

# The Kant Wars and The Three Faces of Kant

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## 1. Introduction: Footnotes, Kant Wars, and Kant Faces

In my 2008 essay, “Kant in the Twentieth Century,” I developed and defended the claim that the history of European and Anglo-American philosophy since 1781 (the year of the publication of the first or A edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*), up through the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is essentially a series of footnotes to Kant:

Alfred North Whitehead ... quatably wrote in 1929 that “the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato.”<sup>1</sup> The same could be said, perhaps with even greater accuracy, of the twentieth-century Euro-American philosophical tradition and Immanuel Kant. In this sense the twentieth century was the post-Kantian century.

Twentieth-century philosophy in Europe and the USA was dominated by two distinctive and (after 1945) officially opposed traditions: the analytic tradition and the phenomenological tradition. Very simply put, the analytic tradition was all about logic and analyticity, and the phenomenological tradition was all about consciousness and intentionality. Ironically enough however, despite their official Great Divide, both the analytic and the phenomenological traditions were essentially continuous and parallel critical developments from an earlier dominant neo-Kantian tradition. This, by the end of the nineteenth century had vigorously reasserted the claims of Kant’s transcendental idealism against Hegel’s absolute idealism and the other major systems of post-Kantian German Idealism, under the unifying slogan “Back to Kant!” So again ironically enough, both the analytic and phenomenological traditions were alike founded on, and natural outgrowths from, Kant’s Critical Philosophy.

By the end of the twentieth century however, and this time sadly rather than ironically, both the analytic and phenomenological traditions had not only explicitly rejected their own Kantian foundations and roots but also had effectively undermined themselves philosophically, even if by no means institutionally. On the one hand the analytic tradition did so by abandoning its basic methodological conception of analysis as the process of logically decomposing propositions into conceptual or metaphysical “simples,” as the necessary preliminary to a logical reconstruction of the same propositions, and by also jettisoning the corresponding idea of a sharp, exhaustive, and significant “analytic-synthetic” distinction. The phenomenological tradition on the other hand abandoned its basic methodological conception of phenomenology as “seeing essences” with a priori certainty under a “transcendental-phenomenological reduction,” and also jettisoned the corresponding idea of a “transcendental ego” as the metaphysical ground of consciousness and intentionality.

One way of interpreting these sad facts is to say that just insofar as analytic philosophy and phenomenology alienated themselves from their Kantian origins, they stultified themselves. This is the first unifying thought behind this [essay], and it is a downbeat one. The second unifying thought, which however is contrastively upbeat, is that both the analytic and phenomenological traditions, now in conjunction instead of opposition, could rationally renew themselves in the twenty-first century by critically recovering their Kantian origins and by seriously re-thinking and re-building their foundations in the light of this critical recovery. Or in other words: *Forward to Kant.*<sup>2</sup>

Let us provisionally suppose, for the purposes of this essay, that what I argued in “Kant and the Twentieth Century” is cogent.

In 1982, Richard Rorty insightfully and wittily remarked—see the epigraph following the images above—that

[f]or ... non-Kantian philosophers, there are no persistent problems—save perhaps the existence of Kantians.

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<sup>1</sup> (Whitehead, 1929:39).

<sup>2</sup> (Hanna, 2008a:149-150).

This Rortyan remark, in turn, identifies something that is of essential importance for the history of late modern philosophy (by which I mean the history of European and Anglo-American philosophy after 1781, the date of the publication of the first or A edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and right up to this morning at 6am), namely, what I will call *anti-Kantianism* and *the Kant wars*. By *anti-Kantianism*, I mean the regularly recurring waves of widespread critical rejections of and visceral antipathy towards Kantian philosophy in the history of late modern philosophy. And by *the Kant wars*, I mean the intellectual, moral, social-institutional, and political conflicts, divisions, oppositions, skirmishes, and struggles, not only between Kantians and anti-Kantians, but also within Kantianism itself, that have fundamentally determined the development, form, and content of European and Anglo-American philosophy since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

What I will argue in this essay is that insofar as the history of late modern European and Anglo-American philosophy has *indeed* been essentially characterized by both anti-Kantianism and the Kant wars, then it has *also* been essentially characterized by what I call *the three faces of Kant*. By coining the phrase, “the three faces of Kant,” of course I am riffing on the title of the famous 1957 book and movie, *The Three Faces of Eve*, which first brought the psychopathological phenomenon of Dissociative Identity Disorder or DID (then called Multiple Personality Disorder or MPD) to public attention in the late 1950s.<sup>3</sup> So what I am referring to by using that term is a specifically *metaphilosophical version* of Dissociative Identity Disorder, that afflicts late modern European and Anglo-American philosophy also right up to this morning at 6am, consisting in three sharply contrasting, conflicting, and even mutually contradictory ways of thinking about Kant-the-man, Kant’s Critical philosophy, and Kantian philosophy more generally.

The **first** face of Kant is what I will call *Kant-the-bogeyman*, because it is the philosophical equivalent of a police artist’s composite sketch of all the *negative caricatures* of Kant-the-man, Kant’s Critical philosophy, and Kantian philosophy more generally, that have been produced, promoted, and promulgated by anti-Kantians of various stripes—including professional academic philosophers who are not Kant-scholars or Kantians, popular philosophers, and non-philosophers with an interest in public-media-driven intellectual, sociocultural, and political debates and trends—ever since the mid-to-late 1780s.

The **second** face of Kant is what I will call *the orthodox Kant*, because it is a positive, non-caricatured, and *thoroughly mainstream professional academic* view of Kant-the-man, Kant’s Critical philosophy, and Kantian philosophy more generally, that is widely shared by leading Kant-scholars and Kantians, virtually all of whom hold permanent professorial positions at high-status colleges and universities, at any given time since the mid-to-late 1780s.

And the **third** face of Kant is what I will call *the radical Kant*, because it is a positive and non-caricatured but also *thoroughly unorthodox* view of Kant-the-man, Kant’s Critical philosophy, and Kantian philosophy more generally, that has been worked out in sharp contrast and opposition to Kant-the-bogeyman and the orthodox Kant alike, *outside* popular philosophy, *outside* public-media-driven intellectual, sociocultural, and political debates and trends, and above all also *outside* the professional academy, at various times since the mid-to-late 1780s.

These three dissociated ways-of-thinking about Kant-the-man, Kant’s Critical philosophy, and Kantian philosophy more generally—the three faces of Kant—are at once (i) philosophical and sociocultural *conceptions* in the sense in which the Vienna Circle spoke of a “scientific conception of the world” (The Vienna Circle, 1996) and (ii) philosophical and sociocultural *images* in the sense in which Wilfrid Sellars spoke of *the manifest image* and *the scientific image* of human

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<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., (Wikipedia, 2020a).

beings and their world (Sellars, 1963), and also, at least in the cases of *the first two faces* of Kant, (iii) philosophical and sociocultural *pictures* in the sense in which the later Wittgenstein spoke of disastrously bad, critically-unexamined philosophical ideologies and presuppositions:

A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably. (Wittgenstein, 1953:§115, 48°)

## **2. Anti-Kantianism and The Strange History of Kant-the-Bogeyman**

Kant is in many ways *the ultimate modern philosopher*, whose work not only *encapsulates* the central ideas and themes of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century *Rationalist* and *Empiricist* metaphysics and epistemology, and of classical *Enlightenment* thinking more generally, but also *revolutionizes* those ideas and themes. In so doing, Kant's work is fully embedded in the basic highly-heated, highly-controversial, public-media-driven intellectual, moral, sociocultural, and political debates about (i) theism vs. deism vs. pantheism vs. atheism vs. agnosticism, (ii) natural science vs. religion, (iii) freedom of religious belief vs. free-thinking vs. religious or intellectual intolerance, (iv) reason vs. skepticism &/or nihilism vs. faith, (v) unenlightened despotism vs. enlightened despotism vs. republicanism vs. anarchy, (vi) universal human dignity &/or cosmopolitanism vs. emergent nationalism, (vii) universal human dignity vs. racism &/or slavery, and (viii) the autonomy of the individual vs. the coercive authoritarianism of the State. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that Kant-the-man, Kant's Critical philosophy, and Kantian philosophy more generally have been flash-points of conflict and controversy from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century get-go, and also that over the last 239 years they have yielded, in reaction and response, not only a great many passionate and even fanatical philosophical disciples and supporters, but also even more equally-but-oppositely passionate and even fanatical, not to mention vicious, philosophical critics and enemies.

For example, as Frederick Beiser points out, the philosophical skyrocketing fame (or, in 21<sup>st</sup> century terms, *virality*) of the first *Critique* in the mid-to-late 1780s, was primarily due to the fact that K.L Reinhold's highly readable and lively *Briefe über die kantische Philosophie* was able to explicate the central notions of Kant's Critical philosophy for the general public and also situate the Critical philosophy as an original, breakthrough contribution to the *Pantheism Controversy* surrounding Spinoza's *Ethics* and *Tractatus theologico-politicus*.<sup>4</sup> This philosophical virality, in turn, meant that by the 1790s and into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Kant-the-man, Kant's Critical philosophy, and Kantian philosophy more generally were fully engaged and ensconced in various controversies and debates with other leading philosophers and thinkers of the period, including Hamann, Goethe, Schelling, Jacobi, Mendelssohn, Herder, Maimon, and Fichte. It also meant that Kant-the-man, Kant's Critical philosophy, and Kantian philosophy more generally were the favorite targets of philosophical pushbacks or take-over attempts by neo-Humean critics, Wolffian critics, *Popularphilosophen*, aka pop-philosophers, members of the *Sturm und Drang* or "cult of genius" literary movement, and Romantic critics, alike: in other words, philosophical push-backs or take-over attempts by *anti-Kantians galore*.

Moreover, by the time that Kant-the-man had become equally famous and notorious in the mid-to-late 1780s and early 1790s, he was already well into his 60s (he was born in 1724), and had developed into a somewhat crusty, fussy professional academic with very fixed habits, a self-described hypochondriac, and a premature valetudinarian with a weak chest and frequent bouts of

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<sup>4</sup> (Beiser, 1987:chs. 2-3, esp. p. 45).

what seems to have been *angina pectoris*. Indeed, as Manfred Kuehn notes, virtually all of the memoirs of Kant written by his contemporaries derive from the last 15 years of his life (he died in 1804), *when he was already an old man* (Kuehn, 2001:1-23). Therefore, what I will call the *Ur-caricature* of Kant, created by Heinrich Heine, must be recognized for what it is—namely, (i) a fairly mean-spirited and even slanderous caricature by a great poet, that is heavily driven by the anti-Kantian *Romantic* critique of Kant, and (ii) solely focused on Kant as an old man:

The history of Kant's life is difficult to describe. For he had neither a life nor a history. He led a mechanically ordered, almost abstract, bachelor life in a quiet out-of-the-way lane in Königsberg, an old city on the northeast border of Germany. I do not believe that the great clock of the Cathedral there performed its task with less passion and less regularity than its fellow citizen, Immanuel Kant. Getting up in the morning, drinking coffee, writing, giving lectures, eating, taking a walk, everything had its appointed time, and the neighbors knew that it was 3:30 pm when Kant stepped forth from his house in his grey coat and his Spanish stick in his hand.... Summer and winter he walked up and down the little alley lined by Linden trees eight times, no matter whether the weather was dull or whether the heavy clouds prognosticated rain. One could see his servant, the old Lampe, anxious and worried, walk behind Kant with a big umbrella under his arm, like an image of destiny. –What a strange contrast did this man's outward life present to his destructive, world-annihilating thoughts! Indeed, if the people of Königsberg had had the least awareness of the full significance of his ideas, they would have felt far more awful dread at the presence of this man than at the sight of an executioner, who can kill only the body. But the people saw in him nothing more than a Professor of Philosophy, and as he passed at his customary hour, they greeted him in a friendly manner and set their watches by him.<sup>5</sup>

In the English-speaking world, Heine's *Ur-caricature* was elaborated, embellished, and as it were, entombed, by Thomas De Quincey's *The Last Days of Immanuel Kant* (1862).<sup>6</sup> This equally bizarre and fascinating text, first published in 1827, is a briefly-introduced English translation by De Quincey of the correspondingly bizarre and fascinating 1804 biographical memoir, *Immanuel Kant in seinen letzten Lebensjahren*, by E.A.C. Wasianski. Like Heine, De Quincey was both amazed and amused by the deeply schizophrenic dual image of Kant as, on the one hand, the clockwork-mechanical, dessicated, dried-out, paradigmatic professional academic philosopher, and on the other, along with Spinoza, the most dangerous, profound, and radical thinker of the early modern era. After Kant's death, Heine's *Ur-caricature* and De Quincey's entombment were then directly and fully carried over into what I will call *the external Kant wars*, consisting of *six waves of anti-Kantianism*, as follows.

**First**, during the early absolute idealist and in particular *Hegelian* period in the early- to mid-19th century, Kant was pejoratively labeled a *subjective idealist*.<sup>7</sup>

**Second**, during the Marxist socialist period prior to the rise of neo-Kantianism, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and again during the Russian Marxist-Leninist socialist period, after 1917, Kant was pejoratively labeled a *petit-bourgeois liberal*.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> (Heine, 1962:II, 461); see also (Kuehn, 2001:14).

<sup>6</sup> Schopenhauer expresses a similar amazement-plus-amusement in “On University Philosophy” (Schopenhauer, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., (Hanna, 2013).

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., (Chaly, 2018; Kikulin 2014).

**Third**, during the early period of classical Analytic philosophy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Kant was pejoratively labeled a *logical psychologist* and again a subjective idealist.<sup>9</sup>

**Fourth**, during and in the immediate wake of World War I, Kant—along with post-Kantian German idealism, and Nietzsche—was blamed for initiating the rise of German militarism culminating in the cult-of-the-Kaiser and World War I, especially in the USA and France.<sup>10</sup>

**Fifth**, during and in the immediate wake of World War II, building on and elaborating the post-World War I tradition of anti-Kantianism, Kant—again along with post-Kantian German idealism, and Nietzsche—was blamed for initiating the rise of the Nazis, culminating in the cult-of-Hitler, World War II, and the Holocaust, especially in the USA, *even though* Kantians and neo-Kantians, especially those who had been students of Leonard Nelson, had been specifically identified by the Nazis as liberal, socialist, and/or Jewish threats to Nazism, and purged.<sup>11</sup>

And **sixth**, most recently, during the early 21st century, with the rise of Analytic metaphysics and multi-culturalist philosophy, Kant, along with *all* so-called “Continental” philosophers is not only pejoratively labeled, yet again, a subjective idealist, but also, on his own, and quite specifically, is bitterly and name-callingly labeled a *racist*, *sexist*, and *xenophobe*.<sup>12</sup>

In an interesting contemporary spin on the external Kant wars and the six waves of anti-Kantianism, let us also briefly consider the recent *anti-Kantian protests* in Kaliningrad, aka Königsberg, Kant’s home town in November 2018. The pictures you see directly below are two views of the famous Kant statue at Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University in Kaliningrad. The picture on the right shows the statue splashed with pink paint in November 2018.



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<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., (Hanna, 2001:chs. 1-2 esp.)

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., Santayana, 1915; Hanna, 1996:ch. 4, 106-141).

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., (Sluga, 1993), (Blanshard, 1949:vi): “One of [Nelson’s] students writes: ‘All Nelson’s pupils who remained in Germany were engaged, as long as they were not imprisoned, in underground or other illegal work against Nazism’”; and also (Kraft, 1949:ix-x): “A future political history of Germany will have to record how, out of [Nelson’s] Academy and the youth groups connected to it, came a number of heroic men and women who fought against the National Socialist regime, and who, since the downfall of that regime, have borne with equal courage their share in the struggle for a new and better order in Germany”.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., (Z, 2017).

Correspondingly, here is what the journalists Sophia Kishkovsky and Jonathan Derbeyshire wrote about that event and the anti-Kantian protests that it expressed:

### **Kant Monument Splashed with Pink Paint in Kaliningrad**

An unknown assailant has splashed pink paint on a monument to Immanuel Kant and his tombstone in Kaliningrad, the former German city of Königsberg where the philosopher lived.

On Tuesday morning, the editor of a local newspaper noticed on her way to work that the statue in front of Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University had been defaced and posted photos of the damage on her Facebook page.

Soon after, the director of the city's landmark cathedral, next to which Kant is buried, posted photos of a similar attack on his tomb.

Although the assailant or assailants had not been apprehended as of Tuesday evening, there was a clue to the motive in leaflets scattered near the university monument that denounced Kant, who died in 1804, as a traitor.

“Shame to traitors! Shame to Kant! Glory to Rus!” read the leaflets.

The Red Army captured Königsberg, the capital of East Prussia, in 1945 from Nazi Germany and it became part of the Soviet Union as Kaliningrad after ethnic German residents fled or were expelled.

The monument to Kant, designed by the German sculptor Christian Daniel Rauch, was originally erected in the 19th century, disappeared during the Second World War, and was recreated in 1992.

Putin has praised Kant, who is a point of pride for many Russians in Kaliningrad. During a visit to the university in 2013 he said that “Kant can and should be a symbol not only of your university but to some extent a symbol of the entire region” and beyond. But nationalists have recently condemned veneration of the philosopher as unpatriotic after he took the lead in a vote to rename the city's airport and he has since fallen to second place, behind the Russian Empress Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great.

In Facebook posts on Tuesday, Russian liberals criticised the attack, but some contemporary artists treated it with humour as a possible act of performance art.

Yesterday, the paint was cleaned off the monument and the tomb. (Kishkovsky, 2018)

### **The Mere Thought of Kant Stirs Russian Nationalism**

“The author of the *Critique of Pure Reason*,” thundered a local politician in the Baltic city of Kaliningrad recently, “cannot be one of the main symbols of a Russian region.”

Writing for a pro-Kremlin website, Andrei Kolesnik denounced the 18th-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant as a “Russophobe” and railed against a plan to name the Russian enclave's airport after him. (Kant was born in what was then the Prussian city of Königsberg in 1724, and lived there his entire life, until he died in 1804.)

This is not the first time in recent years that Kant has inflamed passions in Russia. In 2013, a dispute over the correct interpretation of his philosophy was brought to an abrupt end when a man from Rostov-on-Don shot his interlocutor with an air rifle. So much for what Kant called “perpetual peace.”

When I did postgraduate research on the *Critique [of Pure Reason]*, his masterpiece, I became embroiled in several quite heated debates about the book’s central arguments. But these all stopped short of actual physical violence.

So what is it about Kant and the Russians? It appears that Mr Kolesnik is not alone in his detestation of the sage of Königsberg. Last week, a statue of the philosopher at the local university was splattered with pink paint and his tomb damaged. Leaflets declaring that “the name of the German Kant will not tarnish our airport” were found scattered at both locations.

Meanwhile a video circulated on YouTube showing Igor Mukhametshin, a vice-admiral in the Russian navy, inveighing against Kant in front of a group of sailors. “He wrote some incomprehensible books that none of those present here today have read and won’t read.”

There is a double irony here. First, Kant himself acknowledged that the *Critique of Pure Reason* was “dry” and “long-winded.” He admitted to envying the “subtle” and “alluring” prose style of the great Scottish philosopher David Hume.

Second, there is little evidence that Kant was particularly anti-Russian. Indeed, during the occupation of Königsberg by Russia between 1758 and 1762, he prospered, giving lectures and private tuition to Russian officers and moving in the social circle of Count Keyserlingk, a Russian diplomat.

The real source of current Russian hostility towards Kant was inadvertently revealed in a statement made by a spokesman for Königsberg Cathedral, which houses his tomb. “For Kaliningrad residents, for thinking people,” the spokesman said, “Kant is not a citizen of any particular country, he is an individual of planetary scope.”

And that, in an era of authoritarian Russian nationalism, is presumably the nub of it. Kant was a cosmopolitan who believed that all rational beings are members of a single moral community, and for whom the “freedom to use reason publicly in all matters” was the precondition of enlightenment.

In his essay on perpetual peace, he also defended the idea that no nation is free to interfere in the affairs of another and envisioned a kind of prototype UN in which free states are federated under law. Russia’s neighbours have recently had cause to doubt Moscow’s commitment to such principles.

The anti-Kant campaign seems to have worked. He eventually came third in an online naming poll, behind a second world war Red Army general and Elizabeth Petrovna, empress of Russia during the occupation of Königsberg. (Derbeyshire, 2018)

In short, the strange history of Kant-the-bogeyman, fully bound up with the external Kant wars and the six waves of anti-Kantianism, is not only *coextensive with* but also *intimately intertwined with* the history of late modern philosophy and its corresponding larger intellectual, moral,

sociocultural, and political history, *especially including* contemporary philosophy and the slings-and-arrows of the contemporary real world.

### 3. Being the Orthodox Kant

Being the orthodox Kant has not always meant being the *same* Kant. During Kant's own lifetime, the orthodox Kant was represented by K.L. Reinhold and Johann Shultz.<sup>13</sup> But from the 1790s to the 1920s, the orthodox Kant was represented by the leading members of the classical *neo-Kantian* tradition,<sup>14</sup> including J.F. Fries, J.F. Herbart, F.E. Beneke, Kuno Fischer, Eduard Zeller, Otto Liebman, Jürgen Bona Meyer, F.A. Lange, Alois Riehl, Hermann Cohen, Paul Natorp, Ernst Cassirer, Wilhelm Windelband, Heinrich Rickert, and Emil Lask. The classical neo-Kantian tradition went into the dustbin of history in the late 1920s and the 1930s, initially seriously challenged by the emerging Analytic and existential-phenomenological traditions,<sup>15</sup> then finally crushed by the social-institutional and political ascendancy and domination of the Nazis.<sup>16</sup> Even so, classical neo-Kantianism was also carried forward in a non-trivial *minor key* into North American philosophy, especially including North American mainstream Kant scholarship, by C.I. Lewis<sup>17</sup> and Lewis's graduate students at Harvard—including Brand Blanshard, W.V.O. Quine, Nelson Goodman, Roderick Chisholm, and Wilfrid Sellars—and by the work of exiled members of the Vienna Circle who had been trained by neo-Kantians and retained salient neo-Kantian elements in their work even after their conversion to Analytic philosophy, like Carnap.<sup>18</sup>

Generally speaking, since the mid-to-late 1780s, the orthodox Kant has alternated between three mutually exclusive, differently-oriented readings of the Critical philosophy:

(i) *psychologically*-oriented readings, (ii) *epistemologically*-oriented readings, and (iii) *metaphysically*-oriented readings. Psychologically-oriented readings dominated at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but they were *streng verboten* during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early-to-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, throughout the period of classical neo-Kantianism and its North American diaspora—although they did have a brief resurgence during the Chomsky-driven “Cognitivist Revolution” in philosophy during the mid-to-late 1980s and early-to-mid 1990s.<sup>19</sup> Epistemologically-oriented readings (especially when combined with a dash or more of scientism) dominated throughout the classical neo-Kantian period, and, in North American philosophy, due to the combined influence of Lewis, Lewis's students, and the diaspora of the Vienna Circle and Central Europe-based Logical Empiricists, they also continued their hegemony after World War II and through the 1950s, 60s, 70s, and early 80s. And metaphysical readings have dominated since the emergence, rise, and

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<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., (Schultz, 1784, 1788-1790).

<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., (Willey, 1978; Köhnke, 1991; Luft and Capeillères, 2010; Beiser, 2014; Crowell, 2017; Chaly, 2018; Heis, 2018; Clarke, forthcoming).

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., (Friedman, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., (Sluga, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Lewis, 1929).

<sup>18</sup> See Carnap, 1963:11-12 esp.; Richardson, 1998).

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., (Kitcher, 1990; Brook, 1994).

eventual hegemony of *Analytic metaphysics* in the mid-to-late 1990s and through the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>20</sup>

Cutting across those three mutually exclusive, differently-oriented readings, we can also track at least eight basic oppositions within the overall framework of Kant-orthodoxy, jointly constituting what I will call *the internal Kant wars*.

**First**, there are speculative idealist, and especially absolute idealist, readings of Kant's metaphysics *versus* critical idealist and realist readings of Kant's metaphysics (in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century/early 19<sup>th</sup> century especially, but see also contemporary "Analytic Kantianism").<sup>21</sup>

**Second**, there are psychologically-oriented *versus* anti-psychological (aka "anti-psychologistic," aka "epistemological") readings of Kant's theory of cognition (in the 19<sup>th</sup> century especially, but also during the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century).

**Third**, there is the Fischer-Trendelenburg controversy about how to read the Transcendental Aesthetic (in the 19<sup>th</sup> century especially).

**Fourth**, there are "one-world" (ontological monist) *versus* "two-world" (ontological dualist) readings of Kant's noumenon/phenomenon distinction (in the 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> centuries especially).

**Fifth**, there are incompatibilist *versus* compatibilist readings of Kant's theory of free will (ever since the mid-to-late 1780s).

**Sixth**, there are Conceptualist *versus* Non-Conceptualist readings of Kant's theory of cognition (during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century—see, for example, the Cassirer-Heidegger debate at Davos—and the 21<sup>st</sup> century especially).

**Seventh**, there are intellectualist *versus* non-intellectualist (aka "affectivist") readings of Kant's ethics and theory of practical agency (21<sup>st</sup> century especially).

And **eighth**, there are bourgeois liberal *versus* socialist readings of Kant's political theory (in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century especially, but with an emerging renaissance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century).

—And so it goes: this is the "normal science" practised by *the mandarins of the orthodox Kant*, right up to 6am this morning.

#### 4. Becoming the Radical Kant

In section 2, we saw how the *Ur*-caricature of Kant heavily influenced Kant-the-bogeyman, the external Kant wars, and the six waves of anti-Kantianism, from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century till this morning at 6am. Yet when Kant-the-man was in his late 30s, he was generally thought to be a *man-about-town* and a bit of a dandy, who played billiards and cards, got drunk occasionally, and was mildly scandalous on occasion:

Kant lived and taught in the so-called Magister's alley (*Magistergasse* or *Magisterstraße*.... This was traditionally a street on which many of the faculty at the university [of Kaliningrad] lived.... [H]e enjoyed life as the elegant *Magister*. There were times when, having enjoyed conversation and wine a little too much, he had difficulty "finding the entrance (Loch) into Magister's alley." (Kuehn, 2001:129)

There can be little doubt that Kant was an inspiring lecturer during this period. Nor can there be much doubt that he was interested not only in teaching philosophical theories to his students, but

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<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., (Hanna, 2017a).

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., (Hanna, 2020a).

also in teaching them how to live, by recommending a certain way of life. He then thought that philosophical reflection had to have an important place in life, but that it was neither all nor perhaps even the most important thing. Elegance and appreciation of the beautiful in nature and literature were more important to him than dry book knowledge. (Kuehn, 2001:133)

Kant spent “perhaps most afternoons and evenings in society... not infrequently participating in a suite of playing cards, and often returning home only after midnight. If he was not invited to a meal, he would eat in a restaurant, together with several educated persons....” Kant was, in other words, a central figure in Königsberg social circles. He had great promise, but there were questions whether he would fulfill it. Hamann ... found it necessary to assure Mendelssohn in Berlin that “Kant is a man who loves the truth as much as the tactfulness of good society.” He was far from sure, however. Some of Kant’s friends had a loose lifestyle, and this seemed to influence Kant. Hamann felt that Kant could go one way just as well as the other: he could lose himself in social diversions; or he could make something more solid of his “bright ideas.” The “wild” philosopher might turn out something worthy, and he might not. (Kuehn, 2001:135)

At age 40, shortly after his best friend suddenly died, Kant-the-man had a fundamental, life-changing, personal and indeed existential transformation, an intellectual and spiritual rebirth comparable to those of Augustine, Luther, and Pascal, that largely determined the later shape of his individual, philosophical, and moral life.<sup>22</sup> And Kant-the-man, primed by reading Rousseau’s works, also enthusiastically supported The French Revolution (although, to be sure, as a professional academic philosopher he also banned revolution in his exoteric neo-Hobbesian liberal political theory in *The Doctrine of Right*) and was officially censored for his radical views on religion.<sup>23</sup> So in reality, Kant-the-man was sharply different from Heine’s *Ur*-caricature.

Now turning from Kant-the-man to Kant-the-philosopher, there are, to be sure, further problems to be dealt with. For there are at least ten fundamental *gaps* in Kant’s Critical philosophy, as follows.

**First**, there is a cognitive-semantic gap between *formal* and *material* in the theoretical philosophy and the practical philosophy alike.

**Second**, there is another cognitive-semantic gap between *a priori* and *a posteriori* in the theoretical philosophy and the practical philosophy alike.

**Third**, there is an ontological gap between *the non-manifest ontology of noumena* and *the manifest ontology of phenomena*.

**Fourth**, there is a metaphysical gap between *freedom* and *nature*.

**Fifth**, there is an epistemic gap between *scientific knowing (Wissen)* and *faith (Glauben)*.

**Sixth**, there is a cognitive-epistemic gap between *understanding* vs. *sensibility* (that is, *concepts/conceptual content* and *intuitions/essentially non-conceptual content*).

**Seventh**, there is an inferential gap in the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories between *the categories* and *all the particular appearances (that are supposed to be) subsumed under them*.

**Eighth**, there is a normative gap between *pure practical reason* and *affect/desire/emotion* in the metaphysics of morals.

**Ninth**, there is a cosmological gap between *natural mechanism* and *teleology*.

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<sup>22</sup> See (Kuehn, 2001:chs. 4-6, esp. 145-154 and 238).

<sup>23</sup> See (Kuehn, 2001:ch. 8).

And **tenth**, there is a sociopolitical gap between *the neo-Hobbesian liberal nation-State*, according to “the axiom of right,” and the empirical fact of human egoism and *the (in effect, even if not by name) anarcho-socialist cosmopolitan ethical community*, according to “the axiom of virtue,” a good will, and the Idea of the Highest Good, aka the Idea of God.

Correspondingly, what I have called Kant’s *post-Critical* philosophy from 1788 through to the end of the 1790s,<sup>24</sup> is all about *how to mind those gaps*, by which I mean how to bridge them, mediate between them, negotiate them, schematize them, and/or somehow learn how to affirm them and live with them philosophically. How might Kant’s ten “gap-minding” or transition projects during the post-Critical period from the late 1780s through the 1790s have actually succeeded? Let me (re)count the ways, not only as a step-by-step strategy for *winning the internal Kant wars*, but also as a step-by-step strategy for *becoming the radical Kant*.

**First**, with respect to the (i)-gap between formal and material in the theoretical philosophy and the practical philosophy alike, and also with respect to the (ii)-gap between a priori and a posteriori in the theoretical and practical philosophy alike, Kant explicitly or at least implicitly postulates an “impure a priori” *dynamic aether* in his post-Critical metaphysics of nature, and a *structuralist hierarchy of moral principles* in his post-Critical practical philosophy.<sup>25</sup>

**Second**, with respect to the (iii)-gap between the non-manifest ontology of noumena and the manifest ontology of phenomena, Kant explicitly or at least implicitly postulates a *radical agnosticism* about the existence or non-existence of things in themselves together with *methodological eliminativism*, and an *empirical or manifest realism of authentic appearances*, in his post-Critical epistemology and ontology.<sup>26</sup>

**Third**, with respect to the (iv)-gap between freedom vs nature, Kant explicitly or at least implicitly postulates a *biologically-driven, embodied agency theory of freedom* in his post-Critical metaphysics of rational agency.<sup>27</sup>

**Fourth**, with respect to the (v)-gap between scientific knowing (*Wissen*) and faith (*Glaube*), Kant explicitly or at least implicitly postulates *practical foundations for the exact sciences* and *scientific pietism* in his post-Critical epistemology and philosophy of science.<sup>28</sup>

**Fifth**, with respect to the (vi)-gap between understanding and sensibility (or between concepts/conceptual content and intuitions/essentially non-conceptual content), Kant explicitly or at least implicitly postulates *strong or essentialist non-conceptualism* in his post-Critical cognitive semantics.<sup>29</sup>

**Sixth**, with respect to the (vii)-gap between the categories and all the particular appearances supposed be to subsumed under them (the gap in the Transcendental Deduction), Kant explicitly or at least implicitly postulates an *affirmation* of the gap and also a corresponding

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<sup>24</sup> See also (Hall, 2014).

<sup>25</sup> See (Hanna, 2006a:ch. 8, 2018).

<sup>26</sup> See (Hanna, 2017b).

<sup>27</sup> See (Hanna, 2006a:ch. 8, 2006b, 2009; Hanna and Moore, 2006).

<sup>28</sup> See (Hanna, 2006:part 2, 2016a, 2018, 2019).

<sup>29</sup> See (Hanna, 2008b, 2011a, 2015:ch. 2).

doctrine of *the necessary limits of the formal and natural sciences* in his post-Critical metaphysics of nature and philosophy of science.<sup>30</sup>

**Seventh**, with respect to the (viii)-gap between pure practical reason and affect/desire/emotion in the metaphysics of morals, Kant explicitly or at least implicitly postulates what I call *The Affect of Reason* and *strong Kantian non-intellectualism* in his post-Critical practical philosophy and theory of rational agency.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, putting together the fifth step and the seventh step, we can derive what I call a *Sensibility First* approach to Kant's and Kantian theoretical and practical philosophy alike.<sup>32</sup>

**Eighth**, with respect to the (ix)-gap between natural mechanism and teleology, Kant explicitly or at least implicitly postulates *manifest organicism* in his post-Critical metaphysics of nature.<sup>33</sup>

**Ninth** and finally, with respect to the (x)-gap between the neo-Hobbesian liberal nation-State, according to "the axiom of right," and the empirical fact of human egoism and the in effect, if not by name, social anarchist cosmopolitan ethical community, according to "the axiom of virtue," a good will, and the Idea of the Highest Good, aka the Idea of God, Kant explicitly or at least implicitly postulates what I call *radical enlightenment* and *Left Kantianism* in his post-Critical political philosophy and philosophical theology/philosophy of religion.<sup>34</sup>

A crucial thing to notice about this nine-step process of becoming the radical Kant, is that the hard-and-fast borders between the three mutually exclusive, differently-oriented readings of the Critical philosophy that are characteristic of the orthodox Kant—psychological, epistemological, and metaphysical—*have been not only crossed and transgressed, but also erased and transcended*.

Relatedly, and ironically, but perhaps also predictably, the professional academic flourishing of the orthodox Kant is sometimes taken by the mandarins of the orthodox Kant to be the great contemporary philosophical pay-off of the classical neo-Kantian tradition.<sup>35</sup> But sharply on the contrary, my view is that the great contemporary pay-off of the classical neo-Kantian tradition is its demonstration that *Kant's ethics* and *socialism* have a profound elective affinity. Hermann Cohen, Paul Natorp, and Leonard Nelson were all serious socialists; and one of the "fathers" of the classical neo-Kantian tradition, F.A. Lange, published an influential book in 1865, *Die Arbeiterfrage*, "The Worker Question," that explores basic socialist themes.<sup>36</sup> This elective affinity with socialism, in turn, via the ninth and final step towards becoming the radical Kant, directly connects the classical neo-Kantian tradition to contemporary Kantian *anarcho-socialism*.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> See Hanna, 2011b, 2016b, 2019a).

<sup>31</sup> See (Hanna, 2018a, 2020b).

<sup>32</sup> See (Hanna, 2019b).

<sup>33</sup> See (Hanna, 2014, 2019a).

<sup>34</sup> See (Hanna, 2016c, 2017b, 2017c, 2018b).

<sup>35</sup> See, e.g., (Chignell, 2008:121-124 esp., 2010:48-49).

<sup>36</sup> See, e.g., (Luft and Capeillères, 2010:50).

<sup>37</sup> See, e.g., (Hanna, 2017c, 2016c, 2018).

## 5. Will the Real Kant Please Stand Up?

Obviously, given the external Kant wars and the six waves of anti-Kantianism, the manifold and various negative caricatures collected under Kant-the-bogeyman rubric have had a *deadly* intellectual, moral, social-institutional, and political influence on philosophical and non-philosophical thinking about Kant-the-man, Kant's works, and Kantian philosophy more generally, ever since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Yet *the orthodox Kant* has always been and continues to be, in its own way, *every bit as deadly as the Kant-the-bogeyman*, precisely because it mirrors scholarly platitudes, popular trends, conformism, and dogmatism in mainstream professional academic philosophy, as it has existed at any time since the mid-to-late 1780s.

As a paradigm example of that, let us consider the connections between classical neo-Kantianism and German militarism/nationalism in World War I. Notoriously, there were (i) the "Manifesto of the 93," which was signed by the leading neo-Kantian Alois Riehl, and many other prominent German intellectuals, in 1914,<sup>38</sup> and (ii) the "Declaration of University Teachers of the German Empire," which was signed by 4000 university teachers and professors in 1914, less than two weeks after the Manifesto of the 93.<sup>39</sup> The final sentences of the "Manifesto of the 93" say this:

Have faith in us! Believe, that we shall carry on this war to the end as a civilized nation, to whom the legacy of a Goethe, a Beethoven, and a Kant, is just as sacred as its own hearths and homes.

In short, many or even most of the classical neo-Kantians, as complicit, obedient, passive employees in a professional academic university system that was entirely funded and controlled by the German State, fully enlisted Kant in their militarist/nationalist war-mongering. How "civilized" can you get? In its own way, it is almost as amazing as Adolf Eichmann's brazenly citing Kant's categorical imperative as necessarily equivalent to the *Führerprinzip*, and therefore as the rational and moral "justification" for dutifully, blindly, and unquestionably obeying Hitler's commands. (Arendt, 1965:135-137). So it is easy enough to see how many or even most of the classical neo-Kantians, as mandarins of the orthodox Kant, could be effectively discredited after World War I, and along with that discreditation of neo-Kantian philosophy, also be the more or less unintentional means of triggering the early 20<sup>th</sup> century discreditation of Kant-the-man, Kant's Critical philosophy, and Kantian philosophy more generally.

More generally, however, for *any* philosopher to be a mandarin of the orthodox Kant, is—ironically and self-stultifyingly—to violate Kant's own exhortation in "What is Enlightenment?" to all rationally and morally mature thinkers, and especially philosophers, to dare to think for oneself:

Enlightenment is the human being's emergence from his own self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction from another. This immaturity is self-incurred when its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. *Sapere aude!* Have the courage to use your own understanding! is thus the motto of Enlightenment. (WA, 8:35).

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<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., (Wikipedia, 2020b; World War I Document Archive, 2020).

<sup>39</sup> See, e.g., (Nees, 2014).

Indeed, for *any* philosopher to be a mandarin of the orthodox Kant, is to fall directly under Kant's *own* damning picture of the philosopher who dogmatically, Scholastically, and slavishly accepts the precepts of some existing philosophical system:

He has formed himself according to an alien reason, but the faculty of imitation is not that of generation, i.e., the cognition did not arise **from** reason in him, and although objectively it was certainly a rational cognition, subjectively it is still merely historical. He has grasped and preserved well, i.e., he has learned, and is a plaster cast of a living human being. Rational cognitions that are objectively so (i.e., could have arisen originally only out of the reason of human beings themselves) may also bear this name subjectively only if they have been drawn out of the universal sources of reason, from which critique, indeed even the rejection of what has been learned, can also arise, i.e., from principles. (A836-837/B864-865, boldfacing in the original)

Therefore we should reject the *second* face of Kant, the orthodox Kant, just as vigorously as we reject the *first* face of Kant, Kant-the-bogeyman.

## 6. Conclusion: Kant's Relevance Tomorrow

Recently I was asked the question: "What is Kant's relevance today?" (Hanna, 2020c "Interpreting Immanuel Kant & the Three Faces of Kant"). In view of what I have just argued, the correct but simple answer to this question is that since the history of late modern philosophy is essentially a series of footnotes to Kant and also essentially characterized by anti-Kantianism and the internal and external Kant wars, then in order to understand or do contemporary philosophy properly, we must come to terms with Kant-the-man, Kant's Critical philosophy, and Kantian philosophy more generally, *by coming to terms with the three faces of Kant*.

Moreover, it also naturally flows from this correct but simple answer, that the more sophisticated answer to the question "what is Kant's relevance today?" is that we should be thinking above all about *Kant's relevance tomorrow*. What I mean, is that we should be thinking above all about what philosophy will be like *IF* we can liberate the explosive intellectual, moral, social-institutional, and political potential of the radical Kant from the death-grips of Kant-the-bogeyman and the orthodox Kant. So I conclude that as *real* philosophers—that is, as *anarcho- or borderless philosophers* (Hanna, 2020d "Consequences of *Consequences: Against Professional Philosophy, Anarcho- or Borderless Philosophy, and Rorty's Role*"), who *philosophize with a hammer and a blue guitar* (Hanna, 2020e), and who are above all engaged in *creating a philosophy of the future* (Hanna and Paans, 2020f)—we should equally reject Kant-the-bogeyman and the orthodox Kant, and wholeheartedly affirm the radical Kant instead.<sup>40</sup>

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