# *Introduction*

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Kant lectured on metaphysics at least fifty-three times over the course of his long academic career, more than on any other subject except for logic.[1] In these lectures, Kant critically evaluated and reformulated the definition and structure of metaphysics, as well as of its four major divisions: ontology, cosmology, psychology and natural theology. He also developed and refined key positions taken in his public writings through dialogue with the traditional doctrines that he intended to replace. Several sets of these lectures were transcribed by students and substantial portions of at least ten such transcripts, ranging in date from the mid-1760s to the 1790s, have been preserved in volumes 28 and 29 of the Akademie-Ausgabe of Kant's writings. Today these lecture transcripts are recognized as a unique source for Kant's views on a number of topics not treated in his authorized works, as well as for an understanding of the development of his Critical philosophy. In recent years, several major studies have illustrated how the lecture format provided Kant with a kind of workshop within which he could propose, test and refine key doctrines.[2] But more than this, the transcripts provide us with a rare glimpse of Kant at work in the periods when he did not publish (e.g. the so-called silent decade), shed light on his views on specific topics at times when they were not at the center of his published work and reveal the larger context within which he first arrived at many of his Critical doctrines. The lectures can also help us better understand Kant's published, and hence public writings, by allowing us to compare them with records of his views when these are expressed to a different and somewhat more intimate audience.[3]

[1] My thanks to Steve Naragon, Lawrence Pasternack, David Currell and Hilary Gaskin for their comments and suggestions during the design of this volume.

[2] For just a few of the many recent examples in the English literature, see: Ameriks (1982; 1992), Dyck (2014), Fugate (2015), Stang (2016), Watkins (2004), Watkins (2006) and Wuerth (2014).

[3] The discussion of miracles in Chapter 6 of this volume provide a case in point: That Kant consistently maintains the possibility of miracles throughout the lecture transcripts provides at least circumstantial evidence that his expression of this view in his public writings was not simply a strategy to avoid criticism, as some have suggested.

From a wider vantage point, the lecture notes provide perhaps the best insight into Kant's relation to the metaphysical tradition and into the Critical system of metaphysics he always supposed possible, but never found time to compose himself.[4]

Nevertheless, these materials have yet to be fully utilized by scholars and students, particularly in the English-speaking world. This is due to at least three causes:

1) As printed in the Akademie-Ausgabe, the lectures require considerable expertise simply in order to be read. The sentences are often fragmentary; the spelling and grammar, archaic; the German, mixed with Latin and other languages. The task of reading the lectures is further complicated by Kant's many, often hidden, references to other authors. Although much remains to be done in this regard, the publication in 1997 of *Lectures on Metaphysics*, translated and edited by Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon and accompanied with a full array of helpful supplements, opened up this part of Kant's philosophical corpus to many English-speaking scholars for the very first time.
2) Since the lecture notes were taken down by auditors of varied and sometimes questionable acuity,[5] and the transcripts themselves subjected to a process of recopying, editing and supplementation of which we have only a partial knowledge, scholars have raised justified concerns regarding the reliability of the texts printed in the Akademie-Ausgabe.[6] Every scholar must, accordingly, take care to inform themselves about the origins and imperfections of the transcripts and rely on their own best judgment in using them in any specific instance. This, however, is true of any text, published or otherwise, from which the transcripts are therefore distinct in degree, but not in kind.

[4] See the letter to Ludwig Heinrich Jakob, September 7, 1787, in which Kant tries to persuade Jakob to write a Kantian Critical metaphysics after the model provided by Baumgarten.
[5] Kant himself questioned their acuity in a letter to Marcus Herz in 1778 (Br, 10:242).
[6] Among the more serious issues, to which the reader must be alerted, is the duplication of parts of the Herder transcripts in the first and second volumes of AA, 28. AA, 28:59–140 are based upon the rough notes Paul Menzer took when examining the Herder transcripts. These are superseded by the rediscovered originals printed in AA, 28:843–923. For a fuller explanation of this point, see Kant (1997, pp. xxix–xxx). An important review of AA, 29.1.1, which does not contain any of the metaphysics lectures but can still shed light on some of the limitations of the Akademie-Ausgabe, is found in Stark (1984) and Stark (1985). Also see Naragon (2000). A recent and more general investigation of Kant's lecture transcripts, along with specific examples of some of their imperfections, can be found in Fugate (2019).

For the reader, the first step in addressing these concerns is to reach a clear picture of these origins and imperfections, as well as of the issues relating to the dating of the transcripts. Fortunately, there exist several resources in English to which one can refer for help in building such a picture. Among these is the Translators' Introduction in Kant (1997), which contains an epitome of the German scholarship on the topic, as well as some original results, along with descriptions of the individual transcripts, their approximate dates, consideration of special philological issues therein and biographies of the auditors, when these are known. Indispensable also is the extraordinarily complete and useful website maintained and continuously updated by Steve Naragon, "Kant in the Classroom: Materials to Aid the Study of Kant's Lectures."[7] Here the reader will find an exhaustive account of earlier research on the metaphysics lectures, advice for their use and contemporary accounts of Kant's lecturing activity, among many other indispensable tools for understanding the lectures.[8] This resource was essential to the preparation of this volume and cannot be recommended highly enough to the reader.

As John Zammito (citing Norbert Hinske) suggests in the first chapter of this guide, the most satisfactory approach in dealing with the lectures is ultimately to "work within the framework of a 'corpus' of mutually nuancing materials, i.e., published writings, lecture notes, and unpublished reflections."[9] This is indeed the approach adopted in almost all recent scholarship and ten rich and sophisticated examples of it will be found within the pages to follow.

3) Finally, without access to a full translation of the textbook upon which Kant based his lectures, namely, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's *Metaphysics*, it is difficult if not impossible to understand the import of Kant's comments in the transcripts or indeed even to distinguish Kant's own views from those he is merely expounding from the textbook. Very recently, however, advances have been made on this front with the first German translation of the *Metaphysics*, which appeared in 2011, and then with the first English translation, which appeared in

[7] Available at the URL http://users.manchester.edu/FacStaff/SSNaragon/Kant/Home/index.htm. It is thanks to this resource, which cannot be surpassed, that the present introduction forgoes going further into the specific features and dating of the metaphysics transcripts.

[8] One could be well advised to begin building a critical understanding of the transcripts by following up the bibliography constructed by Naragon. Even the very early investigations, such as Arnoldt (1892), contain important and interesting observations that are still worth considering.

[9] See p. 15.

2013. With many new translations of works by Kant's key predecessors either having appeared, or in preparation, the significance and the usefulness of the lecture transcripts only promises to increase in the future.

If we add to these recent developments the fact that scholars are now, more than ever before, focusing their efforts on understanding Kant's philosophical activity as an organic whole, of which his lecturing activities constituted an essential part, it becomes clear that it is the perfect time for a guide to Kant's metaphysics lectures to join the growing body of work on his career as lecturer.[10]

The ten essays in this volume serve this purpose by presenting the reader with the most comprehensive and informed treatment of Kant's metaphysics lectures to date. Following the structure of Baumgarten's *Metaphysics*, Kant divided his own course on metaphysics into six parts, namely, into a section entitled "Prolegomena" followed by chapters on Ontology, Cosmology, Empirical Psychology, Rational Psychology and Natural Theology. The chapters in this volume provide balanced coverage of the lectures by following this same general plan, with at least one chapter devoted to each of the major themes from each part of Kant's course. Nevertheless, two parts receive greater attention here due to the relatively greater interest taken in them by recent scholarship. The first of these is the Ontology, which covers material relevant to understanding the development, background and content of the Transcendental Aesthetic, Logic and Analytic of the *Critique of Pure Reason.* The second is the Psychology, which has provided scholars with a better understanding of the links between Kant's transcendental philosophy and his anthropology, and of the place of his methodology within the context of other methodologies being developed in the natural sciences at the same time. As is clear from the surviving notes themselves, this emphasis on ontology and psychology also reflects Kant's own distribution of lecture time with respect to these topics.[11]

In Chapter 1, John Zammito investigates the earliest surviving set of lecture transcripts, which happens also to be the only set that remains from Kant's pre-Critical period. These transcripts were written by Kant's famous and controversial student, Johann Gottfried Herder, who audited

[10] In addition to the Cambridge Critical Guide series, recent collections by Clewis (2015) and Dörflinger et al. (2015) have also appeared.

[11] Although no complete set of notes is extant, a fair estimate is that Kant generally devoted the most time to ontology, about the same to psychology (empirical and rational combined), about half as much to natural theology and maybe a quarter as much to cosmology.

many of Kant's courses in the early and middle 1760s.[12] As Zammito notes, the Herder lecture transcripts pose a unique challenge to interpreters, since a proper understanding of their content requires us to carefully separate the intellectual project of the note-taker from that of the lecturer. However, through careful consideration of this matter, Zammito argues that we can indeed gain insight into Kant's own philosophical projects in the years 1762–4 by examining the lecture transcripts. In particular, what we discover in the notes is a Kant fighting to carve out an independent philosophical position, one that is distinct not only from that of the Wolffian (and behind it the Leibnizian) tradition, but also from that of the Pietist and British traditions, both of which – to Kant's mind – had voiced powerful objections to the basic premises of Wolff's philosophy.

Karin de Boer's contribution in Chapter 2 guides us through the introductory sections of eight versions of Kant's lectures, stretching from 1762 to 1792. These sections, often called the "Prolegomena," contain a preliminary account of the topic of the lecture series and correspond to the extremely concise introductory section of Baumgarten's *Metaphysics* in which he defines metaphysics as the science of the first principles in human knowledge, enumerates its various parts and distinguishes the mere use of metaphysical principles from their explicit discussion in the treatise that follows. Through de Boer's analysis, a picture emerges in which Kant, dissatisfied with many elements of the Wolffian metaphysics, progressively realizes that a genuinely scientific metaphysics must first of all determine the limits within which it is possible. In this regard, the various versions of the Prolegomena provide us with a unique window into the incremental development of Kant's conception of a critique of pure reason, one that is quite different from that found in the published writings alone. To be sure, the topics covered in the introductory sections of the lectures are also dealt with in a number of Kant's early works as well as in the prefaces, the introductions and the Doctrine of Method of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. But as de Boer illustrates, the lecture transcripts have the advantage not only of treating the subject in a relatively accessible and compact manner, but also of showing how the *Critique of Pure Reason* emerges from Kant's effort to determine what is worthwhile and what is worthless in Wolffian metaphysics itself or, in other words, to elevate metaphysics to the level of a proper science. In this regard, these introductory sections of the

[12] In addition to the version in AA, the reader will want to consult the new transcription of the Herder notes, accompanied by an introduction and explanatory and textual notes prepared by Steve Naragon and maintained by the Berlin-Brandenburg Akademie der Wissenschaften at the following URL: http://kant.bbaw.de/HerderTranscription/BeginHere.htm.

transcripts provide insight into the genesis of the *Critique of Pure Reason* by revealing how Kant saw the focal point of the work, namely the question of the conditions of possibility of experience, as embedded in the more radical question as to the conditions of the possibility of metaphysics as a real science.

In Chapter 3, Huaping Lu-Adler examines the Ontology section of the lecture transcripts in order to address the long-standing question of the relation between Kant's transcendental philosophy and ontology, both in the traditional Wolffian sense of the latter and in a possibly new Kantian one.[13] As Lu-Adler notes, Kant follows Baumgarten by defining ontology as a science of the universal predicates of all things and by including among these predicates such concepts as being and non-being, reality and negation, possibility and necessity, substance and accident. However, as Lu-Adler discovers, Kant's treatment of ontology in the lectures is both richer than Baumgarten's and diverges from the latter in significant ways. Key to this divergence is a shift that occurred around 1770 in Kant's conception of ontology as transcendental philosophy, namely from that of knowledge that is simply pure and a priori, to knowledge that is concerned with the conditions of the possibility of knowledge itself. This shift reflects Kant's intensified concern with the foundation and possibility of ontology and tracks the emergence of his table of categories as a truly systematic and exhaustive classification of all basic predicates of things in general. By way of conclusion, Lu-Adler explains how, having reached this new Critical standpoint on ontology, Kant is able to justify, though in a modified form, Wolff's distinction between general and special metaphysics, and to Critically rehabilitate the Wolffian notions of *metaphysica naturalis* and *metaphysica artificialis*.[14]

The concept of "ground" (*Grund*) is, of course, absolutely central to the entire German philosophical tradition, running at least from Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason (or ground) to Hegel's use of the notion as a fulcrum for his criticism and transformation of all previous metaphysics.[15] In his contribution to this critical guide (Chapter 4), Nicholas Stang examines and differentiates the various species of this concept that are to be found throughout Kant's metaphysics lectures. As Stang points out, the lion's share of the critical attention given to this aspect of Kant's theory has been devoted to only one specific kind of ground found in his writings,

[13] For a related discussion, see de Boer (2011).
[14] For a broader discussion of this distinction and how Kant uses it to unify the speculative and moral parts of his system, see BM, pp. 29–30 and Fugate (2014b).
[15] In this regard, see Longuenesse (2007, ch. 3).

namely efficient *causal* grounds. In contrast to this tendency, Stang seeks instead to broaden our understanding of this central Kantian concept by focusing on the theory of non-causal grounds, something that is explained more fully in the lectures than anywhere else.

We round out our coverage of the Ontology section of the transcripts with Emily Carson's examination in Chapter 5 of the role played by space and time in the structure and evolution of Kant's metaphysics lectures. Carson's point of departure is Kant's intriguing letter to Ludwig Heinrich Jakob in which he explains that if he were to compose a metaphysics textbook himself, "the ontology part would begin (without the introduction of any critical ideas) with the concepts of space and time, only insofar as these (as pure intuitions) are the foundation of all experiences" (Br, 10:494). Although Kant never adopted this procedure in his own lectures (which raises its own questions), the latter nevertheless contain considerable material for reconstructing the rationale behind this radical proposal. Carson marshals this evidence to show that the idea of beginning ontology with space and time arose, along with the Critical doctrine of the forms of intuition, from Kant's engagement with previous views, in particular those of Wolff, Baumgarten, Meier and Crusius. In her view, approaching Kant's theory of space and time *via* the lecture transcripts offers at least two advantages over any account that draws merely on Kant's published writings. For in the lectures, Kant criticizes alternative accounts in much greater detail than elsewhere, and presents his own theory of space and time in a more natural and straightforward manner.

With Courtney D. Fugate's contribution in Chapter 6, we turn to a consideration of the little-studied Cosmology section of Kant's metaphysics course. Fugate's aim is to demonstrate how a comparative study of the notes taken from different periods can reveal the complex manner in which Kant engaged not only with Baumgarten's textbook, but more generally with the theories of his key predecessors. In the first part of the chapter, Fugate shows how Kant struggled throughout his career with formulating a precise conception of metaphysical cosmology, of its location within the general structure of metaphysics and indeed even of its relation to rational psychology. In the initial phases, Kant builds upon the definition provided in Baumgarten's textbook, revising it literally word for word in connection with insights drawn from Crusius and his own pre-Critical philosophy. However, by the end of his lecturing career, Kant had reached a point where he had to separate out four different "sciences" when teaching from the single cosmology chapter in Baumgarten's *Metaphysics*. In the final part of the chapter, Fugate turns specifically to the treatment of miracles

contained in the lectures after 1781, and argues that it suggests a close link between Kant's conception of a regulative cosmology and his conception of reason's autonomy.

Paul Guyer's contribution in Chapter 7, which takes us into Kant's empirical psychology, illustrates just how useful the metaphysics transcripts can be for understanding Kant's views on a host of topics one would not generally expect to find in a metaphysics course, in this case his views on taste, beauty and the free play of the faculties involved in both. As Guyer explains, Kant's acquaintance with Baumgarten's aesthetics was most likely limited to what he read in the latter's *Metaphysics* (e.g. §662), and this is why we find such lengthy discussions of aesthetics not only in Kant's anthropology lectures (which were based in part on the Empirical Psychology of the *Metaphysics*), but also in the transcripts of the metaphysics lectures. If we look to the surviving transcripts, we find only fragmentary remarks on aesthetics in the pre-Critical *Metaphysics Herder*. But his views are recorded at some length in *Metaphysics* $L_1$, from the mid-1770s, the *Metaphysics Mrongovius* (1782–3) and, a little more briefly, in *Metaphysics Dohna* (1792–3). According to Guyer, this means that the lectures on metaphysics afford us evidence about the development of Kant's aesthetics in the "silent decade" of the 1770s and the early part of the Critical period of the 1780s (i.e. after the publication of the first *Critique,* but before he had decided to publish a third), which are precisely the periods in which evidence about Kant's developing aesthetic is absent from his published works. Guyer argues in particular that these lectures show two major aspects of Kant's Critical aesthetics were already in place by the mid-1770s, namely (i) the division of pleasure into three classes associated with the agreeable, the beautiful and the good, and (ii) the analysis of judgments of taste regarding the beautiful as claiming the universal validity of experienced pleasure (unlike pleasure in the agreeable), but without dependence upon a concept of purpose (unlike pleasure in the good). Although this can also be seen from the anthropology lectures, in Guyer's view the later lectures on metaphysics more fully reveal Kant's understanding of pleasure as the feeling of life or of unhampered activity than do his published works or the lectures on anthropology.

The treatment of Kant's psychology continues in Chapter 8 with Heiner F. Klemme's examination of Kant's radical shift from his pre-Critical to his Critical account of freedom as this is reflected in the lectures delivered before and after the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Klemme's analysis provides us with a model example of how we can gain indispensable insights from the lectures even in cases where the essential shape of

Kant's doctrine can be sufficiently established through authorized, and hence more reliable and authoritative, sources. What the lectures are uniquely able to provide, according to Klemme, is an understanding of the more general framework within which Kant viewed certain problems, or within which they first occurred to him, as well as the various means by which he set about trying to resolve them. In this chapter, Klemme argues that the lecture transcripts ML1, which are our only source for Kant's views on metaphysics in the 1770s, provide a clear picture of how Kant first conceived of the problem of freedom from within the framework of Wolffian metaphysics, and how he sought to overcome and modify this tradition with the emergence of the Critical conception of freedom.

Our discussion of the psychology section of Kant's lectures draws to a close in Chapter 9 with Jennifer Mensch's careful investigation of the shifting place of empirical psychology within Kant's lectures on metaphysics. Mensch positions Kant's treatment of psychology against the backdrop of his project to develop a new lecture course on anthropology in the 1770s, arguing that this created difficulties for Kant due to the unique and innovative approach he had developed for empirical psychology. The first problem that arose concerned how to reconceive psychology itself so that its empirical branch could be reassigned to anthropology, while its rational branch could remain within metaphysics, where it would be purified of the empirical and so protected from the specter of subreption. The second problem, and in many ways the larger one for Kant during this period, followed from his desire to make use of empirical psychology's account of the mental faculties in his own transcendental theory of cognition. According to Mensch, this led to a separate and complex problem, namely that of simultaneously distinguishing his philosophical anthropology from the anthropology being developed by Ernst Platner, while also distancing his transcendental theory of cognition from the "embodied mind" approaches being advanced by Johann Gottfried Herder and Johannes Nikolaus Tetens.

Our volume closes with a collaborative chapter by Lawrence Pasternack and Brian A. Chance on the natural theology portion of the lecture notes (Chapter 10). This section of Kant's course is unique and especially significant in that it forms a natural link between his metaphysics in the strict sense and both his moral philosophy and his philosophy of religion.[16]

[16] The Empirical Psychology section is similar in that it links to moral philosophy, aesthetics and anthropology (for which the Empirical Psychology chapter of Baumgarten's *Metaphysics* provided a partial textbook).

This is evident from Kant's having lectured on natural theology not only as part of the metaphysics course, but also independently in a full course on philosophical theology, which he held at least three times in the 1780s. These courses contain, among many other important topics, Kant's most extensive discussion of the relationship between rational and moral theology, which is one of the unifying themes of Kant's philosophy as a whole. In all cases, Baumgarten's textbook served as the primary source and was closely followed by Kant. But in the fuller course, he chose to supplement the *Metaphysics* with a textbook by one of Baumgarten's closest followers, namely the *Preparation for Natural Theology* by Johann August Eberhard.[17] Yet, even then, one of the auditors of the course records that although "it is true that these lectures are based on Eberhard; nevertheless, the great Kant follows Baumgarten's natural theology more closely, because, according to his own admission, it gives more food for thought" (AA, 29:1054).[18]

Kant's general affinity for Baumgarten's work is a broader question that should be addressed in the future,[19] but Pasternack and Chance provide many insights into his complex relationship to Baumgarten's natural theology in particular. According to Pasternack and Chance, Baumgarten provides Kant with a paradigm case of the failure of German rationalism to escape from an empty, and therefore morally impotent, form of Deism. To support this claim, Pasternack and Chance focus on a comparison between the conception and role of analogy in Baumgarten's textbook and in Kant's lectures from the 1780s and 1790s. Of course, in Christian theology the doctrine of analogy has often been called upon in an effort to forge a middle path between the potential emptiness of a purely negative (i.e. apophatic) theology and the apparent hubris involved in a purely positive (i.e. cataphatic) theology. On Pasternack and Chance's reading, although Baumgarten discusses the doctrine of analogy, his use of it is directly undermined by his own account of human cognition. This inconsistency is what provides Kant with his preferred point of departure for diagnosing the ultimate failure of all traditional rational theology. As the lectures show, and as is corroborated in the published writings, Kant sought to develop an alternative doctrine of analogy, one based upon a regulative and Critical conception of reason and of the employment of reason's ideas, which could attain the moral significance that traditional natural theology had sought but

[17] A translation of this work accompanied by Kant's marginalia and the transcript of the Danzig Rational Theology can be found in Eberhard and Kant (2016).
[18] Quoted in Eberhard and Kant (2016, p. xxxvii). For further information on this and on Kant's rational theology lectures in general, see the Translators' Introduction to the same volume.
[19] Schwaiger (2011) contains many important insights on this relationship.