

Immanuel Kant meets Quantum Mechanics - Bob Clarke, May 2024

Immanuel Kant was born 300 years ago on 22nd April 1724 *,
so it is appropriate to celebrate his Birthday by reviewing aspects of his Philosophy.

What would Kant have made of Quantum Mechanics? Perhaps a more important philosophical question to ask is 'How can Kant's Critical Philosophy help us to understand the fundamental physics of our own day?'. There is no doubt that we need to update some of the 'Critical' position that Kant developed in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR - 1781 & 1787) - we must take a *Neo-Kantian* approach - but I will argue that many of Kant's core ideas, particularly his '*Copernican Revolution*', and his positions on Time, Imagination and Causality, provide valuable insights into present day fundamental physical science and metaphysics. We should not forget that Kant made original contributions to the physical sciences in his '*Pre-Critical*' years (roughly 1747-1770) and was not afraid to revise and correct his own earlier thought. Kant, in the CPR, invited enlightened followers to join in with his Critical enterprise as fellow workers to advance our understanding of the world, so we should be happy to take up his invitation and investigate how modern physics and Kantian metaphysics, working together, can help us to achieve that aim.

* He died on 12th February 1804 – a little short of his 80th Birthday. His last words were (said to be): '*Es ist gut*'.

'For reason has no dictatorial authority; its verdict is always simply the agreement of free citizens, of whom each one must be permitted to express, without let or hindrance, his objection or even his veto', CPR A738/B766.

'Out of the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made'
Immanuel Kant, '*Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*' (1784).

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