280.26; 253). It is noteworthy that Kant says that we should better understand these drives or springs, since in the *Observations* he will take up this anthropological focus from an empirical point of view. This suggests a harmony and affinity between the *Observations* and the *Inquiry*.

In the second “Reflection,” Kant further elaborates his method for attaining certainty in metaphysics, “the philosophy of the fundamental principles of our cognition” (UD, AA 02: 283.13 f.; 256). Philosophy should not try to imitate the synthetic method of mathematics in contexts where such a method cannot be employed. (Kant implies, however, that the synthetic method may be appropriate for philosophy in some contexts.) The metaphysician should start with a concept that is given in experience, even if confusedly; in any case, it is not stipulated. The definition of the object is usually therefore the last thing to be known (UD, AA 02: 283.29; 256).

In the third “Reflection,” Kant claims that metaphysics, “philosophy applied to insights of reason which are more general” (UD, AA 02: 292.26 f.; 266), is capable of enough certainty to produce conviction. Philosophy uses the laws of identity and of contradiction as first *formal* principles of human reason. Unanalysable propositions formed out of basic concepts function as the *material* first principles of reason, for they contain the grounds of other cognitions. Philosophy should thus make use of these material first principles and not adhere merely to formal principles, which by themselves cannot prove anything. This point is directed at Wolffian philosophy.

In the fourth and final “Reflection,” Kant discusses the distinctness and certainty of the fundamental principles of natural theology and morality. His modal argument for the existence of God is similar to one of-

<sup>4</sup> Although I cannot defend this claim here, it appears that some of these unanalysable concepts developed into the first *Critique's* pure categories of the understanding, while space and time became pure forms of sensibility.

ferred in *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God* (1763), and we need not examine the proof here. Let us simply note that for Kant the principles of natural theology are instances of *philosophical* cognition rather than a part of theology (UD, AA 02: 296.29 f.; 270), and that Kant holds that judgments about God's freedom, justice, and goodness have only approximate certainty, for he thinks we do not yet possess clear and distinct concepts of moral phenomena (UD, AA 02: 297.33–37; 271).

In the second section of the “Reflection,” Kant elaborates: moral concepts such as obligation (*Verbindlichkeit*) are not clear and distinct (UD, AA 02: 298.07; 272). In principle, ethics can be certain. Like metaphysics, ethics has formal, first principles as well as material, indemonstrable principles. Just as there is an unanalysable concept of what is encountered in the object of cognition, there is an unanalysable feeling of the good, the moral feeling. Practical philosophy should “analyze and render distinct the compound and confused concept of the good by showing how it arises from simpler feelings of the good” (UD, AA 02: 299.27–29; 273). He believes practical philosophy in its present state is even more defective than speculative philosophy and metaphysics, for it has yet to be determined whether it is the faculty of cognition or whether it is feeling that decides its first principles (UD, AA 02: 300.26–33; 274–275). Given Kant's praise of Hutcheson and moral sense theory, the *Inquiry* suggests that feeling determines the first principles of practical philosophy.

## 2 Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime

In the *Observations*, completed by October 1763 and published by January 31, 1764, the *Inquiry's* suggestion about feeling develops into a bolder thesis. The moral feeling – “the feeling of the beauty and the dignity of human nature” – is the basis of obligation (GSE, AA 02: 217.16 f.; 31).<sup>5</sup> By comparison to the *Inquiry*, the *Observations* has less of a scholastic, academic tone and a freer, flowery style. It is not a meta-philosophical discussion of metaphysics, theology, or ethics, but instead makes empiri-

<sup>5</sup> Citations of the *Observations* are from the translation by Paul Guyer found in Kant, Immanuel: *Anthropology, History, and Education*, edited by Robert Louden and Günter Zöllner, translated by Mary Gregor, Paul Guyer, et al. Cambridge 2007, 23–62.

cal claims in the disciplines of anthropology and aesthetics. As Dieter Henrich points out, the work is part of an empirical reformulation of parts of the 1762/3 system that includes the *Inquiry*.<sup>6</sup>

Kant claims that he casts his glance on the peculiarities of human nature more with the eye of an *observer* than of a philosopher (GSE, AA 02: 207.15; 23). This popular work, which underwent at least six editions in Kant's lifetime, is not scholastic philosophy, but concerns what Kant would later call pragmatic anthropology, even if in 1764 he did not yet distinguish between aesthetics and the latter. It is an empirical application of the method of the *Inquiry*. For instance, in section one, instead of *defining* the sublime and beautiful, Kant gives examples of objects that commonly elicit these feelings and offers empirical descriptions of them.

Accordingly, the *Observations* is neither a momentary, drastic turn in the direction of empirical Popular Philosophy nor a renunciation of the method presented in the *Inquiry*. Rather, in this work Kant expresses the empirical elements of his system in a different genre, writing for a broader audience. In a similar vein, the notes to the *Observations* employ some of the ideas found in the Prize Essay, including the distinction between analytic and synthetic methods.

### 3 Remarks in the Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime

Richard Velkley fittingly writes, "[w]hereas most scholars look at the *Remarks* only for aphorisms of tantalizing biographical interest, one must disclose that it contains a complex argumentation about the meaning of philosophy."<sup>7</sup> Because these unpublished notes were written for Kant alone, we can take their claims as expressing his considered views. What, then, is Kant's conception of philosophy in the notes that Kant wrote in his personal copy of the *Observations* between (approximately) 1764 and 1765?

<sup>6</sup> Henrich, Dieter: "Kant's Denken 1762/3: Über den Ursprung der Unterscheidung analytischer und synthetischer Urteile". In: *Studien zu Kants philosophischer Entwicklung*, edited by Heinz Heimsoeth, Dieter Henrich, and Giorgio Tonelli. Hildesheim 1967, 9–38, 36.

<sup>7</sup> Velkley, Richard: *Freedom and the End of Reason: On the Moral Foundation of Kant's Critical Philosophy*. Chicago 1989, 51.

Let us begin with Kant's views of metaphysics and logic and then turn to practical philosophy and aesthetics. Kant describes metaphysics as the science of the limits of human reason (HN, AA 20: 181.01 f.).<sup>8</sup> Kantian metaphysics, by employing a method of doubt, shows when other philosophers have adopted incorrect principles. It identifies and eliminates "useless" certainty, which is presumably the certainty that is produced merely by the definition of concepts and terms.

In the notes, Kant employs a form of the analytic method that he had proposed in the Prize Essay, although he defends a slightly more skeptical position. Kant thinks that doubting the philosophical doctrines of German scholasticism has a healthy, purgative, and cathartic effect. The doubt is not dogmatic, but a (temporary) suspension of judgment. The philosopher is a "zetetic," a skeptical doubter, a "seeker" (*Sucher*) of genuine clarifications of philosophical concepts (HN, AA 20: 175.14).

Contrasting his method with Rousseau's "synthetic" method that begins with man in the state of nature, Kant describes his method as "analytic" insofar as it examines man in the civilized condition (HN, AA 20: 14.05 f.). Kant applies a version of the analytic method to the partly analyzable concept of the human being. He first examines humanity as given in experience in many of its diverse manifestations, which he thinks vary according to climate, gender, age, education, government, and race. Kant then attempts to arrive at a concept of human nature that is not further analyzable.

What is Kant's vision for practical philosophy? The concept of moral feeling is central to Kant's ethics. We *feel* what is morally right and wrong, and placing ourselves in the moral position of other people is a means (*medium heuristicum*) by which we feel the obligatory or forbidden (HN, AA 20: 156.12 f.). Ethics is based on the principle of non-contradiction in that acting on principles that are self-contradictory is morally forbidden. Nevertheless, morally good action is motivated by moral feeling.

Kant maintains that there is an analogy between ethics and metaphysics. He holds that, at least in principle and given the application of the proper method, ethics and metaphysics are capable of the same degree of certainty, even if the certainty is achieved in different ways. Both ethics

<sup>8</sup> Translations of the *Remarks* are my own. A complete translation is found in Clewis, Robert: *Aesthetic and Moral Judgment: The Kantian Sublime in the Observations, the Remarks (translated), and the Critique of Judgment*. Ph.D. dissertation. Boston 2003. Citations from the *Remarks* list only the Akademie-Ausgabe pages.

and metaphysics employ the method of analysis. "Through analysis [*Zergliederung*] I will make it just as certain to a man that lying is as detestable as the notion of a thinking body is absurd" (HN, AA 20: 49.08–10).

Finally, what is Kant's view of the relation between aesthetics and ethics? Despite an occasional blending together of aesthetics and ethics in the *Remarks*, Kant separates the metaphysical foundations of aesthetics and moral philosophy. In what seems to reveal his plans to contribute to two areas of empirical philosophy, i. e., empirical aesthetics and ethics, Kant writes: "In the metaphysical foundations of aesthetics, the non-moral [*unmoralisch*] feeling is noticed in its diversity; in the foundations of philosophy [*Weltweisheit*], the human moral feeling is noticed in its diversity according to differences in sex, in age, in education and types of government, in races, and in climates" (HN, AA 20: 49.12–50.04). Aesthetics examines non-moral feelings – presumably, beauty, sublimity, disgust, etc. – whereas practical philosophy analyzes moral feeling in its various empirical manifestations.

Kant also uses *Weltweisheit* in the practical, ancient sense of the love of wisdom and mastery of desire (HN, AA 20: 179.16–18). Philosophy in this sense is a way of life – not a speculative system but living in accordance with virtue. He thinks philosophy can and should diagnose and provide a remedy for the social problems caused by luxury and artifice. Morality and medicine are similar in this respect: it is better not to let the disease or corruption arise at all than to do so and then remove it (HN, AA 20: 122.07–10). Kant employs a similar medical metaphor in the *Maladies*.

#### 4 Essay on the Maladies of the Head

A piece that shares some of the frivolous style of the *Observations* and the *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics* (1766), the *Maladies* pokes fun at the "doctors of the understanding" who call themselves logicians (VKK, AA 02: 260.03–05).<sup>9</sup> The essay is clearly meant to be light and ironic, but the choice of target is significant: German scholastic and Wolffian philosophy.

<sup>9</sup> Citations of the *Maladies* are from the translation by Holly Wilson found in Kant, Immanuel: *Anthropology, History, and Education*, 65–77. On Kant's essay, see Meo, Oscar: *La malattia mentale nel pensiero di Kant*. Genova 1982.

The tract's basic idea comes from Rousseau. Natural man knows no philosophy, for it is not a necessity or thing of needs. Since natural man is unconcerned about other people's judgments, he is subject to hardly any foolishness and vanity (VKK, AA 02: 269.03 f.; 75). His needs keep him close to experience, and he hardly notices that he requires understanding for his actions. In the civilized condition, a wise man (*Weiser*) is hard to find. He would lack passion (*Leidenschaft*) and possess reason (VKK, AA 02: 262.06 f.; 68) as well as sound understanding (*gesunder Verstand*) (VKK, AA 02: 269.31; 75). He would live according to nature as much as possible in the civilized condition; it is very difficult for us to do this. Our refined understanding leads us astray.

Kant criticizes German academic philosophy while poking fun at it in, using a tone that is partly serious and partly jocular. He compares true philosophy to medicine: it can eradicate or prevent unhealthy desires just as the physician can cure or impede disease. It can even correct false beliefs. The philosopher can help people with mental illness, but he should not expect much payment for his services (VKK, AA 02: 271.08–11; 77). Kant seems to allude to his financial difficulties, which he would partially offset by lecturing at Albertina University.

#### 5 Announcement of the Organization of His Lectures in the Winter Semester 1765–66

This piece was composed in 1765 and published in the autumn of that year. The *Announcement* merits particular consideration in light of our theme. Kant wrote the work with the intention of awakening student interest in attending his lectures. In giving an overview of his forthcoming lectures, he reveals his conception of philosophy.

Let us begin with his remarks on philosophy made from a pedagogical point of view, the perspective of a talented teacher. Kant describes "the natural progress of human knowledge" as proceeding in three stages, corresponding to understanding, reason, and science. Understanding develops by using experience to arrive at intuitive (*anschauenden*) judgments (NEV, AA 02: 305.16–22; 291). Reminiscent of the other texts examined in this paper, Kant derides scholars who display little understanding, who begin with subtle or artificial science rather than with experience, empirical judgments, and sensory intuition (NEV, AA 02: 306.03 ff.; 291 f.). Kant thinks the teacher of philosophy should begin with the easi-

est concepts and propositions – an application of the *Inquiry's* recommendation to start with empirical cognitions and claims. Kant maintains that the academies proceed in the wrong direction. Since philosophy has a peculiar nature, the teacher should adopt Kant's method. Rather than learning philosophy, the student ought to learn how to philosophize (NEV, AA 02: 306.31 f.; 292). (Kant defends a similar position in the first *Critique* [KrV, A 837 / B 865].) The professor should help students acquire a more mature insight of their own, rather than forcing them to memorize a philosophy that falsely alleges to be a complete discipline like history or mathematics (NEV, AA 02: 307.12 ff.; 293).

The method of instruction that is peculiar to philosophy is *zetetic* and questioning, the method of enquiry (*forschend*) (NEV, AA 02: 307.21 f.; 293). Only after reason has become more practiced, and only then in certain areas, should this method become dogmatic and decisive. (Note that Kant leaves room for dogmatism and positive philosophical claims.) Any knowledge that the student may come to acquire while he is forming and exercising his own judgment and drawing inferences for himself would be desirable but merely supplementary. Because of its questioning nature, philosophy is more a way of life than a means of communicating positive knowledge. This is probably why Kant holds that it is contrary to the nature of philosophy to be practiced as a means of earning one's daily bread (NEV, AA 02: 308.08; 294).

Kant writes that his private lectures will cover metaphysics, the foremost science (*Hauptwissenschaft*); logic; ethics; and physical geography. In the section on metaphysics, Kant endorses some of the main theses of the *Inquiry*, even mentioning the essay (NEV, AA 02: 308.17; 294). The endorsement of his earlier position shows that Kant is not ready to announce any significant departure from the position of the *Inquiry*. Kant says he will use Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* (1739), criticizing it slightly. Following Baumgarten, for Kant metaphysics includes empirical psychology, or the metaphysical yet experiential science of the human being. Metaphysics also covers the nature of bodies and matter, both living and nonliving (*Leblose*). It encompasses ontology, the science that concerns "the more general properties of things." It includes rational psychology, which examines the relation between spiritual and material beings. It also discusses God as cause of all things (NEV, AA 02: 309.25 f.; 295). Kant again applies the analytic method described in the *Inquiry*, for he begins with the easiest subjects and proceeds to the more difficult and abstract.

Logic is divided into a critique and canon of sound understanding or common sense (*gesunden Verstandes*), and the critique and canon of "real learning" and of "the whole of philosophy in its entirety" (NEV, AA 02: 310.07 ff.; 296). The first canon corrects logical errors and fallacies. To teach this, Kant will use Georg Meier's handbook, *Auszug aus der Vernunftlehre* (1752). The second canon, a "complete logic," functions as an organon of different sciences. The logic for metaphysics should be presented only after the philosopher has established some metaphysical claims. Kant states that he will reflect on the proper method of metaphysics at the end of his lectures on the latter. Presumably, such considerations were quite close to the method proposed in the *Inquiry*.

For Kant, the critique of reason (presumably in the first sense) leads to a "critique of taste, that is to say, aesthetics" (NEV, AA 02: 311.06 f.; 297). The rules of sound, ordinary understanding naturally serve to elucidate the rules of aesthetics. Kant holds that here is a very close relationship between the materials examined by the first kind of logic and those examined by this empirical critique of taste.

Kant repeats the *Inquiry's* view that moral philosophy (*moralische Weltweisheit*) is neither thoroughly grounded nor a science, although it has the illusion of being one since the moral feeling (*Sentiment*) is accurate and easy to apply. In ethics, Kant laments, a question is often settled before any reasons have been given; this presumption does not occur in metaphysics (NEV, AA 02: 311.10–17; 297). Kant's ethics lectures are to be based on Baumgarten's *Initia Philosophiae Practicae Primae* (1760). Kant also mentions Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Hume, echoing the *Inquiry's* interest in moral sense theory. Although Kant values their theories, he plans to add to their precision and completeness. For him, ethics should start with the inquiry into human nature, which he thinks is unchanging, and only then ask about what *ought* to happen (NEV, AA 02: 311.30 f.; 298). Descriptive anthropology thus precedes normative ethical theory. His method of practical philosophy improves upon the ancients, Kant thinks, for he can distinguish between wise (civilized) innocence and primitive innocence. He can start with the human being as found in the civilized condition, as he does in the *Remarks*.

Finally, Kant also considers physical geography, but there is little reason to think that he believes that this is part of philosophy *per se* rather than a historical, positive body of knowledge (NEV, AA 02: 312.08 ff.; 298 f.).

## 6 Conclusion: Kant as a Reformer of Metaphysics

It is striking how the *Inquiry* continues to use the German scholastic language of clarity and distinctness, which is traceable back at least to Descartes. Kant was not a pure empiricist at this time, and his empiricist tendencies are situated within a rationalist framework. Kant's relation to Wolffian philosophy remains complex. He distances himself from German school philosophy and criticizes it in the *Observations, Remarks, Maladies*, and *Announcement*, yet the latter states that Kant would use the Wolffian textbooks of Baumgarten and Meier. Since the *Inquiry* offers what Kant considers the proper method of metaphysics, we can see that he is attempting to contribute to and reform the discipline. He did not abandon metaphysics altogether. Kant's further reflections on the proper method of metaphysics would eventually lead to the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

This reveals why it is worthwhile to consider the five pre-Critical texts we have examined here. Although Kant's positions in the *Inaugural Dissertation* (1770) and first *Critique* differ in significant ways from that of his 1762/3 system, elements of Kant's conception of philosophy in 1764–1765 are preserved in later conceptions, as mentioned in this paper's introduction. In writings such as "What is Enlightenment?" and the first *Critique*, Kant would continue to maintain that philosophy should help human beings, especially students, to think for themselves. Kant retains the conviction found in the *Observations, Remarks, Maladies*, and *Announcement* that philosophy should be oriented toward the practical. This orientation toward the essential ends of reason can be discerned in the famous notion of denying knowledge to make room for faith (KrV, B xxx). Accordingly, I hope the consideration of these pre-Critical texts allows us to attain a more historically accurate and philosophically sophisticated understanding of Kant's development.

## Orizzonte del mondo e libertà dell'uomo nello sviluppo del pensiero kantiano tra ragion pura e declinazioni della filosofia pratica

Giuseppe D'Alessandro

Queste brevi riflessioni prendono lo spunto dalla concezione della filosofia come scienza aperta al mondo, alla vita dell'uomo nel mondo. Il riferimento a un passo e a una nota conclusivi della *Critica della ragion pura*, in cui Kant si richiama al *Weltbegriff* filosofico e lo inserisce nella prospettiva di un irrinunciabile, fondamentale "interesse dell'uomo",<sup>1</sup> rappresenta un significativo punto di snodo tra le argomentazioni svolte nella prima *Critica*, a loro volta punto di approdo e di nuova elaborazione di tematiche già presenti già prima della *Dissertazione* del 1770, e gli sviluppi ulteriori che il pensiero kantiano avrebbe preso negli ambiti della filosofia della storia, della religione, della politica, vale a dire nelle declinazioni della ragion pratica. È interessante notare come questa sorta di vera e propria testa di ponte programmatica e prospettica delle vie che la filosofia avrebbe potuto e dovuto intraprendere (giacché, senza la fondamentale apertura esistenziale dell'"imparare a filosofare", non sarebbe neanche stato possibile costruire il sistema di ogni "conoscenza filosofica", apertura che caratterizza la "via critica" alla filosofia, per cui ciascuno è chiamato "a dare il proprio contributo per trasformare il sentiero" filosofico in una "via regia" della ragione e della filosofia),<sup>2</sup> venisse ripresa da Kant di lì a qualche anno proprio in uno scritto di filosofia pratica, in quella *Idea di una storia universale dal punto di vista cosmopolitico*, del 1784, che inaugura la kantiana filosofia della storia (e non, ad esempio, in quella *Erläuterung e weitere Bestimmung* della prima *Critica* rappresentata dai *Prolegomeni* del 1783). I rapporti tra libertà e necessità, tra

1 KrV, A 839 ss./B 867 ss. "C'è però ancora un concetto di mondo (*conceptus cosmicus, Weltbegriff*) che è stato sempre a fondamento di questa definizione [della filosofia come concetto scolastico, ossia il concetto di un sistema della conoscenza] specialmente quando per così dire lo si personificava e lo si presentava come un modello nell'ideale del filosofo [...] Concetto di mondo vuol dire qui quello che riguarda ciò che interessa necessariamente ognuno".

2 KrV, A 856/B 884.

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Claudio La Rocca und Margit Ruffing

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