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KANT'S SILENT DECADE

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A Decade of Philosophical Development

W. H. Werkmeister
Florida State University

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To my colleagues

in the Department of Philosophy,

Florida State University

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W. H. W.
Tallahassee, 1978

Introduction

During the so-called Silent Decade – the interval between the publication of the *Inaugural Dissertation* of 1770 and that of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781 – Kant published only a two-page review of Peter Moscati's paper on the bodily differences between animals and man and a fourteen-page essay, "Von den verschiedenen Rassen der Menschen." For so prolific a writer as Kant this is very little indeed. So, what else did he do? An obvious answer to this question is: He spent most of his time writing the *Critique of Pure Reason*; and, in a sense, this is, of course, true. But it was also during this decade that Kant broke with traditional philosophy and gave the whole of philosophy a new orientation. This development is reflected in the Notes and Reflections that we now know as Kant's *handschriftliche Nachlass,* which fill volumes XV, XVII, XVIII, and XIX of the Akademie-Ausgabe of Kant's *Sämtliche Werke.* I shall here examine that *Nachlass* for any help it may give us in tracing Kant's philosophical development during the 1770s.

Anyone familiar with this vast material knows the fragmentary character of the Reflections and the difficulty of determining their

chronological order. Benno Erdmann's attempt to establish that order on the basis of content was a complete failure. Along these lines nothing further can be achieved.

The best available dating of the individual items is that by Erich Adickes, who used changes in ink and paper and in Kant's handwriting as criteria and by means of them established thirty-three more or less well-defined phases of the Reflections, each phase centering around some more or less precisely datable item or items.[1] Since this is the only objectively defensible chronological arrangement of the phases we have, I shall, of course, accept it here. Within each phase, however, the content of individual items may then suggest more specific aspects of the development of Kant's ideas.[2]

Since it is highly doubtful that the four volumes of Kant's *Nachlass* will ever be translated, I shall here render into English what in my judgment are the most important revelant Reflections, thus giving Kant a chance to speak for himself during this important period of transition in the development of his philosophy.

I shall arrange the material according to broad topics, preserving, however, in each case the chronological order of the relevant Reflections insofar as this is at all possible.

The Reflections pertaining to the Silent Decade begin with Phase λ, item 4146 (XVII: 433), and end in the middle of Phase φ with item 5641 (XVIII: 279), which definitely belongs to the year 1781. Since the editor of volume XIX, Friedrich Berger, specifically states that "the system of dating the individual Reflections as developed by Erich Adickes proved to be correct and objective in all respects,[3] the relevant items in XIX, beginning with 6598, will here be included in their appropriate phases.

Since in his Reflections Kant states the same ideas repeatedly, but usually in somewhat different form, his terminology is not always free from ambiguities — a fact which, at times, makes a consistent interpretation of the various items rather difficult. But since Kant's philosophy was at this time undergoing a radical change, such ambiguities may well reflect progress in his thinking and ought to be taken in this sense. We must remember, however, that the Reflections were not meant for publication but were merely aids in the process of clarifying the ideas that culminated in the revolution in Kant's own philosophical position. Thinking with pen in hand, he was constantly striving to find the best possible formulations of his new insights.

In interpreting the numerous items of the *Nachlass*, a selection had

to be made, and this along two distinct lines: First, numerous items deal, respectively, with moral, theological, and metaphysico-epistemological problems. These I have tried to arrange according to topics in the chapters that follow. Secondly, because Kant expressed similar ideas in various contexts, a selection had to be made for the sake of brevity. I can only hope that this has not resulted in a distortion of Kant's thoughts and that my interpretation is not misleading in important respects. In order to make reasonably sure that such is not the case, I shall first attempt to put the Silent Decade in proper perspective by reviewing briefly the development of Kant's thinking prior to 1770 and his philosophical interests as reflected in the letters he wrote at that time. The topics mentioned in the letters will provide a guide for my selection of the Reflections.

I

In Kant's *Preisschrift* of 1763, "Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral," two themes stand out: (1) Mathematics obtains all its definitions synthetically philosophy (and Kant specifically refers to *rational* philosophy) does so analytically.[4] (2) "Metaphysics is nothing other than a philosophy concerning the primary grounds of our cognition."[5]

The second of these themes clearly indicates Kant's eventual break with traditional metaphysics. He was convinced, however, that, because of the dominance of speculative metaphysics, "it will take a long time" before metaphysics will adopt the "genuine method" that has resulted in the unparalleled achievements of Newtonian physics and that will eventually transform metaphysics itself into a science.[6]

We know from Kant's letters that he himself had already struggled for some time with this new conception of metaphysics— of metaphysics as an analysis of the foundations of knowledge rather than as a speculative enterprise. Thus, he wrote to Johann Heinrich Lambert on 31 December 1765: "For a number of years now I have considered my philosophical efforts from all conceivable angles and have finally come to the point where I firmly believe that I have found the method which one must follow if one is to escape that delusion of knowledge which makes one believe that at any moment one has come to a decision, but just as often one must take it all back; and this is also the source of the disturbing record of the different philosophers, for there is no general standard that would make their efforts unanimous."[7] Kant added,

however, that before dealing with the basic problem of a general standard in metaphysics he intended to publish first "several smaller" works. Among these he mentioned *Die metaphysischen Anfangsgründe der natürlichen Weltweisheit* and *Die metaphysischen Anfangsgründe der praktischen Weltweisheit.*[8] The fact that these two works were finally published as *Die metaphysischen Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* (1786) and *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785) does not detract in the least from Kant's intention in 1765 to develop metaphysics as the foundation of scientific and practical knowledge.

In 1766, Kant published his *Träume eines Geistersehers erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik.* Here the basic question is: Is metaphysics possible "as a science of the limits of human reason"? [9] Although Kant has as yet not defined these limits, he is convinced that he has "at least destroyed the delusion of the conceited knowledge which inflates the understanding so as to fill in its narrow space the place which could be occupied by theories of wisdom and useful instruction."[10]

In order to remove the last doubt about his meaning, Kant wrote to Moses Mendelssohn on 8 April 1776: "As far as my expressed opinion concerning the value of metaphysics as such is concerned, I do not conceal the fact that I regard with repugnance, yes, even with some hatred the puffed-up arrogance of whole volumes full of insights of the kind currently in circulation, for I am fully convinced that the way which has been chosen is completely wrong, and that the methods now in fashion are bound to increase infinitely the delusion and the errors [of speculative metaphysics]. . . . If it be permitted to mention in this connection something of my own efforts, I can say that I believe to have arrived at important insights in these disciplines – insights which settle the method and do not consist merely in general expectations."[11]

The *Dissertation* of 1770 was a first but important statement of his new views. Although limited to a discussion of the difference between the sensible and the intelligible elements in cognition, Kant developed the thesis that "the sensible representations give us things *as they appear*" whereas "the intellectual concepts [give them] *as they are.*"[12] Concentrating further on "sensory cognition," Kant found that such cognition involves both "a *matter* which consists of sensations" and a *form* the representation of which, "if encountered empty of all sensations," would still belong to the sensory aspects of experience.[13] These formal aspects of sensory experience are, of course, space and time. They are "the ground for the *universal connection* of all things in

III

With the topics thus indicated, we might expect that it would be a relatively easy matter for Kant to carry out his seemingly well-defined project; but such was not the case. Although in 1769 "a great light" had dawned upon him,[21] Kant confessed in the fall of 1776 that it had taken a long time before the ideas had become so well organized in his own mind that he finally could see "the whole as well as the limits" of the science that he intended to develop. "I already had the idea of the influence of the subjective conditions of cognition upon the objective ones." But the distinction between the sensible and the intelligible elements came later, and "the latter only in a negative sense."[22]

Although Kant feared that he himself might not be able to complete the work, he was convinced that, after "the dogmatic heat" of the conflict of the new with the old had cooled off, the theory he aimed at would be the only one to survive and, therefore, to prevail.[23] But the task, he found, was not an easy one; for, as he put it, "if one is really in earnest to find the truth, one can in the last analysis not spare even one's own products," although they may at the same time appear to have merit as contributions to science. "One must submit to criticism all that one has learned or has himself thought of." And when he did this with his own views, Kant confessed, "it did not take long to discover that the whole dogmatic theory was but dialectic,"[24] and that the value of his own earlier metaphysical writings was "totally destroyed" by the new criticism.[25] Kant hoped, however, that the general idea of his new project might be saved; for he "was searching for something certain, if not with respect to the object, then at least with respect to the nature and the limits of this type of cognition." And he added: "I gradually found that many of the propositions which we regard as objective are, in fact, subjective; that is, they contain the conditions under which alone we can understand or apprehend the object." This insight made Kant "cautious"; but he "still believed to be able to find the method by means of which to augment dogmatic cognition by pure reason." And he added: "To accomplish this, I needed to understand how cognition is *a priori* possible at all."[26]

The Reflections referred to – although they belong to the second half of the 1770s – hint at, if they do not betray, an intellectual anguish that was Kant's lot during the formative period of his critical philosophy. His struggle with the new ideas and his search for new formulations characterize the *Nachlass* with which we are here

so far as these are *phenomena*."[14] Metaphysics, however, depends entirely on "the employment of pure reason";[15] and "one ought to be careful to prevent that the principles belonging to sensory cognition transcend their boundaries and affect intellectual cognition."[16]

In one aspect of experience this problem had already been solved. Kant put it this way: "Although the representation of space as an objective and real entity . . . is purely imaginary," as form of external sensibility it is "in respect of all sensible things . . . the ground of all truth in external perception"; and geometry discloses its structure and its laws. Hence, "since nothing at all can be given to the senses which does not conform to the basic axioms of space and to their implications (according to the precepts of geometry), what is given [in sensory experience] must necessarily conform to these principles . . . and the laws of sensibility will be the laws of nature in so far as nature can come into the senses. Nature, therefore, is completely subject to the precepts of geometry."[17]

But how is the relation of other concepts, and especially of the pure concepts of the understanding, to the sensory data to be understood? This is the critical question that demanded an answer during the 1770s.[18]

II

But there were other problems, too, with which Kant had to deal during the Silent Decade. One of these he specifically mentioned in his letter to Johann Heinrich Lambert, dated 2 September 1770: "I have resolved . . . to complete this winter my investigations concerning the pure moral world-wisdom in which no empirical principles will be found. . . . This will in many respects prepare the ground for the most important aims of the new form of metaphysics."[19]

Finally, since Kant was essentially a religious person, the question of God's existence and of his role in human affairs was also of concern to him during the 1770s. Its significance for Kant's philosophy as a whole is clearly indicated by his much-quoted statement that he had "found it necessary to deny *knowledge* in order to make room for *faith*."[20]

In the chapters that follow I shall deal with all three topics – the moral, the theological, and the epistemological. All three involve issues with which Kant was concerned in the *Critique of Pure Reason*; but it was the problem of the possibility of *a priori* cognition which occupied him primarily. I shall, therefore, pay special attention to it.

concerned. And it is in this context that we can well understand Kant's feelings when, in one of the Reflections of 1772, he wrote that he would be "very much pleased" if "the best of the doctrine here presented" could be "found in the ancients," for this would confirm "the sound conception."[27] But alas! such retroactive confirmation of his views Kant did not find in the history of philosophy. He was thus fully aware of the novelty and the uniqueness of his own philosophical efforts; and it is not astonishing that in the Reflections we find only occasionally a reference to "the ancients." The rest is pure Kant.

Notes

1. See Adickes's Foreword to vol. XVII of the Akademie-Ausgabe, pp. v–x.
2. For a different interpretation see Erich Adickes, "Die bewegenden Kräfte in Kants philosophischer Entwicklung und die beiden Pole seines Systems," *Kant-Studien* vol. I (1897), Part I, pp. 9–59; Part II, pp. 161–196; Part III, pp. 352–415.
3. AA XIX, v.
4. AA II, 276.
5. Ibid., p. 283.
6. Ibid., pp. 290, 286.
7. Page references to Kant's letters will be to *Immanuel Kant: Briefwechsel,* Selections by Otto Schöndörfer (Felix Meiner Verlag, 1972), for it is readily available and contains all of Kant's letters to his various correspondents. However, I shall also identify the letters in the Akademie-Ausgabe by bracketed numbers. Thus, the quotation just given may be found on page 41 [39].
8. Ibid., p. 42 [34].
9. AA II, 368. The italics are Kant's.
10. Ibid.
11. *Briefwechsel,* pp. 52, 53 [39]...
12. AA II, 392. All quotations from the *Dissertation* are given in my own translation.
13. AA II, 393.
14. AA II, 398.
15. AA II, 395.
16. AA II, 411.
17. AA II, 404.
18. In this connection see Michael C. Washburn's penetrating article, "Dogmatism, Scepticism, Criticism: The Dialectic of Kant's 'Silent Decade'," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 13 (1975): 167–76.
19. *Briefwechsel,* p. 70 [57].
20. *Critique of Pure Reason,* Bxxx. Although all references can readily be checked in the translation by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1950), I have found it necessary to correct that translation in several respects.
21. AA XVIII, 69: 5037. In the case of all Reflections the reference will be given by volume number, page, and item – as in this case.

22. AA XVIII, 60: 5015.
23. AA XVIII, 61: 5015
24. AA XVIII, 95: 5116. Cf. XVIII, 74: 5054: "Dialectic is what contains arguments for and against."
25. AA XVIII, 42: 4964. Cf. XVIII, 89: 5016: If a philosopher has not submitted his own views to searching criticism, his criticism of others is "always idiotic and not philosophical." "It makes use of principles whose examination is properly the purpose" of the investigation.
26. AA XVIII, 95f: 5116.
27. AA XVIII, 77f: 5066.

Chapter One

Freedom and Morality

In the *Preisschrift* of 1763 Kant had argued that in moral matters "the first formal ground of all obligation to act should be: Do the most perfect which through you is possible," and "refrain from doing what would obstruct the highest possible perfection."[1] But, he had added, "it must first be determined whether man's faculty of cognition or his feeling (as inner ground of desire) is determinative of the first principle."[2]

It is a far cry from this theme of Kant's precritical period to the formulations of the categorical imperative that are characteristic of his critical philosophy: "Act as though the maxim of your action were by your will to become a universal law of nature." And: "Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only."[3]

Several commentators have dealt with the period of transition from the precritical to the critical position, a period which largely coincides with Kant's Silent Decade. The first of them was Paul Menzer, whose study, *Der Entwicklungsgang der Kantischen Ethik in den Jahren*

1760-1785,[4] was published long before Kant's *handschriftliche Nachlass* was available. Menzer, therefore, had no access to this wealth of material and himself stated: "With the letter of 1773, the series of reports which are available to us concerning the development of Kant's ethics during the time from 1770 to 1781 breaks off."[5] He can thus contribute little to our task.

Dieter Henrich's article, "Ueber Kants früheste Ethik: Versuch einer Rekonstruktion,"[6] does not deal specifically with Kant's changing views during the 1770s and therefore need not concern us here.

Keith Ward's *The Development of Kant's View on Ethics*[7] deals almost entirely with the student transcripts of Kant's *Lectures on Ethics.*[8] Although Kant lectured on ethics in the semesters of 1775/6, 1776/7, 1777, 1778/9, and 1780/81, the student notebooks are dated 1780 and 1781, and thus do not belong in the period of the 1770s. I shall therefore not deal with them here.

Paul Arthur Schilpp's book, *Kant's Pre-Critical Ethics,*[9] although dealing also with Kant's *Lectures on Ethics,* discusses and provides translations of a number of Reflections that belong to the Silent Decade. However, he includes in these discussions and makes a great deal of what he identifies as "Fragment (ca. 1775)." In dating this Fragment, Schilpp follows Menzer, who assigned it to "ca. 1775" because it happens to be number 6 of the Duisburg *Nachlass,* most items of which do belong to the period around 1775. Both Menzer and Schilpp have taken the Fragment from Rudolf Reicke's *Lose Blätter aus Kants Nachlass.*[10] Menzer had no choice in the matter. No other copy of the Fragment was available to him. Schilpp, however, had access to volume XIX of the Akademie-Ausgabe in which, on the basis of Adickes's objective criteria, the Fragment (item 7202) is placed in Phase ψ, which contains only items dated 1780 to 1790. I shall therefore exclude the Fragment, important though it is for the history of Kant's ethics, from consideration here.

Schilpp does, however, provide also translations and discussions of Reflections that do belong to the 1770s. But in using the individual items in the way he does, he neglects to a large extent their chronological order, thus making it difficult, if not impossible, to note any development in Kant's thinking during this period. I shall here try to remedy this situation.

I

As noted before, in a letter to Johann Heinrich Lambert dated 2 September 1770, Kant had spoken of his resolve "to arrange and complete this winter" a work on a "metaphysics of morals in which no empirical principles will be encountered." By June of 1771, however, the focal point of Kant's interests had shifted somewhat. On 7 June he wrote to Marcus Herz that he was working on a book, to be entitled *Die Grenzen der Sinnlichkeit und der Vernunft,* which was to contain, among other topics, a discussion of "the nature . . . of morals."[11] In a letter to Herz dated 21 February 1772, Kant again referred to this projected work but now added that Part II of it would contain a discussion of "the first grounds of morality."[12]

At about the same time Kant wrote in one of his Reflections: "The first investigation: . . . what are the highest maxims of morality, and what is its highest law? 2. What is the rule of the application of an evaluation to an object? 3. How do the moral conditions become motives, that is, wherein lies their moving force and also their application to the subject? They are, first of all, the motive related essentially to morality, namely, the worthiness to be happy."[13]

Kant was fully aware of the novelty of this approach to the problems of ethics; for in a letter dated "toward the end of 1773," he expressed his conviction that "not many" have ever conceived the idea of an entirely new science and have attempted to realize it. He is sure that he is now "in possession of a doctrinal concept that will solve the riddle completely" and will enable him to develop "an entirely new science" . . . a transcendental philosophy – which, in effect, will be "a critique of pure reason." This work is to be followed by a "metaphysics of nature" and a "metaphysics of morals." Of these he intends to publish the latter first.[14]

In 1776, however, the work had not yet been completed. In a letter to Herz dated 14 November, Kant gave his "consistently interrupted health" as one reason for the delay.[15] During the years which followed, he repeatedly referred to his bad health, which seriously interfered with his efforts to complete the projected work.[16] However, a contributing reason for the delay, if not the real one, seems to have been that, although Kant had collected much relevant material and had found "several fruitful principles," "a major problem" had as yet not been solved. He added: "If I may say so, it takes a stubbornness to carry through a plan such as this," that is, to delimit the realm of pure reason,

to determine its boundaries, to mark off its entire content according to secure principles, and "so to place the boundary markers that in the future one can know with certainty whether one finds oneself upon the territory of reason or of sophistry."[17]

Almost a year later, the work had still not been completed. On 20 August 1777, Kant wrote to Herz that his various investigations had "gradually led to the idea of the whole," but that the completion of the work was blocked "as if by a boulder in the road."[18] Finally, in a letter dated 1 May 1781, he informed Marcus Herz of the impending publication ("this Easter Fair") of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft;*[19] and in a letter to Johann Erich Biester dated 8 June 1781, he proudly asserts that, despite a few inconsequential infelicities in formulation, the book "will lead all further work in this field onto a new path."[20]

What had caused the long delay in completing the monumental work had not simply been a matter of poor health. In a letter to Johann Bernoulli dated 16 November 1781, Kant wrote: "in 1770, because of distinctive boundary marks I could quite well distinguish the sensible [elements] in cognition from the intellectual . . . But now the origin of the intellectual [elements] in cognition created new and unforeseen difficulties."[21] Here, then, is the crux of the problem that Kant faced during the Silent Decade; and it is evident also that problems of epistemology had taken precedence over problems of ethics to such an extent that the final solution of the latter was yet five years in the future. But this does not alter the fact that at the beginning of the 1770s problems of ethics loomed large in Kant's thinking.

II

When we now turn to the Reflections that are Kant's *handschriftliche Nachlass*[22] we find that his aim during the Silent Decade was to place morality as well as knowledge upon "the solid basis of a science." But to find such a basis for morality was not an easy task. A great variety of problems had to be dealt with. The Reflections prove as much.

For the sake of brevity I shall here omit a discussion of Kant's comments on "the theories of older philosophers." I feel especially justified in doing this because Menzer has dealt with Kant's comments on the views of Shaftesbury, Hume, Hutcheson, and Rousseau,[23] and Schilpp discusses Kant's reactions to Epicurus, Zeno, Wolf, and Hutcheson.[24] The interested reader may also examine Kant's own statements as given in XIX, items 6601, 6607, 6611, 6619, 6620, 6621,

6624, 6625, 6630, 6633, 6634, and others. All of these Reflections belong to the time of the *Dissertation,* that is, to the years 1769 and 1770. Kant's summary conclusion is: "All systems are either those which derive morality from reason or [they are those which derive it] from feeling. [In the case of the former it is] a question either of truth or of perfection" (XIX, 116: 6625).[25] In any case, "all systems of morality seek to establish, first of all, the highest (theoretical) principle of moral judgment and, secondly, the highest actual moral rule from which all others flow" (XIX, 121: 6635).

In dealing with the specific issues that were of concern to Kant during this formative period, I shall adhere to the sequence of phases established by Erich Adickes and adopted by Friedrich Berger, thereby gaining a chronological grouping of the Reflections that has a definite bearing on the development of Kant's thinking. The phases relevant to the discussions here range from λ (centering around 1770) to χ (including the first half of 1780). An occasional reference to Phase ψ, which extends beyond 1780, may be necessary. Phase ω, covering the years 1790 to 1801, is of course not relevant here.

III

Because of its fundamental bearing upon all problems of morality I shall consider first Kant's Reflections on the nature and possibility of free will.

In a Reflection dating to about 1770 Kant wrote: "Freedom is the capacity to bring forth something originally and to be effective. But how *causalitas originaria et facultas originarie efficiendi* are possible in the case of a dependent being cannot be understood at all" (XVII, 463: 4221). Right here the basic problem of human freedom had been succinctly stated. However, Kant was more specific. He wrote: "Through our dependence upon impressions we see ourselves in the sensory world and find ourselves to be determined." But we are also conscious of ourselves as members of an "intellectual world" (the thesis of the *Dissertation* of 1770), and here "we find ourselves to be free" (XVII, 467: 4228). This duality in human existence involves the difficulty. How are we to understand that "the human subject is dependent and is yet to act independently of other beings" (XVII, 462: 4219)?

Kant admits that "we cannot prove this freedom *a posteriori* because the absence of a perception of determining grounds yields no proof. . . .

And we also cannot know its possibility *a priori* because the possibility of a primary cause which is not determined through some other cause is incomprehensible. Theoretically we cannot prove freedom at all, only as a necessary practical hypothesis" (XVII, 688: 4724). But "this practical concept of freedom is sufficient to carry out actions in accordance with rules of reason" (XVII, 688: 4725).

But just what is meant here by freedom? In some of the earliest Reflections of the Silent Decade Kant had said: "Freedom is merely the self-activity of which one is conscious" (XVII, 462: 4220). It is "absolute self-activity of the will, without being determined by stimuli or anything else that affects the subject" (XVII, 464: 4225). But this conception of freedom gave way in Phase μ to the identification of freedom with *Willkür* – with capricious will.[26] As Kant put it succinctly: "Pure capricious will is freedom" (XIX, 135: 6697). It is independence from everything which might determine actions (XIX, 590: 4549), and thus is the capacity to determine oneself to any action one pleases (XV, 471: 1057). "This conception of an unconditionally free capricious will [Kant wrote] is a practical postulate (*postulatum practicum*) which everyone actually accepts" (XVII, 588: 4545). It is the basis for "the imputability of an action" (XV, 468f: 1047).

Although Kant used the term *Willkür* – capricious will – throughout the 1770s, and even in the *Critique of Pure Reason*,[27] he did not use it in his *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785); but his whole argument there is based upon the conception of the rational will, which is certainly not capricious. He used the term again, however, in his *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der Blossen Vernunft* (1793) and defined it anew in the *Metaphysik der Sitten* (1797) in the very sense in which he had first used it during the 1770s: "The faculty of doing and forbearing as one pleases . . . combined with the consciousness of being capable of producing the object [decided upon] is called *Willkür* – capricious will."[28] Paton is obviously mistaken when he writes: "In his later works Kant sets forth what seems to be a development of his present [1785] position. There he makes a distinction between will (*Wille*) and *arbitrium* (*Willkür*)."[29]

IV

But let us return to the Silent Decade.

Since capricious will is the capacity to "do as one pleases," it is

indeed "a dangerous monster" (XIX, 163: 6795). Although it may lead to the achievement of "the greatest good," it may also bring forth "the greatest evil" (XIX, 286: 7210). It may be "the origin of every evil and of all disorder" (XIX, 289: 7220), for capricious will is "subjective lawlessness" (XIX, 214: 6960).

Kant had held this view ever since the beginning of the 1770s (XVII, 318: 3868), and if it is the correct view, then it is essential that some restrictions be imposed upon the unlimited freedom of the capricious will. The question is, how is this to be accomplished?

Quite obviously, capricious will cannot impose the required restrictions upon itself (XIX, 283f: 7204); and neither can desire, inclination, or feeling impose them (XIX, 228f:7021). However, since the capricious will is the capacity to "do as one pleases," it is also the capacity for "acting according to laws,"[30] and these laws may well be "universally valid principles" (XIX, 211: 6948; XVIII, 587: 4541) which only reason can supply (XIX, 230: 7029). Capricious will, restrained by such principles, is the very basis of morality (XIX, 177: 6846; 155: 6767); and every action carried out in conformity with those principles is "morally good" (XIX, 239: 7062).

The motive for employing reason in restraining capricious will lies in part in the nature of reason itself; for "reason is the necessary condition of a practical judgment as well as of a theoretical one" (XIX, 66: 6802; ca. 1774). More important, however, is Kant's argument that without such employment of reason the existence of a rational being would not be possible and "man would in his own eyes be very displeasing if his reason were subordinated to his inclinations" (XIX, 218: 6975; ca. 1776; cf. XVII, 320: 3872).

Although reason alone can set no goals nor provide a "motive power for action" (XIX, 230: 7029), it is capable of subsuming all projected actions under a common rule – just as in cognition it can and does subsume the manifold sense impressions under the laws of logic. We are thus endowed with a basic capacity which can guide us to carry out our actions in harmony with the requirements of reason (XIX, 98: 6591), and thus to bring the decisions of our capricious will into harmony with general principles (XVII, 319f: 3872). This effectiveness of reason may be inexplicable, but "it is an *a priori* fact of consciousness" (XVIII, 182: 5440; ca. 1776).

The first thing a man can and must do is bring his capricious will under the rational principles of consistency and noncontradiction (XIX, 276f: 7202), including the harmony of his individual will with the will of

others (XIX, 123: 6645). These principles, though binding for every rational being, are of course purely formal – as are all laws of logic; but they are also determinative of the actions of a rational self rather than of "an empirically determined sequence of phenomena" (XIX, 183: 6866; ca. 1776).

The elimination of contradiction in our actions is only a first "regulative principle of reason." The second or "constitutive principle" is for reason so to guide our actions that they "mutually support one another" in achieving our ultimate goal" (XIX, 294: 7251). "Reason shows us," Kant wrote in one of the Reflections, "that the all-inclusive unity of all purposes of a rational being (in respect to itself and to all others) and therefore the formal unity in the use of our freedom . . . if practiced by everyone, would bring about blissful happiness (*Glückseligkeit*), through freedom" (XIX, 283f: 7204). But this state of affairs can be attained only when capricious will is completely controlled by moral principles.

Such control is possible, Kant wrote in 1776 (or later), because, while all events in nature occur in strict conformity with rigid laws, man's "will is a capacity to act according to *the conception of a rule as law*" (XVIII, 181: 5435). That is, it is the capacity to be determined "not through matter but through the form of the law" (XVIII, 181: 5436). This is so because "through reason we can come to know only . . . the form of the good" (XIX, 148: 6750).

However, in 1773 Kant had written: "Morality is the conformity of an action with a necessary and universal *law of happiness*" (XIX, 167: 6805). In the interval between 1773 and 1776 he had thus shifted from a conception of a material basis of moral law to a purely formal one. But whichever interpretation one accepts, "one must force oneself to wise and morally good actions" (XIX, 222: 6998), and "the moral precepts must be valid for all rational and free beings, may their inclinations be what they will" (XIX, 135: 6698). This is so, Kant wrote, because "only that which, taken universally, is good is also what ought to happen absolutely and irrespective of inclinations" (XIX, 207: 6922). This requirement at once limits our choice of a moral imperative, for "imperatives derived from sensory conditions command conditionally only and only relatively to what is useful" (XV, 468; 1045); and inclinations yield only "rules of skill" in satisfying the inclinations (XIX, 228: 7021). But "an action which is good in itself must necessarily be good for everyone, and not relative to feeling" (XIX, 124: 6648), or to anything else. Moreover, "all moral laws must be certain," although

subsumption under them may be only probable (XIX, 213: 6955).

Since man's capricious will is "subjective lawlessness," it cannot be the basis for an imperative of universal validity, for "one does not know according to what rule one is to judge one's own actions and those of other human beings" (XIX, 214: 6960). The freedom of the capricious will is at best only a "practical freedom" (XVII, 589: 4548) – that is, a freedom for practical purposes only; whereas moral freedom is "the capacity for subordinating all capricious actions to the motives and determinations of reason" (XVIII, 181: 5435; ca. 1776). It is reason which resists all actions that "make the acceptance or use of a rule or law impossible" (XIX, 155: 6765).

Now, "the free will which is harmonious within itself according to the universal laws of freedom is an absolutely good will" (XIX, 240: 7063; ca. 1776). This thought Kant had expressed as early as 1769: "Nothing, therefore, is good except the will" (XV, 301f: 679); and he did so again in 1780: "Nothing is absolutely and in itself good except a good will. . . . Even the Highest Being is good only through it" (XIX, 278f: 7216). In a more familiar form Kant put it this way: "Happiness is good only under the restriction that one be worthy of it: and the condition of worthiness is the good will. . . . Talents and gifts of nature are good only in so far as one possesses a will to make good use of them. Therefore, it is the good will that is the condition without which nothing would be good without restriction, that is, absolutely good (XIX, 284f: 7206).[31] And "perfection is a perfection of the will" (XIX, 189: 6876). It is the good will which, in making "good use of all gifts of nature and of fortune . . . brings it about that we are worthy of them all" (ibid.).

V

In his attempts to find a secure basis for morality Kant faced the question whether or not feeling might serve as such. Hutcheson, so he noted, had introduced "a new kind of feeling as ground for the explanation" of moral actions: "moral feeling" (XIX, 120: 6634); and Kant conceded that recourse to "a system of moral feeling has the merit of eliminating all pragmatic concerns from the realm of morals" (XIX, 177: 6841), for "when feeling provides reason with motive power everything is good" (XIX, 164: 6798).

However, as Kant saw it, certain difficulties – and, in the end, insurmountable difficulties – remained. To begin with, a moral feeling is "not a basis for judgment but for inclination" (XIX, 135: 6696). In

fact, it is "the blind guidance of freedom according to a moral instinct" (XIX, *184*: *6863*) and does not place an action "in the perspective of universality" (XIX, 184: 6864).

Moreover, the moral feeling is "no primary feeling" (XIX, 103: 6598; 134: 6693) but depends upon a moral concept. It "does not bring forth that concept" and "cannot replace it" but "presupposes it" (XIX, 150: 6757). In other words, the moral feeling is not antecedent to the moral judgment but follows upon it. As Kant put it: We can refer to feeling "only afterwards in order to call forth [an appropriate] inclination" toward the action. "If the feeling – for example, compassion – precedes the maxim, the result is a false judgment" (XIX, 131: 6677). Or as Kant also put it: "The question is whether a moral judgment occurs because the actions are regarded as good or as pleasing. If the first is the case, then it is the nature of the action (which is the same for every understanding) that provides the ground for the judgment" (XIX, 134: 6691), and in that case moral judgments, if valid at all, are universally valid. But "if a special feeling were the cause of moral differentiation [between right and wrong, good and bad] then the highest disapproval of vice would originate in the greatest abhorrence or the most displeasing feeling which accompany it. . . . But we actually hate more in others the attributes that are disadvantageous to us than we do what is morally evil" (XIX, 115: 6623).

To be sure, the moral feeling can be "educated," and through nothing more than through "all signs of an immediate abhorrence of vice" (XIX, 137: 6707). "We do not take the greatest pleasure in morally good actions but . . . we judge that taking pleasure in them deserves the greatest moral approval." And so, "in the end, moral maxims, through habit, do establish a feeling for morality" (XIX, 147f: 6749), but the feeling does not establish the moral maxims. As Kant saw it: "The doctrine of moral feeling is more an hypothesis for the explanation of the phenomenon of approval, which we bestow upon various kinds of actions, than it is a position of maxims and first principles that are objectively valid as to what one ought to approve or reject, to do or to refrain from doing" (XIX, 116f: 6626).

"The vulgar man [Kant wrote in 1772 or 1773] has only feeling for the senses; the civilized man [has feeling] for concepts and rules" (XIX, 137: 6707). Earlier he had written: "He who asserts the moral feeling sees it either as something performed or as the inner light of a visionary" (XIX, 206: 6916); but Kant "feared" that "one is so sentimental because one is so thoughtless." And he added: "This delusion robs

reason of its respect and moral law of its dignity" (XIX, 167: 6803). And perhaps worse, since "feeling is the ground of the agreeable and the disagreeable, of the capacity to be happy, if there were a moral feeling we would count on it as a means to please ourselves; it would be one more sense to please ourselves. But in this kind of evaluation, virtue, with its ideal charm, would lose to vice with its physical enticements" (XIX, 149: 6755).

Kant held, therefore, that "not only must one not cite the moral feeling as a principle, one also must leave no moral [issue] to the decision of feeling; . . . for feeling has no rule. It is changeable and capricious like the weather" (XIX, 201: 6902). Fortunately for morality, moral judgments depend upon reason rather than upon feeling, and "moral feeling presupposes moral judgment" (XIX, 152: 6760).

Granted that men have feelings about good and evil; that they are pleased with the one and displeased with the other. Still, "the feeling of satisfaction or of dissatisfaction follows the judgment that something is good or that it is evil, and is not the antecedent condition of the judgment" (XIX, 198: 6899). What, then, is the antecedent condition?

At some time during 1772 or 1773 Kant wrote that "the principle of moral judgment" is "not the divine will; not the universal concept of perfection; not the universal concept of happiness; not private happiness (for this would be empirical); not the moral feeling and not taste (for taste is relative in relation to the subject); it is reason" (XIX, 151: 6760). However, the simple assertion that reason provides the principle of moral judgments requires further elaboration. Even the reference to "a necessary and universal law of happiness" Kant no longer regarded as adequate, for not happiness but being worthy of happiness had become for him the decisive factor.

VI

In one of his Reflections of 1770 Kant had written: "It is true, all morality must aim at something useful. However, it is not usefulness but its universality that makes it morally good" (XVII, 509: 4335). Does happiness as the goal of action measure up to this demand for universality?

Kant knew, of course, that "happiness is the watchword of the whole world" (XV, 262f: 612); but he also knew that "one cannot be happy except according to one's own conception of happiness; and one

cannot be miserable without the idea one forms for oneself of misery" (XV, 261f: 610). Happiness itself "has no independent value" (XIX, 186: 6867). It is, therefore, impossible for happiness to provide a norm of universal validity; and "it is up to us to subsume happiness under a rule" (XIX, 177: 6844), thereby including it in our consideration of moral actions.

This requirement "does not indicate the way to happiness"; it merely "restricts the efforts into harmony with a universal system" (XIX, 221: 6989). Or as Kant also put it: "Morality is the practical universal condition of happiness," for it is the condition for "making oneself worthy of happiness through freedom" (XIX, 286: 7211). Put more succinctly: "Morality does not say that I ought to preserve [my] life but that I ought to do that through which alone I am worthy of being alive" (XIX, 219: 6979).

As Kant saw it, "the desire to be happy derives from self-love; but the judgment of one's worthiness comes from reason" (XIX, 174: 6827). It is grounded in "the employment of freedom according to a universal rule" (XIX, 177: 6844; 235: 7049; 110: 6611). That is to say, being in "harmony with the universally valid laws" of reason is "a necessary condition of self-approbation and satisfaction with oneself, irrespective of what others may do" (XIX, 195f: 6892).

The theme of making oneself worthy of happiness Kant touched upon repeatedly; and he carried it over into the *Critique of Practical Reason.*[32] But his point was always the same: "The conception of morality consists in the worthiness to be happy. . . . This worthiness depends upon the harmony with laws under which, if they were universally observed, everyone would be participating to the highest degree in happiness, as can happen only through freedom" (XIX 195: 6892). And: "The worth of the worthiness of a person derives from that use of freedom through which he makes himself worthy of all that is good" (XIX, 181: 6956).

Basic to this theme is Kant's conviction that "humanity is holy and inviolable – in one's own person as well as in that of others. . . . All duties consist in this: that we honor the superiorities and the dignity of humanity. The right of humanity, therefore, is what limits all freedom through necessary conditions" (XIX, 165f: 6801).

As individual human beings we share, of course, the dignity and the worth of humanity; and so Kant can, and does, say that "the humanity in our own person has certain rights which are inviolable and inalienable, and which limit our freedom to dispose of ourselves; the same with

others" (XIX, 244: 7080; 163: 6795). "All duties toward oneself thus pertain to inner dignity" (XIX, 216: 6966); and it follows, although Kant does not state it as the conclusion of an argument, that "man cannot hope to become happy if he does not become a better man" (XIX, 247: 7093). Hence Kant's admonition: "Do that which makes you worthy of respect" – that is, let your actions be such that, "if they became universally known," they would find "the approval of all" (XIX, 242: 7071). And this is but another way of saying: "Seek perfection (goodness), not happiness" (XIX, 125: 6655). Or as Kant also put it: "The proposition: 'make yourself perfect', if it is to say as much as: 'be good, make yourself worthy of happiness, be a good human being, not merely a happy one', may be regarded as the principle of ethics" (XIX, 298: 7268);[33] for "without moral laws man would be more despicable than an animal, and more loathsome than it" (XIX, 214: 6960).

Put in somewhat different form, the basic principle would read: "Do not dishonor the dignity of humanity in your own person (duty toward yourself); in respect of others do that which is worthy of honor (meritorious duty)" (XIX, 242: 7074; 136: 6703). And this, as is obvious, is but a preliminary formulation of what, in the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals,* Kant calls "the practical imperative": "Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only."[34] And it is clear also in what sense and for what reason Kant could say in the same work: "This principle of humanity and of every rational creature as an end in itself is the supreme limiting condition of freedom of the actions of each man,"[35] and is the first principle of morality. "There can be no duty to enjoy yourself, consequently no duty derived from the principle of happiness. All duty is what ought to be done, not what ought to be enjoyed" (XIX, 297: 7263). It is Kant's belief, however, that actions done in conformity with universal principles "would make oneself as well as others happy" (XIX, 181: 6857).

VII

Throughout the Silent Decade Kant insisted upon the universality of moral laws. Thus he wrote in 1770: "What is universally taken as possible according to a rule of the pure will is right" (XIX, 129: 6673). Early in the decade this theme was connected with the conception of happiness: "The necessary laws (fixed *a priori*) of universal happiness are the moral laws" (XIX, 203: 6910). But, as we have seen, the reference to

happiness soon dropped out of the picture as the basis for morality; and Kant stated his theme in different ways but always to the same effect: "An action is morally good in so far as it is possible in relation to every will and every inclination" (XIX, 134: 6689). Stated more abstractly: "Everything that is good when taken universally is good in itself" (XIX, 135: 6700).

In this perspective "moral laws are those that contain the conditions through which free actions become harmonious with universally valid purposes and the private will with the primordial and highest will" (XVIII, 184: 5446). Such laws, being "valid for free will generally, are valid also for the human will" (XIX, 139: 6715). "The obligation is the same despite all degrees of inclination toward the opposite. Only the imputation is different, for it depends on the extent to which the action can be attributed to the subject itself, that is, to his freedom" (XIX, 135: 6698).

The moral laws here referred to are "principles of evaluation and of judgment" (XIX, 139: 6717) which restrict man's "freedom to do evil" (XIX, 126: 6661); but they do not specifically tell us what to do, for they determine our actions "not through the matter but through the form of the law" (XVIII, 181: 5436; 181: 5435). As Kant put it specifically: "Through reason one can know what is formal, hence only the form of the good" (XIX, 148: 6750).

This, of course, is in complete agreement with Kant's insistence that "morality is the objective subordination of the will under the motives of reason" (XIX, 107 6610; 121: 6636), and that "the agreement of the will with the forms of reason can be determined *a priori*" (XIX, 133: 6688). Another point is that "reason has law-giving power" because every rational being knows that "without the condition of universal consistency with itself . . . no employment of reason in respect of freedom could take place" (XIX, 179: 6853).[36]

But now several questions arise. The first is this: "When the first grounds of morality depend upon reason, is a deviation from the doctrines of morals to be attributed to error or to the evil nature or to the will? " Kant's answer in the same Reflections was that "the false moral judgment is to be attributed to the weakness of reason (prejudices of self-love), and action against the moral judgments [is to be attributed] to the impotence of reason relative to the inclinations" (XIX, 133: 6688). This answer may not satisfy everyone but is perhaps as good as any other.

The next question is: Why should I subordinate myself to the moral

law? The question arises because "we can form no conception of how a mere form of action can have the power of a motive"; nor can "some extraneous matter" determine our acceptance of the moral law, for then we would not be free in our actions. The acceptance must be our own (XIX, 183: 6807). But given this fact, we still have not explained *why* we should accept the moral law.

One suggestion is that we do so out of "self-love," that is, out of "a subjective universal drive." But self-love, Kant argued, is "not a principle for the evaluation of actions and of their objective worth" (XIX, 177: 6843), and for this reason it cannot be the explanation we are looking for. Indeed, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant explicitly states that "the moral law . . . completely excludes the influence of self-love from the highest practical principle and forever checks self-conceit, which decrees the subjective conditions of self-love as laws."[37]

A second suggestion is that, "as a being possessing reason, man must appear in his own eyes very unfavorably if his reason is subordinated to his inclinations and, with respect to its purpose, does not stand under a rule. This rule [Kant continued] must be a rule of reason, that is, an *a priori* rule, and must subordinate him to a universally valid purpose, because only under this condition can his happiness have a rule" (XIX, 218: 6975). Put differently: Without the moral law, that is, without submitting his inclinations to universal law, "man would be contemptible in his own eyes." He would be below the animals and "more worthy of contempt than they" (XIX, 214: 6960).

These negative arguments Kant augmented by considerations of a positive nature. He thus wrote in one of the Reflections that we take pleasure in actions which are in conformity with the moral law, and that this pleasure, which "follows upon the action," is "respect for the law" (XVIII, 255: 5615). In the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant put it this way: The moral law, "awakening respect for itself," is "morality itself, regarded subjectively as an incentive."[38] But, "the driving force of [reason] lies in this, that, in itself [that is, by virtue of its own nature] reason opposes all principles of action which make the employment of rules impossible." Hence, only "the disposition to conduct oneself in one's actions according to the universal principle of the rules is moral" (XIX, 155: 6765).

VIII

It now remains to be seen what "universal principle" and specific

"rule" can be regarded as basic to morality.

"A merely pragmatic good (or evil) action is morally indifferent" (XIX, 124: 6649), for "morality consists in the subordination of every will under the rule of universally valid goals" (XIX, 208: 6924). It follows at once that "an action is wrong insofar as it is impossible when others presuppose in us the principles [underlying the action] – for example, a lie. It is impossible to defraud someone who knows that one wants to defraud him. . . . It is also impossible to will and approve such action as a universal authorization" (XIX, 144: 6734).[39]

The reference to "universally valid goals" might be misleading; but Kant clarified his intent in other Reflections when he wrote that the principles and rules of morality "necessitate absolutely (categorically), without depending upon conditions of profitableness" (XIX, 154: 6765); and that "the magnitude of obligation is a magnitude of the form and not of the matter of the actions" (XIX, 136: 6704).

In view of these statements we can readily understand Kant's thesis that "the principle of morality is always reason" (XIX, 231: 7033). To the question: "How is a categorical imperative possible? " Kant replied that "the ground of its necessity" may be seen in "the universality of the grounds" of rational volition (XIX, 142: 6725). This answer is exactly what we would expect within the perspective of Kant's overall conception of the moral will, and it implies quite rightly that "the moral law is not a law of nature" (XIX, 125f: 6658). That is to say, moral imperatives "never pertain to physically necessary things . . . but only to free beings" (XIX, 122: 6640) whose very freedom is "the capacity to act according to self-given laws" (XIX, 210: 6936).

Imperatives are, of course, "objective rules of action" (XVIII, 182: 5439), and they "alone can be called [moral] laws" (XIX 231: 7033). In other words, "the categorical (objective) necessity of free actions is the necessity according to laws of the pure will" (XIX, 122: 6639). But this will is man's capricious will *restrained by reason;* and so Kant could say: "The universal and highest practical law of reason is that reason must determine the free actions. . . . Actions are not right, freedom is without law, if it does not stand under such a limitation" (XIX, 166f: 6802). This implies, of course, that "moral laws must be valid apodictically, not empirically" (XIX, 290: 7266).

Early in the 1770s Kant stated the moral imperative in various ways. Thus he wrote in one of the earliest Reflections (about 1770): "The rule of law: Do that which is in harmony with the universal rule of actions insofar as everybody does what seems to him to be good" (XIX, 129:

6670). The deficiency of this formulation is obvious — stemming from the ambiguity of the phrase "insofar as everybody does what seems to him to be good."

A year or so later, Kant restated the idea: "Live so that your actions appear to be good also from the perspective of others" (XIX, 241: 7069). But, clearly, there is here a shift from the purely subjective "what seems good to the person himself" to the more objective "perspective of others." However, there is even in this shift an unmistakable overtone of prudence. But this has disappeared in another Reflection: "Freedom must not be so used that it is against humanity itself and against the freedom of others" (XIX, 163: 6795). Even this, however, is still a far cry from the various formulations of the categorical imperative we find in the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals.*

IX

One final problem must be considered briefly: How did Kant see the relation of morality to religion during the Silent Decade? An examination of the Reflections reveals significant shifts in his position.

In 1770 or 1771, for example, Kant wrote: "It is true: Without religion morality would have no motives, all of which must come from happiness. The moral commandments must be accompanied by a promise or a threat. Happiness in this life is not an encouragement." Even then, however, he added: "The judgment concerning the value of actions, insofar as these are worthy of approval and of happiness, must be independent of all knowledge of God" (XIX, 181: 6858).

Still, Kant was sure that, "if there were no God, all our duties would disappear because there would then be an incongruity in the whole [of reality] such that well-being would not correspond to well-behaving; and this absurdity would excuse the other," that is, it would excuse the disappearance of all duties (XIX, 130: 6674). What this amounts to is that "the moral laws require a lawgiver whose will is a good will (a holy will) and also a powerful will." And it must be characteristic of this lawgiver: "First, that he intends the happiness of men; second, that the condition of his intention be moral perfection; and third, that he have the power for this" (XIX, 248: 7097). We can thus "see God as a moral or pragmatic lawgiver" whom we obey either "as children out of moral sentiment" or "as dependent subjects out of pragmatic interest" (XIX, 249: 7099; 156: 6772). And if God is "the originator of the moral law, then we are really obligated to no man but only to God, and we can

apologize to him" when we break his law (XIX, 249: 7098).

By 1772, however, Kant had modified his position significantly. He now wrote in one of his Reflections: "God does not make the moral laws (although he gives them). He only says that they are the conditions of his benevolent will," of a will that is "holy and just when put into practice" (XIX, 246: 7089). More pointedly yet, Kant put it this way: "God is not through his will the *author* of the moral law; the (divine) will *is* the moral law, namely the prototype of the most perfect will and also the principle of all conditions for determining our will in harmony with his own" (XIX, 247: 7092). That is to say, "the divine will is the ideal (the prototype, pattern, guide) of the most perfect will. Consequently, to say that it is the originator of all obligations means that the greatest perfection contains the ground of morality" (XIX, 157: 6773).

To put it still differently: "Without knowledge of the divine will there is no universally valid and powerful judge. No competent general forum. God sees within himself the moral law (man does so, too) and himself as the essential prototype of this law (man sees in himself the possibility of the opposite). . . . From this it follows that man sees himself as subject to moral laws whereas God is . . . the objectively and subjectively necessary law" (XIX, 150: 6758). Stated briefly: "God alone is holy; finite beings are virtuous and in need of internal cooperation" (XIX, 222: 6993).

Moreover, "the kindgom of God on earth is an ideal which has a moving force for the understanding of him who wants to be morally good" (XIX, 201: 6964). But "from the motive of God's holiness no basis for the law of moral judgment can be derived because holiness itself presupposes morality" (XIX, 150: 6756). Hence, "if morality were grounded in the knowledge of divine existence," we would not be able to recognize "the goodness of the divine will." "Religion [therefore] is not a basis for morality, but the reverse is true" (XIX, 150: 6759). That is, "it is necessary to place morality prior to religion" (XIX, 148: 6753).

This shift in Kant's position and its true meaning are ultimately reflected in that well-known passage in the *Critique of Pure Reason:* "So far, then, as practical reason has the right to serve as our guide, we shall not look upon actions as obligatory because they are the commands of God, but shall regard them as divine commands because we have an inward obligation to them" (A819/B847). In the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant put it this way: "It is . . . not to be understood that the assumption of the existence of God is necessary as a ground of all obligations in general. . . . To assume the existence [of a highest

intelligence] is thus connected with the consciousness of our duty, though this assumption itself belongs to the realm of theoretical reason. Considered only in reference to the latter, it is a hypothesis, that is, a ground of explanation. But . . . it can be called *faith* and even pure *rational faith,* because pure reason alone (by its theoretical as well as practical employment) is the source from which it springs."[40]

Obviously consistent with Kant's position as it developed during the Silent Decade, the passages quoted indicate, in a sense, the results of that development. We shall learn more about it in the next chapter.

Notes

1. AA II, 299.
2. Ibid., p. 300.
3. Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals,* translation by Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.), pp. 44 and 54, respectively.
4. *Kant-Studien,* vol. II (1898) Part I; vol. III (1899) Part II.
5. Ibid., III, 11. The letter to which Menzer refers is Kant's letter to Marcus Herz, dated "gegen Ende 1773." *Briefwechsel,* pp. 112–16 [79].
6. *Kant-Studien,* vol. 54 (1963), 404–31.
7. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972.
8. Translation by Louis Infield (London, 1930; New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963).
9. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1938; 2d edition 1960.
10. Kőnigsberg, 1889, pp. 9–16.
11. *Briefwechsel,* p. 94 [67]. The projected work obviously is the *Critique of Pure Reason* of which the *Critique of Practical Reason* was originally intended as a constituent part.
12. Ibid., p. 100 [70].
13. XIX, 177: 6628. Let it be understood that all references involving the *handschriftliche Nachlass* will be to the Akademie-Ausgabe (no other such collection is available). I shall therefore omit this identification and shall give the volume number only, as I have done here.
14. *Briefwechsel,* pp. 113–15 [79].
15. Ibid., p. 150 [112].
16. See, for example, his letter to Herz dated August 1777, pp. 154–57 [120], and to Moses Mendelssohn dated 13 July, 1779, pp. 173–74 [135].
17. Ibid., p. 149 [112].
18. Ibid., p. 157 [120].
19. Ibid., p. 192 [164].
20. Ibid., p. 199 [168].
21. Ibid., pp. 202f [172].

22. The relevant volumes of the Akademie-Ausgabe are XVII, XVIII, and XIX. Where possible I shall add the date of the individual items. If no specific date is given, it can be assumed that I have followed the chronological order of the phases.
23. Menzer, op. cit., Part I (vol. II [1898]), 290–322.
24. Schilpp, op. cit., pp. 110–11. H. J. Paton tells us that Schilpp here gives us "the general evolution of Kant's thought on these subjects." See H. J. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 16. But I agree with Schilpp who himself says on page 172: "I desire to emphasize once more the fact that in the pre-Critical period . . . we cannot speak of a definite, carefully worked out, clearly stated and undeviating solution of the ethical problem on Kant's part."
25. Beginning with this reference, and for the rest of the book, page references to the *Nachlass* will be given in the body of the text as in this case.
26. Kant recognized two positive and two negative "modes of imputation." *Positive*: "1. The good I do, although I am not obligated to do it, can be imputed to me. 2. The good I do not do, although I am obligated to do it, can be imputed to me." *Negative*: "1. The good I do not do and am also not obligated to do cannot be imputed to me. 2. The good I do and am obligated to do cannot be imputed to me" (XIX, 253f: 7124). See also: "That is being inputed whose opposite is no obligation" (XIX, 158: 6781). And "The evil consequences that follow from what I necessarily did cannot be imputed to me" (XIX, 161: 6790). It is the motive which is decisive. (XIX, 157: 6776). "The practical conditions of imputation are those through which an action is possible according to laws of freedom" (XIX, 254: 7129). Again: "The conditions of imputability are, subjectively, freedom and, objectively, moral law" (XIX, 224: 7130). Finally, "what I do according to a law (precept, rule, norm), with respect to which I am free, that is merit and can be imputed (XIX, 258: 7147).
27. There is no standard English term that is the strict equivalent of the German term *Willkür*, and translators of Kant's works differ widely in their rendering of *Willkür* into English. Norman Kemp Smith, for example, translates it as "freewill" – one word (*Critique of Pure Reason* p. 633). James Ellington renders it simply as "choice" (*The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue*, p. 11). John Ladd distinguishes *Willkür* and *Wille* by using "the will" (uncapitalized) for the former, and "the Will" (capitalized) for the latter (*The Metaphysical Elements of Justice*, p. *xxv*). In his edition of Theodore M. Greene's translation of Kant's *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (p. *cxxxix*) John R. Silber marks the difference between *Willkür* and *Wille* by inserting a small 'w' after every word or phrase that is meant as a translation of *Willkür*, omitting it when the translation is one of *Wille.* Greene himself, discussing in his Introduction the meaning of *Willkür* in various contexts (see pp. *xcvi* and *ciii–cxxiv*, and several footnotes) has settled on no standard device marking the difference between *Willkür* and *Wille*. For a very helpful discussion of the problem see Lewis White Beck, *A Commentary on Kant's "Critique of Practical Reason,"* pp. 176–81.

    I shall here take advantage of the fact that Kant himself took *Willkür* to be the equivalent of the Latin *arbitrium* and, attempting to preserve the element of

arbitrariness that is part of the meaning of *Willkür,* I shall transcribe it into English as *capricious will.*

28. The reader of Kemp-Smith's translation of this work would never become aware of this. Since there is no strict equivalent term in English, "die menschliche *Willkür*" becomes "the human will," and "Unabhängigkeit der Willkür" becomes "the will's independence" (p. 465). "Die subjektiven Prinzipien seiner Willkür" is given as "the subjective principles of the will" (p. 474) and, to give but one more example, "freie Willkür" becomes "freewill" (one word) (p. 633).
29. AA VI, p. 213.
30. H. J. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative,* p. 213.
31. XVIII, 182: 5439. See also XVIII, 508: 4333: "The will of man is free means as much as: Reason has the power over the will and the other capacities and inclinations. For reason determines itself and without this all other capacities are being determined according to the law of efficient causes and are externally necessary. Reason cannot be so determined, that is affected; for if it were, it would be sensibility and not reason."
32. Compare the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals,* Lewis White Beck translation in *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), p. 55.
33. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant put it succinctly: "Do that through which thou becomest worthy to be happy" (A808/B836).
34. AA IV, 429. Beck, *Commentary,* p. 87.
35. AA IV, 431; Beck, *Commentary,* pp. 88f. In an article in the *Philosophical Review* (1940), H. H. Schroeder deals rather effectively with "some common misinterpretations of Kantian ethics." I believe that the material here presented gives strong support to some of his arguments.
36. See also XIX, 178: 6850: The "independence of freedom" "presupposes a dependence of it upon the universal condition to be in harmony with itself."
37. AA V, 74; Beck, *Commentary,* p. 182.
38. AA V, 74–75; Beck, *Commentary,* pp. 182–83.
39. See also AA V, 145: 6735. AA VIII, 425–29; Beck, pp. 346–50: "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Altruistic Motives." See also AA IV, 402–3; Beck, *Commentary,* 63–64.
40. AA V, 126; Beck, *Commentary,* 229.

Chapter Two

The Problem of God and of God's Existence

In 1763, in an essay entitled "Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Dasein Gottes," Kant had argued that "only two proofs of the existence of God are possible" (AA II, 159–62): the cosmological and the ontological proof. Commenting on both, he pointed out that "despite its excellence" the cosmological proof is "incapable of mathematical certainty and precision," whereas "despite its logical precision and completeness" the ontological argument breaks down because "existence is not a predicate" (AA II, 72ff), and "suspension of existence is no negation of a predicate" but "the complete denial of all that was posited through the existence" (AA II, 81). Kant proceeded, however, to show that at least "one demonstration [he does not call it proof] of the existence of God is possible" (AA II, 87–92).

Briefly stated, the Kantian argument is this: "All possibility presupposes something real in which and through which everything that can be thought is given. Therefore, there must exist a certain reality the suspension of which would suspend all inner possibility generally. But

that whose suspension or negation destroys all possibility is absolutely necessary. Therefore there exists something whose existence is absolutely necessary." "Because this necessary Being contains the ultimate and real ground of all other possibility, every other being is possible only insofar as it is given through [the necessary Being] as its ground" (AA II, 83). No contingent being can take the place of that ultimate ground.

Moreover, "since the consequence of anything can never surpass its ground, understanding and will [which we as dependent beings possess] must exist as attributes of the necessary simple substance" that is the ultimate ground of everything, and "that substance is spirit." Furthermore, "order, beauty, perfection in everything that is possible presuppose a Being in whose properties these manifestations are either grounded or through which such things are at least possible" (AA II, 88).

Now, "the something which exists as absolutely necessary" is "united in its essence, simple in its substance, a spirit as to its nature, eternal in its duration, unchangeable in its nature, all-sufficient in respect of everything possible and real." In brief, it is God (AA II, 89).

This demonstration, Kant maintains, "can be given completely *a priori*." "Neither my existence nor that of other spirits nor that of a bodied world is presupposed. The demonstration is actually based upon the inner characteristics of absolute necessity" (AA II, 91). The essential nature of the absolutely necessary being, that is, of the ultimate and real ground of all there is, consists in this: Its abrogation would annihilate all that can be thought, the actual and the possible alike. And so Kant comes to this conclusion: "There is only one God [the ultimate and real ground of all there is] and only one proof through which it is possible to comprehend his existence with the awareness of that necessity which utterly destroys every contrary view" (AA II, 162). But Kant adds lamely: "It is absolutely necessary that one convince oneself of God's existence, but it is not equally necessary that one demonstrate it" (AA II, 163).

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant devoted some sixty pages to "the arguments of speculative reason in proof of the existence of a Supreme Being" and to "a critique of all theology based upon speculative principles of reason" (A583/B611). He now asserts that "there are only three possible ways of proving the existence of God" (A590/B618): the ontological, the cosmological, and the physico-theological proof. In the end, however, so Kant argues, "all merely speculative proofs bring us back to one and the same proof, namely, the ontological" (A638/B666); and since this proof has been shown to be

invalid (Kant had already shown this in 1763), "the supposition which reason makes of a supreme being, as the highest cause, is . . . relative only; it is devised solely for the sake of systematic unity in the world of sense, and is a mere something in idea, of which, as it may be *in itself*, we have no conception" (A679/B707).

This thesis quite obviously differs in crucial respects from the position Kant had taken in 1763. Not only did he believe in 1763 that the existence of God as "the ultimate and real ground" of everything can be demonstrated *a priori*, but he maintained also that we do know God's very nature as it manifests itself in the world around us. The Reflections of the 1770s throw at least some light on this fairly radical shift in Kant's thinking.

I

Most of the relevant Reflections belong to the first half of the Silent Decade. Beginning in 1770, they reveal Kant's conviction that "when he denies the existence of God, the virtuous man is a fool and the intelligent man is a rascal." This is so because "intelligence and morality can be combined in practical matters only when I assume the existence of God" (XVII, 485: 4256). But the problem of God, if so I may call it, is actually twofold. This was implicit in Kant's arguments of 1763. He now states it explicitly in one of the Reflections. The problem involves God's existence, that is, the problem of "possibility, necessity, eternity, independence, all-sufficiency, omnipresence, etc." – and his attributes – that is, problems of "omnipotence, understanding, will: the all-powerful, living God" (XVII, 487: 4264). To the question: Why do we face these problems at all? Kant replied: "The idea of God arises: 1. because of a need of the understanding; and 2. because of a need of the will"; for without the idea of God there is no "highest ground from which to derive one's fate with respect to happiness, and a verdict with respect to one's morality" (XVII, 477: 4243).

At this time in the development of his philosophy Kant was still convinced that "the existence of God can be known only through the understanding because the conception [of God] is the highest conception of the understanding, one that is not restricted to objects of experience" but is a manifestation of the understanding's own "intellectual self-sufficiency" (XVII, 483: 4254).[1] It is "the conception of perfection." Kant continued: "The world of the understanding is the moral world. Its laws are valid for every world as the highest laws of

perfection," and from them "one can infer . . . the original and universally valid ground of the essential purpose of things, and thus the existence of the most perfect Being" (XVII, 484: 4254).

This line of reasoning Kant augmented in another Reflection: "The concept of God is a concept of perfection either in respect of things or of morality, and originates from the following basic conceptions: 1. A necessary being. 2. The highest cause. 3. The all-sufficient being (instead of the most perfect one, because the latter does not contain everything)." Of these conceptions the first is "sufficient unto itself." The second "completes the subordinated series." The third "coordinates" all there is. All three conceptions are so interrelated that we can logically move from one to another: "1. The necessary being is the ground of everything and therefore is also the first cause. 2. The first cause is necessary, therefore it is also the most perfect being. 3. The most perfect being is necessary and is the first cause. The first conception [that of a necessary being] thus ends all questions about [God's] existence" (XVII, 465f: 4242; see also XVII, 599: 4577).

The idea expressed in the last sentence is clearly in line with Kant's "demonstration" of God's existence as given in 1763; but Kant was now uneasy about this mode of reasoning, for he saw that "if the necessity of the existence of a thing is to be inferred from its properties, then either existence must be viewed as an attribute or the concept of absolute necessity must be identical with the given properties" (XVII, 487f: 4266) and "must be contained in mere possibility" (XVII, 487: 4265). But we already know that, for Kant, existence is not an attribute, and the ontological proof is without foundation. Kant was to make the most of this in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A597–602/B625–630).

However, in the Reflections Kant suggested an alternative approach. The proposition that God exists, he wrote, is "an original hypothesis concerning the comprehensibility of the reality of things through the understanding (theoretical) and also a principle of action (practical)" (XVII, 484: 4255; 486: 4261). On the theoretical side this means that "all finite beings are, as to their possibility, dependent upon a Being of all beings which contains all reality and is independent of all" (XVII, 479: 4245). But in order for such a "Being of all beings," or *ens realissimum*, "to be possible it is not sufficient that the realities are not contradictory among themselves but among all possible objects there must be one which combines all of them as their common ground" (XVII, 487: 4263).

Even if such freedom from contradiction may be assumed as given,

the so-called "physiocratic" proof "provides only an opinion concerning the existence of God . . . and then faith must be added in order to represent [that common ground] as most perfect" and therefore as God. But, Kant added, "why should it not be possible to give a practical [proof] based on the subjective hypothesis of the moral laws, for otherwise the moral laws would in effect be vacuous and the virtuous person but a phantast" (XVII, 488: 4268).

This line of reasoning, it must be noted, was not present in the *Treatise* of 1763. Nor do we find it in the *Critique of Pure Reason* where Kant specifically points out that "moral theology is . . . of immanent use only" and does not justify our belief in the existence of God. Any attempt at a proof of God's existence based upon the laws of morality would be "a transcendent employment of moral theology" which, "like a transcendent use of pure speculation, must pervert and frustrate the ends of reason" (A819/B847). And in the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant discussed at some length the existence of God as "a postulate of pure practical reason" (AA V, 124—131). But, surely, a postulate is not a proof.

II

Phase μ, about 1770, was very brief, and only about half a dozen Reflections of that period are relevant to the problem of God. In one of them we find Kant's repudiation of Deism: "God is a spiritual being (intelligence), and in distinction from eternal and necessary nature he is called the *living God*" (XVII, 513: 4344). But Kant also wrote: "If we could assume a most perfect world without a wise creator, everything important in moral matters would be understood without God" (XVII, 430: 4139). As it is, "we find [even] in the instincts of animals proof of God's wisdom, although not in the reason of man" (XVII, 517: 4353). We may not comprehend "this Highest Cause according to logical rules or synthetic or dogmatic cognition, for the employment of reason is here awkward," "but no one can excuse himself that, because he has not understood something *a priori,* he also has not assumed it – just as he does not understand *a priori* the attraction through gravity and yet assumes it in his actions" (XVII, 513: 4344).

But if God is the creator and sustainer of the world, and if nature itself reveals his wisdom, then the question arises: Is he also "the originator of evil"? (XVII, 516: 4350). Before we draw the wrong conclusion, Kant bids us to distinguish between pains and evils. "Pains

[he wrote] are not something evil, that is, they can coexist in the world with the highest good even without antecedent sin; for they are means of an exercise in freedom and culture" (XVII, 516: 4351). This, however, is no answer to the question that Kant had just raised, and the problem remained.

To be sure, "as an object of intuition, the intelligible world is a mere (or indeterminate) idea. But as an object of the practical relation of *our* intelligence to intelligences *in general* in the world and to God as the primordial Being in practical respects, the intelligible world is a true conception and a definite idea: the City of God" (XVII, 516: 4349). The terminology of the *Dissertation* of 1770 has here obviously been combined with that of a traditional theme. To my knowledge Kant never used this terminology again. But be that as it may, he was convinced that man has the capacity to rise in knowledge above mere nature and "up to Divinity," although this may mean "nothing more than that man has a capacity for completing his conceptions and for bringing forth an idea of the maximum" (XVII, 514: 4345), and this only according to rules (XVII, 514: 4347).

III

When next we turn to Reflections that are representative of Phase ν (about 1771), we encounter a difficulty of interpretation which arises from the fact that Adickes's criteria for the dating of phases do not in all cases allow a strict separation of Phase ν from later phases, notably from Phase φ (about 1776, and perhaps later). Still, the ideas expressed in these Reflections give us a sufficiently clear picture of Kant's thinking during the mid '70s to warrant our grouping them (following Adickes) as Reflections of Phase ν and Phase ν—φ.

In Reflections which definitely belong to 1771, we again encounter Kant's conviction that "knowledge of God is important in respect of what is practical," that is, in respect of morality. But Kant now added: "What is practical must itself be sufficiently certain, for otherwise it would not in itself be obligatory and would not become so through our knowledge of God. Faith in God, therefore, must spring from morality which, through that faith, supports itself. It is good that, [though] we do not know, we believe that God exists" (XVIII, 55: 4996; cf. A819/B847, cited above).

Of course, "men would like to have a theoretical certainty of God's existence that is independent of all grounds of conduct" so that they

could act freely according to their insights (XVIII, 198: 5495). But this certainty cannot be obtained despite the fact that a proof of "the existence of a higher being" may be "necessitating" – that is, it may be persuasive in practical matters (XVIII, 196: 5483). Kant cautioned, however: "One must not disclaim so passionately and anxiously against the play of arguments and counterarguments" (XVII, 691: 4733). After all, "he who challenges the proofs of the existence of God, or perhaps even advances proofs of the opposite in order to show that the illusion exists on the side of his opponent, contradicts only our knowledge of divine existence, not our belief" (XVIII, 196: 5484).

To be sure, "if one wants nothing but a proof for the already presupposed existence of God, it is easily found" (XVIII, 20: 4888); and "a well-disposed soul is easy to convince to the belief in God and a future [life] ; but an evil one cannot be helped. The hardness of his heart makes him merely intent on speculation. At most he will fear God but not believe in him, that is, he does not accept him" (XVIII, 206: 5520). And for such a person all the arguments advanced as proof of God's existence carry no weight. Even for a "well-disposed soul" the proof may be "a necessary hypothesis" rather than an apodictic demonstration (XVIII, 196: 5484). But from a practical, or moral, point of view it is compelling (XVIII, 196: 5483), for in the belief in God there are "inseparably combined" the conceptions of "the most perfect cause and the best possible world with their consequences in the life to come" (XVII, 551: 4444).

IV

Seeing God in this perspective, we see him in two distinct contexts; and each is crucial.

In the first context the concept of God is "a terminal concept." Although God "belongs to the world" he is "not a part of it." We know him as "the cause" of everything "pertaining to the world" but "we do not know what is in him" – that is, we do not know his nature. This lack of knowledge, however, is "of no significance" (XVIII, 199: 5497), for "we must philosophize about nature as if the world had no beginning" (XVIII, 214: 5545).

Granted that "all [real] possibilities in the world presuppose the conception of a most real Being, and [that] this conception presupposes existence because realities cannot be thought of in perception without having been given, and what is given in perception exists" (XVIII 205:

5518). Still this fact gives us only a minimal insight into God's nature. If it is possible at all to represent God to ourselves, then it is "possible only according to an analogy with human beings, but not as resembling them" in bodily features.[2] "Anthropomorphism is frequently more harmful than atheism" (XVIII, 209: 5529).

In line with this suggestion of an analogy we may well ask, with Kant: Does God know "the things and their actions because he created them? " (XVIII, 211: 5536). Does he "comprehend everything in his creation that is possible? " If so, does he also comprehend "every possibility of free action? " If he does know it, "is the action still free? " "How is it possible to create a being that acts freely? " (XVIII, 215: 5550).

Kant's reply to these questions must be considered within the second context referred to above. We then find Kant asserting: "The effect of God upon man as a free being is the effect of the independent reason upon our limited nature, for God is only an idea of reason" (XVIII, 212: 5540). But, surely, as First Cause, as creator of the world, God must be more than "an idea of reason." Kant himself referred to this fact in several Reflections. Thus he wrote: "God is legislator through the holiness, benevolence and omnipotence of his will" (XIX, 247: 7091). Obviously, no mere "idea of reason" can be a legislator through the omnipotence of its will. Moreover, our knowledge of God is grounded in "moral reasons," for all his attributes are "connected with morality" (XVIII, 88: 5103) and "we must understand the absolute goodness of divine laws in order to know God's will *a priori*, and gladly do it" (XIX, 233: 7041).

In Section II above, I quoted Kant's question: "Is God the originator of evil? " There was no immediate answer to that question. In Phase ν, however, the question demanded an answer rather urgently, for Kant felt that "the world is so constituted that it brings a divine author the greatest honor." "Through it one can know his perfection" (XVIII, 216: 5551). The presence of evil in the world obviously threatens this view of things. How, then, are we to deal with the problem?

In one of the Reflections belonging to Phase ν (that is, in 1772 or 1773), Kant wrote that the good in the world is "grounded in the harmony with the order of nature" and that, since this order is from God, "the good is also from God." But evil – since "it is rooted in freedom, not in divine determination" – is "contrary to the order of nature and therefore contrary also to God" (XVII, 745: 4845). What this means is that "nature as a whole is good" and that "evil pertains to

parts of it only," being the result of a freedom of action that is contrary to the unity of the whole of nature. More specifically: "When we see man, prior to the development of his reason, as a species of animals, we will find the origin of evil" in the absence of reason as a guide in our actions (XVIII, 212f: 5541).

But this is hardly the whole story, and it is also not Kant's final word even in Phase *ν*, because at the level of animal existence evil (in the moral sense as distinguished from pain and suffering) is a meaningless term. We do not charge animals with evil intent. But, so Kant pointed out in one of his Reflections datable to this time, "in the most perfect world moral evil must be possible because in that world there must be freedom and the temptation to evil." Whether or not it is possible for God to prevent evil "only he can understand who knows the relation of the parts to the whole" of God's creation (XVIII, 203: 5511).

The suggestion that God might eliminate evil by eliminating man's freedom provides no solution, for it would mean also the elimination of the possibility of morally responsible good actions. Kant himself suggested that, from "a higher perspective," "evil, together with its punishment," may itself be seen as "part of the good' (XVII, 744: 4844).

I presume that Kant's meaning here is that the consequence of an evil act and its punishment manifests justice in the world – justice being a positive value – and has an educative value in the development of man's employment of reason in his free and morally relevant actions; and this also is a positive good.

V

When next we turn to the Reflections of a year or so later, we find Kant still struggling with problems that had occupied him since the *Treatise* of 1763. But he now noted that "a strange circle" in our reasoning occurs in "cosmo-theology" when "from the existence of God we infer the greatest perfection of the world, and from this we infer the existence of God" (XVII, 602: 4587). However, despite the circularity of this argument, Kant believed that "the cosmo-theological proof is sufficient as principle of the empirical employment of reason in respect of all possible order in the world, and also of the first beginning, in analogy to experiences and to our freedom" (XVII, 606f: 4602). The analogy requires, however, that we eliminate from the argument all references to "sensibility and its restrictive conditions." When we do

this, then "all cognition *in concreto* ceases" so that "we can never actually think God through cognition borrowed from nature, but only secondarily through analogy" (XVII, 607: 4604). God is then seen, "in respect of nature," as "a perfect spirit in understanding and will" (XVII, 599: 4577), and his existence is "a necessary hypothesis" (XVII, 600: 4580). It is "the terminating concept of all things."

So understood, the concept of God is "(1) that of a necessary being, a primordial being or the first of all beings, the highest being; (2) insofar as it has no ground beyond itself it is the all-sufficient being of all beings; and (3) insofar as it has no ground beyond itself and nothing that is independent outside itself, it is one single Being. The question is whether one of these three concepts posits all others." Kant had faced a similar problem before (see Section I, above), but he now dealt with it in a rather different way: "The first two concepts [he wrote] we need because we need a terminus of subordination. These questions are transcendental and concern merely the subordination of our concepts. The second, concerning the origin of all things . . . is metaphysical and presupposes analogies with known causes. The concept of the cause pertains to realities, and causality always pertains to contingencies" (XVII, 599: 4577).

But this whole cosmo-theological argument is based upon the premise that "the first cause of a contingent thing must act out of freedom, not out of the necessity of its own nature." Its action is therefore "teleological" rather than mechanical (XVII, 605: 4594). "The First Mover determines everything through purposes" (XVII, 601: 4583; 600: 4579). "All our cognition of God is [therefore] but an investigation of what might be contained in the ideal of the highest perfection" (XVII, 599: 4576). And "this idea of the highest perfection and of a universal and immediate governor [of the world] is necessary because of a need which we feel. It is not necessary because of reason" (XVII, 598: 4571).

Earlier Kant had written specifically that the concept of God is a concept of reason; that, in fact, it is the highest concept of reason. But he is now obviously struggling with the basic issues entailed by demands for a proof of God's existence. This is underscored by what Kant wrote in other Reflections. Thus he said that God's existence, though its "necessity cannot be proven," is at least "a necessary hypothesis" not only with respect to our "experiences in this world," but with respect also to "morality." "The proof [of his] existence is not apodictic but hypothetical *sub hypothesis logica* and *practica*" (XVII, 600: 4580).

Actually, so Kant now believed, "the practical ground of faith in God can be sufficient." Nevertheless, he added, "subsidiary speculative reasons are necessary in order to make faith secure against false sophistry" (XVII, 601: 4584). We must remember, however, that "the subjective conditions of human reason are the postulates of its employment and are not axioms" (XVII, 596: 4568). They are subjectively significant but lack objective validity.

VI

It is thus evident that prior to 1775 Kant's views on morality and theology were by no means settled. In fact, his intellectual struggle continued well into the second half of the 1770s. He had become convinced, however, that prudence and morality cannot be related one to the other except by hypostatizing "a Being that is powerful and gracious and, at the same time, holy and just" (XVII, 606: 4599.)[3]

In the perspective of this "moral theology," a term carried over into the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A632/B660), God is *summum bonum, legislator et Finis*" (XVII, 608: 4608). Or, as Kant also put it, with a slight shift in meaning: God is "the holy lawgiver, the benevolent governor, and the just judge," "who wills that man be just" (XVII, 609: 4610). "His will is holy, his purpose is benevolent, and his judgment is just. . . . He does not give laws arbitrarily" but aims at bringing all creatures under his laws. "He cannot exempt from law" (XVII, 693: 4739; 610: 4615).

Seen in this context, morality is "the harmony of [man's] free will with the purpose of mankind and of human beings generally" (XVII, 609: 4611).

To be sure, "the existence of the most real Being is no more comprehensible than is that of a limited being; but when such a Being is presupposed it is easier to derive limited beings. There is here, therefore, a necessity to assume such a Being [in order to satisfy] the requirements of speculative reason. Similarly, it is not easier to understand the necessity of a completely holy will and its connection with moral perfection than it is [to understand] a will which is limited [yet free]; but we need it for morality. Seen in this way, both proofs are valid for the subject, and this is sufficient as ultimate ground for action" (XVII, 595f: 4565).

Kant thus recognized practical as well as theoretical reasons for believing in the existence of God; but what we know of God, he said in

one of the Reflections of the mid-seventies, is "mostly negative." It merely serves "to guard against errors that are logically as well as practically harmful." To go beyond this would be "presumptuousness, impertinence" on our part. "All our knowledge of God is but [the result] of an investigation of that which strives toward the ideal of the highest perfection" (XVII, 598f: 4576). It is not a direct or immediate knowledge of God himself.

What Kant's thesis amounts to is that "wisdom and morality cannot hang together except through the hypothesis of a third Being which is powerful and gracious and at the same time holy and just" (XVII, 606: 4599). It was this understanding of the human situation that, prior to 1773, led Kant to the conception of a "transcendental theology." (See also A631/B659ff.)

As he presented the case, "the conception which determines all things is (1) that of a *necessary* Being; (2) that of a *primordial* Being or the first of all beings, the Supreme Being (insofar as it has no ground beyond itself); (3) that of the *All-Sufficient* or the Being of all beings (insofar as it has no grounds beside itself and there is nothing independent and external to it), consequently one single Being. The question is whether or not one of these three conceptions posits all others. The first two we need because we need a term of subordination" (XVII, 599: 4577). Kant had expressed similar thoughts in an earlier Reflection (see above, Section I).

Further contemplation led Kant to point out that the first problem, that of a necessary Being, is "transcendental" because it pertains to the subordination of concepts only. The second problem, pertaining to the existence of a First Cause, is "metaphysical and presupposes analogies with human causes." But what about the third problem, the problem of the "all-sufficient Being" or the "Being of all beings"? At the time when Kant wrote the Reflections here referred to he gave no answer to this question.

VII

A brief look at relevant parts of the first and second *Critiques* shows clearly that many of the ideas found in the Reflections, though differing substantially from the position of 1763, were carried over into the published works.

Kant's emphasis on faith, for example, is reflected in the much-quoted passage in the Preface to the second edition of the *Critique of*

Pure Reason: "I have therefore found it necessary to deny *knowledge* in order to make room for faith" (B*xxx*). In the end, he tells us, the conviction that God exists is "not *logical*, but *moral* certainty" (A829/B857).

To be sure, Kant tells us in the first *Critique*, "the *speculative* interest of reason makes it necessary to regard all order in the world *as if* it had originated in the purpose of a Supreme Reason." The assumption of a Supreme Intelligence "as the one and only cause of the universe" will even as mere idea be useful as a "postulate" in any attempt at an integrative interpretation of nature. And if the assumption should be in error, it "cannot do us any serious harm"; for "the most that could happen would be that where we expect a teleological connection (*nexus finalis*), we find only a mechanical or physical connection (*nexus effectivus*)" (A686f/B714f).

However, it is quite different with the *moral belief* in a Supreme Being; for there is "only one possible condition" under which moral ends can have "practical validity, namely, that there be a God and a future world" (A827f/B855). If our belief in God should be false, morality would be without foundation.

In the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant wrote (in harmony with the earlier Reflections): "God can be thought of only through concepts of reason. The first concept, perfection, can be taken in either a theoretical or a practical sense. . . . The supreme perfection in substance" is God (AA V, 39: Beck, p. 151). And with greater stress on the moral aspect Kant put it this way: "On the supposition of the existence of a cause adequate to its effect" reason must postulate the existence of God as necessarily belonging to the possibility of the highest good" (AA V, 123f; Beck, p. 227). And: "The postulate of the possibility of a highest derived good (the best world) is at the same time the postulate of the reality of a highest original good, namely, the existence of God" (AA V, 125: Beck, p. 228).

A number of other passages might have been quoted which underscore this position; but the samples given are sufficient, I believe, to indicate the continuity of Kant's thinking after 1770 when it comes to the problems of God and of God's existence.

VIII

The Reflections to be considered next all belong to the years 1773–75. Some of the themes touched upon earlier recur, of course, in

these Reflections. It would be strange if this were not so. But there are also discernible changes, if not of substance, then at least in emphasis. We read again that "the world is proof of God's omnipotence, of God's wisdom, of his omniscience, his divine goodness and divine justice" (XVII, 695: 4744); that "his counsels are wise, his will is holy, his purpose (government) is beneficent, his judgments are just" (XVII, 693: 4740). All of this assumes, of course, that God exists. In itself it is no proof of that existence.

But another problem also arose, for "the beginning [of things] is only in the world but not of the world"; and it is God who is the originator of it all. But if this is so, then one may well ask, "Why did he not create the world earlier? " Kant's answer as given in one of the Reflections (and it seems to be as good an answer as any) is that "God is in no relation to absolute and empty time" (XVII, 694: 4743; 728f: 4789); that, in other words, prior to the creation of the world there was no time and therefore no earlier or later.

This idea Kant carried over into the *Critique of Practical Reason.* There he argues that if God is the cause of existence in time, he cannot be the cause of time itself, "because, as the necessary condition *a priori* for the existence of things, time must be presupposed." Kant's solution in the second *Critique*: "The concept of creation does not belong to the sensuous mode of conceiving existence . . . but can be referred only to noumena" (AA V, 102; Beck, p. 207).

In the Reflections Kant maintained that "God is the originator [of the world] through his will" – a theme that is contrary to Spinoza's doctrine of emanation (as Kant specifically noted) and also to the contentions of "the fatalists" (XVII, 693: 4738). But if this is so – that is, if God created the world through an act of will – can we understand this act in analogy to the act of an artist? Although perhaps "not sufficient for us," would that analogy be "entirely correct" (XVII, 691: 4732)? To this question Kant gave at this time (about 1775) no answer. However, he repeated a theme which he had mentioned earlier: "The objections with respect to the existence of God and his attributes have all been taken from the conditions of sensibility which one has taken to be intellectual, and from the subjective conditions of comprehensibility which one has taken to be objective" (XVII, 691: 4733).

But God must not be thought of as the originator of practical things; for he is the creator of "the ultimate substrata of the world" and "it would be contrary to reason to cut off [empirical] investigation and to relieve ourselves mischievously of all further efforts by daring to judge

what God has directly done. . . . There is for us an indefinite area between an occurrence or arrangement in nature and God where we must apply our power of reason in order to explain everything according to laws of nature" (XVII, 693f: 4741).

Still, Kant believed (along with most thinkers of the Enlightenment) that the world is proof of God's omnipotence and wisdom; but he also saw that, if God is related "to the misery of human beings as is compassion, then we can call him compassionate, angry, envious, etc., but only by analogy; for we must not compare the Absolute with us" (XVII, 692: 4734). And "one cannot hope to get into heaven if one has worshipped much, but only when one has become a better human being" (XVII, 692: 4735). In its way this statement is unquestionably an anticipation of Kant's argument in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that "morals is not really the doctrine of how to make ourselves happy but of how we are to be *worthy* of happiness" (AA V, 129; Beck, p. 232; see the corresponding arguments presented in Chapter 1).

One other point must be noted. Kant wrote that in "physico-theology" the main rule is: "One must have recourse to God as an immediate cause, not indeed of any particular fact, but in general with respect to the ultimate substrate of the world – except in the case of revelation" (XVII, 693f: 4741).

To my knowledge this is the first time that Kant referred to revelation during the Silent Decade; but he followed it up, as it were, in a second Reflection: "The revelation of God through reason" – "of his existence or of his will" – "must precede every other; for it gives us the first correct concept by means of which every other can be tested," and both, his existence and his will, "God can reveal to us only inwardly through works or words" (XVII, 697f: 4754). That is, as Kant also put it, we have "a feeling of God's omnipresence" but not of being absorbed in him (XVII, 696: 4750). Thus, as Kant saw it around 1775, our relation to God is best expressed in this way: "If God concurs in the actions of the creature, the creature also concurs in the actions of God; for the concurrence is reciprocal, although not equal on both sides. It is a mutual participation in a third as the effect" of the concurrence (XVII, 696: 4751).

IX

When we now turn to the Reflections that belong to the second half of the 1770s, we find that, once more and rather pointedly, Kant raised

the question: "When did God create the world? " His answer: "Not in time, and therefore not from eternity" (XVII, 728: 4789). But it was a creation *ex nihilo*; for "if matter had existed primordially . . ., then God could not be regarded entirely as the author of all form because matter cannot be merely passive, and a part of guilt or merit would always have to be attributed to it. Also, not all form could [in that case] be placed into it originally but would have to be brought forth in it successively" (XVII, 729: 4790). That is, creation would then have to be merely a form of evolution.

That there is "evolvement" in the world Kant clearly recognized. As he put it in one of his Reflections: "The life of the creatures is the series of changes from an inner principle" (XVII, 728: 4786). But when we examine his position carefully, we discover that he speaks here of "the life" of the individual animal or plant, not of the evolution of the species. For him, "Providence is the arrangement within the creation through which the successive stages become harmonious with divine purposes. . . . And as the creation is related to the causal nexus for its preservation, so Providence is related to government in the final nexus" (XVII, 729f: 4792) – Providence being "the arrangement of order in nature," and government being the "cause of the process of nature" that gives "direction to individual events" (XVII, 730: 4793).

However, Kant insisted that knowledge of God is not to relieve us of our responsibility to investigate "the order of nature and of morals"; rather, it is to bring that investigation to completion "so that we connect the former with purposes and the latter with physical laws of the process that is nature" (XVIII, 265f: 5643). And in this world of nature and morality we must act through our own freedom. "God is not the determining author of our actions," although he is "the instigator of the good ones" (XVII, 745: 4846).

Kant elaborated this theme in another Reflection "The good is from us; but because it depends upon harmony with the order of nature, it is also from God, especially so since the truly moral good depends entirely upon faith in God. . . . Evil is not from God because it is not grounded in freedom and therefore not in Divine Destiny. It is contrary to the order of nature and thus to God" (XVII, 745: 4845). But, obviously, this assertion does not solve the problem of evil – not even in the sense in which Kant had attempted a solution in an earlier Reflection.

But in Reflections datable to 1776 and later Kant was still struggling with the problem of God's existence. He admitted, for example, that

"the cosmological proof (if something exists, then something else must also be necessary) fails" (XVIII, 261: 5828), and that "knowledge of divine existence based on practical and sufficient principles is faith in it" (XVIII, 199: 5498), not actual proof.

He still held that "belief in God and in another world is a consequence of the necessary maxims of theoretical as well as practical reason" (XVIII, 78: 5068); but he wavered even on this point, for in another Reflection of this time he wrote: "Moral theology alone requires a definite concept of a Supreme Being, nature theology does not, but it makes the existence intuitive" (XVIII, 205: 5516). And though Kant held that "the belief that there is no God and no other world is impossible," he admitted that "doubt and uncertainty" are possible (XVIII, 39: 4935). But he also wrote (as he had done before in slightly different words) that "he who denies God acts unwisely if he risks God's existence, or [he acts] as a scoundrel" (XVIII, 19: 4886). On the other hand, "he who says there is a God says more than he knows, as does he who says the opposite" (XVIII, 36: 4941). There is, in effect, "a moral necessity to assume [the existence of] God," for "the perfect is in idea *a priori* antecedent to the imperfect, and the latter is determined only through the former." That is, "we would have no conception of the imperfect at all if we did not envision the perfect first" (XVIII, 202: 5505).

On this theme Kant's Reflections on the problem of God and God's existence come to an end in the late 1770s.

Notes

1. We must note that at this time in the development of his thinking Kant still attributed to the understanding what later on he recognized to be the function of reason.
2. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant put it this way: "If the question be, whether we may not at least think this being, which is distinct from the world, in *analogy* with the objects of experience, the answer is: certainly, but only as object *in idea* and not in reality" (A697/B725). And: "It is only in relation to the systematic and purposive ordering of the world . . . that we have thought this unknown being *by analogy* with an intelligence (an empirical concept); that is, we have endowed it, in respect of the ends and perfection which are to be grounded upon it, with just those properties which, in conformity with the conditions of our reason, can be regarded as containing the ground of such systematic unity" (A698/B726). In

the *Critique of Judgment* Kant put it this way: "The attributes of the Supreme Being can be conceived by us only on an analogy. For how are we to investigate its nature when experience can give us nothing similar? " (p. 456). And: "Knowledge of God and of his existence . . . is possible by means of attributes of determinations . . . conceived in him merely according to analogy, and this knowledge has all requisite reality in a practical relation, but also in respect *of this relation only*, that is, in relation to morality" (pp. 484f).

3. See *Critique of Practical Reason*, the section entitled "The Existence of God as a Postulate of Pure Practical Reason" (AA V, 124–31). Specifically: "It is morally necessary to assume the existence of God" (p. 125). But this is not to be understood as meaning that "the assumption of God is necessary as a ground of all obligation in general (for this rests . . . solely on the autonomy of reason itself" (p. 126).

Interlude

Since by far the largest number of the Reflections during the Silent Decade pertain to the development of Kant's thinking with respect to problems of cognition, and since the Decade itself is delimited by publications dealing primarily with those problems, the *Dissertation* of 1770 and the *Critique of Pure Reason* of 1781, it may be helpful to take a brief look at the arguments and problems of the *Dissertation*. In doing this, we will gain perspective for the Reflections to be considered in the rest of this book.

I

Kant begins his discussions in the *Dissertation* with a brief reference to the speculative and metaphysical conception of "the world as a whole," "the unconditioned totality of all parts that belong together."[1] This "absolute totality," Kant believed, turns out to be "a cross for the philosopher," for the conception of the whole demands that all parts of it be taken as existing simultaneously. But to take them so is impossible,

for doing so contradicts the very idea of a sequential order of events. If one wishes to escape this difficulty, one ought to remember that neither the simultaneous nor the successive order of the constituent parts belongs to the intellectual concept of the whole but pertains only to the conditions of sensory intuition. Kant, therefore, found it necessary to distinguish between "sensibility as the receptivity of the subject" and "intelligence (rationality) as a faculty" that enables the subject to represent to itself that which, because of its qualities, cannot be apprehended by his senses (AA II, 392).

Now, everything in cognition that is sensory depends upon the special endowments of the subject. Sensory representations, therefore, give us the things only as they appear. The concepts of the understanding give them as they are (AA II, 393).

In the case of sensory representations we can distinguish matter, namely, impressions, from form, which is the configuration of the sensory impressions that shows to what extent the manifold which affects the senses is being conditioned by a kind of natural law of the mind (AA II, 393).

The concepts of the understanding in the strict sense are neither abstracted from any employment of the senses whatsoever, nor do they contain in any way whatsoever a form of sensory cognition as such. Kant therefore proposes to call the concepts of the understanding "pure ideas" but empirical concepts "abstractions" (AA II, 394).

Kant continues: "That philosophy which contains the highest principles of the pure employment of the understanding is metaphysics." And "since metaphysics thus yields no principles of experience, the concepts that occur in it are not to be found in the senses but in the nature of the pure understanding itself," not, however, "as inborn concepts but as abstracted from the laws implanted in the mind . . . and therefore acquired" (AA II, 395). Metaphysics employing such concepts is, of course, purely speculative.

When we turn to the sensory elements in experience the situation is quite different. "A principle of the form of the sensory world is that which contains the ground of the universal conception of all things insofar as these are phenomena." And of these "formal principles" there are two: space and time (AA II, 398), a fact which Kant now proceeds to demonstrate. I shall here simply accept the result of that demonstration.[2] After all, it recurs in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

But we learn in the *Dissertation* that "time is the absolutely first formal principle of the sensory world," that is, of "the world of

phenomena" (AA II, 402); and that space is "the absolutely first formal principle of the sensory world . . . which encompasses all that is perceivable as external" (AA II, 405).

Both principles of sensory cognition, though "singular and pure intuitions," are "substrates of the understanding." "In addition, however, although time does not prescribe laws to reason, it nevertheless posits constitutive conditions under which alone the mind can compare its concepts in accordance with rational laws. Thus, I can judge something as being impossible only when I ascribe to the same subject *at the same time* the predicates *A* and non-*A*" (AA II, 405f).

Neither space nor time is acquired by abstraction from the sensory impressions of objects, for both are rooted in an "action of the mind" which, "in accordance with eternal laws, coordinates the sense impressions." "The impressions awaken this mental action but do not influence the intuition" (AA II, 406).

II

The rest of the *Dissertation* deals with "the principle of the form of the intelligible world" (AA II, 406–10), and with "the method pertaining to sensory and intellectual elements in metaphysics" (AA II, 410–19).

The first of these discussions, directed primarily against the speculative metaphysics of Christian Wolf, culminates in the thesis that the unity of the world is possible "only under the condition that there exists only one single necessary cause of everything" (AA II, 408). It is thus in line with much of traditional metaphysics. The second discussion, on the other hand, raises problems with which Kant had to deal again and again in the Reflections as he thought himself through to a solution satisfactory to him.

Kant now argued that, in natural science and mathematics, use determines the method; but the employment of the understanding is "logical only" (AA II, 410f). On the other hand, "in pure philosophy, to which metaphysics belongs, the employment of the understanding with respect to principles is real," rather than merely logical. And since a consideration of method must precede all science, the purpose here is "to determine the principles of the right use of reason." "The exposition of the laws of pure reason is, therefore, the genesis of the science itself." This is true in the case of metaphysics as it is in the case of all other sciences. But "since today" the method of metaphysics is "known only

insofar as logic provides one for all sciences, and one corresponding to the special spirit of metaphysics is totally unknown, it cannot astonish us that those who employ this method roll their stone of Sisyphus into all eternity and appear to move hardly at all" (AA II, 411).

Now, "the whole method of metaphysics with respect to what is sensory and what is known through the understanding comes to this: Carefully prevent the principles proper to sensory cognition from straying beyond their boundaries and affecting intellectual cognition" (AA II, 411). It is necessary to observe this admonition, for "the confusion of intellectual and sensory concepts becomes a vicious metaphysical subreption" (AA II, 412). We assume correctly that "what cannot be known through an intuition is unthinkable generally and is thus impossible." And since, despite all efforts, we cannot even imagine an intuition other than one according to the forms of space and time, it comes about that we regard every intuition impossible which is not limited by them. The metaphysical principle that, "whatever exists, exists some where and at some time," is surreptitiously obtained and is a grave error in metaphysics. Because of it, "all things, even if they are known only through the understanding, are subordinated to the conditions of space and time" (AA II, 414), and this, surely, is an error.

But in addition to the surreptitiously obtained principles there are several related concepts of the understanding – such as possibility, causality, universality, eternity – which are free from sensory elements (AA II, 417). And there are also principles that are independent of sensory elements. Thus, (1) "Everything in the universe happens according to the order of nature." (2) "Prejudice in favor of unity: Do not multiply principles beyond what is necessary." (3) No matter comes into existence or ceases to be; all changes in the world pertain to form only (AA II, 418).

The method preceding the development of a genuine metaphysics must thus be concerned in particular with "the difference between sensory and intellectual cognition." "If it has once been fully developed through careful investigation, it can serve as a scientific propaedeutic that will be of immeasurable value to everything that is intended to penetrate even into the depths of metaphysics" (AA II, 419).

III

It is obvious from the last paragraph that here Kant had projected his own goal in philosophy; and the Reflections of the Silent Decade dealing

with the problems of cognition and metaphysics are evidence of this. His search was on for a method that would transform metaphysics from a speculative enterprise into a science.

Notes

1. *De Mundi Sensibilis Atque Intelligibilis Forma et Principiis* (AA II, 385-419). References throughout will be to this edition. The presentation is based on my own translation.
2. What I said about space and time in Section I of the Introduction applies here, of course, just as ideas first stated in the *Dissertation* are relevant to the discussions in Chapter 4, where I must refer to them again.

Chapter Three

From Metaphysics to the *Critique of Pure Reason*

It is perhaps strange that after having stressed in the *Dissertation* the need of a sound method as basic to the development of metaphysics, Kant's Reflections at the beginning of the Silent Decade do not quite echo this need. Indeed, there is much in these Reflections that definitely belongs to the precritical period in Kant's thinking; and several years had to go by before Kant again faced the question of method and presuppositions in earnest.

It may be helpful to our understanding of the problems here involved to keep in mind two definitions that Kant stated succinctly in one of the Reflections of 1770/71: "Metaphysics is cognition *a priori* of nature; transcendental philosophy is pure cognition *a priori*" (XVIII, 20: 4889). But we must realize that both definitions were modified in essential respects as Kant's thinking developed during the later 1770s, and that, in the end, transcendental philosophy became a critique of pure reason.

In what follows I shall trace this development in considerable detail. But first we must take a look at Reflections which still echo some of the

themes of speculative traditional metaphysics. To do so will provide a background against which changes in Kant's position will become apparent.

I

In a Reflection of 1771, Kant said of metaphysics that it is "not for children or juveniles but for men"; and he added rather whimsically: "One will not take amiss this judgment of a man who, being paid to teach metaphysics publicly, desires to convince himself that he is nevertheless good for something" (XVIII, 26f: 4912). In spite of all its whimsy, this statement may also explain the lingering preoccupation with traditional metaphysical problems which, despite the projection (in the *Dissertation*) of a new orientation in metaphysics Kant found difficult to brush aside.

But let me begin by quoting in its entirety one of the key Reflections of this time; for it reveals better than anything else the complexity of the problems and the confusion of issues which Kant faced in the early 1770s:

> The purpose of metaphysics: 1. to determine the origin of synthetic cognition *a priori*; 2. to comprehend the restrictive conditions of the empirical employment of reason; 3. to reveal our reason's independence from those conditions and thus the possibility of its absolute employment; 4. by this means to extend our employment of reason beyond the boundaries of the world of our senses – although only negatively, i. e., in order to remove the obstacle which reason itself creates (through the principles of its empirical employment); 5. to reveal the conditions of the absolute unity [of reason] so that it might be a complete principle of practical unity, i. e., of the harmony of all purposes in one whole.
>
> (These same principles of expansion are, in turn, negative in respect of the empirical employment of reason where nothing is regarded as nature.)
>
> The dogmatic employment of reason beyond the limits of possible experience cannot objectively determine [any object] and no new synthesis takes place. [Such employment] merely establishes a harmony of the theoretical with the practical unity, for the practical employment is led beyond the limits of what is pragmatic, and therefore also beyond the actual world, according to an analogy with the empirical employment but in relation to the conditions of a perfect unity through which the tasks of our reason are being completed, both *a priori* and *a posteriori*.
>
> (Liberation of the unity of reason from the limitations of its empirical employment makes possible its transcendental employment.)

Although the extension of reason is here merely negative – the absolute unity of the cognition of objects in general and of all purposes (freed from all restrictions of sensibility) being required for the absolute spontaneity of reason – the extension is nevertheless necessary on practical grounds.

Reason is the capacity for the absolute unity of our cognition.

The principles of the completion of cognition – i. e., of the absolute whole of it (the absolute unity of the employment of reason) – are syntheses of reason.

They contain conditions of wisdom, i. e., of harmony within the totality of our purposes.

We contemplate [this totality] only through what is independent, therefore not through sensibility.

The determination of all objects through pure reason is thus the completion of our cognition through the understanding (in the progress of my existence):

1. In respect of the self-knowledge of reason. Completion in progress.

   a. I belong to the universe;
   b. am simple;
   c. free. Intellicence.
   d. My existence is externally not dependent (upon the body) nor is it accidental.

(Among the empirical principles there is this one: The existence of all things in the world is contingent; only the *ens originarium* exists in all understanding necessarily.)

Here I view myself not as a soul but as an intelligence. The synthesis is here merely negative, namely, to separate the conditions of sensibility from me as intelligence.

And the basis of this synthesis is the freedom of reason from the limiting conditions of sensibility – of a sensibility which is a negative principle of morality and therefore also of wisdom.

2. Completion in regress from the conditioned to the unconditioned.

   There exists an original Being which is,

   a. all-sufficient and unique,
   b. simple,
   c. a free cause (intelligence),
   d. necessary in accordance with its nature.

These are the conditions of the complete unity of all objects and therefore

> of all cognitions. But this unity is also the condition of the harmony of all that is practical.
>
> These cognitions are not dogmatic but merely a liberation of the (absolute) unity of the employment of reason in theoretical and practical respects from the conditions of its empirical employment in order to determine the principles of the pure practical employment.
>
> Reason is free from the conditions of sensibility and must be free in practical respects. The extension of the function of reason toward complete unity beyond the limiting conditions of sensibility.
>
> The concepts of the unity of reason, e. g., of the absolute whole – the ground – cannot be separated *in concreto* according to conditions of empirical cognition. They also do not pertain to the sensible world, for that world is no object of pure reason. They do pertain to the world of the understanding, which is the ground underlying the sensible world (XVIII, 5ff: 4849).

The five purposes of metaphysics spelled out in the first paragraph of this Reflection require no comment. Kant's statements are clear and to the point, and they echo the general idea of Section IV of the *Dissertation.* As for the rest of the lengthy Reflection, it may be well to keep in mind specific themes which Kant stresses, for they still represent what is essentially the point of view of traditional metaphysics. We are thus told that the liberation of reason from the limitations of its empirical employment makes possible its metaphysical employment, and that reason so liberated leads to the absolute unity of cognition; that from the conditioned it leads to the unconditioned and thus to a unique and self-sufficient primordial Being which is the ultimate ground underlying the sensible world. Such ideas, it seems to me, are at least a faint echo of traditional or speculative metaphysics.

In another Reflection of about this time (1771) Kant wrote that it is perfectly possible to learn much from old and new analyses. "But what befell the scholastics will then happen again: they [that is, the philosophers who accept the analyses of the past] will be laid aside forever." That is to say, conceived as a rehash of the analyses developed in the past, "metaphysics can no longer be supported" (XVIII, 81: 5079); and "only the contradictions and contentions of the systems have in recent times kept the human understanding from complete deterioration." Although "all of the systems are dogmatic to the highest degree," together and in their mutual contradictions "they present perfectly the position of the sceptic to any one who observes their interplay as a whole" (XVIII, 33f: 4936).

But what is the answer to all this?

II

Despite his rising scepticism concerning traditional metaphysics, Kant still believed prior to 1773 that "metaphysics is necessary," is indeed "indispensable," for the problems with which it is concerned are "propounded by sound reason and moral affairs" (XVII, 558: 4457). They are rooted in "our most important aims." Metaphysics is thus "not an organon of science but of wisdom and serves negatively to remove the obstacles which are a hindrance to our most important knowledge" (XVII, 557: 4453). "It has value as a critique" (XVII, 558: 4457).

Kant himself regarded as essentially metaphysical the problems of possibility, of Being (necessity), of aggregation (wholeness), of "one within another (substance)," and of "one by virtue of another (ground)." He added: "The last three are real relations. The unity of many: (a) of the whole, (b) of the predicates in one subject, or (c) of the consequences from a [common] ground" (XVII, 528: 4385). But in dealing with these problems "one has to be subtle; for all this knowledge is *a priori* and insecure without derivation from its first sources" (XVIII, 38: 4947). Its "form is rational," its "matter sensory"; and metaphysics is concerned with form only (XVII, 521: 4366). But so understood, metaphysics is neither speculative nor is it transcendental philosophy. The only thing that is clear is that, at this time, Kant's thoughts about the nature of metaphysics are still in flux.

In several Reflections of this time Kant referred specifically to some of the problems he encountered in this state of transition. Thus, he wrote that one of the "maxims of reason" is that "everywhere nature forms a system" (XVIII, 81: 5080), and that "this combination of many different things in one whole presupposes dependence upon one ground and flows from it" (XVII, 537: 4413). "The whole error hitherto, it seems to me [that is, to Kant] has been that, in metaphysics, one has wanted to go from the parts to the whole; yes, even by adding extraneous parts. But here it is possible only to begin with a completely unmixed cognition of the whole" (XVIII, 33: 4935), for "we can conceive the finite in the concrete as possible only through limitations of the infinite – for example, a space of a certain figure." Just as, when a limited being is posited with its specific attributes, "all other reality is thought as merely negated" and "the concept of the finite appears to originate in the infinite" (XVII, 542: 4428).

By contrast, every finite being is "a composite whose parts exist prior to their combination," and thus it is "divisible." But this is true

only of physically real things. The "magnitude and power of the understanding," for example, and "the greater moral perfection" are not composites, for they are not things (XVII, 540: 4424). Moreover, actual composites "consist of parts which are not composed in the same way, although they may very well consist of parts that are composed of other kinds of parts (for the latter is no contradiction of the former)" (XVII, 539: 4419). Ultimately, composites consist of simple parts that "can exist even when separated." However, "a total separation in space is the complete suspension of relations," and parts thus separated "do not form a body" (XVII, 539: 4420).

It is obvious from what has just been said that "all unity is relative. Whether an absolute unity is possible is a question" (XVII, 539: 4418), for "a thing cannot be distinguished from its attributes" (XVII, 537: 4414) and therefore remains always a unity within a plurality – that is, it is but a relative unity.

All of these considerations are still very much in the spirit of metaphysical analyses of the past. The critical spirit of the latter part of the 1770s, though anticipated in projection in the *Dissertation* has not yet come into its own.

The same is true in the case of other Reflections of the early 1770s. Thus, with respect to space (and time) Kant now says that they are *quanta* but not *composita.* "Space is not generated through the positing of parts, but parts are possible only through space; and the same is true of time. . . . The parts can quite readily be discerned but cannot be separated, and the division [into parts] is not real but merely logical." Kant continued: "Since, as far as divisibility is concerned, all matter appears to depend upon the space which it fills and therefore to be divisible as is this space, the question is whether the divisibility of matter is not also merely logical, as is that of space" (XVII, 541: 4425).

However, in the case of matter other aspects enter the picture. In one of the Reflections prior to 1772 Kant wrote: "For the concept 'matter' extension and impenetrability are sufficient; for matter itself inertia is also required" (XVII, 543: 4431). In another Reflection he put it this way: "As to its substance, impenetrable extension is matter, as to its form it is body. To the form belong the external figure and the internal structure and, in the third place, the mixture. The figure is an object of mathematics; the structure is one of mechanics; the mixture is one of chemistry and of the forces of physics" (XVII, 543: 4432).

But "mere matter is inert and lifeless" (XVII, 545: 4435). Life, on the other hand, consists in "the inner sufficiency of spontaneity" (XVII,

592: 4556). "Living matter, therefore, is not merely matter" (XVII, 543: 4431). And Kant wondered: "How do we come to presuppose that the impenetrable extension cannot be self-active except through the extraneous and immaterial principle? Does this come about because we encounter here something inwardly impenetrable and therefore suspect . . . a vital principle" (XVII, 543: 4431) – a principle that belongs to the realm of the intelligible rather than to that of sensibility (XVII, 585: 4534)?

To my knowledge Kant gave no answer to this question in the Reflections of the Silent Decade. However, in one of the Reflections he wrote: "One can imagine that either all species of animals have come into existence through a gradual elevation of the perfection (ascension) beginning with the minerals or through the decline of a Being which was more perfect than man when in this primordial animal there were present the sources of every mechanical formation." It is clear, however, that Kant favored the idea of ascension, for in the same Reflection he wrote: "From gross matter gradually plants originate, and from these animals, and finally out of them in gradual transition came man." In this process "the animal capacities which consist in a very special relation to certain circumstances, were gradually adjusted to several or to the more general and, finally, to the universal [circumstances] and now are called reason" (XVII, 544f: 4433).

Kant discussed this "theory of epigenesis" rather critically in Part 2 of the *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (AA V, 417–24); but we need not dwell upon that here.

III

Turning to another topic, Kant argued – still essentially in the spirit of traditional metaphysics – that "all (real) relations are either relations of combination or of conflict. The former are either one through another, one to another (part to whole), or one within another (accidence and substance)." In all of these relations "unity is the strongest combination," and "a substance which contains the first ground of everything which is real . . . is the highest principle of everything. . . . It combines all things within its sphere and is the highest ground of explanation" (XVII, 537f: 4415).

This "highest cause" is also "the ground of the possibility of changes in one and the same world" (XVII, 546: 4436). The changes are real when they involve alterations of things "according to laws of sensibility

in the sequence of time" (XVII, 540: 4423). And so it comes about that "in the world there exists a continuity of the dynamic sequence" of events. Since this continuity is in accordance with laws, we encounter it "not only in the sensible but also in the intelligible world" (XVII, 545: 4434).

However, the idea of a "world" in whatever sense involves its own special problems.

To begin with, what exactly is meant by "world"? In one of his Reflections (about 1772) Kant defined it as "the absolute totality of possible experience." But he realized that, while such a concept is thinkable, an absolute totality as "appearance" in space and time is "a contradiction" (XVII, 582: 4522). "Whether or not the world exists in empty space is not an empirical question," for we have "no empirical means of determining whether or not space is empty because in empty space no external experience would be possible" (XVII, 586: 4535).

However, our concept of the world is most useful, for only through it can every composite part be brought into orderly relation to the whole in accordance with laws intrinsic to that whole; and only thus do all parts of the world stand in harmonious interaction (XVII, 581f: 4524).

"Since the possible is distinguished from the actual only when in the former the conditions are not seen in universal determination," the world can have "no conditions outside itself other than those of an absolutely necessary Being," and can have "no limits of its reality other than the internal conditions of possibility." Kant added: "From a world so understood it is possible to infer a single cause [of that world] and its all-sufficiency, and also the unity of the world itself." Such inference is not possible from the conception of a world that is "not the absolute universe" (XVII, 580f: 4522).

IV

As time went by, Kant became increasingly aware of the fact that philosophy had become "more critical than dogmatic" (XVII, 562: 4448) and that its criticism was directed not only at the propositions of metaphysics but at "human reason" itself (XVII, 519: 4360). He realized that "in the critique of metaphysics one may employ two methods." "The first is: to examine the proofs and to search for paralogisms or for the *petitio principii* [in the arguments of the metaphysicians]. The second is: to oppose to a proof another and equally convincing proof of the opposite. This latter method [Kant

continued] is the best; for the mistakes of the metaphysical arguments consist mainly in this: that what is valid only under the conditions of sensible cognition is asserted about the object in general. A proof can appear to be strict so that one is hardly aware of a mistake – a mistake that one discovers best through a proof of the opposite" (XVII, 557: 4454).

We need note here only in passing that the latter is precisely the method which Kant himself employed when, in the first *Critique*, he dealt with the "antinomies of pure reason" (A405/B432 – A567/B595). He stated there that the antinomies will disclose to us "the transcendental principles of a pretended pure rational cosmology" (A408/B435).

As Kant saw it during the early part of the Silent Decade, the basic error of the past was that philosophers did not ask certain questions which are crucial to the whole philosophical enterprise. They did not ask: Is metaphysics "a critique or a doctrine" (XVII, 558: 4455)? Is it concerned "with objects that can be known through pure reason or through . . . the principles and laws of the employment of our reason" (XVII, 521: 4369)? Kant's answer: "Metaphysics deals not with objects but with cognition" (XVIII, 10: 4853). And now "the question is: What can one know through mere reason and without any experience whatsoever? What are the sources, the conditions, and the limits [of cognition] (XVII, 588: 4455; 520: 4362)?

In attempting to answer these questions, "transcendental philosophy becomes a critique of pure reason" (XVII, 558: 4455). Through "a study of the subject" this new philosophy hopes to prevent "the confusion of what is subjective with what is objective" and to "prove that in our cognition we can never go beyond the sensible world." If mathematics should be cited as a counterexample (cf. XVIII, 59: 5011), Kant admits that "mathematics is the only science which can determine something independently of experience and therefore *a priori*"; but, he added, even then "the qualities" with which mathematics is concerned in actual experience "must be given empirically" (XVIII, 82: 5083).

Metaphysics, thus transformed into a critique of pure reason, so Kant had come to believe in 1772, is "no longer an obstacle to empirical science through intellectual fictions." On the contrary, "by preventing the errors of pure reason," it renders even science "not a small service" (XVII, 613: 4628). "It makes morality secure against false subtlety and thus promotes what is practical. It is advantageous to aesthetics and benefits our knowledge of the inner man." Moreover, Kant continued,

so conceived, metaphysics is "the borderguard which keeps reason from confusing itself by roaming beyond its boundaries and disturbing religion and morals with its chimeras" (XVII, 561f: 4464).

Viewing this development of philosophy in another perspective, Kant saw it this way: What in the beginning was regarded as a doctrine of pure reason is now a discipline of reason, its animadversion. This discipline is the restriction of the power of the mind or of inclinations to their proper limits. It is negative, not dogmatic. "The mind must not only be instructed . . . but must be disciplined as well, that is, its bad habits must be broken" (XVIII, 71: 5044). This discipline of reason "leads to certainty, not in the dogmas of reason but in the maxims of it" (XVIII, 19: 4885), and is "an exercise preparatory for a metaphysics of the theoretical world-wisdom" (XVII, 562: 4466).

V

It is now evident that by 1772 a critical attitude had replaced the old assurance in matters metaphysical in Kant's mind. Also, Kant had become convinced that, in the future, we cannot expect great new systems of philosophy, for "the most distinguished investigation is: How do we obtain cognition at all and, in particular, cognitions *a priori*? What is the ground of their dependability? " (XVIII, 73: 5046).

The way Kant now saw the situation he stated as well as it could ever be stated in a Reflection of 1774. There he wrote: "As far as metaphysics is concerned, we have diligently investigated its location and the approaches to it as if it were an unknown land the possession of which we are contemplating. It lies in the hemisphere (region) of pure reason. We have drawn the outlines of where this island of knowledge is connected by bridges with the land of experience, or where it is separated from it by a deep ocean. We have even drawn the outline of this and know, as it were, its geography. But as yet we do not know what may be encountered in this land – a land which some have regarded as uninhabitable by man, and which others have regarded as their real home. In accordance with the general geography of this land of reason we intend to take its general history into consideration" (XVII, 559; 4448).

It was therefore with high hopes that Kant looked forward to the development of transcendental philosophy as a critique of pure reason and "a propaedeutic to metaphysics" in the more traditional sense of "theoretical world-wisdom" (XVII, 562: 4466). He was convinced that

"the new science" can provide security "against all inroads of seeming reason" and that this in itself is "a very important service" (XVII, 559f: 4459).

Within this context Kant wrote in one of the Reflections of the mid-seventies that it was his "intention to investigate how much reason can know *a priori*, and how far its dependence upon the information derived from the senses extends." In order to carry out this plan (which in effect is a continuation of the "project" first formulated in the *Dissertation*) he thought it would be "necessary to isolate not only reason but sensibility as well, and first of all to examine everything that can be given *a priori* in order to determine whether or not it belongs to the jurisdiction of reason." Kant added: "This separate contemplation, this pure philosophy, is of great value" (XVIII, 59: 5013), for it "serves a universal human purpose" (XVII, 613: 4627).

VI

The first and highly suggestive result of this new orientation in Kant's thinking he expressed in a lengthy Reflection of "about 1772": "The principles of the possibility of experience (of distributive unity) are at the same time principles of the possibility of the objects of experience" (XVII, 703: 4757). He repeated this statement, with an insignificant change in wording, in another Reflection of that time: "The principles of the possibility of experiences are also principles of the possibility of the objects of experience" (XVII, 706: 4758). And in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* he put it this way: "The *a priori* conditions of a possible experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of objects of experience" (A111).

I have quoted this principle in its three versions because of the crucial significance it has in the development of Kant's thinking. We must note that not one of these versions asserts or implies that the conditions of the possibility of experience and of the objects of experience are imposed by the experiencing subject. The principle is in this respect entirely neutral, implying only that in the knowledge-relation certain *a priori* principles make that relation itself possible. But when we consider the whole argument of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, it is obvious that Kant's thesis, taken in its entirety, is not keyed to this essentially "neutral" principle. In harmony with his "Copernican Revolution," Kant specifically stressed that not a neutral principle but the "transcendental apperception" is the "original and transcendental

condition" of the possibility of experience (A107). Or, as he put it in the second edition of the *Critique*: "The principle of apperception is the highest principle in the whole sphere of human knowledge." And this principle was for Kant an analytic proposition (B135). It meant the superordination of the subject—albeit of the transcendental subject or of "consciousness in general"—over the object; and with this, the turn into transcendental idealism was complete.[1]

VII

But let us return to the Reflection from which I have just quoted. There is more there that is of significance, especially so when we combine it with another Reflection of that time. Kant's interests are basically still metaphysical, but we begin to sense something of a struggle going on in his mind.

He contemplates, for example, "the ground for the antinomy of reason" in philosophical disputes and finds that "every empirical synthesis is conditioned, including the mathematical as well as the dynamic," whereas "transcendental synthesis (that is, synthesis through pure concepts of reason) is unconditioned" but is also purely intellectual. There is here therefore "not really an antinomy" (XVII, 711: 4760).

A closer inspection of the facts shows that, as far as empirical syntheses are concerned, "every appearance has parts and is itself a part," and "everything that happens is a consequence (a conditioned) and is itself the ground [of something else]. There is here therefore no first or last . . ., no necessary Being." That is, we do not encounter it among the appearances. In "transcendental synthesis," on the other hand, "the world is limited. It consists of simples. There is freedom. There exists a necessary Being" (XVII, 711: 4760). The two realms – the empirical and the transcendental – are thus completely other and are separated; and it is because of this separation that there is here "no real antinomy."

As Kant ponders further what is involved here he finds that "in empirical cognition the synthesis of the whole is always conditioned." Therefore, "the effects and the causes are also conditioned, for they pertain to the unity of the appearances where the manifold is given prior to the unity." On the other hand, "the unity of the pure employment of reason (involving the simple, the free, the necessary) is determinative of a progression which begins with *a priori* conditions – for example, with

freedom in moral matters – which do not belong to the realm of appearances but make an *a priori* synthesis possible at all" (XVII, 712: 4760).

Obviously, the last part of this statement with its double use of the term *a priori* is ambiguous; but Kant clarified his meaning by saying that "there must be two kinds of principles of (*a priori*) unity": principles pertaining to the "unity of the *a priori* intellection of appearances insofar as we are determined by the appearances," and principles of the "unity of the spontaneity of the understanding insofar as the appearances are determined by it" (XVII, 706: 4758).

If the same principles were determinative of the two types of unity, we would have once more in all essentials the basic theme I have quoted three times at the beginning of Section VI. But Kant now gave it a twist into transcendental subjectivism by arguing that "everything is grounded in a primordial understanding which is the all-sufficient ground of the world"; that "the spontaneity of action, the primordial Being and universal causality are the cardinal concepts upon which depends the unity of the employment of reason in its totality" (XVII, 706: 4758).

But apparently Kant was not quite satisfied with this line of argument, for he now examined in greater detail what is involved in the position here emerging, and he set forth his thoughts in four specific theses:

> 1. There is no first of an aggregate in space and time; [for] the totality of appearances is *a priori* unlimited [and] cannot be determined through successive additions.
>
> 2. There is no absolute first of composition (as there is also no absolute limit of decomposition – there is nothing simple).
>
> 3. There is no absolute limit of subordination in the sequence of actions and effects. There is no first action; no transcendental freedom.
>
> 4. There is no First Cause (no primordial Being), for all appearances are possible only in space and time. But space and time [themselves] are determinable only through appearances.
>
> These propositions are contradicted only by the incomprehensibility of the propositions that there is a regress *ad infinitum* of the dimension, the division, the production, and the dependency. As far as experience goes we always remain within the chain of appearances. Insofar as we consider the things underlying the appearances – which can be thought only by means of concepts of the understanding – the unity of their synthesis demands an absolute first of the inner state of reason (i.e., an unconditioned), of origin, composition, action,

and existence in general. These are conditions of the (subjective) unity in the employment of reason with respect to appearances, and also principles of the manifold" – i.e., of the objects of experience (XVII, 712: 4760).

It is evident that Kant had here rather crucial and complex problems on his hands; and it is equally evident that a thoroughgoing examination of the grounds and limitations of cognition was called for. But that was yet to come.

VIII

When we come to Phase φ in Kant's philosophical development, that is, when we come to the second half of the Silent Decade, we find that the Sage of Königsberg had become thoroughly disillusioned with traditional metaphysics. In one of his Reflections, datable to 1776, he referred to it as "visionary," a "palliative," a product of "maggots in the brain" that requires "a radical cure through purgation" (XVIII, 65: 5027).

In a more restrained vein he admitted that "the efforts of metaphysics have not all been in vain"; but he added at once that "without a critique they have no permanency" (XVIII, 86: 5096). As he now saw it, metaphysics may have special value as a basis for critical cognition, "not in order to increase knowledge but to prevent error." When pursued in this spirit, "it is not the mother of religion but its protective guardian; it is not of objective but of subjective employment" (XVIII, 14: 4865). This "new insight," Kant confessed, "has completely destroyed the value of my previous metaphysical writings. I shall now attempt merely to save the correctness of the ideas" (XVIII, 42: 4964).

Although "the steps in metaphysics have hitherto been in vain" because "one has discovered nothing," we "cannot abandon metaphysics"; but the perspective must be changed. It must now "center on the subject instead of on the object." And Kant gives us what in effect is a projection of his future program: "philosophy of pure reason" is to consist of three parts; one, a part dealing with the subject, and another, a part dealing with the object. "The former: transcendental philosophy, the contemplation of pure reason itself; the latter: cognition of objects. The third: metaphysics of nature and of morals" (XVIII, 18: 4880).

Transcendental philosophy so conceived will be "the grave of all superstition," for the "maxims of reason" disclosed in it are "the conditions of intuition and understanding" (XVIII, 63: 5022) and thus

the foundation of all knowledge. In doing its work, transcendental philosophy "abstracts from all differences and determinations of the things as objects and concerns itself exclusively with pure reason" (XVIII, 100: 5129) – that is, with "the maxims, the boundaries, and the purpose" of pure reason (XVIII, 52: 4987); and "the critique of pure reason [becomes] a preservative against a sickness of reason the germ of which lies in our own nature." That sickness is "the opposite of the inclination (homesickness) which binds us to our Fatherland – that is, it is a longing to lose ourselves outside our circle and to relate to other worlds" (XVIII, 79f: 5073).

In the development of this transcendental philosophy "the citing of books is as little necessary as it is in geometry." "Unanimous judgments of others provide a basis for proof only where the concern is not the rule but its application" – that is, where concepts are "derived from a mass of comparable observations" (XVIII, 41: 4957). In all other cases "everything must be taken from the subject" (XVIII, 75: 5058) from which derive "all cognitions *a priori*" (XVIII, 16: 4873) – that is, from which derive "the elements of cognition *a priori*" and also "the possibility of synthetic cognition *a priori*" (XVIII, 101: 5133). Transcendental philosophy thus "leads to certainty" in the "maxims" rather than in the "dogmas" of reason (XVIII, 19: 4885; 22: 4897). Its "touchstone of truth" is not experience but a "dialectic" in which the task is (as Kant puts it in the *Critique of Pure Reason*) "to find for the conditioned knowledge obtained through understanding the unconditioned whereby its unity is brought to completion" (A307/B364).

IX

One final point may be in order.

As Kant saw it toward the end of the 1770s, "metaphysics" transformed into transcendental philosophy is "not a doctrine but a discipline." Its function is "not to increase knowledge but to prevent error." It is "not about the object but about the rules of the subject" in cognition (XVIII, 14: 4865). Kant confessed, however, in another Reflection of that time that "an unsolvable problem" remains: "How to combine the highest condition of everything that is practical with the conditions of speculative unity; that is, [how to combine] *freedom* with *nature* or the causality of the understanding in respect of appearances. . . . The riddle is the spontaneity of the understanding within the sequence of appearances." "After this [Kant continued] absolute

necessity is the second riddle – one which nature does not propound but the pure understanding does," for the understanding is "the original condition of the possibility of nature" (XVIII, 98: 5121); but morality presupposes man's freedom. How can this freedom be reconciled with the causal necessity characteristic of the world of nature?

Kant faced this problem again and again as he developed his critical philosophy. The solution he had found in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and had accepted when he dealt with matters of morality did not completely satisfy him in the end. It became one of the reasons for his attempt in the *Opus postumum* to develop what he then called "the highest form of transcendental philosophy."[2] But that attempt is not relevant to our concerns now.

Notes

1. Nicolai Hatmann has given us a significant discussion of this development in "Geschichtliches und Uebergeschichtliches in der Kantischen Philosophie" in Joachim Kopper and Rudolf Maltzer, *Materialien zu Kants 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft'* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1975), pp. 205–37.
2. W. H. Werkmeister, "Kant's Conception of 'The Highest Form of Transcendental Philosophy'," *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy,* VI, no. 3 (1975), pp. 19–27. See also W. H. Werkmeister, *Immanuel Kant: The Architectonic and Development of his Philosophy* (La Salle: Open Court Publishing Company, 1979), Chapter XI.

Chapter Four

The Emergence of Kant's Transcendental Philosophy

We must now examine the development of Kant's new position in greater detail.

In 1763, in an essay entitled *Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und der Moral,* Kant had argued that in mathematics "the concept is not given prior to the definition but originates in and through the definition" (AA II, 276; 280; 281). The term 'cone', for example, "may otherwise mean what it will"; in mathematics it means nothing but the object which results when "in arbitrary representation a right triangle is turned around one of its legs" (AA II, 276). In other words, in mathematics we have no object at all until the definition creates it (AA II, 283), and what is not attributed to the object in the definition the object simply does not possess (AA II, 291). In mathematics, therefore, the definition is always synthetic and *a priori*. In philosophy, on the other hand, definitions are analytic only. They are ways of clarifying the concept of things given in experience but which, as given, are "confused and not sufficiently determined" (AA II, 276).

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant again discusses the nature of mathematical knowledge. He speaks of it as "the shining example of how far, independently of experience, we can progress in *a priori* cognition" (A4/B8). "All mathematical judgments, without exception, are synthetic" and are also "*a priori*, not empirical." They carry with them a necessity which "cannot be derived from experience" (A25/B39). That is to say, pure mathematics is "a brilliant example" of synthetic knowledge *a priori* (A39/B55).

Because its basic definitions are "constructions of concepts" in which the predicates of the intended objects are combined "both *a priori* and immediately," mathematics "can have axioms" which pertain to the objects defined (A732/B760). In this respect there is a radical difference between philosophy and mathematics, for the basic concepts of philosophy – "such as substance, cause, right, equity, etc." – are "given *a priori*" and, strictly speaking, cannot be defined. They cannot be constructed as mathematical concepts are (A728/B756). There thus exists "a radical difference in the fortunes of the philosopher and the mathematician, both of whom practice the art of reason" (A717/B745). This difference was obscured in traditional metaphysics "owing to its exhibiting, as *a priori* knowledge, a certain similarity to mathematics." But when we realize that in philosophy "knowledge is derived from concepts," whereas in mathematics "we arrive at *a priori* judgments only through the construction of concepts," we have to recognize "a decided difference of kind" of knowledge (A844/B872). From this it follows that "in philosophy we must not imitate mathematics by beginning with definitions." On the contrary, in philosophy the definitions come "at the end rather than at the beginning of our inquiries" (A731/B759). And we must not "divert philosophy from its true purpose, namely, to expose the illusions of a reason that forgets its limits, and by sufficiently clarifying our concepts to recall it from its presumptuous speculative pursuits to modest but thorough self-knowledge" (A735/B763).

I have quoted from the *Untersuchung* of 1763 and from the *Critique* of 1781 in order to stress the fact that at least one basic conviction persisted in Kant's thinking during the Silent Decade: his insistence upon the fundamental difference of mathematical and philosophical knowledge. Kant could readily account for the synthetic and *a priori* character of mathematical cognitions, for they are grounded in the definitional construction of its concepts. But how can synthetic propositions *a priori* be justified in philosophy where the basic concepts are "given" and can only be clarified, not constructed (as in mathe-

matics)? Here, then, is the problem that occupied Kant much of the time during the 1770s.

I

One other fact must be kept in mind as we approach the Silent Decade. It is this: Prior to 1770 Kant had maintained that the understanding is "a faculty for knowing things, not as they appear but as they are" (XV, 165: 409); that it is the faculty for "judging the particular by subsuming it under the universal" (XV, 171: 424). Reason, on the other hand, is the faculty for recognizing "necessity in accordance with universal rules" (XV, 172: 429). This difference of the two faculties implies that, "for experience, the understanding alone is needed. But for the possibility of cognizing what I do not know from experience, and therefore know *a priori*, I need reason" (XV, 182: 441). By knowing something *a priori* Kant meant "to judge in advance, without the object being given" (XV, 183: 443); and this meaning, be it noted, Kant maintained throughout his philosophical development.

But around 1770, and in obvious connection with his *Inaugural Dissertation*,[1] Kant also maintained that "all cognition can be differentiated as to kind into sensory and rational" (XVII, 520: 4363) and "has either empirical or rational principles" (XVII, 521: 4366).

The duality of the cognitive faculties thus indicated Kant elaborated in the *Dissertation* itself. There we read: "Sensibility is the receptivity of the subject which makes it possible that its representation is affected in a certain way by the presence of an object. Thinking (rationality) is a faculty of the subject by which it can represent to itself that which by virtue of its quality cannot be apprehended through the senses" (AA II, 392). That is to say, the intellectual concepts in the strict sense are "neither abstracted from any kind of employment of the senses, nor do they contain any kind of form of sensory cognition as such. . . . It is therefore advisable to call the concepts of the intellect *pure ideas*, but the concepts given empirically *abstractions*" (AA II, 394). And Kant added: "The philosophy which contains the first principles of the employment of the pure intellect is metaphysics. . . . In metaphysics there are no empirical concepts; its concepts, therefore, cannot be sought in the senses but only in the nature of the pure intellect itself" (AA II, 395). Stated more emphatically: "The whole method of metaphysics . . . comes to this: See to it carefully that the principles

proper for sensory cognition do not go beyond their limitations and affect intellectual cognition" (AA II, 411), for "the confusion of intellectual and sensory concepts becomes a vicious metaphysical subreption" (AA II, 412). "The whole method of metaphysics pertaining to the data of the senses" must therefore be "to prevent that the principles proper to sensory cognition transcend their boundaries and affect intellectual cognition" (AA II, 411).

This strict separation of sensibility and the intellect entailed serious difficulties for Kant. At a time when Newtonian mechanics had been proven valid for the phenomenal world, that separation was no longer tolerable.

Kant himself was well aware of the fact that here was a problem. In a letter to Lambert (dated 2 September 1770), he wrote: "The most universal laws of sensibility deceitfully play a large role . . . in metaphysics. It seems, therefore, that a very special, although purely negative, science (*phaenomenologia generalis*) in which the validity and the limits of the principles of sensibility are determined, must precede metaphysics so that we do not confuse the judgments of pure reason about objects."[2]

In retrospect Kant wrote in a letter to Johann Bernoulli dated 16 November 1781: "In the year 1770, I could separate the sensory aspects of cognition quite nicely from the intelligible by certain boundary marks. . . . But now the origin of the intellectual aspect of cognition created for me new and unexpected difficulties."[3]

In thinking about this problem, Kant stressed further the distinction (previously noted) between the understanding and reason as two forms of man's intellectual faculty – the understanding being the faculty of such constitutive concepts as substance and cause, and pure reason being the faculty of regulative ideas that, in a transcendental sense, integrate the whole of experience. But the true significance of this distinction only gradually dawned upon Kant, and his Reflections during the Silent Decade testify to his struggle toward the clarification in his own mind of the ramifications of the ideas here involved.

II

Before turning to Reflections that give us an insight into the development proper of Kant's ideas, it may be well to consider once more, but briefly, some Reflections that refer to his intentions, his

conception of the value of the work, his progress, and related matters.

We have seen already that in 1772/73 it was Kant's intention "to investigate how much reason can know *a priori* and how far its dependence upon instruction from the senses extends," and that "the critique of pure reason" is to be "not a doctrine" but "a discipline"; that its aim is to "break reason of its bad habits"; for "when reason has not been disciplined but spreads its branches widely it produces blossoms but no fruit" (XVII, 562f: 4468). This projected critique of pure reason, as "a propaedeutic to metaphysics,"[4] Kant saw as "the science for determining the aims and limits or the range of the employment of reason" (XVII, 563: 4471), and therefore as "the grave of all superstitions" (XVIII, 63: 5022). He firmly believed that "all philosophical sciences can gain much from it" (XVIII, 63: 3023).

"At the beginning," Kant tells us in a Reflection written in the late seventies, "I saw this doctrinal concept as in a twilight. I attempted quite seriously to prove propositions and their contradictories, not in order to establish a doctrine of doubt but, because I suspected an illusion of the understanding, to discover wherein it consisted. The year '69 gave me a great light" (XVIII, 69: 5037). But from this initial conception to the final realization of Kant's goal was still a long way; and there was a special reason for this. As Kant put it in 1772: "Other sciences can grow gradually through joint efforts and through accretion. The philosophy of pure reason must be projected all at once because what is at stake is the determination, first of all, of the nature of cognition itself and of its universal laws and conditions, and not to test haphazardly one's power of judgment" (XVIII, 76: 5062).

Moreover, since the critique of pure reason is to be an entirely new approach to philosophy, not much can be learned from the past. "Everyone who writes to evaluate the products of pure reason on the basis of literature, that is, on the basis of wide reading, undertakes a futile labor." Although he may obtain a supply of materials to be evaluated, if "he has not submitted his own understanding to a critique, his critique [of the material] is always idiotic and not philosophical," for "it makes use of principles the examination of which is the proper purpose" of philosophical investigations (XVIII, 89: 5106).

And so we need not be astonished to read in one of the Reflections toward the end of the 1770s that, although he had "learned something" from the reading of the works of others, he had "found it to be good to omit everything foreign and to follow [his] own idea," the more so

because he had "not fought against systems." And Kant added: "I have not quoted myself but have thrown everything out. I do not approve of the rule that, if in the application of pure reason one has previously proven something, one afterwards no longer questions it as a firm principle" (XVII, 62f: 5019).

In the same spirit Kant wrote in 1772: "I have as yet not settled down anywhere in the field of philosophy of pure reason. I have written no large books in this area and thus have not placed my vanity in the necessity of having to defend them and to remain of the same opinion. I even have not looked again at the small attempts, which I have scattered in order not to appear to be idle, in order not to get stuck in one and the same place" (XVIII, 54: 4992). It would have been easy, of course, "to proceed according to a manual," for that "requires only diligence and attention": but to provide the manual itself requires "a sudden idea which, in the realm of thinking, is the same as a lucky incident in the realm of occurrences" (XVIII, 55f: 4997).

In a lengthy Reflection of 1772 or 1773 Kant had the following to say concerning the development of his own thinking:

> It had taken some time [since the "light" of 1769] before the concepts arranged themselves in my mind so that I saw that they constitute one whole and clearly draw the boundary of the science which I intended. Prior to the Disputation [that is, prior to 1770] I already had the idea of the intrusion of the subjective conditions of cognition into the objective; and afterwards that of the difference of the sensible and the intelligible. But the latter was now only negative.
>
> One should not believe that everything hitherto written and thought has been a pure loss. The dogmatic attempts can always continue but a critique of them must follow, and they can be made use of only in order to judge the illusion which happens to human reason when it confuses the subjective with the objective, and sensibility with reason.
>
> Two metaphysicians – one of whom proves the thesis, the other the antithesis – represent in the eyes of a third observer the place for a sceptical examination. One must do both oneself.[5]
>
> I believe, of course, that this doctrine will be the only one which, when the minds have cooled down from the heat of dogmatism, will remain and then must continue for ever. But I doubt very much that I shall be the one who brings about this change. Man's mind is of such kind that, in addition to the reasons which would illuminate it, time is necessary to give them strength and continuity. And when prejudices are attacked it is no wonder that, at the beginning, these efforts will be attacked [in turn] by the very same prejudices;

> for it is necessary first of all to do away with the impressions and the old habit. I could cite various cases where not the originator of the improvement but, later on, those who, after a long period of opposition, found it anew set in motion to continue its course.
>
> I can anticipate the reproach that diverse matters which should have been dealt with have not been elucidated. But such [criticism] is the same as if one were to reproach someone who wanted to write a small book with not having written a large one. What is not contained in a publication constitutes no defect (in the sense of a failed intention); but the deficiency encountered where something is presented as complete [when it is not] is a defect. It takes restraint and good judgment not to say all the good one knows, and not to overburden one's work with all the ideas one has so that the main purpose may not suffer therefrom. In the analysis I have said several things that are not unimportant. (XVIII, 60f: 5015).

Kant was convinced, however, that "it is of the greatest importance to make a science of reason technical." The logicians, he felt, "have tried it in vain with their syllogistic as a factory" (XVIII, 34: 4937). And so, as we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, Kant turned to mathematics as his model. How is it possible, he now wondered, that "in mathematics so much and in philosophy of pure reason nothing at all is known *a priori*" (XVIII, 59: 5011)? His answer: The difference lies in the methods employed in mathematics and in philosophy (XVIII, 34: 4937). And if this is so, an obvious question is: Would it be possible to employ the mathematical method in philosophy? The question is important, Kant adds, because "it is of less importance whether a few propositions of pure philosophy concerning an object are true or false," and of much more importance that they be obtained by an appropriate method and that they "have their proper place within the whole of knowledge, as on a master chart" (XVIII, 53: 4991) — or as the theorems in a mathematical system. But in the end Kant confessed that "even the method has come to me only through trials" (XVIII, 67: 5031).

As the end of the Silent Decade drew near — we may assume that most of the *Critique of Pure Reason* had already been written — Kant realized that "the method of [his] presentation has a disadvantageous form"; that, in fact, it may appear to be "over-subtle, dry, even restricted and far different than the tone of a genius" (XVIII, 53: 4989); that it is "not very well adapted to hold the reader and to please him" (XVIII, 64: 5025). In fact, "some readers will be frightened away." But, Kant asked, "is it not necessary to frighten away some with whom the cause would come into bad hands? " Hence, he added, "even if, like

Hume, I had in my power all possible embellishments I would still have misgivings making use of them" (XVIII, 70: 5040). Again: "Even if I had been in possession of the greatest wit and the greatest charm as a writer I would have excluded them, for I am much concerned with leaving no trace of a suspicion that I wanted to capture and persuade the reader. . . . I expect no accession on his part except through the strength of the insight" (XVIII, 67: 5031). But in a different mood Kant wrote: "In many places my presentation would have become much clearer if it had not had to be so clear" (XVIII, 63: 5020).

However, Kant did give us one hint on how to approach the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "One must begin one's judgment with the whole and direct it toward the idea of the work, including its basis. The rest belongs to its presentation, and in this much may have been missed and could be improved" (XVIII, 64: 5025).

III

It is only natural that the basic ideas that Kant first stated in the *Dissertation* of 1770 should provide the background for his Reflections during the seventies, for they are part of that "great light" of 1769 and find their definitive formulations in the *Critique of Pure Reason.*

Among these ideas are: (1) *Matter* (as that which transcends experience). Its parts are assumed to be substances (AA II, pp. 389f). (2) *Form.* It consists in the coordination and subordination of substances, with coordination taken to be real and objective, the connections and possible influences of the substances one upon another (that is, their causal interrelations) constituting the essential form of the world (AA II, p. 390). (3) The *totality* of all parts of the world that belong together – which is "a cross for the philosopher" because it is difficult to understand how the never-ending series of the states of the world can constitute one all-inclusive whole. The difficulty arises from the fact that succession and coordination are not intellectual conceptions of the whole but belong to the conditions of sensory intuition (AA II, pp. 391f).

Crucial to Kant's argument in the *Dissertation* as well as in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is, of course, his distinction between sensibility and intelligibility. The former he defined in the *Dissertation* as "the receptivity of the subject," and the latter as the faculty of the subject to represent to himself what in the knowledge-situation cannot be apprehended through the senses. The former gives us knowledge of

things *as they appear* (phenomena), the latter represents them *as they are* (noumena)[6] (AA II, p. 392).

All things are given to the senses under the special forms of our sensibility; and these forms are the basis of the universal interrelations of things insofar as the things are appearances. As we know from the *Dissertation*, the forms are space and time, neither of which can be obtained by abstraction from sensory experience because the very possiblity of such experience presupposes them.

And from the *Dissertation* we also know Kant's belief that the substances of the world are all interrelated beings which derive from, and depend upon, one ultimate Being – "the architect of the universe" (AA II, p. 408); and the task of metaphysics is to prevent extending the principles which are proper to sensory cognition beyond their limits into the realm of intellectual cognitions, for what cannot be known through sensory intuition is also unthinkable and therefore impossbile (AA II, p. 411).

IV

In the early part of the 1770s Kant reaffirmed but also modified in various ways some of the ideas he had developed in the *Dissertation*. He thus wrote in one of the Reflections: "In order to attain [my] final goal I find it necessary to isolate reason, and also sensibility, and to consider first of all everything that can be known *a priori* [and then to see] whether it also belongs to the realm of reason" (XVIII, 59: 5013).

Following through on this project, Kant considered once more various problems pertaining to space and time. In a lengthy Reflection datable to about 1771 he raised the question: Are space and time something in themselves and absolute or do they merely adhere to things (XVII, 700: 4756)? This was, of course, as Kant also noted, the basic issue between the Newtonians and the Leibnizians. In the *Dissertation* Kant had repudiated both positions and had set forth the thesis that space and time are forms of our sensibility – a thesis advanced also in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The Reflections of the early 1770s merely underscore the continuity of thought from the *Dissertation* to the *Critique* in this respect – in itself an important fact because in other respects the position developed in the *Dissertation* had to be augmented.

"That time is a form of the inner sense," Kant now says in one of the Reflections, "may be seen from the fact that one can think it but can never intuit it like extension" (XVII, 579: 4518). "According to reason,

time is the nexus of coordination, but according to sensibility [it is the nexus of] subordination" of the moments of time in sequence (XVII, 578: 4514). "All parts of time are again times," and "all given times are parts of a larger time," going on into "infinity." "There is no empty time between two states, [for] change is only the continuation of a process" and no two stages in that process are ever separated by "a time which is not filled by a continuous sequence of changes" (XVII, 700f: 4756).

Space also is nothing real – "neither a thing in itself nor a really real relation through which one thing affects something in another." It is "not a concept of the understanding," for, if it were, it would refer to "some kind of an object." Space also does not belong to objects but is the form of our external sense (XVII, 577: 4507). As "the law of coordination," it is "prior to the things" (XVII, 578: 4511), but "not as something real." "Absolute space, relative to which creatures stand in real relation, is impossible" (XVII, 578: 4512); and "empty space as an object of the senses is also impossible," although we may speak of empty spaces "between planets" (XVII, 578: 4511). "All parts of space are again spaces; for a point is not a part but a limit. All given magnitudes of space are parts of a larger one; and so on into infinity. And the unity [of space] is a pure intuition, not a concept of the understanding" (XVII, 699f: 4756). "The synthetic propositions pertaining to space are therefore not contained in the concept of space . . . but are abstracted from, or found in, the intuition of it" (XVII, 579f: 4519).

Space and time, even together, "do not constitute something real." "Only [sensory] impressions provide the real" (XVII, 578: 4513). "Space and time are merely what is necessary for [sensory] intuition" (XVII, 579: 4516). They provide limits but no totality; for "the first beginning and the outermost limit of the world are equally incomprehensible" (XVII, 576: 4503).

We must note that "all spaces are simultaneous, and that all times are in succession; and that in space a thing is not [simultaneously] in many places; it is so only in succession" (XVII, 577: 4509).

Interpreting space and time as forms of our sensibility has this "positive aspect": The propositions which pertain to space and time "cannot be changed by reason" and are therefore "completely certain and [intuitively] evident." "Everything is somewhere and at some time" (XVII, 577: 4508). But more importantly, since the propositions of mathematics pertain to space and time as pure forms of our sensibility, and since all objects of experience must conform to these forms, the propositions of mathematics are *a priori* valid for all objects of

experience. The "negative aspect" is that the application of the propositions is "restricted to the world of sense impressions" (XVII, 576: 4508). As Kant puts this "negative aspect" in the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "The true correlate of sensibility, the thing in itself, is not known, and cannot be known, through these [sensory] representations" (A30/B45).

V

Given space and time as forms of our sensibility, association and change become possible among the objects of experience. Actually, "change is given in experience but is a problem for reason" (XVII, 569: 4485). This is so because where there is change there must be that which changes and therefore is changeable. In other words, there must be substances and their states (XVII, 570: 4487) – substances, that is, which may change location in space, and the states of substances which may change in time. Change is thus possible in two distinct forms (XVII, 579: 4518). Even so, however, it remains true that "substances neither come into being nor do they cease to be." "Matter, though dependent, is eternal." But in the continuity of change every particular event has its beginning and its end, and "both, beginning and end, have a cause" (XVII, 702: 4756).

Substances are, of course, involved wherever there are "bodies," and "a body is possible only in accordance with the determinations of space, that is, every part of a body occupies space" (XVII, 573f: 4498). This means that bodies are not the substances themselves but only their appearances. They are "phenomena" and, as such, are "possible only through the conditions of space" (XVI. 574: 4499). The question is, do bodies exist also as "something real outside my experience? " To this question Kant replied: "Outside my sensibility bodies are not bodies (that is, they are not phenomena)." The question of whether or not there exists something "external to me" is really "a question concerning the origin of the appearances and not one concerning the existence of that which appears," and "existence, taken as that of an object, is but the representation of the context of all appearances according to laws" (XVII, 586: 4536). That is to say, an object can be said to exist if it is related to the context of appearances in accordance with laws. And "all external appearances are substantial phenomena because we treat them as substances" (XVII, 572: 4494). Of substances that lie outside the range of possble experience we know nothing.

But when we accept the restriction of cognition to the "context of appearances," we discover that "every object is changeable with respect to its synthetic predicates" and that "the synthesis can be thought of as successive determination." But "no predicate can belong to an object if it contradicts an analytic predicate of that object," and "no predicate can belong to an object simultaneously with one which contradicts it synthetically." The facts here depend entirely on "the principle of noncontradiction." The synthetic ascription of predicates, on the other hand, "depends upon experience" (XVII, 567: 4480). Whether something is an object or a predicate of something else we can determine only through our own consicous act – as Kant put it: "through the active verb 'I' " (XVII, 573: 4495).

Further inspection reveals that "two successive states are never directly connected one with the other, for two states are at two different moments in time, and between two moments there is always a time." The question is: "In what state was the thing during that time? " Kant's answer: "The states are the extremes of a line"; and "there exists an infinite series of intermediate states" (XVII, 584: 4531). In the *Critique of Pure Reason* he put it this way: "Between two moments there is always a time, and between any two states in the two moments there is always a difference which has magnitude. . . . All transition from one state to another therefore occurs in a time which is contained between two moments of which the first determines the state from which the thing arises, and the second that into which it passes. Both moments, then, are limits of the time of change, and so of the intermediate state between the two states, and therefore as such form part of the total alteration" (A208/B253).

Obviously, what Kant said in the early Reflection is essentially what he said in the first *Critique*; but in the *Critique* he added: The first moment "determines the state from which the thing [better: the alteration] arises, and the second that into which it passes." In the Reflection Kant asked: "What are the laws and conditions of appearance" which cover the case? And he replied by referring to "another law of sensibility, namely, succession as a series whose members can be counted and which therefore can never be infinite in number." But this merely raised the more general question: "What are the laws and conditions of appearances? " And to this question there is no answer in the Reflection here referred to (XVII, 584: 4531). However, in connection with it other problems arise.

To begin with, "boundaries of an appearance cannot appear," for

boundaries are not objects and "appearance without an object (that is, emptiness) is not possible." Paradoxically, however, "an infinity of time *a parte ante* is necessary in the appearance" for the complete exposition of the present state of affairs (XVII, 583f: 4529). This is so because any present state is determined by antecedent states which, in turn, are determined by states antecedent to them; and so on into past times *ad infinitum.*

But when we limit ourselves to the present, we may find that the idea of a world as a whole serves well as an integrative principle for the totality of our experience, although it provides no proof for any particular causal connection (XVII, 580: 4521). Still, three principles are here in evidence. Kant refers to them in two of his Reflections of 1771/2. For reasons that will be apparent when we come to the second of these Reflections, I shall adjust the order given in the first Reflection to that of the second. The ideas remain the same.

"In all that is real," Kant wrote in the first Reflection, "there is the relation (1) of ground to consequence (*dependentia*); (2) of parts and their composition (*compositio*); (3) of substance to accident (*inhaerentia*)." These three "principles" depend upon "three presuppositions: that of the ground; that of the parts; and that of the object." More specifically, they depend upon the presupposition "of a ground which is not a consequence; of a unity which is not a composit; and of an object which is not a predicate" (XVII, 573: 4496).

The three relations here involved all have their limits. The limits of (1) are "independence and absolute necessity." The limit of (2) is "absolute (complete or infinite) totality, i. e., a synthesis which cannot possibly be any larger." The limit of (3) is "the substantial." And let it be noted that the intuition of myself as the experiencing subject, "the I," is "the intuition of a substance" (XVII, 572: 4493).

That this last thought gave Kant considerable trouble is evident from the fact that he not only dealt with it extensively in the "Paralogisms of Pure Reason" but that he rewrote this whole section in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason.* In the end, his conclusion was that "so long as we do not go beyond mere thinking, we are without the necessary condition for applying the concept of substance, that is, of a self-subsistent subject, to the self as a thinking being" (B413). And: "The proposition, 'I think' or 'I exist thinking', is an empirical proposition" and is "conditioned by empirical intuition" (B428), although "in the consciousness of myself in mere thought I am the *being itself*" (B429).

But let us return to the Reflection we were considering.

Kant continued: The first of the relations referred to above shows "things through one another; the second shows that they belong to one another; and the third shows that they belong in one another." All three relations are "terminals." The first is that of "necessity and its opposite, absolute and primary contingency (freedom)." The second is that of universality (everything taken together) and its opposite: no connection, the simple. The third is that of substantiality and its opposite: mere relation. Not one of these relationships, Kant maintained, can be comprehended: the first, "because the condition of necessity or, in the opposite case, all necessity is lacking; the second, because the terminals of the synthesis are lacking; and the third, because the predicates are lacking." What this amounts to is that "all of these relationships are but the realized logical [aspects] of the relation of subject and predicate, of antecedent to consequent, and of the universality of the concept designating the subject" (XVII, 572: 4493). What emerges here, it seems to me, is the first indication of a close connection between the forms of logical judgment and the facts of experience – a connection which entailed the transition to Kant's derivation of the categories from the forms of judgment. We shall see later that such is actually the case. In the meantime, however, there are other matters to be considered.

VI

"The first question [Kant wrote in one of the Reflections of 1771] is, How can concepts arise in us which have not become known to us through an appearance of the things themselves, or propositions which no experience has taught us? " (XVII, 563: 4470). More pointedly he asked: "Analytic propositions can be proven by the principle of noncontradiction or identity, but synthetic propositions cannot be so proven. How, then, do we obtain them? " And here Kant saw three alternatives: (1) We obtain them "empirically," or (2) "through pure intuition," or (3) "through subjective conditions of the representations of the understanding" (XVII, 566: 4477). But which of these alternatives is the right one?

Kant knew, of course, that a vast number of propositions are generalizations that are empirically grounded. But he emphasized the fact that "the universal is not always borrowed from the particular." "The geometrical properties [for example] are not borrowed from the special determinations of the figures; the latter are borrowed from

universal space. And just so in arithmetic." Kant added: "This real universality [of mathematical concepts] is the derivation of partial determinations out of the whole as a ground. It is then a valid principle." In other words, "when the things are already given, cognition advances from the particular to the general. But from the ground through which the things are given [for example, spatial configurations are given by limitations of space in general] the inference is from the general to the particular, and in the case of the whole it is from the universal to the individual" (XVII, 583: 4527). The paradigm case for Kant is always mathematics – arithmetic as well as geometry – which "contains no principles derived from experience, not even when applied, but only objects of experience" (XVII, 565: 4475) – such as spatial configurations and numbers. And mathematical propositions are valid *a priori* for all objects of experience in space and time.

The problem of *a priori* knowledge having thus arisen again, Kant considered it at some length in a Reflection datable to late 1771.

> The question is [he wrote]: How can we represent to ourselves things entirely *a priori*, that is, independently of all (even implicit) experience, and how can we comprehend the principles which are not derived from experience but are *a priori*? How does it come about that to that which is but a product of our self-isolated mind there correspond objects and that these objects are subject to those laws which we prescribe for them? That there are such cognitions *a priori* pure mathematics and metaphysics teach; but it is an investigation of importance to try to comprehend the ground of their possibility.

Elaborating the problem Kant continued:

> It can well be understood that a representation which itself is an effect of an object corresponds to that object. But it is not at all clear that something which is merely a product of my brain is related to an object. Furthermore, it is also comprehensible that with an impression in me, which stems from objects, there is connnected yet another [impression] in accordance with experience. But it is more difficult to comprehend that we, out of ourselves, validly connect properties and predicates with the represented objects when no experience has shown us that they are connected. To say that a higher Being has wisely placed such concepts and principles in us amounts to destroying all philosophy. We must look into the nature of cognition in general in order to discover how such a relation or connection is possible even though only one of the *relata* is given.

A hint as to how the relation might be possible Kant gives us in the last paragraph of this Reflection. There he says:

> Empirical cognitions are not merely impressions. We ourselves must think something in connection with the impressions for empirical congitions to come into existence. Thus, there must be acts of cognition which precede experience and through which experience is possible at all. Experience never yields truly universal cognitions because [in experience] necessity is lacking. But reason needs universal principles for certain [types of] cognition. Therefore, some universal judgments must be antecedent to experience. (XVII, 564f: 4473)

And the principle of such "judgments of pure reason" is: "Everything contained in the conditions without which an apprehension would be impossible is true" (XVII, 567: 4478).

VII

The question still is, What are the conditions just referred to? There is as yet no answer. But we can at least understand the optimistic tone of Kant's letter to Marcus Herz, dated 21 February 1772. There we read:

> Now I made the plan of a work which might have the title: The Boundaries of Sensibility and Reason. I thought of it in two parts, one theoretical, the other practical. . . . I asked myself: Upon what ground rests the relation of that which, in us, we call representation of the object? (p. 100)[7]
>
> Neither is our understanding through its representations the cause of the object (except in the morality of good purposes) nor is the object the cause of the representations of the understanding. The pure concepts of the understanding therefore cannot be abstracted from the impressions of the senses, nor can they express the receptivity of the representations through the senses. . . . In the *Dissertation* I was satisfied to express only negatively the nature of the intellectual representation. . . . But how a representation could refer to an object without being in some way affected by it, I passed over in silence. I had said: the sensory representations represent the things as they appear, the intellectual [representations represent them] as they are. But how are the things given us if not through the way in which they affect us; and if such intellectual representations depend upon our inner activity, whence comes their agreement with the object? (p. 101)
>
> [I have now] tried to bring transcendental philosophy, namely all concepts of the completely pure reason, into a certain number of categories, but not like Aristotle who placed them as he found them quite casually side by side in his 10 predications, but how they divide themselves into classes through a few basic

> laws of the understanding. (pp. 102f)
>
> I can say that, as far as the essentials of my intention are concerned, I have succeeded, and I am now in the position to present a Critique of Pure Reason which contains the nature of theoretical as well as practical cognition insofar as this is merely intellectual. Of this . . . I shall publish the first Part within about 3 months. (p. 103).

VIII

Kant had obviously been too optimistic when he wrote that he would publish the first part of the *Critique* "in about 3 months." There is no draft, no actual presentation of any part of the *Critique* in the *Nachlass* that would give support to such optimism. In fact, the Reflections of 1772 and 1773 and later clearly show that Kant's ideas were in need of further clarification. But the basic position was fixed: "From experience, that is, empirically, we know how the object is given us, but not the principle of its determinations through reason" (XVII, 732: 4798); and "an analysis of pure reason yields nothing but clarity of the representations which we already have." That is to say, "pure reason can teach us to know objects in no way other than through the application [of synthetic propositions] to sense impressions" (XVII, 613: 4626).

But "how can cognitions be generated in us when their objects have not yet been presented to us? " Mathematics once more provides the answer; for "pure mathematics, which flows entirely from pure sources *a priori* without accepting anything from experience as its ground, has in this respect shown incomparable progress and a luck that is justly admired and at times envied." To be sure, there are also "other sciences" which, "wanting to be of equally pure origin, find themselves constantly in contradictions." A general inquiry into the sources of *a priori* cognition seems therefore called for (XVII, 615f: 4633).

We must keep in mind, however, that "cognitions *a priori* do not pertain to specific things (for these are not yet given), but to universal representations of things in general, that is, to intuitions (not to impressions, for impressions are that through which some determinate something is given) or to thoughts in general" (XVII, 619f: 4636).

Now, all cognitions consist in judgments which are either "immediately or mediately inferences of reason," for "to think means to judge," and "all concepts which express the way in which objects in general are being thought, even if no object is given, must contain that

which in the judgment defines the relation of the two terms with respect to each other." What this amounts to is that "a pure concept of the understanding is the definite logical function of a representation in general" (XVII, 620: 4638).

And so Kant has taken a further step toward a derivation of the categories from the logical forms of judgments.

He clarifies the situation further in a lengthy Reflection datable to 1772 or 1773:

> We know every object only through predicates which we assert or think of it. Prior to this, that which is encountered in us by way of presentations is to be regarded as material only, not yet as cognition. Hence, an object is only a something in general which we think by means of certain predicates that form its concept. In every judgment, therefore, there are two predicates which we compare with each other. Of these, the one that constitutes the given cognition of the object is called the logical subject; the other, which is being compared with it, is called the logical predicate. When I say: A body is divisible, this means as much as: something X, which I know among the predicates that together constitute the concept of a body, I also think by means of the predicate divisibility. Xa is one and the same as Xb: a as well as b belongs to X, but in a different way: Either b is already contained in what constitutes a, and thus can be found through an analysis of a; or b belongs to X without being included in a and comprehended with it. In the first case the judgment is analytic; in the second it is synthetic. For example, 'A body is divisible', is an analytic judgment, but the proposition, 'Every body is heavy', is a synthesis; the predicate is not involved in the subject but is added to it. Now, all analytic judgments can be comprehended *a priori*, whereas that which can be comprehended only *a posteriori* is synthetic. But there are judgments whose validity appears to be certain *a priori* and which yet are synthetic – for example, 'All changes have a cause'. How does one come by such judgments? Whence do we take [the authority] to add one concept to another pertaining to the same object which no observation or experience reveals therein? Nevertheless, all axioms proper are synthetic propositions, for example, 'Between two points there can be only one straight line'. On the other hand, the proposition, 'Every magnitude is equal to itself', is an analytic proposition. [In fact] it is a universal model of analytic propositions, for it contains no mediating term.
>
> We thus have judgments *a posteriori*, which are synthetic, but also judgments *a priori*, which yet are synthetic but cannot be derived from experience because they contain true universality and therefore necessity, and such concepts only as cannot have been derived from experience. These concepts may come to us from wherever they will, [the question is] Whence do we obtain their connection? Are they revelations, prejudices, or what?

If certain of our concepts contain nothing other than that through which all experience is possible on our part, then they can be asserted *a priori*, that is, prior to the experience and yet with complete validity for everything that may ever occur to us. They are then valid, not of things in general, but of everything that can ever be given us through experience, for they contain the conditions under which alone these experiences are possible. Such propositions will thus contain the condition of the possibility, not of things, but of experiences. But things which cannot be given us through experience are nothing for us. Therefore, we can very well employ such propositions as universal in practical respects, but not as principles of speculation concerning objects in general.

Now, in order to discern what kind of concepts those are which must necessarily precede all experience and through which experience is at all possible – concepts which are thus given *a priori* and which also contain the grounds of the judgments *a priori* – we must analyze an experience as such. [We then find that] in every experience there is something through which an object is given us, and something through which it is being thought. If we consider the conditions rooted in the functions of the mind through which alone [the object] can be given, then [it is evident that] one can know something *a priori* also about all possible objects; for through it alone something becomes for us an object or a cognition at all.

We want to investigate the first. That through which an object (of experience) is given us is called appearance. For the human mind the possibility of appearances is sensibility. In sensibility there is a matter called impressions. In respect of it and of its diversity we are merely passive. The manifoldness of the impressions brings it about that we find nothing in us that we know prior to the impressions. One can never represent in thought an impression of a new kind. But the appearances also have a form, a ground lying in our subject, through which we arouse the impressions themselves or that which corresponds to them, and assign to every part of them its place. This can be nothing other than an activity which is naturally aroused through the impressions but which, nevertheless, can be known for itself.

When we posit something in space and time we act; when we posit it beside and after one another, we relate. These actions are but means for the establishment of those positions; but one can take them separately. When we posit the same [event] several times or posit it in one action and at the same time also another [event], this is a kind of acting through which we posit something according to the rule of appearances. In doing this, the positing must have its special rules which differ from the conditions of the form that are required with regard to appearance. (XVII, 616ff: 4634)

IX

Supplementary to this lengthy and important Reflection are others that belong to the same period and in which Kant stresses other aspects of the basic problem with which he was concerned. He states, for example, that "the logical form is for the understanding's representation of a thing exactly what space and time are for its appearances." Just as our impressions find a definite place in space and time, in which they are "determined by the neighborhood of other impressions," so an object is assigned its "particular logical place" through the "pure concepts of the understanding." Through this logical placement or determination the object of our representations "obtains a function among concepts – for example, that of antecedent and consequent" (XVII, 614: 4629).

What emerges here is the logically grounded idea of causal dependencies. As yet, however, there is here no reference to a category of causality any more than there is a reference to other categories. Logical matters pure and simple still dominate Kant's thinking. But he does realize that "logical possibility without the real [as given in sense impressions] is an empty concept" and is "without relation to an object" (XVII, 732: 4801). Although we learn from experience "how an object is given," the principle of its determinations we learn only from reason (XVII, 732: 4798); and we come to know an object only as we subsume the matter of our sense impressions under the logical forms of judgment (XVII, 623: 4645) – under "the categories of quantity, quality, and position" (XVII, 624: 4646). "Our understanding does not furnish the matter through which we know the world, but only the forms for arranging what is present" in sense impressions (XVII, 626: 4653).

This distinction of what is presented in sensibility (matter) and of the forms provided by the understanding for arranging and ordering it – a distinction clearly recognized in the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the "Transcendental Doctrine of Elements," Part I: "Transcendental Aesthetic," Part II: "Transcendental Logic" (see also XVII, 622f: 4643) – was not always sharp and precise in Kant's thinking. In one of the Reflections he put it this way: "At the beginning I wondered whether or not movement also belongs to transcendental aesthetics. Now I understand that, since it involves something in space that is being moved and therefore involves a change of something with respect to relationships, movement involves not only sensibility but an intellectual concept as well" (XVII, 626: 4652). It therefore does not belong to the realm of

transcendental aesthetics. It involves concepts and therefore involves thought.

Now, "to think means nothing other than to determine the representations given through the senses on the basis of what is universal" (XVII, 622: 4642). But first there have to be certain categories of thinking under which the sense data can be subsumed and through this subsumption can be converted into objects of experience. Without this subsumption under categories there are sense impressions but no objects that are at all thinkable (XVII, 635f: 4672).

So far, however, Kant had not been specific as to precisely what categories are required to make the conception of objects possible. When he referred to them in one of the Reflections of this time he gave us a strange assemblage: "Cause and effect appear to be [necessary] for prevision, whole and part for the imagination, substance and accident for the senses, possibility for the faculty of poetizing (*Dichtungsvermögen*), reality for sense impressions, magnitude for intuition, necessity for . . ." Kant did not complete this statement, but added: "In all these cases the steady connection constitutes the basis for abstract concepts of the understanding," and from these concepts "derives the possibility of *a priori* judgments" (XVII, 621: 4640).

Obviously, the categories, such as they are, have not yet been connected with the logical forms of judgments – although, as we have seen, there were at least vague hints to that effect in some of the earlier Reflections.

As noted before (Section VII, above), Kant wrote to Marcus Herz on 21 February 1772 that he had succeeded in solving, at least in principle, the essential problems of pure reason, involving "the nature of theoretical as well as of practical cognitions," and that he would be able to publish Part I ("The Sources of Metaphysics, Its Method and Boundaries") "within about 3 months."[8] But the work was not published at that time.

On 24 November 1776 Kant again wrote to Marcus Herz. The promised work had still not been published and Kant obviously felt that he had to explain this fact. "From all sides," he wrote, "I am being reproached with having been inactive for so long a time; and yet, in reality, I have never been more systematically and more persistently active since you last saw me years ago." And what was Kant's excuse for not having published the previously announced work? "The materials . . . are accumulating in my hands . . . but they are being held back by a major object as if by a dam. . . . It takes stubbornness to pursue steadily a

project such as this, and I have often been tempted by the difficulties to devote myself to other and more agreeable matters."[9] At the same time, however, Kant also refers to his "constantly interrupted health."[10]

On 20 August 1777 Kant again wrote to Marcus Herz: "What holds me up is nothing other than the effort to present everything in complete clarity."[11] And at "the beginning of April 1778," he wrote: "If this summer passes by for me with bearable health, I believe that I can present to the public this little work."[12] But the summer passed by and "this little work" was not published until 1781 as the formidable *Critique of Pure Reason.*

Even when we accept at face value Kant's references to his impaired health (and there is no reason why we should not), his intellectual struggles, not only for clarity of expression but with the formidable problems of his new approach to matters philosophical, are mirrored in the Reflections from 1772 on. They are especially evident in the Reflections of phases ν and σ.

X

Most of the few Reflections identifiable as belonging to Phase σ – that is, to the early part of 1772 – were evidently written prior to Kant's breakthrough into critical philosophy. They still mirror something of traditional metaphysics. Kant wrote, for example, that "the principles of the synthesis of pure reason are all metaphysical." In their application to "intuitions of experience" they are synthetic (XVIII, 705: 4758). In its interpretation of the world "reason begins with the highest reality" (XVII, 724: 4774). This is so because "the sum total of all reality is but one single object," and the manifoldness of the objects of experience is "possible only through the sum total of reality and its restrictions." "An *ens originarium* is therefore the ground of the possibility of the manifold" (XVII, 723: 4773).

In statements of the type quoted nothing of the spirit of critical philosophy is discernible. But there are other Reflections of this period in which Kant stated ideas previously touched upon but which persist in his thinking, albeit in modified form, well into its final commitments. Thus he wrote: "There are beginnings in the world, but there is no beginning of the world. The world has always existed" (XVII, 715: 4761). "There is no absolute first beginning" (XVII, 722: 4765) – "no absolute first in the synthesis of appearances . . . no first of the aggregate in space and time . . . no absolute first in composition (no absolute limit

of division) . . . no simple part of what is extended or of change" (XVII, 712: 4760). In this same, essentially traditional, spirit Kant also wrote: "Everything that exists (insofar as it exists) is substance and accident; insofar as it happens, it is consequence of a ground; insofar as everything exists simultaneously, it is composed into a whole and determined reciprocally" (XVII, 721: 4765).

But one thought began to occupy Kant's thinking again and again. He expressed it in various ways and returned to it on several occasions. It is this: "When something comes to pass, it must have a cause." But this cause is also "something that comes to pass" and must therefore also have a cause, "and so on into infinity" (XVII, 727: 4784; 702f: 4756).

And there is another aspect to all this. Because "space and time are only conditions of appearances," they do not and cannot provide "principles of the systematic unity of our cognitions." For that unity "principles of pure reason" are needed; and "principles of reason are those which contain the conditions of the unity of our cognition insofar as that unity is determinable *a priori*" and itself is "the completion of speculative knowledge *a priori*" (XVII, 704f: 4757). Our experience, therefore, depends upon these principles as much as it does upon the forms of space and time. But this means that "the principles of the possibility of experience . . . are at the same time the principles of the possibility of the objects of experience" (XVII, 703: 4757).

The importance which Kant attached to this statement may be seen from the fact that he repeated it almost verbatim in another Reflection: "The principles of the possibility of experience are also principles of the possiblity of the objects of experience" (XVII, 706: 4758). In a more precisely worded form it became the crucial idea in the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "The *a priori* conditions of a possible experience in general are at the same time the conditions of the possibility of objects of experience" (A111). But let it be noted that in the *Critique* Kant specifically relates this conception to what he calls "the highest principle of all synthetic judgments": "Every object stands under the necessary conditions of the synthetic unity of the manifold of intuition in a possible experience" (A158/B197), thus making it clear that it is "the principle of the transcendental unity of apperception" which is actually the "objective condition of all knowledge"; that "every intuition must stand [under this condition] in order to become an object for me" (B138). But this idea also Kant presented in all essentials in one of the Reflections when he said: "That which is necessary under the subjective conditions under which things appear to us is also necessary for the

things as appearances" (XVII, 527: 4383).

Anticipating the role which Ideas play in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant said in a Reflection previously referred to that "in everything that transcends the limits of experience we can only assume principles of the absolute unity of the synthesis *a priori* (that is, of the unity in the *a priori* employment of reason)" (XVII, 706: 4758). In the *Critique* Kant put it this way: "Transcendental ideas . . . are concepts of pure reason, in that they view all knowledge gained in experience as being determined through an absolute totality of conditions. . . . No object adequate to [them] can ever be found within experience" (A327/B384).

XI

When we now turn to the Reflections belonging to Phase *ν* (1772/3), we face at once a vast array of items not individually dated or arranged according to topics. The task of bringing at least a semblance of order into the material available is formidable indeed but must be undertaken in order to see the development of Kant's thinking in perspective.

Fortunately, there is one Reflection datable to this period in which Kant himself gave us a hint or two on how to interpret the individual items. He wrote: "My intention is to investigate how much reason can know *a priori* and how far its dependence upon the instruction from the senses extends. What, in other words, are the limits beyond which reason cannot go without the aid of the senses? This problem is important and great, for it shows man how far he is determined by reason. In order to reach this final goal I find it necessary to isolate reason, and also sensibility, and first of all to contemplate what can be known *a priori* and to see whether it also belongs to the realm of reason" (XVIII, 59: 5013).

XII

As might be expected, Kant's interpretation of space and time, as developed in the *Dissertation* of 1770, came once more under scrutiny. We are told again that space and time are neither substances nor accidents but "the forms of sensory intuition" which we can know directly and "without matter, that is, without a given object of the senses." And because we directly intuit them, we can and do know much about them and also know *a priori* much about the objects we encounter

under their forms (XVIII, 146f: 5298). We know, for example, that everything in our experience which appears in space and time stands under rules that determine "the unity of the relationships" of all appearances (XVIII, 119: 5211). In this sense, "space and time are the formal grounds of the possibility of a world" (XVII, 456: 4207). But since "time is the form of the inner sense" and "space is the form of the external sense," it follows that "that which we know only as an object of the inner sense is not subordinated to the conditions of external appearance" (XVIII, 152: 5325). And it is this idea that is the key to Kant's thesis of the freedom of the will and of its possibility.

Of *time* Kant says again that it is "the form of consciousness, that is, the condition under which alone we become conscious of things" (XVIII, 151: 5317). As this condition, time is "real" as "opposed to fiction," for "in us there really occur changes" and these take place only in time (XVIII, 151: 5320). Beyond this purely subjective realm of experience, there is also "an infinite series of transitions" among the objects of experience. "All coming into being and ceasing to be . . . occurs in time" (XVIII, 158: 5349). In this temporal flux of events we can distinguish between "current time (the present), elapsed time (the past), and coming time (the future)" (XVIII, 152: 5321); and whatsoever occurs in this sequence is determinable as either "the first, the middle, [or] the last" (XVIII, 158: 5347) in a series of events. But the first, whatever it may be, is already a part of the series. It is "preceded by no empty time" (XVIII, 162: 5365). Within the series, all appearances are determined "*a parte priori* and *posteriori*" (ibid.); and every series of contingent events "depends upon something that is necessary." "But this does not mean that there is a first of the series" as a whole (XVIII, 162: 5364). Any event in time "has much time behind it and much time ahead of it." It is not fixed in time but "moves through it as in flight" (XVIII, 152: 5321); and in this "flight through time" nothing can be regarded as real "if the transition from what precedes it is not necessary according to universal law – that is, without a ground, whether we know it or not" (XVII, 444: 4174).

As far as *space* is concerned, Kant again set forth the thesis of the *Dissertation* that space is "the form of the external sense." And again he asked: "If space were something objective and necessary, how would we come to know this? " From experience we can derive no proposition that is "universally necessary" or is knowable *a priori*; and if we were to create the representation of space arbitrarily, it would most assuredly lack necessity (XVIII, 153: 5329). However, as form of our sensibility

space is the condition under which alone objects of the external world can be experienced at all; and with respect to these objects space is "something real" (XVIII, 151: 5318).

But what about empty space? "A completely empty space," Kant wrote in one of the Reflections, "is the mere idea of a reduction [of reality] to nothing but is not a complete suspension of everything," for even in empty space, if I am able to talk about it at all, "I must be able to determine where I am." "There must therefore be correlates" and space would not be empty. That is to say, "completely empty space, without someone who intuits it, is nothing" (XVIII, 156: 5341). This last statement clarifies Kant's assertion in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that "the complete absence of reality from a sensory intuition can itself never be perceived" (A172/B214).

But there is more to this interpretation of space and time, for, as Kant put it, the thesis that space and time are "merely affections of the mind" – that is, forms of sensibility – and not "objective conditions" of reality would be "a subtle observation of little significance" were it not for the fact that it restricts all knowledge to the realm of actual and/or possible experience – and "this is important" (XVIII, 43: 4968).

What it entails is that there exists a "boundary line" between sensibility and reason such that "reason cannot limit sensibility through raising objections" any more than sensibility can limit reason "by foisting something upon it" (XVIII, 80: 5076). Even so, however, "sensibility is not so different from reason that both could not pertain to the same objects" (XVIII, 40: 4955). But the fact remains that "one can argue about appearances no farther than the conditions of appearances [that is, space and time] extend" (XVIII, 174: 5404); and no "empirical proofs" can ever "take us out of the sensory world" (XVIII, 190: 5463). The understanding, however, "knows *a priori* the first sensory grounds of the appearances or, rather, the elements of the appearances and their basic laws" (XVIII, 47f: 4977). In fact, it is "the faculty for bringing under universal rules everything that can be given us through the senses" (XVIII, 46: 4974). The understanding accomplishes this task by "(1) finding rules for what is given . . . and for possible representations; or (2) by bringing representations under a given rule" (XVIII, 46: 4975).

At this point reason, with its analytic and synthetic propositions, supplements both, sensibility and the understanding. "All analytic propositions of pure reason [Kant wrote in one of the Reflections] are correct in thesis, the synthetic propositions are so only in hypothesis – the hypothesis being that these propositions pertain to experience as

conceptions thereof, or to the conditions of sensibility but without sensibility, or to the completion and the limits [of what is given through the senses]. When this hypothesis is lacking [that is, when the propositions of reason have no relation whatsoever to the content of sensory experience] the propositions are arbitrary [as are the speculative ideas of traditional metaphysics]. If the new conditions [that is, the requirements of critical philosophy] contradict them, they are false." And when we go beyond "the limits of the synthesis provided by the understanding," the propositions of pure reason ("when advanced without restriction") are "not axioms but anticipations" (XVIII, 47: 4976). This idea Kant developed fully in the *Critique of Pure Reason* in a section entitled "Anticipations of Perception." There we read: "All knowledge by means of which I am enabled to know and determine *a priori* what belongs to empirical knowledge may be entitled an anticipation" (A166/B208).

XIII

We know from the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that Kant regarded "the principle of apperception [as] the highest principle in the whole sphere of human knowledge" (B135). He also put it this way: "The first pure cognition on the part of the understanding upon which all the rest of its employment is based . . . is that of the principle of the original *synthetic* unity of apperception" (B137). That is to say, the principle of the unity of apperception is crucial to Kant's critical philosophy. It would have been strange, therefore, if he had not dealt with it in some of his Reflections.

In earlier Reflections Kant had referred to appearances and to objects of appearance. He now raised the question: What exactly is "the origin of the appearances," and he answered: That origin must be seen in the "real functions" of the mind (XVIII, 47: 4977) as it integrates the impressions received through the senses.

But there exists here a reciprocal relationship such that "the mind can become conscious of itself only through the appearances which correspond to its dynamic functions, and can become conscious of the appearances only through its dyanmic functions" (XVII, 675: 4686). Or as Kant also put it: "We are conscious of ourselves and our own actions and of appearances only in so far as we become conscious of our apprehension of them, that is, when we coordinate the appearances with one another or apprehend one through another" (XVII, 662: 4679).

Within this complex relationship "consciousness is the intuiting of itself" as having the experience and being aware of appearances. "Consciousness would not be consciousness if it were simply an impression" and, surely, "I already presuppose consciousness when I abstract from all impressions." The unity of this self-intuiting consciousness is basic to all cognition, and to man's freedom as well (XVIII, 72f: 5049). It is "the condition of all apperception." From it "the connections of the manifold [given in sense impressions] derive according to a rule." It is "the sufficient ground for the subordination as well as for the coordination" of sense impressions (XVII, 651: 4675). This actually involves "three aspects: (1) the relation [of objects] to the subject; (2) the relation [of objects] among themselves; (3) the composition [of objects]." The determination of any particular object of apperception is "the subsumption of it under one of these acts of thinking" (XVII, 647: 4674).

But what does all this have to do with the possibility of synthetic cognition *a priori?* Kant's answer to this question is clear: "The unity of mind [as revealed in the intuition one has of oneself] is the condition of thinking, and the subordination of every particular under the universal [through an act of thinking] is the condition of the possibility of combining a given representation with others" (XVIII, 117: 5203). This means that "just as our sensibility is a faculty for arranging things in accordance with spatio-temporal relations, so there is also a law for arranging things that is separate from the laws of sensibility" (XVII, 525f: 4378) – a law of the understanding that is determinative of the integrative act of apperception. In other words, in apperception "our understanding cognises *a priori* even the first sensory grounds of the appearances or, rather, the elements of the appearances and their basic laws" (XVIII, 48: 4977).

What is given in sense impressions is in apperception "subsumed under categories" and is then seen as an object which "occupies a certain place and has a certain function" with respect to other objects (XVIII, 116f: 5203).

Although the objects thus known are only appearances and not things in themselves, they must not be confused with illusions. The term 'appearance', Kant wrote, "pertains to how an object is given" whereas the term 'illusion' designates what is "merely being thought." That is to say, "what appears in an appearance depends on a judgment concerning the affection of the senses, and when this judgment is correct, then that which appears is still only a phenomenon" but it is not an illusion (XVIII, 56: 4999).

XIV

In the realm of phenomena as determined by the integrative function of the mind in apperception, we are faced with "possibility, actuality, and necessity" as special problems of cognition. The terms designate, respectively, the relation of objects of experience to "the faculty of the mind for positing and suspending" those objects. That is to say, they designate "the relation [of the objects](1) to the faculty (possibility); (2) to activity; and (3) to an activity the opposite of which is not in our power" (XVIII, 125f: 5228).

This statement is, of course, an anticipation of the "postulates of empirical thought in general" as discussed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "1. That which agrees with the formal conditions of experience, that is, with the conditions of intuition and of concepts, is *possible.* 2. That which is bound up with the material conditions of experience, that is, with sensation, is *actual.* 3. That which in its connection with the actual is determined in accordance with universal conditions of experience, is (exists as) *necessary*" (A218/B265f).

Kant elaborated this thesis in various Reflections datable to 1772 or early 1773. Thus we read that "*possibility* is agreement with the general conditions of thinking," whereas "that which contradicts these conditions is impossible" (XVII, 732: 4801). Or as Kant also put it: "What is in agreement with the conditions of a concept in general is possible." And he added: "Mere possibility: What is *a priori* in agreement with the conditions of a concept" (XVIII, 106: 5163). But Kant also put it this way: "Possibility in the abstract is merely noncontradictoriness. It means no more than the admissibility of the idea" (XVIII, 110: 5181).

Since things in their actuality transcend mere concepts, their possibility cannot be comprehended through concepts alone (XVIII, 103: 5150). That is, "the possibility of matter must be given through the senses." Although we know "the absolute possibility of space and time" — since we intuit them — of things we know only "their hypothetical possibility" (XVII, 529f: 4390).

Because in the case of the objects of experience "the matter of their possibility must be given us and [because] we cannot think it prior [to its being given], all thinking pertains to form only." "An object of thought in general is for the human understanding in *formal* respect that which is not contradictory. In respect of its *actuality* it is that which is given" (XVIII, 103: 5147).

Furthermore, "that which is possible only under certain conditions is limited in its possibility by those conditions." But when a particular

object is given, we may "extend its possibility to what in all intention is possible in general, that is, without contradiction." We may thus find that "conditional possibility belongs to causes [in the sequence of events] but that absolute possibility belongs to the first cause" (XVIII, 110: 5181).

Now, "that which is possible in every respect is *necessary* . . . and is at the same time the ground of everything that exists" (XVIII, 110: 5181). Even then, however, Kant distinguished between absolute and limited necessity. The former consists in this, that "something is (1) not a consequence of something else; (2) is a ground of everything else" (XVII, 534: 4405). Or as Kant also put it: "Something is in every respect necessary (absolutely and without limiting condition) if it is in itself (that is, internally) necessary." But since we have "no conception of the inner necessity of a thing," absolute necessity can be asserted only as a presupposition in which is grounded the necessity of everything else. This pertains to "the form as well as the matter" of all sensory experience. Lest there be a misunderstanding, Kant added: the presupposition is not the assertion of "necessity in consequence of an hypothesis, but necessity *as* hypothesis" (XVIII, 134f: 5262).

Even so, however, "one cannot say: Everything is either thoroughly determined or it is not determined at all." As Kant saw it, everything is "at all times determined, but not always through its concept [or analytically] – except in the case of the *ens realissimum*" (XVIII, 139: 5272). What emerged here for Kant is the problem of chance; and he faced it squarely. He put it this way: "In so far as an event does not occur under a specific rule of its cause it is a matter of chance." Does this fact invalidate the principle of causality in its universality? Kant's answer is: "There is no rule in the causality of causes if there are many causes that are not specifically determined with respect to [a particular] event, for example, in war, rain, frost, and sickness are accidents. . . . In the case of human procreation many variations occur fortuitously. Just so in the fortunes of men. . . . Even under divine guidance is the fortune of men very much left to chance, that is, to the influence of many causes which are not related to the person and his merit, and which man cannot bring under a rule" (XVIII, 165: 5372). Chance is thus not a violation of the principle of causality but, in effect, a matter of our failure or our inability to see all the causal relations as interrelated determinations. This fact, however, creates another problem for Kant; for the question now is: Is chance simply a failure on our part to understand the context of events, or is that context itself, objectively considered, indeterminate

in its totality, although thoroughly determined in every particular?

Relevant to a solution of this problem is, of course, Kant's conception of the ultimate ground of things.

XV

A ground is "that through which something else is definitely posited" (XVIII, 115: 5195). More specifically, "a ground is that through which, when I posit it, something else also is posited according to a rule — not according to an empirical rule, which has no true universality, but according to a genuine [that is a universal] rule" (XVIII, 119: 5210; 118: 5207; 105: 5160). The relationship is such that when I posit *A* as a ground, something else, *B*, follows. But *B* can quite well exist without being preceded by *A* (XVIII, 118: 5207). That is to say, "the ground as ground consists in causality" (XVIII, 111: 5183). It determines what follows. And "a complete ground determines completely" (XVIII, 122: 5218) but is itself not necessarily determined.

However, as Kant well knew, the term 'ground' is ambiguous in a very crucial sense. It may be understood in a purely logical sense as the ground of an inference; or it may be taken to mean a "real ground," as in causal determination (XVII, 532: 4397). It is in the latter sense that the idea of a ground is of special significance in Kant's thinking. This is evident from various statements in the Reflections. To give but one example, Kant wrote: "Everything contingent has a ground. All things that are connected have a common ground. Applied to sensibility, these propositions mean: Whatsoever occurs has a ground" (XVIII, 115f: 5199).

To be sure, "the laws of pure reason can contain only the ground of the possibility of objects relative to the mind" (XVII, 525: 4377). The ground for the existence and the modifications of objects of experience, the "complete and real ground" of them all, is nature (XVIII, 180: 5432).

But this reference to nature is also ambiguous. In some of the Reflections the term means "the nature of a thing" as the complete and real ground of what necessarily flows from it according to universal laws (ibid.). But in other Reflections Kant speaks of nature as "the objects of all empirical cognition" (XVII, 687: 4722) such that "all appearances lie in one nature" (XVIII, 175: 5409). In this sense, "nature is everywhere a system (although our cognition [of it]seldom is one)" (XVIII, 81: 5080). And nature is a system because its determining factor is "the inner causal

principle" which determines the events "according to invariable laws" (XVIII, 175: 5409). Or as Kant put it in the *Critique*: "By nature, in the empirical sense, we understand the connection of appearances as regards their existence according to necessary rules, that is, according to laws" (A216/B263; see also A419/B446n).

To be sure, Kant wrote in one of his Reflections: "One knows the *process* of nature through the senses," but one knows "the *order* of nature only through reason." "The greater [that is, the more comprehensive] the reason, the more order one discovers. In the absence of reason everything appears to be either mere accident or blind necessity. Nature is at all times a principle of order." But, Kant points out, this order of nature "differs from an order according to rules of perception." That is, it differs from an order of how things should be if they were meant to please or to serve some other purpose. Still, "the order of nature is necessary to the moral order," for only "under the condition of its order" is it possible to "employ the understanding" in the pursuit of freely chosen goals (XVII, 547: 4439). And so Kant comes to the conclusion that everything that happens has its determining ground – and that in moral matters this includes man's freedom as the ground for moral actions.

In this perspective there emerges in the Reflections what in the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant called the "World-Whole" (A218/B265n). It is precisely the explanation of this whole, he argued, that is "demanded in the transcendental problems of reason" (A484/B512). But the pursuit of this problem leads inevitably to a dilemma: "If the world is a whole existing in itself, it is either finite or infinite. Both alternatives are false. . . . It is therefore also false that the world (as the sum of all appearances) is a whole existing in itself" (A506/B534).

In the Reflections Kant made this point by first distinguishing between quantitative and qualitative wholes (XVIII, 149: 5308), and then arguing that, irrespective of this distinction, "every whole is divisible or has parts that can be distinguished," although at times the parts are shown to be such only when the whole is actually divided (XVIII, 150: 5310). Also, a whole is either derived or it is the result of composition. If it is the latter, then its parts "constitute a real unity" and no part can be altered without some other part also being altered. In any case, "a composition is the contingent unity of many [parts]," and this means, Kant wrote, that "not every whole is a composition." In some cases – as in the case of space – "the unity of the whole precedes the many" or, what amounts to the same thing, "manyness presupposes the

unity that is to be thought in it." (XVIII, 147: 5299).

In general, composition is either ideal or it is real. It is ideal when it "contains the ground of the very possibility of the relations" of the parts (XVIII, 149: 5307). That is to say, "an ideal composit is one whose parts are impossible by themselves – that is, they are impossible unless they are members of the whole" (XVIII, 149: 5305), as in the case of space where the manifoldness of the parts is obviously contingent upon the whole. But when the whole is real rather than ideal, it is so because of the relations of the parts to one another, and the whole is "the contingent unity of the many." Each part could exist without the whole, but the whole can exist only in and through the parts (XVIII, 148: 5299).

Now, "that of which no totality is possible is necessarily incomplete." In this sense, and simply as parts, "all parts are incomplete." They are a "multitude" rather than a whole. And in this sense also "all things in the world are incomplete, the *ens realissimum*, as ground [of all things] ,being the only complete [reality] . And the unity of the whole is the reason why something belongs to the whole as a complement" to its unity (XVII, 535f: 4410).

That everything in the world "must appear in relation to the whole" is evident from the fact that it must appear in space and time. And that everything which appears "stands under a rule" follows from the fact that "otherwise it would not appear as part of the whole in accordance with the unity of all relationships with the whole,' (XVIII, 119: 5211).

XVI

In this context two new problems arise. One is the problem of an underlying substance as basis for the relationships just referred to. The other is the problem of the rules or principles that are determinative of those relationships.

Two considerations led Kant to the conception of substance. One involves the nature of thinking; the other centers on the changes that occur in the objects of experience. As to the former, Kant wrote in one of the Reflections: "Since our understanding cannot think otherwise than by means of judgments, we also can have no conception of things except through predicates that are connected with something permanent as its attributes. The terms 'substance' and 'accident' have no other meaning" (XVIII, 143: 5285); and this "purely logical relationship" of the terms is "synthetic." But since "we can think everything only through predicates, except the I," the subject term of a proposition

is "itself a predicate." It is called "subject" only because it is "the presupposition and substrate" of all other predicates (XVIII, 146: 5297).

But when we leave the sphere of logic and inspect our experience, we soon discover that there is change in and among the objects. That is to say, objects change with respect to their characteristics, and they change also with respect to their place in space and time (XVII, 534: 4406). But regardless of which change we consider, that which undergoes the change, "the changeable, is logically contingent but not so in respect of its existence" (XVIII, 137: 5268). As Kant put it more explicitly: Not only can "the logical contingency with respect to concepts" be inferred from the facts, but also the "inner possibility" of the changes. The modifications which follow one another are contingent, but their sequence in time appears to be necessary. And still more necessary for the explanation of it all is "the thing which remains while its determinations [that is, its characteristics and its positions in time] change" (XVII, 534: 4406).

Moreover, different positions of an object in space mean that, no matter in what other respects the objects are identical, by virtue of their different positions in space they are different objects. Could the same be said with respect to objects which exist at different times? Kant's answer is that in this case the situation is quite different. "Without the identity of things at different times even the different times could not be recognized as different. The permanence of things is thus basic to the flux of time itself" (XVIII, 158: 5348).

This persistence or permanence of objects in time entails the idea of substance. As Kant put it: "In connection with substance time implies persistence or change in action" (XVIII, 143: 5287). That is, substance persists in time. It is "modifiable but in itself does not change. When its states change, it still persists" (XVIII, 144: 5291). We must here recognize a fundamental distinction between substance and its observable characteristics or accidents which "all inhere in the same object" (XVIII, 144: 5287). But since "we know a thing only through its predicates, we cannot know the thing all by itself," stripped of its predicates (XVIII, 144: 5290).

The ideas thus stated in the Reflections found their full development in Kant's discussion of the First Analogy in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, culminating in the conclusion that "permanence is a necessary condition under which alone appearances are determinable as things or objects in a possible experience" (A189/B232).

In the Reflections Kant considered additional aspects of the problem. Thus he wrote: "Only substances are real" (XVII, 445: 4177). This implies that "no substance can by itself cease to be; for this is possible only through an action by which it is destroyed, and no substance can destroy itself. Also: No substance can destroy another" (XVII, 681: 4703). "The proposition: No substance perishes, means the same as: All modifications always pertain to a subject, and no modification or variation of the subject as such takes place. If it did, the subjects would themselves merely be modifications . . . [and could not be] the permanent relative to which everything else can be known as variable" (XVII, 680: 4702).

XVII

Discussing principles in various Reflections Kant wrote: "There are material and formal basic concepts just as there are material and formal principles" (XVII, 531: 4395). And: "The highest principles pertain to form only, for they concern only something in general" (XVIII, 103: 5151). These "rational principles" can be "reduced to a certain number" (XVII, 531: 4393), namely, to three: "The principles: 1. of contradiction; 2. of ground; 3. of determination" (XVIII, 103: 5148).

Referring specifically to the principle of contradiction, Kant wrote that "it can be understood convincingly in its complete validity only in the concrete," that is, in its application. This is so because no propositions are derived from it but are understood only as they conform to it (XVIII, 71: 5043). From this it follows that two propositions which contradict each other "can both be false but not true at the same time" – for example, there is a first beginning of the world, and there is no first beginning." The trouble arises from a shift in the meaning of the subject term. "In the first case, 'beginning' means the highest ground which is permanent; in the second case it means the first member of a series." When the first proposition is understood "as referring to something sensory, it is false"; and when the second proposition is so understood, "it is also false" (XVIII, 71: 5045).

All of this is, of course, in harmony with Kant's contention in the *Critique* that the principle of contradiction is "a universal though merely negative criterion of all truth" (A151/B190).

But in addition to the purely logical principles, there are also "transcendental principles" – that is, "principles of the subjective unity of cognition through reason," or as Kant also put it: "principles of the

agreement of reason with itself" or "principles of a possible empirical employment" of reason (XVII, 706: 4758) through which we establish the unity of experience.

Kant found, however, that "there must be two kinds of principles of unity: unity of the intellection *a priori* of appearances insofar as we are being determined by them, and unity of the spontaneity of the understanding insofar as the appearances are being determined by it" (ibid., 707).

It is evident from these passages that Kant's thinking had not yet reached full clarity with respect to the meaning and function of "transcendental principles," for apparently he still believed that principles could be derived empirically. The picture changed, however, when Kant tried to deal more specifically with the problems here involved.

The crux of the matter is "not that the objects are given through the senses" but that they are "being thought *a priori* and how one would think anything through concepts, be it given in any way it may" (XVIII, 66: 5029).

With the methods and achievements of Kepler (empirical approach) and Newton (postulational approach) in mind, Kant wrote: "Empirically one can establish rules but not laws," for "laws have [universal] necessity and can be known *a priori.*" Kant continued: "one always assumes that the rules of nature are necessary, for it is because of them that it is nature; and [one assumes] that they can be known *a priori* and are therefore called anticipating laws." The understanding is thus "the ground of a lawfulness that is comprehensible *a priori.*" Actually, "all metaphysical principles of nature are only grounds of lawfulness (for example, the law of causality), not of specific laws" (XVIII, 176: 5414).

In line with this thought is what Kant wrote in another Reflection: "Cognition *a priori* is here being opposed to empirical cognition," and at least one characteristic of *a priori* cognition stands out: It "advances from the universal to the particular, from what is necessary in itself to what is contingent" (XVIII, 120: 5212).

Knowledge is in all cases expressed in judgments, and the relation of subject and predicate in the judgment is either analytic or synthetic (XVIII, 103: 5149). "All analytic judgments have as many axioms as synthetic concepts of an intellectual nature are given." By means of these concepts the understanding can obtain empirical knowledge of things; and "the principles pertaining to such concepts are valid *a posteriori* only" and therefore are "true only in the practical sense." "In

the abstract they are only subjectively valid" (XVIII, 16: 4872). The crucial question is: On what grounds can an *a priori* judgment be justified?

Kant's answer, given in one of the Reflections, is clear and concise: When propositions are analytic, the possibility of *a priori* knowledge is obvious. It inheres in the propositions themselves. The situation is quite different, however, in the case of synthetic propositions. As Kant put it: "Synthetic cognition *a priori* is possible only on the principle that all relations of the presentations with respect to an object, together with the determination of the concept of that object, are nothing other than the representation of their necessary connection in one consciousness." But Kant added, "representations cannot be so combined in one consciousness if they are not seen as belonging to one object" (XVIII, 9: 4851).

This answer may be clear and concise but it is not complete. Kant himself elaborated it in several Reflections. Thus he wrote in one of them that "the things which are given us *a posteriori*, that is, as a species of appearance, must have a relation to the understanding such that it is possible to obtain a conception of them – just as, as a species of impressions, they have a relation to sensibility of such kind that it is possible to become aware of an appearance. Everything, therefore, which can become known to us only *a posteriori* (that is, through the senses) stands under the universal conditions of conception, that is, it conforms to rules, through which it is possible to attain a comprehension of things and to connect everything with the concept of things by subsuming it under that concept. Accordingly, everything must appear in such as way that it is possible to cognize it *a priori*" (XVIII, 118: 5208).

More specifically, "every object of the senses is in a time series in which it is determined *a priori*" according to the principle of rational cognition that "everything that exists has a ground," and that "everything which has a ground has also a first ground" (XVIII, 121f: 5217). But right here a further question arises – a question which Kant himself raised. It is this: In the realm of logic we know directly what the ground of an inference is or can be. But "since we do not comprehend the possibility of a *real* [as distinguished from a merely logical] ground, how can we say *a priori* that there must be one? " Perhaps the principle that "everything has a ground" is "valid . . . because without it we would have no experience," for it merely asserts that the order of things in space and time is determined by "universal laws" (XVIII, 119: 5209). It

does not specify what those laws are. They must be discovered empirically. As Kant put it in the *Critique:* "Empirical laws, as such, can never derive their origin from pure understanding" (A127).

XVIII

As we turn to Phase φ of the *Nachlass,* we come to a lengthy reflection that Kant wrote on the margins and between portions of the text of a letter dated 28 April 1774 that he had received from D. F. von Lossows. There is no connection between what Kant wrote in the Reflection and the content of the letter, but the date of the letter is important, for it gives us an approximate date of the whole of Phase φ. We are obviously coming close to the mid-point of the Silent Decade. Although Reflections of this period repeat some of the ideas previously jotted down by Kant, they also augment and often clarify them and touch upon additional problems.

Most of the Reflection written on the letter of April 28 deals once more with Kant's interpretation of space and time as first developed in the *Dissertation* of 1770, but it adds a few clarifying comments.

Of *time* Kant said again that (1) "it is one" and that all objects of experience "stand among themselves in relationships according to the special form" of time; that (2) time is "unending, without a first and a last"; that (3) time is "necessary" and "depends on no thing" for it is "the condition of inner intuitions and therefore the ground for the possibility of all intuitions"; that (4) "all things and states of things have their specific place in time" and "stand in definite relations to all other objects of intuition"; that (5) "time precedes all things and therefore can itself be known *a priori,*" both as to itself and as "a condition of the objects" of experience.

A comparison of these statements with what Kant had to say about time in the *Dissertation* shows that, despite changes in emphasis the main thrust of the argument is preserved (AA II, 398–402). Comparison with the *Critique* shows that only (3) and (5) above correspond to specific statements in the published version (A31/B46; A34/B50).

Of *space* Kant had more to say in the Reflection, although most of what he said is familiar to readers of the first *Critique.* However, collation of the two texts reveals at least some variations in the formulations and in emphasis. In the Reflection we read that (1) "space is nothing but an intuition of mere form"; that (2) all representations of external objects can be placed side by side" because of their existence in

space; that (3) "space is infinite, for the faculty of receiving [sense impressions]has no limits"; that (4) "space is necessary, for it is the primary condition of the possibility of external representations"; that (5) "space is something real which does not depend on the existence of things" and therefore "can be known *a priori*"; and that (6) it is "a pure intuition *a priori.*" To the question: "How is such an intuition possible,", Kant replied in the Reflection: It is possible because "it is nothing other than the awareness of consciousness of its own receptivity for representations (impressions) of things according to certain relations that prevail among them" (XVII, 638f: 4673).

However, the real "riddle of the philosophers" is the problem of "absolute space." It was of concern to Newton no less than to Leibniz. The former took it to be a self-existing entity; the latter regarded it as a relation of existing entities (XVII, 642: 4673). Kant repudiated both of these views. Space, he wrote in the Reflection (as he had done in the *Dissertation* and was to write again in the *Critique*), "is nothing external but is the condition in the mind itself of the form of all external representations." It is not "something imagined (*ens imaginarium*)," for "it is the only real condition of the representations of real external things." It is that which makes the extension and coordination of those things possible "according to certain conditions" (XVII, 639: 4673).

There is good reason for believing that Kant found the problem of space much more troublesome than that of time, for he dealt with it more extensively, developing ever new arguments in defense of his position. He admitted that the conception of absolute space is "entirely correct," for "otherwise one could not say anything about it *a priori*"; but he added at once that it is correct "as ideal, not as real." The conception of absolute space is thus to be retained, but not in the Newtonian sense of space as an entity in itself. Against Leibniz Kant argued that "the order of things which are side by side is not space, but space is what makes such order, or better, such coordination possible." This means that space is not "a universal concept of order" derived from experience. As "inference from observation" it would lack universal necessity and would have to refer to "something in the objects" through which the idea of space would be produced in the mind; and in that case space and spatial relations would have no *a priori* validity for objects of experience (ibid.).

Space in the transcendental sense (so Kant continued his argument) must be seen as the condition under which alone we can experience external objects. As this condition "space is ideal." However, its ideality

is "nothing other than the distinction of sensibility and what is given through it from the understanding and what is thought through it" (XVII, 639: 4673). Moreover, "this ideality of space does not eliminate the reality of space with respect to bodies, that is, with respect to the external objects of sensibility. . . . It merely differentiates objects of sense experience from things in themselves," for "space does not belong to things themselves (either as condition or as determination)" (XVII, 640: 4673). "It is the condition, not of things, but of the appearances of things (phenomena), and only of those of the external sense" (XVII, 641: 4673). Or, as Kant put it in the first *Critique:* "Space does not represent any property of things in themselves, nor does it represent any determination that attaches to the objects themselves. . . . It is nothing but the form of all appearances of the outer sense. It is the subjective condition of sensibility under which alone outer intuition is possible for us" (A26/B42).

In summing up his view in the Reflection, Kant wrote: "Space and time contain the conditions of the rules of appearance. All categories, therefore, in respect of their application, have space and time as their foundation (XVII, 642: 4673). Although the idea is not developed any further in the Reflection, it is unquestionably a first conception of the "schematism of the pure concepts of understanding" as developed in the *Critique* (A137/B176 – A147/B187) – even though the schema is essentially that of time only (A139/B178).

XIX

In other Reflections of 1774 Kant augmented ideas already presented. Thus, he raised once more the question of "whether one can say: A thing is simultaneously in two places when what is in one place is intrinsically identical with what is in the other"; and he replied, as before, that it is "space which makes possible the real external difference and, by analogy, the intrinsic difference as well" (XVII, 683: 4711). "In their appearance two things can be distinguished by the [spatial] relations" – hence, "the diversity of the phenomena" – "but not universally by the understanding" (XVII, 683: 4709).

Related to the problem of the existence of bodies in space is this further question: "Is that which we call a body a special being which is distinguished from the thinking being, or is it but a special appearance of their mutual presence? " Kant added: "I have no reason in support of the latter view; but I also cannot prove it to be wrong." If it were true, "it

would be the mystic world" (XVII, 685f: 4718).

In the Reflection Kant dealt no further with this problem. In the *Critique of Pure Reason,* however, he conceded that, traditionally, there are three interpretations of the mind-body relation: "that of physical influence, that of predetermined harmony, and that of supernatural intervention" (A390); but he also points out that "the alleged communion between two kinds of substances, the thinking and the external, rests on a crude dualism . . . the proof of which is void and illicit" (A392).

And there are other problems with which Kant was concerned in 1774. One of them was that of "a first beginning." It had troubled Kant since 1770 and before. In one of the early Reflections he wrote: "A beginning *in* the world can be thought, but not a beginning *of* the world because for this an imagined time would be required, for the world is not merely to *be* through an other; but is to *become,* since before this it was not" (XVII, 428: 4134). What it comes down to is that "everything which exists exists either because of a physical cause or according to laws of freedom" (XVII, 427: 4129); and "a first beginning can be thought only through freedom" (XVII, 445: 4178; 605: 4594) – that is, through some creative agent.

The realization of this fact led Kant to the distinction between a "first beginning" and a "first cause." The beginning, being "only *in* the world, not *of* the world," belongs to the realm of the sensible. The first cause, on the other hand, belongs to the realm of the intellect (XVII, 694: 4743). There is, therefore, no first beginning; but in its interpretation of the world of appearances the understanding needs the conception of a first cause (XVII, 694: 4742). What Kant's argument amounts to is that the beginning of the world cannot be thought "according to the grounds of sensibility," and without the conception of a first cause it cannot be thought "according to grounds of reason" (XVII, 610: 4617). There is no first in "the regress of appearances" but, as a being in itself, not as appearance," "the world has an origin" (XVII, 610: 4618); and God is its creator (XVII, 612: 4624; 603: 4589). He is "the originator of the things themselves" (XVII, 429: 4135).

Kant saw it this way: "Just as *a* (a work of art) stands to *b* (the rational artist), so *c* (the world) stands to *X* (to what in God I call the understanding)." But Kant was obviously not quite sure that this analogy is valid; for he continued: "Can I conclude so with certainty, and is this conception sufficient for us and also entirely correct? " (XVII, 690f: 4732). The problem was aggravated because, as Kant put it,

"for us there exists an indeterminate gap between an event or an arrangement in nature and God, where we must apply our powers to the explanation of everything according to laws of nature" (XVII, 694: 4741). What we must remember, then, is Kant's contention that "the cause of a series is not *in* the series, and therefore is not the first member of it. The series can be without a first and yet have a cause which is not a member of it." But, significantly, Kant added: "We do not speak here of a series in appearance" (XVIII, 161: 5361).

XX

Among the other problems with which Kant was concerned during the Silent Decade was that of possibility. He dealt with it, both as "logical possibility" and as "possibility of things." Of the former he wrote: "Possibility is agreement with the conditions of thinking in general; impossible is what contradicts them. What is in agreement with the analytic conditions of thinking is logically possible." But Kant added: "Logical possibility without the real is an empty concept, that is, it is without content, without relation to an object" (XVII, 732: 4801). Actually, Kant tells us in another Reflection, "logical possibility, [grounded in] the principle of contradiction, is not of objective reality but of cognition" (XVII, 569: 4483). The "possibilities of things," on the other hand, are "contained in the primordial Being, not as parts but as consequences" (XVII, 690: 4730).

As Kant had put it earlier: "As to their possibility, all finite things depend upon a Being of all beings which contains all reality and is independent of everything else." It is this "highest Reality" that is "the primordial ground of the possibility of all things" (XVII, 479: 4245). That is to say, "every possibility is merely a limitation of the highest Reality, and the pervading possibility is actually the relation to the highest Reality in its determinations. The primordial Being itself cannot be regarded as possible but is the principle of possibility. . . . Nothing is possible without a most real Being" and "the existence of this Being requires no special proof" (XVII, 479f: 4246). Again: "Possibility consists in the actuality of that Reality in which, through limitations, all things are given." In this sense, Kant wrote, "possibility precedes reality in all limited things" (XVII, 480: 4247).

This essentially metaphysical conception of possibility which Kant jotted down in 1770 gave way in 1772 to his transcendental interpretation: "The principles of the possibility of experience . . . are at the same

time principles of the possibility of the objects of experience" (XVII, 703: 4757; cf. A158/B197).

XXI

In some respects the years 1772 and 1773 were of special importance in the development of Kant's thinking. The problem of the possibility of cognition *a priori,* in particular, demanded a solution. But let it be understood that, for Kant, the phrase *a priori* is always adverbial, not adjectival, in meaning – and that this is true in the *Critique of Pure Reason* no less than in the Reflections.

Kant begins with the assertion that "there are judgments whose validity seems to be assured *a priori* but which, nevertheless, are synthetic," and he asks: "Whence do we [take the right] to combine one concept with another of the same object when no observation or experience reveals it as therein contained? " (XVII, 617: 4634). His paradigm case of cognition *a priori* is of course mathematics – "which flows entirely *a priori* from pure sources without receiving anything from experience . . . for example, between two points there can be only one straight line." And there are other synthetic judgments which we employ *a priori* – such as "everything that happens has a cause." Judgments of this type are "genuinely universal and necessary" and "could not have been derived from experience" because "experience is possible only through them" (XVII, 616ff: 4634).

In all experience, sense impressions are being transformed into objects through some act of the understanding. As Kant put it: "Logical performances [that is, judgments] are acts through which we posit and arrange the data [of sense impressions] into representations of things with respect to one another. The representations themselves do not become logical functions; for the real function [of our judgments] consists in the way in which we posit a representation in and for itself. It is an act *a priori* through which every *a posteriori* datum [of experience] becomes a conception." Without such acts of judgment "we would experience no objects at all but only confused inner changes." The actual functions of the understanding are thus "the ground of the possibility of the representation of things, and the logical functions are the ground of the possibility of judgments and therefore of cognitions" (XVII, 615: 4631; 525f: 4378).

Viewing experiences in this perspective, we can readily understand Kant's further contention that "the logical form of judgments is for the

understanding's representations of things precisely what space and time are for their appearances" – namely, the condition under which alone we can know objects (XVII, 614: 4629). And considerations of this nature readily lead to Kant's deduction of the categories from the logical form of judgments and to his conception of their *a priori* validity for all objects of experience. As he put it in the *Critique of Pure Reason:* As "the *a priori* conditions of a possible experience" the categories are "fundamental concepts by means of which we think objects in general for appearances" (A111).

In still another Reflection Kant again made his point, stressing the parallelism in the functions of space and time as forms of sensibility and of the categories as forms of the understanding; but he did so without mentioning specific categories: "In every experience there is something through which an object is given us, and.something through which an object is being thought. When we consider the conditions that lie in the capacities of the mind through which alone an object can be given [that is, space and time], then one can know something *a priori* of the object [namely, the spatio-temporal aspects of its existence]. When we consider that through which alone an object can be thought [that is, the categories], then one can again know something *a priori* of all possible objects, for through this alone something becomes an object for us, or a cognition" (XVII, 618: 4634).

This integrative function of the understanding in judgments concerning objects of experience Kant stressed again and again in the Reflections of 1772 and 1773; and he always saw in it the ground of the possibility of *a priori* cognition. Some of the longer Reflections dealing with the problem are XVIII, 121: 5216 and XVIII, 122f: 5221. It will be sufficient here to refer more specifically to one of the shorter ones. Kant wrote: "The [pure] concepts of the understanding all express acts of the faculties of mind in so far as, in conformity with their universal laws, representations are possible; and this possibility of them is *a priori*" (XVII, 622: 4642). As yet, however, the "categories of the understanding" themselves have not even been mentioned. Their derivation necessitated a prior analysis of the nature of judgments, and this Kant has given us.

A first result of his analysis Kant stated in a Reflection datable to about 1774. There he wrote: "In a judgment the singular proposition expresses unity, the particular expresses manifoldness, and the universal expresses all-inclusiveness. A universal proposition expresses the connection of the many that are subsumed under the universal concept of an

object,[13] and does so through the predicate that is common to the many, that is, through the connection within the sphere of a concept. If the predicate is a reciprocal of the subject term, that term . . . signifies a totality. The conditional proposition expresses the relation of ground and consequence" (XVII, 679: 4700). This characterization of propositions is, of course, still far removed from the classification of judgments in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A70/B95). But let it be noted that Kant clearly distinguished here between judgments as an act of the understanding and propositions as the formulations of such judgments. It is the judgments that are *a priori;* the "universal and necessary" propositions are employed *a priori.* Not to realize this fact leads to various difficulties in the interpretation of the first *Critique.*

XXII

In that much-quoted letter to Marcus Herz dated 21 Feburary 1772, Kant wrote that he sought to "reduce all concepts of the completely pure reason to a certain number of categories . . . as they divide themselves in classes through a few basic laws of the understanding. . . . And I can say that I have succeeded as far as what is essential to my intention is concerned."[14] This statement is obviously true as far as Kant's interpretation of the function of the understanding in experience is concerned. The Reflections reveal, however, Kant's struggle with the problem and there is as yet no final solution — no specific deduction of the categories comparable to that given in the *Critique of Pure Reason.*

In the Reflections we read again that, "as far as the object is concerned, we must note in all cognition (1) the matter and the form of it, that is, the quality; (2) the difference in the way in which it is given; (3) the quantity." The form consists in the relation of subject and predicate in a judgment, whereas "to matter belong the objectively real data, for example, cause, inherence, composition" (XVII, 623: 4645). Obviously, elements of form and matter are here still in a state of confusion.

To be sure, categories are valid *a priori* for all objects of experience because they are the forms through which alone the understanding thinks an object simply as object — that is, as object in general (*überhaupt*) — and therefore also any particular object in response to sense impressions. But first there must be the categories under which in concrete situations the appearances can be subsumed. Through this subsumption what is given in sense impressions becomes "objects of

thought" – that is, it becomes "thinkable for the understanding, for impressions are not thoughts." Without subsumption there simply are no objects (XVII, 635f: 4672).

There must be "categories of the real object, of the ground and of the whole," and these must be "in distinction from the merely logical," for they express "real relationships" (XVIII, 143: 5284). They are "the universal acts of reason through which we think an object in general" (XVII, 492: 4276). But as late as 1773 or 1774 Kant recognized only "three categories and their characteristics: first, of position (existing and nonexisting); 2. in respect of; 3. of completion. The first is whether something is or is not; the second, what there is or is not with respect to another; the third, how much of a thing is together" (XVII, 684f: 4715).

It was not until 1775 that Kant wrote in one of the Reflections: "4 headings of the concepts of the understanding, under each 3 categories; and to these various predicates that are mixed, for example, in the verbs of action and suffering, time and number" (XVIII, 74f: 5055). But what these categories are Kant did not tell us even now in the Reflections. We can only presume that they are the very ones which he gives us in the *Critique of Pure Reason* under the four headings of quantity, quality, relation, and modality (A70/B95).

XXIII

One final point. As early as 1773 or 1774 Kant clearly distinguished between the function of the understanding in subsuming objects of experience under laws, and the function of reason in integrating the knowledge obtained through the understanding. As Kant put it (and here I refer to variously arranged parts of a lengthy Reflection): "The determination of all objects through mere reason is thus the completion of our knowledge obtained through the understanding." That is to say, "reason is the faculty for the absolute unity of our cognitions," and "the principles of the completion of our cognitions, that is, the principles of the absolute whole of them, are the synthesis of reason." "The concepts of the unity of reason" – in the *Critique* Kant calls these "concepts of pure reason" transcendental ideas (A311/B368) – "cannot be represented in the concrete according to the conditions of empirical knowledge." They – these "concepts of pure reason" – "do not pertain to the world of the senses (for that world is no object of reason), but to the world of the understanding which is basic to the former." The key idea

here is that of "an *ens originarium* which is (a) all-sufficient and unique; (b) simple; (c) a free cause (intelligence); (d) necessary, according to its own nature. These are the conditions of the complete unity of all objects and therefore of all cognitions." And "this unity is also the condition of the harmony of all that is practical" – that is, it is "the absolute unity of the employment of reason in theoretical and practical respects." But it is a unity that "cannot be represented in the concrete according to conditions of empirical knowledge." It simply signifies the completion of the integrative function of pure reason (XVIII, 6–8: 4894).

What is of special interest here is the linkage of the theoretical and the practical in the integrative function of reason. And for the first time a clear distinction between the understanding (as faculty of judgment) and reason (as faculty of the integrative transcendental ideas) has been made – a distinction that is of utmost importance for Kant's critical philosophy as a whole.

Notes

1. *De Mundi Sensibilis atque Intelligibilis Forma et Principii* (Akademie-Ausgabe, vol. II).
2. *Immanuel Kant: Briefwechsel,* Selections by Otto Schöndörfer (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1972), p. 71. Akademie-Ausgabe item [57]. The Schöndörfer *Selections* contain all letters written by Kant, omitting only some addressed to him.
3. Ibid., pp. 202f [172].
4. In the *Dissertation* Kant had spoken of such a critique as "a propaedeutic that can be of immeasurable value to all sciences that want to penetrate into the depths of metaphysics itself" (AA II, 419).
5. Kant, of course, did this in "The Transcendental Dialectic" of the *Critique of Pure Reason.*
6. This is, of course, radically different from Kant's position in the *Critique.*
7. For the text of the letter see *Briefwechsel,* pp. 99–106 [70].
8. *Briefwechsel,* p. 103 [70].
9. Ibid., p. 149 [112].
10. Ibid., p. 150.
11. Ibid., p. 157 [120].
12. Ibid., p. 172 [134].
13. Kant uses here the term 'subject', meaning the subject term of a proposition designating an object. I hope that my use of the term 'object' will contribute to a better understanding of Kant's meaning.
14. *Briefwechsel,* pp. 102f [70].

Chapter Five

1775 and After

In the letter of 21 February 1772 to Marcus Herz, Kant asked: "What is the ground of the relation of what in us is called representation of the object? "[1] Three years later he answered this question in one of the Reflections: "Everything that is being *thought* as an object of intuition stands under a rule of construction" (XVII, 657: 4677), and through this construction the understanding and reason take hold of the object. The key to it all is the general principle that "what is necessary under the subjective conditions under which things appear to us is necessary also for the things as appearances" (XVII, 527: 4383).

In order to see this thesis in proper perspective it may be necessary to consider once more, but only briefly, a few Reflections that Kant wrote prior to 1775.

As early as 1770 he had written in one of the Reflections that our "material concepts" can never pertain to anything except to what is given us through the senses. "Even our material principles can be viewed only as laws of experience and can never be more universal" than the extent of experience. And when we consider the "concepts of form"

only, then our manner of judging becomes in effect but "a law of the subjective employment" of the faculty of judgment (XVII, 521: 4368).

In another Reflection of about that same time Kant wrote that, "because without concepts we cannot think anything, every object which we are obliged to think must have a relation of conformity to a concept in general, that is, it must be logically possible." And he added: "Insofar as it is given, an object is thoroughly determined, but not so insofar as it is being thought" (XVII, 501: 4304).

Statements such as these are, of course, still far removed in spirit from the critical position which Kant attained during the second half of the 1770s. Even so, however, and in retrospect, one can discern here formulations of ideas that found full clarification in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

And there are other Reflections of which the same can be said. Thus, Kant wrote: "As to kind, all our knowledge is either sensory or rational" (XVII, 520: 4363). We must note, however, that the crucial distinction between reason and the understanding has as yet not been made. This is evident also from other Reflections of that time. For example: "Reason is a law of arranging things that is separate from the laws of sensibility" (XVII, 526: 4378). And: "One knows the course of nature through reason; the greater the reason, the more order one discovers" (XVII, 547: 4439).

Moreover, the employment of reason needed itself further clarification. In 1770, Kant had spoken of the "threefold employment of reason: (1) The inner sense or intuition of oneself and one's thoughts. (2) Universal representations and the relations of their spheres (logical employment). (3) The form of thesis and synthesis" (XVII, 547: 4440).

By 1772, however, Kant had formulated a thesis which was basic to the further development of his philosophy: "Empirical cognitions[2] [he wrote] are not merely impressions. We ourselves must think something in connection with the impressions in order for cognitions to come about. Therefore, there must be actions of cognition which are antecedent to experience and through which experience becomes possible at all. Also, experiences never give us truly universal cognitions because they lack necessity. Reason, however, needs universal propositions for cognitions that are certain. Therefore, judgments that are certain and universal must lie in our reason prior to the experience" (XVII, 565: 4473).

As Kant saw it at that time, "all immediately certain" propositions are "either (1) basic formulae, or (2) axioms, or (3) canons, or (4) ele-

mentary propositions of analysis, or (5) immediately certain propositions of synthesis." Clarifying his meanings, Kant added: "The *first* are principles of identity and contradiction. The *second:* objective principles of synthesis, space and time. The *third:* objective principles of qualitative synthesis. The *fourth* and *fifth,* the material propositions contained directly under the principles of the forms of synthesis as well as of analysis" (XVII, 522: 4370).

And Kant wondered: "How does it come about that our sensibility contains determinations in which reason sees its own basic concepts? " His answer: "It comes about because the sensory form is possible through the same grounds which the understanding needs for its comprehension" of objects (XVII, 580: 4520). But this broad and abstract statement does not mean very much until it is amplified and its implications are drawn out in detail. This is, in effect, what Kant accomplished in the Reflections of 1775 known collectively as the "Duisburg *Nachlass*" (XVII, 643–73: 4674 – 4684).

I

This *Nachlass* consists of eleven numbered items (numbers 7–18), all except number 9 belonging to the year 1775. The key to the dating is item number 8: 4675, which Kant wrote upon the margins of a brief letter dated 20 May 1775, which he had received from W. H. Bertram, inviting him to the estate Wesdehlen for a one-day visit.[3] On the basis of his careful analysis of Kant's handwriting and of the ink Kant used, Adickes found that all items of the *Nachlass* (except number 9) belong to approximately the same time.

Together, these Reflections give us a fairly coherent account of Kant's thoughts in the mid-seventies, but so far little has been done to tell that story. The only detailed analysis of the texts is Theodor Haering's *Der Duisburg'sche Nachlass und Kant's Kritizismus um 1775.*[4] But Haering regarded only numbers 11, 12, 15, and 16 of the *Nachlass* as of importance for the prehistory of the "Analytic" as developed in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* and his comments are concerned primarily with questions of text rather than with philosophical issues.

Using the text of the *Nachlass* as published by Rudolf Reicke[5] – the definitive text of the Akademie-Ausgabe (1926) was not available to him – Haering provides several alternative readings based upon the original documents and a very helpful line-by-line commentary of an essentially philological nature. I shall here use the text of the Akademie-Ausgabe

(which includes practically all of Haering's alternative readings), and I shall stress issues rather than textual matters. This entails that, instead of dealing with each number of the *Nachlass* separately, I shall select specific topics, trace them through the various Reflections, and note whatever changes, if any, may be found in Kant's conception of crucial issues. My selection of topics will be determined by nothing but the internal evidence of the material available.

II

For reasons that will be evident in a moment I begin with a consideration of Kant's conception of apperception and the role it plays in cognition. Actually, it is the key to Kant's critical philosophy as a whole. All cognition centers in it and has there its firm anchorage. And what is apperception?

In various Reflections Kant spoke of it as "self-perception" (XVII, 658: 4677), that is, "the perception of itself as a thinking subject in general" (XVII, 647: 4674), the "consciousness of thinking itself" (ibid.). Its basic condition is "the unity of the thinking subject" (XVII, 651: 4675); and this is crucial, for "when something is being apprehended it is being taken up into the function of the apperception. I am, I think, thoughts are within me. These are all relationships which . . . bring it about that all appearances are represented as contained under rules" (XVII, 656: 4676). Apperception is thus the basis for "subordination as well as for coordination" (XVII, 651: 4675). In fact, "everything that is being thought as an object of perception stands under a rule of apperception" (XVII, 658: 4677). Here, then, is the central and unifying reality in all experience: apperception.

In the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant elaborated the idea of apperception, distinguishing between *transcendental* and *empirical* apperception (A107), meaning by the former "the pure original unchangeable consciousness" which is "at the same time a consciousness of an equally necessary unity of the synthesis of all appearances according to concepts, that is, according to rules" (A108). In the second edition Kant stressed the fact that "the principle of apperception is the highest principle in the whole sphere of human cognition" (B135).

It is apperception, this "unity of consciousness," which of necessity precedes all data of experience and is the basis for all cognitions, be they *a posteriori* or *a priori*. When the appearances are brought under the rules

of apperception, they are being thought and are thereby "made objective," that is, they are "determined by the universal" (XVII, 658: 4677).

This unity of apperception is supplemented and made functionally more specific by Kant's conception of apprehension. As he put it in "Duisburg 11": "The mind must have a faculty for apprehending whose functions are just as necessary for perception as is receptivity for appearances" (XVII, 658: 4677).

We must note here that, in effect, the mind is said to have two specific faculties: receptivity and apprehension. Both, however, are closely related: "The unity of apprehension is necessarily connected with the unity of intuition of space and time, for without it the latter would provide no intuition of something real" (XVII, 660: 4678). In other words, "an appearance [in space and time] is made objective by being brought under a category" of apperception. "The original relations of the apprehension are thus the conditions of a perception of (real) relations in the appearances" (XVII, 658: 4677). In fact, "mere apprehension already indicates that behind the appearances there must exist a substance as cause of the composition" (XVII, 663: 4679).

The repeated references to appearances make it necessary to consider briefly what is involved here.

The key idea is that "an object is being thought only in so far as it stands under a rule of appearance." This statement Kant clarified by adding: "Not the appearances stand under a rule, but the objects that are their basis" (XVII, 666: 4681). In "Duisburg 8" he put it this way: "The inner necessity of the appearance, when freed from all subjective elements and viewed as determinable by a universal rule (of appearances), is what is objective" and is "the ground of the harmony of the appearances among themselves" (XVII, 650: 4675). "The principle of the exposition of the appearances is the ground of an exposition generally of that which has been given" in sense perception. This principle, however, is not derived from the appearances but is "a representation of the inner action of the mind in combining representations, not merely placing them side by side in intuition" but in transforming them into a whole. "The exposition of the appearances is thus the determination of the ground upon which the connection of the impressions within the appearances depends" (XVII, 643: 4674).

"Appearances can have no order other than that . . . through which the unity of the representations is possible" (XVII, 660: 4678), and this derives not from perception but from conception — that is, it depends

upon mind as "the universal and sufficient source of the synthesis" that is explanatory of all appearances (XVII, 667: 4681). By being subsumed under a universal, appearances are being determined and "represented as objective." They are "being thought" (XVII, 658: 4677); and being thought, they come under "the rules of judgment" (XVII, 659: 4677) and therefore under the categories of the understanding. By means of these they are "brought into relation with a rule" (XVII, 667: 4681) – which is a process that culminates in our having an "experience."

Of experience Kant wrote in "Duisburg 7" that it "allows us to cognize substance, cause and effect, and the whole," all three aspects pertaining to "objects as appearances" and expressing, respectively, (1) a relation of objects to the subject, (2) a relation of consequences among themselves, and (3) relations of composition. By subsuming any particular object under one or another of these relations the object is determined as "objectively real" (XVII, 646: 4674). This does not mean, however, that the object *as experienced* is a "thing-in-itself." In various numbers of the Duisburg *Nachlass* Kant dealt specifically with this problem. I shall here refer to "Duisburg 10" only.

There he noted that in analytical propositions the concept "*a* of *X*" is directly related to "*b* of *X*." Their relation is determined by the principle of noncontradiction: *a* is (is not) *b*. *X* is here without any function whatsoever and may as well be omitted. In the case of synthetic propositions, however, the situation is quite different. Kant put it this way: "If *a* and *b* are not identical, be they used affirmatively or negatively, and if *X* is being thought as not completely determined by the concept *a*, then *a* and *b* are not in logical but in empirical relation. . . . Their relation is determined, not by their meaning as such but by *X*, of which *a* is the designation." How is the synthesis of *a* and *b* in this case possible? As Kant saw it, *X* must be "a datum of sensibility" with respect to which the synthesis, that is, "a relation of coordination" is to be achieved. In this situation, *X* is the concrete instance of *a* but contains more than is being thought by *a*. If we now form a judgment ascribing a predicate, *b* (which is not analytically contained in *a*) to *X*, then *a* and *b* both pertain to *X* and *X* is thinkable as the ground justifying the synthesis of *a* and *b*, that is, "*X* is the ground of $a+b$ but is not identical with $a+b$." "It is necessarily thinkable and yet unknown in the sense of being beyond $a+b$ as incompletely determined ground of the synthesis" (XVII, 653–57: 4676; see also 643ff: 4674; 662: 4678; 665: 4680; and 671: 4684).

In a convincing sense our experience of our own self exemplifies

what Kant was here talking about; for we know ourselves only under the aspects of space and time. The real depth of our own being – that is, the reality of our self as ground of its various manifestations – though necessarily thinkable, escapes actual knowledge (XVII, 662: 4679). As Kant put it in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason:* "So far as inner intuition is concerned, we know our own subject only as appearance, not as it is in itself" (B156). And: "I have no *knowledge* of myself as I am but merely as I appear to myself. The consciousness of self is very far from being knowledge of the self" (B158).

III

The ultimate unity of self-awareness, which is also the unity of apperception, is made functionally more specific by Kant's conception of apprehension. Although Kant spoke in "Duisburg 11" of "two specific functions" of the mind – receptivity and apprehension – he augmented this statement in other Reflections, approaching ever closer to his position as set forth in the first *Critique*. He now spoke of "sensibility, understanding, reason" (XVII, 649: 4675), and wrote more specifically that "the universal relation of sensibility to the understanding and to reason is either that through which objects are given *a priori*, and is therefore the sensory condition of intuition, or it is, secondly, the sensory condition of judgments in general concerning that which is given, or it is, finally, the sensory condition of *a priori* concepts." And Kant added: "The rules which enunciate these conditions *a priori* contain in general the relation of the subjective to the objective" elements in cognition (XVII, 652: 4675).

What this comes to is that "the understanding is placed in opposition to sensibility and reason" (XVII, 651: 4675). It "relates the two extremes by connecting the *a posteriori* data [given through the senses] with the conditions *a priori* [of reason] ," thereby "forming an empirical cognition" (XVII, 649: 4675). Or as Kant put it in the *Critique:* "All our cognition starts with the senses, proceeds from there to understanding and ends with reason" (A298/B355).

In this context Kant faced once more the problem of the possibility of cognition *a priori*, and he dealt with it in several of the Reflections that belong to the Duisburg *Nachlass*. Thus, he wrote in number 17: "*Concipere* means to form *a priori* a concept of something. The principles of the conception are either those of thinking generally, or those of absolute positing, or those of the synthesis *a priori*. For the first

of these the sensory condition is the whole of sensibility; for the second, the condition is all of thinking with respect to a datum generally; for the third, the condition is the whole itself or the totality" (XVII, 670: 4683). But it is "pure thinking" with respect to "objects of the senses" that contains *a priori* – that is, prior to the experience – "certain principles" which are foundational to whatever is "thoroughly determined as experience" (XVII, 660: 4678).

As Kant put it in another Reflection: "In every experience there is something through which an object is given to us, and something through which it is being thought. When we consider the conditions which lie in the activities of the mind through which alone an object can be given, then one can know *a priori* something of the object. When we consider that through which alone an object can be thought, then also one can know *a priori* something of all possible objects; for only so does something become an object or a cognition for us" (XVII, 618: 4634; 614: 4629). In other words, insofar as objects and/or cognitions depend upon the subjective conditions which alone make experience possible, something can be known *a priori* – that is, prior to the actual encounter with the objects. And now Kant added a crucial point to his argument: "Everything is being thought *a priori* under the subjective condition of construction. . . . To determine *a priori* is to construct" (XVII, 653: 4675). Again: "Everything that is being thought as an object of perception stands under a rule of construction" (XVII, 657: 4677).

This theme quite obviously provides the background for Kant's assertion in the *Critique* that "we can know *a priori* of things only what we ourselves put into them" (B*xviii*).

In "Duisburg 7" Kant elaborated the point, stressing the significance of "the rule of construction": If *a* is a concept referring to an object *X*, and *b* is the adjectival determination of *X*, then "*X* can be given *a priori* in the case of construction" – for example, the construction of a triangle either in intuition or on paper – and it can be known in concrete situations under *a priori* conditions of apperception (XVII, 644–47: 4674). In any case, we can and do obtain synthetic knowledge, and we do obtain it *a priori*. We must realize, however, that obtaining such knowledge always involves an action on the part of the subject. For Kant, therefore, the term *a priori* has adverbial rather than adjectival meaning. When he speaks of "synthetische Urteile *a priori*" (as he frequently does in the *Critique of Pure Reason*), he means "synthetic judgments that are antecedent to [actual] experience." He does not

mean judgments that are identifiable as synthetic and *a priori* in their propositional formulations.[6] Such judgments do not exist.

Let us also note that in the Reflections Kant, as a rule, carefully distinguishes between judgment and proposition – between *Urteil* and *Satz* –, using the term 'judgment' to designate an act of mind, and the term 'proposition' as it is commonly used in logic.

IV

Although the possibility of judgments *a priori* has thus been solved in principle – via the idea of "construction" – a further problem arises. Kant put it in the form of a question: How does it come about that to that which is a product of our own mind there correspond physically real objects, and that these are subject to laws which we prescribe for them?

Kant's answer depends on his basic conviction that "all synthetic propositions depend upon a condition of sensibility – either for intuition, construction, exposition, specification (pure or empirical) – or of thinking by the understanding, or of insight through reason" (XVII, 658: 4677); but "only the conditions of sensibility make possible the synthesis of the pure as well as the empirical intuition" (XVII, 669: 4683).

In Kant's view the situation is this: Space and time are forms of our sensibility and, as such, are known to us in intuition independently of all objects of experience. The objects, however, must conform to them, for otherwise we cannot know them. Since space, for example, is three dimensional, all objects conforming to the conditions of space must also be three dimensional. This we know *a priori* – that is, prior to any encounter with objects. The same is true with respect to the specific configurations of space – such as triangles, squares, circles, and so forth. The theorems pertaining to them must be valid also for all empirical objects we know or ever come to know under the forms of space. This we know *a priori* (XVII, 645: 4674).

Kant admitted that in some respects "the empiricist thesis," denying the possibility of *a priori* knowledge, appears to be rather plausible; for "it is understandable that a representation which is the effect of an object corresponds to that object." And it is also comprehensible that "with an impression in me, which stems from objects, another impression is connected and that I therefore, in accordance with this experience, combine one representation with another." "But it is difficult to understand [Kant continued] how, out of ourselves, we can validly

connect predicates with represented objects although no experience has shown them to us as so connected" (XVII, 564: 4473).

Several issues are here involved that make it impossible for Kant to accept the empiricist position.

One is the possibility of cognition *a priori,* which I have just discussed.

Another is the fact that there actually are objects which correspond to our sensory representations, for such correspondence requires that "the representations be determined according to universal laws" (XVII, 648: 4675). As Kant saw it, this involves a "basic principle": "Everything that is being thought stands under a rule, for only by means of the rule is it an object of thinking" (XVII, 661: 4678). By itself, however, this principle does not tell us anything at all specific about an object (XVII, 670: 4684).

In the case of mathematics, so we have seen earlier, the construction of an object – of a triangle, let us say – gives us the specifics of that object (XVII, 662: 4678). In the case of empirical objects the situation is not quite so simple. As Kant saw it in 1775: "We represent to ourselves the object by means of an analogy to construction." That is, we view the object as the result of "universal actions" through which we determine appearances in accordance with rules – just as in geometry we "construct a triangle according to a rule" (XVII, 670: 4684). And just as there are axioms in mathematics which are antecedent to, and guide us in, the construction, so "there are analogues of axioms that are *a priori* as anticipations of the laws of experience generally." They derive their validity and certainty from "the nature of thinking" as "an action of the subject," that is, they derive it "from the subjective but real condition of thinking as such" (XVII, 648f: 4675). Moreover, "I would not represent something as being external to me and thus change an appearance into an (objective) experience, if the representations were not related to something that is parallel to myself through which I refer them from me to some other subject," thereby "transforming the subjective functions of the mind into objective ones, making them into concepts of the understanding which ascribe reality to the appearances" (XVII, 648: 4675).

But more than this is involved here, for "we are conscious of our own actions and of appearances insofar as we become conscious of our apprehension of them, either because we coordinate them with one another or because we apprehend one impression through another" (XVII, 662: 4679). But this already implies that "behind the appearance

there must be a substance as cause of its composition" – that is, as cause of its specific nature – and "observation and evaluation must show what the substance is" (XVII, 663: 4679). This means that "every perception must be subsumed under a heading of the understanding," otherwise "nothing would be thought by it." "The concepts indicate the way in which we make use of the appearances as the matter for thinking." Without the subsumption under concepts "all appearances would remain separate" one from another and would constitute no objects (XVII, 663f: 4879); for, as Kant saw it: "Experiences are possible only when it is presupposed that all appearances belong under headings of the understanding." And Kant amplified: "In all mere intuition there is magnitude; in all appearance there are substance and attributes. In the change of these [there are] cause and effect, in the whole of them [there is] reciprocal action. Therefore, these propositions are valid also for the mind in respect of the production of its own representations, and are elements of that production" (XVII, 664: 4679).

V

To be sure, "we cannot construct the appearances" (XVII, 660: 4678); they are given us under the conditions of sensibility. But these conditions – space and time – "can be known *a priori* through intuition" (XVII, 652: 4675), and insofar as objects conform to them, the objects also can be known *a priori.* Still, appearances have no objective order other than that which they obtain from being specifically determined by a universal function of the understanding. That is to say, "the arrangement of the appearances according to relations in space and time requires a rule, just as the appearance itself requires a form," and the rule is expressed by a concept of the understanding" (XVII, 665: 4680). The determination of appearances in time is of special significance, for it involves "the most universal aspects of the appearances of which reality is the matter" (XVII, 670: 4684).

Furthermore, when appearances are subsumed under rules pertaining to time, "a series can be found that is entirely different from that in which objects are given." This means that "the mind contains within itself the universal and sufficient source of a synthesis" that is independent of the given sequence (XVII, 666f: 4681).

We accomplish this conversion of the given sequence of perceptions into an objective order of events by "representing the objects to ourselves by means of an analogy to construction"; that is, "we

construct it for our inner sense." When we do this, we find that in our own self "every time when something happens it follows upon something else," which, in turn, has also followed upon something else. "This representation [of a sequence] is one of the universal actions of the determination of appearances which, being universal, yields a rule, just as constructing a triangle according to a rule serves as a rule for all other triangles" (XVII, 670: 4684). What this amounts to is that "every beginning of a state of some representation is always a transition from what goes before," and "what follows belongs to what precedes as to that which determines it" (XVII, 663: 4679).[8] As Kant would say in later Reflections: "In order for the sequence to be objectively valid . . . it must be so determined that I cannot reverse it" (XVIII, 107: 5167). And this "determination of things in the order of time" requires "a rational principle" – "the principle of the possibility of experience" (XVIII, 116: 5202).

It is obvious, I believe, that Kant was here trying to find a secure basis for the principle of causality and its *a priori* validity. The problem was crucial for his new orientation in philosophy. It is therefore not astonishing that he returned to it again and again in the various Reflections – even in the Reflections that are the "Duisburg *Nachlass.*"

In number 15 of the *Nachlass* Kant wrote: "Prior to an event many different events may occur; but there is one among them upon which the event always follows" (XVII, 665f: 4681). David Hume could have written this and, in effect, actually did so. But in 1775 Kant also wrote: "When my representation follows upon something, its object would not need to follow upon it if the representation were not determined as a consequence – which can never happen otherwise than according to a universal law." That is to say, "there must be a universal law to the effect that every sequel is determined by something which precedes it, for otherwise I could not posit a sequence of objects [corresponding] to the sequence of representations." But to be able to posit such a sequence "always means that the representation is determined according to a universal law" (XVII, 648 4675).

In "Duisburg 16" Kant wrote: "What happens is a determination of sensibility through the understanding when something is posited in the time sequence." But such determination can be made only "in relation to something which precedes" whatever is to be posited in time. And this means that "the determination of a place of existence in time" can be accomplished only "through the understanding and therefore according to a rule" (XVII, 668: 4682). And Kant realized that the proposition:

"Everything which follows upon something else in time follows upon it according to a rule," is "not grounded in the specifications of the concept *a* of the occurrence" and is therefore not an analytic proposition (XVII, 665: 4680).

But if in the time series of events "the existence of everything is determined relative to other things, their when and for how long" (XVII, 505: 4319), then, in any attempt to explain what is happening now, we are forced into tracing regressively the series of antecedent conditions. As Kant put it in the *Critique:* "If the conditioned is given, a regress in the series of all its conditions is set us as a task" (A498/B526).

However, in tracing the empirical sequence of events we encounter no limit – that is, we encounter nothing that is empirically unconditioned (XVII, 526: 4379). In the *Critique* Kant put it this way: "In the empirical regress we can have *no experience of an absolute limit,* that is, no experience of any condition as being one that *empirically* is absolutely unconditioned" (A517/B545).

What this amounts to is that "the sensory world has no beginning, no first in time" (XVII, 489: 4271; 675: 4686). Or, as Kant stated more fully: "A first beginning is impossible; for a beginning can be conceived only according to laws of sensibility, and consequently only in a time occupied by objects of sensibility. A first beginning which is preceded by no phenomenon cannot be thought. All generation, therefore, is only change, transformation. But [Kant continued] a first cause can very well be thought because it is merely something intellectual" (XVII, 682: 4708). Lest there be here a misunderstanding of Kant's meaning, we must keep in mind his distinction between a first in time and a First Cause. These two, he maintained, "have nothing in common" (XVII, 489: 4271).

That all of these ideas play a prominent part in the overall argument of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is, of course, obvious; for there Kant asserts: "The absolute first beginning . . . is not a beginning in time, but in causality. . . . In respect of its happening, natural causes exercise over it no determining influence whatsoever. . . . Accordingly, in respect of causality though not of time, [it] must be entitled an absolutely first beginning of a series of appearances" (A451/B479). And in this respect Kant had written in one of the earlier Reflections: "A first beginning is thinkable only in terms of freedom" (XVII, 445: 4178), that is, as a First Cause.

VI

When we go beyond the "Duisburg *Nachlass,*" we find that Reflection 5024 (XVIII, 64) is definitely datable "Fall of 1776." It thus provides a reliable reference point in time for all items of Phase φ. The various Reflections assignable to the early part of this phase are very brief and deal with a variety of topics. Occasionally, however, they reveal changes in Kant's thinking that are worth noting. I begin with Reflections pertaining to metaphysics.

In a Reflection of 1772 Kant had raised the question: "Is metaphysics a critique or a doctrine? " More specifically: "What can one cognize through mere reason without all experience? What are the sources, the conditions and limits? " And he had answered: "Transcendental philosophy is critique of pure reason" (XVII, 558: 4455). In 1776 Kant wrote: "The steps of metaphysics have so far been taken in vain. One has discovered nothing in it. Nevertheless, one cannot abandon it" (XVIII, 18: 4880), for, "though metaphysics does not lead to certainty in the dogmas of reason," it leads to certainty "in the maxims of it" (XVIII, 19: 4885). In other words, "metaphysics is not an organon but a canon of reason – a ground, not of doctrine, but of discipline, not of dogmatic but of critical cognition, not to increase knowledge but to prevent errors, not of objects but of the rules of the subject, not the subject matter of religion but its protective guard, not of objective but of subjective employment" (XVIII, 14: 4865). The "most dignified" attitude to take is that "before one ventures [to develop] a doctrine of pure reason, one first carries out a critique of it." And Kant added: "But critiques require knowledge of the sources, and reason must know itself. To this inquiry one is driven only after many years" (XVIII, 21: 4892).

By now Kant had spent many years inquiring into the function of reason in cognition and had discovered that "we can construct metaphysical hypotheses" but "cannot test them in the realm of appearances," as we would test scientific hypotheses. However, since "the boundary of appearances is itself not part of the appearances" but something "outside them," "we have reason for inferring the existence of a Being as the cause of the world, and a future world." But "we have no means of defining them" (XVIII, 41: 4958).

In this abstract sense our belief in the existence of God and in personal immortality may find their justification. "The only insoluble

metaphysical difficulty is to combine the highest condition of the practical with the condition of the speculative unity – that is, to combine freedom with nature. The spontaneity of the understanding in the context of appearances is the riddle. Following this, absolute necessity is the second riddle which the pure understanding rather than nature propounds, for the understanding is the primordial condition of the possibility of nature" (XVIII, 98: 5121).

What emerges here is the "third conflict of the transcendental ideas" as presented in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A444–51/B472–79), although the resolution of the conflict (A538–58/B566–86) Kant did not discuss in the Reflections with which we are now concerned.

In a few of the Reflections he very briefly referred again to mathematics as the key example of synthetic cognition *a priori:* "Mathematics [he wrote] deals with concepts that it can make *a priori* intuitive. Philosophy [on the other hand] can only subsume under pure concepts but can never make them intuitive" (XVIII, 29: 4920). What this entails is that "the cognitions of pure speculative reason can never reach further than the field of experience and beyond its limits have no significance whatever" (XVIII, 85: 5091). Hence, when everything is considered, we find that there is "no employment of reason that at the same time is apodictic and evident except in mathematics with respect to objects, and in morality with respect to actions. All other investigation is natural science" (XVIII, 25: 4907).

In this connection there arises once more the problem of cognition *a priori.* As Kant put it in one of the Reflections after 1776: "When someone speaks of synthetic propositions *a priori* he speaks only about his thoughts . . . or he speaks of the conditions of empirical cognition" (XVIII, 36: 4943); but only the latter is philosophically significant. It implies that "synthetic propositions *a priori* occur only as principles of the possibility and the exposition of experience" (XVIII, 99: 5124). That is to say, "when I assume that an *a priori* concept has an object, I must be able to cognize *a priori* all of that for which the concept contains the condition." Nothing can here be "uncertain and undetermined," and yet "reason contains nothing other than the conditions of its empirical employment." All attempts to transcend this employment are "impossible and in vain," for "transcendent concepts are not concepts of objects. They are ideas" (XVIII, 38: 4946).

In two Reflections Kant referred briefly to the role of the *a priori* in cognition. In one of them he wrote: "All determination in time can take place only according to an *a priori* principle" to the effect that

"everything follows from something that goes before it in accordance with a rule" (XVIII, 120: 5214). This "principle" he had, of course, stated before in almost the same words.

In the other Reflection Kant wrote: "Everything in the world has a ground" means as much as "it can be known *a priori* (as necessary, either absolutely or conditionally) and stands under a rule of order." But this presupposes "the unity of an action of the mind under which the appearances can be subsumed" so that one is connected with another "according to a rule" (XVIII, 114: 5193).

He augmented this by stating as an *a priori* principle that "everything in the world has a ground" (XVIII, 114: 5193); "for if it were in itself necessary it would occur by itself according to a rule" (XVIII, 122: 5219). As it is, "the concept of a ground yields a rule in general" (XVIII, 116: 5200). And "that which is the condition under which we would posit something according to a rule is the cause" (XVIII, 120: 5215). Therefore, the ground is the cause of events, and the principle of causality – which is "the principle of sufficient reason" of the "order in the course of nature" (XVIII, 122: 5220) – is a basic principle that makes possible empirical cognition. It is a principle employed *a priori.*

Kant clarified this theme in other Reflections that belong to a time after 1776. In particular he stressed the relation of the understanding to principles and propositions *a priori.* Thus he wrote: "In Transcendental Analytic the understanding evaluates itself. In Transcendental Dialectic it speaks *a priori* about objects" (XVIII, 22: 4896).[9] But through the "pure concepts of the understanding" alone – meaning the categories – "no object can be definitely known"; yet they are necessary for any knowledge of objects (XVIII, 28: 4916). Their relation to objects is "always determined by sensibility." This is so because "our universal concepts are only signs for what is concrete" (XVIII, 84: 5089); and the existentially concrete is given in sense perceptions only.

In the employment of the concepts of "the pure understanding" to what is given in our sense impressions certain rules must be followed, and these belong to "transcendental logic." Actually, "there are as many transcendental elements (categories) as there are logical elements" (XVIII, 17: 4877). Here for the first time in the Reflections Kant connected the categories directly with "logical elements." But in another Reflection Kant was more specific: "There are four headings for concepts of the understanding, and under each there are three categories" (XVIII, 74: 5055). Even so, however, the specific identification of the four "headings" and the three "categories" under each is nowhere

to be found in the Reflections. For this we have to consult the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A80/B106). But "the pure concepts of the understanding" – that is, the categories – furnish at least part of the *a priori* basis for all cognition. The other part is furnished by the "forms" of our sensibility: space and time.

VII

Of greater concern to Kant than the function of the understanding was at this time the problem of the employment and function of reason. In some of the Reflections, reason does not even count among the sources of knowledge. Thus, Kant wrote: "There are only four sources of knowledge: (1) the senses; (2) the understanding; (3) divine information; (4) mystic illumination and intuition." But it "would be arrogance" to assume that the last two are available to us. Consequently, "our senses and the functions of the understanding provide all knowledge" (XVIII, 83: 5087).

However, "the unity of the (absolute) whole of our cognition" is determinable only through reason, which provides "the transcendental principles of the unity of everything" (XVIII, 92: 5109). Reason requires "that there be assumed an absolute completeness of the presuppositions of the synthesis" of experience; for "in reason there is a nexus of prosyllogisms and episyllogisms," and there are "the principles of necessity, of contingency, of composition and dissolution," and these are "the conditions of the absolute collective (systematic) unity of knowledge in general" (XVIII, 85: 5093). They are it "in their empirical as well as in their transcendental employment" (XVIII, 96: 5117).

Since "all basic principles in general are but of empirical use," the principles of reason can have "empirical employment only" (XVIII, 15: 4869). From this it follows that rational cognition can never transcend "the field of experiences" (XVIII, 85: 5091). But relative to this field the employment of reason means that we recognize something "according to universal laws" and therefore *a priori* (XVIII, 58: 5006).

As Kant put it more adequately in one of the longer Reflections: "The maxims of reason consist in this, that one assume the constitutive unity in the whole of appearances (when one begins *a priori*), and the regulative unity in the parts (when one advances from the parts to the whole)." It means "that no causes be assumed except those whose law can be found through observation"; that therefore "no ghosts, no blind arbitrariness, etc." be regarded as a cause of empirical events; "that

nothing be directly derived from God because one cannot observe his rules of action, although God is seen *a priori* as the highest principle of the unity according to rules – even in the realm of the practical" (XVIII, 89: 5104).

The reference to "the realm of the practical" is of special importance; for "there is no absolute completion of the employment of reason in the realm of sensibility" and reason "ought to be liberated from the restrictive conditions of sensibility" (XVIII, 92: 5111). But when this is being done, reason is still determinative with respect to freedom and the pursuit of ends. And when this fact is taken into consideration, then it becomes evident that "there must exist a first and unique ground of everything" (XVIII, 92: 5110; 92: 5109).

This rather complex situation requires that the first step in developing an adequate philosophy be a "critique of pure reason" so that "reason may come to understand itself." Such a critique requires that one obtain "knowledge of the sources." Kant added: "To this investigation one is driven only after many errors" (XVIII, 21: 4892). But once the work has been done, philosophy turns out to be "the law-giver of human reason" (XVIII, 30: 4925; 58: 5007).

One final point may be of interest. In Reflection 4686 (XVII, 675) Kant wrote: "The mind can become conscious of itself only because of the appearances which correspond to its dynamic functions, and of the appearances only through its dynamic functions." Hegel was to make the most of this idea in his *Phenomenology of Mind.* It is his thesis that in the dialectic that culminates in knowledge, subject and object determine one another. Both aspects of experience (he wrote) – the subjective and the objective – "percipient and content perceived, are at once inseparably united as regards the process of grasping the truth, and yet, by that very fact, each aspect is at the same time reflected into itself, is something on its own account."[10] Keeping this idea in mind may aid us in understanding Kant only the better.

VIII

Of special interest is the Reflection identified as "Duisburg 9" (XVIII, 218–21: 5552). It apparently belongs to Phase χ and was probably written shortly after 1776. Ideas here presented in preliminary form are fully developed in the *Critique of Pure Reason.* Even the title of the Reflection is suggestive: "Concepts of Reflection (Their Amphibolies Which Lead to Paralogisms)."

The text of "Duisburg 9" begins: "A paralogism is an inference of reason which is false according to form, although it is correct according to its matter (the premises)" (XVIII, 218: 5552). In the *Critique* Kant put it this way: "A logical paralogism is a syllogism which is fallacious in form, be its content what it may" (A341/B399). In the Reflection Kant elaborated the point: The paralogism "arises when the middle term is taken in different meanings in the two premises – namely, when in our thinking the logical relation in one of the premises is taken to be something real (in the objects of intuition) in the other premise." This occurs most readily when both, sensibility and the understanding, are involved in the inference. Hence, it occurs most readily when we deal with "(1) identity and difference; (2) agreement and opposition; (3) inner and outer; (4) the determinable (matter) and the determination (form)" (XVIII, 218: 5552). In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant elaborated these ideas: "1. Identity and Difference" (A263/B319). "2. Agreement and Opposition" (A264/B320). "3. The *Inner* and the *Outer*" (A265f/B321f). And "4. *Matter* and *Form*" (A266/B322f).

What is actually involved here is that, in their differences and their sameness, the objects of experience stand in different relations to the two faculties of cognition, that is, to sensibility and the understanding (XVIII, 218: 5552).

Kant continued the Reflection:

> 1. Things which are identical in quality and quantity are not different things but are one and the same thing. For the understanding two drops of water are alike, and one egg is like another, but not as phenomena of intuition in space.
>
> 2. What is not logically opposed to itself is also not (really) opposed to itself in space and time, $a - a$.
>
> 3. Existential things (substances) must have inner determinations, but the determinations of matter consist entirely in external relations; I can therefore not infer monads which have representations because these [i. e., the representations] are inner only.
>
> 4. Matter (the constituent parts of a thing) is antecedent to form – only in intuition is the form, which is given by itself alone, antecedent to matter. (XVIII, 218: 5552).

In "Duisburg 9" these considerations lead directly to the following arrangement (XVIII, 219: 5552):

Something and Nothing

1

Concept without Object;
the object is nothing, *ens rationis.*
Object of Thought

2

Empty Object of a Concept
nihil privativum. Shadow

3

Empty Intuition
without object.
ens imaginarium
Space

4

Empty Object with Concept
nihil negativum.

With only a slight verbal difference in (1), and the omission of explanatory examples in (2) and (3), this table, even its arrangement of lines, is included in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A292/B348).

In the Reflection Kant continued (XVIII, 219: 5552):

No. 1 and No. 2
An object of thought is
distinguished from an
impossible thing.
Axiom, anticipation, analogy
postulate.

The synthetic propositions *a priori*
are principles of possible experience
and therefore pertain only to
objects of the senses.
The end of ontology.

What is of special importance here is the explicit statement that synthetic propositions *a priori* pertain only to objects of the senses, and that this fact means "the end of ontology." The same conclusion is obviously implied in Kant's statement in the *Critique* that the *ens rationis* and the *nihil negativum* – 2 and 3 above – are merely "empty *data* for concepts" (A292/B348f).

Continuing with the Reflection we read: "The understanding prescribes the law to nature, but not one that reaches further than that of the form of appearances in which is grounded the possibility of experience in general; for as object of empirical cognition nature must conform to the possibility of experience, otherwise there would be for

us no nature because it would be impossible to find in it a context that would conform to our faculty for bringing the manifold appearances into one coherent consciousness, and nature would not be knowable" (XVIII, 219f: 5552).

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant put it this way: "The understanding . . . is itself the lawgiver of nature. Save through it, nature, that is, synthetic unity of the manifold of appearances according to rules, would not exist at all" (A126f).

We already know from a number of Reflections previously referred to that, for Kant, "empirical intuitions and concepts, together, constitute experience," and that "we can have synthetic knowledge *a priori* of the objects of experience when these conform to principles of the possibility of experience in general." Kant now elaborated this thesis by pointing out that "the possibility of the synthetic judgments *a priori* depends entirely on the ideality of space and time; that if we should come to know things in themselves, we would perceive them and thus would not know them *a priori* as necessary in themselves; for only because our faculty of intuition has this form [of space and time] can we know *a priori* how the objects will be intuited by us. These forms are the purely subjective aspect of the faculty of representation – but with respect to things as appearances this is objective" (XVIII, 220: 5552).

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant developed a parallel argument. He asserts again "the ideality of space and time," although he now calls it "transcendental ideality" (A29/B44; A36/B52). "Together they are the pure forms of all sensory intuition" and, as such, "they make synthetic propositions possible *a priori* (A38f/B55f). Therefore, insofar as all objects are known to us only under the forms of space and time, we can have *a priori* knowledge of them too (A35/B52).

Since the character of any object of experience is determined by what is given us in sense perception and is subsumed under the pure concepts of the understanding, the problem is how to bring these two factors – the sense perceptions and the concepts of the understanding – together in a unitary experience. In "Duisburg 9" Kant put it this way: "We must put a schema under all our pure concepts of the understanding as a way of composing the manifold in space and time. Since this schema is merely in the sensory representation of the subject, we (1) know only objects of the senses and consequently cannot reach beyond to the supersensible (geometry). (2) The concepts can be extended to all objects of thinking in general; but they yield no extension of theoretical knowledge. In practical respects, however, where freedom is the condi-

tion of its employment, practical-dogmatic cognitions can occur – God, freedom, and immortality (spiritual nature)" (XVIII, 220f: 5552).

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant faced the same problem: "We must be able to show how pure concepts can be applied to appearances"; and his solution was also the same: "Obviously there must be some third thing ... the *transcendental schema* (A138/B177) which is "the representation of a method whereby a multiplicity [of sensory impressions] ... may be represented in an image in conformity with a certain concept" (A140/B179). Or, as Kant also put it: "Without schemata the categories are but functions of the understanding ... and represent no object. This meaning they acquire from sensibility, which realizes the understanding while restricting it at the same time" (A147/B187). That this restriction does not extend to aspects of experience where freedom rather than sensibility is the condition of the employment of the pure concepts of the understanding follows at once from the relation of the schemata to sensibility. Freedom, being "a pure transcendental idea," "contains nothing borrowed from experience" and refers to no object given in experience (A533/B561). It pertains to "spiritual nature only" – to "God, freedom, and immortality."

Let it be noted in passing that the employment of schemata is but another way of recognizing the element of construction in the cognition of objects.[11]

Returning to "Duisburg 9," we find that Kant has taken up once more a point made previously in other Reflections but which is of special interest here. "In nature, that is, in space and time, [Kant wrote] nothing unconditioned can be found. But reason demands what amounts to the totality of the conditions because it itself wants to make the object." The result is that "in cosmology, where nature is viewed as the totality of all objects of the senses, we encounter an antinomy" (XVIII, 221: 5552). In the *Critique* Kant meets this fact head on in Section I of "The Antinomies of Pure Reason" (A408–20/B435–48).

In the Reflection Kant continued: "In theology where we have to consider an object only in practical-dogmatic respects, the relation of the supersensible and of objects that lie beyond nature to the things of the world can be known only according to an analogy with an intelligence in nature, and also only insofar as it is being thought in moral respects with regard to man" (XVIII, 221: 5552).

It is not too farfetched, it seems to me, to see in these formulations

an anticipation, if not a first draft, of a theme which, in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant stated in this way: "Natural theology infers the properties and the existence of an Author of the world from the constitution, the order and unity exhibited in the world. . . . From this world natural theology ascends to a supreme intelligence, as the principle of all natural or of all moral order and perfection" (A632/B660).

In the remainder of "Duisburg 9" Kant argued that, because of the reality of "freedom and its laws," one can "prove the objective reality of mankind as noumenon in the midst of the mechanism of the same reality as phenomenon"[12] (XVIII, 221: 5552). And Kant saw "God as unconditionally necessary substance; freedom as unconditioned causality, and immortality as personality (spirit) that is independent of any commerce with the body (as its condition)." But since the categories give us no knowledge beyond the realm of sensory experience, "we know God only according to the analogy of the subsistence of a thing despite all changes of its accidents in time (duration)." We know "freedom according to the analogy of causality in the connection of force with the effects in the time sequence." And we know "immortality according to the analogy of the connection of many at all times, and therefore of the simultaneity of . . ." Kant did not complete the sentence (XVIII, 221: 5552). "Duisburg 9" thus leaves the argument incomplete.

IX

Reflection 5553, also written after 1776, supplements "Duisburg 9" in important respects and, like "Duisburg 9" may be seen as a preliminary draft of arguments that found final form in the *Critique of Pure Reason.*" The text of the Reflection covers eight pages (XVIII, 221–29) and is identified as "Lose Blätter Reicke Xb 1." It deals primarily with the function and role of reason in cognition.

As Kant put it in the opening sentence: "Just as the senses are related to the understanding, so the understanding is related to reason. The appearances of the first become in the second a unity of the understanding through concepts, and in the third a unity of reason through ideas" (XVIII, 221f: 5553).[13] Putting it in a different way Kant wrote: "the cognitions *a priori* that pertain directly to objects find their completion in the transcendental analytic and are the categories of the understanding." Reason, however, does not pertain to the objects "but

only to the concepts of the understanding of them." "The cognitions of reason, which are entirely *a priori* and do not contain an empirical unity" pertain to a synthetic unity to which the concepts of the understanding [that is, the categories] are subordinated and thus pertain indirectly to a special determination of the unity of appearances." The basic principle here is that "all conditional cognition stands not only under conditions but ultimately under such conditions that are themselves unconditioned" (XVIII, 222).

In earlier Reflections Kant had stated as a principle: "When the conditioned is given, the whole series of all conditions through which the conditioned is determined is also given"; but now he added that this *principle* is "correct" "when I abstract from the objects or take them to be merely intellectual." This is so because "the unconditioned can never be given but must always be in our thoughts. The absolute totality of the conditions is the only unconditioned" (XVIII, 222).

Since in the ideal of pure reason "all categories are together in one idea, we need not distinguish them." Actually, it is the ideal of reason as "the principle of all possibility" which determines "the categories themselves" (XVIII, 223). What this comes to is that "the business of reason consists precisely in this: to furnish the employment of the understanding with unconditional unity within the vast manifold" of experiences (XVIII, 224). It is reason which shows that "all objects of the senses are ultimately grounded in an (existing) noumenon" which "serves to give necessity to the understanding and magnitude and unity to the sphere of its employment" (XVIII, 225). This is so because "the idea of the unconditioned for all conditions of the appearances is grounded in reason as an instruction for seeking the completeness of all cognitions of the understanding in subordination." And: "The idea of the absolute unity of all objects of thinking as one Being of beings is necessary in order to seek the relationship among all that is possible," including "the thoroughgoing relation as unity of the principles" (XVIII, 226).

But Kant also recognized the occurrence of "transcendental illusions." In fact, he recognized "three different kinds of transcendental illusion": The first occurs "when the unity of apperception, which is subjective, is taken to be the unity of the subject as a thing." The second occurs "when the subjective determination of sensibility and its condition is taken to be an object."[14] The third occurs "when the universality of thinking through reason is taken to be a thought of a totality of the possibilities of things" (XVIII, 224). The question as to the source of

these illusions Kant answered by pointing out that it is "the confusion of the subjective conditions of our thinking with the objective"; and "this we cannot avoid because we must necessarily think an object and we have no way of thinking it except as that which brings with it the special constitution of our subject," the "supposition of pure reason" being "that one presupposes what one is required to prove and then proves it through the inference. What is thoroughly determined *a priori* is being presupposed in order to represent to oneself the thoroughgoing determination of all that is possible" (XVIII, 227).

Whereas the understanding deals in categories, reason is "the faculty of ideas." By an idea Kant means "a concept that is sufficiently grounded in reason but for which no object can be given in any possible experience whatsoever" (XVIII, 226).[15] Ideas may serve "either a practical or a speculative" end. If the latter is the case, we deal with "transcendental ideas." "These are necessary concepts of reason" but "must be derived from the categories." This derivation, however, is "merely an inference" pertaining to the "necessary conditions of the complete employment of the understanding, that is, of the employment in its totality" – a totality which "must go so far that it transcends all sensory intuition" and "requires the absolute" (XVIII, 228).[16]

X

As we approach the last years of the Silent Decade the Reflections show ever more clearly that Kant has in effect attained his new critical position. The limited point of view of the *Dissertation* of 1770 has been broadened and, in the process, has been amended and corrected as well. This involved, among other matters, Kant's conception of the relationship of "sensibility and intelligibility" which led to the clarification of the functions of reason and the understanding, providing at the same time a new basis for cognition *a priori*. All that was necessary now was to find the definitive formulations setting forth the new ideas; and this required time. We may therefore assume that Kant now spent most of his time writing the final draft of the *Critique*. This would account for the fact that there are relatively few important Reflections belonging to Phase $\chi - \psi$, the last phase prior to 1781. But there are some, and we must consider them now.

We have just seen that in Reflection 5553 Kant wrote that the necessary concepts of reason must be derived from the categories. He now clarified his meaning in another Reflection, but he also modified his

position. He wrote: "Just as a pure concept of the understanding arises only through the form of judgments when I make them synthetically (and through them think an object), so there arises a pure concept of reason through the form of a rational inference" which subsumes the conditions of judgment under the aspect of universality. This concept of reason is "the concept of a representation of the totality of the conditions for cognizing an object" – that is, it is the concept of a representation of "the totality of the conditions of the (application of the) categories." What this comes to is that "without the concept of reason we would have appearances but the collective unity of experience in which all empirical cognitions must be determinable would be missing" (XVIII, 231: 5555).

The corresponding passage in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is this: "The form of judgments (converted into a concept of the synthesis of intuitions) yielded categories which direct all employment of the understanding in experience. Similarly, we may presume that the form of rational inference (*Vernunftschluss*), when applied to the synthetic unity of intuitions under the direction of the categories, will contain the origin of special *a priori* concepts, which we may call pure concepts of reason, or *transcendental ideas,* and which will determine according to principles how the understanding is to be employed in dealing with experience in its totality" (A321/B378). The difference between the two statements is quite obviously merely a matter of formulation; the theme is the same.

In another Reflection (XVIII, 229–31: 5554), Kant dealt with the problem of noumena. "By noumena [he wrote] I mean the transcendental object of sensory intuition." But, he added at once, "this is no real object or given thing but a concept relative to which appearances have unity." After all, "the (pure) categories have no objects; they merely determine the transcendental object in relation to our sensibility through the synthesis of the manifold of intuition," and "no noumenon corresponds to that manifold." In fact, the transcendental object "can be called noumenon only in so far as it can be represented through the concept of the understanding, and this is impossible by means of the categories because the conditions of intuition are absent. Therefore, we have no concepts for noumena" (XVIII, 230f: 5554).

In the *Critique of Pure Reason,* it may be remembered, Kant distinguished between noumena in the *negative* and in the *positive* sense. This distinction, vaguely implicit in the Reflection, is actually made only in the second edition of the *Critique* (B307), thus indicating a further

development in Kant's thinking.

XI

There are a number of important Reflections — I refer in particular to items 5637, 5639, 5642, 5643, 5644, 5645, and 5650 — but they belong to Phase ψ, that is, they belong to the early 1780s and therefore do not concern us here.[17] There are, however, some Reflections in which Kant commented on his philosophical intentions and on his work generally which may be of interest.

Let us note again that as early as 1775 or 1776 he wrote in one of his Reflections: "My intention is to investigate how much reason can cognize *a priori* and how far its dependence upon the instruction of the senses extends. What, therefore, are the limits beyond which it cannot go without the aid of the senses? " And he added: "In order to realize this final goal I find it necessary to isolate reason, but also sensibility, and first of all to consider everything that can be known *a priori* and to see if it also belongs to the realm of reason" (XVIII, 59: 5013).

Carrying out this plan was not easy. Kant himself described some of the difficulties he encountered: "At the beginning I learned what recommended itself to me most strongly. In a few respects I believed to be able to contribute something of my own to the common treasure; in other respects I found something to improve, but always with the intention thereby to discard dogmatic insights, for the boldly expressed doubt seemed to me to be so much ignorance expressed in the voice of reason that I paid no attention to it. If one really contemplates in earnest to find the truth, one cannot in the last analysis spare even one's own products, although it appears at the time that they promise us merit about the science. One submits completely to criticism what one has learned or thought of oneself." Following this principle, Kant gradually discovered that "many of the propositions which we regard as objective are actually subjective, that is, they contain the conditions under which alone we can understand or comprehend the object." This insight made Kant "cautious" but "did not inform" him. "Since there really are cognitions *a priori* which are not analytic but extend our knowledge, I lacked a critique of pure reason. . . . I still believed to find the method for expanding dogmatic knowledge through pure reason. But for this I needed an understanding of how cognition *a priori* is possible at all" (XVIII, 95f: 5116).

In the pursuit of his goal Kant found little support in the history of

philosophy. "But," he wrote in one of the Reflections, "one must not believe that so far everything written and thought has been pure loss. The dogmatic attempts can always continue but a critique of them must thereupon follow, and they can be employed only in order to judge the illusion which happens to human reason when it confuses the subjective with the objective and sensibility with reason" (XVIII, 60f: 5105).

Kant was convinced that the new critical philosophy would be a challenge to the traditionalists; but he also believed, as we have seen, that once the philosophers had recovered from "the dogmatic heat" generated by the conflict of ideas, the new theory "alone would remain and would then last for ever." But in the mid-seventies Kant "doubted very much that [he] would be the one to bring this change about." "The human mind," he believed, "is such that, in addition to the reasons which are to illuminate it, it takes time to give them force and continuity. . . . For it is necessary, first of all, to break with impressions and old habits." And Kant could see that "not the originator of the improvement" but others, who "after long controversies" rediscover the ideas, set them on the right track and make them prevail (XVIII, 61: 5015).

In the mid-seventies Kant also foresaw that he might be accused of having failed to explain what should have been explained. But such an accusation, he believed, would amount to the same as accusing "someone who wanted to write a little book of not having written a large one." "Restraint and judgment are necessary not to say everything good that one knows and not to overburden one's work with all the ideas one has, so that the main intentions do not suffer from it." And then Kant added – and the reader of the Reflection senses his pride of accomplishment: "In the analysis I have said several things that are not unimportant" (XVIII, 61: 5015).

Toward the end of the Silent Decade Kant wrote in one of the Reflections: "Everyone who wants to evaluate the products of pure reason on the basis of literature, that is, through extensive reading, undertakes a fruitless task. Through this labor he can supply himself with objects for evaluation, but because he has not subjected his own understanding to criticism his critique is always idiotic and not philosophical. He employs principles whose examination is the real purpose [of philosophy]" (XVIII, 80: 5106).

It is thus not astonishing that Kant himself has "referred to nobody from the reading [of whose books he] has learned something." "I have found it to be good to omit everything not my own and to follow my

own ideas. I have not fought against systems, etc. I have not referred to my own works but have overturned everything. I do not approve of the rule that, when one has previously proven something in the employment of pure reason, one afterwards no longer submits it to doubt but [treats it] as a secure principle" (XVIII, 62f: 5019).

Now that the work was essentially done, Kant frankly acknowledged that "through this treatise the value of my previous metaphysical publications has been completely destroyed. I shall now merely try to save the correctness of the idea" (XVIII, 42: 4964).

Notes

1. *Briefwechsel*, p. 100 [70].
2. The German term is *'Erkenntnis'*. In his translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kemp Smith consistently translates it with the word *'knowledge'*. This translation I find to be subtly misleading, for the noun *Erkenntnis* is derived from the transitive verb *erkennen* 'to cognize' and carries with it an overtone of action, of acquiring knowledge, which is essential to Kant's philosophy – as the Reflection here referred to amply proves.
3. *Briefwechsel*, pp. 141f [102].
4. Two versions of this work are in print. One is Haering's doctoral dissertation, which deals with nos. 15, 16, 11, and 12 only, and in that order. The other provides a commentary on all numbers of the *Nachlass* and includes a summary evaluation. Both versions were published in 1910.
5. *Lose Blätter aus Kants Nachlass* (Königsberg: Ferdinand Beyer, vol. 1, 1889; vol. 2, 1895).
6. Kemp Smith's translation of "*synthetische Urteile* a priori" by "*a priori* synthetic judgments" (A9/B16 and throughhout the *Critique*) is sufficiently ambiguous to entail a misunderstanding of Kant's view. But, clearly, even in the *Critique* Kant speaks of *judgment* as "the faculty of subsuming under rules" and distinguishes it from "the form of knowledge" that is propositional.
7. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant put it this way: "In synthetic judgments I must have besides the concept of the subject something else (X), upon which the understanding may rely, if it is to know that a predicate, not contained in this concept, nevertheless belongs to it" (A8). – In 1770, the authority of mathematics was explained by the reduction of space and time to pure forms of sensibility. In 1781, the principles of physics, that is, the "analogies of experience," play precisely the same role as the "principles of mathematics" (A89–91; 89n).

8. In the *Critique* Kant put it this way: "The mere succession in my apprehension, if there is no rule determining the succession in relation to something that precedes it, does not justify me in assuming a succession in the object. I render my subjective synthesis of apprehension objective only by reference to a rule in accordance with which the appearances in their succession . . . are determined by the preceding states" (A195/B240).
9. See the corresponding divisions in the *Critique of Pure Reason.*
10. J. B. Baillie translation (New York: Macmillan, 1931), p. 184.
11. See Kant's statement in the *Critique:* "The *schema* of sensory concepts, such as of figures in space, is a product and, as it were, a monogram, of pure *a priori* imagination, through which, and in accordance with which, images themselves first become possible. . . . The schema . . . is simply the pure synthesis.
12. This statement foreshadows, of course, Kant's argument in the *Critique* that (a) "in its empirical character this subject, as appearance, would have to conform to all the laws of causal determination" (A540/B568); but that (b) "in its intelligible character . . . this same subject must be considered to be free from all influence of sensibility and from all determination through appearances" (A541/B569).
13. This statement corresponds to Kant's thesis in the *Critique* that "all our knowledge starts with the senses, proceeds from thence to understanding, and ends with reason" (A298/B355).
14. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant put it this way: "Error is brought about solely by the unobserved influence of sensibility on the understanding, through which it happens that the subjective grounds of the judgment enter into union with the objective grounds and make these latter deviate from their true function" (A294/B350f). And: "Transcendental illusion. . . . The cause of this is that there are fundamental rules and maxims for the employment of our reason . . ., and that these have all the appearance of being objective principles. We therefore take the subjective necessity of a connection of our concepts . . . for an objective necessity in determination of things in themselves" (A297/B353).
15. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant expressed the same thought in these words: "I understand by idea a necessary concept of reason to which no corresponding object can be given in sense-experience" (A327/B284).
16. Corresponding to this we read in the *Critique:* "The transcendental concept of reason is . . . none other than the concept of the *totality* of the *conditions* for any given conditioned" (A321/B379).
17. Erich Adickes has persuasively shown that most of the *Critique of Pure Reason* was in all probability written during the first half of 1780. See *Kant-Studien,* vol. I (1897), pp. 165–85.

Epilogue

On 19 January 1782 there appeared a review of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in the *Göttingischen Gelehrten Anzeigen* in which the author revealed a complete misunderstanding of Kant's position – a misunderstanding which to a large extent prevails even today. Kant responded to that review and in one of his Reflections to set the record straight. I quote rather extensively:

> "My apparent idealism is the restriction of sensory representation to mere experience and the prevention of our roaming about beyond its boundary to things in themselves. It is merely a prevention of the transcendental *vitii subreptionis*, where one changes one's representations into things. I have once called this doctrine transcendental idealism because one has no [other] name for it. . . .
>
> "For judging, concepts are required, and for the concepts, intuitions. The concepts, in so far as they pertain *a priori* to intuitions, cannot originate through the individual empirical consciousness of the manifold, for then they would not be concepts of the connection of the intuitions. They are possible

only through the combination of the manifold in an apperception by means of the unity of the synthesis of the same. And in this consist the concepts *a priori*.

"Dialectic: So far we have been concerned only with appearances in whose exposition, principles and employment there is genuine truth, and there was no idealism, for truth consists simply in the context of representations that are universally in accordance with laws of the understanding. In this consists the difference from dreams, not in that the images exist by themselves and separated from the mind. But now there arises first an illusion and indeed a natural and unavoidable one since our judgments say something about objects that is not contained in our conceptions of them, that is, of possible experience; and here our theory is the refutation of idealism.

"First, the illusion consists in this that we represent to ourselves in the field of experience a progress according to mere laws of experience, which is not an empirical progress but a mere idea which can be no experience. We remain in the world of the senses and are guided by nothing other than the principles of the understanding which we need in the case of experience, but *we make [transform] our possible progress into an object in itself* by viewing the possibility of experience as something real in the object of experience.

"Here an antinomy reveals itself. All ideas which constitute the basis of this dialectic are contained therein: the psychological as well as the theological, but only in so far as they belong to the series of possible experiences that ought to limit itself. Here the ideas are merely to complete the progress and are cosmological. But another illusion reveals itself – where the ideas do not belong to the series but are by themselves to add something to experience; and here the ideas are in part psychological, in part theological. The hypothetical rational inferences are the guidance; the categorical with respect to the first, the disjunctive with respect to the latter. The first makes the subjective connection of all representations in one subject basic, the latter makes the objective [connection] in one idea [basic]. Of the first subject there thus exists no concept, of the second, the object, there is only an ideal.

"If as far as truth is concerned we require something more than the thoroughgoing context of the intuitions according to laws of the understanding, in what would we posit them, if this were not at the same time the representation of a specific object? If in addition it is to be in agreement with something other which does not lie in our representations, then how can we compare it with them? All objects are determined in me only through the representations; what they may be beyond this and in themselves is unknown to me. An object external to us is transcendent, that is, it is entirely unknown and useless as a criterion of truth.

"Idealism assumes no other than thinking beings. This we never do; we merely do not regard our representations as their attributes. In the senses

> there is neither truth nor error because they do not judge at all; hence all appearances are to this extent without possible error and illusion.
>
> "The idealist admits that real extension and bodies can be external to us but not as real, therefore only as a dream within us. We maintain that these can only be intuitions and only in us. Their objects may, nevertheless, be external to us; but we know nothing about what they are in themselves.
>
> "Synthetic unity of apperception *a priori* is the synthesis of the manifold according to a rule *a priori*. The logical function is the action of combining the very same consciousness with many representations, that is, of thinking a rule at all. The unity of intuition *a priori* is possible only through the combination of the manifold in an apperception which thus must take place *a priori*, consequently also the unity of the synthesis of all empirical intuitions because they can be found in space and time.
>
> "What, now, does one demand that I should maintain in order to be an idealist?
>
> "Idealism is a metaphysical whim which goes farther than is necessary to awaken us to thinking. Syncretists. Semipelagians" (XVIII, 279–82: 5642).

And so we give Kant the last word in this matter. But what he says here merely foreshadows his "Refutation of Idealism" in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.