

Kant's Transcendental Problem

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Introducing the Problem

Problems of philosophy or problems raised by philosophers have, more often than not, something in them that does not, immediately as they are raised, meet the eye. There is, i.e. a hinterland of considerations which give shape to the problem that it has. So was it with Kant's problem 'How is knowledge of the world possible? Can it be said that Kant's philosophy was intended to be *reflection* on our knowledge of the world? To say that, would however, amount to an all-too-naïve account of Kant's philosophy. For one thing, 'reflection' is not the peculiar preserve of Kant, the philosopher. Philosophers of non-Kantian persuasions may as well lay claim to be as reflective as Kant was, no whit more, no whit less. And even in man's pedestrian moods, he does reflect upon, or make review of his thought and belief about the world which he carves out for himself and in which he moves, pronounces indictment upon his or others' actions and customs and mores and so on and on.

Was there anything special about *Kantian* reflection? There *was*. There was indeed something distinctive about Kantian reflection or what might be christened in Kantian diction 'critical' reflection. But if one has to grapple with reflection of the Kantian kind, one has to take account of the tangled web of Kant's thought in the present context.

First, Kant's philosophy reflects upon the conditions of our knowledge of the world. *Second*, Kant's philosophy is claimed (by Kant himself) to be 'transcendental' enquiry into these conditions. *Third*, Kant claims that we have 'transcendental' knowledge of the *a priori* conditions of the possibility of knowledge. But *fourth*, 'transcendental' knowledge raises a problem for Kant. This is the 'transcendental' problem: 'How is knowledge possible?'. *Fifth*, the question arises 'does the transcendental problem haunt Kant *even after* he makes explicit—as he claims to do the conditions of knowledge? The problem, in one way, as

we shall come to see, appears to be *intractable*. That is to say, merely explicating the conditions of knowledge would not amount to finding out the answer or solution to the problem. One has to come to grips with the *problematic*: to see that the problem cannot just be that of explicating the knowledge conditions. For the problem is rooted in the *janus*-faced encounter of man with the world: the world is 'constituted' for Kant by the interpretative forms of the knowing subject and yet appears to be alien. Man wants to 'know' the world, to 'rationalise' it and cannot but rationalise it, because rationalizing is the way of his being *at home with the world*: and yet, the world appears 'alien' to man because the dualism of 'concept' (rationalising device) and 'intuition' is woven into the structure of knowledge. Was man's reason or intellect intuitive, there would be nothing alien to him in his encounter with the world? But constituted as man's intellect is, the specter of an alien world haunts him. So the wonder 'how rationality-seeking can go on in a world which yet (i.e. with all man's rationality-seeking enterprise) *retains* its *alienation* to reason?' is the root of the transcendental problem. The problem, in other words, is embedded in man's *consciousness of foil to his reason-seeking in the world*. If this consciousness of foil to man, the 'subject' as constitutive of the 'object', is not taken into reckoning then the distinctive transcendental problem would come to be mis-conceived, as but a second-order enquiry into the presuppositions of our knowledge of the world. Transcendental enquiry, or transcendental knowledge, is not second-order enquiry or knowledge of knowledge-conditions but arises when knowledge turns inward or reflective to understand what foils it: so that 'reflection' in the context of Kant's inquiry is not a review of knowledge from an onlooker's point of view but consists in knowledge as if asking itself in wonder 'How does the world which I seek to know yet appear alien to me or how an alien world can come to be known?'

This paper is divided into three parts. *First*, we shall, following Kant's first *Critique*, see how his genius *saw through* the 'problem' in its distinctiveness and how, to that extent, Kant's enquiry into knowledge-conditions cannot be compared with the sort of enquiry conducted in philosophy of science into the axioms, postulates, and laws of science. Here, we set our task by distinguishing between different senses of 'Critique' (in Kant's understanding itself). Then, in the *second* part, we shall see how the genius of Kant betrayed itself as it could not hold fast to its insight into the *generality* of the problem that he raised in virtue of which the problem emerges at the level of understanding that

outstretches the level of understanding on which philosophy of science is founded. Consciousness views scientific enterprise, *any* intellectual enterprise for that matter, as *its* enterprise in relation to Nature which yet is foil to consciousness; and then it asks itself how it can settle scores with Nature. This is the general problem of reason which came to be undermined by parts of the writings of the philosopher who himself conceived the problem. In the *third* and the concluding part of this paper, we shall ask ourselves 'What do we do with the problem which *persists* even after it is conceived in its *generality*? Does the generality of the problem demand that its lineaments or contours have to be viewed in terms that extend beyond the boundary of the *Critique of Pure Reason*?

If, as hinted before, Kant's enquiry is not to be misconceived as amounting to philosophy of science, then a Kant interpreter may today seek light from a book of Kant's which came later than his *Kritik der reinen vernunft*. This was *Metaphysische Anfangsgrunde der Naturewissenschaft*. Kant wrote the book in 1786, i.e. five years after his *Kritik der reinen vernunft* which came out in 1781. The *Kritik* itself may be re-interpreted as the '*metaphysische anfangsrunde*' of our knowledge of the world. Chronology should not get the better of philosophical interpretation here: what is historically later may be philosophically first. It is in the light of the notion of the '*metaphysische anfangsgrunde*' of the 'object' that the *Critique* may be re-interpreted. The entire *Critique* may be taken to be an exercise in the articulation of the metaphysical that is, a priori, critical view, which for us is the reflective view, of the 'object'. If the suggested re-interpretation is not accorded any importance, then all that we can make of Kant's philosophy is a philosophy of science which would fall short of Kant's 'critical' intentions: 'criticism' should not assume anything including the 'object' to the apron strings of which commonsense, science and philosophy of science are all alike tied. They are overlaid by the 'objective' *mentalite*, if some such expression may be coined, and do not culture that mental stance in which the 'object' can be evidenced.

If it is said that Kant was, after all, reflecting on the sciences of his time, principally Newton's physics and Euclidean geometry, then the reply would be that even as philosophy of science, Kant's *Critique* is distinguished from the present-day philosophy of science. Lurking within the *Critique* is something more than philosophy of science conceived as enquiry into the presuppositions, postulates etc. of science which is *given*

to the philosopher of science (to be reflected upon) who is not 'critical' enough in that he, throughout his enquiry, assumes—as the scientist does—the 'object' and does not attain to that grade of reflection in which the 'object' is evidenced, seen, intuited. But first let us see if the *Critique* is amenable to the meta-critical interpretation. To do so, we have to understand the different senses of the expression 'critique of knowledge' in Kant's critical philosophy. So, first let Kant speak for himself.

The different meanings of 'Critique of Knowledge'

What Kant calls 'critique of knowledge' is intended to be a critical enquiry into knowledge. And critical enquiry into knowledge can be and has in fact been described differently by Kant. These different meanings of 'critical enquiry' are, however, yoked under a principal conception, nay, a great idea. Only the genius of Kant, solitary and uncomprehended, had worked its way up to such a great idea.

First, 'critical' may be distinguished from, what Kant calls, 'dogmatic'. A dogmatic enquiry takes some idea, some opinion etc. for granted. It takes them for granted 'uncritically'. An idea, or a customary opinion, or a presupposition, without any critical understanding of what its bearing may be upon the enquiry into question, becomes a dogma or a prejudice. Let us take Kant's own example to make clear how an enquiry becomes dogmatic. Kant says, e.g. that geometry is a body of synthetic *a priori* judgments. Then, he maintains, geometry must be said to presuppose space as *a priori* intuition. Suppose we do *not* critically understand that space is *a priori* intuition then we cannot make it intelligible to ourselves the character of geometry, i.e. cannot explain to ourselves how geometry is a body of necessary truths which yet are not analytic but, on the contrary, synthetic. Suppose we take it, as it appears to uncritical commonsense, that space is objective, out there, independent of our apprehending of it in perception, and that the idea of space, as a general idea of extension, is derived from our sense-perception of different areas of space or bits of space or its different curvatures that we see (or think that we see) in the world. Then, Kant commonsense idea of space without critically seeing that its acceptance would spell danger to geometry as a body of synthetic *a priori* truths.

It appears then, according to Kant, that to be 'critical' about knowledge is to enquire into its presuppositions or conditions. So we come to the *second* meaning of the 'critique of knowledge': it is an

enquiry into the presuppositions of knowledge. It asks the question 'How is knowledge possible?' or 'What are the conditions of knowledge? As we shall see, this question is of a very general nature. It is the question about how *any* knowledge in *any* field is possible and not the question about how knowledge in *any* branch of man's innumerable cognitive pursuits becomes possible. With regard to this very general question, something may be said in advance. Kant's genius could envisage this question. At the same time, the genius's perception got warped, and he came to confuse the style of this question, general in nature, with the style of the question, e.g., 'How is geometry possible?' or 'How is Newtonian science possible?' After having raised the question 'How is knowledge possible?' Kant proceeds to tell us something more. He tells us that an enquiry into the presuppositions of knowledge is itself knowledge of the presuppositions. This may appear to be slightly puzzling. How can an enquiry be knowledge? 'Enquiry' may *lead to* knowledge of something. But it does not, at least in ordinary parlance, rank as the same as knowledge. Yet this is what Kant maintains.

Kant's meaning may be made clear when we see how Kant shows that there is something more in the question 'What are the conditions of knowledge?' He holds that the question requires on the part of one who asks it that one must do something. One must adopt a particular kind of *mental stance*. It is a distinctive kind of stance. Suppose a philosopher of logic wants to lay bare the presuppositions of a logical system. He keeps himself away, in order to be objective and in order not allow his findings to be colored by his prejudices, opinions etc., from the enquiry into presuppositions. He guards against psychologism.

The required Kantian stance, needed for knowing or unearthing the presuppositions of knowing, is, however, distinct from the method, called objective, of the enquiry into presuppositions of a logical system. Yet there is no psychologism in it because it is directed, governed, controlled, and determined by a particular method. It is called reflection. Enquiry into presuppositions of knowledge is distinct from other kinds of enquiries into presuppositions of some disciplines, say, history, mathematics, economics etc. Are not those enquiries, too, reflective? Does not the logician reflect on the arguments we ordinary folk employ in our day to day intellectual concourse and then come to list the forms of *Barbara*, *Celarent*, *Darii*, etc? Kant's idea of reflection is however different from that of reflective pursuits in other fields of study, including

reflective study of the presuppositions of a logical system and also the reflective study a logician makes of the forms of arguments of people who argue in the way they do but are not conscious of the forms of their arguments. In the context of this latter, reflection is a *review*, i.e. a second-order activity. I argue in a particular manner. Not being a logician, I am not aware of the style or form of my argument. The logician understands the form, i.e., sees through the argument to find the form implicit in my argument. My intellectual activity of arguing in the way I do is a first-order activity. But the logician's is a second-order activity. Now, Kant's idea of reflection is *not* the idea even of a second-order activity. Kant maintains that when we raise the question about the presuppositions of knowledge, we delve deep, so to say, into knowledge. He would say that reflection in other fields does not turn towards itself, does not delve deep into itself. Reflection, for Kant, is knowledge, turned towards it. So, in its *third* meaning, 'critique of knowledge' is 'reflective knowledge of knowledge'.

The *fourth* meaning is implicit in the third meaning. In fact, when we probe a little into 'reflective knowledge of knowledge' it comes out clearly. 'Reflective knowledge of knowledge' is 'knowledge turning towards its subjectivity'. So the 'critique of knowledge' i.e. 'reflective knowledge of knowledge' is the knowledge of the subjectivity of knowledge'.

We have seen that a philosopher of logic maintains an onlooker's point of view towards the object of his search, say, the presuppositions of a logical system. So too does the logician maintains an onlooker's point of view with regard to the forms, say, *Barbara*, *Celarent*, etc. He wants the object of his search to tell its own tale. He reflects on the logic of pedestrian in me. But the kind of reflection that Kant has in mind does not maintain an onlooker's point of view with reference to what it seeks to find out. The object/objects of Kant's search is/are the presupposition/ presuppositions of knowledge. (Later on we shall see that the presupposition of knowledge is *the* subject). But knowing the presupposition(s) of knowledge involves turning of knowledge towards itself. In other words, knowing that is known is part of the reflection itself, not outside the reflection. It is a distinctive kind of method of knowing that is needed by the critique of knowledge. Here the *reflected* knowing is part of the *reflecting* knowing. Here the known is not other than the knowing of it, not object to it. As K.C.Bhattacharyya has pointed

out, in reflection of the kind the critique of knowledge requires, knowledge is known as transcendental, i.e. 'not distinct from the consciousness of it' and not as its object.

Here we come to the *fifth* meaning of critique of knowledge: it understands knowledge *not* as object. So it is critical i.e. reflective, i.e. subjective shifting of knowledge from object. But what is 'object'? It is other than knowledge. If the 'critic of knowledge' is 'knowledge reflecting on itself' and if reflection is subjectivity of knowledge which cannot be made to stand as object unto knowledge then critique of knowledge cannot be knowledge of knowledge in the sense of *anuvyavasāya* conception of Naiyāyikas who hold that knowledge stands as object (*viśaya*) for another knowledge. So, *sixthly*, critique of knowledge is not knowledge of knowledge. Kant conceived of 'critique of knowledge' as a distinct discipline called Epistemology. Epistemology follows the reflective method which may be called self-evidential (*Svataḥ prameya*). Science, on the other hand, is based on sense perception, inference, hypothesis, etc. and therefore it is other-evidential (*parataḥ prameya*). But since epistemology is not other evidential it is not science. So, *seventhly*, 'critique of knowledge' is epistemology but it is neither 'objective enterprise' nor 'science'.

From the *sixth* meaning of 'critique of knowledge', we come to understand that it is not knowledge of knowledge. Had it been so, as Nyāya would take it to be, it would have been a second-order study. But, we know, it is knowledge reflecting on itself. Therefore, *eightly*, critique is a first-order study.

We now come to the *ninth* meaning of 'critique of knowledge.' Critique of knowledge is knowledge of the boundary of cognitive enterprise. Therefore, 'critique of knowledge', as knowledge of knowledge-conditions, distinguishes between what is knowledge and what is not knowledge. The demarcation is on the subjective ground, on the ground of the subjectivity of knowledge into which reflexivity of knowledge resolves itself according to Kant. Conditions of knowledge are subjective conditions, that is, those conditions which conform to the knowledge-pattern prescribed by the subject. Conditions that do *not* conform to the subject's knowledge-pattern are not conditions of knowledge. Therefore, 'critique of knowledge' demarcates the conditions of knowledge which are subjective from anything that is not subjective and therefore *falls outside knowledge*. So, 'critique of knowledge'

demarcates the limit of cognitive enterprise.

But a problem arises. Conditions of knowledge, for Kant, are subjective. What is not subjective does not conform to knowledge-conditions. Therefore, it cannot be said to be 'known'. Now, if the boundary of knowledge is fixed by the subjective conditions of knowledge, then it seems epistemology arrogates to itself the title of cognitive enterprise. It becomes, then, cognitive enterprise *par excellence*. So, natural science is ruled out, abstract theoretical sciences are ruled out, deductive, inductive, mathematical and statistical enterprises are ruled out, history is ruled out, and so on. These disciplines are to be distinguished from epistemology. According to Kant epistemology is subjective. Its evidence, if any, is derived from reflective subjectivity. It is self-evidential. As opposed to it, the disciplines mentioned and kindred disciplines are *other-evidential*. Cognitive claims are undoubtedly made in them but those claims are other-evidential and subject to various methods of assessments. Are those sciences, then, ruled out by the epistemological stipulation of what should/ should not count as knowledge?

Specifically the question is: how can other-evidentiality go together with cognitivity? It appears that, according to Kant, cognitivity is self-evidentiality. So other-evidentiality would not be cognitivity for him. And if so, the sciences which go by the other-evidentiality criterion would not be cognitive enterprises for him. On the other hand, if at all they are regarded as cognitive enterprises, then the other-evidentiality criterion has to be accepted, and if so, the other sciences, which seemed to be at first ruled out by the self-evidentiality criterion, have to be re-admitted as cognitive enterprises. But if they are so re-admitted then 'cognitivity' becomes inclusive of both self-evidentiality and other-evidentiality and then epistemology turns out to be a discipline that is *at par with other sciences*. So, either the sciences other than epistemology have to be ruled out as non-cognitive or the Kantian restrictive criterion of cognitivity in terms of self-evidentiality has to be rejected.

So, the question may be restated in another form, viz, 'Does Kant makes room for other-evidential enterprises in his 'critique of knowledge'? The question, apparently, is rooted in the lurking suspicion that Kant restricted cognitivity to self-evidentiality, although Kant never held such a position.

When Kant says that epistemology abides by the self-evidentiality criterion, he does not put other-evidential enterprises out of court. Two considerations would weigh with him against ruling out other-evidential enterprises as non-cognitive. First, he would not regard epistemology as a paradigm science which could rule out other sciences. *Not only that a theory of knowledge is not a science but it is also not a philosophy of science.* Epistemology for Kant is *propaedeutic to science*, concerned only with its presuppositions. Epistemology reflects on sciences. But it does not make a survey of science. It is not a second-order study.

It is indeed reflective but reflection is not review. Reflection is finding the subject, explicating the subject, explicating it as distinct from anything other than subject. It is thus that subjectivity as self-evidential, *retrospectively*, understands science as other-evidential. So, other-evidentiality itself is constituted by self-evidentiality. (Constitutive self-evidentiality cannot be justified by constituted other-evidentiality. Not to have seen this was Kant's mistake. So far as this is so, Kant threw all his insights overboard.) So the gain in reflecting on science is to get at the very concept of other-evidentiality, the very concept of science as such. This is how we can, as students of Kant, relate other-evidential, i.e., scientific enterprises to the self-evidential enterprise of epistemology which is philosophical.

Kant indeed writes a philosophy of science. But the philosophy of science he writes is not the current philosophy of science that is concerned with the presuppositions of science: here reflection starts on science being *given*. But for Kant, even the *very concept* of science is realized in self-consciousness, and cannot itself be subject to other-evidentiality. A particular scientific enterprise indeed goes by the criterion of other-evidentiality. Not so, however, the concept of science. It is a *priori* not just because it is non-empirical but because it is constitutive and transcendental, the *a priori* possibility of science. Be it remembered, Kant wrote a book with the significant title *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*.

So, now to the *tenth* conception of the critique: it demarcates philosophy of science from science and also demarcates Kant's transcendental philosophy of science from the current philosophy of science.

We go back a little. Now, let us understand Kant's second

consideration against ruling out other-evidential enterprises as non-cognitive. Kant's motivation was to delimit science, or, more generally, cognitive enterprise. He had in mind the excesses of dogmatic metaphysics which proceed without any proper examination of what can/cannot count as knowledge. Kant maintained that metaphysics cannot be regarded as any kind of cognitive enterprise, be it epistemology, and be it science, for its concepts are beyond certification through any kind of evidence. It cannot even be other-evidential, other-evidentiality being a concept derived from self-evidentiality. So then, we arrive at the *eleventh* meaning of the critique: it demarcates both philosophy and science from metaphysics.

We now come to the *twelfth* meaning of the 'critique of knowledge'. According to it, the critique demarcates philosophy of science (of Kant's conception) from (i) methodology of science and (ii) philosophy from science (of present-day conception). In current philosophy of science, pre-suppositions (whatever they may be) are sought to be justified with reference to the given body of science (whatever that may be—physics, mathematics, statistics and so on). But in Kant's philosophy of science, the basic presupposition is the very *concept* of science: it is, as he would call it, 'transcendental presupposition'. This transcendental presupposition as the very concept of science cannot be justified by an appeal to any *given* body of science. Where Popper demarcates science from philosophy or metaphysics, Kant goes deeper in demarcating philosophy, i.e. philosophy of science as epistemology from science. Where contemporary philosophers of science understand epistemology as philosophy or methodology of science, Kant would be concerned with the basic task of founding a doctrine of science, the concept of science as such. While philosophy for Kant would be concerned with the *concept* of science, science itself is concerned with understanding the world philosophy does not know the world but knows knowledge as constitutive of the world, Philosophy, to repeat Kant's diction, is the *Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*.

II

Since the very *concept* of 'science' obtained in transcendental reflection, i.e. reflection getting inward and installed in the consciousness

of the subject is basic to the bodies of actual sciences, no actual science, no *actual* body of knowledge can justify it. It is strange that Kant proceeded to *justify* the very concept of science or the very transcendental presupposition of science. The presupposition of knowledge, according to Kant, is the very *concept* of knowledge-enterprise *as such* and this latter cannot be justified by an appeal to any *actual* knowledge-enterprise, be it physics, economics, ecology, history and so on. In Kant's specific language, knowledge of nature as a synthetic unity justifies the *a priori* synthetic principles of knowledge. The argument is of this form: unless those principles are presupposed, knowledge of nature as a synthetic unity cannot be justified. The argument is really a *Modus Tollens*. But *modus tollens* is out of question here: for *modus tollens* makes it appear that actual knowledge, i.e. knowledge of nature as synthetic is the yardstick for justifying the synthetic principles of the possibility of knowledge.

But *first*, possibility cannot be justified by actuality. *Second*, the concept of science is self-certified. It is the concept of other-evidentiality constituted in self-evidentiality. But self-evidentiality need not be justified. *Third*, to demand justifiability in the present context is to adopt a legalistic model. On Kant's own admission, the 'deduction' of the synthetic principles of nature is based on a legalistic model. Jurists appeal to a principle to bring under it a 'case': Similarly, Kant thinks, he appeals to the self as synthetic unity *under* which the synthetic structure of our knowledge is to be brought. But legalistic or juridical justification of a principle is one thing, self-validation of knowledge another. Self-validation is anything but justification. The legalistic model has to be abandoned in the present context.

It may, however, be said that the relation between a legal or juridical principle and a 'case' is not all that simple as we have made it out to be. A 'case' is a case under a legal principle and, in its coming to be brought under the principle, our understanding of the 'case' comes to be enriched. So a 'case' comes to be loaded with interpretation in the light of the principle in question. If this is how the relation of a 'case' to a principle is understood, then, it may be said, Kant is justified in analogously bringing synthetic knowledge in physics and mathematics under the principle of the synthetic unity of apperception which helps mathematics and physics to be understood better, i.e. philosophically just as a legal principle helps a case to be understood better, i.e. legally.

But, it may be replied, the legal principle in question is not conceived as *independent* of the setting of the case. There is, for the jurist, a continual exposure to the case, to its subtle nuances, its contours. It is a reflective exercise that the jurist is engaged in and that he brings to bear on the 'case' and that helps the legal principle emerge in his understanding. Surely, when the principle emerges, the 'case' assumes a new meaning or significance which it had not before, i.e. before the principle emerged in the jurist's understanding. Yet the fact remains that the principle is an abstraction of the 'case'. There is, that is, on the part of the jurist a continual backward movement to the case and a forward movement to the principle, both of which acts and reacts on each other. But such backward and forward movements are conspicuous by their absence in the context of understanding the regional contexts of knowledge (paradigms of which are, for Kant, mathematics and physical. It may be said that knowledge of the *a priori* principles is region-independent and constitutive of the different kinds or regions of knowledge. Particularly, the backward movement of the kind referred to just now, in which the jurist is engaged, is absent in one's understanding the status of the synthetic principles, because, *first* although they are, *psychologically*, a later acquisition than the regional contexts of knowledge (of which they are principles), *when* they come to be appreciated, they are appreciated as *constitutive* of and as therefore *independent* of those regional contexts. *Secondly*, whereas the legal principles are abstractions of the 'case' in question, the *a priori* principles are anything but abstractions of the given contexts of knowledge: if anything, they are constructions of the given contexts of knowledge.

The misconceived task of the 'Deduction' on part of Kant has led many in recent times to question whether Kant's list of categories is unique and comprehensive.¹ The founding of Riemannian geometry has led many to cast suspicious eyes on the Kantian conclusion, in defense of Euclidean Geometry, that space is synthetic *a priori*. Einstein observed that in so far as geometry is synthetic, it is not *a priori* and in so far as it is *a priori*, it is not synthetic. Supposing our knowledge of the different regions of the world changes, we may have to revise continually our list of the presuppositions regarding the knowledge-structures that experts in their respective fields have built up. Now, if these questions arise, that is because the root of the trouble lies in Kant's legalistic procedure of justifying the *a priori* principles. These principles constitute

the very possibility of the knowledge of the world and Kant is forced to 'deduce' the *a priori* forms through the knowledge of the world because he could not hold fast to the conception of transcendental knowledge as self-reflective or self-evident. Because we have a transcendental knowledge of the possibility of knowledge of the world in its different regions, therefore actual and changing knowledge cannot be the yardstick of transcendental knowledge. In sum, Kant failed to hold fast to the great idea he propounded, viz, the idea of philosophy as the *Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*.

But what were the reasons for Kant's failure? The reasons are mainly two although they are related. First, Kant thought that he was writing a grammar of Newtonian science. Here is the root of all trouble, all confusion. And from this follows the second reason for Kant's failure in the context in question: Kant confused between 'theory of knowledge' and 'theory of science'. He took it, not consciously of course, that because 'science' is, lexically speaking, 'knowledge', therefore a theory of knowledge is a theory of science. But the first reason is so basic that it needs to be discussed in detail.

It is often thought that Kant *first* accepted the conclusions of Newtonian Science and *then* asked himself the question "What must be granted in order that Newtonian Science is possible?" According to this way of viewing Kant's enquiry, the sort of activity in which Kant is engaged is a second-order activity: *assuming* Newtonian Science as an intelligible or rational system of truths about Nature, Kant seeks to bring out or lay bare the truths about Newtonian Science, i.e. truths which one can refuse to admit only on pain of the condition that such refusal would spell danger to Newtonian Science. Now suppose it is granted that Kant's enquiry can be described as an enquiry into the presuppositions of Newtonian Science. Then our question is whether it would be a faithful description of Kant's task to say that he discovers the presuppositions, i.e., that Newton's science is concerned with saying things about Nature and that, on the same analogy, Kant's philosophy of science concerns itself with saying things about Newtonian Science. Does the analogy hold well?

We may indeed be told that the point about the analogy is stressed only by one who interprets Kant as having understood 'discovery' in the naïve, uncritical sense, as if 'discovery' here were just a process of opening one's eyes and fixing one's gaze on something lying 'out there',

so to say, on the contrary, very much is gained in the way of making clear what 'discovery' of presuppositions is if we follow Kant's lead. Following Kant's lead, we may find that 'discovery', in the present context, is of a different style from how it is taken to be in common sense, and that it is the peculiar methodology of its 'discovery' that distinguishes philosophy from science. Such methodologically different kind of discovery is what Kant calls 'deduction'. And 'deduction', as Kant understands it, consists in steps back to (what Kant calls) the synthetic unity of apperception from which the categorical presuppositions of experience are 'deduced'. But such step backwards is *no inferential step* from conclusion to premise, i.e., from our knowledge of the world to the Kantian synthetic unity of apperception, for, supposing that some such backward inferential operation can be performed, there is no fixed criterion to help us identify *the premise (or the premises) understood as the presupposition (or presuppositions)* of our knowledge. As a matter of fact, theoretical presuppositions, different from those conceived by Kant, have been sought to be formulated by other philosophers. Philosophers are not found wanting to say that there is nothing unique in the Kantian presuppositions. But, from Kant's point of view, not *any and every* intellectually contrived presupposition will do, throughout his insistence is on presuppositions that are discovered according to a certain *method*.

We may hope to understand what the method is by calling to our aid the *end product* of the application of the method i.e., the thesis which the method helps us arrive at. And the thesis is 'Experience is articulated in system of concepts' ('categories' in Kant's diction). When a philosopher says 'Experience is articulated in a conceptual system', he does not *describe* experience. He *reflects* on our understanding of the world, our experience. Now, it may be said that reflection on our experience is just a second-order activity: our initial or primary understanding is concerned with the world but with the way we know the world, adjust ourselves to it, change it etc.

There is, however, something more in transcendental analysis than what is there in reflective analysis as conceived by those who take it to be a second-order activity. Transcendental analysis is reflective and something more. What distinguishes transcendental reflective analysis from non-transcendental (if we may call it so) reflective analysis is the understanding it yields of the concepts in terms of which we interpret

our experience as involved in the process of the subject's clarifying itself in the understanding of experience. In transcendental reflection, the subject is involved in a process of self-engagement. When, in transcendental reflection, we come to be aware of the conceptual presuppositions of experience, we—who come to have such awareness—do, not just engage ourselves in a second-order activity. Philosophers generally tend to think that philosophy starts with such second-order activity, i.e. with reflection (not transcendental). But they do not concern themselves with enquiring how what is understood in reflection stands *vis-à-vis* the reflection. Does it appear to reflection in the way a content appears to *pre-reflective* understanding? The content of *pre-reflective* understanding is revealed as *neutral* to the fact of its being revealed. That it is revealed is just accidental to it: it was not intended, in pre-reflective understanding, to be revealed in that understanding. Its revelation, in other words, was not involved in the structure of the reflection. But when—in transcendental reflection—we come to be aware of the presuppositions of experience, these latter are understood as the presuppositions *we, intentionally or consciously*, formulate in order to make experience clear to ourselves. But 'making clear' here is not clearing a motorway or clearing our desks or clearing the mirror or dusting our books. We clarify experience to ourselves only when we realize, that is, only when the *clarifying consciousness* certifies that something (here 'experience') was not clear because its subjectivity was not manifest. Thus transcendental-reflective analysis is a process by which, in clarifying experience, the clarifying consciousness achieves a new point of view, i.e., the point of view of the subject from which knowledge or experience of the world may be understood or analyzed. So far as it achieves the point of view of the subject, it is a sort of *doing* and not merely *understanding* the conceptual presuppositions of experience, not merely (therefore) a second order activity. What is revealed in a second-order activity is *not structurally* involved in the activity but what is revealed in transcendental reflection is *within* its structure. The structure is dynamic or moving as it is a matter of the subject's continually deepening it, making it explicit.

It may, however, be objected that we are forcing a transcendentalist interpretation upon reflection. There *is* a branch of philosophy, it may be said, which deals with the presuppositions of experience and is, so far reflective without its having anything to do with subjectivity: that branch of philosophy is philosophy of science. So, it may be said, either

philosophy of science is not reflective or reflection is not uniquely transcendentalist or subjective in character. To this, the transcendentalist would answer that he takes nothing away from the philosopher of science, or, for that matter, philosophers of non-transcendentalist persuasion. He would explain philosophy of science in this way the search for the presuppositions of experience in philosophy of science is *chained* to the world-outlook for the purpose of science—which is that of understanding the world, nothing like subjectivity—the task of the philosopher of science is accomplished with his having discovered the presuppositions of experience. But when the transcendentalist critically asks 'What is it to understand the presuppositions of experience?' his *interest shifts* from the world to the subjective understanding of the world. He comes to understand, consequent on such shift of interest, that subjectivity lies imbedded in the world with which one starts in the pre-reflective *cum* pre-transcendental attitude and is clarified, i.e. realized in the critical, reflective and transcendental or philosophical understanding of the world. Thus reflection, as we have interpreted it within the context of transcendentalism, is not the 'discovery' of the presuppositions of our knowledge or experience of the world. Attention is switched over in reflection from the world to the subject knowing the world. Reflective activity, in which philosophy consists, rescues philosophy from being a mere appendage to science and secures to philosophy a new domain viz. that of the subject. Kant was precluded from approaching such a conception of philosophy because he was obsessed with the idea of supplying the philosophical foundation of Newtonian science. And, because Kant confused knowledge with science, he also confused theory of knowledge with theory of science 'science' is, of course, 'knowledge': but we should not, in building up Theory of Knowledge as a distinctive discipline, allow our minds to be clouded with such synonymy. There is a positive scientific view of knowledge according to which knowledge consists in supplying information about the world in the interests of manipulating the world for our purposes. That scientific outlook in which knowledge is treated as appendage to our worldly interests got the better of the philosophic outlook of Kant: as a result, the idea of knowledge as pure subjective reflection, on which theory of knowledge or Epistemology (as distinct from science) can be founded, escaped Kant. Epistemology or Theory of Knowledge is not only no theory of science but also no science itself.

Because Kant could not dare the specifically epistemological point of view, therefore, he restored to the faulty procedure of 'Deduction', i.e. that of validating self-evidentiality, which is constitutive of other-evidentiality, in terms of other evidentiality itself. All Kant's great insights in apprehending the idea of 'Anfangsgründe' were thrown overboard as he wavered between the role of a philosopher of Newtonian Science and the role of a philosopher who reflects on the transcendental possibility of any knowledge in any field whatsoever.

III

We saw earlier that even after the *generality* of the Kantian problem comes to be conceived. It *persists*. The reason, we guessed, is that the problem was identified in the framework of Kant's first critique. Perhaps the problem is expression of the *demand* that Kant's transcendental philosophy be viewed in a conspectus that is larger than that of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Thus, it may be observed that the transcendental problem is not just the problem of explaining how our rational categories or forms constitute the world that we know. But before proceeding further with this suggestion or with the kind of thought that we have to step *beyond* the *Critique of Pure Reason* (in appreciating the distinctiveness of the transcendental problem), let us first give Kant the credit that is due to him.

Descriptivist in his account of human reason, i.e. not a philosopher building on any speculative theory of reason—such as was Plato's or Hegel's—Kant took, as the starting point of his philosophy, the finitude of human intellect. Thus he Philosophy; pointed out that, because of its constitutional finitude, reason cannot be 'intuitive'. In the 'Architectonic' part of his *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant says that the key concept of the architectonic is 'the essential ends of human reason'. Rudolf Eisler's *Kant-Lexikon*² and G.Martin's *Allgemeiner Kant index zu Kant's gesammelten schriften*³ have entries on 'Interesse der Vernunft' ('Interests of Reason'). From these, it is clear that (i) 'Reason for Kant is not static (as it is for Plato) but (ii) is historical. Further, Kant observes that interest 'cannot be attributed to a being which lacks reason'.⁴ Near the end of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant introduced

the concept of the 'history of reason'. The history of reason is the manifestation or realization of the 'interests' of 'reason'. It should be noted in this connection that, for Kant, historical knowledge is knowledge from data which he contrasts with rational knowledge derived from 'principles'. So Kant has in mind the *immanent* ends of reason, i.e. ends determined by principles of reason. What is the immanent end of reason? It is the search for rational totality. The entire history of reason, according to Kant, is 'organically united in a system of human knowledge'.⁵ In contrast with Hegel, Kant (would) maintain that this organic unity is a matter of search, *praxis*.

Conclusion: The Problem Dissolves Itself

Back to the Transcendental Problem. It is, as though, the intimation of the *historicizing* of reason and *not* one of explaining how knowledge of the world through reason ('Categories') is possible. Stated in the latter terms, the problem *cannot be solved*. If it is stated in such terms, the only straightforward answer should be—as has been the answer *in fact*—that knowledge is no problem but is a *fact*. The problem should rather be understood in a way that is consistent with man's rationality-enterprise embedded in his historicity which again is governed by the 'immanent' end of reason, i.e., achievement of totality. Kant of course dreamt of the architectonic unity of reason. He envisioned that he would 'hand down to posterity the treasure of metaphysic, that was to be purified by the Critique': he envisioned 'a complete satisfaction of reason'⁶ 'to which no addition can be made'.⁷ This may indeed be a dream never to be fulfilled. But even when history of reason is completed, there would still remain the scope for praxiological encounter with the world. And it is this unending praxiological encounter that reason envisions when it raises the transcendental problem. In raising the problem, reason gropes towards the goal immanently set by itself. Raising the transcendental problem is reason's self-fulfilling and definitely not conceiving intellectual constructions *from a distance* with the outlook of a theoretician of some discipline.

To sum up: the transcendental problem is to be understood as reflecting reason's inherent praxiological encounter with the world, its ever-expanding but never-expanding historicizing of itself. As reflective of reason's historical-praxiological totalizing process, as actuating reason to realize its immanent end, the *problem dissolves itself*.

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