




ARTICLE

# The Method of Metaphysics and the Architectonic: Remarks on Gava's *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason and the Method of Metaphysics*

Claudio La Rocca 

Università di Genova, Genova, Italy,  
Email: [clr@unige.it](mailto:clr@unige.it)

## Abstract

The article addresses some aspects of Gava's book, highlighting two main points: (1) the notion of philosophy in a cosmic sense; (2) its connection with the meaning of the concept of method. Regarding (1) I show how Gava's interpretation of the systematic concept of philosophy does not account adequately for the scholastic concept. This has consequences for the notion of philosophy in a cosmic sense itself; its nature as an objective archetype and its personification in the ideal of a master of wisdom are not properly emphasized. These features are closely related to Kant's claim that philosophy cannot be learned, which is connected with Kant's peculiar idea of method. Regarding (2), I argue that 'method' for Kant does not concern only the construction of scientific systems, but also the establishment of a way of thinking, a stance embracing thought and action. The meaning of the postulates and the notion of 'faith' thus acquire a 'weaker' connotation, as an attitude, *habitus*, aimed at the establishment and promotion of a 'life-structuring' rationality, and not as an alternative route to a theoretical 'commitment'.

**Keywords:** architectonic; *Schulbegriff/Weltbegriff* of philosophy; learning to philosophize; belief; faith; method; way of thinking

## 1. *Schulbegriff* and *Weltbegriff* of philosophy

It has become clearer in relatively recent times that the Doctrine of Method is not to be considered merely a kind of appendix to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Otfried Höffe had even spoken of a *Nichtlektüre*,<sup>1</sup> and it was possible to cultivate doubt about the patience and attentiveness of readers of the *Critique* regarding this text.<sup>2</sup> However, its role may even be reversed into that of a 'gateway'<sup>3</sup> to the *Critique*, if its reading and interpretation is combined with some of Kant's isolated but important statements for which the entire *Critique* would be 'a treatise on method' (B xxxi) or 'a doctrine of method' (A82-3/B108-9). Gabriele Gava<sup>4</sup> moves from these 'often completely overlooked' (p. 41) assertions by taking them very seriously: he resolutely chooses the path of using them for a

© The Author(s), 2024. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of Kantian Review. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the same Creative Commons licence is included and the original work is properly cited. The written permission of Cambridge University Press must be obtained for commercial re-use.

comprehensive reinterpretation of the aims of the *Critique*, offering perspectives of great interest. There is no need to emphasize how important and convincing I find this approach. The book offers a plurality of relevant themes and analyses, largely made possible and nourished by the general framework chosen. I will limit myself here to some observations on aspects more directly related to the basic thesis presented: the idea of the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a doctrine of the method of metaphysics.

The idea of criticism as a doctrine of method naturally leads to assigning importance to the part of the *Critique* that bears this title. The theoretical centrepiece of the Transcendental Doctrine of Method is undoubtedly the Architectonic, in which Kant attempts to outline a general project of philosophy as such, and of metaphysics in particular. The key idea of this general project is what is indicated by Kant with the *Weltbegriff* of philosophy, as distinct from its *Schulbegriff*.

Gava frames this concept in his reading of the transcendental doctrine of method. His thesis is that the principal task of a doctrine of method is not to identify appropriate procedures of investigation or argument but that rather its purpose is to show that a body of cognitions can be considered a science if it forms a 'system' with an 'architectonic' unity (p. 2). Considering this goal, and the way it is conceived and then carried out, would also allow for some important clarifications on much-discussed and certainly not marginal issues such as that of the relationship between the critique of reason and transcendental philosophy, and between these and metaphysics.

Gava is right to point out that the Kantian idea of a doctrine of method is rather far from the idea that is natural to us of a methodology understood as a set of procedural rules. This idea – which Kant links to that of a 'general' doctrine of method – is viewed negatively by Kant: procedural rules without reference to a specific science turn out to be essentially tautological, and 'instead of giving means for the solution of questions, they give the same questions again'.<sup>5</sup> The Kantian idea of a doctrine of method arises – with a wholly original transformation in a radically different theoretical framework – from a particular intersection between the ideas of *logica practica* or *utens*, 'particular logic', and the section on *Lehrart (methodus)*, which in Meier was the second part of his *Vernunftlehre*.<sup>6</sup> In the latter, the aspect that we today would call methodological was referred to as the order and organization of cognitions; this involves a closer consideration of their whole, a *Ganzes*, dominated by a *Baumeister*, an architect.<sup>7</sup> Already very early outlining the idea of system, connected to that of totality, Kant therefore develops primarily – but not only – this motif he finds in the tradition. The notion of system is then decisive for the interpretation of the meaning of a (transcendental) doctrine of method, and thus of the very idea of the critique of reason.

Kant defines the Architectonic precisely in relation to the notion of system, conceived as a condition of *scientificity*: 'Since systematic unity is that which first makes cognition into science, i.e., makes a system out of a mere aggregate of it, architectonic is the doctrine of that which is scientific in our cognition in general' (A832/B860). Gava's interpretative keys on this point can be sketched as follows. He articulates the concept of systematic unity into two aspects that he believes do not coincide: (1) mere systematicity; (2) architectonic unity. The second is a narrower and more stringent condition: 'Unlike Kant's general demand for systematicity, which can be met in different ways, there is only one ordering of the cognitions belonging to a science that can grant architectonic unity' (p. 18); 'different systems of cognitions can

equally satisfy that demand' (p. 22). While systematic unity would basically concern principles such as those of homogeneity, specification, and continuity, which guarantee 'inferential relationships among cognitions' (p. 22), architectonic unity presupposes an idea, as a rational concept of the form of a whole, which functions as an end and allows the inference of parts of the system from other parts (p. 23). Despite the difficulties in identifying with certainty whether a body of cognitions is the realization of an idea, two minimum criteria are possible – according to Gava – in order to be able to attribute architectonic unity, namely, (1) systematic coherence and (2) the possibility 'to describe the cognitions belonging to a science as dependent on an idea' (p. 29). He distinguishes furthermore two senses in which architectonic unity can be conceived: in a first sense, architectonic unity simply requires that a body of cognitions be organized according to the idea of the whole of a science describing the parts-whole relationships among its doctrines; in a second sense, architectonic unity requires 'that reason "provides the ends a priori" ... and that the cognitions are organized around "a single supreme and inner end"' (p. 34).

With this interpretative toolkit, summarily sketched here, Gava addresses the fundamental distinction between the scholastic and the worldly concept of philosophy. The thesis he arrives at is that 'it is only when metaphysics is understood according to the worldly concept of philosophy that it is possible to regard it as capable of architectonic unity' (p. 37), understood, one may suppose, in the second, more radical sense.

The observations I intend to propose mainly concern the following points: (1) the way in which it is possible to understand the notion of philosophy in a cosmic sense; (2) the meaning of the concept of method and its connection with this notion of philosophy, a connection which can be understood in perhaps an even closer sense than Gava's reading.

Gava's analysis is very clear and convincing, and gives the prominence it deserves to the worldly idea of philosophy, reading it as Kant's insistence that metaphysics must ultimately give an answer to the basic question concerning man's destination. This answer would be possible through the 'epistemological' reformulation, so to speak, of its status, realized by the doctrine of postulates and their relation to that particular theoretical 'commitment' represented by *Glauben*. In other words, this idea would clarify the practical purpose of metaphysics and the possibility of its being fulfilled in new forms by that kind of *Fürwahrhalten* that allows adherence to postulates.

Gava's approach tries to shed light on some aspects and to overcome some problems in Kant's text. I am not entirely sure that the threefold distinction among systematic unity, architectonic unity in the first sense, which I would call *weak* (idea-part relation), and architectonic unity in a second, *strong* sense (organization of science in relation to a single idea prescribed by reason) is an easily applicable tool for the different cases that may arise, although perhaps it turns out to be clearer than the Kantian account in its various texts.<sup>8</sup> Certainly, distinctions are necessary, since Kant speaks of systems in the plural, that is, of systems with reference to multiple cases (e.g., experience as a system, the system of the faculties of the soul, etc.). What is surely clear is that there is a more radical and 'authentic' sense of systematicity that Kant ascribes to philosophy in its worldly sense, which at some point (e.g., in *V-Met-L2/Pöhlitz*, 28: 533; *Log*, 9: 24) leads to ascribing systematicity only to philosophy,

which however is not consistent with other assertions by Kant and even with his explicit distance from the tradition,<sup>9</sup> but which certainly signals that the systematic unity proper to philosophy has its own peculiarity and relevance that must be taken into account.

The distinction between *Schulbegriff* and *Weltbegriff* fits into this context. In first discussing the former concept, it seems to me that Gava radicalizes his view, as he does not ascribe to philosophy, according to its school concept, even the weak sense of architectonic unity: it 'can at best reach technical unity', he writes, but adds: since it 'according to the school concept does not care about setting limits to rational cognition, however, it cannot even achieve technical unity' (p. 36). This thesis involves, in my opinion, an excessive devaluation of the notion of philosophy in the school sense, which perhaps also has consequences for the way philosophy in the worldly sense is conceived. On the one hand, there are texts in which to philosophize in the scholastic sense is clearly attributed a systematic unity.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the way the two concepts are introduced may suggest a different reading of both.

## 2. *Bis dahin*

The discourse through which the *Schulbegriff/Weltbegriff* distinction is introduced takes its starting point from an 'objective' idea of philosophy, understood as 'the archetype for the assessment of all attempts to philosophize, which should serve to assess each subjective philosophy, the structure (*Gebäude*) of which is often so manifold and variable' (A838/B866). It is against this background that the distinction – at least in the first *Critique* – is introduced, and I believe it can be used to guide its interpretation. Philosophy in the objective sense is presented, precisely, as 'archetype' (*Urbild*), as 'a mere idea of a possible science, which is nowhere given *in concreto*, but which one seeks to approach in various ways until the only footpath, much overgrown by sensibility, is discovered, and the hitherto unsuccessful ectype, so far as it has been granted to humans, is made equal to the archetype' (A838/B886). This aspect should not be lost sight of: the authentic idea of philosophy is precisely an idea, a model that is in principle unrealizable. Nor should we lose sight of another element connected with this, and constantly associated with the idea of philosophy in the worldly sense (and, we shall see, with the notion of method): the thesis of the impossibility of *learning* philosophy, as an accomplished science, and of only being able to learn to philosophize, to exercise philosophical reason. Using the expression that I think is decisive in this context, '*bis dahin*', Kant precisely introduces this thesis: 'Until then (*bis dahin*) one cannot learn any philosophy; for where is it, who has possession of it, and by what can it be recognized? One can only learn to philosophize.' In fact, the 'objective' idea of philosophy as an archetype is related to the primacy of philosophizing: to refer to it means 'to exercise the talent of reason in prosecuting its general principles in relation to certain present attempts' (A838/B866),<sup>11</sup> i.e., precisely to philosophize: 'to consider all the systems of philosophy only as the history of the use of our reason, and as the object of the exercise of our critical capacities' (*V-Met-L2/Pölitz*, 28: 534).<sup>12</sup>

The concept of 'school philosophy' and then, by contrast, that of 'worldly philosophy' are introduced on the basis of these premises: an 'objective' idea of philosophy that does not allow any present attempt<sup>13</sup> to be regarded as realized

philosophy<sup>14</sup> and therefore as something that can be learned. Using again the expression *bis dahin*, Kant introduces the *Schulbegriff*: 'Until then, however, the concept of philosophy is only a scholastic concept, that is, that of a system of cognitions which is sought only as a science without having as an end anything more than the systematic unity of these cognitions, thus the logical perfection of cognition.'<sup>15</sup> In contrast to this, it is then said that 'there is also' another concept of philosophy, the worldly concept, which conceives philosophy as 'the science of the relation of all cognition to the essential ends of human reason' (A839/B867).

According to the most usual reading, the *Schulbegriff* represents a stage that would be surpassed by the critique itself (when 'the only footpath ... is discovered') by then proceeding to the terrain of the *Weltbegriff*. Accordingly, at least the second *bis dahin* could be understood as 'until now': the critique would produce the establishment – now – of a more adequate concept of philosophy. Certainly, the critique grounds in Kant's eyes a new and more adequate view of philosophy. This does not mean, however, that a clearer view can lead now to a complete realization of the idea. Criticism, on the one hand, discovers or rediscovers (it was an 'overgrown' path for Kant) a notion of philosophy that can positively orient the work of reason; but, on the other hand, it does not fully realize a 'definitive' philosophy. We should try to read the two sentences together: (1) 'Until then one cannot learn philosophy'; (2) 'Until then, however, the concept of philosophy is only a scholastic concept'. While it would perhaps be excessive to read the second assertion as the thesis that philosophy will always remain a *Schulbegriff* – because it will never be adequate to the *Urbild* – it would surely be wrong to think that the discovery of the critical path enables one to learn philosophy from then on, and that therefore the worldly concept would represent the philosophy that can be realized and finally learned. If one does not want to attribute the latter idea to Kant – something made difficult by the centrality and pervasiveness that the thesis of the primacy of *philosophieren* over philosophy retains<sup>16</sup> – the meaning of the contrast of the two concepts should be read as follows.

The notion of philosophy as an objective archetype remains firm, and its nature as a regulative idea, we might say, remains firm. Hence, it is impossible to conform to that idea, and thus there is the impossibility of *teaching* a philosophy. One concept of philosophy, however, the scholastic one, interprets the relation to the model in a predominantly or exclusively cognitive sense, which also leads to underestimating the radical issue of teaching/learning. If the archetype is a model of knowledge, it is possible in principle – or at least easier – to think that one can conform to it. Kant, on the other hand, in presenting the worldly concept, revives, as it were, and emphasizes its nature as an idea. Even more, he refers to a personified *Urbild*, thus to an *Ideal*, which more radically excludes the possibility of conforming to it.<sup>17</sup> The personified ideal of the philosopher is not incidentally presented as a *Lehrer im Ideal* (A866/B838) or *Lehrer der Weisheit* (9: 24), that is, as the unattainable possibility of *lehren*, teaching a philosophy that can be learned.

If, therefore, the school concept is presented as something that tends to be surpassed (that applies 'until then'), it is not because it is later replaced by a philosophy that adequately realizes the model by making itself 'cosmic'. This way of presenting it underscores that conceiving philosophy as a rational and purely speculative enterprise overshadows, to a greater extent, the function that should

direct it and the ideal toward which it should move, namely, the fact that ‘the practical philosopher is authentically philosophical’, and that therefore ‘philosophy is *the idea* of a perfect wisdom, which shows me the ultimate ends of humanity’ (V-Met-L2/Pöhlitz, 28: 533; my italics). The reference to wisdom, we shall see, must also prevent this task from being understood in an overly theoretical way, as an – albeit transformed – matter of knowledge.<sup>18</sup>

As mentioned, the devaluation of scholastic philosophy is not important in itself, since it is not the concept of philosophy that matters to Kant; it can nevertheless be relevant, because it makes less visible a central feature of worldly philosophy, the reference to wisdom in its connection with *philosophieren*. In other words, to put it this way, the question is not to replace one unsystematic conception of philosophy with a systematic or even fully systematic one; but rather to rethink the notion of philosophy in relation to an ideal, that of wisdom, which necessarily transcends any definite form of it, any ‘present attempt’.

### 3. Way of thinking or theory

I cannot carry out these considerations further here with the detail that would be necessary. I will only try to mention some consequences of the remarks made so far for what is the focus of Gava’s book: the notion of method. Gava rightly emphasizes the peculiarity of the Transcendental Doctrine of Method, especially the Architectonic, which places the notion of the system as a ‘doctrine of scientificity’<sup>19</sup> at the centre. It distinguishes method from a ‘procedural’ methodology in a sense closer to the one customary today, as a set of suggestions on argumentative techniques or procedures of investigation. While it is important to keep this in mind, the notion of method that emerges in the doctrine of method and in the critical philosophy in general is not reducible to a theory of systematicity, to a kind of *sui generis* normative epistemology that describes the conditions under which a body of cognitions can form a system and, thus, a science. An important point of the Kantian notion of method is its connection, not only with the establishment of conditions for systematicity, but also with a *Denkungsart*, a way of thinking: this aspect too constitutes one of the keys to the idea of method.

Method has essentially to do not with an organization of given knowledge, but with its production. It is from the very beginning systematic if it proceeds from the ‘first sources of reason’: ‘knowledge itself must arise systematically’ (V-Lo/Pöhlitz, 24: 531), and we have ‘an obligation to proceed systematically’ (A856/B884). The sources are not principles understood in the sense of propositions from which others can be derived, with a ‘vertical’ organization of knowledge, so to speak, but precisely a way of thinking that from the beginning refers at the same time to a whole, a ‘horizontal’ organization, and to a teleological consideration of knowledge.<sup>20</sup> Kant writes in a letter: ‘I trust that I shall be able to prove formally that not even a truthfully metaphysical proposition can be proved without connection with the whole, but must always be derived only from the relation which it has to the sources of all our rational knowledge in general, thus from the concept of the possible whole of such knowledge’ (Br, 10: 341). One should not confuse ‘maxims of reason’ with ‘axioms’, ‘rules of method’ with ‘principles of theory (doctrine)’ (Refl 4971, 18: 45). ‘The legislation of reason is not based on thoughts, but on the way of thinking’ (Refl 1508,

15: 821). This sort of primacy of method over content<sup>21</sup> is related to the two elements I tried to emphasize earlier: the characterization of the worldly concept as essentially related to a philosophy as 'idea' in which the reference to an unrealizable wisdom that goes beyond the 'doctrine of wisdom' is decisive, and the related conception of the primacy of *philosophieren* over all 'historical' philosophy.<sup>22</sup> This, in turn, is connected with the idea of method.<sup>23</sup> It is not easy to develop here all the necessary connections, but I shall try to summarize the prospect that seems to me to emerge. A philosophy that follows the systematic procedure and understands itself according to the worldly concept excludes, on the one hand, all constructive and deductive procedures, always moving from a 'horizontal' exercise of reason; on the other, it organizes knowledge – the theoretical knowledge of the 'technicians of reason', aimed at *Geschicklichkeit* – in relation to what necessarily interests everyone, that is, to the ultimate end of humanity. This ends up giving a very special meaning to the 'doctrine of wisdom' precisely as knowledge of ends. Its detachment from wisdom<sup>24</sup> shows, however, that its task is not to point to definite ends, through a kind of 'knowledge' of them, and therefore not even to reach a knowledge of the highest good and its conditions. To put it as clearly as possible, the point is not to achieve the same goals as rationalist metaphysics by different (practical instead of theoretical) argumentative means, but to achieve radically different goals.

Gava very effectively points out how the fulfilment of metaphysics in Kant, at which the critique as its doctrine of method aims, must consider 'the systematic relevance of Kant's practical argument' regarding God and immortality 'to the project of the critique of pure reason' (p. 211). This argument is interpreted in a sense that, regardless of discussions about its validity, can go beyond a notion of hope, and can 'justify a stronger attitude' (p. 218). The impossibility of drawing on wisdom but also the idea of a philosophy that promotes essentially, first and foremost, a method of referring to the 'sources' of reason, a way of thinking, can go instead, in my view, in a direction of a decisive *weakening* of the relation to theoretical assumptions. This means that the direction, or at least the trend, of Kant's argumentation moves precisely toward a notion of hope very different from a 'commitment' to truths, albeit differently argued. In the end, what enables 'a free holding to be true' (*ein freies Fürwahrhalten*) (*KU*, 5: 472; *Fort*, 20: 298) toward God and immortality is precisely only a hope – a basic attitude more than a commitment to a proposition. In the third *Critique*, hope is clearly identified with a *Habitus*, a way to act, a stance, and then with a *Vertrauen*, an overall attitude of trust toward the *possibility* that the pursuit of happiness compatible with morality is not contradictory for those acting on the basis of moral law.<sup>25</sup> The meaning of this holding to be true is ultimately centred on the structure of acting oriented by the 'as if', the weakest structure from the point of view of theoretical 'commitment': it results in a 'teaching' 'so to act, as though we knew that these objects were real' (*Fort*, 20: 298). What is outlined here is a type of 'teaching' (*Belehrung*) that is basically about a possible and free way of acting and thinking: Kant returns to the idea of 'a free holding to be true', emphasizing that this freedom is what gives it 'moral worth', and that, on the other hand, produces what is as far as possible from a generally shareable theoretical stance: 'It does not, therefore, confer an imperative (*crede*), and the ground of proof of its correctness is not a proof of the truth of these propositions, considered theoretically, and thus no objective teaching (*Belehrung*) as to the reality of their objects' (20: 298).

I do not think it is a coincidence that the theme of the *Lehren* returns here. The centrality of method for Kant emerges as the centrality of a *habitus*, and also as the centrality of the spirit over the letter of science:<sup>26</sup> method is more than a tool for theory-building.

Although Kant is not always clear on this, he basically oscillates between two tendencies: (1) toward a more radically new vision and (2) toward a position in which he seems to re-propose a teleological system as a 'given' theoretical structure. The prevailing and most interesting tendency seems to me to be the former, the one whereby the 'maxims of reason' are not to be understood as 'axioms', and 'the rules of method' are not to be considered 'principles of theory (doctrine)'.<sup>27</sup> From this perspective, theoretical construction serves the exercise of a rationality that intends to move in the horizon of wisdom without being able to draw on it. As they are conceived in Kant, neither virtue (based on a formal law) nor happiness (which everyone can conceive of differently), nor their union (based on a free holding to be true) – and thus neither the resulting 'articles of faith' – indicate any kind of content that philosophy allows one to affirm, and obliges one to share, but only a way of thinking, and the establishment and promotion of a 'life-structuring' rationality.<sup>28</sup> Even the later Kant takes up and emphasizes this perspective: 'Transcendental philosophy is not a type of knowledge of some object of philosophy, but only a certain method or (formal) principle of philosophizing; a type of discursive knowledge of creating for oneself the object of reason in the concepts of God, freedom and totality' (*OP*, 21: 85).

## Notes

1 Höffe (2003: 303).

2 Gerhardt (1998: 571): 'It is not a peregrine assumption that few readers have gone as far as the second and final part of the book.'

3 Taking up my suggestion in this sense in La Rocca (2003), and insisting on the fruitfulness of this perspective, Hinske (2013) highlights how even in terms of developmental history the *Methodenlehre* belongs to the earliest parts of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

4 Gava (2023). Page numbers in brackets without further indication refer to this book.

5 *Vo-Lo/Philippi*, 24: 338–9. Cf. 24: 319: 'In so-called practical logics the questions are many, but the solution for the most part tautological.' See also *V-Lo/Busolt*, 24: 682.

6 Meier identifies the first two, however he does not give a separate treatment of them but treats them together with the *logica theoretica* or *docens*, while devoting a section to the *Lehrart der gelehrten Erkenntnis*. See La Rocca (2003: 187ff).

7 See Meier (1762: §134). Kant talks about the 'Baumeister eines Systems' in an important passage of the *Metaphysics of Morals* (*MS*, 4: 218).

8 Gava himself acknowledges this by saying (p. 34) that Kant would use in the Architectonic two different accounts of architectonic unity without clearly distinguishing between them; and he discusses the possible objection that the proposed distinction would be based 'on systematic considerations only' (p. 35). My main doubt, however, concerns the possibility of speaking of systematic unity without reference to an idea (and thus of distinguishing systematic versus architectonic unity). This would be a concept very close to Wolff's, from which Kant departs at the moment when he begins to conceive his own notion of a system (cf. Hinske 1991, and e.g. *V-Lo/Pölitz*, 24: 530: 'In jedem System muß eine Idee als das Ganze seyn'), and therefore could hardly be present in the *KrV*. However, this distinction is not particularly relevant to Gava's interpretation of the idea of system applied to metaphysics.

9 Cf. Hinske (1991), who recalls how one of Kant's early conscious innovations with respect to Meier was a critique of the idea that the notion of a system would concern only a priori truths of reason (cf. *V-Lo/Blomberg*, 24: 100).



10 Cf. *V-Lo/Wiener*, 24: 799: ‘Philosophy *in sensu scholastico* involves two things. (1.) A sufficient supply of cognitions of reason. (2.) A correct connection of these, or a system. For a system is the connection of many cognitions in accordance with an idea.’ The same idea is in *V-Met-L2/Pölitz*, 28: 533. Note that using Gava’s taxonomy this means that school philosophy has not only systematic unity, but also architectonic unity. Also *KrV*, A838/B866 seems to be clear on the systematic nature of the *Schulbegriff*: ‘... a scholastic concept, namely that of a system of cognition that is sought only as a science.’ Cf. 28: 532: ‘*in sensu scholastico* philosophy is thus the system of philosophical rational cognitions from concepts.’ See also 28: 533; *Log*, 9: 23; *Log*, 24: scholastic philosophy involves ‘a systematic connection of these cognitions, or a combination of them in the idea of a whole.’

11 CUP translation modified.

12 See *Refl* 1651, 16: 65–6, in which subjective philosophy is contrasted with its objective aspect, which is identified with *philosophieren*, and this with method: “learning to philosophize” is objective: how one should think, that is, the rules of the proper use of reason; therefore, the philosophical spirit is distinct from the spirit of a philosophy and consists of the method of reason.’

13 *Versuch*: the CUP translation makes the inappropriate choice, in my opinion, of rendering the term first with ‘attempt’ and then (*gewisse vorhandenen Versuchen*) with ‘experiments’.

14 Gava acknowledges this but traces it mainly to the fact that ‘there cannot be a single answer to the question how we can bring ourselves to comply with morality’ for the reason that ‘an answer to this question depends essentially on our individual nature as partly sensible beings’ (p. 32). The limitation would in this sense concern only the individual spillover of a doctrine of wisdom: ‘What cannot be realized is a doctrine of wisdom intended as practical guidance regarding how we, as individuals, can perfectly conform to morality’ (p. 40). I think a more radical reading of this impossibility can be given.

15 A838/B866. The CUP translation renders *bis dahin* as ‘until now’ and the present *ist* as ‘has been’. This translation, regardless of linguistic correctness, corresponds to an interpretation of the text which does not seem adequate to me, as I am about to argue.

16 In spite of Kant’s awareness – and pride – of having offered an adequate and solid foundation for philosophy, one *never* finds in his texts any claim that his philosophy would finally be the one that can be learned. On the pervasive and central presence of the idea of the primacy of philosophizing see Hinske (1995).

17 While the ‘*gleich zu machen*’ (made equal) in A838/B866 seemed to express the possibility of partially succeeding (‘so far as it has been granted to humans’), speaking in the other passage of *gleichgekommen zu sein* with respect to the archetype (‘to have equaled the archetype’) now expresses only the object of unfounded, boastful arrogance.

18 It may be noted (I thank an anonymous referee for this remark) that this interpretation seems to have the implausible result that all realized philosophy would be philosophy in the school sense. This result is not necessary if we consider two things at least: (1) as noted above, school philosophy is also characterized by the fact that it is aimed at predominantly theoretical purposes, not simply by the fact that it is not a complete realization of the objective *Urbild*; (2) Kant’s view of philosophy in the cosmic sense includes in this idea the reference to wisdom, which precisely is meant to oppose the idea of a philosophy as a defined set of cognitions, albeit also of a moral kind, and includes something as a practice of life (see Hadot 2001, with several references to Kant and the cosmic concept of philosophy). In accordance with this, the thesis that any philosophy realized in a given set of cognitions is not philosophy according to its authentic concept is neither contradictory nor implausible. A ‘realized’ philosophy that takes this into account and moves within the horizon of a philosophy aiming at wisdom would not be school philosophy without being, however, ‘the’ philosophy that can be learned. On the non-existence of philosophy see *PhilEnz*, 29: 8.

19 The idea is present early in Kant. Cf. *Refl* 3325 (1769–1775), 16: 780: ‘Method is the unity of a whole of knowledge from principles... it transforms an aggregate into a system and common knowledge into science.’

20 For further on this, see La Rocca (2013).

21 See again La Rocca (2013). Cf. *Refl* 4991, 18: 53: ‘It matters little whether some propositions of pure philosophy about the object are true or false; it is more important whether they are conceived in the proper method and have their proper place in the whole of knowledge, as in the general map.’

- 22 The two are explicitly brought together by Kant in *Refl* 1629, 16: 49 (1780–89): ‘Philosophy as the doctrine of wisdom cannot be learned: for who is wise.’ See also *Refl* 1652, 16: 66. It is interesting that in *Refl* 4973 this is even referred to metaphysics: ‘Metaphysics is something that cannot be learned’ (18: 46).
- 23 See *Refl* 4919, 18: 29; *Refl* 1632, 16: 52; *Refl* 1651, 16: 66; V-Lo/Wiener, 24: 800.
- 24 See La Rocca (2003, 2004).
- 25 I refer here to the *Critique of the Power of Judgement* and then to the *Fortschritte*, although Gava’s theme is the first *Critique*, because I think this text makes clearer – also with the more decidedly ‘non-theoretical’ terminological choices (Kant speaks of ‘trust in the promise of the moral law’: *KU*, 5: 472) – the ‘weak’ sense of *Glauben* that I am defending.
- 26 See *Refl* 1510, 15: 828: ‘The spirit of an art is a whole, a systematic method that contains a coherent idea. The natural aptitude (*das Naturel*) reaches to the letter of science, as it is given, the talent to the spirit of science, namely the principle on which it is based, and the method.’
- 27 *Refl* 4971, 18: 45. On the distance of the Kantian perspective from the reconstruction of a ‘classical’ teleological system, cf. La Rocca (2011).
- 28 I take up the expression from Chignell, quoted by Gava (p. 215).

## References

- Gava, G. (2023) *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason and the Method of Metaphysics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gerhardt, V. (1998) ‘Die Disziplin der reinen Vernunft, 2. bis 4. Abschnitt’. In G. Mohr and M. Willaschek (eds), *Immanuel Kant. Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag), 571–96.
- Hadot, P. (2001) *La Philosophie comme manière de vivre. Entretiens avec Jeannie Calier et Arnold I. Davidson*. Paris: Éditions Albin Michel.
- Hinske, N. (1991) ‘Die Wissenschaften und ihre Zwecke. Kants Neuformulierung der Systemidee’. In G. Funke (ed.), *Akten des 7. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses* (Bonn: Bouvier), vol. I, 157–77.
- (1995) ‘Ursprüngliche Einsicht und Versteinerung. Zur Vorgeschichte von Kants Unterscheidung zwischen “Philosophie lernen” und “Philosophieren lernen”’. In G. Müller (ed.), *Das kritische Geschäft der Vernunft. Symposium zu Ehren von Gerhard Funke* (Bonn: Bouvier), 7–28.
- (2013) ‘Kants Verankerung der Kritik im Weltbegriff. Einige Anmerkungen zu KrV B 866 ff.’. In S. Bacin, A. Ferrarin, C. La Rocca, and M. Ruffing (eds), *Kant und die Philosophie in weltbürgerlicher Absicht. Akten des XI. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses* (Berlin-Boston: de Gruyter), vol. I, 263–76.
- Höffe, O. (2003) *Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft. Die Grundlegung der modernen Philosophie*. München: Beck.
- La Rocca, C. (2003) *Soggetto e mondo. Studi su Kant*. Venezia: Marsilio.
- (2004) ‘Was Aufklärung sein wird. Zur Diskussion um die Aktualität eines Kantischen Konzepts’. *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 52, 347–60.
- (2011) ‘Aufklärung und Formen der Rationalität. Kant und die Vernunft als Zweck’. In L. Cataldi Madonna and P. Rumore (eds), *Kant und die Aufklärung. Akten der Kant-Tagung in Sulmona, 24.–28. März 2010* (Hildesheim-Zürich-New York: Olms), 95–115.
- (2013) ‘Methode und System in Kants Philosophieauffassung’. In S. Bacin, A. Ferrarin, C. La Rocca, and M. Ruffing (eds), *Kant und die Philosophie in weltbürgerlicher Absicht. Akten des XI. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses* (Berlin-Boston: de Gruyter), vol. I, 277–97.
- Meier, G. F. (1762) *Vernunftlehre*. Halle: Gebauer.

**Cite this article:** La Rocca, C. The Method of Metaphysics and the Architectonic: Remarks on Gava’s *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason and the Method of Metaphysics*. *Kantian Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1369415423000511>