

Abstracts

Slavoj Žižek

Kant, Mysticism, and the Pre-Ontological Real

Hegel's notion of reconciliation is much more paradoxical than it may appear. It does not designate the final sublation (*Aufhebung*) of all tensions in a rational totality but the reconciliation with an irreducible excess of madness as a condition of rationality. This madness is directly experienced in what Hegel, following mystics, calls "night of the world" – mysticism can thus be rehabilitated as a basic materialist experience.

Keywords: Kant, Hegel, Lacan, Real, mysticism, understanding, reason

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Frank Ruda

Mutmaßung, or: For a Return to The Courage to Use One's Own Understanding

The present text thinks through Kant's famous formulation of the Enlightenment as being linked to the courage to use one's own understanding. It addresses the question of how we can understand not what it means to use one's own understanding, but what it means that one has to have the courage to do so. On this basis and against the background of diagnoses that indicate in what precise

way a lack of courage is (politically) detrimental, the article unfolds the contours of a concept of courage post-Kant.

Keywords: Badiou, courage, extra-ordinary language philosophy, Fanon, measure, Solzhenitsyn

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Andrew Cutrofello

Kant's Four Discourses

In his preface to the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant distinguishes four metaphysical discourses: the dogmatist's, skeptic's, indifferentist's, and critic's. Explicitly conceived as social links, they bear an uncanny resemblance to the discourses of the master, hysteric, university, and analyst that Lacan introduces in *Seminar XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*. After explicating these parallels, specific differences between the critic's discourse and the analyst's discourse are explored. Lacan takes the critic to harbor quasi-sadomasochistic attitudes toward the law, but Kant would take Lacan to neglect to raise the question *Quid juris?* with respect to the four discourses themselves. Just as Kant derives his fourfold table of categories from the fourfold structure of Aristotelian judgment, so he could derive Lacan's four quartets from a problem that originates in Plato's *Parmenides*.

Keywords: Kant, Lacan, critique, psychoanalysis, indifferentism, university discourse

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Güçsal Pular

"No Human Being Can Be without Metaphysics": Kant on Indifference to Metaphysics

A neglected 18th-century rival to Kant's critical philosophy is what in the preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason* he names "indifferentism," namely, the loose group

of philosophical figures and trends belonging to the French Enlightenment, Scottish philosophy of common sense, and German *Popularphilosophie* that, despite other doctrinal and methodological divergences, were united by the conviction that metaphysics, as a speculative science, was a dispensable intellectual enterprise. The main goal of this paper is to demonstrate the extent to which Kant's critical reformulation and solution to the problem of metaphysics was embedded in the indifferentist problematic, and it does this by identifying and reconstructing Kant's main arguments against indifferentism. In Kant's assessment, indifferentism embodied a self-stultifying meta-metaphysical attitude, had an inconsistent philosophical methodology, and set up a self-defeating cultural goal. Reconstructing Kant's counterarguments against indifferentism has the added benefit of revealing the remarkable breadth of his conception of metaphysics, the indispensability of which he emphasized, first, as a natural predisposition of human reason, then, as its critical self-examination, and finally, as its consummate culture.

Keywords: Kant, critical philosophy, metaphysics, reason, indifference

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Eric Reinhart

Kant's Animating Principle: On Aesthetic Vitalism and the Origin of Desire

If Kant's first critique could be said to concern how and what we can think, and the second critique concerns how we should live and what we should do, then the third critique asks why: Why do we think and why do we act? What propels us to do either? This essay argues for an object-disoriented aesthetics, positioning Kant's third critique as a framework for rethinking the role of beauty and the aesthetic encounter in subjectivity, ontology, pure and practical reason, and political community. Moving beyond preoccupations in the philosophy of aesthetics with art and art objects that obscure the nature and function of beauty, Kant emphasizes the subjective principle of the supersensible, wherein the aesthetic is defined not by the properties of objects nor by experience but by the "feeling of life" itself that

the encounter with beauty elicits within the subject. What Kant identifies as disinterestedness, free play, and universal communicability allow for a decentering and dissolution of the subject, fostering a unique form of sociality – the *sensus communis* – that emerges from the communicability of the incommunicable that characterizes being as such. By reframing the aesthetic encounter in relation to desire as the animating principle behind language and reason, and by drawing out the aesthetic encounter’s resistance to objectification, representation, and understanding, object-disoriented aesthetics draws out the potential of beauty to subvert stable identifications and historical constraints, and to thereby cultivate open-ended political community and associated ethical action.

Keywords: object-disoriented aesthetics, aesthetic vitalism, disinterestedness, *sensus communis*, political community, desire, Kant, Scarry, Arendt, Lacan

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Anthony Curtis Adler

Kant’s Transcendental Alethiology: Truth from the Critique of Pure Reason to the Critique of Judgment

Starting from the tension between Kant’s professed adherence to a correspondence theory of truth and his rejection of knowledge of things as they are in themselves, I argue that Kant’s theory of truth only becomes comprehensible through the foundational inquiries into truth emerging in the wake of his philosophical “Copernican revolution.” Both Heidegger’s rethinking of truth as disclosure and Tarski’s semantic theory of truth respond to the Kantian “fissure,” and, in turn, two of the most compelling accounts of Kant’s theory of truth – Gerald Prauss’s “Zum Wahrheitsproblem bei Kant” and Robert Hanna’s “Kant, Truth, and Human Nature” – draw “retrospectively” on both Heidegger and Tarski in order to clarify Kant’s position. Defending Kant’s commitment to correspondence truth, Hanna argues that for Kant there are not only three different material criteria for theoretical truths but a further distinction can be drawn between truth and a non-cognitively directed truthfulness. Yet while Hanna, for whom Kant is a “constrained pluralist about truth,” stops at the second critique, I argue that truth also plays a

tacit role in the third critique. The faculty of judgment is a subjective power for correspondence – the condition of the very possibility of correspondence. The judgment of taste does not communicate a specific truth about the world, but instead conveys a potential for truth within the human powers of cognition. The ultimate condition of truth, taking the place of God in Aquinas, is the *sensus communis*, humankind's plural finitude, as revealed through aesthetic judgment and the historical cultivation of taste.

Keywords: Kant, truth, judgment, *sensus communis*, Tarski, Heidegger, Gerold Prauss, Robert Hanna

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Dominik Finkelde

Kant, Maimon, and the Differential Theory of Perception

This paper examines the philosophical interplay between Salomon Maimon and Immanuel Kant, with a focus on Maimon's critique of Kant's dualism and the epistemological challenges arising from the latter's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant acknowledged Maimon's profound insight into his philosophy, particularly on the foundational questions of cognition: "quid facti?" (what are the facts?) and "quid juris?" (what justifies these facts?). Kant's attempt to reconcile the sensory and conceptual realms through the schema of time is met with skepticism by Maimon, who proposes a unified foundation for understanding and intuition. Drawing inspiration from calculus and Leibniz's infinitesimals, Maimon develops a differential approach to cognition, suggesting that the human mind synthesizes reality through an interaction of infinitesimally small cognitive elements.

Keywords: differential theory of cognition, sensibility and understanding, epistemology, infinitesimal calculus, mind and world

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Kobe Keymeulen

Weeding out the Critical Root – How Kant Thinks the Radical

This essay explores how Immanuel Kant's seminal work *On Radical Evil in Human Nature* (1793), rather than strictly presenting an ethical thesis, can instead be understood as constructing a theory on how anything, including evil, can be radical. Although the term "radical" is used frequently in contemporary literature with varying intentions, Kant's text can present us with a deliberate, careful consideration of its meaning for critical philosophy. This paper opens with Kant's use of the term in the discussion of the hypothetical use of Reason in the first *Critique*, relating it to distinction between truth (*Wahrheit*) and veracity (*Wahrhaftigkeit*). It then pursues this approach throughout *On Radical Evil*, observing an inherent asymmetry between good and evil, where evil operates with reflective, corrupting adaptability. I conclude by situating Kant's insights within the broader trajectory of German Idealism and contemporary radical philosophy, focusing in particular on Marx's famous dictum on radicality – "grasping the matter by its roots." Ultimately, Kant is presented as modernity's pioneering thinker of the radical, even as he ultimately retreats from fully embracing the implications of his own critical framework.

Keywords: radicality, radicalism, Immanuel Kant, evil

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Alenka Zupančič

The Kantian Limits

If one were to capture the debates surrounding Kant's legacy in a single word, that word would likely be limit(s) or limitation(s). This paper delves into the Kantian notion of the limit and proposes an interpretation that may challenge our conventional understanding of the term. It does so by closely examining Kant's distinction between *Schranke* and *Grenze*, as discussed in the *Prolegomena*. The paper connects this discussion, on the one hand, to Hegel's critique of Kant, and on the other, to key psychoanalytic concepts that involve a peculiar kind of

negativity—one that is not so different from the negativity at stake in Kant’s philosophy, and particularly in his discussion of Grenze.

Keywords: limit, boundary, Schranke, Grenze, desire, infinite, negativity