

Lucy Allais. *Manifest Reality: Kant's Idealism and His Realism.* Oxford University Press 2015 year. 329 pp. \$60.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9780198747130).

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is incredible, not only for its argumentative and game-changing brilliance, but also for its amenability to interpretive nuance and for the applicability of contemporary views to it. These three factors are not independent, and Lucy Allais's *Manifest Reality: Kant's Idealism and His Realism* makes good use of the latter two. Though not disregarding its brilliance, Allais provides a new interpretation of transcendental idealism, the *Critique's* central doctrine, by applying a contemporary view from the philosophy of mind to it.

Manifest Reality has three parts, each with four chapters. (Perhaps coincidentally, Kant's tables of judgments and categories have four headings each with three terms.) Part One provides exegetical motivation for Allais's project. Arguing that Kant's text supports an interpretation that embraces neither a robust metaphysical distinction between noumena as intelligibilia and phenomena as mental constructs, nor a purely epistemological or 'deflationary' view, Allais describes her commitment to a 'moderate metaphysical' one. Part Two provides resources allowing her to interpret transcendental idealism as such a view. These resources include a relational account of color from contemporary philosophy of mind and a recovery of what Allais takes to be Kant's intended distinction between intuitions and concepts. Finally, Part Three applies lessons from Part Two to satisfy the aim motivated by Part One.

Here I first summarize Allais's chapters before critically commenting. Chapter 1 introduces Part One and the book. Knowingly or not, Allais employs a metaphor that John McDowell employs in his Kant-inspired book, *Mind and World* (Harvard University Press 1996). For McDowell, epistemologists 'oscillate' between the Myth of the Given and idealism. For Allais, Kant's expositors (not unrelatedly) oscillate between interpreting transcendental idealism metaphysically and epistemologically. Instead Allais urges: 'We need an account of a form of mind-independence which allows that the mind-dependent appearances given to us in intuition are things which also have a way that they are in themselves which we cannot cognize' (36). Chapter 2 then considers reasons that Kant is not a phenomenalist in Allais's sense of taking empirically real objects to be purely mental, while chapter 3 considers reasons that Kant is not a noumenalist in her sense of taking things in themselves to be metaphysically independent of appearances. Finally, chapter 4 counters deflationary interpretations of transcendental idealism by focusing on Henry Allison's (*Transcendental Idealism*, Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Introducing Part Two, chapter 5 explores John Campbell's (*Reference and Consciousness*, Oxford University Press, 2002) relational view of perception. According to it, Allais explains, 'a perceptive mental state is not merely a modification of an inner state of a subject but a relational state essentially involving the object and a conscious subject' (106). Allais notes that such a view is consistent with objects' appearing either the same as or different from how they are independently of being perceived. She then suggests that colors provides a model of the latter if understood 'as features of external objects which are directly presented to us in perception but which are not qualities objects have independently of the possibility of their perceptually appearing to us' (117). Allais calls such properties generally 'essentially manifest'. Chapter 6 appeals to the idea of essentially manifest qualities to understand Kant's claim in the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (4: 289) that transcendental idealism can be understood analogously with secondary qualities like colors. Kant's idealism is then secure, because understanding all empirical properties as essentially manifest

requires that they are the properties that they are only relative to possible perception. That idealism remains metaphysically moderate, because those relational properties are properties of mind-independent objects. Key to this, for Allais, is the role of intuition in giving us singular and immediate presentations of perceptual particulars, the interpretive case for which she makes in chapter 7. As part of it, Allais sides with non-conceptualists, who take intuitions to be mental states that are perceptual and yet not conceptual. She claims that the a priori forms of intuition are 'required for our having singular and immediate presentations of the objects about which we think' (168), and that Kant's transcendental idealism enters only in the Transcendental Aesthetic and not also the Analytic, concerned with categories and principles. Allais develops this in chapter 8, where she distinguishes Kant's argument for how geometry is possible from his argument for how metaphysics is possible.

Finally, introducing Part Three, chapter 9 explains the consequences of this for Kant's empirical realism, by comparing Allais's interpretation with three contemporary positions: meaning-theoretic anti-realism, denying the law of the excluded middle; anti-realism in the philosophy of science, denying the reality of unobservable scientific posits; and structural realism, maintaining that the only thing that we can know about reality are relational properties (perhaps because there are only relational properties). Chapter 10 explains that Kant believes that relational properties must be grounded in intrinsic ones, and that these intrinsic properties are transcendental idealism's unknowables. Here Allais contrasts her view with Rae Langton's (*Kantian Humility*, Oxford University Press, 1998), who likewise distinguishes relational from intrinsic properties. Chapter 11 interprets the transcendental deduction of the categories, given Allais's interpretation of transcendental idealism, as epistemological. According to Allais, the deduction shows not how the categories create objects but how they allow us to cognize them. Finally, chapter 12 extends this reasoning by reminding us that explaining how geometry and metaphysics are possible are distinct for Kant, and closes by considering how her interpretation of transcendental idealism can make sense of free will.

There is a great deal to admire in *Manifest Reality*. It earns its place as a major exegetical work on Kant, alongside Henry Allison's, Paul Guyer's, Robert Hanna's, Rae Langton's, and Peter Strawson's. It also seems to leave fewer exegetically recalcitrant textual passages. While historical purists might object to Allais's appealing to a contemporary view to help interpret Kant, doing so allows her to offer an especially charitable interpretation. So on this score purists should be content. Allais also gives a full-throated response to the anachronism charge directly (150).

Nonetheless I have four criticisms of increasing strength. First, Allais often makes a claim at the start of a chapter, repeats it at the start of a section, and rephrases it multiple times within the section, only to repeat it again at the section's close and chapter's close. The book would have benefited from significant tightening of presentation.

Second, Allais engages Kant's text less intensely than some other commentators at times do. She also limits herself almost to the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Prolegomena* while many look beyond.

Third, Allais might have better controlled her vocabulary. I was confused by her stage-setting in chapter 1 when she insisted that Kant endorsed idealism but not phenomenalism, not least of which because one of her interpretive *desiderata* was to explain how Kant could distinguish noumena from phenomena (4). Not until p. 19 does Allais identify phenomenalism with extreme idealism, and not

until chapter 2 does she give her canonical understanding of idealism. Even then she sometimes uses other locutions, as at the start of chapter 4 she claims: ‘I have argued that Kant is not an extreme phenomenalist idealist’ (77). Likewise, though she explains that the view of perception on which she relies is better called ‘relational’ than ‘direct’ (104), Allais continues to use ‘direct’ alone or together with ‘relational’ throughout the text.

And fourth, I am unsure about Allais’s handling of Langton. As I was reading *Manifest Reality*, I was immediately reminded of Langton’s distinction between relational and intrinsic properties and immediately wondered how if at all Allais’s view differed. Nonetheless Allais does not mention Langton until p. 70 and does not address her view directly until chapter 6, half-way through the book. Moreover, even after Allais does so, I was left uncertain as to whether she was exaggerating its differences from hers. While, according to Allais, they differ in other ways, she emphasizes that only for Langton are relational properties both ‘lonely’ in the sense of being properties that an object could have were it the only thing existing and independent of laws of nature and ‘superadded’ in the sense that the connection between intrinsic and relational properties needs divine doing. Though these are part of Langton’s view, Langton’s central insight was to understand phenomena as relational properties and noumena as intrinsic ones. And this is central to Allais’s own interpretive account.

To be sure, none of these criticisms is serious. The second, third, and fourth could have been obviated by a proper introductory chapter in which Allais explained that she will not hunt for textual evidence outside the *Critique* or *Prolegomena*, defined her terms, and situated her interpretation relative to the major ones in the literature, respectively. The first could have been obviated by stricter editing. Regardless *Manifest Reality* will be part of discussions of Kant’s theoretical philosophy for years to come. Anyone interested in that topic should read this book.

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