

Rudolf A. Makkreel, *Kant's Worldview: How Judgment Shapes Human Comprehension*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2021 Pp. xii + 284 ISBN 97808101 44316 (hbk) \$99.95

A worldview is often taken to provide a comprehensive picture of the world and our place within it. In this book, the late Rudolf Makkreel examines Kant's own worldview, including both 'Kant's main stated positions' and 'the general tenor of his mode of thinking' (p. ix). Makkreel acknowledges that Kant 'never fully defined a worldview in the way we think of it now' (p. 5). Nevertheless, Makkreel aims to disclose a worldview implicit in Kant's *Critical oeuvre*.

According to Makkreel, Kant presents a 'multilevel worldview' (p. 3). This worldview is 'multilevel' in the sense that it makes use of various modes of reflection and judgement: 'To the extent that human experience can make sense of the world and attain a worldview, it will be a layered affair where different modes of reflection and judgment are operative' (p. 3). More specifically, Kant denies that the mental processes that yield knowledge are, by themselves, capable of arriving at a comprehensive worldview. Instead, Kant claims that many things elude our knowledge – for instance, freedom, aesthetic evaluation and life. Therefore, the attempt to comprehend 'the full horizon of human experience' requires the use of 'supplementary modes of organization' (p. 3). Given Kant's reliance on various modes of mental organization, Makkreel contends that Kant does not present an absolutist worldview: 'From the very beginning, we saw Kant argue that human attempts at comprehension can never be absolute' (p. 230). Instead, Kant takes different modes of organization to be appropriate in different contexts. Therefore, Kant's philosophy requires 'a careful delimitation of the world by specifying it into contextual spheres' (p. 238). Relative to these different contexts, various modes of organization can provide us with 'orientational reflection' (p. 9). In the end, however, we cannot arrive at a single comprehensive picture of the world and our place in it; therefore, the notion of a worldview ultimately operates for Kant merely 'as a limit idea' (p. 4).

Makkreel's argument for this general interpretation is divided into two main parts. The book's first part, 'Cognizing, Comprehending, and Knowing the Natural World', focuses on the mental processes involved in our knowledge of the empirical world. The book's second part, 'Comprehending and Contextualizing the Human World', focuses on those aspects of the world that Kant takes to elude our knowledge and thus to require alternative modes of reflection and judgement to comprehend. The book's division into these two main parts obviously harkens back to Dilthey's well-known distinction between the methods of the *Natur- und Geisteswissenschaften*. Makkreel was a prominent Dilthey scholar, and the hermeneutic tradition has long been an important touchstone for Makkreel's work on Kant, as evidenced by the title of Makkreel's earlier book *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the Critique of Judgment*. Makkreel describes this latest book as 'a continuation and expansion' of that prior book's emphasis on 'the interpretative nature of reflective judgment' (p. ix). Of course, Dilthey himself also helped to popularize the notion of a worldview. Dilthey's own taxonomy of worldviews employs a tripartite distinction between naturalism, the idealism of freedom and objective idealism. Makkreel adopts Dilthey's

tripartite distinction and agrees with Dilthey that Kant's philosophy 'is closer to the idealism of freedom than to Dilthey's two other worldview types' (p. 228). But Makkreel reasonably notes that the idealism of freedom might take various specific forms, and he aims to distinguish his own interpretation of Kant's idealist worldview from competitors, such as Fichte's idealism of freedom or the worldview attributed to Kant by the early twentieth-century scholar Richard Kroner. Makkreel dismisses Kroner's interpretation as 'transcendent' and 'intensely religious', and suggests that his own interpretation of Kant's worldview better helps to illuminate Kant's interest in 'the empirical concerns of human beings' (p. ix). I do wish, however, that Makkreel had spent time more engaging with the specifics of Kroner's influential interpretation (his discussion of Kroner runs for only about a page). Specifically, Kroner (under the influence of Wilhelm Windelband) takes Kant's worldview to present an 'ethical voluntarism' centred on the relationship between the sensible and intelligible realms and the demands of the will (Kroner 1914: 7). This interpretation's central stress on freedom's demands in the context of the sensible-intelligible distinction finds some support in Kant's own reflections on the critical philosophy. For example, in discussing his own philosophy, Kant writes, 'The ideality of space and time (consequently the concept of all objects of experience as appearances) and the practical reality of the rational concept of freedom are the two cardinal points of metaphysics' (Refl 6349, 18: 673). And he adds: 'Both together are the *cardines* of the critical philosophy, and all metaphysics has them as its aim' (Refl 6348, 18: 672). Given such comments, it is unfortunate that Makkreel does not deal with Kroner's alternative interpretation more fully.

As one might expect from Makkreel's emphasis on the broad notion of a worldview, the book's individual chapters cover an enormous number of issues and draw extensively on nearly every aspect of Kant's corpus. More specifically, chapters 1–6 focus on issues related to the acquisition of knowledge. Chapters 7–8 treat Kant's practical philosophy. Chapters 9–10 deal with issues related to Kant's aesthetics. Chapters 11–12 concern Kant's treatments of life and natural teleology. Chapters 13–14 examine issues related to psychology and anthropology. Chapters 15–16 develop Kant's notion of a 'cosmical philosophy' and include extended discussions of topics like history and race (p. 198). The individual chapters consistently display Makkreel's detailed and wide-ranging knowledge of Kant's works. Indeed, the individual chapters are surprisingly detailed for a book concerned with the rather broad notion of Kant's worldview, and those interested in more specific aspects of Kant's philosophy are still likely to profit from these individual discussions. Makkreel's overall emphasis on various varieties of mental organization also fits well into a recent trend in Kant studies focused on the importance of alternatives to knowledge (*Wissen*), such as cognition (*Erkenntnis*), rational belief, reflective judgment, symbolism, etc. To my mind, the book's emphasis on these various alternatives to knowledge helps to prompt several interesting questions about the relationship between them (although the book does not itself clearly raise them). For instance, the book notes that practical belief and reflective judgement both provide alternative modes of orientation. But why, we might ask, does Kant claim that practical reason grounds belief (*Glaube*), whereas he does not make any such claim for reflective judgement? That is, why might some modes of orientational reflection yield belief, while others do not? And how might the differences between such modes of orientational reflection impact Kant's worldview? To my mind, Makkreel's discussions of Kant's various modes of orientational reflection help

set up such questions as potential avenues for further research and, in doing so, help to provide us with another opportunity to engage further with the legacy of Rudolf Makkreel's influential career in Kant studies.

Reed Winegar
Fordham University, NY, USA
Email: bwinegar@fordham.edu

References

- Kroner, Richard (1914) *Kants Weltanschauung*. Tübingen: Mohr.
Makkreel, Rudolf A. (1990) *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant: The Hermeneutical Import of the Critique of Judgment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.