

PREFACE:
THE EARLY CRITIQUE
OF KANT'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY
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IN Classical German Philosophy, the concept of freedom is at the centre of innumerable controversies. Kant's writings dominate the philosophical debate in the German speaking universities at the end of the 18th century. The opposition between laws of nature and the moral law was one of the most widely discussed problems at the time. Philosophers who take Kant as their reference point conceive of freedom in the context of a system in which necessity rules the world. This discussion represents a pivotal moment in the history of philosophy.

The essays collected in this special issue were first presented at an international conference on «The Early Critique of Kant's Moral Philosophy». It was held at the University of St Andrews in September 2019 with the financial support of the Scots Philosophical Association, the Mind Association, the Aristotelian Society, the British Society for the History of Philosophy, the St Andrews Philosophy Department, and with the invaluable contribution of the Alexander-von-Humboldt-Foundation.

The main focus of the conference lay on the first reception and critique of Kant's moral philosophy at the end of the 18th and the very beginning of the 19th century. Our aim was to analyse not only the relations between the most important philosophers of the early Romantic movement and German Idealism, but also the complex constellation in which those major philosophical figures operated. Uniquely, we discussed not only well-known authors (like Reinhold, Jacobi, Fichte, Schiller, and Hegel) but also some lesser-known, almost forgotten figures who were part of that constellation, like Christoph Gottfried Bardili, Johann August Eberhard, Johann Georg Heinrich Feder, Johann Carl Günther Werdermann, Gottlieb August Tittel, and Maria von Herbert.

The essays published in this issue of «Studi Kantiani» reflect this. Heiner Klemme explores Abicht's relation to Kant and reveals the origins of the notion of «aims and rights of humanity». Antonino Falduto focuses on Werdermann's treatment of the concept of «whole human being» as a bridge between Kant and Feder. Michael Walschots investigates Tittel's profound criticisms of Kant's moral philosophy. Jürgen Stolzenberg expands the moral philosophical perspective by an analysis of the concept of «right» in the context of a debate between Kant and Fichte. Luca Fonnesu examines the relation between Kant and Jacobi with regard to their numerous disagreements on ethics. Finally, Violetta Waibel opens up a dialogue between Kant and Schiller on the importance of feelings in moral actions. By carving out the significance of these early criticisms of Kant's work in the context of moral philosophy, the essays collected in this issue reveal some important differences between Kant's own approach and the philosophical efforts of his early readers.