

BOOK — REVIEW

INTERPRETING KANT. Moltke S. Gram, (ed.) Iowa City,
University of Iowa Press. 1982. pp 149. US \$22.40

This book, dealing as it does with some of the finer points to be met with in interpreting Kant's philosophy, consists of an introduction by the editor of ten pages followed by eight essays by various authors who obviously are specialists in their respective fields. After two hundred years of interpretation, Kant's philosophy in English now appears to resolve itself mainly into a matter of probing the semantic divergencies that are to be found within his basic terminology, allowing especially for what may be called a 'semiotic indeterminism' discoverable in the course of translating the original eighteenth century German in which Kant wrote his three *Critiques*. There is at present a deep concern for correct and up-to-date translation that centers around key terms in Kant's writings, terms such as *Anschauung*, *Empfindung*, *Vorstellung*, *Willkür*, *Zweck*. There is also a great deal of emphasis put upon correct grammatical usage in translation, in stylistic preference and in philological derivation. The proper reference in pronouns in Kant's long and involved German sentences becomes crucial to the original intended meaning. Alternate possible readings are suggested and a comparison is made of the work of different translators. All in all, the niceties of text and translation are attended to in this publication edited by Gram, not a long work, but one in which the material is extremely condensed. Each essay will be briefly dealt with in what follows.

Richard E. Aquila in a relatively brief essay asks on Kant's behalf 'Is Sensation the Matter of Appearance?' The focus here is on passages in the first Critique in trying to determine whether Kant always takes *Empfindung* (sensation) to be an ingredient in our being presented in the way in which we are presented rather than only as an indicator of the way in which we perceive those appearances. There is some question concerning translation of the German preposition *an* as to whether sensation is actually 'in' the appearance or whether sensation in some way only is connected with appearances. Kant himself has said that sensation posits (*setzt*) an object that has a correspondence to the sensation of space and time where the sensation in question denotes the real of intuition. Aquila is concerned to show that the original texts are in some cases much more ambiguous than translators (Norman Kemp Smith is cited) have indicated and that such ambiguities tend to be smoothed over in translation. *Empfindung* may be extended to the material aspects of appearances insofar as sensations form a part of the intuitions that present themselves to us, for there are places where Kant unambiguously states that sensation is the ingredient of appearances corresponding to the material of appearance, as for example at A 167/B 208-9. In the *Critique of Judgement*, (tr.) James C. Meredith, 1986 (Introduction VI, 29) it is stated that sensation is the matter of representations. Yet Aquila finds that there are places, for example at B 147, where Kant may be taken to say that material appearance for all practical purposes can be equated with our sensations, i. e., subjective to us as simply our 'being presented, and that sensation only expresses rather than consists in the materiality of external things.

Perhaps the key essay in the series is 'The Sense of a Kantian Intuition' by Moltke S. Gram, who thinks that translators of Kant's German texts have for the most part succeeded in begu-

eathing to us a confused Babel of words. Kant himself, it is felt, in company with eighteenth century philosophy in general, has prostituted the usage, for example, of the term *Anschauung*, usually rendered in English by 'intuition'. He has brought it down from its exalted state which originally suggested a state of mystical awareness, something akin to a beatific vision held apart from any kind of symbolic knowledge whatsoever, a vision which, for example, Meister Eckhart, the thirteenth century Dominican preacher and theologian attempted to convey to his listeners. With Kant, *Anschauung* has been degraded to the level of human procurement under the aegis of human cognition and therein has been deprived of its mystical overtones. Gram's approach is to trace the word to its source in early medieval literature in order to explore the traditional German usage of the term, the only way, it is claimed, to even partially resolve some of the aggravating problems associated with *Anschauung*. Accordingly, Gram ably investigates traditions in German usage of *Anschauung* or *Anschouung* or *anscouuen* as found in the language of the later middle ages as a kind of mystical intuition designating a non-discursive rather than a discursive awareness. *Anschauung* as intuition may be taken to encompass the super-sensuous as well as the sensuous object.

In any event it is Gram's conclusion that the sense of intuition for Kant denotes something that may in itself be neither a property nor a set of properties. Although Kant's writings are anything but clear about what is really meant by *Anschauung* and never enlighten us as to whether intuition may be called a perception allowing it to be brought under an act of judgment Kant has however told us in sufficiently clear language that intuition is to be taken as a singular concept. In other words, this means that intuition utilized as a cognitive instrument is conceptually dead, leaving intuition to be understood in a kind

of category that is to be reached only by acquaintance. In a protracted discussion attempting to distinguish intuitions from concepts, the author is constantly searching for a satisfying meaning for *Anschauung* and in conclusion insists that we are entirely lacking in any suitable definition of the term.

Ralf Meerbote investigates in depth Kant's understanding of the terms *Wille* and *Willkür*, an area in which again there have been problems in interpretation among commentators. The author disagrees with most Anglo-Saxon translators of Kant's original texts, believing that no one translation does justice to Kant's mature views. *Willkür* suggests choice and *Wille* for Kant is practical reason or *Vernunft*. But no one has yet explained how it comes about that practical reason, as an individual conscious will (my free will) in all its perversity is able to operate from a noumenal realm residing as it does outside of space and time altogether. Autonomy of the will for Kant is made to be strangely noumenal where there is supposed to reside no theoretical awareness for a metaphysics of morals or for any understanding of morality or indeed for any understanding of any kind. The individual free will must therefore surely do its work, not in the noumenal world but in the world of space and time, as anyone would have a right to expect.

We are reminded that *Willkür* is the object of *Wille*, but since the will and hence its object is already in existence when the will wills something, *Willkur* can hardly be said to be brought into existence, at least not entirely by the will's own act of willing. The natural will, which is alleged to be the object and content of the will, would therefore to some extent exist independent of the very free will which orders it into existence, all of which would be somewhat like saying that the wake of the vessel is created in advance of its fully completed slide down the launching ways. But it does make some sense to say, as

Meerbote contends, that *Willkur* as choice, that is, as the object for which *Wille* (the individual will) is ever striving, must in principle hold the will to responsible and voluntary choosing rather than allow simply any form of undisciplined arbitrary behaviour. Arbitrariness would mean that our much valued freedom of choice could degenerate into a subjective irrationality rather than give evidence of the sober consideration we would want to see associated with it.

Commentators seem now to be mainly concerned with how to render some of the more important terms upon which Kant's philosophical system rests. At least this is the opinion of Werner Pluhar in a brief but closely argued article entitled 'How to Render *Zweckmässigkeit* in Kant's Third *Critique*'. For example, it is pointed out that what is known as an 'implant' in translation into English may introduce distinctions that are illusory and therefore result in the misdirection of future research. Again, what is called an 'erasure' in translation may telescope two or more German words into one English word and hence wrongfully conflate the meaning of the terms. James C. Meredith in his 1928 edition of Kant's *The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* is taken to task as one who is guilty of both forms of mistranslation. Several examples are given which bear the impact of heavy criticism. Both *urteilen* and *beurteilen* in German have the meaning of 'to judge,' but Meredith translates the one as 'to judge' and the other as 'to estimate,' a manifest example of implantation. But Kant already has a word for 'to estimate' which is *schätzen*, so that when Meredith translates both *beurteilen* and *schätzen* as 'to estimate' we now have a glaring instance of erasure. Again, *Zeichnung* for Kant carries the unambiguous meaning of 'pattern,' but notoriously by the device of implantation it is given variously in English as 'pattern,' or even as 'intention,' renderings which, it is claimed,

could make research into Kant's philosophical writings very difficult or at worst altogether misleading.

Translation of the German term *Zweckmässigkeit* comes in for special attention toward the end of the essay, and while 'purposiveness', its suggested correct translation, should call to mind a general term that is no more than noncommittal, reference to some specific purpose is not thereby ruled out. The generality of the term avoids the direct implication of any one purpose. *Zweckmassigkeit* may imply that some useful function is to be served although a deliberate design is for the most part lacking if not absent altogether. The German word thus should never be rendered only as 'purpose' with its implied sense of finality,

In a contribution entitled 'Translation and Kant's *Anschauung*, *Verstand*, and *Vernunft*', Hans H. Rudnick again points up the fact that equivalence of meaning is often lost in the process of translation. The difference in meaning hinges very much on cultural as well as on semantic grounds, reflecting ways in which the philosopher in his employment of his own original language has interpreted his world. New semantic content may be added according to the style of the translator and his manner of argumentation making it doubly difficult to be certain of the intended original meaning. Rudnick is of the opinion, rightly it would seem, that there has not been a sufficient carrying over of the full meaning of the eighteenth century German idiom into the vernacular of modern languages for successful communication with the modern reader. There is also with Rudnick a concern about the German term *Anschauung*, an issue that was already dealt with in Moltke S. Gram's essay. Rudnick's considered view is that *Anschauung* for Kant stands primarily for a sensuous awareness of the 'archetypal essence', a seeing and observing (*Schauen*) in me, the latter referring to a conscious perceiv-

ing not only of what is going on actually, but of what goes on beyond actuality in suggesting a prophetic 'seeing' in relation to the transcendental.

Although Rednick keeps his discussion on a fairly general level there can be little quarrel with the points that he has endeavoured to make. Translation of terminology from the source language is difficult, especially the translation from eighteenth century philosophical texts. The tradition of German Idealism is found to be quite unlike recent pragmatic developments in the western world and it is more than evident that philosophical thought processes from the two different cultures have developed along different lines.

Looking at Hans Siegfried's essay 'Kant's "Spanish Bank Account": *Realität* and *Wirklichkeit*', the author emphasizes that more is required than a linguistically accurate translation in order to understand Kant's writings in another language and in a different philosophical environment. It is necessary to understand the tradition from which Kant's philosophy emerged. Kant's philosophy should be read *entwicklungsgeschichtlich*, that is, against the history of the development of traditional philosophy and its problems. For example, translators (and Norman Kemp Smith again comes in for his share of criticism) have not always been faithful to Kant's intended meaning of *Realität* (reality) and *Wirklichkeit* (actuality). Kant, in the 'hundred thalers' illustration is saying that actual thalers, not 'real' thalers, would make a difference to his bank account. It is claimed also that Professor L. W. Beck, in dealing with Kant's criticism of the classical ontological argument for the existence of God, should make the distinction between actuality and possibility on the one side and something entirely different, namely 'reality' on the other side as was intended by Kant. Professor Beck writes 'reality' for 'actuality'. *Realität* and *Wirklichkeit*

are meant to denote something very different in kind although their separate meanings tend to be blurred in English and even in contemporary German.

A pronounced influence on German 'school' philosophy may be traced to Francis Suarez, sixteenth century Spanish Jesuit philosopher. Suarez pointed out the fact, later to become part of Kant's thesis, that no amount of only 'predicamental' or categorical determination is sufficient to bring a thing into actual existence, even though such determination may be declared to be 'real'. Kant's claim, therefore, is that the determination of a thing in or from being alone is not enough to constitute a full determination of the thing, not enough, that is, to lend the thing an actual existence in actuality and obviously not sufficient to furnish the thing with an actual concrete existence such that it can be touch and felt. Despite Kant's doctrine as it was thus derived from Suarez, it has been found that in the writings of philosophers after Kant's time there still has been confusion in this matter whenever it is insisted that because something is fully determined in the reality of being, that is, predication alone, it must thereupon exist in a state of full-fledged actuality.

In the article by W. H. Werkmeister, 'What Did Kant Say and What Has He Been Made to Say', Norman Kemp Smith is once again criticized, this time for holding that Kant's first *Critique* conforms to what Smith terms a 'patchwork theory'. If such is Smith's preconceived notion, it is undeniable that any translation he makes will reflect to some extent a view which may nevertheless be unjustified. Further, it is claimed by Werkmeister that it is hardly true to Kant's intentions to render *Erkenntnis* as 'knowledge' as Smith has done, rather than as 'cognition' which more correctly conveys the meaning of *Erkenntnis* as the process or act of knowing. The reason for this is that Kant's *Critique*, it is maintained, does not pretend

to be a work of metaphysics, but sets out a transcendental philosophy which concerns itself only with our mode of cognition of objects, categorically and in quanta, as it were, insofar as this is possible a priori rather than with the objects as they are in themselves. The first *Critique* (at B 25, for example) is quoted in support of this rather fundamental point. Also of interest is Werkmeister's version of Kant's 'Wie sind synthetische Sätze a priori möglich', (B 17, 73) Kant is not asking about a priori propositions in the way in which we have been accustomed to read Smith's English translation, as for example, 'How are a priori synthetic judgments possible', but is asking instead how synthetic judgments are a priori possible. The change in word order renders the 'a priori' not as an adjective but as an adverb and the 'a priori' modifies not 'propositions' but their being possible. In asking, therefore, how there can be possibility, not judgments in the a priori sense, there is now removed from the a priori something of what might be taken to be its harsh necessity. The a priori is allowed to stand in a modifying capacity leaving the way open to approach it in a sense of contemplation or even of wonderment as it serves to introduce us to the nature of possibility itself and our assessment of it.

Vorstellung, as it is used by Kant, is taken to express a very general concept which could be suggestive of the act of intuiting or of thinking as well as designating whatever it is that one might intuit or think. Indeed, *Vorstellung* is made to encompass even a 'notion' which, as a concept of and as an idea, transcends experience itself. But we here meet a problem scarcely acknowledged by Werkmeister, namely, that concepts have all along been supposed by Kant to arise out of the faculty of the human understanding. How the same vocabulary can do double duty for the world of experience and the supersensible world is certainly

not dealt with and we are never enlightened as to how it may be possible to join the finite and the infinite in the same concept. *Vorstellung* translated as 'representation' suggests a kind of blanket term and thereby hardly does justice to all the different shades of meaning to which the term may be exposed, meanings which will also depend upon the context within which the term is employed.

The problem of *Vorstellung* is also taken up by Rolf George in '*Vorstellung* and *Erkenntnis* in Kant' and he is, of course, not the first to speculate on the difficulty to be experienced in defining the term *Vorstellung* or representation as used by Kant. Kant claimed in his *Logic* (Kant's *Logik* A 41-42) that a representation can be defined only by means of another representation. The indefinability of this most general epistemological term for Kant has tended to be total since it is taken to be the highest genus in his entire philosophical system. If we become curious to know what it is that representation may ultimately represent, it is of interest to note that Kant allows for representations that do not represent, that is representation given as subject term, for example, without the necessity of it having any content. There can, it is conceded, be objects that are given in some form of representation, as it were, where no corresponding representation is actually present. On the other hand there may be representations existing of which we are not at all conscious. The author again tries to make it clear that, in dealing with *Erkenntnis*, the translation is to be rendered as 'cognition' rather than as 'knowledge' as we find it in English translations with which we are familiar. He points out that cognitions should be taken as purely mental processes instead of considering them as judgments in the course of the acquisition of new knowledge in the more or less abstract epistemological sense.

It goes without saying that the philosophical vocabulary developed by Kant and bequeathed to us in the *Critiques* has proven itself to be of significance for modern philosophers and has been taken up by and has become part of philosophy since Kant's time. A careful perusal of this book will be most rewarding for anyone interested in tracking down many of the finer points of Kant's philosophical writings and the various nuances of his thought seldom otherwise discussed.

59 Victor Street

ALBERT W. J. HARPER

London, Ontario, Canada

N6C 1B9

LIFE MEMBERS

(Individuals)

254. Dr. Avinash Kumar Shrivastav
Amber Chauraha
Near Mahadev Temple,
Bihar Sharif,
Nalanda 803 101 (Bihar)
255. Miss Tanya Mukerjee,
Hara Gauri Bhavan,
Road No. 6, Rajendra Nagar
Patna 100 016 (Bihar).
256. Dr. Ramesh Chandra Das,
Lecturer in Logic,
Panchayat College,
Bargarh 768 028
Dist. Sambalpur (Orissa).
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