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A Criticism of the Critical Philosophy

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## MIND

A QUARTERLY REVIEW

OF

PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY.

I.—A CRITICISM OF THE CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

It would, I suppose, be generally held by those who regard the "Return to Kant" as the next step which English philosophy ought to take, that the 'Transcendental Analytic,' in which a metaphysical basis is constructed for physical science, is, of all Kant's work, the most immediately important for English students. To Kant himself, indeed, the negative and destructive side of the argument in the first *Kritik*, which is mainly developed in the 'Transcendental Dialectic,' was, I think, more fundamentally important than its positive side: he was more concerned to demolish dogmatic metaphysics than to establish physical science, of which the principles and procedures appeared to him to be adequately guaranteed by experience, without any transcendental deduction. But the destruction of Rational Psychology, Cosmology and Theology has but a remote interest for English students of philosophy. This kind of dogmatism has never been dominant among us since the time of Locke: some kind of rational theology, indeed, has been kept in existence by the argumentative needs of positive theology, but it can hardly be said that any system or method of rational theology—at least in the Kantian sense—is a force to be seriously reckoned

<sup>1</sup> Concluded from MIND XXIX.

with at present, in the region of independent philosophical speculation. At any rate all the schools of philosophy that were dominant in England when Kantism began to be preached—Empiricism Idealistic and Materialistic, and the philosophy of Common-sense as represented by Hamilton—agreed in accepting what we may speak of broadly as the negative results of the *Kritik*; and even granting that they got at these results too hastily and by too short cuts, still, it would hardly be of fundamental importance to return to Kant in order to reach the goal of philosophic nescience by a more regular road.

Again, it may reasonably be held that Kant himself attached paramount importance to what may be called the ontologically constructive part of his system, the establishment of the belief in "God, Freedom and Immortality" on the basis of practical faith. Indeed, for Kant as a man, we may almost say that the rest of his work was only valuable as leading up to these conclusions: and it is characteristic of Kant that he never seems to lose the man in the philosopher. But no serious attempt has yet been made, by those who are commending Kant to our notice, to lead the English mind to his moral theology: and since, as I explained in my former article, my concern now is not with Kant historically regarded but with Kantism offered as a method of dealing with our present philosophical problems, it would be idle to criticise the Kantian moral theology until some competent expositor seriously asks us to believe it.

It is, therefore, the theory of knowledge given mainly in the 'Analytic' which is to ground us in Kant; and it is accordingly against this theory that one who declines to be thus grounded is called upon to direct his main criticisms. It is true that the 'Analytic' presupposes the exposition of the forms of sensibility given in the 'Æsthetic'; but the only conclusion that it is useful—or even desirable—to carry from the latter to the former is just that Time and Space are necessary forms of sensibility. This is all, I conceive, that Kant holds to be requisite in order to explain how the synthetical *a priori* propositions of geometry or arithmetic are possible. The understanding, of course, has to grasp the particulars of *a priori* intuition in order to construct a mathematical proposition; but Kant does not consider that an explanation of this process is required for the establishment of the possibility of pure mathematics.

The question, then, which the elaborate analysis of the 'Analytic' is required to answer relates primarily to the legitimacy of the synthetical *a priori* propositions of rational

physics (including applied mathematics):—I say “legitimacy” because in the present article I shall not take Kant’s argument as *assuming* the universal validity of such propositions, but as designed to establish their validity in respect of all objects of sensible experience.<sup>1</sup> This question is only directly dealt with in the part of the treatise which deals with the systematic presentation of the Principles of the Pure Understanding: to which accordingly, from this point of view, the preceding discussions must be considered merely as introductory. But in fact the problem which Kant is called upon to solve has become more comprehensive by the attainment of the conclusions of the ‘Æsthetic’. If Time and Space are merely forms of our sensibility, our empirical cognitions of particular objects seem to require explanation as much as our universal cognitions relative to such objects. If things do not really exist in time and space independently of our consciousness, why do we ordinarily think of them as so existing, and why is this thought apparently confirmed by the whole of our experience, including the communicated experience of other human beings? What is the real significance of this mass of apparently certain and consistent cognitions, by an indefinite number of human beings, of one aggregate of material things, extended and moving in one space and perduring through one time?

This, I say, is the problem with which, I conceive, Kantism is called upon to deal; but it is importantly different from the problem with which Kant actually does deal, though I cannot perceive that he ever shows an adequate consciousness of the difference, while his English expositors appear to ignore it altogether. For instance, Mr. Watson tells us repeatedly that Kant offers an explanation of “the special facts of ordinary experience” (as well as “the laws embodied in each of the special sciences”); that “he sought for a hypothesis adequate to account for the facts in their completeness”.<sup>2</sup> But Kant, so far as I am aware, nowhere

<sup>1</sup> See my former article, MIND XXIX., pp. 76-83. Since that article was written I have read with much interest Dr. Vaihinger’s full and careful discussion of Kant’s starting-point and procedure in his *Commentar zu Kant’s Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, I., 2. I am glad to find myself in substantial agreement with the conclusions of this learned and acute commentator, at least on the most important questions raised by him.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Kant and his English Critics*, chap. 1. I must observe that Mr. Watson is peculiarly unfortunate in his language; since Kant has expressly repudiated, in the strongest possible terms, the notion that his reasoning involves a “hypothesis”. Cf. Pref. to 1st ed., p. 9, “Ich habe mir selbst das Urtheil gesprochen dass in dieser Art von Betrachtungen . . . alles was einer Hypothese nur ähnlich sieht, verbotene Waare sei”.

professes to explain—and certainly nowhere does explain—the apparent objectivity of our empirical cognitions so far as the *particular* characteristics of their objects are concerned; he is entirely occupied with their universal and necessary characteristics—which alone, in his view, are capable of being known *a priori*. He does not profess to give an account of what experience *is*, but what it *must* be; of the “rules of pure thinking of an object,” “conceptions which may relate themselves to objects *a priori*,” “principles without which no object can be thought”.<sup>1</sup> How, indeed, could it be otherwise, if, as he has before told us, “no concepts which contain anything empirical are to be admitted” into Transcendental Philosophy?<sup>2</sup>

Let us take, then, the problem as Kant defines it, and endeavour to get a clear view of it, before we examine his method of solving it. In the first place, what precisely does Kant mean by the “Object,” of which he proposes to determine the necessary conditions? What distinctions does he draw at the outset between objects and other nameables?

In the first place it seems evident that he does not, for the most part,<sup>3</sup> mean to include under this term all that, in a wider sense, we are accustomed to call “objects of thought” or “of knowledge”. For instance, Logic, as Kant expressly tells us, is not concerned with objects: the forms of thought with which Logic deals are not “objects,” for the general purposes of the ‘Transcendental Analytic,’ though of course capable of being scientifically known, and therefore of being compared and classified, and made the subjects of judgments universal and particular, affirmative and negative, categorical and disjunctive, &c. The “object” of Kant’s transcendental analysis must have elements supplied by some sense. At the same time we cannot say that any feeling, or even any combination of feelings thought under one notion, can be an object in the narrower Kantian signification of the term. The latter might perhaps be inferred from the definition that Kant gives in one passage (§ 17, p. 118). “Object is that in the conception of which the manifold of a given intuition is united.” But he has already explained (‘Æsthetic,’ § 3, p. 63) that the sensations of colours, sounds and heat, “because they are merely

<sup>1</sup> ‘Transcend. Logik, Einleitung,’ pp. 84, 5, 9. My references throughout are to Hartenstein’s edition (1867).

<sup>2</sup> ‘Einleitung,’ p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> I insert this qualifying phrase, because there certainly seem to be some passages in which “Object” must be understood in this wider sense.

sensations and not intuitions, do not help us by themselves to know any object"; so that we cannot suppose that any synthesis of the manifold of such sensations would by itself constitute an object for Kant's purposes—not (*e.g.*) the synthesis of different sounds recalled under the notion of "the tune I heard last night". How then are we to distinguish the kind of sensible manifold of which the combination constitutes an object for Kant? So far as material objects are concerned,<sup>1</sup> we must, I conceive, identify it with what, in ordinary thought, is distinguished as an object of *perception* from mere sensation, by the implicit belief that it exists independently of our consciousness. Such an implicit belief, though Kant nowhere affirms it to be involved in the conception of an empirical object which he analyses, certainly seems to me to be more or less definitely suggested by much of the language that he uses about it. Take, for instance, the following (§ 14, p. 112): "All experience contains, besides the intuition of the senses, by which something is given, also a conception of an object which in the intuition is given, or appears". It seems clear that the object which is thought as appearing in the intuition is at the same time thought to exist independently of it: and the same may be said of the phrases elsewhere used, where an object is said to be thought "through" or "in relation to" a "Vorstellung".

In this way we seem led to the singular result that the combined manifold of sensible elements, which in Kant's view constitutes an object, can only be distinguished from other combined manifolds of feeling by a characteristic which Kant's theory declares to be illusory; the characteristic namely of being thought to have an existence independent of the perception in which it is presented. What I call outward objects are nothing but mere "modifications of my sensibility," merely "in me," "determinations of my identical self"; and yet in thinking of them as objects I inevitably think of them as existing independently of the modifications of my sensibility by which they are perceived. I do not see how this conclusion can be avoided; and yet I cannot perceive that Kant is ever clearly aware that the notion of an empirical object which he is occupied in determining *a priori* is a notion which contains this illusory element. On the contrary, in important parts of

<sup>1</sup> As the constructive importance of the 'Analytic' is explained by Kant himself to lie in its relation to the principles of physics, I may venture here to avoid the peculiar difficulties that I find in making Kant's view of "Selbst-anschauung" clear and consistent.

his argument he appears to me to forget that it is an illusion, in spite of the explicit language in which he has elsewhere characterised it as such. For we find among the characteristics of empirical objects laid down as *a priori* cognisable, that they must contain a (phenomenal) substance that is thought of as remaining unchanged amid all phenomenal change: but it seems impossible to think this and at the same time to think of all phenomena as merely modifications of my sensibility. Yet Kant nowhere seems conscious of this *prima facie* contradiction, or makes any effort to explain it. It seems to him absurd that "the thing-in-itself" should "wander into my consciousness": yet, so far as I can see, neither he nor his English expositors find any difficulty in conceiving the phenomenal thing to wander out of it. Both he and they seem to hold that I can know objects to be merely modifications of my sensibility, combined in certain ways by my understanding; while at the same time I also conceive them as different from the modifications of my sensibility and as perduring when the latter cease. Indeed, this unconscious contradiction seems to run through Kant's use of his cardinal term "Vorstellung": the "Vorstellung" is now identified with its object, and now again contrasted with it, without any attempt at reconciling the two incompatible views. At one time we are told that "outward things are nothing but mere *Vorstellungen*,"<sup>1</sup> while again it is declared that, "the determination of my existence in time is only possible through the existence of real things which I perceive outside me and not through the mere *Vorstellung* of a thing outside me."<sup>2</sup> Will it be said that these really existent phenomenal things, though independent of *my* consciousness, are implicitly thought by me to be in relation to "consciousness in general," and that it is this relation which gives them their permanence, when they cease to be modifications of my sensibility? This—which resembles the Berkeleyan mode of reconciling Idealism and Common-sense—is an explanation certainly suggested by some passages in our recent English expositors of Kant. Thus (*e.g.*) Mr. Caird says,<sup>3</sup> that by the recognition of the data of sense as objective "the data of sense are taken out of their mere singularity as feelings, and made elements in a universal consciousness, in 'consciousness in general'; or, to put

<sup>1</sup> 'Æsthetic,' § 3, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> In the 'Refutation of Idealism,' p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> *Philosophy of Kant*, c. viii., p. 341.

the same thing in another way, they are related to a consciousness, which the individual has, not as a mere individual, but as a universal subject of knowledge". But whatever happens to the data of sense in Kant's psychological laboratory, it is at any rate certain that they do not cease to be modifications of sensibility. Hence in order to explain how phenomenal things can be conceived to exist independently of my—or any other man's—sensibility, we should have to suppose not merely a rational consciousness which all men share, but a universal quasi-human sensibility, modified similarly to the human; and I need hardly describe the emphasis with which any such chimera would be repudiated by Kant.

I can only explain Kant's indifference to the difficulty above pointed out by referring it to the confusion—or at least fusion—that continually takes place in his mind between the phenomenal objects which are "insgesammt in mir," and the things-in-themselves of which the former are phenomenal. Here I am glad to find myself in close agreement with Mr. Caird, who says (c. v., p. 278) that Kant "treats the object which the understanding determines through synthesis of the manifold given in sense as *identical with, or at any rate phenomenal of,* the object that affects sense". To express my view exactly, I should vary Mr. Caird's phrase very slightly, and say that Kant always regards the one object as phenomenal of the other, but often identifies the two so completely that he speaks of both indifferently by the same name in the same passage, even in the very transcendental discussions in which the distinction between the two is of fundamental importance. Thus he tells us (§ 14, p. 111) that "two ways only are possible in which synthetical *Vorstellungen* and their objects can agree . . . either if the object alone makes the *Vorstellung* possible, or the *Vorstellung* alone makes the object possible. The former . . . is the case with phenomena in respect of what in them belongs to sensation"; whereas the latter, of course, is the case in respect of the forms of intuition and thought. Here it seems evident that the object which makes the *Vorstellung* possible so far as its sensational elements are concerned, cannot be the phenomenal object which is itself constructed out of such sensational elements; it must therefore be the noumenal object which affects sensibility; on the other hand it seems no less evident that the object which the *Vorstellung* makes possible must be the phenomenal object.

To sum up: the notion which Kant has formed of the



Object which he seeks to determine *a priori* is not adequately clear or consistent; for, in the first place, while interpreting objectivity to mean universal validity, he does not clearly recognise that the particular objectivity of our common material world, assumed in ordinary thought and the reasonings of physical science, lies beyond the range of his *a priori* explanation; and, in the second place, he surreptitiously includes in the notion of his (phenomenal) object the characteristic of existing in some manner independently of our sensibility, which is inconsistent with his reduction of its matter to mere modifications of our sensibility, combined and ordered by thought.

Let us now pass to consider the manner in which he deals with the problem as stated by himself; that is, with the ascertainment of the *a priori* characteristics of empirical objects. Before examining the particulars of Kant's treatment of this problem, we may, I think, reasonably scrutinise the general nature of the method adopted. As I before hinted, I do not claim, in asking how Transcendental Philosophy "is possible," to "suspend all Transcendentalists from their business" until the question has been satisfactorily answered: I am aware that in the progress of knowledge many things have been done which had been plausibly shown to be impossible, and perhaps the work of Transcendental Philosophy may be one of them. I only ask the general question, because the defects that I find in the details of Kant's method are just such as I should expect to find in the work of a philosopher who had never seriously applied to his own procedure the criteria by which that of his dogmatic predecessors had been tried and found wanting.

How, then, does Kant think that we can know the necessary intellectual conditions of experience? To a "dogmatic" metaphysician, of course, the question would not seem to present any particular difficulty; for these intellectual conditions are a part of the universe of being, and there would seem to be no obvious reason why they should not be known as well as anything else, and at least no *a priori* reason why they should not be known *a priori*. But the case is *primâ facie* different for Kant; since the great negative result of his 'Analytic' is that the categories or fundamental forms of thought are only of use for binding together the impressions of sensibility, and can only produce positive knowledge by their application to these impressions; so that no knowledge is possible of things that cannot be made objects of experience. But if we are unable to penetrate to things *beyond* experience, why should we be any more able to discover the

conditions which lie—if I may so say—*behind* it; since the latter cannot any more than the former become empirical objects, according to Kant's definition of the term?

To this question Kant's language in the 'Introduction' suggests the very naïve answer that I have got my mind by me and therefore must be able to find out all about it; so that there can hardly be any difficulty in framing a complete inventory of the "*curta supellex*" of my *a priori* possessions.<sup>1</sup> It does not clearly appear why the scantiness of our intellectual furniture should be thus taken for granted: *primâ facie*, the world of thought is as extensive as the world of things; how then can we know *a priori* that Thought's own resources are so limited? But granting this assumption, it is at any rate manifest that the inventory cannot be made out by any direct observation of my faculties, but only by a reflective analysis of their products, experience and thought about experience; and in fact, I presume, it is by such an analysis that Kant conceives logicians to have separated the formal *a priori* element furnished by the understanding in ordinary empirical judgments. Let us grant that this separation can be performed, and that the eleven or twelve forms thus obtained can be demonstrated to be necessary: it still seems to me unwarrantable to assume that they are derived from the mind and not from external sources. But as this fundamental assumption is common both to the 'Æsthetic' and to the 'Analytic,' it has been sufficiently dealt with in my former article, and I need not dwell upon it further. Here I will only observe that, even if we grant this assumption, and accept the general accuracy and "apodictic" certainty of the analysis of judgments performed by logicians: it still does not appear how the results of this analytical procedure can be known to have the systematic completeness which Kant repeatedly claims for them, and on which he lays great stress.<sup>2</sup> He seems to think that because the Understanding or Faculty of Judging has an essential unity—we will afterwards enquire how this, again, is known—therefore its fundamental forms have been obtained from a common principle, and therefore systematically, and therefore completely. But in fact he has established no kind of rational relation between the unity of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Einleitung,' § vii., p. 50. "Der Verstand . . . dessen Vorrath, weil wir ihn nicht auswärtig suchen müssen, uns nicht verborgen bleiben kann," &c.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Analytik der Begriffe,' 1st Hauptst. beginning pp. 91, 2, and the contrast of his method with that by which Aristotle's categories were obtained; also 3 Absch., p. 101.

understanding and the multiplicity of its forms—the categories are no more systematised by being referred to one understanding than beads are systematised by being strung on one string. What Kant does is simply to take these forms from the ordinary logic, subject to one or two changes for which the need, he thinks, is evident when we pass from the point of view of General to that of Transcendental Logic; and to assume their systematic completeness. His confidence in the traditional logic would seem to be due to what he notes as a remarkable characteristic of this science, *viz.*, that it was completed by its founder Aristotle, and has “taken no step forward” since his exposition. The characteristic would certainly be a remarkable one, if it were correctly attributed: but in fact it is rather Kant’s historical blunder that is remarkable, since the very forms of judgment to which the Transcendental Philosophy gives special prominence—the different kinds of Relation—are not clearly or expressly distinguished by Aristotle, who pays no attention to any but categorical reasoning. There could not be a more striking proof that the method of reflective analysis, by which alone the forms of judgment and reasoning would seem to be ascertainable, does not ensure systematic completeness.

But let us suppose that Kant’s inventory of the forms of judgment is perfect, and may be known to be so with apodictic certainty: the important part of his task still remains: he has to show with the same certainty how they are necessarily applied in our experience of objects. Now the cognition of an object through sense is not a judgment, though it may involve judgments, explicit or implicit: it requires, as Kant explains, the co-operation of Understanding, Imagination, and Sense: and it is in the account of this co-operation that the difficulty of obtaining any certain or trustworthy results by his method becomes most manifest. I suppose that every one who, accustomed to English empirical psychology, has come to Kant expecting to have the necessary conditions of experience demonstrated to him by a non-empirical method, must have felt astonished and bewildered at the elaborate psychological system put forward in the ‘Transcendental Analytic’. Kant appears to be, if I may so say, at home among his faculties behind the scenes, where a process is supposed to go on of which only the results are presented on the stage of empirical consciousness: and in tracing this process he gives us statement after statement which if not empirical must be nakedly dogmatic—“synthetic *a priori*” propositions, in a region where it would seem that no *Anschauung* can be supposed to come in.

For instance; it is laid down at the very outset of the treatise that Sense is passive or "Receptivity," Understanding active or "Spontaneity"; and accordingly that sense-perceptions depend on "affections," conceptions on "functions" and "acts".<sup>1</sup> Now it is hardly necessary to say that Sense and Understanding are, in Kant's view, distinguishable by other characteristics besides the pair thus contrasted: *viz.*, that sense is the source of the concrete, particular element in our cognition, and Understanding of general notions. This is evident (*e.g.*), from the argument in the 'Æsthetic' by which Space is shown to be a form of Sensibility as distinct from Understanding: since this argument does not introduce the distinction of "activity" and "passivity": its point consists entirely in showing that Space is not merely a generic term for many similar relations, including an indefinite number of spaces "under" it, but represents a concrete whole including "in" it all particular spaces. It seems clear therefore that in the statements that Sense is passive or a Receptivity and Understanding active or a Spontaneity we have, implicit or explicit, synthetical universal propositions; and hence, I conceive, Kant is bound to explain how these synthetical universals are supposed to be known. If they are to be "apodictically" certain, as is implied in Kant's account of his method, whence is this certainty to be derived? If it is obtained independently of ordinary experience we seem to require, on Kant's principles, some sort of transcendental intuition which shall present us not with things in space or events in time, but with the nature or relations of the "Vermögen" or "Fähigkeiten" of the human mind. If no such chimerical source of knowledge is assumed—and I need hardly say that it is not claimed by Kant—the only alternative is to suppose that reflection on ordinary experience shows us a *necessary* connexion of inactivity with particularity and of activity with generality in our cognitions. But if the terms "active," "receptive," &c., connote—as they seem to do—the presence or absence of the empirically known fact of volition, I cannot conceive how the connexion can be thought to be necessary; since experience—at least my experience—does not present it as universally subsisting: I can find numberless instances in my experience of general notions presenting themselves in

<sup>1</sup> "Functionen," "Actus," "Handlungen". I cannot profess to understand the exact relation of "Function" and "Handlung" in Kant's terminology; since I find that "Function" is stated to be "die Einheit der Handlung" &c., and on the other hand that "alle Urtheile" are "Functionen der Einheit".

consciousness without my being conscious of any antecedent volition: and I know no ground for assuming an unconscious volition in such cases. If, again, it be said that the terms "active" and "spontaneity" are not intended to imply conscious volition, I ask what conceivable attribute they can signify, and how this can be known, either in experience or out of experience, to be universally predicable of the mental source of general notions. Will it be suggested that the mind may be said to be "active" so far as the qualities or characteristics of *cognita* are regarded as effects of which the mind, and not anything outside the mind, is the cause? The least reflection will show that this cannot be Kant's meaning; since in this sense, "activity" must be attributed to the mind *quod* sensible as well as to the mind *quod* intellectual. For not only is the matter of sense-perception, according to Kant, necessarily "formed" by Sense no less than by Intellect; even this matter must be conceived to be what it is, partly because the human mind is such and such, and not merely because external causes are such and such.

I have laboured—I fear to the weariness of the reader—in endeavouring to find a plausible ground for this transcendental dogma of the essential activity of intellect in contrast to the passivity of sense, because the indirect importance of it in Kant's *a priori* construction of objects of experience appears to me very great; since it is, as I conceive, concerned in the parentage of two other synthetical universal propositions, which have somehow escaped the barrier of Criticism, and roam freely through the argument of the 'Analytic,' doing serious damage to its cogency. These are explicitly enunciated in the following passage at the commencement of the 'Deduction of the Categories,' as rewritten by Kant in his 2nd edition (§ 15, p. 114.)

"The connexion (*conjunctio*) of a manifold can never enter into us through the senses, . . . for it is an act of the spontaneity of the *Vorstellungskraft*; and as, in order to distinguish this from sensibility, we must call it understanding, we see that all connecting, whether we are conscious of it or not . . . is an act of the understanding. This act we shall call by the general name of *synthesis*, in order to show that we cannot represent to ourselves anything as connected in the object, without having previously connected it ourselves, and that of all *Vorstellungen* connexion is the only one which cannot be given through objects, but must be accomplished by the subject itself, because it is an act of its spontaneity."

It will be admitted that we have in this argument two synthetical universal propositions: first, that the Senses *cannot* be the source of that combinedness or connexion of manifold sense-data which is an element of the notion of an object of

experience: and, secondly, that the Understanding *must* be the source of this, being the sole faculty of synthesis. Now here again, as in the case of the proposition just discussed, I must ask the reader to bear in mind that my objections to Kant's argument are not dogmatic but critical: I do not profess to prove the contradictory of either of these fundamental assumptions: I merely urge that they require a justification which yet, on Kant's own principles, it seems impossible that they should obtain. How can I know as a necessary truth that the Faculty or Receptivity by which the concrete particular element of cognition is obtained cannot be the source of the unity in which the manifold data of sense are combined when thought of as qualities of an object? I imagine that Kant is led to affirm this dogma by first inferring from the physical separateness of the chief organs of sense that sensations, as physical facts, are originally separate and so require a process of combination, and inferring, secondly, from the passivity of sense that it cannot be the source of this combination. But it is, of course, obvious that we have here no concern with the physical antecedents or concomitants of sensation. From the point of view of transcendental analysis, I can only define Sense as the source of particular concrete elements of cognition; and if so, it is surely quite unwarranted, except on the assumption of some such transcendental *Anschauung* as I before suggested, to affirm that sense *cannot* present us with these elements as conjoined. Even supposing that in experience combination or conjunction was found to be always due to the activity of the mind—so far as this is empirically cognisable,—this empirical evidence could not, on Kant's principles, give his proposition the apodictic certainty with which he claims to lay it down.

But though the confirmation of experience could not supply Kant's argument with the basis that it requires, it may not be irrelevant to ask how far experience does confirm it. So far as my own experience goes, it seems to me certainly true that, for a clear and distinct perception of an object, some amount of voluntary attention is necessary: but it does not seem to me that the volition which thus comes in has any more relation to the unity of the object than it has to the manifold of sense-data: it rather appears that both the manifold elements and their conjunction are vaguely and obscurely given in the kind of sense-perception that can occur without conscious attention, and that both are *pari passu* raised out of this vagueness and obscurity by the voluntary act of attending to, or concentrating conscious-

ness on, them. Further, that the combination of sense-data may be perfectly involuntary would seem to be shown,—so far as experience can show it,—by the coalescence of primary and revived feelings through association to which our recent empirical psychology has given great prominence: since in many cases the coalescence is so complete that the distinctness of the elements is indiscernible in ordinary consciousness, and requires a trained faculty of analysis to apprehend it.

It may be said that this kind of coalescence is quite different from the conjunction of which Kant speaks, and could not give us our notion of the “unity” of the object. Even if this were granted, it would only make way for a similar argument against Kant’s theory: since I do not see how the cognition of an object of perception as *one*, involving as it does a distinction of the one object from other concomitant sense-percepts, is in the least explained by Kant’s reference of this unity to the necessary unity of self-consciousness. I have endeavoured to separate this reference from the argument discussed in the preceding paragraph, because I admit the proposition that self-consciousness<sup>1</sup> “must be able to accompany all my *Vorstellungen*” as one of which reflection shows the contradictory to be inconceivable. I cannot conceive a feeling, thought, or volition as mine, without conceiving it as referred to a permanent identical self; and in this reference it is implicitly conjoined with other phenomena of the same self. But I see no ground for identifying this conjunction with the conjunction of the manifold in an object. The differences between the two kinds of synthesis appear to me fundamental. First, self-consciousness accompanies all mental phenomena in the same manner—if not empirically in the same degree—and therefore conjoins all alike to each other; whereas an object is always known as distinguished from other objects and from merely subjective feelings of the percipient. Again, the essential characteristic

<sup>1</sup> I do not mean that this proposition is exactly Kant’s: indeed in translating “das Ich denke” by self-consciousness I have excluded the implication that the “Ich” of self-consciousness is a “thinking” as distinct from a “feeling” Ego, in order not to anticipate the subsequent discussion as to the relation of self-consciousness to the operations of the understanding. I am also unable to follow Kant in the distinction that he endeavours to establish between “pure” self-consciousness, cognisable *a priori* as a necessary accompaniment of “*Vorstellungen*,” and empirical self-consciousness. *E.g.*, his statement, “Das empirische Bewusstsein . . . ist an sich zerstreut und ohne jede Beziehung auf die Identität des Subjects,” seems to me the reverse of true: I can suppose “*Vorstellungen*” to take place without self-consciousness, but I cannot conceive a consciousness accompanying these which does not involve a reference to the “identity of the subject”.

of the unity given by self-consciousness is that it is a unity combining changes or successive differences: whereas the unity required for the notion of an object necessarily involves the combination of simultaneous differences. Indeed, if appeal be allowed to experience, nothing can be more manifest than that the conjunction of the varying elements of consciousness which is given by their reference to an identical self has no tendency to bind them into objective union. Thus (*e.g.*) when we wake from a dream, we are simultaneously conscious of the identity of our dreaming self with our waking self, and of the absence of any connexion between the apparently objective world of the dream and the world in which we find ourselves on waking.

But further: even if it were granted that the synthesis of the manifold in an object cannot be attributed to the mind *quâ* sensitive and merely receptive, but must be due to an "act of the spontaneity of the *Vorstellungskraft*," it still seems to me unwarrantable to identify the source of synthesis with the Understanding, as Kant has previously defined and used this term—that is, with the faculty of judgment, of which the fundamental forms are given in the list of categories. There is indeed a singular *naïveté* in the phrase by which Kant, in the passage above quoted, announces this identification. He says that "die Spontaneität der *Vorstellungskraft*" must be *called* Understanding "to distinguish it from Sense". But why must it be so called, or rather, *can* it be so called, consistently with the account that Kant has previously given of Understanding and its operations, without surreptitiously introducing a synthetical *a priori* proposition, at least as illegitimate as any of the dogmas of Rational Psychology that Kant afterwards attacks? What ground have we for assuming that the Faculty of Conception and Judgment or "mediate cognition through concepts" is also the faculty to which the synthesis that forms "an object of perception out of sense-data is due; and accordingly assuming that the forms of judgment, as analysed and classified by logicians, will also regulate this latter synthesis? It is not enough to say that we cannot actually separate perception and conception, and that percepts can be "nothing to us as thinking beings" unless thought under general notions: because, so far as this is true, it is equally true of the sensations which Kant distinguishes as merely subjective, such as the "fine flavour of wine, which does not belong to the objective characteristics of the wine, even considered as a pheno-



menal object".<sup>1</sup> Such flavours, however, when reflected upon and considered merely as feelings, necessarily become—in the wider sense which I before distinguished from Kant's—'objects' of thought and judgment; they are classified in wider and narrower groups, distinguishable by differences of quality, which we apply as predicates in judging of all, some or one of the group, categorically, hypothetically or disjunctively. Thus I may judge that some or all various flavours are agreeable, that the flavour of this claret is full but not delicate, that if the flavour of Chablis be combined with that of oysters the pleasure of both is heightened, that the flavour of champagne is either sweet or dry, &c., &c. But it appears obvious to me, and I understand Kant to hold, that this application of the forms of judgment has no tendency to give objectivity—in the Kantian sense—to the merely subjective feelings thus reflectively compared and analysed: hence there is no apparent reason why it should have this effect in the case of the other sense-data which do become elements of phenomenal objects.

Again, even if it were granted that the object of experience is the result of a synthesis of which the modes or forms are identical with those of the faculty of judgment, I cannot see that it would follow necessarily that we should be able, as Kant says, to determine intuitions in reference to the categories: *e.g.*, to say *a priori* that among the manifold of sense-data we shall find some element that can only be thought as the subject of empirical judgments while other elements can only be thought as predicates. This determination, however, is essential for Kant's purpose of supplying a rational basis for physics. In considering this part of his argument it is necessary to take note of the distinction and relations conceived by him to exist between Understanding and Productive Imagination: which I have so far avoided noticing, because, while they have no fundamental importance in reference to my criticism, I could not pretend to give a consistent account of Kant's doctrine with regard to them: since he sometimes expressly distinguishes the synthesis of the Imagination from that of the Understanding, and sometimes, with equal definiteness, speaks of "one and the same spontaneity under the names of Understanding and Imagination". At any rate it is some operation of this double-named spontaneity acting on Time, the pure form of all sensible experience, which gives us the "Schemata" or

<sup>1</sup> 'Transc. Æsth.,' § 3, p. 63.

*a priori* rules for the application of the categories to phenomena: *i.e.*, certain "time-determinations" which must necessarily characterise objects of experience whatever the particular quality of their sensible matter may turn out to be. Now I cannot perceive that Kant gives any good reason for expecting to find this correspondence between categories and time-determinations: all that appears to me to follow from his previous arguments—granting them valid—is that, *if* in virtue of the forms of judgment we can affirm anything *a priori* of objects generally, it must be something relating to time. Since, however, he considers that he has worked out this correspondence with systematic completeness, let us proceed to examine its details.

According to Kant, the four classes of categories—Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Modality—are correlated respectively to the "series of time," the "content of time," the "order of time," and the "Zeitbegriff in Ansehung aller möglichen Gegenstände". The last quoted phrase does not seem to me very lucid, especially as "Möglichkeit" is one of the categories whose application has to be determined; and since the schematism of the categories of modality does not lead to any distinct principles of *a priori* physics, I shall confine my remarks to the first three heads. In dealing with these it will be convenient to consider, along with the schemata, the principles that are supposed to be cognisable through the necessary application of the category in each case: for it is in this way that the forced and violent character of the whole procedure, especially as applied to the first two groups of categories, is most easily seen. To begin with the first head. The "schema" of Quantity—the time-determination by which the application of the logical category of Quantity to phenomena is regulated—is said to be Number. Number is a "Zeitbestimmung" which refers to the "series of time": and on this *a priori* application of the logical category of quantity to time depends the axiom that "all intuitions are extensive quantities". Now there is doubtless an important difference between logical quantity and arithmetical quantity: in passing from the former to the latter we advance from the merely indefinite plurality, involved in the relation between a general notion and the particulars which it classifies, to a perfectly definite plurality. But I cannot perceive that the transition introduces a time-determination. I do not see that the definite plurality involved in the notion of number has any more essential relation to our sense-perceptions than the logical categories have: and since Kant expressly tells us that his

categories "unabhängig von Sinnlichkeit blos im Verstande entspringen," I suppose that their essential characteristics must, in his view, be conceivable independently of any reference to our forms of sensibility. But if conceivable at all, they clearly must be conceived as *twelve*: their *twelveness* must be as independent of time as any other of their characteristics. And, more generally, it seems obvious that the parts of any logical whole, when definitely known, are as essentially numerable as the parts of a physical whole: so that in Kant's definition "number is the unity of the synthesis of the manifold of a homogeneous intuition," the four last words appear to be an illegitimate restriction, according to his own view of the relation of Intuition to Thought. The only reason that Kant has for regarding Number as a time-determination would seem to be the fact that it takes time to count: the synthesis of which number is the result is effected, he says, "dadurch dass ich die Zeit selbst in der Apprehension der Anschauung erzeuge". But in counting six I do not make a synthesis of time any more than in the logical process of drawing a conclusion from premisses; though in each case the process no doubt occupies time. The parts of the number six, when conceived abstractly, are surely conceived as simultaneous, not successive: and whatever they are they are certainly not units of time.<sup>1</sup> But again: when we consider the schema of quantity in connexion with the principle based upon it, that "all intuitions are extensive quantities," we see that just as the transition from indefinite to definite plurality was ignored in Kant's account of the relation of the category to the schema, so here another important difference, that between discrete and continuous quantity, is unduly slurred over. I cannot say that Kant ignores it altogether: he certainly does mention it, as it were accidentally, in the course of a subsequent discussion of *intensive* quantity. But in all that he says of the extensive quantities or "homogeneous manifolds" of intuition, he does not hint that such quantities are continuous and not discrete; nor that some of the most familiar relations among them—as that between the circle and its radius—are incapable of being adequately represented

<sup>1</sup> I do not mean to say that Kant identifies the units of number with units of time: he is of course perfectly aware that the parts of time must be extended quantities. But I think that in his desire to work out his system symmetrically he goes as near this identification as he can without committing himself to a manifest error: when he says that "Arithmetik bringt ihre Zahlbegriffe durch successive Hinzusetzung der Einheiten in der Zeit zu Stande" (*Prolegom.*, § 10).

by the relations of definite numbers. If the ignoring of this distinction were merely a negative defect, it might be hypercritical to lay stress upon it; but it has, I conceive, helped to lead Kant into a positive misstatement. He says<sup>1</sup> that an extensive quantity is one in which the "Vorstellung" of the parts makes the "Vorstellung" of the whole possible, and therefore necessarily precedes it. Now if such quantities were discrete and consisted of a finite number of units, this might be said; but I do not see how it can be said of an extended quantum which is necessarily conceived as continuous and divisible without limit. Surely there is a serious error—which Kant's dialectical acumen would have been sure to note in any other writer—in the statement that in thinking any portion of time I think a successive progress "wo durch alle Zeittheile und deren Hinzuthun endlich eine bestimmte Zeitgrösse erzeugt wird"; so far as it implies, as it certainly seems to imply, that a definite consciousness of the parts precedes the consciousness of the whole. For, of however many parts we may be definitely conscious in forming the notion of a given time or line, as all these parts are themselves extended quantities, they must be conceived as in their turn divisible into other parts of which the definite consciousness has *not* preceded.

I have laid stress on this misstatement, because it seems to me a good illustration of the incorrectness of Kant's general assumption that the understanding "cannot separate what it has not previously bound together," in its application to phenomena. In my view the essential function of thought, in all its departments, is not primarily or mainly the binding together of isolated elements into a whole; but a process by which we pass from the consciousness of some vague manifold, the elements of which are (1) obscurely thought or even (2) have a merely potential existence, to a consciousness of the same manifold as not only more connected, but more distinct in its parts, and not only more distinct but fuller. Now in other parts of Kant's treatise he seems to me to recognise at least implicitly both effects of this process: thus in his account of analytical judgments ('Einleitung,' § iv., p. 40) he expressly notes the progress from obscurity to distinctness in the elements of a conception: and in his discussion of the 'Transcendental Ideal' he seems at least to suggest the progress from potential to actual fulness in our notions of individual objects. But in the 'Transcendental Analytic' he views the function of the Understanding as *merely* one of

<sup>1</sup> 'Axiomen d. Anschauung,' p. 156.

synthesis of what is given as separate, and accordingly falls, in the region of mathematics, into the manifest error just noticed.

I hold, therefore, that no support can be derived for Kant's general theory of Schemata from his application of it to the particular case of Quantity. But if the schematism of Quantity breaks down, that of Quality fares, I must say, much worse. I remember that an old commentator of Leibniz, when he comes to the *Monadology*, cannot refrain from suggesting that his author's real aim must have been to try "quousque tandem pergeret bruta hominum assentiendi humilitas". No one would think of attributing such a motive, even in jest, to the earnest and candid Kant; but I do not find in this part of his reasoning the patient ingenuity which rarely deserts him even when he is most astray from truth; and it seems to me to require a "bruta assentiendi humilitas" to accept it as a cogent establishment of the relation which he declares to exist between the (logical) quality of a judgment and the intensive quantity of a phenomenon.

He begins by affirming dogmatically that "reality is that in the object which corresponds to feeling . . . the transcendental matter of all objects". The statement appears to me surprising, and inconsistent with language used by Kant elsewhere. I do not understand why reality should be thus equated to matter alone, instead of form and matter combined. I should have thought that, though space and time were not real in abstraction, they were at any rate real as elements of formed phenomena: and I should have thought that Kant distinctly held this view, since he repeatedly asserts that in his system space and time have "empirical reality"—and it is with empirical reality that he is here concerned. But, suppose this proposition granted, I should have thought that the schema of the category of Reality was thus obtained: that the categories of Reality and Negation, in their application to phenomena, would be interpreted as representing the presence and absence respectively of Feeling, regarded as the content of Time. This, however, would not suit Kant's purposes; as he is desirous of connecting his schema with the principle that "the real in all phenomena has intensive quantity," and is capable of continuous diminution down to zero; and hence he lays down that the schema of a reality is the "continuous and uniform production of it in time". Now here again I wish to make clear that I am not raising any question as to the truth or falsehood of the above-mentioned proposition—or rather propositions, since

there are two which do not necessarily involve each other: I am only unable to understand the grounds on which Kant claims acceptance for them. They obviously cannot be generalisations from experience; and it seems absurd to say that they can follow necessarily from the application of the categories of Reality and Negation to the content of Time. For there is nothing more evident about the logical antithesis of affirmation and negation, when abstractly contemplated, than its absoluteness, and the apparent absence of any possible mediation or transition between the two terms. It presents itself as the simplest form, the purest essence, of all antithesis: that a thing must either be or not be is one of the fundamental "laws of thought" in the logical tradition. No doubt, in the physical world we find continuous transition everywhere; which constitutes a serious difficulty in applying to nature the results of logical analysis and division. But this *primâ facie* unadaptedness of logic to fact Kant does not in any way overcome: he simply *jumps* from the one to the other by the aid of an unwarranted dogma that "every feeling has a degree or quantity by which it can fill the same time more or less till it vanishes into nothing"—a dogma which is, in fact, substantially the principle itself that is afterwards supposed to be proved by it.

Not less remarkable is the deduction which Kant makes from his principle of the 'Anticipations of Perception': *viz.*, that we cannot have experience of a vacuum. We are first told that reality corresponds to feeling, and negation to absence of feeling; and the possible continuous diminution of the real down to zero is inferred as corresponding to a similar diminution of feeling. But then we suddenly find that we somehow know *a priori* that "every sense *must* have a definite degree of receptivity," and accordingly that below the point at which any kind of sensation stops—below what we may call the sensible zero—the transcendental matter corresponding to such sensation must be still conceived as possibly existing, in any one of an indefinite number of continually diminishing degrees. Thus "we see that experience can never supply a proof of empty space or empty time, because the total absence of reality in a sensuous intuition can never be perceived, neither can it be deduced from any single phenomenon, and from the difference of degree in their reality; nor ought it ever to be admitted in explanation of them": and thus the schematism of the category of Negation seems to end by demonstrating its strict inapplicability to phenomenal reality.

I hardly know where to begin to criticise this singular

argument. (1) If the matter of all phenomenal objects consists of mere modifications of our sensibility, how can we consistently suppose a phenomenal object to exist corresponding to modifications which, by the very nature of our sensibility, cannot possibly occur? And (2), if we could suppose this, by what transcendental intuition do we know that our senses *must* be incapable of perceiving phenomenal reality below a certain degree? And (3), even granting that we must suppose as possibly existent a phenomenon that cannot possibly appear, and therefore that we can never have direct experience of void space and time, it still is not clear why the assumption of such a void can never be admitted as an explanation of phenomenon: for, granting that an apparent void cannot be known to be real, it does not surely follow that it must be known to be merely apparent. And, finally, it seems to me that this corollary from the 'Anticipations of Perception' must land us in serious difficulties when we try to make it consistent with Kant's express interpretation of the first 'Analogy of Experience'—to the discussion of which I will now proceed.

The schematism of the categories of Relation—at any rate of the first two pairs—and the establishment of the corresponding *a priori* principles form a part of Kant's doctrine which has, on various grounds, more interest for most students than what has just been discussed. For, first, the principles in question are propositions which we commonly regard as requiring some kind of proof, whereas the 'Axioms of Intuition' would commonly be thought to be self-evident: secondly, the proof that Kant offers in each case, is one that does not seem to need as a basis Kant's general doctrine as to the relation of the understanding and its categories to time and the schemata; it would remain to be dealt with on its merits even if that general doctrine were abandoned as untenable; while at the same time, as was before said, the relation of the categories to time-determinations does not here appear to be so forced and artificial as it does in the case of the other categories. The relation of logical Subject to its Predicates is clearly analogous in some way to the relation of phenomenal Substance to its Accidents: substance, again, is conceived as remaining permanent while its accidents change: so that it is at any rate a plausible view that the schema of the category of subject—that in phenomena which may be known *a priori* to be cogitable only as subject and not as predicate—is the permanent. There are, however, two objections to the doctrine. In the first place we can obviously apply, and do

in ordinary thought apply, the category of subject to other elements of experience or consciousness besides the permanent matter that we conceive as underlying phenomenal change: all *cognita* whatever—not merely accidents as well as substances, but the merely subjective feelings which Kant distinguishes from the objective characteristics of phenomenal objects, must be made subjects of predication when our knowledge respecting them is made explicit: hence there does not seem to be any reason why we should also find for the category a special application to something that *cannot* be thought as predicate. And secondly, so far as we conceive the permanent substance as something that possesses equally permanent attributes, the distinction of subject and predicate is inevitably reintroduced *within* this notion of substance which is put forward as corresponding to subject only. And Kant, of course, does conceive his substance as having the attribute of quantity, which remains as unchanged as the substance: his first ‘Analogy of Experience’ expressly states “that the *quantum* of substance in nature is neither increased nor diminished”.

Let us now consider the transcendental proof which Kant offers of this principle—which may, as I have said, be taken quite independently of the doctrine of the categories and their schematism. The proof is briefly this. All phenomena exist in Time, which does not itself change, all change having to be thought in it. As Time “für sich” cannot be perceived, there must be in objects something to represent time, unchanging and of which all change can only be thought as a determination. This is Substance: as it cannot change, its quantum cannot be decreased or increased.

Now, first, it does not seem to me true—that is, not truly to represent our common thought as expressed in our common language—to say in this absolute way that “Time does not change”. I should say that change and permanence, succession and duration are inextricably combined in our notion of time, so that it is as true to say “Time *passes*” as that Time abides. However, I will not dwell on this point, as I am quite prepared to admit that I cannot conceive change without the conception of somewhat that remains unchanged besides Time. But I see no reason why this somewhat should necessarily be conceived as permanently unchangeable. For instance: suppose a manifold is presented consisting of elements which we may represent by the four letters *abcd*: it appears to me that I can perfectly well conceive the four elements changing one after another so that ultimately an entirely new manifold  $a_1, b_1, c_1, d_1$  should be



found to have substituted itself for *abcd*; provided that, while *a* is changing into *a*<sub>1</sub>, *bcd* remains unchanged, and so on for each of the four elements.

Perhaps it may be said that this presentation of coexistent elements is not really possible, because "our apprehension is always successive"; or, as Kant states it more definitely in the 'Deduction of the Categories' in his first edition, "as contained in one moment, each *Vorstellung* can never be anything but absolute unity". I just note that we have here another of those strange dogmas of Transcendental Psychology which Kant can neither consistently support by an appeal to an experience nor claim to know *a priori*: and I remark further that this particular dogma is altogether contrary to my own experience, so far as I can know it by reflection; since I am continually conscious of an apparently presented manifold of quite simultaneous sensations and sense-perceptions. But even if it were granted that "apprehension," strictly speaking, is always serial; I do not see how Kant can deny that I can have a simultaneous manifold in my consciousness somehow, whether it be strictly presented or partially represented; and this is all that I require for the purposes of the above argument.

The notion, then, of an absolutely permanent substance does not appear to me to be necessarily involved in the notion of change, as Kant argues: and I do not see that he gives any other cogent reason for affirming *a priori* the existence of such a substance in nature. There are, moreover, other difficulties in the way of accepting his account of the notion. The language in which he introduces it seems to imply that substance can itself be perceived; since the necessity of finding it in the objects of perception is expressly stated to follow from the fact that "die Zeit für sich" cannot be perceived, and the consequence would seem to fail if Substance also was incapable of being "für sich wahrgenommen". Yet, whatever precise meaning we give to the words last quoted, it is hard to see how the characteristic they express can be attributed to Substance, as Kant conceives it—"the substratum of all the real"—any more than to Time. Then, again, what kind of quantity is it that is attributed to substance? Kant has distinguished two kinds of quantity, extensive and intensive: does he mean to attribute both, or if not, which of the two? There seems no doubt that he conceives his Substance as extended in space, as he identifies it with the Matter of which physicists assume the permanence. It remains, therefore, to ask whether the parts of this extended substance differ in their intensive

quantity or not. He has already, in discussing the 'Anticipations of Perception' rejected the assumption that "das Reale im Raume allerwärts einerlei sei": hence we must suppose that the parts of his Substance have different intensive quantities. But thus his Substance turns out to be an aggregate of heterogeneous substances: and yet, as the ground for assuming its existence was that we might have something to represent, in Mr. Caird's words, the "unity or self-identity of time itself," this heterogeneity is surely a very singular and inappropriate characteristic.

Here I must conclude. The category of Causality, which I refrain from touching, is perhaps the most interesting of all: on the other hand, the amount of discussion—in the English language—which has recently been bestowed on this is so disproportionately large, that I shrink from adding anything to it, if it be not absolutely necessary. The tree is known by its fruits, but it is hardly needful to dissect them all; and I conceive that I have already examined the particulars of Kant's system sufficiently to support my general objections to his method. In conclusion, I will only say that my objections are not urged from the point of view either of Empiricism or of the Common-sense Philosophy. I do not hold either that our common *a priori* assumptions respecting empirical objects require no philosophical justification, or that verification by particular experiences is the only justification possible. But I see no ground for expecting to get anything better by the method which Kant has mis-called 'Criticism'. This, as I have tried to show, is as dogmatic—in the worst sense of the term—as that of any preceding metaphysician: and I do not see that we are likely to gain by exchanging the natural and naïve dogmas of the older "transcendent" ontology, for the more artificial and obscure, but no less unwarranted, dogmas of this newer "transcendental" psychology.

H. SIDGWICK.