KANT’S THEORY
OF LABOUR

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Kant’s Theory of Labour

Elements in the Philosophy of Immanuel Kant

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Abstract: By exploring the innovative account of labour embedded in Kant’s political philosophy, this Element develops an intersectional and materialist reading of Kant. Drawing on Kant’s early notes and lectures on themes of labour, the household, sex, and slavery, alongside his political, historical, and anthropological writing on race and gender, Jordan Pascoe argues that Kant’s normative account of independence is configured through his theory of labour, which attends in innovative ways to reproductive labour. By revealing the close linkages between slavery and domestic labour in Kant’s political thought, Pascoe shows how Kant’s evolving thinking about labour may have shaped his ultimate rejection of slavery, rather than any change in his theory of race. Instead, Kant’s theory of labour provides a lens through which to read his anthropological accounts of race and gender as embedded within his political philosophy, and to develop an intersectional analysis of his practical philosophy.

This Element also has a video abstract: www.cambridge.org/pascoe

Keywords: Kant, intersectionality, labour, feminist philosophy, social reproduction

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# Contents

1 Could It Be Worth Thinking about Kant on Labour? ................................................. 1  
2 Kant’s Theory of Labour ......................................................................................... 6  
3 ‘A New Star’: Kant’s ‘Trichotomy’ Argument ...................................................... 14  
4 Of Sex and Slavery: The Development of Domestic Right .................................... 20  
5 Labour, Leisure, and Laziness: A Kantian Taxonomy of Entitlement ................. 25  
6 Kantian Reconstruction: Slavery, Abolition, and Poverty Relief ....................... 33  
7 The Problem of Kantian Intersectionality ............................................................ 46  
8 Concluding Remarks: Kantian Systemic Injustice .............................................. 53  

References ............................................................................................................... 56