

Fußnote hervorgeht wird die Aussagekraft dieser DFG-Statistik wird dadurch erheblich eingeschränkt, daß nur solche Kollegiaten erfaßt sind, die ihre Dissertation während der Laufzeit ihres Stipendiums auch abschließen, das sind 43%. In Wirklichkeit wird also die durchschnittliche Promotionsdauer von durch Graduiertenkollegs geförderten Studenten noch höher sein.

Nach der Förderung im Kolleg – aber evtl. noch vor Abschluß der Diss! – waren 45% der

Stipendiaten „in der Forschung tätig“, 9% fanden eine Stelle im öffentlichen Dienst ohne Forschungstätigkeit, 12% einen Job in der Industrie, 6,5% waren arbeitslos und von dem restlichen Viertel ist unbekannt, womit sie sich beschäftigten.

Insgesamt gibt es an den Kollegs weniger Postdoktoranden als man von Hamburg aus vermuten würde, nämlich 212 Postdoktoranden mit Stipendium und 264 durch andere Mittel finanzierte, was pro Kolleg im Schnitt je gut

ein Postdoc-Stipendium und einen weiteren Postdoc ergibt. Von diesen sind nur noch 24% Frauen. Immerhin sind deren Berufsaussichten nicht so übel, denn gut 70% der Postdocs fanden direkt im Anschluß an ihre Kollegzeit eine Stelle oder weitere Finanzierung. Ohnehin schließen die wenigsten ihre Habilitation bereits im Kolleg ab, 1995 waren es ganze fünf Personen.

Also, nun auf zur Verbesserung der Quoten!

Von Kant über Pol Pot zu Derrida

Barry Smith und Peter Baumann über *The Worst Cognitive Performance in History*

Beim Beantworten des KogBit-Fragebogens in der letzten Ausgabe hatte der englische Philosoph Barry Smith (Buffalo/NY, phsmith@acsu.buffalo.edu) Immanuel Kants *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781) als „the worst cognitive performance in history“ bezeichnet. Peter Baumann ließ diese Bemerkung keine Ruhe, und es entwickelte sich eine Auseinandersetzung per E-Mail, die einige weitere Juwelen hervorbrachte (etwa daß Kant ein nichtklassischer Chinesischer Realist sei oder sich in Derridas Schriften im Gegensatz zu denen Hitlers nichts Gutes findet). Die E-Mails wurden von Peter B. in Absprache mit Barry S. in die Form eines Dialoges gebracht.

PB: Why do you think that Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is the worst cognitive performance in history?

BS: *Kant drew an absolute line between what we can know and what is; in this way he seriously devalued human confidence in the powers of science, setting in train a tradition of thinking which began*

with Hegel, through Marx (the doctrine of 'false consciousness'), Nietzsche and other 'masters of suspicion', down to Adolf Hitler and Goebbels (the 'great lie'), and Pol Pot and Derrida (both students of philosophy in Paris).

May I quote you?

I suppose so, but only to people with a sense of humour.

Oh, I guess I didn't get the joke. But there's still something serious in what you said, isn't there? In the beginning you said that Kant drew a line between what we can know and what is. But who doesn't?

Kant drew an absolute line: We can, he said, never know anything about what is.

Do you want to say Kant is a sceptic? If yes, you should really publish this view – it's a very original view of Kant ...

If 'world' here means 'world of things in themselves' then my view is not original at all; if 'world' means 'phenomenal world' then Kant says we can know the world we've created, but only that.

I still don't see how that makes him a sceptic. Anyway, you also said that Kant "devalued human confidence in the powers of science". Let's compare, e.g.,

Hume and Kant. One might take Hume as a kind of sceptic with regard to causality. Kant on the other hand tried to 'rescue' the idea of causality as a principle of science. One can, of course, doubt whether Kant succeeded in doing so. But be this as it may, I don't see any reason for saying that Kant devalued human confidence in science and in the value of science.

But he did, as did Hume (Kant resolved Hume's dilemma by fictionalising the whole of science – see Vaihinger's 'Philosophie des Als Ob')

There is a sense in which Vaihinger would agree. But here you're relying on an interpretation of Kant almost nobody nowadays – except you and Vaihinger – holds.

Everyone is desperately trying to find interpretations of the German Saint which will protect his saintliness ...

Some people seem to have an obsession with the church!

...and Kant writes so badly that new interpretations fall readily off the trees. He established norms of style in German philosophy which have had deleterious effects above all in France, but also

elsewhere (see my paper "German Philosophy: Language and Style" in *Topoi*, volume 10)

If you don't like his style, o.k. But I think it's historically false to see a connection (as you seem to do) between Kant and the anti-scientism/anti-rationalism of postmodernist French philosophy. These people are primarily influenced by Hegel, Husserl (Your hero!), Nietzsche and Heidegger.

Kant gave birth to Fichte... the knee-bone is connected to the thigh bone...

What about Kant's famous letter, his "declaration against Fichte"? That Kant gave birth to Fichte is what the followers of Fichte, Schelling, Hegel say. And even these people criticise Kant for not being idealist enough.

So "Classical German Idealism" is a misnomer. Kant was really a non-classical Chinese realist.

So you take Kant to be the first German Idealist? Like Fichte or Hegel? I heavily disagree with that. I'm not the only one who thinks that German Idealism is based on a misunderstanding (whether productive or not) of some parts of Kant's philosophy.

And Kant is innocent, in this regard?

What does "innocence" mean in the history of ideas? Anyway, I think you put Kant in an entirely wrong neighbourhood. Let's try it the other way around. In my view, Kant is one of the grand-uncles of cognitive science (but that's another topic). Besides that, I think that Kant's role in the history of philosophy is much more positive (to say the least). In a way, (almost) every philosopher today is working on problems and questions that lead

back to Kant. No matter whether one agrees with what Kant says on specific topics and no matter whether one recognises his impact on philosophy. Let me just name a few topics: Who was a better and more devastating critic of metaphysics than Kant? (Take, for instance, his path-breaking critique of the "ontological" proof of the existence of God and his remarks on the concept of existence which are very close to what Frege later said about the concept of existence).

Yes - and look at the terrible, terrible consequences of the failure on the part of so many contemporary philosophers to take metaphysics seriously!

The Logical Positivists, for instance! And you don't want to say they're also part of the line that leads from Kant to Hitler, do you?

Long Story (see, inter alia, chapter 1 of my book "Austrian Philosophy")

Another point: Take the project of identifying necessary conceptual features of experience. Strawson is only one of the most well-known philosophers who pursues such an idea. Or take the idea that judgement is complex in the following important way: two fundamentally different types of mental representation are involved, i.e. intuitions and concepts. They have two very different semantical and logical roles in judging. There is nothing like that in Locke's or Hume's empiricism: they don't have any attractive theory of judgement or propositional structure because they only have mental representations of one single sort: ideas. Furthermore, in a sense, Kant's distinction predates the distinction between referring (with singular terms) and predicating (with predicates).

On all of these things I think Kant is confused, and I am confident I could find precursors of whatever his good ideas might have been (e.g. in Leibniz, Wolff, Crusius, etc., not to mention - if it's good theories of judgement you're after - Gregory of Rimini or William of Ockham or Tom of Cobley)

Or in almost anybody else? Anyway, let's take the analytic-synthetic distinction: it was there before, but Kant was the first to give some explanation.

This was definitely in Crusius, and in Locke, and in Leibniz...

I said that. But there is a difference between saying a distinction is there and giving an explanation.

Moreover Kant's treatment of the a priori is absurd

Why absurd?

Propositions are a priori (e.g., Pythagoras' theorem) because we impose them on the world: when a passer-by sees a ladder leaning against a wall, he imposes Pythagoras' theorem on what he sees. So if the ladder is 5 feet long, and the foot of the ladder is placed 3 feet from the wall, the perceiver makes it true, by the miraculous workings of his "transcendental consciousness", that the top of the ladder will be 4 foot from the ground. This is just silly.

It is absurd to define "a priori" as "imposing something on the world"! Right you are! But Kant didn't do that (I wonder how you find all this nonsense in just one book). He rather explained it along the (nowadays) usual lines ("independence from experience"). It's true: for some years we have known (see Kripke and Kaplan) that one shouldn't identify the a priori with the necessary and the a posteriori with the contingent. This is an improvement that would hardly have been possible without a conception like Kant's. Frege, for instance, knew about the merits of

Kant's distinction of analytic and synthetic (see his "Foundations of Arithmetic") and developed his own view based on that. Learning from Kant doesn't mean agreeing with him. It's not a good idea just to condemn, condemn, condemn ... in the manner of some Holy Spanish Inquisition ...

One can find good bits in "Mein Kampf", too. (Even in Derrida, perhaps) Added in proof: No. That last bit is going too far.

And I was just beginning to get your jokes... You leave no doubt that you really don't like Kant. But even if Kant is so bad wouldn't it be a good thing to read the book as a student? In the

questionnaire you say you want to ban the book. Why not read it as a paradigm of how not to philosophise? Furthermore, you told me why you think Kant is so bad. But you didn't tell me why the first Critique is the worst cognitive performance in history (late Heidegger would be a much better candidate for that position, wouldn't it). And that's definitely a different question, isn't it?

God, how I hate Kant!

Did you ever read Kant? Why not give it a try?

Don't try to teach your grandmother how to suck eggs.

Don't worry! Anyway: If all that is your sincere opinion on

Kant and not your sense of humour then you should definitely try to publish your views.

I published some remarks, including one or two papers on, of all things, Hegel; also there is an interview in "Information Philosophie" way back in 1987 which tries to set the record straight.

Maybe we should come to an end. We haven't reached an agreement on Kant. But that's not that important. It seems more important, sich seines Verstandes ohne Leitung eines anderen zu bedienen. Can you agree with that?

Yes, I agree: you should never serve your understanding while standing on someone else's ladder.

TAGUNGSKALENDER

The Mind as a Scientific Object: October 25-27, Toronto

Background: What are the principal methods by which present-day researchers attempt to explain human mentality in scientifically respectable and empirically meaningful terms? How did these methods originate; and what is their broader significance at the present time? For example, do they differ fundamentally from all philosophical approaches to the topic or, at least in this one area, have science and (certain aspects of) philosophy become melded and mutually supporting?

1. Biology and Ethology: Studying Mind Genetically and Comparatively. 2. Neuroscience: Reductionism and Alternatives to Reductionism. 3. Psychology and Linguistics: Exploring Mentality's „Modules“ 4. Integrating the Mind's Physical and Cultural Dimensions. For further information and programme, contact: Ian Gerrie or David Johnson iger-

rie@nexus.yorku.ca djohnson@nexus.yorku.ca

First European Workshop on Cognitive Modeling in Conjunction with EuroSoar 10

14—16 November 1996, Berlin University of Technology

This workshop has been created to establish interdisciplinary cooperation in the domain of cognitive modeling. It should be of interest for researchers in the fields of artificial intelligence, cognitive psychology and computer linguistics. The workshop and is open for work on cognitive modeling using general architectures (such as SOAR and ACT) as well as other kinds of modeling approaches. The program will include presentations of papers, demo sessions, discussion groups and tutorials on cognitive modeling. Topics of interest include but are not limited to: methodology of cognitive modeling (e.g. AI programming), classification, pro-

blem solving, reasoning, inference, learning, language processing and human-computer interaction.

Deadline for contributed papers is over. Up-to-date information about the workshop will be given on the WWW. See <http://www.cs.tu-berlin.de/~schmid/eurocog.html> for information about hotel registration, location of the conference rooms etc. Contact:

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4th ACM International Workshop On Advances In Geographic Information Systems

November 15-16, 1996, Rockville, Maryland, USA

In recent years computer processing of Earth observations

