

'hegemons' in his own lifetime, these questions are more pressing in our own time in terms of maintaining an international system of ever-growing importance.

Corradetti's book achieves its goal of laying out a historically informed interpretation of Kant's writings on international law while defending a constructivist approach to justification of basic norms and their extension to a generalized framework. However, it is not clear whether this interpretation can adequately bring this philosophical framework to bear on contemporary problems in international relations. While the problems we confront today are quite different than the ones Kant tried to address, due to the relatively increased complexity of international organizations, one might wonder how one can apply this framework to describe and address them, rather than retreading variations on the problems that Kant confronted in the late eighteenth century.

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James A. Clarke and Gabriel Gottlieb (eds), *Practical Philosophy from Kant to Hegel: Freedom, Right, and Revolution* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021 Pp. xv + 269 ISBN 9781108497725 (hbk), £75.00

Histories of German philosophy often depict the development of German idealism as a linear progression from Kant to Hegel by way of Fichte and Schelling. These traditional narratives tend to ignore the immediate reception of Kant's philosophy and its significance to understanding the familiar post-Kantian heavy hitters. Recently, there has been an increase in scholarship on lesser-known figures in the early reception of the critical philosophy and on their role in the development of German idealism. However, most of these pioneering studies have focused on the development of post-Kantian theoretical philosophy; scholarship on the development of post-Kantian practical philosophy has paled in comparison. This impressive collection aims to fill this lacuna by providing a historically rich and philosophically robust account of this development.

As the editors rightly note, the development of post-Kantian practical philosophy is just as philosophically nuanced and important as its theoretical counterpart, and a proper understanding of the oft-neglected figures in the development of post-Kantian philosophy can help to refine, and sometimes revise, our understanding of the canonical figures of this tradition. The volume excels in giving attention to such disregarded figures as H. A. Pistorius, J. A. H. Ulrich, S. Maimon, J. B. Erhard, E. Reimarus, K. L. Reinhold, F. H. Jacobi, F. Schlegel, W. Humboldt, K. Dalberg, F. Gentz, A. W. Rehberg and J. Möser.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, it is a virtue of this edited collection that its scope encompasses both ethical and political currents of post-Kantian practical philosophy. The volume comprises thirteen chapters in addition to a brief introduction by the editors. The introduction includes an outline of the contributions contained in the volume against the backdrop of an overview of three broad themes that exemplify

the development of post-Kantian practical philosophy: (1) the implications of freedom and determinism on the possibility of moral responsibility; (2) the foundation of the philosophy of right and its relationship to morality; (3) the right to revolution. The breadth of the topics covered in this collection and limits of space here prohibit a detailed consideration of each contribution, so I will limit myself to discussion of a selection of chapters.

In the first chapter, Paul Guyer argues that the empty formalism objection to Kant's conception of the categorical imperative, typically associated with Hegel, was first raised by H. A. Pistorius in the latter's review of Kant's *Groundwork*. The chief claim in this iteration of the objection is that a merely formal law cannot determine the will without presupposing some object or end by virtue of which adherence to the moral law is considered good. For Pistorius, this presupposed object or end will ultimately be grounded in human nature. According to Guyer, although Kant's response to Pistorius in the *Analytic of the second Critique* seems to be a repetition of the negative argument of the *Groundwork* that any material principle of morality would be contingent, Kant's accounts of respect and the highest good can be seen as an extended reply to Pistorius' concerns. Thus, Kant's expanded treatment of respect in the second *Critique* might be seen as a rejoinder to Pistorius' objection that a formal fundamental principle of morality precludes a coherent conception of moral motivation. Likewise, Kant's presentation of his account of the highest good could be taken as a concession to Pistorius that the desire for happiness is a part of human nature but can also be seen as an insistence that the highest good must be based on the moral law. Guyer then shows conceptual parallels between Kant's treatments of moral motivation and the highest good in subsequent works and Pistorius' review of the second *Critique*. Guyer's convincing chapter makes a timely contribution to the investigation of how the reception of the critical philosophy might have in turn influenced Kant himself. It should be noted, however, that Pistorius was not the only critic on Kant's radar who had raised issues concerning the formalism of the moral law and the supposed inability of such a principle to effectively determine the will; G. A. Tittel had voiced similar concerns in his *Über Herrn Kants Moralreform (On Kant's Reform of Morals)* of 1786.

Next, Katerina Deligiorgi examines the relationship between Kant's conceptions of transcendental freedom and the moral ought by means of a set of criticisms presented in J. A. H. Ulrich's *Eleutheriology or On Freedom and Necessity*. For Ulrich, all philosophically possible positions on free will are based on either the concept of chance or that of necessity; these concepts form the basis of the doctrines of indeterminism and determinism, respectively. According to Deligiorgi, Ulrich aims to show 'that Kantian freedom reduces to chance' (p. 32) and attempts to recast Kant's pure ethics as based on the absolute ought 'in a deterministic framework' (p. 37). She presents a Kantian rejoinder to Ulrich's objections and concludes by discussing the differences between Kant's and Ulrich's approaches to ethical necessity and the efficacy of objective principles; whereas Ulrich foists a metaphysical reading on Kant's account of the efficacy of normative principles, Deligiorgi proposes that Kant's account of this efficacy be understood from the perspectives of moral epistemology and moral psychology. Yet, I disagree with several of Deligiorgi's claims and will mention a few of them. First, contrary to her claim that Ulrich attempts to show that Kant's conception of transcendental freedom reduces to chance, on my reading Ulrich's aim consists in demonstrating the disjunctive proposition that transcendental freedom amounts to either determinism or indeterminism.

Second, in contrast to Deligiorgi's claim that Ulrich follows Kant in conceiving of ethical necessity as an absolute ought (pp. 29, 37–9, 42–3), which is supposedly problematic for Ulrich in view of his 'naturalization of ethical necessity' (p. 42), Ulrich is explicit that he defers treatment of the concept of the absolute ought and leaves undecided whether the ought is ultimately hypothetical (Ulrich 1788: 17n.). Despite these interpretative disagreements, Deligiorgi's contribution represents a fresh perspective on an important topic in the reception of Kant's account of free will.

In the next chapter, James A. Clarke focuses on J. B. Erhard's account of the relationship between right and morality. Clarke argues that previous scholarship, which has focused almost exclusively on Erhard's 1795 essay 'Devil's Apology', runs the risk of oversimplifying Erhard's account of this relationship by characterizing his theory of right as 'partly independent of morality' (p. 62). Drawing on Erhard's works adjacent to 'Devil's Apology', Clarke persuasively shows that Erhard's view of the relationship between right and morality is 'much richer and more complex' (p. 73) than both 'Devil's Apology' and the previous scholarship based on it might suggest. Specifically, Erhard conceives of this relationship as one of interdependence: while right is subject to moral constraints and to morality's demand that juridical norms and institutions enable morality's realization, morality is dependent on right for these enabling conditions. Clarke shows further that the relationship between the theories of morality and right involves a hierarchy between moral theory, natural right and the theory of legislation (in that order). He concludes by considering Erhard's position in connection with the debate between legal positivism and natural law theory on legal validity. Readers will be rewarded with a fine exposition of Erhard's rich and dynamic understanding of the interplay between the theories of right and morality and their object domains.

Reed Winegar's chapter considers Elise Reimarus' political philosophy. Previous scholarship has claimed that Reimarus' political philosophy anticipates three views held by Kant in connection with the permissibility of rebellion: (1) people are obligated to enter into the rightful condition; (2) membership in a state does not depend on consent; and (3) rebellion against the state is impermissible. Winegar convincingly argues that Reimarus does not hold these views. Instead, she endorses a pragmatic consequentialist position, according to which entry into the rightful condition is recommended in order to secure the exercise of one's external freedom. For Reimarus, individuals give actual consent to the authority of the state to uphold the conditions necessary to enjoy rights and liberties. The failure of the state to secure these conditions, or, worse, the state's transgression of fundamental freedoms leaves room for the permissibility of rebellion if this promises more freedom. In this way, Reimarus' emphasis on the maximization of external freedom offers an interesting consequentialist alternative to Kant's rejection of rebellion (p. 117). Winegar's contribution is a welcome engagement with a historically neglected figure of the European Enlightenment.

In his contribution, Daniel Breazeale examines through a historical lens issues surrounding the concepts of freedom and duty in connection with Kant, Reinhold and Fichte. The picture Breazeale offers foregrounds Kant's account of free will and its supposed vacillations. In Breazeale's interpretation, Kant's account in the *Groundwork* and second *Critique* restricts freedom to the class of morally good actions. C. C. E. Schmid allegedly criticized this account, and is purported to have claimed that 'Kant was incapable of explaining how one might bear responsibility for immoral actions' (p. 118). This, Breazeale maintains, prompted Reinhold to develop an account of free will in

his *Letters II* that consists in the capacity to choose for or against the moral law, a capacity of which we are immediately conscious and have direct knowledge (p. 124).<sup>2</sup> Faced with the difficulty of accounting for the freedom (and thus imputability) of immoral action, Kant supposedly responds to Reinhold's proposal in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* when he revises his previous position and extends freedom to the class of immoral actions for the sake of imputation. According to Breazeale, in the *Metaphysics of Morals* Kant renounces the position of the *Religion* and reverts to the purported position of the *Groundwork* that identifies free volition with volition from duty. For his part, Fichte attempts to provide a transcendental account of the empirical efficacy of noumenal freedom by means of his distinction between formal and material freedom. Whereas the former indicates the original spontaneity of the pure I, material freedom, which admits of degrees, can be characterized as the harmony between the individual and the moral law achieved through self-reflection. Although for Fichte the act of reflection necessary to transform formal into material freedom is ultimately inexplicable, every I is capable of this kind of self-reflection and is thus morally responsible for having not achieved it.

Breazeale's chapter insightfully portrays some of the complex development of the reception of Kant's account of free will and its relationship to moral obligation. However, by his own admission Breazeale paints 'with a very broad brush' (p. 118). This broad-brush depiction of the development of Kant's account of free will and post-Kantian philosophy obscures some of its finer details. First, Breazeale's interpretation of Kant's account of free will, specifically with respect to its scope and Kant's supposed revisions of the same, is highly controversial, which Breazeale neglects to acknowledge. Second, contrary to Breazeale's claim that Schmid criticized Kant for being unable to account for moral imputation, an inaccuracy that is restated by the editors in their introduction (p. 7), Schmid offers an account of imputation in his *Attempt at a Moral Philosophy* that rests on his interpretation of Kant's account of freedom as restricted to morally good action (Schmid 1790: 206–7). Lastly, against Breazeale's claim that in the *Religion* Kant responds to Reinhold's *Letters II*, published in the autumn of 1792, Part One of Kant's work, which contains the relevant passages on freedom of the power of choice and its relationship to imputation, was published in April 1792 in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* and was sent to the publisher in February of that year, and therefore could not have been influenced by Reinhold's new account of free will.

Elizabeth Millàn Brusslan's contribution investigates Friedrich Schlegel's philosophical pluralism against the backdrop of his critique of Kant. As Millàn Brusslan observes, Schlegel rejected a sharp distinction between philosophy and poetry, and engaged with leading figures (e.g. Jacobi and Schiller) in both academic and literary works in order to promote gender equality and social progress more generally. While he admired Kant's critical project, he also considered it deficient in its lack of attention to historical investigations; for Schlegel, these investigations are necessary to uncovering social inequalities. Millàn Brusslan then turns to Kant's conception of enlightenment and his remarks on forms of government in *Toward Perpetual Peace*. Here some of Millàn Brusslan's claims are wanting. For example, Millàn Brusslan claims that Kant's 'project of enlightenment is aimed at transforming the individual, not the society' (p. 184), a claim for which she does not argue. Although I cannot offer an interpretation of Kant's concept of enlightenment here, a thoroughgoing account would treat Kant's claims about 'universal enlightenment' and 'humankind's emergence from its self-incurred minority'

(cf. WIE, 8: 40), as well as the relationship between civil and cosmopolitan society. Furthermore, Millàn Brusslan asserts that ‘Kant also claims that it is logically impossible that one and the same person could be legislator and executor of his/her will’ and cites ‘all dictators’ as ‘counterexamples to this claim’ (p. 185). In doing so, she neglects another interpretative option, namely that Kant is not referring to a logical impossibility here, but ‘a contradiction of the general will with itself and with freedom’ (TPP, 8: 352). Lastly, Millàn Brusslan seems to conflate the sense of ‘democracy’ to which Kant appeals with contemporary understandings of representative democracy; she contrasts Kant’s views with the idea ‘of a democratic republic’ (p. 183) and claims that Kant has not shown that republicanism and democracy are mutually exclusive (p. 186). However, it is *direct* democracy which Kant conceives of as problematic and which, in explicit agreement with Kant, Fichte also rejects in his *Foundations of Natural Right*. Several scholars have observed that what we call representative democracy today is consistent with Kant’s conception of republicanism (e.g. Rendtorff 2009). These interpretative issues aside, Millàn Brusslan’s paper succeeds in highlighting Schlegel’s conception of philosophy as innovative and socially progressive.

The next chapter, by Douglas Moggach, considers the development of post-Kantian political philosophy. Moggach discusses the debate between Wilhelm von Humboldt and Karl von Dalberg concerning the nature and proper role of the state. Whereas Humboldt champions individual liberty and limits state intervention to the preservation of proprietary and civil rights, Dalberg advocates an absolutist state tasked with the promotion of the general welfare through authoritative direction. Moggach succeeds in demonstrating the significance of Kant’s predecessors for the development of German political debates at the turn of the nineteenth century. As Moggach observes, ‘persistence of the Leibnizian heritage is a key to deciphering the complexities of post-Kantian political thought’ (p. 194). In this light, Humboldt’s anti-interventionism can be seen as a synthesis between a Kantian promotion of freedom and a broadly Leibnizian commitment to the spontaneous unfolding of individual potential. By the same token, Dalberg’s defence of the tutelary state might be characterized as the implication of a thoroughly Wolffian adherence to the realization of perfection and the contention that external intervention is necessary to achieve this.

Taken together, the contributions collected in this volume provide an engaging historical and philosophically rigorous account of the development of post-Kantian practical philosophy. The volume will be of interest to both students and scholars of classical German philosophy, the Enlightenment, and the history of ethics and political philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

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## Notes

1 Works by several of these figures are featured in Noller and Walsh (2022).

2 For the claim that Reinhold’s considered view is that the concept of freedom first receives objective reality through the moral law, see Walsh (2020).

3 I am grateful to Raman Sachdev and Michael Walschots for comments on an earlier draft.

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Robert R. Clewis, *Kant's Humorous Writings. An Illustrated Guide* London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021 Pp. xxiv + 256 ISBN 9781350112780 (hbk), \$68.00

A closer acquaintance with Kant's writings and biography reveals that he had an acute sense of humour. His texts display mastery of irony, parody and sarcasm, and his contemporaries considered him a witty interlocutor. The 'humorous writings' featured in the title of Robert Clewis' book are entertaining short texts that Kant employs in writings and lectures to convey his views on aesthetics, anthropology and morals. The subtitle reads 'an illustrated guide', which is to be taken in the literal sense as Kant's jokes are paired with pictorial illustrations by Nicholas Ilic. More figuratively, however, Clewis elucidates what Kant finds comically amusing by reconstructing Kant's theory of humour. Clewis' treatment is divided into three parts. In part one, he develops a reconstruction of Kant's theory of humour and considers the application of Kant's ethics to humour. In parts two and three, he exemplifies Kant's understanding of humour by discussing thirty entertaining texts employed by Kant in his writings and lectures.

Part one, 'Kant's Theory of Humor', consists of three chapters. In chapter 1, Clewis examines Kant's theory in light of the most prominent approaches to humour: the theories of superiority, release and incongruity. Kant's theory of humour encompasses the three aspects singled out by these major theories. So, on the superiority theory, 'we feel comic amusement because we feel we are better than the object of our laughter' (p. 7). This aspect figures in Kant's theory as it strikes a balance between 'setting ethical bounds on ridicule' and 'allowing a great deal of room for satirical jest' (p. 21). According to the release theory, 'we laugh . . . in order to release pent-up psychological energy' (p. 12). The presence of this aspect in Kant's theory of humour is shown by numerous passages in which Kant describes laughter as the mental and bodily relaxation following a mental and bodily tension (pp. 16–19). On the incongruity theory, 'we are amused . . . because we enjoy a mismatch between what we perceive and our ordinary expectations' (p. 9). The author locates this aspect in Kant's recurring characterization of 'laughter [as] an affect resulting from the sudden transformation of a heightened expectation into nothing' (CPJ, 5: 332–3; Kant's emphasis). On Clewis' interpretation, Kant holds that many jokes are structured so as to generate an expectation just in order to disappoint it. When the expectation reveals itself as an illusion, it disappears – it turns into nothing. Provided that no intellectual, moral or