

Kant's Transcendental Power of Imagination

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Kant calls the transcendental power of imagination a 'blind yet indispensable function of the soul' (*KdrV* A78/B103). Responsible for a host of sub-personal functions of integration which alone afford cognitive representations required for human self-consciousness of anything so much as appearing to occur before, during or after anything else, Kant's transcendental power of imagination launches an anti-Cartesian philosophical revolution, of central importance today to the cognitive sciences – though Kant's account provides richer resources than have yet been tapped (Brook 2016). Kant stresses that those *a priori* conditions by which alone we can know (or be aware of) anything as an object, cannot themselves be known *as* objects (A402); he likewise stresses that we cannot assay our own transcendental power of imagination by conceptual or logical analysis, nor by introspection – neither can we do so empirically, not by any means available to Kant, nor to us today. How, then, can Kant use 'transcendental reflection' (A261/B317) to assay our cognitive architecture credibly? Answering this question, I shall show, charts the analytical proof structure of Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*.

Some suggested background readings, for those who may be so inclined:

- Brook, Andrew, 2016. 'Kant's View of the Mind and Consciousness of Self'. In: E.N. Zalta, ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/kant-mind>>
- Michael Wolff, 2017. 'How Precise is Kant's Table of Judgments'. In: J. O'Shea, ed., *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), 83–105.

Biographical Note

Kenneth R. WESTPHAL is Professor of Philosophy, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi (İstanbul). His research focuses on the character and scope of rational justification in non-formal, substantive domains, both moral (ethics, justice, history and philosophy of law, philosophy of education) and theoretical (epistemology, history and philosophy of science). His books include *Kant's Transcendental Proof of Realism* (Cambridge, 2004), *How Hume and Kant Reconstruct Natural Law: Justifying Strict Objectivity without Debating Moral Realism* (Clarendon, 2016) and *Grounds of Pragmatic Realism: Hegel's Internal Critique and Transformation of Kant's Critical Philosophy* (Brill, 2017). He is completing a new book, *Normative Justification, Natural Law and Kant's Constructivism in Hegel's Moral Philosophy*, and plans a systematic study in history and philosophy of law focussing on Montesquieu, G.W.F. Hegel and Rudolf von Jhering.
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