

ROMAN WITOLD INGARDEN

Lviv lectures on *Kant's Criticism* (selection)*

[Lecture One, 7 October 1925]

The lectures I intend to deliver in the current trimester are complementary to the lecture series on *The main directions of contemporary theory of cog-*

* The present lectures on *Kant's Criticism* (the first four of twenty-one) were read and transcribed from the philosopher's notes left in the Ingarden Family Archive, the structuring of which was first undertaken by the philosopher's son Jerzy Ingarden (Part I). Subsequent work on the manuscript was carried out by Irena Krzemicka-Krońska (Part II), the philosopher's student and a participant in his Lviv lectures. She reorganised Jerzy Ingarden's notes and reconstructed the second part, supplementing it with her own notes and those given to her by Władysław Bednarowski, the philosopher's favourite student during his time in Lviv. See Roman W. Ingarden, *Krytycyzm Kanta. Wykłady lwowskie z lat 1935/1936* [*Kant's Criticism. The Lviv lectures from the years 1935/1936*]. Jerzy Ingarden transcribed from Roman Witold Ingarden's notes (Part I) and from Władysław Bednarowski's own notes and annotations, the whole was corrected and completed by Irena Krzemicka-Krońska (original). These can be found, together with some additional notes, illegible, in the Ingarden Family Archive. A copy of the typescript (both parts) is now among the philosopher's collection in the Archives of the Polish Academies PAN and PAU in Kraków, folder 47 (109 microfilm frames) (copy). Cf. Roman W. Ingarden, *Lwowskie wykłady o Krytycyzmie Kanta z roku akademickiego 1935/1936* [*The Lviv lectures on Kant's Criticism from the academic year 1935/1936*], the lectures

nition, which I started last year and will continue this year, but in the second and third trimesters.

Namely, in the second trimester I must present the views of so-called neo-Kantianism. This is impossible without adequate information on Immanuel Kant's theory of cognition. The fact that Kant has not been taught at our University in recent years means that I need to fill this gap myself. For this reason, I will not introduce you to the whole of Kant's philosophy but will confine myself to his epistemological considerations and, above all, those from the period of his so-called criticism. Nor will I be able to outline this highly manifold historical background against which his criticism arose. The philosophical traditions at work here reach far back in time, and it would be necessary to properly present the main motifs, issues, and solutions, as well as the conceptual apparatus of modern European philosophical thought. This cannot be achieved in a one-semester lecture. Therefore, I will limit myself to only what is most essential for understanding Kantian criticism. Knowledge of Kant's theory of cognition is vital for understanding not only neo-Kantianism but, in general, the currents and views of virtually the entire epistemology of the 19th and 20th centuries. For Kant's views – whether one should acknowledge their veracity or not – undoubtedly represent a turning point in modern epistemology and in European philosophy in general. Indeed, there are historians of philosophy who are inclined, when elaborating modern philosophy, to make a distinction between 'pre-Kantian' and 'post-Kantian' philosophy. It is true that Kant did put forward some completely new thoughts within the theory of cognition and was the first to actually create a comprehensive system of theories of cognition, as well as the first to bring epistemological research to the forefront of all philosophical considerations, albeit he himself did not confine himself to epistemology. Through Kant, the entirety of philosophical issues took on a different form, regardless of whether Kant's immediate successors were able to preserve it. It is moreover true that the effect of Kant's philosophy on the development of European philosophy has been immense and has certainly not

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yet ended. One might say that every eminent philosopher in the nineteenth century and up to the present day has not only come across Kant's views in some way, but has, additionally, either positively or negatively responded to him. It is also unquestionable that Kant is one of the most eminent figures in European philosophy in general, although those who consider Kant to be the most eminent European philosopher in general, or at least in modern philosophy, are probably mistaken. Such a view is usually voiced by German philosophers, but Kant's range of interests and the originality of his views in various fields do not match those of Aristotle or Leibniz, who in almost every field of human knowledge offered new and important epoch-making things, while Kant offered epoch-making things in practically only one field - the theory of cognition. Nor can Kant compare with the great spiritual culture of at least a number of great European and modern minds, such as Leibniz, Hume, the Encyclopedists, and others. His influence, though immense, as I have pointed out, cannot measure up, for example, to that of Aristotle. And his internal and external life - apart from his scientific work - is in fact very poor - the life of a German petty-bourgeois from a godforsaken province, who only by the undoubted rationality of his philosophical thought rose above the level of the place from which he emerged and in which he lived, but who, at the same time, did not feel the urge to change this petty-bourgeois atmosphere, nor did he feel the need for direct contact with people of prominence, nor the need to explore the wide world and encounter the whole variety of cultural achievements (it is said that he did not see the sea while living in Königsberg for 80 years, although this cannot be proved; in any case, he did not undertake any major journeys and in fact hardly ever left Königsberg). In this respect, Kant differs radically both from Hume, his contemporary, and the whole plethora of great minds and personalities of France at the time (Voltaire, the Encyclopaedists, Rousseau, etc.), although he undoubtedly surpasses them as a philosopher. This must have had an impact, in particular, on those of his philosophical works devoted to ethics and (in today's terminology) aesthetics - although one cannot deny the importance of these works either. Admittedly, the knowledge we have of him and his way of life mainly concerns his old age, or at least his old-bachelorhood, from the time of the publication of his most important work, *Critique of*

Pure Reason, and the beginning of his fame, which appeared in its first edition in 1781, that is, when Kant was 57. But the fact that Kant did not have some kind of lush and rich youth is a matter of certainty. He grew up in very modest circumstances and was condemned to a very meagre emolument until his professorship at the University of Königsberg.

Immanuel Kant was born in 1724 in Königsberg, East Prussia. His father was a saddler, reputedly of Scottish origin. Kant had eight siblings, which is interesting insofar as, after the death of his father (1746; his mother had died nine years earlier), instead of helping his family, in 1740, he enrolled at the University of Königsberg, a small provincial university that at the time played no role in the intellectual life of Germany. Not a single truly outstanding scholar is to be found among Kant's professors. Although we do not know any further details of Kant's studies, it seems that Kant's greatest personal and scholarly influence came from Martin Knutzen (1713–1751), an associate professor who lectured on all branches of philosophy as well as mathematics and natural science. Knutzen introduced Kant to the philosophy of Christian Wolff, prevalent in Prussia at the time, as well as to mathematics and physics, in particular the works of Isaac Newton (Leibniz's peer in the 17th century). It appears that Kant's main interest at that time (as is evident from the writings from the first phase of his pre-critical period) was in mathematics, physics, and cosmology, and it was only after these topics that Kant moved on to philosophical issues (natural philosophy). This was markedly reflected in his later epistemological research. In 1746, Kant submitted to the dean of the Faculty of Philosophy his first independent work, entitled *Gedanken von der wahren Schätzung der lebendigen Kräfte* [*Thoughts on the True Estimation of Living Forces*], devoted to a dispute between Leibniz and Descartes on a certain matter in physics *resp.* natural philosophy. It was a youthful work, but one that attests to the young author's independence of judgement.

Upon his graduation from the University, Kant spent about 10 years as a house teacher in various towns around Königsberg. In 1755, Kant received his habilitation at the University of Königsberg, defending the dissertation *Principiorum primorum cognitionis nova dilucidatio* [*A New Elucidation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Cognition*] and wrote *Monadologia physi-*

ca [*Physical Monadology*]. In the winter semester of the academic year 1756–1757, he began to teach at the university as a so-called *magister legens* and remained in this post for 15 years; his two attempts at a professorship were unsuccessful. In 1764, he was offered the Chair of Poetry in Berlin, which he did not accept, and two years later he managed to obtain a position as junior librarian, which provided him with a very modest (62 thalers) but steady income. Besides, the position of professor at that time was also very modest in Germany and cannot be compared with that of university professors in Germany in the 19th century. The salaries they earned were small, and until 1812 they did not sit in higher state examinations. In order to generate income, they had to give private lectures in their own chambers, etc. Docents too sometimes gave such lectures, including Kant, who soon became very popular with his listeners. In addition to logic and metaphysics, he mainly taught mathematics and natural sciences (including physical geography). In connection with this stands a work published in 1755 entitled *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels* [*Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*]. This work, published anonymously, did not initially find recognition or readership, and it was only later in connection with the related theory of Laplace that its prominence became apparent. There even arose a legend around the existence of a ‘Kant-Laplace theory’ of the structure of the world, one that was not reflected in reality.

In the 1760s, Kant takes a turn away from questions concerning the external world towards questions of the internal world and the issue of man and morality. This stands in conjunction with the internal transformation of German spiritual culture under Lessing’s influence, which will be followed by an array of outstanding minds. In the final decades of the 18th century, this will lead to the grandest period of German literature and intellect. This historical process is influenced by external cultural influences – in particular English philosophy and literature (Shaftesbury, Hume), as well as a number of prominent Frenchmen such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau. These influences have a distinct effect on Kant – the strongest being first Rousseau and then Hume, whose acquaintance will trigger in Kant a defining breakthrough in his epistemological views, while Rousseau will weigh on his views on ethics.

The 1760s are at the same time a period of great development in Kant's work and activity. During this period, he published a number of treatises: (II pre-critical epoch):

- 1763 – *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseyns Gottes* [*The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God*];
- 1763 – *Versuch, den Begriff der negativen Größen in der Weltweisheit einzuführen* [*Attempt to Introduce the Concept of Negative Magnitudes into Philosophy*];
- 1764 – *Untersuchung über die Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und Moral* [*Inquiry Concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality*];
- 1764 – *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* [*Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*];
- 1766 – *Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik* [*Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*].

He is gaining recognition and popularity. However, it is not until 1770 (in his 46th year) that Kant is given a university chair at Königsberg (having rejected an appointment to Jena and Halle directly before that). This year is also the date of the publication of an important work by Kant, as it contains the first incremental step in the revolution in Kant's views that took place in the following years under the influence of Hume. It is the so-called "Dissertation" *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis* [*Dissertation on the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World*], which Kant wrote for the purpose of a public dispute on assuming the chair. I shall later devote a closer consideration to it.

[Lecture Two, 14 October 1935]

Kant's greatest work, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* [*Critique of Pure Reason*], was published in 1781. It took Kant over 10 years to work through the is-

sues, publishing nothing, only to then write this work in a matter of months. Rushed editing had a detrimental effect on the shape of the text; it became heavy and inaccessible, making it much more difficult to understand the salient thoughts. Not surprisingly, the work was understood in a variety of ways, and different interpretations of it led to the emergence of different directions of Kantianism. Also, a series of commentaries on the work appeared. Shortly after its publication, the reactions of readers made Kant conscious of the inherent difficulty and inaccessibility of his work. It was also in 1783 that Kant promulgated a writing that was aimed at preparing readers to understand the *Critique*, namely *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können* [*Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Present Itself as a Science*]. Further:

- 1785 – *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* [*Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*];
- 1785 – *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* [*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*]; 1787 — the 2nd amended edition was published of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* [*Critique of Pure Reason*];
- 1788 – *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* [*Critique of Practical Reason*];
- 1790 – *Kritik der Urteilskraft* [*Critique of the Power of Judgement*].

These three critiques constitute the totality of Kant's so-called system of criticism. Further:

- 1793 – *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* [*Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*];
- 1795 – *Zum ewigen Frieden* [*Toward Perpetual Peace*];
- 1797 – *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechte und Tugendlehre* [*The Metaphysical Elements of Justice and Doctrine of Virtue*];
- 1798 – *Der Streit der Fakultäten* [*Conflict of Faculties*].

Of Kant's published lectures, the most important include: *Anthropologie* (1798), *Logik* (1800), *Physische Geographie* (1802/1803), *Pädagogik* (1803), *Metaphysik* (1821).

After the publication of his major works (“The Critiques”), Kant began to undergo progressive mental decline, to the point where the last years of his life are a slow fading and senile stupor. In 1804, Kant died.

Since Kant’s death, a number of collective editions of his writings have appeared, the most important of which I give here for practical reasons:

- I. edition by K. Rosenkranz and Fr. W. Schubert, beginning in 1838 in 12 volumes;
- II. by G. Hartenstein in 10 volumes (1838 and in 8 volumes until 1868);
- III. by J. Kirchmann in the so-called *Philosophische Bibliothek*;
- IV. by E. Cassirer in 12 volumes (1913 ff.);
- V. Critical edition of the Academy of Arts in Berlin, in XXIV volumes, the best edition to date.

Plus many editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The literature on Kant’s philosophy is so immense that I will not give it all here. A large part of it is given in Volume III by Ueberweg, *Geschichte der Philosophie* [*History of Philosophy*].

[Lecture Three, 21 October 1935]

In order to understand the upheaval that followed the *Critique of Pure Reason* and to understand the motives that led Kant to this outcome, it is necessary to retrace the history of European philosophy a little, bearing in mind that Kant grew up in the atmosphere of the philosophical school of Wolff, whose philosophy was to a large extent a systematization of certain views of Leibniz, the fact that he was occupied for a long time with natural science, in particular (Newtonian) physics, and that he succumbed to the already mentioned influence of Hume and Rousseau. The mere mention of these names shows that Kant was influenced in his culminating works by the two main trends of modern European philosophy: continental rationalism and English empiricism. Thus, as we shall see, Kant’s criticism is a particu-

lar synthesis of these two directions, introducing, moreover, some entirely new points of view.

As I have noted, the philosophical atmosphere in Germany at the time of Kant's studies and first independent works was dominated by the so-called Wolff school. It was headed by Christian Wolff (1679–1754), whose main merit lies in: a) systematizing and certain modifications of the philosophical views of Leibniz (1646–1716); b) developing on German soil a philosophical conceptual apparatus and training a certain number of minds in philosophizing, however, rather minor minds.

Some of the most prominent representatives of the Wolff school include: Martin Knutzen (1713–1751); Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–1766); Alexander Baumgarten (1714–1762) – the well-known author of the first aesthetics (creator of the term – works: *Metaphysica* 1739, *Aesthetica* 1750–1758). As we see, both Wolff and his students lived and worked during Kant's youth and manhood. The chairs of philosophy in Prussia consisted almost entirely of representatives of the school. Thus, it is not at all surprising that in his early works Kant is very much influenced by the views of the school and only gradually and slowly distances himself from Wolffianism. Yet for many years – even after the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant continues to use Baumgarten's *Metaphysics* as a groundwork for his university lectures.

What were the main hallmarks of this 'atmosphere'?

1. It was renewed primarily by rationalism. It was based on the conviction:
 - a) that by the purely rational means of cognition it is possible to obtain absolute knowledge of the real world, and thus to construct a metaphysics, and not only, as the schoolmen would say, "*naturae naturatae*," but also "*naturae naturantis*," i.e. God;
 - b) that we obtain cognition through judgements (not, as the empiricists would have it, in 'experience' – sensory perception). Although our cognition begins with experience, it is only achieved by transcending experience through the fact that we mentally analyse what is given in experience and encapsulate it in concepts that are clear and distinct. 'Perception' is such a concept '*in statu nascendi*' ('dark'

concepts – petites perceptions – Leibniz) – there is no essential difference between ‘experience’ and ‘thinking’ – only a difference of degree of cognition. Externally, rationalist metaphysics was distinguished by its departure from (arbitrary) definitions of basic concepts, i.e. by taking certain basic assertions and deriving others by means of purely logical operations. This is, if we may say so, the most glaring and extreme manifestation of the so-called ‘mathematical method’ in philosophy initiated by Descartes. This rationalism proclaimed that the consideration of the possible should precede the study of the real;

- c) that the results obtained rationally in conceptual analysis and concerning that which is “only possible” are ipso facto valid for the real world, although a “validation” of rational cognition by empirical cognition is also postulated;
 - d) that all cognition is analytic and is ultimately based on the principle of contradiction and the principle of sufficient reason (Leibniz);
 - e) that the real world is ordered according to rational principles and that its creator, God, is the most perfect intellect.
2. The second fundamental characteristic is the bringing of metaphysics to the forefront of philosophical research, naturally in the conviction that a true and justified metaphysical system can be constructed. Wolff and his school also considered it their main achievement to have built such a system (starting from Leibniz). This metaphysics not only discussed but also resolved the central issues of traditional metaphysics, i.e. the questions of the essence and existence of God, the immortality of the soul, the relation of God to the world, etc.
 3. Leibniz, as is well known, created the so-called monadology, i.e. a system according to which only monads, more or less conscious, exist in the world, with no strictly self-existent purely material world in relation to the monads. The monads are ‘contained within themselves’ – they cannot cognise anything else but themselves, but nevertheless, owing to the harmony established in advance by God, they contain within themselves representations of the entire world around them (all monads). Monads differ among themselves in the degree of clarity and

distinctness of their 'representations.' Monads are meant at the same time to be centres of power.

This position is maintained by Wolff, with some modifications. These modifications comprise the following main points:

- a) The weakening of Leibniz's spiritualist idealism in the *Monadology* by:
 - 1) attributing spirituality (the ability to present) only to beings that are actually conscious;
 - 2) recognition of the existence of bodies (material things) which, according to Wolff, and in accordance with Leibniz, consist of monads, but to which Wolff attributes an undefined 'power' – (however, in accordance with the Leibnizian conception of substance).
 - b) The reduction of the pre-established harmony, universal according to Leibniz for all monads to the relationship between 'body and soul';
 - c) Meanwhile, Wolff maintained the view that space is only a form of the order of things, not a substance or essential attribute of things.
4. In Wolff's school (as in Wolff himself) there is a certain return to the Aristotelian type of scholasticism – despite various factual differences – in the conceptual apparatus, in the technique of philosophical deliberation. The scholastic character of the whole of this philosophy also stands in relation to this.

Kant was reared at the university in the spirit of this school, but what makes his education different from that of the average philosopher of the time is that, thanks to Knutzen, he encountered one of the most eminent naturalists of modern times, Newton, and that, having become thoroughly acquainted with the physics of his day, he was not so ostensibly one-sidedly rationalistic as, so to speak, the pure-bred Wolffianists. In addition – physical natural science, ultimately founded by Newton, becomes for Kant a kind of ideal of exact science, and this is why, as we will see later, Kant's main theoretical concern will become the epistemological grounding of the objectivity of physical-mathematical natural science.

These distinctive features of Kant's studies will cause him to slowly diverge from the views of the Wolff school – notably under further influences from outside German philosophy, in particular English empiricism, although he will eventually oppose this too, as the rationalist factor will ultimately prevail to some extent in Kant. But that which so distinctly characterizes the Wolff school – the belief in the possibility of metaphysical, absolute cognition of the real world as it is 'in itself' – will be eventually overcome (for Kant). But this will only happen later. For the time being, we are dealing with Kant's views in his so-called pre-critical period. This period, as I have indicated, is divided into two phases:

- 1) approximately – works from the 1750s;
- 2) his views in the 1770s, up to 1770, i.e. until the publication of his dissertation: *De mundi sensibilis atque intelligibilis forma et principiis*.

To get an idea of Kant's interests and thinking in the first phase of the pre-critical period, it will be useful to say a few words about the 1763 treatise *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*. I leave aside Kant's cosmological views here, but it is important to note that Kant pursues them by way of purely physicalist considerations, firmly rejecting any supra-physical explanations in cosmology. Related to this, however, is the claim that it is precisely by demonstrating by way of purely physical [explanations], the rational structure of the world that one obtains proof that the world is created by God. (As we shall see, the question of God's existence and the proof of His existence will often occupy Kant). Namely, if an ordered world could and must have arisen from the proper movements of given elements (celestial bodies), then – according to Kant – therein lies the proof that the very "nature of things" is the basis for a sensible, rational structuring of the world. Kant even tries to derive the essence of thinking beings from the structure of the cosmos and celestial bodies: the greater the distance of the planets from the sun, the lighter and nobler (*fein*) the material from which they are built is to be, and the greater the qualities of the psychic beings living on these planets are to characterize them.

Claims of this kind – of which Kant says are: “nicht weit von einer ausgemachten Gewißheit entfernt” [AA I 359] – are connected with his view of the immortality of the soul, of the wandering of souls on different planets, coupled with the gradual development of the thinking individual.

As we can see, considerations of a purely physical, cosmological nature are linked to views which, leaving aside their boldness or naivety, are evidence of Kant's deep conviction that it is possible to practice this kind of metaphysics seriously and hold its claims to be true and justified. It would not be until the 1760s that an outstanding change would be effected on this front – a rather far-reaching scepticism about metaphysics.

Perhaps one of the motives for this subsequent change was Kant's realisation that between mathematics, its physical applications, and metaphysics a substantial congruence in the treatment of the same issues occurs from time to time. At the same time, one should remember that mathematics was regarded throughout modern philosophy, both by rationalists (such as Descartes and Leibniz) and empiricists (such as Hume), as the ideal of all knowledge. Meanwhile, in natural philosophy – which was the first area Kant addressed in his works – Kant encountered downright contradictory views with regard to questions of space between Newton, whom he adored, and Leibniz, whom he considered the most eminent of philosophers. Leibnizian monadology (which Kant equated with metaphysics in general) denied the existence of empty space, infinite divisibility of space, activity from a distance, while the mathematical philosophy of nature took the exact opposite position. It is intriguing that Kant, in attempting to reconcile these things, for the time being proclaims himself in favour of Leibnizian metaphysics. Contrary to Newton, who presumed the absoluteness of space, Kant, following Leibniz, proclaims the phenomenality of space. If space were indeed an absolute reality and the substrate of the material world (Descartes), then the laws established by mathematics for it and for the material thing would be valid. If, on the other hand, space is merely the form of order between monads and the phenomenal product of these monads, then the geometrical laws pertain to and are valid for the form of the phenomena of bodies, but not for the metaphysical essence of bodies. Thus, Kant resolves the discord between mathematics and philosophy found by him.

In spite of this temporary victory for metaphysics – the demarcation of the fields of application of metaphysics and mathematics is of vital importance. To this he adds, in his treatise *Untersuchung über die Natur des Deutlichkeit der Grundsätze der natürlichen Theologie und Moral*, published in 1764, the realisation that between mathematics (mathematical natural science) and metaphysics exists an important methodological difference: (a) Leibniz regarded mathematics as an *a priori* science; (b) analytical, in which all results are obtained by logical operations by reducing all theorems ultimately to ‘identical sentences’ ($b \times a = a$ is b). The same applied also to metaphysics *resp.* to ‘ontology.’

Meanwhile, Kant arrives at a different view in this regard. He establishes three points of difference between mathematics and metaphysics:

- 1) In mathematical theorems and proofs, one considers the general by means of signs, but ‘*in concreto*,’ i.e. by means of concrete, evident examples, whereas in metaphysics (or more generally in philosophy) – one considers the general ‘*in abstracto*’ – in a purely conceptual manner;
- 2) In mathematics, the number of primitive notions and axioms is small, whereas in philosophy, unprovable notions and theorems that cannot be proved (the highest assumptions) are plentiful;
- 3) Philosophy arrives at the definition of its (basic) concepts through analysis, while mathematics does so through synthesis.

In philosophy, unprovable principia are logically prior to the clear and explicit concepts we construct on their basis, whereas in mathematics (as Kant believes) we begin with complete definitions of the objects of investigation and, on this basis, we construct axioms *resp.* the resulting theorems.

According to Kant, this difference stems from the fact that mathematics deals with freely invented objects, its definitions arise from an arbitrary association of concepts, and this arbitrary association Kant calls “synthesis” (“Alle willkürlichen Begriffe sind synthetisch und umgekehrt” [AA XVI 570]).

In metaphysics, on the other hand, the concepts of objects (basic concepts) are given to us and, in particular, are originally given to us in a vague (“*verworren*”) form – in the impressions and perceptions we experience. This is why the first task of philosophy is to identify, through the analysis of what is given, the simple unverifiable concepts and principles that cannot be

justified – in order to arrive by this path at the formulation of clear and distinct concepts, i.e. at the definitions. The juxtaposition of mathematics and metaphysics is to the disadvantage of the latter. This is already evident from the enormous number of primitive concepts and fundamental theorems in metaphysics. When in addition these primitive concepts are unclear and have yet to be analytically explained, with often no knowledge of whether the analysis has been carried out far enough, and thus whether the resulting definitions are of sufficient clarity – then, this clearly reveals the inadequacy of the foundations of metaphysics. It was, in Kant's view, a great mistake to apply the mathematical method to metaphysics, and in particular: a) the 'synthetic' formation of concepts – leading to nominal, arbitrary definitions. Meanwhile, metaphysics does not call for definitions of what exists; b) deduction from the fundamental theorems (axioms) of the metaphysical system, since first concepts did not at all possess the perfection of the clear and explicit mathematical concepts (and definitions), nor the fundamental theorems the obviousness of axioms. Thus, the edifice of metaphysics built on this basis had to be shaky.

It is of particular note that Kant, having established the seemingly essential differences between mathematics and philosophy, states that there is only a difference of degree, that the time will come when metaphysics can be practised in the same way as mathematics. Namely, when the first concepts of metaphysics and its fundamental theorems have been duly explained and established. But this is something that no one has yet done. "Die Metaphysik ist ohne Zweifel die schwerste unter allen menschlichen Einsichten; allein es ist noch niemals eine geschrieben worden" [AA II 283].

So, it is a clear front against the metaphysics of the Wolff school. This is also how Kant intended to reject the fundamental mathematical method in philosophy and metaphysics in particular. Kant rejects it only practically on account of the factual state of the foundations of metaphysics, while still believing that it is possible to construct metaphysics as a certain deductive, rational system. This indicates that at the time Kant at least still believed in the rationality of the construction of the world and empiricism.

Kant himself also continues to practise such metaphysics. The core of his metaphysics of these years is found in the treatise *Der einzig mögliche Beweis-*

grunde zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes (1763), published a year earlier. Namely, a view of the essence of God in His relation to the world. Firstly, it critically discusses the various proofs for the existence of God: a) the physical-theological (from “purpose in nature”) – a proof he rejects, just as b) the so-called ontological proof – God’s existence is actually derived from the notion of a divine being as the most perfect being. Kant’s objection is based on a claim that would later come to play a role in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, namely that ‘existence’ is never an attribute of an object (also in Hume).

The distinction between the predicative ‘is’ and the existential ‘is,’ thus speaking against Leibniz’s theory of judgement.

Following his critique of other proofs, Kant conducts his own proof of God’s existence. In outline, it reads as follows:

All real possibility presupposes something existing – in particular, a being necessarily existing – namely, an “*ens realissimum*” with the attributes of spirituality and reasonableness.

The real world, which constitutes a unified and ordered system of things, is the realisation of a certain world of possible things. This world of ‘possible things’ is the product of the divine intellect. It is in the divine intellect that this mutual rational and purposeful adjustment of the natures of things to one another has been accomplished, which causes things in the real world to constitute a certain meaningful whole, ordered according to immanent laws.

Thus, the sensible ordering of the world provides the ultimate basis for the proof of God’s existence.

There exists a real world of order – there exists a world of possible things – there exists an ultimate being – God.

While pointing to the ultimate – “only possible” – basis for the proof of God’s existence, Kant adds a significant remark: “insofar as such a proof is to be undertaken at all” – and at the same time “Es ist durchaus nöthig, daß man sich vom Dasein Gottes überzeuge; es ist aber nicht eben so nöthig, daß man es demonstrire” [AA II 163] or “Ein finsterer Ocean ohne Ufer und ohne Leuchthürme [...]” [AA II 66], where it is easy to get lost.

In the treatise *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund...* Kant introduces a distinction between two types of possibility:

- a) the logical possibility = consistency, the noncontradiction of what is conceived (noncontradiction of the content of concepts, sentences);
- b) the real possibility of what exists.

The former presupposes only the principle of contradiction, while the latter the factual existence of at least one real object in which all real possibilities are grounded.

Kant takes this a step further in the treatise *Versuch, den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen* (1763) – and thus at the same time as *Der einzig mögliche Beweisgrund...* Here he draws a distinction between:

- (a) logical contradiction and real contradiction;
- b) logical reason and real ground (“*Grund*”) – cause.

Regarding a) Descartes, in his *Principia philosophiae*, argues that ‘motion’ and ‘rest’ represent a logical contradiction: ‘rest’ is the negation of ‘motion’ (‘motionlessness’). Having established this relationship between the concepts, he proceeds from there to infer the behaviour of real moving and motionless bodies (because of the contradiction a body in motion cannot stop).

This kind of view is later to be found in modern rationalists on a number of occasions. In particular, in Kant’s time, Christian Augustus Crusius (1712–1775, an eclectic opponent of the Wolff school) stood up against Newton’s notions of ‘attraction’ and ‘repulsion’ of bodies, whereby, according to Newton, ‘repulsion’ was to be negative attraction. Crusius criticizes Newton’s notion of ‘negative attraction’ as being not repulsion, but rest (“*Ruhe*”), while ‘negative motion’ is merely the negation of motion, i.e. rest.

Kant argued against this.

Negative magnitude is not the negation of magnitude.

The mutual exclusion in reality of two real inverse factors is not the same as the logical exclusion of contradictory sentences.

Any ‘negative’ magnitude in nature is something just as ‘positive’ as a so-called positive magnitude, with which it cannot coexist. Thus, repulsion is as positive as attraction, pain as delight (pleasure), cold as warmth.

Positive and negative quantities are not contradictory but merely cancel each other out in reality – one removes the other from reality. Their mutual abolition (removal, exclusion) has nothing to do with the principle of contradiction.

The distinction between logical contradiction and real inconsistency stands in close relation to the distinction between logical and real possibility.

The logical possibility of certain elements – is merely their non-contradiction.

In turn, the real possibility of a certain thing includes not only a) the real existence of the elements of which it is composed into a single whole, but also b) that its elements do not stand in a mutually exclusive relationship, do not cancel each other out.

The mutual cancellation of positive and negative quantities is an interaction. One of them is a reason for the abolition of the other.

Regarding b) But by the same token, one must distinguish between the logical relation between reason (principle, assumption) and consequence (conclusion), and the real relation between cause and effect. The two relations were repeatedly mixed up by rationalists (cf. for example, Spinoza), or rather the relation of cause and effect was reduced – identified with the logical relation. Moreover, in the Leibnizian-Wolffian school, the relation of reason was reduced to a relation of identity. It was believed that by analysing the notion of reason (principle), we would find the notion of consequence (or rather, in the notion of what constitutes a reason in a given case lies the notion of what constitutes a consequence). For instance, necessity is the reason (principle) of immutability, complexity is the principle (ground – “*Grund*”) of divisibility, etc.

This understanding of the relation of reason to consequence is preserved by Kant as follows: “[...] weil die Folge wirklich einerlei ist mit einem Theilbegriffe des Grundes [...]”, “[...] diese Verknüpfung des Grundes mit der Folge kann ich deutlich einsehen [...]” [AA II 202].

But alongside the logical reason – there is a real principle – a basis, a cause – and a real consequence, an effect (God – the world, the movement of a sphere moving another and the movement of a sphere being moved, etc.) and between them there is no effect of the effect being contained in the cause.

“Die Bewegung der stoßenden Kugel ist etwas, die der gestoßenen etwas Anderes; ich kann nicht durch Zergliederung der Willens Gottes eine existierende Welt in ihm antreffen. Es bleibt daher in allen diesen Fällen des Realgrundes und der Realentgegensetzung die nicht weiter beantwortbare Frage: wie allein wir verstehen, dass, wenn, das Eine ist, auch das Andere ist (bzw. Aufgehoben ist)? [The movement of the ball that hits is one thing, that of the ball that is pushed is something else; I cannot find an existing world in him by dissecting the will of God. Therefore, in all these cases of real ground and real opposition, the unanswerable question remains: How do we understand that if one thing is, the other also exists (or is abolished)?]”¹

All must be struck by the extraordinary similarity of these deductions to Hume’s claims in *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Kant – not yet familiar with Hume at the time – will posit all the same theorems that in Hume form the point of departure for further consideration, and the same question, the solution of which will become one of the foundations of Kantian criticism. But for the time being, only the question itself is put forward.

Finally, Kant’s last work from this period is *Träume eines Geistessehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik*. In it, Kant’s sceptical and ironic attitude towards (existing) metaphysics reaches its greatest intensity. Kant’s external motive for writing it stemmed from spiritualistic experiences and Swedenborg’s mystical views. Kant, encouraged by his friends’ enquiries, imported the writings of Swedenborg (*Arcana coelestia* – 8 volumes) and studied them.

The treatise, written partly in jest and partly in earnest, is divided into two parts. In the first, Kant develops a sketch of metaphysical pneumatology. Spirits are immaterial beings and stand in relation to bodies on the one hand, and to the world of (spiritual) laws on the other – they bind and communicate with each other in a trans-physical way, independent of time and space. Thereafter, Kant discusses spiritualistic phenomena – the possibility of which seems to follow from a metaphysical pneumatology – from a naturalistic and sceptical point of view: they are to be merely the delusions of a dis-

¹ Ernst von Aster, *Geschichte der neuern Erkenntnistheorie (von Descartes bis Hegel)* (Berlin and Leipzig 1921), 474.

eased mind, which under abnormal conditions project themselves externally as physical phenomena.

The second part contains an account of Swedenborg's mystical visions and theories – laid out to mock (or confirm) this fantastic metaphysics.

It is only the ending, however, that expresses Kant's earnest view.

Philosophy has every reason to guard itself against speculations that exceed the reach of experience. It cannot at all be resolved by purely rational means whether there exist extraordinary forces, whose existence Swedenborg proclaims, or whether there are spirits which could think and act without any connection with the body. Experience is the only source of our cognition of reality. The fundamental concepts of things, cause, force, action – are entirely arbitrary and cannot be justified or refuted unless they are derived from experience.

Therefore, the answer to the question raised in the previously discussed treatise is given: “[...] wie etwas könne eine Ursache sein oder eine Kraft haben, ist unmöglich jemals durch Vernunft einzusehen, sondern diese Verhältnisse müssen lediglich aus der Erfahrung genommen werden” [AA II 370]. Kant, therefore, is not yet aware of the difficulties that Hume encountered on this path.

As for the extraordinary forces proclaimed by Swedenborg to exist, there are no consistent results of experience, only the alleged impressions of individuals – which do not yield a foundation for general experimental laws.

Kant's concluding remark is also significant for the later development of his views; as for the immortality of the soul, neither metaphysical speculations nor alleged empirical confirmations are adequate to prove it. What suffices is the moral belief only available to us (“der moralische Glaube”).

As a result:

At the end of this period, Kant seems to have lost faith not only in the positive claims and theories of metaphysics of Wolff or Crusius, but also in the possibility of metaphysics as an *a priori*, purely rational knowledge of reality. What remains is faith in the possibility of metaphysics as “Wissenschaft von den Grenzen der menschlichen Metaphysik.”²

² Quoted by Kant not as “Metaphysik” but as “Vernunft.”

What remains to be clarified in this regard is the question concerning the influence that drove Kant away from the school of metaphysics in which he had grown up. The views of historians of philosophy are not in agreement about this. Some – who wish for political reasons to see in Kant a completely independent mind – seek to demonstrate that the changes taking place in Kant's views, including the final turn that led to critical philosophy, are in their crucial moments the result of the self-generated development of Kant's mind. Others see here the influence of the transformations of the German cultural atmosphere, influenced in part by the English Enlightenment that reached Germany via France, in particular Voltaire, and the direct influence of English philosophy, in particular Hume. According to Kant's own account – Hume's influence on Kant cannot be denied. There is also no doubt that Kant was reading the writings of English philosophers and that he held them in high esteem (we know this from Herder, Kant's student, and from Kant himself). Lastly, it is a fact that Kant was familiar with the views of Rousseau, whose influence is marked above all in Kant's moving from an overestimation of the value of purely intellectual cognition and speculative metaphysics to an appreciation of moral intuition and the simplicity of feeling. With all of this, it is difficult to assess today the depth of these influences and whether the transformation in Kant's views should be credited to them, or whether we should only attribute to them the role of simply reinforcing Kant's own development of thought. Moreover, it is not clear when Kant became acquainted with Hume's writings and, more particularly, when his acquaintance with this philosopher's views caused such a tumult in Kant's mind that his attempt to overcome this tumult ultimately led to his critical philosophy. Historians diverge on this point – some date Kant's acquaintance with Hume back to the early 1760s, others indicate the year 1769 – i.e. immediately prior to the "Dissertations" of 1770, and finally others give 1772. However, these are mere conjectures, which cannot be supported by any sufficient argument.

When we look today at a number of Kant's works from the "pre-critical" period, what is striking is not necessarily any particular internal development of his views: it is rather the apparent vacillation of his position and his oscillation between opposing tendencies (this is particularly true of his at-

titude to metaphysics) – as if some internal ferment would not let Kant rest, and as if he was repeatedly shifting from one opposition to another and undertaking and abandoning certain thoughts. This is evident not only in relation to Kant’s attitude to metaphysics, but also with regard to his attitude to issues of space. Here Kant found two opposing theories: Newton’s and Leibniz’s – (not to mention Descartes’s): Newton, according to whom absolute space exists, and Leibniz – according to whom space is merely phenomenal – it is a phenomenon arising from the relation of monads to one another, it is merely an order arising from the properties of things. Space so conceived is a derivative of all that exists, whether that which exists is conceived in terms of spiritual monads or in terms of material things. And it is derivative in such a way that if (for example) the material world (or monads) did not exist, there would be no space. As I have already said, in the 1750s, Kant declared his support for the phenomenality of space. And later – in the “Dissertation” of 1770 as well as in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), he will take a position quite related to (but different from) Leibniz – meanwhile, a short time before the “Dissertation,” he writes a treatise under the title *Von dem ersten Grunde des Unterschiedes der Gegenden im Raume*, in which the main objective is to conduct a proof that “der absolute Raum unabhängig von dem Dasein aller Materie und selbst als der erste Grund der Möglichkeit ihrer Zusammensetzung eine eingene Realität habe” [AA II 378]. The thesis, in view of Kant’s previous phases of development, is quite unexpected and is based on the assertion of the existence of forms that cannot be brought to discovery despite the fact that, as Kant claims, they are completely similar to each other and have the same arrangement of parts (right hand and left hand).

I will neither elaborate on this ‘proof’ here, nor discuss it as a value, I only meant to state the marked shifts in Kant’s views on the question of space. One detail should also be emphasized, namely that here Kant regards space as “der erste Grund der Möglichkeit ihrer (scil. der Materie) Zusammensetzung” [ibidem]. While in the phenomenalist conception space was something derivative in relation to things, this relation is now reversed, it is something – if we may say so – not only absolutely existing, but at the same time something more primary in relation to matter, *resp.* to things. Here a certain

apriorism of space in relation to “things” – admittedly conceived later already as “*Erscheinungen*” – will be preserved by Kant in the final solution on the critical position.

Lectures read and transcribed from the original by:

Radosław Kuliniak
University of Wrocław
ORCID: 0000-0002-0090-6609
e-mail: kornik90@poczta.onet.pl

Mariusz Pandura
University of Wrocław
ORCID: 0000-0001-5875-2705
e-mail: mariusz.pandura@uwr.edu.pl