

Kant's Criticism of Swedenborg: Parapsychology and the Origin of the Copernican Hypothesis

Stephen Palmquist

Human reason was not given strong enough wings to part clouds so high above us, which withhold from our eyes the secrets of the other world.[1]

from <http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp/srp/arts/KCSP.htm>

1. The Traditional Myth of Kant's 'Awakening'

Kant's life is traditionally portrayed as falling into two rather distinct periods. The years prior to 1770 form the 'pre-Critical' period, while those from 1770 onwards form the 'Critical' period. The turning-point is placed in the year 1770 because this is when Kant wrote the Inaugural Dissertation for his newly gained position as Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of Koenigsberg. In this work, entitled *On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World*,[2] he proposed for the first time that space and time should be regarded as "forms of intuition" that human subjects read *into* experience, rather than as self-subsisting attributes of nature that we read *out from* the objects we experience. The typical 'textbook' account of Kant's life usually declares that the 'pre-Critical' Kant was a Leibnizian dogmatist, trained in the school of Wolffian rationalism, and was interested as much in natural science as in philosophy, but that sometime around 1770 Kant was suddenly "awakened" from his "dogmatic slumbers" by his reflection on David Hume's philosophy.[3] Some commentators, such as Kuehn (1983), go so far as to say not only that "Kant and Hume aim at the very same thing", but that "all the specific doctrines of Kant's critical enterprise are intimately bound up with Hume's influence on Kant." (p.191)

Although it is difficult to determine the exact nature and date of this dramatic awakening, there is no doubt that Kant was familiar with Hume's ideas by the early 1760s; indeed, so the story goes, in 1766 he published a book that adopts Hume's empiricist standpoint almost completely.[4] This book, entitled *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer, Illustrated by Dreams of Metaphysics* [hereafter *Dreams*], is typically interpreted as a minor work of an exceedingly skeptical nature, and of relatively little importance in understanding Kant's mature thought. This "strangest and most tortured of Kant's writings"(Ward 1972, p.34) is, at best, a stage he passed out of as quickly as he passed

into it, and at worst, an embarrassment for Kant and Kant scholars alike. The embarrassment could come not only as a result of the rather unorthodox subject-matter – what we would now call *parapsychology* (i.e., studying the nature of visions and various types of mystical experiences – but because of the flippant attitude Kant adopts from time to time throughout the book (see note 25, below). Indeed, regardless of how we interpret the philosophical content of this book, the psychological disposition of its author, who had recently entered his fifth decade, would appear to be that of a man in the midst of what we might nowadays call a mid-life crisis.[5]

The traditional account contains at least as much error as truth. While it is true that Kant never mentions his mature theory of the transcendental ideality of space and time before 1770, it is not true that he owes the theory to Hume (whose theory of space and time bears little resemblance to Kant's). Nor is it legitimate to equate this doctrine (expounded in its official form in the Aesthetic of the first *Critique*) with the term 'Critical', as is implied by the dating of the Critical period from 1770. On the contrary, Kant associates his "new method of thought, namely, that we can know *a priori* of things only what we ourselves put into them", not with the *Critical method*, but with the new 'Copernican' insight he believes will enable him to revolutionize philosophy.[6] His description and use of Criticism as a philosophical method is quite distinct from its application to problems in metaphysics by means of the Copernican hypothesis. Thus, when Kant instructed the editor of his minor writings to ignore all those written before 1770, (see Sewall 1900, p.x) he was not defining the starting point of his application of the Critical method, but rather that of his application of the Copernican hypothesis to the task of constructing a new philosophical System. If we must divide his life into two periods at 1770, we should therefore avoid using the term 'pre-Critical' (as others have advised, but without giving a viable alternative [e.g., Beiser 1992, p.36; Dell'Oro 1994, p.174]) and refer instead to the 'pre-Copernican' and 'Copernican' periods. Adopting this new label will protect us from making inconsistent statements such as Gulick's (1994), implicitly conflating these two forms of revolution: "Kant's self-designated Copernican revolution ushered in his critical period" (p.99). Since Kant exhibited 'Critical' tendencies throughout his life, his mature years should be named the 'Copernican' period.

Before we proceed it is crucial to have a thorough understanding of Kant's mature conception of 'Criticism' or 'Critique' (*Kritik*), as elaborated in *CPR*. In the first edition Preface, Kant describes his era as "the age of criticism", during which reason accords "sincere respect ... only to that which has been able to sustain the test of free and open examination" (*CPR*, Axi). But this enlightened "habit of thought" can be trusted only if it submits to its own "tribunal" of Criticism (Axi-xii). Thus "the subject-matter of our critical enquiry" (i.e., of the entire Critical philosophy) is reason itself (Axi), and its "first task" is "to discover the sources and conditions of the possibility of such criticism" (Axxi). This means the questions addressed to reason cannot be answered by means of

...a dogmatic and *visionary* insistence upon knowledge ... that can be catered for only through magical devices, in which I am no adept. Such ways of answering them are, indeed, not within the intention of the natural constitution of our reason; and ... it is the duty of philosophy to counteract their deceptive influence, no matter what prized and cherished *dreams* may have to be disowned. (*CPR*, Ap.xiii, emphasis added)[7]

Instead, only by first examining "the very nature of knowledge itself" can we answer reason's questions in such a way as to provide solutions to the problems of metaphysics (Ap.xiii-xiv).

In the second edition Preface Kant not only describes more fully the subject-matter of the particular type of Critique he plans to engage in, but also explains more clearly the nature of the Critical method. Metaphysics will be "purified by criticism and established once for all": the purification is "merely *negative*, warning us that we must never venture with speculative reason beyond the limits of experience"; but the establishment is *positive* inasmuch as it "removes an obstacle which stands in the way of the employment of practical reason" (*CPR*, p.xxiv-xxv). In other words, the scope of reason's speculative (i.e., theoretical) standpoint is narrowed by tying it to sensibility, but this frees metaphysics to be established on the firmer foundation of reason's practical standpoint — i.e., on *morality* (p.xv). The Critical method, therefore, is intended to establish limits, but to do so for both negative and positive purposes. The former can be seen when Kant refers to "our critical distinction between two modes of representation, the sensible and the intellectual" and immediately adds "and of the resulting limitation ..."; (*CPR*, p.xxviii)[8] likewise, he argues that non-contradictory

doctrines of freedom and morality are "possible only in so far as criticism ... has limited all that we can theoretically *know* to mere appearances" (p.xxix). The positive benefit of such limitations is that they enable us to avoid "dogmatism" (defined here as "the preconception that it is possible to make headway in metaphysics without a previous criticism of pure reason"), which "is the source of all that [skeptical] unbelief ... which wars against morality" (p.xxx). Indeed, Kant goes so far as to say that "all objections to morality and religion will be for ever silenced" (p.xxxi), because his Critique will "sever the root of *materialism, fatalism, atheism, free-thinking, fanaticism, and superstition ... as well as of idealism and scepticism*" (p.xxxiv).

Throughout the rest of *CPR* Kant repeats many of these same claims about the nature of Criticism in its special, philosophical form. In most of their occurrences the words 'critical', 'criticism', and 'critique' are used in close connection with some mention of the *limitations* of knowledge.[9] The only interesting exception is that on several occasions he adds that Criticism serves as *a middle way* between the opposite extremes of dogmatism and skepticism (*CPR* 22-3, A388-9, 784-5, 789, 797). Indeed, this epitomizes Kant's association of the Critical method with *synthesis*, which he claims always takes the triadic form of "(1) a condition, (2) a conditioned, (3) the concept arising from the union of the conditioned with its condition" (*CJ*, p.179n). And of course, the most basic example of his use of this pattern is his exposition of the Critical philosophy in the form of three *Critiques*.

This brief analysis of Kant's understanding of the Critical method reveals that he never associates it directly with the Copernican hypothesis but, instead, with several key distinctions. The Critical method is, for Kant, the method of striking a middle way between two extremes ("a third step", as he calls it in *CPR* 789 [see also 177, 194, 196, 264, 315, 760-1, 794]). It operates by trying to locate the boundary between what can be known (and *proved*) and what can never be known (yet remains *possible*) — the boundary line being defined in terms of "the limits of all possible experience" (e.g., p.121). Thus it is closely associated with "the distinction between the transcendental and the empirical" (p.81), as well as with that between speculative (theoretical) and practical (moral) "employments of reason", or *standpoints*. [10] Although certain apparently skeptical claims have to be made on the way, the ultimate purpose of Criticism for Kant

is positive: to provide a means of constructing the foundation for metaphysics upon solid (non-speculative, moral) grounds.

A careful reading of Kant's works reveals that traces of this Critical way of doing philosophy are evident throughout most of his writings, from the earliest essays on metaphysics and natural philosophy to the latest essays on religion, political history, and other subjects.[11] Indeed, the fact that he uses *this* method to develop and expound the implications of his Copernican hypothesis is what gives lasting value to the theories that arise out of it, and not *vice versa*. There is no need to provide here a thoroughgoing proof of the ubiquity of the Critical method in Kant's writings.(for this see *KSP*, II.2, pp.32, 39, *passim*). Instead I shall concentrate on *Dreams* because, in proportion to its importance, it is the most neglected and/or misunderstood book in the corpus of Kant's writings. The next section sketches the contents of this book, after which I shall draw attention in §3 to its Critical character and discuss its role in Kant's discovery of the Copernican hypothesis. Finally, I shall offer some brief suggestions in §4 as to the relation between *Dreams* and Kant's mature System of Perspectives. In so doing we shall find that Kant's assessment of Swedenborg and his unusual experiences was far from being entirely negative; on the contrary, it provides us with a level of insight into the nature and limits of parapsychology that is highly appropriate for a Festschrift honoring John Beloff, one of the most respected contemporary philosophical researchers into the mysteries of this topic that fascinated Kant so much.

2. Kant's Criticism of Swedenborg's Mystical Dreams

In *Dreams* Kant examines the nature and possibility of mystical visions, paying special attention to the claims of a Swedish writer and accomplished scientist named Emanuel Swedenborg.[12] Kant examines these visions not only to explore the limits of his own commitment to a belief in the spirit world,[13] but also (and more importantly) in order to draw attention to the dangers of speculative metaphysics by comparing it with fanatical mysticism. This analogy, present as it is in the very title of the work, will prove to be of utmost importance in understanding how *Dreams* relates to the later development of Kant's System. As noted earlier, *Dreams* is commonly interpreted as evidence of a radically empiricist stage in Kant's development, where he

is supposedly adopting something of a Humean position. But his actual intention, as we shall see, is to encourage a *Critical* attitude: while he comes down hard on the misuse of reason by spirit-seers and metaphysicians when they regard their respective dreams "as a source of knowledge"(Sewall 1900, p.146), he expresses quite clearly his own dream that a properly balanced approach to both mysticism and metaphysics will someday emerge.[14] A detailed examination of Kant's views on parapsychological phenomena as presented in *Dreams* can therefore provide some helpful clues as to Kant's motivations for constructing the Critical philosophy itself.

The mystical experiences considered in *Dreams* are not experiences of the presence of God (i.e., "of infinite spirit which is originator and preserver of the universe" (*Dreams* p.321n[44n]), but experiences of lower spiritual beings, who are supposed to be able to communicate with earthly beings in visions and apparitions. Although Kant ridicules those who have such experiences at several points in *Dreams*, he reveals his private view of such experiences in two important letters. In a letter to Charlotte von Knoblock (dated 10 August, probably 1763) he admits he "always considered it to be most in agreement with sound reason to incline to the negative side ..., until the report concerning Swedenborg came to my notice" (Sewall 1900, p.158).[15] After recounting several impressive stories, Kant tells how Swedenborg was once able to describe in precise detail a fire that "had just broken out in Stockholm", even though he was fifty miles away in Göteborg. He says this "occurrence appears to me to have the greatest weight of proof, and to place the assertion respecting Swedenborg's extraordinary gift beyond all possibility of doubt."(Sewall 1900, p.158) In a subsequent letter (8 April 1766) to Mendelssohn Kant explains that he clothed his thoughts with ridicule in *Dreams* in order to avoid being ridiculed by other philosophers for paying attention to mystical visions (hardly taken seriously by most philosophers in the Enlightenment (see *Dreams* 353-4[91-2])). He admits:

...the attitude of my own mind is inconsistent and, so far as these stories are concerned, I cannot help having a slight inclination for things of this kind, and indeed, as regards their reasonableness, I cannot help cherishing an opinion that there is some validity in these experiences in spite of all the absurdities involved in the stories about them ... (Sewall 1900, p.162)

Elsewhere in the same letter he draws a Critical conclusion: "Neither the possibility nor the impossibility of this kind of thing can be proved, and *if someone attacked Swedenborg's dreams as impossible, I should undertake to defend them.*" (Rabel 1963, p.74)[16] Clearly, Kant believed something significant is happening in such parapsychological experiences – significant enough to merit a comparison with the tasks of metaphysics, "the dream science itself", to which he admits to being hopelessly "in love"(Zweig 1967, p.55; see also *KCR* I.2). The problem this set for him was to describe "just what kind of a thing that is about which these people think they understand so much" (*Dreams* p.319[41]).

In the Preface to *Dreams* Kant hints at the Critical nature of his inquiry by asking two opposing questions, but offering a "third way out": he asks (1) "Shall [the philosopher] wholly deny the truth of all the apparitions [eye-witnesses] tell about?"; or (2) "Shall he, on the other hand, admit even one of these stories?"; and he answers that (3) the philosopher should "hold on to the *useful*" (p.317-8[38]).[17] The treatise itself consists of seven chapters, grouped in two parts: Part One contains four "dogmatic" chapters and Part Two contains three "historical" chapters. The correspondence between these two parts and the structure of the System he was soon to begin elaborating is evident by the fact that Part One ends with a chapter on "Theoretical Conclusions" and Part Two ends with a chapter on "Practical Conclusions" (*Dreams* pp.348[85], 368[115]), thus foreshadowing the division between the first and second *Critiques*.

The theoretical part begins in Chapter One, under the heading "A complicated metaphysical knot which can be untied or cut according to choice" (*Dreams* p.319[41]), by discussing what a *spirit* is or might be. Kant confesses:

I do not know if there are spirits, yea, what is more, I do not even know what the word 'spirit' signifies. But, as I have often used it myself, and have heard others using it, something must be understood by it, be this something mere fancy or reality. (p.320[42])

To this rather Wittgensteinian remark he adds that "the conception of spiritual nature cannot be drawn from experience", though its "hidden sense" can be drawn "out of its obscurity through a comparison of sundry cases of application" (p.320n[42-3n]). He then argues that a spirit must be conceived as a simple, immaterial being, possessing

reason as an internal quality (pp.320-1[43-5]). After considering some of the difficulties associated with this concept, he adopts an entirely Critical position: "The *possibility* of the existence of immaterial beings can ... be supposed without fear of its being disproved, but also without hope of proving it *by reason*" (p.323[46-7], emphasis added). If one assumes "that the soul of man is a spirit", even though this cannot be proved, then the problem arises as to how it is connected with the body (pp.324-5[48-9]). Kant rejects the Cartesian focus on a mechanism in the brain in favor of "common experience":[18]

Nobody ... is conscious of occupying a separate place in his body, but only of that place which he occupies as a man in regard to the world around him. I would, therefore, keep to common experience, and would say, provisionally, where I sense, there I *am*. I am just as immediately in the tips of my fingers, as in my head. It is myself who suffers in the heel and whose heart beats in affection (*Dreams* pp.324-5[48-9]).[19]

The chapter concludes with the confession "that I am very much inclined to assert the existence of immaterial natures in the world, and to put my soul into that class of beings" (p.327[52]). Although he concedes that the various questions concerned with such a belief are "above my intelligence" (p.328[54]), he does suggest in *Dreams* that "Whatever in the world contains a principle of *life*, seems to be of immaterial nature. For all life rests on the inner capacity [cf. freedom in the second *Critique*] to determine one's self by one's own will power." (p.327n[52-3n])

After confirming the metaphysical possibility of (and his personal belief in) spirits, Kant presents in Chapter Two "a fragment of secret philosophy aiming to establish communion with the spirit-world" (*Dreams* p.329[55]). He begins by positing an "immaterial world" that is conceived "as a great whole, an immeasurable but unknown gradation of beings and active natures by which alone the dead matter of the corporeal world is endued with life." (*Dreams* p.330[57]).[20] As a member of both the material and the immaterial world, a human being "forms a personal unit" (p.332[60]). Kant conjectures that purely immaterial beings may "flow into the souls of men as into beings of their own nature, and ... are actually at all times in mutual intercourse with them", though the results of such intercourse cannot ordinarily "be communicated to the other purely spiritual beings", nor "be transferred into the consciousness of men" (p.333[61]). As evidence for such a communion of spirits, Kant examines the nature of

morality. Using one of his favorite geometrical metaphors (that of intersecting lines), he says in *Dreams* (pp.334-5[63]): "The point to which the lines of direction of our impulses converge is ... not only in ourselves, but ... in the will of others outside of ourselves." The fact that our actions are motivated not only by selfishness, but also by duty and benevolence, reveals that "we are dependent upon the *rule of the will of all*" (p.335[64]); and "the sensation of this dependence" – i.e., our "sense of morality" – suggests that "the community of all thinking beings" is governed by "a *moral unity*, and a systematic constitution according to purely spiritual laws." Thus, "because the morality of an action concerns the inner state of the spirit", its effect can be fully realized not in the empirical world, but "only in the immediate communion of spirits"(p.336[65]).

In reply to the possible objection that, given this view of the spirit-world, "the scarcity of apparitions" seems "extraordinary", Kant stresses that "the conceptions of the one world are not ideas associated with those of the other world"; so even if we have a "clear and perspicuous" spiritual conception, this cannot be regarded as "an object of actual [i.e., material] sight and experience." (*Dreams* pp.337-8[67-9]).[21] However, he freely admits that a person, being both material and immaterial, can become

...conscious of the influences of the spirit-world even in this life. For spiritual ideas ... stir up those pictures which are related to them and awake analogous ideas of our senses. These, it is true, would not be spiritual conceptions themselves, but yet their symbols.... Thus it is not improbable that spiritual sensations can pass over into consciousness if they act upon correlated ideas of the senses. (pp.338-9[69-70])

Even "our higher concepts of reason" need to "clothe themselves" in, "as it were, a bodily garment to make themselves clear", as when "the geometrician represents time by a line" (p.339[69-70]). An actual apparition, which might "indicate a disease, because it presupposes an altered balance of the nerves", is unusual because it is based not on a simple metaphor, but on "a delusion of the imagination", in which "a true spiritual influence" is perceived in imagined "pictures ... which assume the appearance of sensations" (p.340[71]). Kant warns that in an apparition "delusion is mingled with truth", so it tends to deceive "in spite of the fact that such chimeras *may be based upon a true spiritual influence*" (p.340[71-2], emphasis added).

In truly Critical fashion Kant now adopts the opposite perspective in Chapter Three, presenting an "Antikabala" – that is, "a fragment of common philosophy aiming to abolish communion with the spirit-world" (*Dreams* p.342[74]). Here Kant first states the analogy between metaphysicians ("reason-dreamers") and visionaries ("sensation-dreamers"): in both cases the dreamer imagines a private world "which no other healthy man sees", yet "both are self-created pictures which nevertheless deceive the senses as if they were true objects" (pp.342-3[75]). In order to help such dreamers "wake up, *i.e.*, open their eyes to such a view as does not exclude conformity with other people's common sense" (p.342[74]), he proposes an alternative description of what is happening in an apparition. The problem is to explain *how* visionaries "place the phantoms of their imagination outside of themselves, and even put them in relation to their body, which they sense through their external senses" (pp.343-4 [77]). He suggests that in external sensation "our soul locates the perceived object at the point where the different lines, indicating the direction of the impression, meet", whereas in a vision this "*focus imaginarius*" is located not outside of the body but "inside of the brain" (pp.344-5[77-9]). The difference between the fantasy of a sane person (see p.346n[81n]) and the delusions of an insane person is that only the latter "places mere objects of his imagination outside of himself, and considers them to be real and present objects" (p.346[80]). So "the disease of the visionary concerns not so much the reason, as a deception of the senses" (p.347[82]). Kant concludes that this simpler interpretation "renders entirely superfluous the deep conjectures of the preceding chapter ... Indeed, from this perspective, there was no need of going back as far as to metaphysics" (pp.347-8[82-3]).[22]

The fourth and final chapter of Part One presents the "theoretical conclusion from the whole of the consideration of the first part" (*Dreams* p.348[85]). Kant begins with a penetrating description of his own method of philosophizing (*i.e.*, the Critical method), according to which "the partiality of the scales of reason" is always checked by letting "the merchandise and the weights exchange pans" (pp.348-9[85]). He uses this metaphor to make two points. First, it suggests the importance of being willing to give up all prejudices:

I now have nothing at heart; nothing is venerable to me but what enters by the path of sincerity into a quiet mind open to all reasons ... Whenever I meet with something

instructive, I appropriate it.... Formerly, I viewed common sense only from the standpoint of my own; now I put myself into the position of a foreign reason outside myself, and observe my judgments, together with their most secret causes, from the standpoint of others. (p.349[85-6])

Kant's exposition in *Dreams* exemplifies this Critical (perspectival) shift by opposing the merchandise of his own prejudices concerning the spirit-world (Chapter Two) with the dead weight of a reductionist explanation (Chapter Three). The second point of the analogy is, however, the crucial one: we must recognize that "The scale of reason is not quite impartial" and so move the merchandise from the speculative pan to the pan "bearing the inscription 'Hope of the Future'" (i.e., from the standpoint of the first *Critique* to that of the third[23]), where "even those light reasons ... outweigh the speculations of greater weight on the other side" (*Dreams* p.349[86]). Here at the threshold of his mature philosophical System, then, Kant stresses the overriding importance of what I call the 'judicial' standpoint (see note 23): "This is the only inaccuracy [of the scales of reason] which I cannot easily remove, and which, in fact, I never want to remove" (pp.349-50[86]).

On this basis Kant concludes that, even though "in the scale of speculation they seem to consist of nothing but air", the dreams of spirit-seers (and metaphysicians!) "have appreciable weight only in the scale of *hope*" (*Dreams* p.350[86-7]). While admitting "that I do not understand a single thing about the whole matter" of how the immaterial can interact with the material, he claims "that this study ... exhausts all philosophical knowledge about [spiritual] beings ... in the negative sense, by fixing with assurance the limits of our knowledge" (pp.349-50[88-9]). The assumed spiritual principle of life "can never be thought of in a positive way, because for this purpose no data can be found in the whole of our sensations" (pp.351-2[89]).[24] He is therefore constrained by ignorance to "deny the truth of the various ghost stories", yet he maintains "a certain faith in the whole of them taken together" (p.351[88]).[25] As I have argued elsewhere (*KSP*, V.1), this subordination of speculative knowledge to practical faith is the key to the justification of the Copernican Perspective itself. Thus, when Kant concludes Part One by saying "this whole matter of spirits" will "not concern me any more", because "I hope to be able to apply to better advantage my small reasoning powers upon other subjects" (p.352[90]), he may be hinting that he is already

beginning to formulate a plan for constructing a System of Perspectives based on Critical reasoning.

Having promised not to philosophize on spirits any longer, Kant recounts in the first chapter of the second ("historical") part three stories concerning the spiritual powers of Swedenborg, "the truth of which the reader is recommended to investigate as he likes" (*Dreams* p.353[91]). He claims "absolute indifference to the kind or unkind judgment of the reader", admitting that in any case "stories of this kind will have ... only secret believers, while publicly they are rejected by the prevalent fashion of disbelief" (pp.353-4[92]).

In the second chapter of Part Two Kant provides a summary of Swedenborg's own explanation of his "ecstatic journey through the world of spirits" (*Dreams* p.357[98]) and notes its similarity to "the adventure which, in the foregoing [i.e., in Part One], we have undertaken in the balloon of metaphysics" (p.360[102]). The position Swedenborg develops "resembles so uncommonly the philosophical creation of my own brain", Kant explains, that he feels the need to "declare ... that in regard to the alleged examples I mean no joke" (p.359[100]). To cover up his own interest in Swedenborg's work, Kant ridicules his 'hero' for writing an eight-volume work "utterly empty of the last drop of reason" (pp.359-60[101]) – a good example of the occasional harsh or frivolous statements that later embarrassed him (see note 16). The extract turns out to be so close to the views Kant had expounded in Chapter Two of Part One that he concludes his summary by reassuring the reader that "I have not substituted my own fancies for those of our author, but have offered his views in a faithful extract to the comfortable and economic reader who does not care to sacrifice seven pounds [closer to seven *hundred* these days!] for a little curiosity" (p.366[111]).

The chapter ends with an apology for leading the reader "by a tiresome roundabout way to the same point of ignorance from which he started", but adds that "I have wasted my time that I might gain it. I have deceived the reader so that I might be of use to him" (*Dreams* p.367-8[112-3]). After confessing his unrequited love of metaphysics, Kant insists that metaphysics as a rational inquiry "into the hidden qualities of things" (i.e., *speculative* metaphysics) must be clearly distinguished from "metaphysics [as] the science of the boundaries of human reason" (i.e., *Critical* metaphysics):

Before ... we had flown on the butterfly-wings of metaphysics, and there conversed with spiritual beings. Now ... we find ourselves again on the ground of experience and common sense. Happy, if we look at it as the place allotted to us, which we can leave with impunity, and which contains everything to satisfy us as long as we hold fast to the useful. (p.368[114])

Far from indicating a temporary conversion from dogmatic rationalism to skeptical empiricism, as is usually assumed about *Dreams*, this passage, interpreted in its proper context, reveals that Kant already has a clear conception of the *Critical method*, and is nurturing the seed that was to grow into his complete philosophical System.

Any doubt about the Critical character of *Dreams* is dispelled by the "practical conclusion from the whole treatise" given in the final chapter of Part Two (p.368[115]). Kant begins by distinguishing between what science *can* understand to achieve *knowledge* and what reason *needs* to understand to achieve *wisdom* – a distinction that pervades the entirety of his mature System. By determining what is impossible to know, science can establish "the limits set to human reason by nature", so that "even metaphysics will become ... the companion of wisdom" (p.368[115-6]). He then introduces (what I call) the principle of perspective as the guiding principle of this new way of philosophizing: once philosophy "judges its own proceedings, and ... knows not only objects, but their *relation to man's reason*", thus establishing the *perspective* from which the object is viewed, "then ... the boundary stones are laid which in future never allow investigation to wander beyond its proper district" (pp.368-9[116], emphasis added). This is followed by a warning against the failure to distinguish between philosophical relations (i.e., those known by reflection) and "fundamental relations" (i.e., those that "must be taken from experience alone") – the distinction that forms the basis for all other Critical distinctions.[26] That Kant is here referring to immediate experience, not to empirical knowledge, is evident when he says "I know that will and understanding move my body, but I can never reduce by analysis this phenomenon, as a simple [immediate] experience, to another experience, and can, therefore, indeed recognize it, but not understand it" (p.369 [117]). He reaffirms that our powers of reflection provide "good reason to conceive of an incorporeal and constant being"; but because our immediate experience as earthly beings relating to other earthly beings depends on "corporeal laws", we can never know for certain what "spiritual" laws

would hold if we were "to think ... without connection with a body" (pp.370-1[117-8]). The possibility of establishing "new fundamental relations of cause and effect" – i.e., of having an immediate experience not of corporeal nature but of spiritual nature – "can never ... be ascertained"; the "creative genius or ... chimera, whichever you like to call it", which invents such spiritual (later called noumenal) causality cannot establish knowledge (much less scientific 'proof') precisely because the "pretended experiences" are not governed by corporeal (later called *a priori*) laws, which alone are required for a knowledge-claim to be "unanimously accepted by men" (pp.371-2[118-9]).

This final chapter of *Dreams* ends with a concise (and entirely Critical) explanation of the positive aspect of this otherwise negative conclusion. The fact that "philosophic knowledge is impossible in the case under consideration" need cause no concern (neither for the metaphysician nor for the mystic) as long as we recognize that "such knowledge is dispensable and unnecessary", because reason does not need to know such things (p.372[120]). "The vanity of science" fools us into believing that "a proof from experience of the existence of such things" is required. "But true wisdom is the companion of simplicity, and as, with the latter, the heart rules the understanding, it generally renders unnecessary the great preparations of scholars, and its aims do not need such means as can never be at the command of all men." The true philosophy, which Kant always believed would confirm common sense and therefore would be attainable for everyone (unlike a speculative dependence on theoretical proofs or mystical apparitions, each available to only a few individuals), should be based on "immediate moral precepts" — that is, on a "moral faith" that "guides [the 'righteous soul'] to his true aims" (pp.372-3[120-1]). Thus he concludes (p.373 [121]) by defending the position later elaborated in his practical and religious systems, that it is more appropriate 'to base the expectation of a future world upon the sentiment of a good soul, than, conversely, to base the soul's good conduct upon the hope of another world.'

3. Kant's Four Major 'Awakenings'

In the preceding section we have seen that all the main characteristics of Kant's Critical method, together with anticipations of several of his mature doctrines and

distinctions, are present in *Dreams*. The method of choosing the middle path between two extremes is exemplified by Kant's advice in the Preface to "hold on to the useful" — though this is not exactly how he would later describe his Critical means of steering between the extremes of dogmatism and skepticism [but cf. note 17]. The Critical distinction between the theoretical and the practical, whose most obvious application is to the distinction between the first two *Critiques*, is foreshadowed by the conclusions to the two parts of *Dreams*, the first being theoretical and the second, practical. The attitude expressed in the first chapter, that 'spirits' are theoretically possible but can never be proved to exist, is reminiscent of the hypothetical perspective adopted in the Dialectic of *CPR*, where all 'ideas of reason' are treated similarly.[27]

Even the second chapter, where Kant is letting his metaphysical imagination run wild, contains an interesting parallel: Kant's suggestion that the inner state of spirits is primarily important in its connection with *morality* is entirely consistent with his later decision to regard morality as the proper foundation for metaphysics. (The same point is emphasized in the last chapter, where the true basis for belief in spirits is said to rest on morality rather than speculation.) And the skepticism Kant adopts in Chapter Three is not unlike the version he sometimes adopts in the Dialectic of the first *Critique* (in both cases as a temporary measure to guard against unwarranted speculation).[28] The subordination of the theoretical (i.e., speculative) to the practical and the judicial (see note 23), as hinted by Kant's expressed preference for the "useful", is forcefully emphasized by his reference to the "scales of reason" in the fourth chapter. His use of this metaphor to emphasize the philosophical legitimacy of hope for the future in spite of our theoretical ignorance foreshadows both the third *Critique* and *Religion*. [29] Throughout Part One, and again in the second chapter of Part Two, Kant describes his new view of the first and foremost task of metaphysics in exactly the same terms as he would use some fifteen years later in *CPR*: metaphysics must begin as a *negative* science concerned with establishing the limits of knowledge. And in the book's final chapter we meet not only the distinction between immediate experience and reflective knowledge, which is so crucial to Kant's System [see note 26], but also the equally important notion that reason does not *need* to have a *theoretical* understanding of mystical experiences (or metaphysical propositions), as long as we take into consideration the common moral awareness of all human beings.

If Kant was in full possession of the Critical method by 1766, why, it might be asked, did he take fifteen more years to write *CPR*? This is particularly perplexing in light of the fact that after 1781 Kant published at least one major work nearly every year until 1798. The typical explanation of Kant's development renders this problem slightly less difficult, because the 'Critical awakening' is regarded as not happening until the late 1760s or early 1770s. On this view Kant had a great deal of trouble formulating his ideas for *CPR*, yet *after* it was completed he suddenly realized the need for a second *Critique*, and *after* that, the need for a third. However, the fact that Kant could apply all the Critical tools in 1766 to write *Dreams* makes it very difficult to believe that he would fumble around for fifteen more years, and then suddenly turn into a prolific genius. Rather, it suggests Kant may well have wanted to have the basic (architectonic) plan for his entire System more or less complete *in his mind* before even *starting* the long task of committing it to paper. The need for a fifteen year gap (including his long 'silent decade') between *Dreams* and *CPR* becomes more understandable if we regard Kant as formulating in his mind during this time not just *CPR*, but his entire System — though obviously, the details concerning the precise form it would take had not entirely crystallized by 1781.[30] The traditional view fails to take account of the fact that writers do not always say everything they know about their plans for future undertakings, and also ignores the importance of Kant's emphasis on establishing and maintaining specific architectonic patterns.[31]

The one aspect of Kant's transcendental philosophy that is conspicuously absent in *Dreams* is the cornerstone of the whole System, the *Copernican* hypothesis (i.e., the assumption that *a posteriori* objectivity is based on *a priori* subjectivity, rather than *vice versa* [see *KSP*, III.1]). And this had begun to dawn on him by 1770, when he wrote *Dissertation*, where he regards time and space as "forms of intuition" not inherent in the object itself. Thus the crucial question is: if 'Criticism' was the original distinguishing character of Kant's life-long philosophical method, what was the source of the sudden insight he later called his 'Copernican' hypothesis? Copleston (1960, p.196) conjectures that the new insight might have come as a result of his reading of the *Clarke-Leibniz Correspondence*, newly published in 1768. Others would cite Hume as responsible for all such major changes in Kant's position (see e.g., note 4). What has long been ignored in English Kant-scholarship is the significant extent to which some of the details of the Critical philosophy, not the least being the Copernican hypothesis itself, actually

correspond to the ideas developed by Swedenborg. Kant himself acknowledges this correspondence to some extent in *Dreams*, but repeatedly emphasizes that the ideas he presents as his own were developed independently of his acquaintance with Swedenborg's writings (*Dreams* p.359 [100], p.360[102], p.366[111]). However, the extent of the parallels between his *subsequent* theories (especially those in *Dissertation*) and Swedenborg's is sufficient to merit the assumption that, in spite of his ridicule in *Dreams*, Kant actually adopted much of Swedenborg's 'nonsense' (p.360[101]) into his own thinking (see *Dreams* pp.357-8[98-9]; Sewall 1900, pp.24-7, 31-3)!

A good example of the similarity between Kant's mature views and Swedenborg's ideas is brought out in Kant's summary of Swedenborg's position, highlighting the distinction between a thing's true or 'inner' meaning and its outer manifestation. How closely this coincides with the position Kant eventually defends in his writings on religion becomes quite clear in *Dreams* when he says: "This inner meaning ... is the origin of all the new interpretations which [Swedenborg] would make of the Scripture. For this inner meaning, the internal sense, i.e., the symbolic relation of all things told there to the spirit-world, is, as he fancies, the kernel of its value, the rest only the shell" (p.364[108]). As I argue elsewhere (*KCR*, VI.2), Kant uses precisely the same metaphor in his own investigation of "pure religion", except that the "inner meaning" is derived from practical reflection (the Critical mode of dreaming?) rather than from visionary "dreams" about the spirit-world.

A more detailed examination of Swedenborg's epistemological distinctions would reveal numerous other corresponding theories. For example, the Copernican assumption itself, which marks the main difference between *Dreams* and *Dissertation*, has its roots at least partially in Swedenborg. For, as Vaihinger puts it, the relationship of Kant's "transcendental subject ... to the Spiritual Ego of Swedenborg is unmistakable"; indeed Kant may well have taken his "doctrine of two worlds from Swedenborg direct" (Sewall 1900, p.25; see also pp.12-14, 24). Thus there are good grounds for regarding Swedenborg's 'spiritual' perspective as the mystical equivalent of Kant's transcendental perspective in metaphysics. Such a perspectival relationship is hinted at by Sewall (1900): "Neither of the two great system builders asks the support of the other.... As Kant was necessarily critical, this being the office [or Perspective] of the

pure reason itself, so was Swedenborg dogmatical, this being the office [or Perspective] of experience"(pp.22-3).

Sewall appends to the 1900 translation of *Dreams* (pp.123-54) various extracts from Swedenborg's writings, revealing that Swedenborg's ideas often anticipate (from his own mystical perspective), and therefore may have influenced, many of the key ideas Kant develops in his transcendental philosophy. The roots of Kant's transcendental idealism can be seen in Swedenborg's spiritual idealism: "spaces and times ... are in the spiritual world appearances"; "in heaven objects similar to those which exist in our [empirical] world ... are appearances"; "appearances are the first things out of which the human mind forms its understanding" (Sewall 1900, pp.124-6). The roots of Kant's view of the intelligible substratum of nature are also evident: "nothing in nature exists or subsists, but from a spiritual origin, or by means of it"; "nature serves as a covering for that which is spiritual"; "there exists a spiritual world, which is ... interior ... to the natural world, therefore all that belongs to the spiritual world is cause, and all that belongs to the natural world is effect"; "causes are things prior, and effects are things posterior; and things prior cannot be seen from things posterior, but things posterior can be seen from things prior. This is order" (*Ibid*, pp.131-3).

Even views similar to Kant's "analogies of experience" in *CPR* are developed by Swedenborg: "Material things ... are fixed, because, however the states of men change, they continue permanent"; "The reason that nothing in nature exists but from a spiritual origin or principle is, that no effect is produced without a cause" (*Ibid*, pp.125, 132). The parallels extend beyond the theoretical to the practical and judicial standpoints as well: "the will is the very nature itself or disposition of the man"; "heaven is ... within man".(*Ibid*, pp.138, 135). Moreover, Kant's Criticism of mystical visionaries as wrongly taking imagined symbols to be real sensations cannot be charged against Swedenborg, who warns: "So long as man lives in the world he knows nothing of the opening of these degrees within him, because he is then in the natural degree ...; and the spiritual degree ... communicates with the natural degree, not by continuity but by correspondences and communication by correspondences is not sensibly felt" (*Ibid*, p.135; see also p.141).

Of course, Kant's use of such ideas often differs in important respects from Swedenborg's, as when Kant argues for the importance of *phenomenal* causality as being the only significant causality from the standpoint of knowledge. Nevertheless, given the fact that before reading Swedenborg he did not write about such matters, whereas afterwards such 'Copernican' ideas occupied a central place in his writings, it is hardly possible to doubt that Swedenborg had a significant influence on Kant's mature thinking. I am not claiming that Kant owes his recognition of the importance of the Copernican hypothesis to Swedenborg *alone*, but only that his influence has been much neglected, and merits further exploration.[32]

If Swedenborg did exercise an important influence on Kant, then why does Kant seem to give Hume all the credit, for instance, in the oft-quoted passage from the Introduction to *Prolegomena* (see note 3)? Swedenborg was far from being a philosopher, so perhaps Kant did not feel constrained to acknowledge his influence — indeed, 'felt *embarrassed*' might be a more appropriate expression, since Swedenborg's reputation was hardly respectable among Enlightenment philosophers. Kant's request that his writings prior to 1770 not be included in his collected minor writings (see note 16) would therefore reflect his desire to protect his reputation from too close an association with the likes of Swedenborg. In any case, Kant's claim that the ideas he expresses in *Dreams predate* his reading of Swedenborg leaves open the possibility that Swedenborg stimulated him to think through his own ideas more carefully, and in the process to adopt some of Swedenborg's ideas, or at least to use them as a stimulus to focus and clarify his own.

Does the *Prolegomena* passage therefore represent a false 'confession'? By no means. But in order to understand that passage properly, and so to give an accurate answer to the question of the relative influence of Hume and Swedenborg on Kant, it will be necessary to distinguish between four aspects of Kant's development that are often conflated:

(1) The general *Critical method* of finding the limits that define the 'middle way' between unthinking acceptance of the *status quo* (dogmatism) and unbelieving doubt as to the validity of the entire tradition (skepticism).

(2) The general *Copernican insight* that the most fundamental aspects of human knowledge (the ones making it objective) have their source in the human subject as *a priori* forms, not vice versa. (That is, time, space, etc., are not absolute realities rooted in the object, as philosophers had previously assumed.) This, of course, was the seed that (when fertilized by the Critical method) gave rise to the entire System of ‘transcendental philosophy’.[33]

(3) The *particular application* of (1) to itself (i.e., reason’s Criticism of reason itself).

(4) The *particular application* of (2) to the problem of the necessary connection between a cause and its effect.

As stated above in §1, we can see (1) operating in varying degrees in almost all of Kant’s writings (see note 11). Indeed, his lifelong acceptance of (1) is clearly the intellectual background against which alone his great philosophical achievements could have been made (and as such, is the source of his genius). Although his ability to make conscious use of this method certainly developed gradually during his career, receiving its first full-fledged application in *Dreams*, neither Swedenborg (the dogmatist) nor Hume (the skeptic) can be given the credit for this. The Critical method is not something Kant *learned* from these (or any other) philosophers, but is rather the natural *Tao* through which Kant read, and in reading, transformed, their ideas.[34] If anyone is to be thanked, it should be his parents, and in particular, his mother.[35]

Kant’s recognition of (4) as one of the crucial questions to be answered by his new philosophical System, is, by contrast, clearly traceable to Hume’s influence. In fact, his discussion of Hume’s impact on his development in *Prolegomena* (p.260[8]) undoubtedly refers primarily (if not solely) to this narrow sense of "awakening": Kant is probably telling us nothing more than that his "recollection" of Hume helped him recognize that causality cannot be treated as a purely intellectual principle (as he had done in *Dissertation*), but must be justified (if at all) in some other way (*viz.*, as a transcendental form of knowing, just as were space and time in *Dissertation*). The fact that Kant uses the term ‘recollection’ indicates a fairly late date (probably 1772 [see note 4]) for this dramatic event. For Kant is suggesting that (4) came to him as a result of *remembering* the skepticism of Hume ("the first spark of light") that had begun influencing his thinking about ten years before. However, if Kant’s famous

"awakening" is only a dramatized account of his discovery of (4), then such references to Hume do not answer the more fundamental question, the answer to which we have been seeking here: Where did Kant get the idea of using (2) as the basic insight for solving *all* such philosophical problems?

Kant's discovery of (2) came in several fairly well-defined steps, mostly from 1768 to 1772. Prior to 1768 there is little (if any) trace of such an idea. Between 1768 and 1772 he applied the insight to intuitions but not to concepts. In 1772 he realized that concepts too must be regarded from this Copernican (Transcendental) Perspective. As a result of this somewhat unsettling discovery (unsettling because in early 1772 he believed he was within a *few months* of completing *CPR*), he spent *nine more years* (from 1772 to 1781) working out in his mind the thoroughgoing implications of this insight for his entire philosophical System. It is plain enough to see how Hume's ideas could have caused the final (and crucial) change in the extent of Kant's *application* of (2) in 1772, because Hume employs some of his most powerful arguments to support his skepticism regarding the a priori basis of the idea of necessary connection. Kant's realization in 1772 of the full force of these arguments awakened him to an awareness of the incomplete nature of his application of (2) in *Dissertation*, and gave him the idea of applying (2) to concepts as well as to intuitions.

But where did (2) come from in the first place? It could not have come from Hume, inasmuch as nothing like it appears in Hume's doctrines of space and time (or anywhere else in Hume's works). Hume's explanation for our belief in all such 'objective facts' is always to reduce them to logic and/or an *empirical* kind of subjectivity (as he does in the final paragraph of his *Inquiry*); he never so much as hints at the possibility of any third way, such as is given by Kant's theory of *transcendental* subjectivity. There are, to my knowledge, only two likely explanations, both of which probably worked together to awaken Kant to his Copernican insight sometime between 1766 and 1768. The first is his reading of Swedenborg's writings, especially his massive work, *Arcana Coelestia*, which he read in 1766, just before writing *Dreams* (p.318[39]: Sewall 1900, p.14n); and the second is his reading of the *Clarke-Leibniz Correspondence*,[36] together with his consequent discovery of the antinomies of reason (see below). If this account of Kant's development during these portentous years is correct, then Kant's description of (4) as an awakening from *dogmatic* slumber is a

somewhat over-dramatized account, whose purpose is not to emphasize a sudden break from lifelong dogmatism (cf. note 34), but only to explain how Hume saved him from settling for the half-baked *form* of (2) that he had originally distilled from the ideas of two thinkers *whom he regarded as dogmatists* (Leibniz and Swedenborg). Thus, if we look at the overall picture, we see that Hume's influence has, in fact, been overrated; it fulfils only one specific role in Kant's long process of development.

This interpretation of Kant's development gives rise to two further questions regarding Kant's use of his sleeping/dreaming/awakening metaphor. For he uses it not only in relation to Hume's influence, but also in many other contexts. In a letter to Garve (21 September 1798), for instance, he confides that his discovery (c.1768) of "the antinomy of pure reason ... is what first aroused me from my dogmatic slumber and drove me to the critique of reason itself" (AA12:255[Zweig 1967, p.252]; see also note 7). How can this account of Kant's 'awakening' be made compatible with his (better known) references to Hume? Although interpreters have often struggled with this question, the answer seems obvious once we distinguish between the four *aspects* of Kant's development listed above. Kant's comments must refer to *different experiences* of awakening: the awakening by Hume refers to (4), while that for which the antimony is responsible refers to (3). Accordingly, Kant says the antinomy showed him the need for a Critique of reason, whereas he says Hume's stimulus gave a "new direction" (*Prolegomena* p.260[8]) to his speculative research (thus implying he had already begun working on that Critique). The tendency to regard these as referring to the same experience arises only because he uses the same metaphor to describe both developments.

The second question arises once we recognize the obviously close connection between Kant's metaphor of being awoken from sleep and the metaphor of *dreaming* that permeates the entirety of *Dreams* (even its title). Whether Kant's awakening really happened only in 1768 (via the antinomies) or only in 1772 (via Hume's skepticism) — or even at both times — Kant's comments would seem to imply that *Dreams* itself dates from the period of "dogmatic slumber" from which he only *later* awoke. Yet even those who do not fully appreciate the *Critical* elements in *Dreams* agree that it is not the work of a sleeping dogmatist! So how could Kant's metaphor apply to anything that happened *after* he wrote this book? Without presuming to give the final answer to this difficult

question, I shall venture to offer a plausible suggestion, based on the account of Kant's development given above.

Criticism is the middle path between dogmatism and skepticism. It is the tool Kant believed he could use to preserve the *truth* and *value* of both methods and yet do away with the errors into which each inevitably falls. The Critical mind will therefore always allow itself to be "tempted", as it were, by the two extremes it ultimately seeks to overcome; but in the process of becoming more and more refined, it will appear at one moment to be more dogmatic and at another to be more skeptical (just as we observed Kant's mind to be in the text of *Dreams*). In other words, the Critical method does not *do away* with skepticism and dogmatism, so much as use them as opposing forces to guide its insight further along the spiral path towards the central point of pure Critique. Now, in order to stay healthy a human being needs both sleep and waking; and in the same way, we could develop Kant's metaphor one step further by saying the healthy (Critical) philosopher needs regular doses of both dogmatism and skepticism. Skepticism functions like an alarm clock to remind philosophers when it is time to stop their dogmatic dreaming and return to the normal waking life of Criticism. The Critical philosopher will naturally have many experiences of this type, just as a normal person is often surprised to wake up in the middle of a dream, yet will dream again the next night. Thus, the confusion caused by Kant's various references to his awakening from dogmatic slumbers may be best explained by regarding each as equally legitimate and equally important milestones in his development.

We have seen that Hume's influence was never such as to *convert* Kant to skepticism, but served only as "the first spark of light" (*Prolegomena*, p.260[8]) to kindle his awareness of the need to reflect on the rationality of his cherished beliefs. This *limited* view of the influence of Hume on Kant comes out quite clearly in almost all Kant's references to Hume or skepticism. In *CPR*, for example, Kant again uses his favorite metaphor to describe the relation between dogmatism, skepticism, and Criticism: "At best [skepticism] is merely a means of awakening [reason] from its dogmatic dreams, and of inducing it to enter upon a more careful examination of its own position" (p.785). Kant's attempt in *Dreams* to examine mysticism and metaphysics with a Critical eye should therefore be regarded as resulting from one of his first major awakenings (perhaps largely as a result of his *initial* reading of Hume, probably in the

early 1760s). Ironically, although he disagreed with the *dogmatic use* to which Swedenborg put his ideas, Kant seems to have recognized in them some valuable *hypotheses* that could be purified in the refining fire of Criticism. The antinomies awoke him (in 1768) to the realization that reason's Critical method must be applied not only to objects of possible knowledge (such as mystical experiences and metaphysical theories), but also *to reason itself*. And just when he thought he was on the verge of perfecting this self-Criticism of reason (in 1772), Hume awoke him once again to the realization that his Copernican insight must be used to limit not only intuition but also the concepts arising out of human understanding. We can conclude, therefore, that although Hume was instrumental in awakening Kant to the *limits* of dogmatism, Swedenborg's speculations were responsible in a more direct way for the initial formation of his Copernican hypothesis.

4. The Dream of a System of Critical Philosophy

A clear understanding of the influence of Swedenborg on Kant, and of the function of *Dreams* as a Critical prolegomenon to Kant's mature System of *transcendental* Critique, makes it not so surprising to hear Sewall (1900) say mystics "from Jung-Stilling to Du Prel" have always "claimed Kant as being of their number" (pp.16-17, 32). Indeed, Du Prel (1885, Vol 2, pp.195-8, 243, 290) stresses Kant's positive attitude towards Swedenborg, and argues that in *Dreams* "Kant ... declared Mysticism possible, supposing man to be 'a member at once of the visible and of the invisible world'" (p.302).[37] He even suggests that "Kant would confess to-day [i.e., in the 1880s] that hundreds of such facts [based on various types of parapsychological experience] are proved" (p.198). This is probably going too far, but so is Vaihinger's conclusion that "Kant's world of experience ... excludes all invasion of the regular system of nature by uncontrollable 'spirits'; and the whole system of modern mysticism, so far as he holds fast to his fundamental principles, Kant is 'bound to forcibly reject'" (Sewall 1900, p.19). Kant is forced to reject mysticism *only* as a component of his theoretical system (i.e., *CPR*); the other systems nevertheless remain open to nontheoretical interpretations of mystical experiences. Sewall reflects Kant's purposes more accurately when he writes:

The great mission of Kant was to establish ... [that reason] can neither create a knowledge of the spiritual world, nor can it deny the possibility of such a world. It can affirm indeed the rationality of such a conception, but the *reality* of it does not come within its domain as pure reason.(pp.20-1)

As Vaihinger himself admits elsewhere, Kant's apparent rejection of mysticism (and so also, parapsychology) therefore "refers only to the practices (of spiritism), and to the *Mysticism of the Feelings*; it does not apply to the rational belief of Kant in the 'corpus mysticum of the intelligible world.'"(Sewall 1900, p.25).[38]

Kant therefore has two distinct, though closely related, purposes in *Dreams*. The first is to reject unCritical (speculative or fanatical) forms of mysticism, not in order to overthrow all mysticism, but in order to replace it with a refined, *Critical* version, directed towards our experience of *this* world and our reflection on it from various perspectives. This perspectival element in Kant's mysticism is hinted at by Vaihinger when he says Kant believes:

The other world is ... not another place, but only another view of even this world.... [It] is not a world of other things, but of the same things seen differently by us.... But the wildly fermenting must of the Swedenborgian Mysticism becomes with Kant clarified and settled into the noble, mild, and yet strong wine of criticism. (Sewall 1900, pp.15,18)

Unfortunately, the general mystical thrust of Kant's System of Perspectives has been grossly neglected by almost all English-speaking Kant-scholars.[39] In Part Four of *KCR* (see note 13) I have attempted to set right this neglect by examining the extent to which Kant's Critique of mysticism in *Dreams* paves the way for a full-blooded 'Critical mysticism'.

Kant's second purpose in clearing from the path of metaphysics the obstructions created by the speculative claims of mystical experiences is to prepare the way for his own attempt to provide a metaphysical System that could do for metaphysics what *Dreams* does for mystical visions and all forms of parapsychological experience.[40] For the Critical dream envisaged in *Dreams* was to serve as a seed planted in his reason, which eventually matured into the tree of Critical philosophy; and only when this tree

finally bears fruit does the mystical seed that gave birth to the System appear once again (i.e., in *Opus Postumum*). Accordingly, Kant's Critical labors can be regarded as an attempt to build a rational System that *preserves* the true mystical dream, thus putting mysticism and parapsychology in their true place, at the mysterious (yet nonetheless *real*) centre of metaphysics and physics, respectively. In this sense, at least, Kant would agree with Du Prel (1885) when he says: "It is ... dream, not waking, which is the door of metaphysic, so far as the latter deals with man" (Vol 1, p.70).

REFERENCES

Beck, L. W. (Trans.) (1950). Revised version of P. Carus' translation of I. Kant's (1783) *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc.

Beck, L. W. (Trans.) (1956). I. Kant's (1788) *Critique of Practical Reason*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc

Beck, L. W. (1969). *Early German Philosophy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Beck, L. W. (1987). Review of G. Gawlick & L. Kreimendahl's *Hume in der deutschen Aufklärung*. In *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 20, 405-8.

Beiser, F. C. (1992). Kant's intellectual development: 1746-1781. In Paul Guyer (Ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Broad, C. D. (1953). *Religion, Philosophy and Psychological Research*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

Cassirer, E. (1921, 1918). *Kants Leben und Lehre*². Translated by J. Haden (1981) as *Kant's Life and Thought*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Copleston, F. C. (1960). *A History of Philosophy*, vol. VI, *Wolff to Kant*. London: Burns and Oates Ltd.

Dell'Oro, R. O. M. (1994). *From Existence to the Ideal: Continuity and Development in Kant's Theology*. New York: Peter Lang.

Du Prel, C. (1885). *Die Philosophie der Mystik*. Translated by C. C. Massey (1889) as *The Philosophy of Mysticism*, 2 vols. London: George Redway; reprinted in 1976 (New York: Arno Press).

Fang, J. (1967). *Kant-Interpretationen*. Münster: Verlag Regensburg.

Gerding, J. L. F. (1994). Was Kant a sceptic? In *Proceedings of the Parapsychological Association's 37th Annual Convention*. Utrecht: The Parapsychological Association.

Gulick, W. B. (1994). The creativity of the intellect: From ontology to meaning. The transmutation of the sensible and intelligible worlds in Kant's Critical thought', *Ultimate Reality and Meaning*, 17, 99-108.

Gulyga, A. (1985). *Kant*. Translated by M. Despalatovic (1987) as *Immanuel Kant: His Life and Thought*. Boston: Birkhäuser.

Jonsson, I. (1967). 'Swedenborg, Emanuel', in P. Edwards (Ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. London: Collier Macmillan Publishers. Vol 8.

Kant, I. (1762-1795). *Vorlesungen über Metaphysik*. In Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Eds), *Kants gesammelte Schriften, Akademie Ausgabe*. 29 vols. AA28.1; AA28.2,1; AA29. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Kant, I. (1764a). *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen*. In Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Eds), *Kants gesammelte Schriften, Akademie Ausgabe*. 29 vols. AA2:205-56. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Kant, I. (1764b). *Versuch über die Krankheiten des Kopfes*. In Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Eds), *Kants gesammelte Schriften, Akademie Ausgabe*. AA2:257-271. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter

Kant, I.(1766). *Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik*. In Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Eds), *Kants gesammelte*

Schriften, Akademie Ausgabe. 29 vols. AA2:315-73 = CE1: 303-59. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Kant, I. (1770). *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis.* In Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Eds), *Kants gesammelte Schriften, Akademie Ausgabe.* 29 vols. AA2:385-419 = CE1:375-416; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Kant, I. (1783). Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können. In Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Eds), *Kants gesammelte Schriften, Akademie Ausgabe.* 29 vols. AA4:253-383 (cf. CE3) Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Kant, I. (1787/1781). *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*,² In Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Eds), *Kants gesammelte Schriften, Akademie Ausgabe.* 29 vols. AA3 (passim)(1787 version); AA4:1-252 (1781 version). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Kant, I. (1788). *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft.* In Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Eds), *Kants gesammelte Schriften, Akademie Ausgabe.* 29 vols. AA5:1-163 = CE4:137-271. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Kant, I. (1790). *Kritik der Urtheilskraft.* In Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Eds), *Kants gesammelte Schriften, Akademie Ausgabe.* 29 vols., AA5:165-485 (cf. CE5). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Kant, I. (1798). *Der Streit der Facultäten.* AA7:1-116. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter

Kerferd, G. B. and Walford, D. E. (Trans.) (1968). I. Kant's (1770) *On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World* in G. B. Kerferd and D. E. Walford (Eds) *Selected Pre-Critical Writings and Correspondence with Beck.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Klinke, W. (1949). *Kant für Jedermann.* Translated by M. Bullock (1952) as *Kant For Everyman.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Kuehn, M. (1983). Kant's Conception of 'Hume's Problem', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, **21**, 175-193.

Laywine, A. (1993). *Kant's Early Metaphysics and the Origins of the Critical Philosophy*. Atascadero, Ca.: Ridgeview Publishing Company.

Manolesco, J. (1969) 'Introduction', in his translation of I. Kant's *Dreams of a Spirit Seer Illustrated by Dreams of Metaphysics*. New York: Vantage Press.

McCarthy, V. A. (1982). Christus as Chrestus in Rousseau and Kant, *Kant-Studien*, 73, 191-207.

Meredith, J. C. (Trans.) (1952). I. *Kant's [(1790)] Critique of Judgement*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press (reprinted from his 1911 and 1928 translations of the two Parts).

Palmquist, S. (1987). *A Complete Index to Kemp Smith's Translation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. Oxford and Hong Kong: distributed privately. Also available as e-text at www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp/indx/toc.html (correct March 2001).

Palmquist, S. (1993). *Kant's System of Perspectives*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Palmquist, S. (2000). *Kant's Critical Religion*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Paulsen, F. (1898). *Immanuel Kant: Sein Leben und seine Lehre*. Translated by J. E. Creighton and A. Lefèbvre (1902) as *Immanuel Kant: His Life and Doctrine*. New York: Fredrick Unger Publishing Co.

Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Eds) (1902-present). *Kants gesammelte Schriften, Akademie Ausgabe*. 29 vols. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Rabel, G. (Ed.) (1963). *Kant*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

Richardson, J. (Trans., anon.)(1799). I. Kant's (1764) Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime in (1798-9) Essays and Treatises on Moral, Political, Religious and Various Philosophical Subjects, 2 vols. London: William Richardson; reprinted. G. Micheli (1993), Bristol: Thoemmes Press.

Sewall, F. (Ed.) (1900). I. Kant's *Dreams of a Spirit Seer Illustrated by Dreams of Metaphysics*, trans. E. F. Goerwitz. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.

Smith, N. K. (Trans.) (1929). I. Kant's [(1787/1781)] *Critique of Pure Reason*. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd.

Ütz, G. F. (1992). *Swedenborgs verborgene Wirkung auf Kant*. Translated by J. D. Odhner and K. Nemitz (1993-1995) as *Swedenborg's Hidden Influence on Kant*, in a series of installments published in *The New Philosophy*, 96-98: vols. 96 (1993), 171-225, 277-307; 97 (1994), 347-96, 461-98; 98 (1995), 99-108; etc

Wallace, W. (1901). *Kant*. London: William Blackwood and Sons.

Ward, K. (1972). *The Development of Kant's View of Ethics*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Werkmeister, W. H. (1980). *Kant: The Architectonic and Development of His Philosophy*. London: Open Court Press.

Wolff, R. P. (1960). Kant's Debt to Hume Via Beattie *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 21, 117-23.

Zweig, A. (1967). *Kant: Philosophical Correspondence 1759-99*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

FOOTNOTES

1. Kant (1776); Sewall (1900), p.373 (121). Sewall (1990) will hereafter be referred to as *Dreams* in the text. References to Kant's writings, as in Kant (1776), will be identified by the volume and page numbers in the standard, Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Eds.) (1902-present) edition and the equivalent volume and page numbers in the new Cambridge Edition of Kant's Works in English — abbreviated 'AA' and 'CE', respectively. The translation quoted, if different from the CE translation, is then identified, along with the abbreviation that will be used in all further references to that book. References to Kant's writings will normally be identified by

these abbreviations and included in the main text, citing the German page number(s); the English page number(s) follow(s) in square brackets in cases where the German pagination is not included in the English text quoted.

2. Kant (1770); Kerferd & Walford (1968). This book was Kant's inaugural dissertation for his professorial post at the University of Königsberg, so I shall refer to it hereafter as *Dissertation*.

3. The latter is based on Kant's [1783] own account of the matter: "I openly confess my recollection of David Hume was the very thing which many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave my investigations in the field of speculative philosophy a quite new direction". (p.260, [Beck (1950), p.8]). Beck (1950) will hereafter be referred to as *Prolegomena* in the text.

4. In a note to his translation of *Prolegomena* Lewis White Beck (1950) suggests that "Kant had probably read Hume before 1760, but only much later (1772?) did he begin to follow 'a new direction' under Hume's influence" ([p.8n]). Beck (1969) defends his position in *Early German Philosophy*; see also Wolff (1960). In *Dissertation* and as late as 1772, in a letter to Marcus Herz, Kant shows no awareness that Hume's skepticism challenges his own conception of causality as an intellectual principle. The supposed reason is that Kant was familiar only with Hume's *Enquiry* (1748), with its relatively modest skepticism, until he read Beattie's *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth* (1772), which contains translations of long passages from the more radically skeptical text of Hume's *Treatise* (1738). Beck (1987) confirms his acceptance of this explanation despite more recent conjectures that Kant's friend, Hamann, who translated part of the *Treatise* in 1771, may have shown his translation to Kant as early as 1768.

Paulsen (1898) affirms that Kant "did not receive the impetus to his work [i.e., *Dreams*] from the English writers, and especially from Hume's epistemological investigations", (pp.87-8). The influence of Hume, he argues, came mainly in the early 1770s "as furnishing an incentive to turn towards his original [i.e., Kant's own unique] position" (pp.93-4), and to a lesser extent, just prior to the writing of *Dissertation* in 1770 (pp.97-9). This supports the view I shall defend in §3, that Hume's "awakening" refers primarily to the change from *Dissertation* to the first *Critique*.

Both these suggestions account only for Kant's recognition of the *need* for a more adequate defense of the philosophical principle of causality. They say nothing positive about the source of what I take to be the two most fundamental aspects of Kant's mature philosophical System: his Critical method and his 'Copernican' assumption. Moreover, they also fail to account for the unique (Humean?) character of *Dreams*. In §3, I shall propose an alternative explanation of Kant's development, which makes up for these and other inadequacies of the traditional view.

5. This conjecture is supported not only by Kant's age (early 40s), but also by his cynical dissatisfaction with the status quo. Manolesco (1969) treats "Kant's sudden hatred for speculative metaphysics" as "a deep psychological change due to unrequited love, not by metaphysics but by Swedenborg himself" (pp.14-15) for not replying to Kant's queries. Moreover, Kant was involved in failed love affairs with at least two women at around this time (see e.g., Klinker 1949, pp.39-41; Wallace 1901, pp.44-5; and especially, Gulyga 1985, pp.54-5.)

6. Kant (1787/1781), AA3:*passim* (second edition) and AA4:1-252 (passages unique to first edition) = CE2:*passim* (both editions); Smith, (1929), pp.xvi-xviii. Smith (1929) will hereafter be referred to as *CPR* (= *Critique of Pure Reason*) in the text. References are to the 1787 edition, unless the page number is preceded by 'A'.

7. The emphasized words indicate that Kant was still mindful of his earlier work in *Dreams* which, as will become apparent in this essay, adopts the same point of view expressed in this quotation. In fact, Kant uses terms referring to this sleeping/dreaming/awakening metaphor 27 times in *CPR* (see Palmquist 1987, pp.34,109, 347), most of which echo quite clearly the attitudes adopted in *Dreams*. The most significant references are *CPR* pp. Ap.xiii, 503, 519-21, 785, 792 (but see also pp. Ap.xin, xxxvi, 1, A112, 217, 247, 278, A376-7, A380, A390, 434, 452, 479, 652, 808). Such texts should not, however, be taken as evidence that Kant was completely against all mysticism. Rather, they restate the same problem posed in *Dreams*—viz., how one's "cherished dreams" *can* be preserved, if not by dogma and/or magic. Kant's *solution* to this crucial problem is fully examined in Part Four of Palmquist (2000). Palmquist (2000) will hereafter be referred to as *KCR* (= *Kant's Critical Religion*) in the text. The present essay, incidentally, is a revised version of *KCR*, Chapter II.

8 These two modes of representation are similar, though not identical, to the distinction I make between ‘immediate experience’ and ‘reflective knowledge’ in Palmquist (1993), IV.1. Palmquist (1993) will hereafter be referred to as *KSP* (= *Kant’s System of Perspectives*) in the text. See also *KCR*, III.2. References to these two books cite the chapter and section (or note) numbers; this renders them easier to locate using the e-text versions available on my web site, currently (March 2001) located at www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp

9. See e.g., *CPR* 352,A395. Palmquist (1987, p.86) lists 168 occurrences of these three words in *CPR*.

10. Indeed, as I argued throughout *KSP*, the making of such perspectival distinctions is the key task of the Critical philosopher (see especially *KSP* II.1).

11. In the earlier works, of course, the traces are evident retrospectively even though Kant himself would not yet have been conscious of the significance of the naturally Critical tendencies of his way of thinking. In fact, *becoming conscious* of what was *already there* seems to be one of the implications of his much-used metaphor of sleeping/dreaming/awakening (see note 7). Otherwise a metaphor such as ‘coming alive’ or ‘giving birth’ would have been more appropriate.

12. Swedenborg (1688-1772) was not only the founder of crystallography, but also made significant advances in a wide range of scientific, technological, and economic fields. For an account of such accomplishments, see the opening section of Ütz (1992); see also Laywine (1993, pp.57-8).

13. Kant’s interest in the spirit world is almost always neglected, if not outright denied, by Kant scholars nowadays. Yet throughout his life he repeatedly affirmed a belief in its reality. Even in *CPR* he uses ‘spirit’ and its cognates 16 times (see Palmquist 1987, p.353), affirming his commitment to a surprisingly Platonic view of the eternity of the human spirit: "we can propound a transcendental hypothesis, namely, that all life is, strictly speaking, intelligible only, is not subject to changes of time, and neither begins in birth nor ends in death; that this life is an appearance only, that is, a sensible representation of the purely spiritual life, and that the whole sensible world is a mere picture which in our present mode of knowledge hovers before us, and like a

dream has in itself no objective reality; that if we could intuit ourselves and things *as they are*, we should see ourselves in a world of spiritual beings, our sole and true community with which has not begun through birth and will not cease through bodily death — both birth and death being mere appearances." (*CPR*, pp.807-8)

14. The subtle difference between this and the usual interpretation can be illustrated by quoting Werkmeister's (1980) claim that in *Dreams* Kant concludes "that metaphysics ought to abandon its dogmatic speculations about God, the life hereafter, and similar topics" (p.64). This is correct, *provided* we understand (as Werkmeister himself hints elsewhere (cf. note 16) that abandoning *dogmatic speculation* does not entail altogether abandoning belief in God, etc., as is assumed by those who regard *Dreams* as the work of an outright skeptic. Kant abandons speculation not in order to swing over to the skepticism of unbelief, but in order to make room for a *Critical reformation* of his beliefs.

15. On the dating of this letter, see: Sewall (1900), p.160; Broad (1953), pp.117-8; and Rabel (1963), p.74.

16. Laywine (1993), pp.60-61, gives a good summary of the first three visions Swedenborg made public, each mentioned in Kant's letters.

Kant's tendency in *Dreams* to ridicule views towards which he was in fact sympathetic may be what led him to suggest this book be excluded from his collected minor writings (see Sewall 1900, p.x; Manolesco 1969, p.7). Paulsen (1898, p.84) admits that the "spiritology" in *Dreams* "is not intended [by Kant] to be entirely without seriousness", inasmuch as it foreshadows the important 'two worlds' doctrine later propounded in *CPR*. Later he relates this to "Kant's Platonism", already evident in *Dreams* "an ethical and religious view of the world on the basis of objective idealism" (p.310). Mendelssohn captures the strangeness of Kant's mood in *Dreams* when he writes in a book review: "The jesting profundity with which this little work has been written leaves the reader at times in doubt as to whether Mr. Kant intended to make metaphysics ridiculous or spiritism (*Geisterseherei*) plausible" (Werkmeister 1980, p.43). The answer, as we shall see, is *both* and *neither*: making unCritical approaches to both issues look ridiculous prepares the way for the Critical method to reveal the plausibility of both, when viewed Critically. For *Dreams* adopts an entirely Critical

method, and so first poses the problem (though somewhat obscurely) that is to be solved by Kant's mature philosophical System. That Kant is intentionally using Swedenborg's visions as a *test case* for the application of his well-formed Critical method, before launching into its application to all of metaphysics, is indicated in his 1766 letter to Mendelssohn (in Manolesco 1969, pp.154-9), where he calls attention to the "important conclusions which are meant to determine in a strict manner the *methodology* of [the new metaphysics]", and then invites *Mendelssohn* to use this new (Critical) method "to draw up a new master plan for this science" (Manolesco 1969, pp.156-7, emphasis added). See also Laywine (1993, pp.72-100) and Werkmeister (1980, pp.44,84) for similar views of the prefiguring role of *Dreams*.

Werkmeister (1980) quotes Borowski's biography of Kant as saying "the attentive reader found already here [in *Dreams*] the seeds of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and of that which Kant gave us later." Unfortunately, he gives no details as to just which aspects of *Dreams* constitute these "seeds". After using the same metaphor (*Dreams* "contains ... many of the seeds of Kant's Critical Philosophy" [Manolesco 1969, p.13]), Manolesco lists some examples: Kant's "theory of spirits is almost an exact replica, expressed in philosophical language, of Swedenborg's own thesis ... Swedenborgian doctrines ... provided him with fundamental metaphysical starting points for his later views on the soul, on the dualism of mind and matter, on his conception of noumena and phenomena, on inner sense and its connection with the unity of apperception." (pp.17-18)

17. McCarthy (1982) makes the interesting suggestion that Kant's mature philosophy replaces 'Christus' (Latin for 'anointed') with 'Crestus' (Latin for 'useful'). If so, Kant's third point can be regarded as a foretaste of what is to come. We must keep in mind, however, that 'useful' for Kant means 'useful in bringing about goodness'; it is not a sudden leaning towards utilitarianism (cf. Kant [1762-1795, AA28.1, AA28.2,1, and AA29 = CE10:*passim*). McCarthy (1982) shows his implicit awareness of the moral aspect of the Kantian 'useful' when he says his (like Kant's) concern is with "the role of Jesus the (morally) 'Useful'" (p.192). What McCarthy seems to ignore is that the 'Crestus' need not *exclude* the 'Cristus'; as I argue in Part Three of *KCR*, both can (and should) work together as complements.

18. Kant notes in *Dreams* that this "prevalent opinion which assigns to the soul its seat in the brain, seems to originate mainly in the fact, that we feel distinctly how, in deep meditation, the nerves of the brain are taxed. But if this conclusion is right it would prove also other abodes of the soul. In anxiety or joy the sensation seems to have its seat in the heart. Many affections, yea most of them, manifest themselves most strongly in the diaphragm. Pity moves the intestines, and other instincts manifest their origin in other organs" (p.325n[50n]). Here we see a good example of Kant's awareness of and concern for the condition of his own body. Unfortunately, interpreters tend to excuse this concern as stemming merely from his eccentric ideas about how he could maintain his own health through sheer will power and self-determination (see e.g., Kant [1764, AA2:257-71]; Kant [1798, Part III, AA7:1-116 = CE6:237-327]). Yet it seems also to reveal the importance he placed on fostering a meditative awareness of his *immediate experience*: philosophy for Kant is ultimately not an abstract function of the mind or brain, but a *discipline* in which the whole body participates as well.

19. See also AA28:146-7 and Laywine (1993, pp.52,159). Laywine makes a good case for viewing soul-body interaction as the chief philosophical concern around which most of Kant's pre-Copernican writings revolved. She argues that, prior to *Dreams*, Kant was (at least implicitly) committed to a theory of "physical influx", whereby the soul has quasi-material characteristics, such as impenetrability, and that in the process of grappling with Swedenborg's vulgar version of the same view, Kant recognized the need to give it up. I summarize and assess her interpretation in Appendix II.2 of *KCR*.

20. "The relation [of these 'incorporeal substances'] by means of things corporeal is consequently to be regarded as accidental" (*Dreams* p.330[56-7]). Since an "undoubted characteristic of life" is "free movement" (including growth), Kant suggests that both plants and animals may also have an immaterial nature (p.330[57]). In order to show the close connection between plants and animals Kant mentions Boerhave's view: "The animal is a plant which has its roots in the stomach (inside)." He then opines the converse is also true: "The plant is an animal which has its stomach in the root (outside)." But he warns that "such conjectures ... have the ridicule of fashion against them, as being dusty antiquated fancies"; "the appeal to immaterial principles is a

subterfuge of bad philosophy", so he will "not ... use any of these considerations as evidence" (p.331[58]).

21. Kant conjectures that the spiritual conceptions that arise in the deepest, dreamless sleep "may be clearer and broader than even the clearest in the waking state. This is to be expected of such an active being as the soul when the external senses are so completely at rest. For man, at such times is not sensible of his body." When dreaming, by contrast, a person "perceives to a certain degree clearly, and weaves the actions of his spirit into the impressions of the external senses." Unfortunately, Kant does not acknowledge the importance of this connective function of dreams, so instead of regarding them as revealing profound symbols of spiritual conceptions (as Jung, using Kant as his philosophical springboard, has since suggested [see Appendix II.1 of my *KCR*]), he ridicules them as being "only wild and absurd chimeras" [*Dreams* 338n(68n)]. Du Prel (1885) develops an elaborate theory of 'somnambulism' (including hypnotism) based explicitly on Kant's philosophy [see e.g., Du Prel 1885, vol. 1, pp.xxvi, 5-7, 62, 71, etc.]. He also agrees with Kant on many specific points [see e.g., Du Prel 1885, pp.57-8]. For example he says: "With the deepening of sleep must diminish the confusion of the dream." (*Ibid.*, p.44). In arguing for "the scientific importance of dream", he claims this clarity can be explained best by assuming that in deepest sleep the center of control changes from the brain (the focus of consciousness) to the solar plexus (the focus of the unconscious), and that the more control exercised by the latter, the more significant the dream will be (*Ibid.*, pp.27-44, 68-9)

22. The concluding paragraph of Chapter Three, containing these comments, also includes some harsh ridicule of those who adopt the perspective of Chapter Two. He suggests, for instance, that although visionaries are not necessarily insane, "insanity [is] a likely consequence of such communion.... Therefore, I do not at all blame the reader, if, instead of regarding the spirit-seers as half-dwellers in another world [the view Kant himself seems to prefer], he, without further ceremony, dispatches them as candidates for the hospital" (p.348[83]). No doubt this is one of the embarrassing remarks in *Dreams* that led Kant to suggest in later life that it be excluded from his collected minor works (see Sewall 1900, p.x).

23. Cf. my book *KSP*, IX.4 (p.307) and note II.12. For an explanation of Kant's 'judicial' standpoint (that of the third *Critique*), see notes I.13 and I.17 of *KCR*.

24. This position has an obvious affinity with the doctrines of the positive and negative noumenon developed in *CPR* [see my book, *KSP*, VI.3].

25. Thus, Kant notes (p.350n[87-8n]) that our speculative ignorance "does not at all invalidate the confidence that the conceptions thence evolved [i.e., from hope] are right." For example, the "inner perception" that death is "only a transformation" leads "to that point to which reason itself would lead us if it were more enlightened, and of a greater scope." Kant is saying our immediate experience can provide existential certainty for a position that cannot be proved theoretically. This existential certainty is grounded in what Kant calls "rational faith" [see *KCR*, note IV.15].

26. For a fuller explanation of this fundamental distinction between immediate experience (which, as such, produces no knowledge) and the various reflective forms of experience (which do produce knowledge), see my book, *KSP*, IV.1, and the summary of that section given in the first sequel, *KCR*, III.2.

27. This emphasis on the useful in *Dreams* may have arisen to some extent out of Kant's Wolffian education. For Wolff himself stressed the importance of "the useful" (see e.g., Copleston 1960, p.112). Kant did not abandon this emphasis in his mature writings, but rather transformed it into the hypothetical perspective in his theoretical system (i.e., the first *Critique*) and into the practical standpoint of his overall philosophical System.

In the final chapter of *Dreams* the same strategy is employed to address the issue of the possibility of a spiritual influence on the body: such influences are possible but cannot be proved because they are not governed by corporeal laws. This is directly parallel to Kant's mature attitude towards "noumenal causality", which cannot be regarded as knowable because it does not fall under the *a priori* principles of the possibility of experience.

28. Indeed, Kant even uses the metaphor of awakening in the skeptical chapter of *Dreams* (p.342[74], quoted above, in §2), thus indicating that in 1766 he was already thinking of skepticism as a useful tool for stimulating philosophers to reconsider their dogmatism. This fact, as we shall see later in this section, raises serious questions about

the traditional view that Kant's "awakening" by Hume did not happen until 1768, or perhaps even 1772 (see note 4).

29. Moreover, Kant uses the same metaphor in *CPR* 795, where he refers to "the assay-balance of criticism" (see also *CPR* pp.617,811). And he uses the corresponding metaphor of "weighing" two opposing arguments in *CPR* A388-9,615,617,665,778, as well as in *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, (see Beck 1956, p.76).

30. As early as 1764 Kant recognized a special relationship between metaphysics, moral philosophy, and philosophy of religion (see Kant 1764; Richardson 1799, vol.2, p.246n[63n]). In June of 1771 Kant affirmed in a letter to Marcus Herz that his project would have to address the topics of metaphysics, morality, and aesthetics. And his letter to Herz in February 1772 shows he already conceived of his task as including work on "the principles of feeling, taste, and power of judgement" in addition to its theoretical and moral aspects (AA10:124; translated in Zweig 1967, p.71). Although he apparently had not yet decided to devote a separate *Critique* to each subject, he *had* already thought of the title 'Critique of Pure Reason' (AA10.126[*bid.*, p.73]). For a concise summary of the importance of these two letters, see Copleston 1960, pp.203-7.

31. I examine the details of the architectonic structure of Kant's System in *KSP*, III.3-4. A brief summary of those sections is given in my book, *KCR*, III.1; see also Appendix III.1.

32. Laywine (1993) makes significant headway in this direction (see also note 19), though she reaches some rather questionable conclusions. For a detailed discussion of her interpretation, see Appendix II.2 of my book *KCR*.

33. This distinction between Kant's Critical method and the *transcendental* orientation of his philosophy is often ignored by Kant-scholars, who tend to conflate the terms by talking about Kant's "transcendental method" – a phrase Kant himself never uses. This type of interpretive error lies behind Cassirer's (1921, 1918) claim that in *CPR* "Kant is presenting a completely novel *type of thinking*, one in opposition to his own past and to the philosophy of the Age of Enlightenment" (p.141). This notion of a complete "opposition" between Kant's past (wherein he is portrayed as being

unknowingly duped by his dogmatic upbringing) and his Critical outlook (which is supposed to have sprung as suddenly as the ringing of an alarm clock from his reading of Hume) typifies the mythical account of Kant's development against which I am arguing in this essay. In *CPR* Kant is not negating his past, but pressing it to its proper limit; he is separating the wheat from the chaff of his own background and of his Age (see e.g., *CPR* Ap.xin) by bringing into full view the Critical method that had characterized his way of thinking from the start of his career.

One exception to the above is J. Fang (1967), who calls attention to the mistake of regarding Kant's *method* as transcendental (pp.112-3). He also recognizes the importance of distinguishing between the Critical method and the transcendental character of Kant's mature philosophy: the "critical method" is already "*partially* revealed" (i.e., applied) in 1770, but "concerns itself with 'limits' alone ... and not yet with 'sources'", as it does in its transcendental application (Fang 1967, pp.118-9). With intimations of Einstein, he then suggests that "the *special* critical method of 1768-69, viz., 'to determine the validity and bounds of intuitive principles', had to be generalized, and when it was finally 'broadened', the *general* critical method was to discover and justify ... the sources, the extent, and the limits of the human faculty of knowledge or metaphysic in general — the main task of the *Critique*." (p.121) Unfortunately, Fang does not work out in any detail the significance of this distinction (which relates more to Kant's gradual application of his Copernican insight than to the Critical method as such), nor does he mention *Dreams* as relevant to the development of Kant's Critical method.

34. This implies that the traditional view of *Dreams* as a temporary excursion into Humean skepticism [see §1, above] is entirely unjustified, based as it is on a shallow reading of the text and a neglect of the ubiquity of the Critical method in Kant's writings. Hume's influence on Kant in the early 1760s was only one of many influencing factors acting together as grist for the Critical mill. Interestingly, neither Hume nor Swedenborg is included in Werkmeister's description of "the complexus of ideas which is the basis for all further development of Kant's philosophy" [Werkmeister 1980, p.15].

35. Kant's biographers consistently report the strong influence he felt his mother had on his general personal and intellectual development. I discuss her influence further in *KCR*, X.4.

36. In fact, the influence of Swedenborg is quite compatible with the influence of Leibniz. For Swedenborg himself studied Descartes, Leibniz, and Wolff, much as Kant did in his early years (see Jonsson 1967, p.47). (In §335.7 and §696 of *The True Christian Religion* Swedenborg even describes his visions of Aristotle, Descartes and Leibniz, together with nine of their followers, among whom was Wolff.) Thus, Kant's reading of Swedenborg may well have worked *together* with his reading of the *Clarke-Leibniz Correspondence* to point him towards the Copernican hypothesis.

37. The term 'mysticism' in this quote (as elsewhere in this essay) might well be replaced nowadays by the more scientific term, 'parapsychology'.

38. Kant affirms his belief in the notion of a '*corpus mysticum*' at several points even in *CPR*, as when he says that "if we could intuit ourselves and things as they are, we should see ourselves in a world of spiritual natures, our sole and true community" (*CPR* p.836; see also Ap.393-4]. Kant's lifelong belief in a spirit-world is demonstrated by Manolesco (1969).

39. Sewall (1990, p.x [*sic*; page number should read 'ix']) lists several works written between 1889 and 1895 that do focus on Kant's mystical tendencies. The most significant of these is Du Prel's *Kant's Vorlesungen über Psychologie* (1889), which contains an introduction entitled 'Kant's mystische Weltanschauung'. Sewall (1900,), translates the following passage from pp.vii-viii of that work: "'Dreams' ... has been interpreted as a daring venture of Kant's genius in making sport of superstition; the accent has been laid on Kant's negations, and his affirmative utterances have been overlooked. The 'Lectures on Psychology' now show ... that these utterances were very seriously intended; for the affirmative portions of the 'Dreams' agree very thoroughly with the lengthier exposition of the 'Psychology', and the wavering attitude of Kant is here no longer perceptible." (pp.13-4n)

40. I have intentionally presented this as the *second* purpose, because the text of *Dreams* clearly regards it as such. Nearly all interpreters read into the text their own

exclusive interest in Kant's metaphysics, and thereby treat the whole topic of mystical visions as a mere (perhaps ill-chosen) illustration. How easy it is to forget that even the title specifies the *main* topic as focusing on visionary dreams (i.e., what we would now classify as part of *parapsychology*), and explicitly regards *metaphysics* as a secondary illustration.

Johan L.F. Gerding (1994) is an exception. He stresses that Kant is dealing with parapsychological phenomena ('psi'). However, he takes *Dreams* as a "fundamental denial of psi" claiming "Kant explicitly states that psi phenomena cannot exist" (p.141). But this is too strong. Kant's conclusion is that we cannot form such experiences into a *science*: he openly admits that psi phenomena do exist as immediate experiences; the problem is that we cannot *understand* them. Gerding (1994) goes so far as to claim that for Kant "psi cannot even be hypothetical" (p.144) and that "Kant does not allow psi to be even possible." He suggests we could avoid excluding psi from transcendental philosophy by tracing them to "an unknown capacity of the human mind" (pp.144-5), but this renders them uninformative: "Psi information from a transcendent world therefore is not possible." He defends his position by arguing that a case of ESP, for example, "has to be verifiable for living human beings" in order to be regarded as genuine (p.145). This still leaves the *process* unknowable: we can know *that* something happens without knowing *how* it happens. He thus concludes: "the Kantian transcendental philosophy does not exclude paranormal phenomena when they are interpreted as anomalous phenomena, which happen to living human beings." What Gerding fails to recognize is that a perspectival interpretation of *Dreams* enables us to see this as precisely Kant's own view! The error is to think Kant himself did not recognize that psi can be mysterious yet entirely possible.

Send comments to: StevePq@hkbu.edu.hk.

This page was last updated on 8 December 2005. Please come again!