

## Kant's Theory of Normativity

### Exploring the Space of Reason

Konstantin Pollok offers the first book-length analysis of Kant's theory of normativity that covers foundational issues in theoretical and practical philosophy as well as aesthetics. Interpreting Kant's "critical turn" as a normative turn, he argues that Kant's theory of normativity is both original and radical: it departs from the perfectionist ideal of early modern rationalism, and arrives at an unprecedented framework of synthetic a priori principles that determine the validity of our judgments. Pollok examines the hylomorphism in Kant's theory of normativity and relates Kant's idea of our reason's self-legislation to the "natural right" tradition, revealing Kant's debt to his predecessors as well as his relevance to contemporary debates on normativity. This book will appeal to academic researchers and advanced students of Kant, early modern philosophy, and intellectual history.

KONSTANTIN POLLOK is Professor of Philosophy at the University of South Carolina, Columbia. He is the author of *Kants Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft: Ein Kritischer Kommentar* (2001) and *Begründen und Rechtfertigen: Eine Untersuchung zum Verhältnis zwischen rationalen Erfordernissen und prävalenten Handlungsgründen* (2009).

# Kant's Theory of Normativity

## *Exploring the Space of Reason*

---

Konstantin Pollok  
*University of South Carolina*



Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-12780-7 — Kant's Theory of Normativity  
Konstantin Pollok  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India  
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107127807](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107127807)  
10.1017/9781316412503

© Konstantin Pollok 2017

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2017

*A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

ISBN 978-1-107-12780-7 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-12780-7 — Kant's Theory of Normativity  
Konstantin Pollok  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

Dem Andenken meines Freundes  
Manfred Saga (1952–2013)

Metaphysics is not a philosophy about objects, for these can only be given by means of the senses, but rather about the subject, namely, the laws of its reason.

(Kant, *Refl* 3716, ca. 1764–68)

Everything in nature works in accordance with laws. Only a rational being has the capacity to act *in accordance with the representation* of laws, that is, in accordance with principles.

(Kant, *Groundwork*, 1785)

The man who believes himself endowed with an autonomous will thus places himself in another order of things and relates himself to determining grounds of an entirely different sort from when he perceives himself as a phenomenon in the sense-world and subordinates his causality to external determination under natural laws. The fact that he has to represent and think everything in this twofold way is not at all contradictory, for it rests in the first place on his consciousness of himself as an object affected by the senses, in the second on the consciousness of himself as intelligence, that is, as an active subject who, in using reason, is freed from any passive attachment to sensory impressions. Thus, in line with the basic orientation of the transcendental method, here too determination of the object is the result of the mediation of the *analysis of judgment*.

(Ernst Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought*, 1918)

## Contents

---

<i>Preface and Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page xi</i>
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xiv
Introduction	1
1 Kant's Theory of Normativity?	1
2 Outline of Work	12
<b>Part I From the Clarity of Ideas to the Validity of Judgments</b>	<b>23</b>
Introduction	23
1 Kant's Farewell to Perfectionism	27
1.1 Discharging 'Perfection' as the Supreme <i>Ratio Essendi et Cognoscendi</i> in Early-Modern Rationalism	27
1.1.1 Ontological and Epistemological Perfection	28
1.1.2 Practical Perfection or Perfectibility	36
1.1.3 Aesthetic Perfection	40
1.2 Kant's Search for a 'Secure Path of a Science'	44
1.2.1 Starting the Critical Turn: Distinct Ideas Are Judgments	44
1.2.2 Completing the Critical Turn: 'How Are Synthetic Judgments A Priori Possible?'	49
1.3 Conclusion	56
2 The Concept of Judgment and the Divisions of Philosophy	58
2.1 Conceptual Vagueness	58
2.2 The General Concept of Judgment	60
2.3 The Spontaneity of Synthesis	63
2.4 Kant's Division of 'Rational Cognition from Concepts' ( <i>Vernunftserkenntnis</i> )	68
2.4.1 Modality and the Trichotomy of Higher Faculties of the Mind	68
2.4.2 Analytic Divisions of Philosophy – Methodological and Metaphysical	73
2.4.3 Synthetic Divisions of Philosophy – The Faculties of the Mind	74
2.4.3.1 Cognition, Desire, Feeling of Pleasure and Displeasure	74
2.4.3.2 Higher Faculties as the Home of Principles of Judgments	76
2.5 Conclusion	78
	vii

viii	Contents	
3	Kant's Taxonomy of Judgments	81
3.1	Kant's Formal Division of Judgments	81
3.2	Kant's Material Division of Judgments	87
3.2.1	A Priori/A Posteriori – The Source of the Propositional Content of a Judgment	88
3.2.2	Analytic/Synthetic – The Scope of the Propositional Content of a Judgment	91
3.2.3	Objective/Subjective – The Validity of a Judgment	96
3.2.4	Determining/Reflective Judgments – The Extrinsic and Intrinsic Guidance of the Power of Judgment	101
3.2.5	Constitutive/Regulative – The Justificatory Status of Principles	107
3.3	Conclusion	114
<b>Part II</b>	<b>Kant's Transcendental Hylomorphism</b>	<b>117</b>
	Introduction	117
4	Hylomorphism and Normativity	121
4.1	Kant on Predecessor Versions of Hylomorphism	121
4.1.1	Ontological Versus Transcendental Hylomorphism	121
4.1.2	Historical Embedding	123
4.2	'The Formal in Our Knowledge Is the Preeminent Business of Philosophy'	131
4.2.1	Kant's Case for a Formal Logic	131
4.2.2	'Metaphysics Is Philosophy About Form'	135
4.3	Conclusion	141
5	Determinable Sensibility and Intellectual Determination	143
5.1	Transcendental Matter and Form	143
5.2	Intuition	148
5.2.1	Matter and Form of Intuition	148
5.2.2	' <i>Forma non Afficit</i> '	150
5.3	Concept	157
5.3.1	Concepts as Forms	158
5.3.2	The Form of Concepts	161
5.4	Judgment	164
5.4.1	The Relation Between Concept and Judgment	164
5.4.2	The Forms of Judgments	166
5.5	Inference	171
5.5.1	Immediate Inferences	171
5.5.2	Mediate Inferences	173
5.6	System of Cognition	178
5.6.1	Metaphysics of Nature	179
5.6.2	Metaphysics of Morals	182
5.6.3	'A Single Philosophical System'	186
5.6.3.1	New Elements for the Solution of the Problem	186
5.6.3.2	Tentative Steps Toward an Ethicotheology	188
5.7	Conclusion	193

Contents	ix
<b>Part III The Legislation of Pure Reason</b>	<b>197</b>
Introduction	197
6 'Reason Prescribes Laws to Us'	201
6.1 Self-Legislation	201
6.2 Reason 'In General'	204
6.3 The Natural Right Tradition and Kant's Distinction Between <i>Homo Phaenomenon</i> and <i>Homo Noumenon</i>	206
6.4 Synthetic Principles A Priori and the Validity of Our Judgments	211
6.4.1 The Role of Synthetic Principles A Priori in the Development of Kant's Critical Philosophy	212
6.4.1.1 The Motivational Trajectory from the First to the Second <i>Critique</i>	212
6.4.1.2 The Motivational Trajectory from the Second to the Third <i>Critique</i>	215
6.5 Conclusion	219
7 The Normativity of Judgments of Experience	220
7.1 <i>Intellectus Archetypus</i> and <i>Intellectus Discursivus</i>	221
7.2 'Categories Are Concepts That Prescribe Laws A Priori to Appearances'	225
7.2.1 Transcendental Unity of Self-Consciousness	226
7.2.2 'Figurative Synthesis'	229
7.3 Schematism: 'How Is the Application of the Category to Appearances Possible?'	233
7.4 Principles: 'Conditions of the Possibility of the Objects of Experience'	238
7.4.1 Mathematical Principles	240
7.4.2 Dynamical Principles	242
7.5 Conclusion	248
8 The Normativity of Practical Judgments	249
8.1 The 'Decisive Influence of Reason on Our Actions'	251
8.2 The Common Ground of Kant's Imperatives	255
8.3 The Difference Between Kant's Imperatives	258
8.4 'Morally Practical Reason in Us Is Humanity ( <i>Homo Noumenon</i> ) That Gives Laws to Us'	263
8.4.1 ' <i>Forma non Afficit</i> ' and the Hylomorphism of Practical Reason	263
8.4.2 The <i>Homo Phenomenon–Noumenon</i> Distinction and the Concept of Conscience	269
9 The Normativity of Judgments of Taste	273
9.1 Another Kind of Judgment	274
9.2 Heautonomy	279
9.2.1 Aesthetic Heautonomy	279
9.2.2 Teleological Heautonomy	281
9.2.3 Compatible Notions of Heautonomy?	282
9.3 The Concept of Beauty and the Relationship Between Aesthetic Feelings and Judgments	285



x	Contents	
9.4	The Moments of a Judgment of Taste and the Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgments	290
9.5	Conclusion	304
	Epilogue: Kant's Moderate Forms of Transcendental and Political Idealism	308
	<i>Bibliography</i>	312
	<i>Index</i>	322

## Preface and Acknowledgments

---

The idea for this book developed in concentric circles. Like a child throwing a pebble into the water, having read Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* I was captivated by the notion of synthetic judgments a priori, deeply fascinated but also puzzled by the shockwaves this notion sends in all directions, into every part of what Kant calls 'metaphysics.' Twenty-five years later I still see those principles at the center of Kant's attempt to explore the space of reason. What I have gained since then is a partial understanding of some of the concentric circles radiating from that novel concept.

This book is a record of those circles, but it takes the opposite direction, from the periphery to the center. Seemingly, this makes the decision about the starting point appear to be ad hoc (which one is the outermost circle?). Yet this charge, *mutatis mutandis*, can be settled for neither direction of the argument. I decided to follow the synthetic, or, as Kant also calls it, 'ampliative' method of constructing, or justifying what I take to be the core of Kant's theory of normativity. As a corollary to this decision, even though the book may now be seen to have an arbitrary beginning, it has, at least, a definitive end (terminal *and* goal), exploring Kant's notion of synthetic judgments a priori as the ultimate source of the lawfulness of any movement in the space of reason.

I was fortunate enough to receive generous support from many people for my travels in the space of reason. Albert Mues, my first philosophical teacher in philosophy, set me straight transcendently. Without him I would probably have given up reading Kant after looking at the *KrV* table of contents. Reinhard Brandt was my mentor during the decade I spent at Marburg University, where I had the chance to breathe a good dose of neo-Kantian air. With Brandt's help I gained access to *and* appreciation of the relevant historical contexts, familiarity with which I now take to be indispensable for dealing critically with Kant's work. Michael Friedman, whose philosophical mastership I have experienced at first hand over the past two decades, provided the institutional support that opened a number of doors to wonderful places for concentrated work. His friendly advice and encouragement gave me the confidence to start climbing one of the most difficult pitches of my life, culminating in my first book written in English.

xii Preface and Acknowledgments

Since my project of making Kant's theory of normativity explicit naturally covers quite a lot of ground in terms of his writing, there is an almost inexhaustible wealth of secondary literature pertinent to my claims and arguments. Given my incapacity to include all of this (and the word limit set by the publisher, as well as the limited patience of the reader), I had to restrict my discussion of the literature to an almost irresponsible minimum. Besides the literature listed at the end of the book, I have benefitted tremendously from conversations with the following thinkers: R. Lanier Anderson, Ralf Bader, Michael Bratman, John Ceballes, Graciela De Pierris, Tal Glezer, Paul Guyer, David Hyder, Heiner Klemme, Manfred Kühn, Melissa Lane, Michela Massimi, Giuseppe Motta, Andrews Reath, Werner Stark, Jens Timmermann, Clinton Tolley, Eric Watkins, and Allen Wood.

For helpful questions and comments on parts of the manuscript I owe thanks to the students of my 2007, 2010, 2013, and 2014 courses on Kant, especially Craig Bacon, Rosa Fuller, Gerad Gentry, Daniel Kruidenier, and Alfred Peeler, who confronted me with many of the obvious and less obvious snares of Kant's philosophy. As a welcome side effect of these classes I got used to talking about Kant in English and learned some nice English idioms (e.g., "reading Kant is like drinking from a fire hydrant," – Michelle Panchuk).

I would also like to thank two anonymous readers for their insightful written comments on the book manuscript, as well as Hilary Gaskin, Rosemary Crawley, and Emma Collison at Cambridge University Press for their friendly assistance.

A special thanks is owed to Nicole Osborne who copy edited the entire manuscript with great patience.

Finally, I gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the following institutions: the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung for a Feodor-Lynen Research Fellowship and the Stanford Humanities Center for a Junior Fellowship for the academic year 2006–7; the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of South Carolina for financial support of my 2009–10 residence at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS) at Stanford University, as well as the American Council of Learned Societies for a Frederick Burkhardt Residential Fellowship for Recently Tenured Scholars that allowed me to spend another year at CASBS (2012–13). For being marvelously fed there, both physically and intellectually, I'd like specifically to thank the CASBS crew, especially Iris Litt, Bob Scott, Linda Jack, Cynthia Pilch, Tricia Soto, Christy Duignan, and Susan Beach, who helped to make those two years the most productive of my life. I am also grateful for permission to reuse previously published material from my articles "From the Clarity of Ideas to the Validity of Judgments: Kant's Farewell to Epistemic Perfectionism" (*Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 44/1, 2014, pp. 48–65) and "'The Understanding Prescribes Laws to Nature': Spontaneity,

Legislation, and Kant's Transcendental Hylomorphism" (*Kant-Studien*, 105/4, 2014, pp. 509–30).

Anne Pollok provides the acuteness of mind and warmth that together make the space of reason a wonderful place in which to live. Without her and Sebastian and Firmian's love I couldn't have survived there.

## Abbreviations

---

I use the following abbreviations to refer to Kant's texts. Page citations refer to *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften (formerly: Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften), Berlin: Walter de Gruyter (1900–). Only references to *KrV* refer to the 'A' and 'B' paginations of the first and second editions; all other references list volume and page number of the *Akademie-Ausgabe* of Kant's works, e.g.: *EEKU* 20:225. All translations are taken – unless otherwise stated – from *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, Cambridge University Press (1992–).

<i>Anth</i>	<i>Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht (Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View)</i>
<i>BDG</i>	Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes (The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God)
<i>DG</i>	Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral (Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality; the Prize Essay)
<i>EEKU</i>	Erste Einleitung in die <i>Kritik der Urteilkraft</i> (First Introduction to the <i>Critique of the Power of Judgment</i> )
<i>FM</i>	Welches sind die wirklichen Fortschritte, die die Metaphysik seit Leibnizens und Wolff's Zeiten in Deutschland gemacht hat? (What Real Progress Has Metaphysics Made in Germany since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff?)
<i>GMS</i>	<i>Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten (Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals)</i>
<i>GSE</i>	<i>Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen (Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime)</i>
<i>IaG</i>	Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht (Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim)
<i>JL</i>	<i>Jäsche Logik (Immanuel Kant's Logik. Ein Handbuch zu Vorlesungen. [Hrsg.: G.B. Jäsche]) (Logic Jäsche)</i>
<i>KpV</i>	<i>Kritik der praktischen Vernunft (Critique of Practical Reason)</i>

## List of Abbreviations

xv

<i>KrV</i>	<i>Kritik der reinen Vernunft (Critique of Pure Reason)</i>
<i>KU</i>	<i>Kritik der Urteilskraft (Critique of the Power of Judgment)</i>
<i>MAN</i>	<i>Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft (Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science)</i>
<i>MS</i>	<i>Die Metaphysik der Sitten (incl. MSTL, MSRL) (The Metaphysics of Morals)</i>
<i>MSI</i>	<i>De Mundi Sensibilis atque Intelligibilis Forma et Principiis (On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World, Inaugural Dissertation)</i>
<i>MSTL</i>	<i>Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre (Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Virtue)</i>
<i>MSRL</i>	<i>Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre (Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Right)</i>
<i>NG</i>	<i>Versuch, den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen (Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy)</i>
<i>Prol</i>	<i>Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik (Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics)</i>
<i>PND</i>	<i>Principiorum Primorum Cognitionis Metaphysicae Nova Dilucidatio (New Elucidation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Cognition)</i>
<i>Refl</i>	<i>Reflexion (Reflexion)</i>
<i>RGV</i>	<i>Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft (Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason)</i>
<i>SsF</i>	<i>Die falsche Spitzfindigkeit der vier syllogistischen Figuren (The False Subtlety of the Four Syllogistic Figures Proved)</i>
<i>TP</i>	<i>Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis (On the Common Saying: That May Be True in Theory, but It Is of No Use in Practice)</i>
<i>ÜE</i>	<i>Über eine Entdeckung, nach der alle neue Kritik der reinen Vernunft durch eine ältere entbehrlich gemacht werden soll (On a Discovery Whereby Any New Critique of Pure Reason Is to Be Made Superfluous by an Older One)</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie (On a Recently Prominent Tone of Superiority in Philosophy)</i>
<i>ZeF</i>	<i>Zum ewigen Frieden (Toward Perpetual Peace)</i>