

The World as Will and Presentation

Arthur Schopenhauer

1818

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[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Every four-point ellipsis indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Longer omissions are reported between brackets in normal-sized type. —Schopenhauer gives many quotations in Greek and/or Latin; they will be given in English, usually without mention of the other languages. —The division into Books, and their titles, are his; so (in the Books) is the division into numbered chapters, but not their titles, which are added in the present version, as are the occasional cross-headings in SMALL CAPITALS. Footnotes between [square brackets] are editorial; others are Schopenhauer's. In the 'Appendix' on Kant, the chapter-numbers as well as their titles are added in the present version.—The work consisted of two volumes, of which the second is a set of commentaries on the first. Most of the philosophical world's interest has been focussed on the first, which is all that is presented here. —The work's title has most often been given in English as *The World as Will and Representation*; the present version's 'Presentation' follows the 2008 translation by Richard E. Aquila (published by Longman). This has found favour with several writers on Schopenhauer, largely because 'Representation' inevitably carries the idea of a representation *of something*, which is flatly contrary to Schopenhauer's view. Aquila, whose generous help has contributed much to the present version, gives on his pages xii–xvi a different and subtler objection to 'Representation'. From now on, Schopenhauer will be referred to as AS.

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Glossary

accident: Translates *Accidenz*, a technical term meaning ‘non-essential quality’.

affection: Translates *Affektion*. Although German dictionaries don’t support this, it seems likely that sometimes when AS speaks of an *Affektion* of x, he means only a *state* of x.

disinterested: This text uses the word always in its actual, proper meaning, namely that of ‘not *self*-interested’.

exists: This usually translates *da ist*, literally ‘is there’.

GP: Used here as short-hand for ‘Grounding Principle’, which translates *Satz von Grunde*. In English this is usually called the ‘principle of sufficient reason’, following Leibniz’s *raison* and *ratio*. Kant and AS use the German *Grund* (Leibniz did not write philosophy in German). The principle says that everything must have a reason or a cause.

identical: Translates *identisch*. There’s no way to avoid this translation, but quite often AS doesn’t mean ‘identical’ but ‘closely alike’. Similarly with ‘identity’. For example, ‘identical things’ in chapter 14.

individuation-maker: See the explanation early in chapter 23.

Knowledge: This word, with its initial capital, translates *Wissen*, which for AS is abstract knowledge that is exclusively in the province of reason. (He isn’t rigorous about this, however. For example, in chapter 14 he says that history is a case of *Wissen*.) The uncapitalised ‘knowledge’ translates *Erkenntniss*, standing for knowledge generally, of which Knowledge is one species, the others relating to perception, intuition, experience etc.

liberum arbitrium indifferentiae: AS uses this Latin phrase in its meaning ‘freedom to go either way’.

occult qualities: Hidden qualities; by AS’s time the phrase had become a term of derision in the physical sciences, standing for mysterious ‘forces’ for which no explanation can be given.

peculiar: To say that property P is peculiar to individual x or species y is to say that only x or the members of y have P.

penetration: This means ‘*seeing* through’ (German *Durchschauung*), not ‘getting through’ or ‘piercing’.

per accidens: In AS’s use of this scholastic technical term, to say that something happens to x *per accidens* is to say that its cause lies in x’s circumstances, not its own essential nature.

petitio principii: The Latin name for the fallacy of *begging the question* = arguing for a conclusion which is one of the premises. The current use of the phrase to mean *raising the question* is a product of pandemic journalistic ignorance.

positive: Translates *positiv*, which enters into two very different contrasts: **(i)** the positive/negative contrast, and **(ii)** the contrast between institutions that are man-made (*positiv*) and ones that are somehow established by nature without human intervention. Where it is clear that **(ii)** alone is in play, *positiv* is translated by ‘man-made’. In a few places there are indications of **(ii)** but ‘man-made’ doesn’t work right.

Realität: When used as a concrete noun, this is left untranslated because the only tolerable translation for it is ‘reality’, and that is reserved for *Wirklichkeit*. For AS’s distinction between these, see page 13, especially the footnote. When

Realität occurs as an abstract noun, it is translated by 'realness'.

shape: translates *Gestalt*. A better translation would be 'form', but that is used for AS's *Form*; and there are places—e.g. on page 27—where the two have to be kept apart.

speculative: Theoretical, often with an emphasis on non-normative; 'speculative philosophy' on page 34 refers to the whole of philosophy other than ethics and aesthetics.

subject of: Throughout this work, the 'subject of a cognitive state is not •what the state (belief, knowledge etc.) is *about* but rather •the thing that *is in* the state, the thing that believes, knows etc.

Upanishads: The part of the Vedas (see next item) that discuss meditation, philosophy and spiritual knowledge.

Vedas: A body of religious texts originating in ancient India.

Appendix: Critique of Kantian philosophy

It is the privilege of great genius, especially of genius that opens up a new path, to commit great faults with impunity. (Voltaire)

72. Introduction

It is much easier to display the faults and errors in the work of a great mind than to give a clear and full exposition of its value. For the faults are individual and finite, so that they can be completely surveyed. Whereas the stamp that genius impresses on its works is that what is excellent in them is unfathomable and inexhaustible; so that they become never-aging teachers through many centuries. The completed masterpiece of a truly great mind will always have such a deep and powerful effect on the entire human race that there's no way of calculating how far—down the centuries and across the nations—its illuminating influence can reach. This will always be so; for however cultivated and rich the times may have been in which the masterpiece arose, genius always rises like a palm-tree above the ground in which it is rooted.

But a deeply penetrating and widespread effect of this sort cannot occur suddenly, because of the great distance between the genius and ordinary men. The knowledge that this individual has at *one* period drawn directly from life and the world—won and set forth for others as something won and readied for them—can't become the possession of mankind right away; for mankind has less power to receive than the genius has to give. Rather, even after a successful battle with unworthy opponents who challenge the immortal thing's life at its very birth, wanting to nip in the bud the salvation of man (like the serpents in the cradle of Hercules), that knowledge still has to

- wander the byways of countless false interpretations and distorted applications,
- survive attempts to unite it with old errors, and so
- live in a state of battle

until a new, unprejudiced generation arises for it, a generation which, even from its youth, receives waters from that well through a thousand derivative channels, assimilates them bit by bit, and so comes to share in the benefit that was destined to flow to mankind from that great mind. Thus slowly goes the education of the human race, of that weak yet refractory pupil of the genius.

So too, it will take time for the entire force and importance of Kant's doctrine to become obvious, which it will do once the spirit of the times—having been gradually reshaped by the influence of that doctrine, altered in its most important and innermost features—comes to bear living witness to the power of that colossal mind. But I don't want here in rash anticipation of the *Zeitgeist* to take on the thankless role of Calchas and Cassandra.¹ But I must be allowed, in accordance with what has been said, to regard Kant's works as still very new, while many nowadays view them as already antiquated—indeed have laid them aside as over and done with; and others, made bold by that, ignore them altogether and brazenly go on philosophising about God and the soul under the presuppositions of the old dogmatic realism and its scholastic teaching. It's like wanting to make the doctrines of the alchemists hold good in the context of modern chemistry! Anyway, Kant's works don't need my feeble praise, but will

¹ [Prophets in Greek mythology.]

themselves eternally praise their master and live forever on earth—not perhaps in his letter but in his spirit.

Of course, if we look back at the immediate upshot of his doctrines, and thus on efforts and events in the domain of philosophy during the time since he wrote, we find confirmation of something very disheartening that Goethe said: ‘Just as the water that is displaced by a ship immediately flows back in behind it, so when great minds have pushed error aside and made room for themselves, it very quickly closes in behind them according to a law of nature.’ Yet this period has been only an episode, which is to be reckoned as part of the fate I have referred to that befalls all new and great knowledge; an episode that is now unmistakably near its end, for the persistently driven bubble eventually bursts. There is a growing general awareness that true and serious philosophy still stands where Kant left it. At any rate, I cannot see that between Kant and myself anything has been done in philosophy; so I regard myself as his immediate successor.

What I intend in this Appendix to my work is really only to justify my doctrine in respect of its many points of disagreement—even of contradiction—with the Kantian philosophy. A discussion of this is necessary because my train of thought, different as its content is from the Kantian, is obviously under its influence, necessarily presupposes it, and takes it as a starting-point; and I confess that what is best in my system is due, second only to the impression of the perceptual world, to the works of Kant as well as to the sacred writings of the Hindus and to Plato.

But I can’t justify my side in the disagreements between myself and Kant without accusing him of error and exposing mistakes that he has made. In this Appendix, therefore, I must proceed against Kant in a thoroughly polemical manner and indeed with seriousness and with all-in effort; for that’s

the only way to get rid of the error that clings to Kant’s doctrine and make its truth shine more brightly and stand more securely. So it is not to be expected that my sincere reverence for Kant should extend to his weaknesses and mistakes, leading me to expose them with the most cautious indulgence, using circumlocutions that would inevitably make my writing weak and faint. Such indulgence is needed for the living, because human frailty cannot endure even the most just refutation of an error unless it is accompanied by soothing and flattery, and hardly even then; and a teacher of the age and benefactor of humanity at least deserves that we indulge his human weakness so as to spare him pain. But a dead man has cast off this weakness: his achievement stands firm; time will more and more purify it from every overestimation and devaluation. His mistakes must be separated from it, rendered harmless, and then consigned to oblivion. Therefore, in the polemic against Kant that I’m about to begin I have my eye solely on his mistakes and weaknesses, confront them with hostility, and wage a relentless war of extermination against them, constantly concerned not to shelter them under indulgence but rather to set them in the brightest light so as the more surely to annihilate them. For the reasons I have given, I am not conscious of injustice or ingratitude toward Kant. Still, so as to prevent anyone from seeing malice in my proceedings, I want first to display my sincere reverence for and gratitude toward Kant by briefly expounding his main achievement as I see it; and I’ll do this at such a level of generality that I’m not required to touch on the points on which I must later contradict him.

73. Kant and his predecessors

Kant's greatest achievement is his distinction between phenomenon and thing in itself—on the basis of a demonstration that between things and us there always stands the *intellect*, so that things cannot be known as they may be in themselves. He was led on this path by Locke (see Kant's *Prolegomena* §13). Locke had shown that the secondary qualities of things—such as sound, smell, colour, hardness, softness, smoothness, and the like—being based on states of the senses, don't belong to objective bodies, to things in themselves, to which he attributed only the primary qualities, i.e. those that merely presuppose space and impenetrability, thus extension, shape, solidity, number, mobility. But this easily discoverable Lockean distinction, which remains merely on the surface of things, was only a youthful prelude, so to speak, to the Kantian distinction. Starting from an incomparably higher standpoint, Kant explains all of what Locke had allowed to count as primary qualities, i.e. qualities of •the thing in itself, as also belonging only to •its appearance in our faculty of apprehension, and indeed just because we know *a priori* of their conditions—space, time, and causality. Thus Locke had removed from the thing in itself the share that the sense organs have in its appearance. Kant, however, also removed from it the brain-functions' share (although not under this name), thus giving the distinction between *phenomenon* and *thing in itself* an infinitely greater significance and a very much deeper meaning. For this purpose he had to take in hand the important separating of our *a priori* knowledge from knowledge that is *a posteriori*, something that had never been done before him with adequate strictness and completeness or with a clear understanding of what was going on; this accordingly became the main subject of his

profound investigations.

Now here I want to note at once that Kant's philosophy has a threefold relation to that of his predecessors: **(i)** confirming and broadening **Locke's** philosophy, as we have just seen; **(ii)** correcting and using **Hume's**, a relation that is most clearly expressed in the preface to the *Prolegomena*—

(that finest and most comprehensible of all Kant's main writings, which ought to be read much more than it is, for it immensely facilitates the study of his philosophy);

and **(iii)** a decidedly polemical and destructive relation to the **Leibniz-Wolffian** philosophy. One should be familiar with all three doctrines before proceeding to a study of Kantian philosophy.

If (as I have said) the distinction between •phenomenon and •thing in itself—thus the doctrine of the utter *diversity* of the ideal and real—is the hallmark of the Kantian philosophy, the assertion of the absolute *identity* of these two which appeared soon afterwards is a sad example of proof of what I quoted Goethe as saying a page or two back; all the more so as it rested on nothing but the humbug of 'intellectual intuition' and was accordingly only a return to the crudeness of the common viewpoint, masked under the imposing ways of elegant airs, bombast, and gibberish. It became the point of departure worthy of the still grosser nonsense of the plodding and stupid Hegel.

·KANT'S RENOVATION OF ALREADY EXISTING DOCTRINES·

Kant's separation of the phenomenon from the thing in itself, understood in the way I have explained, far surpassed in the depth and thoughtfulness of its grounding everything that had gone before it. (It was also infinitely consequential in its results; ·I'll come to that shortly·.) Kant took a truth that Plato tirelessly repeated, and presented it

- entirely in his own terms,
- in an utterly new manner,
- from a new angle, and
- on a new path.

Plato usually put it thus: This world that appears to the senses has no true *being* but only a ceaseless *becoming*; it is and also is not; and apprehension of it is not so much knowledge as delusion. This is also what he put in mythical form in the most important passage in all his works (*Republic*, beginning of Book 7, mentioned early in chapter 31 above, saying that men who are tightly bound in a dark cave see neither genuine original light nor actual things, but only the scant light of the fire in the cave and shadows of the actual things that are passing in front of the fire behind their backs; yet they think the shadows are *Realität*, and that determining the succession of them is true wisdom.

The same truth, expressed again in an entirely different way, is also one of the main doctrines of the Vedas and Puranas, the doctrine concerning Maya, by which was understood what Kant calls phenomenon as opposed to thing in itself.¹ For the work of Maya is said to be this visible world in which we exist, which is

- a conjured-up bit of magic,
- an insubstantial semblance with no nature in itself,
- like an optical illusion or a dream,
- a veil that envelops human consciousness,
- a Something of which it is equally false and true to say that it is and that it is not.

•HOW KANT IMPROVED ON THOSE•

But Kant not only expressed the same doctrine in an utterly new and original manner, but made it a proved and indis-

putable truth by means of the calmest and most temperate exposition, whereas Plato and the Indians had based their assertions merely on a general perception of the world, presented them as the direct output of their consciousness, and expressed them in a way that was mythical and poetic rather than philosophical and clear. In this respect, they relate to Kant as the Pythagoreans Hicetas, Philolaus, and Aristarchus—who had already maintained the movement of the earth around a resting sun—relate to Copernicus. Such distinct knowledge and calm, thoughtful exposition of this dream-like nature of the whole world is really the basis of the whole Kantian philosophy; it is its soul and its greatest merit. He accomplished this by dissecting and showing us piece by piece the entire machinery of our knowledge faculty, by means of which the phantasmagoria of the objective world is brought about, doing this with admirable thoughtfulness and skill. All earlier western philosophy, appearing unspeakably clumsy as compared with the Kantian, had failed to recognise this truth, and for just that reason had always spoken as if in a dream. It was Kant who first suddenly awakened them from it; and therefore the last sleepers (Mendelssohn) called him ‘the all-destroyer’. He showed that the laws that reign with unbreakable necessity in existence, i.e. in experience in general, are not to be used to derive or explain existence itself; and thus that their validity is only relative, i.e. comes into play only after existence—the world of experience in general—is already posited and before us; so that these laws cannot be our guide when we come to explain the existence of the world and of ourselves. All earlier western philosophers had fancied •that these laws which govern phenomena—and all of which (time and space as well as causality and inference) I sum up in formulating the GP—were absolute laws

¹ [See the final paragraph of chapter 37.]

conditioned by nothing, *aeternae veritates* [Latin for 'eternal truths'], •that the world itself existed only in consequence of and in conformity with them; and therefore •that under their guidance the whole riddle of the world must be capable of solution. The assumptions made for this purpose (criticised by Kant under the name of 'ideas of reason') really only served to raise the mere phenomenon (the work of Maya, the 'shadow-world' of Plato) to the level of the one highest *Realität*, to set it in the place of the innermost and true essence of things, thereby making real knowledge of this impossible; that is, in a word, to put the dreamers still more soundly to sleep. Kant showed those laws, and consequently the world itself, to be conditioned by the subject's kind of knowledge; from which it followed that however far one might go in inquiring and inferring under their guidance, one wouldn't advance a step towards the main thing, i.e. towards knowledge of the nature of the world in itself and apart from presentation, but would only move like a squirrel in a treadmill. So one can compare all the dogmatists to people who thought that if they went straight ahead long enough they would reach the end of the world; but Kant then circumnavigated the world and showed that, because it is round, one cannot escape it by horizontal movement, but that by perpendicular movement this may be possible.¹ One can also say that Kant's doctrine provides the insight that the end and beginning of the world is to be sought not beyond but within us.

But all of this rests on the basic distinction between **a** dogmatic philosophy and **b** critical (or transcendental) philosophy. Anyone who wants to make this quite clear to himself, and embody it in an example, can do that in all

brevity by reading, as a specimen of a dogmatic philosophy, Leibniz's essay 'The Ultimate Origin of Things'. Here in a quite proper realistic-dogmatic manner, using the ontological and cosmological proofs of the existence of God, the origin and excellent character of the world are demonstrated *a priori* on the basis of *veritates aeternae*. It is mentioned in passing that experience reveals the exact opposite of the excellence of the world here demonstrated, whereupon experience is told that it understands nothing about this and should keep its mouth shut when philosophy has spoken *a priori*.

Now, with Kant, the critical philosophy has appeared as the opponent of this whole dogmatic method. It •takes for its problem those *veritates aeternae* that serve as the foundation of every such dogmatic structure, •investigates their origin, and •finds it in the human head, where they arise from the forms which belong specifically to it, and which it carries in itself for the purpose of comprehending an objective world. Thus here in the brain is the quarry that provides the material for those proud dogmatic constructions. But because to attain to this result the critical philosophy had to go beyond the *veritates aeternae* on which all preceding dogmatism was based, so as to make them the very object of its investigation, it became *transcendental*² philosophy. It follows from this that the objective world, as we know it, does not belong to the essence of the *thing in itself*, but is its mere phenomenon, conditioned by those very forms that lie *a priori* in the human intellect (i.e. brain); so it—the objective world—can contain nothing but phenomena.

Kant admittedly did not get as far as knowing that the phenomenon is the world as presentation and the thing in itself is will. •(i)• But he did show that the phenomenal

¹ [This sentence is a kind of joke. AS is not soberly saying that Kant showed anything about the shape of our globe.]

² [*transscendentale*; from Latin *trans scandare* = 'to climb beyond'.]

world is conditioned by the subject as much as by the object; and by isolating the most general forms of the world's phenomenon, i.e. the presentation, he showed that we can recognise these forms not only by starting from the object but just as well by starting from the subject, and can survey them in the whole of their lawful character, because they are really the common boundary between object and subject; and he concluded that following this boundary never enables us to penetrate into the inner being of the object or the subject, and consequently never lets us know the essence of the world, the thing in itself.

He derived the *thing in itself* not in the correct way (as I will soon show) but with help from an inconsistency that he had to pay the penalty for through frequent and incontrovertible attacks on this chief part of his doctrine. He didn't recognise the thing in itself directly in *will*; **(ii)** but he took a great, ground-breaking step toward this recognition by depicting the undeniable moral significance of human action as entirely distinct from the laws of the phenomenon, independent of them and and never explicable in accordance with them, but as something that immediately touches the thing in itself: this is the second main point about his achievement.

(iii) The third is utter overthrow of scholastic philosophy—a term that I use here designate the whole of the period beginning with the Church Father Augustine and ending just before Kant. For the chief characteristic of scholasticism is the one that was very accurately stated by Tennemann: *the prevailing religion's guardianship over philosophy*, leaving nothing for philosophy to do but proving and embellishing the main dogmas prescribed to it by that religion. The true scholastics, up to Suarez, confess this openly; subsequent philosophers do it more unconsciously, or without admitting it. It is generally thought that Scholastic

philosophy extended only to about a hundred years before Descartes, and and that he began an entirely new epoch of free inquiry, independent of all doctrines of positive faith; but in fact no such thing is attributable to Descartes and his successors, but only a semblance of it and at best an attempt at it. Descartes was a highly exceptional mind, who—considering the times he lived in—accomplished a great deal. But if we set this consideration aside and measure him for the alleged •liberation of thought from all fetters and •initiation of a new period of unprejudiced independent inquiry, we have to find that—with his scepticism lacking in true seriousness, adopted and discarded so quickly and so clumsily—he indeed puts on airs as if he would once and for all throw off all the early-implanted opinions of his time and his nation, but he does this only momentarily for show, in order to take them up again at once and maintain them even more firmly; and so have all of his successors up to Kant. Most applicable to a 'free independent thinker' of this stripe is the verse by Goethe:

Saving your gracious presence, he to me
A long-legged grasshopper appears to be,
That leaping flies, and flying leaps,
And in the grass to the same old ditty keeps.

Kant had grounds for putting on airs as if he too only meant things this way. But the supposed leap—which was permitted because of course it was 'known' to lead back into the grass—this time turned out to be a flight, and those who stand below have only to follow it, and can never recapture him.

So Kant ventured, on the basis of his doctrine, to show the impossibility of proving those dogmas that were supposed to have been proved so often. **Speculative theology** and the **rational psychology** connected with it received their death-

blow from him. Since then, they have vanished from German philosophy. Don't be misled by the fact that here and there the word is retained after the thing has been abandoned, or that some impoverished philosophy professor has the fear of his lord¹ before his eyes and leaves the truth to take care of itself. The size of this achievement of Kant's can be appreciated only by someone who has observed the harmful influence of those conceptions on natural science as well as philosophy, in all the writers of the 17th and 18th centuries, even the best of them. In German writings in natural science, the change in tone and metaphysical background that has appeared since Kant is striking; before him, the situation here was the same as it still is in England!

The size of this achievement of Kant's is connected with the fact that all the preceding philosophy (ancient, medieval, and modern) had been dominated by an unthinking adherence to the laws of the phenomenon, elevation of these laws to the position of eternal truths and thereby the raising of fleeting phenomena to the position of true essence of the world—in short, *realism* undisturbed in its delusion by any reflection. Berkeley, like Malebranche before him, had already recognised the one-sidedness, indeed the falsity of that philosophy; but he couldn't overthrow it, because his attack was limited to a single point. So it was left to Kant to enable the idealistic point of view to be dominant in Europe, at least in philosophy; the point of view which throughout all non-Moslem Asia, and indeed essentially, is that of religion. So before Kant we were in time; now time is in us, etc.

Ethics was also treated in accordance with laws of the phenomenon by that realistic philosophy, which takes those laws to be absolute, even applicable to the *thing in itself*. So it based ethics

- sometimes on a doctrine of happiness,
- sometimes on the will of the Creator, and
- finally on the concept of *perfection*.

This conception, taken by itself, is entirely empty and lacking in content, because it designates a mere relation that gets its meaning from the things it is applied to. For 'to be perfect' means nothing more than 'to correspond to some concept hereby presupposed and given'; and the concept must be presented in advance, because without it 'perfection' is an unknown quantity and consequently says *nothing* when expressed by itself. Someone might want to make the concept of *humanity* a tacit presupposition here, and accordingly set *striving for human perfection* as his moral principle; but then he is only saying 'Human beings ought to be as they ought to be'—and we are no wiser than before. In fact, 'perfect' is nearly a mere synonym for 'complete', for it signifies that in a given case or individual all the predicates that lie in the concept of its species are actually present. So the concept of 'perfection', when used simply and *in abstracto*, is a word empty of thought, and the same applies to talk of a 'most perfect being' and so on. It is all mere word-mongering. Nevertheless, in the last century this concept of perfection and imperfection had become common coin; it was indeed the hinge on which all moralising and even theologising turned. It was on everyone's lips, so that eventually real mischief was done with it. We see even the best writers of the time, such as Lessing, lamentably entangled in perfections and imperfections and thrashing about with them. Any thinking person would at least obscurely feel that this concept has no positive content because like an algebraic sign it signifies a mere relation *in abstracto*.

Kant, as I have said, completely separated the undeniably

¹ [meaning 'his employer'.]

great **a** ethical significance of actions from **b** the phenomenon and its laws, and showed **a** the former as directly bearing on *the thing in itself*, the innermost nature of the world, whereas **b** the latter—time and space and everything that fills them and is ordered within them following causal laws—are to be viewed as a shifting and insubstantial dream. . . .

That Kant's great accomplishments had to be accompanied by great errors can be appreciated on purely historical grounds: although he brought about the greatest revolution in philosophy, putting an end to the *scholasticism* (using this term in the broad sense I have indicated) that had lasted for fourteen centuries, thus beginning an entirely new third epoch in world philosophy,¹ the immediate upshot of his appearance was almost purely negative, not positive, because he didn't present a complete new system that his followers could at least have held onto for a while; so everyone noticed that something great had happened, but nobody quite knew what it was. They saw of course that the whole of previous philosophy had been fruitless dreaming from which the new age was now awakening; but they didn't know what they should now hold to. A great void, a great need, had come on the scene; even the general public was aroused. Occasioned by this fact, but not impelled by inner drive and a feeling of force. . . ., men with no exceptional talent made various weak, absurd, indeed sometimes crazy attempts to fill the void; and the now-aroused public listened to them with the great patience that is to be found only in Germany.

The same thing must once have happened in nature, when a great revolution altered the whole surface of the earth, land and sea changed places, and the scene was cleared for a new creation. It took a long time for nature to produce a new series of lasting forms, each in harmony with itself and with

all the others. During that time there appeared strange, monstrous organisms that lacked harmony internally and among themselves, and so could not survive for long, but whose still existing remains bring us memorials of that vacillation and effort on the part of newly forming nature.

We all know that an entirely similar crisis and an age of tremendous monstrosities was brought forth by Kant in philosophy; and that allows us to infer that his achievement can't have been perfect, and must have been burdened with great defects. . . . I want now to track these down.

74. Flaws in Kant's philosophy

We should start with the fundamental thought underlying the intention of the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a whole—making it clear for ourselves, and examining it.

Kant adopted the standpoint of his predecessors, the dogmatic philosophers, and so he started out as they did from the following presuppositions. **(1)** Metaphysics is the science of that which lies beyond the possibility of all experience. **(2)** Such a science can never be achieved using principles that are themselves first drawn from experience (*Prolegomena* §1); the only thing that can reach further than possible experience is what we know *before* all experience and thus *independently of* it. **(3)** Within our faculty of reason, some principles of this sort are actually to be found; they are comprehended under the name 'knowledge through pure reason'.

Kant goes this far with his predecessors, but here they part company. They say:

These principles, or items of knowledge through pure reason, are expressions of absolute possibility of

¹ [The first being ancient philosophy.]

things, *aeternae veritates*, sources of ontology; they stand *above* the world-order, as fate stood above the gods of the ancients.'

Kant says:

They are mere forms of our intellect, laws not of the existence of things but of their presentation to us, so they apply merely to our apprehension of things and can't extend beyond the possibility of experience (see objective **(1)** above). For the *a priori* nature of these forms of knowledge, since it can only rest on their subjective origin, is just what cuts us off for ever from knowledge of the nature of things in themselves, and confines us to a world of mere phenomena, so that we can't know—*a posteriori*, let alone *a priori*—things as they may be in themselves. So metaphysics is impossible, and its place is taken by the criticism of pure reason.¹

Against the old dogmatism, Kant is utterly victorious here; so all dogmatic efforts appearing since then have had to follow entirely different paths from the earlier ones. And I will now lead the way to the justification of my own path, in accordance with the currently accepted aim of that criticism.

A more careful examination of the reasoning given above will oblige one to confess that its first assumption is a *petitio principii* [see Glossary]. It lies in this proposition (presented with special clarity in Kant's *Prolegomena* §1): 'The source of metaphysics must not be at all empirical; its basic principles and concepts must never be taken from experience, whether inner or outer.' This cardinal assertion is given no support except an etymological argument based on the word 'metaphysics'—from Greek meaning 'beyond (or above) the physical'. But in fact things stand as follows. The world

and our own existence are necessarily displayed to us as a riddle. It is assumed without further ado •that the solution of the riddle can't come from a thorough understanding of the world itself, but must be sought in something entirely distinct from the world (for that's what is meant by 'beyond the possibility of all experience'); •that this solution cannot include anything of which we can have any sort of *immediate* knowledge (for that is what is meant by 'possible experience', both inner and outer); and •that it must be sought only in what we can learn in a merely *mediated* way, namely, in what we can learn through inferences from general propositions *a priori*. After the chief source of all knowledge was in this way excluded, and the direct way to truth was closed off, it is no wonder that the dogmatic systems failed, and that Kant could show the necessity of this failure; for metaphysics and knowledge *a priori* had been assumed beforehand to be identical.

In addition, one would have had to prove in advance that what it takes to solve the riddle of the world flatly *cannot* be contained within the world itself, but is to be sought only outside the world, in something we can be directed to only by those forms of which we are conscious *a priori*. But as long as this hasn't been proved, we have no ground—in this most important and difficult of all tasks—to block the source of knowledge that is richest in content, namely **inner and outer experience**, so as to work only with contentless forms. So I say that •the solution of the riddle of the world must come from an understanding of the world itself; thus that •the task of metaphysics is not to fly beyond the experience within which the world exists, but to understand it in its depths, because experience (outer and inner) is indeed the main source of all knowledge; and therefore that •the solution of

¹ [*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, standardly translated as 'Critique of Pure Reason'.]

the riddle of the world is possible only by *correctly* connecting outer with inner experience, bringing these two so heterogeneous sources of knowledge into a ·fruitful· combination; although this is possible only within certain limits that are inseparable from our finite nature, hence in such a way that we achieve a correct understanding of the world itself, yet without reaching an explanation of its existence that is complete and eliminates all further problems. Hence, *est quadam prodire tenus* [Horace's Latin, meaning 'It is something to have come this far'], and my path lies in the middle between •the ·supposedly· omniscient science of earlier dogmatism and •the despair of Kantian critique. But the important truths discovered by Kant, by which the earlier metaphysical systems were overturned, have provided data and material for my path. . . . So much for Kant's fundamental idea; now I want to consider its elaboration and details.

Kant's style bears throughout the stamp of a superior mind, of genuine, firm individuality, and a quite unusual power of thought. Its character may perhaps be aptly described as a *sparkling dryness*, which enables him to take firm hold of concepts, single them out with great assurance, then toss them about with the greatest freedom, to the amazement of the reader. I find the same sparkling dryness in Aristotle's style as well, although his is much simpler.

Nonetheless, Kant's exposition is often unclear, indefinite, unsatisfactory, and sometimes obscure. The obscurity is partly to be excused by the difficulty of the topic and the depth of the thought. But •someone who is himself fundamentally clear and knows quite distinctly what he thinks and wants will never write unclearly, will never set forth wavering and vague concepts, and label them with extremely difficult, complicated expressions drawn from foreign languages, to be continually employed from there on, in the way that Kant took words and formulas from older—even

scholastic—philosophy, which he combined for his purposes, e.g. 'transcendental synthetic unity of apperception', and all over the place puts 'unity of synthesis' where 'union' alone would have been quite sufficient. Further, •such a person will not explain over and over again what has once been explained, which Kant does, e.g. with understanding, the categories, experience, and other chief concepts. •Such a person will not incessantly repeat himself and yet in every new exposition of the thought already expressed a hundred times leave it in just the same obscure condition. Rather, he will once and for all state his opinion clearly, rigorously, exhaustively, and leave it at that. As Descartes says in a letter ·to the Princess Elisabeth·: 'The better we understand something, the more we are determined to express it in just one way.' But the greatest drawback to Kant's sometimes obscure exposition is that it worked as an *exemplar vitiis imitabile* [Horace's Latin, meaning 'pattern for the imitation of his faults']; indeed, misunderstandings of it were employed to give authority to bad stuff. The public had been compelled to recognise that the obscure is not always senseless; and nonsense immediately took refuge behind obscure exposition. Fichte was the first to seize this new privilege, which he employed vigorously; Schelling was at least his equal in this; and a host of hungry scribblers without talent and without integrity soon outdid them both. But the greatest audacity in dishing up sheer nonsense, in stringing together senseless and frenzied webs of verbiage such as had until then been heard only in madhouses, finally came on the scene with **Hegel**, and became the instrument for the most outrageous general mystification that has ever existed, with a success that will appear a marvel to posterity and remain a monument to German stupidity.

75. The Categories

But let us return to Kant. It has to be admitted that he entirely lacks the imposing simplicity of the ancients, lacks innocence, *ingénuité, candeur*. His philosophy has no analogy with Greek architecture, which offers grand, simple relationships, revealing themselves all at once to our view; rather, it reminds one most strongly of the Gothic style in architecture. For a quite individual peculiarity of Kant's mind is a strange satisfaction with symmetry, which loves a varied multiplicity so that it may order it, and repeat the ordering in sub-orderings, and so on indefinitely, as in Gothic churches. Indeed, he sometimes carries this so far that it degenerates into something trivial, doing obvious violence to the truth and proceeding with it as old-fashioned gardeners do with nature, whose work we see in symmetrical alleys, squares, and triangles, trees shaped like pyramids and spheres, and hedges winding in regular curves. I will support this with facts.

After dealing with space and time in isolation, then—having dismissed the entire world of perception that fills space and time (the world in which we live and exist) with the empty words 'the empirical content of perception is *given* to us'—he at once reaches with a single leap *the logical foundation of his entire philosophy*, the Table of Judgments. From this he deduces a strict dozen categories, symmetrically arranged under four headings—Quantity, Quality, Relation, Modality—which later become the frightful procrustean bed into which he violently forces all the things of the world and all that happens in men, not shrinking from any violence and not ashamed of any sophisms as long as he can everywhere repeat that Table's symmetry. The first

thing that is symmetrically derived from it is the pure table of the general principles of natural science, namely, the Axioms of Intuition, Anticipations of Perception, Analogies of Experience, and Postulates of Empirical Thought in General. Of these principles, the first two are simple; but the latter two symmetrically generate three offspring each.

The mere categories were what he calls concepts; but these principles of natural science are judgments. In accordance with his highest directing principle with respect to all wisdom, namely symmetry, it is now time for inferences to prove their fruitfulness, and this indeed they do in turn in symmetrical fashion, without missing a beat.¹ For just as experience, together with its *a priori* principles, arose for the understanding by applying the categories to sensibility, so in the same way the ideas of reason arise by applying inferences to the categories, which is achieved by reason in accordance with its supposed principle of seeking the unconditioned. This then proceeds as follows. The three categories of relation supply to syllogistic reasoning the three possible kinds of major premises, and syllogistic reasoning accordingly falls into three kinds, each of which is to be regarded as an egg out of which reason hatches an idea:

- out of the categorical syllogism the idea of the soul,
- out of the hypothetical syllogism the idea of the world,
and
- out of the disjunctive syllogism the idea of God.

In the second of these, the idea of the world, the symmetry of the table of the categories is once again repeated, with its four headings producing four Theses, each of which has its Antithesis as a symmetrical counterpart.

I pay the tribute of my admiration to the very acute combination that produced this elegant structure, but I

¹ [AS clearly means this whole sentence sarcastically.]

shall none the less proceed to a thorough examination of its foundation and its parts. The following remarks must come first.

76. Kant's stubbornness in his errors

It is amazing how Kant follows his path without further reflection, pursuing his symmetry, ordering everything in accordance with it, without ever separately addressing one of the subjects thus treated. I will explain this in more detail. After treating intuitive knowledge solely in connection with mathematics, he entirely neglects the rest of the perceptual knowledge within which the world lies before us, and confines himself entirely to abstract thinking, though this gets its significance and value solely from the perceptual world, which is infinitely more significant, more general, and richer in content than the abstract part of our knowledge. Indeed—and this is one of the main points—he never clearly distinguishes perceptual from abstract knowledge, and for just this reason (as we will subsequently see) he becomes entangled in self-contradictions that he can't escape from.

Having dispatched the entire sensory world with the empty 'it is given', he then (as I said) sets the logical Table of Judgments as the foundation-stone of his building. But here he doesn't give a moment's thought to what really lies before him. These judgment-forms are words and word-combinations. It should first have been asked what these words directly stand for, and it would have been found that they stand for concepts. The next question would have concerned the nature of concepts. The answer to that would have shown the relation of concepts to the perceptual presentations of which the world consists; then perception would have been distinguished from reflection. Then there would have to have been an investigation not

only of •how pure and merely formal perception *a priori* enters consciousness but also of •how its content, empirical perception, does so. But that would have involved showing what role the understanding has in this, thus also in general what **understanding** is and how it contrasts with the **reason** the critique of which is here being written. It is most striking that he doesn't *once* define the latter in an orderly and satisfactory way; he only gives incomplete and inaccurate explanations of it, incidentally and as the context of the moment demands—quite in contradiction with the rule of Descartes cited a page or two back. For example, at B24 of the *Critique of Pure Reason* it is the faculty for *a priori* principles; at B356 Kant says again that reason is the faculty for principles, and contrasts it with the understanding, which is the faculty for rules! One would then suppose that the difference between principles and rules is enormous, since it entitles us to assume a special faculty for each. But this great difference is supposed to consist in the fact that

- what is known *a priori* on the basis of pure perception, or through the forms of the understanding, is a rule, whereas
- what results *a priori* from mere concepts is a principle.

I shall come back later to this arbitrary and unsatisfactory distinction, in connection with the Dialectic. At B386 reason is the faculty for making inferences; he more often explains (B94) the understanding as concerned with mere judging. [There follows a difficult passage in which AS adds to his objections to Kant's handling of these notions, terminating with this:] At B360 he explains that the immediate conclusions drawn from a proposition are still a matter for the understanding, and only those where a mediating concept is employed are carried out by reason. For example, he says that the conclusion 'Some mortals are human beings' is still drawn by the mere understanding from the proposition

'All human beings are mortal'; by contrast, 'All scholars are mortal' requires a quite different and much more preeminent faculty, reason. How was it possible for a great thinker to come up with such stuff? And then

- at B581 reason is all of a sudden the persisting condition of all voluntary actions;
- at B642 it consists in the fact that we can give an account of our assertions;
- at B671–2 it consists in the fact that it unites concepts of the understanding into ideas, just as the understanding unites the manifold belonging to objects into concepts; and
- at B674 it is nothing other than the faculty for deriving the particular from the general.

The understanding is likewise explained at seven places in the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

- (1) At B75 it is the faculty for producing presentations by oneself;
- (2) At B94 it is the faculty for judging, i.e. for thinking, i.e. for knowing through concepts;
- (3) At B137 it is the faculty for knowledge in general;
- (4) At A132/B171 it is the faculty for rules. But
- (5) at B197 we are told 'It is not only the faculty for rules, but the source of principles in accordance with which everything stands under rules'; yet it had been earlier contrasted with reason because only reason was the faculty for principles.
- (6) At B199 the understanding is the faculty for concepts, but
- (7) at B359 it is the faculty for the unity of phenomena by means of rules.

My explanations of those two cognitive faculties are firm, sharp, determinate, simple, and always in agreement with the linguistic usage of all peoples and times. I don't need to

defend them against Kant's truly confused and groundless talk about the matter. I cited the latter only as confirmation of my charge that Kant pursues his symmetrical, logical system without sufficiently reflecting on the subject matter that he is treating in this way.

Now if Kant had (I repeat) seriously investigated •how far two such diverse cognitive faculties (one of which marks off mankind from other species) can be known, and •what 'reason' and 'understanding' mean according to the linguistic usage of all peoples and all philosophers, he would never— with no further authority than the scholastics' distinction between *intellectus theoreticus* and *intellectus practicus*, which in fact was nothing like the distinction he was making

—have distinguished *theoretical reason* from *practical reason* and made the latter the source of virtuous action. Likewise, before so carefully separating concepts of the understanding (by which he understands sometimes his categories, sometimes all general concepts) from concepts of reason (his so-called 'ideas') and made both of them the subject of his philosophy, which in fact for the most part deals only with the validity, application, origin of all these concepts,

Kant should have investigated what in general a *concept* is. This investigation, necessary as it is, he unfortunately leaves undone; which has greatly contributed to the hopeless confusion of intuitive knowledge and abstract knowledge, which I shall soon prove.

The same lack of adequate reflection with which he bypasses the questions

- what is perception?
- what is reflection?
- what are concepts?
- what is reason?

- what is understanding?

allows him also to neglect the following inescapably necessary investigations:

- What is it that I am calling the objective thing, which I distinguish from presentation?
- What is existence?
- What is an object?
- What is a subject?
- What are truth, illusion, error?

But he follows his logical schema and his symmetry without reflecting or looking about him. The table of judgments—he seems to think—should and must be the key to all wisdom.

I have presented as Kant's main achievement that he

- distinguishes the phenomenon from the thing in itself,
- explains this entire visible world as phenomenon, and therefore
- denies its laws any validity extending beyond the phenomenon.

It remarkable that he didn't derive the phenomenon's merely relative existence from the truth—so simple, readily available, and undeniable—'No object without subject', so as to depict the object, because it always exists only in relation to a subject, as being radically dependent on the subject, conditioned by it, and therefore as being a mere phenomenon that doesn't exist *in itself*, doesn't exist absolutely. Berkeley—to whose achievement Kant does not do justice—had already made that important principle the cornerstone of his philosophy and thereby established the immortality of his memory, although he did not himself draw the proper conclusions from that principle, and after that was both misunderstood and not sufficiently attended to.

[The background to AS's discussion of Kant's reaction to Berkeley is the fact that (A) the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* virtually disappeared from

sight, to be replaced by repeated reprintings of (B) the second edition. AS praises J. K. F. Rosenkranz for including in his reprintings of Kant the whole of A, 'whereby he has perhaps rescued the most important work of German literature from oblivion. . . . Let no-one imagine that he knows the *Critique of Pure Reason* and has a distinct concept of Kant's doctrine if he has read it only in B. . . .; for he has read only a disfigured, spoiled, to a certain extent inauthentic text.' AS also claims that it was he who first prodded Rosenkranz into doing this.]

In the first edition of the present work, I launched some accusations against Kant's reaction to Berkeley because at that time I knew the *Critique* only in the B version. When I later read A, I saw to my great pleasure that all the contradictions of which I had accused Kant vanished and that he explains the external world lying before us in space and time as a mere presentation to the knowing subject, doing this with just as much decisiveness as Berkeley and I do, even if he doesn't employ the formula 'no object without subject'. Thus, for example, he says at A383 without reservation: 'If the thinking subject went out of existence, necessarily the whole corporeal world would also vanish, because the world is nothing but an appearance in the sensibility of our thinking subject, a way in which its representations occur.' The entire passage A348–392, in which Kant sets forth his idealism in a very fine and clear way, was suppressed by him in B and replaced by a multitude of expressions that conflict with it. So the text of the *Critique* as it was in circulation from 1787 to 1838 became something deformed and spoiled; it was a self-contradictory book whose sense could, just for that reason, not be entirely clear and intelligible to anyone. . . .

The decisively idealistic basic view that is so clearly expressed in A is undeniably in conflict with Kant's way

of introducing the *thing in itself*, and no doubt this is the main reason why in B he suppressed the main idealistic passage and declared himself as straightforwardly opposed to Berkeleyan idealism. But this only brought inconsistencies into his work, without being able to remedy its main defect. It is well known that the defect consists in the way he chose to introduce the *thing in itself*, the unsatisfactoriness of which was shown at length by G. E. Schulze in his work *Aenesidemus*, and was soon recognised as the untenable point in his system. The matter can be made clear in very few words.

Kant bases the assumption of the *thing in itself*—although under the cover of many differences of terminology—on an inference in accordance with the law of causality; namely that empirical perception (more accurately, the sensation in our sense organs from which perception comes) must have an external cause.

·There are three things wrong with this·. **(i)** According to his own account, which is correct, the law of causality is known to us *a priori*, and is consequently a function of our intellect, thus of subjective origin; **(ii)** sensation through the senses, to which we are here applying the law of causality, is undeniably subjective; and finally **(iii)** even the space into which this inference places the cause of sensation as an object is something given *a priori*, and is thus a *subjective* form of our intellect. So empirical perception as a whole remains altogether on subjective ground and soil, as merely process within us, and nothing entirely distinct from it—independent of it—can be demonstrated as a necessary presupposition of it, as a *thing in itself*. In actual fact, empirical perception is mere presentation to us; it is the

world as presentation. We can get to the nature of this world only along the entirely different path that I have entered on, by bringing in self-consciousness, which informs us of *will* as the *in-itself* of the phenomenon that we are; but then the thing in itself becomes something utterly different from presentation and its elements, as I have explained.

The great infirmity of the Kantian system at this point. . . illustrates the truth of the beautiful Indian proverb 'No lotus without a stem.' The stem here is the fallacious derivation of the thing in itself; but only **a** the way of deriving it, not **b** the recognition of a thing in itself for the given phenomenon. It was in **b** the latter manner that Fichte misunderstood the issue. He could do this only because for him it was not a matter of truth but of making a stir for the promotion of his personal goals. Accordingly he was bold and thoughtless enough to deny the thing in itself altogether, and to set up a system in which what is supposedly derived *a priori* from the subject is not (as with Kant) the mere form of the presentation but also the material element, the whole of its content. In doing this he was rightly counting on the foolishness and lack of judgment of the public, which accepted as proofs what were really poor sophisms, mere hocus-pocus, and a senseless mishmash.¹ In this way, he succeeded in directing the public's attention from Kant to himself, and in giving German philosophy the direction in which it was subsequently carried further by Schelling, finally reaching its goal in the senseless Hegelian pseudo-wisdom.

I now return to Kant's great mistake, mentioned above, of not properly distinguishing perceptual knowledge from abstract knowledge; leading to a hopeless confusion which we have now to consider in greater detail. If he had sharply

¹ [The original of this sentence contains the words *Hokuspokus* and *Wischiwaschi*]

separated •perceptual presentations from •concepts merely thought *in abstracto*, Kant would have kept the two apart and in every case would have known which of them he was dealing with. Unfortunately that's not what happened; though this accusation has not been openly made, and so may come as a surprise. The 'object¹ of experience' that he keeps talking about, the real object² of the Categories, is not a perceptual presentation but is not an abstract concept either; rather, it is of neither kind yet at the same time of both kinds, and an utter absurdity. For, unbelievable as it seems, he lacked the wisdom or the honesty needed for him to be clear within himself and to explain clearly to others whether his 'object of experience, i.e. •object• of knowledge arising through employment of the categories' is a perceptual presentation in space and time (my first class of presentations) or a mere concept. Strange as it may be, he constantly has in mind something intermediate between the two, and this creates the unfortunate confusion that I must now draw into the light. For this purpose, I have to go in general terms through the entire Doctrine of Elements.³

77. The Transcendental Aesthetic

The Transcendental Aesthetic is a work of such extraordinary merit that it alone would suffice to immortalise Kant's name. Its proofs are so convincing that I count its theorems among the incontrovertible truths, just as without doubt they also belong among the most consequential, and so are to be regarded as the rarest thing in the world, namely a genuine major discovery in metaphysics. The fact, rigorously

proved by him, that a part of our knowledge belongs to our consciousness *a priori* admits of no other explanation than that this constitutes the forms of our intellect; indeed, this is not so much an explanation as a clear statement of the fact itself. For *a priori* means nothing other than 'not gained on the path of experience, thus not coming into us from outside'. But what is present in the intellect without having come from outside is just that which *originally* belongs to it, its own essence. . . . Accordingly, 'knowledge *a priori*' and 'the intellect's very own forms' are fundamentally only two expressions for the same thing, thus synonyms, so to speak.

So I wouldn't know how to subtract anything from the doctrines of the Transcendental Aesthetic, only how to add something, namely that Kant didn't bring his thoughts to completion, in that he didn't reject the entire Euclidean method of demonstration, although he had said (A87/B120) that all geometrical knowledge is made directly evident by perception. It is most noteworthy that even one of his opponents, and indeed the most acute of them, G. E. Schulze, concluded that Kant's doctrine would lead to a treatment of geometry entirely different from the one actually in practice. He thought that this was an argument against Kant, but really he was unknowingly initiating a war against the Euclidean method. See chapter 15.

After the Transcendental Aesthetic's detailed discussion of the general *forms* of all **perception**, one would surely expect to be given some explanation of its *content*, concerning how empirical perception enters our consciousness, how knowledge of this entire world—so real and so important for

¹ [*Objekt*]

² [*Gegenstand*]

³ [Kant divided the *Critique* into the Doctrine of Elements and the Doctrine of Method, the former constituting 80% of the whole.]

us—arises within us. But Kant's whole teaching contains nothing about this except frequent repetitions of the empty statement 'The empirical element in perception is *given* from outside.'

78. A fundamental contradiction

From the pure forms of perception, Kant also arrives by a leap at **thought**, by arriving at the Transcendental Logic. Right at the beginning of this (A50/B74), where Kant cannot avoid touching on the material content of empirical perception, he makes the first false step. . . .

'Our knowledge', he says, 'has two sources, namely, **a** receptivity of impressions and **b** spontaneity of concepts; the first is **a** the capacity for receiving presentations, the second is **b** the capacity for knowledge of an object through these presentations; through **a** the first an object is given to us, through **b** the second it is thought.'

That is false. It implies that the impression—for which alone we have mere receptivity, which thus comes from outside and is alone really 'given'—would already be a presentation, indeed already an object. But it is nothing beyond a mere sensation in the sense organ, and only by applying the understanding (i.e. the law of causality) and by bringing in space and time as perceptual forms does our intellect transform this mere sensation into a presentation that now stands as an object in space and time and can be distinguished from the object only to the extent that one is asking about the thing in itself, but is otherwise identical with it. . . . But with that the business of the understanding and *perceptual* knowledge is completed; there's no need in it for any concepts or any thought; which is why animals also have these presentations. If you add concepts, if

you add thought (to which spontaneity can of course be attributed), you abandon perceptual knowledge and admit into consciousness a wholly different class of presentations, namely non-perceptual abstract concepts. This is the work of reason; but it gets the entire content for its thinking only from previous perception and the comparison of that with other perceptions and concepts. Thus Kant already brings **thought into perception**, laying the ground for that hopeless confusion of intuitive knowledge with abstract knowledge which I am criticising here. But then on the other hand the object of thought is an individual real object, so that thought here forfeits its essential character of generality and abstraction, and instead of general concepts gets individual things for its object, so that Kant now brings **perception into thought**. This generates the hopeless confusion I have mentioned, and the consequences of this first false step extend over Kant's whole theory of knowledge. All through the latter there's a complete confusion of perceptual and abstract presentation, leading to something intermediate between the two, which he depicts as the object of knowledge through the understanding and its categories, knowledge that he calls 'experience'. It is hard to believe that Kant had the thought of anything fully determinate and really clear when he talked in this way about the 'object of the understanding'. I will now prove this—i.e. prove that he didn't—by revealing the monstrous contradiction that runs through the entire Transcendental Logic and is the real source of the obscurity that envelops it.

• ONE SIDE OF THE CONTRADICTION •

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A67–69/B92–4), (A89–90/B122–3) and further at (B135, 139, 153), he repeats and insists that

- the understanding is not a faculty for perception, its knowledge is not intuitive, but discursive;

- the understanding is the faculty for judging (A69/B94), and a judgment is indirect knowledge, presentation of a presentation (A68/B93);
- the understanding is the faculty for thinking, and thinking is knowledge through concepts (A69/B94);
- the categories of the understanding are emphatically not conditions under which objects are given in perception (A89/B122), and perception in no way needs the functions of thought (A91/B123);
- our understanding can only think, not perceive (B135, 139) .

Further, in *Prolegomena* §20 perception or perceptual apprehension belongs merely to the senses, judging involves only the understanding; and in §22 the business of the senses is to perceive, that of the understanding is to think, i.e. to judge.—Finally, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* the understanding is discursive, its presentations are thoughts, not perceptions. This is all in Kant's own words.

It follows from this that the perceptual world would exist for us even if we had no understanding at all, that it comes into our head in an entirely inexplicable manner, which he expresses with his strange expression 'perception is *given*', without further clarifying this vague and figurative¹ expression.

·THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CONTRADICTION·

Now, that is all contradicted in the most glaring manner by the whole of the rest of Kant's doctrine of the understanding, of its categories, and of the possibility of experience, as he explains these in the *Transcendental Logic*. At (A79/B105) the understanding brings unity into the manifold of perception through its categories, and the pure concepts of the understanding relate *a priori* to objects of perception.

At (A94/B126) 'the categories are a condition of experience, whether it be of the perception or of the thought that is to be met with in it.' At (B127) the understanding is the originator of experience. At (B128) the categories determine the perception of objects. At (B130) all of what we present to ourselves as combined in the object (which is of course a perceptual object and not an abstraction) has first been combined by an action of the understanding. . . . At (B136) we indeed find a highest principle of the possibility of all perception in relation to the understanding. At (B143) it even stands written at the head of a section that all sensory perception is conditioned by the categories. . . . At (B144) unity enters perception by means of the categories, through the understanding. At (B145) the understanding's process of thought is most strangely explained by saying that it synthesises, combines, and orders the manifold of perception. At (B161) experience is possible only through the categories and consists in the connecting of sensations, which are of course perceptions. At (B159) the categories are *a priori* knowledge of objects of perception in general.

Further, here and at (B163 and 165) one of Kant's main doctrines is expounded, namely, that *the understanding makes nature possible in the first place*, prescribing laws to it *a priori* and directing it with respect to its lawful character, etc. But now nature is something perceptual and not an abstraction; so according to this, the understanding must be a perceptual faculty. At (B168) the concepts of the understanding are said to be the principles of the possibility of experience, and that experience is the determination of phenomena in space and time in general, which phenomena then of course exist in perception. Finally, at (A189–211/B232–256) there stands the long invalid 'proof that the objective suc-

¹ [*bildlichen*, which could mean 'metaphorical'; the point is just that it is not to be taken strictly and literally.]

cession as well as the simultaneity of objects of experience is not perceived by sense, but only brought into nature by the understanding, thus making nature possible. But certainly nature—the sequence of events and the simultaneity of states of affairs—is something purely perceptual and not merely abstractly thought.

I challenge anyone who shares my respect for Kant to reconcile these contradictions, and to show that he had a thought that was entirely clear and determinate in his doctrine of the object of experience and of how it is determined by the activity of the understanding and its twelve functions. I am convinced that the contradiction I have pointed out, which runs through the entire *Transcendental Logic*, is the real source of the great obscurity in the latter's exposition. Kant was dimly conscious of the contradiction, inwardly battled with it, but wouldn't or couldn't clearly bring it to mind, and thus veiled it from himself and others, avoiding it by all kinds of subterfuges. Perhaps this is why he makes such a strange, complicated machine of the faculty of knowledge, with so many wheels—

- the twelve categories,
- transcendental synthesis of imagination,
- inner sense,
- transcendental unity of apperception,
- the schematism of the pure concepts of the understanding,

and so on. And despite this great apparatus, not once does he try to explain perception of the external world, which is after all the chief ingredient in our knowledge; rather, he pitifully dismisses the pressing demand for such an explanation always with the same empty, figurative expression 'Empirical perception is *given* to us.' At (B145) we learn in addition that it is given by the object; so the object must be something distinct from perception.

79. The source of the trouble

If we try to investigate Kant's innermost opinion, not clearly expressed by himself, we find that such an object—distinct from perception but in no way a concept—is for him the real object for the understanding; indeed that the strange assumption of such an object that can't be *presented* is really what 'supposedly' makes perception into experience in the first place. I believe that an old, deep-rooted prejudice in Kant, impervious to all investigation, is the ultimate basis for his assumption of such an *absolute object*, one that is an object *in itself*, i.e. even without a subject. It is not the perceived object; rather, it is conceptually added to perception by thought, as something corresponding to it, so that then perception is experience and has value and truth, which it consequently obtains only through its relation to a concept. (This is in diametrical opposition to my account, according to which concepts obtain their value and truth only from perception.) The real function of the categories is to add to perception this 'object' that can't be directly presented. 'The object is given only through perception, and is afterwards thought in accordance with the category' (A399). This is made especially clear by a passage at (B125): 'Now the question arises whether conceptions *a priori* don't also come first as conditions under which alone a thing can be, not perceived certainly, but yet thought as an object in general', which he answers in the affirmative.

Here we see clearly the source of the error and the confusion that envelops it. For the object as such always exists only *for* perception and *in* it; it can now be completed through the senses or in their absence through the imagination. What is *thought*, on the other hand, is always a general, non-perceptual concept, which can at best be the concept of some object or other; only indirectly, by means

of concepts, does thought refer to objects, which are and remain always perceptual. For our thought does not serve to give realness to perceptions; so far as they are capable of it, they have this realness by themselves. Rather, our thought serves for bringing together the common features and results of perceptions, so as to be able to preserve and more easily work with them. But Kant ascribes objects themselves to *thought*, in order to make experience and the objective world dependent on the *understanding*, but without having the understanding be a perceptual faculty. In this respect he does indeed distinguish perception from thought, but makes individual things partly objects of perception, partly objects of thought. But the perception itself can come into existence only by the application to sensation of knowledge of the causal nexus, which is the one function of the understanding. So perception is in reality intellectual, which is just what Kant denies.

The Kantian assumption criticised here can be found stated even more clearly in the *Critique of Judgment* (start of §36), and in *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* (note to the first explanation of the phenomenology). But one finds it set out extremely clearly—with a naïveté that Kant would hardly have allowed himself on this questionable point—in two books by Kantians [AS gives the details]. There it is decisively shown how every thinker's pupils who don't think for themselves become a magnifying mirror for his mistakes. Having finally settled on his doctrine of the categories, Kant trod with a cautious step in expounding it, whereas his pupils went ahead boldly, thus exposing the falsity it contained.

In accordance with all this, the object of the categories is indeed not the *thing in itself* for Kant, but is its nearest relative: it is the *object in itself*—

- an object that has no need of a subject,

- an individual thing yet not in time and space because it is not perceptual,
- an object of thought but not an abstract concept.

Accordingly, Kant distinguishes three things: **1** the presentation, **2** the object of the presentation, **3** the thing in itself. The first **1** is a matter of sensibility, which for him includes sensation and the pure perceptual forms, space and time. The second **2** belongs to the understanding, which *thinks* it through its twelve categories. The third **3** lies beyond all possibility of knowledge. (As confirmation of this, see (A108–9)). But now there is no basis for the distinction between presentation and object of presentation. Berkeley had already proved this, and it proceeds from the whole of my exposition in the present work. . . .and indeed from Kant's own completely idealistic point of view in his first edition. But if you don't want to count the object of presentation as a presentation, you'll have to take it to be the thing in itself: this ultimately depends on what one means by the word 'object'. In any case, this much is certain: if we think clearly about the matter, nothing is to be found other than presentation and thing in itself. The source of Kant's errors is the unjustified interpolation of the hybrid *object of presentation*. But with its removal, the doctrine of the categories as *a priori* concepts also falls away, since they contribute nothing to perception and are not supposed to apply to the thing in itself, their only role being for us to think those 'objects of presentations' and thereby transform presentation into experience. For every empirical perception is already experience, and every perception that comes from sensation through the senses is empirical: the understanding refers this sensation to its cause, doing this by means of its single function (knowledge *a priori* of the law of causality); this cause is thereby displayed as an object of experience in space and time (forms belonging to pure

perception), as a material object persisting in space through all time, though it is always a presentation, as are space and time themselves. If we want to go beyond this presentation, that brings us to the question of the thing in itself, the answer to which is the theme of my entire work, as of all metaphysics in general. Connected with Kant's error that I have been discussing here is his failure (criticised earlier) to provide any theory of the origin of empirical perception; all he does is to say that it is *given*. He identifies it with mere sensation through the senses, to which he adds only the perceptual forms *space* and *time*, comprehending both under the term 'sensibility'. But from these materials no objective presentation arises. Such a presentation absolutely requires

- the relation of the presentation to its cause, and thus
- the application of the law of causality, and thus
- the understanding;

for without this the sensation remains always subjective, and doesn't take the form of an object in space, even if space is given with it. But for Kant, the understanding can't be employed for perception: it is supposed merely to think, so as to remain within the Transcendental Logic. This connects with another of Kant's failings: he has left it to me to carry out the only valid argument for the rightly recognised apriority of the law of causality, namely the argument from the possibility of objective empirical perception itself, and instead provided one that is obviously invalid, as I have shown in §23 of my treatise on the GP.

It is clear from the above that Kant's **2** 'object of presentation' is made up of what he has stolen from **1** presentation and from **3** the thing in itself.¹ If experience actually came about only through the understanding's employing **twelve**

distinct functions through that many *a priori* concepts to *think* objects that previously were merely *perceived*, then every real thing would have a number of determinations that (like space and time) could not be thought away, belonged essentially to the existence of the thing, yet couldn't be deduced from the properties of space and time. But only **one** such determination is to be met with, namely causality. This is the basis for materiality, because the essence of matter consists in action, and matter is through and through causality. . . . But materiality is all that distinguishes a real thing from a fantasised image, which is then of course only a presentation. For matter gives things a persistence through all time with respect to their matter, while their forms change in accordance with the law of causality. There is nothing more to the thing than •determinations of space or time, or •its empirical properties, which all go back to its activity and thus to more fine-grained determinations of causality. But causality has already come into empirical perception as a condition of it, so that such perception is a business of the understanding. The understanding does indeed make perception possible, but it contributes nothing beyond the law of causality to experience and its possibility. What fills the ontologies of old, beyond what has been stated here, is nothing further than relations of things to one another or to our reflection, and a farrago of nonsense.

80. The great difference between the Aesthetic and the Analytic

One sign of the groundlessness of the doctrine of the categories is already given in how it is stated. What a difference in this respect between the Transcendental Aesthetic and

¹ [See the use of **1-2-3** early in the preceding paragraph.]

the Transcendental Analytic! In the former, what clarity, definiteness, assurance, firm conviction that is openly pronounced and infallibly communicated! All is full of light, no dark hiding places are left: Kant knows what he wants and knows he is right. In the Analytic, on the other hand, all is obscure, confused, indefinite, vacillating, unsure, anxious in its exposition, full of excuses and appeals to what is yet to come, or indeed to what is *not* yet to come because it will be held back. The whole of sections 2 and 3 of the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding is also utterly changed in B because Kant wasn't satisfied with it; it becomes entirely different from what it was in A, but no clearer. We see Kant actually battling with the truth so as to establish the doctrine he has finally decided on. In the Transcendental Aesthetic all his theorems are actually *proved* on the basis of undeniable facts of consciousness, whereas in the Transcendental Analytic we find mere *assertions* that this is how things are and must be. Thus here, as everywhere, the exposition bears the stamp of the thought from which it has proceeded; for style is the physiognomy of the mind.

It is also noteworthy that when Kant wants to give an example for more detailed discussion, he nearly always takes the category of causality for that purpose, and then what he says is quite correct; for the law of causality is the real form of the understanding; but it is its *only* form, the other eleven categories being only blind windows. The Deduction of the categories is simpler and less convoluted in A than in B. Kant tries *in B* to explain how, in accordance with perception given by sensibility, the understanding brings about *experience* by means of its thought of the categories. In the process, expressions are repeated to the point of exhaustion—'recognition', 'reproduction', 'association', 'apprehension', 'transcendental unity of apperception'—but

nothing clear is said. It is most noteworthy that in this discussion he doesn't touch even once on something that must surely occur first to everyone, the relation of sensation to its external cause. If he didn't want to recognise such a relation, he should have expressly said so; but he doesn't do this either. He merely creeps around it, and all the Kantians have likewise crept after him. The secret motive for this is that **(i)** he reserves the causal nexus, under the name 'ground of the phenomenon', for his false derivation of the thing in itself; and that **(ii)** if cause were brought into it, perception would become intellectual, which he could not grant. Moreover, he seems to have feared that **(iii)** if the causal nexus were allowed to hold between sensation and object, the object would at once become the *thing in itself* and lead to Lockean empiricism. But this difficulty is removed by the reflection that the law of causality is of subjective origin, just as much as sensation itself; and moreover that one's own body, so far as it makes its appearance in space, belongs among presentations. But his fear of Berkeleyan idealism prevented Kant from conceding this.

As the essential operation of the understanding by means of its twelve categories, 'combination of the manifold of perception' is repeatedly cited; but this is never properly explained, nor is it shown what this manifold of perception is before its combination by the understanding. Now time and space are *continua*, i.e. all their parts are originally not separated but combined. But they are the pervasive forms of our perception. Thus also everything that is displayed (is 'given') within them appears as already a continuum, i.e. its parts already appear as combined and have no need of an additional 'combination of the manifold'. If, however, someone tried to interpret that 'combining of the manifold of perception' as relating different sense-impressions to a single object—for example, perceiving a bell, I recognise that

what affects my eye as yellow, my hand as smooth and hard, my ear as sounding, is just one body—then I reply that this is rather a consequence of the knowledge *a priori* of the causal nexus (this actual and only function of the understanding), by virtue of which all those different effects on my different organs of sense lead me to one common cause of them, the nature of the body standing before me; so that my understanding, in spite of the variety of the effects, still apprehends the unity of the cause as a single object which is displayed through them.

In the fine recapitulation of his doctrine that Kant gives at (A719–26/B747–54) he explains the categories perhaps more clearly than anywhere else, namely, as ‘the mere rule for the synthesis of whatever perception has given *a posteriori*’. He seems to have in mind something like the fact that in the construction of a triangle the angles give us the rule for connecting the lines; at least this picture gives us the best way of understanding what he says about the function of the categories. The preface to the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* contains a long note which also provides an explanation of the categories; it says that they ‘are in no way distinct from the formal actions of the understanding in judging’, except that in judging, subject and predicate can always trade places; so judgment in general is then defined as ‘an action through which given presentations first become knowledge of an object’. According to this, since animals don’t judge they must also be absolutely incapable of knowledge of objects. Of *objects* in general, according to Kant, there are merely concepts, no perceptions. Whereas I say: objects exist first for perception, and concepts are always abstractions from this perception. Thus abstract thinking must be conducted in exact accordance with the world that is present in perception, since it is only in their relation to this that concepts have their content. . . . I accordingly demand

that we •throw eleven of the categories out the window and retain only that of causality, but •see that causal activity is already the condition of empirical perception, which is therefore not merely sensual but intellectual, and •see that the object thus perceived—the object of experience—is one with its presentation, from which nothing remains to be distinguished except the thing in itself.

81. The source of the Transcendental Logic

After repeated study of the *Critique of Pure Reason* at different stages of my life, a conviction about the origin of •the Transcendental Logic has forced itself upon me, and I now pass it on, as very helpful to an understanding of •it. Kant’s only discovery—based on objective comprehension and the highest human thought—is the apperçu that time and space are known to us *a priori*. Delighted by this happy find, Kant wanted to pursue its vein still further, and his love for architectonic symmetry gave him the lead, as follows.

As he had found a pure perception underlying empirical perception as its *a priori* condition, he supposed that in the same way certain pure concepts would surely lie within reach of our knowledge as a presupposition for empirically acquired concepts; and that actual empirical thought would first be possible only through a pure *a priori* thought, which however would in itself have no objects at all, but would have to take them from perception; so just as the Transcendental Aesthetic demonstrates an *a priori* foundation for mathematics, there must also be such a thing for logic, so that the Transcendental Aesthetic would get a symmetrical counterpart in a Transcendental Logic.

From then on Kant was no longer unbiased, no longer engaged in purely investigating and observing the deliv-

erances of consciousness; rather, he was directed by a presupposition and pursued a goal, namely to *find* what he had presupposed, in order to place on the Transcendental Aesthetic a symmetrically corresponding Transcendental Logic (so happily discovered!) as a second storey. Now for this purpose he hit upon the table of judgments, out of which he did his best to construct the table of categories, the doctrine of twelve pure *a priori* concepts that are supposed to be the conditions of our thought about the very things the perception of which is conditioned by the two *a priori* forms of sensibility; thus a pure understanding now corresponded symmetrically to a pure sensibility.

Then another consideration occurred to him, which offered a means of increasing the plausibility of what he was doing, namely the assumption of the *Schematism* of the pure concepts of the understanding. But just through this the unconscious cause of his procedure betrayed itself most distinctly. . . . When we occasionally try to return from •abstract thinking to •perceiving, we are really only trying to convince ourselves that our abstract thought has not removed itself far from the secure ground of perception and may be flying above it, or may even have become mere verbiage (something like when, walking in the dark, we occasionally reach out to touch the wall for direction). We go back in that case to perceiving, even if only tentatively and momentarily, by calling up in imagination a perception corresponding to the concept just then occupying us, though this image can never be entirely adequate to the concept but is a merely provisional *representative* of it. . . . Kant calls a fleeting mental image of this sort a *schema*, in contrast with images brought to completion in the imagination. He says that it is like a monogram of the imagination, and then maintains that if

such a thing stands in the middle between our abstract thought of empirically acquired concepts and our clear perception as it occurs through the senses, there must also exist

between pure sensibility's *a priori* perceptual faculty and pure understanding's *a priori* faculty of thought (thus the categories) such schemata of the pure concepts of the understanding.

He explains these schemata one by one, as monograms of pure *a priori* imagination, and assigns each of them to the corresponding category, in the amazing chapter 'On the Schematism of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding', which is notoriously obscure—no-one has ever been able to make anything of it. But its obscurity vanishes when it is considered from the standpoint I have provided; though this shines a brighter light than anything else does on the intentionally directed character of the procedure, and the previously adopted *decision to find* what corresponds to the analogy and could serve the architectonic symmetry—which is so much the case here that it becomes downright comical. For in assuming schemata of pure (contentless) *a priori* concepts of the understanding (categories), analogous to empirical schemata (or representatives of our actual concepts by way of the imagination), he overlooks the fact that the purpose of such schemata here entirely disappears. For the purpose of schemata in empirical (actual) thought entirely concerns the material content of such concepts: because these concepts have been drawn from empirical perception, we aid and orient ourselves in abstract thought by occasionally casting a fleeting glance back at the perception from which the concepts have been derived, to assure ourselves that our thought still has real content. This, however, presupposes that the concepts in question have originated from perception, and that we are merely glancing back at their

material content—a mere tool to help us in our weakness. But with *a priori* concepts, which don't yet have any content, this sort of thing obviously doesn't apply. For these concepts haven't come from perception, but rather come to meet it from within, in order to get content from it in the first place; so they haven't yet anything to glance back at.

I have dealt with this at length on this because it's the very thing that throws light on the secret process of Kantian philosophising, which consists in this:

After the happy discovery of the two *a priori* perceptual forms, Kant then, with analogy as his directing principle, tried to demonstrate an *a priori* analogue for every determination of our empirical knowledge,

...so that the seeming profundity of the exposition, and its difficulty, serve to conceal from the reader that its content remains an entirely indemonstrable and merely arbitrary assumption. But anyone who finally sees through the sense of this exposition of Kant's is easily misled into taking his laboriously attained understanding for a conviction of truth in the matter. If Kant had instead proceeded here (as he did with the discovery of *a priori* perceptions) in an unbiased and purely observational manner, he'd have been sure to find that when an empirical perception is made out of the pure perception of space and time, what is added to it is on the one hand **a** the sensation, and on the other hand **b** the knowledge of causality; the **b** latter changes the **a** mere sensation into objective empirical perception, but just for that reason it is not first derived and learned from **a** sensation, but exists *a priori*, and is indeed the form and function of the pure understanding. It is its only one, though it is so rich in results that all our empirical knowledge rests on it.

If, as has often been said, the refutation of an error is complete only when its mode of origination is shown in psychological terms, then I believe I have accomplished this here with respect to Kant's doctrine of the categories and their schemata.

·'SYNTHETIC UNITY OF APPERCEPTION'·

Having then introduced such great errors into the initial, simple outline of a theory of the faculty of presentation, Kant proceeds to various highly complex assumptions. To these belongs first of all *the synthetic unity of apperception*: a very strange thing, very strangely depicted: 'The *I think* must be able to accompany all my presentations.' Must be able: this is a problematic-apodictic¹ pronouncement; in plain terms, a proposition that takes with one hand what it gives with the other. And what is the sense of this proposition thus balancing on the head of a pin? That all presentational activity is thinking? That is not the case. And it would be dreadful if it were, for then there would be nothing but abstract concepts—and nothing like a pure perception free of reflection and will, such as that of the beautiful, the deepest grasp of the true essence of things, i.e. of their platonic ideas. Also, it would have to be the case that animals either think or don't even engage in presentation.

Or is the proposition perhaps supposed to mean: *no object without subject*? That would be a poor way of saying this, and it would come too late. If we assemble all of Kant's pronouncements, we'll find that what he understands by 'synthetic unity of apperception' is, as it were, the unextended centre of the sphere of all our presentations, the radii of which converge upon it. It is what I call the subject of knowing, the correlate of all presentations. . . .

¹ [These are old logical terms. A statement about what *may* (or is *able* to) be the case is 'problematic'; one about what *must* be the case is 'apodictic'. AS is calling attention to what he sees as the oddness of saying that something *must be able* to be the case.]

82. Kant's Table of Judgments

My rejection of the entire doctrine of the categories, counting it among the groundless assumptions that Kant burdened the theory of knowledge with, comes from **(i)** the critique of the doctrine I have been giving, from **(ii)** my proof that the Transcendental Logic contains contradictions, the source of which is the confusion of perceptual with abstract knowledge, and from **(iii)** my proof of the lack of any clear and determinate concept of the nature of the *understanding* and of *reason*, instead of which we found in Kant's writings only disconnected, conflicting, scanty, and inaccurate pronouncements regarding those two mental faculties. Finally, it comes from **(iv)** the explanations that I myself have given of those same mental faculties in the first Book. . . .and in greater detail in my treatise on the GP (§§21, 26, 34). Those explanations •are very determinate and clear, •obviously arise from consideration of the nature of our knowledge, and •perfectly agree with how the concepts of those two knowledge faculties show up (though not *clearly*) in the speech and writings of all times and all peoples. . . .

The Table of Judgments on which Kant bases his theory of thought and indeed his entire philosophy has in itself, on the whole, something right about it; so it is still incumbent on me to demonstrate how these universal forms of all judgments originate in our knowledge faculty, and to reconcile them with my account of it. In this discussion, I shall always attach to the concepts of understanding and reason the senses given to them in my explanation, which I therefore assume the reader is familiar with.

An essential difference between Kant's method and mine is that he starts from indirect, reflected knowledge, whereas I start from immediate, intuitive knowledge. He is like someone who measures the height of a tower by its shadow,

and I am like someone who applies the measuring rod to the tower itself. So for him philosophy is a science drawn *from* concepts, whereas for me it is a science *in* concepts, drawn from perceptual knowledge, the only source of all evidence, and comprehended and fixed in general concepts. He passes over this whole perceptual world that surrounds us—so multifarious and rich in significance—and confines himself to the forms of abstract thinking; and, although he never explicitly says so, this procedure is based on the assumption that reflection is a copy of all perception, so that anything that is essential in perception must be expressed in reflection, and expressed in very contracted forms and outlines, which are thus easily surveyed. Accordingly, the essential elements and lawful character of abstract knowledge should put into our hands all the strings by which the motley puppet-show of the perceptual world is set in motion before our eyes.

If Kant had only stated clearly this highest principle of his method and then consistently followed it, at least he'd have had to clearly separate the intuitive from the abstract, and we wouldn't have had to battle with irresolvable contradictions and confusions. But from his way of solving his problem we can see that this principle of his method was present in his mind only very unclearly, so that even after a thorough study of his philosophy we still have to guess at it.

As for the stated method and fundamental maxim itself, it has much to be said for it and is a brilliant thought. The nature of all science consists in our bringing the endless manifold of perceptual phenomena under comparatively few abstract concepts out of which we construct a system by that enables us to •have all those phenomena within the reach of our knowledge, to •explain past events and to •determine what is to come. The sciences, however, divide among them the wide domain of phenomena, on the basis of the latter's particular, manifold species. Now it was a bold and happy

thought to isolate •what is essential to concepts as such, apart from their content, in order to discover from •these forms of all thought found in this way what is also essential to all intuitive knowledge and consequently essential to the world as phenomenon in general; and because this would be found *a priori* because of the necessity of those forms of thought, it would be of subjective origin and would lead to just the ends Kant had in view.

Before going any further with this, one would have to inquire into

- what the relation is between reflection and perceptual knowledge (which of course presupposes the clean separation of the two, neglected by Kant);
- how reflection actually reproduces and represents perceptual knowledge, whether quite purely or by being taken up into reflection's own forms, transformed and partly disguised;
- whether the form of abstract, reflective knowledge is determined more by the form of perceptual knowledge or by the character attaching unalterably to reflective knowledge itself. . . .

But this inquiry would have shown that. . . reflection doesn't relate to perceptual knowledge as the surface of water does to the objects mirrored in it, but scarcely even as the mere shadow of these objects stands to the objects themselves. A shadow of an object repeats only a few of the object's external outlines, whereas reflection unites the greatest multiplicity into a single shape and depicts the greatest diversity with a single outline, so that there is no way to arrive on the basis

of it at a complete and sure construal of the things' internal structures.¹

The whole of reflective knowledge, or reason, has only one chief form, and this is the abstract concept. It belongs to reason itself and has no direct necessary connection with the perceptual world, which therefore also exists for animals that have no concepts; and there could be an entirely different world which the form of reflection would fit just as well. But the uniting of concepts into judgments has certain determinate and lawful forms which, found by induction, constitute the Table of Judgments. These forms are for the most part derivable from the nature of reflective knowledge itself, and thus immediately from reason, because they arise from the four laws of thought (which I call metalogical truths) and from the *dictum de omni et nullo*.² Others of these forms are based on the nature of perceptual knowledge, thus on the understanding; but just for this reason they don't point to an equal number of particular forms belonging to the understanding; rather, they are fully derivable from the understanding's one function, namely, immediate knowledge of cause and effect. Still others of those forms, finally, have arisen from the conjunction and combination of the reflective and intuitive modes of knowledge, or really from the latter being taken up into the former.

83. Getting down to the details

I shall now go through the moments³ of judgment individually, indicating the origin of each from the sources I

¹ [The original says *die Gestalten der Dinge* = 'the things' shapes', but this must be a slip.]

² [The traditional three 'laws of thought' are the principles of identity, of contradiction, and of excluded middle. AS counted the GP as a fourth. The *dictum de omni et nullo*—'maxim of all and none'—says that what is true (false) of a whole class is true (false) of every subclass within it.]

³ [*Momente*, apparently meaning something like 'chief characteristics'.]

have referred to; from which it follows that a deduction of categories from them is wanting, and the assumption of the categories is just as groundless as Kant's account of them is (so I have argued) confused and self-contradictory.

[i] The so-called **Quantity** of judgments stems from the nature of concepts as such, and thus has its ground solely in reason, having absolutely no direct connection with the understanding or with perceptual knowledge. As I explained in the first Book *chapter 9*, it is essential to concepts as such that they have an extension, a sphere, and that broader or less determinate ones include narrower or more determinate ones. The latter can be separated out, which can be done either **a** in such a way that one only characterises it in general terms as some undefined part of the broader concept or **b** in such a way that one defines and fully separates it out by giving it a special name. The judgment that carries out this operation is **a** in the first case called a particular judgment and **b** in the second case a universal judgment. For example, one and the same part of the sphere of the concept *tree* can be isolated by

- a** the particular judgment 'Some trees have gallnuts' or by
- b** the universal judgment 'All oak trees have gallnuts'.

You can see that the difference between the two operations is very small—indeed that the possibility of it depends on the richness of the language.¹ Yet Kant has declared that the difference reveals two fundamentally different actions, functions, categories of the pure understanding that determines experience *a priori* precisely through them. Or, finally, a concept can be used to arrive at a determinate, individual, perceptual presentation from which it was itself (along with many others) derived; this happens

c in a singular judgment such as 'This tree here has gallnuts'.

Such a judgment merely indicates the boundary between abstract knowledge and the perceptual knowledge to which it directly goes: Kant then made a special category out of this as well. After all I have said, no further polemics are needed here!

[ii] In the same manner, the **Quality** of judgments lies entirely within the domain of reason, and doesn't point to any law of the understanding that makes perception possible. The nature of abstract concepts. . . entails the possibility, as likewise explained in chapter 9, of uniting and separating their spheres; and this possibility is the basis for the general logical laws of identity and contradiction, to which I attribute *metalogical* truth because they originate purely from reason and are not further explicable. They determine that what has been united must remain united, what has been separated must remain separated, thus what has been posited cannot at the same time be nullified; thus they presuppose the possibility of combining and separating spheres, i.e. of judgment. The *form* of judgment, however, lies solely in reason, and is not—like the *content* of judgments—brought across from the understanding's perceptual knowledge, in which there is therefore no correlate or analogue to be sought for them. Once perception has arisen through the understanding and for the understanding, it exists complete, not subject to doubt or error, and accordingly knows neither affirmation nor negation; for it gives voice to itself and does not—as does the abstract knowledge of reason—have its value and content merely in relation to something outside it in accordance with the GP. It is therefore sheer *Realität* and all negation is foreign to its nature; negation can only be added by thought

¹ [He means that it's possible only in a language that happens to have a name for the class of oak trees.]

in reflection, and just for that reason always remains within the domain of abstract thought. To *affirmative* and *negative* judgments—two of the kinds Kant included under *Quality*—Kant adds *infinite* judgments, availing himself of an old scholastic whim, an ingeniously invented hole-plugger that didn't even need to be explained—a blind window like the many that Kant brought in for the sake of his symmetrical architectonic.

84. Relation

[iii] Under the very broad concept of **Relation** Kant brought together three entirely different properties of judgments. Because they are so different, our search for their origin must take them separately.

(a) The hypothetical judgment—taking it in general—is the abstract expression of that most universal form of all our knowledge, the GP. In my 1813 treatise on the GP, I show that it has four entirely distinct meanings, each originating from a different knowledge faculty, just as each concerns a different class of presentations. It is well enough established there that the origin of the hypothetical judgment as such—of this general form of thought—cannot merely be, as Kant would have it, the understanding and its category of causality, but that the law of causality (which I count as pure understanding's single form) is only one of the modes of the GP, which includes all pure or *a priori* knowledge which in each of its meanings has this hypothetical form of judgment as its expression.

Here we see clearly how cases of knowledge that are entirely different in their origin and their meaning nevertheless, when thought *in abstracto* by reason, appear in one and the same form of combination of concepts and judgments, and so in this form are no longer distinguishable; and to distinguish

them one must go back to perceptual knowledge, entirely abandoning the abstract. Therefore, the path struck by Kant—to find, from the standpoint of abstract knowledge, the elements and innermost workings of intuitive knowledge as well—was altogether perverse. The whole of my introductory treatise on the GP is to a certain extent to be viewed as a thorough discussion of the meaning of the hypothetical form of judgment; so I shan't linger on it here.

(b) The form of the categorical judgment is nothing other than the form of *judgment in general* in the most proper sense. For judging, taken strictly, means only thinking the combination or incompatibility of spheres of concepts. So hypothetical and disjunctive combinations are really not special forms of judgment; for they are only applied to judgments as already formed, in which the combination of concepts remains unalterably categorical; but they in turn connect these judgments, with the hypothetical form expressing the dependence of one on another, and the disjunctive their incompatibility. But mere concepts have only one kind of relation to one another, namely the one expressed in the categorical judgment. The subspecies of this relation are **a** intersection and **b** complete separation of conceptual spheres, i.e. **a** affirmation and **b** negation; from which Kant made special categories under an entirely different title, 'Quality'. Intersection and separation also have subspecies, according to whether the spheres intersect entirely or only partially, which determination constitutes the *Quantity* of judgments, from which in turn Kant made an entirely separate category-title. Thus he separated things that are quite closely related, indeed identical, the easily surveyable variants of the only possible relation among mere concepts, and on the other hand under this title of 'Relation' united things that are most distinct.

Categorical judgments have as their metalogical principle

the logical laws¹ of identity and contradiction. But the ground of the connection of concept-spheres that confers truth on a judgment. . . . may be of very different kinds, so that the truth of the judgment is either logical, empirical, transcendental or metalogical, as I explained in §§30–33 of the introductory treatise and need not repeat here. We can see from this how very diverse the cases of immediate knowledge can be, though all of them are presented *in abstracto* by the combination of the spheres of two concepts as subject and predicate; and we can also see that no single function of the understanding can be taken to correspond to and produce that combination. For example, the judgments

- ‘Water boils’,
- ‘The sine is the measure of the angle’,
- ‘The will decides’,
- ‘Occupations distract’,
- ‘Making distinctions is difficult’

all use the same ·subject-predicate· logical form to express the most diverse sorts of relation. This again confirms how perverse it is to adopt the abstract point of view when setting out to analyse immediate, intuitive knowledge.

Categorical judgment springs from knowledge on the part of the understanding (with this word understood properly, in my sense) only when causation is expressed by it; but this is the case with every judgment that refers to a physical quality. For when I say ‘This body is heavy, hard, fluid, green, acid, alkaline, organic’ etc., this always refers to its effect, and knowledge of this is possible only through pure understanding. Now, once this knowledge—

like much that is quite different from it, e.g. the subordination of highly abstract concepts

—was expressed by subjects and predicates *in abstracto*,

these merely conceptual relations were turned back to perceptual knowledge ·by Kant·, who supposed that the *subject and predicate* of judgment must have its own special correlate in perception, *substance and quality*. But I shall make it clear later that the only true content of the concept of *substance* is the concept of *matter*. But ‘qualities’ is entirely synonymous with ‘kinds of effect’, so that the supposed knowledge of substance and quality is never anything more than pure understanding’s knowledge of cause and effect. [AS then gives references to other places where he discusses these matters, and says that he’ll deal with them] more closely when I examine the principle that substance persists.

(c) Disjunctive judgments stem from the logical law of the excluded middle, which is a metalogical truth; so they are entirely the property of pure reason and don’t originate in the understanding. Kant’s derivation from them of the category of *community* or *interaction* is a glaring example of the violence against the truth that he sometimes allows himself so as to satisfy his desire for architectonic symmetry. [AS here cites two previous writers who have rightly criticised the derivation in question.]

What actual analogy is there between •a concept left open for determination by mutually exclusive predicates and •the thought of interaction? The two are even quite opposed to one another, since

- in disjunctive judgment the affirmation of one of the two alternative propositions is necessarily the negating of the other, whereas
- when one thinks two things in the relation of interaction, the positing of one is necessarily positing of the other, and vice versa.

So it’s indisputable that the real logical analogue of inter-

¹ [*Denkgesetze*, literally = ‘laws of thought’.]

action is the *vicious circle* in argument, in which—just as supposedly with interaction—the grounded is also in turn the ground, and conversely. And just as logic rejects the vicious circle, so also the concept of interaction should be banned from metaphysics. For I seriously intend now to show that there is no such thing as *interaction* in the true sense; this concept—so popular in use just because of the vagueness of the thought it conveys—when more closely considered turns out to be empty, false, and null. You should first reflect on what causality in general is [and he refers to others of his writings that could assist in this. He then continues:] Causality is the law in accordance with which occurrent *states* of matter have their positions determined in time. Causality is concerned merely with states, indeed merely with alterations, and not with matter as such or with persistence without alteration. Matter as such doesn't come under the law of causality, since it neither comes into existence nor goes out of existence; so the *thing* of matter (as they say) doesn't come and go but only its *states* do so. Furthermore, the law of causality has nothing to do with persistence; for where nothing is altered there is no effect-production and no causality, but rather an enduring resting-state. If this state is then altered, bringing a new state into being, either the new state persists or it doesn't, and if it doesn't it brings forth a third state, and the necessity with which this happens is just the law of causality, which is a mode of the GP and therefore can't be further explained because the GP is the principle of all explanation and all necessity. It's clear from this that cause-and-effect stands in an exact connection and necessary relation with before-and-after. For state A to be a cause and state B an effect of it, A must precede B in time. But the concept of *interaction* implies that each is both the cause and the effect of the other; which is to say that each is the earlier and yet also

the later one. Thus, an absurdity. For it is not possible for two states to exist simultaneously, and indeed necessarily simultaneously, because as necessarily belonging together and existing simultaneously they constitute only one state. The permanence of this state certainly requires the continued existence of all its determinations, but then we are concerned not with change and causality but with duration and rest; this state may lead to another, and that to yet another, which all happens merely in accordance with the simple law of causality, and does not establish a new law, that of interaction.

I also plainly assert that there are no examples that would validate the concept of interaction. Everything that might be adduced as such is either **(i)** a resting state to which the concept of causality—which has meaning only with respect to alterations—finds no application at all, or **(ii)** an alternating succession of mutually conditioning states that are given the same name, which can be fully explained by simple causality. An example of **(i)** is provided by pans of a scale brought to rest with equal weights: here no effect is produced because there is no alteration; things are in a resting state. Gravity is striving. . . ., but cannot show its force by any effect. The fact that removal of one of the weights leads to a second state that becomes at once the cause of the third, the sinking of the other pan, happens in accordance with the simple law of cause and effect, and doesn't need a special category of the understanding or even a special name. An example of **(ii)** is the continuous combustion of a fire. The combination of oxygen with the flammable body causes heat, and this in turn causes the renewed occurrence of that chemical combination. But this is nothing other than a chain of causes and effects, whose members are alternately given the same name, *combustion*. . . . [AS gives a further example—this time a geographical one—of a type-**(ii)** causal chain that

night be mistaken for interaction, and then continues:] It is just the same with the swinging of pendulums, indeed even the self-maintenance of organic bodies, in which every state leads to a new one that is of the same *kind* as the one that caused it, but is a new one *individually*; only here the affair is more complicated because the chain now consists of links of many kinds—not just of two—so that a ·kind of· link that is given the same name recurs only after several others have intervened. But still all we have here is an application of the single and simple law of causality, which gives us the rule for sequences of states—not something that would have to be grasped through a new and special function of the understanding!

[AS now (i) presents and refutes another possible argument for interaction, (ii) says that if there were real interaction then there could be a perpetual-motion machine, which we know there couldn't, and (iii) says that Aristotle denies that there is interaction, backing this with quotations from Aristotle's Greek. Between (ii) and (iii) he lashes out again at Kant:] In the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* Kant begins the proof of the fourth theorem of mechanics by saying 'All external action in the world is interaction'. How then can it be *a priori* true that **a** simple causality and **b** interaction involve two distinct functions in the understanding, and even that the real *succession* of things is possible and knowable only through **a** the former and their simultaneity only through **b** the latter? According to that, if all action is interaction, then succession and simultaneity would also be the same thing, and everything in the world would be simultaneous.

85. Modality

[iv] The categories of **Modality** have the advantage that what is expressed through each of them does actually correspond to the judgment-form from which it is derived, which is hardly ever the case with the other categories because they are mostly forced to come, through the most arbitrary deduction, from the judgment-forms.

Thus it is perfectly true that it's the concepts of the **a** possible, **b** actual and **c** necessary that are occasioned by the **a** problematic, **b** assertoric and **c** apodictic forms of judgment. But it is not true that those concepts are the understanding's separate, original, and non-derivative forms of knowledge. Rather, the concepts of contingency, possibility, impossibility and actuality arise only because reflection is applied to such forms of knowledge. So these concepts don't by any means spring from one faculty of the mind, the understanding, but arise through the conflict between abstract and intuitive knowledge, as will be seen right away.

I maintain that *being necessary* and *following from a given premise* are wholly equivalent concepts and utterly identical. We can never know (or even merely think) something to be necessary except by regarding it as a consequence of a given premise; and the concept of necessity contains absolutely nothing beyond this dependence, this fact of being posited by way of another and inevitably following from it. It thus derives and survives¹ simply and solely through application of the GP. Therefore, according to the different forms of this principle, there is

- physical necessity (of effects from causes),
- logical necessity (through knowledge-grounds in analytic judgments, inferences, etc.),

¹ [echoing the original's *entsteht und besteht*.]

- mathematical necessity (in accordance with the ground of being in space and time), and finally
- practical necessity, a phrase that I'm not using to mean anything like determination by a supposed 'categorical imperative', but rather actions that are necessitated for a given empirical character by the motives at hand.

Everything necessary is so only relatively, under the presupposition of the premise from which it follows; so 'absolute necessity' is a contradiction. . . .

The contradictory opposite, i.e. the denial of necessity, is *contingency*. The content of this concept is therefore negative, namely

merely the *lack* of the connection expressed by the GP.

Consequently, the contingent too is always only relative; something is contingent only with reference to something that is *not* its ground. Every object of any sort—e.g. every event in the actual world—is always necessary and contingent at once: necessary with reference to the one thing that is its cause, contingent with reference to everything else. For its contact with everything else in time and space is a mere coincidence without necessary connection. . . . So absolute contingency is as little thinkable as absolute necessity. [AS gives and lengthily develops reasons for this that are clearly implied by things he has said already. He sums up:] All of this ultimately derives from the fact that the modality of judgment indicates not so much the objective character of things as the relation of our knowledge to it. But since everything in nature comes from a cause, everything *actual* is also *necessary*. Though only so far as it is at this time, in this place, for that's as far as the law of causality extends. If we abandon perceptual nature and go over to abstract thought, then we can present ourselves in reflection with all natural

laws—some known to us *a priori*, some only *a posteriori*—and this abstract presentation contains everything that is in nature at any time in any place, but abstracting from any particular place and time; and such reflection leads us into the broad realm of *possibility*. But even here there's no place for the *impossible*. It is obvious that possibility and impossibility exist only for reflection—for abstract knowledge on the part of reason—and not for perceptual knowledge, although it is perception's pure forms that supply reason with the determination of the possible and impossible. Possibility and impossibility are **a** metaphysical or only **b** physical, depending on whether the natural laws that generate our thoughts about it are **a** *a priori* or **b** *a posteriori*.

From this account, which doesn't need proof because it rests immediately on knowledge of the GP and on the unfolding of the concepts of the necessary, actual, and possible, we see well enough •how entirely groundless it is for Kant to assume three separate functions of the understanding for those three concepts, and •that here again he has pursued architectonic symmetry without being disturbed by any doubts.

But in addition to this he made the great mistake—admittedly following the procedure of earlier philosophy—of confusing the concepts of *necessary* and *contingent* with one another. [AS offers to explain this, in a passage driven by the view that necessity, properly understood, 'is relative': If Q follows from P, then Q is necessary relative to P; but it doesn't make sense to say that a proposition is *absolutely necessary*, this being a concept that the earlier philosophy and then Kant 'snatched out of thin air'. AS cites passages in the *Critique of Pure Reason* where Kant falls foul of this and is led into self-contradiction and to confusing necessity with contingency. Here is some of the passage:] The earlier philosophers had misused abstraction in the following way.

It was obvious that something whose ground is posited follows inevitably, i.e. cannot not be, thus is necessary. They fastened exclusively on this latter feature, however, and said: that is necessary which cannot be otherwise, or the opposite of which is impossible. But they failed to attend to the ground and the root of such necessity, thus overlooking the relativity of all necessity, and thereby creating the entirely unthinkable fiction of something *absolutely necessary*, i.e. of something whose existence

- would be as inevitable as consequences that follow from grounds, but which
- would not be the consequence of any ground, and therefore
- would depend on nothing.

What that last clause postulates is just an absurdity, because it conflicts with the GP. With this fiction as a point of departure, they—in diametrical opposition to the truth—declared that everything that is posited through a ground is contingent, namely, seeing the relative character of its necessity and comparing it with that absolute necessity, contradictory in its concept, which had been snatched out of thin air. Even Kant retains this fundamentally perverse definition of the contingent and gives it as his explanation: *Critique of Pure Reason* B289–91, B301; A419, 458, 460; B447, 486, 488. This leads him into the most evident contradiction with himself, insofar as on B301 he says ‘Everything contingent has a cause’, and adds: ‘That is contingent whose non-being is possible.’ But what has a cause is something whose non-being is altogether impossible; thus it is necessary. . . .

86. More on modality

I take this opportunity to add some further comments on those concepts of modality.

[In this chapter AS repeatedly brings in two technical terms from the theory of syllogisms, namely ‘major premise’ and ‘minor premise’. His uses of these is obscure, confusing, and so inaccurate that one wonders whether he had even a novice’s grasp of this theory. In this version, all that will be silently filtered out.]

Since all necessity rests on the GP, and is therefore relative, all *apodictic* judgments are in their origin and according to their ultimate significance *hypothetical*. They become categorical only through the addition of an *assertoric* premise, thus in the conclusion of an inference.¹ If this second premise is still undecided, and this indecision is expressed, then this yields a *problematic* judgment.

[The next bit is obscurely written. It’s gist is this: A general law of nature (e.g. the law of gravity) is as it stands apodictic, but in application to any individual case (e.g. the fall of that apple) it is only problematic: there’s always the question of whether the apple’s circumstances were such as to make the law of gravity applicable to it. And conversely, every individual event is necessary through its cause, and thus reportable in an apodictic judgment, but a judgment bringing an individual event under a general law—e.g. saying that *that* fall of the apple was a case of gravity—must be problematic.]

This is all based on the fact that

- possibility exists only in the domain of reflection and for reason,
- the actual exists in the domain of perception and for the understanding; and

¹ [That phrase literally translates the German, but the text seems to be defective. AS surely meant to say that in such a case the judgment in question *appears as* the conclusion of an inference.]

•the necessary exists for both domains.

Indeed, the difference between necessary, actual, and possible exists only *in abstracto* and with respect to concepts; in the real world, all three collapse into one. For everything that happens, happens **necessarily**, because it happens from a cause, which in turn itself has a cause; so all of the world's processes form a strict chain of necessarily occurring events. Accordingly, everything actual is at once necessary, and there's no difference between reality and necessity, or between reality and possibility. For anything that hasn't *actually* come to be wasn't *possible*, because the causes without which it couldn't occur did not themselves occur, nor *could* they have occurred within the great chain of causes; so it was an **impossibility**. Thus every event is either necessary or impossible. But all this applies merely to the empirically real world, i.e. to the complex of individual things. . . .

If on the other hand we employ our reason to consider things in general terms, comprehending them *in abstracto*, then necessity, reality, and possibility are again separated. In that frame of mind we recognise as entirely possible everything that squares with laws belonging *a priori* to our intellect. What corresponds with the empirical laws of nature we recognise as possible in this world, even if it has never actually come to be; so we sharply distinguish the possible from the actual. The actual is indeed in itself always also necessary, but is comprehended as such only by someone who knows its cause; but apart from this it is, and is called, contingent.

[Here follows a passage discussing a supposed 'dispute' in which the two parties actually agree,¹ and dragging in tattered shreds of theory of syllogism. AS emerges from this

as follows (though with the syllogistic nonsense filtered out):] Every general proposition determines things with respect to reality only under a presupposition, hence hypothetically. The general proposition loads the cannon; the proposition stating the presupposition sets the fuse, and only then does the shot ensue, the conclusion. This holds everywhere of the relation between possibility and reality. Since the conclusion—which is the expression of reality—always ensues necessarily, it follows that everything actual is also necessary, which can also be seen from the fact that being necessary only means being the consequence of a given ground; this is for actual things a cause, thus everything actual is necessary. Accordingly, we here see the concepts of the possible, actual, and necessary coinciding. . . .

What holds them apart is the limitation of our intellect by the form of time; for time is the mediator between possibility and reality. The necessity of individual events can be made completely evident through knowledge of all of their causes, but the conjunction of all these various and mutually independent causes appears to us as contingent; indeed their mutual independence is precisely the concept of contingency. But since each of them was the necessary consequence of its cause, and the chain of causes has no beginning, this shows that contingency is a merely subjective appearance arising from the limits of our understanding's horizon, and as subjective as the optical horizon within which the heavens touch the earth.

Since *necessity* is the same as *consequence from a given ground*, it must make its appearance as a particular sort of necessity for each mode of the GP [remember that 'GP' is short for 'Grounding Principle'.] and also have its opposite in

¹ [AS presents the 'dispute' by making one party say 'Only what becomes actual was possible; and everything actual is also necessary.' and making the other say 'Much is possible that will never become actual; for only the necessary becomes actual.' Shadow-boxing!]

possibility and *impossibility*, which always first arise through reason's abstract consideration of objects. So the four sorts of necessity mentioned early in chapter 85 stand opposed to four sorts of impossibility:

- physical,
- logical,
- mathematical, and
- practical.

It may also be noted that if one keeps entirely within the domain of abstract concepts, possibility always attaches to the more general concept, necessity to the narrower one. For example: 'an animal *can* be a bird, fish, amphibian, etc.>'; 'a nightingale *must* be a bird, this an animal, this an organism, this a body.' This is because logical necessity, the expression of which is logical inference, proceeds from the general to the particular and never conversely.

On the other hand, in perceptual nature (presentations belonging to the first class) everything is really necessary by the law of causality. Only added reflection can see it as contingent, comparing it with that which is not its cause, and even as merely and purely actual by abstracting from all its causal connections. Only for this class of presentations does the concept of the actual really have any status. . . .

In the third class of presentations, that of pure mathematical perception, there is—if one keeps entirely within it—sheer necessity. Possibility arises here too only by reference to concepts of reflection, e.g. 'a triangle *can* be right-angled, obtuse, equilateral; it *must* have three angles that add up to two right angles.' Thus we reach the possible only by passing from the perceptual to the abstract.

After this exposition, which presupposes knowledge of what I said in the treatise on the GP and in the first Book of the present work, I hope there will be no further doubt about the true and very different sources of the forms

that the table of judgments sets before us, or about the inadmissibility and utter groundlessness of the assumption of twelve separate functions of the understanding to explain them. Many easily observable details indicate the falsity of the 'twelve functions' thesis. Someone who thought that an affirmative, a categorical, and an assertoric judgment are three fundamentally different things—so different that they justify assuming an entirely unique function of the understanding for each of them—would have to have a great love of symmetry and much trust in the path it leads to!

87. More about the list of categories

Kant himself betrays his awareness of the untenability of his doctrine of the categories when in the chapter on Phenomena and Noumena in B he omits several long passages from A. . . . which too openly displayed the weakness of that doctrine. For example, he says at A241 that he hasn't defined the individual categories because he couldn't define them even if he wanted to, as they are incapable of any definition; forgetting that at A82 he had said, 'I purposely refrain from the definition of the categories, even if I might be in possession of it.' So this was—pardon my language!—wind. But he let the later passage stand. So all those passages that were wisely omitted from B betray the fact that nothing clear can be thought with respect to the categories, the whole doctrine of which stands on feet of clay.

This table of categories is now offered as the principle that is to guide all metaphysical, indeed all scientific, thinking (*Prolegomena* §39). And in fact it is not only (as I have shown above) the basis for the entire Kantian philosophy and the pattern by which its symmetry is to be everywhere achieved, but it also truly became the procrustean bed into which Kant forces every possible inquiry, with a violence that I will now

consider in somewhat more detail. . . .

Kant entirely sets aside and forgets the *meanings* of the expressions designating the rubrics,¹ and the forms of judgments and categories, holding only to the *expressions* themselves. These originate partly in Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*, but are arbitrarily chosen. Surely the extension of concepts could have been labelled by something better than 'Quantity', though this word suits its object better than do the other rubrics for the categories. The word 'Quality' was obviously chosen only from the custom of contrasting quantity and quality; for in the case of affirmation and negation the label 'Quality' is quite inappropriate. But with any consideration in which he engages, any quantity in time and space and any possible quality of things, physical, moral, etc., is brought by Kant under those Categorical rubrics, on the basis not of the faintest fittingness but only of arbitrary nomenclature. One has to bear in mind all the esteem that one otherwise owes to Kant, not to give harsh expression to one's displeasure at this procedure.

The next example is provided for us by the 'pure physiological table' in the *General Principles of Natural Science*. What on earth does the Quantity of judgments have to do with the fact that **a** every perception has an extensive magnitude? What does the Quality of judgments have to do with the fact that **b** every sensation has a degree? The **a** former actually rests on the fact that space is the form of our outer perception, and the **b** latter is nothing more than an empirical and indeed entirely subjective observation, drawn merely from considering the character of our sensations.²

Further, in the table (A344) that gives the basis for 'rational psychology', the soul's *simplicity* is introduced under Quality; but simplicity is a quantitative property with absolutely no relation to affirmation and negation in judgment. Quantity was supposed to include the soul's *unity*, which is already comprised in its simplicity. Then Modality is forced in in a ridiculous way, by saying that the soul is related to possible objects. But relatedness belongs to Relation,³ except that this is already taken over by the concept of substance. Then the four cosmological ideas, which are the material for the Antinomies, are traced back to the rubrics for the categories; I'll say more about this when I examine the Antinomies. Several still more glaring examples are provided by the table of the categories of freedom in the *Critique of Practical Reason*; in the first Book of the *Critique of Judgment*, which examines judgments of taste according to the four rubrics for the categories; and finally in the *Metaphysical Foundations Principles of Natural Science*, which is entirely tailored to the table of categories: see at the end of chapter 1 how the unity, plurality, totality of the directions of lines are supposed to correspond to the categories that are so named in accordance with the Quantity of judgments! This may be the main source of the element of falsity that is mixed in here and there with what is true and excellent in this important work.

¹ [The German is *Titel*; it refers to the general headings under which Kant groups his trios of judgment-forms and categories: 'Quantity', 'Quality', 'Relation' and 'Modality'.]

² [The German has *Sinnesorgane* = 'sense-organs', but that was surely a slip.]

³ [In the German, relatedness is *Verhältniß* and relation is *Relation*.]

88. The persistence of substance

The principle of **a** the *persistence of substance* is derived from the category of **b** subsistence and inherence. But we know **b** this only from the form of categorical judgments, i.e. from the combination of two concepts as subject and predicate. To make **a** that great metaphysical principle depend on **b** this simple, purely logical form—what a lot of force has to be used! But it is done for the sake of symmetry. The proof that Kant gives here for **a** this principle makes no use of its supposed origin from the understanding and from **b** the category, and is drawn from the pure perception of time. But this proof is also completely wrong. It is false that there is any simultaneity or duration in mere time; these presentations come from the uniting of *space* with time, as I have already shown in my treatise on the GP (§18) and further explained in chapter 4 of the present work; knowledge of those two discussions is required for an understanding of what follows. It is false that in all change time itself *remains*; on the contrary, it is just time itself that is fleeting; a permanent time is a contradiction. Kant's proof is untenable, strenuously though he supports it with sophisms. Indeed it gets him into the most blatant contradiction: after (A177/B219) wrongly setting forth simultaneity as a mode of time, he quite rightly says (A183/B226) 'Simultaneity is not a mode of time, in which no parts are simultaneous, but rather all in succession'.

In truth, simultaneity involves space as much as it does time. For if two things are simultaneous and yet not *one*, they are distinct by virtue of space; if two states of *one* thing are simultaneous (e.g. the glowing and the heat of an iron bar), then they are two simultaneous effects of one thing, and therefore presuppose matter which presupposes space. Strictly speaking, 'simultaneous' is a negative characterisation, which merely says that two things or states are *not*

distinct by virtue of time, and so their difference is to be sought elsewhere.

But of course our knowledge of the persistence of substance, i.e. of matter, has to rest on an *a priori* insight; for it is elevated above all doubt, and so cannot be drawn from experience. I derive it from the fact that the principle of all becoming and passing away—the law of causality of which we are *a priori* conscious—essentially concerns only alterations, i.e. successive *states* of matter; so it is limited to the *form* but leaves the *matter* untouched. So matter stands in our consciousness as the foundation of all things, not subject to any becoming or passing away, hence always having been and always remaining. A deeper grounding of the persistence of substance. . . . can be found in chapter 4 above, where it is shown that the essence of matter consists in completely uniting space and time, which is possible only by means of the presentation of causality; . . . so that there is never knowledge of matter otherwise than as through and through causality. . . . So causality, matter and reality—as an intimate uniting of space and time—are one thing, and the subjective correlate of this is the understanding. Matter must bear within itself the conflicting properties of the two factors (space and time) from which it comes; and it's the presentation of causality that eliminates the contradiction between the two and makes their conjunction comprehensible to the understanding. Matter exists only through and for the understanding, the entire capacity of which consists in knowledge of cause and effect; for it, therefore,

- the insubstantial flow of time, coming to the fore as change in qualities,

is united in matter with

- the rigid immobility of space, which displays itself as the persistence of substance.

For if substance passed away like qualities, then phenomena

would be torn loose from space and belong only to mere time. The world of experience would be dissolved, with the annihilation of matter.

Thus the principle of the persistence of substance, which everyone recognises as *a priori* certain, has to be based on the part played by space in matter, i.e. in all the phenomena of reality; space being the contrary and opposite of time and therefore in itself knowing no change at all. The persistence principle couldn't be based on mere time, to which Kant for this purpose absurdly imputes a lasting character. . . .

I would have many other particulars to refute in the further course of the Transcendental Analytic, but I fear it would try the reader's patience and therefore leave him to his own thoughts. But we are repeatedly confronted in the *Critique of Pure Reason* with that fundamental failing of Kant which I criticised in detail above, the lack of any distinction between •abstract, discursive knowledge and •intuitive knowledge. This is what constantly spreads obscurity over Kant's whole theory of the faculty of knowledge, and never lets the reader know what he is really talking about at any point; so the reader, instead of *understanding*, always only *conjectures*, alternately trying to understand what is said at any point as a statement about thought or a statement about perception, and is constantly left hanging. In the chapter 'On the Distinction of all Objects into Phenomena and Noumena' Kant's incredible lack of reflection on the nature of the difference between perceptual perception and abstract presentation brings him (as I am about to explain in more detail) to the monstrous assertions (i) that without thought—and thus without abstract concepts—there would be no knowledge of an object, and (ii) that because perception is not thought, it is not any kind of knowledge and in general nothing but mere sensation! Indeed even further (A253/B309) (iii) that perception without concepts is

entirely empty, while concepts without perception are always something. Now (iii) is the exact opposite of the truth. For concepts obtain all their meaning, all their content, from their reference to the perceptual presentations from which they have been abstracted by omitting everything inessential; so that when the foundation of perception is withdrawn they are empty and null. Perceptions, on the other hand, have immediate and very great meaning in themselves. . . .; they represent themselves, give voice to themselves, don't have a merely borrowed content as concepts do. For the GP holds sway over perceptions only as the law of causality, determining only their position in space and time; but the GP doesn't condition their content and their meaningfulness, as is the case with concepts, where it serves as the ground of knowledge. In one place Kant seems to be getting at a distinction between perceptual and abstract presentation; it is where he objects against Locke and Leibniz that the former made everything into perceptual presentations and the latter made everything into abstract presentations. But no distinction is forthcoming; and if Locke and Leibniz made those mistakes, Kant himself is burdened by a third mistake that encompasses them both, namely confusing the perceptual with the abstract to such an extent that a monstrous hermaphrodite arose from the two of them, an absurdity that can't be clearly presented and that was therefore bound to confuse students, stun them, and set them quarrelling with one another.

Certainly, thought and perception are separated in the chapter 'On the Distinction of all Objects into Phenomena and Noumena' more than they are anywhere else; but the way the distinction is made in this chapter is fundamentally wrong. It says:

'If from my empirical knowledge I remove all thought (through categories), no knowledge of any object

remains; through mere intuition nothing at all is thought; and the occurrence in me of this sensory event—the one that remains when all thought is removed from an item of empirical knowledge—doesn't amount to a representation of any object.' (A253/B309)

To a certain extent this sentence contains all of Kant's errors in a nutshell, because it shows clearly that he has misconceived the relation between¹ sensation, perception, and thought, and has accordingly identified perception—whose form is supposed to be space in all three dimensions—with mere subjective sensation in the sense organs, while having knowledge of an object first added on by thought as distinct from perception. I on the other hand say: objects are first of all objects of perception, not of thought, and all knowledge of objects is originally and in itself perception; but this is emphatically not mere sensation, because the understanding is already active in it. The thought that is an added element in human beings but not in animals

- is a mere abstraction from perception,
- yields no fundamentally new knowledge, and
- . . . merely changes the form of knowledge already won by perception, converting it into abstract knowledge in concepts.

Perceptibility is lost by this, but on the other hand it enables items of knowledge to enter into combinations that immeasurably broaden the range of their applicability. The material of our thought, on the other hand, is nothing but our perceptions themselves, and *not* something that isn't contained in perception and would have to be brought to it by thought; and so the material for everything that happens in our thought must be capable of verification in our perception, for otherwise the thought would be empty.

Although this material is variously processed and transformed by thought, it must be possible to recover it from there and lead thought back to it—like what happens when a piece of gold is recovered from all its solutions, oxidations, sublimations, and compounds, and is set before us again pure and undiminished. This couldn't be the situation if thought itself had added something, indeed the principal thing, to the object.

89. The Amphiboly chapter

The entire chapter that follows this one, 'On the Amphiboly', is merely a critique of Leibnizian philosophy and as such it is mainly accurate, though its over-all shape is merely a product of a preference for architectonic symmetry, which here again provides the directing principle. [In a rather complicated way, AS says that Kant's wish to echo Aristotle leads him to focus on *four* aspects of every concept, which AS says] are altogether arbitrarily assumed, and ten others could with equal right be added. But the number *four* corresponds to the rubrics for the categories, so Kant does the best he can to divide the main Leibnizian doctrines among them. Also, by this critique certain errors of reason are stamped (so to speak) as natural, though they were merely false abstractions on the part of Leibniz, who—rather than learning from his great philosophical contemporaries, Spinoza and Locke—served up his own strange inventions. In the chapter on the Amphiboly of Reflection, it is finally said that there could be a kind of perception quite different from ours though our categories were applicable to it. So the objects of that supposed perception would be noumena, things that can merely be thought by us, but since the

¹ [Thus the German; but he should have said 'the relations amongst'.]

perception that would give meaning to this thought would be lacking—indeed would be altogether problematic—so the ‘object’ of that thought would also be merely a quite indeterminate possibility. I have shown that Kant, in total contradiction with himself, presents the categories sometimes as a condition of perceptual presentation, sometimes as a function of merely abstract thought. In the chapter now under discussion, they appear exclusively in the latter role, and it really seems as if he would ascribe merely discursive thought to them. But if this really is Kant’s opinion, he should have opened the Transcendental Logic by characterising thought in general, *before* going on at length about the various functions of thought. This would have involved him in distinguishing thought from perception, and showing what sort of knowledge mere perception provides and what new sort is added in thought. Then we’d have known what he is really talking about; or rather he would have talked quite differently, speaking at one point about perception and at another about thought, instead of (as he does) always talking of an intermediate thing which is an absurdity.¹ Then there wouldn’t be that great gap between the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Logic, where, after his account of perception’s mere form, he simply brushes off its content—perceptual apprehension as a whole—with a mere ‘it is given’, and doesn’t ask how it is given, *whether with or without understanding*, but goes across in a *leap* to abstract thought, and not even to thought in general, but immediately to certain forms of thought, and doesn’t say a word about what thought is, what a concept is, what the relation is between the abstract and discursive and between the concrete and intuitive, how the knowledge of human beings is unlike that of animals, and what reason is.

[AS goes on to say that the terms ‘noumena’ and ‘phenomena’ (or their Greek equivalents) were used by ancient and medieval philosophers for sober purposes, whereas] Kant irresponsibly ignored the meanings those words already had, and took charge of them—as though they were still unclaimed—as labels for his things in themselves and his appearances.

90. What are the forms of thought?

Having had to reject Kant’s doctrine of the categories, just as he rejected Aristotle’s, I want here to suggest here a third way of saying what they were trying to get at. What they were both seeking under the label of ‘categories’ were the most general concepts under which all things, however diverse, have to be subsumed and through which therefore everything that exists would ultimately be thought. That is why Kant conceived of them as the *forms* of all thought.

Grammar relates to logic as clothes relate to the body. So shouldn’t these very highest concepts—

this ground-bass of reason that is the foundation of all more particular thought, and so has to be at work if any thought is to happen

—because of their extreme generality, be expressed not by individual words but by entire classes of words? The point is that any word whatever will have one of those forms already thought along with it, so that the word’s meaning would have to be sought not in the dictionary but in grammar. In fact, shouldn’t they be those differences among concepts by virtue of which the word expressing them is either a noun or an adjective, a verb or an adverb, a pronoun, a preposition, or some other particle—in short, the ‘parts of speech’? For

¹ [In German ‘intermediate thing’ is *Mittelding* and ‘absurdity’ is *Unding*; middle thing and non-thing.]

undoubtedly these denote the forms which all thought primarily assumes, and in which it directly moves; so they are the essential forms of speech, the fundamental constituent elements of every language, so that we can't imagine any language that didn't consist of at least nouns, adjectives and verbs. Subordinated to •those basic forms would be the forms of thought that are expressed through inflections of •them—thus through declension and conjugation—and it doesn't matter to our main concern whether these are indicated by articles and pronouns. But I want to examine the matter in more detail and ask again: what are the forms of thought?

(i) Thought consists throughout of judgments; judgments are the threads of its entire fabric. For without the use of a verb, our thought doesn't *move*, and whenever we do use a verb, we judge.

(ii) Every judgment consists in recognition of a relation between subject and predicate, which it separates or unites with all sorts of restrictions. It unites them beginning with

- recognition of the actual identity of two concepts, which can occur only with equivalent concepts; then
- in recognition that one concept is *always* also thought in the other, but not conversely, in a universal affirmative proposition; and finally
- in recognition that one concept is *sometimes* also thought in the other, in a particular affirmative proposition.

Negative propositions follow the contrary course. Accordingly, it must be possible to find subject, predicate, and (affirmative or negative) copula in every judgment, even if each is not designated by its own word, though usually it is. [AS now speaks of cases where each part of speech doesn't have its own separate word, especially in Latin, and says that

this is unimportant, because]: often one word designates predicate and copula, as in 'Gaius ages,' sometimes one word all three, as in *concurritur*, i.e. 'the armies are engaging.' From this it becomes evident that the forms of thought are not after all to be so directly and immediately sought in words, nor even in the parts of speech, since the same judgment can be expressed in various languages, indeed even in the same language, through various words and even through various parts of speech, but the same thought nonetheless remains, consequently also its form; for the thought could not be the same with a difference in the very form of the thought. But with the same thought with the same form the verbal construction can surely differ; for it is merely the outer clothing of the thought, whereas the thought is inseparable from its form. So grammar explains only the *clothing* of the forms of thought. The parts of speech can thus be derived from the original forms of thought independently of all languages: their work is to express these forms with all their modifications. They are the instrument—the clothing—of the forms of thought, and have to be fitted exactly to their structure so that the structure is recognisable in them.

(iii) These actual, unalterable, basic forms of thought are of course those of Kant's *logical Table of Judgments*, except that this Table has blind windows—created by Kant's wish for symmetry and by his table of categories—which need to be dropped; and there is a false ordering •which needs to be remedied•. Thus, for example:

(a) **Q**uality. Affirmation or negation, i.e. combination or separation of concepts: two forms, •whereas Kant says there are three•. This attaches to the copula.

(b) **Q**uantity. The subject concept is taken entirely or in part: universality or plurality. To the first of these also belong individual subjects: 'Socrates' means 'every Socrates'.

Thus only two forms, ·in contrast again with Kant's supposed three·. This attaches to the subject.

(c) Modality does actually have three forms. It determines the quality as necessary, actual, or contingent. So it also attaches to the copula.

These three forms of thought arise from the logical laws of contradiction and identity. But from the GP and the law of excluded middle there arises:

(d) Relation. This comes on the scene only when someone makes a judgment about independently available judgments, and can only consist either in •stating the dependence of one judgment on another. . . ., hence combining them in a hypothetical proposition, or else •in stating that the judgments exclude one another, hence separating them in a disjunctive proposition. This attaches to the copula, the role of which here is to separate or combine independently available judgments.

The parts of speech and grammatical forms are ways of expressing the three constituents of a judgment

subject — predicate — copula

and their possible relations, thus the forms of thought just listed and their finer determinations and modifications. Noun, adjective, and verb are therefore essential basic constituents of language in general; so it must be possible to find them in all languages. But we can imagine a language in which adjective and verb are *always* fused, as is *sometimes* the case in all languages. Provisionally, it can be said that

- the role of expressing the subject is that of nouns, articles, and pronouns;
- the role of expressing the predicate is that of adjectives, adverbs, prepositions;
- the role of expressing the copula is that of verbs, though these (with the exception of *esse* ·= Latin for 'to be'·) already contain a predicate.

Philosophical grammar describes the exact mechanism of the *expression of* forms of thought, just as logic describes operations involving the forms of thought themselves.

[AS adds a 'warning' against one writer's 'unsuccessful attempt to construct the categories on the basis of grammatical forms'.]

91. The Transcendental Dialectic

I return to the Kantian philosophy, specifically to the Transcendental Dialectic. Kant opens it with an explanation of *reason*, the faculty that will play the main role in it, whereas until now only *sensibility* and *understanding* have been on the stage. I have already spoken of the explanation of reason he gives here (he also has others), 'that it is the faculty for principles'. So now he is telling us that all of the previously considered cases of *a priori* knowledge, which make pure mathematics and pure natural science possible, provide mere rules but no principles; for they come from perceptions and forms of knowledge, but not from mere concepts, which is required for anything to be called a 'principle'. So a principle is supposed to be knowledge from mere concepts and yet to be synthetic. But this is downright impossible. Nothing can come from mere concepts except analytic propositions. If concepts are to be combined synthetically and yet *a priori*, this combination *must* be mediated by a third factor, by a pure perception of the formal possibility of experience; just as synthetic *a posteriori* judgments are mediated by empirical perception; so a synthetic *a priori* proposition can never come from mere concepts. But nothing at all is known to us *a priori* beyond the GP in its various modes, and no synthetic judgments are therefore possible *a priori* except ones that come from what gives the GP its content.

In the meantime Kant finally comes up with a supposed

principle of reason corresponding to his demands, but indeed only with this *one*, from which other principles follow as consequences. It is the proposition that Chr. Wolff presents and elucidates in two of his works [details are given]. Just as under the rubric ‘Amphiboly’ mere Leibnizian philosophical theses were taken to be necessary aberrations of reason and criticised as such [see chapter 89], precisely the same happens here with Wolff’s philosophical theses. Kant’s exposition of this ‘supposed’ principle of reason is still obscure because of its indistinctness, indefiniteness, and fragmentation (B364, B379). Stated clearly, however, it is this: ‘If the conditioned is given, the totality of its conditions must also be given, as must also the *unconditioned*, by which alone that totality is made complete.’ To get a vivid sense of the seeming truth of this proposition, picture the conditions and the conditioned as links of a hanging chain, the upper end of which is not visible and therefore might go on ad infinitum; but since the chain doesn’t fall, there must be one link up there that is the first and is somehow fixed. Or more briefly:

- reason would like a point of attachment for the infinitely ascending causal chain; that would be a comfort to •it. But I want to examine the proposition not in pictures but in itself. It is synthetic, to be sure; for nothing more follows analytically from the concept of the conditioned than that of a condition. But it has no truth *a priori* nor even *a posteriori*, but rather smuggles in its semblance of truth in a subtle manner which I must now expose. We have immediately and *a priori* the knowledge expressed by the GP in its four modes. All abstract expressions of the GP are derived from this immediate knowledge and are thus ‘not immediate but mediated, which also holds for their consequences. I have explained in chapter 84 how *abstract* knowledge often unites manifold cases of *intuitive* knowledge into one form or one concept in such a way that they become indistinguishable;

thus abstract knowledge relates to intuitive knowledge as a shadow relates to the real things whose great multiplicity it reproduces through one all-encompassing outline. Now Kant’s supposed ‘principle of reason’ makes use of this shadow. In order to infer the unconditioned from the GP, which it flatly contradicts, it shrewdly abandons

- immediate, perceptual knowledge of the content of the GP in its individual modes,

and makes use only of

- abstract concepts, which are drawn from it and have value and significance only through it,

in order—somehow or other—to smuggle its ‘unconditioned’ into the broad domain of those concepts. What is going on here is clearest when it is dressed in dialectical clothing, thus: ‘If the conditioned exists, its condition must also exist, and indeed fully, thus completely, thus the totality of its conditions must exist; consequently, if they constitute a series, the entire series must exist, consequently also its first beginning, thus the unconditioned.’

92. The absurd search for the Absolute

It is false that the conditions of something conditioned can form a series. Rather, the totality of conditions for anything conditioned must be contained in its *nearest* ground, which immediately leads to it and wouldn’t be a sufficient ground if it didn’t. The various determinations of the state that is its cause must all come together before the effect occurs. But the series, e.g. the chain of causes, arises only because we consider in turn as something conditioned what was just now the condition, in which case the entire operation starts over again and the GP appears anew with its demand. But there can never be a truly successive series of conditions for something conditioned. . . .; it is always an alternating

series of conditions and things conditioned. With every link that we pass, the chain is interrupted and the GP's demand is paid in full; it arises anew when the condition is made into something conditioned. So the GP always demands only completeness of the *immediate* condition, never completeness of a series. [AS now repeats all of that at greater length, adding only the statement that what leads people to think of the alternating series of causes and effects as a uniform series of conditions is their retreating into the *abstract* way of thinking in which the difference between cause and effect disappears. He concludes:] The abstract principle of reason then steps boldly forth with its demand for the unconditioned. But to recognise its invalidity, there is no need for

- a critique of reason by means of Antinomies and their resolution,

but only for

- a critique of reason understood in my sense,

namely, an examination of the relation between **a** abstract knowledge and **b** immediately intuitive knowledge, by means of a descent from the indeterminate generality of **a** the former to the solid determinateness of **b** the latter. From such a critique it emerges that the essence of reason in no way consists in the demand for something unconditioned; for as soon as reason proceeds with fully thoughtful awareness, it is bound to find that something unconditioned is a downright absurdity. As a faculty of knowledge, reason can only deal with objects; but all objects for a subject are necessarily and irrevocably subordinated and subject to the GP, both with respect to what precedes and with respect to what follows. The validity of the GP is so firmly embedded in the form of consciousness that we are absolutely unable to imagine any

object of which no further Why? is to be demanded—any such idiocy as an absolute Absolute. The fact that this or that person's comfort enjoins him to stop at some point and assume such an Absolute at his pleasure is of no avail against that incontrovertible *a priori* certainty, even when he puts on most elegant airs in doing so.

In fact, all of that talk about the Absolute, this almost exclusive theme of the philosophies attempted since Kant, is nothing but the cosmological proof *incognito*. [This refers to what Kant called the 'cosmological argument' for the existence of God.] This argument, having lost all its rights and been declared an outlaw as a result of the trial conducted against it by Kant, can no longer show itself in its true shape; so it appears in all sorts of disguises, sometimes in elegant ones, cloaked in intellectual perception or pure thought, sometimes as a suspect vagabond who makes his demands—half begging, half defiant—in more modest philosophical theses. If men absolutely want an Absolute, then I'll give them one that much better satisfies the demands on such a thing than their visionary phantoms: it is **matter**.

- It has no beginning,
- it is imperishable,
- it is really independent and
- it exists through itself and is conceived through itself,¹
- everything comes from its womb and everything returns to it.

What more can one demand of an absolute? . . .

Incidentally, the fact that regress to an unconditioned cause, to a first beginning, is in no way grounded in the nature of reason is practically proved by the fact that Brahmanism and Buddhism—the primordial religions of our race, which even now have the most adherents—do not know or

¹ [AS gives this in Latin; he is quoting Spinoza's definition of 'substance'.]

admit such assumptions, but carry the series of successively conditioning phenomena to infinity. . . .

Kant himself denies objective validity to his supposed principle of reason, but he seeks to prove it as *subjectively* necessary, doing this by way of a shallow sophism (B364). Namely: because we seek to bring every truth that we know under a more general truth, so long as we can, this is nothing but the hunt for the unconditioned, which we have presupposed. But actually we are merely applying reason—the faculty of abstract, general knowledge that distinguishes thoughtfully aware, linguistically gifted human beings from animals, which are slaves to the present

—using it to simplify our knowledge enabling us to survey it. For the use of reason consists just in our

- taking knowledge of the particular by way of the general,
- taking individual cases by way of rules, and
- taking rules by way of more general rules,

so that we are seeking the most general points of view. Such overviews make our knowledge so highly facilitated and perfected that it creates the great difference between the course of an animal life and that of a human life, and in turn between the life of an educated man and that of an uneducated one. Now of course the series of grounds of knowledge—which exists only in the domain of the abstract, the domain of reason—always finds an end

- in something unprovable, i.e.
- in a presentation that is not further conditioned according to this mode of the GP, and thus
- in the *a priori* or *a posteriori* directly perceptual ground of the highest proposition in the inferential chain.

I have already shown in my treatise on the GP that here the

series of grounds of *knowledge* really passes over into the series of grounds of *becoming* or of *being*. . . .

So it is utterly false that our search for higher grounds of knowledge, for more general truths, arises from the presupposition of an object unconditioned with respect to its existence. . . . How indeed is it supposed to be essential to reason to presuppose something that reason is bound to recognise as an absurdity as soon as it reflects on it? Rather, the origin of that concept of the unconditioned is to be found only in the laziness of the individual who wants it to free him from all further questions—his own or other people's—though without any justification.

Now Kant himself denies all *objective* validity to this supposed principle of reason, but presents it as a necessary *subjective* presupposition, thus introducing an irremediable split into our knowledge—a split which he soon allows to appear more clearly. He further articulates that 'principle of reason' (B379) in accordance with his favoured method of architectonic symmetry. From the three categories of Relation arise three kinds of inferences, each of which provides the directing principle for the search for a special unconditioned, of which there are therefore three:

soul — world — God,

where the world is conceived as an object in itself and a closed totality. Here we should note a major contradiction which Kant doesn't notice because it would be very dangerous for the symmetry: two of these 'supposedly' unconditioned items are in fact conditioned by the third; that is, soul and world are conditioned by God, who is their productive cause. So those two don't have in common with God the predicate

'is unconditioned',

though this is supposed to be the point here. They have in common with God only the predicate

'is inferred according to the principles of experience, and is beyond the possibility of experience'.

93. 'Three unconditioned beings'

Setting this aside, we recognise

- the three ·supposedly· unconditioned beings which Kant says that all reason must arrive at if it follows its own essential laws

as being

- the three main subjects around which the whole of philosophy under the influence of Christianity has revolved, from the scholastics on down to Christian Wolff.

Accessible and familiar as those concepts have become through all those philosophers and now through philosophers of mere reason, that doesn't mean that they were bound to arise—even without revelation—from the development of everybody's reason, as a product peculiar to its very nature. To settle whether this is so, we would have to resort to historical investigation, inquiring into whether

ancient and non-European peoples (especially the Hindustani) and many of the earliest Greek philosophers had actually arrived at those ·three· concepts,

or whether instead

in too congenial a spirit we merely ascribe these concepts to them, just as the Greeks recognised their gods everywhere, by wrongly translating the *Brahma* of the Hindus and the *Tien* of the Chinese as *theos*.

If the latter is the case, real theism is to be found only in the Jewish religion and the two that have arisen from it, whose adherents have for that reason grouped the followers of all the world's other religions under the name of 'heathens'—a most simplistic and crude expression, incidentally, which

should at least be banned from the writings of the learned, because it equates Brahmanists, Buddhists, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Germans, Gauls, Iroquois, Patagonians, Caribbeans, Tahitians, Australians and many others, dumping them in one bag. Such an expression is fitting for **priests**, but in the world of **the learned** it should be shown the door at once; it can travel to England and settle in Oxford.

[AS develops this theme. He says that it is 'entirely settled' that Buddhism contains no theism, and gives complicated reasons for thinking that Plato's 'occasional touches of theism' are owed to the Jews, reporting that 'Numenius called him "the Greek-speaking Moses"', and adding this:] Clement of Alexandria often returns to the claim that Plato knew and made use of Moses [AS gives references], including one place where—after monkishly scolding and mocking all the Greek philosophers because they were not Jews—he praises Plato exclusively and erupts into sheer joy over the fact that, just as he learned his geometry from the Egyptians, his astronomy from the Babylonians, magic from the Thracians, and much from the Assyrians, so he learned his theism from the Jews. . . . According to Plutarch and Lactantius, Plato thanked nature that he was born a human being and not an animal, a man and not a woman, a Greek and not a barbarian. Now we find in Isaak Euchel's *Prayers of the Jews* a morning prayer in which they thank God that he who is giving thanks has been born a Jew and not a pagan, a free person and not a slave, a man and not a woman.

Such an historical investigation would have saved Kant from a jam that he gets into by saying •that those three concepts necessarily arise from the nature of reason, while also •demonstrating that they are untenable and cannot be supported by reason. In this way he turns reason itself into a sophist [here = 'a purveyor of an invalid argument'], saying (B397):

'They are sophistries not of men but of reason itself,

and not even the wisest of men can free himself from them. If he works hard at it, he may be able to guard himself against actual error; but he'll never be able to free himself of the illusion, which incessantly torments and mocks him.'

According to that, these Kantian 'ideas of reason' would be comparable to the focus in which the rays reflected from a concave mirror converge some inches in front of its surface; in consequence of which, by an inevitable process of the understanding, we are presented with an object which is a thing without reality.

But the term 'idea' for those three supposedly necessary products of pure theoretical reason was unfortunately chosen. It was snatched from Plato, who used it to refer to the imperishable forms which—when multiplied through space and time—become imperfectly visible in countless individual perishable things.¹ Plato's ideas are thus altogether perceptible, as indeed the word that he chose definitely indicates—a word that could fittingly be translated as 'perceptibles' or 'visibles'. And Kant appropriated it to designate what lies so far from all possibility of perception that even abstract thought can only halfway attain to it! The word 'idea' has through 22 centuries kept the meaning that Plato (who first introduced it) gave to it; for not only all ancient philosophers, but also all the scholastics—and indeed the Church Fathers and the theologians of the Middle Ages—used it only in that Platonic sense, the sense of the Latin word *exemplar* [= 'model', 'pattern', 'example']. . . . That Englishmen and Frenchmen were later led by the poverty of their languages to misuse this word is bad enough, but not important. Kant's misuse of the word 'idea', giving it a new significance introduced through the slender thread of *not being an object of experience*—which it

has in common with Plato's ideas but also with every possible chimera—is thus altogether unjustifiable. Now, since the misuse of a few years is not to be considered against the authority of many centuries, I have always used the word in its old, original, Platonic significance.

94. The concept of *soul*

The refutation of rational psychology is much more detailed and thorough in A, the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, than in later editions; so we must tackle it entirely in terms of A. This refutation has on the whole very great merit and much that is true. I am quite convinced, however, that it is merely because of his love of symmetry that Kant •derived the necessity of the concept of the soul from the paralogism ·of substantiality· by applying the demand for the *unconditioned* to the concept of substance, which is the first category of relation, and accordingly •maintained that the concept of a soul arose in this way in every exercise of speculative [see Glossary] reason. If it really arose—·as he said it does—·from the presupposition of an ultimate subject of all the predicates of a thing, then we would have to assume a soul not only in human beings but also in every lifeless thing, since such a thing also requires an ultimate subject of all its predicates. Anyway, Kant makes use of an entirely inadmissible expression when he speaks of a Something that 'can exist only as subject and not as predicate' (e.g. *Critique of Pure Reason* (A323); *Prolegomena* §§46–7), although a precedent for this can be found in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* IV, ch. 8. Nothing at all exists as **subject** and as **predicate**; for these expressions belong exclusively to logic, and designate relations among abstract concepts.

¹ [AS means not that the individual things are imperfectly visible but that the ideas are imperfectly visible *in* them.]

Their correlate or representative in the perceptual world is supposed to be **substance** and **accident** [see Glossary]. But then we need look no further for something that exists only as subject and never as quality; we have it immediately with *matter*. It is the substance for all the properties of things, which are its qualities. If we want to retain the phrase of Kant's that I have just criticised, we can say that matter is the 'ultimate subject' of all the predicates of every empirically given thing, namely, what remains after removal of all its predicates of every sort. This holds for human beings as much as for animals, plants, or stones, and it is so evident that not to see it requires a determined will not to see it! . . .

a Subject and predicate, however, are related to **b** substance and accident as **c** the GP in logic is related to **d** the law of causality in nature; and it is as impermissible to run **a** and **b** together as it is to conflate **c** with **d**. But Kant pushes the latter conflation to the highest degree in *Prolegomena* §46, in order to get the concept of the soul to arise out of the concept of ultimate subject of all predicates and out of the form of a categorical inference. To expose the sophistry of this section, one need only reflect on the fact that *subject* and *predicate* are purely logical determinations that simply and solely concern •abstract concepts and •their inter-relation in judgment; whereas *substance* and *quality* relate to the perceptual world and the understanding's grasp of it, and even there are identical with *matter* and *form*. More on this soon.

The assumption of two fundamentally different substances, body and soul, has arisen from the contrast between objective and subjective. If someone looks at himself ·objectively· in outer perception, he finds a spatially extended and entirely corporeal being; whereas if he apprehends himself in mere self-consciousness, thus purely subjectively, he finds something merely engaged in willing and presentation,

free from all the forms of perception, thus without any of the properties of bodies. Now he forms the concept of *the soul*, as he does all of the transcendent concepts that Kant calls 'ideas', by applying the GP, the form for all objects, to something that is not an object—in this case, to the subject of knowing and willing. Specifically, he considers knowing, thinking, and willing as effects for which he is seeking a cause; he can't accept the body as such a thing, so he posits a cause for them entirely distinct from the body. This is how the first dogmatist (Plato in the *Phaedrus*) and the last one (Wolff) argue for the existence of the soul, namely by taking thinking and willing as the effects that point us to that cause. Only after the concept of an immaterial, simple, indestructible being had arisen in this manner, through hypostasizing a cause corresponding to the effect, did scholastics develop and demonstrate the cause in terms of the concept of *substance*. But before that they had formed this concept specially for this purpose by the following **trick**, which is worthy of notice.

With the first class of presentations—i.e. those of the perceptual, real world—the presentation of matter is also given, because the law of causality dominating that world determines changes of *states*, which presuppose something persisting in which the changes occur. With reference to the principle of the persistence of substance, I showed above that this presentation of matter arises because time and space are intimately united in the understanding (for which alone matter exists) by the law of causality. . . . and space's share in this product is displayed as the persistence of matter, while the share of time is displayed as the change of its states. Naked matter can only be thought *in abstracto*; it can't be perceived, for it never appears in perception except clothed in qualities. *Substance* is a further abstraction from this ·already abstract· concept of matter; so it is a higher genus,

which arose in this way. Of the concept of matter, only the predicate of persistence was allowed to remain, while all its other essential properties—extension, impenetrability, divisibility, etc.—were thought away. Like every higher genus, the concept of substance thus contains less *in* itself than the concept of matter, but it doesn't correspondingly contain more *under* itself, as every other higher genus does, because it doesn't include several lower genera besides matter. Rather, matter remains the single true subspecies of the concept of substance, the single thing through which its content can be demonstrated as realised and confirmed. So there is no place here for the purpose for which reason elsewhere produces a higher concept through abstraction, namely so as to think several subspecies at once, distinguished by secondary determinations. So that abstraction—the one that goes up from *matter* to *substance*—is either entirely without purpose and idly undertaken, or it has a secret secondary purpose. The secret purpose (the **trick** referred to above) comes to light when, under the concept of substance its genuine subspecies *matter* gets a second one coordinated with it, namely *immaterial, simple, indestructible substance: soul*. But the smuggling in of the concept of the soul depended on a previous unlawful and illogical way of forming the 'supposedly' higher concept of substance. When reason behaves properly, it forms a higher generic concept only by juxtaposing the concepts of several 'lower' species, then . . . by omitting their differences and retaining their points of agreement, obtaining the more encompassing but less contentful generic concept; from which it follows that concepts of species must always precede the concept of the genus 'that contains them'. In the present case, the process is reversed. Preceding the generic concept *substance* there was only the concept *matter*, which was idly formed from it without any justification, by arbitrarily omitting all but one

of its determinations. Only then was the second, inauthentic subspecies, 'soul', juxtaposed with the concept of matter and thus smuggled in. But for the formation of this concept all that was needed was an *explicit* denial of that which had previously been *tacitly* left out of the higher generic concept, namely, extension, impenetrability, divisibility. So the concept of substance was formed merely to be the vehicle for smuggling in the concept of immaterial substance. It is consequently very far from being able to count as a Category or necessary function of the understanding. Rather, it is a thoroughly dispensable concept, because its only true content already lies in the concept of matter, besides which it contains only a great void that can be filled only by the smuggled-in subspecies of *immaterial substance*, the inclusion of which was the only reason for forming it in the first place. For this reason, in all strictness, the concept of substance is to be entirely rejected and everywhere replaced by the concept of matter.

95. Three kinds of inference

The categories were a Procrustean bed for every possible thing, but the three kinds of inferences are such a bed only for the three so-called 'ideas'. The idea of *soul* was forced to find its origin in the *categorical* form of inference. Now it is the turn of the dogmatic ideas regarding the universe, conceived as an object in itself between the two limits—

- the smallest (an atom) and
- the greatest (the extent of the world in time and space).

These ideas now have to arise from the *hypothetical* form of inference. No great force is needed to achieve this. For the hypothetical judgment gets its form from the GP, and in fact all of the so-called 'ideas'—not only the cosmological ones—arise from

- applying the GP in an unreflective, indeterminate way, and then
- setting it aside at one's pleasure.

Specifically, they arise by virtue of the fact that, in accordance with the GP, only the dependence of one object on another is ever sought, until the exhaustion of the imagination finally creates a terminus¹ for the journey; which ignores the fact that every object—indeed the whole series of them, and the GP itself—are much more dependent on something that is closer to them, namely the knowing subject for whose objects, i.e. presentations, the GP is alone valid. . . .

Thus, since the form of knowledge from which only the cosmological ideas are here derived—namely the GP—is the origin of all of the dreamed-up hypostases, there is no need for any sophisms; but they are all the more needed for classifying the cosmological ideas in accordance with the four rubrics for the categories.

(i) The cosmological ideas with respect to time and space, thus the ideas of the spatio-temporal limits of the world, are boldly viewed as determined by the category of **quantity**, though they obviously have nothing in common with that except the chance fact that in logic the extension of the subject-concept in a judgment is called its 'quantity', a metaphorical expression doing work for which some other word would have served equally well. But this is enough for Kant, in his love of symmetry, to exploit this happy accident of wording and attach to 'quantity' transcendent dogmas about the world's extent.

(ii) Even more boldly, Kant attaches to **quality**, i.e. affirmation or negation in a judgment, transcendent ideas about matter. This can't even be explained by accidental facts of verbal similarity; for the mechanical (not chemical) divisibility

of matter is related to its quantity, not its quality. [AS goes on to say that this idea of divisibility does not belong at all among inferences in accordance with the GP, from which, as the content of the hypothetical form, all cosmological ideas are supposed to flow. This is] because Kant is here relying on the claim that the relation of parts to the whole is that of condition to conditioned. . . .

The part/whole relation actually rests on the principle of contradiction: the whole doesn't exist by way of the parts, nor do they exist by way of the whole; rather, they necessarily coexist because they are one thing, and their separation is only an arbitrary act. So in accordance with the principle of contradiction if the parts are thought away the whole is also thought away, and conversely; but it doesn't imply that the parts condition the whole as ground to consequence, a view that would require us in accordance with the GP to seek *ultimate parts* as the ground of the whole. So great are the difficulties that are overcome by the love of symmetry!

Under the rubric of **relation** would then quite properly come (iv) the idea of the first cause of the world. But Kant has to save this for the fourth rubric, that of **modality**. Otherwise there would be nothing for modality to do, so Kant forces it to take in this 'first cause' idea by saying that whatever is contingent. . . . is made necessary by the first cause. So what appears as a third idea here, for the sake of symmetry, is (iii) the concept of freedom. But this—as the Note on the Thesis of the Third Conflict clearly states—is really meant as the idea of the cause of the world. . . .

The third and fourth conflicts are therefore fundamentally tautologically the same.

¹ [Ziel, which can mean 'goal'.]

96. The Antinomy a sham battle

But beyond all this I find and assert that the whole Antinomy is a mere game of mirrors, a sham battle. Only the assertions of the *antitheses* actually rest on the forms of our faculty of knowledge, i.e. (to put it in objective terms) on necessary, *a priori* certain, universally general natural laws. So only their proofs are set out on the basis of objective grounds. By contrast, the assertions and proofs of the *theses* have only a subjective ground, rest solely on the weakness of the thinking individual, whose imagination—tired in the face of an infinite regress—puts an end to it with arbitrary assumptions that he does his best to smooth over, and whose judgment in this matter is additionally paralysed by early and firmly instilled prejudices. So in each of the four conflicts, the ‘proof’ of the thesis only a sophism, while the proof of the antithesis is an unavoidable rational inference from laws of the world as presentation, laws that we know *a priori*. Kant needed a great deal of effort and skill to get the theses to make a semblance of attacking opponents that are endowed with real power. His first and pervasive artifice here is that he does not

like someone conscious of the truth of the proposition he is defending, emphasise the core of his argument, presenting it in as isolated a way—as nakedly and clearly—as he can;

but rather

sets it out on both sides hidden under, and mixed with, a torrent of superfluous and prolix sentences.

Now the conflict between Kant’s theses and antitheses recall the opposing propositions that Socrates brings into conflict in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*. [AS now sneers at those who think that these ‘speculative’ [see Glossary] issues have implications for morality; and continues:] I shall not, how-

ever, accommodate myself to such limited and perverse little minds but shall—honouring not them but the truth—reveal Kant’s ‘proofs’ of the individual theses as sophisms, whereas his proofs of the antitheses are set out honourably, properly, and on the basis of objective grounds. I assume that in this examination the reader will always have the Kantian antinomy before him.

·THE FIRST ANTINOMY·

To grant that the ‘proof’ of the thesis in the first conflict is sound would be prove too much, for it applies as much to time itself as to change in time, and ‘if valid’ would prove that time itself must have a beginning, which is absurd. In any case, the sophism consists in this: instead of the lack of a beginning of the series of states that was originally in question, suddenly its lack of an end (infinite) is interpolated, and then it is proved that this is logically incompatible with completeness (which no-one doubts) and yet every present completes the past. The end of a series with no beginning can always be thought, however, without contradicting its lack of a beginning: just as, conversely, the beginning of an endless series can be thought. Against the actually correct argument for the **·time-**related part of the antithesis, however—that alterations in the world absolutely necessarily presuppose an infinite series of alterations going back—nothing at all is brought forth. The possibility that the causal series will some day end in an absolute standstill is thinkable by us, but the possibility of an absolute beginning clearly isn’t.

With respect to the spatial limits of the world, it is ‘proved’ from

•‘The world counts as a *given whole*’

that

•The world must have limits.

The inference is valid, but its premise is just what needed proving, and remains unproved. Totality presupposes limits, and limits presuppose totality, but here both together are arbitrarily presupposed.

But we are not provided with as satisfying a proof for the antithesis in this *·space-related part of·* the antinomy, because the law of causality yields necessary determinations merely with respect to time, not to space. It imparts to us the *a priori* certainty that no filled time could ever border on an empty time preceding it. . . ., but not that a filled space cannot have an empty one alongside it. So far no *a priori* decision on the spatial issue would be possible. However, the difficulty of thinking the world in space as limited lies in the fact that space itself is necessarily infinite, and therefore a limited finite world within it—however large it may be—becomes *·by comparison with the whole·* an infinitely small magnitude; the imagination finds an insuperable obstacle in this lack of proportion, so it has to choose between thinking of the world as infinitely great and thinking of it as infinitely small. The ancient philosophers already saw this [and AS cites some of them, including one who produces ‘the sense of the Kantian argument for the antithesis, except that he disfigured it with a scholastic, convoluted delivery’. He moves on into a somewhat jumbled series of remarks about limits in time and in space, citing Giordano Bruno and Aristotle. He adds:] Kant himself asserts seriously, and upon objective grounds, the infinity of the world in space in his *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*.

·THE SECOND ANTINOMY·

In the second conflict, the *·proof of the·* thesis begins with a blatant *petitio principii* [see Glossary], beginning: ‘Every

composite substance consists of simple parts.’ It has no trouble ‘proving’ simple parts from this arbitrarily assumed premise about composition. But the proposition ‘all matter is composite’, which the issue comes down to, is a groundless assumption and remains unproved. The opposite of the simple is not the composite but rather the extended, that which has parts, the divisible. It is here silently assumed here that the parts existed before the whole and were brought together: thereby the whole arose; for this is what the word ‘composite’ means.¹ But this can’t be asserted any more than its opposite can. Divisibility means merely the possibility of breaking the whole up into parts; it doesn’t at all mean that it was composed of those parts and originated from them. . . . There is no essential temporal relation between the parts and the whole. Rather, they condition one another and are thus always simultaneous; for only so far as both exist does the spatially extended exist. So Kant’s statement (in his Note to the Thesis) that ‘One should really call space not a compositum, but a totum’ applies also to matter, which is merely space that has become perceptible.

On the other hand, the infinite divisibility of matter, which the antithesis asserts, follows *a priori* and incontrovertibly from the infinite divisibility of the space that matter fills. Nothing can be objected against this proposition. Kant indeed depicts it as an objective truth at B541, where he is speaking seriously and in his own person, no longer as a spokesman for the Thesis. Likewise, in his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* the proposition ‘Matter is infinitely divisible’ stands as a settled truth at the head of the proof of the first theorem of mechanics, having earlier been proved as the fourth theorem of dynamics. Here, however, he

¹ [‘composite’ here translates *zusammengesetzt* = ‘placed together’, which is also the meaning of the Latin words that are the origin of the English ‘com-posite’.]

ruins the proof of the antithesis with the greatest confusion of exposition and a useless torrent of words, with the sneaky intention of not letting the evidentness of the antithesis too greatly overshadow the sophisms of the thesis.

Atoms are not a necessary thought of reason, but merely a hypothesis for explaining differences in the specific weight of bodies. That we can also explain this otherwise—and even better and more simply than through atomic theory—Kant himself has shown in the Dynamics of his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*; before him, however, there was Priestley's *On Matter and Spirit*; and indeed the fundamental idea is already to be found in Aristotle's *Physics*.

•THE THIRD AND FOURTH ANTINOMIES•

The argument for the third thesis is a very subtle sophism; it is really Kant's supposed 'principle of pure reason' itself, entirely unadulterated and unaltered. It tries to prove the finiteness of the series of causes from the premise that a cause, in order to be *sufficient*, must contain the complete sum of the conditions from which the consequent state, the effect, proceeds. The argument then quietly replaces

- completeness of the conditions that are present *together* in the state that is the cause

by

- completeness of the *series* of causes through which that state itself has first come into reality;

and because completeness implies closure, which in turn implies finiteness, the argument infers from this a first cause—hence an unconditioned cause—as the start of the series. But the sleight of hand is obvious. To conceive of state A as a sufficient cause of state B, I assume that it contains the totality of the determinations required to make it inevitable that state B will ensue. This entirely satisfies the demand for a sufficient cause; and it has no

direct connection with the question how state A itself has come about—a question that concerns state A's role as an effect, not as a cause of B. The presupposition of the finitude of the series of causes and effects, and therefore of a first beginning, gives no appearance of being necessary, any more than the present moment's presence has a beginning of time itself as a presupposition; rather, that 'beginning' is first added by the laziness of the speculating individual. That the former presupposition lies within the assumption of a cause as sufficient ground is thus smuggled in and false, as I showed late in chapter 92 in considering the Kantian principle of reason, in part coinciding with this thesis.

In illustration of the assertion of this false thesis, Kant is not ashamed to give *his rising from his chair* as an example of an unconditioned beginning; as if it were not as impossible for him to stand up without a motive as for balls to roll without cause! . . .

The proof of this antithesis is unobjectionable, as were the preceding ones.

The fourth conflict is, as I have already noted, really tautologically the same as the third. And the proof of its thesis is in its essentials the same as that of the third. Kant's assertion that everything conditioned presupposes a series of conditions that is complete and therefore terminated 'at its beginning' with the unconditioned, is a *petitio principii* [see Glossary] that one simply has to reject. Everything conditioned presupposes nothing but its condition; that this is in turn conditioned introduces a new consideration that is not immediately contained in the first.

The antinomies are not to be denied a certain plausibility; yet no part of the Kantian philosophy has encountered as little contradiction, indeed has found as much acceptance, as this exceedingly paradoxical doctrine. Almost all philosophical parties and textbooks have accepted and repeated

it, and of course elaborated upon it; while nearly all Kant's other doctrines have been attacked—indeed, there has never been a lack of wrongheaded individuals who rejected the Transcendental Aesthetic. The undivided approval that the Antinomies have found, by contrast, may come in the end from the fact that certain people derive inner contentment from contemplating the point where the understanding would so truly come to a standstill, having run up against something that simultaneously is and is not. . . .

97. Kant's conclusion about the antinomies

Kant's ensuing 'Critical Solution of the Cosmological Dispute' is not what it gives itself out as being, namely

- resolution of the dispute revealing •that the two sides are both wrong in the first and second antinomies because they start from false presuppositions, and
- that both sides are right in the third and fourth;

rather, it is

- confirmation of the antitheses by explaining what they say.

In this 'solution' Kant first asserts, obviously wrongly, that both sides start from the premise that when anything conditioned is given the complete (and thus closed) series of its conditions is also given. Only the thesis based its assertions on this proposition, which is Kant's pure 'principle of reason'; whereas the antithesis everywhere explicitly denied it and asserted the opposite. Further, Kant burdens both sides with the presupposition that the world exists in itself, i.e. independently of its being known and of the forms of this knowledge, but again this is a presupposition made only by the thesis; whereas the assertions of the antithesis are so far from based on it that they downright contradict it. For the concept of an infinite series utterly rules out the

series' being given in its entirety; so it's essential to it that it exists only in passage through it and never independently of that. On the other hand, the presupposition of determinate limits includes the presupposition of a whole that exists in a self-subsistent manner and independently of the process of completely measuring it. Thus only the thesis makes the false presupposition of a world-whole that is self-subsistent, i.e. given in advance of all knowledge, to which knowledge would merely be added on. The antithesis is from the outset in dispute with this presupposition. For the infinitude of the series that it merely asserts under the direction of the GP can exist only if the regress is actually carried out. Just as any object at all presupposes the subject, so too the object determined as an endless chain of conditions presupposes in the subject the kind of knowledge corresponding to this, namely the constant following of the links of the chain. But this is just what Kant provides as a resolution of the dispute, and so often repeats: 'The infinity of the world's size exists only *through* the regress, not *before* it.' This 'supposed' resolution of the conflict is thus really only a decision in favour of the antithesis, the assertion of which already contains this truth, just as it is entirely incompatible with the assertions of the thesis. . . . Thus only the thesis involves the presupposition that Kant says has led both sides astray.

It is in fact a doctrine of Aristotle's [in his *Metaphysics* XI] that something infinite can never exist *actu*, i.e. actually and as given, but merely *potentia*. . . . He elaborates on this at length in his *Physics* III, where he to a certain extent provides the entirely correct resolution of all the Antinomies. He presents the Antinomies in his terse way, and then says: 'An arbiter must be called in'; after which he provides the resolution that the infinity of the world—in space as well as in time and in division—never exists *before* the regress or progression

but rather *in it*. . . . So this truth already lies in a correct grasp of the concept of the infinite. Someone who supposes that he is thinking of any infinite as something objectively existent and complete is simply misunderstanding his own thought.

If indeed one goes in the opposite direction from Kant's, *starting* from what he offers as the conflict's resolution, the proof of the antithesis follows directly just from that. Here is how. If

the world is not an unconditioned whole and exists not in itself but only in presentation, and its series of grounds and consequences exist not *before* but only *through* the regress of presentations of them,

then

the world cannot contain any determinate and finite series, because any such determination and limitation would have to be independent of the presentation;

so all of its series must be endless, i.e. not exhaustible by any presentation. . . .

I can't decide whether Kant himself knew that his 'critical solution' of the dispute was really a pronouncement in favour of the antithesis. That depends on whether what Schelling somewhere most aptly called Kant's 'system of accommodations' extends that far, or rather that Kant's mind is here unconsciously accommodating itself to the influence of his time and surroundings.

98. Freedom

The resolution of the third antinomy, whose topic was the idea of freedom, is particularly noteworthy for us because it is here with the idea of freedom that Kant has to speak more extensively of the *thing in itself*, which was previously seen only in the background. I find this easy to understand,

having having recognised the thing in itself as *will*. This is the point where Kant's philosophy leads to mine, or where mine comes from his as from its stem. You'll be convinced of this if you attentively read the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B564–5), and compare that passage with this from the introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*: 'The concept of freedom can present its object (that is the will) to the mind as a thing in itself, but not in perception; whereas the concept of nature can present its object to the mind in perception but not as a thing in itself.' In particular, however, read what §53 of the *Prolegomena* says about the resolution of the antinomies, and then honestly answer the question whether all that doesn't sound like a riddle to which my doctrine is the answer. Kant did not complete his thought; I have merely carried the matter through for him: I have carried what he said of the human phenomenon alone over to all phenomena, which differ from the human phenomenon only in degree, holding that their nature in itself is something absolutely free, i.e. a will. My work shows how fruitful this insight is when combined with Kant's doctrine of the ideality of space, time and causality.

Kant never gave a separate discussion or clear derivation of the thing in itself. Rather, whenever he needs it, he introduces it through the inference that the phenomenon—and thus the visible world—must have a reason, an intelligible cause, which would not be a phenomenon and so could not belong to any possible experience. He does this after incessantly •emphasising that the categories—including the category of causality—can be applied only to possible experience, are the understanding's mere forms that serve to spell out the phenomena of the sensory world, beyond which they can have no meaning at all, and so on, therefore •forbidding the application of them to things beyond experience, and •rightly explaining and overturning all earlier dogmatism as

a violation of this prohibition. The incredible inconsistency that Kant fell into here was soon noted by his first opponents and used for attacks against which his philosophy had no defence. For we do indeed, in an utterly *a priori* way and prior to all experience, apply the law of causality to alterations sensed in our sense organs; but that only shows that this law has as subjective an origin as do these sensations themselves, and so doesn't lead to the thing in itself. The truth is that on the path of presentation one can never get beyond presentation; it is a closed-off whole that has within its own resources no clue leading to the nature of the thing in itself, which is *toto genere* different from it. If we were merely beings engaged in presentation, the way to the *thing in itself* would be entirely closed off to us. Only the other side of our own nature can give us insight into the other side that is the nature *in itself* of things. This is the path I have followed. But Kant's inference to the thing in itself, contrary as it is to his own teaching, obtains some excuse from the following circumstance. He does not simply and absolutely, as the truth demands, take

- the object to be conditioned by the subject and conversely,

but only takes

- the mode and manner of the object's appearance to be conditioned by the subject's forms of knowledge,

—forms that therefore enter our consciousness *a priori*. But what we know merely *a posteriori* is for him an immediate effect of the thing in itself, which becomes a phenomenon only in passing through those *a priori* given forms. From this point of view it is to some extent explicable how he could miss the fact that objectivity as such belongs to the form of the phenomenon and is conditioned by subjectivity as such, just as much as the object's manner of appearance is conditioned by the subject's forms of knowledge; and that therefore if

a thing in itself is to be assumed, it cannot be an object at all (as Kant always assumes that it is) but must rather lie in a domain *toto genere* distinct from presentation (from knowing and being known); so that it couldn't be inferred in accordance with laws governing the interconnection of objects.

It has gone in exactly the same way for Kant with the establishment of the thing in itself as with the establishment of the apriority of the law of causality: both doctrines are correct, but their proof is wrong; so they belong to the class of true conclusions from false premises. I have retained them both, but given them an entirely different and secure grounding. I haven't •smuggled in the thing in itself, or •inferred it through laws that exclude it because they apply rather to its phenomenon, or •reached it by roundabout paths of any sort. Rather, I have immediately established it in the place where it immediately lies, in the will that is revealed immediately to each person as the *in-itself* of his own phenomenal being.

The concept of freedom enters human consciousness from each person's immediate knowledge of his own will. For of course *will*—as world-creating, as thing in itself—is free from the GP and thereby from all necessity, thus completely independent, free, indeed omnipotent. But this applies only to will *in itself*, not to its phenomena, to individuals, which are indeed—precisely through it, as its phenomena in time—unalterably determined. In common consciousness unpurified by philosophy, however, a will is at once confused with **b** its phenomenon, and what belongs to **a** it alone is attributed to **b** the latter; which gives rise to the illusion of the individual's unconditioned freedom. Spinoza says rightly that the stone that one throws, if it had consciousness, would believe it flew of its own free will. For of course the in-itself of the stone is also the one and only free will, but, as in all

its phenomena, here too where it makes its appearance as a stone, it is utterly determined. But enough has already been said about all of this in the main part of this work.

Kant, having failed to recognise this immediate origin of the concept of freedom in every human consciousness, now (B561) takes that concept to come from a most subtle speculation in which the unconditioned, at which reason is always supposed to be aiming, leads us to hypostasise the concept of freedom, and it is in this transcendent idea of freedom that the practical concept of it is also supposed to be initially grounded. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* §6, however, he derives the practical concept in yet another way, from the premise that the categorical imperative presupposes it: that speculative idea is thus the original source of the concept of freedom. . . . This is wholly wrong, for the delusion of a complete freedom of the individual in his particular actions is liveliest in the belief-system of the crudest human being who has never engaged in reflection, so it is not grounded in any speculation, although others have often speculated about it. Only philosophers (especially the deepest ones) and the most thoughtful and enlightened writers of the church are free of that delusion.

It follows from all I have said that the real origin of the concept of freedom is in no way an inference from •the speculative idea of an unconditioned cause or from •the supposition that the categorical imperative presupposes it. Rather, it springs immediately from that consciousness in which everyone is aware of himself as *will*, i.e. as that which, as *thing in itself*, does not have the GP for its form and which itself depends on nothing—on which rather all else depends. [The rest of this long sentence is horribly complex. The gist of it is that the ordinary person gets into a philosophical muddle as a result of which] instead of recognising his entire existence as an act of will's freedom, rather seeks freedom

in his individual actions. On this, I refer to my work *On the Freedom of the Will*.

Now if Kant had, as he here pretends to do and also apparently did in earlier cases, merely *inferred* the thing in itself, doing that with an inference that he himself had absolutely forbidden, what a strange coincidence it would then be that here—where for the first time he approaches the thing in itself and illuminates it, he at once recognises it as *will*, the free will that makes itself known in the world only through temporal phenomena! I really think from this, though it can't be proved, that whenever he spoke of **the thing in itself** Kant was in the darkest depths of his mind always thinking unclearly of **will**. A confirmation of this is provided in the *Critique of Pure Reason* at Bxxvii–xxviii.

99. Further developments in the Antinomies

In any case, it is this intended resolution of the third supposed conflict that gives Kant the occasion for the most beautiful expression of the deepest thoughts of his entire philosophy. Thus the whole of the 'Sixth Section of the Antinomy of Pure Reason', but above all the discussion of the contrast between empirical and intelligible character (A534–50) which I count among the finest things ever said by a human being. . . .

It is all the more regrettable that this is not the right place for it, because **(i)** it is not found on the path where the exposition says it is, and so is not derived in the way it was supposed to be, and because **(ii)** it doesn't fulfill the purpose for which it exists, namely, to resolve the supposed antinomy. An inference is made from the phenomenon to its intelligible ground, the thing in itself, through the inconsistent employment of the category of causality beyond all phenomena. In this case the will of man (which Kant

calls 'reason', with an unpardonable breach of all use of language) is set up as the thing in itself, with an appeal to an unconditioned *ought*, the categorical imperative, which is postulated without more ado.

Now instead of all this, the sincere and open way would have been to start directly from will, establish it as the *in-itself* of our own phenomenal being, which we recognise without any mediation, and then to give that account of empirical and intelligible character, demonstrate how all actions, although necessitated by motives, are necessarily and absolutely ascribed—both by their author and by other people—to their author alone, as depending only upon him and as constituting the basis for assigning guilt and merit to him.

This was the only direct path to knowledge of that which

- is not phenomenon, and so
- is not found through the laws of the phenomenon, but rather
- is revealed, becomes knowable, is objectified through the phenomenon, namely

the will for life. Then it would have to be exhibited, merely by analogy, as the *in-itself* of every phenomenon. But then of course it couldn't have been said (A546/B574) that in lifeless or even animal nature no faculty is thinkable that isn't conditioned by the senses. . . .

The whole concept of *thing in itself* was falsified by the improper position and correspondingly circuitous derivation that Kant gave of it. He relates will, or the thing in itself, to the phenomenon as cause to effect; but that relation exists only *within* the phenomenal world, and can't connect that world with something that lies beyond it and is *toto genere* different from it.

Further, the proposed purpose, namely resolution of the third antinomy through the decision that both sides, each in

its own sense, are right, is not achieved at all. For neither thesis nor antithesis says anything at all about the thing in itself; they speak only of the phenomenon, the objective world, the world as presentation. It is of this and nothing else that the thesis—in the invalid argument I have displayed—tries to demonstrate that it contains unconditioned causes, and it is also this of which the antithesis rightly denies the same thing. So the whole account given here in justification of the thesis of transcendental freedom of the will so far as it is a thing in itself, however good it is in itself, is really just a changing of the subject. For the depicted transcendental freedom of the will is emphatically not the unconditioned causality of a cause that the thesis asserts, because a cause must be a phenomenon, not something *toto genere* different lying beyond all phenomena.

When speaking of cause and effect, the relation of the will to its phenomenon (or of the intelligible character to the empirical) must never be brought in, as is done here; for it is altogether wholly different from the causal relation. In this resolution of the antinomy it is correctly said that a human being's empirical character, like that of every other cause in nature, is rigidly determined, so that its actions necessarily happen in accordance with external influences; and therefore also—

despite all transcendental freedom, i.e. independence of the will in itself from the laws governing the inter-connection of ·the parts of· its phenomenon

—no human being can begin a series of actions of himself, which the thesis says he *can* do. So freedom has no causality. For the only free thing is *the will*, which lies outside nature or the phenomenon; the latter is the objectification of the will, but is not causally related to it. The causal relation is met with only *within* the phenomenon, thus presupposes it, and cannot connect the natural world with something

that is not a phenomenon. The world itself is explicable on the basis of *will* (since it *is* the will insofar as it makes its appearance), and not on the basis of causality. But *within the world* causality is the single principle of explanation: everything happens in accordance with laws of nature. Thus right lies entirely on the side of •the Antithesis, which **a** keeps to the subject under discussion and **b** employs the principle of explanation that is applicable to it, and has nothing to apologize for. Whereas the Thesis is supposed to be pulled out of its difficulty with an apology that **a** makes a *leap* to something entirely different from what is in question, and then **b** adopts a principle of explanation that is not applicable there.

The fourth conflict is (I repeat) in its innermost sense tautologically the same as the third. In its resolution, Kant elaborates still further on the untenability of the thesis. But he gives no arguments for its truth and for its supposed consistency with the antithesis, just as he can't bring any against the antithesis. He apologetically introduces the assumption of the thesis, calling it (A562/B590) an arbitrary presupposition whose object might well be in itself impossible; and merely displays a really feeble effort to provide it with a spot somewhere secure from the sweeping power of the antithesis. He is doing this only so as to avoid exposing the nullity of the entire presumption—so dear to him—of a necessary Antinomy in human reason.

100. The 'Transcendental Ideal' chapter

Now follows the chapter on the 'Transcendental ideal', which suddenly sets us back into the rigid scholasticism of the middle ages. You would think you were listening to Anselm of Canterbury himself! The

*ens realissimum*¹ = the sum total of all realities = the content of all affirmative propositions

steps forward, along with the claim that is a *necessary* thought on the part of reason! I for my part must confess that such a thought is *impossible* for my reason, and that I can't have any determinate thought in connection with the words that ·supposedly· designate it.

I am sure that Kant was compelled to this chapter—strange and unworthy of him as it is—by his liking for architectonic symmetry. The three main objects of scholastic philosophy (which, broadly understood, can be regarded as continuing up to Kant) are the **a** soul, **b** the world, and **c** God. They are supposed to be derived from the three possible major premises of inferences, though obviously their only possible source is the undisciplined application of the GP. After **a** the soul was forced into the categorical judgment, and the hypothetical was employed for the **b** world, there remained nothing for **c** the third idea but the disjunctive major premise. Fortunately there existed a previous work in this direction, the *ens realissimum* of the Scholastics, together with the ontological proof of the existence of God, set up in a rudimentary form by Anselm of Canterbury and then perfected by Descartes.² This was joyfully made use of by

¹ [Latin for 'the most real being'.]

² [Very briefly, the argument runs like this: 'God has every possible reality (true by definition). Existence is one kind of reality (self-evident). Therefore God exists.']

¹ [The phrase 'sacrifice *to*' reflects the translator's hunch that AS is thinking of sacrifices laid on the altar of a god.]

Kant, surely with some reminiscence of an earlier Latin work of his youth. But the sacrifice to his beloved architectonic symmetry that Kant makes in this chapter is enormous.¹ In defiance of all truth, what has to be called the *grotesque* idea of a sum total of all possible realities is taken to be an essential and necessary thought on the part of reason! To 'prove' this, Kant employs the fiction that our knowledge of individual things arises through a progressive limiting of general concepts, and thus also of an absolutely most general concept containing all *Realität* within itself. This contradicts his own doctrine as much as it contradicts the truth. For the truth is that all general concepts arise through abstraction from real, individual, perceptually recognised things; and this abstraction can be continued on to the absolutely most general concept, which then includes everything *under* itself but almost nothing *within* itself. So Kant has here stood the procedure of our faculty of knowledge on its head, and could well be accused of having led to the philosophical charlatanism that has become famous in our time, which

instead of recognising concepts as thoughts abstracted from things, takes concepts to come first and sees things only as concrete concepts

—bringing its inverted world to market like a philosophical parade of fools, which naturally met with great applause.

Even if we assume that reason must, or at least that it *can*, attain to the concept of God without revelation, this obviously—so obviously that it needs no proof—happens only by following the thread of causality. Therefore Chr. Wolff, in the preface to his *Cosmologia generalis*, says: 'In natural theology we soundly demonstrate the existence of the divine from cosmological principles. The contingency of the universe and of the natural order, together with the impossibility of pure chance, are the steps on which we ascend from the visible world to God.' [AS quotes this in Latin, and also

quotes, in French, two short passages in which Leibniz says the same thing.] In contrast to this, the thought worked out in this chapter is so far from being essential and necessary to reason that it is rather to be regarded as a prime exhibit among the monstrous productions of an age which through strange circumstances fell into the most singular aberrations and perversities. I'm talking about the age of scholasticism, an age that has no parallel in world history, and can never return.

This scholasticism did of course, when it reached its final form, 'prove' the existence of God mainly from the concept of the *ens realissimum*, bringing in the other proofs only incidentally, as accessories; but this is merely a matter of pedagogy and proves nothing about the origin of theology in the human mind. Kant has taken the procedure of scholasticism here to be the procedure of reason—something that he often does. If it were true that the idea of God comes—obeying the essential laws of reason—from disjunctive inference in the shape of an idea of the absolutely most real being, then surely this idea would also have turned up among the philosophers of antiquity. But there is no trace of the *ens realissimum* in any of the ancient philosophers, although some of them teach of a creator of the world, but only as a form-giver for matter that exists independently of him. . . ., and they argue for him simply and solely through the law of causality. . . .

101. Kant's refutation of speculative theology

Regarding the detailed refutation of speculative [see Glossary] theology that now follows, I have only to note that—

like the entire critique of the three so-called ideas of reason generally, and thus like the entire 'Dialectic of Pure Reason'

—it is the goal and purpose, so to speak, of the entire work. But this polemical part doesn't have—as has the preceding doctrinal part, i.e. the Aesthetic and Analytic—a quite general, lasting, and purely philosophical interest; its interestingness relates to a particular time and place, relating to the main features of philosophy holding sway in Europe up to Kant, though its overthrow by Kant's polemic gained him immortal credit. He eliminated theism from philosophy, because philosophy—understood as a body of knowledge and not a doctrine of faith—can make room only for what is empirically given or established by valid proofs. I'm talking here only about real philosophy, taken seriously, directed solely towards truth; and not about the joke philosophy of the universities, in which, after Kant as before him, speculative theology plays the main role and the soul appears without ceremony as a familiar character in it. For that is the philosophy which, lavished with stipends and honoraria and even with courtly titles, has looked proudly down from its heights for forty years, ignoring folk like me, and would love to be rid of the old Kant with his critiques so that heartfelt toasts may be raised to Leibniz!

It should also be noted here that, just as Kant says he was led to his doctrine of the *a priori* status of the concept of causality by Hume's scepticism regarding that concept, so also his critique of all speculative theology may have been prompted by the critique of all popular theology in Hume's *Natural History of Religion*, and also by his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*—both very well worth reading. Indeed, Kant may to some extent have intended to provide a complement to that critique. For Hume's first-cited work is really a critique of *popular* theology which •aims at displaying its pitiable character and •respectfully refers us to *rational or speculative* theology as genuine theology. But then Kant exposes the groundlessness of rational theology, leaving

popular theology untouched and even setting it up in a nobler form as a faith that is supported by *moral feeling*. Pseudo-philosophers later twisted that faith into intake by reason, consciousness of God, or intellectual perception of the supersensible, of divinity, etc.; whereas Kant, demolishing venerable errors and knowing the danger of doing so, had merely wanted to use moral theology to interpose a few weak temporary supports, so that when the collapse came he would have time to get out of the way.

[In this paragraph we'll be dealing with three arguments that Kant undertakes to invalidate: **a** one from the concept of existence, **b** one from the premise that *something* exists, and **c** one from premises about *what* exists.] As for carrying this out, there was no need for a critique of reason for a refutation of **a** the ontological proof of God's existence, because it is very easy—even without presupposing the Aesthetic and Analytic—to show clearly that the ontological proof is nothing but a subtle play of concepts with no power to convince. In Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* we find 'Existence is never part of the essence of anything' (chapter 7 of Book 2); which is so perfectly adequate for refuting the onto-theological proof that one might think it had been written for that purpose. The refutation of **b** the cosmological 'proof' of God's existence is an application to a given case of the doctrine of the *Critique* expounded up to that point; and there is nothing to be said against it. And **c** the physico-theological argument for God's existence is merely an amplification of the cosmological proof, which it presupposes, and in fact finds its detailed refutation only in the *Critique of Judgment*. . . .

In his critique of these proofs, Kant was concerned merely with speculative [see Glossary] theology, and limited himself to academics. If he had also had in mind life and popular theology, he'd have had to add to the three 'proofs' a fourth one, which for the great mob is the really effective one and

would fittingly be called, in Kant's technical terminology, the ceraunological proof.¹ It is the argument based on man's •feeling of helplessness, impotence, and dependence in the face of natural forces that are infinitely superior, inscrutable, and largely menacing, paired with his •natural tendency to personify everything, to which is added his •hope of accomplishing something through pleading and flattering, and of course gift-giving. In short, in every human undertaking there is something that isn't in our power and doesn't enter into our calculations; and the desire to win this over is the origin of the gods. An old truth from Petronius: 'Of all the things in the world, fear first made the gods.' Hume, who appears throughout to be a forerunner of Kant, is mainly criticising this •fourth• 'proof' in the works I have cited.

But Kant's critique of speculative theology set into lasting embarrassment the philosophy professors: their salaries paid by Christian regimes, they couldn't leave the main article of their faith in the lurch. So how do these gentlemen help themselves? They just say that the existence of God is self-evident. So! After

- the ancient world, at the cost of its conscience, worked wonders to prove it, and
- the modern world, at the cost of its understanding, presented ontological, cosmological, and physico-theological proofs,

to these gentlemen it is self-evident! And on the basis of this self-evident God, they then explain the world: that is their philosophy.

Until Kant came along there was a real dilemma between **a** materialism and **b** theism, i.e. between **a** the assumption that the world came into being through blind chance and **b** that this happened through an intelligence working from

without according to purposes and concepts; there was no third possibility. So atheism and materialism were the same thing. Hence the doubt whether there really could be an atheist, i.e. a man who really could attribute to blind chance the disposition of nature, so full of design, especially organic nature; see, for example, Bacon's essay on Atheism. In the opinion of the great mass (the mob) of people—and of Englishmen, who all belong to the mob in such things—that is still how matters stand, even among their most famous scholars. Just look at the preface of Richard Owen's *Ostéologie comparé* of 1855, where he is still confronting the old dilemma between Democritus and Epicurus on the one hand and, on the other hand, an intelligence in which 'knowledge of a being such as man existed before man appeared on the scene'. It did not occur to him even in his dreams to doubt that all purposiveness must have come from an intelligence. Writing for the *Académie des Sciences*, he with childlike naiveté equates *la téléologie* with *la théologie scientifique*—these are immediately one thing for him! If something in nature is purposive, then it is a work of intention, of reflective consideration, of intelligence. Well of course, what does the *Critique of Judgment*—or for that matter my book on will in nature—mean to such an Englishman or to the *Académie des Sciences*? These gentlemen don't go as deep as that. These *illustres confrères* scorn metaphysics and *philosophie allemande* [French phrases, meaning 'illustrious colleagues' and 'German philosophy']; they adhere to old woman's philosophy. But the validity of that dilemma between materialism and theism rests on the assumption that the world lying before us is that of things in themselves, so that the only order of things is the empirical one. But after the world and its order became (through Kant) a mere

¹ [That borrows jokingly from Greek, and has to be translated as something like 'the thunderboltological argument for God's existence'.]

phenomenon, the laws of which mainly depend on the forms of our intellect, there was no longer any need •to explain the existence and essence of things and of the world by analogy with alterations in the world that we perceive or bring about, or •to think that things we apprehend as means and ends have arisen through means-end thinking. Thus in removing the foundation of theism with his crucial distinction between phenomenon and thing in itself, Kant opened the way to entirely different and deeper explanations of existence.

In the chapter on the 'final purpose of the natural dialectic of reason', Kant says that the three transcendent ideas are valuable as *regulative principles* for the advancement of knowledge of nature. But he can hardly have been serious about this. No natural scientist will doubt the opposite thesis, namely that those presuppositions limit and deaden all natural investigation. To test this with an example, consider how the assumption of a soul—as an immaterial, simple, thinking substance—would have related to the truths that Cabanis has so beautifully set forth, or to the discoveries of Flourens, Marshall Hall, and Charles Bell: would it have been conducive to them or rather in the highest degree obstructive with respect to them? Indeed, Kant himself says (*Prolegomena* §44) that 'the ideas of reason are a positive obstacle to reason's knowledge of nature'.

It is not the least of Frederick the Great's merits that under his regime Kant was able to develop and permitted to publish the *Critique of Pure Reason*. A salaried professor would hardly have dared such a thing under any other regime. Kant indeed had to promise the great king's successor that he would write no more.

102. Kant's ethical views

I could regard criticism of the ethical part of Kantian philosophy as superfluous here, because in my *Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*—22 years after the first edition of the present work—I provided a more detailed and thorough criticism than I do here. Still, what I retain here from the first edition, which for the sake of completeness could not be dropped, can serve as a suitable introduction to that later and much more thorough criticism, to which I refer the reader for the main points.

Because of Kant's love of architectonic symmetry, *theoretical* reason was bound to have a *practical* counterpart. The 'practical intellect' of scholasticism, which in turn stems from Aristotle's 'practical principle', provides the language for it ready-made. But to them it meant merely

reason directed toward means and ends,

whereas for Kant 'practical reason' is the source and origin of the undeniable ethical significance of human action, just as of

•all virtue, all generosity, and every achievable degree of saintliness.

According to this, all these good things would come from mere *reason* and would require nothing else. To act reasonably¹ would be the same thing as acting virtuously, generously, in a saintly manner; and to act selfishly, maliciously and viciously would be merely acting unreasonably. But all times, all peoples, all languages have always taken the two to be entirely distinct things. So today does a everyone who knows nothing of the language of the 'new school', i.e. the whole world except for b a handful of German scholars: the a former always mean two entirely different things by

¹ [Other translators put 'rationally', but the German is *vernünftig*, and it seems best to retain the connection with *Vernunft* = 'reason'. Similarly for all future uses of '(un)reasonable(ness)'.]

'virtuous ways' and 'a reasonable course of life'. To say that the sublime author of the Christian religion, whose course of life is set before us as the paradigm of all virtue, was *the most reasonable human being* would be called a most unbecoming and indeed blasphemous way of talking, as would saying that his precepts contained only the best directions for an entirely reasonable life. Take the case of someone who acts according to these precepts: instead of thinking ahead about himself and his own future needs, he always only relieves the greater needs of others without any further motive; indeed he gives all his possessions to the poor, in order then to proceed—destitute of all means of subsistence—to preach to others the virtue that he himself practises. Everyone rightly honours this; but who would venture to praise it as the height of *reasonableness*? . . .

Contrast this with a man who from his youth onwards thinks with unusual care about how to acquire the means for a carefree subsistence, for the support of his wife and children, for a good name among people, for external honour and distinction, and who is not distracted in this by

- the charm of present pleasure, or by
- the thrill of defying the arrogance of the powerful, or by
- the desire to avenge insults or undeserved humiliation that he has undergone, or by
- the tug of thought about impractical aesthetic or philosophical matters and of travels to interesting lands.

This man is not distracted by things like this, and never lets

himself be misled into losing sight of the goal, but works solely toward it with the greatest consistency. Who ventures to deny that such a philistine—even if he avails himself of some unpraiseworthy though not dangerous means—is quite extraordinarily reasonable? Then consider the case of a villain who, with deliberate shrewdness and following a well thought-out plan, •helps himself to riches, to honours, even to thrones and crowns, then •ensnares neighbouring states with subtle cunning, overpowers them one by one and now becomes a world-conqueror, and •doesn't let himself be distracted by any thought of right or humanity, but with harsh consistency •tramples and crushes everything that opposes his plan, unfeelingly plunges millions into misfortune of every sort, millions into blood and death, yet •royally rewards and always protects his followers and helpers, never forgetting anything, and in this way reaches his goal. Who doesn't see that someone like this must have gone to work in a thoroughly *reasonable* manner, that just as a powerful understanding is required for the laying of plans, complete mastery of reason—indeed genuinely *practical* reason—is needed for carrying them out? Or are even the precepts given to the prince by the shrewd, consistent, reflectively thoughtful, and far-seeing Machiavelli not reasonable?¹

Just as wickedness is quite consistent with reason—indeed isn't really dreadful without it—nobility is sometimes found combined with unreason. Take the case of Coriolanus: after spending all his force for years to get revenge against the Romans, now that the time has finally come he lets himself be softened by the pleas of the senate and the tears

¹ As an aside: Machiavelli's problem was to answer the question of how the prince could maintain himself *unconditionally* on the throne, despite internal and external enemies. His problem was not the ethical one of whether a prince as a human being should wish to do such a thing, but the purely political one of how he might carry it out *if* he wants to. He answers this in the manner in which one writes directions for playing chess, where it would be foolish to feel the lack of an answer to the question of whether it is morally advisable to play chess at all. Reproaching Machiavelli for the immorality of his work is like reproaching a fencing master for not starting his lessons with a moral lecture against murder and manslaughter!

of his mother and wife, abandons the revenge he has for so long prepared for. Indeed, calling down on himself the righteous anger of the Volscians, he dies for those Romans whose ingratitude he knows and has so intensely wanted to punish.

Finally, for the sake of completeness I should mention that reason can most surely be combined with a lack of understanding. That's what happens when a stupid maxim is chosen and followed out consistently. For example, Princess Isabella, daughter of Philipp II, swore that she would wear no clean underclothes until Ostend was conquered, and kept her word for three years! All *vows* belong here: they stem from a lack of insight as regards the law of causality, i.e. a lack of understanding; but it is reasonable to fulfill them if one has so little understanding as to make them.

In keeping with the examples I have cited, we also see writers appearing even shortly before Kant contrast *conscience*, as the seat of moral stirrings, with *reason*. [AS gives several quotations from Rousseau's *Émile*, ending with (in French): 'In all difficult moral problems, I have always found them easier to solve by the dictates of my conscience than by the insights of my reason.' He then provides (in Greek) quotations from Aristotle to the same effect.]

103. Ethics and reason

I have explained reason as the faculty for ·handling· concepts. It is this unique class of general, non-perceptual presentations, symbolised and fixed only by words, that distinguishes men from animals and gives men dominion over the earth. Animals are slaves to the present, know no

motives except immediately sensory ones, so that when such a motive is presented to an animal, the animal is drawn to it or repelled by it as iron in the case of a magnet; whereas in man thoughtfulness—deliberation—has dawned through the gift of reason. This enables him easily to survey—looking forward and back—his life and the course of the world as a whole, makes him independent of the present, lets him go to work with deliberation, with planning, and with caution, for evil as well as for good. But anything he does, he does with complete self-consciousness: he knows exactly how his will decides, what he chooses in each case, and what other choice was possible in that situation; and from this self-conscious willing he comes to know himself and to act in ways that reflect his nature. In all of these relations to human action, reason is to be called *practical*: it is *theoretical* only when the objects it is concerned with have a merely theoretical interest and no relation to the thinker's conduct—though very few people are capable of this. What is called **practical reason** in this sense is pretty much what is designated with the Latin word *prudentia*, which Cicero says is a contraction of *providentia*; whereas *ratio*, when used to label a mental power, usually signifies true **theoretical reason**, although the ancients did not strictly observe the distinction between these.

In nearly everyone reason has an almost exclusively practical orientation. If this is abandoned, however, thought loses its control of action, leading to:

- 'Scio meliora, proboque, deteriora sequor'¹ or
- 'Le matin je fais de projets; le soir je fais des sottises.'²

So that a man lets his action be directed not by his thought but by present impressions, almost like an animal. Such a

¹ [Ovid: 'I see the better and I try ·to do it·, I do the worse'.]

² [Voltaire: 'I make plans in the morning and commit stupidities in the evening.']

man is called ‘unreasonable’ (without being thereby accused of moral badness), though what he lacks is not reason but rather the application of reason to his conduct; one could to a certain extent say that his reason is merely theoretical and not practical. He may be a truly good person, like many who can’t see someone unfortunate without helping him, even with sacrifices, while leaving their own debts unpaid. Such an unreasonable character can’t possibly commit great crimes, because those require planning, dissimulation, and self-control, and these are impossible for him. But he will also be unlikely achieve any very high level of virtue. For even if his nature strongly inclines him toward the good, he’ll be subject to the upsurges of vice and malice that beset every human being; and they are bound to become deeds if he doesn’t have practical reason to oppose them with unalterable maxims and firm intentions.

A final point: Reason manifests itself as genuinely *practical* in those reasonable characters who are called ‘practical philosophers’ in common life, and who are distinguished by

- an uncommon equanimity in disagreeable circumstances as well as in pleasant ones,
- a balanced state of mind, and
- determined perseverance in acting on decisions once made.

In fact it is the predominance of reason in them, i.e. knowledge that is more abstract than intuitive—and therefore their surveying of life by over-all conceptual means—that has enabled them to recognise once and for all

- the deception of momentary impressions,
- the inconstancy of all things,
- the brevity of life,
- the emptiness of pleasures,
- the fickleness of fortune, and
- the big and little tricks of chance.

So whatever comes to them was expected, and what they know *in abstracto* doesn’t surprise them or make them lose

their composure when it confronts them in reality and in individual cases. In this they are unlike less reasonable characters, who are so dominated by the present, the perceptual, the actual, that cold, colourless concepts fade into the background of consciousness; forgetting intentions and maxims, these people are prey to emotions and passions of every sort.

At the end of my first Book I presented my view that Stoic ethics was originally nothing but directions for a life that is truly *reasonable* in this sense. [AS goes on to refer to Horace’s frequent praise of this kind of life, and lengthily—with references also to Cicero and Democritus—corrects a common misunderstanding of one sentence of Horace’s:] To translate *Nil admirari* as ‘Do not marvel at anything’ is entirely wrong. This Horatian maxim doesn’t concern the theoretical as much as the practical, and really means: ‘Prize no object unconditionally, don’t fall in love with anything, don’t believe that owning anything can bring happiness; every inexpressible desire for an object is only a mocking chimera, which can be swept away by clear knowledge just as well as by owning the object—just as well but much more easily.’ . . . Virtue and vice are really not in question with such reasonableness in one’s conduct; but this practical employment of reason is what gives human beings pre-eminence over animals, and only with reference to it is talk about ‘the dignity of man’ intelligible and permissible.

In all the depicted cases and in all thinkable ones, the difference between **a** reasonable and **b** non-reasonable action reduces to the question whether the motives are **a** abstract concepts or **b** perceptual presentations. So my explanation of reason exactly agrees with •the linguistic usage of all times and peoples. And you’ll surely not regard •that as something accidental or arbitrary, but rather see that it has come from the difference that every man is conscious

of between distinct mental faculties; this consciousness governs how he speaks, but of course he doesn't elevate it to the clarity of an abstract definition. It is not the case that our ancestors created the words without giving them a determinate sense, so that they could lie ready for philosophers who might come centuries later to determine what thought they should convey; rather, they used them to designate entirely determinate concepts. So the words are no longer abandoned; and to attribute to them a sense entirely different from the one they previously had is to misuse them, introducing a license by which any word could be used in an arbitrary sense, inevitably creating endless confusion. Locke has already shown in detail that most disagreements in philosophy come from the mistaken use of words. As an illustration of this, just look at how shamefully today's barren-minded pseudo-philosophers misuse the words 'substance', 'consciousness', 'truth', etc. [With an explosion of references to Plato, Cicero, Locke and Leibniz, AS maintains that 'all philosophers before Kant spoke of reason in general in my sense, even if they couldn't explain its nature in a completely clear and determinate way.' He goes on with references to writings that show what was meant by 'reason' shortly before Kant. Then:] If on the other hand one reads how in recent times 'reason' is spoken of under the influence of the Kantian mistake—an influence that has grown like an avalanche—one is forced to assume that all the sages of antiquity, and all philosophers before Kant, were completely deprived of reason; for the recently discovered immediate perceptions, intuitions, apprehensions, presentiments on the part of reason were as foreign to them as the sixth sense of bats is to us! [AS declares his own lack of these supposed gifts of reason, and goes on to sarcastically praise them, concluding with sarcasm *crescendo*:] This, however, must be said in favour of the invention (or discovery) of a kind

of reason that immediately perceives what-have-you in an instant, in defiance of all the *Kants* with their critiques of reason: it is an incomparable expedient for—in the easiest way in the world—pulling oneself and one's favourite fixed ideas out of trouble. The invention, and the reception that it found, does honour to our times!

Though the essential character of

Vernunft, ratio, raison, reason

is on the whole and in general terms accurately recognised by all philosophers of all times, although not sharply enough determined or traced back to a single point, on the other hand the nature of

Verstand, intellectus, esprit, intellect, understanding

has not been so clear to them. So they often confuse it with reason, which is why they don't achieve an entirely complete, pure, and simple explanation of reason's essence. Among Christian philosophers, the concept of reason acquired an entirely foreign secondary meaning, in contrast with revelation, and on this basis many of them rightly hold that knowledge of a duty of virtue is possible from mere reason, i.e. without revelation. This consideration has had an influence even on Kant's doctrine and terminology. But the reason/revelation contrast is only of historical significance, and should be kept out of philosophy.

One might have expected that Kant, in his critiques of theoretical and practical reason, would start with an account of the nature of reason in general and then, having thus determined the genus, proceeded to explain the two species, showing how one and the same reason manifests itself in two such different ways while retaining its principal characteristic that defines the genus. But we find nothing like that. I have already shown how inadequate, vacillating, and conflicting are the explanations of the faculty he is critiquing in the *Critique of Pure Reason*—explanations that

he scatters randomly in that work. Practical reason turns up unannounced in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and afterwards stands in the *Critique of Practical Reason* as something already established. No further account of it is given; and no hearing is allowed to the linguistic usage of all times and peoples or to the conceptual definitions of the greatest earlier philosophers; indeed, all of this is merely trampled under. In a general way, we can gather from individual passages that Kant's opinion goes something like this: the **essential character of reason** is knowledge based on *a priori* principles; knowledge of the ethical significance of action is not of empirical origin, so it too must be an *a priori* principle and accordingly stems from reason, which is then to that extent *practical*.

I have already said enough about the incorrectness of this **account of reason**. But even apart from that, how superficial and unfounded it is to use the single attribute of *independence from experience* to unite the most heterogeneous things while ignoring the enormous differences among them. For even supposing (though I don't grant it) that knowledge of the ethical significance of action originates from an imperative lying within us, from an **unconditioned Ought**, how fundamentally different this would be from the general forms of knowledge that Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* shows that we are *a priori* conscious of, a consciousness that enables us to pronounce in advance an **unconditioned Must** that is valid for all possible experience. The difference between this *Must*, this necessary form for all objects that is already determined in the subject, and that *Ought* of morality is so huge and so evident that laying them together under the attribute 'non-empirical form of knowledge' may count as

a clever comparison, but not as a philosophical justification for equating their origins.

Anyway, the birthplace of this child of practical reason, the *absolute ought* or *categorical imperative*, is not in the *Critique of Practical Reason* but is already in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B830). It is a forced birth and is brought about only by means of the forceps of a **Therefore** which—boldly and brashly, one might even say shamelessly—connects as 'supposed' ground and consequence two propositions that are wildly foreign to one another and have no connection. The premise from which Kant starts is that we are determined not only by perceptual motives but also by abstract ones:

'Not merely what stimulates, i.e. immediately affects the senses, determines human choice, but through presentations of that which is itself more remotely useful or harmful, we have a faculty for overcoming impressions on our faculty of sensory desire. These reflections on that which is desirable with respect to our entire state, i.e. good and useful, rest on reason.'

(Perfectly correct: if only he always spoke of reason so reasonably!) He goes on:

'So this **therefore** also yields laws that are imperatives, i.e. objective laws of freedom which say what ought to happen, even if it perhaps never does.'¹

Thus without any further accreditation the *categorical imperative* leaps into the world, to rule there with its unconditioned *Ought*—which is a square circle [see footnote in chapter 53]. For the concept of *Ought* everywhere implies the thought of threatened punishment or promised reward, a thought without which the concept has no meaning; so an *unconditioned ought* is a contradiction in terms. I had to

¹ [AS adds an exclamation-mark to this whole sentence, and also to the 'therefore' contained in it. He is expressing his contempt for the 'argument' of Kant's that he is describing.]

criticise this mistake because it is related to Kant's great achievement in ethics, which consists in his freeing ethics from all principles of the world of experience—namely from any doctrine that refers directly or indirectly to happiness—and actually showing that the realm of virtue is not of this world. This achievement is all the greater because the peripatetics, stoics, and epicureans—that is, all the ancient philosophers except Plato—tried by very different devices

- to make virtue and happiness interdependent in accordance with the GP, or even
- to identify them with one another, in accordance with the law of contradiction.

The same criticism applies just as much to all philosophers of recent times, up to Kant. So this is a very great achievement of his; yet justice also demands recalling here that **(i)** his exposition and development often don't correspond to the tendency and spirit of his ethics, as we shall soon see; and that **(ii)** he is not the first to have cleansed virtue of all principles of happiness. For Plato explicitly teaches that virtue is to be chosen only for its own sake, even if unhappiness and shame are inevitably connected with it; he expounds this especially in the *Republic*, of which it is the main tendency. But Christianity even more preaches a perfectly unselfish virtue, which is practised not for the sake of reward, even reward in a life after death, but entirely disinterestedly, from love for God; with the proviso that ·virtuous· works do not justify; only faith does that; it accompanies virtue like a mere symptom of it, and therefore enters the scene independently and free of charge. [AS adds a reference to a work of Luther's, and to Indian works that depict the hope for reward as 'the path of darkness'.]

We don't however find Kant's doctrine of virtue to be so

pure; his account of it has remained far behind the spirit, and has indeed fallen into inconsistencies. In the 'highest good' that he discusses later, we find virtue tied to happiness. The *ought* that was originally so unconditioned is later said to have a condition, really so as to rid itself of the inner contradiction the burden of which it cannot live with.¹ The happiness contained in the 'highest good' is not, to be sure, really supposed to be the motive for virtue; yet there it stands, like a secret clause whose presence turns all the rest into a mere pseudo-contract: it is not really virtue's reward, but yet a voluntary gift for which virtue, having done its work, secretly holds out its hand ·for reward· Kant's whole moral theology has the same tendency; so that through it morality really self-destructs. For, I repeat, all virtue that is in any way practised for the sake of reward rests on a shrewd, methodical, far-seeing egoism.

Now the content of the absolute *ought*, the fundamental law of practical reason, is the famous:

'Act in such a way that the maxim of your will could always at the same time count as a principle for a general legislation.'

This principle sets for anyone who wants a rule for his own will the task of finding one for the will of everybody. Then the question arises of how such a rule is to be found. Obviously, to find the rule for my own behaviour I am supposed to consider not myself alone but the totality of all individuals. And then my aim becomes not my own well-being but the well-being of everyone, without distinction. But that is still well-being. So I find that all can be equally well off only if everyone sets the egoism of others as a limit to his own. From this it follows of course that I should harm nobody, because if this principle is generally accepted I won't be

¹ [This refers to the contradiction that AS says is inherent in the notion of unconditioned *ought*.]

harmed either; but this is the only reason I have—not yet *having* a moral law but still *seeking* one—for wanting this to be made a general law. But obviously this means that the source of this ethical principle is the desire for well-being, i.e. egoism. That would be a splendid basis for political theory, but as a basis for ethics it is worthless. Anyone wanting to meet that moral principle's task of establishing a rule to guide the will of *everyone* needs a rule for *himself*; otherwise, everything would be indifferent to him. But this rule can only be his own egoism, since it is only this that is affected by the conduct of others; and therefore it is only by reference to this egoism that each person can have a will concerning the conduct of others. Kant himself very naively acknowledges this in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, where he carries out the search for maxims for the will thus: 'If everyone viewed the need of others with utter indifference, and you belonged to such an order of things, would you agree to it?' *Quam temere in nosmet legem sancimus iniquam!*¹ would be the rule for the agreement in question. Similarly in the *Foundation for the Metaphysics of Morals*: 'A will that resolved not to support anyone in need would be in conflict with itself, because cases can arise where *it* needs the love and sympathy of others', and so on. This principle of ethics—which when seen clearly turns out to be an indirect and covert expression of the ancient, simple principle 'What you don't want **a** done to yourself, don't **b** do to others' [AS quotes this in Latin]—thus refers first and immediately to **a** the passive element, *undergoing*, and then only through that to **b** *doing*. So it would (I repeat) be quite useful as a guide for the constitution of a state, which is directed toward preventing **a** the suffering of wrong, and aims to provide for all and each

the greatest sum of well-being. But in ethics—

where the object of inquiry is **b** action as action and in its immediate significance for the agent, but not its consequence, **a** suffering, or its relation to others

—that consideration is inadmissible because it amounts fundamentally to a principle of happiness, and thus to egoism.

So we can't share Kant's pleasure in the fact that his principle of ethics is not a *material* one, i.e. one that posits an object as motive, but rather a merely *formal* one, making it correspond symmetrically to the formal laws with which the *Critique of Pure Reason* has made us familiar. It is of course not a law but only the formula for finding one. But **(i)** we already had this formula more briefly and clearly in 'What you don't want done to yourself, don't do to others'; and **(ii)** analysis of this formula shows that its content comes simply and solely from the reference to one's own happiness, so that it can only serve reasonable egoism, to which indeed every legal constitution owes its origin.

(iii) Another mistake which offends everyone's feelings, is often criticised, and is parodied in an epigram by Schiller,² is the pedantic rule that a deed can't be truly good and meritorious unless it is done solely

out of respect for recognised law and the concept of duty, and in accordance with a maxim which reason is conscious of *in abstracto*,

and not

from any inclination, from a feeling of benevolence for others, from softhearted sympathy, compassion, or emotional upsurges, which (according to the *Critique of Practical Reason*) are very burdensome to

¹ [Horace's Latin, meaning: 'How thoughtless to endorse a rule that is harmful to oneself!']

² ['Gladly I serve my friends, but unfortunately from inclination. So it eats at me often: I am not one who has virtue.']

right-thinking persons because they confuse their reflectively considered maxims.

Rather, the deed must be done reluctantly and with self-compulsion. Recall that hope for reward is supposed to have no influence in the matter, and consider the great absurdity of the demand. But what is more to the point is that this is precisely opposite to the genuine spirit of virtue: what is meritorious in virtue is not the deed but the gladness to do it, the love from which it proceeds and without which it is dead work. Thus Christianity rightly teaches that all outward works are worthless if they don't come from the genuine disposition that consists in true good-will and pure love; and that what blesses and redeems is not *works* but rather *faith*—the genuine disposition which the Holy Spirit alone confers and which the free, deliberative will, having only the law in view, does not produce.

Kant's demand •that every virtuous action should be done from pure, reflectively considered respect for the law and in accordance with its abstract maxims, coldly and without (indeed in opposition to) all inclinations, is exactly on a par with maintaining •that every genuine work of art has to arise through a well-considered application of aesthetic rules. One demand is as perverse as the other. The question (already treated by Plato and Seneca) as to whether virtue can be taught is to be answered in the negative. We will eventually have to make up our minds to face the fact—which was also the source of the Christian doctrine of election by grace—that as regards its chief characteristic and its inner nature, virtue is to a certain extent inborn, as is •artistic• genius; and that just as

•all the professors of aesthetics, with their forces united, can't give anyone the ability to produce gen-

uine works of art, so also

•all the professors of ethics and preachers of virtue can't transform an ignoble character into a virtuous and noble one,

the impossibility of the latter being even more obvious than the impossibility of converting lead into gold. And the search for an ethics and a supreme principle thereof that would have a practical influence and actually transform and improve the human race is just like the search for the philosophers' stone.¹ But I have already spoken in detail at the end of Book IV [chapter 69] of the possibility of a complete change of a person's disposition not by means of abstract knowledge (ethics), but by means of intuitive knowledge (efficacious grace); the content of that Book relieves me of any need to dwell on it longer here.

That Kant didn't in any way penetrate to the real significance of the ethical content of actions is shown eventually by his doctrine of the highest good as the necessary union of virtue with happiness, and that to be virtuous is to be worthy of happiness. This lays him open to a logical objection: the concept of *worthiness* that provides the standard in this case can't serve as a point of departure because it presupposes that an ethics is already in play.

The upshot of my Book IV [chapter 68] was that all genuine virtue, having achieved its highest degree, leads eventually to a state of total renunciation in which all willing comes to an end; whereas happiness is satisfied willing. So the two are fundamentally incompatible. Anyone who has been enlightened by my exposition won't need any further explanation of the complete perverseness of this Kantian view of the highest good. And, independent of my positive exposition, I have no further negative exposition to give.

¹ [A mythical substance that was supposed to turn base metals into gold, and to perform other wonders.]

We meet Kant's love of architectonic symmetry also in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, which he has tailored entirely according to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, using the same rubrics and forms in an obviously arbitrary way; this is particularly evident in the table of the 'categories of freedom'.

The *Philosophy of Law* is one of Kant's latest works, and is so poor that, although I entirely disagree with it, I think a polemic against it is superfluous, since its own weakness must lead it to die a natural death, just as if it were the work not of this great man but of an ordinary mortal. Therefore, with this work I give up the negative mode of procedure and refer to the positive, that is, to the short outline of it given in my Book IV. A few general remarks on Kant's *Philosophy of Law* may be made here. The errors which I have condemned in considering the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as clinging to Kant throughout, appear in the *Philosophy of Law* in such excess that one often believes one is reading a satirical parody of the Kantian style, or at least listening to a Kantian. The two main ones are the following. (i) He wants (and many since him have wanted) to separate the doctrine of right sharply from ethics, but nonetheless not to make the former dependent on human legislation, i.e. voluntary compulsion, but rather to have the concept of right stand pure and *a priori* on its own.¹ But this is not possible. For action, beyond its ethical significance and beyond its physical relation to others, and thereby to external compulsion, does not admit of a third point of view even as a mere possibility. Consequently, when he says that 'A duty of right is that duty which can be coerced', this *Can* is either to be understood physically—and then all right is positive and a matter of choice, and any choice that can be put into effect is in turn right—or the *Can* is to be understood ethically,

and we are in the domain of ethics again. With Kant the conception of legal right hovers between heaven and earth, and has no ground on which to stand; with me it belongs to ethics. (ii) His definition of the concept of right is entirely negative, and thus insufficient:

'Right is that which is compatible with the coexistence of individual freedoms in accordance with a general law.'

Freedom (here empirical, i.e. physical freedom, not moral freedom of the will) means the state of *not* being obstructed, and is thus a mere negation. The coexistence of freedoms has precisely the same meaning in turn. We thus remain with mere negations and obtain no positive concept, indeed do not learn at all what is really in question if we don't already have knowledge of it from elsewhere.

In elaborating on this, the most perverse views are subsequently developed, such as that in the state of nature, i.e. outside of the political state, there is no right to property, which really means that all right is man-made, so that natural right rests on man-made right, whereas it should be the other way around. Further,

- the grounding of rightful acquisition by way of initial occupancy,
- the ethical obligation to construct a civil constitution,
- the basis for the right to punish, etc.

all this, I repeat, I regard as altogether unworthy of a separate refutation. . . .

104. The *Critique of Judgment*

After what I have said, I can deal very briefly with the *Critique of Judgment*. One has to marvel at how Kant—

¹ [At this point we run into the fact that the German word *Recht* can mean either 'law' or 'right'.]

- to whom art surely remained most foreign,
- who apparently had little receptivity for the beautiful,
- who indeed probably never had the opportunity to see a significant work of art, and finally
- who seems to have had no knowledge of Goethe, the only person of his century and his nation who was fit to stand beside him as a fellow giant

—was able to achieve great and lasting merit for his philosophical treatment of art and the beautiful. Here is what explains this achievement.

•Much as men had reflected on the beautiful and on art, they had always considered these only from the empirical point of view, investigating on a basis of facts what quality distinguishes the object of any kind that was called *beautiful* from other objects of the same kind. On this path they arrived first at quite specialised principles and then at more general ones. They tried to distinguish genuine from spurious artistic beauty, and discover the marks of this genuineness which could then serve as rules.

- What pleases us as beautiful, what doesn't;
- what is therefore to be imitated, to be striven for, what is to be avoided;
- which rules, at least negative ones, are to be established; in short,
- what the means are to the arousal of aesthetic satisfaction,
- i.e. what its conditions are that lie **in the object**,

—that was almost exclusively the theme of all discussions of art. Aristotle opened this path, and we still find on it in most recent times, Home, Burke, Winckelmann, Lessing, Herder, and so on. To be sure, the general run of the discovered aesthetic principles led back eventually to **the subject**, and it was noted that if the effect in the subject were properly known, we could then determine in an *a priori* manner the

cause that lies in the object, this being the only way the considerations in question could achieve the sureness of a science. This led to psychological discussions here and there, but Alexander Baumgarten in particular presented a general aesthetics of the beautiful with this aim, starting from the concept of perfection in knowledge through the senses and thus in perceptual knowledge. But for him once this concept has been presented, the subjective part is done with, and he moves to objective matters and practicalities relating to them.

•But for Kant was reserved the merit of inquiring seriously and deeply into the very arousal that leads us to call the object that causes it 'beautiful', in order to discover, as far as possible, its constituents and conditions within our mind. So his inquiry took an entirely subjective direction. This was obviously the right way to go. For to explain a phenomenon that is given in its effects, one must first have exact knowledge of the effects, so as to determine the character of the cause in a thorough way. Kant's merit in this, however, didn't extend much further than •indicating the right path and •occasionally offering approximate examples of how to follow it. What he provided can't be regarded as objective truth and real gain. He provided the method for the inquiry and broke the ground, but fell short of the goal.

We can't help noticing that in the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* Kant retains the method which is peculiar to his entire philosophy and which I have considered in detail above. I mean the method of starting from **a** abstract knowledge, as a basis for understanding **b** perceptual knowledge, so that **a** the former serves him as a *camera obscura* (so to speak) in which to capture and survey **b** the latter within it. Just as in the *Critique of Pure Reason* the forms of judgment are supposed to give him insight regarding our entire perceptual world, so too in this *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* he starts not

from **b** the beautiful itself, from the perceptually, immediately beautiful, but from **a** *judgment* regarding the beautiful, to which he gives the ugly title 'judgment of taste'

His attention is especially aroused by the circumstance that such a judgment obviously expresses something occurring within the subject, but is of such general validity that it's as though it concerned a property of the object. This is what struck him, not the beautiful itself. He always starts from the statements of others, from *judgment* regarding the beautiful, not from the beautiful itself. So it's as though he knew it only by hearsay, not immediately, just as a highly intelligent blind person could construct a theory of colours from accurate statements about them that he has heard. We can indeed consider Kant's philosophical theses about the beautiful almost purely in those terms. Doing so, we will find that his theory is most ingenious—indeed that some of its general observations are striking and true. But his real resolution of the problem is so unsatisfactory, remains so far below the dignity of its subject, that it can't occur to us to take it for objective truth; so I regard myself as spared the need to refute it, and here again I refer to the positive part of my work.

His book as a whole originated from the idea of having found the key to the problem of the beautiful in the concept of *purposiveness*. The idea is deduced, which is never a difficult matter, as we have learned from Kant's successors! Thus arises the baroque union of knowledge of the beautiful with knowledge of the purposiveness of natural bodies, within one cognitive faculty called *judgment*, and the treatment of these two different subjects in one book. With these three cognitive powers—reason, judgment, and understanding—a variety of symmetrically architectonic amusements are subsequently undertaken. Kant's fondness for these is displayed throughout this book by the way whole thing is forcibly tailored to

the fit the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but especially by Kant's dragging the 'Antinomy of Aesthetic Judgment' in by the hair. One could also accuse him of major inconsistency because

- after it was incessantly repeated in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the **understanding** is the faculty for judging, and
- after the forms of that faculty's judgments have been made the cornerstone of all philosophy,

now we are introduced to another quite unique power of **judgment** which is totally different from that. Anyway, what I call judgment—namely, the capacity for carrying **a** perceptual knowledge over into **b** abstract knowledge, and for accurately applying **b** the latter in turn to **a** the former, is explained in the positive part of my work.

Kant's theory of the sublime is by far the best part of the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*. It is incomparably more successful than his theory of the beautiful. It doesn't just provide (as the other does also) the general method of inquiry, but also indicates a portion of the right path to a solution, doing this so well that although it doesn't provide the real solution of the problem it brushes past it very closely.

In the *Critique of Teleological Judgment*, the simplicity of the material enables one to recognise, perhaps more than anywhere else, Kant's rare talent for turning a *thought* this way and that and expressing it manifold ways, until it becomes a *book*. The book as a whole would say only this:

Although organic bodies necessarily appear to us as though they had been assembled according to a pre-existing conceptualised purpose, this doesn't entitle us to assume that this is how things stand objectively. For our intellect, to which things are given from outside and indirectly—so that it never knows anything about the inner element by which they arise and survive, but merely about their outside—has to

use an analogy to grasp a certain peculiar character of products of organic nature; what it does is to compare them with works intentionally produced by human beings, the character of which is determined by conceptualised purpose. This analogy is sufficient to enable us to grasp the agreement of all the parts with the whole, thus giving us the clue to their investigation; but it must not on this account be made the actual ground of explanation of the origin and existence of such bodies. For the necessity of their appearing to us in that way is subjective in origin.

That is roughly how I would summarise Kant's doctrine regarding teleology. He had already presented its main part in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A692–702). But in his knowledge of *this* truth we again find David Hume as Kant's illustrious forerunner: he too had sharply disputed the assumption in question,¹ in the second part of his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. What distinguishes the Humean from the Kantian critique of the assumption is mainly that Hume criticises it as something that is based on experience whereas Kant criticises it as something that is held *a priori*. Both are right, and their accounts complement one another. [And then a reference to a commentary on Aristotle in which the essence of Kant's doctrine of teleology was anticipated.]

Kant is completely right in this matter. After showing that the concept of effect and cause can't be used to explain the existence of nature as a whole,

it was also necessary to show that

nothing in the character of nature is to be conceived as the effect of a cause directed by motives (concepts of purpose).

If we bear in mind the great seeming-truth of the physico-

theological proof, which even Voltaire took to be irrefutable, it was of the greatest importance to show that the subjective element in our apprehension, which Kant claimed for space, time, and causality, also extends to our judgments of natural bodies; so that the compulsion we feel to think of them as premeditated in accordance with concepts of purpose, and thus as having arisen in such a way that their presentation preceded their existence, has an origin that is just as subjective as our perception of that space which is so objectively displayed to us; so it can't be validated as objective truth. Kant's discussion of the matter, apart from the wearying verbosity and repetition, is superb. He rightly says that we'll never be able to explain the character of organic bodies on the basis of merely mechanical causes, by which he means the unintentional and lawful working of all general natural forces. But here I find another gap. He denies the possibility of such an explanation merely with respect to the purposiveness and seeming intentionality of *organic bodies*; but even where those are not involved, explanatory grounds from one domain of nature can't be brought over into another, but rather abandon us when we set foot in a new domain, and new fundamental laws take their place, laws that we can't hope to explain in terms of the laws of the previous domain. Thus in the domain of the truly mechanical, the laws of gravity, cohesion, rigidity, fluidity, elasticity hold sway. They stand on their own as expressions of forces that can't be further explained (apart from my explanation of *all* natural forces as lower levels of the objectification of will). In that domain they constitute principles for all further explanation, which merely consists in reducing things to them. When we leave this domain and come to the phenomena of chemistry, electricity, magnetism and crystallization, those principles cease to be

¹ [This refers to the assumption 'that this is how things stand objectively'.]

of any use to us; indeed those laws no longer apply, those forces are overcome by others and the phenomena develop in direct contradiction to them [i.e. in contradiction to the laws of the previous domain], in accordance with new fundamental laws which—just like the former ones—are basic and inexplicable, i.e. can't be reduced to more general laws. Thus, for example, we will never succeed in using the laws of true mechanism to explain even the dissolving of a salt in water, let alone more complex chemical phenomena. All of this is already presented more thoroughly in Book II of the present work. It seems to me that a discussion of this sort would have been very useful in the Critique of Teleological Judgment, spreading much light on what was said there. Such a discussion would have been especially favourable to Kant's splendid insight that a deeper knowledge of the *essence in itself* of which natural things are the phenomenon would reveal one and the same ultimate principle in both the mechanical (lawful) and the seemingly intentional operation

of nature, a principle that might serve as a common ground for explaining both. I hope I have provided this by presenting *will* as the real *thing in itself*, and in accordance with it—in Book II of the present work and the supplements to it,¹ but especially in my work *On the Will in Nature*—the insight into the inner nature of the apparent design and of the harmony and agreement of the whole of nature has perhaps become clearer and deeper. So I have nothing more to say about it here.

The reader interested in this critique of Kantian philosophy ought not to neglect reading the supplement to it, provided in the essay in *Parerga and Paralipomena* entitled 'Further Elucidations of Kantian Philosophy'. For it has to be remembered that my works, few in number as they may be, were composed successively, over the course of a long life and with long intervals between them; so that it mustn't be expected that everything I have said on a subject stands together in one place.

¹ [Meaning the supplements in volume 2 of the present work, not offered on the website from which the present text came.]