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KANT'S STRATEGY

BY LEWIS WHITE BECK

Great strategists are soldiers who win wars, or at least delay defeat, by their genius in efficiently marshalling the forces at hand. Wars are not won just by strategy, but they may be lost by it. For victory, good strategy must be carried out by effective tactics; but good tactics may be wasted by being used in the wrong place, at the wrong time, and against the wrong enemy. While the great strategist will keep in mind the tactical capabilities and weaknesses of his men, so as not to plan battles that cannot be won in the field, the history of warfare recognizes great strategists who did not win, not because their strategy was wrong but because this or that tactical move was not successfully made. Often we discern strategy best in a general who loses, for often we can attribute to his victorious opponent such virtues as stubbornness, single-mindedness, and courage, or ascribe his victory to such gifts of fortune as superior numbers, better weapons, and good luck.

I wish to use these metaphors of strategy and tactics in an exposition of Kant's philosophizing. We know of Kant's keen and learned interest in military matters. Though most of his metaphors which refer to his work are drawn from law and the natural sciences and there are few military metaphors,¹ is it too far-fetched to consider his work as intellectual warfare, and thus to draw on a different set of metaphors? In particular, I see Kant as engaged in a two-front war. Germany has found, twice in this century, and Prussia found, in Kant's lifetime, that to fight a two-front war it must use one army on two fronts and be able to shift this army rapidly from one to the other. In Kant's two-front war, his talent as a strategist was shown by his finding a philosophical argument which could be used effectively against two very different opponents at the same time. I shall try to show the pattern of this strategy by showing how Kant waged one battle before he began writing the Critique of Pure Reason and then repeated its plan later and on a larger scale. But before doing that, we must first carefully identify the opponents against whom this strategy was to be used.

¹The richest source of Kant's military metaphors is his late polemic against Schlosser, Verkündigung des nahen Abschlusses eines Traktats zum ewigen Frieden in der Philosophie (1796). In this he proposed his theory of freedom as a ground on which dogmatists and skeptics could sign a treaty of peace. Nothing in the present essay is incompatible with that polemic, but I hope that I have come closer to the historical and epistemological citadel of his philosophy than he did in this Tendenzschrift. (Titles are given in German when there is no English translation of the work in question.) A sensitive and comprehensive study of Kant's metaphors, "The Fabric of Metaphor in the Critique of Pure Reason," by David Tarbet, will be published shortly in the Journal of the History of Philosophy.
At the very end of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in the chapter entitled “The History of Pure Reason,” Kant sets forth three great perennial divisions in metaphysics as the theory of the scope and function of reason. He gives three dichotomies: between intellectualists and sensualists in regard to the object of knowledge, between empiricists and noologists (rationalists) in regard to the origin of knowledge, and between naturalists and scientists (users of the *scientische Methode*, i.e., systematic, “scholastic” philosophers) in regard to the methods of knowledge. Among the latter, Kant distinguishes two types: those who proceed dogmatically, like Wolff, and those who proceed skeptically, like Hume.

These three ways of dividing possible philosophies are logically independent of each other, but in fact we find certain family affiliations among some of them. The great intellectualists have been noologists and dogmatists; the great sensualists have been empiricists and either naturalists or skeptics. There are, then, two great coalitions opposed to each other, not only in Kant’s time but again and again since Socrates and the Sophists met in battle.

Let us see what were the elements in the two coalitions which were opposed to each other. We may think of Kant as standing isolated between them, looking for future allies in both camps (though of course this is not the whole historical truth because Kant himself was at one time a member in good standing of one of the alliances and, in the later sixties, seems to many historians of philosophy simply to have changed sides for a time). But the mature Kant was never entirely uncritical of the rationalists, and never fully committed to a skepticism based on empiricism. So let us imagine him as standing between, unwilling to commit himself to either; this was, perhaps his own conception of his position as when he stirs up trouble between the opposing forces, entices them into battle with each other so that they will destroy each other.²

We shall examine first the composition of the *entente* founded in modern times by Locke. There were three principal allied powers here, all agreeing on one point: that all our knowledge comes from experience. These allied powers were: skepticism in metaphysics, naturalism in ethics, and something I shall call for lack of a better name skepticism tempered with naturalism in the theory of knowledge. Hume is the best example of all three. Kant believed that, though Hume was not a consistent skeptic, he was saved from Pyrrhonism only by his good sense and by a fortunate error he made in

the estimation of mathematical knowledge. But Kant believed that a consistently developed empiricism could lead to skepticism not only in metaphysics, which is as far as he thought Hume pushed it, but also in our natural and mathematical knowledge. Since, as Hume\(^3\) put it and Kant believed, “Nature is always too strong for principle,” such a skepticism in metaphysics was quarantined by a recognition that what little knowledge we have suffices for the ordinary affairs of life. As Locke himself saw, “The candle that is set up in us shines bright enough for all our purposes,” but does not cast a light into the regions into which we can never venture. Naturalism in ethics, a kind of empiricism in regard to our knowledge of right and wrong and a eudaemonism or hedonism in the definition of good and bad, has regularly been associated with metaphysically skeptical but this-worldly naturalistic empiricism. Kant did not equally oppose all the members of this coalition of ideas. He came to share the empiricists’ skepticism of metaphysics but always rejected the naturalism of healthy common sense, which he called “mere misology reduced to principle.”\(^4\) And he always opposed the naturalistic ethical theory even when praising Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Hume for their “beautiful discoveries” in the method of ethical inquiry.\(^5\)

Kant’s strategic question in dealing with this coalition must have been: how could he maintain skepticism in metaphysics—to which he was pushed by his study of Hume and his own discovery of the antinomies which he called “the most fortunate perplexity into which pure reason has ever fallen”\(^6\)—without falling victim to eudaemonism in ethics and to a jejune appeal to common sense in the conduct of life and the development of science? How could he oppose Hume without falling in with Reid, Beattie, and Oswald, who he thought were very uninspiring company? How could he give up a supernatural metaphysics without making a metaphysics out of naturalism?

Let us now look at the opposing coalition of the rationalists. Here we find dogmatism in metaphysics, to which Kant adhered in the fifties. Opposed to empiricism was the Leibnizian epistemology which proceeded to solve even the simplest problems by an argument \textit{obscurum per obscurius}. It was an epistemology which explained the simplest facts learned through sense experience by an appeal to pre-

\(^3\) Hume, \textit{Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding}, Sect. XII, Part ii, end.

\(^4\) \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, A 855 = B 883.

\(^5\) \textit{Nachricht von der Hinrichtung seiner Vorlesungen, Gesammelte Schriften}, Prussian Academy edition, II, 311–2. (Henceforth all page references in parentheses are to this edition.)

\(^6\) \textit{Critique of Practical Reason}, Beck translation (New York, 1956), 111 (V, 107). (All page numbers to the second \textit{Critique} are to this translation, followed by Academy pagination in parentheses.)
established harmony, and the theorems of physics by appeal to the-odicy. In ethical theory, there was a Scotism making the good depend upon God—another instance of getting the cart before the horse—and a theory of freedom which Kant called a "wretched subterfuge" grounding nothing more than the freedom of a turnspit or marionette.7 Again we find that Kant was not equally inimical to all these opponents; as I have said, early in life he espoused its dogmatism, and in the sixties he accepted the "wretched subterfuge" in ethics he was later to condemn. Hence his strategic position must have been something like this. Having turned his back upon dogmatism in metaphysics (after 1770), how could he save an ethical theory which required a metaphysical rather than a quasi-physical or hyperphysical foundation? How could he give up metaphysics because it was not empirical? How could he defend our knowledge of nature by giving a theory of synthetic judgments known a priori, without defending metaphysics which consisted of nothing but synthetic judgments known a priori?

Had Kant's strategy been that of divide et impera, he would have been an eclectic philosopher drawing a bit from here and a bit from there. His philosophy would itself have been a coalition system of the kind he explicitly condemned,8 and he would have been as forgotten now as other eclectics and compromisers.

I have been speaking in very broad terms of Kant's attitudes towards a coalition of views into two different Weltanschauungen. Kant seldom talked on this synoptic level; he was generally concerned with specific philosophical doctrines, whatever their source. But we have a foretaste of his grand strategy in the tactics of a particular battle he waged in the late sixties and early seventies, so we shall examine this before considering the later and larger campaign. I refer to the disputes concerning the nature of space and geometry.

It might be thought that empiricism could have no tenable theory of mathematics. If all the material of knowledge comes from experience, all universal statements are inductive and only probable. But since universal mathematical statements are not merely probable, the thesis of empiricism must be false. The empiricist had two ways of dealing with this syllogism. First, he could, with Hume in the Trea-tise,9 deny the minor premise and make geometry an empirical science

7 Ibid., 99, 101 (IV, 96, 97).
8 Critique of Practical Reason, §3, p. 23 (V, 24).
9 Treatise of Human Nature, I, Part III Sect. i: "The reason why I impute any defect to geometry is, because its original and fundamental principles are derived merely from appearances; and it may perhaps be imagin'd, that this defect must always attend it, and keep it from ever reaching a greater exactness in the comparison of objects or ideas, than what our eye or imagination alone is able to attend" (Selby-Bigge, 71).
which only approximately fits the observed facts of nature. Or, second, he might deny, with Hume in the *Inquiry*\(^\text{10}\) that mathematics is knowledge of nature and assert that it is only the logical manipulation of symbols. Kant suggests that Hume took the latter point of view in order to keep from giving up mathematical certainty;\(^\text{11}\) apparently not knowing that Hume had once committed himself to the former explicitly skeptical conclusion. But given a Newtonian physics and theory of space, the second of Hume's views is in practice as skeptical as the first, because there is no way to justify the application of a merely logically necessary geometry to the space of physics, and, with very few exceptions, the XVIIIth century had not yet distinguished between interpreted and uninterpreted axiom systems and decided that mathematics belonged among the latter.\(^\text{12}\)

Leibniz, on the other hand, never played with an empiricistic theory of mathematics, but consistently developed the formalistic theory like that of Hume's later work, and his theory therefore suffered the same infirmity as that in Hume's *Inquiry*—it was hard to see why a system of analytic judgments should have any objective reference to the real disposition of things in space. But whereas Hume could have no theory of how this is possible and, in all probability, thought (as he did in the *Treatise*) that it was not possible, Leibniz did try to show that the propositions of mathematics are necessarily true of space. He did so through two hypotheses. (1) Our perceptions of the physical world are only confused conceptions: hence clear and distinct sense perceptions, of the kind we get through counting and

\(^{10}\) *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, the first paragraph in Sect. vii, and in Sect. iv: "If any term be defined in geometry, the mind readily, of itself, substitutes on all occasions, the definition of the term defined ..." and "Propositions of this kind [geometrical and arithmetical] are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe. Though there never were a circle or triangle in nature, the truths demonstrated by Euclid would for ever retain their certainty and evidence" (Yalden-Thomson, 61, 24). But when Hume returns to the subject matter of the *Treatise* in Section XII Part ii of the *Inquiry* (Yalden-Thomson, 162–64), i.e., to the application of geometrical concepts to experience, he does so for the purpose of pointing out the discrepancy between geometrical concepts, as commonly (and he believes erroneously) understood, and our spatial perceptions, and thus repeats his *first* answer.

\(^{11}\) *Critique of Practical Reason*, 13 (V, 13).

\(^{12}\) See E. W. Beth, *The Foundations of Mathematics* (Amsterdam, 1959) on efforts to draw this distinction in the XVIIIth century. We may say that Hume's inconsistency, documented in notes 9 and 10 *supra*, arises because in the *Treatise* he is concerned with applied geometry and in the *Inquiry* with pure geometry. But inasmuch as the distinction did not clearly exist, each is mixed up with the other in both the books. Kant recognized the distinction (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B 145; cf. also *Thought on the True Estimation of Living Forces*, § 115) but did not see how important—perhaps how fatal—it was for his entire position.
mensuration, must conform to, if they are indeed not identical with, clear and distinct conceptions of numbers and magnitudes. (2) But what we perceive as spatial is not really outside us in an absolute Newtonian space which we could know, if at all, only a posteriori. Rather, space is a phenomenon bene fundatum, a phenomenon well-founded in the logical relations holding between substances (monads) or states of substances. Geometry is founded on logic; it is a logic which can be mapped spatially as a representation of simultaneously existing incompatibles; space is simply the order in which we perceive compresent possibilities. There is, therefore, no problem as to why the logical relations of concepts fit the intellectual representations we have of space; in a sense, the former generate the latter.13

If we compare the outcome of Hume’s Inquiry with Leibniz’s theory of mathematics, we find that these two philosophers agreed on one point and disagreed on another. (a) They agreed, to use Kant’s terminology, that mathematical judgments are analytic and logically necessary. (b) They disagreed as to whether mathematics had any necessary objective reference—Leibniz affirming it and Hume denying it.

In 1768 Kant, working from a suggestion by Euler, formulated the hypothesis that the thesis (a) was false: 14 Mathematical knowledge is not analytic and logically necessary. But it is necessary, in the sense that it necessarily applies to our experience of objects in space (here Kant agrees with Leibniz), but it does not apply, even approximately, to anything but objects of experience (and here Kant agrees with the earlier Humean view).

When Kant formulated this view by saying that mathematics contains synthetic judgments, he is disagreeing with both Hume and Leibniz.15 His answer to it leads directly into the great campaign I

13 See Kant’s very clear statement of Leibniz’s problem and solution, Critique of Pure Reason, A 275-6 = B 331-2. The flaw in Leibniz’s argument is that Leibniz does not distinguish between the sensible appearances and things in themselves, and fails to do so because he makes sensible appearances only confused intellectual representations of things in themselves (substances). But, according to Kant, they are not; hence the problem of the relation of mathematics to the perceptual content is left untouched.

14 On the First Grounds of the Distinction of Regions of Space. The argument is that logically indiscernible entities should be identical, but they are not, as shown by incongruent counterparts in geometry; therefore geometrical figures are not adequately defined by non-intuitive predicates or relations.

15 It is often said that Kant’s initial discovery (or claim) from which everything else followed was that there are synthetic judgments known a priori. This is not true. Both Locke and Descartes had admitted judgments which, by the later Kantian criteria, were synthetic and known a priori. It was to explain their apriority that Leibniz and Hume had denied their syntheticity and replaced them with
have spoken of. Our preliminary study of Kant’s treatment of mathematical knowledge from 1768 to 1770 points the way to the larger issue in two respects. First, the answer to the question, “How are synthetic judgments a priori possible?” or “How is pure mathematics possible?” gives the substantive thesis of *Critique of Pure Reason*, to which I shall turn shortly. But more to my purpose here is the fact that Kant’s strategy in this criticism of Hume and Leibniz is in form and pattern exactly the same as his larger strategy in the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a whole.

Kant did not tell us his strategic secrets, and perhaps he was not fully aware of his stratagem. But in our own century, this stratagem has been formulated in what is sometimes called “Ramsay’s Maxim.” In cases where two opposed arguments seem internally sound but where their conclusions are incompatible and hence a stalemate is created, Frank P. Ramsey 16 wrote: “It is a heuristic maxim that the truth lies not in one of the two disputed views but in some third possibility which has not yet been thought of, which we can only discover by rejecting something assumed as obvious by both the disputants.” Two theories, X and non-X, may be reconciled or both refuted by finding that they have a common false element. Upon analysis, X may be found to be A + Y and non-X may be found to be A + non-Y; and A may be found to be false. When the falsity of A is seen, a new theory can be developed without it. Though Y and non-Y are still contradictory, just as X and non-X are still contradictory, these contradictions no longer matter; they are left behind in philosophical debate, because what made them seem frustratingly important was that they seemed to be the only possible corollaries of A, and now A itself has been given up.

We have seen how Kant applied this maxim in the disputes concerning mathematics. Hume and Leibniz disputed whether mathematics applied to experience; and each could give excellent reasons for denying and asserting it, respectively. But they both agreed that mathematical judgments were logically necessary. This agreed-upon principle was, according to Kant, false.

We can illustrate this pattern again by referring to Kant’s later

vérités de raison and relations of ideas, respectively. But what forced Leibniz and Hume to do so (Hume much more consistently than Leibniz) was the assumption by both Descartes and Locke that we are endowed with an intellectual intuition and that all sense experience is *a posteriori*. Kant rejected both these assumptions, while Hume denied only the first. Only Kant’s denial of the latter permitted him to go beyond Hume and to support the thesis that we have synthetic *a priori* sensible knowledge. (In this paper, however, I am more concerned with the contribution of sense to the syntheticty of knowledge than to its apriority: but I believe Kant’s underlying strategy could be illustrated also in his theory of the latter.)

attempt to resolve the space antimony.\textsuperscript{17} Rationalists said space was finite; empiricists said it was infinite. Equally good proofs existed on both sides. The statements are contradictory, but Kant said they were both false. What he should have said is that both were statements in compound judgments, “Space is the real form of objects existing intrinsically, and it is finite,” and “Space is the real form of objects existing intrinsically, and it is infinite,” and both these compound judgments are false because the first conjunct is false. If we deny the first conjunct, then the dispute about the second no longer matters since the second conjuncts are about something which does not exist at all.

Other illustrations of this strategy could be given. But let us now look at the over-all strategic situation. Can Kant find some principle accepted by both coalitions but nevertheless false? If so, rejecting that common principle will defeat both parties simultaneously, or at least break up their internal affiliations and establish a new center of power in Kant’s own counter-thesis which will attract allies from both coalitions. Kant’s attempt to discover this common, but false, fundamental principle is his strategy in fighting his two-front war; but unlike most two-front wars, her a victory on either front will be a victory on both. Perhaps we should even change our metaphor, and say that Kant’s strategy is to show that a single position which is essential to both sets of opponents is untenable.

The common principle Kant thought he found in both and thought he could show to be false is: \textit{There is but one ultimate source or faculty of knowledge}. The point at issue between the Lockeans and the Leibnizians was: What is this single source of knowledge? That there was such a source was the unexamined dogma of both, and if Kant could show it to be false he would have broken up both coalitions.

Leibniz, he tells us, intellectualized appearances while Locke sensualized all the concepts of intellect.\textsuperscript{18} For Leibniz and Wolff, increasing the distinctness of a representation raised it from the level of feeling and sensation to that of thought; sensation and feeling are confused thought. The \textit{de facto} synthetic connections discovered empirically between representations are to be replaced by logical connections between well-defined concepts resulting from their analysis. Synthetic empirical knowledge is not knowledge but only a pre-stage to rational knowledge of things as they must be. We human beings have to be satisfied with experience, but it is a poor substitute for rational knowledge of necessary connections. Empirical epistemology as a

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{17}] See the very relevant paper of J. E. Llewelyn, “Dialectical and Analytical Opposites,” \textit{Kant-Studien}, \textit{LV} (1964), 171-4.
  \item[\textsuperscript{18}] \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} A 273 = B 327.
\end{itemize}
theory of scientific methodology is at best only an Interimserkenntnis-
theorie.

Locke was too much influenced by Descartes to deny in principle, and too much of a man of good sense to deny in practice, that there is a difference between the experience of seeing the compatibility of two ideas and that of seeing a sequence of logically unrelated ideas. He never formulated one theory that would account for both; but both are there. The differences between him and Leibniz are not as pointed as the rubrics of empiricism versus rationalism make them appear. Even Hume recognized diverse sources for mathematical knowledge and for knowledge of matter of fact; he still sees the difference between thinking and perceiving and, in fact, he insists that there is a gulf between them. How, then, can Kant say Locke sensualized intellectual concepts?

The clue is again found in Hume's theory of mathematics in the Inquiry. Precisely because mathematical knowledge is knowledge of the relation of ideas, and thus does not fall under the general rule of empiricism that our knowledge comes from experience, Hume saw that mathematics has no existential import. By completely intellectualizing our mathematical knowledge, Hume cut it off from reaching the full fruition of knowledge, which is to be knowledge about existing things. The connection with objects, which would be necessary if mathematics were to be full knowledge,\(^1^9\) was broken by making mathematics logically analytic. Therefore the intellect that had to do with real existence, that is, the intellect that gives knowledge, must be an intellect which has been sensualized. It was this sensualized intellect which Kant thought produced the skepticism inherent in empiricism, just as Leibniz's intellectualized senses could produce only dogmatism.

As early as 1762 Kant saw the differences between the methods of mathematics and those of metaphysics. By 1768 he saw the difference between mathematics and logic. Certainly in 1770 he had a theory of two cognitive faculties, the sensibility and the intellect, and of two different worlds, the sensible and the intelligible. No matter how much clarity we might achieve in our analyses of the content of the empirical or sensible world, we could never raise it to the level of the logically necessary and metaphysically evident; indeed, we have, as a matter of fact, far more clear and distinct ideas of the sensible world than we have of the intelligible. In metaphysics, we have only a few clear and distinct ideas; but our obscure metaphysical notions are not thereby rendered sensible to us.\(^2^0\)

\(^1^9\) Ibid., B 147.

\(^2^0\) On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible Worlds ("Inaugural Dissertation"), §§ 7, 8: On the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morals ("Prize Essay") I, § 3 (II, 280).
The *Inaugural Dissertation* of 1770 represents Kant's first strategic coup: he can save geometry from skepticism, by showing how it can apply to objects *a priori*, and he can go on with the dogmatic metaphysics he derived from his rationalist teachers. He thinks that the troubles of the Leibnizians in their metaphysics arose from their mixing concepts which applied only to the senses with those which were produced by pure reason. By a clear separation of the spheres of the two cognitive faculties, therefore, he could save metaphysical dogmatism and, almost as a by-product, avoid skepticism in mathematics. Now this may appear to have been no victory for him at all on a strategic level. For Kant seems to have attacked both Leibniz and Hume on their mathematical theories, but to have drawn a set of conclusions entirely acceptable to the rationalists, viz., the apriority of mathematics and the possibility of an *a priori* metaphysics. The letter to Marcus Herz of February 1772 is the last manifesto of his rationalism, however, because his “recollection of Hume” soon thereafter awoke him from his dogmatic slumber.

We often speak of what followed as “Kant’s reply to Hume,” but Kant is replying to both Leibniz and Hume. His question was: How not to be a dogmatist in metaphysics without being a skeptic in our knowledge of nature. Hume’s skepticism was all of one piece: no objective necessary knowledge of matter of fact either in or beyond experience. Leibniz’s dogmatism was all of one piece: *a priori* knowledge of both what is in and what is beyond experience. Kant wanted to break these two continuities; and he saw that each was based on a theory of one source and one kind of knowledge.

We know little of the history of what went on in Kant’s mind between February 1772 and April 1781. But it is clear that two things did happen. One was that Kant, having settled to his own satisfaction the problem of how mathematics is possible, turned his attention to the conditions of our knowledge of existing objects and found that we can know only those given both to thought and sense. Second, Kant continued to think about the book on the “metaphysics of morals” which he had been planning to write for twenty years.21 We shall see now how his strategy evolved so as to solve both questions at once: how to save the rational features of science from Hume’s attack and the irreducibly empirical features from Leibniz’s and Wolff’s; and how to save the conception of a metaphysics of morals from Hume’s naturalism and empiricism and from Leibniz’s and Wolff’s dogmatism which did, as he said, “war against it.”22 To show this, I shall quote two passages from the *Critique of Pure Reason* which are absolutely essential to his total philosophy, and I shall

21 See my *Commentary on Kant’s Critique of Practical Reason* (Chicago, 1960), 5-10.

22 *Critique of Pure Reason* B xxx.
show how they are direct consequences of his challenge to the principle agreed upon by all his opponents.

The first is: "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. It is just as necessary to make our concepts sensible, that is, to add the object to them in intuition, as to make our intuitions intelligible, that is to bring them under concepts." The reason for this statement is found in Kant's distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments. Analytic judgments relate concepts to each other by finding one contained in the intension of the other; synthetic judgments are syntheses of concepts which are held together by their common reference to something given, which Kant calls X. In a mathematical judgment, this X is a pure intuition or construction of space; in perceptual knowledge, it is a phenomenal object which is given to me in a set of intuitions which are related by a rule I follow in determining the order in which I entertain them, a rule so formed that they will conform to a rule of judgment in logic. But when I try to make a synthetic judgment about something not given in intuition, I find that I can only relate my concepts analytically and not bring them into any relation to an object; there is no intuitive X which is, as it were, the glue to hold the concepts together either a priori or a posteriori. If, however, there were only one source of knowledge, which Kant calls an intellectual intuition or intuitive intellect, then the act of thinking an object would lead to its representation in me—and dogmatic metaphysics would be possible.

Notice Kant's strategy here. There are two factors involved in knowing: sensibility and understanding. Neither alone can give us knowledge; either alone is blind or empty. (Empiricism is blind; rationalism is empty.) Knowledge comes from the application of one to the other. Dogmatism is the policy of claiming rational knowledge beyond what can be perceived; rationalism is inherently dogmatic; it can best be dogmatic precisely where there is in principle no perceptual source or test for its claims. So that what makes an answer to Hume possible—the rules of relating representations to each other introduce a synthetic element a priori into our empirical knowledge—also makes an answer to Leibniz possible: there is a perceptual or intuitional element in all a priori knowledge that is not merely and emptyly logical.

The second sentence is: "I have, therefore, denied knowledge in order to make room for faith." This well-known sentence is the

23 Ibid., A 51 = B 75.
24 Ibid., A 9 = B 13.
25 "Empiricism is based on touch, but rationalism on a necessity which can be seen"—Critique of Practical Reason, 14 (V, 14).
26 Critique of Pure Reason, B xxx.
foundation of Kant’s ethical theory, because it makes it possible for him to accept the rationalistic thesis of the Third Antinomy without taking also the dogmatism which universally attended it. The thesis of the antinomy states that there is a “causality of freedom” and the antithesis is that there is only a “causality of nature.” Both of these statements may be true if the common presupposition is that the sensible world in space and time is the only world to which our concepts apply. But there is no evidence whatsoever that the thesis is true; all that Kant says he has shown is that it is thinkable, i.e., not self-contradictory, and that it is not even contradictory to the principle of the mechanism of nature if the common presupposition is false. Now this common presupposition is precisely what was challenged by Kant’s solution to the Hume-Leibniz controversy over knowledge; it is the presupposition that there is one world of actual objects to be known in only one way (other ways being conveniences or customs of the limited human knower). Had that controversy not been solved as it was, Kant tells us,27 nothing could have saved the causality of freedom, nothing could have prevented the export into metaphysics of the principle of sufficient reason found essential to physics.

Unless a theory that sharply divides physics from metaphysics can be established, metaphysics can only be an extension of physics and the only metaphysical causality will be mechanical. The theory of the sharp division is the theory that while metaphysics uses only one cognitive faculty and hence is unable to give theoretical knowledge, physics, which does give us knowledge, requires two independent sources, viz., sensibility and reason. Here again we have the negative test on what Kant says about an intellect that would be unitary in its sources of knowledge. If we had an intuitive intellect, the antinomy would not arise,28 but the antinomy is the most fortunate perplexity into which pure reason could ever have fallen.

I have said that Kant’s strategy is to break up the coalitions led by empiricism and rationalism by finding and denying the axiom they agreed upon. Bergson wrote that every great philosopher has said only one thing,29 and James remarked that any worthwhile system of philosophy can be written on a post card. It is an amusing jeu d’esprit

27 Critique of Practical Reason, 98 (V, 95); Critique of Pure Reason, B xxix. The Kemp Smith translation of the latter sentence is unclear. The sense is: “Since it is only on the assumption of freedom that its negation [i.e., mechanism] contains any contradiction, while the denial of mechanism contains an obvious contradiction, freedom, and with it morality, would have to yield to the mechanism of nature [on the assumption that speculative reason does not permit freedom except in contradiction to mechanism].”

28 Critique of Judgment § 77; Critique of Practical Reason, 103 (V, 100).

29 La pensée et le mouvant (Paris, 1934), 141.
to take a philosopher's ten or twenty volumes and try to compress them to post card length. My proposal for doing this to Kant's will be disappointing, since hardly anyone nowadays will deny the sentence but many will deny that it is the seminal thought in Kant. But it was a highly disputable proposition in his day, and I think that some of the lasting importance of Kant is shown by the fact that it is no longer disputed. The sentence would be: In order to know and to act, it is necessary both to see and to think.

I hesitate, of course, to say that this insipid statement is the sum and substance of Kant's philosophy. But when I see how much of his philosophy depends on it, how much is an elaboration and defense of it, and how many of his polemics are against those whose philosophy was an implicit denial of it, I think there is merit in this as a summary if one insists upon post card brevity in the history of philosophy.

I have expressed the opinion elsewhere 30 that Kant is too complex a philosopher to be pressed into any single mold, whether that mold be made in Marburg, Heidelberg, Göttingen, or elsewhere. The logistic, metaphysical, positivistic, existential, psychologistic, and axiological interpretations of Kant all have the merit, to be sure, of bringing to the fore what is at most background in the others. It is natural to use any great philosopher of the past as either an arsenal or as a target in later philosophical conflicts, and thus Kant has been regarded at one time as a founder of positivism, at another as its opponent; as the destroyer of metaphysics, and as the philosopher who made it "scientific"; as the chief critic of psychologism, and as the man who ruined epistemology by making it psychologistic.51 It is not likely, therefore, that Kant will appear as a living force in contemporary philosophy if we see him primarily as the arbiter between an empiricism and a rationalism that are themselves no longer living movements in philosophy. Yet if we try to see Kant in his own time and try to give full weight to his explicit statements about Hume, Leibniz, and Wolff, we return to the classical 32 picture of Kant which I have been outlining.

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30 Studies in the Philosophy of Kant (New York, 1965), 52 n.
32 I call it "classical" because Hegel, the true founder of the history of philosophy, so regarded Kant (Lectures on the History of Philosophy, iii, 429); but it was, until very recently, so naively reproduced that it could equally well be called the "textbook picture."