IMMANUEL KANT

THE GREATEST WORKS OF IMMANUEL KANT

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Introduction

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IMMANUEL KANT
by Robert Adamson

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KANT, IMMANUEL (1724-1804), German philosopher, was born at Königsberg on the 22nd of April 1724. His grandfather was an emigrant from Scotland, and the name Cant is not uncommon in the north of Scotland, whence the family is said to have come. His father was a saddler in Königsberg, then a stronghold of Pietism, to the strong influence of which Kant was subjected in his early years. In his tenth year he was entered at the Collegium Fredericianum with the definite view of studying theology. His inclination at this time was towards classics, and he was recognized, with his school-fellow, David Ruhnken, as among the most promising classical scholars of the college. His taste for the greater Latin authors, particularly Lucretius, was never lost, and he acquired at school an unusual facility in Latin composition. With Greek authors he does not appear to have been equally familiar. During his university course, which began in 1740, Kant was principally attracted towards mathematics and physics. The lectures on classics do not seem to have satisfied him, and, though he attended courses on theology, and even preached on one or two occasions, he appears finally to have given up the intention of entering the Church. The last years of his university studies were much disturbed by poverty. His father died in 1746, and for nine years he was compelled to earn his own living as a private tutor. Although he disliked the life and was not specially qualified for it — as he used to say regarding the excellent precepts of his *Pädagogik*, he was never able to apply them — yet he added to his other

accomplishments a grace and polish which he displayed ever afterwards to a degree somewhat unusual in a philosopher by profession.

In 1755 Kant became tutor in the family of Count Kayserling. By the kindness of a friend named Richter, he was enabled to resume his university career, and in the autumn of that year he graduated as doctor and qualified as privatdocent. For fifteen years he continued to labour in this position, his fame as writer and lecturer steadily increasing. Though twice he failed to obtain a professorship at Königsberg, he steadily refused appointments elsewhere. The only academic preferment received by him during the lengthy probation was the post of under-librarian (1766). His lectures, at first mainly upon physics, gradually expanded until nearly all descriptions of philosophy were included under them.

In 1770 he obtained the chair of logic and metaphysics at Konigsberg, and delivered as his inaugural address the dissertation *De mundi sensibilis et intelligibilis forma et principiis*. Eleven years later appeared the *Kritik of Pure Reason*, the work towards which he had been steadily advancing, and of which all his later writings are developments. In 1783 he published the *Prolegomena*, intended as an introduction to the *Kritik*, which had been found to stand in need of some explanatory comment. A second edition of the *Kritik*, with some modifications, appeared in 1787, after which it remained unaltered.

In spite of its frequent obscurity, its novel terminology, and its declared opposition to prevailing systems, the Kantian philosophy made rapid progress in Germany. In the course of ten or twelve years from the publication of the *Kritik of Pure Reason*, it was expounded in all the leading universities, and it even penetrated into the schools of the Church of Rome. Such men as J. Schulz in Königsberg, J. G. Kiesewetter in Berlin, Jakob in Halle, Born and A. L. Heydenreich in Leipzig, K. L. Reinhold and E. Schmid in Jena,

Buhle in Gottingen, Tennemann in Marburg, and Snell in Giessen, with many others, made it the basis of their philosophical teaching, while theologians like Tieftrunk, Stäudlin, and Ammon eagerly applied it to Christian doctrine and morality. Young men flocked to Königsberg as to a shrine of philosophy. The Prussian Government even undertook the expense of their support. Kant was hailed by some as a second Messiah. He was consulted as an oracle on all questions of casuistry — as, for example, on the lawfulness of inoculation for the small-pox. This universal homage for a long time left Kant unaffected; it was only in his later years that he spoke of his system as the limit of philosophy, and resented all further progress. He still pursued his quiet round of lecturing and authorship, and contributed from time to time papers to the literary journals. Of these, among the most remarkable was his review of Herder's *Philosophy of History*, which greatly exasperated that author, and led to a violent act of retaliation some years after in his *Metakritik of Pure Reason*. Schiller at this period in vain sought to engage Kant upon his *Horen*. He remained true to the *Berlin Journal*, in which most of his criticisms appeared.

In 1792 Kant, in the full height of his reputation, was involved in a collision with the Government on the question of his religious doctrines. Naturally his philosophy had excited the declared opposition of all adherents of historical Christianity, since its plain tendency was towards a moral rationalism, and it could not be reconciled to the literal doctrines of the Lutheran Church. It would have been much better to permit his exposition of the philosophy of religion to enjoy the same literary rights as his earlier works, since Kant could not be interdicted without first silencing a multitude of theologians who were at least equally separated from positive Christianity. The Government, however, judged otherwise; and after the first part of his book, *On Religion within the Limits of Reason alone*, had

appeared in the *Berlin Journal*, the publication of the remainder, which treats in a more rationalizing style of the peculiarities of Christianity, was forbidden. Kant, thus shut out from Berlin, availed himself of his local privilege, and, with the sanction of the theological faculty of his own university, published the full work in Königsberg. The Government, probably influenced as much by hatred and fear of the French Revolution, of which Kant was supposed to be a partisan, as by love of orthodoxy, resented the act; and a secret cabinet order was received by him intimating the displeasure of the king, Frederick William II., and exacting a pledge not to lecture or write at all on religious subjects in future. With this mandate Kant, after a struggle, complied, and kept his engagement till 1797, when the death of the king, according to his construction of his promise, set him free. This incident, however, produced a very unfavourable effect on his spirits. He withdrew in 1794 from society; next year he gave up all his classes but one public lecture on logic or metaphysics; and in 1797, before the removal of the interdict on his theological teaching, he ceased altogether his public labours, after an academic course of forty-two years. He previously, in the same year, finished his treatises on the *Metaphysics of Ethics*, which, with his *Anthropology*, completed in 1798, were the last considerable works that he revised with his own hand. His *Lectures on Logic*, on *Physical Geography*, on *Paedagogics*, were edited during his lifetime by his friends and pupils. By way of asserting his right to resume theological disquisition, he also issued in 1798 his *Strife of the Faculties*, in which all the strongest points of his work on religion were urged afresh, and the correspondence that had passed between himself and his censors was given to the world.

From the date of his retirement from the chair Kant declined in strength, and gave tokens of intellectual decay. His memory began to fail, and a large work at which he wrought night and day, on the connexion between physics

and metaphysics, was found to be only a repetition of his already published doctrines. After 1802, finding himself attacked with a weakness in the limbs attended with frequent fits of falling, he mitigated the Spartan severity of his life, and consented to receive medical advice. A constant restlessness oppressed him; his sight gave way; his conversation became an extraordinary mixture of metaphors; and it was only at intervals that gleams of his former power broke out, especially when some old chord of association was struck in natural science or physical geography. A few days before his decease, with a great effort he thanked his medical attendant for his visits in the words, “I have not yet lost my feeling for humanity.” On the 12th of February 1804 he died, having almost completed his eightieth year. His stature was small, and his appearance feeble. He was little more than five feet high; his breast was almost concave, and, like Schleiermacher, he was deformed in the right shoulder. His senses were quick and delicate; and, though of weak constitution, he escaped by strict regimen all serious illness.

His life was arranged with mechanical regularity; and, as he never married, he kept the habits of his studious youth to old age. His man-servant, who awoke him summer and winter at five o'clock, testified that he had not once failed in thirty years to respond to the call. After rising he studied for two hours, then lectured other two, and spent the rest of the forenoon, till one, at his desk. He then dined at a restaurant, which he frequently changed, to avoid the influx of strangers, who crowded to see and hear him. This was his only regular meal; and he often prolonged the conversation till late in the afternoon. He then walked out for at least an hour in all weathers, and spent the evening in lighter reading, except an hour or two devoted to the preparation of his next day's lectures, after which he retired between nine and ten to rest. In his earlier years he often spent his evenings in general society, where his knowledge and

conversational talents made him the life of every party. He was especially intimate with the families of two English merchants of the name of Green and Motherby, where he found many opportunities of meeting ship-captains, and other travelled persons, and thus gratifying his passion for physical geography. This social circle included also the celebrated J. G. Hamann, the friend of Herder and Jacobi, who was thus a mediator between Kant and these philosophical adversaries.

Kant's reading was of the most extensive and miscellaneous kind. He cared comparatively little for the history of speculation, but his acquaintance with books of science, general history, travels and belles lettres was boundless. He was well versed in English literature, chiefly of the age of Queen Anne, and had read English philosophy from Locke to Hume, and the Scottish school. He was at home in Voltaire and Rousseau, but had little or no acquaintance with the French sensational philosophy. He was familiar with all German literature up to the date of his *Kritik*, but ceased to follow it in its great development by Goethe and Schiller. It was his habit to obtain books in sheets from his publishers Kanter and Nicolovius; and he read over for many years all the new works in their catalogue, in order to keep abreast of universal knowledge. He was fond of newspapers and works on politics; and this was the only kind of reading that could interrupt his studies in philosophy.

As a lecturer, Kant avoided altogether that rigid style in which his books were written. He sat behind a low desk, with a few jottings on slips of paper, or textbooks marked on the margin, before him, and delivered an extemporaneous address, opening up the subject by partial glimpses, and with many anecdotes or familiar illustrations, till a complete idea of it was presented. His voice was extremely weak, but sometimes rose into eloquence, and always commanded perfect silence. Though kind to his students, he refused to

remit their fees, as this, he thought, would discourage independence. It was another principle that his chief exertions should be bestowed on the intermediate class of talent, as the geniuses would help themselves, and the dunces were beyond remedy.

Simple, honourable, truthful, kind-hearted and high-minded as Kant was in all moral respects, he was somewhat deficient in theregion of sentiment. He had little enthusiasm for the beauties of nature, and indeed never sailed out into the Baltic, or travelled more than 40 miles from Königsberg. Music he disregarded, and all poetry that was more than sententious prose. His ethics have been reproached with some justice as setting up too low an ideal for the female sex. Though faithful in a high degree to the duties of friendship, he could not bear to visit his friends in sickness, and after their death he repressed all allusion to their memory. His engrossing intellectual labours no doubt tended somewhat to harden his character; and in his zeal for rectitude of purpose he forgot the part which affection and sentiment must ever play in the human constitution.

On the 12th of February 1904, the hundredth anniversary of Kant's death, a Kantian society (*Kantgesellschaft*) was formed at Halle under the leadership of Professor H. Vaihinger to promote Kantian studies. In 1909 it had an annual membership of 191; it supports the periodical *Kantstudien* (founded 1896; see BIBLIOGRAPHY, *ad init.*).

THE WRITINGS OF KANT

No other thinker of modern times has been throughout his work so penetrated with the fundamental conceptions of physical science; no other has been able to hold with such firmness the balance between empirical and speculative ideas. Beyond all question much of the influence which the

critical philosophy has exercised and continues to exercise must be ascribed to this characteristic feature in the training of its great author.

The early writings of Kant are almost without exception on questions of physical science. It was only by degrees that philosophical problems began to engage his attention, and that the main portion of his literary activity was turned towards them. The following are the most important of the works which bear directly on physical science.

1. *Gedanken von der wahren Schätzung der lebendigen Kräfte* (1747); an essay dealing with the famous dispute between the Cartesians and Leibnitzians regarding the expression for the *amount of a force*. According to the Cartesians, this quantity was directly proportional to velocity; according to their opponents, it varied with the square of the velocity. The dispute has now lost its interest, for physicists have learned to distinguish accurately the two quantities which are vaguely included under the expression amount of force, and consequently have been able to show in what each party was correct and in what it was in error. Kant's essay, with some fallacious explanations and divisions, criticizes acutely the arguments of the Leibnitzians, and concludes with an attempt to show that both modes of expression are correct when correctly limited and interpreted.

2. *Whether the Earth in its Revolution has experienced some Change since the Earliest Times* (1754; ed. and trans., W. Hastie, 1900, *Kant's Cosmogony*; cf. Lord Kelvin in *The Age of the Earth*, 1897, p. 7). In this brief essay Kant throws out a notion which has since been carried out, in ignorance of Kant's priority, by Delaunay (l865) and Adams. He points out that the action of the moon in raising the waters of the earth must have a secondary effect in the slight retardation of the earth's motion, and refers to a similar cause the fact that the moon turns always the same face to the earth.

3. *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*, published anonymously in 1755 (4th ed. 1808; republished H. Ebert, 1890). In this remarkable work Kant, proceeding from the Newtonian conception of the solar system, extends his consideration to the entire sidereal system, points out how the whole may be mechanically regarded, and throws out the important speculation which has since received the title of the nebular hypothesis. In some details, such *e.g.* as the regarding of the motion of the entire solar system as portion of the general cosmical mechanism, he had predecessors, among others Thomas Wright of Durham, but the work as a whole contains a wonderfully acute anticipation of much that was afterwards carried out by Herschel and Laplace. The hypothesis of the original nebular condition of the system, with the consequent explanation of the great phenomena of planetary formations and movements of the satellites and rings, is unquestionably to be assigned to Kant. (On this question see discussion in W. Hastie's *Kant's Cosmogony*, as above.)

4. *Meditationum quarundam de igne succincta delineatio* (1755): an inaugural dissertation, containing little beyond the notion that bodies operate on one another through the medium of a uniformly diffused, elastic and subtle matter (ether) which is the underlying substance of heat and light. Both heat and light are regarded as vibrations of this diffused ether.

5. *On the Causes of Earthquakes* (1755); *Description of the Earthquake of 1755* (1756); *Consideration of some Recently Experienced Earthquakes* (1756).

6. *Explanatory Remarks on the Theory of the Winds* (1756). In this brief tract, Kant, apparently in entire ignorance of the explanation given in 1735 by Hadley, points out how the varying velocity of rotation of the successive zones of the earth's surface furnishes a key to the phenomena of periodic winds. His theory is in almost entire agreement with that now received. See the parallel

statements from Kant's tract and Dove's essay on the influence of the rotation of the earth on the flow of its atmosphere (1835), given in Zöllner's work, *Ueber die Natur der Cometen*, pp. 477-482.

7. *On the Different Races of Men* (1775); *Determination of the Notion of a Human Race* (1785); *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* (1786): three tracts containing some points of interest as regards the empirical grounds for Kant's doctrine of teleology. Reference will be made to them in the notice of the *Kritik of Judgment*.

8. *On the Volcanoes in the Moon* (1785); *On the Influence of the Moon on the Weather* (1794). The second of these contains a remarkable discussion of the relation between the centre of the moon's figure and its centre of gravity. From the difference between these Kant is led to conjecture that the climatic conditions of the side of the moon turned from us must be altogether unlike those of the face presented to us. His views have been restated by Hansen.

9. *Lectures on Physical Geography* (1822): published from notes of Kant's lectures, with the approval of the author.

Consideration of these works is sufficient to show that Kant's mastery of the science of his time was complete and thorough, and that his philosophy is to be dealt with as having throughout a reference to general scientific conceptions. For more detailed treatment of his importance in science, reference may be made to Zöllner's essay on “Kant and his Merits on Natural Science” contained in the work on the *Nature of Comets* (pp. 426-484); to Dietrich, *Kant and Newton*, Schultze, *Kant and Darwin*; Reuschle's careful analysis of the scientific works in the *Deutsche Vierteljahrs-Schrift* (1868); W. Hastie's introduction to *Kant's Cosmogony* (1900), which summarizes criticism to that date; and articles in *Kant-Studien* (1896 foll.).

The notice of the philosophical writings of Kant need not be more than bibliographical, as in the account of his

philosophy it will be necessary to consider at some length the successive stages in the development of his thought. Arranged chronologically these works are as follows: —

1755. *Principiorum primorum cognitionis metaphysicae novae dilucidatio*.

1756. *Metaphysicae cum geometria junctae usus in philosophia naturali, cujus specimen I. continet monadologiam physicam*.

1762. *Die falsche Spitzfindigkeit der vier syltogistischen Figuren*, "The False Subtlety of the Four Syllogistic Figures" (trans. T. K. Abbott, Kant's *Introduction to Logic and his Essay on the Mistaken Subtilty of the Figures*, 1885).

1763. *Versuch den Begriff der negativen Grössen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen*, "Attempt to introduce the Notion of Negative Quantities into Philosophy."

1763. *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes*, "The only possible Foundation for a Demonstration of the Existence of God."

1764. *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* (Riga, 1771; Konigsberg, 1776).

1764. *Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und Moral*, "Essay on the Evidence (Clearness) of the Fundamental Propositions of Natural Theology and Ethics."

1766. *Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik*, "Dreams of a Ghost-seer (or Clairvoyant), explained by the Dreams of Metaphysic"

(Eng. trans. E. F. Goerwitz, with introd. by F. Sewall, 1900).

1768. *Von dem ersten Grunde des Unterschiedes der Gegenden im Raum*, “Foundation for the Distinction of Positions in Space.”

The above may all be regarded as belonging to the precritical period of Kant's development. The following introduce the notions and principles characteristic of the critical philosophy.

1770. *De mundi sensibilis et intelligibilis forma et principiis*.

1781. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, “Kritik of Pure Reason” (revised ed. 1787; ed. Vaihinger, 1881 foll, and B. Erdmann, 1900; Eng. trans., F. Max Müller, 1896, 2nd ed. 1907, and J. M. D. Meiklejohn, 1854).

1783. *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können*, “Prolegomena to all Future Metaphysic which may present itself as Science” (ed. B. Erdmann, 1878; Eng. trans. J. P. Mahaffy and J. H. Bernard, 2nd ed. 1889; Belfort Bax, 1883 and Paul Carus, 1902; and cf. M. Apel, *Kommentar* zu Kants Prolegomena*, 1908).*

1784. *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte im weltbürgerlicher Absicht*, “Notion of a Universal History in a Cosmopolitan Sense.” With this may be coupled the review of Herder in 1785.

1785. *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten, “Foundations of* the Metaphysic of Ethics” (see T. K. Abbott, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Ethics*, 3rd ed. 1907).

1786. *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*, “Metaphysical Elements of Natural Science” (ed. A. Höfler, 1900; trans. Belfort Bax, *Prolegomena and Metaphysical Foundations*, 1883).

1788. *Ueber den Gebrauch teleologischer Prinzipien in der Philosophie*, “On the Employment of Teleological Principles in Philosophy.”

1788. *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, “Kritik of Practical Reason” (trans. T. K. Abbott, ed. 1898).

1790. *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, “Kritik of Judgment” (trans. with notes J. H. Bernard, 1892).

1790. *Ueber eine Entdeckung, nach der alle neue Kritik der reinen Vernunft durch eine ältere entbehrlich gemacht werden soll*, “On a Discovery by which all the recent Critique of Pure Reason is superseded by a more ancient” (*i.e.* by Leibnitz's philosophy).

1791. *Ueber die wirklichen Fortschritte der Metaphysik seit Leibnitz und Wolff*, “On the Real Advances of Metaphysics since Leibnitz and Wolff”; and *Ueber das Misslingen aller philosophischen Versuche in der Theodicee*.

1793. *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, “Religion within the Bounds of Reason only” (Eng. trans. J. W. Semple, 1838).

1794. *Ueber Philosophie überhaupt*, “On Philosophy generally,” and *Das Ende aller Dinge*.

1795. *Zum ewigen Frieden* (Eng. trans., M. Campbell Smith, 1903).

1797. *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre* (trans. W. Hastie), and *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe*

der Tugendlehre.

1798. *Der Streit der Facultäten*, “Contest of the Faculties.”

1798. *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*.

The Kantian Philosophy.

Historians are accustomed to divide the general current of speculation into epochs or periods marked by the dominance of some single philosophic conception with its systematic evolution. Perhaps in no case is the character of an epoch more clearly apparent than in that of the critical philosophy. The great work of Kant absolutely closed the lines of speculation along which the philosophical literature of the 18th century had proceeded, and substituted for them a new and more comprehensive method of regarding the essential problems of thought, a method which has prescribed the course of philosophic speculation in the present age. The critical system has thus a two-fold aspect. It takes up into itself what had characterized the previous efforts of modern thought, shows the imperfect nature of the fundamental notions therein employed, and offers a new solution of the problems to which these notions had been applied. It opens up a new series of questions upon which subsequent philosophic reflection has been directed, and gives to them the form, under which it is possible that they should be fruitfully regarded. A work of this kind is essentially epoch-making.

In any complete account of the Kantian system it is therefore necessary that there should be constant reference, on the one hand, to the peculiar character of the preceding 18th-century philosophy, and, on the other hand, to the problems left for renewed treatment to more modern thought. Fortunately the development of the Kantian system

itself furnishes such treatment as is necessary of the former reference. For the critical philosophy was a work of slow growth. In the early writings of Kant we are able to trace with great definiteness the successive stages through which he passed from the notions of the preceding philosophy to the new and comprehensive method which gives its special character to the critical work. Scarcely any great mind, it has been said with justice, ever matured so slowly. In the early essays we find the principles of the current philosophies, those of Leibnitz and English empiricism, applied in various directions to those problems which serve as tests of their truth and completeness; we note the appearance of the difficulties or contradictions which manifest the one-sidedness or imperfection of the principle applied; and we can trace the gradual growth of the new conceptions which were destined, in the completed system, to take the place of the earlier method. To understand the Kantian work it is indispensable to trace the history of its growth in the mind of its author.

Of the two preceding stages of modern philosophy, only the second, that of Locke and Leibnitz, seems to have influenced practically the course of Kant's speculation. With the Cartesian movement as a whole he shows little acquaintance and no sympathy, and his own philosophic conception is never brought into relation with the systematic treatment of metaphysical problems characteristic of the Cartesian method. The fundamental question for philosophic reflection presented itself to him in the form which it had assumed in the hands of Locke and his successors in England, of Leibnitz and the Leibnitzian school in Germany. The transition from the Cartesian movement to this second stage of modern thought had doubtless been natural and indeed necessary. Nevertheless the full bearings of the philosophic question were somewhat obscured by the comparatively limited fashion in which it was then regarded. The tendency towards what may be technically called

subjectivism, a tendency which differentiates the modern from the ancient method of speculation, is expressed in Locke and Leibnitz in a definite and peculiar fashion. However widely the two systems differ in details, they are at one in a certain fundamental conception which dominates the whole course of their philosophic construction. They are throughout individualist, *i.e.* they accept as given fact the existence of the concrete thinking subject, and endeavour to show how this subject, as an individual conscious being, is related to the wider universe of which he forms part. In dealing with such a problem, there are evidently two lines along which investigation may proceed. It may be asked how the individual mind comes to know himself and the system of things with which he is connected, how the varied contents of his experience are to be accounted for, and what certainty attaches to his subjective consciousness of things. Regarded from the individualist point of view, this line of inquiry becomes purely psychological, and the answer may be presented as it was presented by Locke, in the fashion of a natural history of the growth of conscious experience in the mind of the subject. Or, it may be further asked how is the individual really connected with the system of things apparently disclosed to him in conscious experience? what is the precise significance of the existence which he ascribes both to himself and to the objects of experience? what is the nature of the relation between himself as one part of the system, and the system as a whole? This second inquiry is specifically metaphysical in bearing and the kind of answer furnished to it by Leibnitz on the one hand by Berkeley on the other, is in fact prescribed or determined beforehand by the fundamental conception of the individualist method with which both begin their investigations. So soon as we make clear to ourselves the essential nature of this method, we are able to discern the specific difficulties or perplexities arising in the attempt to carry it out systematically, and thus to note with precision

the special problems presented to Kant at the outset of his philosophic reflections.

Consider, first, the application of the method on its psychological side, as it appears in Locke. Starting with the assumption of conscious experience as the content or filling-in of the individual mind, Locke proceeds to explain its genesis and nature by reference to the real universe of things and its mechanical operation upon the mind. The result of the interaction of mind, *i.e.* the individual mind, and the system of things, is conscious experience, consisting of ideas, which may be variously compounded, divided, compared, or dealt with by the subjective faculties or powers with which the entity, Mind, is supposed to be endowed. Matter of fact and matter of knowledge are thus at a stroke dissevered. The very notion of relation between mind and things leads at once to the counter notion of the absolute restriction of mind to its own subjective nature. That Locke was unable to reconcile these opposed notions is not surprising; that the difficulties and obscurities of the *Essay* arise from the impossibility of reconciling them is evident on the slightest consideration of the main positions of that work. Of these difficulties the philosophies of Berkeley and Hume are systematic treatments, In Berkeley we find the resolute determination to accept only the one notion, that of mind as restricted to its own conscious experience, and to attempt by this means to explain the nature of the external reality to which obscure reference is made. Any success in the attempt is due only to the fact that Berkeley introduces alongside of his individualist notion a totally new conception, that of mind itself as not in the same way one of the matters of conscious experience, but as capable of reflection upon the whole of experience and of reference to the supreme mind as the ground of all reality. It is only in Hume that we have definitely and completely the evolution of the individualist notion as groundwork of a theory of knowledge; and it is in his writings, therefore, that

we may expect to find the fundamental difficulty of that notion clearly apparent. It is not a little remarkable that we should find in Hume, not only the sceptical dissolution of all fixity of cognition, which is the inevitable result of the individualist method, but also the clearest consciousness of the very root of the difficulty. The systematic application of the doctrine that conscious experience consists only of isolated objects of knowledge, impressions or ideas, leads Hume to distinguish between truths reached by analysis and truths which involve real connexion of the objects of knowledge. The first he is willing to accept without further inquiry, though it is an error to suppose, as Kant seems to have supposed, that he regarded mathematical propositions as coming under this head; with respect to the second, he finds himself, and confesses that he finds himself, hopelessly at fault. No real connexions between isolated objects of experience are perceived by us. No single matter of fact necessarily implies the existence of any other. In short, if the difficulty be put in its ultimate form, no existence thought as a distinct individual can transcend itself, or imply relation to any other existence. If the parts of conscious experience are regarded as so many distinct things, there is no possibility of connecting them other than contingently, if at all. If the individual mind be really thought as individual, it is impossible to explain how it should have knowledge or consciousness at all. “In short,” says Hume, “there are two principles which I cannot render consistent, nor is it in my power to renounce either of them, viz. *that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences*, and *that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences*. Did our perceptions either inhere in something simple or individual, or did the mind perceive some real connexion among them, there would be no difficulty in the case” (App. to *Treatise of Human Nature*).

Thus, on the one hand, the individualist conception, when carried out to its full extent, leads to the total

negation of all real cognition. If the real system of things, to which conscious experience has reference, be regarded as standing in casual relation to this experience there is no conceivable ground for the extension to reality of the notions which somehow are involved in thought. The same result is apparent, on the other hand, when we consider the theory of knowledge implied in the Leibnitzian individualism. The metaphysical conception of the monads, each of which is the universe *in nuce*, presents insuperable difficulties when the connexion or interdependence of the monads is in question, and these difficulties obtrude themselves when the attempt is made to work put a consistent doctrine of cognition. For the whole mass of cognisable fact, the *mundus intelligibilis*, is contained *impliciter* in each monad, and the several modes of apprehension can only be regarded as so many stages in the developing consciousness of the monad. Sense and understanding, real connexion of facts and analysis of notions, are not, therefore, distinct in kind, but differ only in degree. The same fundamental axioms, the logical principles of identity and sufficient reason, are applicable in explanation of all given propositions. It is true that Leibnitz himself did not work out any complete doctrine of knowledge, but in the hands of his successors the theory took definite shape in the principle that the whole work of cognition is in essence analytical. The process of analysis might be complete or incomplete. For finite intelligences there was an inevitable incompleteness so far as knowledge of matters of fact was concerned. In respect to them, the final result was found in a series of irreducible notions or categories, the *prima possibilia*, the analysis and elucidation of which was specifically the business of philosophy or metaphysics.

It will be observed that, in the Leibnitzian as in the empirical individualism, the fundamental notion is still that of the abstract separation of the thinking subject from the materials of conscious experience. From this separation

arise all the difficulties in the effort to develop the notion systematically, and in tracing the history of Kant's philosophical progress we are able to discern the gradual perception on his part that here was to be found the ultimate cause of the perplexities which became apparent in considering the subordinate doctrines of the system. The successive essays which have already been enumerated as composing Kant's precritical work are not to be regarded as so many imperfect sketches of the doctrines of the *Kritik*, nor are we to look in them for anticipations of the critical view. They are essentially tentative, and exhibit with unusual clearness the manner in which the difficulties of a received theory force on a wider and more comprehensive view. There can be no doubt that some of the special features of the *Kritik* are to be found in these precritical essays, *e.g.* the doctrine of the *Aesthetik* is certainly foreshadowed in the *Dissertation* of 1770; the *Kritik*, however, is no patchwork, and what appears in the *Dissertation* takes an altogether new form when it is wrought into the more comprehensive conception of the later treatise.

The particular problem which gave the occasion to the first of the precritical writings is, in an imperfect or particular fashion, the fundamental question to which the *Kritik* is an answer. What is the nature of the distinction between knowledge gained by analysis of notions and knowledge of matters of fact? Kant seems never to have been satisfied with the Wolffian identification of logical axioms and of the principle of sufficient reason. The tract on the *False Subtlety of the Four Syllogistic Figures*, in which the view of thought or reason as analytic is clearly expressed, closes with the significant division of judgments into those which rest upon the logical axioms of identity and contradiction and those for which no logical ground can be shown. Such immediate or indemonstrable judgments, it is said, abound in our experience. They are, in fact, as Kant

presently perceived, the foundations for all judgments regarding real existence. It was impossible that the question regarding their nature and legitimacy and their distinction from analytic judgments should not present itself to him. The three tracts belonging to the years 1763-1764 bring forward in the sharpest fashion the essential opposition between the two classes of judgments. In the *Essay on Negative Quantities*, the fundamental thought is the total distinction in kind between logical opposition (the contradictoriness of notions, which Kant always viewed as formed, definite products of thought) and real opposition. For the one adequate explanation is found in the logical axiom of analytical thinking; for the other no such explanation is to be had. Logical ground and real ground are totally distinct. “I can understand perfectly well,” says Kant, “how a consequence follows from its reason according to the law of identity, since it is discoverable by mere analysis of the notion contained in it. . . . But how something follows from another thing and not according to the law of identity, this I should gladly have made clear to me. . . . How shall I comprehend that, since something is, something else should be?” Real things, in short, are distinct existences, and, as distinct, not necessarily or logically connected in thought. “I have,” he proceeds, “reflected on the nature of our knowledge in relation to our judgment of reason and consequent, and I intend to expound fully the result of my reflections. It follows from them that the relation of a real ground to that which is thereby posited or denied cannot be expressed by a judgment but only by means of a notion, which by analysis may certainly be reduced to yet simpler notions of real grounds, but yet in such a way that the final resort of all our cognition in this regard must be found in simple and irreducible notions of real grounds, the relation of which to their consequents cannot be made clear.”

The striking similarity between Kant's expressions in this *Essay* and the remarks with which Hume introduces his

analysis of the notion of cause has led to the supposition that at this period of his philosophical career Kant was definitely under the influence of the earlier empirical thinker. Consideration of the whole passage is quite sufficient to show the groundlessness of this supposition. The difficulty with which Kant is presented was one arising inevitably from reflection upon the Leibnitzian theory of knowledge, and the solution does not in any way go beyond that theory. It is a solution, in fact, which must have been impossible had the purport of Hume's empirical doctrine been present to Kant's mind. He is here at the point at which he remained for many years, accepting without any criticism certain fundamental notions as required for real cognition. His ideal of metaphysic is still that of complete analysis of given notions. No glimmering of the further question, Whence come these notions and with what right do we apply them in cognition? is yet apparent. Any direct influence from Hume must be referred to a later period in his career.

The prize essay *On the Principles of Natural Theology and Morals* brings forward the same fundamental opposition — though in a special form. Here, for the first time, appears definitely the distinction between synthesis and analysis, and in the distinction is found the reason for the superior certainty and clearness of mathematics as opposed to philosophy. Mathematics, Kant thinks, proceeds synthetically, for in it the notions are constructed. Metaphysics, on the other hand, is analytical in method; in it the notions are given, and by analysis they are cleared up. It is to be observed that the description of mathematics as synthetic is not an anticipation of the critical doctrine on the same subject. Kant does not, in this place, raise the question as to the reason for assuming that the arbitrary syntheses of mathematical construction have any reference to reality. The deeper significance of synthesis has not yet become apparent.

In the *Only Possible Ground of Proof for the Existence of God*, the argument, though largely Leibnitzian, advances one step farther towards the ultimate inquiry. For there Kant states as precisely as in the critique of speculative theology his fundamental doctrine that real existence is not a predicate to be added in thought to the conception of a possible subject. So far as subjective thought is concerned, possibility, not real existence, is contained in any judgment.

The year 1765 was marked by the publication of Leibnitz's posthumous *Nouveaux Essais*, in which his theory of knowledge is more fully stated than in any of his previous tracts. In all probability Kant gave some attention to this work, though no special reference to it occurs in his writings, and it may have assisted to give additional precision to his doctrine. In the curious essay, *Dreams of a Clairvoyant*, published 1766, he emphasizes his previously reached conclusion that connexions of real fact are mediated in our thought by ultimate notions, but adds that the significance and warrant for such notions can be furnished only by experience. He is inclined, therefore, to regard as the function of metaphysics the complete statement of these ultimate, indemonstrable notions, and therefore the determination of the limits to knowledge by their means. Even at this point, where he approximates more closely to Hume than to any other thinker, the difficulty raised by Hume does not seem to occur to him. He still appears to think that experience does warrant the employment of such notions, and when there is taken into account his correspondence with Lambert during the next few years, one would be inclined to say that the *Architektonik* of the latter represents most completely Kant's idea of philosophy.

On another side Kant had been shaking himself free from the principles of the Leibnitzian philosophy. According to Leibnitz, space, the order of coexisting things, resulted from the relations of monads to one another. But Kant began to

see that such a conception did not accord with the manner in which we determine directions or positions in space. In the curious little essay, *On the Ground of distinguishing Particular Divisions in Space*, he pointed out that the idea of space as a whole is not deducible from the experience of particular spaces, or particular relations of objects in space, that we only cognize relations in space by reference to space as a whole, and finally that definite positions involve reference to space as a given whole.

The whole development of Kant's thought up to this point is intelligible when regarded from the Leibnitzian point of view, with which he started. There appears no reason to conclude that Hume at this time exercised any direct influence. One may go still further, and add that even in the *Dissertation* of 1770, generally regarded as more than foreshadowing the *Kritik*, the really critical question is not involved. A brief notice of the contents of this tract will suffice to show how far removed Kant yet was from the methods and principles of the critical or transcendental philosophy. Sense and understanding, according to the *Dissertation*, are the two sources of knowledge. The objects of the one are things of sense or *phenomena*; the objects of the other are *noumena*. These are absolutely distinct, and are not to be regarded as differing only in degree. In *phenomena* we distinguish matter, which is given by sense, and form, which is the law of the order of sensations. Such form is twofold — the order of space and time. Sensations formed by space and time compose the world of appearance, and this when treated by the understanding, according to logical rules, is experience. But the logical use of the understanding is not its only use. Much more important is the *real* use, by which are produced the pure notions whereby we think things as they are. These pure notions are the laws of the operation of the intellect; they are *leges intellectus*.

Apart, then, from the expanded treatment of space and time as subjective forms, we find in the *Dissertation* little more than the very precise and definite formulation of the slowly growing opposition to the Leibnitzian doctrines. That the pure intellectual notions should be defended as springing from the nature of intellect is not out of harmony with the statement of the *Träume eines Geistersehers*, for there the pure notions were allowed to exist, but were not held to have validity for actual things except on grounds of experience. Here they are supposed to exist, dissevered from experience, and are allowed validity as determinations of things in themselves.

The stage which Kant had now reached in his philosophical development was one of great significance. The doctrine of knowledge expressed in the *Dissertation* was the final form which the Wolffian rationalism could assume for him, and, though many of the elements of the *Kritik* are contained therein, it was not really in advance of the Wolffian theory. The doctrine of space and time as forms of sense-perception, the reference of both space and time and the pure intellectual notions to the laws of the activity of mind itself, the distinction between sense and understanding as one of kind, not of degree, with the correlative distinction between phenomena and noumena, — all of these reappear, though changed and modified, in the *Kritik*. But, despite this resemblance, it seems clear that, so far as the *Dissertation* is concerned, the way had only been prepared for the true critical inquiry, and that the real import of Hume's sceptical problem had not yet dawned upon Kant. From the manner, however, in which the doctrine of knowledge had been stated in the *Dissertation*, the further inquiry had been rendered inevitable. It had become quite impossible for Kant to remain longer satisfied with the ambiguous position assigned to a fundamental element of his doctrine of knowledge, the so-called pure intellectual notions. Those notions, according to the *Dissertation*, had

no function save in relation to things-in-themselves, *i.e.* to objects which are not directly or immediately brought into relation to our faculty of cognition. They did not serve as the connecting links of formed experience; on the contrary, they were supposed to be absolutely dissevered from all experience which was possible for intelligence like ours. In his previous essays, Kant, while likewise maintaining that such pure, irreducible notions existed, had asserted in general terms that they applied to experience, and that their applicability or justification rested on experience itself, but had not raised the question as to the ground of such justification. Now, from another side, the supreme difficulty was presented — how could such notions have application to any objects whatsoever? For some time the correlative difficulty, how *objects* of sense-perception were possible, does not seem to have suggested itself to Kant. In the *Dissertation* sense-perception had been taken as receptivity of representations of objects, and experience as the product of the treatment of such representations by the logical or analytical processes of understanding. Some traces of this confused fashion of regarding sense-perceptions are left even in the *Kritik*, specially perhaps in the *Aesthetik*, and they give rise to much of the ambiguity which unfortunately attaches to the more developed theory of cognition. So soon, however, as the critical question was put, On what rests the reference of representations in us to the object or thing? in other words, How do we come to have knowledge of objects at all? it became apparent that the problem was one of perfect generality, and applied, not only to cognition through the pure notions, but to sense-perceptions likewise. It is in the statement of this general problem that we find the new and characteristic feature of Kant's work.

There is thus no reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of Kant's reference to the particular occasion or cause of the critical inquiry. Up to the stage indicated by the *Dissertation* he had been attempting, in various ways, to unite two