

Review*Inspirations from Kant: Essays*

by Leslie Stevenson

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Leslie Stevenson's book contains nine essays, most previously published and now revised, which examine parts of Kant's Critical, and mostly theoretical, philosophy. The discussions reflect Stevenson's past interest in a set of topics, which do not follow any general or systematic theme even though some issues reappear in different essays. Not all the topics are closely linked to Kant (essays 7 and 8) but Kant's philosophy is the primary target.

Although the essays do not follow any general theme they share a common method. It is a method, associated with such philosophers as Wittgenstein and Austin, which approaches philosophical problems at least initially by distinguishing and cataloguing different uses of the relevant concepts in ordinary language (or common sense). It is exemplified in the later Wittgenstein's equation of 'meaning' and 'use' and in Austin's catalogue of excuses (in 'A Plea for Excuses'). In Stevenson's essays it yields just such catalogues (e.g. of types of representation (essay 1), forms of transcendental idealism (essay 3), belief and emotion (essays 6, 7), spontaneity (essay 7) etc.).

In the book Leslie Stevenson refers to my *The Revolutionary Kant* (Open Court, 2006) in support of such a method in clarifying Kant's philosophy but, as I shall suggest, I have some

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anxieties about its use in this context. For although I am sympathetic to its use in clarifying philosophical problems generally there is a central restriction on its use in the context of historical figures. Kant was himself an enthusiastic cataloguer (of 'ideas' (B377); of concepts of 'nothing' (B348); of judgement forms and categories (B95, 106) etc.) but they were determined by his prior philosophical interests. His classifications arise out of those interests and are subordinated to them. Any ordinary language clarification of his technical vocabulary has similarly to be sensitive to those underlying philosophical interests if it is to throw light on his position. Later, in my second section on Comments I note some anxieties about Stevenson's clarification but first offer a summary of the essays.

### 1. A Brief Summary of the Essays.

**T**he essays can be divided into three groups according to their Kantian issues, but two essays (7 and 8) are not primarily concerned with Kant. Group I concerns an interpretation of Kant's transcendental idealism (essays 1 and 3); Group II (essays 2, 6, and 8) focuses on psychological issues; Group III deals with issues (cosmology and free will) arising from Kant's Dialectic (essays 4, 5, 7, 9).

#### Group I: Transcendental Idealism.

**E**ssay 1 offers comments on Kant's famous Copernican hypothesis (Bxvi) that objects might 'conform to our knowledge' rather than that 'our knowledge conforms to objects'. The discussion, guided by Sebastian Gardner's claim that this is an issue about 'representation' and 'necessities of representation', then embarks on a catalogue of different types of representation (propositional, conceptual, intuitive, singular terms) and their objects. The recent controversy over non-

conceptual content is considered in relation to Kant's non-conceptual intuitions, as also is the notion of an 'intentional object', though that is regarded as obscure and replaced by the generic notion of 'content'. The suggestion is that this clarifies and resolves the idealistic mind-dependence associated with the Copernican hypothesis in such Kantian claims as that we 'impose laws on nature' (A126-127). Stevenson rejects a naïve interpretation of such claims according to which we actually produce reality, or the world and its objects, and in essay 5 reformulates Kant's position in the following way:

I suggest that Kant means only that *our conceptions of the world* are a product of human cognitive and scientific activity. (75)

Essay 3 catalogues three different ways in which we can understand the transcendental ideality of space and time, based on a distinction between 'global' and 'perspectival' aspects of space and time derived from Rescher's *Conceptual Idealism*. The first suggestion is that transcendental idealism can be understood in both cases by appealing to our procedures in setting up a system of spatio-temporal measurement by means of public objects such as clocks and rulers. Although such constitutive activities occur within, and make essential use of, public objects they are, according to Rescher, 'mind-involving' though not 'mind-dependent'.

The second way applies only to perspectival aspects in which space and time are related to subjects' particular points of view ('from here', 'now'). Such perspectival claims can be expressed in terms of the way things appear to subjects and the suggestion is that this reflects Kant's technical use of 'appearance' and its contrast with 'things in themselves'. Even though our ordinary understanding of the way things appear operates within the public world it is said to be not just 'mind-involving' but 'mind-

dependent' and so captures that part of Kant's transcendental idealism.

The third way outlines a dispute between Falkenstein and Waxman about whether Kant's 'impressions' and 'sensations' should be understood as physiological or psychological. That issue is noted but not resolved (48-49), and the discussion focuses on the more general question of how we can understand and explain the relation between these physiological and psychological features in 'what the ordinary perceiver is doing' (51). The issue is left as an on-going research venture in cognitive science.

#### Group II: Psychological Issues.

**E**ssay 3 is designed to 'explore various kinds of unity in experience... produced by mental processes of synthesis' (21). Kant's constant appeals to 'synthesis' are a principal interest and the discussion is guided by the claim that 'human conceptualized experience is the result of preconceptual, sub-personal processing' (23). Much is made of Kant's belief that synthesis is often unconscious but its activity is said to contrast with a 'passive' empiricism. Stevenson recognises that this raises two immediate issues. One is the general difficulty of separating psychology from philosophy in this context; the other is the difficulty, which Kant faces, of explaining how content can be nonconceptual in the light of his insistence that knowledge requires both sensibility and understanding (B 75).

What follows is a detailed survey of ways in which we may 'integrate' specific experiences into an ordinary human understanding of features in the 'world'. A report of a simple sensory property of a material object may be based on a complex of separate experiences with perceptual and conceptual aspects, in succession, and from different sense modalities.

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Such cases point towards formulations of principles which govern these operations such as:

Succession: A perceptual experience of succession is not reducible to a succession of perceptual experiences, even if they occur in the time-order of the events perceived. (26)

The later principles owe less to Kant's own account of our mental powers and the essay concludes with references to three issues. First is a discussion of Wilfrid Sellars's criticism of a traditional attempt to justify knowledge on the basis of mere 'sense impressions'; the second refers again to the dispute between Falkenstein and Waxman; and the third is a brief suggestion that 'Kant's theory of mind is broadly functionalist and consistent with a nonreductionist form of materialism' (41).

In Essay 6 Leslie Stevenson surveys Kant's accounts, from the first *Critique* to the moral philosophy and the various logic notes, of the terms '*meinen*', '*glauben*', and '*wissen*'. The discussion starts from the section in the Doctrine of Method (B848 - 860) where the basic distinctions are outlined, but it is also shown that in other and later works Kant does not always maintain a clear or consistent usage for these terms. The essay disentangles this complex terminological development and issues, characteristically, in a five-fold catalogue of different occasions of the use of 'belief'.

Essay 8, 'Six Levels of Mentality', does not make Kant's philosophy the centre of interest. It raises again more generally the issue of nonconceptual representation, distinguishes between 'belief' and 'acceptance', and considers whether belief can properly be voluntary (a topic central to essay 7). As in other discussions the upshot is a catalogue of different types or forms both of belief and of desires and emotions. The different forms are distinguished in terms of their overt linguistic expressibility and their directedness towards minds or towards

objects. Kant's appeals to the notion of 'spontaneity' figure in the concluding taxonomies, and a connection is noted with the traditional problem of free will and determinism and Kant's attempt to resolve it. That outstanding issue has some connection also with essay 7, but is addressed head-on in the final essay 9.

Group III:

Issues from the Dialectic: Freedom and Cosmology.

Essay 4 offers an account of Kant's diagnostic apparatus in the Dialectic which includes references to what is 'given' in experience, and how we come to talk of an 'unconditioned' terminus to a series of conditions in experience, such as the beginning of the universe. Kant's conception of the 'given' is generally identified through what is presented and inductively inferred a posteriori (56-57). An apparently odd exception is noted, and linked to Kant's phrase 'given a priori', in which we may talk of what can be deductively inferred from data in a mathematical puzzle (sense (iv) in essay 5; 66).

In the Dialectic Kant's notion of an 'unconditioned' represents an inevitable but also fallacious inference from our experience, which goes beyond anything that can be 'given'. This conception is illustrated in ways in which we may think of the past as if it were like a foreign country available at any time for a visit instead of merely as a construct inferred from the present in accordance with empirical laws. A further illustration is discussed in Kant's references to a 'transcendental object'. The suggestion is that the expression merely stands in for the ways in which we think of experience as 'objective' even though it may be misunderstood to refer to some independently existing realm of objects. These cases point to a reformulation of Kant's resolution of the problems. The suggestion (61) is that it would be false to claim that on the basis of what is empirically given a

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whole series leading to an 'unconditioned' (such as the beginning of the universe) is also empirically given; but acceptable to claim that on the basis of what is empirically given the whole series of past conditions is necessarily given, i.e. we know that some such series exists, though we have no determinate knowledge of it.

Essay 5 pursues these suggestions in the context of the first, cosmological, Antinomy in which disputes arise about whether we should think of the physical universe as having spatio-temporal bounds or as boundless. The essay summarizes the arguments given in the dispute, interprets Kant's resolution of the issue, and offers a comparison with current developments in scientific cosmology. Recent claims that science might achieve a conclusive 'theory of everything' are criticised as over-ambitious on the ground that they presuppose an implausible and unwarranted form of physicalism. The suggestion is that Kant's resolution of the Antinomy makes a similar point in arguing that such claims suffer from a 'conceptual' defect (73) where there is 'no fact of the matter' (73,74). Even though Kant did not accept a verificationist account of meaning his claim is said to be that it 'makes no sense' (73) to say of the universe as a whole that it must be either bounded or boundless.

Essay 9 continues Stevenson's discussion of the antinomies by considering the traditional conflict between freedom and causal determinism. The essay begins by examining the way 'determinism' might be understood independently of Kant. A determinist claim that there is a complete causal explanation of every event, which makes that event inevitable, is said to be vulnerable to a number of limitations in terms of the complexity of events, of the universe, and of the precise mathematical formulation for the required explanatory laws. In the light of these limitations determinism is said to be no more than a 'vastly inflated idealization' of our limited knowledge (146). We have only a partial, incomplete knowledge of reality (associated

with Kant's conception of reality known as 'appearance') but no prospect of attaining a complete account (associated with Kant's conception of a reality of 'things in themselves' of which we are in principle ignorant). The position seems to be that described in essay 5 where reference to such a complete picture is said to be conceptually defective.

Kant's own position in this context is often assumed to start with a commitment to such a determinism in his proof of the Second Analogy, but Leslie Stevenson appeals to my discussion of that section (*The Revolutionary Kant*, Ch. 20) to indicate that that assumption is questionable or even deniable. That enables Kant's resolution of the third Antinomy to proceed in a more detached way, and the suggestion is that his distinction between a regulative or constitutive commitment to both causality and free will underpins that resolution. In the case of causality to treat its principle as regulative is no more than to enjoin scientists to pursue the search for causes (and causal laws) endlessly (without supposing that the search could ever end). In the case of free will the regulative principle is that 'we should treat people as amenable to reason as far as possible, and be amenable to reason ourselves' (161). The concluding claim is that with such an account in place the supposed conflict between 'determinism' and 'indeterminism' is spurious, for both are 'figments of our philosophical imaginations' (161).

Essay 7 makes some concluding points about Kant's attitude towards the question whether belief can be voluntary, or in what sense, if any, we can properly *decide* what to believe; but most of the essay contains a detailed survey of responses to that question in Descartes, Spinoza and Hume. The central point is that although there seem initially to be marked differences between these three philosophers, a more careful examination reveals some less evident similarities, some ambiguities and some obscurity. Kant's contribution focuses on his distinction between reason and understanding and his various references to

'spontaneity' in the theoretical and practical philosophy. The discussion ends with a characteristic catalogue of five such references, the final one of which, 'the spontaneity of an uncaused event' (117), points directly to the conflict between freedom and determinism in essay 9.

## 2. Comments.

The essays sometimes go beyond their Kantian territory, and even the account of Kant's views is qualified in various ways (as only 'inspired' by Kant or actually representing his position), but it is inevitable that questions will be raised about the interpretations offered in the discussions. I comment primarily on the accounts of Kant's transcendental idealism (Group I) and of the arguments from the Dialectic (Group III) with only minor interpolations on the psychological issues (Group II).

### I. Transcendental Idealism.

The most immediate account of transcendental idealism is given in the discussion of Kant's Copernican hypothesis in essay 1. The hypothesis, that objects might conform to our knowledge, rather than the other way round, is a paradigm expression of Kant's central doctrine. Leslie Stevenson firmly, and rightly, rejects a naïve literal interpretation (26-27), in which somehow we actually produce the physical world (Kant himself rejects this equally firmly at B125); and he also rejects phenomenalist and Berkeleyan interpretations. Instead, following Sebastian Gardner's guidance, he attempts to clarify Kant's position with a catalogue of different types of representation along with their appropriate 'objects'. Such a project has both a Kantian and an independent interest since Kant's own classification of representations into 'intuitions' and 'concepts'

raises the wider question of nonconceptual content. But there is a strong case for saying that such a project misses a central point in Kant's claim, namely that it is designed to replace an earlier, more conventional philosophical position. If we focus just on empiricism, where the claim is that all representations arise from a posteriori sense experiences together with operations on them, then Kant's hypothesis is surely designed to try out an alternative. The alternative non-empiricist view would consider the possibility that some of our representations do *not* derive in that way from an independently given a posteriori experience. Viewed in that way Kant's primary aim is to test the possibility of, and outline a role for, a priori representations in a way, which runs contrary to that traditional empiricism. The general classification of representations and their objects misses that point because it is not restricted to, and does not emphasise or even distinguish, a priori representations. The essays make some use of classifications such as 'a priori' and 'synthetic a priori' but they are not explained or justified.

That general point has some important corollaries. Stevenson notes Kant's common phrase 'given a priori' (56, 66), but his response to this unexpected, non-empiricist expression is, with minor provisos, to disregard it and to treat what is given as a posteriori. There is no suggestion that this use has any wider significance in Kant, but it deserves to be taken more seriously as a contrast between what is given *a posteriori* and what is given, whether analytically or synthetically, *a priori*. Though the phrase marks a substantial terminological divergence from empiricism its significance is not merely terminological, and I later indicate how it has importance in Kant's resolution of the Antinomies in the Dialectic.

These points already distinguish Kant from empiricism. In overlooking them Leslie Stevenson is in danger of making Kant look too much like an empiricist, and the same danger arises in other claims. At one point (24) he contrasts a 'classic empiricist

account of perceptual experience as 'mere passive perception' with Kant's belief that 'conceptualized experience does not come into being until a lot of mental processing has been done'. But this seems to disregard the fact that even empiricists allow us to conduct mental operations on the data of sense, as in Locke's 'operations of the mind' (*Essay*, Book 2. XI). If there are differences between Kant and empiricists it cannot be that only the former appeals to such mental operations, and in fact Kant's mental operations are not very different from those described by the empiricists of his time. The real difference at this point between Kant and empiricists is, again, that only the former appeals to a priori aspects of these operations in a way, which the latter did not notice and could not have accepted. That difference is formally marked in Kant's distinction (A97) between considering the elements of the three-fold synthesis 'not in their *empirical* but in their *transcendental* constitution' (my emphasis). For this indicates that although these syntheses can be *exemplified* in a posteriori experience Kant's interest in them is not in their empirical occurrences but in their a priori role as necessary conditions for that experience.

The point can be taken further. When reformulations of Kant's principles of transcendental idealism are given in the essays they also often seem to be compatible with empiricism. The passage quoted above (75) claims that Kant's transcendental idealism 'means only that *our conceptions of the world* are a product of human cognitive and scientific activity', but it is difficult to see anything in such a claim that an empiricist would object to. The same seems to hold for the formulation (19) of what is distinctive in Kant's doctrine:

Just as all objects of un-conceptualized perception . . . must conform to the conditions for the subject to have perceptions, so all the objects of conceptualized perception . . . must conform to the conditions for the subject to

have concepts of perceivable objects, properties, and states of affairs.

For such claims might be thought to be analytically true in saying only that our perception (whether conceptualized or not) must conform to any conditions required for it. It may be responded that it is the 'objects' of perception, which conform to those conditions, but this claim is ambiguous. Leslie Stevenson has already rejected the idea, on Kant's behalf, that the 'objects' in question are actual objects such as physical things, and characterizes them instead as 'contents'. Yet it seems natural to think that it is also analytically necessary that any perceptual or conceptual content must conform to the conditions required for such content. What would relieve the danger of triviality would be to specify the distinctive character of the conditions which Kant has in mind, and which differentiates his understanding of them from that of empiricists. The formulations themselves offer no guidance in that matter, do not distinguish them from anything empiricists might hold, and crucially again leave out any reference to the a priori character of the conditions Kant is interested in. The same is true of the extended discussion of the psychological principles (essay 2) in which we integrate separate data from the senses into an ordinary (conceptualized) understanding of what we perceive. For it remains unclear whether the given principles, many of which are not Kantian, should be regarded as a priori or as empirical hypotheses in cognitive science.

Some of these uncertainties might be expected to be resolved in essay 3, which outlines three distinct ways in which space and time might be 'transcendentally ideal'. Unfortunately this expectation turns out to be unfulfilled because it is difficult to ascribe any of the three accounts to Kant. The third account raises the issue, in Kant and independently of Kant, of explaining the relations between a physiological and a psychological

interpretation of the data of sensibility, but that issue is left unresolved and so offers no clear understanding of transcendental ideality. The other two accounts, however, offer a clear understanding but do not correspond to Kant's conception of transcendental ideality.

The first account rests on the active ways in which we have developed spatio-temporal measurements using public objects such as clocks and rulers. It is, however, difficult to see why these activities should not be regarded by Kant as a part of what is included in his empirical realism rather than his transcendental idealism. It is true that there is activity here rather than mere passivity, but it has been noted already that that by itself, without reference to a priori conditions, is not enough to differentiate Kant's account from empiricism. Rescher's suggestion is that these activities are 'mind-involving' though not strictly 'mind-dependent', but the criteria, which distinguish these descriptions, are not explained in the essay.

The second account differentiates between the two, 'global' and 'perspectival', aspects of space and time so that only the latter qualifies as transcendently ideal and 'mind-dependent', and this also causes problems. It is true that the perspectival aspects are naturally associated with ordinary accounts of the 'way things appear' to subjects, but a major difficulty here is that Kant's technical term 'appearance' is explicitly distinguished by him from its colloquial uses (B62-64). In Stevenson's example appearances are restricted to the perspectival aspects of space and time, but this runs counter to Kant's position in two ways. First Kant's (technical) appearances cover both the perspectival and the global aspects; our knowledge of space and time, whether perspectival or global, is restricted to appearances. Second the implication is that if only perspectival aspects concern Kantian appearances, global aspects of space and time must concern Kantian things in themselves, but such a claim is fundamentally in conflict with Kant's position.

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## II. Issues from the Dialectic: Cosmology and Free Will.

### (i) Cosmology.

Some of the same difficulties noted already arise from Stevenson's inclination to interpret Kant's position in empirical terms. For example Kant's resolution of the First Analogy is said to rest on his evaluation of the following schematic argument (61):

If the conditioned is given, then the whole series of conditions for it is also given; Present states of affairs are given as conditioned; ergo: The whole series of past conditions for present states of affairs is also given.

Kant, as Leslie Stevenson points out, takes the major premise to rest on an ambiguity between a 'constitutive' and a 'regulative' reading, but the ambiguity is then formulated and evaluated as follows:

. . . if the major premiss is taken to mean: "If a present state of affairs is empirically given . . . then the whole series of past conditions for it is also empirically given", it is false. However, if it is taken to mean: "If a present state of affairs is empirically given, then the whole series of past conditions for it is necessarily given, i.e. we know that some such series exists, but we have no determinate knowledge of it, we can have no empirically justified conception of how far it stretches and what it contains", it can be accepted.

The first, false, claim is the 'constitutive' interpretation of the premise in the schematic argument; the second, acceptable, claim is Kant's 'regulative' expression of what we are entitled to

claim. Both claims might be queried over some of their details: can it really be right to say that just to know that there have been past conditions is to say that 'the whole series of past conditions is necessarily given'? But the main difficulty is that they seem to leave out some essential elements in Kant's discussion. For one thing the arguments in the thesis and antithesis, which this ambiguity is intended to resolve, do not seem to be empirical or inductive arguments; they seem to be, and are surely intended to be, deductive arguments from reason. Typically each argues, apparently deductively through a *reductio ad absurdum*, for a contradiction in the opposed view. Such an account fits very easily into a rationalist position which Stevenson himself ascribes to Spinoza in essay 7 (102, 104). On page 102, reference is made to Spinoza's 'rationalist faith that if we properly conceive all the contents of the world we would be able to understand why everything must be as it is, how each state of affairs follows not just by contingent causal laws but by logical necessity from the preceding state'. Echoes of such views can be found in Leibniz and other rationalist philosophers. Although Spinoza's proposed exercise in logic is not explicitly aimed at establishing whether the universe has a beginning or not, it is not difficult to see such aspirations behind the formal arguments in the Antinomy for the thesis and antithesis. If logic can provide us with information about all the members of the series it might be expected that it would also tell us whether the series has a beginning or not. But to understand the arguments in this way is evidently not to appeal to any inductive inference from what is empirically given.

In the light of this point it might also be expected that if the proponents of thesis and antithesis were faced with, and asked to respond to, Leslie Stevenson's formulation they might reply that they had never supposed that they could establish their claims empirically. Their suggestion would be that Kant's resolution of the issue, understood in this empirical form, does

not address their arguments at all. Their claim would be that without the benefit of science or empirical evidence metaphysics, and reason, with the aid of logic alone can provide us with the truth. If Kant were adopting the formulations about empirical evidence then his position would be evidently open to such a strong counter. That Kant did not criticise the arguments in these terms is indicated by his use, noted earlier, of the expression 'given a priori'. For the suggestion is that the underlying (rationalist) method used in the arguments is that powerful appeal to pure logic to which Spinoza referred. For this reason Leslie Stevenson's disregard of that phrase, and his conviction that what is given in Kant is primarily what is given empirically, a posteriori, misses out one of the important elements in Kant's discussion. It is associated with Kant's earlier criticisms of the misuse of logic when he distinguishes between treating logic correctly as a canon but incorrectly as an organon (B84-86). It is not an accident that Kant refers in the passage to a 'logic of illusion' to be exemplified in the Dialectic. The examination of the Antinomies is one of the key points where that lesson about the misuse of logic is demonstrated.

There is a further, related omission in the account of the Antinomy. Leslie Stevenson's view (captured in the second formulation above) is that all claims about the universe as a whole can be set aside as having a conceptual defect, corresponding to no 'fact of the matter', where it 'makes no sense' to suppose that the universe must be either finite or infinite (73). Leslie Stevenson is quite right to deny that Kant is a verificationist about meaning, but readers might find these alternative descriptions quite puzzling. More importantly the suggestion overlooks two related points in Kant's account. The first is that when Kant does speak of his denial that we can properly talk of the universe as either finite or infinite it is the 'universe as a whole *in itself*' that is the intended subject of such claims. Leslie Stevenson notes this himself in a quotation from

B534-535 where Kant says it is 'false that the world (the sum of all appearances) is a whole existing in itself' (73-74). This, of course, ties in with Kant's general, uncontroversial claim that the error on both sides of the Antinomy consists in taking what is only an appearance (in his technical sense) as if it were a 'thing in itself' (in his technical transcendental, not empirical, sense). The underlying assumption which Kant rejects in both arguments is not that we can have no empirical evidence for the universe's beginning or never beginning; the underlying assumption is that the universe, properly an appearance, is taken in the antinomial arguments as a thing in itself. It is a consequence of that assumption that the only available way of establishing truths about the universe, so conceived, is the illusory way of rationalist logic.

One side of the omission, then, fails to do justice to Kant's appeal to a perverted misuse of logic, but there is another side. For just as Kant recognises one mistaken conception of the universe as a whole in itself so he also recognises what he calls an acceptable 'comparative' conception of 'the universe as a whole' (B511-512). The illusory antinomial arguments concern only what Kant calls an 'absolute whole' related to that noumenal conception of the universe as a whole *in itself* and not to the whole universe as an *appearance* in its 'comparative' 'empirical' meaning (B511-512; B506-507). In section 9 (B543-551) he speaks of, and allows, an empirical employment of the cosmological ideas in their regulative interpretation, which reflects the character of a fallible, revisable scientific cosmology. Leslie Stevenson endorses such a scientific theory but does not ascribe such a view to Kant presumably because the empirical interpretation of the given argument seems to conflict with it, but in the light of section 9 there is no reason to doubt Kant's acceptance of such an empirical, scientific theory. On this basis Kant could consistently recognise the achievements of current cosmology in articulating the features of, and develop-

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ment from, a big bang. He would not have regarded this as the establishment of the thesis in the first Antinomy that the universe has a beginning for that concerns not the comparative, scientifically accessible universe as a whole, but a universe *in itself* as a whole taken in some 'absolute' meaning with no such empirical, scientific access. The consequences of this are that the *false* claim misrepresents Kant's position but that even the *acceptable* claim falls short of what Kant accepts in the *empirical* employment of the regulative idea.

( ii ) Free Will and Determinism.

**J**ust as some minor queries can be raised about the cosmological Antinomy in Leslie Stevenson's account, so some such queries can be raised about the discussion of the Third Antinomy. We might ask whether a committed determinist would buckle under Stevenson's catalogue of the limitations currently attached to our knowledge of the universe's causal laws; and perhaps whether they would nowadays be impressed by appeals to common sense (159-160). There remain, as in other cases, some questions about the reformulation of Kant's claims. As in the First Antinomy Leslie Stevenson offers to reformulate what Kant is prepared to accept as a regulative principle in the cases of both free will and causality. The causality case is straightforward since it is evident that Kant does express it as an injunction to pursue the search for causes. But there is doubt about the adequacy of the regulative principle of freedom formulated as: 'we should treat people as amenable to reason as far as possible, and be amenable to reason ourselves'. Kant would not want to dispute the acceptability or value of that injunction, but it remains unclear how it is related to the transcendental idea of freedom. One natural way of taking Kant's position would be to say that his injunction tells us to continue to regard people as subject to

both moral and legal principles and sanctions. Treating oneself and others as amenable to reason is undoubtedly part of that, but Stevenson's formulation conceals the point that for Kant transcendental freedom is needed in order to safeguard practical freedom against a determinist threat.

Perhaps it is because Stevenson sees no value in Kant's appeal to transcendental freedom for that purpose (61) that he offers no indication of the role, which that conception of freedom plays. In particular there is no indication whether he thinks Kant violates his own restrictions on knowledge of noumena by actually asserting claims about our existence and character as free noumenal agents. There is also no recognition that alongside Kant's arguments in the third Antinomy about transcendental freedom there is also in the Canon of the first *Critique* an explicit claim that practical freedom is 'proved through experience' (B829). That recognition leads to a set of questions about Kant's relation to doctrines such as 'determinism', 'indeterminism' and 'compatibilism'. Although Stevenson allows that Kant takes determinism and indeterminism to be properly regulative ideas, he seems to think that beyond that concession Kant rejects, or ought to reject, all these doctrines. I suggest, however, that his attitude to all three is different from, and more complex than, this.

I offer the following points quite summarily. First it seems natural to ascribe to Kant a form of determinism with regard to *phenomena*. Although Leslie Stevenson appeals to my view (*The Revolutionary Kant*, Ch.20) that the principle of the Second Analogy does not express a strong determinism (of the kind Stevenson discusses and qualifies) nevertheless it is clear that Kant does not think that any phenomena can be regarded as *exempt* from causal forces. By the same token he cannot therefore accept any defence of freedom which treats some events (those performed by human agents) as beyond the scope of causal explanation. With regard to phenomena therefore he

*rejects* indeterminism not because it is known to be false but because it is unwarranted.

On the other hand it is conventionally thought that in Kant's references to transcendental freedom as a property of noumenal agents in his resolution of the Third Antinomy he actually *endorses* indeterminism. To say therefore that he rejects indeterminism, or that he rejects both determinism and indeterminism, is no more than a half-truth, which leaves open the question of his commitment to such a noumenal indeterminism. My belief (outlined in a paper to the recent St. Andrews Kant conference in September 2011) is that Kant does not commit himself to the actual existence of noumena in the argument; that he recognises the account as a phantasy even though it still retains a genuine role in his defence of transcendental freedom against determinism (B573: '... even if the assumption should be a mere fiction..'). But this is also a complex story and one, which Leslie Stevenson does not pursue even to the extent of showing how Kant's commitment at that point to noumena is simply inconsistent with his claim that we are totally ignorant of noumena.

Something similar is true of Kant's attitude to compatibilism (and incompatibilism), as Allen Wood famously indicated in saying, neatly but mysteriously, that Kant attempted to show the compatibility of compatibilism and incompatibilism (*Self and Nature in Kant's Philosophy*, p. 74). If Stevenson does hold that Kant rejects compatibilism, (and particularly rejects, as he says (note 33, 171), Hume's compatibilism), then he must be mistaken. However successful Kant's defence against determinism is, the evident aim is to enable us to speak of both freedom and causality in the same (phenomenal) human agent. That is evident not only from the Canon but also from the discussion of transcendental freedom in the resolution of the Antinomy. Leslie Stevenson says in a note (note 33, 171) that the well-known passage from the second *Critique* where Kant

rejects a doctrine which provides no more than the 'freedom of a turnspit' (5.95-5.97) is a rejection of Hume's compatibilism, but this cannot be right. For one thing the only philosopher referred to in the passage as canvassing such a hopeless freedom is Leibniz, not Hume. Leibniz's position, as expressed forcefully in the Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence (§ 92) and elsewhere, is in many respects very different from Hume's. The real difference between Kant and Hume in this issue seems to be only that Kant regards Hume's defensive arguments against determinism as inadequate, but agrees that we can ascribe both freedom and causality to one and the same phenomenal agent with regard to one and the same act. Viewed in this way Kant's position is that further argument from the Third Antinomy (which neither Hume nor Stevenson see a need for) is required for the defence against determinism, but Hume's compatibilist conclusion is correct. Kant thinks the excursion into transcendental freedom and the noumenal world is necessary to bolster Hume's inadequate argument against determinism, but what is then bolstered is the compatible ascription of both freedom and causality to human agents. None of this so much as surfaces in Leslie Stevenson's account; some of it is strongly at odds with that account.

The queries raised here about Leslie Stevenson's account are all associated with his tendency to locate, and sometimes criticize, Kant's position within an empiricist framework. It is a tendency that owes something to the Wittgensteinian/Austinian method deployed in the discussion and it is liable both to distort Kant's position and to mislead uninstructed readers. Kant evidently has more sympathy with the sceptical empiricists than with the dogmatic rationalists, as his image of the latter's 'infancy' and former's 'adolescence' indicates (B789). But the claimed 'maturity' for his own Critical philosophy is plainly intended to supersede empiricism just as empiricism is taken to supersede rationalism. To offer empiricist accounts of Kant's

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major claims must be to distort them, but it is also in danger of leaving out a fundamental aspect of his argument. If we forget the striking but unclear imagery of 'imposing laws on nature' it is possible to see the cash value of Kant's Copernican revolution, and transcendental idealism, in the belief that there are essential a priori elements in our experience. If it is assumed that only a posteriori features of that experience owe their presence to an independent reality, and that all items in experience are either independent of, or dependent on, our mental powers, then it follows that Kant's a priori elements must be mind-dependent. The positive part of Kant's argument throughout the first *Critique* is designed to explain the viability of, and role for, those a priori elements, and to show in the subsequent details what 'mind-dependence' means here. An empiricist interpretation of Kant's claims will by-pass this central argument, and will leave readers uncertain whether these are properly interpretations of that position rather than criticisms of it; whether they represent what Kant meant or only what he should have said.