The Necessity of a Priori Forms in Kant

Francis Mathias Oppenheim

Loyola University Chicago

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THE NECESSITY OF A PRIORI FORMS IN KANT

by

Francis M. Oppenheim, S. J.

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1951
LIFE

Francis Mathias Oppenheim, S. J., was born at Coldwater, Ohio, May 18, 1926.

He was graduated from Coldwater High School, Coldwater, Ohio, June, 1942.

In September of that year he entered the Society of Jesus at Milford Novitiate, Milford, Ohio. Here he enrolled in Xavier University and began his undergraduate studies. In September, 1946, he transferred to West Baden College, West Baden Springs, Indiana, to commence his philosophical studies. From this division of Loyola University he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in June, 1947. He began his graduate work in philosophy at West Baden College in September, 1947.

During the scholastic years '49-'50 and '50-'51 the author taught Latin at St. Ignatius High School, Chicago, Illinois, and at St. Ignatius High School, Cleveland, Ohio.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One evening back in the winter of 1780-1781, the University of Koenigsberg's most enlightened professor leaned back from the little desk in his private study and smiled. At last, there it was! His manuscript of the *Critique of Pure Reason* ready for the printer! As he sat there musing over the eight or more years of work that had gone into this book, Immanuel Kant was well aware of the influence it might easily have—in fact, probably would have. He knew that the life or death of the old metaphysics would depend on his publishing this book. Why should he hesitate to kill such a bothersome self-contradictory Hecuba? This was the way to put an end to all indemonstrable assertions.

So he sent his manuscript to the printer. The first edition appeared. It was not too well received, but a second edition followed. Slowly interest in Professor Kant began to grow and the tempo of the printings quickened. Soon French and English presses were relaying to foreign readers his analysis of human reasoning. All the other major languages began telling Kant's message so effectually that gradually a new race of men began to appear.
This race of men seemed decent and godly enough. What if they could not prove the existence of God, the freedom of the will, or the immortality of the soul? They could always just "trust" in them. Granted that there existed for them a "continental divide" between speculative and practical thought, still it was because of this split that they were all autonomous. Since they were now the lawmakers for their own actions, they were responsible to no ultimate authority above or beyond themselves. What could give men more dignity than this autonomy of theirs?

So the intellectual progeny of Kant has multiplied until today, almost one hundred and fifty years after his death. This race of men and their deeds give far more evidence from which to judge the true import of the Critique of Pure Reason than the studious professor of Koenigsberg enjoyed in his silent study that evening long ago.

Of course Kant's influence has been augmented by many subsequent thinkers in every field who consciously or unconsciously have used the limitations and dogma of his Critique as their starting points. Yet Kant remains the seminal point from which—even more than from Descartes—modern philosophy has been

shot through with subjectivism, modern morals with irrationalism, and modern living with its slavery to misconceived freedom. To bring out the real significance of Kant's work some development of these ideas seems necessary.

Since the time of Kant one can truly question whether there has developed any philosophy which did embrace all the reality that a philosophical system can embrace. Hegel's Idealism, Comte's Positivism, Mill's Utilitarianism, James's Pragmatism, and Dewey's Instrumentalism—all accept, at least implicitly, Kant's reply to his central problem about synthetic judgments a priori. They either build upon his reply or reject the consequences that Kant or others drew from it while still clinging to the fundamental positions.

There is ample evidence of the subjectivism that the "Copernican Revolution" of Kant has breathed into modern philosophy. Most of today's philosophers rarely go beyond the problem of knowledge, being locked thereby within the subjective self. Then there are thinkers who approve as worth while only those ideas which are advantageous to themselves. A man of this type will admit that there may be an Architect of the universe, but will not go on to say that there is a God, simply because he sees no profit for himself in such an assertion. Even the watchword

of current philosophy, "It works!" always has the connotation, at least, of working for me.

In the field of religion this subjectivism shows itself in indifference either to any particular religious denomination or to the whole idea of religion in general. Could religion have been branded so easily and accepted so widely as the "opiate of the people" if someone even before Hegel had not first divorced from the metaphysical basis of religion that system of morality which people know is no opiate? And even in morals there is the odd spectacle today of men conceiving of the morally good and bad—if they admit they can be distinguished at all—as merely subjective values, and forcing themselves to try observing the shell of a moral life without the motivation of the love of God, hope of reward, or fear of punishment; for Kant had discarded such motivation as unethical in the Critique of Practical Reason. Instead, many moderns are trying to hobble along on the rickety crutches of reputation and self-respect alone.

While keeping in mind the other influences contributing to the stark reality which is today's world, one can scarcely be accused of exaggeration if he gives the foremost place after Original Sin to Immanuel Kant. No thinking man can long doubt

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the real significance and the colossal impact of the answer given by the man from Koenigsberg to his simple starting question, "How are synthetic judgments a priori possible?"

It is precisely because the reality of today's world is bleak, that more critical eyes are turning daily not only to Kant's starting question, but also and especially to the suppositions lying beneath that question. For they see only too clearly that practically all the activities of modern non-scholastic philosophy are dependent on Kant's question and its suppositions in one way or other, either as developments of or reactions to Kant's doctrine.

For example, two important suppositions of Kant are that synthetic judgments a priori actually exist, and that a priori forms are the only way of explaining them. The question today is: Do these suppositions rest on grounds that are themselves solid? Or, perhaps, did Kant take for granted the grounds themselves of these suppositions? Could these grounds beneath Kant's own suppositions perhaps have been the fundamental principles which everyone accepted as true and unassailable in Kant's day, but which further investigation and experience have shown to be

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4 Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn, The Everyman's Library edition, New York, 1946, 32. In the following pages, this work and this edition will be referred to simply as the Critique.

5 Ibid. 58 and 79.
be highly questionable?

It should not be surprising, therefore, that the purpose of the present thesis is to carry on a little of this investigation of Kant’s suppositions. Thus the thesis will attempt, in particular, to explain and to evaluate two of the basic reasons which led Immanuel Kant to consider his a priori forms as necessary. The two basic reasons to be treated here are his division of judgments and his neglect of abstraction as manifested by his positing the “Copernican Revolution.”

The area of this investigation is limited to the Prefaces and Introduction to Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason. Kant’s second edition is chosen because it embodies his own additions, alterations, and omissions. Moreover, the three English translators have used this edition—two of them basing their entire work upon it. Of the English translations, that of J. D. M. Meiklejohn, as printed in the Everyman’s Library edition, New York, 1946, has been selected because of its fidelity to Kant, its readability, and its wide accessibility through this modern edition. In the Introduction to this edition A. D. Lindsay discusses the relative value of Kant’s two editions. The present thesis might have been based on any of the three English Translations without any significant change.6

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6 The varying merits of these English translations of Kant are taken up by N. K. Smith in his translation of the
What type of approach shall be made in this consideration of Kant's division of judgments and neglect of abstraction? The psychological approach seems well suited to this purpose. Thus in the first part, the philosophical thought and examples that set the stage for Kant shall be propounded, along with a study of Kant himself before he solved the problem that confronted him. In the second part of the thesis, an attempt shall be made to understand exactly what Kant meant by the phrase "synthetic judgments a priori," and by the reasons he adduces to show the necessity of his a priori forms. The third and last division contains the critical part of the thesis which aims at answering whether Kant's a priori forms are strictly necessary or even reasonably adapted to a theory of cognition.

The last subject of these introductory remarks is the method to be used in pursuing the objective of this thesis. Since three main elements in this investigation of Kant's suppositions will be: the exposition of what Kant has said on the problem, the analysis of what Kant meant, and finally, the criticism of his reasons for the solution, a few words on the method used with each of these elements seems appropriate.

Regarding the exposition of Kant, both Norman Kemp Smith in his A Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason' and Fr. Joseph Maréchal, S. J., in his Le Point de Départ de la Métaphysique have made some pertinent statements. For example, N. K. Smith says that

 citation of single passages is quite inconclusive. Not only must all the relevant passages be collated; they must be interpreted in the light of an historical understanding of the various stages in Kant's development. We must also be prepared to find that on certain main questions Kant hesitates between opposed positions, and that he nowhere definitely commits himself to any quite final expression of view.7

Besides multiple citations, wherever it is possible, the investigator must exercise patience if he fails to find conclusive answers. Kant may quite simply not have formed any completely satisfactory answer.

Fr. Maréchal tells those interested in Kantian studies to avoid two extremes in their résumés of Kant's thought.8 The one extreme is to write a very brief, clear, and attractive summation. The shortcomings of this approach are that it is very likely to be more of an insufficiently guaranteed interpretation than a faithful résumé and that it will have altered excessively the true historical character of Kant's writings. The other

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7 Smith, Commentary, xxiv.

extreme is to launch out upon a very elaborate, detailed, and complicated opus on Kant. Evidencing this extreme are Vaihinger's long, uncompleted work and the three thick tomes of Vleeschauwer. If the present thesis inclines more to the first extreme, let the limitations of the author, of time, and of thesis regulations be sought as an explanation.

When the problem of analyzing Kant's meaning arises, there accompanies it the following question which demands a sincere answer: Is it possible to find Kant's de facto meaning with certitude? even with high probability? Some doctrines of Kant may be fairly clear. Yet others have received grossly divergent interpretations from his most capable, or at least his most renowned, commentators. Ordinarily, even a conscientiously objective interpretation of Kant is only probable. Therefore, any criticism based on such an interpretation can claim no more than probability.

For the sake of simplicity, direct interpretation of Kant seems preferable, since for almost any interpretation derived from secondary sources opposing views can be found. Consequently, in so far as it is possible, the use of secondary sources in this thesis will be limited to a confirmation of the direct interpretation of Kant.

When, finally, consideration is given to the method of criticism to be employed in this thesis, one finds the two possi-
bilities of intrinsic and extrinsic criticism. In the intrinsic criticism—as the phrase is understood here—the norm used is the author's consistency and his efficacy in attaining his end. Thus Kant's statements and arguments would be judged according to these two points.

Extrinsic criticism consists either in taking a norm that is known to be valid or in establishing one if it is deemed necessary, and then comparing the doctrine of Kant to this norm. Chapter three will be composed of both types of criticism.

An alternate method of extrinsic criticism is usually not very satisfactory. It consists in collating all the testimonial against Kant on a certain point or in assembling all the years on another. The only means of insuring something like objectivity in this amassing of approval for a certain idea would be to note down sedulously the purpose of each contributing critic before quoting him. This would, quite obviously, only add to the complexity of the task. If, for example, various quotations from the critical parts of N. K. Smith, H. J. Paton, and Edward Caird were adduced, it could easily be seen that the first aims at showing Kant as a phenomenologist, the second at saving Kant no matter what the cost, and the last at pointing out that idealism is the only terminus for anyone who accepts Kant's starting points. Consequently, in the critical part of the thesis, chapter four, references to secondary sources will
again be used, in as far as it is possible, for confirmatory purposes, just as they are used in the analytical part, chapter three.
CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL AND PERSONAL INFLUENCES ON KANT'S PROBLEM

What are the suppositions that led Kant to affirm that a priori forms are necessary? To bring these suppositions to light is the aim of this present chapter.

Now if slow-motion studies are highly helpful in bringing to light all the factors contributing to some successful off-tackle play in a relatively important football game, how much more helpful will it be to use a "slow-motion study" of all the influences entering into that act or those acts of judgment by which Kant gave an answer to his initial question? This second chapter, then, will be a slow-motion study: first, of the general factors which dispose any man towards an erroneous act of judgment; and second, an application of this study to the particular case of Immanuel Kant to see whether any of these factors—logical or illogical, personal or traditional—can be discovered in his thought; and if so, what influence they had on Kant's problem.

The reader's personal experience and also the universal experience of men evidence that men's judgments frequently
are moved more strongly by irrational pulls or pushes than by the strength of sheer logic. What are some of these irrational pulls or pushes? Probably the first that deserves mention is a man's will when it somehow induces the intellect to make an assent. And this can happen in various ways. Through his will a man can simply fix upon something he wants, something that pleases him. When this happens, his will is already disposed to pull his mind to assent because of the pleasure he has foretasted. Or the irksomeness of suspending judgment and tediously waiting for more light on the question may goad his will on to demand any decision from the intellect so long as some decision is made. Finally, a yes-man attitude may have habituated his will to let the intellect give far too easy an assent.

Besides these inordinate dispositions of the will, there are other factors inclining to error. There is an unruly imagination that exaggerates and distorts facts. Long years of experience taught Teresa of Avila to brand this teeming source of error as "the madman of the house." Moreover, there are a man's moods and temperament that can make him too eager or too sluggish in giving assent. Again, there is that strong inclination to be sceptical towards anything not confirmed by immediate sense experience.

In the intellect itself there are many occasions for error. First there is the natural limitation of man's in-
tellect. This fact is attested to most strongly by the works of
the truly brilliant men of our race. All the very different
approaches to reality propounded by Plato, Aristotle, Augustine,
Aquinas, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and Bergson—to speak only of
Western thought—are proof of this natural limitation of man's
power for knowing reality. Again, a judgment can be made without
focusing sufficient attention on the problem. Frequently error
creeps into a man's thinking because he is unfamiliar with those
basic sciences that would keep his thought in line. An ignorance
of metaphysics, of logic, and even of history can lead to small
errors which in the end grow quite costly, because all the other
disciplines depend on these fundamental sciences.

The final factor within the intellect disposing to
error is what might be called the directly logical influence
that leads the mind astray. This embraces all the mind's previous
judgments—those "pre-judgments" or "prejudices"—which may be
insufficiently grounded but which are used nonetheless to support
reasoning. Obviously all consequent reasoning can have no great-
er worth than the original "prejudice."

Although all these possible interior sources of error
seem disheartening enough to any enthusiastic seeker for truth,

1 For a detailed study of the nature and operation of
"prejudice" cf. John Henry Newman's The Present Position of
it would be gross carelessness to leave unmentioned those factors outside a man which can move him to error. Such elements are those subtle, irresistible things like the spirit of one's times, or the example of others, or the prejudices of one's fellow workers. These move almost imperceptibly, but with great force.

After this brief survey of the general occasions of error, the ground seems somewhat prepared for an application to Immanuel Kant in order to discover if any, and how many, of these occasions may have been present during his serious study of the possibility of synthetic judgments a priori. Fortunately, there is not much need of fearing a noteworthy distortion of Kant's thinking which might have arisen from too playful an imagination or from those vacillating moods of triumphant discovery and wearied frustration. For Kant was a deep, hard, patient thinker who was careful to retrace the steps of his thought.²

But undoubtedly other influences both logical and non-logical were tugging at Kant's mind. To present the reader with a clear all-embracing view of these influences, first they will be merely catalogued, and then a more detailed study of each influence will follow. During the detailed study of these influ-

² Cf. Maréchal, Le Point de Départ, V, 10. Also cf. Paton, Kant's Metaphysic of Experience, 56.
ences an attempt will be made to point out two things: (1) that this influence actually affected Kant's thinking, and (2) in what direction it tended to turn that thinking.

The historical and personal influences upon Kant's decision regarding the necessity of a priori forms may be divided into non-logical and logical influences. Some of the non-logical influences came from without and some from within, that is, some of his own character traits. Those non-logical influences from without can be divided into the spirit of Kant's times, which consisted of liberalism, laicism, scientism, and pietism, and into the example of Kant's predecessors: the rationalists, the British moralists, and especially Hume. The non-logical influences working from within were his own genius, his exalted esteem of his own accomplishments, his impatience with contradictions, his carelessness with terminology, and his lack of familiarity with much of the history of philosophy.

On the other hand there were three logical influences already accepted by Kant and thus directing his reflection during his search for the how of synthetic judgments a priori. One of these logical influences had been fashioned by Kant's predecessors. This "pre-judgment" had certain occasions and prerequisites conditions which disposed his predecessors' minds toward this universally held conclusion. The common occasions were found in Occam's nominalism and Descartes's subjectivism. One of
the prerequisite conditions was an excessive dichotomy between soul and body, which the Continental rationalists took care of emphasizing, while the stress of the British empiricists fell on the three following conditions: (1) a separation of accidents from substance, because in the knowing process man reaches the appearances, not the real substance; (2) the atomic theory of sensation: all that is known of things is a succession of sense impressions; and (3) accidents hide rather than manifest substance.

From these occasions and conditions the mental activity of Kant's predecessors caused only one conclusion to flow. Necessity and strict universality cannot come from sense experience. This was the "prejudice" inherited from Kant's predecessors.

On the other hand the two "prejudices" fashioned by Kant himself were (1) that Wolffian metaphysics was metaphysics simply, and (2) that his own Copernican Revolution was a valid hypothesis.

The foregoing list does not pretend to be exhaustive. It does purport to be factual. A more detailed study of each influence must be undertaken now to show the part that it played in the intellectual conflict that was waging for years inside
the acute mind of Koenigsberg's famed professor. The order of this study will parallel that of the foregoing list.

It is almost impossible for a man to emancipate himself from the spirit of his age, and thus it is important to take into account the part played by the spirit of the late eighteenth century in forming Kant's decision. A good historian looking back upon such a period can characterize it and contrast it with other ages. But it is only an attentive, analytical thinker who can so lift himself above his own times and the turmoil about him as to be appreciatively aware of the subtle movements and tendencies of his own age. In a footnote of his Preface to the first edition, Immanuel Kant showed himself to be such an attentive analytical thinker. Anyone who is familiar with the elements comprising the late eighteenth century—those elements of independence, naturalism or laicism, scientism, and pietism—will find the first three of these elements rather clearly

3 Cf. Maréchal, Le Point de Départ, III, 10.

"le conflit séculaire du rationalisme dogmatiste et de l'empirisme vint a se jouer finalement, pendant une trentaine d'années, au sein d'une pensée probe et patiente, rigoureuse et systématique.

Nous assisterons aux péripéties les plus marquantes de ce drame intellectuel peu banal, et nous en considererons ensuite de très près, le dénouement."

4 Cf. for example, Carlton J. Hayes, A Political and Cultural History of Modern Europe, New York, 1933, I, 496 and 510-513, or Thonnard, Précis d'Histoire, 445-450.
revealed in Kant's famous footnote. And it must be remembered that Kant approvingly identifies himself with the spirit described in this footnote. This fact brings out the actual influence of these elements upon him.

The last element, pietism, is not too obvious in this footnote, though there is no doubt that Kant was strongly influenced both by his pietistic mother and by Dr. Schultz, a preacher of pietism. The footnote in which Kant describes his own age follows.

We very often hear complaints of the shallowness of the present age, and of the decay of profound science. But I do not think that those which rest upon a secure foundation, such as Mathematics, Physical Science, etc., in the least deserve this reproach, but that they rather maintain their ancient fame, and in the latter case, indeed, far surpass it. The same would be the case with the other kinds of cognition, if their principles were but firmly established. In the absence of this security, indifference, doubt, and finally, severe criticism are rather signs of a profound habit of thought. Our age is the age of criticism, to which everything must be subjected. The sacredness of religion, and the authority of legislation, are by many regarded as grounds of exemption from the examination of this tribunal. But, if they are exempted, they become the subjects of just suspicion, and cannot lay claim to sincere respect, which reason accords

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only to that which has stood the test of a free and public examination.\(^6\)

The esteem of science, the desire for critical thinking, the quest to remove all barriers impeding progress, the longing to see morality firmly established shine out in this passage and are themes that keep recurring either explicitly or between the lines throughout all of Kant's Critiques.

But how will these four elements mould Kant's thinking? That is the object of this investigation. These elements play the most important part of all the influences undergone by Kant. They determine the end which he sets out to attain by his speculation, as well as the fundamental manner in which that end is going to be pursued.

It was his devotedness to science and his deep desire for solid moral living that put Kant upon his course. His end during all his years of thinking was to save and protect both science and morality—and a noble end it was. The other two elements in Kant's eighteenth century atmosphere—dependence and laicism—controlled the manner in which Kant would go about saving morals and science. He would do his own independent thinking. He would not bother to depend on the many centuries of philosophical experience behind him. Much less would he defer

\(^6\) Kant, Critique, 2.
to any supposed fount of revealed truth. Nor would he seek his solution, even in part, from some intervention of the supernatural. The light of his own native reason was amply sufficient to guide him. —With these remarks, the nature and influence of the temper of Kant's times seem to be sufficiently sketched.

Another illogical influence that can play upon one's mind is the example of others. The concreteness, the suggestiveness, perhaps, even the seeming success of the living example allures an assent from the mind far more easily than the thinly concatenated coherence of a prolonged argument. And Kant had before him many examples that drew his mind in the direction of something like a priori forms. It will be sufficient to mention three of these examples.

As Kant sat in his study, his eyes might easily have fallen on the tomes of Leibnitz, Wolff, and the other rationalists. Here were innate ideas in abundance. Here were men who had gotten around the difficulties of cognition by a simple feat—at least, so it was reputed. Just deposit the ideas in the mind from the start. Then there could be scarcely any difficulty in having the mind come to know them. Here seemed to be one facile way out of Kant's problem.

Besides these predecessors on the Continent there were many outstanding men in England who had carved out new paths that could be easy to follow. If one takes into account Kant's desire
to explain the synthetic judgment a priori and joins it with Kant's long acquaintance with the works of the British Moralists like Lord Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson, Joseph Butler, and Adam Smith, it will be readily seen how the moral instinct, the innate "moral sense" of these men seemed an alluring possibility towards the solution Kant was groping for.

But perhaps the strongest of all the examples influencing Kant was that of David Hume. There are numerous assurances of this given by Kant himself in both the Critique and in his Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics. Hume continually speaks of hidden springs and principles of human nature to explain universal, necessary connections. In the end what could be more close to Kant's ideas of the categories as synthesizing forms?

Since the present paper does not aim at any exhaustive analysis of the non-logical influences entering ab extra into Kant's decision, this slow-motion study may now focus upon the character of Kant himself to bring to light the predispositions within the man which may have inclined him one way or another to

7 Cf. ibid., 27, 35.
8 Kant, Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics, ed. Dr. Paul Carus, Chicago, 1935, 3-10, 19, 21.
fix his assent concerning the necessity of a priori forms of understanding.

A glance at Kant laboring ceaselessly and with almost clock-like regularity on a problem that the majority of men are not even aware of, and a pondering gaze that follows him as year after year he perseveres in his toil and masterfully maintains a high interest in his problem, clearly reveal without much possibility of doubt that here is "a powerful and penetrating intellect struggling and twisting relentlessly towards its goal." 10

Here is an intellectual giant of the first order. Over and above that native brilliance and perspicacity characteristic of this mind there are many intellectual virtues that would help to ward off error. Such virtues were Kant's unquestionable sincerity, great patience, and untiring perseverance. Kant's is, indeed, as Fr. Maréchal puts it, "une pensée probe et patiente, rigoureuse et systématique ... une génie consciencieux et presque entièrement sympathique." 11

But it must be kept in mind that extremes usually entail some dangers, and thus for Kant there was the danger of an exalted esteem of his own intellectual endowments and accomplishments. There is, indeed, some evidence for believing Kant

10 Paton, Kant's Metaphysic of Experience, 56.
11 Maréchal, Le Point de Départ, III, 10 and 17.
succumbed to this danger. He does refer very frequently to the
greatness of his achievements. One runs across passages in
the Critique or Prolegomena that are redolent of an overweening
self-confidence.

Even if Kant had been a literary man, his style would
not have been in harmony with the great German writers of his
period like Schiller and Heine. But since Kant was a professor
and a philosopher, from whom clarity and absolute objectivity
are expected, one cannot pass over without mention those pas-
sages of Kant that seem tinted with a certain braggadocio. The
Frenchman, Buffon, says that style is the man, and to the extent
that his dictum is true does Kant merit to be noted as overly
confident in his own abilities.

Moreover, some of his best-known commentators have
called Kant to task for this. Consequently, sufficient

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12 In the Prolegomena alone, cf. 67, 86, 95, 112, 117,
120, 138; and in the Critique, cf. 3, 4, 5, 16, 21, 37 and 38 of
the first forty pages.

13 For an interesting contrast in the style of two
philosophers compare Kant's introduction to the Critique with
Thomas Aquinas's prologue to the Summa Theologica, or better
still with Aquinas's proemium to the De Regimine Principum.

14 Cf. Edward Caird, The Critical Philosophy of
Immanuel Kant, Glasgow, 1889, i, 201; or Smith, Commentary, 35,
where he speaks of "Kant's immodest over-estimate of the
importance of his work."
justification seems at hand to note down a somewhat high esteem of his own intellectual prowess as one of the dispositions affecting Kant's thought. Realistically considered, few things would have been more difficult for Kant to avoid than this high self-esteem. For it must be remembered that after years of intellectual sparring in and around the University, Kant could not have failed to recognize his own mental stature in comparison with that of the contemporaries with whom he lived, worked, and conversed.

The possible influence of such a disposition scarcely needs comment. It could easily tend to make Kant over-sure of his own conclusions, or reluctant to make investigations far back into the history of philosophy, or even irked and disconcerted when the stubborn contradictions of the rationalists would not yield to the power of his thought.

This last named effect, an impatience with contradictions, calls for a more explicit treatment. In fact, Pr. Maréchal points out Kant's difficulties with the antinomies, which Kant considered as inherent contradictions in any definite metaphysics, as the real starting point from which flowed the necessity of a priori forms. It is true that Kant was highly

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15 Maréchal, Le Point de Départ, V, 438. Years of reflective thought seem to have brought Kant himself to realize the influence of the antinomies upon himself, for he writes in a letter to Garve (Sept. 21, 1796) that it was not Hume, but the
sensitive to the many contradictions which his keen mind could spy in the arguments of the rationalists. And in their extremely a priori view of things and their not too successful attempt at explaining God's freedom, the true nature of sin, and many other Cartesian difficulties, Kant may well have been justified when he treated with disgust the contradictory statements of the rationalists. 16

However, it takes an extremely patient mind to make sure, first, that certain doctrines are truly contradictory, and then, to push on to distinguish between the really existing thing spoken of in the doctrine, and the doctrine itself which for some reason does not conform to the reality. Frequently it is difficult to find the ambiguity of terms or the difference of aspect involved. And if Kant has not taken the utmost care in this regard, surely some of the consequent error can be attributed to the circumstances in which he was enmeshed. For few men have ever been so completely caught and surrounded by the prongs of a philosophical "pincers movement" as was Kant 17— and both pincers had stemmed out of those unbalanced half-truths of Descartes.

Is there, perhaps some reason that might explain, at

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antinomies of pure reason which awakened him from his dogmatic slumber.

16 Cf. for example, the Critique, 1, 11, 13, 36.

least in part, Kant's inability to work his way out of these antinomies, save by having recourse to his distinction between \textit{phenomena} and \textit{noumena}? Almost every reader of the \textit{Critique} complains of the obscurity of Kant's thought and the multiple meanings of the various terms. Surely nothing could more seriously hinder Kant's discerning a difference of aspect or an ambiguous use of terms in a supposed contradiction than a certain obscurity and confusion about the meaning and use of basic definitions.

The point of this present problem is not the actual presence of major contradictions in Kant's \textit{Critique}. There are enough \textit{rixae inter scholae} on that question. But the issue at hand is, does Kant have the habit of sometimes using very basic words in a loose non-scientific manner or even with a confusing ambiguity? It is not necessarily a weakness or a fault to employ one word in many different meanings provided the meanings are kept in line and the context sufficiently indicates the desired meaning. St. Thomas Aquinas might be cited here as an example. In general neither friend nor foe of the Angelic Doctor brands him as an obscurantist though he does use words such as \textit{intellectus}, \textit{ratio}, \textit{subjectum}, \textit{potentia}, etc., in many different senses.

The answer to the present question is that Kant often did not keep sufficiently distinct the various meanings he
attached to a word. Terms like experience, judgment and synthesis, category or form are often not employed precisely enough for a scientific treatment. Even H. J. Paton, who aims at saving Kant wherever possible says, "I do not defend these carelessnesses of expression, nor do I maintain that the contradictions are always merely verbal."21

Thus, the evidence gathered in one's own conscientious study of Kant and the weight of so many authorities point directly to Kant's insufficient precision and care in the use of terms as major reasons why Kant's many antinomies remained unsolved. There is no need to point out the consequences of this carelessness with words, those important "citadels of thought."

A study of Kant's obscurity may lead this investigation to a fifth characteristic of Kant's thinking, a factor that undoubtedly accounts very much for his peculiar use of terms and his rather naive belief that he was the first to venture into such unchartered problems of the mind. This fifth characteristic is Kant's extremely slight acquaintance with the whole history of

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20 Cf. Überweg, History of Philosophy, II, 164
21 Cf. Paton, Kant's Metaphysics of Experience, 51. Moreover, Smith, Commentary, xx, says: "As a writer, he [Kant] is the least exact of all the great thinkers."
philosophy. And if the spirit of his times is considered, a
disdain for the Middle Ages or for anything somewhat Catholic in
tone, along with an exclusive interest in the "enlightened"
period, is easily understood.²² Ample references might be made
to this ignorance of previous philosophical endeavor,²³ but one
or two examples taken from the Critique itself are necessary to
bring this out more clearly.

Regarding his question, "Are synthetic judgments a
priori possible?" Kant tells us in the Prolegomena that "The
principal reason it was not made long ago is that the question
never occurred to anybody."²⁴ It may well be true that Kant
first used the particular phrase, "synthetic judgments a priori,"
but it is only an unfamiliarity with Aristotle, with Aquinas and
the other Middle Age doctors that could leave him with the im-
pression that he was the first to investigate this type of
judgment. If Kant had read, for instance, the second book of St.
Thomas's Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle, he would
not have ventured such a statement.²⁵

Another instance of Kant's ignorance of the history of

²³ From the Prolegomena alone can be cited the
following loci: 3, 27, 86, 87, 88, 93.
²⁴ Kant, Prolegomena, 27.
²⁵ Aquinas, In II Met., 1, nn. 275-287.
philosophy occurs when he speaks of the ontological argument for the existence of God in the *Critique*. He says

*Philosophers have always talked of an absolutely necessary being, and have nevertheless declined to take the trouble of conceiving, whether—and how—a being of this nature is even cogitable, not to mention that its existence is actually demonstrable.*

Kant would not have had to penetrate even into the chief work of Aquinas to find himself contradicted. If he had merely scanned the *Summa Theologica*’s table of contents, or its equivalent, he would have discovered that Chapter Twelve of the first book was entitled, *Quomodo Deus a nobis cognoscitur?*; while even earlier, Kant’s eyes would have rested on the words, *Utrum Deum esse sit demonstrabile?*, where Aquinas’s affirmative answer means that God is surely "cogitable," as Kant puts it.

Moreover, in St. Thomas’s famous thirteenth chapter of the first book, "De Nominibus Dei," he elaborates the analogous knowledge we have of God. It should be borne in mind, too, that we are looking at only one of Aquinas’s works. He had also taken up the cognoscibility of God in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, in his *Commentary on Peter Lombard's Sentences*, and in other works. Moreover, besides Aquinas, there were many other doctors and philosophers of the "pre-enlightened" days—

26 Kant, *Critique*, 347.

27 Aquinas, *S. Th.*, I, 2, 2.
such as Albert the Great, Dun Scotus, Bonaventure, and Suarez—who definitely had not "declined to take the trouble of conceiving" this particular problem.

Examples such as these might be increased by twenty or thirty; but again the evidence seen in a private reading of Kant’s Critique joined with these foregoing samples, points decidedly to too small an acquaintance with philosophical thought before the "enlightenment." The possible influence of such ignorance is manifest.

This brings to a close the present investigation of the non-logical influences affecting Kant from within and from without. From without Kant absorbed the spirit of his age. He wanted to be an independent thinker and critic largely because of the liberalism and laicism that filled his days. Because of the success of science and the spread of pietism, he set his eyes on the noble goal of saving and protecting both science and morals. Besides this spirit of the "enlightened age," there were the examples of the rationalists with their innate ideas, of the British Moralists with their "moral instinct," and especially of David Hume with his hidden springs and principles working unnoticed deep down in human nature. All of them were at least road-marks pointing in the direction of a priori forms.

From within, Kant was disposed and conditioned by his own sincere and persevering thought that proceeded from a truly
gifted mind, by a consequent esteem of his own work, by a certain
impatience in the face of real or seeming contradictions, by a
carelessness in his use of terms, and finally, by an unfamiliar-
ity with the history of philosophy.

Now that the dispositions in Kant's intellect and in
his other faculties have been examined—his desires, his blind
spots, his intellectual temptations, his natural drift in viewing
problems,—now, the living thought, the actual philosophical
doctrines which his predecessors and Kant himself fashioned, may
be deposited carefully into this mind, and the reaction observed.
This means a historical study of what will be called the logical
influences upon Kant, an examination of some of these presuppo-
sitions and "prejudices" which, once accepted, logically pre-
determined Kant's solution of the problem.

It is an admitted fact\(^{28}\) that one of the most funda-
mental suppositions in Kant's *Critique* is the doctrine that
absolute universality and necessity do not come from experi-
ence.\(^{29}\) No distinctions are made regarding this supposition.

\(^{28}\) Cf. Smith, *Commentary*, 56; \(\text{Überweg, *History of}

\begin{align*}
\text{Philosophy, *155 and 161, where he calls this supposition Kant's}\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{prima verba}; \text{Maréchal, *Le Point de Départ*, III, 82; F. X.}
\text{Milwaukee, 1947, 346; and Coffey, *Epistemology*, 169.}

\(^{29}\) Cf. *Critique*, 26, 27, 31 and 32; cf. *Prolegomena*,

\begin{align*}
32, 80, \text{and 81.}
\end{align*}
Thus the question immediately arises, how and where did Kant get this notion? Before an answer can be given, a glance should be paid to the general philosophical trends before Kant. Then an effort will be made to point out the occasions that offered Kant an opportunity to make this supposition. After this, the various conditions will be revealed which were needed for this supposition and were fashioned by the Continental rationalists and the British empiricists. These conditions were so firmly established before Kant’s entry upon the philosophical scene, that all subsequent thinking would naturally be disposed to arrive at this one particular conclusion; necessity and absolute universality do not come from sense experience.

Fr. Maréchal’s brief summation of the general philosophical currents before Kant is offered here in translation as a background against which to view Kant.

Kant had his predecessors. We have already studied the efforts at a critical theory of cognition attempted by rationalists like Descartes and Leibnitz, or by empiricists like Locke and Hume. Their answers were incomplete and one-sided but at least had benefited philosophy by clearing off the terrain and by pointing out, through their very failures, the dangers to be avoided.

In this way each one of them made a lasting contribution. Descartes effectively called attention to the possible activity of the Ego in the knowing process; Leibnitz, to the dynamism of the intelligence in forming the intelligible object; Locke and Hume, to the improbability of innate ideas and to the difficulties that beset every ontological realism.

But their influence did not stop here. Kant’s Critique was to a certain extent predetermined by the
concrete terms of the problem which was already lying on the table for his examination. It has already been shown ... how the natural development of modern philosophy, starting from Occam, had driven his doctrine back into two extreme positions—we almost said, into two horns of a dilemma. There was phenomenal empiricism (Rame) on one side and rationalistic dogmatism on the other either in monistic form (Spinoza) or pluralistic (Wolff). From either of these two positions the path towards further evolution was blocked: empiricism always ended up in the powerlessness of the sceptic, while rationalism was breaking up through internal contradictions.30

So much for a general idea of Kant's predecessors and of the impasse thought had reached when Kant entered the scene.

Besides the corroding influence of Occam's nominalism,31 there was another occasion that opened the way for Kant's major supposition regarding universality and necessity in judgments. It was Descartes's over-emphasis on the subjective Moi, which disturbed the normal balance in the traditional theory of knowledge and allowed post-Cartesian philosophy to "start from the mind" and then attempt some safe exit to reality.

Was Kant affected by this over-emphasis on the subjective element in the knowledge equation? Kant was clearly imbued with the Cartesian attitude of starting from the mind's own activity. This is well brought out by his basic question,

30 Maréchal, Le Point de Départ, III, 10.

31 The size of this paper prevents a thorough study of Occam's influence. The reader is referred to Maréchal, Le Point de Départ, I, 215-260.
which is at bottom logical—and with Kant, formally logical. For him all content in the synthetic judgments a priori may be forgotten while his study is going on. However, no judgment is ever given just in its form without any matter. Kant has thus lost that realist sense that takes nature as it is found and straightforwardly asks "what is it?" The act of cognition might of its nature necessarily imply two things, the knower and the thing known, but for the thinker on the continent during the late eighteenth century the knower was the only element that counted. There are, moreover, explicit statements of Kant written in the same spirit. The act of cognition might of its nature necessarily imply two things, the knower and the thing known, but for the thinker on the continent during the late eighteenth century the knower was the only element that counted. There are, moreover, explicit statements of Kant written in the same spirit.

32 If more evidence is desired, let it be remembered that Kant had taken as one of his starting points in the Introduction the obvious existence of purely a priori knowledge.

What would be the influence of this aprioristic attitude? It presupposes that the human intellect is not an essentially relative faculty whose proper object is some form proper to an external object which determines the intellect to act. Thus, this attitude excludes the "I-become-the-object," the "I-exercise-the-activity-of-the-object" theory of Thomistic psychology. It prepares the way for the problem of the "bridge" when there may be no need for such a problem. Finally, it removes any emphasis on the causality of the thing known and thus

32 Cf. the Critique, 2, 3, 35.
makes it difficult to explain how necessity and strict universality could possibly come from sensible things.

After this glance at the occasions for Kant's basic supposition, account may be taken of the existence and influence of the various "prejudices" which the rationalists and the empiricists—that two-fold brood of Descartes—had passed on to "clarify" Kant's hours of study.

The mathematically clear division which Descartes had made between soul and body was inherited and enhanced by his successors on the Continent. Between spirit and matter there was a dichotomy that nothing could bridge, and thus a formidable barrier blocked the possibility of abstraction. This doctrine of an excessive separation between soul and body passed down through the rationalist line and was absorbed, to some extent at least, by Kant. It is clear that at least in the more familiar sections of his work Kant always speaks of the senses, the understanding, and the reason (when his intent is to contrast them), as if they were units in themselves. He does not make the important distinction between necessarily conceiving faculties as if they were substances themselves, and asserting that they actually are so.

Although Kant's Transcendental Ego offers some basis of unity which resembles the scholastic radication of distinct faculties in one ultimate source of immanent activity, nevertheless his noticeable lack of emphasis on the dynamic interaction and interdependence of the faculties when man is producing one unified operation is quite in accord with the essentialistic metaphysics of his rationalist predecessors, and leaves opportunities for pseudo-difficulties.

This presupposition of an excessive dichotomy tends to engender problems where none really exist. Although Kant's use of the schemata to explain the mediation necessary between sense and intellectual cognition will approximate the Thomistic use of the cogitative sense, nevertheless, Kant's exaggerated chasm between sensitive and intellectual cognition only confirms the rejection of the possibility of abstraction by the intellect from sense data. For with this chasm the difficulty of inter-causality arises, as well as the need of seeking the total explanation for the universality and necessity found in a priori judgments from the intellect alone.

If the Continental rationalists had cleft a chasm between mind and matter, between the intelligible and the sensible, the British empiricists--Locke, Berkeley, Hume--had cut yet another chasm, but this time it was not in the knower, but in the thing known. As this study now turns to consider the
British logical heritage to Kant, the three suppositions which they bequeathed to him may be used as guideposts. They were: the dichotomy between primary and secondary qualities, the atomic theory of sensation, and the "hidden pedestal" idea of substance.

The first supposition of the empiricist school was the separation in our knowing process of the accidents from the existing thing in itself, as if these accidents were the object known. It is an historical fact that the germs of this theory were sown by Descartes in his *Discours de la Méthode*. He disregarded secondary qualities because they could not be clearly conceived, and affirmed that extension and motion were the only realities in the material world. Locke developed this tenet further. He merely held to a nominal essence of an unknown substrate. Berkeley, who followed, managed to deny the reality of all material objects and made knowledge of them depend upon God's putting them into the mind. Thus, all that remained for Hume to assert was that men "are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity."

Evidence for Kant's acceptance of this theory is found frequently in the *Critique* and in the

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This emphatic division between accidents and things-in-themselves disposed Kant's mind to look to anything but abstraction as a possible explanation for his famous problem on the relation of the mind to the thing, which he had outlined in his well-known letter to Marcus Herz. According to this "prejudice" the sensible accidents manifested in experience were known and told nothing of the supposed substance beneath. Thus, the propounders of this theory should, if they wished to be logical, have spoken of sensing "motion" and not "something moving," or spying "redness" and not some "red thing." Kant, accordingly, passes by the possibility of an object concretely affecting the senses in such a way that here and now the knower intentionally exists according to this quantity and these various qualities of this being and acts out dynamically all these determinations.

Kant was also affected by Hume's "prejudice" that men know merely a group of sensations rapidly succeeding each other

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36 For the Critique, cf. 46-47, 51, 56-57, 60. Cf. also Paton, Kant's Metaphysic of Experience, 66, for a clear statement of Kant's acceptance of this doctrine on sensible qualities. For the Prolegomena, cf. 43-44, 58, 99, 109, 153.

37 Cf. Smith, Commentary, 219-220, for an English translation of this letter dated Feb. 21, 1772.
and do not know any underlying substance. This might easily be suspected from Kant's own confession of Hume's influence upon himself, and from the fact that the objects of Hume's and Kant's experience are really the same. There are, moreover, several passages in Kant's works which are stamped with this doctrine.38

One example of this doctrine may be cited. Kant says in his treatment of the succession of time that "Our apprehension of the manifold of phenomena is always successive. The representation of parts succeed one another."39 Such a tenet is intimately bound up with the above mentioned doctrine in which the accidents are separated from the substance. The present presupposition only stresses that separation more and leads to difficulties, if in the knowing process man is to be lead by sense-affecting accidents to an intelligible substance.

Another supposition of the British empiricists that hinders a knowledge of substance, is that the accidents hide the reality beneath them rather than manifest it. This doctrine was popularized among philosophical circles by Locke with his "pin-cushion" idea, or better, his "invisible pedestal" conception of substance. When Hume imbibed this tradition, he forgot about the substance and made the accidents the "things-known." Kant, in

38 Kant, Critique, 144, 148, 157, 200, 436. Also cf. Prolegomena, 25.

39 Kant, Critique, 149.
accepting the doctrine of the accidental determination in general, accepted this teaching, too. The thing-in-itself is entirely unknown and impenetrable for the mind.

That these accidental modifications might manifest and exhibit the insensible natures of things to the intellect is another possibility scarcely taken account of, since ultimately its adoption would mean the explicit positing of causality from the thing-in-itself upon the senses and the actuality of a strictly spiritual soul. Kant rejects here yet another element that is essential to the theory of abstraction, namely, that a thing's operations manifest its manner of existence.

After seeing Kant's mind conditioned by all these logical influences of his predecessors, it is not surprising to find him accepting quite naturally the doctrine that strict universality and necessity do not come from sense experience. After all, was this not the one piece of undisputed ground common to empiricist and rationalist alike? For the sake of clarity, Kant's thought under the pressure of these logical influences is presented in the following syllogism. There can be knowledge only of what is given formally in sense experience, for the atomic theory of sensation demands this. But natures or essences which are needed for any strictly universal and necessary knowledge are

40 Cf. Prolegomena, 99.
not given formally in sense experience. Therefore, any strictly
universal and necessary knowledge, which derives from natures or
essences, cannot be obtained from experience. In other words,
strict universality and necessity point to a knowledge which has
some other source than sense experience.

Besides these logical influences from without, there
were at least two other important ideas that helped push Kant’s
mind onto the course it actually took. These were suppositions
mostly of his own making. A brief glance at these last ”preju-
dices” is necessary to reduplicate as closely as possible all the
stage-props and atmosphere that set the scene for Kant’s decision.

The first of Kant’s own presuppositions stemmed from
his unfamiliarity with the history of philosophy. It consisted
in too rapid a generalization. For Kant identified Wolffian
metaphysics with metaphysics as such. Consequently, Kant

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41 Cf. Étienne Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers,
Garden City, Kansas, 1949, 112-132, especially 119, where Gilson
speaks of Wolff’s influence throughout Europe during Kant’s day:

"To innumerable professors and students of philosophy, meta-
physics was Wolff and what Wolff had said was metaphysics. To
Immanuel Kant, in particular, it never was to be anything else,
so that the whole Critique of Pure Reason ultimately rests upon
the assumption that the bankruptcy of the metaphysics of Wolff
had been the very bankruptcy of metaphysics."

The import of Gilson’s words is confirmed and heightened
by the interesting and enlightening comparison which can be made
between Kant’s remarks on the nature of metaphysics (cf. Critique,
3, 6, 11, 15, etc.) and the remarks of Aristotle and Aquinas on
the same subject (cf. bk. < of Aristotle’s Metaphysics and bk.
II of Aquinas’s Commentary).
supposed that in justly putting the sword to Wolffian metaphysics, he was destroying all previous scientific metaphysics. However, the fact that this essentialistic Wolffian metaphysics could not give valid explanations of those antinomies which put Kant into such mental throes was no sign that a true metaphysics lacked an explanation. Wolffian metaphysics suffered from an excessively a priori approach, a complete absence of analogy in the notion of being, and a disregard for the dynamism and teleology in the actuality of beings. How could it answer the antinomies? A noteworthy effect of this identification by Kant of Wolffian metaphysics with metaphysics as such was to keep down any interest or curiosity in Aristotle's or Aquinas's works on metaphysics.

The second supposition of Kant's own fashioning was that in the theory of knowledge the conformity of the mind to the thing known was matter for hypothetical conjecture. Whether the mind of man conforms to things or things conform to his mind is not at all evident to Kant. Therefore for him either view can be treated as an hypothesis. This is his whole attitude when he is explicitly setting up his so-called Copernican Revolution.42 He looks upon his whole Critique as a mere experiment to establish the sounder hypothesis. He tells us,

"Let us then make the experiment whether we may not be more successful in metaphysics, if we assume that the objects must conform to our cognition."43

One thing can be seen affecting the entire Kantian philosophy as a result of this initial hypothesis. It is that the Kantian system in all its ramifications possesses no greater validity per se than this starting hypothesis.

This brings to a close the study of many of the influences working on Kant's mind. Some of them were doctrines of his own fashioning. Others were the traditional doctrines of his philosophical fore-fathers. Some were logical. Other influences were far more subtle, stealing almost unobserved into Kant's hours of study. Such were the temper of his times, the example of other thinkers, and the power of his own real genius—along with some of the weaknesses that not infrequently accompany genius.

What was the result of this maze of influences? How did Kant react to this "pincer-movement" of excessive empiricism and rationalism? How did he formulate that reaction? And what did he mean by it? These are the questions to be treated in the following chapter.

43 Ibid. 12.
CHAPTER III

THE NATURE, MEANING, AND PROOF OF KANT'S PROBLEM

The previous chapter has brought to light some of the historical and personal influences upon Kant's thinking. This chapter aims at analyzing the nature, meaning, and proof of Kant's critical problem.

To see clearly the central problem which Kant poses in his Critique of Pure Reason and which he there solves, at least to his satisfaction, it seems best to go first of all to that cause which is the most fundamental in any problem, the final cause.

Now what was Immanuel Kant trying to do in his Critical Philosophy? What was his aim? Looking at the positive elements in his philosophy, one can safely say that at least one of his objectives, if not the chief one, was the saving of science. Kant wanted to erect some bulwark against the scepticism that threatened to destroy science. Moreover, morals had to be strengthened against that quest for pleasure which Kant found

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1 Cf. Kant, Critique, 35.
quite rampant around him. He refers to this purpose in his Preface to the second edition where he says, "... above all, it [the Critique] will confer an inestimable benefit on morality and religion." and "I must, therefore, abolish knowledge to make room for belief." Kant set before himself as his final goal these two aims: to save science and to strengthen morals. Thus, they became the cause of all of Kant's efforts. These goals gave direction to his thinking and permeate his various Critiques.

The next step to be taken in coming gradually to a knowledge of the critical problem, is to see the obstacles that kept Kant from achieving these ends. In general these obstacles were the dangerous decay of metaphysics and rationalism, which ought to have supported science, and the struggles of empiricism and the natural sciences against the dogmatic assertions of metaphysics and rationalism.

The metaphysics with which Kant was acquainted was constantly falling into contradictions and could only be saved, if at all, by employing some Deus ex machina, as Leibnitz did with his theory of pre-established harmony. These rationalists were very adept at tearing down some other system; but when the fire of criticism was directed at their own tenets, the inconsist-

2 Kant, Critique, 18.
ancies in their doctrines or the arbitrariness of their starting points became manifest. And woe to the poor eclectic who tried to pluck pleasing doctrines from different systems! Antinomy upon antinomy descended upon his head.

In the opposing camp the empiricists warred strongly. Their simple empiricist principle had set the ramparts of rationalism tottering, and thus they had been only too eager to conclude to the essential weakness of any rational philosophy. The result was that the supposedly solid speculative foundations of the moral order, such as freedom of the will, immortality of the soul, and the existence of God, were anything but closed questions, and consequently, little valid support for morality.

Moreover, the natural sciences seemed to be unduly restricted in their phenomenal development by the doctrines of metaphysics, the queen of the sciences. These sciences were ever finding more evidence which seemed to show that actions in this world were determined by physical causes alone, though metaphysics kept teaching the apparently incompatible influx of free causality into such a world. The conflict between metaphysics and the natural sciences was heightened when these natural sciences followed Descartes's stress on the mechanism in events, although metaphysics insisted that they came about for
And yet alongside all this philosophic doubt and turmoil Kant saw a strange spectacle. There was logic, standing serene as ever. So too, mathematics, untouched by these sceptical storms, was showing progress day by day. And recently physics had burst into a new glory, thanks to the work of Newton. While regarding this spectacle, Kant could not help wondering why metaphysics alone was enmeshed in the coils of contradiction.

The immediate and most apparent answer was that somehow a very fundamental mistake had crept into metaphysics, although the other sciences, perhaps unknowingly, had hit upon the true path to certitude. To remove this basic error in metaphysics, something radical had to be done—perhaps not so radical as an arbitrary ousting of metaphysics from the field of science, but at least there was need of an exacting examination of all the starting points used in metaphysics.  

Kant took upon himself the task of once and for all carrying out this exacting examination. In the critical spirit characteristic of his age, he could not exercise merely some half-attentive control over the materials that entered into his

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3 This restriction is quite clearly brought out by A. D. Lindsay in his Introduction to the Everyman Edition of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, London, 1946, xi.

4 Cf. Maréchal, *Le Point de Départ*, III, 87-89, which is paraphrased here.
patient scrutiny of speculation. Centuries of philosophical experience had shown that this trust was too naive. Was it not just this spontaneous trust that had brought metaphysics into such decadence?

Thus, while focusing his critical faculties upon the general obstacles to his purposes, and while contrasting this confusion and conflict in metaphysics with the order and harmony present in certain other sciences, Kant discovered two special difficulties from which all this confusion and conflict seemed to rise. These were the two problems upon whose solution depended the life or death of the natural sciences and metaphysics and, consequently, of morality, also.

One difficulty was the traditional bête-noir of the rationalists who followed Descartes. If one started with the ideas in his mind, how could he ever be sure they conformed with reality? How could there be a bridge between his mind and the thing? Kant was aware of this problem at the beginning of his critical study, as his letter to Marcus Herz on February 21, 1772 assures us.  

5 Cf. for example, the following excerpt of the well-known letter as translated by Smith in his *Commentary*, 220:

We can thus render comprehensible at least the possibility of two kinds of intelligence--of an *intellectus archetypus*, on whose intuition the things themselves are grounded, and of an *intellectus octypus* which derives the data of its logical procedure from the sensuous intuition of things. But our
The second special difficulty, which was still more weighty, was the dilemma that arose from Kant's clinging to the rationalist principle of identity as the sole norm for scientific judgments, and his almost simultaneous abandoning of the rationalist principle that the real cause of an object and its sufficient reason are identical. Adhering to the rationalist viewpoint, Kant said, "All our reasoning is reduced to discovering the identity of the predicate with the subject either considered in itself or in its connection," but he parted radically from rationalist thinking when he declared that the definition of the cause of an object makes it necessarily something else than the object. Thus, in propositions that involved a causal relation, Kant could not call upon the principle of identity to understanding (leaving moral ends out of account) is not the cause of the object through its representations, nor is the object the cause of its intellectual representations (in sensu reali). Hence the pure concepts of the understanding cannot be abstracted from the data of the senses, nor do they express our capacity for receiving representations through the senses. But, whilst they have their sources in the nature of the soul, they originate there neither as the result of the action of the object upon it, nor as themselves producing the object.


7 Immanuel Kant, "Versuch den Begriff der negativen Grössen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen," Kant's Werke, II, 104. Maréchal, Le Point de Départ, III, 33 calls this remark of Kant, "Peut-être même prémisses décisive de la Philosophie critique."
explain the connection of subject and predicate. And yet he saw
a real connection there between the subject and predicate, al-
though he could not analyze it in the subject. In fact, many of
the sciences depended on just such causal propositions. Upon
what basis then could the subject and predicate be joined in
propositions of this sort? Kant formulated his dilemma in these
words, "Regarding this ontological reason [the real cause] and
its connection with a real consequence, here is the question I
ask: How can we understand that 'Because a certain thing ex-
ists, another thing must exist'?"8

This dilemma, confusedly present in Kant's dissertation
of 1755,9 and intensified by his own pre-critical ponder-
ings, was rendered even more acute by Kant's acquaintance10 with
Hume's questionings upon the principle of causality. Since it
was not self-evident for Hume that every event should have a
cause, what was that third something by which the synthesis of
subject and predicate in the causal principle could be accom-
plished? Kant, however, did not agree with Hume that this
linking sprang from an inner habit forged by experience, since

8 Ibid.


10 As Smith suggests in his Commentary, xxix, this ac-
quaintance may perhaps have been only an indirect one occasioned
by Kant's reading of Beattie's criticism of Hume.
this led to scepticism, the destruction of science. And Kant always accepted the well-reputed existing sciences without question. He accepted them as given, as starting points in his study. Moreover, unlike Hume, Kant did not limit his inquiry into the nexus for the causal axiom alone, but extended his investigation to all those judgments of both valid and pretentious science, wherein the predicate did not seem contained in the content of the subject. What did his investigation reveal, and how did Kant crystallize its findings?

First, Kant said that even in an unphilosophical state men possessed judgments that were independent of experience, judgments that did not tie the mind down to this particular time and place. For example, men knew not only that "Kant's house had been built by someone,"--this was singular knowledge--but also that "Whatever happens has a cause." This latter judgment was on the universal plane. Men gave a universal assent to this statement, and meant that it could be applied to any and all happenings.

In addition, men affirmed this judgment and others like it with strict necessity, "Whatever happens must have a cause." Kant saw that these judgments which were universal and

11 Cf. Kant, Critique, 35.
12 Kant, Critique, 26.
necessary were absolutely demanded by the sciences. For the sciences were to give men power over the things and events they encountered. Without universal, necessary judgments, science would become as variable and limited as the experience of individual men. Men would not be able to rely at all upon the applicability of scientific principles, nor could these principles be said to be true. Consequently, science must have universal, necessary judgments.

Secondly, regarding this universal necessary type of judgment, which Kant called *a priori* to distinguish it from judgments derived from experience, or *a posteriori* as he says, there arose the evident need of investigating the following questions. How could the human mind possess such *a priori* judgments? From what principles did this knowledge spring? How much of this knowledge was genuine?

Next, Kant began this investigation of *a priori* judgments. His first step was carefully to distinguish this *a priori* knowledge into two types. He was familiar with that type in which the predicate was contained in the subject. These judgments Kant called analytical or explicative, since they analyzed or explained the thought-content of the subject-concept. There was no difficulty about these analytic *a priori* judgments. While perceiving their importance in clarifying science, Kant also saw that this was not the only type of *a priori* knowledge.
If it were the only type, science could never discover anything really new, for in this type the predicate always existed already in the subject.

The other type of a priori judgment, without which science could not exist, was the augmentative judgment; or synthetic judgment, as Kant called it. This type augmented the thought-content of the subject by adding to it a completely new predicate not contained in the subject. This synthetic type made it possible for science to attain new knowledge. It enabled science to make progress about its subject matter.

That synthetic judgments a priori existed was a known fact for Kant. He effortlessly adduced examples from all the levels of science. The following were some of his specimens: seven plus five equals twelve; a straight line between two points is the shortest; in all communication of motion, action and reaction must always be equal; the world must have a beginning.15 All these examples are universal and necessary in their mode of predication. And, according to Kant, their predicates are not contained even covertly in the subject-concept.13

However, with this type of synthetic judgment a priori Kant saw a new problem arising. Although judgments from experience (synthetic judgments a posteriori) could validly augment

15 Ibid. 32-33.
the content of the subject by employing actual experience to justify connecting a new predicate to the subject, still, with this new type of synthetic judgment, in which there was a complete divorce from experience, what could be the unknown X which justified the linking of the new predicate to the subject? For example, in judgments involving a causal relation like "Whatever happens has a cause," what principle allowed one to connect "a cause" to "whatever happens"—and that necessarily and universally? The evidence of experience was neither sufficiently universal nor necessary.

For Kant this problem was emphasized in synthetic judgments a priori of causality, because for him only one term of the causal relation could be found by his analysis of the static subject-concept.\(^\text{14}\) Now whence did these causal relations arise? Their necessity ruled out changeable experience as a source. Their relativity excluded the absolute concept as a source. The only remaining source was the knowing mind, and therefore Kant was faced with the absolute need of a priori conditions or mental forms for saving the sciences which would lie impotent without causal principles. Kant knew that since he had determined to save science from the outset, he had to justify the joining of the predicate to the subject in all these synthetic judgments.

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\(^{14}\) Ibid. 31-32.
judgments a priori.

Briefly, in order to be genuine, science had to have synthetic a priori judgments—synthetic judgments to insure newness and scientific progress; a priori judgments to insure unchangeableness and universality in science. In reacting against Hume's sensistic scepticism, Kant was trying to defend and to promote science by means of synthetic judgments a priori. There was only one weak-spot with these judgments. How could that foreign predicate be joined validly to the subject? And thus Kant crystallizes his entire Critique; he finally touches the core question of the Kantian system when he asks, "How are synthetic judgments a priori possible?"15 This problem marks the pivotal point of Kant's work.

Now no one doubts the benefits of unity and clarity that a central problem can bestow on an author's work. However, after reading and studying the Critique, anyone who makes a little reflection upon Kant's central question, the multitude of smaller problems involved, and the vast consequences implied, may well find two questions occurring in his thought. Has Kant made an over-simplification in formulating the problem? If not, has he, then, clearly shown the exact bearing of every subordinated problem to this question about the possibility of

15 Kant, Critique, 35.
synthetic judgments a priori? 16

Many critics confess at least some obscurity in finding the precise internal relation of all the parts of the Critique of Pure Reason to the critical problem stated in the Introduction. 17 But Norman Kemp Smith goes beyond this and suggests that Kant is guilty of over-simplification, since Kant does not carefully define what he means by the question and thus leaves room for many additional problems. 18

Up to this point the chapter has dealt with the causes of Kant's critical problem and how he finally focused upon his central problem, namely, "How are synthetic judgments a priori possible?" In summary, then, it has been shown that Kant set

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16 Note that other great minds have attempted to reduce the whole of their work to a single problem and sometimes have succeeded. An example of this can be found in the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas. He tells us (in S. T., I, 2, 1), "principalis intentio . . . est Dei cognitionem tradere." Thus his central problem is "Who is God?" and he takes pains to point out at least in general the relation of more than a thousand articles towards the solution of this problem. His habit of showing the connection between various questions and sub-questions is done very briefly, perhaps, even in an introductory phrase, but it is done. Cf. for example, S. T., I-II, 90, proemium, where St. Thomas indicates the connection between his treatise on Satan and his treatises on law and grace, adding the relations of subordinate articles.

17 Cf., for example, Smith, Commentary, xx.; Paton, Kant's Metaphysics of Experience, 48-50; A. D. Lindsay, "Introduction," to Everyman's Library edition of the Critique, x-xi.

18 Smith, Commentary, 43.
out to defend science and morals. He was confronted with con-
flicts and dilemmas arising from a contradictory rationalism,
Hume's scepticism, and the natural sciences. After many years
of patient pondering he overcame these obstacles by discovering
synthetic judgments a priori, which led him, as if by a secret
pass, to valid science and solid morals. But then there re-
mained the problem of explaining how these judgments could be
formed. This last question, therefore, became his chief concern.

Now this present study attempts to discover what was
Kant's exact meaning in his basic question. It has been pointed
out previously that even an essayed objective interpretation of
Kant's words by recognized Kantian scholars leads only probably
to Kant's actual meaning. The interpretations which follow
accentuate this fact while exposing a multiplex answer to the
present query: what does Kant mean by his starting question?

In commenting on Kant's starting question, N. K. Smith
says that the only words in it which do not admit of ambiguity
and cause trouble are "synthetic judgments a priori" since the
"How" and the "possible" admit of many different senses. And
yet, as shall be seen later on, that very phrase, "synthetic
judgments a priori," despite all of Kant's descriptions and
subdivisions, is not altogether clear and unquestionable. 19

Therefore, various meanings can be expected in every part of the starting question. The words, "How," "synthetic judgments a priori," and "possible" will each be considered in its turn.

The word "How" presents two different meanings. It may first introduce a question asking, "in what way," "by what faculties and equipment," do synthetic judgments a priori come about. Or again, that "How" may be reduced to something like, "Well, as a matter of fact, how are they possible?" In this exclamationary sense the "How" is equivalent to a "whether." And in accord with the one or the other meaning, either Kant's analytic or his synthetic method seems to answer the critical problem more satisfactorily.

The phrase, "synthetic judgments a priori," denotes a type of judgment which appears sufficiently clear before examination. Until the critical part of this thesis, it may be taken for granted, as Kant himself seems to do, that the nature of that which he divides, namely, judgments, is adequately known.

As for a priori, Kant tells his readers that it means independence from experience. Consequently, he divides

20 Smith, Commentary, 45-46.

21 Still Kant's ignorance of the nature of judgment will be shown as a major cause in the obscurity of his division of judgments. This is summarized in Chapter IV, page 90 of the present thesis. To be summarized later.

22 Kant, Critique, 25-26.
judgments a priori into those which are independent of this or that experience, and those which are entirely independent of experience. The latter type of judgment he subdivides into impure a priori judgments, that is, those which, though made without any direct reference to experience, have borrowed at least one conception from that source, and into pure a priori judgments in which not only the nexus but also the conceptions are entirely independent of experience. When one analyzes these subdivisions, he may wonder whether de facto he has any such pure a priori judgments which are absolutely non-empirical, with no strings attached to them trailing back to former sensations. Such judgments could not, of course, be had without Kant's Copernican Revolution being true.²³

Since H. J. Paton's treatment of "synthetic" judgments seems very apt, attention is called to his faithful exposition of what Kant means by "synthetic."

The turning point of this discussion is the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments.

At first sight no distinction would seem to be simpler. Either the predicate B belongs to the subject A as something which is contained (covertly) in the concept of A—this is an analytic judgment; or else the predicate B lies entirely outside the concept of A, although it is connected with it—this is a synthetic judgment.

Synthetic judgments may be either a posteriori or a priori. 'All triangles have the three interior angles

²³ Paton, Kant's Metaphysics of Experience, 76.
equal to two right angles' is a synthetic a priori judgment. In both cases the predicate adds something which is not thought in the concept of the subject, but the second judgment is characterized by necessity and universality, and is therefore, a priori as well as synthetic. 24

Thus far one sees a clear description and division of the species of synthetic judgments.

But, as Paton admits, 25 the difficulty is this: "what is implicit and what is not implicit in a concept? It might seem to be implicit in the concept of triangle that the interior angles are equal to two right angles; but this Kant would deny to be an analytic judgment."

As for examples of analytic judgments, Kant presents "snow is white" and Paton offers "gold is yellow," thus indicating that "white" is implicit in "snow," and "yellow" implicit in "gold." On the other hand, they affirm that synthetic judgments are exemplified by propositions such as "bodies are heavy" and "swans are white," where "heavy" and "white" are not implicit in the respective subjects.

Now why "white" should be contained implicitly in the concept of snow and not in that of swan is not too evident upon examination. Yes, there are swans which are not white. Still is it impossible that there be a snow which is not white? Moreover,

24 Ibid. 82-83.
25 Ibid. 85.
the reason why "gold-is-yellow" should merit different classification than "bodies-are-heavy" seems somewhat subjective, if not entirely so. Even the pro-Kantian Paton admits "the nature of analytic judgments [and consequently of synthetic judgments] is not altogether clear." This obscurity may arise from Kant's manner of dividing judgments.

The final expression in Kant's critical problem to be examined is the word "possible"; and here N. K. Smith, following Vaihinger, points out six different meanings of "possible," all of which Kant employs at various times. The six meanings, when listed in contrasting pairs, are as follows. How are synthetic judgments a priori psychologically possible? How logically possible? How are they possible of explanations? How possible of an existence? How are they possible in the real? How are they possible in the ideal? Each meaning will be taken up very briefly.

How are synthetic judgments a priori psychologically possible? In other words, what are the subjective conditions for this type of judgment? Through what mental faculties do they take place? Study of the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Analytic reveals that Kant will include the forms of sensation (space and time) and the pure forms of thought (the

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26 Ibid. 86.
categories) in his response to this question.

How are these judgments logically possible? Or how can they be valid? This question is in itself twofold, embracing the possibility of some nexus between subject and predicate, and the possibility of an objectively valid predication of these judgments.

How are these judgments possible of explanation? How is Kant going to account for them? They have to be made comprehensible. This question may well have goaded Kant on to popularize his doctrine in the Prolegomena.

How are synthetic judgments a priori possible of existence? In other words, how can they exist at all? According to the rationalists and empiricists it would seem one cannot even think such judgments.

Lastly, since Kant employs all six meanings of "possible," it seems advisable to present a summary paraphrase of N. K. Smith’s final distinction between judgments which are possible in the real and in the ideal. According to Kant, natural science and mathematics already exist composed of synthetic judgments a priori. When applied to these judgments, Kant’s initial question asks how these real judgments used by scientists can exist.

27 Smith, Commentary, 52, which is paraphrased here.
But in Kant's opinion metaphysics has not yet been coherently realized. Thus it remains a goal to be striven for along with the synthetic judgments *a priori* which are expected to form its fabric. Kant's basic question, when directed at these judgments of the future, might be rephrased more explicitly into, "How are these *ideal* synthetic judgments *a priori* of the new metaphysic possible?" Kant offered the basis of this last difference in meaning when he formulated his starting question in one way for physics and mathematics and in another way for metaphysics.  

In summary then, one finds not a little difficulty and complexity in seeking the meaning of a seemingly simple question. Its immediate clarity is attractive; and yet, on further investigation, so many various meanings are found in every expression that one begins to wonder whether Kant could not have stated his starting question more sharply and unmistakably, or perhaps, even whether he has posed a *real* problem.  

To obviate this doubt about the reality of his critical problem, Kant directs the evidence of his Introduction towards establishing the real existence of an *a priori* synthesis. And this commences the third part of the present chapter: the proof of Kant's problem.

Now although the existence of some sensible things can be apprehended immediately through sensibly experiencing those things, it frequently happens that affirmations of real existence rest on a transit of the mind from an existing effect to its real cause; as in the well-known example of Robinson Crusoe's discovery of the existence of another man on his island. Kant thinks the existence of synthetic judgments a priori is immediately evident. Nevertheless, for his readers' sake he employs in the Introduction this second method of inferring their existence by moving from existing propositions to specific acts of understanding.

Therefore, in the third part of this chapter an effort will be made to analyze this argument of Kant in four ways: (1) by finding what his five premises are, (2) by bringing to light the logical consequence which binds his five premises together, (3) by uncovering the foundations of these five premises, and (4) by pointing out one concomitant of these premises, namely, the preclusion of an abstractive intellect.

An examination of the Preface and Introduction to Kant's second edition reveals his use of five general premises. First, the hypothesis of the Copernican Revolution is justified. Secondly, universality and necessity are the signs of a priori judgments. Thirdly, a priori judgments exist in the sciences. Fourthly, the criterion of synthetic judgments is the predicate's
non-inclusion in the subject's content. And fifthly, the sciences actually involve synthetic judgments a priori.

Since the logical connection of these premises does not become evident from this list, their natural dependence upon the preceding premises may be brought out explicitly by reasoning along with Kant in the following manner.

I cannot ask "How are synthetic judgments a priori possible?" unless I know that they are possible. But the way to prove them possible is to prove their existence. Therefore my first supposition is the existence of synthetic judgments a priori.29 But as their existence will be of no use to me unless I have some way of telling that they do exist, I must secondly establish a norm for recognizing synthetic judgments a priori.30 But this norm, too, would be meaningless unless some a priori knowledge were possible. Therefore, I must show, as my third supposition, the de facto existence of some a priori knowledge.31 To do so, I must set down in advance a norm for distinguishing it with certainty from a posteriori knowledge. This will be my fourth premise.32 But even this norm will be meaningless unless

29 Kant, Critique, 32.
30 Ibid. 30-31.
32 Ibid. 25-26.
there is the possibility of some a priori knowledge in general. Therefore I must establish the sine qua non condition of the possibility of a priori knowledge, namely, the conformity of things to the mind. This will be my fifth and last supposition.33

But how does Kant establish and re-enforce these suppositions? On what reasons do his five premises rest? Why, for example, does he claim that the hypothesis of his "Copernican Revolution" is justified? He answers that the need of discovering the fundamental difficulty which retards the growth of metaphysics, and the examples of the other well-developed sciences, are really sufficient causes for inverting the direction of man’s knowing, at least as an experiment.

Universality and strict necessity are the norms for recognizing a priori knowledge because, says Kant, only subjective generalization can mark that knowledge which we form from experience.

Anyone familiar with the demands of science knows that its propositions must be universal and necessary; and since various sciences exist, a priori judgments also exist. Such is Kant’s foundation for his third premise.

33 Ibid. 11-14.
Kant views his fourth premise as a truly original basis for dividing a priori judgments. Either the predicate is implicit in the subject or it is not. Thus the important implication of this premise, which Kant merely posits without thorough explanation, is the existence of some norm that determines the extent of contents in the subject-concept. There exists some principle which determines that "white" will be contained in the concept of "snow" but excludes "heavy" from the concept of "body."

Kant rests his final premise, that the sciences actually include synthetic judgments a priori, upon an exposition of the synthetic and a priori character of judgments such as: "seven plus five equals twelve," "in all changes of the material world, the quantity of matter remains unchanged," and "the world must have a beginning."

Such are the foundations upon which Kant rests the premises of his proof. It seems strange that each one of these explicit premises effectively precludes the theory of abstraction as a possible explanation of the origin of universal, necessary judgments. And yet, right from the beginning of his critical thinking, when Kant had first explained his difficulty to Marcus Herz, abstraction was ruled out.

Hence, the pure concept of the understanding cannot be abstracted from the data of the senses, nor do they express our capacity for receiving representations through the senses. But, whilst they have their sources in the nature of the soul, they originate there neither as the result of the action of the object upon it, nor as themselves producing the object.\footnote{Kant, Letter to Marcus Herz, February 21, 1772; translation taken from Smith, \textit{Commentary}, 220.}

Through this omission or positive exclusion of another "hypothesis," Kant may be forming a \textit{parvus error in initio} against which St. Thomas gives warning. However, such a suspicion pertains more to the critical part of this thesis.
CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION OF KANT'S PROOF

At this point it is necessary for a more thorough understanding of the nature of Kant's arguments to examine his premises rather carefully. For this detailed analysis two of his five premises have been selected. First, Kant's division of judgments will be examined to find the causes of the obscurity already noted. Secondly, Kant's "Copernican Revolution" will be studied to see whether it meets the requirements of a justifiable hypothesis.

The obscurity and confusion resulting from Kant's division of judgments were established as facts when treating in the previous chapter about Kant's exact meaning in the phrase "synthetic judgments a priori." At present the causes of this obscurity and confusion are sought. How can they be found? The method selected in this study is empirical. It proceeds on the principle that one very probable cause of this obscurity was Kant's failure to grasp clearly the elements constituting that

1 Cf. pages 59-62 of the present thesis.
which he intended to divide. Consequently, a study of Kant's judgments considered in their constitutive elements of form and matter (the copula and the conceptions of subject and predicate respectively) will elucidate the causes of the disagreements and difficulties in Kant's division. For the sake of clarity the term judgment will be used to indicate the intellectual operation itself, and proposition to signify the known term of that operation.

In examining propositions first according to their formal element, namely, their copula, it is seen that Kant explicitly affirms that the predicate always belongs to the subject in affirmative judgments. Scholastics can recognize here their relation of inherence. In analytic judgments Kant specifies this belonging or inherence as a relation of identity joining the predicate and subject. For synthetic judgments this belonging is not had through a relation of identity, in Kant's sense, but through a concrete union of S. and P. grasped in experience, or through some other unknown X as unifying bond.

Before continuing with the examination, a distinction is in order concerning this relation of inherence. This relation may be twofold. There is the actual relation which exists and also the relation which the knower affirms as existing. These

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2 Kant, Critique, 30.
two will be identical in true universal propositions, but different when the propositions are false.

For example, in the proposition, "Gold is non-rusting," there is a relation existing between the meaning of "gold" and that of "something which does not rust." The actual relation may be one of identity, though the knower may affirm it as a non-identical relation. It is obvious, therefore, that a division of judgments based on the relation which the knower affirms as existing between S. and P. rather than upon the actually existing relation will cause confusion and obscurity when many men come to employ the division.

Moreover, a further source of obscurity can be seen if the division of judgments is based not on the formal relation of identity or non-identity, but upon the intellectual operation through which these relations are apprehended, i.e., the operations of analysis and synthesis.

Using the example given above, one man may grasp the identity between "gold" and "non-rusting" by analyzing his concept of "gold," even if someone else must make the affirmation only through synthesis.

These observations reveal three possible bases for dividing judgments. These bases consist in differences found (1) in the objective relation between S. and P., (2) in the relation which is affirmed as existing between S. and P. by some
knows, and (3) in the operation of judging.

It should be noticed that in dividing judgments the first basis mentioned should always be the fundamental norm if the objectivity of a scientific division is sought. However, the other bases should not be overlooked in later subdivisions. It also follows that the more a division of judgments rests on the second and third bases given above, the more it becomes infected with subjectivism.

Now Kant, when dividing judgments, says, "Analytical judgments (affirmative) are therefore those in which the connection of the predicate with the subject is cogitated through identity." The question which immediately arises is, who cogitates it through identity? Kant may. But others, perhaps, may not. Which basis of division is Kant employing here? Is it the objective relation of S. and P. or the relation which is simply affirmed by some individual?

The one quotation just given is insufficient to show convincingly Kant's use of the second basis. But a thorough perusal of the fourth part of his Introduction cannot leave much doubt. Besides the numerous references to himself which Kant makes as to the person judging, explicit loci are found indicating that his attention is focused on the second basis, on the

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3 Ibid. (Underlining added.)
relation which his mind affirms as existing between conceptions.  
Moreover, Kant denominates propositions according to the operation used in their formation. This is brought out by his terminology. And his claim of originality in dividing judgments may have some fundament in so far as analysis and synthesis are now made a norm of division. This third basis is as explicitly used as that of cogitated identity.

Thus, the present examination reveals some subjectivism in the language used by Kant to describe the copula in judgment. Does this subjectivism also exist in the examples he offers? A

4 Examples of this taken from Kant, Critique, 30-32, are the following: "In all judgments wherein the relation of a subject to the predicate is cogitated . . ." (not simply, is); "this relation is possible in two different ways." (Does Kant mean possible of being in two different ways, or possible of being thought in two different ways?); "I need not go beyond the conception of body . . ."; "the manifold properties which I think in that conception . . ."; "I can cognize beforehand by analysis the conception of body . . ."; "How then am I able to assert . . ."; "a foreign predicate B which the understanding nevertheless considers to be connected with it." (Underscoring and parentheses added.)

5 Paton, Kant's Metaphysics of Experience, 85.

6 Cf. Kant, Critique, 30-31. For example, "I need . . . merely analyze the conception, that is become conscious of the manifold properties which I think in that conception in order to discover this predicate in it; it is therefore an analytical judgment . . . [However] By the addition of such a predicate, therefore, it becomes a synthetical judgment." The reason why it is synthetical or not is the mind's adding or not-adding to the subject. This is dividing judgments according to the mental operation producing them.
few of these may be considered.

For example, when I say, 'All bodies are extended,' this is an analytical judgment. For I need not go beyond the conception of body in order to find extension connected with it... This is not an empirical judgment, but a proposition which stands firm a priori.

Kant here tells us he discovers extension in the concept of body, and affirms it with strict necessity. He does not prove the necessity of the connection. He affirms it. Do others see it differently from Kant? Yes. N. K. Smith says this proposition cannot be recognized as true save in terms of a comprehensive theory of physical existence. If matter must exist in a state of distribution in order that its parts may acquire through mutual attraction the property of weight, [then] the size of a body, or even its possessing any extension whatsoever, may similarly depend upon specific conditions such as may conceivably not be universally realized.

Here Smith questions the necessary universality affirmed in Kant's nexus. Kant has undoubtedly seized a universally experienced fact. But perhaps he has confused his affirmed relation of strict universal necessity between extension and body with the objectively existing relation. Besides, if this affirmed relation is derived from experience, then how can it also be universal and necessary according to Kant?

Secondly, Kant says the relation in the proposition

7 Ibid.
8 Smith, Commentary, 39.
that seven-plus-five-equals-twelve is not one of identity. This means that the predicate is not contained in the subject-concept.

Yet even the pro-Kantian Paton admits, "It may, however, be maintained that all mathematical judgments are analytic."9 Here again the classification of judgments seems to depend on the person classifying.

Finally, Kant says 'Everything that happens has a cause' is an example of a synthetic judgment. The disagreement of most scholastic philosophers with Kant on this judgment because of their expositions of its analytic nature adds more evidence in the investigation of subjectivism in Kant's division.

Do any of Kant's critics corroborate these indications of subjectivism? Smith frequently charges Kant with general subjectivism.10 Paton, who explicitly aims at saving Kant's doctrine from the corrosive influence of Smith's theory, answers the charge of subjectivism in Kant's division of judgment by saying, "Kant's language in places might suggest that the distinction is subjective, but this, I think, is true only when the subject-concept is empirical ... Kant does not mean his distinction to be merely a subjective one."11 Indeed, Kant intended his

9 Paton, Kant's Metaphysic of Experience, 89.
10 Cf. Smith's index on "Subjectivism," Commentary, 650.
11 Paton, Kant's Metaphysic of Experience, 83-84.
distinction to be scientific and objective. But one's intention is frequently miscarried in the execution.

However, Paton's defense, over and above its admission of some subjectivism in Kant's division, is beset with two difficulties.

First, Paton's answer seems to be begging the question, since one of the things Kant must establish in his proof is the existence of propositions whose subject-concepts are absolutely independent of experience, and not just wishfully thought to be so independent.

Secondly, if Kant allows some subjectivity in his division, where is he going to draw the line? If he admits, as he does,¹² that the judgment "gold is non-rusting" may be analytical for those skilled in metallurgical research and at the same time synthetical for those not skilled in handling metals, he cannot logically refuse to classify judgments like "the human soul is immortal" as both analytical and synthetical under similar circumstances. Yet, Kant maintains this judgment is synthetical without exception.¹³ If the norm he allows for himself were also applied here, this judgment concerning the human soul's immortality would be analytical for those who see clearly the

¹² Kant, Critique, 417.
¹³ Ibid. 241.
essential properties of the soul, and synthetical for the majority who are non-skilled in psychological analysis.

Therefore, both the language and the examples used by Kant as well as the testimony of a pro-Kantian critic point to one conclusion. Kant failed to realize that a mere subjective incapacity to see that a proposition is actually analytical does not make that judgment synthetic. The elements joined in judgment do have a relation, and this objective nexus—not the subjective apprehension of it, nor the operation through which it is apprehended—must be the fundamental basis in dividing judgments.

From such an examination of Kant's copula in judgment it must be more than evident that the variety of ways in which the copula was viewed was caused by the variety of content in the subject-concept existing among various people. Paton put his finger to the heart of the problem aptly enough. "The difficulty," he says, "is to know what is implicit, and what is not implicit in a concept."14

These words may serve as an introduction to an examination of the matter in Kant's judgments, namely, his conceptions of predicate and subject. What is a conception for Kant? The answer to this question can be broken down into an analysis of Kant's own words, a unified description of Kant's conception.

14 Paton, Kant's Metaphysic of Experience, 84.
and a consequence which issues from his view of what a conception is.

Before viewing Kant's ideas, the reader might erect a background of questions against which to contrast Kant's statements. Examples of such questions might be these: "Is Kant here describing the intelligible quiddity of the thing?" "Is he confusing the universal concept and the schematic phantasm?" "Is he emphasizing intellectual content in a conception?"

First, then, to present a patch-like description of conceptions which Kant offers incidentally during his Introduction to the Critique. He says that explicative judgments only analyze it the [subject] into its constituent conceptions, which were thought already in the subject, although in a confused manner. 15

I can cognize beforehand by analysis the conception of body through the characteristics of extension, impenetrability, shape, etc., all which are cogitated in this conception. 16

If we take away by degrees from our conceptions of a body all that can be referred to mere sensuous experience—colour, hardness or softness, weight, even impenetrability—the body will then vanish; but the space which it occupied still remains, and this it is utterly impossible to annihilate in thought. 17

Some of the answers to the questions used as a reference back-

15 Kant, Critique, 30.
16 Ibid. 31.
17 Ibid. 27.
ground may already be taking shape in the reader's mind. To make them clearer, reference will now be made to Kant's Logik, since it is generally agreed that Kant maintained the ideas of traditional logic during his Critique. 18

Kant says a concept is a representatio per notas [merkmale] communis. 19 "The aggregation of co-ordinate attributes [merkmale] constitutes the totality of the concept." 20

Therefore a concept for Kant is a group of merkmale.

What is a merkmale? It is translated as representation, attribute, note, and mark, though this leaves the question whether it is intelligible or sensible or both, undetermined. These merkmale, which were "already thought into a subject," were considered according to the logic of Kant's time to be divided into two groups: (1) ad essentiam pertinencia which included certain primitive and constitutive marks (essentialia), as well as attributes, which had their sufficient ground in the essence and were derivative from it; and (2) the extra essentialia, which included all other marks, whether modes or relations, since both were not derivative from the essence. Thus, if the essence were

18 Cf. Smith, Commentary, 34, and Paton, Kant's Metaphysic of Experience, 187-188.


20 Ibid. 95.
present, the attributes had to be present, but this was not true for the modes and relations. The fact that relations were not necessarily present will be of some importance later on.

Kant divides concepts into empirical and intellectual concepts. The empirical concepts are not definitions. Kant exemplifies this in the Critique with the concept of water. "The word [water], with the few marks attached to it, is more properly a designation than a conception of the thing." This is the Scholastic "descriptive definition."

The intellectual concepts are also indefinable. Ordinarily these are the categories, such as substance or cause, but sometimes non-empirical concepts like "fitness" or "right."

Kant's empirical and intellectual concepts are not definitions, are not complete quiddities, since, according to Kant, the definition expresses the complete representation of the thing, the entire quiddity. But he prefers to call his concepts explanations or expositions of the thing.

Do these expositions express even a partial quiddity of the thing? Kant simply does not emphasize the understanding's

22 Cf. pages 87-88 of the present thesis.
23 Kant, Critique, 417.
24 Ibid.
apprehension of what a thing is. His empirical concept may imply some quiddity, but it is not a quiddity of the thing known, especially when Kant calls it "a rule by which my imagination can delineate an image."25 The empirical concept is compounded with an a priori element; but if this enriches the concept with any meaning, it is meaning sprung from the understanding, not from things.

Regarding his intellectual concepts, Kant's terminology is too confused to allow an unqualified statement. His easily discernible twofold use of category—sometimes as a unifying form, and at other times as the matter or content of thought26—necessitates a distinction. In so far as Kant uses the intellectual concept as a synthesizing form it does not express any quiddity. In so far as he uses it to indicate content, then there may be a quiddity present, but it cannot be called a quiddity of the thing known, since "the pure concept is such that it is not drawn from experience, but springs from reason in regard to its content."27

In summary, therefore, Kant's concepts are not quiddities of the thing. What are they then? The pure concept has

25 Ibid. 119.
26 This discrepancy was observed by Überweg, History of Philosophy, II, 164.
27 Kant, Logik, 89
just been defined. The empirical concept is a compound of both sensible and intelligible characteristics, (merkmal), with the accent falling heavily on the former of the two elements. This sensistic emphasis in the empirical concept is brought out clearly by studying the manner in which Kant abstracts an empirical concept. He describes the conceiving of "tree."

I see a spruce, a lime, and a willow. I compare them, and observe that they differ from one another as regards [the size, shape, and so on, of] their trunk, their branches, their leaves. I reflect on what they have in common, namely, trunk, branches, and leaves. And I abstract from everything in which the seen objects differ from one another. In this way I obtain a concept of "tree." 28

A more striking example of emphasizing the schematic phantasm instead of going on to the intelligible meaning is found in Kant's conception of "dog."

The concept of "dog" signifies [bedeutet] a rule according to which my imagination can delineate generally the shape of a certain four-footed animal without being limited either to some special individual shape offered by experience or to any possible individual image which I construct in concrete. 29

Now while it is true that the universal concept of dog does have a necessary reference to some schematic phantasm for its specification, since the specific difference of dog escapes the human

28 Ibid. 92. (Underlining added.)

29 Kant, Critique, 119. This doctrine is elaborated with greater detail in the Transcendental Deduction and the Schematism of the Categories.
intellect, nevertheless, Kant neither stresses nor even mentions
the intelligible nature of dog. Moreover, a concept which "means
a rule according to which my imagination can delineate the shape"

is not a concept of what a dog is. It may be a guide to the
phantasm. It is not an apprehension of the nature of dog. But
it must be remembered that even in concepts like "dog" and "tree"
there are, according to Kant, the pure a priori elements such as
substance and space.

The confusion which results from using such concepts
as "body" in supposedly scientific propositions becomes evident.
One predicate is considered implicit in a subject because it has
always been associated with that group of merkmae in sense ex-
perience. Thus this sensism in Kant's conceptions obscures and
confuses his division of judgments.

Another result of this over-emphasizing of the sense
characteristics in conceptions is that the attention of one con-
sidering these conceptions is attracted to the intuitional view
of the sense data, their picture content, rather than to the
subtle intelligible meaning involved. This leads to what might
be termed "picture logic," where one concept is conceived as
being implicit in the subject-concept if the former is locally
coincident with the phantasm of the subject-concept. Does Kant
fall into this difficulty? The reader may incline to a tentative
decision while reading the following words of Kant.
Either the predicate B belongs to the subject A, as somewhat which is contained (though covertly) in the conception A; or the predicate B lies completely out of the conception A, although it stands in connection with it.

If I go out of and beyond the conception A, in order to recognize another B as connected with it, what foundation have I to rest on...30

Kant seems to be arranging picture-concepts. At least he is concentrating on their sense character instead of their intelligible meaning.

What Kant's conception is, and how it is formed have been explained. There remains, however, another source of subjectivism in Kant's division of judgments. This is the norm according to which Kant considers certain marks as implied in a concept and others as extrinsic to it. His norm arbitrarily includes some sensible characteristics and absolute attributes, although it excludes other equally frequent sensible characteristics and all relations.

Kant's concept of "body in general" exemplifies his adhesion to certain sensible notes as "analytic," and his rejection of another because he claims it is synthetic.

I can cognize beforehand by analysis the conception of body through the characteristics of extension, impenetrability, shape, etc., all which are cogitated in this conception. But now I extend my knowledge, and looking back on experience from which I had derived this conception of body, I find weight at all times connected.

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30 Ibid., 30-31.
with the above characteristics, and therefore I synthetically add to my conceptions this as a predicate... Four things which Kant says in the passage just quoted are (1) that weight is a note added on synthetically, (2) that in experience weight is seen to be connected with other characteristics that are analytical, (3) that extension, impenetrability, and shape are cogitated in the conception and are analytical, and (4) that this previous conception was derived from experience.

Kant offers no reason why some of these empirically-discovered characteristics of a body are analytical while weight is synthetical. Why does he choose to draw the line between shape and weight? Is shape contained more radically than weight in the concept of body. Perhaps. Yet this cannot be proved by the dogmatic affirmation that up to a certain point the concept is analytical, but anything beyond it is synthetical. Kant's norm appears arbitrary.

31 Ibid.

32 Kant's arbitrariness here has been touched on by Paton, Kant's Metaphysics of Experience, 86. It is attacked by Joseph Groot, O. S. B., (Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae, editio sexta, Friburgi, 1932, II, 85.) who counters Kant's classification of "bodies are heavy" as a synthetical judgment by calling it a per se proposition, though perhaps not quoad nos. "Ex ipsa enim corporis essentia potest cognoscis gravitas quae in corporis essentia necessario radicatur." Moreover, Smith, Commentary, 38-39, gives reasons why Kant is arbitrary in his admission of Merkmale into a concept.
A note about this first example leads logically into treating the second arbitrary manner of forming the subject-concept. It should be noted that when Kant considers impenetrability as implicit in the concept of body, he views it as an absolute attribute, not as a relation or relative power of acting. This very attribute is a good example of Kant's arbitrariness since he makes impenetrability analytical, and therefore, universal and necessary, without regard to the facts of experience. This view of impenetrability as an absolute attribute is to be expected since Kant, tied down by his static, essentialistic way of conceiving things, thought that "a concept must, in its connotation, be an abstracted attribute . . . Relational thinking and the concepts of relation are ignored." Since attributes have their sufficient reason in the essence of the thing, they can be analyzed in that concept itself. But since the sufficient reason for a relation cannot be found in the concept, neither can the relation be analyzed there.

An instance of this clinging to only absolute constituent attributes occurs in Kant's Introduction where he says:

34 Cf. Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers, 120.
35 Smith, Commentary, 181.
36 Paton, Kant's Metaphysic of Experience, 85-86.
In the conception of something that happens, I indeed think an existence which a certain time antecedes, and from this I can derive analytical judgments. But the conception of a cause lies quite out of the above conception and indicates something entirely different from 'that which happens,' and is consequently not contained in that conception.37

The conception, "that which happens," since it implies only absolute attributes cannot contain an essential relation to that which caused it to happen. This exclusion of essential relations in the subject might have caused an amusing spectacle had Kant's contemporaries challenged him to classify the following judgment as either analytic or synthetic: children are the offspring of parents. The proposition is universal and necessary. The meaning of offspring is absolute in so far as it indicates the subject of generation, but it is also essentially relative in so far as it necessarily implies the generators. Children, considered as such, are an example of essentially relative beings (relativa). But Kant by-passes the possibility of such beings, in holding that being can and should be conceived only as absolute, static perfection.38

This study of the norm used by Kant in admitting merk-male into concepts has brought out the fact that this norm was

37 Kant, Critique, 31-32.

38 Cf. Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers, 128. It is apparent that Aquinas's meaning in the dictum "In uno enim relative est intellectus alterius" was unknown to Kant. (De Pot. 7, 10, ad 4.)
arbitrary both with regard to certain sensible characteristics and with regard to relations.

The limits of this thesis do not allow a thorough examination into the nature of Kant's judgments considered as complete wholes. However, the evidence already seen in the investigation of the nature of Kant's judgments according to their constitutive parts of copula and conceptions seems to substantiate the following summary views. Kant does not habitually consider judgment as an essentially spiritual operation. He does not enter into the question why men necessarily make judgments in coming to know things. His knowledge about the fundamental nature and causes of judgment appears neither very accurate nor profound.

Therefore, in summing up this study of Kant's premise that the predicate's non-inclusion in the subject-concept is the norm of a synthetic judgment, five causes should be highlighted as vitiating Kant's division of judgments. They were Kant's failure (1) to reconcile in his division both the variety in men's apprehensions of the connecting link between S. and P. and the objective fact, independent of a human knower, of a necessary or contingent connection; (2) to establish a norm for determining the admission of notes into a conception; (3) to emphasize the quiddity of the understood concept; (4) to consider the implications of necessary relations in essentially relative
beings; (5) to grasp accurately and profoundly the nature and necessity of human judgments, which were the matter that Kant undertook to divide.

The validity of Kant's premise on the division of judgments has been examined and its weakness exposed. Now if, for the sake of argument, it were conceded, not granted, that this premise were valid, would Kant's argument for the existence of synthetic judgments a priori actually prove? The existence of synthetic judgments might be established solidly enough. But whether these judgments would be also a priori in Kant's sense would depend on the strength of Kant's other premises. How strong are these premises by themselves, apart from the flaws discovered in Kant's division of judgment?

Though the limits of this thesis do not permit an investigation of how strong each of the four remaining premises may be, nevertheless it seems wise to show the weakness of yet another Kantian premise. Therefore, the most fundamental premise is chosen for examination. This premise is Kant's view that his "Copernican Revolution" is a justifiable hypothesis.

The cause leading Kant to formulate this view was one of the general causes that led him to start his critical study. Why had metaphysics come to a standstill? Why was it so self-contradictory? Why had it not found the sure path of science? Kant argued correctly to some fundamental mistake, and then from
among other possibilities he chose to single out as the culprit
the traditional doctrine of the mind's conformity to things.

Before an examination of the reasonableness of this
choice, attention should be called to one of Kant's footnotes
where he says:

In this Preface I treat the new metaphysical method as
a hypothesis with the view of rendering apparent the
first attempts at such a change of method, which are
always hypothetical. But in the Critique itself it
[the new metaphysical method] will be demonstrated,
not hypothetically, but apodeictically . . . .39

In this note Kant wishes to assure his reader that although the
first step in the Critique is only hypothetical, this should not
cause the reader to hesitate, since later on the correctness of
this first step will be proved. This proof occurs in the
Critique itself when the striking facility which this hypothesis
possesses for cutting the knots of all metaphysical antinomies
is displayed.40 But it should be remembered that mere ease in
solving antinomies is not an intrinsic argument for the truth of
an hypothesis.

However, this note does not mean that Kant's argumenta-
tion is ever independent of this starting hypothesis. It is
always the necessary condition for existing a priori knowledge.41

39 Kant, Critique, 14.
40 Kant, Critique, 311-312, 318-321.
41 Paton, Kant's Metaphysic of Experience, 76.
and the Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic rest on existing a priori knowledge. As a result of this initial hypothesis, one thing can be seen affecting the entire Kantian system. It is that the Kantian philosophy in all its ramifications possesses no greater validity per se than this starting point.

The method of studying this fundamental premise of Kant will consist in presenting and commenting on the salient passages in which Kant posits his Copernican Revolution.

In the first of these passages Kant says:

It appears to me that the examples of mathematics and natural philosophy . . . are sufficiently remarkable . . . to induce us to make the experiment of imitating them, so far as the analogy which, as rational sciences, they bear to metaphysics may permit.42

Two questions arise upon examining this text. First, are the examples of mathematics and natural philosophy actually sufficient (and not merely apparently so) to justify the experiment Kant proposes? Kant says they appear sufficient, and yet the preceding historic sketches he has given of the allegedly sudden starts in the other sciences are not set down as scientific data nor arranged to effect a demonstration from proved historic facts.

Despite this inconclusive appeal to history, however, there may have been sufficient reason to imitate the other

42 Kant, *Critique*, 11-12.
sciences, provided care was taken to avoid initial errors and to be sure that the imitation always proceed reasonably.

The second question is, how far does the analogy of the other rational sciences to metaphysics allow of an attempt at imitating them? They use hypotheses. Can metaphysics do likewise? Yes, but only in a similarly limited area. Since the nature of an hypothesis is such as to give by itself only probable knowledge, and since this can become the certain knowledge proper to science only by employing some certain principles to demonstrate that the hypothesis in question is the unique possible explanation, it follows that the legitimate use of the hypothesis must be to develop those certain principles which the scientist already holds. Thus, it is not licit to make an hypothesis about first principles. Surely the mind's relation to the thing known is a first principle in the act of knowing. It is recognized implicitly in the act of knowing, and is a first principle in the metaphysics of cognition. Consequently, in forming a hypothesis about this relation, Kant has exceeded the limited area in which alone the hypothetical

43 St. Thomas, S. T., I, 32, 1, ad 2, exemplifies this in adducing the geocentric hypothesis and noting, centuries before Copernicus, its essential weakness. "Sicut in astrologia ponitur ratio excentricorum et epicyclorum ex hoc quod, haec positione facta, possunt salvari apparentia sensibilia circa motus caelestes; non tamen ratio haec est sufficienter probans, quia etiam forte alia positione facta salvari possent."
argument is valid. Reason went beyond the bounds of pure reason.

But Kant says, "It has hitherto been assumed that our cognitions must conform to the objects." Have all Kant's predecessors made this assumption? Smith, while admitting this "assumption did actually underlie one and all pre-Kantian philosophies," notes that Hume, Malebranche, and Leibnitz had partially anticipated Kant's own reversal of it.

Kant classifies this traditional doctrine that our cognitions must conform to the objects known as an assumption. Was this teaching assumed, taken for granted? No, at least not in the accepted sense of "assumption." Ordinary men have abundant evidence for this doctrine, just as they have abundant evidence that fire burns wood and not vice versa, for the force of frequent experience compels them to make this judgment which someone might loosely dub as an "assumption." The mind's conformity to the thing is a fact that is immediately evident to reflective minds that are not biased by subjectivistic doubts.

Moreover, philosophers, probing into this basic principle of the knowing process, have analyzed it and shown it to be a very well-founded "assumption." For example, St. Thomas

44 Kant, Critique, 12.
45 Smith, Commentary, 21.
Aquinas proceeds from the evident distinction between the knower and the thing known. Then he simply raises the familiar daily experience of "I've got it," or "Catch on?" to a philosophical level by stating that somehow the thing known is in the knower, that some union has been effected between the two. But this union can only be achieved by the two having something in common, by a sharing in some "form," by some "conformity," as the Scholastics say; and since the knower was previously without this form (for otherwise he would already have been knowing the object), he could only have received this form from the thing known, through its experienced action upon him in accordance with the law that omne agens agit sibi simile.

Now besides the weight of universal testimony and the studied approval of competent philosophers, this so-called "assumption" preserved men's thinking from the absurdity of a pre-established harmony in all intellects. For strange things would have been noticed if objects had to conform to our human cognition. Were this the case, Kant might easily have discovered the following nonsense.

Each and every good Koenigsberger, if pointedly questioned by Professor Kant out on his late afternoon stroll, would have begrudgingly admitted that his beloved city was occupied during the Seven Year War because of Russia's military superiority. But if the cause of this shameful confession were
sought, Kant would have discovered that the minds of all his neighbors were so constructed that they automatically applied the relation of causality in exactly the same way to exactly the same sense data of time, place, people, and events. And all these neighbors would have concurred in their assertions almost as if it had been planned. Forsooth, not one of them could see that independently of his own thinking, Koenigsberg's fall had been directly influenced by that strategic pounding of the Czar's artillery and that lively charge of Russian riflemen which rankled so in their memories. --No, it had not "been assumed that our cognition must conform to the objects." It was known.

Kant continues in his Preface, "all attempts to ascertain anything about these objects a priori... have been rendered abortive by this assumption.\(^46\) Antinomies were, indeed, present and these rendered abortive many scientific attempts. But does Kant try to establish—at least summarily—in what precise manner it was this particular assumption which caused the antinomies and not others that might, perhaps, have been partially responsible? Picking out as the culprit the relation in the knowing process, Kant says nothing about the two terms in that process which are notorious for causing difficulties.

\(^46\) Kant, Critique, 12.
These two terms are the material thing known, and the human knower, "the lowest of intellectual substances."\(^{47}\)

The next statement of Kant that should be commented on occurs when Kant states without qualification that the assumption of having objects necessarily conform to our cognition appear, at all events, to accord better with the possibility of our gaining the end we have in view.\(^{48}\)

When we have attained that end, we shall then be convinced of the truth of that which we began by assuming for the sake of experiment.\(^{49}\)

Two notions which Kant affirms here are (1) that his assumption appears the better possible way to his end, and (2) the attainment of this end proves the truth of his assumption. Several remarks must be made.

Regarding the first notion, Kant's assumption may appear\(^{50}\) to him to be more conducive to his end. He offers no

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47 Cf. Aquinas, In II Met., 1, nn. 278-285, where these two sources of difficulty are clearly treated.

48 Kant, *Critique*, 12.


50 It should be noted that the two chief reasons by which Kant seeks to bolster his "Copernican Revolution" in metaphysics have "appear" as their copula instead of "is." These reasons are (1) the examples of the sciences appear sufficient to induce the Revolution, and (2) the metaphysical Revolution appears better suited to Kant's end. Thus he starts the metaphysical Revolution.
solid reasons to make it appear so to his reader. But if his statement be considered absolutely, as "It is the better possible way to my end of scientific knowledge," one should note that the type of scientific knowledge allowed by Kant's hypothesis is only about phenomena and cannot contain affirmations of noumenal value.

Moreover, it could not be stated with certitude that Kant's assumption would be the best way to scientific knowledge, unless all the possible assumptions have certainly been discovered, and this one found to be certainly superior to all. In laying the foundation for his system, Kant does not tarry to establish these things.

Kant's second notion, which can correctly be Americanized into "If it works, it's true," ultimately depends on the true definition of truth. If truth is coherence, then Kant's statement may be true, for some competent critics have affirmed that there are no formal contradictions in Kant's system, that it is a generally coherent whole.51 But if truth includes coherence but also demands something more, then the consistency of Kant's system does not demonstrate its truth any more than the consistency of Riemann's geometry establishes the truth of

that elaboration of coherent thought.

The final words to be studied in examining the validity of Kant's premise about inverting the knowledge-relation are, "We here propose to do just what Copernicus did."52 Now did Kant actually do just what Copernicus did?—that is, were both the astronomer's and the philosopher's initial thinking about their respective problems strictly parallel regardless of the effects that followed?

Ironical as it may seem, Kant's "Copernican Revolution" was not Copernican enough to be scientifically accurate, as will appear in the subsequent paragraphs. Copernicus had noticed the difficulties in astronomy resulting from Ptolemy's geocentric hypothesis. Starting with the Aristotelian principle regarding local motion, Copernicus argued that, "All apprehended change of place is due to movement either of the observed object or of the observer, or to differences in movement that are occurring simultaneously in both."53 Thus Copernicus began with three possible explanations of the evident motion. Either the sun and stars alone move, or the earth alone moves, or both are moving but at different velocities.

52 Kant, Critique, 12.

53 This translation of Copernicus' De Revolutionibus is taken from Smith, Commentary, 24.
But Kant, while professedly imitating Copernicus, adduces only two possibilities to explain the conformity in cognition which is evident upon reflection. He says, "Either, first, I may assume that the conceptions . . . conform to the object . . . or, secondly, I may assume that the objects . . . conform to my conceptions. But where is the third possibility? Kant neither considers nor adds the logical "or, thirdly, I may assume that the conceptions conforms to the object and the object conforms to the conception, but under different aspects."

The Copernican theory still remains hypothetical today, for the third possibility of a twofold movement has definitely not been disproved. Similarly, the Kantian theory, even if the initial hypothesis were formulated about licit matter, would still be only probable, as the third possibility of a two-way causality has not been proved impossible.

Therefore, in summarizing this study of Kant's radical twisting of the conformity in knowing, one discovers that his hypothetical argument is not only scientifically incomplete for failing to consider a third hypothesis, but also involves illicit matter for a hypothesis. Consequently, Kant's argument for the existence of synthetic judgments a priori, resting as

54 Kant, Critique, 12.
it does upon this invalid hypothesis and upon his excessively subjective and arbitrary division of judgments, does not prove.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

During the development of this thesis the central line of thought may have been obscured by the frequent detailed studies which seemed necessary for a thorough establishment of the proof. Consequently, in closing this investigation of Kant's introductory reasoning, it may be well to review the main line of the argument.

The thesis aimed at showing that there is no necessity for the a priori forms in Kant, since the central problem, which he solved by positing these a priori forms, presupposes premises that are invalid. Kant does not need the answer he invented because the problem it was made to answer does not exist.

Kant's central problem was: How are synthetic judgments a priori possible? He answered by saying that these judgments are possible through a priori forms which fashion the needed synthesis of predicate and subject. Leading up to Kant's opening question were five clear steps of reasoning. These five steps or premises to Kant's opening question were: (1) that the
hypothesis of his "Copernican Revolution" in epistemology is justified, (2) that universality and necessity are the signs of a priori judgments, (3) that a priori judgments exist in the sciences, (4) that the criterion of synthetic judgments is the predicate's non-inclusion in the subject's content, and (5) that the sciences actually contain synthetic judgments a priori. Of these five premises the present thesis examined the most important ones, the first and the fourth. It showed them not strong enough to support further reasoning.

Reviewing the first premise, one recalls that Kant's "Copernican Revolution" consisted in the hypothesis that since the doctrine of the mind's conformity to things had not avoided difficulties in the past, it was licit to reverse the relation and have things conform to the mind. Now a hypothesis by nature can only be used to help extend science, not to start it. There can, therefore, be no hypothesis about starting principles. But surely the mind's relation to the thing known is a starting principle in the act of knowing. This relation is, consequent-

ly, beyond the limits allowed to a valid hypothesis. Kant's first premise exceeded the bounds of pure reason.

Besides this initial flaw, Kant's Copernican Revolution contradicted experience and tradition; it led to absurd consequences when applied to real life; and by not admitting
the possibility of a third hypothesis, it failed to imitate Copernicus closely enough to be called valid reasoning. This third hypothesis of a knowing process involving a mutual causality exerted by both thing and mind without change in the thing is embraced in the Scholastic doctrine of abstraction.

The fourth premise was also carefully scrutinized. This premise dealt with the norm Kant used in dividing judgments. It was found that his division was obscure and arbitrary because the judgments which Kant divided were only obscurely grasped and arbitrarily classified. Our study first examined the form of judgments, namely, the copula, and showed from Kant's own writings and from competent critics that he failed to distinguish between the objective fact of a relation existing between subject and predicate and the knower's apprehension of this relation. This failure to distinguish was one of the main sources of obscurity in Kant's division of judgments.

Then the study of the fourth premise examined the matter of judgments, namely, the concepts of subject and predicate. The result was the discovery of subjectivism and sensism in Kant's concepts and arbitrariness in the norm used in admitting notes to these concepts. This subjectivism and arbitrariness in both concepts and copula, including his refusal to admit necessary relations into concepts of essentially relative beings, is a second chief source of obscurity in Kant's division of
judgments.

These invalid premises make the question based upon them unnecessary. Consequently the a priori forms needed to answer that question are also unnecessary.
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The thesis submitted by Francis M. Oppenheim, S.J., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Sept 20, 1951

Date

Signature of Adviser