



**INTERPRETING KANT
FOR EDUCATION**
DISSOLVING DUALISMS AND EMBODYING MIND

Sheila Webb

WILEY

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WILEY

This edition first published 2022

Originally published as Volume 54, Issue 6 of *The Journal of Philosophy of Education*

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John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, USA

John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

Editorial Office

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Webb, Sheila (Independent scholar), author.

Title: Interpreting Kant for education : dissolving dualisms and embodying mind / Sheila Webb.

Description: Hoboken, NJ : Wiley, 2022. | Series: Journal of philosophy of education book series | Includes index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022040971 (print) | LCCN 2022040972 (ebook) | ISBN

9781119912170 (paperback) | ISBN 9781119816478 (adobe pdf) | ISBN
9781119816485 (epub) | ISBN 9781119816461 (obook)

Subjects: LCSH: Kant, Immanuel, 1724-1804. | Education-Philosophy.

Classification: LCC LB14.7 .W425 2022 (print) | LCC LB14.7 (ebook) | DDC
370.1-dc23/eng/20220926

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022040971>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022040972>

Cover design: Wiley

Cover image: Courtesy of Johanna Nordland

Preface

There is perhaps no thinker in the modern world who has laid the way for the development of philosophy so influentially as Immanuel Kant. He is the towering figure in the wake of whose work philosophy finds its different directions. And it is hard to think of the philosophy of education, especially in its modern incarnations, without some sense of Kant in the background, whether as the pillar of reason, the supreme proponent of deontological ethics, or the philosopher who leads Michel Foucault to raise the question again: 'What is enlightenment?' Yet for many, both enthusiasts and detractors, Kant's ideas are encountered indirectly, with over-reliance on dominant interpretations and acquiescence in received ideas. Encyclopaedia entries, simplified exegesis, and synoptic accounts abound, and the general effect is to provide an image of the man and his ideas that readily succumbs to caricature.

It is against this background that Sheila Webb has been motivated to write the remarkable monograph that follows. On the strength of a growing suspicion of the shortcomings of so much that has been written and said about this great philosopher, and attuned to the new waves of Kantian scholarship that have recently been challenging received views, she has embarked on a ground-breaking study. Her targets are familiar interpretations in both philosophy and education, but her purpose is certainly not exclusively critical. As her title, *Interpreting Kant for Education*, indicates, her intention is to provide a more accurate interpretation, dispelling barriers to understanding, but also revealing Kant's special relevance to thinking well

about education. Indeed, the motivation for the book is by no means narrowly scholarly: its author is struck by the impoverishment of so much policy and practice in education today, mired as it is in a culture of performativity and accountability, both of which are pervasive threats to what might truly be quality in education; and she is committed to the view that a new reading of Kant can do much to remedy this. As the book's subtitle—*Dissolving Dualisms and Embodying Mind*—indicates, the dismantling of the ways of thinking that have sanctioned these harmful practices involves release from the sclerotic dualisms of fact and value, subject and object, and body and mind. Through a spiralling series of arguments, the book leads the reader to an appreciation of ways in which Kant's philosophy can provide this release. Priority in this reading is given to questions of epistemology and philosophy of mind, and the pertinence of these to matters of teaching and learning is made clear by way of some vivid examples. Anyone enquiring into such matters as they bear upon the curriculum would do well to consider the insights that here come into view. It should be apparent also that the book's exposure of the harm that is done by the distortion of Kant's views reveals in turn a robust philosophy of mind, the adoption of which would put much educational research and practice onto a more secure footing.

Paul Standish
Series Editor

Author's Preface and Acknowledgements

Since starting as a teacher many years ago, I've long been interested in different ideas about mind and knowledge and how these then shape ideas about the learning process. Troubled by the impoverished conceptions in the increasing 'performativity' culture in education, I found myself agreeing with criticisms of traditional epistemology, for instance those by Richard Rorty, but unconvinced by alternative theories. I then read John McDowell's *Mind and World* which offered a very different way of thinking about mind and related concepts; as I read more of the literature around this, including Robert Brandom's *Making It Explicit* and *Articulating Reasons*, so I became more persuaded by the insights and ideas of German Idealist thought. I quickly learnt however that the Kant being referred to in this literature was radically different from the negative picture of Kant that is currently prevalent in the philosophy of education. A lack of serious engagement with his work has meant a much-criticised dualist picture continues to circulate widely. I set out to challenge this picture by drawing on contemporary Kantian exegesis and commentary, and show that Kant can be understood in a much more valuable light. Grappling with Kant's insights, and contrasting different interpretations of them, not only led me to unfamiliar conceptions of our ordinary concepts but to deeper questions about the nature of knowledge, concepts and learning, and what it is to be minded. In discussing these I have tried to draw attention to some of the exciting new ideas being developed by contemporary

philosophers, as well as the significance of the German Idealist tradition for educational theorising.

In writing this book I owe a special debt of gratitude to Jan Derry, from whom I have learnt much. Her enthusiasm for the subject and generosity of spirit is apparent to everyone who knows her; so thank you, Jan, for all those lively philosophical discussions over good food and wine. My heartfelt thanks also go to Roger Marples for introducing me to philosophy in the first place, I hope in time he will be convinced of the new Kant in these pages. I am grateful to John Vorhaus for criticisms that led me to clarify my explanations, and to audiences of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain for their questions and comments on papers I have given. I have also benefitted from being a member of the Hegel Society of Great Britain, where I have learnt from stimulating discussion around many rich areas of Hegelian thought. My thanks also to an anonymous reviewer for thoughtful and helpful comments, and to Paul Standish for his excellent editing of the manuscript. Any errors that remain are my own. Finally, I would like to thank my family, Sam, Jo and Jake, for enriching my life in so many ways.

Interpreting Kant for Education

SHEILA WEBB

This introduction to *Interpreting Kant for Education* begins with a puzzle. Immanuel Kant is undoubtedly one of the most important and unrivalled thinkers of modern philosophy, the influence of his work 'has been, and continues to be, so profound and widespread as to have become imperceptible' (Howard Caygill, [1995](#), p. 1). Yet in the philosophy of education Kant receives fierce criticisms, and his work is frequently disparaged and ridiculed. Criticism is particularly directed at alleged dualisms, intellectualism and a conception of mind as disembodied or detached from real life. This Kant in education theory stands in contrast to the Kant to be found in more careful exegesis and contemporary work in the philosophy of mind and epistemology. By contrasting interpretations of his central terms and insights, I seek to show that Kant can be understood in an altogether different and more valuable way. The focus is on some deep-seated assumptions that, I argue, are presupposed when interpreting Kant's work, leading to the dualist picture that is widespread in education. Uncovering these presuppositions and disturbing our familiar concepts by offering new understandings of Kant's terms, not only shows his philosophy in a more favourable light (with robust conceptions of mind and knowledge) but brings into view differing ideas about the nature of knowledge and concepts, cognition and rationality, prompting deeper questions about how we learn and what it is to be minded, indeed, to be human. All of these are of profound importance to educational thought, and I believe Kant has

much to offer that has yet to be appreciated in the philosophy of education.

Kant's work is profound and complex, historically changing the course of philosophy. From the thousands of readings, interpretations and exegeses over the years, a particular 'picture' circulates in educational theory, and this obviously has its own history. To change this familiar picture and think of Kant's work anew would require more than one book; here a start is made by suggesting different ways to understand some of Kant's central epistemological terms, which show how mind can be understood as embodied and his subject embedded in the real world.

My interest in Kant started when looking to alternative theories and conceptions of knowledge after dissatisfaction with the increasingly 'reductive' and 'standards' culture in education, in which knowledge is all too often treated as a 'portfolio of skills'. The rising tide of scientism is increasingly reflected in educational policy and practice, despite having been the focus of a sustained critique in educational theory. I start here with two illustrations of such critique to draw attention to various dualisms that are frequently pointed out as a root of the problem. Paul Standish is a long-term critic of the reductive culture, with its preoccupation with measurement, empirical data and statistics, which are presented as 'offering hard and often incontrovertible evidence' (2010, p. 6). The push for empirical methods, evidence and measurable impact devalues conceptual work and philosophical research, the impact of which cannot be measured in quantitative terms.¹ In identifying dualisms, Standish argues that the 'hardening of the subject-object dichotomy generates crude accounts of objectivity, where objectivity is thought to be synonymous with numerical measurement' (2011, p. 3). And of the fact-value dualism, Standish quotes Hilary Putnam:

Every one of you has heard someone ask, 'Is that supposed to be a fact or a value judgment?' The presupposition of this stumper is that if it's a value judgment it can't possibly be a [statement of] fact, and a further presupposition of this is that value judgments are subjective. (in Standish, [2010](#), p. 4)

Judgements are assumed to be subjective, with subjectivity understood negatively as untrustworthy and not based on fact—and in opposition to objectivity, where this is considered synonymous with numerical measurement.

Kant, as I will attempt to illustrate, has quite different and less oppositional conceptions of subjectivity and objectivity.

Richard Pring is another long-standing critic of the commodification of education, arguing that despite 'the centrality of knowledge and understanding in the development of the educated person, one too often adheres to a narrow interpretation of such knowledge and understanding' (2014, p. 11).² Judgement, Pring argues, is 'relegated to insignificance in a world of mechanical rationalism' (2013, p. 69). In contrast, for Kant, judgement is central; he draws attention to something more fundamental than facts and propositions, and this is our human *capacity* for knowledge, with judgement at its core. Pring points to the 'wars' between two dominant paradigms of knowledge: one he characterises as naïve realism and the other as constructivism—the first 'believes in 'an objective reality'' while the other sees reality as 'a 'social construction of the mind'' (2000, p. 251). He writes:

The division between the two has become quite sharp, reflected in their respective languages or in different logical configurations of otherwise familiar words—objective/subjectivity, reality/multiple realities, truth/consensus, knowledge/opinion, understanding/perception and so on. It is as though the Cartesian dualism has returned in a more subtle form to entrap the unwary, even those who would so roundly condemn it in its original formulation... Thus, the contrast is drawn between the objective world (out there independently of our thinking about it) and the subjective worlds (in our heads, as it were, and individually constructed); between the public discourse and private meanings; between reality unconstructed by anyone and the ‘multi realities’ constructed by each individual. (p. 248)

I maintain that a form of dualism does indeed ‘entrap the unwary, even those who would so roundly condemn it in its original formulation’, and this has shaped interpretations of Kant's philosophy in education. Kant tends to be associated with one or the other of these prevailing paradigms; either with the foundationalism of empiricism or read as a constructivist. But while Pring sees dualisms *between* these paradigms, I will point to dualist assumptions about mind and world inherent in *both* of them, revealing the extent of the (dualist) presuppositions that are reflected in typical characterisations of Kant in education.

Both Standish and Pring call on the philosophy of education to challenge such dualisms and reclaim a place for philosophy in educational research. This book responds to the challenge. A dualism between mind and the external world, mind and body, is rooted in the philosophy of Descartes, and is something Kant addresses and seeks to change with his critical philosophy. James Conant writes that ‘Kant's entire theoretical philosophy aims to think

through precisely this [dualist] schema as the source of a fundamental unclarity in modern philosophical thinking' (parenthesis added); indeed, Conant continues, 'it is nothing less than the primary purpose of his theoretical philosophy to dissolve the central philosophical assumption which gives rise to the standard interpretative schema in the first place—the idea that reason is added from the outside to our nature as finite sensory beings' (Conant, [2016](#), p. 89). Conant's remarks are indicative of the reading of Kant developed in this book, which stands in contrast to the familiar 'Kantian' picture in education, and provides the conceptual resources for rethinking the familiar dualisms referred to by Standish and Pring.

What is interesting in critique of the 'reductive' trend in education is the frequent reference to Kant as a philosophical source of it. With charges of an absolutist Reason, a mechanical rationality, a disembodied mind and a disconnect between thought and reality, Kant is routinely cast as the adversary of whatever theory is being presented. Many of the educational theories presented have been very influential and rightly so; in this book I do not engage with (or take a stand for/against) the positions these theorists take, rather I am interested in their interpretations of Kant. A look at some of the references to Kant provides a sense of his current status in educational theory.³

Paul Hirst tells us that it was his reading of Kant that motivated his influential *Forms of Knowledge* in the early days of modern British philosophy of education. He writes:

to acquire knowledge is to become aware of experience as structured, organized and made meaningful in some quite specific way, and the varieties of human knowledge constitute the highly developed forms in which man has found this possible. To acquire knowledge is to learn to see, to experience the world in a way otherwise unknown, and thereby to come to have a mind in a fuller sense. (1974, p. 31)⁴

This passage is in tune with the reading of Kant developed through the chapters. However, Hirst continues by distancing himself from Kant, rejecting the idea ‘that being rational in any sphere is a matter of adherence to a set of principles that are of their character invariant’, and rejecting ‘any elements in thought that can be known to be immune to change, making transcendental demands on us’ (pp. 92–93). Hirst is resisting for his own work the idea of an ahistorical rationalism that he associates with Kant, and which fits with the conventional ‘Kantian’ picture in education.⁵ This picture is, however, at odds with the Kant that can be found in contemporary readings and exegesis in mainstream philosophy.

Kant tends to be read as a constructivist or associated with epistemological foundationalism—which reflects the dominance of these prevailing ways of thinking about knowledge in education. For instance, Daniel Royer writes: ‘Certainly much of Kant's foundationalist epistemology has been refuted or corrected in the last century’ (2006, p. 61). And Wilfred Carr criticises ‘Kant's “foundationalist” philosophy’ with its ‘absolutist and *a priori* conception of reason’ and ‘disembodied rational autonomous subject’ (1995, p. 79). He writes of

Immanuel Kant's attempt to provide the philosophical foundations for universal principles of rational justification that are independent of particular historical, social or cultural circumstances and that are grounded in the capacity of enlightened human reason to achieve objectivity and truth. (2006, p. 143)

Kant's subject is portrayed as disembodied, and again reason and principles are seen as independent of culture and history. Feminist theories—making significant impact on epistemology since Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (1982)—also tend to be opposed to Kant's philosophy. Claudia Card criticises Kant for his disembedded reason and disregard of particular cultural circumstances (1996), and Lorraine Code similarly gives voice to the general antagonism towards Kant's view by feminist and postmodern thinkers (2005, 2006).

While some align Kant with traditional empiricism, many more in education read Kant as a constructivist. Their criticisms, however, are aimed at the same dualisms and detached conception of mind, whether in relation to knowledge or ethics. For instance, David Carr interprets Kant as 'thoroughgoingly constructivist' with a conception of reason as disembedded and internalistic, making for a disconnect between inner thought and outer reality (2003, 2007). He argues:

to the extent that moral judgements constitute a type of prescription that is utterly dissociated from the normal workaday motives, wants or inclinations of agents, they are entirely innocent of empirical content or any necessary connection with sensible experience. For Kant, then, morality requires to be understood in terms of the rational *imposition* of rules or principles or pure practical reason on the rough and tumble of human practical experience. (Carr, [2003](#), p. 94)⁶

A disconnect between mind and sensible experience is frequently noted, as is the imposition of rules or reason onto experience. Wolff-Michael Roth also portrays Kant as constructivist and as providing ‘an epistemological subject that has no hold in and on this actual world that we inhabit’ (2011a, p. 23). Mind, in Kant, is ‘rationalistic’ and ‘superior to the senses’ (2011b, p. 6), submitting them to order and taking ‘entire charge of the integration’ (p. 45). That mind is superior to the senses, detached from the world, and imposes rules on the rough and tumble of human experience again fits with, and reinforces, the typical picture of Kant that abounds.

Not all theorists writing in education are critics of Kant; a few have appropriated this typical picture—of mind ‘ordering’ experience and imposing rules and meaning—for philosophical support of their positions. David Jardine, for example, writes that human reason is, ‘as Kant defined it, a synthesizing faculty that, in the act of knowing something in the world, actively constructs orderliness out of the chaos of experience’ (2006, p. 23). Likewise, Ernst von Glasersfeld credits Kant for the idea that mind imposes meaning onto reality, for ‘we cannot even imagine what the structure of the real world might be like’ (1990, p. 2). David Elkind also credits Kant for the idea that ‘a child creates and re-creates reality out of his or her experiences with the environment’ (Elkind, [1989](#), p. 115).⁷ It will be argued that what these theorists who *appropriate* Kant have in common with the above *critics* of Kant is the fact that they employ the same metaphysical presuppositions that give rise to a dualism. Kant is ascribed a radical subjectivism, with mind characterised as constructing (ordering, structuring) meaning from received sense data and imposing this onto (an unknowable) reality. So, like the above critics, these theorists portray Kant's conception of mind along the lines of ‘mind makes nature’—with significant consequences for

theories of knowledge, perception, cognition and learning. Rather than challenge, then, these appropriations strengthen what has become the prevailing 'Kantian' picture.

What is most frequently referred to in this 'Kantian' picture is the dualism perceived to be at the heart of Kant's view. Roland Reichenbach suggests that postmodernists 'often refer to the aesthetic mode of judgement...but, of course, they wouldn't accept Kant's strict dualism of an empirical world and a world of reason' (1999, p. 241). Two worlds are posited. David Hamlyn assumes a dualism in arguing that physical objects 'are what Kant called 'things in themselves', forever unknowable and outside our experience', giving no grounds for belief (1970, p. 170). Wilfred Carr similarly criticises the dualism 'implicit in Kant's idea of a transcendental, noumenal "self" stipulating absolute standards to which the earth-bound, phenomenal self should conform' (1995, p. 38). The 'idea of the knowing subject, disengaged from the world', he argues, 'is a myth' (1995, pp. 79, 80). 'Two-self' characterisations are not unusual; Sally Sedgwick argues that for Kant 'the empirical self is not only split off from its noumenal counterpart, but also clearly subordinated to it' (1997, p. 80). John White similarly states that 'Kant's rationale for his view depends on his "two-world" view of man as consisting of a noumenal self and a phenomenal self'; and '[d]etached from desire, the concept of reason in both Kant and Peters becomes obscure, the transcendental arguments of *Ethics and Education* leaving the reader as unenlightened as Kant's delineation of the noumenal self in the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Groundwork*' (2005, p. 34). Whether it be for his view of knowledge or his ethics, it appears that contempt for Kant runs deep in educational theory.

But this Kant, with its detached conception of mind, stands in contrast to the Kant to be found in contemporary

mainstream philosophy. It is my view that these educational theorists are wrong to attribute the 'subject disengaged from the world' picture to Kant, instead of attributing it to the traditional empiricist (Cartesian) metaphysics from which it arises—a metaphysics that continues to implicitly prevail. The concepts and structure of Kant's arguments in his critical philosophy are complex, lengthy and sophisticated as he grapples with the metaphysics of his time, coming up with new concepts and terms to capture what he thinks is right and what wrong with this. It is the many distinctions he makes for fine-grained explanation that have been subject to dualist understandings. But read in a different light, Kant can be seen as a critic of (what has come to be known as) 'Kantianism'.⁸

In educational theory there is little exegetical work on Kant, indeed some see the notions of epistemology and metaphysics as outmoded and irrelevant. A few even have an aversion to theory itself: for instance, Wilfred Carr claims that educational theory, being deeply rooted in the foundationalist discourse of Enlightenment modernity, has run its course and should be brought to a 'dignified end' (2006, p. 150).⁹ Richard Smith notes that it has become common to read of the death of epistemology, and that it has lost its place in the philosophy of education 'in the face of scepticism about the extreme version of analytical philosophy—the view of concepts as stable and susceptible to definitive mapping' (2016, p. 272).¹⁰ But while in education Kant, along with epistemology generally, tends to be scorned or dismissed, in mainstream philosophy there has been a re-engagement with Kant and Hegel and flourishing work on German Idealist ideas. This was first prompted by John McDowell, with his *Mind and World* (1994), and Robert Brandom, with his *Making It Explicit* (1994) and *Articulating Reasons* (2000). McDowell draws on Kant to argue that the perennial dualism 'anxiety' of

traditional epistemology is an illusion, for if we conceive of mind and world differently there is no dualism. This is because 'Kant—to resort to a thumbnail caricature—established that the world...cannot be constitutively independent of the space of concepts, the space where subjectivity has its being' (McDowell, 1998, p. 306). That is to say, for Kant there is *no dualism* between mind and world—contrary to the typical 'Kantian' picture in education and the examples given above. And while the growing literature springing from fruitful exchanges between the analytic and German traditions is very varied, these theorists are not working with a view of concepts as ahistorical and stable or a disembodied rationality. When Brandom, for instance, teaches 'Kantian lessons about Mind, Meaning and Rationality' (2006), this is completely different from the 'Kantian' Kant of education. It seems to me that while the projects Smith and Carr pursue are clearly quite different from Kant's critical philosophy, they nevertheless adopt a position on the ongoing and developing thought about knowledge—what may be claimed of it, what may be argued is involved in it—in a process that is never completed. Whether comment, critique, theory or a position, worked out or suggestive, all these play a part in the open-ended process of developing ideas. My discussions through the chapters of Kant's terms and insights are at the same time an exploration of different ideas about mind, subjectivity and objectivity, perception and self as well as ideas about knowledge and concepts, and the role of education in all of these—contemporary ideas that contribute to the ongoing process in educational theory.

With his Copernican view, Kant radically shifted thought about what it is to be a knower. That is, he replaced a focus on the *success* (truth, justification) of representations, with a focus on how a representation can function at all; how

can a thought come to represent in the first place, how can it have objective content, questions that are conceptually prior to those of justification. As Brandom puts it, 'Kant wants to know what it is for mental states to *be*, or to *appear to us* to be, to function for us as, *representings* of represented objects. This question is more basic than that addressed by his predecessors' (2006, p. 2). Kant shifts attention to our distinctively human *capacity* for knowledge, and *Bildung* (education) is essential to developing this.¹¹ Kant takes over his 'capacities' approach to knowledge from Aristotle (Engstrom, 2006). Some educationalists have turned to Aristotle for richer conceptions of rationality and knowledge than those found in the current 'reductive' culture.¹² But Kant is normally associated with the latter and portrayed in *opposition* to Aristotle¹³ rather than as drawing on the *same* cognitive tradition. Despite similarities, however, there are differences, as Sebastian Rödl explains: 'Aristotle's metaphysics is not critical' like Kant's, because 'it did not occur to him that one might conceive the forms of thought he describes as projections onto a reality that in itself is alien to reason' (2012, p. 43). Coming later in history, Kant *was* faced with the (dualist) development of thought after Descartes, which he addresses with his critical philosophy. The problem, to reiterate my point, has been that the conceptual distinctions Kant makes—to capture and articulate what he takes as right and wrong with the historically existing (empiricist and rationalist) approaches of his time—have tended to be interpreted through the very dualist assumptions that his critical work is so useful for exposing.

In the Anglophone analytic tradition, with its strong 'scientific' strand of thinking, Kant has had little impact. Brandom sums this up, in his usual colourful way:

Developments over the past four decades have secured Immanuel Kant's status as being for contemporary philosophers what the sea was for Swinburne: the great, gray mother of us all. And Kant mattered as much for the classical American pragmatists as he does for us today. But we look back at that sepia-toned age across an extended period during which Anglophone philosophy largely wrote Kant out of its canon. The founding ideology of Bertrand Russell and G.E. Moore, articulating the rationale and fighting faith for the rising tide of analytic philosophy, was forged in a recoil from the perceived defects of a British idealism inspired by Hegel. Mindful of the massive debt evidently and self-avowedly owed by Hegel to Kant, and putting aside neo-Kantian readings of Kant as an empiricist philosopher of science that cast him in a light they would have found more favourable, Russell and Moore diagnosed the idealist rot as having set in already with Kant. For them, and for many of their followers down through the years, the progressive current in philosophy should be seen to have run directly from Locke, Leibniz, and Hume to Mill and Frege, without any dangerous diversion into the oxbow of German idealism. (2013, p. 107)

But while on the one hand there is growing appreciation of German idealism in mainstream analytic philosophy, on the other hand, there is the growth of scientific naturalism. This science-based approach dispenses altogether with the dualism problem (of how to fit a non-material mind into an external material world) for the concept of mind is eliminated entirely from explanations, which are given using the concepts of the natural sciences. Naturalism has become an orthodox approach: 'Naturalism has become a slogan in the name of which the vast majority of work in analytic philosophy is pursued' (Mario de Caro and David Macarthur, 2004, p. 2). For examples, see the work of Jerry

Fodor, Paul and Patricia Churchland, Daniel Dennett and Mario Bunge.¹⁴ However, Robert Hanna argues that this scientific trend is a ‘disastrously regressive turn in philosophy’, which amounts to ‘the *Copernican Devolution*, a retrograde evolution in philosophy that brings us back, full circle, to naïve, pre-Kantian, pre-critical conceptions of mind, knowledge, and world’ (2016a, p. 2). Like Brandom, he argues for the need to learn Kant's lessons.

There are of course scholars of Kant in the analytic tradition; these include Henry Allison, Karl Ameriks, Paul Guyer, Allen Wood, David Velleman, Christine Korsgaard, Onora O'Neill, to name a few. Peter Strawson's reading remains very influential, as does Richard Rorty's profound critique.¹⁵ Also, Wilfred Sellars criticises foundationalist epistemology with a powerful ‘Myth of the Given’ argument that mirrors Kant's own (1956, 1967). In the contemporary literature I draw on, there are references to Anglophone interpretations of Kant that are referred to as dualist or ‘two-world’ readings. Robert Greenberg, for instance, argues that ‘almost without exception’, Kant is read as being concerned with the conditions for possible experience, or the possibility of empirical knowledge, and contends that ‘this view of the *Critique* reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the work’ (2001, p. 4). Pirmin Stekeler-Weithofer also argues that ‘[t]here are widespread misreadings of Kant's philosophy, especially in Anglophone traditions’ (2010b, p. 5). Kant's sources of knowledge (intuition and spontaneity, or sensibility and the understanding) tend to be read as two separate entities or two worlds (Rüdiger Bubner, [2002](#); Andrea Kern, [2006](#), 2017; Stephen Engstrom, [2006](#); James Conant, [2016](#)). Graham Bird writes of the traditional tendency to ‘ascribe to Kant an exhaustive idealist dualism of mental states, “ideas,” and transcendent things in themselves and then note the inevitable tensions and contradictions which arise

from Kant's apparent attempts to escape from that tradition' (2006, xii). Bird urges us 'to abandon the temptation to understand Kant in a traditionalist way' and to avoid the 'Cartesianism which still haunts contemporary philosophy' (p. xiii). Dualist readings 'cannot be squared', Stephen Engstrom similarly argues, 'with what Kant actually says about theoretical cognition and the way understanding and sensibility cooperate in it' and claims that a 'proper appreciation' of the capacities 'eliminates the appearance of dualism' (2006, p. 2). In this literature, it is the *unity* of thought and reality, mind and world that are apparent. For instance, Dieter Henrich (an eminent Kant scholar) talks of the 'indissoluble' correlation between the unity of thought and unity of reality (1994). Rödl argues that 'a substance and its form enter thought together' (2012, p. 205), and Stekeler-Weithofer makes it clear that 'our social conceptual distinctions and our (joint) perceptual access to the object are "grown together", and embedded in our practices' (2010a, p. 15). Understanding Kant's terms differently not only eliminates the appearance of a dualism, as Engstrom says, but offers to educationalists a different way of thinking about concepts, knowledge and mind (and related concepts such as subjectivity and objectivity, and cognition).

Some of these new developments in mainstream philosophy are beginning to make inroads into educational theory, particularly through the ongoing work of Jan Derry and David Bakhurst. Derry, for instance, draws on Brandom and McDowell for her work on inferentialism, which she brings to bear on educational issues (2009, 2014, 2016, 2017; Derry and Bakker, [2011](#)). And McDowell is an important influence on David Bakhurst whose significant contributions to education include *The Formation of Reason* (2011) and a variety of papers and seminars (2009, 2014, 2016). This work, however, draws principally on Brandom

and McDowell; there has not been a focus on Kant *per se*—so in educational theory, as far as Kant is concerned, the dualist ‘Kantian’ picture remains in force.

In order to make explicit some of the presuppositions through which, it is argued, Kant has typically been read and portrayed in education, some philosophy at a metaphysical level is necessary. This is the work of Part One of this book. McDowell is used to expose the conceptual errors that give rise to the dualism ‘anxiety’ inherent in the traditional way of thinking about knowledge. While McDowell argues that the dualism rests on an illusion, he also writes that ‘[i]t matters that the illusion is capable of gripping us’ (1996, p. xi). This is why I give much attention in the course of these chapters to loosening this grip by introducing different ways to think about Kant's central concepts. The reading that is developed through Part One is then used in Part Two to challenge the widespread ‘Kantian’ picture in education and address criticisms of intellectualism and a detached mind. At the same time, Part Two further elaborates the reading being presented to show how Kant's conception of mind can be understood as embodied, with his subject always immersed in and responsive to a particular context.

Reading Kant anew means setting aside some deep-seated assumptions as well as familiar understandings of concepts, and thinking of them in a different way. This is no easy task. In fact, this is an extremely difficult task, as our ordinary English understandings of such words and concepts naturally come to mind. We understand what we read or hear through our prior understanding of what these concepts capture (even when reading unfamiliar text), and this is perfectly natural. But what can get lost are different understandings of what a concept *can* capture, which can vary in different languages and traditions. An example of this is given by Standish, who talks of the dominance of the