

The Reception of the Notion of Soul as Vis Representativa in Kant's Pre-critical Philosophy

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Abstract : The notion of the representational soul is widely discussed within the German metaphysical landscape of the 18th century. The enunciation of the notion implies, within the 18th-century German rationalism, a number of generally accepted metaphysical notions. However, in the pre-critical writings of Immanuel Kant, it is possible to identify a critical stance towards this notion. The paper thematizes two central aspects: on the one hand, it discusses the notion of the vis of the representative soul, and on the other, it addresses the question of the fundamental forces (Grundkraefte) of the soul. The aim of the present paper is to show how Kant, in the Nova Dilucidatio and in his Lectures on Metaphysics, probably delivered in the mid-1770s, despite the Wolffian terminology he employed in the field of psychology, criticizes the central aspects connected with the notion of the soul as a representative force. Beginning with a critical analysis of the relationship between Kantian ideas and those of some key exponents of German metaphysical rationalism, it emerges how the Kantian position stands as an alternative to its own historical context.

Keywords : German metaphysics, soul, power, pre-critical philosophy

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