Brownson as a Critic of Kant

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BROWNSON AS A CRITIC OF KANT

by

Lawrence John Roemer

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

1941
VITA AUCTORIS

Lawrence John Roemer was born in Wilmette, Illinois, October 22, 1916. He received his elementary education at St. Joseph's School, was graduated from St. George High School in 1935 and received the A.B. degree from Loras College in June, 1939. Since that time he has been employed by Loyola University as an Assistant in the Department of Philosophy.
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INTRODUCTION

The Life of Brownson

Orestes Augustine Brownson was born in Stockbridge, Vermont, in 1803. A few years later his father, Sylvester Brownson died, leaving his wife with the burden of supporting a family of four small children. When Orestes was six years old his mother placed him in the care of an aged couple in the neighboring town of Royalton. He tells us that his foster-parents treated him with great kindness and affection, and taught him the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed and the Shorter Catechism as well as a few simple rules of conduct:

They taught me to be honest, to owe no one anything but good will, to be frugal and industrious, to speak the truth, never to tell a lie under any circumstances, or to take what was not my own, even to the value of a pin; to keep the Sabbath, and never to let the sun go down on my wrath.¹

But it is rather paradoxical to speak of his childhood, for as he says, he had none: "Brought up with old people, and debarred from all the sports, plays, and amusements of children, I had the manners, the tone, and tastes of an old man before I was a boy. A sad misfortune".²

At an early age his foster-parents taught him to read, and he developed a great fondness for it. Before he was eight years old he had read through a Protestant version of the Scriptures and had memorized a large portion of it before he was fourteen.³ Thus religion was the cornerstone of his early life; the fond dream of his youth was to become a minister of religion and to dedicate his life to the task of instructing others in the knowledge and the love
of God. And religion remained of prime importance throughout his whole life. In his effort to find truth in religion he embraced the Congregationalists and Presbyterians, became a Universalist minister and later a Unitarian minister; he founded what was a tantamount to a religion of his own called the Society for Christian Union and Progress, and finally became a Catholic on October 20, 1844. He remained a Catholic until his death in 1876.

Although we have no occasion to describe his religious experiences in any elaborate detail, a brief summary of the circumstances surrounding his conversion may give us some insight into his character. In 1836 he founded, edited, and wrote most of the articles for a magazine he called The Boston Quarterly Review. In a comparatively short time his review became one of the most popular in the country; and by this time he had also gained a wide reputation as a lecturer. That his renown as a writer and orator made him one of the most influential men in America is evinced by the fact that Van Buren, for example, attributed his defeat in the 1840 election largely to Brownson's essay on The Laboring Classes. Moreover his Novel, Charles Elwood, published in 1840, was reprinted several times in England. Thus, just prior to his conversion Brownson was a very famous man in the full flush of youthful maturity with a great career as a politician, writer and speaker lying open before him.

Now in order to truly appreciate his conversion to Catholicism, we must remember that Catholics were undergoing a rather severe persecution at the time Brownson was most famous. Anti-Catholic feeling was rather strong and Catholics were looked upon with a great deal of suspicion and mistrust by
their fellow citizens. Mobs rioting in the streets of our Eastern Cities burned several Catholic Churches. Thus, he had everything to lose, materially speaking, and nothing to gain by becoming a Catholic. And as might be expected, when he did become a Catholic it seemed to him as though the entire universe crashed in ruins about him; but he accepted Catholicism even though it meant a complete renunciation of his past life. He had to turn his back upon the things ordinary men hold so dear in life: Old friends, wealth, prestige, power. But without the slightest hesitation he continued his review recently changed to Brownson's Quarterly Review, and boldly vindicated his stand. Instead of timidly claiming the possibility of being a good Catholic and a loyal American citizen, Brownson asserted the impossibility of being a good American citizen without being a Catholic. And it was because he so fearlessly set forth his views on matters concerning the rights of Catholics that, as Daniel Sargent remarks, the bishops of America gave him credit for liberating the Catholic press in the United States.

But his religious wanderings do not evince an instability of character, nor do they indicate that Brownson was intellectually weak and of a vacillating temperament. He was by no means a mere intellectual weathercock who shifted with every change in the breeze of public opinion. He was, on the contrary, firm in his convictions and would hold fast to what he believed to be true regardless of the cost involved. His adherence to the truth is shown first of all by the fact that he remained a loyal and devoted Catholic for over thirty-one years. His frequent changes before conversion to Catholicism demonstrate rather his sincerity and his willingness to accept truth wherever
he found it. And his apparent instability in things religious is explicable only in the light of his burning love for truth and his willingness to make sacrifices in order to attain and defend it.8

It is, of course, necessary to summarize briefly the philosophic background of Brownson. We may remark at the outset that there was nothing at all unusual about his early training in philosophy. Having been brought up among Protestants, and being interested in things philosophic from his youth, it was quite natural for him to study the works of the philosophers famous in his day. And so he read, among others, the works of Locke, Reid, Stewart and Hume; nor was it unusual that he should be influenced by his masters, as he was when he professed the scepticism of Hume.9 And since a great many famous philosophers of that time were French, Brownson became acquainted with some of them when he mastered the French language while he was a Unitarian minister (about 1833). Among the writings he studied were those of the brilliant Victor Cousin, who had a tremendous influence on him.10 And being interested in the French philosophers, Brownson also acquired a knowledge of the writings of Pierre Leroux, from whom he borrowed much.11 But though he borrowed much from Leroux, Brownson never assented to his pantheistic doctrine that man communes with God through humanity.12

Thus far we have noted, in general, Brownson's philosophic background until the time of his conversion in 1844. Since his criticism of Kant was written prior to his conversion, we mention only in passing the men influencing him after 1844. As a Catholic he considered it his duty to become familiar with some of the writings of the fathers and doctors of the church,
especially St. Thomas and St. Augustine; and for a time he was also a devotee of Gioberti.\textsuperscript{13} For a time his works were almost completely forgotten, but it is extremely gratifying to note a revival of interest in him at the present time (see, for example, the recent biographies of Brownson by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and Doran Whalen). Articles about him also appear rather frequently in leading Catholic periodicals,\textsuperscript{15} and his name is mentioned more frequently in the Catholic press and by distinguished Catholic leaders. The late Reverend J. W. R. Maguire, for example, noted economist and arbitrator of labor disputes, spoke of him as "the most profound philosopher that ever treated American institutions of government. His memory needs no monument, because there is no proportion between his mighty mind and mere monuments of wood and stone".\textsuperscript{16} The Very Reverend Dr. Joseph P. Donovan, C.M., refers to him as the greatest thinker America has yet produced, and as the American equal and equivalent of Cardinal Newman.\textsuperscript{17} Daniel Sargent says of him that, as a master of forceful prose and as a controversialist he has scarcely an equal among English writers.\textsuperscript{18} The distinguished Dr. Wm. J. Bergin, C.S.V., former president of St. Viator College, says of Orestes Brownson that he is perhaps the greatest master of applied logic that ever lived.

From the brief survey of his life given above, we may readily observe that Brownson has a claim to fame on a great many counts. The fact that he was born in poverty and reared in sorrow and yet rose to be one of the most influential men of his day, is an achievement worthy of note. Having practically no formal education and yet reading Aristotle in the original "before he had heard on his upper lip" is another accomplishment of which few can
He was counted an educated man; he knew passably the Greek and Roman classics, was not ignorant of the sciences, had mastered most of the systems of philosophy, knew the languages and literatures of the principal modern nations of Europe, had studied more carefully than most scholars, ancient and modern history, theology, and politics, without ever having been to college, except a short period at the Academy of Ballston.\(^9\)

These facts evince, if nothing else, his amazing versatility and capacity for knowledge.

But in our estimation these extraordinary achievements obscure, rather than bring into bold relief, the true greatness of Brownson. In our estimation any man is truly great only in so far as he dedicates his life, wholeheartedly and sincerely, to the attainment of a great and noble cause. If this be a worthy conception of "greatness", Brownson is a truly great man. For he consecrated his whole life to the search for and defense of truth.\(^20\)

He is also great because of a very remarkable ability to think clearly on any of the many subjects he treated, whether in the domain of philosophy, religion, politics, literature, or any other walk of human thought or activity. And therefore he is not to be condemned and summarily dismissed because he is not an "original thinker". He did not claim to have made any startling new discoveries in any of the various subjects he studied so thoroughly. But in our estimation his genius consists in the unusual ability to solve new problems in the light of eternal and immutable principles. And it is because he treated nearly every problem which arose in the light of its basic principles that his writings are seldom ephemeral. And hence they are still worthy of serious consideration.
FOOTNOTES OF THE INTRODUCTION

1Brownson’s Works Volume V. p.4 (Detroit 1882-1887) Citations hereafter are to Works, volume, and page. A chronological table is given at the end of the thesis.

2Works v. p. 4

3“My reading was confined principally to the Scriptures, all of which I had read through before I was eight, and a great part of which I knew by heart before I was fourteen years old.” Works, V. p. 51

4“In 1840, we supported Mr. Van Buren, - though he has done us the honor of ascribing to us personally the principle share of his defeat, - for then we regarded the contest as one of principle”. Works, XV, p. 477

5“Though written in 1834 and 1835, the book had not been published till 1840; and its author, speedily growing dissatisfied with it, had peremptorily forbidden a second edition in America, though it was reprinted several times in England”. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Pilgrim’s Progress (Boston: 1939) p. 141

6“To pass from one Protestant sect to another is a small affair, and is little more than going from one apartment to another in the same house. We remain still in the same world, in the same general order of thought, and in the midst of the same friends and associates ... But to pass from Protestantism to Catholicity is a very different thing. We break with the whole world in which we have hitherto lived; we enter into a new and untried region, and we fear the discoveries we may make there, when it is too late to draw back. To the Protestant mind this old Catholic Church is veiled in mystery, and leaves ample room to the imagination to people it with all manner of monsters, chimeras, and hydras dire. We enter it, and leave no bridge over which we may return. It is a committal for life, for eternity. To enter it seemed to me, like taking a leap in the dark; and it is not strange that I recoiled.” Works, V, pp. 158-9.

7“He had found the Catholic press in America literally in chains of timidity. He had taken off its shackles, set it on its feet. The bishops, long before he died, had attributed the emancipation almost entirely to him, and the praise which they gave him he could trust, for it came from them singly, and those who gave it were not always partial to all of his views.” Daniel Sargent, Four Independents. (New York: 1935) p. 237

8“What men most lack is principle, is the feeling that they should be true to the right; and that to be manly is to be ready to follow the truth under whatever guise it may come, to whatever it may lead, to the loss of reputation, to poverty, to beggary, to the dungeon or the scaffold, to the stake or exile. I have had my faults, great and grievous faults, as well as others, but I have never had that of disloyalty to principle, or of fearing to own my honest convictions, however unpopular they might be, or however absurd or dangerous the public might regard them ... Sincerity in error is respectable; insincerity in the truth is of all things the most reprehensible, for it proves the heart is wholly false, a mass of corruption.” Works, V, pp. 46-7
Like most English and Americans of my generation, I had been educated in the school of Locke. From Locke I had passed to the Scottish school of Reid and Stewart, and had adhered to it without well knowing what it was, till it was overthrown by Dr. Thomas Brown, who, in the introductory lectures to his philosophy, revived the scepticism of Hume, and drove me into speculative atheism, by resolving cause and effect into invariable antecedence and consequence, thus excluding all idea of creative power or productive force. Still young, I rushed into pure sensism." Works, V, p.124

In this half-dreaming state, with vague feelings and vaguer notions, I encountered the philosophical writings of Cousin, first, I think, in 1833, and yielded almost entirely to the witchery of his style, the splendor of his diction, the brilliance of his generalisations, and the real power of his genius, although I made from first to last certain reserves". Works, V, p.125

We learned from him to substitute, intentionally at least, the ontological method of philosophizing for the psychological, which we had hitherto professed, and this was much; but, unhappily, we learned from him, at the same time, a vicious ontology, conducting, though we saw it not then, necessarily to pantheism or nihilism". Works, I, p.215 Cf. also Works, V, pp.128-9 for Leroux's influence on Brownson's doctrine that "man lives and can live only by communion with what is not himself".

Vide, not eleven. Concerning Leroux's doctrine of communion, Brownson says that he followed it in part, "but I did not and could not follow him in all his applications of the great principle he had helped me to grasp and understand. He sought to apply the principle in an un-Christian sense;" Works, V, p.130

Precisely how much Brownson borrowed from Gioberti is still a disputed question. It is certain that he received from him the notorious formula, Ena Great Existential, and applied it, but with certain modifications, to his own theory of knowledge. It was his defense of this formula that caused many to brand him an ontologist (For example, Bishop Turner in his History of Philosophy, and also Father J. S. Hickey, O. Cist., Summula Philosophicae Scholasticae Vol. I, p.402. For a more complete treatment of the relation between Brownson and Gioberti, Cf., America's Foremost Philosopher, Sidney Raemers, (Washington, 1931) pp.16-19 and pp.24-5


America's Foremost Philosopher, pp.16

America's Foremost Philosopher, Introduction, p.XI; Cf. also the following: "We have the justly famed Belloc, hailed as the philosophic historian of the Reformation, but no attention paid to the fact that seventy-five years ago, America's limited circle of Catholic readers were keenly perusing in the pages of Brownson's Quarterly Review an analysis of that piece of human retardation not less profound and not less eloquent" Ibid., p.XII
Four Independents, p.238

Orestes A. Brownson's Early Life, Henry F. Brownson. Detroit 1898, p.9

His predominant passion, Isaac Hecker said of Brownson, 'was love of truth. This was all his glory and all his trouble; all his quarrels, friendships, aversions, perplexities, triumphs, labors. A zealot for truth, he could not dally with lesser delights like popularity or worldly success. With so unswerving a purpose his life became strong-willed and austere . . . Brownson was a proud and lonely man, dedicated to his search and filled with a passionate honesty that never let him rest short of final satisfaction.

His heart consumed in this unsparing quest, he put private happiness well below his high aspiration. Financial security rarely concerned him ... Though he walked on many paths that might have brought him fame or power ... He always left the traveled road to bruise himself in the thickets. Truth was an ignis fatuus, its small sharp flame burning obscurely just off the beaten way, but Brownson had no compunctions about rushing from certainty, and always he believed each new direction to be the right one." Pilgrims Progress pp.278-9.
CHAPTER I

Brownson's Approach to the Study of Kant

It seems rather strange that Brownson should begin a criticism of Kant with a treatise on the classification of systems. But the reason for this is not far to seek; he maintains that it is impossible to get a clear notion of any system of philosophy unless it is known in its relations to other systems of thought. Before we can understand Kant's philosophy, then, we must study it in its setting; we must know its place in the general history of philosophy. In order to grasp his system firmly we must know something of its causes and the extent to which it agrees with or differs from other systems. We must pin it down in its proper position in the history of philosophy. In short we must classify it. But if our classification is to be of any value, Brownson maintains that it must have its basis in the nature of science itself. The ground of classification cannot be the fancy or caprice of the historian, but must rest on a necessary principle of classification. Our first task, then, in studying Kant is to determine the principle whereby we shall classify systems.

Brownson tells us that modern historians of philosophy, especially Cousin, tend to classify all systems of philosophy "according to the assumed principles of the Psychological origin." He uses the term "Psychological" not in its modern sense, but as signifying a method of philosophizing which takes its point of departure in the fact of consciousness. Those philosophers who begin in the subject or with an examination of human nature in order to
explain human knowledge are said to employ psychological method of philosophizing. On the other hand those philosophers who take their point of departure in things or in extra-mental reality, employ the ontological method of philosophizing. Brownson ordinarily speaks rather contemptuously and disparagingly of the Psychologists and frequently condemns philosophers because they are nothing more than miserable Psychologists. Cousin, as is obvious from what has been said, is employing a false principle of classification when he attempts to reduce all systems of thought to their origin in consciousness.

Brownson rejects the view of Cousin that a philosopher must be either a Sensist, Idealist, Mystic or Sceptic, because the classification is inadequate for the obvious reason that there is no room in it for such men as Plato, Aristotle, St. Bernard and Abelard, to mention only a few. Its only value lies in the fact that it is a fair classification for men such as Kant, Hume, Descartes, Locke, and Berkeley who were concerned exclusively with the scientific problem.

But there were some philosophers who were not concerned exclusively with the problem of knowledge. And hence we must also find a principle according to which the great Greek philosophers and the Scholastics may be classified. For there is a vast difference between the vain sophists and sceptics who begin to philosophize by calling into question the capacity of the mind for knowledge, and the ancients and Scholastics who attempt to explain the origin and ground of objective reality. Hence there must be two separate principles of classification for these widely divergent types of philosophy. Brownson
would classify all systems of thought on the following basis: 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doctrines of Life</strong></td>
<td><strong>Doctrines of Science</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Atheism</td>
<td>1. Sensism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pantheism</td>
<td>2. Sentimentalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Theism</td>
<td>3. Intellectualism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now since we are treating of Brownson's classification of systems merely as a preliminary to the study of Kant, we offer neither a defense nor a criticism, but merely a brief word of explanation. First of all Doctrines of Life are distinguished from Doctrines of Science because the chief concern of the former is to render an account of the origin of objective reality, while the latter is concerned primarily with the origin and ground of science itself.

The reason for subdividing the Doctrines of Life as he does follows: If anyone attempts to account for the origin of things, he must do so on the basis of Plurality, Unity, or Synthesis. That is, if a philosopher maintains that life originates in plurality his doctrine will be Atheistic; (polytheism is really nothing more than Atheism). If he explains all things from the standpoint of mere unity, he must contend for Unityism, i.e., Pantheism. But if, with the great Christian father, we explain things from the viewpoint of Synthesis, our doctrine will be Trinityism, or Theism in the proper sense of the term. Now it is important to observe that, in order to have a true doctrine of life, we must recognize God not as a mere unity nor yet as a mere plurality, but as an indissoluble synthesis of "Unity in Diversity, and Diversity in Unity, as is shadowed forth in the very first verse of Genesis, where the Hebrew name for God is a singular noun with a plural termination." 23
The true fountain of life is a Triune God, and a doctrine of life, if it is to be a true doctrine, must recognize the real, living, Triune God as the source of life; hence if one's notion of The Source of life is limited to the conception of God as a mere unity he cannot arrive at a true doctrine of life. But since mortal man cannot attain to a knowledge of the Trinity without the aid of Divine Revelation, such revelation is absolutely essential for the formation of a true doctrine of life. Therefore Brownson, as we shall have occasion to point out later, cannot separate reason and revelation, but maintains that they are and must be substantially identical.

But to return to our explanation of the Doctrines of Science stated above; we must note first of all that Brownson retains the Sensist class of Cousin, but eliminates Scepticism. He does this because Scepticism does not imply a doctrine of knowledge, but rather a lack of one. Of the four classes of Cousin stated above we have left, then, Idealism and Mysticism; now Brownson maintains that these are much more properly termed Sentimentalism and Intellectualism.

Thus far we have been concerned chiefly with Brownson's mode of approach to the study of Kant. Whatever else may be said of his method, he certainly attempts to do a thorough job; for he undertakes first of all to investigate the very foundation upon which Kant builds his philosophical edifice. He attempts to discover precisely wherein the Kantian system is rooted, and to understand it in its origin and setting in the general history of philosophy. But influenced by Cousin's classification of systems and beginning with the assumption that all systems of thought can be grouped on the basis of certain
similarities, he must find a place for Kant in one of the classes he has established. And so he tells us already that it is quite obvious that Kant's Critic of Pure Reason is manifestly a Doctrine of Science. At the very outset, then, it is impossible for Brownson to admit that Kant can ever attain to a doctrine of life. That is, Kant does not investigate the origin, ground and conditions of extra-mental reality, but he is a Psychologist who deals primarily with the question of knowledge. And since he is a Psychologist he begins his treatment of knowledge by an investigation of the subject instead of taking his point of departure in the object. Hence we are justified in concluding already that Kant is a Subjectivist and that he cannot conclude validly to objective reality. For, according to Brownson, "no conclusion from the subjective to the objective ever yet was valid."

But another conclusion, and an even more important one is justified on the basis of the evidence presented thus far, namely, that Brownson cannot admit the validity of any Critical system of philosophy; for there is no room in his subdivisions of the Doctrines of Science for a Critical philosopher. There is not a separate niche in his classification for "Kantian Agnosticism", so Brownson must either reject the possibility of such a system, or be unaware of the real problem of Kant. But in order to discover which of these alternatives is most plausible, we must present, as clearly as we can, Brownson's view of the problem Kant attempted to solve.

Brownson maintains that the problem Kant attempted to solve was not at all original with him. A great many philosophers before him had grappled with the same question and had failed to offer a satisfactory solution. In
order to get a clear notion of Kant's problem, then, we must summarize briefly the problem and the solutions proposed by Kant's predecessors.

But here we are immediately involved in another difficulty. In order to see precisely how the problem of knowledge arose in modern philosophy it is important first of all to get a clear notion of what we understand by the term philosophy, what is expected of it, and its relation to Theology. For no rational discussion of any problem is possible without first carefully defining terms. And therefore by telling exactly what philosophy can accomplish, as well as its relation to Theology, we might get some insight into the origin of the problem of knowledge. The origin of the problem of knowledge is perhaps interwoven with a false and vicious notion of philosophy. And thus we are called upon to formulate a proper notion of philosophy and its relation to Theology.

Brownson remarks at the outset that philosophy and theology cannot be separated and that some of the most pernicious errors of the day are a direct consequence of the fact that modern philosophers do attempt to separate them. They contend for the independence and sufficiency of human reason and hence demand of reason that, in formulating a doctrine of life, it borrow nothing from Revelation. With this view of philosophy it is small wonder that a great many modern philosophers deny Scholasticism to be a real system of philosophy because of its recognition of and dependence upon theology. Brownson of course denies that the fathers of the church were not philosophers. He maintains that the great questions debated by the Catholic Theologians necessarily involved profound ontological questions; and that the theologians
could not begin to express themselves without the aid of sound philosophy.\textsuperscript{26} Not only is it wrong, therefore, to say that the Fathers and Doctors of the church were not philosophers, but it is impossible to have any worthwhile philosophy without religion. As Brownson puts it "We maintain with St. Augustine and John Erigena, the identity of religion and philosophy. Philosophy is nothing but the practical teachings of religion, referred to their ontological principles, and reduced to doctrinal forms. Philosophy is the offspring, not of doubt, but of Faith, and is impossible in unbelieving eras.\textsuperscript{27}

Now if philosophy and theology are mutually dependent it is certain that philosophy will degenerate and collapse if separated from theology. For since revelation is a matter of faith, it follows that philosophy is impossible in an age of unbelief. And thus it is that the breakdown in philosophy began when men doubted the authority of the church. This doubt has its roots deeply entwined in the revival of pagan literature in the middle ages, and in the triumph of heathen literature in the fifteenth century. The reason for this is obvious; as was pointed out above philosophy needs revelation. And since pagan philosophers were not in possession of the Divine Revelation in its purity and integrity, pagan philosophy does not and cannot have a true doctrine of Life. Hence as we imbibe the more freely of pagan thought the less clear will be our perception of Christian truth. Whence it is that the influence of the Church decreases in direct proportion to the increase of interest in things non-Catholic.

The doubt concerning the authority of the church, more or less dormant in the fifteenth century, became in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,
an open revolt against the church; a great many people refused to accept her doctrines as true because they felt she had no right to teach. The revolt extended not only to the religious doctrines of the church, but also to the intellectual, social and political order founded and dependent upon the church. In its religious aspect, directed by Luther, the revolt is termed Protestantantism; in its political phase it becomes the supremacy of the state -- later the supremacy of the rabble over the church and state; the revolt against Scholastic philosophy becomes "what by courtesy we call "Modern Philosophy".28

This, of course, is an omen of ill for Kant. For in Brownson's view he marks a kind of culmination of the rebellion against the church, and is the consummation of a movement which is unworthy of the name philosophy. But to be logical and consistent Brownson must take such a view, because it follows necessarily from his very notion of philosophy and its relation to theology (as was explained above). And so at the very beginning Brownson is convinced that Kant is wrong and must be refuted.29

But if Kant's philosophy, as well as the whole of modern philosophy, began in a revolt, a rebellion against tradition, we must ask why it rebels. What is the basis and foundation of its revolt? On what possible ground can it justify an open break with the schoolmen?

There is only one possible answer to the above questions. For when men, because of the influx of things non-Catholic, became dissatisfied with the church and refused to recognize her as an authority, this rebellion could be justified only on the basis of pure reason alone. For it seems quite obvious
that no one could justify a rebellion against the church on the ground of any possible tradition or authority. And hence reason alone must be supreme. Modern philosophy would summon the Scholastics before the tribunal of reason and demand of them that they render an account of their works. Reason would be the court of last resort; it would place even Divine Revelation on trial. And hence modern philosophy began by turning its back upon the great heritage of the past and attempted to construct philosophy anew upon the bedrock of reason alone - the only imperishable basis for any philosophy.

And thus it is that the starting point of Descartes was in complete and open doubt, revolt, rebellion, for that was the starting point of his age; nothing worthwhile in philosophy remains. He must reconstruct the whole edifice. He concedes not a single thing to be proved, not even his own existence nor his ability to know. And hence he must propose questions such as, "Can I know? How do I know that my knowledge is valid?" But the only way Descartes can remove doubt is by knowledge. The validity of knowledge, then, is the first thing to be established in order to remove this universal doubt.

Descartes attempts to answer his problem by means of his notorious enthymeme, Cogito, ergo sum. I think, is a fact so clear, so evident, so absolutely certain that I cannot doubt it. Even awareness of my own existence depends upon thought because I am able to recognize that I exist only in thought. But that, according to Brownson, does not solve the problem of establishing the validity of knowledge. For, how do I know that I think? If thought is my authority for affirming my existence, on what authority do
I affirm that I think? If I affirm thought on the authority of consciousness, how affirm consciousness and how establish its reliability? If Descartes refuses to take knowledge for granted, why does he take thought for granted and why assume its validity? But Descartes does not attempt to prove the trustworthiness of consciousness, and hence he does not prove what he set out to establish. Rather he abandoned his original problem of knowledge without solving it, and thus leaves it to be solved by his successors.

While Brownson admits the Cartesian enthymeme to be defective as an argument, he dismisses objections to it on that ground because they miss the point; Descartes never meant his formula to be an argument or a strict demonstration. He merely intends it to show that we recognize in the fact of thought not only that we think, but also that we persist as a thinking subject. But, he argues, if I affirm my existence because I am able to recognize it distinctly in thought, why not apply that criterion of certitude to objects outside myself? The reality of objects, therefore, is evinced on the basis of whether or not I can conceive them clearly. And having determined this, "nothing is more easy," says Brownson, "than to construct his theory of the universe. All rests on the original conceptions of the subject, given in the affirmation, I am. Proceed with these as in the construction of the science of geometry, and you will arrive, with mathematical certainty, to a doctrine of Life."

According to Brownson, however, this Cartesian analysis presents only a partial truth, which is, that subjective existence is recognized in thought. But Brownson maintains that in every thought there is found not only the thinking subject, but also some object or thing about which we think; and that
object must be distinct from the thinking subject. Subject and object are indissolubly united in every thought, and an analysis (so to speak) of thought gives us both subject and that which is distinct from it, the object. But instead of analysing thought so as to discover in the fact of thought itself both subjective and objective existence, Descartes first of all concluded from thought to the reality of a thinking subject. Then, from the idea in the subject he attempted to pass to extra-mental reality. And hence he concluded from subjective to objective existence, from the idea to objective reality. But his conclusion is invalid "because no passage from subject to object ever yet was valid."

Brownson has a rather lengthy treatment of Descartes because he considered him to be a kind of source from which a great many errors stemmed. And so, after Descartes established a problem and failed to solve it, Brownson traces that problem in Descartes' successors in order to understand the exact status of the problem at the time of Kant. And therefore we must consider, even though briefly, Brownson's estimation of Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, and Hume.

Our next task, then, is to examine and to classify the doctrines of Francis Bacon. Brownson maintains that Bacon is very much overrated; he founded neither a school of philosophy, nor had he any famous disciples. For Brownson maintains that "To talk of Baconian philosophy, save in deference to common usage, is to betray our ignorance." Neither has Brownson a very high opinion of his so-called inductive method: "Nothing seems to us more vague, inconclusive, less scientific, than what Bacon says about Induction, unless it be what Englishmen and Americans say after him, and professedly in
his spirit. The most that can be said for the Baconian method is that it attains to a classification of isolated facts, and hence is not scientific. For science is a knowledge of things in their principles and causes, or in the Platonic system, a knowledge of the idea. His method has a certain validity in law, but is not of much value elsewhere. Insofar as the inductive method is valid, it is the method of the human mind itself and Bacon neither established its validity as a method nor made any startling advances as to its use.

To classify Bacon, then, is a rather difficult task for he contributed neither a body of doctrine nor a method of philosophizing. The best that may be said for him is that he exerted an influence on his contemporaries. And because his method was applicable only to the classification of sensible phenomena, he was, from the standpoint of the influence he exerted, primarily a Sensist. And therefore, even though he believed in the suprasensible, Bacon must be classed as a Sensist.

Hobbes, who is sometimes unjustly referred to as a follower of Bacon, is the next name worthy of mention. Although he is also a Sensist, for he recognized no order of knowledge above sense knowledge, he is, as a thinker, vastly superior to either Descartes or Bacon. But since Hobbes is generally known through his disciple, Locke, it is unnecessary to say much about him here. We mention only in passing that Brownson maintains that his political doctrines give us a poor picture of Hobbes, the man; according to Brownson he was really quite a philanthropist.

As we mentioned above, Locke, is nothing more than a satellite of Hobbes.
He is a sort of Hobbes made easy, or, as Brownson so neatly puts it, "Hobbes made palatable, and fit to be served up to respectable people." Like his predecessors, Descartes and Hobbes, Locke is nothing more than a miserable psychologist. That is, he is concerned primarily with the origin and ground of human science rather with a Doctrine of Life. He therefore takes his point of departure in the subject, attempting to investigate the understanding in order to see how it works. He thus seeks to unravel problems such as: How does the understanding work? How can I be certain that I know?

His answers to these questions prove that he is a Sensist. His doctrine might very well be formulated: Sento, ergo sum; or, applied to the object, Sento, ergo est. (Vol.I, p. 160) Although he contends for the reality of intellectual knowledge, he can do so only at the expense of logical consistency. For the premises from which he begins can lead to nothing more than a Sensist interpretation of reality, as Hume and Berkley have demonstrated.

As for Hume and Berkley, we note briefly that Brownson maintains that they have accepted Locke's premises and demonstrated the absurdity of trying to explain science on the basis of Sensism. Although at this time he did not have a very high opinion of Hume, he credits Hume with showing that, if the sensist philosophy in vogue in his day be accepted, genuine science is impossible.

Now since Brownson maintains that the problem proposed by Kant is substantially the same as that raised by Descartes, we summarize briefly, as Brownson does, the status of the problem of knowledge at the time of Kant. Descartes, as we pointed out, established, rather than solved the problem of
knowledge. Malebranche, Hobbes, Berkley and Hume wrestled with the same problem, but could not offer a satisfactory solution. The question of the origin, ground, and validity of knowledge was, then, an open question ever since Descartes raised and failed to solve it. We find that Kant, well aware of the unsuccessful attempts of his predecessors, now presents his answer to the problem.

From what has been said already it is quite obvious that, according to Brownson, Kant really attempts to establish the possibility of human knowledge as well as its limitations. Brownson, however, admits that Kant does not propose the problem precisely in this form; but in so doing he disguises the real problem both from himself and his readers. According to Brownson, Kant tells us that any advance in knowledge is impossible without synthetic judgments a priori. And then Kant directs his attention to these judgments. Are they valid at all? To what extent are they valid? How are they formed? So it seems evident to Brownson that in Kant's system the validity of knowledge is dependent upon the validity of the synthetic judgment a priori. And so Brownson concludes that Kant, in investigating the ground and possibility of synthetic judgment a priori, investigates the very possibility of knowledge itself - moreover, that is the real problem of Kant.

Thus far we have presented as accurately as possible Brownson's notion of the problem which Kant has undertaken to solve. And of course Brownson's criticism will be rendered on the basis of whether or not Kant has solved that problem. And that is why Brownson remarks at the very beginning that Kant began in a capital blunder. For Brownson states very emphatically that any question as to the possibility of human knowledge is a stupid and
ridiculous question. In Brownson's estimation then, it is the supremest arrogance, to ask whether or not the mind can know. For as he points out, "we have only the human mind with which to answer the question." And since he claims that Kant is trying to establish the possibility and validity of knowledge, he remarks that it requires knowledge to answer the question concerning the possibility of knowledge, even as knowledge is required to answer any other question. Hence the absurdity of trying to establish the validity of the mind by the mind, the possibility of knowledge by knowledge.

But even granting for the sake of argument that we could, by a most rigorously logical demonstration, prove that science is impossible, such a demonstration would establish the fact of science in concluding to the contrary. For the demonstration must itself be scientific or unscientific. If it is not a scientific demonstration it is worthless and proves nothing nothing either way concerning our ability to know. If the demonstration is itself scientific it most certainly cannot conclude to the impossibility of the mind to know, for that would involve a contradiction.

Furthermore Kant, according to Brownson, makes a pretense of beginning at a point midway between dogmatism and scepticism, for he professedly begins as a critic. In other words Kant's purpose is to criticize or investigate the foundation of knowledge to see whether or not it is secure. Hence Kant at the outset "neither affirms nor denies; he merely criticises, that is, investigates." It is only after his investigation that he will conclude to the possibility or impossibility of knowing reality, to the validity or invalidity of the foundation of knowledge. In other words, according to Kant, before
we trust reason we must first establish its trustworthiness; we must criticise and investigate to see what reason can or cannot do before admitting its reliability.\(^{45}\)

But Brownson, while noting clearly that Kant attempts to begin as a critical philosopher, denies that Kant has the slightest justification for so beginning. Not only has he no justification for beginning as a critic, but it is impossible, nay, absurd for him to do so.\(^{46}\) Thus in Brownson's estimation Kant began in pure dogmatism. Moreover, according to Brownson, Kant professes to have demonstrated, as the result of his labor, the impossibility of scientific knowledge. And hence from this data Brownson concludes: "He (Kant) begins by assuming the possibility of science, as the condition of demonstrating its impossibility.\(^{47}\)

Now the above argument is based on what we might call purely a priori grounds. For before attempting a detailed investigation of Kant's system Brownson attempts to prove that the very starting point of Kant must lead him to error. The argument which follows is on much the same sort of a priori basis. For he maintains that Kant's unqualified condemnation of all previous metaphysics is, to say the least, a strong presumptive proof that Kant himself is to be condemned. For Brownson maintains that the science of today must be built upon the foundations of the past; and hence, in order to advance science, one must accept, not demolish, the contributions of the past. And so, as far as Brownson is concerned, Kant is without merit himself if he can find no merit in his predecessors.\(^{48}\)

From the criticism of Kant advanced thus far by Brownson we may observe
that he is interested primarily in refuting the entire Kantian system of philosophy. He is convinced at the very outset that Kant's system is pernicious, because Kant, in constructing his system, will not be guided by Divine Revelation. Furthermore, as Schlesinger noted, Brownson felt that he could not, without doing violence to his convictions, accept both the doctrines of Kant and the Church. And so he ridicules the very starting point of Kant as the most effective way of proving his system to be worthless. And as a sort of popular argument he also points to the "arrogance of Kant" in refusing to recognize anything worthwhile in the systems of previous metaphysicians.

To summarize briefly Brownson's criticism of Kant's point of departure: Brownson maintains that Kant attempts to criticise thought antecedently to the acceptance of its validity; and hence in Brownson's interpretation, Kant really attempts to establish the veracity of man's faculties. But this, according to Brownson, is absurd, for we must, at the outset assume the ability of the mind to attain to truth. For he recognizes dogmatism as the only valid starting point in philosophy. Any other point of departure, according to him, is inconsistent. However, it is quite possible that Brownson, in criticising Kant as he did, misrepresented him and missed entirely the real point at issue in the very notion of a critical philosophy.49

The reason why Brownson, at this time, criticises Kant as he does may be explained by the fact that he was so anxious to refute Kant; and his desire to overthrow the Kantian system might be responsible for the fact that he failed to concede what was properly due to Kant. Moreover, since there is no recognition of critical starting point in Brownson's classification of systems,
he cannot recognise the possibility of such a starting point. And thus an explanation of his criticism of Kant might lie in the fact that Brownson began his criticism with the assumption that all systems of philosophy might be classified on the basis of certain similarities.

And since he began his criticism with a classification of systems, and since he maintains that Kant is unable to render an explanation of science, Brownson classifies Kant in his Doctrine of Science as a Sensist. And perhaps it is because he was so intensely interested in discovering the similarities in systems of philosophy that he failed to grasp the difference in the starting points of Kant and Descartes.
FOOTNOTES OF CHAPTER I

21Brownson has a rather lengthy and involved explanation and refutation of Cousin's method of classification. Works, I, pp. 130-144. But since a detailed discussion of his views is unnecessary for an understanding of his Criticism of Kant, we present only his ultimate conclusions.

22Works, I, p. 142.


24"The Unitarian, no doubt, believes that God is the living God; but he enters into no inquiry as to what, touching the ineffable mystery of the Divine Being, is implied in this assertion, that God is the living God. He, therefore, stops short of a real doctrine of Life." Works, I, p. 138.

25For a more complete treatment of the above, Cf. Works, I, pp. 138-143.

26"Was the question between the Arians and the Athanasians nothing but a question of mere dogma enjoined by authority? Was it for a single diphthong that men disputed and cut one another's throats for some three hundred years? Do not so libel humanity. . . . In asserting that the son was made of like substance with the Father, what did the Homocian attempt, but to introduce two kindred substances as the basis of his theory of the universe, and thus to explain Life from the point of view of plurality, which is Polytheism or Atheism?" Works, I, p. 143.

27Works, I, p. 146.

28Maritain expresses a somewhat similar view: "I shall consider Luther, not to study him exhaustively and as the founder of Protestantism, but to bring out certain features in the character of that enemy of philosophy which are of consequence to our philosophical battles. After all, it would be astonishing if the extraordinary loss of balance induced in the Christian mind by heresy had not had the most important repercussions in all spheres, particularly in that of the speculative and practical reason. By the very fact that the Lutheran revolution bore on religion, on that which governs all human activity, it was the attitude of the human soul and of speculative thought confronted with reality." Three Reformers, New York, 1936, p. 4. Cf. also pp. 45-50.

29Schlesinger says much the same thing when he points out that Kant was the one main intellectual obstacle between Brownson and the Catholic church; Brownson, according to Schlesinger, "spent much of 1844 surmounting . . . . The discouraging doctrines of Kant, who had argued away the possibility of reaching absolute truth, still stood between Brownson and his sanctuary. Kant, indeed, grew to be the great topic of conversation in the Brownson home. Even the children talked of the categories of judgment and the Ding-an-sich. A Pilgrim's Progress. pp. 177-8.

30Works, I, p. 151.

31As was explained above, this analysis of thought was derived from Cousin; see above, influence of Cousin on Brownson.


33Works, I, p. 155.
Brownson also denies that the Inductive method has "wrought such mighty wonders even in the physical science." It has not given us the "exact sciences"; the so-called exact sciences are not worthy of the name "Science." "We must beg them to pardon us, if we find it impossible to stretch our courtesy so far as to call this knowledge and classification of phenomena, science." Works, I, pp. 157-8.

Hobbes is a true Englishman; and therefore, must needs profess one doctrine and practice another. If he loves mankind, he must in doctrine atone for his philanthropy, by maintaining the duty to hate them; if he hates them, he must be eloquent in praise of universal benevolence. Confide with your whole heart in an Englishman or an American, unless he preaches philanthropy. When he once mounts that for his hobby, look well to your looks and keys." Works, I, p. 159.

We have little sympathy with David Hume, a much overestimated writer, who was an unbeliever in religion, a sceptic in philosophy, and of no remarkable worth or moral dignity as a man; but he is one of the great names of British metaphysical speculation, and no student of the aberrations of the human mind for the last century and over, whether in Great Britain or on the Continent can safely overlook his essays. Works, I, p. 381.

"He succeeded in showing that the empirical philosophy favored by Bacon and Hobbes and elaborated and defended by Locke, conducts every one of its disciples of a little logical nerve to mere egoism and scepticism." Works, I, p. 381.

"Kant's problem, we see, then, was precisely the problem with which Descartes commenced, and which he trenched, rather than solved, by his famous enthymeme . . . . His originality is not in his problem but in his mode of handling it." Works, I, p. 161.

The science, that is, the knowing, properly so called, is all and entirely in this very synthetic judgment. If this judgment be impossible, it be invalid, then is science impossible, and human knowledge a mere delusion. So, after all, Kant is inquiring into the possibility, as well as into the conditions, validity, extent and bounds of science." Works, I, p. 162.

Kant, however, never completes this line of reasoning. And therefore the hypothetical proportion proposed by Brownson would, for Kant, be a false question. And since the hypothetical proposition is questionable, therefore the conclusion is also of doubtful validity. However, whether or not Brownson misrepresented Kant at this point remains an open question.

Although Brownson does not cite texts from Kant to substantiate his interpretation, he might very well have had the following in mind: "We must discover on the largest scale the ground of the possibility of synthetic judgments a Priori; we must understand the conditions which render every class of them possible". Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. F. Max Muller, New York, 1927; Second edition, revised, p. 8. (Hereafter cited as Critique.)

It has been suggested that the real purpose of Kant's Critique was to give a via media for the explanation of knowledge between the innatism of Leibnitz and the sensism of Hume, as Turn would seem to indicate when he
says: "We may describe Kant as dissatisfied with the rational philosophy because it exaggerated the a Priori, and with the empirical philosophy because it exaggerated the a posteriori, elements of knowledge". History of Philosophy, p. 530. Although Brownson does not state explicitly that this was the real purpose of the Critique, he states very clearly on several occasions that Kant's explanation of knowledge combines certain features of both innatism and empiricism. Works, I, pp. 163, 183, 209.

Assuming this, we may say, in the outset that the whole inquiry into which Kant enters is founded in a capital blunder, and can end in no solid or useful result. To ask if the human mind be capable of science is absurd; for we have only the human mind with which to answer the question." Works, I, p. 163.


Compare Brownson's view with the following in Kant: "It is indeed a very common fate of human reason first of all to finish its speculative edifice as soon as possible, and then only to enquire whether the foundation be sure. Then all sorts of excuses are made in order to assure us as to its solidity, or to decline altogether such a late and dangerous enquiry." Critique, p. 41.

Cf. also Kant: "Its (metaphysic's) procedure is at first dogmatic, i.e., unchecked by a previous examination of what reason can and cannot do, before it engages confidently in so arduous an undertaking. . . . Now it might seem natural that, after we have left the solid ground of experience, we should not at once proceed to erect an edifice with knowledge which we possess without knowing whence it came, and trust to principles the origin of which is unknown, without having made sure of the safety of the foundations by means of careful examination. It would seem natural, I say, that philosophers should first of all have asked the question how the mere understanding could arrive at all this knowledge a Priori, and what extent, what truth, and what value it could possess." Critique, p. 3.

But is the critic blind? To criticise, to investigate, - what is this, but to discriminate, to distinguish, to judge? Can there be an act of discrimination, of judgment, without science? If you assume, then, your capacity to enter into a critical investigation of the power of the human mind to know, you necessarily begin by assuming the possibility of science, and therefore by what logicians term a petitio principii. Kant attempts the investigation, and in so doing assumes his capacity to make it; and, therefore, contrary to his profession, begins in pure dogmatism." Works, I, p. 163.

Works, I, p. 163.

Maritan expresses a somewhat similar view: "We are bound to the past in the intellectual order as in every other, etc." Three Reformers, p. 3.

That Brownson was aware of this later on might be surmised from the following: "Kant's masterly Critic of Pure Reason is really a criticism on method, not science." Works, II, p. 232.
CHAPTER II

The Complexity of the Intellective Faculty

Kant begins his Critique with the proposition that "all our knowledge begins with experience". But then he reasons that if experience be possible at all, we must admit that the mind prior to experience possesses the conditions which render experience possible. The conditions necessary to render experience possible, Brownson notes, are, for Kant, certain a priori forms or cognitions. And since there are a priori cognitions or forms upon which experience is based, Kant's problem is to determine precisely what these cognitions are. That is, Kant wishes to investigate the a priori conditions necessary for experience, as distinguished from, or abstracted from, the a posteriori elements received in the experience itself. For, by a careful examination of the facts of consciousness, Kant detects therein both a rational and empirical element; and he attempts to give us the precise nature of this rational element found in every experience. That is, after abstraction is made of all experience there remains, not the mind as a mere tabula rasa, but rather a mind with certain categories or a priori cognitions of its own. And hence we must discover the exact nature of these elements (which are the foundations of experience) before we can erect a scientific edifice upon them. For it is precisely because philosophers have neglected the investigation of these cognitions that they have hitherto been unprogressive.

We may assert first of all that cognitions a priori are the categories
of Kant, that is, "certain forms under which we necessarily apprehend all things". However, unlike the categories of Aristotle, those of Kant are entirely subjective, and hence they are forms of the understanding itself, without which experience would be impossible. And because we are called upon to investigate the a priori conditions of experience as distinguished from its empirical elements, we must discover some criterion whereby we may distinguish the one from the other. Hence Brownson tells us that, for Kant, the distinctive marks of the a priori elements of knowledge are necessity and strict universality; for experience can never give us the general or universal. For example, prior to the apprehension of a particular fact of causality we must be in possession of the a priori notion of cause, the distinctive marks of which are necessity and strict universality. Thus whatever is necessary or universal in our knowledge is supplied by the understanding itself. Now the possibility of applying these a priori cognitions to the particular and contingent facts of experience is what Brownson understands by the transcendental cognitions of Kant. And since, as we have observed, the categories of Kant are entirely subjective, they cannot be object nor derivable from any object. Therefore Kant's whole investigation must be limited to the sphere of the subject. But Kant investigates the subject not as actually thinking or knowing, but rather the inherent forms within the subject that render knowledge possible. That is, Kant investigates the categories or innate forms of the subject, and without these forms or categories the subject itself is incapable of experience. And hence the power to experience is due, from the standpoint of the subject, to the fact that the subject is in possession of
cognitions a priori or categories.

Now these categories, according to Brownson, are not produced or formed by the mind. Nor are they the actual operation of the mind, that is, the actual thinking or knowing of particular facts. Rather these cognitions are innate or inherent forms of the understanding itself. That is, they lie ready in the understanding and are supplied by it on the occasion of a particular fact of experience. And because these cognitions are not produced by the mind nor are they the mind in operation or in actu, Brownson maintains that they can be nothing more than the possibility of the mind, or the power of the mind, in a fact of experience, to add something to the experience which cannot be found therein. In other words, on the occasion of a fact of experience, the mind furnishes an a priori element out of its own resources and applies that element to the experience. For Brownson, then, Kant is criticising the subject considered as a power or potency; that is, the mere ability of the subject to think, or the faculty of reason "in potentia, non in actu". In other words, according to Brownson Kant is investigating the faculty of reason or the cognitive force itself (in his language, the innity of the subject), as distinct from the actual cognition.4

Here, again, Brownson claims to have penetrated the verbiage of the Critique, and seized the real meaning of Kant's cognitions a priori. For he professes to have examined carefully the possible meanings of cognitions a priori as Kant uses the term, and concludes that the one he has stated above is the correct meaning.5 And so Brownson continues his criticism of Kant on the assumption that Kant, in investigating the cognitions a priori or the
categories, is investigating the faculty of reason itself; and moreover, reason in the sense of the power or ability of reason, that is, reason "in potentia, non in actu".

From this view of cognitions a priori, several important conclusions follow, and they follow inevitably, even though Brownson admits that Kant himself does not draw them from the premises given. For if the power of the understanding to know is due to the presence of certain categories, and without these categories the understanding would not be what it is, Brownson concludes that these cognitions must be the constituent elements of the understanding itself. And in order to make these cognitions a priori the constituent elements of the understanding, Kant must assume the complexity of the cognitive force. He must assume, then, that it can be analysed, broken up into its component parts. And therefore Brownson concludes that Kant really arrives at his cognitions a priori by decomposing the faculty of reason itself. That is, Kant, by an analysis of reason, arrives at its constituent elements, namely the cognitions a priori, without which reason could not function. And Brownson maintains that it is precisely with the assumption of the complexity of the human understanding that Kant's real error begins. Now if Kant is wrong in assuming the complexity of the cognitive force, Brownson must establish its simplicity. And in order to see how he does this we must have some notion of what he understands by the soul and the faculties of the soul.

Brownson, by way of criticism remarks that there is really an ambiguity in Kant's use of the term understanding. For he says that "the understanding, taken substantively, is the cognitive force; but Kant does, and does not, so
take it". In other words Brownson maintains that Kant views reason as made up of constituent elements (pure and transcendental cognitions), and yet he also looks upon these elements as the instruments of reason; that is, the pure and transcendental cognitions are distinct from reason, but they are, nevertheless, means at the disposal of reason. Therefore they would be neither the understanding itself nor yet the completed act of the understanding, (that is, neither the substantive force which knows nor the actual cognition or "the knowing taken phenomenally"), but rather something midway between these alternatives. In the words of Brownson "they are neither the vis nor the actus, but the endowments, attributes, or properties of the force cognizing. This is Kant's actual doctrine as exactly seized and stated as it is possible for us to seize and state it".9

Now Brownson condemns this view as the real source of the errors of modern philosophy, for it assumes that the powers of the soul called faculties are distinguishable from the subject in which they inhere. That is, some philosophers fancy a distinction between the intellect, for example, and the force within man that acts, namely, the soul; or in Brownson's language, some philosophers assume a distinction between the subject and the inneity of the subject, between the me and the inneity of the me. But according to Brownson there is no basis for such an assumption, for he maintains that faculties or powers of the soul are indistinguishable from the subject in which they inhere. He admits a distinction of faculties within the subject, but not from the subject.10 For he maintains that "the faculty really is the subject, that is, the subject under a given aspect".11
Now Brownson holds this view precisely because it safeguards both the unity of man and the simplicity of his active principle. For he points out that in every action of man, the whole man, as a unity, acts. The eye, for example, does not see, but man sees; reason does not know, but man knows. Moreover, Brownson maintains that I do not know because I have reason, but because I am reason; I do not feel because I have sensibility, but because I am it. And since man is a unity, and since the whole man knows, feels, and acts, he concludes that "I must needs act, feel, and know in all and every one of my phenomena". That is, the mind is a single vis or force, and never acts with one faculty one faculty alone; for each action of man is the act of the single whole, and the whole man must enter into each act of man. Therefore when he feels, for example, he never acts with his sensibility alone, leaving his reason behind, as it were. The whole essential man, with all his attributes and in the unity of his nature, is entirely present in each act of that man. But, though all of man's acts flow from one nature, still he may act in diverse ways; but this is due, not to faculties distinct from the principle of these acts, but in virtue of a distinction of faculties in the very bosom of the soul itself. In other words he maintains simply that the faculties are not distinct from the soul, but that they are virtually distinct within the soul.\textsuperscript{12}

Now, according to Brownson, an erroneous view of substance is responsible for the above mentioned error in regard to the distinction of faculties. For Brownson maintains that Kant's notion of substance is that of a substratum which underlies and upholds, qualities, properties, or faculties". That is,
substance for Kant is a kind of hidden core to which properties or attributes are attached. Thus, in Kant's view of substance, then, Brownson maintains that it would be possible to abstract from an object all the qualities and attributes revealed to us by experience and still arrive at something hidden beneath these properties, which is their support. Brownson maintains that this is absurd. For beginning with this Kantian notion of substance as a substratum, diversity of substances would be inadmissible. Beings could differ accidentally, but not substantially. Moreover, he maintains that this same erroneous notion of substance as substratum is responsible for the stupid view of some moderns who maintain that man is different from the brute only because of the addition of a certain distinctive human quality superinduced upon a substance common to him and the animal world.

Condemning this notion of substance as erroneous, Brownson defends what he conceives as good in the view of Leibnitz, namely, that substance is active or acting force (vis activa, or what the Germans call Kraft). That is, activity is the fundamental note in the conception of substance, rather than that of permanence. For he maintains that a being is, only insofar as it is active. Hence the substance of the thing is and must be the active principle within the thing. From this it follows, then, that every being must be substantially a monad or a unity. For if substance be identified with the active force of a being, then, to suppose two active forces within a being would be to suppose two substantial beings, not one. Applying this notion of substance to man will, perhaps, give us a clearer notion of Brownson's arguments against the real distinction of faculties from the soul. We find, then, that since the
substance of a thing is identified with the active force of a being, man must be substantially a simple, acting force; that is, man is in his essence a unity or a monad. And thus it is that the faculties of man cannot be distinct from the simple principle of activity within him; for if the faculties were active principles really distinct from the soul there would be more than one active force in man. And on that basis man would not be a unity, but must be a substantial plurality.

But Brownson has yet another argument against the real distinction of faculties. For he argues that the force that knows, for example, is called the understanding; and that understanding must be identical with the soul. For if the understanding were really distinct from the soul, there must, according to Brownson, be some sort of division or separation between the soul and the understanding; that is, the understanding would enjoy, at least inasmuch as it is distinct from the soul, some sort of existence independently of the soul. And hence if there is a real distinction between the soul and the understanding, the soul considered in itself (that is, apart from the understanding which is distinct from it), would be essentially incapable of intelligence. And since the soul is the principle of activity in man, and since that active principle is the substance of man, Brownson concludes that man himself, (that is, on the basis of a real distinction of faculties from the soul), would be substantially unintelligent. That is, understanding would belong, not to the substantial, active principle called the me. But this conclusion is absurd, for consciousness testifies to the fact that the acts of the understanding are essentially my own acts, not
the acts of a somewhat substantially distinct from myself.  

However, since the soul is capable of diverse acts, namely volitions, sentiments and cognitions, these acts must be due, not to any complexity in the soul, but to the fact that the soul is a limited being; that is, the soul is potential as well as actual, and it overcomes its limitations in different ways; and it does this, not \textit{tota simul}, but successively. Moreover, the faculties of man are nothing more than the powers or potencies of man, while the soul considered as an entity is essentially an active force. And therefore Brownson concludes that the distinction between the soul and its faculties (if they can be said to be distinct at all), is merely the distinction "between actual being and potential being, between the \textit{vis activa} and the \textit{potentia nuda} of the Schoolmen".

Furthermore, since \textit{potentia} designates a lack of being rather than a perfection, faculties are not something positive and superinduced upon the soul, and hence they cannot be really distinct from it. However, it cannot be said that the soul and its faculty are actually the same; for the soul, considered as an entity, is essentially active while the faculty is a power or a potency. But in Brownson's view the faculty is "virtually the soul, and becomes the soul inasmuch as it is actualized or perfected". And therefore, again, the soul and its faculty are virtually, not really distinct. This rather lengthy treatment of the identity of the soul and its faculties seems almost superfluous in an essay criticising the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}. for the distinction of faculties is not really a problem that Kant himself proposes in the \textit{Critique}. Brownson's treatment of this problem, however, is
important for us, not only by reason of the fact that, strictly speaking, he imposes this problem on Kant; but also because he makes it the foundation upon which he constructs his whole refutation of Kant. And therefore, as we shall note later, understanding of his doctrine of substance in conjunction with his treatment of the real distinction of faculties, is a necessary prerequisite for an understanding of his refutation of Kant.

Moreover, it is from Brownson's notion of substance that we derive his conception of the essential nature of man. For when he speaks of the "me" he designates the active principle within man which, in turn is identified with the essence of man. Hence man himself is not body, but rather, "spirit living in body and served by bodily organs". Hence, properly speaking, the agent of every act of man is the physical man; and hence whatever he does, whether it be willing, feeling, or knowing, is done by the same simple, spiritual force called the me.23

Now the whole point of Brownson's discussion of substance in relation to the distinction of faculties in man is to show that there is a clear cut distinction between subject and object. That is, whatever is inherent in the subject really is the subject and is indistinguishable from it. Or, in the words Brownson repeats so frequently throughout his criticism:

If Kant had comprehended, in the outset, the simple fact subsequently stated by Fichte in the postulate, the me is me, he never would, he never could, have written the Critic of Pure Reason: for he would have seen that if the me is me, the not-me is not-me, and therefore that the object, or whatever is objective, since distinguished from the subject, is not and cannot be me, nor the inimity of the me. This simple truism, which is nothing but saying, what is, is, completely refutes the whole critical philosophy.
We would therefore commend to the admirers of the Critik der reinen Vernunft of the master, the careful study of the Wissenschaftslehre of the disciple.24

And hence as Brownson himself observes, the principle that whatever is distinct from the subject or the me is not and cannot be inherent in the subject and hence must be object and really separate from the subject, is the principle of his whole refutation of Kant.

We have seen thus far that Kant's errors may be traced ultimately to his false conception of substance. For according to Brownson he viewed substance as a kind of substratum or hidden core, really distinct from the properties, qualities, and attributes which it upholds. And hence viewing the soul, as a substance and the faculties as properties of the soul, it follows that the faculties may be really distinct from the soul. And hence a pernicious view of substance gave rise to what Brownson considers to be an equally pernicious view, namely that the faculties or powers of the soul may be really distinct from it.

And hence it is impossible for Kant to view his a priori forms as really distinct from the understanding, but nevertheless as means inherent in and at the disposal of the understanding. For, by correcting the false notion of substance stated above and substituting in its place the correct conception of it (that the fundamental note in the conception of substance is Kraft, or simple active force), he has established that it is impossible for the cognitions to be necessary forms inherent in the understanding and yet distinct from it. For the understanding is identified with the soul, the vis activa, the psychical man, the me, which enters wholly and entirely into
each action of man. And since a real distinction means, for Brownson, separability, the means by which I know cannot be distinct from the me, for if they were distinct from me, the soul itself would be essentially unintelligible; and hence knowledge could not be attributed to the me, but to a somewhat really distinct from me.

And thus it is that Brownson maintained at the beginning of this chapter that the cognitions a priori, or the categories of Kant, are really the understanding itself and indistinguishable from it. And hence the theory of categories or subjective forms inherent in the understanding is inadmissible because such categories assume that the understanding is complex. And hence the understanding cannot be complex because it is identified with the simple vis or active force within man which is the soul.

Now since the categories of Kant are unjustifiable, and moreover, demonstrably false because they introduce complexity into the soul, it is, therefore, legitimate to conclude even at this point that it is impossible for Kant to justify his synthetic judgments a priori.

We must observe also, at this point, that Brownson really imposes upon Kant both his theory of substance and the conclusions following from it, namely that the faculty that knows is complex. For we scarcely need to point out that neither of these "problems" really were problems for Kant. For if "we have always to deal with representations only" and if "how things may be by themselves, apart from my representations" is completely beyond the sphere of knowledge, why would Kant be disturbed about the substance of things? And hence, by imposing his own notion of substance and the consequences
flowing from it upon Kant, Brownson proposes a false problem to Kant; in other words, he proposes problems which really do not exist within the Kantian system.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

1Works, II, p. 48.
2He (Kant) begins by analyzing the fact of experience. This fact he makes consist of two parts, - the one empirical and a posteriori, the other a priori, and supplied from the understanding itself. He then eliminates the empirical portion, and proceeds to his analysis of the a priori portion, which he terms cognition a priori. This cognition a priori is assumed to lie already in the understanding prior to any fact of actual cognition, as the ground and condition of the possibility of actual cognition, or, what is the same thing, experience" Works, I, p. 189.
3"If we consider this cognition a priori in its application to some particular fact of experience, it is simply cognition a priori; but if generally, as abstracted from all particular facts of experience, and as the simple possibility of the application of the cognition a priori to the empirical fact, it is Transcendental Cognition, because it can be brought into none of the predicaments or categories, but transcends them all" Works, I, p. 189.
4"We must bear in mind that our inquiry lies wholly within the region of the subjective faculty of intelligence. It does not concern the knowing, but the power or ability to know; not experience, but the possibility and conditions of experience ... they are not the thinking of that which transcends experience, but the ability to think it. This, in simple terms, is all that we can understand by the pure and transcendental cognitions" Works, I, p. 175.
5Here we can only remark, that, while we admit what Kant calls cognitions a priori, we deny it to be a cognition a priori". Brownson then mentions some of the difficulties involved in a misunderstanding of the term, and concludes: "But we must not dismiss such a man as Kant in this summary way. We ask, therefore, again, What does he really understand by cognition a priori?" Cf. Works, pp. 173-4.
6Brownson may have had the following text of Kant in mind in order to justify his conclusion: "By analytic of concepts I do not understand their analysis or the ordinary process in philosophical disquisitions of dissecting any given concepts according to their contents, and thus rendering them more distinct; but a hitherto seldom attempted dissection of the faculty of the understanding itself, with the sole object of discovering the possibility of concepts a priori, by looking for them nowhere but in the understanding itself as their birthplace, and analysing the pure use of the understanding" Critique p. 154. (underscoring added).
7Brownson himself does not pretend that his conclusion could be found in the Critique itself, but that his conclusion is justified from premises supplied by Kant; Cf. Works, I, p. 176.
8Works, I, p. 178.
9Works, I, p. 176.
10He really contends for a virtual distinction of faculties, as we shall point out later.
11Works, I, p. 182.
"At most, then, only a virtual distinction in the soul, of the three faculties of willing, feeling, and knowing, can be admitted" Works, I, p. 192.

"Abstract from a given object, corporeal or incorporeal, or, to make the statement as strong as possible in Kant's favor, abstract from your conception of object in general, all conception of qualities and properties, and there will remain the conception of - nothing" Works, I, p. 177.

"It is impossible of course to determine what text of Kant Brownson had in mind but it may have been the following: "This sounds very well, but if people are asked to explain what they mean by substance, they find it by no means easy to answer without reasoning in a circle. How can we conclude immediately from the action to the permanence of the agent, which nevertheless is an essential and peculiar characteristic of substance (phantomenon)? . . . As all effect consists in that which happens, that is, in the changeable, indicating time in succession, the last subject of it is the permanence, as the substratum of all that changes, that is substance" Critique p. 167. Cf. Also, pp. 150-4, especially page 154.

"As substantive, all beings would be one and identical; and multiple and diverse only in relation to their accidents . . . . It was this same erroneous notion of substance, that misled Spinoza and involved him in his pantheistic fatalism" Works, I, p. 179.

Thus, it has been contended that there is an ascending scale from the lowest animal up to man and the ascent consists in adding, in the case of each degree, a quality to those possessed by the degree just below. The superior retains all that belongs to the inferior, and adds a new quality. Thus, man is the resume of the whole animal world, combining in himself all the qualities of all the various orders of existence below him, and adding to them certain qualities which none of them have. Thus man may be defined, for instance, a monkey -- with additions!" Works, I, p. 179.

Although Brownson uses some of his terminology, he does not accept the whole system of Leibnitz. He even makes certain reservations on Leibnitz' view of substance.

Brownson's argument seems to be based upon the assumption that a real distinction necessarily implies separability.

"In cognition there must needs be an agent that cognizes. Now, this agent is the understanding, taken ontologically, as force, not as the product or the instrument of force. The understanding, then, is force knowing, or intelligencing. This force must be identically and integrally me; or it must be distinct from me. If distinct from me, it is a separate, and so far as I am concerned an independent being, and is not me, but another me, and, therefore, in no sense a predicate of me. But here is still another difficulty. The moment you affirm the faculty of intelligence to be a cognitive force, and distinct from me, you declare intelligence cannot be a predicate of me. I am, then, in myself, incapable of intelligence. Now, how am I, essentially, that is to say, in my essence (esse), unintelligent, incapable of intelligence, ever to know? The knower would not be me, but a faculty of intelligence proved to be not me." Works, I, p. 182.
Evidently Brownson here fails to consider another possible alternative, namely that the intellect may be distinct from the soul as a substantial principle, and yet not be ontologically distinct (to use Brownson's phrase). However, it may be that Brownson considered this alternative and disagreed with it because he would not admit the distinction of the substance from its mode, to be a real distinction.

"How am I, essentially unintelligent, to be placed in such a relation with intelligence as to believe, and to have the right to affirm, that its acts, which are cognitions, are not its, but mine?" Works, I, p. 182.

Then again, if we shift our point of view, and consider the faculty, not as the negation of being merely, but as the positive ability of the soul to remove its limitations by realizing its essence, as the virtuality of the soul, then it becomes virtually the soul itself, and therefore, virtually indistinguishable from it, as we contended in our former article. The soul and its faculty are the soul in its actuality and its virtuality, in its actual essence and its virtual essence. The faculty is not actually the soul, because it is not actual being; it is virtually the soul, and becomes it really and identically just so far as it becomes real. Essentially, then, the faculty and the soul are one and the same." Works, I, p. 191.

"How the soul can use the body and be itself affected by whatever affects the body is also a mystery, an impenetrable mystery. All we know is, that it does use the body, and is affected by all its accidents. What we call affections of the body are in reality affections of the soul, at least in great part. In pain, it is not my body that suffers the pain, but I myself. So in disease, and the innumerable ills that flesh is heir to. The agent and patient are the psychical man, not the physical man. In sensibility, I use what are called the senses are not senses, but the organs of sense. That which senses is the spiritual force which I call I, myself." Works, I, p. 193.
CHAPTER III

Transcendental Aesthetics

As we mentioned before, Brownson maintains that Kant's fundamental error lies in the fact that he considers the subjective faculty of intelligence to be complex, and hence susceptible of analysis. And in accordance with that conviction, Brownson holds that Kant resolves the faculty of intelligence into its component elements, namely:

1. Sensibility, or the Receptivity
2. Understanding, or the power of conceiving
3. Reason, or the faculty of Ideas

Now in explanation of the above we note first of all that it is by the sensibility that objects are presented to us, or, as Kant says, "sensibility alone supplies us with intuitions (Anschauen)"\(^2\) The term understanding designates the power by which the intuitions become thought, and it is from thought that conceptions arise. After conceptions come the ideas which are furnished by Reason; according to Brownson ideas seem to be related to conceptions, as conceptions are related to intuitions.\(^3\)

Now in accordance with this three-fold division of the force that knows, Kant classifies all mental phenomena into intuitions, conceptions and ideas. And since he has a separate treatise on each one of these sub-divisions, Kant's Critique is divided into: I. Transcendental Aesthetics, in which he treats of intuitions; II. Transcendental Logic, or Elementary Science, in which he discusses conceptions, or the categories of the pure understanding;
III. Transcendental Dialectics, in which he discusses the Ideas, and makes the especial Critic of Pure Reason, as distinguished from Sensibility and Understanding.4

Quite obviously Brownson does not accept the above for he considers it to be an analysis of the intellectual faculty; and, as we noted before,5 he has a rather lengthy and involved argument to prove that the knowing force is simple and therefore incapable of analysis. And since a real distinction of the faculties is inadmissible, there is, a fortiori, no basis for further distinctions within one of the powers of the soul, namely the power of knowing.

For Brownson, then, the Transcendental Aesthetics deals merely with one of the sub-divisions of the faculty of knowing, namely the sensibility from which intuitions are derived. That is, when an object effects the faculty of representation, it is called a sensation. And the intuitions of that object by means of that sensation is empirical. In other words, the process by which an object is represented to or placed before the mind is called intuition. Now that intuition, as Kant points out, may be either strictly empirical or pure.6 That is to say, by an analysis of the intellectual phenomena, Kant discovers therein both cognitions a priori and cognitions a posteriori. These cognitions a priori are the forms of the subject, and lie ready for the subject to use on the occasion of a particular fact of experience; furthermore, they can be considered separately from the sensation itself.7 Now the pure intuition considered separately from the empirical sensation is the only thing that the sensibility itself can supply. Now
there are two pure forms of sensuous intuition, according to Kant, namely, **Space** and **Time**. Now the name cognition *a posteriori* designates that portion of experience considered separately from the pure forms of sensuous intuition which are added by the mind.9

Now the empirical intuition of any object is impossible without the cooperation of the pure intuition; and thus intuition of any object is impossible without intuition of its space. That is, empirical intuition of space is impossible without a pure intuition of space or the *a priori* form of space in general, which form lies ready in the understanding. Now according to Brownson the possibility of applying this pure intuition of space to any particular intuition of an object is called the transcendental intuition. And from what we have stated above it is quite obvious that this pure intuition is not dependent upon experience, nor is it in any way derivable from experience; for the transcendental form of space is the condition that renders experience possible. That is, the transcendental intuition of space must be inherent in the sensibility itself, for it is only because of the presence of the transcendental that we can experience things as existing in space.

The same conditions must be present in order to experience things successively or in time. Just as the pure form of space (under which form the co-existence of objects are apprehended) lies already in the mind, so also is the form "time" subjective. That is, time must be given *a priori* in order that we might apprehend the succession of events. For the pure intuition of time cannot be derived from change or succession, because it is prior to such an experience. The transcendental intuition of time, then, is
a form of the sensibility itself, and is supplied by the sensibility on the occasion of a fact of experience. 10

Now Brownson maintains that, even regardless of whether or not Kant can be refuted, he cannot establish his own doctrine, namely that the forms of space and time are subjective. For if that fact could be established, it would, according to Brownson, impugn the reliability of the cognitive faculty. For, according to Kant, we do not attain to a knowledge of things as they are in themselves (for this is entirely beyond his sphere of investigation), but we know only our representations of things. That is, we know only representations, and representations are received only according to forms inherent in the mind.

Now it is precisely this doctrine of Kant, (that we know only representations) that is the point at issue; and that doctrine is, according to Brownson undemonstrable. For why should anyone start by assuming that we know only our own representations and not things in themselves? For the real issue to be proved is that we attain only to a knowledge of representations; and hence it is a petitio principii to assume at the outset what is to be demonstrated, namely, that our knowledge is not of things but of representations. In other words, Brownson maintains that before Kant can say: "My knowledge extends only to the representations I have of things, let him first prove that he knows representations only and not things. For, that I know representations and not realities, is the precise point to be proved; and since that point must first be demonstrated before it is acceptable, it can be assumed neither as a starting point, nor as a basis for any particular
demonstration." And hence Kant nowhere demonstrates the doctrine upon which his whole system is based. Furthermore, Brownson contends that common sense testifies to the fact that we know the forms of things as they actually exist extra-mentally. That is, the common sense of mankind tells us that we perceive a tree thus and so because the tree really is thus and so. Hence, when Kant tells us that we do not know things, but only our representations of things, our understanding deceives us when it tells us that we know real things. Our understanding is then, deceptive and if it is deceptive its testimony is not trustworthy. And, therefore, why trust the understanding at all, regardless of whether it tells us that the forms of things are subjective or objective? For if consciousness is a reliable witness, its testimony is acceptable when it tells us that we know the forms of things; if it is unreliable it is not worthy of credence when it demonstrates the subjectivity of forms.\(^\text{11}\) And thus, if it were established that we know only representations, while the understanding testifies that we know extra-mental realities, the understanding is deceptive, and hence science would be impossible.

It might be objected, however, that Kant establishes his doctrine by proving that experience tells us only what is, but not that it must necessarily be as it is and not otherwise.\(^\text{12}\) And hence he may legitimately conclude that the necessary element of knowledge must be furnished by the understanding. But this conclusion, according to Brownson, is illogical. In the first place it might be suggested that necessity and universality may be accounted for without having recourse to subjective forms. Moreover, the subject itself is contingent and individual, so why assume that it supplies
the necessary and universal element of knowledge? What reason is there for not assuming that the subject also supplies the contingent and the particular elements of the representations that we know? And hence Brownson concedes that Kant has established, at best, that along with the intuition of the particular there is always the intuition of the necessary, and the general and universal. But to account for that necessity and universality it is not necessary to resort to innate forms.

Now Brownson maintains that space and time mark the real order and relations of things themselves, not merely the order in which we conceive things. But though he maintains that space and time mark real relations, he does not concede that they are real beings or entities. Space and time, then, are merely relations that exist between created things in the order of co-existence and succession; and since they are relations only, they are nothing at all considered apart from the things which are related. Hence to say of a thing that it exists in space is merely saying that, between objects co-existing, there is a certain kind of relationship. Thus, to affirm that things exist in time means only that there is a relationship of past and future between created things, because creatures are not pure act but must realize their existence progressively or successively. Therefore things do not exist in space and time, for space and time simply mark the relationship that exists between objects. Hence space and time begin and end with creation, for prior to creation only God existed. And therefore prior to creation space and time could not exist for there were no related objects; for there is no relation where there is nothing related.
Now in the Transcendental Aesthetics again, we find Brownson condemning the starting point of Kant; for Brownson does not concede Kant's right to subdivide the faculty of intelligence as he does. And hence, Kant again, for Brownson, begins his treatment of the Transcendental Aesthetics in a "capital blunder." And therefore on purely a priori grounds Kant's entire dissertation on that subject is worthless.

Moreover, Brownson takes issue, again, with the fundamental notion of a critical starting point; and therefore, virtually denies Kant's right to begin the investigation that he does. For he maintains that universal scepticism is the necessary consequence of Kant's doctrine concerning the a priori forms of space and time. In other words, to accept Kant's Transcendental Aesthetics is, for Brownson, to commit intellectual suicide. And hence the only salvation of science lies in the acceptance of the doctrine that space and time are real extra-mental relations; and that other forms of knowledge are objectively rather than subjectively derived. And while Kant would say that "it remains completely unknown to us what objects may be by themselves and apart from the receptivity of our senses," Brownson would dispute Kant's right to make such a statement, because, if it were true, man's entire scientific edifice would crumble in ruins about him.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

1Works, I, p. 188.
2Critique, p. 15.
3Sensibility furnishes us with sensations, and sensations furnish us with intuitions (Anschauungen) and representations (Vorstellungen) of objects; Understanding is that power by which an object represented or presented by sensibility is thought, and it furnishes us with conceptions (Begriffen); Reason is the power by which we give unity and ideal completeness to our conceptions, and by it we are furnished with Ideas, which are to conceptions, in some respects, what conceptions are to intuitions". Works, I, pp. 188-89
4Works, I, p. 189: Brownson's criticism is limited to the Transcendental Aesthetics and Logic.
5His argument is substantially the same as that given in chapter two, and therefore repetition here is unnecessary.
6I call all representations in which there is nothing that belongs to sensation, pure (in a transcendental sense). The pure form therefore of all sensuous intuitions, that form in which manifold elements of phenomena are seen in a certain order, must be found in the mind a priori. And this pure form of sensibility may be called the pure intuition (Anschauung). Critique, p. 16.
7"The matter only of all phenomena is given us a posteriori; but their form must be ready for them in the mind (Gemuth) a priori, and must therefore be capable of being considered as separate from all sensations." Critique, p. 16.
8"Secondly, we shall separate from this all that belongs to sensation (Empfindung), so that nothing remains but pure intuition (reine Anschauung) or the mere form of the phenomena, which is the only thing which sensibility a priori can supply." Critique, p. 17.
9In transcendental Aesthetics therefore we shall first isolate Sensibility, by separating everything which the understanding adds by means of its concepts, so that nothing remains but empirical intuition. (Anschauung).
10Cf. also: Time is not an empirical concept induced from any experience, for neither co-existence nor succession would enter into our perception, if the representation of time were not given a priori. Only when this representation a priori is given, can we imagine that certain things happen at the same time (simultaneously) or at different times (successively). Time is a necessary representation on which all intuitions depend. We cannot take away time from phenomena in general, though we can well take away phenomena out of time. Time therefore is given a priori. In time alone is reality of phenomena possible." Critique, p. 24.
11Furthermore, space and time are pure relations. They mark the order in which bodies and events stand in our intuitions, it is agreed; but who dare say that they mark only this? Of course, if we accept Kant's doctrine, that the form under which the object is perceived is derived from the subject, we must say so, but this is the very point in question. Kant asserts it, makes it the foundation on which his whole edifice rests, but
no where demonstrates it. To assert a doctrine, and then to assume it, as
the basis of particular demonstrations, while it is itself undemonstrated,
is not, we believe, the general practice of good logicians, and though it
may be authorized by the Kantian logic, is repugned by the Aristotelian.
Moreover, his general doctrine is not susceptible of demonstration. It is
in fact suicidal. If we cannot attain to cognition of things themselves,
if we can cognize them only as objects, and as objects only under the forms
imposed by the understanding, we can know nothing at all. We do always
seem to ourselves to perceive the forms of the objects as objective, and
if in this our understanding deceives us, it forfeits our confidence, cannot
be trusted at all. And no more, when by the Kantian process, it dem-
onstrates the forms to be subjective, than when, in the apprehension of
common sense, it affirms them to be objective." Works, I, p. 198. (If
Kant assumes his doctrine as a principle upon which he bases other proofs,
quite obviously it cannot be demonstrated for then it would be a conclusion,
not a principle.)

13That forms of thought are objective and not subjective is established in
the next chapter, namely, Transcendental Logic.
"Nor can we accept, without some important qualifications, what Kant and
even Cousin say concerning intuitions of space and time, after abstraction
is made of their respective contents. They would have us believe that it
is possible to conceive of space and of time, even after we have conceived
of the absence of all contents of time. Take away in thought the entire
universe, and we may still conceive of space as remaining; take away the
whole order of succession, and time is left. But this we deny. For space
and time are neither forms of the sensibility, as Kant, maintains, nor are
they entities, as Cousin would seem to teach. They are pure relations,
and therefore must needs be inconceivable, where there is nothing related.
Space is very conceivable within the universe, but not out of it; for it
marks the order in which its several parts stand to each other; but without
the universe it is inconceivable. What is called imaginary space is
imaginary, or rather a mere word, to which there is no conception to respond.
We may always ask of some particular thing, Where is it? For that merely
asks its relation of co-existence to something else more or less clearly
apprehended. But to ask of the universe, as embracing the totality of
things, Where is it? is absurd; for that asks, What is the relation? where
there is nothing related. So of time, we may ask of some particular event,
When did it occur? for that merely asks its relation, in the order of
succession, to some other event, to which we more or less distinctly refer.
But to ask of the universe itself, When did it begin to exist? or, When
will it cease to exist, is absurd; for, besides the universe itself, there
is nothing between which and it there is the relation we express by the term
when or by the term where. Besides the universe, there is no existence but
God; and the relation of the universe to him is not that of time or space,
but of the effect of its cause." Works, I, p. 199.
CHAPTER IV

Transcendental Logic

Now the transcendental logic, as we have noted before, deals with conceptions, or apprehensions. That is, the object is given to us in intuition, and the understanding thinks those objects furnished by the sensibility or the receptivity of our soul. Hence, both intuition and conceptions enter into knowledge, for without intuition objects would not be presented to us, and without understanding we could not think them. And therefore Kant says that "Thoughts without contents are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind".¹ That is knowledge is the joint product of two distinct faculties; for knowledge cannot be produced either by the understanding or the sensibility alone, but by the union of both. And hence Brownson defines Kant's conceptions as "the seizing, grasping, apprehending, or taking hold by the mind, of the object presented by intuition. But they seize the object only under certain fixed and definite forms".²

Just as the intuitions, therefore, contained an empirical and a pure or a priori element, so also do the cognitions or thoughts. The actual cognitions, then, do not and cannot give us a knowledge of reality as it exists independently of our mind, for we know only our concepts; and these concepts contain an a priori element which has, according to Brownson, no objective validity (that is, there is nothing in reality to correspond to the a priori cognitions).³ For example, in knowing a tree, I do not necessarily know the tree as it is; rather I attain only to a knowledge of my actual concept.
of that tree, which concept is conditionally a priori by an element. Hence Brownson remarks that it is absurd to ask Kant whether or not the tree has objective existence apart from my conception, for apart from myself it is no object of conception; and since I know only my conceptions, I cannot, apart from my conceptions, affirm or deny anything whatsoever about the tree. Hence Brownson remarks that it is absurd to ask Kant whether or not the tree has objective existence apart from my conception, for apart from myself it is no object of conception; and since I know only my conceptions, I cannot, apart from my conceptions, affirm or deny anything whatsoever about the tree.4

Thus, as far as the real existence of the tree is concerned, it may or may not exist independently of my conception.5 However, its formal existence is dependent upon my intuition, for forms are supplied by the subject.6 Hence the way in which we know a thing is due, not to the object, but to the subject.7

Now just as we could deal separately with pure intuitions, that is, intuitions abstracted from any empirical admixture, so also may we deal with the understanding considered apart from all empirical elements. And in so doing we deal only with the a priori forms of the understanding itself.8 And just as the sensibility could not receive intuitions save under the forms of where and when, so also no objects can be conceived save under the a priori forms of the understanding. Now these forms under which we necessarily conceive all things are the categories of Kant. They are:9

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Hence Brownson maintains that the really important problem is to ascertain the principle of Kant's categories; and whether or not they are really derived from the subject or the object. He points out that Aristotle derives his categories from extra-mental reality; and they are for him the necessary form of conception because they are the necessary forms of the thing conceived. But for Kant all this is reversed and things are conceived thus and so because of forms supplied by the understanding itself, rather than because things are thus and so apart from the understanding. In other words, the understanding imposes its forms upon the object, and not vice versa. And thus Aristotle contended for a knowledge of things while Kant must maintain that things in themselves are completely unknown to us. And for that reason, therefore, the real point at issue in the entire Kantian system is "Do we always cognize under the categories because they are the a priori forms of the understanding, or because they are the forms of things themselves?" 10

Brownson's proof that the forms of thought are objective is dependent, as we have noted before, upon his analysis of thought into subject, object, and relation. For man, because he is a creature, is a dependent being, both in the intellectual and physical orders; and therefore he is never sufficient for himself, but, in thought or any other activity he is dependent upon the concurrence of that which is not himself, namely the object. And because he is dependent in the intellectual order, he can never suffice for himself, that
is, be his own object. That is, according to Brownson man lives "only by communion with what is not himself". And just as he would starve if cut off from all objects in the physical order, so also would he starve intellectually if cut off from all intelligible objects. In other words, thought is impossible if there is no subject that thinks, no object which is thought, and no relation between subject and object. For if the subject were removed there is no thought, quite obviously, because thought is impossible without a thinker; remove the object and there is equally no thought, for to think "nothing", is simply not to think; deny the relation between subject and object and thought is impossible, for the soul cannot think an object unless it is somehow in relation with that object. Moreover, Brownson maintains that if the soul alone were sufficient for thought, it would be impossible to be certain of the objective validity of knowledge. And hence to deny the active concurrence of the not-me in the production of thought would be pure and undisguised subjectivism; from which it would be impossible to conclude to any objective reality, because there would be nothing to bridge the gap from the subject to the object.

Hence, on the basis of this analysis of thought, it is obviously impossible for Kant even to investigate categories which are forms of the understanding. For Brownson maintains with Fichte that the me equals me, and hence anything which is a form of the understanding is the understanding and is therefore indistinguishable from it. And therefore, in order to investigate the categories or the innate forms of the understanding, the understanding would have to investigate itself, which is impossible, for in that case the
the subject investigating would be identically the subject investigated. On that basis we would have to conclude, according to Brownson, that "the me investigating equals the me investigated, and hence to investigate equals to be investigated. That is to say, it is all the same thing to strike, or to be struck."11

But since this is patently absurd, we must conclude that the subject, at least inasmuch as it is investigating, is really distinct from the thing investigated. But, since the me is always and everywhere equal to itself and indistinguishable from itself, the object, precisely because it is investigated, is distinct from the me investigating; and hence the object of investigation must always be the not-me.12

But, although Brownson denies that we can know ourselves directly, he contends that the me knows itself in its actions. And Kant is right, therefore, when he says, "I am, I think, I judge" accompanies every synthetic judgment, for the me discovers itself as an actual subject only in its conscious acts. But in its conscious acts the me can affirm itself only as the subject. Thus I think, I am, I judge, is the subject, and the object (the somewhat about which I judge and think), inasmuch as it is object, is and must be distinct from the object, or the me.13

From this it follows that the forms under which we cognize, because they are the categories and the categories are the object of an investigation, must really belong to extra-mental realities and not to the subject. For if they were inherent in the understanding, they would be indistinguishable from the understanding, and hence would not be investigated, but they would
be doing the investigating. And hence by the very fact that the forms under which we apprehend things are investigated by the understanding, these forms are really distinct from it.14

However, Brownson admits that the formal existence of some objects of knowledge is supplied by the mind. This is the case in the Divine attributes, for example when we perceive the Divine Goodness as distinct from the Divine Justice. But these forms supplied by the mind are simply negative forms which we must supply because our faculties are so limited that we cannot take in the whole of reality at once. And because we cannot take in the whole of reality at a single glance, as it were, we are compelled to regard the Divine wisdom and goodness as separate attributes. But because it is admitted that privative forms are supplied by the subject, we cannot conclude that positive forms are also supplied therefrom. And since the categories are positive forms which the subject really adds to the object, the argument stated above is not invalidated by the admission that negative forms are subjective.15

Now Brownson admits that, granting Kant's evaluation of the mind, his conclusions are irrefutable. But his error commences precisely in the limitation he places on the mind, namely that the intelligible world is out of its reach. For Brownson maintains that his restriction of experience to sensible objects is unwarranted and inadmissible.16 He contends that we have intuitions of, and really experience intelligible objects, that is, ideas, even as we have experience of sensible objects.17 Now this statement of Brownson is a rather startling one if not properly understood. When Brownson
maintains that we have real intuition of supra-sensible objects he understands intuition in the Kantian sense of the term, that is, that man's intellect is really capable of being placed in relation with intelligible objects; or, in other words, in order to know intelligible objects, these intelligible objects must somehow be presented to the mind. And Brownson contends that we are placed in relation with intelligible objects only in conjunction with our intuition of sensible objects. He does not mean, then, that intelligible objects are presented to the mind directly and immediately, and without the medium of sensible intuition, for this he expressly denies. He maintains, and he says it is the doctrine of St. Thomas also, that man is "in this present life always soul united to body, and can perform no operations which are not conjointly operations of both. Not being a pure spirit, but spirit united to matter, - not being a pure intelligence, like the angels, but intelligence united to sense, - he can apprehend the intelligible only as united to the sensible, the spiritual only as united in some way to the material". And hence when Brownson accuses Kant of arbitrarily limiting experience to sensible objects, he means, simply, that Kant arbitrarily denies that man can attain to a knowledge of anything but the particular and the contingent; while Brownson contends that experience teaches that we can attain also to a knowledge of the universal and necessary.

And with this explanation it is easy to understand Brownson's final criticism of Kant, namely, that Kant's problem, "How are synthetic judgments a priori formed?" was raised in consequence of a misapprehension. For Kant's problem consisted precisely in this: "how can I add the a priori
element to the empirical element in knowledge?" In other words, in a proposition like the following: "Everything which happens has a cause", the conception of Cause is entirely different from "something happens", and, moreover, indicates something altogether different than "everything which happens"; how, then, from "everything happens", do I attain to a conception entirely different from it, namely, causality? And what is more important still, since the causality is different from "everything which happens", how do I come to know that the conception of causality is necessarily connected with something that happens? How can I ever unite cause and effect, that is, relate causality with effectibility, and know that everything which happens must have a cause? That is Kant's precise problem as understood by Brownson.20

Brownson's answer to the problem is simplicity itself: There is and can be no such problem. For we experience the ideal, the general, the universal just as really and as certainly as we experience the particular and the individual; and if the cause is united or is present in the effect, we always experience, however obscurely, the cause along with the effect, the noumenon with the phenomenon. And hence the problem of uniting the universal and the individual, the cause and the effect in the judgment, does not occur; for they are united in my judgment because they are ontologically united and I experience one in conjunction with the other.21 That is, the intelligible world, for Brownson, is not altogether removed from the sensible; the cause is not completely separated from the effect; and the noumenon is not disjointed from the phenomenon. Rather the cause is in the effect, the necessary is in the contingent, in the sense that it may be discovered, however obscurely,
therein. We can prove the existence of God, then, Who is the cause while the universe is the effect, because the cause is always revealed and discoverable in the effect. But God, in this world is never apprehended by Himself alone, but only in conjunction with the apprehension of his effects. And hence in order to contemplate the intelligible by Himself, we must separate the intelligible from the sensible phenomena with which it is presented.

Brownson's conclusion, as is evident from what we have said, is that Kant makes no positive contribution to philosophy because of his false starting point. For, as he pointed out, in every investigation the inevitable assumption is that we know. Any other assumed starting point is false and cannot be consistently maintained, and must, therefore, lead to all kinds of absurdities, including the denial of genuine science.

Hence the psychological point of departure does not and cannot suffice for an explanation of science, or for anything else for that matter. That is, in order to have a true Doctrine of Life or a true Doctrine of Science, we cannot begin with the subject alone, but we must start with things themselves. And hence an analysis of mental phenomena alone will explain neither how we know or why we know under this form rather than that. For such an explanation it is necessary "to go to ontology, to things themselves, I see things because they are; and under this or that form because they so exist objectively in re".22

But since an answer to the fundamental questions of knowledge requires a Doctrine of Life, to which, as we pointed out above, Kant never attained. And he could not have a Doctrine of Life because he would not accept the
guidance of Divine Revelation. And hence it is fundamentally because Kant would not rise to the comprehension of the Christian Theology that Brownson concludes as he does:

There may be depths in the Critic we have not sounded, diamonds that we have not discovered; but we have sounded to the depth of our line, and we have searched diligently for the gems which might be concealed at the bottom; but, alas, we have found nothing but bald atheism and cold, heartless scepticism, erected into a system bearing all the imposing forms of science. We have labored to refute its fundamental principles, because we believe them adopted by large numbers who have never read Kant himself, and because we would do what we can to atone for our own former philosophical and theological errors, and aid as we can in recalling the age to a religious philosophy, in consonance with the profound mysteries of the Christian faith. We hope we have not labored in vain.23
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1Critique, p. 41.
2Works, I, p. 201.
3Compare, for example, the following in Kant: "As, in thinking in general, we take no account of the relation of our thoughts to any object (whether of sense or of the pure understanding), what is called (1) the synthesis of the conditions of a thought in general, is not objective at all, but only a synthesis of thought with the subject, which synthesis is wrongly taken for the synthetical representation of an object. . . . without a previous intuition, no category by itself can give me a concept of an object, for by intuition alone the object is given, which afterwards is thought in accordance with a category . . . "(Underscoring added). Again, "I have really no knowledge whatever of the object, but only of my concept which I make to myself of something in general, that is incapable of any real intuition". Critique, pp. 321-22-23. He says also that we know the categories only, and it is only through the categories that we know things, Ibid., p. 324.

4"Then I cannot ask whether the tree does or does not exist independently of my beholding it; for, independently of my beholding it, that is, of my intuition of it, it is to me no object of conception" Works, I, p. 187.
5Compare Brownson's view with the following: "It remains completely unknown to us what objects may be by themselves and apart from the receptivity of our senses. We know nothing but our manner of perceiving them, that manner being peculiar to us, and not necessarily shared in by every being, though, no doubt by every human being" Critique, p. 34.

6Cf. the following in Kant: "The matter only of all phenomena is given us a posteriori; but their form must be ready for them in the mind (Gemuth) a priori. . . ."Critique, p. 16.

7Hence his second great positive doctrine, that on which he founds his claim to originality, namely that the form of the thought (intuition and conception) or the form under which the object is cognized, is derived from the subject; never, as metaphysicians had hitherto fancied, from the object" Works, I, p. 187.

8Compare with the following of Kant: "General but pure logic has to deal with principles a priori only, and is a canon of the understanding and of reason, though with reference to its formal application only, irrespective of any contents, whether empirical or transcendental" Critique, pp. 42-43.

9Critique, p. 58. Brownson has no quarrel with the number or exactness of the categories; however he remarks that from the viewpoint of logic they might be reduced to subject and predicate; from the standpoint of ontology to "being and phenomenon, or with M. Cousin, Substance and Cause". But, as he points out, this question has only a remote connection with our present Purpose", and hence he dismisses the question. Cf. Works, I, p. 202. Of Cousin's reduction, upon which he looks so favorably at present, he says later: "M. Cousin prides himself on this reduction of the categories, and regards it as his chief claim to originality as a metaphysician; but, though we own we were simple enough to be taken in with it, we consider it the rock
on which he split, and the source of his failure." Works, VI, p. 107.

10 It must be remembered here that Brownson has already presented arguments to show that Kant's theory is not only incapable of proof, but destructive of all science. His own positive proof that forms of thought are objective follows here; it differs from the previous argument because the former argument dealt with the effects of a system of categories; that is, granting categories, what effect would they have on knowledge? Works, I, p. 203.

11 Works, I, p. 204.

12 "What is that which investigates, the intelligent me. What is that which is investigated, the intelligent me. The me is me and always equal to itself. The subject and the object are the same, and absolutely indistinguishable. But if so, the me investigating equals the me investigated... But certainly the object investigated is distinguishable from the subject investigating, by this fact, at least, that it is investigated, while the subject investigates. But the me equals me, according to our postulate and therefore can in no sense whatever be distinguished from itself. Consequently, the me can never be its own object. Consequently, again, it is not the living subjective faculty of intelligence, that Kant is really analyzing." Works, I, p. 204.

13 Works, pp. 294-295.

14 "For, again, if the me, as Kant himself agrees cannot observe itself as object, but only indirectly as subject, it follows necessarily, that it cannot observe its forms as object, for its forms are indistinguishable from itself. Just so certain, therefore, as we see objects at all, just so certain is it that the forms under which we see them are object, and not subject." Works, I, p. 206.

15 "Because a negative form is subjective, that is to say, a form which is merely privative, we are not at liberty to say a positive form, in which there is that not in the object, is also subjective. Consequently, the concessions as to negative forms, or inadequate conceptions, do not invalidate the argument." Works, I, p. 207.

16 "With both (Kant and Hume) empiricism and sensism are synonymous. Neither admits the capacity of the soul to have experience of intelligible objects (Noemena) but both confine it strictly to sensible objects (Aistneemata and Phantasmata)

17 The doctrine of the reality of ideas, of the true, the beautiful, and the good, is a true doctrine; and that we have real experience of ideas, objectively, as much so as of sensible objects, is, we hold, an unquestionable fact; but it is only in the category of the phenomenon, of the effect, the particular, the contingent, that we cognize them. But as the ideal is always in the actual, so in the intuition of the actual we have intuition of the ideal. Works, I, p. 211.

18 Vide, note 17 above; Cf. also, the following: "We must, however, ... beware of the error of the mystics and exclusive spiritualists who will have it that we can attain to the intelligible world immediately, that we can rise to cognition of cause without the medium of the effect." Works, I, p. 211.
19 Works, I, p. 287.
20 Cf. Works, pp. 209-211.
21 We must bear in mind the explanation given above concerning Brownson's use of the term experience.
22 Works, I, p. 213.
23 Works, I, p. 213.
Conclusion

We have summarized the essential points of Brownson's criticism of Kant as contained in his various essays. What shall we now say of Brownson himself as a critic of Kant? Since he was a reviewer by profession, he had established an ideal which he, as a reviewer, had striven to attain. And so, in rendering a verdict on Brownson as a Critic of Kant, it is fitting that we do so in the light of the critical principles Brownson himself stated so admirably:

"We hold that in refuting an author it is our duty to reproduce his doctrine, at least so far as we intend to make it the subject of comment, as he holds it in his own mind, and so far explain it that our readers may see the truth which he has misconceived and misapplied. There is no other honest way of dealing with an author's system, or rendering our discussions of erroneous systems of any advantage to the truth. To cite passages from an author which verbally contradict our own doctrines, and then pronounce him a fool, a sophist, a man whose God is darkness, not light, is not becoming the dignity of philosophical discussion. Hegel did not profess to be an Atheist, or a pantheist; he denied that he was either. We have no right to suppose that he did not intend to avoid both, and that if he has fallen into either error he has been deceived. The proper way to treat him is to point out the source of his deception, and to show what in his principles or method has misled him. We have no right to treat otherwise such a man as Hegel, certainly one of the master minds of modern Germany. Pere Gratry has not so treated him, and it is almost impossible from his citations to comprehend Hegel's error."¹

But, as we have noted at the conclusion of nearly every chapter, Brownson never really entered into the mind and spirit of the Critique, and thus
he did not criticise it in the light of the Kantian system. Rather, he continually forced problems of his own making upon Kant. For at the very outset he studied Kant only in the light of a rather arbitrary system of classification, and hence mutilated, so to speak, the doctrine of Kant so that he could classify it into his own systems.

Moreover, the criticism Brownson aims at Pere Gratry might very well apply to Brownson himself: "For Kant did not profess to be an Idealist or a Sceptic, but he denied that he was either. We have no right to suppose that he did not intend to avoid both . . . ." Hence, quite obviously Brownson had no right to criticise Kant as an Idealist or as a Sceptic, but he should have entered into the spirit of the critical philosophy. For the same reason, then, Brownson had no right to force Kant into his own doctrine of Substance and the consequences flowing therefrom.

The fact that Brownson never really entered into the spirit of the critical philosophy is evinced most graphically, we think, by the fact that Brownson so frequently condemned the entire Critique because of its starting point. For example, the whole Critique was founded in a capital blunder and could end in no solid or useful result because Kant, supposedly, had tried to establish the veracity of man's cognitive faculties. Hence, from the outset Kant could not contribute anything worthwhile to philosophy. Moreover, the entire Kantian edifice was again destroyed from another point of view: Kant could never attain to truth because he would not be guided by Christian Theology. And then the Kantian system as a whole was destroyed from yet another angle: its pernicious view of substance inevitably leads to
absurdities, such as the impossibility of anything but accidental differences in beings. Moreover, from the erroneous notion of substance there also arose the perverted view that there could be a real distinction of faculties from the soul; and hence, building his Critique upon that foundation, Brownson destroyed the entire edifice once more by showing that foundation to be made of sand. And so Brownson really attempted to demolish the whole Kantian philosophy from every point of view that he treated it.

Furthermore, his treatment of Kant is professedly incomplete, for he treats only of the first two of Kant's three divisions. And he really never entered into what might be termed a formal treatment of the categories, but merely concerned himself with the effects of such a system of categories; that is, the consequences flowing from such a system.

But, as Brownson remarks again, "the great aim of the generous and noble minded Catholic critic is to recognize what there is in his author that is true and good, worthy of commendation, and to pass lightly over small or incidental errors, for our great work is not so much to avoid errors as to bring out and appropriate truth". And hence, whatever else may be said of Brownson, he certainly attempted to treat thoroughly every phase of the Critique which he wrote about. For example, he tried to trace the starting point of Kant through the entire modern philosophy back to its "father", Descartes. And hence he attempted to trace every error of Kant to its ultimate source in order to show precisely what it was that misled and deceived him; and then he tried to establish what he considered to be the true doctrine so that the reader could understand clearly how Kant had misconceived
the truth.

And if Brownson was so thorough as we noted above, he was equally careful to be honest with Kant and to grasp his system as Kant held it in his own mind. We say he tried to treat Kant thus, but, however much our respect and admiration for Brownson may be, we must admit that he did not succeed in his endeavor. But that he did not purposely misrepresent Kant we hold to be unquestionable, and may be evinced in part, at least, by the following:

"We have aimed to comprehend his doctrine, (Kant's), aimed to set it forth correctly, and to meet it fairly. If we have done him any injustice, it has been unintentional".3

Moreover, if "we are to recognize what there is in an author that is true and good, worthy of commendation," we must not forget that throughout his criticism, Brownson has consistently maintained that the only real starting point of philosophy is in ontology or in things themselves; that, (in Brownson's language) the ontological, not the psychological, is the only valid point of departure in philosophy: "The truth is that (Kant's problem) is inexplicable from the purely psychological point of view, and nothing proves it better than the abortive attempts of Hume and Kant, both men of the highest order of metaphysical genius, and either of whom would have explained it, had it been explicable by the method adopted. We have said more than once, that science or knowing, is inexplicable psychologically. Every psychologist inevitably, if he pushes his principles to their last conclusions, ends in scepticism".4

Furthermore, it is extremely difficult to render an absolute verdict on
Brownson as a critic of Kant, because, quite obviously, that criticism is based upon his own metaphysical system, and hence his arguments stand or fall with his metaphysics. And since it has been impossible for us to refute or establish his whole philosophy, we can only say that his arguments appear sound within his own system. His refutation of Kant is presented clearly and follows logically from the principles with which he begins, and are conclusive against the Kantian system as he understood it.

We must not forget, either, that in judging an author our primary consideration must be to discover whether or not he had attained the end and purpose of his criticism. Now Brownson criticised the philosophy of Kant because, even prior to his conversion to Catholicism, he recognized that Kant's philosophy is incompatible with Divine Revelation. He saw Kant's system as the enemy of the Church, and hence labored to refute it and to warn others of the dangers hidden therein. And more than that he recognized the fact that the philosopher must accept the guidance of Christian Theology; that nothing is more in accord with his rational nature than an acceptance of Revelation, and nothing more irrational than for a philosopher to turn his back upon revelation and to construct his system without it. Whether or not to what extent he succeeded in establishing these points, it is, of course, impossible to determine. But since his review, (at the time he wrote these articles), was one of the most popular in the country, it is safe to say that he had exerted a great deal of influence against Kantianism in America. And if he succeeded in lessening the influence of Kant he achieved the end he set out to attain, and thus "he has not labored in vain".
And finally, because he was a reviewer, we hope that the reader will give Brownson the consideration he so often gave to his fellow-editors: "A . . .
reviewer, obliged to publish at stated periods, often compelled to write in haste, and to publish his article before giving it its last finish, may rightfully demand a charitable construction of his language, and that the reader give it an orthodox meaning whenever it is by any means possible, without absolute violence, to do so".5
FOOTNOTES OF THE CONCLUSION

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

Orestes A. Brownson:
Born 1803

Became a Presbyterian 1822

Became a Universalistic Minister 1826

Married Sally Healy 1827

Edited the Gospel Advocate 1828

Became a follower of Fanny Wright and Robert Owen 1829

Became a Sceptic 1829-1830

Preached as an Independent Minister 1831

Became a Unitarian Minister 1832

Wrote Charles Elwood or the Infidel Converted 1834

Joined the Transcendentalists 1836

Founded the Church of the Future 1836

Edited the Boston Reformer 1836

Founded the Boston Quarterly Review 1838

Published The Laboring Classes 1840

Connected with Brooks Farm 1842

Published the Mediatorial Life of Jesus 1842

Became Contributing Editor of the Democratic Review 1843

Founded Brownson's Quarterly Review 1844

Converted to Catholicism October 20, 1844

Essays on Kant published 1844

Published The Spirit Rapper 1854
Published *The Convert; or, Leaves from My Experience* 1857

Ended *The Brownson Quarterly Review* 1864

Published *The American Republic; Its Constitution, Tendencies and Destinies*

Revived *The Brownson Quarterly Review* 1873

Died 1876

Henry F. Brownson. Orestes A. Brownson's Early Middle and Later Life. Detroit, 1898-1900.


Sargent, Daniel. Four Independents New York, 1935


The thesis, "Orestes A. Brownson: A Criticism of the Philosophy of Kant", written by Lawrence John Roemer, has been accepted by the Graduate School with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Charles J. O'Neil, Ph.D. May 16, 1941
Rev. John F. McCormick, S.J., Ph.D. May 17, 1941
Rev. Joseph A. McLaughlin, S.J., Ph.D. May 11, 1941