

complexity there, moreover, that it is spatial complexity induced by the form of outer intuition, as long as we do not treat the elements of the complexity as parts from which the whole field is constructed by composition. This, I believe, is just what Kant allows. See Vinci 2015: 150–7.

- 5 *Reflexion* 4634 (17: 616); quoted on p. 127. A similar account, also discussed by Landy, is offered in the first *Critique* by Kant in an addition to section 14 of the B-Edition (B128–9).
- 6 ‘It is the commitment to inferring the latter two judgments [‘The ship will be mid-stream soon’ and ‘The ship will be downstream later’] from the first [‘The ship is upstream now’] that represents the necessary connection between the various temporal states of the ship’ (p. 219).
- 7 He does so (pp. 96–101) in connection with a critical discussion of Longuenesse.
- 8 Vinci 2015.
- 9 I have indicated in n. 2 how this doctrine is exegetically permissible in light of Kant’s doctrine of combination. A reader wishing to see the full story may consult Vinci 2015: 9–22.
- 10 See Vinci 2015: 161–9.
- 11 Like Landy, I draw quotations from the first *Critique* from Kant 1998.
- 12 I take Kant to be treating subsumption here as an act of synthesis carried out by the Imagination, the same act called the *Synthesis of Recognition in a Concept* in the A Deduction. This leaves unresolved the question of how subsumption of intuitions under concepts, and judgements *per se*, relate to one another. In Vinci 2015: 180–7, I make a suggestion about this involving a distinction between the analytic and synthetic unities of apperception. This suggestion relies on the second way of taking the unity of apperception mentioned at the outset.

References

- Kant, Immanuel (1998) *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vinci, Thomas (2015) *Space, Geometry and Kant’s Transcendental Deduction of the Categories*. New York: Oxford University Press.

J. Colin McQuillan, *Immanuel Kant: The Very Idea of a Critique of Pure Reason*
Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2016
Pp. xiii + 176
ISBN 9780810132481 (pbk) \$34.95
doi:10.1017/S1369415417000085

To appreciate J. Colin McQuillan’s *The Very Idea of a Critique of Pure Reason*, it is important to bring to it the right expectations. The book does not deal primarily with issues concerning the possibility, intricacies and systematic purpose of a critique of pure reason. Rather its main aim is to get to grips with Kant’s use of the term ‘critique’. This is not to say that McQuillan puts to one side internal issues concerning Kant’s philosophical project in the

Critique, it is just that his discussion of such issues is intended to illustrate a point for which he seeks mainly contextual support: that ‘critique’ describes a positive, not just a negative, project.

Chapter 1 gives some of the broader intellectual context of the term ‘critique’, ranging from aesthetic to literary uses. McQuillan acknowledges and takes issue with Giorgio Tonelli’s work, concluding that ‘Surveys of eighteenth-century philology, literary criticism, aesthetics, and logic may not adequately explain the origin of Kant’s conception of critique’ (p. 17). Chapters 2 and 3 track the development of Kant’s own critique of metaphysics, from early works, such as the 1763 essay he submitted for the Prussian academy competition, the *Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality*, taking on the correspondence with Johann Heinrich Lambert and Moses Mendelssohn, the *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* of 1766 and finally the correspondence with Marcus Herz, which documents Kant’s several attempts at setting metaphysics on the secure path of science. McQuillan again finds insufficient clues in this material to explain ‘why Kant thought a “critique” of pure reason’ a necessary step to constructive metaphysics (p. 62). For this we need to turn to the *Critique* itself. Chapter 4 gives an outline of what a critique of reason entails; drawing on earlier examples of critical practice and on Kant’s own frequent programmatic statements about the need to renew metaphysics, McQuillan is able to show that the *Critique* has a positive purpose to place metaphysics on a sound scientific footing. The final chapter and the conclusion are devoted to reception history, including a detailed discussion of Johann August Eberhard’s articles in the *Philosophisches Magazin* (1788–92) and Kant’s responses to Eberhard. McQuillan’s ability to survey such a wealth of material so economically and so seemingly effortlessly is admirable.

Still, the book left me puzzled and in what follows I will try to explain the nature and reasons for the puzzle. McQuillan starts by looking outside the *Critique* for an initial understanding of ‘critique’, because he considers that the question ‘why Kant called the *Critique of Pure Reason* a critique’ (p. ix) is unjustly neglected. The contrast is with the attention lavished on the arguments of the *Critique*. Put bluntly like this, the statement is not convincing, since those who study the arguments also have a conception of the project the arguments are supposed to serve and, therefore, a view of what ‘critique’ is. As it turns out, however, McQuillan’s main concern is the subset of interpretations that present Kant as the scourge of metaphysics. I am not sure what the precise target is. Interpretations that are hostile to the metaphysical significance of the *Critique*, and which have tended to over-emphasize its anti-sceptical tenor, may once have been dominant, though even P. F. Strawson, who fixed this reading at least for an Anglophone audience, reluctantly acknowledges a residual metaphysical content in the

book. What an earlier generation found bafflingly misguided is no longer considered out of bounds. This shift in perspective is, in turn, largely the product of careful analysis of arguments presented by Kant in relation of arguments of his predecessors (for example, on causality, spontaneity, systematicity). McQuillan holds back from this kind of reconstructive work. As I have said, most of the book is about the context of the *Critique* (its gestation and reception) as well as the context of ideas about critique. It is this methodological choice that I find puzzling.

Here is why. As McQuillan himself admits, the contextual material of the early chapters is at best partially illuminating. The first chapter gives some examples of positive conceptions of criticism current in eighteenth-century intellectual life. That is useful perhaps given McQuillan's overall thesis, his vindication of a positive function for the *Critique*. However, the same general view of criticism can be gleaned simply by looking at the etymology of the term, which leads to *krinein*, a verb meaning to separate, to sieve, to discriminate, which carries the implication that the critic has the good in view as he sets the bad aside from it. The aim of taking the more roundabout path through the eighteenth-century material may have been to give some context for the famous footnote, 'our age is *an age of criticism* ... and to criticism everything must submit' (Axii). But again to understand *how* Kant sees the matter of critique, it would have been more fruitful, I think, to look at his own work on the rules for conducting one's understanding or on enlightenment – to say nothing here of later parts of the systematic critical project. The examination of parallel cases of negative and positive uses of criticism in Kant's own work would get us closer to the fundamental conceptual question posed by the very idea of a 'critique' of pure reason, that is, how the internal criticism of metaphysics – or of one's own reasoning or of reason itself – goes hand in hand with the project of founding a metaphysics – or of guiding one's own reason or of reason emerging vindicated from its own tribunal. The contextual analysis McQuillan undertakes aims at a 'what' question that concerns specifically the first *Critique*: what is 'critique'? As a result, the 'how' question only intermittently gets a look in. Yet I think this question matters whether one shares, as I do, McQuillan's positive view of the *Critique* or not. This is because, in the end, I suppose, showing why Kant thought the project of setting metaphysics on a sound scientific footing is doable and worth doing cannot be addressed by an intellectual biography of critique and of the *Critique*, however engaging and meticulously researched it is.

Katerina Deligiorgi

University of Sussex

email: K.Deligiorgi@sussex.ac.uk