KANT'S LECTURES ON ETHICS

This is the first book devoted to an examination of Kant's lectures on ethics, which provide a unique and revealing perspective on the development of his views. In fifteen newly commissioned essays, leading Kant scholars discuss four sets of student notes reflecting different periods of Kant's career: Herder (circa 1762–1764), Collins (roughly 1774–1777), Mrongovius (1784–1785), and Vigilantius (1793–1794). The essays cover a diverse range of topics, from the relation between Kant's lectures and the Baumgarten textbooks, to obligation, virtue, love, the highest good, freedom, the categorical imperative, moral motivation, and religion. Together they will provide the reader with a deeper and fuller understanding of the evolution of Kant's moral thought. The volume will be of interest to a range of readers in Kant studies, ethics, political philosophy, religious studies, and history of ideas.

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KANT'S *Lectures on Ethics*

A Critical Guide

EDITED BY

LARA DENIS Agnes Scott College and

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Tulane University





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Foreword

Kant was a popular teacher until late in his long career. Even when he was a young instructor, he attracted older residents of Königsberg as well as many students to his lectures. But the lectures were designed for the students, who were usually younger than conventional undergraduates are now. Kant was helping to bring them up. He was teaching them the rudiments of morality as well as moral philosophy. Although they had to be able to read – or puzzle out – enough Latin to cope with the Baumgarten textbooks that Kant used, they were not very well educated. Students normally took the moral philosophy course as part of their first-year curriculum. It was part of the preparation for more advanced studies of law or medicine or theology. These were the professions for which students were educated.

Lecture classes met four times a week, for forty or forty-five minutes. There were additional discussion sessions. In addition to notes from the ethics courses, notes have survived from several other courses that Kant taught – for example, those on logic, anthropology, metaphysics, and physical geography. Students generally kept their notes in bound volumes, often inscribed with the student's name. The notes are conventionally identified by using the name of the student whose copy is involved. Copies of the notes circulated widely among students and others during Kant's lifetime. Many of the notes have been known to scholars for a long time. Some notes once available are now lost, perhaps destroyed during World War II. And some are fairly recent discoveries.

The first publication of notes from Kant's courses on moral philosophy was that by Menzer, in 1924 (see Menzer 1924a). His edition was the basis for the 1930 translation by Louis Infield, which was frequently reprinted. A three-volume edition of the ethics notes, edited by Gerhard Lehmann, was published in 1974 as part of the *Akademie-Ausgabe* of Kant.¹ Although the

¹ This is volume 27 of the Academy edition of Kant's works (see AA 27). It consists of three separate parts, paginated continuously.

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Foreword

editing has been the target of much criticism the edition has not yet been replaced and serves as the main source for work on the notes. A previously unavailable manuscript of notes on the ethics lectures, in a notebook owned by a student named Johann Friedrich Kaehler, turned up in 1997. It was edited by Werner Stark and published in 2004 (see Stark 2004a).

Stark makes strong claims for Kaehler. He admires Menzer's work and is highly critical of Lehmann's. He thinks Kaehler should replace all of these printings of the ethics notes. One reason for his assurance is that there are twelve other texts from the middle of the 1770s that are the same as Kaehler (Stark 2004b, cf. his 1999). He finds it astonishing that there should be so many identical sets from such a short period of time. Of no other lecture notes, Stark asserts, is this true. He takes this as evidence that many students found in these notes a "well worked out and very comprehensive report of Kantian moral philosophy." Moreover, in the preparation of the text, Stark tells us, modern editorial technology not available to Lehmann has been used (Stark 2004b, 392f).

Stark's claim for Kaehler is no doubt warranted. But this poses a problem for those who do not wish to read the notes in the original German. Kaehler was not available in the mid-1990s when Peter Heath translated a substantial selection of ethics notes using the Lehmann edition. Heath's translation is the fullest, and the most likely to be used by readers of English.² How reliable is it?

Stark gives some comparisons of the texts of Menzer, Collins, and Kaehler (Stark 1999, 89–97). I have myself done a comparison of the Kaehler text with Collins as in Heath's translation of it. Stark ignores some of the differences in paragraphing, single words, and short sentences or parts of sentences. Many of the discrepancies that he notes are trivial, for example, *stärkste (strongest)* for *höchste (highest)* (Stark 1999, 91). But there are a few important differences. The most substantial are certain passages in Kaehler but not in Collins. Heath has, however, used passages from notes taken by a student named Mrongovius to make up for the larger of these gaps in Collins.³ In these locations, Kaehler has essentially identical passages, thus validating Heath's additions. Another difference is also substantial. Stark argues convincingly that a dozen lines of Collins (27:375:12–24, pages 148f. of Heath's translation), should not be included. The disputed text begins, "So long as we acknowledge ..." and ends, "defies the latter's

² In Heath and Schneewind 1997. The Collins translation provided by Heath will be referred to as "Heath-Collins."

³ Heath-Collins 68–73 is taken from 27:1425–1430; Heath-Collins 81f is taken from 27:1438.

Foreword

intention." Stark says that it is probably a copyist's error, inserting someone's later marginal annotation into the body of the notes (see Stark 2004a, 225, n. 179).

The other differences make – as far as I can see – no philosophical difference to what Kant said. A few examples will suffice. There are differences of paragraphing here and there. Collins has Kant attributing to Socrates the saying, "My friend, there are no friends" (Collins 27:424, Heath-Collins, 185), while Kaehler has him attributing it to Aristotle (Kaehler 295). Heath-Collins 215 differs by a few sentences from Kaehler 353f. Here and there Collins has a sentence not in Kaehler. Apart from these and perhaps a dozen other minor divergences, Collins and Kaehler are the same. The very large amount of overlap among Kaehler, Collins, and Heath-Collins should if anything strengthen our confidence in Heath-Collins as representing Kant's lectures. In my opinion, readers who do not use Kaehler can use Collins or Heath's accurate and fluent translation of it to get as good an idea as we can have of what Kant told his students.

The notes that students took as they attended Kant's lectures on ethics are a rich source of information about his views on morality, the metaphysics of morals, and religion. They add general claims as well as fascinating details to what Kant says in his published writings on these topics. They enable us to trace some aspects of the development of his philosophical views of morality. They present Kantian views that are hardly if at all discussed in the published work - for instance, Kant's understanding of the history of moral philosophy (discussed by Wood in the present volume). And they give us a glimpse of the passion with which Kant pursued certain ideas - perhaps most notably his strong opposition to any form of religion that relies on formulae, ritual, and dogma rather than on living a moral life from purely moral motives. They also show us Kant urging his students to enjoy life as fully as possible, of course within the boundaries set by the moral principle. No ascetic, he! Quite the contrary. The essays in the present volume will help the reader work through the rich and complex material in the notes. They will add to our understanding of Kant's moral philosophy as a whole, and perhaps help us even to enjoy it more.

J.B. SCHNEEWIND

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Translations and abbreviations

Unless footnoted otherwise in their essays, authors use translations from the *Cambridge Edition of the Writings of Immanuel Kant*, series editors Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge University Press, 1992–). Page citations are to *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Ausgabe der Königlich-Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1902–) using the volume:page number format or the volume:page number:line format; exceptions are noted. In some cases, section numbers or headings are used in addition to or instead of page numbers. Abbreviations that authors use within citations include the following.

AA Akademie-Ausgabe

CE Cambridge Edition

ApH Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht [1798] (AA 7)

Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, Robert B. Louden (trans.) (CE Anthropology, History, and Education, Robert B. Louden and Günter Zöller [eds], 2007)

BBGSE Bemerkungen zu den *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des* Schönen und Erhabenen [1764–1765] (AA 20). Also available as Immanuel Kant, *Bemerkungen in den "Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen,"* Marie Rischmüller (ed.), vol. 3 of *Kant-Forschungen*, Reinhard Brandt and Werner Stark (eds.) Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1991

> "Remarks in the Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime" in Immanuel Kant, Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime and Other Writings, Patrick R. Frierson and Paul Guyer (trans., eds.), part of the Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy series, Cambridge University Press, 2011

> Excerpts also in CE *Notes and Fragments*, Paul Guyer (ed.), Curtis Bowman, Paul Guyer, Frederick Rauscher (trans.), 2005

Translations and abbreviations

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BGSE	Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen [1764] (AA 2)
	Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime, Paul
	Guyer (trans.) (CE Anthropology, History, and Education,
	Robert B. Louden and Günter Zöller [eds.], 2007)
Br.	Briefe (AA 10–13)
	Kant's letters (CE <i>Correspondence</i> , trans., Arnulf Zweig [ed.], 1999)
С	Moralphilosophie Collins [reflecting notes originally from
0	1774–1777; transcribed for or by Collins, 1784–1785] (AA 27) Collins notes on Kant's moral philosophy lectures (CE <i>Lectures</i> <i>on Ethics</i> , Peter Heath [trans., ed.] and J. B. Schneewind [ed.],
	1997)
F	Naturrecht Feyerabend [1784] (AA 27) A new edition is being prepared by Heinrich P. Delfosse, Norbert Hinske, and Gianluca Sadun Bordoni. So far, one volume has appeared: Stellweinden und Kenhanden "Networkt Formeland"
	Stellenindex und Konkordanz zum "Naturrecht Feyerabend,"
	Teilband I: <i>Einleitung des "Naturrechts Feyerabend"</i> (Stuttgart-
	Bad Canstatt: Fromann-Holzboog, 2010). Kant's lectures on natural right (to appear, translated by
	Frederick Rauscher, in CE Lectures and Drafts on Political
	Philosophy, Frederick Rauscher and Kenneth Westphal [eds.],
-	in press)
G	Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten [1785] (AA 4) Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (CE Practical
	<i>Philosophy</i> , Mary J. Gregor [trans., ed.], 1996)
Н	Praktische Philosophie Herder [1762–64] (AA 27)
	Herder notes on Kant's lectures on practical philosophy. Translated selections appear in CE <i>Lectures on Ethics</i> .
HN	Handschriftlichen Nachlass (AA 14–23)
	Handwritten remains (selections in CE Notes and Fragments,
	Paul Guyer [ed.], Curtis Bowman, Paul Guyer, Frederick
	Rauscher [trans.], 2005, and in CE Lectures and Drafts on Political Philosophy)
Ι	"Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher
	Absicht" [1784] (AA 8)
	"Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim" (CE
	Anthropology, History, and Education)
Kaehler	Kaehler's transcription of Kant's lectures on ethics [1777]. Available in Stark 2004a.

xviii	Translations and abbreviations
KpV	Kritik der praktischen Vernunft [1788] (AA 5) Critique of Practical Reason (CE Practical Philosophy)
KrV A/B	<i>Kritik der reinen Vernunft</i> [1781, 1787], cited by A (first edition) /
	B (second edition)
	Critique of Pure Reason, Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood
	(trans., eds.) (CE, 1998)
KU	Kritik der Urteilskraft [1790] (AA 5)
	Critique of the Power of Judgment, Paul Guyer (trans., ed.)
	(CE, 2000)
L	Vorlesungen über Logik (AA 9, 24)
	Lectures on logic, J. M. Young (trans., ed.) (CE Lectures on
	Logic, 1992)
ΜI	Moral Mrongovius I [1774–1777] (AA 27)
	Mrongovius notes on Kant's moral philosophy (brief pas-
	sages used to supplement Collins notes in CE Lectures on Ethics)
M II	Moral Mrongovius II [1784–1785] (AA 29)
	Mrongovius notes on Kant's moral philosophy lectures
	(selections in CE Lectures on Ethics)
MA	"Mutmaβlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte" [1786] (AA 8)
	"Conjectural Beginning of Human History" (CE
140	Anthropology, History, and Education)
MS	Die Metaphysik der Sitten [1797–1798] (AA 6)
D	Metaphysics of Morals (CE Practical Philosophy)
Р	Praktische Philosophie Powalski [1782–83] (AA 27)
PS	Powalski notes on Kant's practical philosophy lectures
P3	Preisschrift – "Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral" [1764]
	(AA 2)
	"Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of
	Natural Theology and Morality" (CE Theoretical Philosophy,
	1755–1770)
R	Reflexionen (AA 14–19)
	Selections appear in CE <i>Notes and Fragments</i> and CE <i>Lectures</i>
	and Drafts on Political Philosophy. Citations include Reflexionen
	number.
RGV	Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft [1793]
	(AA 6)
	Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason (CE Religion
	and Rational Theology)

Translations and abbreviations

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RL	Metaphysische Anfansgsgründe der Rechtslehre [1797] (AA 6)
	Metaphysical Foundations of the Doctrine of Right, part one
	and the first published part of the Metaphysics of Morals (CE
	Practical Philosophy)
TL	Metaphysische Anfansgsgründe der Tugendlehre [1797] (AA 6)
	Metaphysical Foundations of the Doctrine of Virtue, part two
	and the second published part of the Metaphysics of Morals (CE
	Practical Philosophy)
ТР	"Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein,
	taugt aber nicht für die Praxis" [1793] (AA 8)
	"On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory,
	but It Is of No Use in Practice" (CE Practical Philosophy)
ÜP	Über Pädagogik [ed. Friedrich Theodor Rink (Königsberg:
	Friederich Nicolovius,1803] (AA 9)
	Lectures on Pedagogy, trans. Robert B. Louden (CE
	Anthropology, History, and Education)
V	Die Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius [1793–94] (AA 27)
	Vigilantius's notes on Kant's lectures on the metaphysics of
	morals (CE Lectures on Ethics)
VA	Vorlesungen über Anthroplogie (AA 25)
	Lectures on anthropology (selections to appear in CE Lectures
	on Anthropology, Allen W. Wood and Robert B. Louden [eds.],
	2013)
VMS	Vorarbeiten zu <i>Die Metaphysik der Sitten</i> (AA 23)
	Preparatory work on the Metaphysics of Morals
VpR	Vorlesungen über die philosophische Religionslehre [1783–86?]
	(AA 28)
	Lectures on the philosophical doctrine of religion, Allen
	W. Wood (trans.) (CE Religion and Rational Theology)
ZeF	"Zum ewigen Frieden" [1795] (AA 8)
	"Toward Perpetual Peace" (CE <i>Practical Philosophy</i>)