

Kant in Current Philosophy of Mind and Epistemology

Kant en la filosofía de la mente y la epistemología actuales

SOFIA MIGUENS*

University of Porto, Portugal

PAULO TUNHAS**

University of Porto, Portugal

Abstract

In this text we present the articles contained in issue 6 of *Con-Textos Kantianos*, which is dedicated to the relation between Kant's philosophy and current discussions in philosophy of mind and epistemology. The articles are organized in three sections, dedicated respectively to sensory consciousness and judgement, spontaneity and Kantianism and science.

Keywords

sensory consciousness, perceptual judgement, spontaneity, Kantianism and science.

This present issue of *Con-Textos Kantianos* is dedicated to the relation between Kant's philosophy and current discussions in philosophy of mind and epistemology. It contains contributions by Kant scholars and other philosophers on themes such as self-consciousness and self-knowledge, judgement and perception, perception and givenness and conceptualism and nonconceptualism about experience. More generally, Kant's perspective on nature, perception, experience and science is brought to bear on ongoing research.

* Professor at the Institute of Philosophy of the Univ. Of Porto. E-mail for contact: smoraismiguens@gmail.com

** Professor at the Institute of Philosophy of the Univ. Of Porto. E-mail for contact: paulo.tunhas@gmail.com

The articles are organized the following way. The first section is devoted to consciousness and judgement; the articles included in it explore topics ranging from sensory consciousness, causal-perceptual judgement and perceptual judgement to aesthetic judgement.

In *Analytic Kantianism: Sellars and McDowell on Sensory Consciousness* **Johannes Haag** (Potsdam Universität, Germany) focuses on Wilfrid Sellars and John McDowell as proponents of so-called Analytic Kantianism. He analyses how their accounts of sensory consciousness differ in important ways. In particular, he is interested in McDowell's criticism of Sellars, both as a reading of Kant and on its own merits. The article offers a detailed analysis of such criticism as well as a defense of Sellars' position. At the background is the attempt to spell out what transcendental philosophy means as methodology.

In *Kant, Causal Judgment & Locating the Purloined Letter* **Kenneth R. Westphal** (Univ. Boğaziçi, Turkey) goes after Kant's subtle and complex account of cognitive judgment, which he believes is far more illuminating (namely for contemporary discussions) than is often appreciated. The analysis of Kant's account of causal-perceptual judgment leads him to highlight one central philosophical achievement: Kant's finding that, to understand and investigate empirical knowledge we must distinguish between predication as a grammatical form of sentences, statements or (candidate) judgments, and predication as a (proto-)cognitive act of *ascribing* some characteristic(s) to some localised particular(s). Kant's account of perceptual judgment thus accords with – and indeed justifies – a central and sound point regarding language, thought and reference advocated by apparently unlikely philosophical comrades such as Stoic logicians, Kant, Hegel, Frege, Austin, Donnellan, Evans, Kripke, Kaplan, Travis and Wettstein (these are all authors whose approaches stand in contrast to 'description theories' of reference, to Quine's notion of 'ontological commitment' and to much of recently regenerated 'analytic metaphysics').

In *Apperception or Environment: J. McDowell and Ch. Travis on the nature of perceptual judgement* **Sofia Miguens** (University of Porto, Portugal) compares and contrasts John McDowell's Kantian view of perceptual judgement with Charles Travis Fregean approach to the same topic. By analysing the clash between Travis' idea of the silence of the senses and McDowell's idea of intuitional content, the author aims to characterize the core of their divergence regarding the nature of perceptual judgement. The article also aims at presenting their engagement as a reformulated version of the debate around conceptual and nonconceptual content of perception, bringing forth some of its stakes. Such reformulated version of the debate makes it possible to bring out what a Kantian position on representation, consciousness and appearances ultimately amounts to, as well as to identify a particular angle of criticism to it.

Also **Matías Oroño** (University of Buenos Aires/CONICET, Argentina) in *El (no)-conceptualismo de Kant y los juicios de gusto* (*Kant's (non)-conceptualism and judgments*

of taste) focuses on judgement, but this time on aesthetic judgement. He believes there is a tendency within the conceptualism–nonconceptualism debate to overlook Kant’s aesthetics. The main goal of the article is to put forward an analysis of D. H. Heidemann’s non-conceptualist interpretation of Kant’s view of judgement of taste. The author begins by considering Heidemann’s analysis of the cognitive character of judgements of taste. Then he assesses the supposed nonconceptualism involved in aesthetic experience. Finally he puts forward an alternative explanation of the connections between Kant’s position on the aesthetics of beauty and the conceptualism–nonconceptualism debate. The author’s thesis is that even if judgements of taste do not possess cognitive value they allow us to understand central aspects of the Kantian theory of knowledge.

In *La epistemología kantiana y el contenido no conceptual (Kantian Epistemology and Non-Conceptual Content)* **Juan Rosales** (Universidad Yachay Tech, Ecuador) analyses John McDowell’s contention that the content of experience is fully conceptual; hence anything like nonconceptual content would simply not be possible. The article starts from a direct reading of Kant’s *Lessons of Logic* and an indirect reading of *Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Directions in Space*. The author argues in favor of an interpretation of skills and practices as possible expressions of non-conceptual content in Kant’s epistemology.

We believe a liberal interpretation of the import of Kant on epistemology and philosophy of mind can be illuminating, so we did not restrict the selection of articles to analytic philosophy, or Analytic Kantianism. When a question such as e.g. spontaneity, and what Kant means by it in his approach to subjectivity, is at stake, it may be useful to search beyond analytic philosophy. This the case in the first article of the second section, dedicated to spontaneity.

In *Heidegger’s interpretation of the Critique of Pure Reason: the question of imagination (A interpretação heideggeriana da Crítica da Razão Pura: a questão da imaginação)* **Sílvia Bento** (University of Porto, Portugal) focuses on the Heidegger’s controversial interpretation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in Kant and problem of metaphysics, searching for a perspective on Kant’s views on subjectivity, spontaneity and imagination. Withholding her critical stance on Heidegger, the author analyses her interpretation of the first edition of the *Critique*, presented as an ontological interpretation of Kantian transcendental subjectivity, with imagination as its core.

In *The Case for Absolute Spontaneity in Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason* **Addison Ellis** (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA) also focuses on the topic of spontaneity. He tries to assess Kant’s claim in the *Critique of Pure Reason* according to which the understanding is a faculty of spontaneity, while the sensibility is a faculty of receptivity. While the terms ‘spontaneity’ and ‘receptivity’, and their relation, are often taken for granted in Kant scholarship, the author inspects them carefully. He argues for he conclusion that the thesis of relative spontaneity (RS) (according to which thought is self-

determined according to a conditioned inner principle) is wrong. If RS were the correct way to understand our self-determination in thought, then we would have to understand representational unity as the unity of an aggregate. But we do not have to understand it this way, for reasons the authors spells out. He concludes that this means that we must make sense of how thought can be self-determined in an unconditioned way.

In this collection of articles we took epistemology in a broader sense, so as to include a Kantian conception of science and scientific thinking. Thus the third section is dedicated to Kantianism and science.

In *¿Por qué la psicología empírica no es una ciencia natural? Una lectura del “Prólogo” a los Primeros principios metafísicos de la ciencia de la naturaleza de Kant* (*Why is Empirical Psychology not a Natural Science? A Reading of the “Preface” to Kant’s Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*) **Martín Arias-Albisu** analyses the “Preface” to the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*. There Kant holds that empirical psychology, in contrast to mathematical physics and phlogistic chemistry, is not a natural science. The article aims to offer an interpretation of the reasons why Kant assigns such status to empirical psychology. The author purports to show, on the one hand, that empirical psychology does not have a proper scientific character like mathematical physics since inner phenomena cannot be presented *a priori* like movements in space. On the other hand, psychology does not have an improper scientific character, such as that of phlogistic chemistry, because it is not possible to conduct experiments nor make rigorous observations in the domain of inner sense. The outcome is that empirical psychology is a mere systematic and classificatory natural description of the phenomena of inner sense.

In *La fonction épistémologique du jugement réfléchissant chez Kant* (*The epistemological function of reflective judgement in Kant’s theory of knowledge*) **Eric Beauron** (University of Paris I - Sorbonne) analyses the epistemological function of reflective judgement, whose principle is brought out in the two introductions of the *Critique of Judgement*. The analysis of § 62 of the *Critique of Judgement*, in conjunction with the § 38 of the *Prolegomena* and the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic, reveals the heuristic role of the principle of formal purposiveness and the affinity in scientific procedures, especially in the Newtonian invention of the law of universal gravitation. The aim of the article is to explore how reflective judgement works in epistemological contexts in which the functions of the understanding can no longer operate, since the empirical data escape the transcendental principles of the Analytic of Principles. The functioning of an epistemological ‘as if’ is brought to light to create the architectonical link between the technique of nature and its mechanical necessity.

In *Frege sobre Kant: uma motivação filosófica do logicismo* (*Frege on Kant: a philosophical motivation of logicism*) **Manuela Teles** (University of Porto – Portugal) analyses the way Frege always had Kant in mind when formulating his position in philosophy of logics and mathematics. Frege defends the thesis according to which one can

only reach knowledge of numbers and of basic arithmetic operations if one accepts that determining what concepts and objects are is not a task for psychology (taken in a broad sense as a research into representations (*Vorstellungen*), whether they be empirical or a priori). Determining what concepts and objects are is rather a task for logic, to which a non-psychologistic philosophy may be associated. According to the autor, Frege defends the thesis that the agglutinating force of concept largely surpasses the unifying capacity of synthetic apperception.

Finally in *Da afinidade à acção (From affinity to action)* **Paulo Tunhas** (University of Porto, Portugal) analyses the work of Portuguese philosopher Fernando Gil, which was much influenced by Kant. From the very beginning of his philosophical work Fernando Gil looked for a harmony between the Kantian project and certain pre-Kantian modes of thinking, such as the Leibnizian. In his later work he also searched for harmony with the post-Kantian philosophy of Fichte. Such is the double origin of his deeply original philosophy of knowledge, which the author analyzes.

We believe we have gathered in the presente issue of *Contextos Kantianos* very interesting and diverse materials (also geographically diverse, since the authors whose work we present in this issue come from countries such as Germany, Portugal, Spain, the US, Turkey, Argentina and Venezuela); we hope the result presented is of some value for all those involved in philosophical research which owes to Kant its orientation or inspiration.

