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**THE QUESTION OF TRUTH IN
IMMANUEL KANT'S *CRITIQUE OF PURE
REASON***

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In loving memory of my Mum, Mama Theresia Biy

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ABSTRACT

This thesis sets out to test the relevance of the Kantian conception of truth in our contemporary era. In order to seek an appropriate, constructed relationship between our knowledge and its object, we argue that the contemporary epistemological debate on nonconceptual content inevitably takes us back to Kant. This is because though concepts without intuitions are empty and intuitions without concepts are blind, there is a nonconceptual angle to the Kantian theory of knowledge which implies that “blind intuitions” constitute a primitive level of rationality or ‘proto rationality’ which cannot be considered irrational because conceptualisation will no longer be the only criterion of rationality. This view makes Kant not only a proponent of conceptualism but also and above all of nonconceptualism. We argue that the nonconceptual angle of the Kantian theory of knowledge is consistent with the conceptual angle thereby taking us back to the *noumena* to show that we can no longer be contented with unknowable entities. Supplementing conceptualism with nonconceptualism in the Kantian theory of knowledge makes the theory flexible thus giving us more chances of grasping the reality in its complexity. To prove that a return to Kant is not anachronistic, our research work has carried out an uncompromising critical analysis of two contrasting but complementary angles of the relationship that Kant conceives between concepts and intuitions to make his theory more adaptable to the epistemological needs of our era in which the truth is no longer a discovery but a construction with extensions in metaphysics, natural science, morality and religion.

To construct a more appropriate relationship between the subject and the object of knowledge that can give rise to truth in our era, our analytical, critical and adaptive study of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* has obtained results at three levels. Firstly, in the construction of the truth, the Kantian transition from speculative to practical reason can only be epistemologically useful if contemporary religion gets the necessary moral foundation that will rid it of conflicts, servitude and illusions in the denominational multiplicity of our era. Since denominational multiplicity has become an obstacle to the establishment of an ethical community, the goal of the expansion of the field of truth from speculative to practical reason will remain utopic unless the Kantian rational religion becomes a reality in our era. Secondly, contemporary natural science becomes apodictic, acquires universality and necessity from the Kantian reformulated version of metaphysics when all dialectical illusions are eliminated. We argue that the Kantian critique of metaphysics is a destructive – constructive process to make metaphysics more applicable as part of the foundation of a science worthy of the name. Thirdly, given the complexity of the reality in our era that has given rise to an expression of disappointment in a problematic ‘post – truth’ era, a contemporary reading of Kant’s theory of knowledge has to take into account the nonconceptual representation of the object which has to complement the conceptual angle to make the Kantian theory more flexible to cope with the multidimensional and multidisciplinary needs of our era in search of truth.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse se propose de tester la pertinence de la conception kantienne de la vérité à notre époque contemporaine. Afin de rechercher une relation appropriée et construite entre notre savoir et son objet, nous soutenons que le débat épistémologique contemporain sur le contenu nonconceptuel nous ramène inévitablement à Kant. Bien que les concepts sans intuitions soient vides et que les intuitions sans concepts soient aveugles, il existe un angle nonconceptuel dans la théorie kantienne de la connaissance qui implique que les « intuitions aveugles » constituent un niveau primitif de rationalité ou de « proto rationalité » qui ne peut être considéré comme irrationnel car la conceptualisation ne sera plus le seul critère de rationalité. Cette vision fait de Kant non seulement un partisan du conceptualisme mais aussi et surtout du nonconceptualisme. L'angle nonconceptuel de la théorie kantienne est cohérent avec l'angle conceptuel nous ramenant ainsi aux noumènes pour montrer que nous ne pouvons plus nous contenter d'entités inconnaissables. Compléter le conceptualisme par le non-conceptualisme dans l'épistémologie kantienne rend sa théorie flexible, nous donnant ainsi plus de chances de saisir le réel dans sa complexité. Pour prouver qu'un retour à Kant n'est pas anachronique, notre thèse a mené une analyse critique sans concession de deux angles opposés mais complémentaires du rapport que Kant conçoit entre concepts et intuitions pour rendre sa théorie plus adaptable aux besoins épistémologiques de notre époque dans laquelle la vérité n'est plus une découverte mais une construction avec des prolongements en métaphysique, sciences naturelles, la morale et la religion.

Pour construire un rapport plus approprié entre le sujet et l'objet de connaissance qui puisse faire naître la vérité, notre étude analytique, critique et adaptative de la *Critique de la raison pure* de Kant a obtenu des résultats à trois niveaux. D'abord, dans la construction de la vérité, le passage kantien de la raison spéculative à la raison pratique ne peut être utile épistémologiquement que si la religion contemporaine se dote du fondement moral nécessaire qui la débarrassera des conflits, de la servitude et des illusions dans la multiplicité confessionnelle de notre époque. La multiplicité confessionnelle étant devenue un obstacle à l'établissement d'une communauté éthique, le but de l'élargissement du champ de la vérité de la raison spéculative à la raison pratique restera utopique à moins que la religion rationnelle kantienne ne devienne une réalité à notre époque. Deuxièmement, les sciences naturelles contemporaines tirent leur caractère apodictique, l'universalité et la nécessité de la version reformulée de la métaphysique kantienne lorsque toutes les illusions dialectiques sont éliminées. La critique kantienne de la métaphysique est un processus destructeur – constructif pour rendre la métaphysique plus applicable en tant qu'élément du fondement d'une science digne de ce nom. Troisièmement, étant donné la complexité du réel à notre époque qui a donné lieu à une expression de déception dans une ère problématique « post-vérité », une lecture contemporaine de la théorie de la connaissance de Kant doit prendre en compte la représentation nonconceptuelle de l'objet qui complète l'angle conceptuel pour rendre la théorie kantienne plus flexible pour faire face aux besoins multidimensionnels et multidisciplinaires de notre époque en quête de vérité.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

From Immanuel Kant to us, the question of truth cuts across many fields of study. Our work focuses on the epistemological treatment that Kant gives to the problem with inevitable references to metaphysics and natural science. If the truth is considered nominally as the relation of knowledge with the object, then we must identify the kind of object as well as the kind of relation that should exist between the subject and the object to deserve the appellation of 'truth'. An inquiry concerning the status of truth in epistemology implies the method that leads to the truth. The methodical rigour of Immanuel Kant conditions us to envisage the issues relating to truth in a way as to culminate in solutions or at least possibilities of solutions to the contemporary problem of complexity and the failure of systematic theories. The question concerning what we can know means we should identify the object of our knowledge. This becomes a problem because the object of knowledge is not easily given and the procedure to grasp it should never be taken for granted. The relationship between the subject and the object of knowledge brings into play the various faculties used by man in cognition. In Kantian philosophy, the main faculties at the centre of controversies are understanding and reason, the former being that with which objects are thought through concepts and the latter being that by which concepts are taken beyond the bounds of experience in search of synthetic unity and completeness. This, in turn, implies that the object of knowledge can be empirical and given in sensible intuition through time and space, or transcendental and not given in sensible intuition but assumed for the sake of explanatory completeness.

Depending on the object of knowledge and the possibilities and limitations as well as conflicts of the faculties involved, the knowledge of the truth becomes problematic in Kantian philosophy and in our work. Under which conditions does the relation of knowledge with the object guarantee the truth? Here, we need to consider the conditions of the knower and those of the thing known. We need to know if the knowledge of truth depends more on the subject than the object or vice versa or on both at the same level. This age – old problem of philosophy gets an original treatment in Kant's critical philosophy which has to formulate a hypothesis for treating the problem of knowledge and also and above all carrying out a rigorous deduction of the hypothesis. The formulation of the new hypothesis is likened to a revolution like that carried out by Nicholas Copernicus in astronomy. The rigorous deduction is based on the model of Isaac Newton in the demonstration of the mathematical laws of nature. The difference is made through what is known as the "Kantian Copernican Revolution" that is at the crossroad of natural science, epistemology and metaphysics.

In epistemology, the new hypothesis makes the final product of knowledge a construction of the mind through its own internal concepts and principles formulated independently of experience. In metaphysics, the conversion of categories to transcendental ideas of pure reason seeks and finds synthetic unity and completeness but is of no epistemological value and can only serve as a foundation for a future system of morality and religion. In natural science, the new hypothesis leads to the abandonment of blind induction used by students of nature who make the mind a slave to experience whereas the hypothetical deductive approach makes the mind and its concepts and principles the conditions of possibility of experience altogether. The categories are the concepts of the understanding which, like the ideas of pure reason, are *a priori* or conceived independently of experience, but which, unlike the ideas of pure reason, yet relate to the experience from which they were not derived. The categories give rise to judgments which are ways by which knowledge obtained as a manifold of perceptions is brought to a point of unity. Analytic *a priori* judgements are independent of experience and break down concepts such that the predicate term says something already implied in the subject term thereby using tautology to avoid contradiction. Synthetic *a posteriori* judgements appeal to experience such that the concept in the predicate adds something new or foreign to the concept in the subject. With analytic *a priori* judgments, logical necessity is the referee; with synthetic *a posteriori* judgements, experience is the referee.

But there is a third category of judgements called synthetic *a priori* judgements which are neither proven through experience nor logical necessity, they are not derived from experience and yet add something new to our stock of knowledge. The advent of synthetic *a priori* judgements is the product of the Kantian Copernican revolution that constitutes the central theme of his epistemology and the bone of contention in the kind of metaphysics that can be epistemologically fruitful. Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* lays the framework for the use of reason only where objective and valid knowledge can be obtained while avoiding the misuse of reason in dialectical illusions:

There is no need of a critique of reason in its empirical employment, because in this field its principles are always subject to the test of experience. Nor is it needed in mathematics, where the concepts of reason must be forthwith exhibited in concrete in pure intuition, so that everything unfounded and arbitrary in them is at once exposed. But where neither empirical nor pure intuition keeps reason to a visible track, when, that is to say, reason is being considered in its transcendental employment, in accordance with mere concepts, it stands so greatly in need of a discipline, to restrain its tendency towards extension beyond the narrow limits of possible experience and to

*guard it against extravagance and error, that the whole philosophy of pure reason has no other than this strictly negative utility.*¹

We need to know the conditions under which synthetic *a priori* judgments become knowledge or at least a major step to knowledge. This is what Kant has to prove so that we can use it as his achievement that can serve as a solution to our contemporary problems of epistemology, metaphysics and natural science. If science has failed in the appeal to blind experience and metaphysics has failed in the uncensored appeal to transcendental ideas or ideas of pure reason, then there is need to return to the object to unveil the *noumena* without unnecessary reconciliation of conflicting approaches. Negatively, the critique has to restrict the use of reason so that we should not take illusions for truth. Positively the critique has to define the field of possible truth so that we should easily test validity and objectivity of knowledge. Yet despite the severe critique of metaphysics, the *a priori* resemblance of mathematics with metaphysics implies that not all hope is lost for the old science of speculative philosophy in matters of knowledge and especially in matters of religion and morality.

In matters of knowledge, metaphysics has to become a reformulated science of synthetic *a priori* judgements to have any hope of standing with mathematics as the foundation of natural sciences. Between the need to keep reason within the bounds of experience for the sake of knowledge and the need for reason to go beyond experience to attain synthetic unity and completeness in its principles, natural science and metaphysics are in an apparent opposition mediated by the *a priori* successes of mathematics. If natural science uses mathematics to attain certainty where metaphysics fails, then there is need for questions to be asked. If metaphysics is failing where natural science is succeeding through *a priori* principles, then it is important to know if natural science is still purely inductive and empirical as its adepts claim so as to distance it from philosophy. This problem leads us to the current preoccupations of modern science that has moved from blind induction to hypothetical deduction to get better foundations of truth. In *Metaphysical Foundations of Science*, Kant understands the transcendental foundation of natural science which natural scientists assume in their inquiries but avoid talking about so as not to lose the ‘prestige’ of science in what they consider as vain metaphysical speculations. Yet the concepts of natural science inevitably lead to a transcendental base:

¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1929, The Discipline of Pure Reason, pp. 575 -576. [Except otherwise stated, we are quoting the first edition of 1781.]

[...] the concept of motion in relative (movable) space, second, that of motion in absolute (immovable) space, and third, that of relative motion in general, as distinct from absolute motion. The concept of absolute space is the basis for all of them. But how do we arrive at this peculiar concept, and what underlies the necessity of its use? It cannot be an object of experience, for space without matter is no object of perception, and yet it is a necessary concept of reason, and thus nothing more than a mere idea.²

If natural scientists have not really succeeded to abandon the ways of metaphysics because the *a priori* foundation of mathematics is maintained and we cannot prevent reason from seeking synthetic unity of its principles, then the Kantian reformulation of the conditions of possibility of metaphysics as a science necessarily pushes natural scientists to implicitly or explicitly assume the metaphysical foundation they have been shying away from, and yet using mathematics whose *a priority* is not very far away from that of metaphysics.

Therefore, the quest for truth in Kantian epistemology implies the reconciliation of rationalism and empiricism in epistemology through transcendental idealism, the possibility of complementarity of natural science and metaphysics through the hypothetical deductive approach achieved by the Kantian Copernican revolution, and for us, the reconciliation of our knowledge with our growing need for more avenues through which we can accurately represent the truth. And in our era of globalisation, the need to put knowledge at the service of humanity stretches our faculties to their utmost limits which are not set arbitrarily, after all the truth continues to puzzle and baffle many. We actually have to move beyond any imaginable limits as long as such a move leads to something good for man. The need to put knowledge at the service of humanity is not ignored by Kant who makes it clear in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* that “All cultural progress, by means of which the human being advances his education, has the goal of applying this acquired knowledge and skill for the world's use. But the most important object in the world to which he can apply them is the human being: because the human being is his own final end.”³ This means that we are going to judge the results of the Kantian quest for truth in the light of the complexity of the reality which conditions us not to reject any approach in the construction of the truth. That is why the last part of our research work highlights problems inherent in the use of reason today: the enduring and yet conflicting complementarity of natural science with metaphysics in the light of the ever complex nature of truth; the need for the expansion of

² Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, trans. Michael Friedman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, Fourth Chapter, General Remark to Phenomenology, p. 98.

³ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Robert Loudon, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 6.

truth from the speculative to the practical realm to bear epistemological fruits as well as the extrapolation of the truth in contemporary moral and religious practices marked by illusions and religious madness; as well as the explosion of the truth in intercultural relationships.

On April 22, 1724, in Königsberg (Prussia), today Kaliningrad in Russia, was born Immanuel Kant, son to Johann Georg Kant and Anna Regina Kant. Immanuel Kant was the fourth child to his parents though at the time of his birth his only surviving sibling was a five – year – old sister, his parents having lost two children prior to his birth. Despite the difficulties faced by his father's trade of harness – making at the time, Kant had a strict moral upbringing that can be reflected in the purity of his moral theory based on the practice of virtue as a duty. Just at the threshold to the age of 22, Kant had lost his parents, his mother died in 1737 and his father died in 1746; the loss of his mother was the most devastating to Kant who was just 13 years old. Kant attended *Collegium Fridericianum*, a Pietistic school led by Albert Schulz where he received the kind of religious education that his mother wanted for her kids. As a religious movement of Protestant Churches in Germany, Pietism laid much emphasis on practical faith and acts of charity unlike the elitist Orthodox Church of the time. Pietism is greatly reflected in the Kantian theory of a religion based on morality.

In 1740, Immanuel Kant made his way into the University of Königsberg where he had a life - changing story as a student and as a professor and the great philosopher we know him to be. Studying and teaching in his hometown means that Kant never went far away from the people and the customs he grew up in, and had the kind of home – feeling tranquillity to build a system of philosophy inseparable from his childhood experiences as a student and private teacher. As a university student, Kant did not laugh very often. As a private teacher, due to financial difficulties, in 1741, Kant dropped his university studies to make ends meet. When Kant returned to the university later, he had the kind of life experience that could make him a self – sponsored orphan ready to face the challenges of life. In 1770, Kant was given a university chair in Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Königsberg, which implies that the combination of metaphysics and logic in his epistemology and ethics are not a matter of accident. Kant became a celebrity in his hometown not only because of the profoundness of his thought but also because of the conceptual density of his philosophy not accessible to a first - time reader.

As one of the first great philosophers to become a university teacher of philosophy, Kant was an academician par excellence who had the chance to teach the philosophical ideas

he conceived and to combine logic and metaphysics in the lessons that later became the bedrock of what is known as ‘critical philosophy’. Between 1770 and 1780, Kant went into a ‘silent decade’ also known as the ‘pre –critical era’ in which he used his university teaching career and moments of deep personal reflection to develop ideas that shaped the history of philosophy in ways that make him a perennial thinker. Writing a biographic extract on Kant is as difficult as talking about the life of an author and the philosophy of the author at the same time, given that many aspects of our lives do not always reflect our later thoughts though some events in our lives actually shape our thoughts as Kuehn notes:

Kant's biography would appear to be especially difficult to write. His life was that of a typical university professor in eighteenth-century Germany. His philosophical work is so dense, abstruse, and technical that it is difficult to make it accessible to the general reader. This would seem to be a deadly combination. Furthermore, Kant himself followed in his works the motto "de nobis ipsis silemus" ("about ourselves we are silent"). He was concerned with philosophical truth, and he wanted to be known for having advanced philosophical truths. This also has consequences for his biography. There is no journal; the details about his life are sparse. They have to be gleaned from what he let through by accident, and from the recollections of those who were closest to him. Most of these are recollections of older people about the older Kant.⁴

In a meticulous lifestyle of an academician that concealed many elements of his life so as to project the life of the philosopher, Kant became a personality for admiration and a mystery to many who were curious about his private life. And since many concealed aspects of the life of a philosopher involve social life, Kant is falsely tagged as a misogynist for the life of celibacy which must not necessarily mean despise of women.

Though Kant was not married and not much is known about his possible intimate relationships with women, the charge of misogyny cannot be proven as he associated with the female folk of the Konigsberg society of intellectuals and traders who, in one way or the other, could not get the philosopher to get entangled in a romantic relationship that could lead to marriage. Yet, Kant interacted and socialized with the intellectual and business class of his era while respecting a controversial maxim to avoid marriage:

Kant formulated the maxim: "One mustn't get married." In fact, whenever Kant wanted to indicate that a certain, very rare, exception to a maxim might be acceptable, he would say: "The rule stands: One shouldn't marry! But let's make an exception for this worthy pair." Rules and maxims could have exceptions, and not just as far as marriage was concerned; but just as only the

⁴Manfred Kuehn, *Kant: A Biography*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, Prologue, pp. 19 – 20.

*exceptional marriage was for him an acceptable exception, so maxims could be violated only rarely.*⁵

To Kant, marriage was to be a rare circumstance that had to break the general rule of celibacy. He did not find the exceptional circumstance to get married but had many regular moments of a genius developing an age old philosophical system that could only be developed by men of exceptional talent.

After the ‘pre –critical’ or ‘silent decade’ of 1770 to 1780, the era of ‘critical philosophy’ began in 1781 with the publication of the massive *Critique of Pure Reason* which is on focus in our thesis on the status of truth. The Kantian critique was so ravaging that, in matters of theology, the moral religion based on reason had an effect on church attendance in Königsberg, and as Manfred Kuehn puts it, “Many contemporaries had made Kant's doctrines responsible for the empty churches at Sunday services in Königsberg and elsewhere.”⁶ In the era of critical philosophy, far from a critique of books, it is about coming to terms with what we can know and what we cannot know using reason. The status of truth finds systematic treatment in Kant’s philosophy because a new and revolutionary approach to truth means that we put to question the relation between the subject and the object of knowledge so as to have an adequate relationship between our cognition and the object of our knowledge. On the status of truth, Kant states the age – old philosophical problem himself: “What is truth? The nominal definition of truth, that it is the agreement of knowledge with its object, is assumed as granted; the question asked is as to what is the general and sure criterion of the truth of any and every knowledge.”⁷ The definition of the truth as an agreement between the knower’s knowledge and the thing known implies that the truth is more of a relationship and a construction than a static entity to be discovered. Yet a general criterion of truth has to take into account the content of the knowledge attained. If this is to be done through the object of our knowledge, then a definition of the object of knowledge becomes necessary. It is at this level that the complexity of the reality today conditions us to question the contemporary methods used to seek the truth and to seek to know if the Kantian approach had not posed the theoretical groundwork for what is needed today to master the reality in its perplexing and puzzling complexity.

⁵ *Ibid.*, A Palingenesis and Its Consequences, p. 169.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, Transcendental Logic, p. 97.

Grasping the status of truth is conditioned by what Kant refers to as “critique” and this critique does not refer to an evaluation of books but to a process that aims at evaluating the possibilities and limits of the human faculty of reason. The critique is a delimitation of the bounds of reason that can lead to illusions if used beyond the empirical bounds within which it leads to knowledge. Kant himself defines the concept of critique: “I do not mean by this a critique of books and systems, but of the faculty of reason in general, in respect of all knowledge after which it may strive independently of all experience.”⁸ The critique targets pure reason because it is a faculty higher than the understanding and it has the tendency to take the concepts beyond their bounds of epistemological applicability. While the understanding deals with concepts known as categories which condition the possibility of experience, pure reason is a faculty which takes the concepts beyond the bounds of experience in search of systematic unity and completeness. Even when pure reason attains this systematic unity and completeness, the epistemological goals are not attained due to the lack of the necessary empirical link that gives validity to knowledge in the Kantian theory of truth.

The problem of truth becomes even more complex when we consider not only the complexity of the object of knowledge whose totality may not be given to our faculties of representation, but also and above all the faculties and modes of knowledge some of which may not be able to conceptualize the given representations of an object putting to question the correspondence test of truth as that relationship whereby the subject represents the object with the kind of accuracy that can make the concept a condition for the possibility of cognition of the object. But whether this criterion will hold true for all objects of knowledge is a matter of controversy and profound research for us and Kant acknowledges the problem as follows: “[...] a general criterion of truth must be such as would be valid in each and every instance of knowledge, however their objects may vary. It is obvious, however, that such a criterion [being general] cannot take account of the [varying] content of knowledge (relation to its [specific] object).”⁹ In our era, every knowledge claim must be justified through the subject or the object or both, that is, the relation of one to the other. But in our era, the relation of subject to object becomes problematic since the subjective conditions must be clearly spelt out such that the ensuing truth should not be a personal fantasy but a possibility for inter – subjectivity according to concepts whose *a priori* origin is supposed to unite all

⁸ *Ibid.* Preface to the First Edition, p. 9.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Transcendental Logic, p. 97.

rational beings in a universal and valid cognition that transcends subjective grounds of relativity.

With Kant, we do a critical analysis of what the truth is supposed to be given the nature of the object studied and the nature of the human mind used as a tool to study the object. From both angles of the human mind and the object of knowledge, there are problems and solutions systematically treated in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. If the object as it is given is such that it cannot be thought, then our concepts may be wasted on objects to which they are inapplicable. If our concepts are such that they cannot be applied to some or all the objects, then the concepts result from a faculty that is not appropriate to think our objects of knowledge. If objects can be given to us without being thought and if concepts can exist to which no object can correspond, then the Kantian 'Copernican Revolution' has to be revisited within the framework of the epistemological needs of our era of complexity. Our analytic treatment of the Kantian conception of truth opens up to a critique without complacency of a theory of knowledge that may serve as a stepping stone to the solution of contemporary problems of knowledge. If Kant is reconciling two distinct elements that have independent existence, each in its own sphere, then the critique of the highest tribunal of the human mind may serve to dissipate the contention in a reconciliatory approach that is more of an ideal than a reality of our method and objects of cognition. If Kant is reconciling two elements that are supposed to complement each other but have not always been complementary, then it is the reconciliation of independent existence and complementarity that is put to question. We need to know if the objects of knowledge are not entirely given to conceptualization or our concepts are not entirely applicable to all objects.

The Kantian theory of knowledge, by attempting to reconcile apparently distinct faculties and objects and concepts and ideas, pushes the contemporary debate on epistemology to conceptual extremism of camps that need further 'revolutions' in epistemology to grasp the reality that has still not been grasped through any hasty reconciliation of contrasting theories. Our work meanders between the problems of systematic rigidity and openness in our theories of knowledge that, in one way or the other, accept and reject the Kantian conception of truth. At a critical level of testing the relevance of the Kantian approach to the truth in our contemporary era, we want to know if the Kantian reconciliation of distinct faculties has helped us in the quest for the reality in its complexity. If the Kantian reconciliation creates further situations of conceptual extremism, then the project of critical philosophy in terms of the truth has to be made to suit the needs of our time

so that we either avoid the conflict of complementary faculties or the complementarity of distinct faculties. Anil Gomes summarizes the conflict of faculties and objects and concepts as follows:

[...] each faculty cannot be reduced to the other. This is evidenced in the fact that each faculty has its own representations by means of which it relates to objects: ‘Objects are therefore given to us by means of sensibility, and it alone affords us intuitions; but they are thought through the understanding, and from it arise concepts’ Intuitions are immediate and particular representations through which objects are given to us. Concepts are mediate, general representations which relate us to objects by means of marks which can be common to more than one thing.¹⁰

Between methodological rigidity and openness, between closed systems and anarchical methods of grasping the elusive truth, our thesis seeks to prove that intuitions without concepts are blind but not meaningless as they constitute a proto – rational level of cognition that gives new perspectives and conditions of possibility of knowledge of the *noumena*.

The contemporary problem that takes us back to Kant is that of complexity. This problem has given rise to the problematic “post – truth” era treated in our work more as an expression of disappointment with fashionable but closed theories of truth than a real historical era that has literally gone beyond the truth. If anything were to be considered to exist beyond the truth, then it has to be a ‘higher truth’ or a more adequate relationship between our knowledge and the object of our knowledge. The ‘post – truth’ conception of complexity only implies that we need more adequate methods to give our knowledge an appropriate relationship with the object. In this way, going back to Kant is not anachronistic because the Kantian *noumenon* is in itself an expression of complexity and a challenge for us to go beyond Kant to seek methods of grasping the truth without contention in the unknowable. We therefore go back to Kant because a deeper reading of his epistemology shows that he had made room for us to understand that intuitions without concepts are blind but not meaningless because conceptualization is no longer the only criterion of rationality. We envisage the conditions of possibility of knowledge of the *noumena* when we juxtapose Kantian conceptualism with his nonconceptualism.

Our main research question seeks to test the relevance the Kantian Copernican revolution in epistemology in our contemporary era. Thus we question Kant’s view that

¹⁰Anil Gomes, “Kant, the Philosophy of Mind, and Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy”, in ed. Anil Gomes and Andrew Stephenson, *Kant and the Philosophy of the Mind: Perception, Reason and the Self*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, Chapter 1, p. 7.

knowledge of an object is more dependent on the subject's mind than on the object itself. Is Kant's Copernican Revolution still relevant in our contemporary quest for truth which is more of a construction than a discovery? To this general question, we add two other auxiliary questions that can help us relate the views of Kant to contemporary issues in epistemology especially the problematic 'post – truth' era. Firstly, has Kant's critique of metaphysics provided a more solid foundation for natural sciences in our era? This auxiliary question takes us to the disciplines of metaphysics and natural science whose indispensability in the construction of the truth requires justification in our era. Secondly, we question in order to show the relevance of Kant's expansion of the field of truth from theoretical to practical reason in our era. Does the contemporary relationship between morality and religion make Kant's transition from theoretical to practical reason a model for our contemporary era that seeks to construct and not just discover the truth? This second auxiliary research question helps us put to test the Kantian model constructing the truth through the trilogy of what we can know, what we should do and what we can hope for in our era.

Our research hypothesis thus envisages the possibility of nonconceptual intuitions as a step to the demystification of the complex reality. In this light, the condition of possibility of truth may no longer be in the reconciliation of conflicting methods but in putting the various methods in a competition with each other thereby giving flexibility to the Kantian theory of knowledge whose original rigidity no longer meets the epistemological needs of our time. Showing that nonconceptualism is inherent in Kantian epistemology and is consistent with Kantian conceptualism provides alternatives for the contemporary mastery of the complex reality.

Previous research work on this topic has taken the debate on Kantian epistemology to the level of nonconceptual content as another way of reading Kant's philosophy which is contrary to the traditional interpretation that makes Kant a philosopher to whom non – conceptual intuitions and non – intuitional concepts cannot give rise to valid knowledge. We take the debate to the level of knowledge of the *noumena* to prove that though the Kantian epistemological system culminates in the impossibility of knowledge of things as they are in themselves, Kant himself gives us the ingredients to go beyond this interpretative angle of his theory and envisage knowledge of the *noumena* when intuitions that are not conceptualized are considered proto – rational. This position implies that we need to use the debate of nonconceptual content as a condition of possibility of knowledge of the *noumenon* which to

us is the complex reality that we need to demystify in our era. The works of contemporary neo – Kantian thinkers like Lucy Allais (2015), Lewis White Beck (2002), Karl Americks (2006), Maurizio Ferraris (2013), Manfred Kuehn (2001), Beatrice Longueness (2017) and Dennis Schulting (2016) and others cited in our work, have given us the starting material with which to return to Kant with the justification of lifting the *noumenon* to the status of a possible object of knowledge that is complex but very knowable if we give an alternative interpretative angle to the traditional reading of Kant and open up the Kantian system through conceptual loose ends and concessions that dissipate the epistemological impediment of rigidity as illustrated by nonconceptualism.

From the authors who have done research work on similar topics, we can say that post – Kantian philosophy is not sufficient because the anti – Kantians reject the Kantian systematic closure of truth within the categories which are now obsolete in the ‘post – truth’ and ‘postmodern’ eras while the neo – Kantians seek to give non – conceptual content to Kantian epistemology. We use these positions to go back to Kant and to argue that the *noumena* can become knowable in the light of contemporary evidence that conditions us to go beyond Kant using Kant himself who gives independent existence to intuitions and concepts despite the more fashionable angle of complementarity of these two entities. The *noumenon* either loses its place as a substratum to appearance or it becomes knowable in a way that may no longer respect the *a priori* conceptual plan of the mind by which knowledge attains universality and validity. It is about identifying nonconceptual intuitions as a proto-rational or primitive level of cognition that is not meaningless but rather gives an alternative bottom – up theory to the traditional top – bottom angle of conceptualism. The idea here is to show that Kant admitted the possibility of an interpretative angle of his theory that serves as prolegomena to the knowledge of the *noumena* and thus condition of possibility of the demystification of the reality in our era. This angle is that of nonconceptualism which gives rise to proto – rational cognition.

Our research work entitled “The Question of Truth in Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*” sets out to know the kind of relationship that should exist between the subject and object of knowledge that can give rise to truth. The general problem of our work, then, is to know if the kind of relationship between knowledge and the object as conceived by Kant can help us demystify the complexity of the reality in our era. We argue that a profound reading of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, contrary to popular opinions, leads to the view that though intuitions without concepts are blind, they are not meaningless as they constitute a

nonconceptual and proto - rational level of cognition which takes us back to the *noumenon* or the thing as it is to unravel complexity through alternative methods of cognition that are bottom – up from intuitions to concepts to complement the top – bottom cognition from concepts to intuitions. We use the non – conceptual interpretative angles of the Kantian theory of knowledge to show that if the *noumena* exist, then they may be knowable through the conceptual loose ends in Kant’s epistemology which thus becomes a stepping stone to the mastery of the complexity of the reality in our era.

The first part of our work is analytical as it uses comparison and demonstration to highlight the Kantian originality in the conception of truth as an adequate relation between our cognition and the object of our cognition. This part of our work makes use of the Kantian critique of metaphysics to show how the misuse of reason can give rise to illusions that are impediments to the quest for an adequate relationship between our knowledge and its object. It is when the metaphysical illusions have been eliminated that the transcendental deduction can then propose a reformulated use of metaphysics in epistemology. It is about showing the originality of Kant’s conception of truth in his era of a “Copernican Revolution” in epistemology.

The second part of our work is a critical evaluation of the Kantian approach to truth that may no longer be applicable to contemporary realities if not well interpreted and contextualized to accommodate the contemporary mutations in methodology and in the object that is no longer given as an instantaneous achievement of the subject’s mere readiness to conceptualize. We go beyond Kant using Kant, to show that the unknowable is no longer an option in contemporary epistemology in dire need to construct the truth and not discover it. The critical level of our work has to show that the Kantian approach raises aporia that need to be reviewed within the framework of the contemporary debate on Kantian epistemology. Since the complexity of the reality in our era is such that it leads to the postulate of a problematic ‘post – truth’ era, if Kant has to remain relevant in our time, we must seek angles in his theory that are more flexible to suit contemporary needs than the traditional rigid interpretation given to his epistemology.

The third part of our work, then, is an adaptation of the Kantian conception of truth to the needs of our era. It goes without saying that, since the era of Kant, theories, methods, conceptions of the object and the subject have evolved with time and space and so it is not always easy to make an 18th century thinker’s views the solution or at least the beginning of

the solution to contemporary problems of knowledge. In the spirit of Kant, the ultimate goal is to be destructive in a constructive way; to, without giving in to methodological anarchy, seek those links in the Kantian theory of knowledge that give us more chances of grasping the truth in the cotemporary era without bias and without prejudice. We have to show that the transition from speculative to practical reason can bear fruits in our era that needs to construct and not just discover the truth, the inevitable *a priori* foundation that the Kantian reformulated metaphysics gives to contemporary science as well the need give an alternative nonconceptual interpretation of the relationship between intuitions and concepts in view of obtaining better epistemological results in the future.

FIRST PART

**THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF KANT'S CONCEPTION OF
TRUTH**

INTRODUCTION

The Kantian conception of truth is understood within the framework of his general theory of knowledge dubbed *transcendental idealism*. Kant, here, has to make a difference with regards to his immediate and distant predecessors as well as his contemporaries whose conception of truth did not take into account the conjoined role played by the mind and sense – experience in our global view of reality. As far as the approach is concerned, Kant has to show that the empiricists and rationalists miss the point when they respectively make sensation and reason work in isolation from one another. This is the substance of the Kantian Copernican Revolution where Kant establishes the necessity for the empirical and rational approaches in epistemology to complement each other.

With regards to the content of the truth, Kant makes use of his Copernican Revolution to state the tenets of his idealism dubbed *critical or transcendental idealism*. In his massive *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant states the Copernican Revolutionary foundation of his new idealism:

Hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects. But all attempts to extend our knowledge of objects by establishing something in regard to them a priori, by means of concepts, have, on this assumption, ended in failure. We must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge. This would agree better with what is desired, namely, that it should be possible to have knowledge of objects a priori, determining something in regard to them prior to their being given.¹¹

The “Copernican Revolution” in epistemology presupposes that prior to cognition, the mind cannot be a blank slate as the traditional empiricists used to assume. If our knowledge must not conform to objects, if objects must also conform to our knowledge, then we need to test the relevance of the knowledge thus obtained in terms of its proximity with the truth.

The general problem of the first part of our work consists in an analytical examination of the innovations of the transcendental idealistic approach of the Kantian Copernican revolution. A test of the relevance of knowledge is, to a great extent, a test of the relevance of the approach used to get to it. The proximity of our knowledge to the truth is directly proportional to the relevance and efficiency of the method used to acquire the knowledge. How efficient is the Kantian transcendental idealistic approach in the quest for truth in

¹¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, Preface to the Second Edition, 1929, p. 22.

epistemology? In other words, does the Kantian transcendental idealism help us do away with illusions in our quest for truth? This problem requires of us that we examine the innovations of the Kantian approach with regards to the approach used by his immediate and distant predecessors as well as that used by his contemporaries. Our aim here is not to do a catalogue of epistemological approaches before the era of Kantian philosophy; our aim is to do a comparative analysis by which the novelty of the Kantian approach can be highlighted and its efficiency and relevance tested. That is why we need to compare the approach of traditional idealism with the Kantian transcendental idealism to see how the new approach proposed by Kant leads to a more enriching content of our knowledge and the truth thus obtained.

If the content of our knowledge depends on the efficiency of the method used to get to it, then it is important to discard methods which only lead to illusions that do not enrich the enterprise of knowledge, in fact such a method can only be counter – productive in our quest for truth. The Kantian theory of knowledge identifies the metaphysical endeavor as one of those approaches that only lead to illusions. Before outlining the pre-conditions for any future metaphysics to acquire the status of science, Kant took time to explain why and how the metaphysicians of his time and those before him were involved in futile attempts to grasp the truth. The Kantian critique of metaphysics paves the way not only for other approaches that are more adequate in the quest for the truth but, also and above all, makes room for metaphysics to carry out reforms in methods and objects of study that can reconstitute its lost glory.

The issue with metaphysics, according to Kant, is the absence of delimitations of reason, an absence which takes reason off bounds with nothing epistemologically worthy to show off for. In the first line of the Preface to the first edition of *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant had already stated the gloomy fate of metaphysics as a result of the overambitious use of human reason in fields that are beyond its competence: “Human reason has this peculiar fate that in one species of its knowledge it is burdened by questions which, as prescribed by the very nature of reason itself, it is not able to ignore, but which, as transcending all its powers, it is also not able to answer.”¹² If metaphysical questions are inevitable and answers to such questions impossible, then it is not only about the futility of the metaphysical enterprise in the quest for truth but, also and above all, the limitations of the human mind that cannot find answers to metaphysical questions. Yet a typical metaphysician believes firmly

¹² *Ibid.*, Preface to the First Edition, p.7.

that he is on the path to truth using metaphysical speculations. The Kantian critique of metaphysics has to embody his critique of human reason, a critique of the capacity of the human mind to grasp the truth using pure concepts that lack sensible representations.

If the metaphysical adventure only leads to falsehood and illusions, and if the human mind continues to be addicted to this metaphysical enterprise, then what are the conditions of possibility of the emergence of truth from a different kind of metaphysics? Here, Kant has to reinvent metaphysics, a project that looks too ambitious in its aims. At least Kant has to outline conditions for metaphysics to fulfill if it has to lead to truth. What Kant saw as metaphysics in his predecessors and contemporaries was an unproductive battle ground of empty concepts:

So far, too, are the students of metaphysics from exhibiting any kind of unanimity in their contentions, that metaphysics has rather to be regarded as a battle – ground quite peculiarly suited for those who desire to exercise themselves in mock combats, and in which no participant has ever yet succeeded in gaining even so much as an inch of territory, not at least in such manner as to secure him in its permanent possession. This shows, beyond all questioning, that the procedure of metaphysics has hitherto been a merely random groping, and, what is worst of all, a groping among mere concepts.¹³

If what Kant wants is a new science of metaphysics that leads to truth, then such a science must be based on a new foundation to avoid the “mock combats” in empty concepts. This is where Kantian metaphysics finds a place in his epistemology as a *condition of possibility* for the emergence of truth. In this way we can interpret the Kantian critique of metaphysics as a constructive – destructive endeavor to give metaphysics a new facelift at the service of truth. Such, too, is the spirit of our work, to find a stronger and better foundation of truth than that provided by the metaphysics of the Kantian era.

Yet, after laying down the conditions of possibility of metaphysics as science on its own (a task which is more of a possibility than an achievement), Kant found in metaphysics a valid foundation or base for other disciplines. This does not, in the strict sense, rehabilitate metaphysics as a discipline with positive epistemological results on its own, but as that on which other disciplines depend as base for attaining truth. Of importance to us is the way metaphysics can provide a solid foundation for our understanding of nature; it is about using the mind only as far as its concepts can have a relationship with objects of sense –

¹³ *Ibid.*, Preface to the Second Edition, p. 21.

experience. Here, metaphysics can provide rational *a priori* laws for the study of nature. Kant makes this idea clear in his Preface to *The Metaphysical Foundation of Natural Science*:

A rational doctrine of nature [...] deserves the name of a natural science, only in case the fundamental natural laws therein are cognized a priori, and are not mere laws of experience. One calls a cognition of nature of the first kind pure, but that of the second kind is called applied rational cognition. Since the word nature already carries with it the concept of laws, and the latter carries with it the concept of the necessity of all determinations of a thing belonging to its existence, one easily sees why natural science must derive the legitimacy of this title only from its pure part – namely, that which contains the a priori principles of all other natural explanations –and why only in virtue of this pure part is natural science to be proper science.¹⁴

If metaphysics only serves to provide principles for the acquisition of knowledge and if such principles are necessary for truth to be attained, then we need to know where the traditional metaphysicians went wrong for metaphysics to become a misadventure that hitherto only led to falsehood and illusions. This will give us an understanding of the difference when Kant makes metaphysics the foundation and not the complete structure of natural science. How does metaphysics, which on its own fails to provide indubitable truth, now serve to provide principles for truth in other disciplines, mainly natural science? This problem ushers us into the Kantian destructive – constructive critique of reason, such that in the quest for truth, we know what to keep and what to discard as method to attain knowledge as well as the content of the knowledge itself. This is the central preoccupation of the first part of our work intended to outline the difference made by Kant in the quest for truth and the innovations of the transcendental deduction that makes the Kantian approach unique in the history of Philosophy.

¹⁴Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, trans. Michael Friedman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, Preface, p.4.

FIRST CHAPTER

KANT'S COPERNICAN REVOLUTION

Traditional idealism or what Kant refers to as “idealism proper” takes pure reason beyond bounds and makes it an autonomous source of knowledge. The content of such knowledge is a mental construction to which the senses and experience are sources of illusions. On the other hand the Kantian “critical” idealism makes pure reason a source of universal laws to which experience must conform. Hence the mind prescribes concepts and rules thanks to which we are able to understand experience. Even the pure *a priori* concepts of the understanding whose origin is independent of experience must, in the final analysis, be used to explain and give meaning to experience from which they did not emerge. Traditional idealism does not put its concepts at the service of experience as Kant remarked in *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science*:

*Idealism proper always has a mystical tendency, and can have no other, but mine is solely designed for the purpose of comprehending the possibility our cognition a priori as to objects of experience, which is a problem never hitherto solved or even suggested. In this way all mystical idealism falls to the ground, for (as may be seen already in Plato) it inferred from our cognitions a priori (even from those of geometry) another intuition different from that of the senses (namely, an intellectual intuition), because it never occurred to any one that the senses themselves might intuit a priori.*¹⁵

The task is obvious; Kant has to overturn the mystical basis of traditional idealism by making it a path to understanding and explaining nature. The intuitions of the senses have to replace intellectual intuitions; pure reason has to be used to understand objects of experience and not to create an imaginary world of intelligible objects. To what extent, then, can it be asserted that the Kantian critical idealism is a more efficient path to knowledge than the mystical traditional idealism? It is about the proximity of what is considered reality to the objects of experience, it is about whether the knowledge-seeker is involved in a fruitless game of empty concepts or a fruitful one of using concepts to outline universal laws that give meaning to experience. Herein lays the core of the difference made by critical idealism vis-à-vis the mysterious claims of the traditional idealists.

¹⁵Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science*, trans. Gary Hatfield, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, Appendix, Note 1, pp. 152 - 153.

1.1: Nicholas Copernicus and Immanuel Kant: The Perfect Analogy

Apart from the fact that the book by Nicholas Copernicus had as title *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* (1543), the book itself laid down the theoretical framework of a revolution in astronomy. The Kantian hypothesis that led to critical idealism is as revolutionary as the Copernican hypothesis that changed the face of astronomy in 1543; and Kant explained the perfect analogy in the first critique:

We should then be proceeding precisely on the lines of Copernicus' primary hypothesis. Failing of satisfactory progress in explaining the movement of heavenly bodies on the supposition that they all revolved round the spectator, he tried whether he might not have better success if he made the spectator to revolve and the stars to remain at rest. A similar experience can be tried in metaphysics as regards the intuition of objects. If intuition must conform to the constitution of the objects, I do not see how we could know anything of the latter a priori; but if the object (as object of the senses) must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, I have no difficulty in conceiving such a possibility.¹⁶

If our faculty of knowledge conforms to objects, then we cannot know anything prior to experience. And the mind would be a blank slate on which experience makes its marks. Such an experience would be blind and meaningless to the faculty of knowledge reduced to a receptacle that passively receives the marks of experience. This is the hypothesis rejected by Kant (just like Copernicus rejected the geocentric hypothesis) in order to study the possibility of objects conforming to our faculty of knowledge, such that our faculties of knowledge impose their marks on objects by giving the objects an explanation conditioned by the internal constitution of the mind itself (just like the new heliocentric hypothesis put forward by Copernicus).

The Kantian “Copernican Revolution” has to overturn traditional idealism and traditional empiricism. Traditional idealism has much to do with the content of our knowledge and is at the crossroads of metaphysics and epistemology. The traditional empiricist makes the mind a receptacle for experience to make its marks. John Locke clearly states the view rejected by Kant, the view that the mind conforms to objects of the senses: “The senses at first let in particular ideas and furnish the yet empty cabinet; and the mind by degrees growing familiar with some of them, they are lodged in the memory, and names got

¹⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, Preface to the Second Edition, p.22.

to them, and by degrees learns the use of general names.”¹⁷ If the mind were such a receptacle receiving all the information about objects through the senses, then such information about objects would lack the justifying universal rules that make it a science. Prior to experience, the mind has a coherent internal structure not only to receive passively but also and above all to interpret the information received according to internal rules that give meaning to the blind objects of our sense – experience. This is one aspect of the Kantian “Copernican Revolution” relating to the source of what is to be considered truth in epistemology.

Contrary to the ancient view of a stationary earth at the centre of the universe, Copernicus shocked his contemporaries with the hypothesis of a stationary sun and a moving earth. That the earth moves, that the sun is at the centre of the universe, that the movement of the earth may not easily be perceived if other planets are moving at the same speed in the same direction: it was a new dawn for astronomy. The new Copernican hypothesis was later tested, proven and confirmed. Today, people may take such ancient discoveries for granted in our contemporary era. Yet it was a real revolution at the time; and when Kant did something similar in epistemology, the novelty was obvious.

Man has an essential status of being both a subject and an object of knowledge. As a subject of knowledge, man is the knower, the knowledge - seeker. As an object of knowledge, man becomes the thing to be known among other objects of knowledge in the world. Apart from trying to know himself, man has to know other things in the world. For man to have knowledge the thing to be known has to be given to man, it has to be accessible as an object of knowledge. Before the object of knowledge is given, the mind already has an internal constitution to think through the object of knowledge. The Kantian “Copernican Revolution” outlines two factors involved in the knowledge of an object:

*To think an object and to know an object are thus by no means the same thing. Knowledge involves two factors: first the concept, through which an object in general is thought [...] and secondly, the intuition through which it is given. For if no intuition could be given corresponding to the concept, the concept would still indeed be a thought so far as its form is concerned but would be without any object and no knowledge of anything would be possible by means of it.*¹⁸

¹⁷ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. John W. Yolton, London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1961, Book I, Chapter II, p.15.

¹⁸ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Transcendental Deduction B (Second Edition), pp. 161-162.

Thus the Kantian “Copernican Revolution” is necessitated by the intention of the knower not to have “empty” concepts and not to have blind intuitions. Knowledge only becomes possible when concepts think about objects given in intuition. The relationship between concepts and intuitions does not give primacy to the latter over the former. Rather the former belongs to our internal faculty that gives meaning to the latter. Thinking an object is not the same as knowing an object because our thoughts could be about “nothing” at all; our thoughts could be about no object at all. Such thought without object cannot lead to truth because it lacks content and corresponds to nothing given in intuition.

To avoid thinking concepts without corresponding intuitions through which objects are given to us and to avoid the hypothesis of “blind” intuitions, the Kantian novelty introduces an approach according to which the mind does not just conform to things; things conform to the mind. Since the Kantian epistemological path to truth only gives the conditions of possibility of knowing an object according to the internal constitution of the mind, which implies that knowing the object as it is in itself is a task that the mind cannot accomplish, the “Copernican Revolution” of Kant is about knowing that which is in the knower to which every object has to conform. It is not obvious, just like the astronomical novelty stated by Copernicus, in *Commentariolus*, one of his minor writings on astronomy, as ‘postulates’: “All the spheres encircle the sun, which is as it were in the middle of them all, so that the centre of the universe is near the sun. [...]. What appears to us as motions of the sun are due, not to its motion but to the motion of the earth and our sphere, with which we revolve about the sun as any other planet.”¹⁹ The sun is at the centre of the universe in the “astronomical revolution” carried out by Copernicus. The mind imposes its marks on the objects of our knowledge in the “Kantian Copernican Revolution” in epistemology. The earth is not the centre of the universe in the astronomical position rejected by Copernicus in a revolutionary manner that was at variance with the traditional view of the church through whose authority he conceded to refer to his view as a mere hypothesis. The mind does not create reality but imposes its marks on a reality given to the mind by intuition through the senses. Kant in this view challenges traditional idealism that had a mystery in its foundation when the link with sense perception was not established beyond reasonable doubt.

A new foundation for truth is the aim and transcendental idealism is the new method to get to the truth. It is a new foundation for science or a new science altogether. Kant himself

¹⁹ Nicholas Copernicus, “Commentariolus”, Postulates 3,5, in, *Nicholas Copernicus, Minor Works*, trans. Edward Rosen, ed. Pawel Czartoryski, London: The Macmillan Press Ltd: 1985, pp. 81-82.

sums up what is to be expected of the new approach proposed: “[...] we can know *a priori* of things only what we ourselves put into them. [...] for the new point of view enables us to explain how there can be knowledge *a priori*; and in addition, to furnish satisfactory proofs of the laws which form the *a priori* basis of nature, regarded as the sum of the objects of experience – neither achievement being possible on the procedure hitherto followed.”²⁰ The legacy is then built on expectations or possibilities of achievements in the quest for the truth when the mind does not have to be an autonomous producer of knowledge without the empirical link and yet the same mind does not have to be a passive receptacle of intuitions without conforming them to its *a priori* laws at the foundation of all quests for knowledge. The expectations are high. The mind has to give rules to nature and nature has to conform to the rules of the mind.

Whether Kant enjoyed the same success in epistemology as that enjoyed by Copernicus in astronomy is still to be deciphered. Robert S. Westman does not doubt the legacy of success of Copernicus in astronomy: “Somehow, in the century after Copernicus’ death, all novelties of astronomical observation and theory, whether or not provided by Copernicans, turned themselves into evidence for the Copernican theory. That theory we should say was proving its fruitfulness.”²¹ Though the “Copernican Revolution” of Kant in epistemology makes the thing-in-itself (*noumenon*) unknowable, it, in its form, establishes a change of approach that opens up to a vast field of research that intends to unravel the ever challenging nature of the reality using all we have – an internal or inbuilt faculty that gives the rule prior to experience itself.

The Kantian “Copernican Revolution” gives us a new method of seeking knowledge, a new method of seeking truth. The tool here is the faculty that Kant refers to as “understanding” to distinguish it from “reason” whose employment is “regulative” because it gives completeness to our thoughts towards synthetic unity and completeness. In the third critique (*Critique of Judgment*), Kant singles out the “understanding” for an obvious difference. “The understanding is singled out in this way because [...] it is the only one among cognitive powers capable of providing principles of cognition that are constitutive *a priori*.”²² The understanding’s principles are “constitutive” because they link concepts with

20 Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Preface to the second edition, p.23.

²¹Robert S. Westman, “The Comet and the Cosmos: Kepler, Mastlin and the Copernican Hypothesis” in Jerzy Dorbrzycki (ed.), *The Reception of Copernicus Heliocentric Theory*, Warsaw: Ossolineum: 1972, p.11.

²² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (1790), trans. Werner S. Pluhar, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987, Preface to the First Edition, p.4.

objects, they are not there to “regulate” concepts, and they are rules to explain nature through concepts conceived prior to the encounter with experience. They are rules that do not originate from the objects but are used to explain objects. The conception of such principles implies that prior to cognition; the mind has to define the object according to pre-conceived rules that are not derived from the object itself. They are rules of the Kantian “Copernican Revolution” in epistemology.

In cognition of objects, the objects do not define our thoughts; rather, our thoughts define the object and our thoughts only have content as long as they are relating to the object. In other words, while the regulative ideas of pure reason give order and completeness to our concepts, the concepts of the understanding give order and meaning to experience. In this way, the Kantian novelty respects the bounds of pure reason whose transcendental ideas have no link with the object and thus considers such ideas of pure reason as “regulative” and not “constitutive” to avoid the mystical character of traditional idealism. At the same time, to avoid sceptical empiricism, the concepts of the understanding which are used to explain experience do not themselves originate from experience. Such is the Kantian limit-setting hypothesis that is supposed to serve as a condition of possibility of knowledge of objects using *a priori* principles. It is about using what does not come from the object to know the object, in which case the object has to be given in intuition for the concepts of the understanding to proceed with *a priori* principles to cognize the object. The faculty of understanding itself cannot go beyond bounds because its *a priori* concepts are meant to give knowledge only of objects of experience.

Breaking off with a past supposedly full of error in the method and content of our knowledge is what makes the Copernican and Kantian revolution a perfect analogy. Rejecting the errors of the past and paving a new path for the future is what unites Kant with Copernicus in their formulation of a new plan for epistemology and astronomy respectively. In *Kant’s Copernicus Revolution: The Transcendental Horizon*, J. Everet Green brings out the perfect analogy:

Kant resembles Copernicus only in that both disavow established and commonsensically attractive doctrines in favour of initially implausible yet demonstrably true alternatives. Hence, resemblance between them stems chiefly from the rejection of inherited error for radically novel method of truth. The Copernican Revolution introduces a new way of thinking both in its abandonment of blind induction and its resultant contribution of a new hypothesis about the sun and the earth. According to Kant’s Copernican

*hypothesis, metaphysics, like science, must attend to rules of reason's own making. Just as the scientist forces nature to answer questions devised according to the scientist's own plan, so may reason, Kant hypothesized, force nature to conform to rules of its own devising.*²³

Kant resembles Copernicus in the initially weird nature of the new view he proposes vis-à-vis the established tradition of their respective times. Rejecting what they considered as errors of the past already unite the two authors. Their proposals for a new beginning, however, require demonstration or proof to show that what they propose yields better results than what obtained before them.

The proof of the hypothesis of Copernicus received fruitfulness as far as the motion of heavenly bodies is concerned. On the other hand, the Kantian proof led to two realms of reality, the knowable “phenomena” and the unknowable “*noumena*”. As Green notes, “According to this hypothesis, experience conforms to our concepts and knowledge of nature is demonstrably possible because we constitute its laws. Absolute knowledge of nature on the other hand, is impossible because we depend on something given to our faculty of sensible intuition for the content of our knowledge”.²⁴ The Kantian approach was thus not over ambitious in its claims of what we can know with it. That precisely is the purpose of the “Critique”, the *Critique of Pure Reason* which was not about a critique of books but rather a delimitation of reason, setting bounds to the use of reason and the knowledge that can be obtained when reason works within epistemologically rewarding bounds.

Should the unknowable *noumena* then be considered as a failure of the Kantian “Copernican revolution”? Kant rather sees it as an achievement to avoid the “dialectal illusion” of taking reason beyond bounds which is a fruitless epistemological endeavour. In the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* of 1783, Kant makes it clear that

If I speak of objects in time and space, I am not speaking of things in themselves (since I know nothing of them), but only of things in appearance, i.e., of experience as a distinct way of cognizing objects that is granted to human beings alone. I must not say of that which I think in space or time: that it is in itself in space and time, independent of this thought of mine; for then I would contradict myself, since space and time, together with the appearances in them, are nothing existing in themselves and outside my representations, but are themselves only ways of representing, and it is patently contradictory

²³ J Everet Green, *Kant's Copernican Revolution: The Transcendental Horizon*, Maryland: University Press of America, 1997, p.13.

²⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 13-14.

*to say of a mere way of representing that it also exists outside our representation.*²⁵

Time and space are *a priori* modes of sensibility; it is through them that intuitions are given to us. Kant insists that our intuitions must be sensible because we cannot have intellectual intuitions. This means that objects are only given to us by means of intuition in space and time which are *a priori* forms of sensibility by which objects become objects of knowledge for us. This has nothing to do with the objects in themselves; the objects in themselves have no direct route to our understanding except through space and time by which they are given to us in intuition making them representations. Space and time are *a priori* modes not derived from experience but through which the mind conditions objects of our knowledge before the “categories” proceed with principles and rules to give synthetic unity and meaning to experience. The construction of knowledge is done in the mind prior to the encounter in experience and experience itself becomes the mind’s reading of objects according to its inbuilt modes, modes built prior to experience and used to make experience itself possible.

Space and time as well as the objects are our ways or our mind’s way of presenting them. It is about thought establishing pre-conditions by which all experience is possible; the modes of our thoughts constitute what Kant refers to as the conditions of possibility of experience altogether. Herein lays the achievement of the Kantian “Copernican Revolution”. The unique quality of the Kantian revolution in epistemology is situated in between what Georges Pascal calls ‘dogmatic rationalism’ and ‘sceptical empiricism’. To him, dogmatic rationalism, while justifying the success of science, cannot give an account of the failure of metaphysics; and on the other hand, sceptical empiricism justifies the failure of metaphysics but does not render account of the success of mathematics and physics²⁶. Kant’s ‘Copernican revolution’ is at the crossroads of dogmatic rationalism and skeptical empiricism. Dogmatic rationalism uses pure reason to succeed in mathematics but cannot explain why metaphysics using the same reason has not been successful. On the other hand, skeptical empiricism explains the failure of metaphysics because it uses concepts not derived from experience, yet cannot explain the success of mathematics using similar concepts.

The Kantian novelty is in synthetic *a priori* judgments: prior to experience, the mind has built up concepts and principles to explain the experience; prior to sensible intuition, the

²⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science*, *op. cit.*, Main Transcendental Question, Third Part, p. 93.

²⁶ Georges Pascal, *La Pensée de Kant*, Paris: Bordas, 1966, p.30.

mind already has modes of space and time with which it will receive objects; and the mind already has categories by which the objects will be thought. The knowledge is synthetic because it adds something new to our understanding of experience and yet *a priori* because the principles or modes of explanation are not derived from experience but from within the mind itself. These are the tenets of the Kantian transcendental idealism. Dogmatic rationalism does not admit any bounds of reason and so cannot explain the failure of metaphysics. Skeptical empiricism is not aware of the ability of the mind to make synthetic *a priori* judgments and so cannot explain the success of mathematics and physics.

In our interpretation of Kant's "Copernican revolution" as a rejection of dogmatic rationalism and skeptical empiricism, Kant cannot just be considered a kind of "philosophical referee". Making Kant a mere referee between the rationalists and the empiricists puts him at a position of an observer making judgments on the strengths and weaknesses of the actors. This is not the case because Kant refutes dogmatic rationalism and skeptical empiricism in order to show the uniqueness of his new approach. According to Geoffrey Warnock in a discussion with Bryan Magee in *The Great Philosophers*, "he [Kant] is sometimes represented as conducting a debate between the merits and demerits of rationalism and empiricism, like a sort of philosophical referee or discussing how there can be synthetic necessary truths [...]."²⁷ In the 'Copernican revolution', Kant is more than just a referee, he is using the views of his predecessors to make a difference; he is looking for what Bryan Magee and his interlocutor refer to as "synthetic necessary truths" and this is the crux of the matter. He is looking for truths that are not analytic, he is not interested in just breaking down concepts in tautological statements whose subjects and predicates are the same; he is in search of synthetic truths that build up knowledge from one truth to new truths, from one concept to other concepts that give truth by explaining and giving meaning to objects.

Thus, if one were to talk of the significance of the Kantian "Copernican Revolution", it would not just be about reconciling rationalism and empiricism, it would not just be about showing the weaknesses inherent in these two theories on the sources of knowledge and the path to truth; it would be about rejecting the errors of the past to propose something more rewarding for the future. In *The Concept of the World from Kant to Derrida*, Sean Gaston notes that

²⁷Bryan Magee, *The Great Philosophers*, London: BBC Books, 1987, p.171.

For Kant, the significance of the hypothesis that the earth rotates around the sun was that Copernicus formulated it in a manner contradictory to the senses yet true by seeking for the observed movements not in the objects of the heavens but in their observer. Kant compared the project of critical philosophy to a Copernican revolution, insisting that we should not start with the object as given but how it is possible that we can experience and understand the object in philosophy was not simply a rejection of empiricism [...]. Kant's work was primarily focused on challenging the assumptions and impasses of Metaphysics as a wholly isolated speculative cognition of reason that elevates itself above all instruction from experience. Kant's critical philosophy was devoted to challenging the excessive claims of both empiricism and rationalism. He would attempt to find a new middle way between these competing philosophical perspectives.²⁸

In astronomy, the truth lies in the observer and not the object observed. In Kantian Philosophy, the truth lies in the knower and not the thing known. The thing known follows the *a priori* plan of the knower's modes of comprehension of objects. The objects are given in experience but the starting point is in the mind. The mind chooses how to know objects; the mind decides the rules by which experience will be given meaning. This is more than just a reconciliation of empiricism and rationalism. Kant is making a huge difference in change of direction in the process of cognition.

Kant is using reason to defeat reason in its over ambitious employment; Kant is setting the records straight about the conditions of possibility of experience using the *a priori* concepts and principles of the mind. If the use of reason to criticize reason was a method already applied by John Locke and David Hume in their critique of metaphysics, the Kantian novelty was the target of synthetic *a priori* judgments. Daniel Bonevac holds that

*Kant's means for achieving this end is the critical method. The title of the work is ambiguous in both English and German: Pure reason may be the agent or the object of the critique. In fact it is surely both. The critical method requires reason to critique itself, to determine its own limits and then to devise rules for staying within them. This, Kant thinks, is the key to reason's complete satisfaction: there is not a single metaphysical problem that has not been solved, or for the solution of which the key at least has not been supplied. Understood in this way, Kant's critical method hardly seems revolutionary. It had been exemplified already in Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*. Both were attempts to define the limits of human knowledge by employing reason in a reflective act of self-criticism.²⁹*

²⁸ Sean Gaston, *The Concept of World from Kant to Derrida*, London: Rowman & Littlefield International, Ltd, 2013, pp.1-2.

²⁹ Daniel Bonevac, "Kant's Copernican Revolution" in Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins (ed.), *The Age of German Idealism*, London: Routledge, 1993, p.41.

If using reason to critique reason was not new, the use of synthetic *a priori* judgments was new and an achievement of the Kantian “Copernican Revolution”. The real revolution by Kant, then, was the use of categories as *a priori* concepts that give *a priori* rules or principles that make experience possible and that lead to the knowledge of objects.

Yet, some authors think that the Kantian revolution was not “Copernican” but “Newtonian”. This is when we understand the precise and concise distinction between the formulator of a hypothesis and the provider of the proof or demonstration of the hypothesis. We are heading to the point where some writers think that the Kantian revolution was “Copernican” only in form and “Newtonian” in content. When Robert Hahn wrote *Kant’s Newtonian Revolution in Philosophy*, it was obvious that he wanted to move from the formulator of the hypothesis to focus on the one who inspired Kant to prove the hypothesis thus formulated:

The method of demonstration in sciences: (1) a novel hypothesis, and (2) a rigorous deduction. The rigorous deduction is the focus of Kant’s concern for through it objectivity in knowledge is established. The hypothesis, although indispensable to the successful deduction, is capable, by itself, of securing that essential objectivity. In Kantian terms, Copernicus represents the formulator of a novel hypothesis, while Newton represents the provider of a rigorous deduction. Thus, to identify Kant’s contributions with a Copernican revolution, in his own terms, would be to cast him into the role of a mere formulator of hypothesis and not the provider of a rigorous deduction, a role that he explicitly rejects.³⁰

The point is striking enough. We may have been giving more credit to the one who inspired Kant to formulate the hypothesis than the one who inspired him to carry out a rigorous deduction of the hypothesis. In this case, the Kantian revolution may have been more “Newtonian” than “Copernican”. Yet, the role of Copernicus as the formulator of a hypothesis that Kant used as an analogical model cannot be ignored as we have already proven.

The Kantian “Copernican revolution” opens up on a vast field of innovations in theory and practice, in school of thought and in method. The advent of synthetic *a priori* judgments, at first sight makes Kant an idealist to an extent. But since we are in the era of methodological innovations, Kant redefined idealism and gave it a new empirical dimension that completely breaks off with the traditional idealism decried by Kant for having a mystical

³⁰ Robert Hahn, *Kant’s Newtonian Revolution in Philosophy*, Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988, p.3.

undertone. To what extent can it be asserted that the new idealism of Kant is clearer and more distinct than all other forms of idealism before him? Are we moving from an obscure system to one of clarity? Does the transition from traditional to Kantian idealism provide better conditions of possibility of truth? These questions and the philosophical problems therein make a comparative study of traditional and Kantian idealism a necessity in our quest for truth.

1.2: A New Way of Using the Mind

The relationship between the subject and the object has given rise to many versions of idealism. All the variable versions of idealism are reduced to two; either the material world is nothing but an entire creation of the mind or the material world's existence is dependent on the mind. The former is that which Kant considers to be mystical and the latter is that which fits squarely in the Kantian scheme of transcendental idealism. The former is mystical because it creates a new world of mental entities that are completely estranged from the objects themselves. The latter creates a mental plan for representing the material world and the material world becomes conditioned and dependent on the mental plan constructed in the mind prior to any form of contact with the material world. The former is the idealism of philosophers before Kant whose views he systematically refutes. The latter is Kantian and is accepted by some authors and rejected by others.

To avoid the ambiguity in the employment of the term "idealism" whose early versions in ancient Greece are found in the works of Parmenides and Plato, it is important to start with working definitions that can help us grasp the originality of the Kantian approach. The modern versions of idealism are illustrated by the works of Descartes and Berkeley. The case between the two groups of idealists is elucidated by Norman Kemp Smith in *Prolegomena to an Idealist Theory of Knowledge*:

The meanings attached to the term idealism are so numerous and so conflicting that I have found it convenient to use it in very wide sense, as covering all those philosophies which agree in maintaining that spiritual values have a determining voice in the ordering of the universe. [...] On first thoughts, the possible methods of upholding idealism may well appear, broadly stated, to be only two in number. Either we may strive to demonstrate that matter is so opposite in nature to mind that it is patently incapable of generating or of accounting for it or we may profess to demonstrate that matter, as dependent on consciousness, itself bears witness to the reality of mind. The history of philosophy would seem, however, to show that the former method; while possibly tenable in some other formulation than any which has

*hitherto been given of it, presupposes a more complete knowledge both of mind and of matter that we can yet rightly claim to possess, and that the latter method, though representing the stand point of so acute and distinguished a thinker as Berkeley, and in some degree also of Kant, has failed to make good its fundamental contention, that matter is mind-dependent.*³¹

The “spiritual values” or mental entities contribute in one way or the other to give order to the universe. The level at which the mental entities participate in the understanding of the universe is the subject of the controversy among idealists and non-idealists alike.

The ‘mystical idealists’ in Kant’s opinion are those who hold the view that mental entities are real and are completely independent of the material world. All of reality, in this way, will be a product of the mind realised without any participation and without any contribution from the material world. In this conception of idealism, the material world would be on its own, very different from the mental world. The two would exist in their distinct forms without any possibility of one intruding in the affairs of the other. This at first sight should be epistemologically valuable because it gives room for us to carry out independent research on both. If this were the case, the epistemological task would be easy for idealism to deal with the mental world and for materialism to focus on the world of tangible objects and we would have two realms of existence with distinct objects studied using two distinct approaches that exist independently. In such a dispensation, metaphysics would prosper as a speculative science pondering over mental, intangible entities. In such a dualism of mental and material entities, the human mind would have to withdraw to itself in a process of introspection and the content of our knowledge would be pure ideas completely detached or void of material content; we would not have any epistemological obligation to link our ideas to any objects in the material world.

The conception of idealism whereby the material and mental entities exist in separate realms gives us a chance to have a complete mastery of all aspects of reality without fear of going beyond the bounds of one or the other. The controversy however arises at two levels: firstly, when the idealists admit the existence of material and mental entities in separate worlds, distinct with no interaction but then have to say which of the two should have precedence over the other; and secondly when the idealists have to show a sort of interaction or coexistence of entities from both realms of reality. In the first case, when it has to do with the primacy of one world over the other, the problem becomes complex; and the complexity

³¹ Norman Kemp Smith, *Prolegomena to an Idealist Theory of Knowledge*, London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1924, pp. 1-2.

is even more heightened in the second case where an idealist admits that there is interaction between the mental and material entities and then has to explain how such an interaction takes place. If at all there is interaction between the two where then do we situate the truth in the midst of the complexity? Herein lays the origin of the multiple meanings and multiple versions given to the term “idealism”. Where is the reality located then? Is it in the mental world (of the mind) in which case the material world would have its own independent reality? Is the reality in the mind as having primacy over the material world? Is the reality in the mind as a mixture of mental entities and empirical representations such that the material world bears witness to the mental reality? And if the reality is a combination of both, does the inner experience of mental entities condition the outer experience of material entities or vice versa? The philosophical problems inherent in these multiple interrogations take us to the heart of the controversies of idealism to see if the difference made by Kant is epistemologically worthy.

The task for Kant is to prepare the ground for transcendental idealism. This is done by rehabilitating or reviving the material world rejected by all forms of idealism that adopt a mystical dimension in their inquiry. The mystical tendency is that of disconnecting the material world from all mental entities and making idealism look exoteric. It is about defining the field of possible knowledge; it is about accepting that there are things that we can have valid or objective knowledge about and sticking to the rule not to go beyond the circumscribed field of knowledge. It is about working within the framework of time and space by which objects are given to us and concepts by which objects are thought. This is how Kant delimitates the field of valid knowledge beyond which other forms of idealism become exoteric and mystical: “Other forms of intuition than space and time, other forms of understanding than the discursive forms of thought, or of knowledge through concepts even if they should be possible, we cannot render in any way conceivable and comprehensible to ourselves and even assuming that we could do so they still would not belong to the experience –the only kind of knowledge in which objects are given to us.”³² The field of valid and objective knowledge has thus been defined and circumscribed: through space and time which are the *a priori* forms of sensible intuition, objects are given to us for thought. The manifold of appearances thus becomes experience for us when given through space and time as perceptions. Here, space and time are *a priori* or modes of the mind through which sensible objects are received in intuition and intuition is that act by which the objects of

³² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, Postulates of Empirical Thought, p. 250.

sensibility are given to us. Kant insists that we are not capable of having intellectual intuitions which is the basis of division of reality into the knowable ‘phenomena’ and the unknowable ‘*noumena*’.

The point made by Kant implicitly and explicitly shows that though the journey beyond the *a priori* forms of sensible intuition which are space and time and beyond the concepts of the understanding which are categories, is possible, such a journey yields no epistemological fruits. It is the journey of ‘mystical’ idealism on the one hand, and the ‘dialectical’ use of reason in metaphysics, on the other hand. The case of idealism is our bone of contention for now. So what is the epistemological fate of an idealist who hangs on to the strict separation of the mental world from the material world that it is supposed to explain? To avoid the ‘dialectical’ use of reason in an illusory manner, Kant notes that “Whether other perceptions than those belonging to our whole possible experience, and therefore a quite different field of matter, may exist, the understanding is not in any position to decide. It can deal only with the synthesis of that which is given.”³³ The possibility is thus granted: the possibility of existence of entities beyond space and time and beyond the faculty of the understanding. The problem is that even if such a possibility were to be realised, we do not have the required tool with which to grasp such entities to produce valid and objective knowledge; for the faculty of the understanding, which gives validity and objectivity to knowledge by linking concepts to objects, is not capable of any form of employment beyond experience.

Not every possibility has an actuality. The mystical idealistic journey is possible but not actual. It does not link up with reality; it has no connection with the real world. To Kant, the relationship between possibility and actuality goes thus: “Everything actual is possible; from this proposition there naturally follows, in accordance with the logical rules of conversion, the merely particular proposition, that some possible is actual; and this would seem to mean that much is possible which is not actual.”³⁴ What, then, makes mystical idealism possible but not actual? The temptation by reason to overstep its bounds is natural and plays what Kant calls a ‘regulative’ role for us to have completeness and unity in our ideas. But as far as adding anything valid and objective to the stock of our knowledge is concerned, such a possibility is useless, it makes thought a game of words, a game of empty concepts to which no intuition corresponds to make them actual.

³³ *Idem.*

³⁴ *Idem.*

We can then explore the idealistic world which is possible but gives rise to impossibilities as far as knowledge is concerned “For that which would have to be added to the possible, over and above the possible, would be impossible. What can be added is only a relation to my understanding, namely, that in addition to agreement with the formal conditions of experience, there should be connection with some perception. But whatever is connected with perception in accordance with empirical laws is actual, even though it is not immediately perceived”³⁵. Anything above and beyond experience is impossible. Our internal states only gain actuality in relation to external states. The mind conceives laws of experience so as to link its concepts to experience according to these laws. Appearances would be representations of objects, and perceptions would be representations of appearances in accordance with the laws of experience, laws which are formulated *a priori* or prior to the experience itself. Only intuitions through time and space and concepts of the understanding fall within this realm of possibility. The rest are impossibilities.

The crux of the failure of mystical idealism, to Kant, is that “without material, nothing whatsoever can be thought”³⁶. At this point we can then state the views of some prominent philosophers whose idealism completely or partially ignored the material world that would have given them validity and objectivity. On this line of thinkers, Parmenides of Elea in his Poem *On Nature* as early as the pre-Socratic era was already stating philosophical views that seemed “mystical” in the Kantian understanding of idealism in which concepts correspond to no objects. What makes some idealists ‘mystical’ should not just be the style of writing and conceptual density in their analyses, after all some writers think that though Kant intended to make idealism explicit, his style and density of analysis is not easily accessible to all for comprehension. In the works of Parmenides, the language is metaphorical like that of many other authors of the Greek Antiquity. In the poetic piece *On Nature*, Parmenides thus wrote:

Listen and I will instruct thee - and thou, when thou hearest, shalt ponder - what are the sole two paths of research that are open to thinking. One path is: the Being doth be, and Non-Being is not: this is the way of conviction, for truth follows hand in her footsteps. Th’ other path is: that being is not, and Non-Being must be; this one, I tell thee in truth, is an all incredible pathway.

³⁵ *Idem.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

*For thou never canst know what is not (for none can conceive it), Nor canst thou give it expression, for one thing are Thinking and Being.*³⁷

In ancient Greece, Parmenides already envisaged the dualistic conception of a problematic reality especially when he rejected the way of the senses as the way of opinion in order to state that the way of the mind as the only way of truth.

The Parmenidean conception of being gives a very idealistic dimension to reality. The reality is conceived by Parmenides in terms of “Being” which is eternal, immutable and one. The unity of ‘Being’ makes Parmenides an idealistic monist who conceived the ultimate reality to be an abstract entity that is not affected by the whims and caprices of the senses. “Being is” projected as a reality that is changeless and eternal was a complete rejection of appearances. The ever changing nature of appearances puts them in the field of “Non-Being” which to Parmenides is not real. Anything in the course of becoming something else is nothing in particular; a sure and certain epistemological discourse cannot be made about anything whose current state is a stage toward something else. Using the logical principle of non-contradiction, Parmenides holds that we cannot know that which is not; change is an illusion of the senses. This is a spiritual dimension of reality that may not have the ‘mystical’ conceptual density seen with modern idealists. Thus Parmenides admits that the changing material world is not known because it is ‘Non-Being’. Being is the unchanging reality only accessible to the mind while non-Being is the changing appearance that is nothing at all.

The Parmenidian conception of the two paths that any researcher can take is significant because it gives rise to contrasting results. The way of opinion (and the opinions themselves change with person, time and place), is one of illusions, guided by the senses to see diversity where there is unity, to see change where there is stability and to see an ephemeral entity where there is eternity. Here, Parmenides is presenting the two paths of research so as to reject one completely in favor of the other. The pre-Socratic philosophers of Elea, led by Parmenides, were laying the groundwork of idealism and giving the two methods of looking for truth which have divided philosophers and scientists since then. Whether Parmenides gave a tenable justification for the primacy of the way of truth over the way of opinion is a controversy heightened by Plato. Kant actually classifies Plato among the ‘mystical idealists’. Since Parmenides, Plato and Descartes dedicated much time in their

³⁷ Parmenides, "On Nature", in *The Fragments of Parmenides*, trans. Thomas Davidson, Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 1870, pp. 4-5.

philosophy proving that the senses are sources of illusions. Immanuel Kant has to reject this approach before disproving the implicit and explicit mysticism in their idealism.

Making the senses a source of illusions like the rationalists did, and making them a source of truth like the empiricists did does not make sense in critical philosophy. This is because to Kant,

It is [...] correct to say that the senses do not err - not because they always judge rightly but because they do not judge all. Truth and error, therefore, and consequently also illusion as leading to error, are only to be found in the judgment, i.e. only in the relation of the object to our understanding. In any knowledge which completely accords with the laws of understanding there is no error. In a representation of the senses – as containing no judgment whatsoever – there is also no error.³⁸

Thus the first ‘idealistic’ error made by Parmenides, Plato and Descartes is that they dedicated so much time considering the senses as a source of illusions as if the senses could make any judgments at all. In this consideration of the sense, the attention of the researcher is tilted away from the understanding that is the source of all judgments to the senses (which cannot judge) and to the ideas of pure reason (which do not correspond to any objects at all).

Whether a philosopher is giving credit to the senses as sources of truth or discrediting them as sources of illusions is completely irrelevant in our quest for truth and in our desire to avoid illusions. Rather than blaming or praising the senses for whatever role we wrongly ascribe to them, we should focus on them as that by which objects are given to us in intuition through the *a priori* modes of sensibility which are time and space. In this way, we would not lay any praise nor blame on the senses for truth and errors respectively; we would rather focus on the understanding which relates us to the objects by means of concepts. What is extremely disturbing with idealism is the ease with which the authors give a mystical tendency to their approach. In *Parmenides*, Plato creates a character that is controversially attributed to the historical Parmenides, in dialogue with Socrates, and in the course of which dialogue ‘Plato’s Parmenides’ presents the complexity of having multiple “forms”. This is in a bid to show that ideas need a point of unity that would not depend on the plurality of material objects:

And what about the large itself and other large things? Whenever you look at them, with your soul, in the same way, will there not appear again one large thing, by which all these appear large? [...] So another form of largeness will

³⁸ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Transcendental Dialectic, p. 297.

*turn up besides the largeness itself that has come to be and the things that participate in it; and over all these again another, by which all these will be large, and thus you will no longer have one of each form, but an indefinite plurality.*³⁹

Of course, the Parmenides of Plato is not the historical Parmenides. The biased intentions of Plato are to get Parmenides to accept the multiplicity of “Forms” as conceived. But even in that dramatic exchange of ideas between ‘Plato’s Parmenides’ and the ‘Platonic Socrates’, the undertone of ‘mystical idealism’ is obvious. Here, the authors have left the world of experience and are now into a mental exercise of abstract concepts using reason beyond the field where it can give rise to knowledge. And this is one error of mystical idealism: moving away from the material world and not establishing any conditions of possibility of return to the material world; here the mind is not a source of rules for explaining experience, the mind is the truth itself through its content as ideas called “forms” with no possibility of an epistemological return to the material world to explain experience using the ideas thus conceived.

Plato moved from material things to “Forms” and pushed the idealism to the “Form of Forms” (the Good) which gives rise to Truth, Beauty and Justice. Plato’s idealism starts from the material world only to end up showing how the material world is an imperfect, ephemeral and mutable copy of the perfect, changeless, eternal and immutable “Forms”. This is where Plato’s forms or Ideas become the ultimate truth when the soul moves from the appearance to the reality. Thus there is a reality hidden behind the appearance and only accessible to the mind. In Book VI of *The Republic*, Plato, through the character of Socrates in the dialogue, states the characteristics of the soul in the quest of knowledge:

*Well [...] the soul is also characterized in this way. When it fixes itself on that which is illuminated by truth, and that which is, it intellects, knows, and appears to possess intelligence. But when it fixes itself on that which is mixed with darkness, on coming to being and passing away, it opines and is dimed, changing opinions up and down, and seems at such times not to possess intelligence.*⁴⁰

Plato disagreed with Parmenides mainly on the problem of the One and the Many, also known as the problem of Unity and Diversity. The reality to Plato is a plurality of Ideas or Forms while the reality to Parmenides is a single abstract entity called Being. Plato admits the

³⁹ Plato, "Parmenides" in *Plato's Parmenides*, trans. Samuel Scolnicov, California: University of California Press, 2003, P.61.

⁴⁰ Plato, "The Republic" in *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom, U.S.A: Basic Books, 1968, Book VI, p. 189.

existence of material things but insists that tilting the mind away from material things toward the intelligible realm is the only means by which truth can be obtained. Like Parmenides, Plato holds that truth is obtained when the mind focuses on things that are changeless and eternal and these are the Forms to Plato. In this way, and like the Parmenidian way of opinion, Plato's idea of changing opinions results from the mind trying to focus on things of the changing material world of sense-experience.

Plato conceived 'Ideas' with a level of perfection that, in a desire to move away from experience, the 'Ideas' become models that can hardly be used to explain nature. Kant glorifies such ideas in the field of morality where reason gives the law to itself, as an autonomous will to respect freedom as a condition of moral action which aims at an ideal of pure reason. The ideal of Plato, which does not succeed epistemologically because it goes beyond the faculty of understanding through which concepts relate to objects, can only be used as the aim of moral actions. For knowledge to begin with the senses does not mean that the knowledge arises from the senses because the rules of experience are *a priori* or dictated by the mind prior to the experience itself. Plato, in the desire to relegate the senses to the background, pushed reason too far to a point that it can only have a practical impact as a model of morality toward which the practice of virtue is directed. To Kant, "All our knowledge starts with the senses, proceeds from thence to understanding, and ends with reason, beyond which there is no higher faculty to be found in us for elaborating the matter of intuition and bringing it under the highest unity of thought."⁴¹ Plato moved away from the senses and went beyond understanding to reason to obtain Ideas that cannot relate with objects directly, Ideas that play a regulative role in bringing the concepts and principles of the understanding to a perfect completeness, synthetic unity and logical coherence which does not guarantee a direct relation to any object. Such ideas, in the field of practical reason, can serve as the ultimate ideal goal of all acts of virtue, an idea that conditions us to respect moral laws as a duty. Epistemologically, then, and using Kantian terms, we can say that Plato's are Ideas of Pure Reason and not Concepts of the Understanding.

In Plato's philosophy the Idea of the Good is the highest Form that is a synthesis of Truth, Beauty and Justice which respectively find application in epistemology, aesthetics and ethics. Here is how Plato states the Form of Forms, the Idea that is the cause of other Ideas in the intelligible realm of 'Higher forms': "[...] what provides the truth to the things known

⁴¹ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Transcendental Dialectic, p. 300.

and gives power to the one who knows, is the idea of the good. And, as the cause of the knowledge and truth, you can understand it to be a thing known; but as fair as these two are – knowledge and truth, if you believe that it is something different from them, and still fairer than they, your belief will be right.”⁴² Plato conceives the reality to be at four levels, divided into two unequal levels: the sensible world and the Intelligible World. The sensible world is further divided into two realms: the level of imagination which corresponds to shadows and images of material objects, and the level of belief which corresponds to the level of material objects. The level of imagination is the lowest level of reality. The objects here are not even materially real; they are representations of material objects in the form of a mirage or image that poorly represents the substance. One step further and we are in the level of beliefs. At the level of beliefs, we have an encounter with material objects, and this is still not enough to give us the truth because material objects give an incorrect picture of reality. We need to leave the material world and move to the intelligible world for a more epistemologically rewarding experience.

The Intelligible World of Plato is further sub-divided into two realms: the level of thought and the level of understanding. The level of thought is the level of lower forms when we are introduced to the contemplation of abstract entities. This is the level of Geometry and Mathematics. The mastery of Geometry was a condition to fulfill in order to be admitted into Plato’s Academy where students were trained to contemplate on the forms. A mastery of the lower forms of Geometry is thus required to move to the highest stage of learning and of knowledge: this corresponds to the level of Understanding where one becomes a philosopher - king and master of Higher Forms. It is at this level that one gains access to the Good as the source of all knowledge and as the light that illuminates all our minds to attain Truth, Beauty and Justice. At this level, we move away from all beautiful things to focus on the Idea of Beauty itself and the source of these ideas. Plato’s conception of the various levels of reality, in what is considered as the Metaphor of the Divided Line, goes thus:

[...] take a line cut in two unequal segments, one for the class that is seen, the other for the class that is intellected – and go on and cut each segment in the same ratio. Now, in terms of relative clarity and obscurity, you’ll have one segment in the visible part for images. [...] Then in the other segment put that of which this first is the likeness - the animals around us and everything that grows, and the whole class of artifacts. [...] Now, in its turn, consider also how the intelligible section should be cut. [...] in one part of it a soul, using as images the things that were previously imitated, is compelled to investigate on

⁴² Plato, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

*the basis of hypothesis and makes its way not to a beginning but to an end; while in the other part it makes its way to a beginning that is free from hypotheses, starting out from hypothesis and without the images used in the other part by means of forms themselves it makes its inquiry through them.*⁴³

Plato's Metaphor of the Divided Line makes the visible realm an incorrect and inaccurate representation of the reality conceived as Forms or Ideas. We move from shadows or images to material objects to mathematical and geometrical forms and finally to the higher forms of Beauty, Truth and Justice all derived from the original form, source of all forms called the Good. This movement across the divided line corresponds to an intellectual exercise which admits that the visible is not the real, the real is beyond the visible; the real is intelligible and is in stages up to the Good as the source of all that is real. And it is very clear to identify what Kant considers 'mystical' elements in Plato's idealism. Kant is very systematic in his rejection of Plato's 'mystical' idealism.

Firstly, Kant has a problem with the use of the term 'Idea' which may not mean exactly the same thing to two philosophers. To Kant, "Plato made use of the expression 'idea' in such a way as quite evidently to have meant by it something which not only can never be borrowed from the senses but far surpasses even the concept of understanding [...], inasmuch as in experience nothing is ever to be met with that is coincident with it."⁴⁴ The 'ideas' of Plato do not originate from the senses and cannot be made to relate with the senses. Even if his 'ideas' are *a priori*, there is no ground for such 'ideas' to relate with experience. Since Plato's reality is beyond the appearances, such a reality loses the link with appearances when the knowledge - seeker takes the epistemological leap into the intelligible realm. From there, Plato's knowledge-seeker can only refer to appearance in terms of regrets, regretting all the times he thought there could be reality in appearances. In fact, Plato's researcher starts despising appearances from the very moment that he starts contemplating the Forms. Appearance is thus just a regrettable step to the Forms, a moment of deception that should never have existed if some people did not believe, erroneously, that the senses could be a safe path to truth. A contemplation of the Forms makes the philosopher - king a master of reality who can only return to the appearances on a pedagogic mission to rescue those who still think that the senses could give rise to truth. And these are the same appearances to which our ideas must relate in Kantian idealism. The appearances rejected by Plato's idealism are thus valorized in Kantian idealism.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

⁴⁴ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

In Plato's philosophy, depending on appearances or anything related to the senses is likened to the epistemologically pathetic situation of a prisoner in a cave in which he can only see shadows of real objects, and takes the shadows for real objects themselves. As described in the 'Allegory of the Cave' of Book VII of *The Republic*, the situation of someone depending on the senses, as likened to that of a prisoner in a cave, is not epistemologically glorious at all:

[...] make an image of our nature in its education and want of education, likening it to a condition of the following kind. See human beings as though they were in an underground cave-like dwelling with its entrance, a long one, open to the light across the whole width of the cave. They are in it from childhood with their legs and necks in bonds so that they are fixed, seeing only in front of them, unable because of the bond to turn their heads all the way around. Their light is from a fire burning far above and behind them. Between the fire and the prisoners there is a road above, along which we see a wall, built like the partitions puppet-handlers set in front of the human beings and over which they show the puppets.⁴⁵

The rest of the story of prisoners is typically one of a prisoner succeeding to escape from the cave in what is known as Ascending Dialectics which is actually the movement away from appearances to the reality. This is the tedious exercise of tilting the mind's 'eyes' away from the illusions of the senses toward the light of reality brought by the mind. The shock and amazement that go with the discovery of the reality behind the appearances have the undertone of regrets for having taken illusions for reality. The chains are the daily obstacles we face on our path to the truth and the shadows are the illusions of the senses. The shadows, themselves, correspond literally to the lowest level of reality produced by the imagination. Thus literally and metaphorically, Plato's Allegory of the Cave paints a very bleak picture of the condition of someone depending on appearances.

The return journey to the cave, by the freed prisoner, is the rescue mission of a pedagogue who wants to bring light to a dark room. When knowledge replaces ignorance, the other prisoners will have the same feeling of shock and amazement, when freed, to realize that they have been living in illusions as appearances. The cave symbolizes that level of reality that is so far away from the forms that shadows are taken for real objects. And when the freed prisoners start contemplating the beauty of the real world, they, with time, realize that the reality is a multitude of Ideas of which the material world is a poor duplicate that

⁴⁵ Plato, *op. cit.*, Book VII, p. 193.

does not meet up with the perfection, immutability and eternity of the Ideas. This is precisely the level where Kant has a problem with the Ideas of Plato:

For Plato ideas are archetypes of the things themselves, and not, in the manner of the categories, merely keys to possible experiences. In his view they have issued from highest reason, and from that source have come to be shared in by human reason, which, however, is now no longer in its original state, but is constrained laboriously to recall, by a process of reminiscence (which is named philosophy), the old ideas, now very much obscured.⁴⁶

The ideas of Plato are, then, very different from the categories of Kant. The ideas of Plato are models that can never be perfectly represented in material objects while the categories of Kant are the means by which the mind gives rules to the material world. The categories of Kant are concepts by which the object is thought, the categories are actually the conditions of representation of experience making categories the conditions of possibility of experience altogether. In Plato's conception of the process by which the mind acquires knowledge by reminiscence, the striking claim that we merely recall our Ideas implies that the mind can as well produce knowledge without any need for the material world and the senses. In this way, the appearance has no role to play in the process of cognition. If all of philosophy is about reminiscence, then abstraction is made of all appearance and the contemplation of the forms as well as their 'recall' through reminiscence makes Plato's idealism mystical for ignoring the experience that would have given it objectivity and validity. Kant has a clue as to why Plato had to be so 'mystical'.

Venerated philosophers like Plato and other idealists who employed reason beyond the bounds of valid and objective knowledge could not imagine a situation where the acquisition of knowledge could just be limited to describing appearances. The need to outline an approach that is technically and conceptually complex pushed Plato to the forms which, by not providing any link with experience, are epistemologically fruitless. The respect with which Kant tackles the views of Plato is obvious in the 'first critique'. Yet, Kant has to take his refutation of Plato's idealism to its logical end:

Plato very well realized that our faculty of knowledge feels a much higher need than merely to spell out appearances according to a synthetic unity, in order to be able to read them as experience. He knew that our reason naturally exalts itself to forms of knowledge which so far transcend the bounds of experience that no given empirical object can ever coincide with them, but

⁴⁶ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

*which must none the less be recognized as having their own reality, and which are by no means mere fictions of the brain.*⁴⁷

Plato considered reason to be a very important faculty: an autonomous faculty that could not just limit itself to interpreting appearances. Here, reason is higher than appearances, or appearances are too low to be the ultimate object of study by reason. The error here, on the one hand, consists in thinking that studying appearances brings reason down to the level of the senses and thus mistakenly taking the senses for a faculty of judgment. Yet the senses do not judge, the senses simply constitute a passage through which appearances are given to us in intuition. It is not a weakness, then, for a system of philosophy to make sense of appearances. Plato obviously wanted to distance himself from the purely empirical approach that limits itself so much on appearances to the point of even ignoring the mind through skeptical considerations that put everything idealistic to doubt. And in trying to distance himself from the empiricists, Plato reduced appearances to epistemologically useless entities that we only consider as a regrettable step to the forms that are given an independent existence.

On the other hand, in his exaggerations on the power of reason to produce autonomous entities like the forms, in Kantian terms, we can say that Plato needed a ‘critique of pure reason’; Plato needed a moment to use reason as a tool to understand the strengths and limitations of reason itself. Since Plato did not use reason to critique reason, he ended up in a closed system that puts reason in a tight corner with its ideas which would not relate to the objects that any epistemological venture should aim at. It is normal for every epistemological venture to transcend experience, what is not acceptable is when we transcend experience and end up with entities that can no longer in any way relate to the same experience. This is where we lose both objectivity and validity. The objectivity and validity that come with relating our concepts to the objects is what Plato’s idealism fails to achieve. For all the respect that he had for Plato, Kant admitted that the journey to the ‘mystical’ world of forms is epistemologically useless, yet such a journey provides a very useful ideal in the practical use of reason. This is where the respect of the moral law that reason prescribes to itself gives rise to an unshakeable moral foundation for religion that consolidates the moral proof of God’s existence as a move toward something beautiful and spiritual, an ideal that may never be reached, yet the tenacious attempt to get to this ideal gives man a fulfilling life in virtue that makes us at the same time pleasing to Good. In this view, from Kant’s

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 310 – 311.

considerations on Plato, it would be disrespectful to consider the Forms of Plato as completely useless because they play the regulative role for reason to have synthetic unity of its own ideas. Such unity is logically important for coherence and consistency, yet the content, objectivity and validity of such ideas make the difference between Plato's and Kant's idealism.

The highest height of Plato's idealism is reached in the theory of reminiscence. Here, the truth is innate in us, the truth is inborn. The learning process is never to inculcate new ideas in an 'empty' mind. The process of cognition is an inward journey, a sort of introspection whereby the mind returns to itself. Such a journey to the depths of the mind, once again, makes experience useless. In *Plato's Theory of knowledge*, Francis Macdonald Cornford notes that

*He [Plato] claims that he has not 'taught' the slave the true belief he now has, any more than the false beliefs he produced at first. At the outset the slave had no knowledge; but these beliefs were in him, including the true belief which he did not know. They have been 'stirred up in him, as it were in a dream', and if he were questioned again and again in various ways he would end up by having knowledge in place of belief - knowledge which he would have recovered out of his own soul. This knowledge must have been acquired before birth. If then the truth of things is always in our soul, the soul must be immortal; hence you may confidently set about seeking for and recovering the memory of what you do not know, that is to say do not remember.*⁴⁸

This is the highest Plato could go with his theory of knowledge. It is the summit of his idealism. The soul is immortal because innate ideas are antecedent to birth, the truth lives in the immortality of the soul which moves from one body to another at the death of the body, and the teacher just has to help the student remember the innate ideas of the soul.

The logical conclusion of Plato's theory of knowledge does not have a place of epistemological value in the Kantian system of philosophy. Even if the soul were immortal, the ideas cannot be in us prior to birth and completely detached from experience. Plato's ideas do not coincide with experience anywhere because they were not meant to. Such ideas are meant to be in a world of their own as autonomous, eternal, immutable and perfect entities. And since the Ideas neither relate to experience nor serve as condition of possibility of experience, such a system of philosophy is bound to fail epistemologically because the knowledge obtained from it can never have validity or objectivity. And since the "Copernican

⁴⁸ Francis Macdonald Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1935, p.3.

Revolution” of Kant in epistemology came to turn things around in the formal quest for the knowledge and in the concrete demonstration of how truth is obtained, Kant moved from Plato’s ‘mystical’ idealism to ‘problematic’ and ‘dogmatic’ idealism that he had to refute to make way for critical idealism.

1.3 On “Problematic” and ‘Dogmatic’ Idealism

Apart from the historical proximity that Kant had with René Descartes, it was the ideological differences between the former and the latter that comes to the limelight on the ‘problematic’ nature of Cartesian idealism. The term ‘problematic’ used by Kant to describe Cartesian idealism announces a systematic refutation that raises doubt about the Cartesian, ‘indubitable’ existence of the self as proven by the activity of thought. The ‘cogito’ of Descartes comes to the heart of Kantian philosophy as a ‘problematic’ proof of human existence and as a misuse of reason beyond the bounds where the concepts can relate with objects. Yet, in his time, Descartes is the symbol of philosophical modernity that consecrates the authority and autonomy of reason in matters of knowledge in all spheres of life. Against his immediate predecessors of the scholastic era who mixed reason with faith in issues relating to Christian dogma, René Descartes makes distinctness and clarity the rational criteria for every proof, including proofs of human existence and proof of the existence of God. The ultimate truth was the discovery of the ‘cogito’ and the approach was based on the model of the Methodic Doubt, a method that yielded enough epistemological fruits to give a new beginning to philosophy in the new era of philosophical modernity.

The autonomy of reason in the new Cartesian era of philosophy makes everyone a potential getter of truth through an ability that is common in all men: the power of the mind that leads to the clarity and distinctness considered as criteria for truth. In the first lines of the *Discourse on Method*, Descartes clearly spells out the universal human ability to get the truth depending on how the universal tool is employed:

Good sense is the most evenly shared thing in the world; for everyone believes himself to be so well provided with it that even those who are the hardest to please in every other way do not usually want more of it than they already have. Nor is it likely that everyone is wrong about this, rather, what this shows is that the power of judging correctly and of distinguishing the true from the false (which is what is properly called good sense or reason) is naturally equal in all men, and that consequently the diversity of our opinions arises not from the fact that some of us are more reasonable than others, but solely that we have different ways of directing our thoughts, and do not take into account

*the same things. For it is not enough to possess a good mind; the most important thing is to apply it correctly.*⁴⁹

The Cartesian path to the truth is a property that every human being has. Yet, based on the different problems tackled by the subjects of knowledge, we may treat matters differently. Yet we all have the natural gift to attain clarity and distinctiveness in thought. No one has monopoly of reason, Descartes respects the democratic prerequisite of equality in the distribution of the powers of the mind; nature is very democratic in the distribution of the powers of the mind; nature is very democratic in the fair share of good sense to all human beings in this world. In this respect, the enterprise of knowledge is potentially enriched by all human beings who decide to make good use of their good sense in matters that are important and following rules that can lead to the truth in our thoughts and acts.

Those who make the wrong use of reason have themselves to blame and not nature. What then is ‘problematic’ in Cartesian idealism? The foundation of Cartesian idealism, at first sight, seemed to be enough in laying down basic principles of ‘first philosophy’ which was the Cartesian way of referring to ‘metaphysics’. The Kantian statement of the Cartesian ‘problematic’ idealism and the ‘dogmatic’ idealism of George Berkeley goes thus:

*Idealism [...] is the theory which declares the existence of objects in space outside us either to be merely doubtful and indemonstrable or to be false and impossible. The former is the problematic idealism of Descartes, which holds that there is only one empirical assertion that is indubitably certain, namely, that ‘I am’. The latter is the dogmatic idealism of Berkeley. He maintains that space, with all the things of which it is the inseparable condition, is something which is in itself impossible; and he therefore regards the things in space as merely imaginary entities.*⁵⁰

The case of ‘dogmatic’ idealism of George Berkeley is examined later in this sub-section of our work. For now, we need to understand the ‘problematic’ character of Cartesian idealism as seen by Kant. Kant is actually highlighting the exaggerated use of the Cartesian doubt also known as the methodic doubt. Here, Descartes decided to suspend judgment on everything except that which could not be submitted to any reasonable doubt. Descartes has as focus to show that the foundation of our knowledge is shaky and needs to be revisited for a review through doubt. It is in the course of putting everything in the world to doubt that Descartes made the most important discovery of his philosophy. When the doubt moves from anything revealed by the senses to the body, Descartes is looking for that which leaves no room for

⁴⁹ René Descartes, *A Discours on the Method of Correctly Conducting One’s Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences* (1637), trans. Ian Maclean, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, Part I, p. 5.

⁵⁰ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Refutation of Idealism, p. 244.

even the slightest doubt. And the lively style of writing used by Descartes is inviting as the author takes us along in a philosophical journey whose conclusion cannot be known in advance and whose conclusions have to be irrefutable as Descartes thought they could be.

Unlike the ancient skeptics who used to doubt for the sake of doubting, Descartes made doubt a veritable tool for acquiring knowledge by progressively eliminating falsehood. The first step is to put to doubt all the information received by means of the senses. The place of the senses as sources of illusions is made clear in the Cartesian *Meditations on First Philosophy*: “All that up to the present time I have accepted as most true and certain I have learned either from the senses or through the senses; but it is sometimes proved to me that these senses are deceptive, and it is wiser not to trust entirely to anything by which we have once been deceived.”⁵¹ The first doubt cast on the senses is from the illusions they produced in the past and could still do same in the present and in the future. Like all philosophers of the trend of rationalism, Descartes rejects the senses as a source of knowledge. And, like we have proven with Kant, this can only be understood when we erroneously take the senses as a faculty of judgment. The senses do not judge, so strictly speaking, the senses can neither give rise to truth nor to falsity. The senses link up the subject to the object through appearances in sensible intuitions given in time and space. It is the faculty of understanding that makes judgments relating the concept to the object. As is the case with Plato, the Cartesian conception of the role of the senses in the process of cognition can lead to confusion about the actual instrument or tool used by humans to acquire knowledge. The senses merely provide the moment by which objects are given to the real faculty of judgment which is the understanding. Rejecting the senses, as an ultimate source of truth or error, then, is an error in itself.

But it is at the level of the discovery of the “cogito” that Kant centralized his refutation of Cartesian idealism. The first truth of Cartesian philosophy, considered by Descartes as the most fundamental truth of metaphysics or ‘first philosophy’, is the proof of the existence of the self from the activity of thinking. When the Cartesian doubt moves from the senses to the body, Descartes discovers that he could literally doubt everything away which means he could not accept anything as clear and distinct except his own thoughts or the activities of his mind, some of which activities involve doubting. The doubt that gives rise to the discovery of the ‘cogito’ or thought as the essence of humanity is a quest for self-

⁵¹ René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, ed. Standley Tweyman, London and New York: Routledge, 1993, Meditation I, p. 46.

evident truths; by progressively doing away with illusion, we get to a point where the truth of the activity of doing away with illusions becomes self-evident and thus constitutes proof of the existence of the self. This is how Descartes proves, justly, that the mind is easier to know than the body, and, secondly, that knowledge of the mind and its activities inevitably proves the existence of the self as a thing whose essence is defined by thought itself. This is the bone of contention for Kant. René Descartes proves the existence of the self from inner consciousness.

In an exercise of introspection, René Descartes takes us on a journey to the inner self, an inward journey to the mind itself and its activities which constitute the focal point on which the existence of the self revolves:

Can I affirm that I possess the least of all those things which I have just said pertain to the nature of body? I pause to consider, I revolve all these things in my mind, and I find none of which I can say that it pertains to me. [...] Let us pass to the attributes of the soul and see if there is anyone which is in me. What of nutrition or walking? But if it is so that I have no body it is also true that I can neither walk nor take nourishment. Another attribute is sensation. But one cannot feel without body, and besides I have thought I perceived many things during sleep that I recognized in my waking moment as not having been experienced at all. What of thinking? I find here that thought is an attribute that belongs to me; it alone cannot be separated from me. I am, I exist, that is certain. But how often? Just when I think, for it might possibly be the case if I ceased entirely to think, that I should likewise cease altogether to exist. I do not now admit anything which is not necessarily true: to speak accurately I am not more than a thing which thinks, that is to say a mind or a soul, or an understanding or reason, which are terms whose significance was formerly unknown to me. I am, however, a real thing and really exist; but what thing? I have answered: a thing which thinks.⁵²

The progressive elimination of all the attributes of the body leads to the ultimate truth of Cartesian philosophy: the self exists as a self - evidence when every other thing is put to doubt. Sensation involves the body; the five human senses of touch, smell, sight hear and taste, all involve the body. To doubt the existence of the body is to cast doubt on all forms of sensation associated with the body. The seven biological characteristics of life are also intrinsically bound with a body. To doubt the existence of the body is to doubt the possibility of respiration, growth, irritability, excretion, reproduction, movement and nutrition. But in the manifold of things that can be doubted away with doubts over the existence of the body, Descartes discovered the indubitable remnant which is spiritual: the mind and its activities.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Meditation II, Pp.52-53.

Cartesian idealism establishes thinking as the defining essence of humanity. A human being exists only as long as he thinks. Human existence ends with the end of the activity of thinking. An end to the exercise of the mind would mean an end to human existence itself. Kant accepts the form of the Cartesian argument in the quest for proof of existence moving from outer experience. To Kant “Problematic idealism [...] which merely pleads incapacity to prove, through immediate experience, any existence except our own, is, in so far as it allows of no decisive judgment until sufficient proof has been found, reasonable and in accordance with a thorough and philosophical mode of thought.”⁵³ The form of the Cartesian argument is acceptable because philosophy is all about proofs and demonstration of hypothesis formulated according to the possible link between claims and logical principles. This is the same philosophical spirit exhibited by Kant in his idealism. Seeking to eliminate error, seeking to attain the truth by progressively doing away with all the possibilities of illusions is a Cartesian asset that Kant could not ignore. Yet, Kant had to refute the content of the Cartesian argument that was expressed in acceptable form.

The ‘problematic’ nature of Cartesian idealism stems from its rejection of outer experience in a bid to prove the reality of an inner experience. Making abstraction of all forms of outer experience, like Descartes did, is the problematic content that leads to error: “The required proof must [...] show that we have experience, and not merely imagination of outer things, and this, it would seem, cannot be achieved save by proof that even our inner experience, which for Descartes is indubitable, is possible only on the assumption of outer experience.”⁵⁴ Descartes makes assumption about outer objects, or objects out of our mind, as if they were just imaginary entities that lacked concrete existence. To ‘doubt away’ all forms of outer experience is to assume that all objects of sense-experience are fictitious. This is the assumption that takes Descartes to the world of pure thought as the world whose activity provides the indubitable proof of the existence of the self.

Like Plato, then, in his quest to push the faculty of knowledge up to its optimum level, Descartes overstepped the bounds of the mind and ignored experience to which all our concepts must relate to have validity and objectivity. In the Sixth Meditation, the Cartesian distinction between imagination and the intellect takes Descartes to the theory of innate ideas and knowledge by introspection:

⁵³ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

[...] I easily conceive that if somebody exists with which my mind is conjoined and united in such a way that it can apply itself to consider it when it pleases, it may be that by this means it can imagine corporeal objects; so that this mode of thinking differs from pure intellection only inasmuch as mind in its intellectual activity in some manner turns on itself, and considers some of the ideas which it possesses in itself while in imagination it turns toward the body [...].⁵⁵

Here, Descartes is accepting that cognition is a sort of introspection, the mind returning to itself, just as it is the case with Plato. And since the mind is easier to know than the body, the role of the Cartesian imagination that applies to the body is pushed to the background as a procedure that cannot give rise to the clarity and distinctness that we achieve using pure intellection. Firstly, the inward journey by the mind toward itself completely ignores experience to which all our concepts must relate to have validity and objectivity. Secondly, Descartes ascribes to the imagination a role that is not epistemologically rewarding.

By holding that the imagination seeks to know the body while the mind seeks, through its innate ideas, knowledge, René Descartes reduces the imagination to the study of that which can easily be doubted away. After all, the body and all other things revealed to us by the senses can easily be rejected through the methodic doubt in Cartesian Philosophy. The case is not the same with Immanuel Kant to whom the imagination plays a vital role toward the synthesis of apperception. Through sensation, we receive objects in perception; through the imagination, we are able to associate the manifold of appearances received in perception. Here, the imagination is a representation of ideas linking one to the other in an association of likeness and difference before the final level of synthetic apperception where the ideas get to a point of unity in consciousness and become recognized as knowledge of objects that gave rise to the original perceptions. Thus, unlike Descartes who considers the imagination as that which studies the doubtful body, Kant considers the imagination as one of the three subjective sources of knowledge:

There are three subjective sources of knowledge, upon which rests the possibility of experience in general and of knowledge of its objects – sense, imagination and apperception. Each of these can be viewed as empirical, namely, in its application to given appearances. But all of them are likewise a priori elements or foundations, which make this empirical employment itself possible. Sense represents appearances empirically in perception, imagination in association (and reproduction), apperception in the empirical consciousness, of the identity of the reproduced representations with the appearances whereby they were given, that is, in recognition [...]. In the

⁵⁵ René Descartes, *op. cit.*, Meditation VI, pp. 87 – 88.

*understanding there are then pure a priori modes of knowledge which contain the necessary unity of the pure synthesis of imagination in respect of all possible appearances.*⁵⁶

Here, the subjective sources of knowledge are in relation to the subject or knowledge-seeker. This does not imply that the knowledge of the object thus obtained would vary from one subject to another. Rather, it implies that the knowledge obtained originates from the subject as compared with the object. This is the Kantian Copernican revolution where the subject has modes of knowledge to which experience has to conform. Objects or things cannot be known in themselves, this constitutes the unknowable *noumena*. Every object known are Phenomena as they appear to our modes of knowledge, and the modes of knowledge are *a priori* or prepared prior to any experience. In this way, objects are given in sensation as perception, the perceptions are associated and reproduced by the imagination, and the final unity or synthesis of the imagination is achieved by the categories in apperception where concepts are made to relate to objects or to produce principles used to explain experience. Every object given to us is not the object in itself but a form of *re-presentation*, that is, the mind presents the object in another way, in its own way according to its modes of knowledge.

The manifold or many forms of appearances are received in sensation as perceptions. These perceptions are various ways of representation of our objects of knowledge. After the reception of appearances in sensation as perceptions, the imagination comes into play. The role of the imagination here is to organize the perceptions or representations toward synthetic unity in apperception. The imagination is a mediator between perceptions and apperception, the subjective source of knowledge that associates similar perceptions and separates them from those which lack similarity. In other words, the imagination reproduces perceptions respecting similarities and differences. The imagination is the organizer of perceptions, presenting them in a new form that aims at synthetic unity, and the synthetic unity is achieved by the categories in apperception. At the level of apperception, the categories give rules that relate all the perceptions to the object. The whole process is for the mind to have internal modes thanks to which every object given is received, represented, interpreted, associated with all other representations and synthesized in such a way as to give rules to experience, and this is synthetic *a priori* knowledge.

The Cartesian idealism, like Plato's, relegates appearances to the background whereas in Kantian idealism, all ideas are geared toward providing an explanatory link for objects of

⁵⁶ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Transcendental Deduction, pp. 141-143.

experience. Then Descartes doubts the external world to prove the existence of the self as a thinking thing whereas the internal states can only be known through outer states. Self-consciousness of thought does not make the self an object of knowledge, the subject has to be given in perception like all other objects. The imagination is not a faculty for studying objects that can be put to doubt. It is a faculty that combines, separates, organizes and prepares perceptions toward synthetic unity in apperception. It was in the fourth part of the *Discourse on Method* that Descartes stated the *cogito ergo sum* as the most fundamental principal in philosophy in syllogistic form:

[...] considering that all the same thoughts which we have while awake can come to us while asleep without any one of them being true, I resolved to pretend that everything that had ever entered my head was no more true than the illusions of my dreams. But immediately afterwards I noted that, while I was trying to think of all things being false in this way, it was necessarily the case that I, who was thinking them, had to be something; and observing this truth: I am thinking therefore I exist, was so secured and certain that it could not be shaken by any of the most extravagant suppositions of the skeptics, I judged that I could accept it without scruple, as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking.⁵⁷

Suspending judgment till all the doubts are cleared, pretending that everything about the senses and about the body were false, the “I”, the subject that is thinking must exist. And the conclusion of the existence of the subject is based on the premise of thought. Here, the act of thinking is the premise that gives rise to the conclusion about the existence of the subject. I think, therefore I am, I think therefore I exist, I exist only as long as I think, it is only as a thinking being that my existence is understood and proven, are variable forms of the Cartesian syllogistic proof of existence of the subject from the act of thinking.

In a series of plausible arguments, Kant proves that the existence of the self can only be known in relation to outer experience where objects are linked up in a time-sequence. To be conscious of the existence of something is one thing, and to know that which exists is another thing. To know a thing, it has to be given in intuition. To know the self, it has to be given in outward experience as an object of knowledge like all others. Here, the subject of knowledge has to become the object of knowledge to the same subject. This goes beyond mere self-consciousness in thought; this implies assuming the existence of outer experience by which the self and other objects are given to thought. Kant has to wipe away the ‘mystery’ behind the Cartesian supposed knowledge of the self. To be aware of my thoughts does not

⁵⁷ René Descartes, *Discourse on Method, op. cit.*, Part four, p. 28.

prove that I exist. To be aware of my thoughts implies that I, the thinking thing, have to be given to my thought as an object to be known. This in itself already implies the existence of the world outside my thoughts and the self is part of that world where objects are given to thought in intuition. The self exists, among other objects in experience. The self has to be given to thought as the thing to be known. This can only be done if the world of outer experience exists. Yet, Descartes starts his reflection by ‘doubting away’ the world of outer experience. If the world of outer objects does not exist as Descartes claims, then the self which is part of that world cannot be known too. The self must thus be distinguished from self-consciousness.

Self-consciousness is my awareness of thoughts and even if I move from there to assume that I exist, I am still to be known. To exist is not to be known. To know implies intuition in a world whose existence Descartes has already put to doubt. This shows that

[...] the game played by idealism has been turned against itself, and with greater justice. Idealism assumed that the only immediate experience is inner experience, and that from it we can only infer outer things - and this, moreover, only in an untrustworthy manner, as in all cases where we move from given effects to determinate causes. In this particular case, the cause of the representations, which we ascribe, perhaps falsely, to outer things, may lie in ourselves.⁵⁸

Kant shows that idealism is self-defeating. The outer experience is not caused by inner experience; in other words, the mind does not create the object of experience. Rather, the mind creates modes of knowledge with which to receive and explain the world of objects. The things existing outside our thoughts are there in themselves and we cannot know those things in themselves. We can only know them according to our *a priori* modes of knowledge. The mind does not create the material world; the mind creates modes to know the material world. Thought does not create objects. Objects are given to thought in intuition. Thought does not create the self that exists. Rather, the self that exists must be given to thought through intuition. We cannot move from thought to the objects directly, the step by which the objects are given in intuition makes the difference in Kantian idealism. The representation of outer things does not begin from our thoughts; it is the mode of the representations that arises from our thoughts. Experience proves the first moment, in time, when objects are given to us. But the modes of representation of experience in our thoughts are *a priori*, consciousness of my existence is an inner experience but the time-sequence through which the self is given to

⁵⁸ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Refutation of Idealism, Note I, p. 245.

thought is an outer experience that constitutes the decisive moment that gives rise to objective and valid knowledge.

Idealism defeats itself when it assumes that self-consciousness is an act of cognition. Kant insists that “The consciousness of myself in the representation “I” is not an intuition, but a merely intellectual representation of the spontaneity of a thinking subject.⁵⁹ To be aware of my thoughts is a spontaneous act that does not involve any object given to thought through intuition. The outer things have to be presupposed for the self to be known as an object. Kant notes that

[...] outer experience is immediate, and that only by means of it is inner experience - not indeed the consciousness of my own existence, but the determination of it in time - possible. Certainly the representation ‘I am’, which expresses the consciousness that can accompany all thoughts, immediately includes in itself the existence of the subject; but it does not so include any knowledge of that subject, and also no empirical knowledge, that is, no experience of it. For this, we require, in addition to the thought of something existing, also intuition, and in this case inner intuition, in respect of which, that is, of time, the subject must be determined. But in order so to determine it, outer objects are quite indispensable, and it therefore follows that inner experience is itself possible only mediately, and only through outer experience.⁶⁰

We have access to objects of sense-experience immediately; they are given to us as soon as our faculties come into contact with them. Inner experience is mediate because it is not just thought, it cannot lead to knowledge if it were just pure thought; it needs the self to be given in intuition. The subject of knowledge has to become the object of knowledge. Nothing empirical is known through pure thought.

However, to be fair with Cartesian philosophy, there is a plausible claim that the mind is more easily known than the body and other material things. This claim is further made clearly in the Cartesian *Principles of Philosophy*: “[...] it is obvious that we perceive more properties or qualities in our mind than in any other thing; since absolutely nothing can cause us to know something other than our mind, without at the same time bringing us with much more certainty to a knowledge of our mind itself.⁶¹ The mind is the tool used to acquire knowledge. Thus we cannot know other things using the mind without knowing the mind itself. Descartes thinks that if the mind gives us knowledge of other things with clarity and

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Note 2, pp. 246.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 245-246.

⁶¹ René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, trans. Valentine Roger Miller and Reese P. Miller, Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1982, Part 1, p.7.

distinctness, then the knowledge that we have of the mind itself cannot be less clear and less distinct than the knowledge that we have of other things using the mind. This Cartesian view of the mind is very logical in its form or quest for clarity. But, as we have shown with Kant, the problem is with the content of what Descartes considers to be knowledge. The self cannot be known by doubting away the material world. In fact, the self has to be known as an object given to intuition like other objects.

As self-consciousness in our thoughts, the mind's existence is obvious. But when the self has to become an object of knowledge, intuition has to be involved. This is because the self and its existence become known only through experience. On this point, Kant writes:

*Since the existence of any object of the senses cannot be known completely a priori but only comparatively a priori, relatively to some other previously given existence; and since, even so, we can then arrive only at such an existence as must somewhere be contained in the context of the experience, of which the given perception is a part, the necessity of existence can never be known from concepts, but always only from connection with that which is perceived, in accordance with universal laws of experience.*⁶²

The Cartesian knowledge of the self does not provide a link with experience by which any knowledge is considered valid and objective. Descartes ignores the senses and appearances. A game of concepts may give rise to logical or formal consistency but cannot give rise to knowledge if the empirical link to the objects is not established. Objects must be given. This is done in intuition. Objects must be thought. This is done in the understanding through the concepts. The Cartesian idealism does not link concepts with their objects in experience. That is why the Cartesian idealism is problematic.

The idealism of George Berkeley, on the other hand, is dogmatic. The problematic idealism doubts everything in experience except the existence of the self, made clear and distinct by thought. The dogmatic idealism of George Berkeley rejects the existence of space altogether. In this extreme case of idealism, everything we see in space is a product of our imagination because the entities in space do not exist at all. The first time that Kant makes reference to Berkeley, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is to show that time and space are *a priori* forms of sensibility. This implies that time and space are not in objects themselves but in us, they are the modes in us by which objects are given to us in intuition. To make space and time to belong to objects and not to us is the error committed by Berkeley who rejects space and all the objects in it as imaginary entities. In this way, Berkeley does not see space

⁶² Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

as a property of the mind but as a property found in objects themselves. If such were to be the case, then we cannot have any knowledge of any objects as we cannot know objects in themselves. In his exposition on time and space, Kant shows that, taken as a property of the mind to grasp external objects, space is an *a priori* form of sensibility. Here, we must note that sensible intuition is that by which objects are given to us and this is the only means by which we can receive objects. Intellectual intuition is not possible because objects cannot be given to us in pure thought. Berkeley makes the error of rejecting space when he considered it as that which contains objects of the material world rather than as that in us by which material objects are given to us.

Kant explains the paths followed by Berkeley's idealism and how the latter got to the level of considering space and everything material as illusions. This is what happens when an idealist, in a quest to reject the material world so as to focus on the mind, ignores the objects that give validity and objectivity to knowledge. Kant notes that treating space and time as belonging to objects themselves leads to the error of dogmatic idealism committed by Berkeley:

It is only if we ascribe objective reality to these forms of representation [time and space] that it becomes impossible for us to prevent everything being thereby transformed into mere illusion. For if we regard space and time as properties which, if they are to be possible at all, must be found in things in themselves, and if we reflect on the absurdities in which we are then involved, in that two infinite things, which are not substances, nor anything actually inhering in substances, must yet have existence, nay, must be the necessary condition of the existence of all things, and moreover must continue to exist, even although all existing things be removed, - we cannot blame the good Berkeley for degrading bodies to mere illusion.⁶³

Considering space and time as belonging to things in themselves, considering space and time as existing entities, considering space and time as things out there which contain the objects of our knowledge, considering space and time as that which subsists even without objects and as having an independent existence: these are the errors that led Berkeley to dogmatic idealism that sees space and objects as illusions; these are the errors that a Kantian idealist has to avoid so as to situate space and time in the subject, the knowledge-seeker who needs internal modes to represent and give meaning to objects. The Kantian idealist has to rehabilitate the world of bodies degraded by Berkeley in dogmatic idealism. This is done by considering space and time as *a priori* forms of sensibility through which objects are received

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Transcendental Aesthetics, p.89.

in intuition. By so doing, the process of association and recognition of representations performed by the imagination and categories to attain synthetic apperception will then guarantee the truth as a link between the concept and the subject.

In the dogmatic idealism of George Berkeley, for anything to exist, it must be perceived. Existence is inseparable from perception. Nothing exists without the mind of the agent of perception. In *Principles of Human Knowledge*, George Berkeley insists that “[...] neither our thoughts, nor passions, nor ideas formed by the imagination, exist without the mind, is what everybody will allow. And it seems no less evident that the various sensations or ideas imprinted on the sense, however blended or combined together (that is, whatever objects they compose) cannot exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving them.”⁶⁴ Whether we are in sensation or in imagination or in intuition or in memory, everything has to be perceived by the mind. To be is to be perceived. Anything that is not perceived is as good as nothing at all. The material world and objects in time and space do not have any independent existence if they are not perceived by the mind. No matter the complexity in the composition of our ideas, they must be perceived. No matter the source of the ideas, the real act of perception takes place in the mind. This is an extreme case of idealism where the real world is that of the mind, the world of perception which guarantees existence.

In his demonstration of perception as the only proof of existence of things in the mind, Berkeley takes the example of a table on which we write. He has to show that without the various perceptions that the mind has of the table, there is nothing else to be known as the table:

*The table I write on, I say, exists, that is, I see and feel it; and if I were out of my study I should say it existed, meaning thereby that if I was in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it. There was an odor, that is, it was smelled; there was a sound, that is to say, it was heard; a color or figure, and it was perceived by sight or touch. This is all that I can understand by these and the like expressions. For as to what is said of the absolute existence of unthinking things without any relation to their being perceived, that seems perfectly unintelligible. Their esse is percipi, nor is it possible they should have any existence, out of the minds or thinking things which perceive them.*⁶⁵

⁶⁴ George Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge and Three Dialogues*, ed. Howard Robinson, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, Part 1, p. 25.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

It is then obvious that while sounding like an empiricist showing how the senses give rise to knowledge through perceptions from touch, sight, hear, smell and taste, Berkeley is actually an idealist of the most extreme level, the level that Kant refers to as dogmatic idealism.

Dogmatic idealism is a level reached by Berkeley in thought whereby the thinking subject creates the reality in perception. The material world as existing in itself is a mere illusion. The real world is the perception: to be is to be perceived. The essence of things is in the perception. Without the mind of the knower, there is nothing to be known at all. Without the mind, the material world does not exist at all. The mind creates the reality in perception; a representation of a perception in the past is memory which implies that if the object were there in the present, it might be perceived. Thus the object itself is not the reality. The reality is the perception of the object. Nothing meaningful can be said about the material world except through perception.

Obviously, Berkeley is an empiricist because at the beginning of his inquiry, his focus is on sense-perception or representations of things received through the senses in a mental activity. The senses merely provide the moment of contact between the object and the knower. We move from the contact of the senses and the object to the perception or mental representation resulting from this contact. Berkeley pushes the reflection further to prove that apart from sense-perception and perception of ideas, there is nothing else as reality:

It is indeed an opinion strangely prevailing amongst men, that houses, mountains, rivers, and in a word all sensible objects have an existence natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding. But with how great an assurance and acquiescence soever this principle may be entertained in the world; yet whoever shall find in his heart to call it in question, may, if I mistake not, perceive it to involve a manifest contradiction. For what are the aforementioned objects but the things we perceive by sense, and what do we perceive besides our own ideas or sensations; and is it not plainly repugnant that any one of these or any combination of them should exist unperceived?⁶⁶

Berkeley sets out as an empiricist to show how the objects of the material world are perceived by means of the senses. But at the level of the understanding, the mind starts combining and separating ideas, and this is what Berkeley considers as perception of ideas derived from objects through the senses. The logical leap into pure idealism is done when Berkeley considers the thoughts of authors who give the material world an independent existence that is not in the mind. This is where we land in illusions according to Berkeley. Nothing can exist

⁶⁶ *Idem.*

unperceived. When we talk about mountains and rivers, we are simply saying that we can perceive them if we get close to them. We could also be saying that we perceive them as ideas of the imagination. Yet, apart from the perception through the senses and using ideas, there is nothing like mountain and river. The mountains and rivers have no independent existence apart from our perceiving them. Kant talks of the ‘good Berkeley’ whose idealism is considered ‘dogmatic’ for associating space with all the objects of the material world and considering them illusions when considered without perception. To be is to be perceived according to Berkeley. Without perception nothing else can be proven to exist.

Like with Descartes, the problem with Berkeley, according to Kant, is that Berkeley ignores the external world as an illusion so as to take the reality to the level of the perception of the senses and of ideas. This makes the process of cognition an inward journey that ignores the material world so as to present the reality as a mental construction. Kant makes it clear that

I am conscious of my own existence as determined in time. All determinations of time presuppose something permanent in perception. This permanent cannot, however, be something in me, since it is only through this permanent that my existence in time can itself be determined. Thus perception of this permanent is possible only through a thing outside me and not through the mere representation of a thing outside me; and consequently the determination of my existence in time is possible only through the existence of actual things which I perceive outside me.⁶⁷

Here, Berkeley’s dogmatic idealism determines the reality from the level of the thinking subject. Yet, in Kantian idealism, knowledge of internal states is mediated by the existence of outer states. The outer states constitute that by which objects are given in experience to fulfill the requirements of objectivity and validity of knowledge. If my existence in time must have a reference with permanence, then the permanence must be outside me to justify my own existence. Knowledge needs a reference out of our own consciousness and this permanent reference is only provided by outer objects in relation to which the self is known in time with other objects of sense-experience. And since idealism makes an abusive use of the mind, the Kantian critique of metaphysics in general is a logical continuation of his rejection of problematic and dogmatic idealism.

⁶⁷ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

SECOND CHAPTER

KANT'S CRITIQUE OF METAPHYSICS

Though Kant carried out a systematic critique of metaphysics, he retains much respect for metaphysics as a foundation of many fields of knowledge. Kant had worries mainly with the way his predecessors used (or rather) misused metaphysics in pretentious claims that rendered no service to the original intention which was to have a solid foundation for the reality. And the original intention could never be achieved because the misuse of reason is one of the reasons for which a critique of reason using reason becomes a necessity. If there is one field that calls to mind the necessity to circumscribe the field of application, then it is metaphysics. This puts our work at the crossroad of metaphysics and epistemology. The truth becomes problematic when the boundaries of the tool for its discovery, which is reason, are not clearly marked out. Generally considered to be a quest for the foundation or root of reality, metaphysics becomes a speculative field whose status as a science is put to question. Its claims are too ambitious and exaggerated and the instrument to attain its goals is not as boundless as its fanatics think it is. That is why a critique of metaphysics is inseparable from a critique of pure reason itself. If the metaphysical venture up to Kant's era was not marked by success and if the case may not be different in our era, then the critique of pure reason using reason itself continues. If the goals of the critique can be attained to make metaphysics a possible science whose objectives can coincide with those of epistemology, then a solid foundation of truth can become a possibility. For now, the status of metaphysics remains problematic.

In the first pages of the Preface to the first edition of his massive *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant, using metaphorical and poetic expressions, paints a very pessimistic picture of the possibilities of metaphysics. Using the terminology of Kantian philosophy, the metaphysical adventure starts as a leap from concepts of the understanding to ideas of pure reason as we seek to explain reality using faculties whose application goes beyond the normal field of competence of reason. The metaphysical journey, as described by Kant, literally ends in tears. Human reason

[...] begins with principles which it has no option save employ in the course of experience, and which this experience abundantly justifies it in using. Rising with their aid [...] to ever higher, ever more remote, conditions, it soon becomes aware that in this way - the questions never ceasing - its work must always remain incomplete; and it therefore finds itself compelled to resort to

*principles which overstep all possible empirical employment [...]. But by this procedure, human reason precipitates itself into darkness and contradictions [...]. For, since the principles of which it is making use transcend the limits of experience, they are no longer subject to any empirical test. The battle field of these endless controversies is called metaphysics.*⁶⁸

Thus described, the fate of metaphysics seems to be sealed as a mere misadventure in the dark. The darkness here is the misuse of reason which, though natural, inevitably leads to illusions. Yet human reason cannot avoid metaphysics, and metaphysics cannot yield the fruits aimed at by its fanatics at the beginning of every inquiry that takes reason beyond the bounds of genuine knowledge. Will human reason's natural disposition to metaphysics always be epistemologically useless? If the fate of metaphysics cannot change, should the future tend toward trying to discard this aspect of human reason or reorienting it toward something useful for the future? The former preoccupation is tackled in this chapter of our work while the latter is announced so that, at the end of the critique of metaphysics, we can give room for projections into a future where the complexity of the truth, may, after all, take us to metaphysics for reorientation.

Within the framework of critical philosophy, metaphysics is situated at the level of 'transcendental dialectic' which, together with 'transcendental analytic' constitute the two fields of 'transcendental logic' which, together with 'transcendental aesthetic' constitute the two divisions of the massive 'transcendental doctrine of elements' which is the first huge section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the other section dubbed 'transcendental doctrine of method' not as massive as the first section called 'transcendental doctrine of elements'. Unlike the 'transcendental analytic' which is mainly a deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding that relate with objects of experience to give objectivity and validity to knowledge, the 'transcendental dialectic' where metaphysics is situated leads to what Kant calls the 'dialectical illusion'. Kant here reinvents 'dialectic' with a pejorative meaning to distance himself from fanatics of metaphysics before him and during his era. Kant does not want to engage reason in a game of words that demonstrates sagacity through coherence and consistency. Unfortunately, and this is where metaphysics fails to be epistemologically useful, such a show of coherence in a display of words becomes useless when the concepts are 'empty' because they lack the empirical content that could make metaphysics a science. The following figure represents our understanding of the place of metaphysics in the various sections of the Kantian *Critique of Pure Reason*:

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Preface to the First Edition, p. 7.

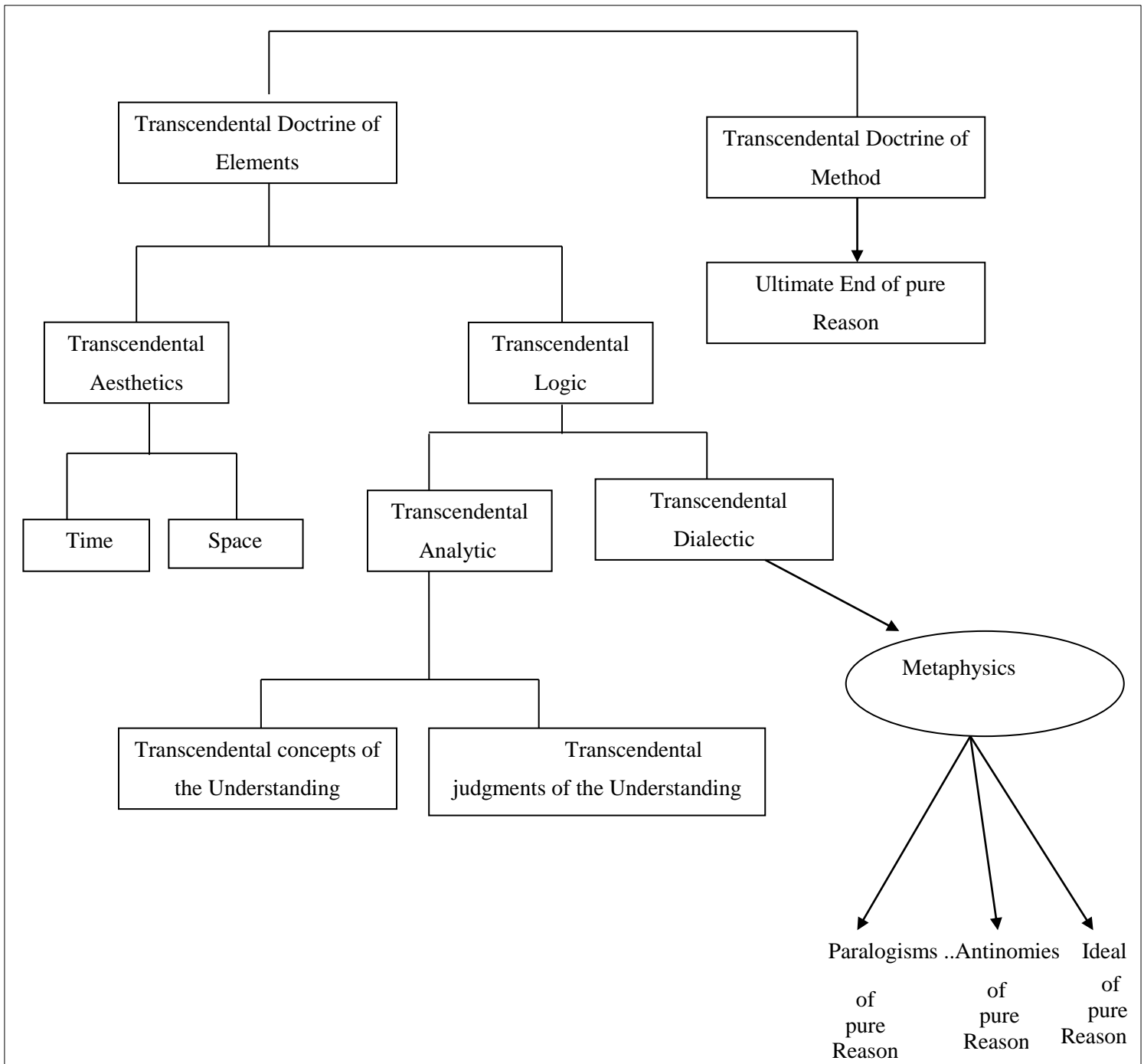


Fig I: The Position of Metaphysics in the Critique of Pure Reason

Sounding good through well carved words, building concepts in a very convincing and logical way, respecting coherence and consistency in thought: metaphysicians are capable of doing all this and more, except the case when we seek validity and objectivity for what they claim to be the fruits of their labor. This is when we land in the ‘dialectical illusions’ and Kant is meticulous enough to give a precise meaning to the term ‘dialectic’ as the method that leads to the illusions of metaphysics:

However various were the significations in which the ancients use 'dialectic' as the title for a science or art, we can safely conclude from their employment of it that with them it was never anything else than the logic of illusion. It was a sophisticated art of giving to ignorance, and indeed to intentional sophistries, the appearance of truth, by the device of imitating the methodical thoroughness which logic prescribes, and of using its 'topic' to conceal the emptiness of its pretensions.⁶⁹

What Kant calls the 'logic of illusions' is a result of what he refers to as the 'dialectical' use of reason. And this is what metaphysics does, the use of logic in sophistry, to conceive and present arguments that are formally acceptable because they respect all rules of contradiction and respect all rules of orderliness in presentation of statements in a convincing structure. This is the use of logic in a game of words that has no link with objects of experience. We are thus in a 'dialectical' use of logic to make 'empty' arguments convincing because the arguments make use of 'empty' concepts.

To understand the Kantian critique of metaphysics, it is important to note that logic in itself does not give validity to knowledge in terms of content. The formal arrangement of propositions in an argument does not necessarily relate to a content that relates with objects of experience. The problem is with what Kant refers to as 'general logic' which is expected to serve as a tool or instrument of coherence irrespective of the content. We can be dealing with illusions coated in thorough respect of logical rules:

For Logic teaches us nothing whatsoever regarding the content of knowledge, but lays down only the formal conditions of agreement with the understanding; and since these conditions can tell us nothing at all as to the objects concerned, any attempt to use this logic as an instrument (organon) that professes to extend and enlarge our knowledge can end in nothing but mere talk - in which, with a certain plausibility, we maintain, or, if such be our choice, attack, any and every possible assertion.⁷⁰

The 'dialectical' illusion consists in claiming that we are adding something new to own stock of knowledge through the use of logic in sophistry. This, exactly, is the path followed by metaphysics using the 'logic of illusions' having the impression that coherence and consistency are enough to produce new knowledge. When all is said and done, without anything new to our stock of knowledge, the metaphysicians take praises or give praises to each other for a job not done at all. This is the failure of metaphysics to coincide with epistemology in goals and in methods. This is the bone of contention in the Kantian critique of metaphysics.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Transcendental Logic, p. 99.

⁷⁰ *Idem.*

What, then, is the object of study of metaphysics that Kant rejects? The answer to this interrogation will help us do a systematic critique of metaphysics. In the study of the basis of all reality or the foundation of all realities, Kant looks at metaphysics from three angles, all of which lead to the ‘logic of illusions’ and ‘dialectical’ illusions where sophistry is mistaken for truth. The three angles of Metaphysics are *rational psychology*, *rational cosmology* and *rational theology*. The three dimensions of metaphysics respectively correspond to three objects of study:

Metaphysics has as the proper object of its enquiries three ideas only: God, freedom, and immortality, so related that the second concept, when combined with the first, should lead to the third as a necessary conclusion. And other matters with which this science may deal serve merely as a means of arriving at these ideas and of establishing their reality. It does not need the ideas for the purpose of natural science, but in order to pass beyond nature. Insight into them would render theology and morals, and through the union of these two, likewise religion, and there with the highest ends of our existence, entirely and exclusively dependent on the faculty of speculative reason. In a systematic representation of the ideas, the order cited, the synthetic, would be the most suitable; but in the investigation which must necessarily precede it the analytic, or reverse order, is better adapted to the purpose of completing our great project, as enabling us to start from what is immediately given us in experience –advancing from the doctrine of the soul, to the doctrine of the world, and thence to the knowledge of God.⁷¹

God, freedom and immortality then are the objects of study of metaphysics. God is studied in rational theology as an ideal of pure reason; freedom is studied as part of the world taken in its totality as an object of rational cosmology, and the idea of immortality is associated with the soul studied under rational psychology. By bringing all metaphysical issues down to these three, Kant intends to move from one to the next in the quest for synthetic unity culminating in the ideal of pure reason. A synthetic unity of these ideas of metaphysics is attained through God as the ideal of pure reason. Yet, for the sake of analysis, we have to move from immortality to freedom and to God to understand how pure reason inevitably confronts illusions in its quest for synthetic unity. The following table is our understanding of the three objects of study of metaphysics, each of which corresponds to a special aspect of Metaphysics as well as the dialectical illusion involved:

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Transcendental Ideas, Note added in second edition, p.325.

Table 1: Our understanding of the three divisions of Metaphysics

Object of study	Aspect of Metaphysics	Dialectical illusion involved
Immortality (of the soul)	Rational psychology	Paralogisms of pure reason
Freedom (of the world)	Rational cosmology	Antinomies of Pure Reason
God	Rational theology	Ideal of Pure Reason

2.1- The Paralogisms of Pure Reason

Rational psychology is an aspect of Metaphysics that deals with the soul. This is based on the doctrine of the dualistic conception of man to be made up of a material body and an immaterial soul. The soul is associated with mind and the activity of thought. The body is associated with sensation and activities of the senses. The doctrine of the dualistic conception of man, as body and soul, dates back to the Socratic era, with Socrates himself. With Socrates, the body is a source of corruption to the purity of the soul. The virtue moralist dedicates his existence to the nourishment of the soul in complete negligence of the body. The real man is the soul and not the body. The body is nourished with food and the soul is nourished with character. The purity of the soul does not depend on the body for survival. The soul is immortal and moves to another body at death. Death affects only the body. A clean soul can be housed in a dirty body. The soul is the source of all virtues. Yet, the soul has an appetitive element that is completely subdued by the rational element. The rational element commands the soul; the courageous element respects and executes the dictates of reason for all our appetites to be kept under control. On no occasion should a soul ever be dominated by appetites. Allowing the soul to be commanded by the body is tantamount to allowing appetites or bodily desires to take over our reason.

It was in the book entitled *Phaedo*, one of the dialogues of Plato, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, attributed to both Socrates and Plato, was set forth. In the dialogue set on the last day that Socrates had on earth, as reported by Phaedo who was an eye witness to the event, the venerated philosopher, Socrates, as reported by Plato, developed arguments for the immortality of the soul as an integral part of the life of a philosopher:

[...] those who practice philosophy in the right way are in training for dying and they fear death least of all men. [...] if they are altogether estranged from the body and desire to have their soul by itself would it not be quite absurd for them to be afraid and resentful when this happens? [...] One must surely think so [...] if he is a true philosopher, for he is firmly convinced that he will not

*find pure knowledge anywhere except there. And if this is so, then, as I said just now, would it not be highly unreasonable for such a man to fear death?*⁷²

If to philosophise is to learn to die, if philosophers actually live so as to prepare for death, then the fear of death is not a philosophical attitude. This is because death, viewed as the separation of the soul from the body, is a welcome relief for the philosopher who lives seeking to free the soul from the body so as to acquire pure knowledge that is uncorrupted and incorruptible by bodily desires. This is how Socrates talked about death on his dying day as a prelude to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul developed by Plato using Socrates as his mouthpiece in the dialogues. In this way, the venerated Socrates accepted to drink poison to free his soul from the body after a life spent like a stoic, ready to accept his destiny, and like a cynic who despised worldly pleasures and completely rejected the fulfillment of bodily desires at the expense of nourishing the soul with good character.

Then, in the doctrine of transmigration of souls, Plato, through Socrates, shows that death comes from life and life comes from death as direct opposites that alternate and give rise to each other. When the soul is separated from the body, at death, it moves to the World of Forms where pure knowledge is situated and where all bodily desires and temptations of the material world can no longer influence the philosophical contemplation of truth. From the World of Forms, the soul returns to another body in an endless process of reincarnation whereby life replaces death and death replaces life in the immortality of the soul. Socrates insists that if this were not the case, then all living things would have died, that is, their souls would have been separated from their bodies permanently with the possibility of having a world without human beings. If the death of the body were the end of the life of the soul, then we would not even have human beings living; but since life leads to death and death in turn leads to life with the return of the soul, the immortality of the soul is guaranteed:

*Let us examine it in some such a manner as this: whether the souls of men who have died exist in the underworld or not. We recall an ancient theory that souls arriving there come from here, and then again that they arrive here and are born here from the dead. If that is true that the living come back from the dead, then surely our souls must exist there, for they could not come back if they did not exist, and this is a sufficient proof that these things are so if it truly appears that the living never come from any other source than from the dead.*⁷³

⁷² Plato, "Phaedo", trans. G.M.A. Grube in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper, Indianapolis / Cambridge: Hackett Publishing company, 1997, p.59.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

Thus stated, Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul puts life and death in a dynamic movement of cause and effect, from the cause to the effect which becomes a new cause that takes us back to the first cause. Here, death causes life and life causes death in an eternally reversible process that permits the souls of the dead to return to other bodies after death leading to new life. This is a doctrine of what Kant calls rational psychology or 'rational doctrine of the soul' which is associated with the problematic metaphysical concept of immortality. This psychology is 'rational' and not 'empirical' because it has no link with intuition through which objects are given to us in time and space. Yet, the arguments advanced by Plato, and other rational psychologists for the immortality of the soul, are very plausible. They are constructed in respect of the rigid rules of logic. They are the foundation of what Kant calls "the paralogisms of pure reason".

In systematic steps to refute the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, cherished by metaphysicians of rational psychology, Kant has to prove that the soul cannot be known using the approach followed by rational psychology. In his spirit of completeness in conceptual analysis, Kant defines 'paralogism' associated with rational psychology's study of the soul in relation to immortality: "A logical paralogism is a syllogism which is fallacious in form, be it content what it may. A transcendental paralogism is one in which there is a transcendental ground constraining us to draw a formally invalid conclusion. Such a fallacy is therefore grounded in the nature of human reason, and gives rise to an illusion which cannot be avoided, although it may, indeed, be rendered harmless."⁷⁴ We cannot avoid the illusions of rational psychology but we can live with them; after all it is an aspect of metaphysics which is a natural disposition of the human reason. The transcendental ground that compels us into fallacious reasoning in rational psychology is the use of pure reason overstepping its bounds with the intention of proving that the soul is a substance or an object of knowledge that could exhibit permanence as other objects given to us in intuition. The transcendental ground here is not like that of the understanding which inevitably links concepts to empirical objects; the transcendental ground is an assumption that an object of pure thought is an object of experience. This is the fallacious reasoning.

When the subject of knowledge is taken transcendently through the self-consciousness of thought, and move from there to assume existence in immortality, the paralogism is obvious as the first kind of dialectical syllogism: "In the first kind of syllogism,

⁷⁴ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Paralogisms of Pure Reason, pp. 328 – 329.

I conclude from the transcendental concept of the subject, which contains nothing manifold, the absolute unity of this subject itself, of which, however, even in so doing, I possess no concept whatsoever. The dialectical inference I shall entitle the transcendental *paralogism*.⁷⁵ At this level, it is important to do a further elucidation of the terms to avoid confusion. It is important to give further precision about the Kantian use of the terms ‘concept’ and ‘idea’ in relation to the faculty of ‘understanding’ and ‘reason’. Firstly, we have the concepts of the understanding which are unique in that they, in the final analysis, relate to objects. A concept that stems from the understanding alone without the pure image of sensible objects is a *pure concept of the understanding* while that which takes into account the pure image of sensible objects is called an empirical object of the understanding. Empirical concepts are *a posteriori* or derived from experience or at least follow from experience. No one questions the employment of empirical concepts because they are easily verified by the ever-ready experience from which they are derived.

It is with the use of pure concepts of the understanding that questions arise. These are *a priori* concepts called ‘categories’ which give unity to appearances; categories unite all empirical concepts under a general rule: “Concepts of understanding are [...] thought *a priori* antecedently to experience and for the sake of experience, but they contain nothing more than the unity of reflection upon appearances, in so far as these appearances must necessarily belong to a possible empirical consciousness⁷⁶. The empirical consciousness is contingent, can vary from one person to another and is subjective; the unity of reflection, here, brings together all the appearances to a rule that unites all empirical consciousness to an objective *a priori* ground. The transcendental unity of apperception is objective because it stands above empirical subjective grounds, yet gives objectivity to the same experience through universal rules. The transcendental paralogism uses the subject in a meaning that goes beyond all possible experience not to attain unity but to justify the objective existence of something not given in intuition. The transcendental concept of the subject used by rational psychology is no longer a concept of the understanding that relates to objects.

A transcendental concept of the subject is a ‘concept of pure reason’ which is not ‘immanent’ in experience, as is the case with concepts of the understanding. Rather it is ‘transcendent’ because it goes beyond all appearances. The *transcendental concept of reason* or the *concept of reason* goes beyond the employment of the understanding because while

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

understanding seeks to unite appearances, reason seeks to unite all the concepts of the understanding under an unconditioned and unconditional point of unity in a supreme ideal. This is the core of the rejection of rational psychology because to Kant, the transcendental concept of the subject is a ‘concept of reason’ and the problem arises herein because “the title ‘concept of reason’ already gives a preliminary indication that we are dealing with something which does not allow of being confined within experience, since it conceives a knowledge of which any empirical knowledge (perhaps the whole of possible experience or of its empirical synthesis) is only a part.”⁷⁷ A concept of reason or a transcendental concept of reason, unlike the pure concept of the understanding, seeks to unite thought with itself in the highest level of unity whose primary focus is not to relate to experience at all. The paralogism, then, is to assume fallaciously that we have objective knowledge of that which goes above all forms of experience that gives objectivity and validity to knowledge.

In what Kant calls a ‘serial arrangement’ that takes us naturally up the ladder to the ideas of reason from perceptions, we can easily situate the dialectical illusion of rational psychology in using a transcendental idea or concept of reason to justify an existence not given in intuition:

*The genus is representation in general (repraesentatio). Subordinate to it stands representation with consciousness (perceptio). A perception which relates solely to the subject as the modification of its state is sensation (sensation), and objective perception is knowledge (cognito). This is either intuition or concept (intuitus vel conceptus). The former relates immediately to the object and is single, the latter refers to it mediately by means of a feature which several things may have in common. The concept is either an empirical or a pure concept. The pure concept, in so far as it has its origin in the understanding alone (not in the pure image of sensibility), is called a notion. A concept formed from notions and transcending the possibility of experience is an idea or concept of reason.*⁷⁸

A concept of reason is thus formed from pure concepts of the understanding. But while the pure concepts of the understanding are *a priori* and relate to experience, the concepts of reason are also *a priori* but have no link with any possible experience. The ideas of reason rather seek the unity of pure thought with itself. In the Kantian serial arrangement, we cannot know objects as they are in themselves; we can only have them as *representations*. Representation which stands in relation with empirical consciousness depends on the subjective conditions of the knower. And since such modifications are subjective, they vary

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

from one person to another. Colour, taste, smell, sound are examples of such sensations that relate to our empirical consciousness through empirical concepts that can be verified in experience but lack the ground of objectivity given by *a priori* concepts of the understanding. Objective consciousness has the *a priori* conditions which give validity and universal rule to experience and this is achieved by synthetic apperception of the perceptions associated by the imagination. With reason, we move beyond this synthetic apperception attained by the understanding to seek absolute, unconditioned unity of all the universal rules prescribed by the understanding to experience. The dialectical illusion of rational psychology treats the subject as self-consciousness thereby making objective knowledge of it impossible as no intuition can ever correspond to such a transcendental concept of reason.

Kant refers to rational psychology's treatment of 'I think' as that through which we conceive all concepts including transcendental concepts. The 'I think' then is also a transcendental concept in its self – awareness of an activity that precedes all conceptions. As a transcendental concept, the 'I think' does not have any link with experience, yet

[...] it enables us to distinguish, through the nature of our faculty of representation, two kinds of objects, 'I', as thinking, am an object of inner sense, and am called 'soul'. That which is an object of the outer senses is called 'body'. Accordingly, the expression 'I', as a thinking being, signifies the object of that psychology which may be entitled the rational doctrine of the soul', inasmuch as I am not here seeking to learn in regard to the soul anything more than can be inferred, independently of all experience (which determines me more specifically and in concreto), from this concept 'I', so far as it is present in all thought.⁷⁹

This is the Kantian dualistic conception of man, then, as revealed by the concept 'I think' which gives rise to the body and the soul. It would have been easy to know the body as given in outer experience, but the soul, as given in inner experience and has to be known through thought, does not in any way prove that my awareness of my thought implies an existence in human form. Rational psychology has to maintain its purity as a 'rational' doctrine of the soul, and in this way we do not have to proceed in any way as to link knowledge of the soul with any experience, for that would make it an 'empirical psychology'. To keep our inquiry about the soul purely 'rational', we must avoid all links with experience and when maintained in its pure rational approach, rational psychology gives rise to paralogisms.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

There are four paralogisms or invalid syllogisms with false conclusions derived from rational psychology. The first is to consider the thinking subject as a substance, the second is to consider the soul or thinking being as simple, the third is to consider the soul as a person and the fourth is about the ideality of outer experience or idealism that we have already dealt with in the previous sub-section of our work. In the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant summarizes the paralogisms of rational psychology into one invalid syllogism:

The whole procedure of rational psychology is determined by a paralogism, which is exhibited in the following syllogism:

That which cannot be thought otherwise than as subject does not exist otherwise than as subject, and is therefore substance.

A thinking being, considered merely as such, cannot be thought otherwise than as subject

*Therefore it exist also only as subject, that is, as substance.*⁸⁰

The problem with the syllogism which makes it a paralogism is that ‘thought’ used in the major premise does not have the same meaning as that used in the minor premise thereby making the conclusion fallacious. ‘Thought’ as used in the major premise refers to an object given in intuition and can lead to valid and objective knowledge through the categories. In the major premise, the subject is considered as a *substance* given to intuition in time and space. In the minor premise, ‘thought’ refers to consciousness or awareness in thought which is simply a means by which all concepts are obtained, including transcendental concepts. In this sense, self-consciousness or the awareness of the activity of thinking does not imply that anything is given in intuition; it does not mean that anything can be known at all. My awareness of my thought does not imply that it is a thought of something given in intuition and does not in any way imply that something exists, talk less of existence in human form.

The dialectical illusion of rational psychology thus gives us a syllogism that inevitably leads to the fallacious conclusion of existence from self-consciousness without any intuition:

In the major premise, we speak of a being that can be thought in general, in every relation, and therefore also as it may be given in intuition. But in the minor premise we speak of it only in so far as it regards itself, as subject, simply in relation to thought and unity of consciousness, and not as like wise

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 371.

*in relation to the intuition through which it is given as object to thought. Thus the conclusion is arrived at fallaciously [...].*⁸¹

The most important thing is the rejection of the conclusion which assumes that a thinking being exists as a subject and thus as a substance. The thinking subject is not *self-subsisting*, it is not a substance, and it is not given as an object in intuition. This amounts to a rejection of the first paralogism that sees the soul as a substance. The soul makes us self-conscious or aware of our thoughts, but the soul is not a thing to be known, it is a mental activity and not an object of knowledge. Taken this way, the soul as awareness of the thinking self is more of a means by which objects are known and not an object of knowledge itself.

The second paralogism considers the soul to be a *simple* substance. The subject is a simple entity, and since the soul is the thinking subject, then the soul must be a simple entity. Yes, “[...] it is [...] impossible to derive this necessary unity of the subject from experience, as a condition of the *possibility of every thought, from experience*”⁸². Here, the simplicity of the soul can only be known if it were a substance given to us in experience. This is not the case, thus the conclusion that the soul is simple as an aspect of unity of thought is fallacious and not grounded in experience.

The third paralogism assumes the soul is a person because “[...] in all the manifold, of which I am conscious I am identical with myself [...]”⁸³. The identity of my consciousness with myself is not a synthetic proposition where new knowledge is acquired by intuition. This identity is analytical and does not make the soul a person as an object of knowledge given in intuition. The fourth paralogism, also based on an analytic proposition, assumes that “I distinguish my own existence as that of a thinking being from other things outside - among them my body [...]”⁸⁴. We are not sure that our inner consciousness will still exist without the things outside us; this implies that we cannot be sure of an existence as thinking beings without objects to think about. We cannot assert that the soul has a concrete existence merely from the act of thought; in such a case, we may have to literally eliminate all objects of thought, including the body, to see if the soul persists as an independent concrete object with a distinct existence. Analyzing our thoughts does not prove the existence of objects of thought and does not prove that the soul exists merely through our awareness of thought.

⁸¹ *Idem.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, Paralogisms of *Pure Reason*, First Edition, p. 336.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 371.

From the paralogism which assumes that the soul is simple, united in thought and indivisible, Kant challenged the views of his contemporary, Moses Mendelssohn, on the immortality of the soul. Mendelssohn argues that anything that is simple cannot be wiped out because it has no constituent parts that can be progressively wiped away. This view implies that annihilation is only possible with composite or compound entities made up of many components which can be detached and wiped away progressively. In his book entitled *Phaedon, or, the Death of Socrates*, the German contemporary of Kant, Moses Mendelssohn, does a remake of Plato's *Phaedo*, the dialogue set on the day Socrates was executed. The difference here is that Mendelssohn puts his words in the mouth of Socrates, the character in the dialogue, to defend the doctrine of the immortality of the soul as if Socrates were a modern philosopher. Mendelssohn thus does a modern version of Plato's ancient view of the immortality of the soul. To Mendelssohn, then, "[...] the soul and body exist together in the most intimate connection; the latter is gradually dissolved into its part; the former must either be annihilated or preserve ideas. By natural powers nothing can be annihilated; our soul, therefore, can never cease to have ideas."⁸⁵ According to this view of Mendelssohn, nothing can be completely destroyed; only composite things can be broken down to their simple components. Since the soul is not a composite entity, it cannot be broken down into anything simpler.

The body is made of many parts which can be caused to disintegrate; the parts of the body actually do disintegrate at death when it is separated from the soul. The soul is simple, and its unity in composition cannot be annihilated. Thus the soul survives death; to be more precise, the soul survives the death of the body. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant restates Moses Mendelssohn's argument accurately as follows:

In his Phaedo, he [Mendelssohn] endeavored to prove that the soul cannot be subject to [...] a process of vanishing, which would be a true annihilation, by showing that a simple being cannot be diminished, and so gradually lose something of its existence, being, by degrees, changed into nothing (for since it has no parts it has no multiplicity in itself), there would be no time between a moment in which it is and another in which it is not – which is impossible.⁸⁶

The argument of Mendelssohn seems to be very logical given that destruction of things in the universe is never really complete annihilation but transformation into another form of existence. With composite objects, it is a sort of decomposition or break down into simple

⁸⁵ Moses Mendelssohn, *Phaedo or the Death of Socrates*, London: J. Cooper, 1789, p. 99.

⁸⁶ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, pp. 372 – 373.

components. As such the body parts at death decompose while the soul remains intact as a simple substance. Apart from the proof of the fallacy in the paralogism of the soul existing as a simple entity, Kant even supposed that the soul were really a simple substance (of which it is not) just to refute Mendelssohn's theory of the immortality of the soul.

Firstly, Kant insists that even if we admit the soul were a simple entity, there would still be a chance that the soul, taken this way, would have no 'extensive quantity' which comes with composite parts that can be broken down. Yet, the soul, even taken as a simple entity, would still have what Kant calls 'intensive quantity'. To Kant, intensive quantity is "[...] a degree of reality in respect of all its faculties, nay, in respect of all that constitutes its existence, and that this degree of reality may diminish through all the infinitely many smaller degrees. In this manner the supposed substance –the thing, the permanence of which has not yet been proved –may be changed into nothing, not indeed by dissolution, but by gradual loss of its powers [...]." ⁸⁷ Thus even when an entity is simple, it must have a degree of reality that can be progressively lost. Here, it is not about progressive disintegration of a composite entity but a progressive loss of degrees of existence for a simple entity. An entity made up of one part considered as a unity, nonetheless, diminishes through its power of existence that can be lost progressively.

Secondly, Kant thinks that the approach used by Mendelssohn inevitably leads to idealism especially the Cartesian problematic idealism that we have already treated in the first sub-section of this chapter. To Kant,

[...] in the system of rational psychology, these beings [thinking beings] are taken not only as being conscious of their existence independently of outer things, but as also being able, in and by themselves, to determine that existence in respect of the permanence which is a necessary characteristic of substance. This rationalist system is thus unavoidably committed to idealism or at least to problematic idealism. ⁸⁸

This is because with problematic idealism, the existence of the self is proven without consideration of the things existing outside us, whereas to know the self, it has to be given in intuition like other things outside of us. The self, taken merely as consciousness, cannot be proven to be a substance that must have the characteristics of permanence by which it is determinable as an object given to intuition.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

The concepts of rational psychology, as highlighted by Kant, inevitably leads to the soul as an affirmation of self-consciousness in thought wrongly considered as a simple substance that is immortal. Yet the immortality cannot be proven, just as the knowledge of the soul itself cannot be demonstrated:

This substance merely as object of inner sense, gives the object of immateriality; as simple substance, that of incompatibility; its identity, as intellectual substance, personality; all these three together, spirituality; while the relation to others in space gives commercium with bodies, and so leads us to represent the thinking substance as the principle of life in matter, that is, as soul (anima), and as the ground of animality. This last, in turn, as limited by spirituality, gives the concept of immortality.⁸⁹

Taken as the animating principle of the life of a body, the soul is limited by its spiritual nature and is assumed to be a substance whose simplicity preserves its immortality. And this is where rational psychology fails to show how an entity that lacks permanence and cannot be given in sensible intuition can be considered an object of knowledge. The awareness of the act of thought does not prove knowledge of anything as substance at the basis of the thought. In this way, Kant dismantles the foundation of rational psychology as system of dialectical illusions called paralogisms. The critique of rational psychology shows that the study of the soul, independently of all considerations linked to experience, cannot add anything new to our stock of knowledge. Yet the conception of immortality may not be completely useless as we shall see in the third part of this work where we shall try to adapt the views of Kant to contemporary problems of epistemology and especially morality and religion.

The study of the soul as the thinking subject is closely related to the subject as an agent of freedom. We are moving from the paralogisms of pure reason with dialectical illusions involving the soul or thinking self, to the ‘antinomies of pure reason’ with dialectical illusions surrounding the transcendental conception of freedom. Here, we are moving from rational psychology to rational cosmology; we are moving from the thinking self to the world considered as a totality. We are moving from the self as a being of thought to the self as a being in complex causal relations in the world. We are moving from the impossibility of having knowledge of the soul rationally to the impossibility of having knowledge of the world as a totality. If the thinking subject is naturally endowed with the powers of reason, then we need to test such powers when the subject tries to grasp the truth about the world or the cosmos. In this transcendental journey, reason, as is the case with the

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

soul, has to get into conflict with itself in a series of contradictions that reason itself has to tackle but whose solutions are not easily obtained.

2.2 The Antinomies of Pure Reason

The difference between the dialectical illusions of rational psychology and those of rational cosmology is that, with the former, the illusion is presented from one angle as a syllogism whose conclusion inevitably leads us to fallacies about the nature and especially the knowledge, or rather, the impossibility of having an objective knowledge of the soul; and with the latter, the dialectical illusion is presented from two completely opposed angles, making opposite and yet rationally defensible claims about the nature and especially knowledge of the world as a totality. We are talking about the ‘antinomies’ of pure reason which revolve around the concept of transcendental freedom. If the phenomenon of causality is the means by which natural laws give order to appearances, then the place of freedom in the world becomes problematic since freedom involves spontaneity and independence of all laws of experience. Yet, we have to prove that the truth about the world of causality has to do with the concept of freedom. To what extent, then, can we assert that there is freedom in a world marked by natural causal relationships? How do we reconcile the reality of freedom in the midst of fixed natural rules of causality? Is the truth about the world as a totality to be found in experience itself or in a concept that transcends experience? These are preoccupations that lead us to the conflicts of reason with itself in attempts to know the world of appearances which constitutes the sole basis for objectivity and validity of knowledge.

At the heart of the controversies, known as ‘antinomies of pure reason’, is the necessity to do a synthesis of appearance. The world is a multitude of appearances grasped through perception. The study of the world as a totality thus involves a synthesis of all appearances, a totality of all appearances according to rules of nature. Of course, the world in itself is part of what Kant calls the unknowable *noumena* or thing in itself. We must study the world as appearances, as it is given to us in intuition through time and space. Thus explained, the study of the world implies that we need rules by which all appearances can be brought to a point of unity. Immanuel Kant, then, paves the way to the controversies of rational cosmology in the problematic ‘rational’ attempts to synthesize all appearances so as to know the world as a totality:

I entitle all transcendental ideas, in so far as they refer to absolute totality in the synthesis of appearances, cosmical concepts, partly because this

unconditioned totality also underlies the concept - itself only an idea - of the world-whole; partly because they concern only the synthesis of appearances, therefore only empirical synthesis. When, on the contrary, the absolute totality is that of the synthesis of the conditions of all possible things in general, it gives rise to an ideal of pure reason which, though it may indeed stand in a certain relation to the cosmical concept, is quite distinct from it. Accordingly, just as the paralogism of pure reason formed the basis of a dialectical psychology, so the antinomy of pure reason will exhibit to us the transcendental principles of a pretended pure rational cosmology. But it will not do so to show this science to be valid and to adopt it. As the title, conflict of reason, suffices to show, this pretended science can be exhibited only in its bedazzling but false illusoriness, an idea which can never be reconciled with appearances.⁹⁰

Our ideas about the world as a totality cannot be made to relate with experience. Reason is just involved in another game of coherence and consistency which gives rise to two opposed and opposing positions each of which seems logical in its own right. Yet, the empirical basis is lacking in the content of what is meant to be knowledge of the world. When reason gets into conflict with itself in the attempt to know the world, metaphysics gets its ‘glorious’ moments in mock combats without any progress in the enterprise of knowledge. Rational psychology fails to give us the truth about the soul, and rational cosmology, in antinomies, fails to give us true knowledge of the world. If the aim is not to adopt this science because it is a pseudo-science, the plausible arguments raised for the antinomies are a proof that reason is never satisfied with what it gets from appearances.

Kant makes reference to the ‘ideal of pure reason’ which ultimately follows from the antinomies when reason seeks the underlying laws of causal relationships in the universe. The quest for the synthesis of all possible appearances leads to the concept of a necessary being as the ultimate source of motion in the universe. But at the level of the synthesis of all appearances, the antinomies of pure reason become glaring. Is the synthesis of all appearances an empirical or a transcendental undertaking? What Kant refers to as ‘cosmical ideas’ are transcendental concepts arrived at by reason in the bid to grasp the totality of all appearances using concepts beyond the appearances themselves. Here, the understanding is the faculty by which we should normally explain appearances using categories. Kant insists that the understanding is the only source of concepts. What Kant refers to as ‘ideas of reason’ or ‘transcendental concepts of reason’ are the categories of the understanding taken beyond bounds. When we move from an effect back to its cause, the cause that we are moving back to is the effect of another cause. In this way, a series of appearances is created as a chain of

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Antinomy of Pure Reason, pp. 387 - 388.

causes and effects. In other words, we move from one conditioned appearance to its condition, a condition which itself is conditioned by another appearance. The chain of causes and effects in the universe, the chain of conditions in the universe pushes reason to get into antinomies. Before talking about the antinomies proper, it is important to clarify the meanings of the terms used by Kant to explain reason's quest to know the world as a totality.

Firstly, we need to know how reason converts the category to a transcendental idea; then we will understand the terms 'world' and 'nature' and most especially how the study of one leads us to the other and ultimately to the antinomies:

[...] we must recognize that pure and transcendental concepts can issue only from the understanding. Reason does not really generate any concept. The most it can do is to free a concept of understanding from the unavoidable limitations of possible experience, and so to endeavor to extend it beyond the limits of the empirical. [...] For a given conditioned, reason demands on the side of the conditions – to which as the conditions of synthetic unity the understanding subjects all appearances - absolute totality, and in so doing converts the category into a transcendental idea. For only by carrying the empirical synthesis as far as the unconditioned is it enabled to render it absolutely complete; and the unconditioned is never to be met with in experience.⁹¹

The conditions are the causes and effects relating one appearance to another in the universe. The understanding, through the categories, can normally synthesize the appearances as a chain of conditioned phenomena in the universe. From one conditioned appearance to another, the understanding gives rise to natural laws that explain all conditioned events in the universe. Whereas the understanding can give synthetic unity to appearances through concepts, reason demands absolute totality. The absolute totality of all appearances is itself no longer an appearance; it is the unconditioned in all conditional phenomena in the universe. The absolute totality of all appearances is a transcendental concept; the unconditioned in all conditioned phenomena is a transcendental concept. Reason thus pushes us to progressively move from concepts of the understanding to transcendental concepts of pure reason. Reason progressively takes us beyond the bounds of all possible experience.

It is obvious that, unlike the understanding, reason is never contented in explaining the world merely as a series of appearances. The understanding synthesizes appearances and that is not enough; reason needs the absolute totality of appearances. Reason is not contented with the inductive approach to synthesize appearances; reason pushes the induction to

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 386.

ultimate ends of absolute totality. Moving from one conditioned phenomenon to another is not enough in an infinite regress. Reason looks for the unconditioned beyond all conditions: “Reason makes this demand in accordance with the principle that *if the conditioned is given, the entire sum of conditions and consequently the absolutely unconditioned* (through which alone the conditioned has been possible) *is also given*. The transcendental ideas are thus, in the first place, simply categories extended to the unconditioned [...]”⁹² From the conditioned to the unconditioned, we are moving from the understanding and categories to reason and transcendental ideas. And this is the source of the antinomies: Is the unconditioned to be found in experience or beyond experience? By referring to it as a transcendental idea of reason, Kant is making it clear that the unconditioned is no longer an empirical reality. We are moving from inductive science to a deductive science which assumes that the unconditioned general concept should give rise to particular conditioned perceptions. The antinomies of pure reason have to do with whether, in our supposed knowledge of the world, we should limit ourselves to the appearances, the conditioned phenomena or move beyond the appearances to the absolute totality of appearances or the unconditioned basis of all appearances.

Secondly, then, having understood the source of the antinomies, we need to know the precise and concise meanings of key terms used in the antinomies that make valid and objective knowledge of the world as a totality impossible. This is progressively taking us to the heart of Kant’s rejection of rational cosmology. Kant makes a clear distinction between ‘world’ and ‘nature’: “we have two expressions, ‘world’ and ‘nature’ which sometimes coincide. The former signifies the mathematical sum total of all appearances and the totality of their synthesis, alike in the great and in the small, that is, in the advance alike through composition and through division. This same world is entitled nature when it is viewed as a dynamic whole”⁹³. The world corresponds to appearances, things as they appear to us, things as we perceive them, the synthesis of our perceptions. The world does not refer to things as they are in themselves, the world of the rational cosmologist is the totality of appearances studied through ‘cosmological ideas’ when the world is seen as nothing except appearances. On the other hand, nature refers to the world as governed by fixed rules. When the understanding prescribes rules to the world, it becomes nature. When appearances are interpreted using rules, we are in nature. Rational cosmology, by looking at the world as a

⁹² *Idem.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.392

series of causes, is also an investigation on natural laws as long as this investigation tries to go beyond the bounds of experience to explain the same experience. The world is not static; the world is full of motion synthesized in a chain of causes that gives rise to the antinomies of pure reason.

From the vintage position of the knowledge-seeker, the dynamism of the world as nature is a theatre for an antinomy opposing the empiricist and the rationalist. The empiricist wants to know the world only within the limits of experience. The empiricist does not care about the absolute totality of appearances because he cannot overstep the bounds of experience. He limits his inquiry to the chain of causes only as far as experience can permit. He does not care about the absolute unconditioned idea of pure reason used by the rationalist and idealist to explain causal relations beyond the appearances themselves. On the other hand, the idealist in his metaphysics and the rationalist in his epistemology want to know the origin of the dynamism of the world beyond what is given in intuition. When the second meaning of the term ‘world’ is understood not just as the totality of appearance, but also and above all, everything that exists, the antinomies pose more complicated problems:

[...] by the term ‘world’ we mean the sum of all appearances and it is exclusively to the unconditioned in the appearances that our ideas are directed, partly also because the term ‘world’, in the transcendental sense, signifies the absolute totality of all existing things and we direct our attention solely to the completeness of the synthesis, even though that is only attainable in the regress to its conditions. Thus despite the objections that these ideas are one and all transcendent, and that although they do not in kind surpass the object, namely, appearances, but are concerned exclusively with the world of sense, not with noumena, they yet carry the synthesis to a degree which transcends all possible experience, I none the less still hold that they may quite appropriately be entitled cosmical concepts.⁹⁴

Whether we are seeking the unconditioned in appearances or the completeness in the synthesis of appearances, chances are high that categories will be converted into transcendental ideas as reason seeks the ultimate unity of appearances beyond the appearances themselves. The controversy surrounding the transcendental ideas, then, highlights the need for completeness which is not attained until reason takes the categories out of their empirical bounds. While this may not be completely a useless endeavor in the field of practical reason where the transcendental ideas of reason give us something to hope for in religion through steadfast respect of the moral law, such ideas in the theoretical use of reason are epistemologically useless.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 393.

The preliminary concepts that usher us to the conflict of reason with itself have to do with the world as synthesized appearances and absolute completeness in our knowledge of all existing things, if at all such knowledge were to be possible. The dialectical illusion entertained by empiricism and rationalism are conceived through a beginning in experience, overstepping the bounds of experience to explain experience, or staying within the limits of experience to explain the same experience, the experience here being all appearances put together or all existing things put together. If the ultimate cause of all appearances is situated beyond the appearances themselves, then there is transcendental freedom as a spontaneous source of motion in the world. On the other hand, if there is no ultimate cause of appearances beyond the appearances themselves, then there is nothing like transcendental freedom; in this case, appearances give rise to each other infinitely and the world has no beginning in time and no limit in space.

In the same way that the concept of immortality is at the centre of the dialectical illusions of rational psychology, the concept of freedom is at the centre of the dialectical illusions of rational cosmology when freedom is understood transcendently as the spontaneous source of all appearances in the world. Here, there is an apparent conflict between freedom and nature. If the causal chain has an end in freedom as the ultimate causality of all causes, then the world has a beginning in time and a limitation in space. This conception of freedom is opposed to natural laws which give dynamism to the world. Kant situates the place of freedom amidst causal relations in nature thus: “[...] the condition of that which happens is entitled the cause. Its unconditioned causality in the appearance is called *freedom*, and its conditioned causality is called *natural cause* in the narrower sense. The conditioned in existence in general is termed contingent and the unconditioned necessary.”⁹⁵ The transcendental concept of freedom, which is one of the three concepts of Metaphysics (the other two being God and immortality), is thus considered as an unconditioned causality for all causes in appearances. In this way, freedom is transcendental in cause and empirical in effect. The causality of freedom is unconditioned and does not visibly fit in the chain of natural causes in the world. Freedom is an assumption that the chain of causes in the universe ends in spontaneity, a rational source of all empirical causes in the chain of appearances. Yet, the effects of freedom are felt in the empirical world of appearances. How the unconditioned causality of freedom bears on all the natural causes is something unknowable empirically but its effects are felt in the chain of causes in appearances. Transcendentally, then, freedom

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.392.

stands above nature in its causality or ability to effect movement without being part of their empirical chain of causes. Empirically, since the effects of the transcendental concepts of freedom are manifested in appearance, freedom is the transcendental causality of all empirical causes.

The assumption that there is transcendental freedom, just like the assumption that there is immortality by rational psychology for a soul whose knowledge is problematic; is problematic for a world whose knowledge as a totality is itself problematic. That the world has a beginning, and its antithesis; that simple things exist in the world and its antithesis; that there is freedom in the world and its antithesis; and there is an absolutely necessary being in the world and its antithesis, are cases of reason in conflict with itself in the four antinomies. In such cases, the thesis and the antithesis stand opposed to each other concerning the same supposed reality - the world. When two opposing camps present very convincing arguments about the same object and there is no way to judge who is right and who is wrong, then it is a perfect representation of the antinomies of pure reason which implies that something might be wrong with the object of study. Just as the concept of immortality is made irrelevant due to the problematic nature of the soul, the problematic nature of the world as a totality may just lead us to reject the metaphysical concept of freedom.

The peculiarity of the antinomies is that experience, which is supposed to be the sole judge of validity and objectivity of knowledge, cannot declare one camp victorious over the other. And that is the essence of the antinomy or what Kant also refers to as ‘the antithetic of pure reason’:

If thetic be the name for anybody of dogmatic doctrines, antithetic may be taken as meaning, not dogmatic assertions of the opposite, but the conflict of the doctrines of seemingly dogmatic knowledge (thesis cum antithesie) in which no one assertion can establish superiority over another. The antithetic does not, therefore, deal with one-sided assertions. It treats only of the doctrines of reason with one another and the causes of this conflict. The transcendental antithetic is an enquiry into the antinomy of pure reason, its causes and outcome. If in employing the principles of the understanding we do not merely apply our reason to objects of experience, but venture to extend these principles beyond the limits of experience, these arise pseudo-rational doctrines which can neither hope for confirmation in experience nor fear refutation by it. Each of them is not only in itself free from contradiction, but finds conditions of its necessity in the very nature of reason - only that,

*unfortunately, the assertion of the opposite has, on its side, grounds that are just as valid and necessary.*⁹⁶

If experience is helpless in the face of the antinomies, if the arguments in both camps are equally convincing and logical, then the solution to the antinomy will have to come from reason itself. It is like a conflict in which both parties are right, making judgment of a winner a difficult task. When we take the epistemologically misadventure of going beyond experience to explain the world, the resulting conflict is one that experience itself cannot resolve. The doctrines are not irrational at all, because they follow the logical requirements of coherence and consistency. The doctrines are ‘pseudo-rational’ which means that it is a kind of sophism, an exhibition of sagacity on an object that is problematic. The arguments feign rationality, the rationality’ is actually a game of convincing words at first sight and especially in form. But the content, upon closes examination, reveals a dialectical illusion created by reason for itself and that can only be solved by reason itself.

The use of reason in the antinomy is dogmatic and requires a critique. Kant states the first antinomy of pure reason as follows:

“Thesis

The world has a beginning in time, and is also limited as regards spaces.”⁹⁷

“Antithesis

“The world has no beginning, and no limits in space; it is infinite as regard both time and space.”⁹⁸

The thesis of the first antinomy is proven by the view that the contrary does not hold; that is, there is impossibility in assuming that an infinite series of states in the world has passed by. The world cannot be given as an infinite series. An infinite series implies that at any point in time a new state has been added and has passed away. This means a synthesis of the whole can never be completed because each state is an addition to the series. A complete synthesis of infinity is thus impossible and the world cannot be known as infinity in time and in space. In the same way, a synthesis of all the parts that fill up the infinity of the world space would be impossible since the parts of the infinite whole would not, then, be given in intuition. Therefore, logically, we must assume that the world has a beginning in time to give a beginning to a series that can never be grasped as infinite. In the same way, the world must be limited in space so that a complete synthesis of the parts of the whole can be carried out, a

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 393 - 394.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 396.

⁹⁸ *Idem.*

task which is otherwise impossible in an infinite world space where all parts can never be given in intuition.

The antithesis is proven by the argument that, for the world to have a beginning in time, we must assume that there was ‘empty time’ with nothing in the world and that is impossible because we cannot prove how something emerges from nothing, how something appeared to fill a time which was hitherto empty. The world, thus, does not have a beginning for that would imply the existence of an empty time before the world came into existence. The antithesis is proven by the impossibility of the assumption that “[...] an empty time and an empty space must constitute the limit of the world”⁹⁹. An empty time is impossible because an empty time cannot give rise to a world as a resultant from an empty time in causality. In much the same way, an assumption of an empty space is impossible because all existence of space is defined by appearance. In fact, appearances make space altogether possible because an empty space cannot be an object of intuition. Appearances are that by which the concept of space makes sense to us in sensible intuition. Assuming a limit of the world implies that there is either empty space or a space filled by entities other than appearance in comparison with which we situate the limit of the world. This is completely impossible because space is not a thing in itself but merely a form of sensible intuition. If space is marked by appearances, then space is merely a mode through which things appear to us. If there is nothing appearing to us, then the existence of an empty space cannot be proven. Thus the world must be infinite in both space and time.

The thesis of the second Antinomy of pure reason is based on Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’s conception of substance as a ‘monad’. The thesis of the second antinomy has to do with simple substances in their coexistence with composite substances. The controversy here revolves around the view that simple substances cannot be known except in their co-existence as composite entities in the world. Here, we need to bear in mind the controversy around the supposed simplicity of the soul which is expected to make it immortal, an idea rejected by Kant in the paralogism of pure reason when the nature of the soul is declared unknowable to experience because the thinking being as self-consciousness is not given to us in intuition and thus cannot be known; a conclusion which also dismisses the idea of immortality despite the supposed and problematic simplicity of the soul rejected by Kant. Kant’s statement of the

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 399.

thesis of the second antinomy affirms the existence of simple substances even in co-existence with other simple substances in composite substance.

The Kantian thesis of the second antinomy, in line with Leibiz's conception of the monad goes thus: "Every composite substance in the world is made up of simple parts, and nothing anywhere exists save the simple or what is composed of the simple."¹⁰⁰ The thesis is proven by disproving the contrary. The opposite view rejects the existence of simple substances. This is logically absurd because that would mean the moment we do away with all the composite things in thought, that is, when we assume that composition is not real, nothing else will be left. This is impossible because substance implies subsistence when everything else fades away or when everything else is discarded in thought. When the idea of composition is taken away, something must subsist, something must persist which is the simple substance.

Like Leibniz, Kant admits that simple substances can only exist as constituents of composite elements. Of course, Kant has to present the antinomies as convincing as possible. In explaining the thesis, then, Kant insists that composite things are a mode of existence of simple things, and the fact that simple things can only exist in composite things should not lead us to deny simple things of a permanent existence: "[...] composition is merely an external state of these beings; and that although we can never so isolate these elementary substances as to take them out of this state of composition, reason must think them as the primary subjects of all composition, and therefore, as simple beings, prior to all composition."¹⁰¹ The primary substance is thus a thought entity, what is given in experience is a multitude of composites, what Kant calls the manifold in experience or a multitude of appearances conjoined in such a way that experience cannot give them to intuition as simple or primary entities. Thus when experience gives us the composites, reason must think of the simple entities which co-exist in composites.

In his book entitled *Monadology*, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz explains the nature of substance that he refers to as a 'monad':

The monad [...] is nothing other than a simple substance which enters into compounds, 'simple' meaning 'without part'. And there must be simple substances, because there are compounds; for the compound is nothing but an accumulation or aggregate of simples. Now where there are no parts, neither

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

*extension nor shape, nor divisibility is possible. And these monads are the true atoms of nature, and in a word, the elements of things. There is also no dissolution to fear, and there is no conceivable way in which a simple substance could perish naturally. For the same reason, there is no way in which a simple substance could begin naturally, since it cannot be formed by composition. Thus it may be said that monads can only begin and end at once, that, is, they can only begin by creation and only end by annihilation, whereas that which is composition begins or ends by parts.*¹⁰²

The existence of simple substances is derived from the existence of compound entities. The simple substances are derived from the compound substances in which they exist as aggregates. The divisibility of compound entities implies the existence of simple entities. Yet, unlike Mendelssohn whose argument to prove the immortality of the soul rejects the possibility of annihilation of simple substances, Leibniz admits that simple substances can be annihilated, yet the annihilation cannot be achieved naturally. This in turn brings to mind the idea of a creator and agent of annihilation of monads. This also brings to mind the idea of monads being created out of nothing and being annihilated without leaving behind any traces. We are not yet taking the transcendental leap to the supreme creator of monads; we simply want to prove that the Kantian thesis of the second antinomy is influenced by the Leibnizian conception of the monads as the simple that makes up the compound entities in the world, the atoms of nature. The thesis of the second antinomy moves from the existence of compound entities in experience to the conception of the existence in thought of simple entities.

The antithesis of the second antinomy of pure reason is based on the empirical observation of compound things in the world. The assumption that compound things are made up of simple things may be rational but the concept of space does not accommodate the idea of simple entities. The same reason makes us understand that things are given to us as manifold in space and in time. Everything given to us in space is a composite. To divide the composite into its constituents implies that we are in an attempt to divide space into as many parts as there are simple substances. Yet, space is not divisible into simple entities. Space is divided into other spaces. Besides, space is not a thing in itself that could be divided into as many entities as we come across in composite things. Rather, when we divide the composite, in thought, into simple parts, the simple parts can only occupy space in the manifold whereby things are given to us as composites. The idea of simple substance is self-defeating when we

¹⁰² Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, 'The Monadology' in *Leibniz's Monadology, A New Translation and Guide*, trans. Lloyd Strickland, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014, pp. 14 - 15.

admit that objects in experience are only given to us as composites and it is only in thought that we can break them down into their simple components.

Like we have seen with Leibniz and Kant, “[...] the existence of the absolutely simple cannot be established by any experience or perception, either outer or inner; and that the absolutely simple is therefore a mere idea, the objective reality of which can never be shown in any possible experience, and which, as being without an object, has no application in the explanation of the appearances.”¹⁰³ The impossibility of perceiving simple things implies that we cannot have objective and valid knowledge of them. It is like living in an illusion or rather an assumption that composite things are made of simple things but the simple things have never been given to us in intuition. There is no empirical element that can break down the composite things that we see in the universe into their simplest components. What Leibniz thus describes as the ‘atoms of nature’ cannot be perceived, it is an idea that is very coherent with the empirical reality of composite entities. But the idea of simple objects cannot itself be verified through experience. The antithesis is, then, as convincing as the thesis. The idea of composite things (as given in nature) which are divided into simple things (in thought) and that simple things are in turn given to intuition as composites, is self-contradictory.

We cannot prove that compound things are made up of simple things when the simple things will still appear to us as composites so that only through reason can we be able to deduce enduring simple substances amidst the manifold given to us in experience. In his intention to present all angles of the conflict of reason with the conviction of a dialectician, Kant writes that “[...] since everything real, which occupies a space, contains in itself a manifold of constituents external to one another, and is therefore composite; and since a real composite is not made up of accidents [...] but of substances, it follows that the simple would be a composite of substances –which is self-contradictory.”¹⁰⁴ In the Kantian system of philosophy, either the idea of simple substance is an aspect of the unknowable *noumenon* (thing in itself) or the transcendental idea of pure reason which cannot be known empirically but whose conception regulates our thought toward synthetic unity and completeness. This antinomy reminds us of the paralogism where the problematic simplicity of the soul does not help to make it an object of intuition thereby making it unknowable.

¹⁰³ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 403.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

The third antinomy of pure reason concerns the transcendental idea of freedom. As we already noted earlier in this sub-section of our work, it has to do with what becomes of the chain of empirical causes in nature or a dynamic world. If nature is a world in motion, we need to trace the original source of the motion. If the chain of causes operates on its own infinitely, then natural laws control the world. If there is a transcendental source to the series of causes in the universe, then nature is under the influence of another force above it. This is where the transcendental idea of freedom emerges as a spontaneous force that operates the chain of causes in the universes without itself being part of the empirical reality of the chain of causes. Kant states the thesis of the third antinomy as follows: “Causality in accordance with laws of nature is not the only causality from which the appearances of the world can one and all be derived. To explain these appearances it is necessary to assume, that there is also another causality, that of freedom.”¹⁰⁵ Freedom is a special kind of causality, freedom is a transcendental cause, transcendental in its origin or spontaneity or ability to effect motion in appearances, but empirical in its effect since the chain of causes is visible in nature as the motion set up by freedom whose power to cause such motion is not visible in experience. This thesis is the logical assumption that nature is not enough to explain the chain of causes in an infinite regress. Kant notes emphatically that apart from Epicurus, all other philosophers of the antiquity felt the need to assume that there is a prime mover at the origin of motion in the world, a mover that moves other things in the universe without being moved by anything itself.

Since Kant exempts Epicurus from the ancient philosophers whose views establish a prime mover of the universe, it is important to note that the view developed by Epicurus gives autonomy to nature in a world whose dynamics are controlled by natural laws in the infinity of the universe. Here, Epicurus is the rare philosopher of ancient times who did not propose a transcendental origin to the chain of cause in the universe. Epicurus was thus an empiricist whose philosophy had no room for freedom as a transcendental causality. In his book *On Nature* that did not survive up to our era except as fragments, Epicurus gives an independent existence to the universe. The views of his book, *On Nature*, are summarized in his *Letter to Herodotus* as follows:

[...] nothing is created out of that which does not exist: for if it were, everything would be created out of everything with no need of seeds. And again, if that which disappears were destroyed into that which did not exist,

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 409.

*all things would have perished, since that into which they dissolved would not exist. Furthermore, the universe always was such as it is now, and always will be the same. For outside the universe there is nothing which could come into it and bring about the change.*¹⁰⁶

Epicurus would thus not accept the transcendental idea of freedom which would make the universe dependent on a cause outside the universe itself. In his empiricism, Epicurus avoids going out of experience to make experience dependent on something outside the experience itself. The universe of Epicurus is self-generating; the universe has no other causality outside the chain of natural causes. Yet, when taken the Epicurean way, the universe will have an infinite regress in the chain of causes, a regress that reason cannot be contented with because it does not give us completeness.

Reason only attains completeness when we move from the conditioned chain of causes to an unconditioned causality which perfectly reflects the spontaneity of freedom. The antithesis of the third antinomy which states that “There is no freedom; everything in the world takes place solely in accordance with laws [...]”¹⁰⁷ then stands at variance with the thesis and is yet rationally justifiable. Transcendental freedom becomes an illusion when we consider that anything that has to effect a change in the chain of causes should itself be part of the chain. Freedom goes against nature in a way that cannot be explained through experience: how a transcendental causality can effect changes in empirical causes is a mystery to experience. And if freedom were to effect changes in the world naturally, it would be another natural law and not a transcendental assumption. Transcendental freedom thus has no empirical foundation that can make it lead to valid and objective knowledge.

The fourth antinomy is also based on a cosmical idea related to the world as a dynamism but whose ultimate goal leads to the conception of the existence of God as a supreme ruler of the universe, an ideal fully developed in the next sub-section of our work in what Kant refers to as ‘the ideal of pure reason’. At the level of the fourth antinomy, reason wants to investigate whether the chain of causes in nature inevitably leads to the conception of a necessary being. The thesis goes thus: “There belongs to the world either as its part or as its cause, a being that is absolutely necessary.”¹⁰⁸ At this level, we do not need to consider the being as God, though it goes without saying. At this level, the idea is to show that the sum of all appearances, as conditioned, implies that for the series to be complete we must get to the

¹⁰⁶ Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus*, trans. Cyril Bailey, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1926, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

idea of the unconditioned. But for the unconditioned to be the source of conditioned events, it must belong to the time series where one event is preceded by another in experience. The being of absolute necessity here must belong to the world itself. Thus the thesis of a necessary being must not be a transcendental entity, “For if it is existed outside that world, the series of alterations in the world derives its beginning from a necessary cause which would not itself belong to the sensible world. This [...] is impossible.”¹⁰⁹ Viewed this way, the being of absolute necessity has to be part of the series of causes in time or the totality of the series itself. To keep things at the cosmological level, the absolutely necessary being has to be part of the cosmic series. This is where Kant makes a difference between cosmic ideas and the ideas of pure reason, which ideas of pure reason situate the necessary being beyond the temporal series and thus beyond the totality of appearances. At the level of appearances, the necessary being would be the strongest, highest or most influential member of the cosmic series of causes.

On the other hand, and still keeping things at the cosmic level without overstepping the bounds of experience, the antithesis of the fourth antinomy states that “An absolutely necessary being nowhere exists in the world, nor does it exist outside the world as its cause.”¹¹⁰ The antithesis implies that even if the necessary being were to be transcendental, the idea would still be null and void. If we assume that the series has a necessary beginning, the beginning would then not be causality and would interrupt the dynamism of a universe which empirically is in perpetual motion. On this basis, a necessary beginning of the series is rejected, and with it the idea of an absolute necessary being. If we assume that the series is unconditioned when taken as a whole, we would still need to prove how a whole can be unconditioned and necessary when the members that make up the whole are conditioned and contingent. The leap from the conditioned and contingent into the unconditioned and necessary is unwarranted by experience. Even the assumption that the being of absolute necessity can be outside the world is the most illogical because at this level, to effect change in time, the cause too must be part of the time series. Thus, whether we assume that the being of absolute necessity is in the world or outside the world, it cannot be proven beyond reasonable doubt using experience and reason itself. This antithesis of the fourth antinomy, like those of other antinomies, stands at the same level of logical coherence and consistency

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 416.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

with the thesis. And since the conflicts are created by reason, the solution has to come from reason itself.

The beginning of the solution to the antinomies is to return to the object of the controversy: the world as a totality, an object of study taken in a way that makes it difficult to be given in experience, or given in experience in a way that does not give satisfaction to reason – a situation that leads to the metaphysical temptation that in turn gives rise to dialectical illusions. The theses of all the four antinomies illustrate the use of reason in a way that goes beyond the empirical realm, which gives objectivity and validity to knowledge, by converting categories into transcendental ideas of reason. The summary of the thesis which fails to give knowledge in the theoretical use of reason and rather gives brighter prospects in the practical use of reason is

*That the world has a beginning, that my thinking self is of simple and therefore indestructible nature, that it is free in its voluntary actions and raised above the compulsion of nature, and finally that all order in the things constituting the world is due to a primordial thing, from which everything derives its unity and purposive connection – these are so many foundation stones of morals and religion.*¹¹¹

The beginning of the solution to the antinomies is to admit that, used theoretically, reason cannot attain its epistemological objectives when the world is studied as a totality moving from the conditioned to the unconditioned because such a move can never be verified empirically. On the other hand, taken practically, the transcendental foundation of the series of natural causes in the universe makes possible the glorious ideas of the foundation and object of morality. The transcendental leap, attained in the theoretical use of reason, fails epistemologically because no objective and valid knowledge is obtained from it, but the theoretical failure becomes an ideal for morality so that our persistent conformity of our actions to the moral law prescribed by reason should make us rise above all temptations of the sensible world in a way that makes us pleasing to God as the ideal of pure reason and makes religion possible as the ultimate culmination of all our untiring practice of virtue as a duty.

The theoretical failure of reason in epistemology and the practical success of reason in morality and religion prove that the transcendental leap is not as useless as it seems to the empiricists. Kant accepts the views of the empiricists to an extent where the empirical bounds

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

must be respected for us to attain knowledge. Yet the complete rejection of transcendental ideas, as stated by the empiricists, gives no room for morality and religion: and Kant thinks empiricism fails too when it does not admit that transcendental ideas are useful even in the practical field where good works deserve a reward or at least the hope of a reward where the objectives of morality and religion coincide. Empiricism itself becomes dogmatic when it limits everything to experience including morality and religion. The pure spirit of empiricism is illustrated by David Hume whose rejection of the transcendental leap led him toward a rejection of the existence of God as the ideal of pure reason. Taken in this extreme, empiricism does no service to practical philosophy where the failures of theoretical reason are supposed to be made up for.

The empiricists, like Epicurus, are right when they reject the attempts to seek beyond the world a transcendental foundation of the world. But the empiricists are wrong when their rejection continues in the field of morality. David Hume actually rejects the transcendental ideas as a source of unnecessary ‘religious fears’ that we can happily live without. In his *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*, Hume rejects all the illusions of metaphysics and their extrapolation in the field of religion:

*[...] this obscurity, in the profound and abstract philosophy, is objected to, not only as painful and fatiguing, but as the inevitable source of uncertainty and error. Here, indeed, lies the justest and most plausible objection against a considerable part of metaphysics, that they are not properly a science, but arise either from the fruitless efforts of human vanity, which would penetrate into subjects utterly inaccessible to the understanding, or from the craft of popular superstitions, which, being unable to defend themselves on fair ground, raise these entangling brambles to cover and protect their weakness, chased from the open country, these robbers fly into the forest and lie in wait to break in upon every unguarded avenue of the mind, and overwhelm it with religious fears and prejudices.*¹¹²

The fruitless venture of the human mind going beyond experience creates monsters that give rise to fears of the underworld, fears of a realm that is inaccessible to us: such fears neither make metaphysics a source of truth nor make reason a complement of experience; rather, it makes the noble search for truth a vain game of empty words whose vanity is known in advance. Yet, reason indulges in this venture for consolation purposes which can neither serve as ground nor content of knowledge. The metaphysician is then literally chased to the forest when the true philosophy of empiricism sets limit to the field of clarity. Reason’s

¹¹² David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles W. Hendel, Indiannapolis, New York: The Bobbs - Merrill company, 1955, p. 20.

refusal to accept the empirical bounds is in itself a weakness, for epistemological nobility requires that we do not go beyond the limits of the possible to satisfy an ego in illusion. Metaphysics then becomes popular, yet superstitious to any philosopher at a quest for clarity, the kind of clarity that is only guaranteed by the humility of accepting bounds imposed on reason by experience.

The limits set by experience and which are supposed to guide reason through the fruitful path of inquiry runs throughout Kant's philosophy. Kant actually uses experience to set bounds to reason, but uses practical reason to reject the dogmatic claims of experience that nothing useful can be obtained from the transcendental leap beyond the data of intuition:

According to the principle of empiricism, the understanding is always on its own proper ground, namely, the field of genuinely possible experiences, investigating their laws, and by means of these laws affording indefinite extension to the sure and comprehensible knowledge which it supplies. Here, every object, both in itself and its relations, can and ought to be represented in intuition, or at least in concepts for which the corresponding images can be clearly and distinctly provided in given similar intuitions. There is no necessity to leave the chain of the natural order and to resort to ideas, the objects of which are not known, because, as mere thought-entities, they can never be given.¹¹³

This highlights the relationship that ideas should have with objects. The truth would not be an idea in the strict sense of the word; the truth would be in the relationship that ideas have with objects. Whether the idea is empirical or transcendental, the criterion for its truth will be the possible link it can have with experience or objects given in intuition. The categories are pure concepts of the understanding, yet they coincide with experience and serve as principles and rules that make nature a coherent whole. The categories have to be guided to stay within bounds so as to always give clarity to nature. The misuse of categories beyond the bounds of experience is what gives rise to the dialectical illusions in the antinomies.

When empiricism, on the other hand, becomes dogmatic, it gets into difficulties when it obstinately rejects the natural disposition of reason to go beyond empirical limits. John Locke insists on the empirical limit to be framed by the mind in the need to understand experience. In the second book of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Lock notes emphatically that

[...] I believe we shall find, if we warily observe the originals of our notions, that even the most abstruse ideas, how remote so ever they may seem from

¹¹³ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 426.

*senses or from any operation of our minds, are yet only such as the understanding frames to itself, by repeating and joining together ideas that it had either from objects of sense, or from its own operations about them: so that those even large and abstract ideas are derived from sensation or reflection, being no other than what the mind, by the ordinary use of its own faculties, employed about ideas received from objects of sense or from the operations it observes in itself about them, may and does attain unto.*¹¹⁴

Locke, in trying to be a consistent empiricist, is insisting on the empirical origin of ideas or the mind framing ideas only in a bid to make sense of experience. To an extent, though with hesitation, Locke is admitting the possibility of existence of Kantian categories as transcendental concepts of the understanding used to explain appearances. Locke simply does not want to admit the *a priori* origin of ideas used by the mind for reflection. The operations of the mind are *a priori* and yet the concepts relate to experience as the Kantian categories, a reality avoided by Locke emphatically by reference to the sensation or objects of sensation from which all ideas are derived. This is when empiricism leaps into dogmatism in the deliberate decision to undermine the role of the mind as the source of those ideas that give meaning to experience and only as long as they relate to experience. At one point, Locke had to admit the difficulties he faced in insisting to give an empirical origin to ideas when he ended up in the unknowable substance. Beyond the secondary qualities of color, smell, taste and sound, we have the primary qualities of texture, weight, shape and motion; and the primary qualities give rise to the secondary qualities. But beyond the primary qualities, there is an unknowable substrate. At this point, Locke's claims of an unknowable substance is already a way of leaving room for the transcendental leap beyond experience which he desperately seeks to avoid so as to be a consistent empiricist.

The fact that the empiricists struggled to remain consistent with the empirical limit is because they took the limit too far to even leave no room for the ideals of morality and religion: they were dogmatic. In this light, David Hume, in his explanation of causality, decided to talk of custom or habit since he did not see the mind as the ultimate source of ideas that nearly perfectly explain experience. Berkeley, in his idealism, rejected the world of objects in space which is no longer consistent with pure empiricism. Locke's unknowable substance is not far from the Kantian unknowable *noumena*. Hume's reference to causality was a wakeup call to Kant and served as a prelude to the deduction of the categories, developed in the next chapter of our work. The empiricists could not be consistent because

¹¹⁴ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. by John W. Yolton, London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1961, Book II, chapter XIII, p. 132.

they were dogmatic, yet the idealists were not less dogmatic in their problematic leap beyond experience with a pretensions ambition of attaining objective and valid knowledge. Thus the beginning of the solution to the antinomies of pure reason is to admit that both camps are dogmatic in their claims so as to do a proper synthesis. The proper synthesis consists in a review of the object of controversy, the unknowable world as a totality since such knowledge pushes us beyond the bounds of experience and becomes problematic. Yet, the movement beyond experience is the foundation for morality and religion. We can only know the world as far as experience can permit in the chain of causes. But the transcendental concept of freedom is not useless because it serves a very important purpose in practical reason that gives morality and religion an ultimate ideal.

The antinomies of pure reason are maintained by the lack of modesty and lack of humility from the actors involved (empiricists, and metaphysicians using reason in idealizing circumstances). Yet the popularity of idealism does not imply that it can lead to any positive epistemological outcome. The lack of popularity of empiricism does not mean that we can all give up on the world of experience to chase wild metaphysical dreams. To the empiricists, Kant has this to say:

[...] when empiricism itself, as frequently happens, becomes dogmatic in its attitude towards ideas, and confidently derives whatever lies beyond the sphere of its intuitive knowledge, it betrays the same lack of modesty; and this is all the more reprehensible owing to the irreparable injury which is thereby caused to the practical interest of reason.¹¹⁵

In this case, both camps involved in the antinomy are right in their logical claims which exhibit coherence and consistency. But both camps are wrong in their lack of modesty to accommodate each other. They can co-exist with different goals, empiricism fulfilling the goals of the need for objective and valid knowledge while rationalism using idealizing reason fulfills the practical goals of morality and religion. The antinomies help us to envisage unity in the Kantian system of philosophy, unity in the system referred to as the ‘architectonic’ where all the parts have to stick together and sustain each other by complementing each other. Such is the necessity that gives rise to morality and religion flowing from the epistemological failure of theoretical reason.

The antinomies oppose two *contrary* and not two *contradictory* views; for contradictory views are mutually exclusive and cannot accommodate each other. On the other

¹¹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *op cit.*, p. 427.

hand, contraries oppose each other without mutually destroying each other. Contraries can both be false, and in this way we can reject the claims from both camps because they are looking at the object from different angles. In this case the opposition should not even exist because empiricism will serve epistemological purposes while idealizing serves practical purposes in morality and religion. Contraries are dialectical because both camps can argue for an eternity in quarrels that cannot be settled. Contradictions are analytical because through them we can clarify the meanings and roles of concepts as will be seen with the categories that do not entertain illusions because the rules are clear. The contraries in the antinomies arguing endlessly about the finite and infinite nature of the world cannot be settled once and for all. But if we understand that the finite world is the object of knowledge while the infinite world is the object of morality and religion, then the opposition disappears and we avoid spending time in dialectical illusions.

The antinomies constitute much ado about nothing in reality. There is no need putting both sides in opposition. Each can exist on its own sphere, one simply moves beyond the bounds of the other without destroying it and that should be for a different purpose other than epistemological. One is theoretical while the other is practical; this way, one does not have to be seen as a rival to the other: [...] the world may not be given as a thing in itself, or as being in its magnitude either infinite or finite. I beg permission to entitle this kind of opposition *dialectical*, and that of the contradictories *analytical*. Thus of two dialectically opposed judgments both may be false; for the one is not a mere contradictory of the other, but says something more than is required for a simple contradiction.”¹¹⁶ Idealizing reason simply goes beyond experience to explain experience dialectically, but ends up giving a solid foundation and object to morality and religion. Empiricism simply sets epistemological limits on reason for objectivity and validity. One needs to accommodate the other as an extension of the employment of reason for a practical purpose. The ideal of pure reason completes the dialectical illusions that find employment only for practical purposes.

2.3: The Ideal of Pure Reason

Immanuel Kant has to prove that knowledge of God is impossible because the concept of God is a being of reason, an idea used by reason to regulate ideas towards synthetic unity and that such synthetic unity cannot constitute an object of possible knowledge because the object aimed at is not given in intuition. Any rational attempt to prove the existence of God

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 447.

becomes epistemologically futile and morally useful in the transition from speculative to practical reason. The ontological, cosmological and physico – theological proofs of God’s existence become dialectical as we seek to intuit the object in vain. Why is the quest for rational proofs of God’s existence epistemologically futile?

Kant refers to the ontological proof of God’s existence as an approach to prove God’s existence in which “[...] abstraction is made of all experience, and the existence of a supreme cause is concluded from *a priori* conceptions alone.”¹¹⁷ Since the ontological argument proves the existence of God from His essence, and since God is not an object of intuition, the ontological proof works with an idea of pure reason. In his *Proslogion*, the father of the ontological proof, Saint Anselm of Canterbury notes that “[...] something than which nothing greater can be thought”¹¹⁸ cannot be supposed not to exist without contradiction. Existence in reality is different from existence in thought. The idea of greatness implies existence not only in thought but also and above all in reality because existence in thought alone contradicts the idea of supreme greatness.

Saint Anselm insists that a being that cannot be thought not to exist is greater than one that can be thought not to exist. The idea of Supreme Greatest is posed here as an essential part of God’s nature, an idea which already implies existence not only in thought but also in reality. “So if that than which a greater cannot be thought exists only in the understanding, then that than which a greater *cannot* be thought is that than which a greater *can* be thought. But that is clearly impossible.”¹¹⁹ Saint Anselm’s image of the fool is that of someone who refuses to accept that which is so clear to a rational mind, that is, the existence of God. It is the supposed impossibility of proving the contrary to be true that made the ontological argument famous.

The ontological argument is also considered by Kant as the ‘Cartesian argument’ in reference to the reformulated version by René Descartes. To Descartes, the idea of supreme perfection precedes that of the self. Man is essentially a being prone to error, a fallible and thus imperfect being. But the idea of imperfection is a limitation of perfection in the same way as finite nature is a limitation to infinite nature. In this order of ideas, we come to know

¹¹⁷Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 2nd edition, (1787), trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn, Dutton, New York: Everyman’s Library, 1934, Transcendental Dialectic, p. 346.

¹¹⁸ Saint Anselm, “Proslogion”, trans. Thomas Williams, in Steven M. Cahn (ed.), *Classics of Western Philosophy*, 4th edition, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1995, p. 379.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

that we must owe our existence to a Supreme Being because if we had brought ourselves into existence, we would have given ourselves all the perfections. A self – created being cannot lack any perfection because we can give our best qualities best to ourselves. But how do we understand our imperfection if we do not have an idea of a being of absolute perfection?

*For how would it be possible for me to know that I doubt and desire, that is to say, that I lack something and am not all perfect, if I did not have in me any idea of a more perfect being than myself, by comparison with which I know the deficiencies of my nature?*¹²⁰

Knowledge of our imperfection leads us to knowledge of a perfect being. The procedure eliminates illusions and gives rise to clarity and distinctness of ideas in Cartesian philosophy.

The Cartesian ontological argument thus poses the inseparability of divine essence from existence. “For I am not free to conceive a God without existence, that is to say, a supremely perfect being devoid of a supreme perfection.”¹²¹ Perfection in the Cartesian argument plays the same role that greatness plays in the argument by Saint Anselm. The ontological proof is a process of pure reason; no reference is made of intuition as reason moves from one idea to the next in the quest for justification of divine existence, a process that inevitably leads to a dialectical illusion. The basis of the argument is the idea of *ens realissimum* or the totality of reality, a reality that embraces all other realities. This synthetic unity of an idea is the unconditioned in thought and the unconditioned in thought is not given in intuition: “[...] the conception of an absolutely necessary being is a mere idea, the objective reality of which is far from being established by the mere fact that it is a need of reason.”¹²² The problem here is the arbitrary leap from an idea of absolute totality of reality to the reality itself which is not given as an object in intuition.

The idea of a being of absolute necessity is a regulator of reason towards synthetic unity. This unity is in ideas and does not in any way prove that the idea refers to something concrete which is what the ontological argument dialectically sets out to prove. “[...] something, the non-existence of which is impossible”¹²³ is an idea that can be rejected without contradiction. This is because in such an analytic proposition in which the predicate merely breaks down the subject into its conceptual constituents, we cannot reject the

¹²⁰ René Descartes, “Meditations on the First Philosophy” in *Discourse on Method and the Meditations*, trans. F.E. Sutcliffe, London: Penguin Books, 1968, Third Meditation, p. 124.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, Fifth Meditation, p. 145.

¹²² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 347.

predicate without contradicting the subject, but we can reject both. Hence, the idea of an all - embracing reality can be rejected together with its derivatives; in this particular case, the ideas of supreme greatness and perfection can be rejected as well as the existence of the being to which such ideas are ascribed.

Besides, the ontological argument is tautological reasoning. The subject already exists with all its predicates. If supreme greatness and supreme perfection already imply existence, then the argument tells us nothing new about God. According to Kant, “If I cogitate a thing as containing all modes of reality except one, the mode of reality which is absent is not added to the conception of the thing by the affirmation that the thing exists; on the contrary, the thing exists – if it exists at all – with the same defect as that cogitated in its conception [...]”¹²⁴ A perfect being does not become more perfect with the affirmation of existence, and the case is same with the idea of greatness. We create an all – embracing concept and start analysing the concept as a procedure of proof which actually proves nothing because the subject already supposes the predicates in such analytic propositions. Yet the real issue at stake is to show that such a being actually exists in experience and that is where the ontological argument fails.

The ontological argument does not respect the empirical bounds within which knowledge is possible: “[...] all our knowledge of existence [...] belongs entirely to the sphere of experience - which is in perfect unity with itself; and although an existence out of this sphere cannot be absolutely declared to be impossible, it is an hypothesis the truth of which we have no means of ascertaining.”¹²⁵ Even if existence beyond experience is possible, we cannot prove it because Kant has already set experience as the realm beyond which we cannot have knowledge of any object that cannot be intuited. Even when an argument starts from experience as is the case with the cosmological proof, the dialectical illusion is the same because the idea of the impossibility of an infinite regress in the chain of phenomenal causes is an idea that cannot be situated in the experience that it sets out to prove. “The *cosmological proof* [...] retains the connection between absolute necessity and the highest reality; but, instead of reasoning from this highest reality to a necessary existence [...], it concludes from the given unconditioned necessity of some being its unlimited reality.”¹²⁶ God as a being of unconditioned necessity takes Him out of the chain of phenomenal causes thus making God

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 350.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, Section V, p. 352.

an idea of absolute necessity which is not given in the experience to which God is the transcendental causality.

The cosmological proof takes off from experience but ends up in the same idea of an all – embracing reality as the unconditioned necessary causality of experience and this is dialectical to Kant: “If something exists, an absolutely necessary being must likewise exist. Now I, at least exist. Consequently, there exists an absolutely necessary being. The minor contains an experience, the major reasons from a general experience to the existence of a necessary being.”¹²⁷ The being whose existence is proven is the being of absolute necessity. But the being of absolute necessity is not proven according to the means used to prove the existence of other empirical realities and so cannot be proven to exist the way other empirical objects exist. Causality is a principle that holds in nature and cannot be understood transcendently or beyond the natural chain of causes. The *a priori* concept of an embracing reality is not given in experience either. Since the cosmological proof is actually based on an *a priori* concept of an all – embracing reality, despite the take-off from experience, the cosmological argument is the same like the ontological argument that depends on an idea of unconditioned necessity to project the existence of a supreme author of the universe

The concept of God gives conceptual coherence and becomes a regulative idea of pure reason through which the mind acquires orderliness in thought. But such orderliness in thought does not prove existence in reality:

*The conception of a Supreme Being satisfies all questions a priori regarding the internal determinations of a thing, and is for this reason an ideal without equal or parallel, the general conception of it indicating it as at the same time an ens individuum among all possible things. But the conception does not satisfy the question regarding its existence - which was the purpose of all our inquiries; and, although the existence of a necessary being was admitted, we should find it impossible to answer the question: what of all things in the world must be regarded as such?*¹²⁸

If all other beings are given as such, then we will not be able to demonstrate any concrete existence of the objects of our knowledge since all of them would be ideas that give rise to coherence in thought without referring to anything in concrete existence outside the mind itself.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 356-357.

Kant considers the physico – theological proof of God’s existence to be one in which we move “[...] from determinate experience and the peculiar constitution of the world of sense, and rise, according to the laws of causality, from it to the highest cause existing apart from the world.”¹²⁹ The physico – theological proof, also known as the teleological proof, moves from the order or harmony in the universe to project an author who gave rise to the harmony observed in the universe. It is like a process whereby by admiring the beauty in a work of art, we think of the author of the work of art as a great artist who must exist to realise his masterpiece. Thus, matter, independently, cannot give rise to the kind of harmony observed in it and so we must presuppose a creator of matter with the orderliness in it:

*This arrangement of means and ends is entirely foreign to the things existing in the world - it belongs to them merely as a contingent attribute, in other words the nature of different things could not of itself, whatever means were employed, harmoniously tend towards certain purposes, were they not chosen and directed for the purposes by a rational and disposing principle, in accordance with certain fundamental ideas.*¹³⁰

There are things in nature that are not artworks. That is why we easily distinguish sticks from sculptures. Besides, we cannot prove that matter on its own cannot have such orderliness without the handiwork of artistic creator. The comparison with a work of art implies that if we separate form from matter, then God is only responsible for the form on matter and not the matter itself in which case God would not be the creator of the universe and everything found in it but only the creator of the form in the matter found in the universe.

Kant therefore holds that “This proof can at most, therefore, demonstrate the existence of an *architect of the world* whose efforts are limited by the capabilities of the materials with which he works but not of the *creator of the world* to whom all things are subject.”¹³¹ If the idea is to prove that God gave form to matter which He did not create, then the argument proves the work of God as an artist giving form to matter. But if the argument is intended to prove that God created matter in the universe, then God becomes the transcendental causality of the chain of phenomenal causes which makes it a cosmological argument. Thus the physico – theological argument is the cosmological argument in disguise and suffers the same fate of trying to give a transcendental cause to experience whereas such

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, Transcendental Dialectic, p. 346.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, Section VI, p. 364.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 365.

a transcendental cause cannot be given in intuition and cannot therefore be an object of possible knowledge.

God is an ideal of pure reason: through the idea of God, reason is able to attain synthetic unity in ideas, this kind of systematic completeness and unity of ideas regulates the understanding mediately in its conditioning of the objects of our knowledge. But such unity of ideas has no immediate relation to the objects of our knowledge since the ideal does not refer to anything given in intuition. Kant's definition of the ideal makes God that to which we compare ourselves and our ideas with regards to systematic unity and perfection, but that about which we can never have objective knowledge:

[...] what I entitle the ideal seems to be further removed from objective reality even than the idea. By the ideal I understand the idea, not merely in concreto, but in individuo, that is, as an individual thing, determinable or even determined by the idea alone. Humanity [as an idea] in its complete perfection contains not only all the essential qualities which belong to human nature and constitute our concept of it - and these so as to be in that complete conformity with their ends which would be our idea of perfect humanity but also everything which, in addition to this concept, is required for the complete determination of the idea.¹³²

The ideal goes beyond what obtains in experience to what can be obtained or what is supposed to be obtained beyond experience. It is our perfect idea of who we are supposed to be or how things are supposed to be, and yet things can never be proportional to the ideal which goes beyond what is empirically possible to what is to be aimed at if perfection were of this world. In this way, the idea of God guides us in the quest for synthetic unity in ideas but the idea of God can never be treated as knowledge because it does not correspond to any intuition.

Rather, the ideal of pure reason has a role to play in morality when we carry out the necessary transition from speculative to practical reason so that what cannot be known because it is beyond the realm of experience can be hoped for as the greatest idea that conditions us to work toward perfection even if such perfection cannot be attained. It is our representation of the best idea that should serve as a rule of unity and purity in transcendental ideas: "As the idea gives the rule, so the ideal in such a case serves as the archetype for the complete determination of the copy; and we have no other standard for our actions than the conduct of this divine man within us, with which we compare and judge ourselves, and so

¹³² Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, The Ideal of Pure Reason, pp. 485 – 486.

reform ourselves, although we can never attain to the perfection thereby prescribed.”¹³³ In the quest for knowledge, our concepts of the understanding only become cognition when they become concepts of objects as is proven by the transcendental deduction of the next chapter of our work. Apart from the categories, we have transcendental ideas including the idea of God considered as an ideal of pure reason because it is meant to take our concepts above all subjective empirical grounds toward perfect unity for the good of morality and not for the sake of knowledge. Hence, from the Kantian critique of metaphysics, it is clear that dialectical illusions have been identified thus paving the way for a transcendental deduction that should link our concepts to intuitions as a major achievement of the Kantian theory of knowledge.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 486.

THIRD CHAPTER

ON THE DEDUCTION OF THE CATEGORIES

At the heart of Immanuel Kant's epistemology are the categories or transcendental concepts of the understanding through which objects are thought. In relation to time, the view that knowledge begins with experience does not mean that all knowledge arises from experience. In terms of time, intuitions through which objects are given to us must precede the concepts by which they are thought. This means we receive perceptions first before the concepts start synthesizing them. But before all intuitions the *a priori* concepts of the understanding are already constituted in the mind. If you have to know anything at all, you must start with intuition, but the intuitions will be received by inbuilt modes of knowledge in the mind, and these modes are constituted independently of experience and thus independently of intuitions which provide the perceptions that concepts work on. How does the mind constitute and use these *a priori* modes of knowledge called categories? To Kant, "[...] all human knowledge begins with intuitions, proceeds from thence to concepts, and ends with ideas. [...] in respect of all three elements it possesses *a priori* sources of knowledge [...]." ¹³⁴ The temporal sequence of cognition from intuitions to concepts and ideas only refer to the object outside the mind becoming an object of knowledge for us. From intuitions of the senses to the concepts of the understanding and the ideas of reason, the mind receives perceptions and works on them to produce knowledge.

But before receiving any perceptions, which means prior to intuitions, the mind has inbuilt modes of knowledge, or to be more precise, inbuilt modes to treat the perceptions in a way as to generate knowledge, the mind has concepts of the understanding which are capable of giving rise to synthetic *a priori* knowledge. This chapter of our work explores the possibilities of synthetic *a priori* knowledge through the categories. When experience does not seem to be the source of a rule and yet the rule respects the requirements of logical coherence and consistency and perfectly explains experience, the empiricist is puzzled and may not want to take the decisive step to admitting the role of the mind as a source of concepts that are not derived from experience but are used to explain experience with a baffling degree of accuracy.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, Natural Dialectic of Human Reason, p. 569.

3.1: David Hume's 'wake up' inspiration

In several passages of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant makes reference to David Hume on the inspiration that led to the discovery of the categories as well as the necessity that the rule prescribed by the mind imposes on experience in such a way that the rule itself could not originate from experience. After all experience cannot be the source of apodictic principles used by reason to explain nature with the highest degree of accuracy. But it is in one famous passage of the preface to the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science* that Kant states the role played by Hume in a dramatic manner. This is what Kant wrote about Hume lighting the spark to the discovery of the categories:

*I freely admit that the remembrance of David Hume was the very thing that many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave a completely different direction to my researches in the field of speculative philosophy. I was very far from listening to him with respect to his conclusions, which arose solely because he did not completely set out his problem, but only touched on a part of it, which, without the whole being taken into account, can provide no enlightenment. If we begin from a well-grounded though undeveloped thought that another bequeaths us, then we can well hope, by continued reflection, to take it further than could the sagacious man whom one has to thank for the first spark of this light.*¹³⁵

As an empiricist that David Hume originally set out to be, one would have expected him to justify everything through experience without admitting the primacy of the mind over experience in matters of knowledge. Actually Hume tried to be a consistent empiricist but at the moment that Hume could discover the categories, he wanted to remain an empiricist and thus ended up as a skeptical empiricist.

In his *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume treated the reality of causality in the universe up to a point when he almost left experience to situate the justification of causality in a rational principle. But seeing the position not being consistent with his empiricism, Hume resorted to custom as that tendency that pushes us to see necessity in the relationship between two events where one is considered the cause and the other the effect. That the sun rises in the east and sets in the west is a reality of experience that Hume thought was beyond the human mind to justify except through custom or habit. That the sun will always rise in the east and set in the west is a hypothesis that we cannot ascertain thereby

¹³⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science*, *op. cit.*, Preface, p. 10.

bringing to light the limitations of induction. Failing to find the justifying principles of causality in experience and insisting that the principle could not be derived from the mind independently of experience, Hume fell back on habit or custom as that tendency in human nature whereby when one event gives rise to another in such a way that there is no case in the past and in the present where a particular event does not give rise to another particular event, we, out of habit and without logical nor empirical necessity, associate the two events and make the former the cause and the latter the effect. Kant credited Hume for attempting to push the inquiry to the point where he admitted the difficulty, yet Kant rejected the solution proposed by Hume.

The problem that Hume bequeathed to Kant without a satisfactory solution was the inability for us to observe an object and identify the part of the object that makes it a cause to an effect, we are not able to prove through experience that given a particular object assumed to be the cause gives rise to another assumed to be the effect. In nature, and except through habit, we cannot prove through experience that lightning has a necessary connection with thunder for the former to be considered the cause and the latter considered the effect. The first step is for Hume to prove that causality is not grounded in human reason as an *a priori* principle. The second step is to show that causality is not grounded on any principle of experience and that it has to do with constant conjunction or association of events in experience by humans through custom. It is, to Hume, about the source of the necessity in the principle linking a cause to an effect:

*[...] we must inquire how we arrive at the knowledge of cause and effect. I shall venture to affirm as a general proposition which admits of no exception, that the knowledge of this relation is not, in any instance, attained by reasonings a priori, but arises entirely from experience, when we find that any particular objects are constantly conjoined with each other. Let an object be presented to a man of ever so strong natural reason and abilities – if that object be entirely new to him, he will not be able, by the most accurate examination of its sensible qualities, to discover any of its causes or effects.*¹³⁶

As a thorough empiricist, we would have expected Hume to reject the *a priori* of causality and then admit the empirical basis of the relationship between the cause and the effect. But Hume went a little further, and that is where Kant gives him credit for lighting the spark that led to the categories, to insist that causality is not founded in experience as a necessary

¹³⁶ David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles W. Hendell, Indianapolis / New York: The Bobbs – Merrill Company Inc, 1955, Section V: Skeptical Doubts Concerning the Operations of the Understanding, p.42.

principle since an observation of the sensible qualities in an object cannot identify anything about it that we can consider a cause or an effect.

Empirically, then, to Hume, observing an object using the senses does not give us any necessary principle for us to consider anything as its cause and its effects. Hume is looking for a necessary empirical principle that proves with certainty that an object has an effect and a cause, and he does not find any such necessary principle. Habit or custom is not a principle of necessity, it is a constant association of events which may be just a matter of probability because we are not sure that the future will resemble the past for such events or objects to always be conjoined infinitely. Thus the problem posed by Hume also puts to question the inductive method that does not give grounds for absolute necessity of principles. Kant thinks that absolute necessity found in apodictic principles like those of mathematics can only be derived from the mind and not from experience. Here, we can say that Hume is confronted with the same problem faced by natural scientists who know that nature cannot give the grounds of necessity that they seek for their principles. By insisting that experience does not give us sufficient grounds for justifying the reality of causality in the universe, Hume is establishing a limitation of experience, that is, he is showing that experience is not enough to justify an empirical reality like causation. When experience fails to provide the ground of necessity for an empirical reality, and when the author insists that the principle cannot be of *a priori* origin or derived independently of experience, the said author becomes a skeptic, doubting the powers of the mind to give accurate grounds for empirical realities and yet not finding the justifying grounds in experience itself. The resort to constant conjunction or habit or custom as the empirical ground for causality in the universe is an assumption that only holds for the past and the present events under consideration, for there is no guarantee that constant conjunction will continue to serve as the basis of such phenomena in the future.

What Hume wants to avoid is the possibility of principles explaining experience and which yet are not derived from experience. He is avoiding the step toward synthetic *a priori* judgments. He is avoiding the step through which he will consider causality as a category or *a priori* or pure concept of the understanding, a concept not derived from experience but used to explain experience, a principle which is not empirical but which is a construction of the mind to explain experience. In the antinomies of pure reason, we have the empiricists who reject transcendental freedom because they want nature to be autonomous as the ultimate generator of an infinite chain of causes called natural laws. Here, and with Kant, causality will be a category or pure concept of the understanding to explain experience, and then the

necessity of transcendental freedom will be a result of a synthetic *a priori* judgment, it builds knowledge using pure concepts alone, and those concepts do not correspond to any intuitions. Here, we have two situations each leading to knowledge at different levels: the category of causality applied in intuitions thus giving rise to objective and valid knowledge and the transcendental causality of freedom giving rise to knowledge through the synthesis of pure concepts. Kant admired Hume for the procedure, for assuming the possibility of categories when, despite rejecting causality as an *a priori* concept, he still was not satisfied with what he got from experience as constant conjunction of objects and events which was like a compromise when he could not find an adequate empirical principle to explain causality and yet did not want to assume that the principle could be a pure creation of the mind.

By burying himself in experience, Hume's induction is blind because he refuses to let it be lighted by reason. By the decision not to admit that there is *a priori* knowledge, Hume has to move toward an unconvincing conclusion obtained when we blindly follow nature and associate events to assume rules that may not hold for the future. And as a response to Hume, Kant makes it clear that

[...] experience never confers on its judgments true or strict, but only assumed and comparative universality, through induction. We can properly only say, therefore, that, so far as we have hitherto observed, there is no exception to this or that rule. If, then, a judgment is thought with strict universality, that is, in such manner that no exception is allowed as possible, it is not derived from experience, but is valid absolutely a priori. Empirical universality is only an arbitrary extension of a validity holding in most cases to one which holds in all [...]. When, on the other hand, strict universality is essential to a judgment, this indicates a special source of knowledge, namely, a faculty of a priori knowledge. Necessity and strict universality are thus sure criteria of a priori knowledge, and are inseparable from one another.¹³⁷

By staying glued to experience to seek for grounds of causality, Hume cannot obtain a universal rule that will hold for all cases. Induction is based on probability in relation to future events whose occurrence is not guaranteed by the rule derived from experience. If we depend only on experience, we cannot say, for instance, that rain is the cause of the growth of fresh grass. We can only say that in the past, rain has led to the growth of fresh grass and there is not case in the past when rain was not followed by fresh grass growth. For the present, and still depending only on experience, we do not know any case of rain falling and fresh grass not growing as a consequence, thus we conclude that rain is the cause of the growth of fresh grass. The problem here is that we have not had any exception to this rule in

¹³⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. 44.

the past. At present we do not yet have any exception to the rule. But nothing proves, through experience, that the future will resemble the past, and that an exceptional case will not arise in the future.

The universality and necessity of rules cannot be based on experience and induction. We will never have all the cases in experience to derive the rule from experience absolutely. Experience thus does not guarantee absolute universality and necessity. We need an *a priori* source of universal and necessary knowledge. This is where causality as a category or *a priori* concept of the understanding becomes a source of knowledge, it becomes knowledge itself and the possibility of experience altogether since natural laws are derived from the same *a priori* source. But Hume did not accept that beyond experience and independently of experience, the mind could prescribe rules to the same experience. But somewhere in the passages of his book, Hume knew that seeking the foundation of experience was not a far – fetched task for philosophers. That is why Kant thinks that Hume understood the problem of causality very well but gave a wrong solution to the right problem posed, just enough to wake Kant from the dogmatic slumber. In his glorification of experience, Hume did not fail to notice that an empirical limit to the curiosity of the mind of a philosopher may not be respected:

*In reality, all arguments from experience are founded on the similarity which we discover among natural objects, and by which we are induced to expect effects similar to those which we have found to follow from such objects. And though none but a fool or madman will ever pretend to dispute the authority of experience or to reject that great guide of human life, it may surely be allowed a philosopher to have so much curiosity at least as to examine the principle of human nature which gives this mighty authority to experience and makes us draw advantage from that similarity which nature has placed among different objects.*¹³⁸

Obviously, Hume is dogmatically attached to experience and does not think that a human being with all thinking faculties intact can doubt cognition by experience. To Hume, our constant association of objects and events depends on causation when we observe one giving rise to another from the past to the present thus bearing similar expectations for the future; resemblance when events and objects have many qualities in common; and contiguity when objects and events follow each other in a time sequence of preceding and consequent events.

Yet, Hume is visionary enough to leave room for philosophical research into the *a priori* grounds of all experience. Like Newton who does not want to frame a hypothesis and

¹³⁸ David Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

yet projects an elastic and electrical spirit as the ultimate source of harmony in phenomena, Hume rejects an *a priori* source of experience but still makes it clear that such research is not useless. This simply means that David Hume, despite the unquestionable authority that he vested in experience, in one way or the other, still assumed that there were grounds of experience beyond the experience itself. Like the natural scientists who come close to the metaphysical grounds of nature through mathematics and avoid research into such areas which they consider obscure, Hume wanted to remain consistent with his theory and so avoided any venture into *a priori* grounds of experience. But Kant uses the rejection of Hume's solution to the problem of causality to project the categories which give a more universal and apodictic ground of experience than what empirical principles could ever provide:

[...] it is easy to show that there actually are in human knowledge judgments which are necessary and in the strictest sense universal, and which are therefore pure a priori judgments. [...] if we seek an example from the understanding in its quite ordinary employment, the proposition, 'every alteration must have a cause', will serve our purpose. [...] indeed, the very concept of a cause so manifestly contains the concept of a necessity of connection with an effect and of the strict universality of the rule, that the concept would be altogether lost if we attempted to derive it, as Hume has done, from a repeated association of that which happens with that which precedes, and from a custom of connecting representations, a custom originating in this repeated association, and constituting therefore a merely subjective necessity.¹³⁹

The subjective necessity arrived at by Hume in the constant conjunction of events in causality cannot lead to absolute universality. Inherent in this lack of absolute necessity in Hume's treatment of causality is the view that if we allow nature to dictate rules to us, we can never attain universality and we cannot have an objective science. If we allow experience to give rules to us based on association of objects and events, we will never have objectivity as absolute agreement of objects on rules that hold for all persons at all times which are the requirements of a true science.

The necessity of the link between a cause and an effect is a necessity guaranteed by the category of causality that gives rise to hypothetical judgment where an object or event is posed as a necessary condition for the existence of another object or occurrence of another event. Causality is a universal law of nature. But it is not derived from experience. It is a category, a pure concept of the understanding, an *a priori* concept that gives unity to

¹³⁹ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. 44.

experience. Without the concept of causality and other categories, then, there is no possibility of experience because it is only through this concept and the other categories that the mind conditions experience according to internal rules originating from the mind itself. Before the temporal state when objects are given to us in sensible intuition through time and space, the mind already has causality and the other categories as modes of knowledge by which it can carry out synthetic *a priori* judgments that yet apply to experience. The judgment is synthetic because the construction of concepts is such that the statement “every object has a cause” which means that every object is the effect of a cause adds the new concept of cause to whatever concept we have of the object. In this way, prior to all experience, we already know that every event has a cause as synthetic *a priori* knowledge, and when such knowledge is applied in experience it gives objectivity and validity. On the other hand, when categories are converted to ideas of pure reason thereby moving beyond experience in application of concepts to situate a transcendental causality of nature called freedom, it is pure synthetic *a priori* knowledge assumed by pure reason to be the ultimate unity of the understanding in its definition of rules for experience.

The category of causality is used by the understanding to give rules to experience. Transcendental causality is the conversion of the category into an idea of pure reason to give understanding completeness with reason when we move from the conditioned to the unconditioned, a task more useful for morality and religion than knowledge, and yet, a task which builds knowledge purely in unity of ideas. In the same way that mathematics uses *a priori* concepts to give rules of nature, the understanding uses the categories to give rules to experience. Then metaphysical ideas of pure reason have to be assumed for the sake of unity of ideas constructed without any consideration of experience. Thus the move toward transcendental freedom is a construction of ideas whereby the predicate adds a new concept to the concept of the subject making the knowledge synthetic. Now whether the synthetic knowledge constructed *a priori* applies directly to experience depends on whether we are talking about categories of the understanding or ideas of pure reason. Categories apply to experience and are actually the conditions of possibility of experience, categories dictate rules to experience; categories attain unity of experience. On the other hand, the ideas of pure reason attain unity with the understanding and not directly with experience, unity of reason with itself and with the understanding and thus only indirectly with the objects synthesized by the understanding. The transcendental concept of freedom can only apply to experience

indirectly through its effect on the phenomenal chain of cause yet the causality cannot be proven empirically and is not given in intuition.

David Hume inspired Kant to go further than custom to look for the foundation of the empirical reality of causation. David Hume observed objects and saw nothing intrinsic in their qualities that could be considered as cause and effect. Hume further observed phenomena and considered the way we associate objects that have resemblance and contiguity with each other. The empirical basis was not directly revealed in the qualities of the objects. We have to use memory and the senses to associate objects. We use memory to associate present objects with objects of the past with which they have resemblance. In this way, Hume insists that “Custom [...] is the great guide of human life. It is that principle alone which renders our experience useful to us and makes us expect, for the future, a similar train of events with those which have appeared in the past. Without the influence of custom we should be entirely ignorant of every matter of fact beyond what is immediately present to the memory and the sense.”¹⁴⁰ Just like John Locke who thought that beyond the primary qualities of texture, shape, and size, we cannot know the substratum of entities leading Locke to qualify substance as unknowable, Hume, in his skeptical empiricism, ends up with the claim that beyond what is given to our senses and what the senses gave us in the past which is now memory, we cannot know anything else. The unknowable to Hume here is in the decision not to go beyond experience to look for principles of experience. Hume came so close to the category of causality but could not face the implications on his empirical theory.

Kant admires the methodic shrewdness of Hume in putting the issue of causality so squarely and even opening the way to *a priori* principles of experience but vehemently rejecting what he was getting closer to. Yet Hume’s rejection of *a priori* knowledge and expression of the necessity for experience to guide our understanding of nature does serious damage to mathematics that Hume wrote about with admiration, just like Kant. Kant then highlights the predicament of Hume as follows:

Among philosophers, David Hume came nearest to envisaging this problem, but still was very far from conceiving it with sufficient definiteness and universality. He occupied himself exclusively with the synthetic proposition regarding the connection of an effect with its cause [...], and he believed himself to have shown that such an a priori proposition is entirely impossible. If we accept his conclusions, then all that we call metaphysics is a mere delusion whereby we fancy ourselves to have rational insight into what, in

¹⁴⁰ David Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 58 – 59.

*actual fact, is borrowed solely from experience, and under the influence of custom has taken the illusory semblance of necessity. If he had envisaged our problem in all its universality, he would never have been guilty of this statement, so destructive of all pure philosophy. For he would then have recognized that, according to his own argument, pure mathematics, as certainly containing a priori synthetic propositions, would also not be possible; and from such an assertion his good sense would have saved him.*¹⁴¹

By rejecting *a priori* knowledge in his analysis of causation, Hume is not only doing damage to metaphysics but also and above all to mathematics. The *a priori* synthetic propositions of mathematics are made to apply to experience and become the basis of the scientific explanation of nature. Surprisingly enough, Hume does not discard mathematics which uses *a priori* propositions. Hume speaks well of mathematics but speaks ill of metaphysics. To Hume, “Though there never were a circle or triangle in nature, the truths demonstrated by Euclid would forever retain their certainty and evidence.”¹⁴² Well, if Hume’s intention is to reject metaphysics, then he will have to reject mathematics too. Accepting the *a priori* concepts of mathematics and rejecting the *a priori* concept of causality is failing to realize obvious similarities.

Hume’s attempt to reject pure philosophy while accepting the truths of mathematics which are not far from those of pure philosophy ended in failure. Hume ended up in concessions accepting the existence of concepts very similar to those he rejects with causality but makes them unknowable. When it comes to the forces of nature that are beyond nature, and this is where Leibniz called for humility from the students of nature as we saw in the first part of our work, Hume makes concessions not without the sarcasm used by all authors attached to experience to refer to those of the metaphysical trends. In a bid to bury us in blind induction and experience, Hume makes the force of nature unknowable: “As nature has taught us the use of our limbs without giving us the knowledge of the muscles and nerves by which they are actuated, so has she implanted in us an instinct which carries forward the thought in a correspondent course to that which she has established among external objects, though we are ignorant of those powers and forces on which this regular course and succession of objects totally depends.”¹⁴³ Hume was an example of what Kant calls ‘a student of nature’ who used to look up to experience to reveal the laws of nature *a posteriori*. This was blind induction that did not give room for the mind to develop *a priori* knowledge. Hume was the philosopher who came closest to discovering the categories before Kant.

¹⁴¹ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

¹⁴² David Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

Unfortunately, he was blinded by empiricism that led him into skepticism that made the human mind a slave to nature.

Therefore, the element of Hume's philosophy that led Kant to discover the categories in transcendental deduction is the difficulty that Hume faced in getting a necessary principle from experience to explain causality and yet the denial of an *a priori* origin of a possible principle of causation. In Hume's empiricism, and as stated in *A Treatise of Human Nature*,

All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS. The difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness. Those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name impressions; and under this name I comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul. By ideas I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning [...].¹⁴⁴

This implies that if we have to make an inquiry on causation, it has to be a perception of the senses or an idea which is even a faint representation of a perception. As we move from sensation to perception and to the idea, we lose in the degree of liveliness and force with which the impression strikes our mind. By so doing, impressions are livelier and more forceful than ideas. Nothing from the sensible qualities of an object strikes us with the liveliness and force that can lead us to identify another object as its cause or effect. Upon observation of an object, we cannot have an 'idea' of its cause and effect since all ideas are representations or perceptions and the perceptions are sensible and nothing about the cause and the effect of an object is sensibly given in the qualities of the object. Since no empirical principle justifies causality and yet no rational principle can be attributed to it in Hume's empiricism, and since causality is an empirical reality, it must be understood within the framework of experience without going beyond experience because beyond experience we cannot have the lively and forceful impressions that we receive from objects of the senses.

Failing to find the necessity of the connection between the cause and the effect in the object itself, Hume tries to look for it in the subject but his empiricism forbids any move that gives rise to *a priori* principles because such a move cannot be warranted by the impressions and ideas which must all be derived from experience. Hume moved from the observed to the observer to get the source of the necessity of the link between the cause and the effect and had to come back to experience again. Norman Kemp Smith illustrates Hume's analysis as

¹⁴⁴ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2007, Book 1, Part 1, Sect. 1, Of the Origin of our Ideas, p. 7.

follows: “If now it be agreed that the factor of necessary connection is never to be found in the observed, we must look for it in the only other quarter in which it can possibly lie, namely, in the observer. But we have already, by implication, ruled out all those inner states in which it has hitherto so generally been located [...].”¹⁴⁵ Where then is the necessary connection between a cause and an effect according to Hume? The cause – effect nexus has to be situated in phenomenal repetitions from the past to the present and with expectations for the future. This is reasoning by analogy whereby we expect events of the past to be repeated in the future through similarities brought about by the mind’s association of ideas. The relationship between the cause and the effect “[...] in physical bodies, has, as Hume allows, obvious and all important effects, but effects which again are known only in and through experience, and only in the sequence of distinguishable and mysteriously conjoined events.”¹⁴⁶ Thus from the observed to the observer, we have to move back to the observed and move from the effects linked to causes by association of ideas. Note needs to be taken that the force that creates a necessary connection between events in experience is ‘mysterious’, unknown, and has to remain unknowable. We have to focus on the visible effects of the force without doing an inquiry about its origin because any such inquiry cannot respect the empirical bounds of knowledge cherished by Hume.

From the *Critique of Pure Reason* to the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* and even in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant continued to credit Hume for the inquiry that laid the foundation stone for the categories. Though Hume refused to erect the building that the foundation entailed, Kant moved from there to outline the *a priori* principles of causality in the universe in *a priori* synthetic judgments. Apart from failing to realize that his idea of constant conjunction eliminates mathematics which is based on *a priori* principles and thus shatters the foundation of natural science, Hume also failed to realize that metaphysics had to be assumed as a foundation of natural sciences that he, as a student of nature, sought to eliminate so that all our principles of knowledge should be derived exclusively from experience. With Kant, then, after acknowledging the problem defined by Hume and rejecting the solution proposed by Hume, Kant moved on to propose a solution that rescues not only metaphysics and mathematics but also and above all natural sciences as a whole. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant opines that

¹⁴⁵ Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume: A Critical Study of its Origins and Central Doctrines*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, Part II, p. 92.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

David Hume, who can be said to have in fact started all those challenges of the rights of a pure reason which made a complete investigation of these rights necessary, inferred as follows. The concept of cause is a concept that contains the necessity of the connection of the existence of what is different and, specifically, insofar as it is different—so that, if A is posited, I cognize that something entirely different from it, B, must necessarily also exist. However, necessity can be attributed to a connection only insofar as the connection is cognized a priori; for experience would allow us to cognize concerning a linkage only that it is, but not that it is necessarily so. Now, it is impossible, he says, to cognize a priori and as necessary the connection between one thing and another (or between one determination and another entirely different from it), when [i.e.] they are not given in perception. Therefore the concept of a cause is itself fraudulent and deceptive.¹⁴⁷

From the failure in experience and reason to establish the necessity of the connection between the cause and the effect, and still returning to experience, Hume projected the weak link of custom whose necessity and universality are put to question as we cannot be certain that the future will resemble the past. Projecting custom or habit as the basis of causality was the first mistake of Hume who did not want to move to the rational basis of the phenomenon of connection.

Secondly, in order to rescue mathematics after assuming that constant conjunction was the empirical basis of causality, Hume held the view that mathematical propositions were analytic or simply involved in the elucidation of concepts with the necessity and universality that characterize those cognitions whereby we simply break down the subject term into its components in the predicate. But reducing mathematics to *a priori* analytic propositions implies that nothing new is learnt from the breakdown of concepts and this is where Kant thinks Hume made the second mistake as mathematics is much more than just an analysis of concepts: “Mathematics had still come off well until then because Hume supposed that its propositions were all analytic, i.e., that they advanced from one determination to another on account of identity and hence according to the principle of contradiction. (However, this is false, for they are, rather, all synthetic [...].”¹⁴⁸ By insisting that mathematics deals with synthetic and not analytic propositions as Hume claimed, Kant proved that new knowledge is obtained from mathematical propositions *a priori* even when the propositions are not applied in experience. And whenever required, the mathematician represents numbers, plane figures and quantities in experience. Thus though synthetic and *a priori* in the construction of concepts and principles, mathematics finds application in experience as the foundation of

¹⁴⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), trans. Werner S. Pluhar, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002, Part I, Book I, Analytic of Pure Practical Reason, p. 70.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

natural sciences. Even in its pure form, mathematics involves synthetic *a priori* propositions and as a foundation of nature, the concepts and principles constructed *a priori* find application in experience as we use numbers for example to count objects and other quantitative measurements.

The rejection of Hume's solution to the problem of causality gave room for Kant to carry out the transcendental deduction that gave rise to the pure concepts of the understanding. In the Kantian deduction, causality was no longer to be considered as an empirical principle because, as such, it will not have the necessity and universality that only reason gives to principles. According to Lucy Allais,

*In the Transcendental Deduction of the categories, Kant's aim is to vindicate our use of certain fundamental a priori concepts, such as the concepts of substance and cause. He is not trying to show that we do use these concepts (which he thinks is not in doubt), but that we are entitled to use them; that our use is justified. His strategy is to show that they are conditions of the possibility of experience [...] of objects. In addition to vindicating the categories, the Deduction also provides part of the answer to the question with which Kant opens the Critique—whether and how metaphysics is possible. Metaphysics, Kant thinks, consists of synthetic a priori propositions.*¹⁴⁹

In the next sub – section of our work then, we are treating the transcendental deduction that led to the categories. From there, we shall examine the judgments through which concepts relate to objects in time and space which Kant calls 'schematism'. A deduction of the categories is also a rescue mission for metaphysics to show how synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible. In the Kantian system of philosophy, experience does not have a complete independent existence. The categories actually constitute the conditions of possibility of experience.

From Hume then, Kant is to accept the role that the mind can play through concepts and principles that Hume either did not want to investigate or did not think were possible. To an extent, it could have been an attempt to remain consistent in his empiricism. Yet it could also have been the case that Hume thought it was a failed adventure in advance. With Paul Guyer, we can say that

Kant derives the concepts that Hume could not in his transcendental logic, which proceeds in three steps: first, it identifies fundamental aspects or "functions" of judgment in general logic; next, in the "metaphysical

¹⁴⁹ Lucy Allais, *Manifest Reality: Kant's Idealism and Realism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, Part Three: The Transcendental Deduction, Relation to an Object, p. 260.

*deduction” of the pure concepts of the understanding, it associates the logical functions of judgment with the categories, that is, general forms for the concepts of objects, forms that concepts of objects must have if we are to be able to think about those objects by means of judgments, given the forms that judgments have; and finally, in the “schematism” of the pure concepts of the understanding, it assigns the categories spatiotemporal interpretations, reflecting the specifically spatiotemporal a priori structure of our intuitions of objects, so that the concepts of objects we form in accordance with the categories can be used to make judgments about the kinds of objects we actually experience.*¹⁵⁰

From the concepts of objects derived completely *a priori* to the logical judgments associated with them, as well as the application of the categories in space and time through sensible intuitions: these are the preoccupations of the next sub – section of this chapter which makes use of the problem raised by David Hume to show how the mind, without experience, adopts an internal plan to apply in experience and to yield knowledge through construction of concepts, still independently of experience. It is the heart of the Kantian quest for truth in epistemology, metaphysics and natural sciences.

3.2: Transcendental Deduction

Relating *a priori* concepts to objects is the most brain-taking task of Kantian philosophy and a topic for controversy among philosophers. How can concepts not derived from experience be made to relate to experience? And in the most extreme case, how can concepts not derived from experience become the condition of possibility of experience itself? In other words, how do *a priori* concepts make experience possible? Making experience independently of which they are derived possible is the unique nature of categories or pure concepts of the understanding in the quest for truth. For *a priori* or pure concepts of the understanding to relate to objects of experience is a task achieved by what Kant calls ‘transcendental deduction’. And to this task, Kant has a precise definition that distinguishes transcendental deduction from empirical deduction: “The explanation of the manner in which concepts can thus relate *a priori* to objects I entitle their transcendental deduction; and from it I distinguish empirical deduction, which shows the manner in which a concept is acquired through experience and through reflection upon experience [...]”¹⁵¹ Empirical deduction is easy to verify and confirm because experience is always readily available to testify whether concepts are empirical or not. But experience cannot be used as

¹⁵⁰ Paul Guyer, *Knowledge, Reason and Taste: Kant’s Response to Hume*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008, Chapter 3, pp. 138 – 139.

¹⁵¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason, op. cit.*, Transcendental Deduction, p. 121.

criterion of transcendental deduction because the concepts are not derived from experience and yet have to relate to objects.

At the basis of the transcendental deduction of the categories is the idea of 'combination'. Objects are given to us as appearances in a manifold of intuition. This means that through the *a priori* forms of sensible intuition which are space and time, objects are given to us as a multitude of appearances. Through apprehension, we receive perceptions which are mere representations of appearances or objects as they appear to us in time and space. From perceptions, there is a combination or synthesis of intuition in such a way that the perceptions only make sense to us when they are combined or synthesized. Combining or giving synthetic unity to perceptions is not a task performed by experience because what experience gives to us is a multitude of appearances. In this way, the act of combining perceptions toward synthetic unity is an *a priori* act. This means that prior to any form of experience we already have the ability to combine perceptions. The idea of combination toward synthetic unity when we start uniting perceptions is already the construction of *a priori* knowledge because the process is carried out independently of experience.

In the transcendental deduction of the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant notes that the combination of perceptions is an act of the understanding through concepts and not that of sensibility, because if it were an act of intuition it would not be *a priori* and thus not a universal necessity:

*[...] the combination (conjunctio) of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and cannot, therefore, be already contained in the pure form of sensible intuition. For it is an act of spontaneity of the faculty of representation; and since this faculty, to distinguish it from sensibility, must be entitled understanding, all combination be we conscious of it or not, be it a combination of the manifold of intuition, empirical or non-empirical, or of various concepts is an act of the understanding. To this act the general title 'synthesis' may be assigned, as indicating that we cannot represent to ourselves anything as combined in the object which we have not ourselves previously combined, and that of all representations combination is the only one which cannot be given through objects.*¹⁵²

The central act is that of combination referred to as synthesis and that Kant also describes as synthetic unity. This act means that independently of all forms of experience, the faculty of the understanding by which objects are thought through concepts has the ability to unite all our intuitions, perceptions and concepts toward a point of unity by which they are *known a*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, Transcendental Deduction of Pure Concepts of the Understanding, Second Edition, p.151 – 152.

priori. This is achieved by means of the categories. The emergence of the categories is thus conditioned by the need for a synthesis of the multitude of perceptions received from experience. The mind is able to build knowledge through concepts and without experience. For example, the idea of three lines in a triangle is a combination of concepts achieved purely *a priori*. The necessity of the link between the cause and the effect is purely attained *a priori* in concepts and that necessity cannot be attained in experience.

With the case of the category of causality, for example, we are given a multitude of appearances in experience and we need to synthesize the appearances through concepts and not through intuitions. For us to synthesize appearances and understand the necessity of causality, we need unity of perceptions constructed independently of experience so as to have universality and necessity. In this way, though the objects are in experience, the synthetic unity that gives necessity is achieved independently of the experience. We do not need to look at objects to see the necessity of the cause; we need to unite a multitude of appearances as representations, and since representations are not things in themselves but a way for things to appear to us, the act of synthesizing appearances in intuition and synthesizing concepts to identify the necessity of the link between the cause and the effect is *a priori*:

*Thus the concept of a cause is nothing but a synthesis (of that which follows in the time-series, with other appearances) according to concepts, and without such unity, which has its a priori rule, and which subjects the appearances to itself, no thoroughgoing, universal, and therefore necessary, unity of consciousness would be met with in the manifold of perceptions. These perceptions would not then belong to any experience, consequently would be without an object, merely a blind play of representations, less even than a dream.*¹⁵³

Causality as a category would be an *a priori* rule of nature whose necessity is attained by concepts and not by the objects or experience which is perfectly explained by it. Prior to any form of experience, all our perceptions are programed to be brought to a point of unity through a synthesis by concepts which makes it a necessity. The unity of consciousness is the act by which all perceptions are scheduled to be identified by us only by that which unites them and that which unites them cannot be in the experience, it has to be a construction of concepts. The category of causality, then, will be a combination, in thought, of various perceptions that bind appearances together. This unity that puts consciousness in the presence of a manifold of appearances that have been synthesized is that which gives a rule to experience and it is called a category.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, Transcendental Deduction, p. 139.

Kant goes further to make it clear that the categories are not just the concepts by which objects are thought, but also and above all the concepts by which objects are possible altogether. The categories are the conditions of possibility of experience. As conditions of possibility of experience, they constitute *a priori* knowledge because they are that through which we know the world. To Kant,

Either the object alone must make the representation possible, or the representation alone must make the object possible. In the former case, this relation is only empirical, and the representation is never possible a priori. This is true of appearances, as regards that [element] in them which belongs to sensation. In the latter case, representation in itself does not produce its object in so far as existence is concerned, for we are not here speaking of its causality by means of the will. None the less the representation is a priori determinant of the object, if it be the case that only through the representation is it possible to know anything as an object.¹⁵⁴

If the object makes a representation possible, then the representation depends on the object and the relationship between the object and the subject would be based on an empirical principle which cannot be universal because there is no guarantee of universality for every future case to conform to the rule. But if the representation makes the object possible, this does not mean that the representation has created the object or caused the object to exist. The causality here is not bringing an object into existence from nothing; the representation is that which makes it possible for an object to become an object of knowledge for us. Without representations we do not know anything else about objects. We can only know objects as they appear to us. And since we can only know objects as representations, there is no way we can say that an object could exist beyond the representation itself.

Consequently, the categories are not here to prove that the material world does not exist; they simply prove that since we can only know objects as representations, then the representation makes the object possible, or the representation is the condition of possibility of the object. As far as we are concerned, there is nothing as objects except through representations. This means we must have an innate faculty through which we represent objects through concepts and this faculty is the understanding. Of course, the *a priori* forms of space and time are conditions for objects to be given to us as appearances. Beyond the *a priori* forms of time and space by which intuitions are possible, the understanding must have an inbuilt plan by which even what is received in intuition becomes possible through concepts.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 125 – 126.

In the transcendental deduction of the categories, we move from intuition through which objects are given, to concepts through which objects are thought as the determining ground by which concepts become the conditions of possibility of objects themselves. The stages that culminate in the deduction of the categories, then, move from intuitions to concepts. “[...] the first condition, namely, that under which alone objects can be intuited, does actually lie *a priori* in the mind as the formal ground of the objects. All appearances necessarily agree with this formal condition of sensibility, since only through it can they appear, that is, be empirically intuited and given.”¹⁵⁵ Like the case of natural sciences whose first foundation lies in mathematics and needs to assume metaphysics as the ultimate source and unity of all *a priori* principles, the *a priori* forms of time and space by which objects are given in intuition have to assume categories as the foundation and point of synthetic unity for all *a priori* principles that make experience possible. The *a priori* forms by which objects are given are not enough for us to know the objects, we need the *a priori* concepts by which the objects are thought and this is in the faculty of the understanding. We thus have to suppose that the understanding is the source of all concepts that make objects possible in the same way that space and time make objects given to us in intuition. That by which they are thought must be above that by which the objects are given; beyond the intuition by which they are given then, the concepts of objects make experience altogether possible.

Kant proceeds from the question of the means by which objects are given to the means by which they are thought to put the latter as the basis of the former and the possibility of objects in general: “The question now arises whether *a priori* concepts do not also serve as antecedent conditions under which alone anything can be, if not intuited, yet thought as object in general. In that case all empirical knowledge of objects would necessarily conform to such concepts, because only as thus presupposing them is anything possible as object of experience.”¹⁵⁶ The means by which they are thought has primacy over the means by which they are given, and has primacy over the objects themselves in experience. Since concepts are antecedent to intuitions, concepts condition intuitions and determine the possibility of the objects in experience. “Now all experience does indeed contain, in addition to the intuition of the senses through which something is given, a concept of an object as being thereby given, that is to say, as appearing. Concepts of objects in general thus underlie all empirical

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹⁵⁶ *Idem.*

knowledge as its *a priori* conditions.”¹⁵⁷ The concepts themselves become the foundation of all experience. In this case, the construction of *a priori* concepts is in itself an act of knowledge because the *a priori* concepts of the understanding that will make all experience possible. The understanding thus builds knowledge on its own and implants it on experience which must conform to it as a matter of necessity and universality. If prior to experience we already have the knowledge built and to which experience must conform, then the deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding is knowledge itself as we simply impose this knowledge on experience.

Since the most fundamental criteria of truth are universality and necessity whereby the object has to conform to the knowledge defined by the concept, the categories as conditions of possibility of experience constitute knowledge themselves because, though built *a priori*, they impose rules on experience and only as long as they impose these rules on experience do they constitute knowledge. Here, if metaphysics is to give rise to knowledge *a priori*, it must construct concepts which, even if not used to define experience, condition experience in one way or the other. “The objective validity of the categories as *a priori* concepts rests, therefore, on the fact that, so far as the form of thought is concerned, through them alone does experience become possible. They relate of necessity and *a priori* to objects of experience, for the reason that only by means of them can any object whatsoever of experience be thought.”¹⁵⁸ If an object is not thought, it would not be known. It would not be thought if it is not given. Above all, it would not be known if it is given and not thought. It is by thinking objects *a priori* that the understanding, through the categories, attains objective and valid knowledge that must hold true for all cases in experience. The internal mechanism of the understanding is the necessity to construct concepts to synthesize and unite all perceptions into a unity with consciousness through which they become knowledge built *a priori* to explain experience by means of pure concepts.

What then are categories? What role do they play in judgments? A succinct definition of the categories is given by Kant: “They [categories] are concepts of an object in general, by means of which the intuition of an object is regarded as determined in respect of one of the logical functions of judgment. Thus the function of the categorical judgment is that of the relation of subject to predicate [...].”¹⁵⁹ The categories are concepts by which all the objects

¹⁵⁷ *Idem.*

¹⁵⁸ *Idem.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

are thought as representation. And since representations are the only way objects are given to us, and there is no other knowledge except as representations, we can say that categories are concepts by which objects are possible in experience. The categories give meaning to intuitions when interpreted through judgments. For example, the category of substance given in intuition is only understood in terms of relations of categorical propositions that establish relationships between subjects and predicates. Judgments through the category of causality are hypothetical and judgments through the category of community are disjunctive.

The table of categories is based on the Aristotelian model. In the book entitled *Categories*, Aristotle identified ten “uncombined words” which are all possible kinds of things that can serve as subject or predicate terms in a proposition. Actually, the *Categories* constitute texts from Aristotle’s *Organon* which is a collection of books that he wrote in Logic and named the *Organon* by his followers who were known as the *Peripatetics*. The *Organon* is supposed to provide a ‘tool’ or ‘instrument’ for correct reasoning in Logic. In the fourth chapter of *Categories* then, Aristotle makes an exhaustive list of ten uncombined words that can be used as subject and predicate in propositions:

Each uncombined word or expression means one of the following things:— what (or Substance), how large (that is. Quantity), what sort of thing (that is, Quality), related to what (or Relation), where (that is. Place), when (or Time), in what attitude (Posture, Position), how circumstanced (State or Condition), how active, what doing (or Action), how passive, what suffering (Affection).¹⁶⁰

From Aristotle, Kant got the inspirations to classify concepts of objects according to ‘categories’ which to Kant are pure or *a priori* concepts of the understanding by which objects are thought and synthesized to a point of unity with self-consciousness to produce knowledge when those concepts become the conditions of possibility of experience itself. The inspiration from Aristotle who is the father of Logic highlights the role of Logic in Kantian philosophy.

The transcendental doctrine of elements is divided into transcendental aesthetics which deals with the *a priori* forms of sensibility which are space and time; and transcendental logic which deals with the *a priori* or pure forms of the understanding and reason in so far as they give rise to knowledge *a priori*. But transcendental logic is divided into transcendental analytic which examines the *a priori* rules of understanding that make experience possible and thus give rise to knowledge; and transcendental dialectic which

¹⁶⁰ Aristotle, “Categories”, by Harold P. Cook, in *Aristotle, The Categories, On Interpretation, Prior Analytics*, edited by T. E. Page, London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1934, Chapter IV, pp. 17 – 18.

makes use of pure ideas of reason which are actually the categories taken beyond the bounds of experience and beyond the bounds of all possible intuitions to project God as the ideal of pure reason, transcendental freedom as the causality of the phenomenal chain of causes in the universe and immortality as a characteristic of the soul when it is wrongly taken as an object of knowledge – as we have seen in the Kantian critique of metaphysics through the respective critiques of rational theology, rational cosmology and rational psychology. Transcendental analytic is the logic of truth while transcendental dialectic is the logic of illusions. Here, we are concerned with the transcendental analytic as that part of logic that provides rules of *a priori* knowledge, whereby coherence and consistency of concepts are accompanied by such concepts being able to relate to experience or to become the conditions of possibility of experience. We are at a quest for transcendental knowledge.

The kind of knowledge we are to obtain with the categories is transcendental because the principles are constructed *a priori* and yet relate to experience as conditions of possibility. Since representations are determinations of the mind, and the synthetic unity of representations is another act of the mind, we are at the quest for knowledge produced by the mind to be applied in experience as its condition of possibility or that which gives rules to experience. Kant has a precise definition for the knowledge we are to obtain with the categories of the transcendental analytic of the transcendental logic:

Not every kind of knowledge a priori should be called transcendental, but that only by which we know that and how certain representations (intuitions or concepts) can be employed or are possible purely a priori. The term 'transcendental', that is to say, signifies such knowledge as concerns the a priori possibility of knowledge, or its a priori employment. Neither space nor any a priori geometrical determination of it is a transcendental representation; what can alone be entitled transcendental is the knowledge that these representations are not of empirical origin, and the possibility that they can yet relate a priori to objects of experience. The application of space to objects in general would likewise be transcendental, but, if restricted solely to objects of sense, it is empirical.¹⁶¹

Space as an *a priori* form of sensible intuition is transcendental in the representations of intuition. But in relation to objects of experience, space is empirical. Thus space can only give rise to transcendental knowledge if we consider solely the *a priori* possibilities it provides for us to represent objects in intuition. Of course the representations are no longer the objects themselves, but their way of being given *a priori* according to the *a priori* form of space which is not in the object itself but in us.

¹⁶¹ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Transcendental Logic, p. 96.

The first step to the categories is to apply the logical functions of judgment. The knowledge to be obtained by the use of the understanding is discursive and not intuitive. It is discursive because though the concepts are given to us unmixed, we have to link them up through logical functions of judgment. To judge using concepts is to link one concept to another in a discursive or mediate manner since only intuitions are related to objects directly. When objects are given to us in intuition, the representation with the object is ‘immediate’. But when we have to make judgments using concepts, we have to be relating representations to each other and the relationship of the concept with the object is ‘mediate’ because we need to use other representations or at least the representation of intuition which is directly related to the object. Thus, we can best understand categories through the logical functions of judgment by which we use the categories to relate representations and intuitions in a mediate and not immediate link with the object. Kant then has to show us that the logical functions of judgment serve as a clue to the discovery of the categories that judgments are about and through which judgments the categories have a mediate or discursive link with the object. An understanding of the table of judgments is thus necessary for us to understand the table of categories. This means that in order to understand the categories, we need to first understand the logical functions by which they are applied in their mediate relationship with objects.

What then are judgments whose logical functions serve as a prelude to the understanding of the categories? Based on Aristotelian logic, each category will correspond to a logical function that permits us make judgments. Kant thus insists that

Since no representation, save when it is an intuition, is in immediate relation to an object, no concept is ever related to an object immediately, but to some other representation of it, be that other representation an intuition, or itself a concept. Judgment is therefore the mediate knowledge of an object, that is, the representation of a representation of it. In every judgment there is a concept which holds of many representations, and among them of a given representation that is immediately related to an object.¹⁶²

From representations of other representations and at least the representation of intuition which is directly related to the object, the logical functions of judgments help us relate concepts to their objects. Thus pure concepts of the understanding or categories relate to objects through judgments. The table of judgments and the subsequent table of categories provide answers to questions about the possibility of *a priori* knowledge and how such knowledge relates to objects through concepts. This is the two – directional deduction which

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, Analytic of Concepts, p. 105.

moves from concepts to objects and from objects to concepts. Objects are given to us through intuition and from intuitions they are represented as concepts, concepts being representations which are determinations of the mind. In this way, when we finally link up concepts to objects through judgments, we are simply showing the possibility for the mind to determine objects since all representations are determinations of the mind.

With inspiration from Aristotle, Kant outlined the four groups of logical functions by which we can put concepts in a discursive or mediate relationship with the object through judgments. The four heads of the logical function of judgments are quantity, quality, relation and modality. These are the four most general conceptual tools or instruments with which we can apply the categories to link concepts with objects in a discursive or mediate manner. Kant makes a statement that leads to the table of judgments as well the table of judgments itself to serve as a prolegomena to the understanding of the categories as follows: “If we abstract from all content of a judgment, and consider only the mere form of understanding, we find that the function of thought in judgment can be brought under four heads, each of which contains three moments. They may be conveniently represented in the following table”¹⁶³:

Table 2: Table of Judgments¹⁶⁴

<p style="margin: 0;">II</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><i>Quality</i></p> <p style="margin: 0;">Affirmative</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Negative</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Infinite</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">I</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><i>Quantity of Judgments</i></p> <p style="margin: 0;">Universal</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Particular</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Singular</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">III</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><i>Relation</i></p> <p style="margin: 0;">Categorical</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Hypothetical</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Disjunctive</p>
	<p style="margin: 0;">IV</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><i>Modality</i></p> <p style="margin: 0;">Problematic</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Assertoric</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Apodeictic</p>	

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

The four heads into which judgments are classified are actually four ways of classifying propositions in Logic. In terms of *quantity*, the judgment is concerned with how much of the subject class is taken into consideration in the proposition. If all the members of the subject class are taken into consideration, in which case it is about the entirety of a class, the judgment is *universal*; if the judgment is about a partial class or only some members of a class, then it is *particular*; and if the judgment is about a single individual or thing, then it is *singular*. Kant agrees with the logicians who think that singular propositions should be considered universal since the single individual or entity considered is taken in its entirety.¹⁶⁵

In terms of *quality*, we are looking at the essential character of the judgment. Here, we want to know whether the predicate affirms or denies something about the subject. Thus we have affirmative and negative judgments in terms of quality. But Kant lays emphasis on infinite judgments which have to be distinguished from negative judgments. An infinite judgment is actually an affirmative judgment with a contradicted or negated predicate using a prefix which implies that beyond the predicate class, there is an unlimited realm of objects where the subject belongs. Kant illustrates this difference with an example: “[...] by the proposition, ‘The soul is non-mortal’, I have, so far as the logical form is concerned, really made an affirmation. I locate the soul in the unlimited sphere of non-mortal beings. Since the mortal constitutes one part of the whole extension of possible beings, and the non-mortal the other, nothing more is said by my proposition than that the soul is one of the infinite number of things which remain over when I take away all that is mortal.”¹⁶⁶ Unlike the judgment ‘The soul is not mortal’ which clearly excludes the soul from mortal objects, the judgment ‘The soul is non – mortal’ is actually affirming that the soul is among the infinite number of objects out of the realm of mortals.

In terms of *relation*, we are looking at the kind of link that the subject has with the predicate, the link that the condition has with what follows from the condition and the link that divided and complementary parts of a whole have with each other. The judgment in terms of relation is *categorical* if it makes a straight affirmative or negative statement about the subject in relation to the predicate; it is hypothetical if it has two judgments, one stating the ground or cause and the other stating the consequence or effect; the disjunctive judgment contains two or more judgments in a sphere of knowledge such that the presence of one excludes the other from the same sphere of knowledge. “There is [...] in a disjunctive

¹⁶⁵ *Idem.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

judgment a certain community of the known constituents, such that they mutually exclude each other, and yet thereby determine in their totality the true knowledge. For, when taken together, they constitute the whole content of one given knowledge.”¹⁶⁷ Kant uses the category of ‘community’ with regards to disjunctive judgments. This is because the knowledge is taken as a totality of many parts existing as complements whereby the presence of one implies the absence of the other. It is a community of complementary objects or complementary concepts.

In terms of *modality*, we are not considering the content but “[...] concerns only the value of the copula in relation to thought in general.”¹⁶⁸ Here, the copula can determine the degree of certainty or state of mind of the person making the judgment. *Problematic* judgments refer to situations which are optional; the copula proposes an option that announces a possibility and impossibility if it is negative. For instance, the judgment ‘All footballers may be rich’ makes the concept of richness an option available for the concept of footballers to fit in among other options. An *assertoric* proposition is a judgment of truth. The copula makes the assertion true as a judgment of existence. For example the judgment ‘All dogs are mammals’ is *assertoric* because it establishes truth or reality. If we move from the *assertoric* level to the level of certainty, we are in situations of conformity with the *a priori* rules of the understanding which make the judgment *apodictic*. “The *apodictic* proposition thinks the *assertoric* as determined by these laws of the understanding, and therefore as affirming *a priori* and in this manner it expresses logical necessity.”¹⁶⁹ Thus in a syllogism, we can move from a possibility to reality and to certainty. Problematic judgments may be false, assertoric judgments are true, and apodictic judgments are certain or necessary.

From the table of judgments, we have the clue to the table of categories or pure concepts of the understanding. Each moment of judgment under the four headings corresponds to a category or *a priori* concept by which the understanding builds knowledge that makes experience possible. In terms of quantity, a universal judgment corresponds to the category of *unity*, a particular judgment to *plurality*, and a singular judgment corresponds to the category of *totality*. In terms of quality, an affirmative judgment corresponds to the category of *reality*, a negative judgment corresponds to *negation* and an infinite judgment corresponds to *limitation*. In terms of relation, the categorical judgment corresponds to the

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

¹⁶⁸ *Idem.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

category of *substance*; hypothetical judgments correspond to *causality*, and the disjunctive judgment corresponds to *community*. And then in terms of modality, the problematic judgment corresponds to the category of *possibility*; the assertoric judgment corresponds to the category of *existence*, and apodictic judgments correspond to the category of *necessity*.

The categories are not just concepts in the simple meaning of the term. Categories are concepts that become rules when their deduction does not just define the object but makes the object possible. Categories are thus rules of experience. Causality, for instance, is a category. But more than just a concept, it is a rule that makes experience possible as a relationship of objects with some considered as the causes and others as the effects. According to Otfried Höffe,

Intuition provides us with a manifold of unstructured sensations: visual, aural and other sensible impressions spread out through space and time. In order for unstructured sensations to become something objective (a chair, for example), which is present in the same manner for everyone and about which one can communicate with others, one needs a rule. This rule is the concept of a chair, according to which sensations are combined into the unity of a bundle of sensation and the unity is then referred to as a certain form and structure. The concept of a chair specifies how something must be configured in order to be a chair and not a table or book. Through concepts, the material of intuition, which is taken in receptively, is formed into the unity and structure of a determinate object. Concepts effect both synthesis (connection) and determinacy.¹⁷⁰

By connecting the manifold of perceptions into a synthetic unity, the concept called category actually determines the object. The concept makes the object possible. The rule provided by the concept is objective and universal for everyone because it is not derived from the subjective conditions of experience that cannot give apodictic rules for itself. The ability by the understanding to combine, synthesize and bring perceptions to a point of unity is what makes categories unique as determinants of objects of experience. The categories are the basic units of *a priori* synthetic truths. Kant outlines the pure concepts of the understanding in the following table of categories:

¹⁷⁰ Otfried Höffe, *Immanuel Kant*, trans. Marshall Farrier, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994, p. 66.

Table 3: Table of Categories ¹⁷¹

	I	
	<i>Of Quantity</i>	
	Unity	
	Plurality	
	Totality	
II		III
<i>Of Quality</i>		<i>Of Relation</i>
Reality		Of Inherence and Subsistence (substantia et accidens)
Negation		Of Causality and Dependence (cause and effect)
Limitation		Of Community (reciprocity between agent and patient)
	IV	
	Of Modality	
	Possibility - Impossibility	
	Existence - Non-existence	
	Necessity - Contingency	

It is obvious that with the categories, the mind conceives rules and simply verifies the rules in experience. The understanding, through the categories, builds knowledge *a priori* and then does a test to see if the knowledge works in experience as the determinant of objects. On its own then, the understanding builds knowledge purely *a priori* which makes metaphysics possible. But the knowledge only gains objectivity and validity when it serves as the determining ground of experience. As rules, to Höffe, the categories work in the following way: “The rules of synthesis and determinacy do not stem from sensations. Nor are they gained by mere combination. They are due to the spontaneity of the understanding, which “thinks up” rules in order to comprehend what is intuitively given, and checks whether what it thinks works as an interpretation of what is given.”¹⁷² The spontaneity of the understanding is that automatic innate ability to attain synthetic unity of perceptions so as to determine objects from the multitude of perceptions. The object as a determined whole is thus made possible by the understanding through the category. Through the categories of unity, plurality

¹⁷¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

¹⁷² Otfried Höffe, *Immanuel Kant*, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

and totality in terms of *quantity*, the understanding determines objects as members of a class taken wholly, members of a class taken separately, or one member taken as a singular object. Through the categories of reality, negation and limitation dealing with *quality*, the understanding determines objects in relation to what they are, what they are not and the infinite realm to which they belong respectively.

Through the category of relations, the understanding determines the permanence in a substance from the accidental, the phenomenal chain of causes and effects in the universe and the relationship of complementarity and reciprocity of knowledge linked to objects in a community of alternatives. Through the category of modality, the understanding determines objects as a possibility when it is an option among others, an existence when it is truth and a necessity when based on *a priori* principles. Kant shows the links between the various categories as follows: “[...] allness or totality is just plurality considered as unity; limitation is simply reality combined with negation; community is the causality of substances reciprocally determining one another; lastly, necessity is just the existence which is given through possibility itself. It must not be supposed, however, that the third category is therefore merely a derivative, and not a primary, concept of the pure understanding.”¹⁷³ The third category on each heading is not a derivative but a primary concept of the understanding. But through a separate act of the understanding, the third category can be derived from the first two under each heading. If plurality considered as unity gives totality, it does not imply that totality would not exist as a primary concept in its own right. It simply means that by a different process of reasoning, we can understand that if one entity among a plurality of entities is taken on its own and considered wholly, it gives totality. That is why singular judgments are considered universal because they take a single entity into account wholly, making it a totality in unity of a single entity that can still exist among a plurality of entities.

In the deduction of the categories, Kant shows the *a priori* grounds of experience at three levels. The three levels correspond to the way the understanding works with the spontaneity of reception of representations and yet an *a priori* plan to synthesize the representations toward a point of unity known as the synthesis of apperception through which knowledge gains objectivity and validity as it makes experience possible. Firstly, there is the level of “the synthesis of apprehension in intuition”. This is a very important level of transcendental deduction when the manifold of representations in intuition is brought to a

¹⁷³ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

point of unity based on a time – sequence of reception of representations. Kant summarizes this first level of deduction as follows:

Every intuition contains in itself a manifold which can be represented as a manifold only in so far as the mind distinguishes the time in the sequence of one impression upon another; for each representation, in so far as it is contained in a single moment, can never be anything but absolute unity. In order that unity of intuition may arise out of this manifold (as is required in the representation of space) it must first be run through, and held together. This act I name the synthesis of apprehension because it is directed upon intuition, which does indeed offer a manifold, but a manifold which can never be represented as a manifold, and as contained in a single representation, save in virtue of such a synthesis.¹⁷⁴

The synthesis of apprehension is the act by which perceptions are ordered and connected according to the time sequence by which they are received. The representation of space as an *a priori* form of sensibility is based on this unity of intuition whereby all the representations as appearances are connected to belong to a single representation as is the case of space. Space is thus a manifold of intuitions connected in a single representation through the synthesis of apprehension.

The second step in the deduction is known as the “synthesis of reproduction in the imagination”. We are at the level of imagination which is considered as an intermediary faculty between intuition and apperception. The transcendental faculty of imagination has as role to represent the representations midway between sensibility and apperception. Through its link with intuition, it is sensible. But since the object represented in the imagination is not present, its role is *a priori*. Kant thus notes that

Imagination is the faculty of representing in intuition an object that is not itself present. Now since all our intuition is sensible, the imagination, owing to the subjective condition under which alone it can give to the concepts of understanding a corresponding intuition, belongs to sensibility. But inasmuch as its synthesis is an expression of spontaneity, which is determinative and not, like sense, determinable merely, and which is therefore able to determine sense a priori in respect of its form in accordance with the unity of apperception, imagination is to that extent a faculty which determines the sensibility a priori and its synthesis of intuitions, conforming as it does to the categories, must be the transcendental synthesis of imagination.¹⁷⁵

Since the synthesis of apprehension as realized in intuition is itself a representation and since we do not have access to objects in themselves as we can only have them as they appear to

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Transcendental Deduction, pp. 131 - 132.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Second Edition, Transcendental Deduction, p. 165.

us, the imagination of a representation of the representations received in intuition works according to an *a priori* plan. It is a faculty that helps the mind to represent objects that are received through intuition but no longer available for intuitive verification. The imagination switches the internal faculties from intuitive to discursive uses, from intuitions to concepts. It is a mediator between intuitions and concepts. It is intuitive in reception of perceptions and their representation when the object is no longer present, and above all, the imagination is determinative because its representation of intuitions for thought is no longer a subjective plan but an *a priori* act that determines objects according to rules.

Thirdly, from the synthesis of reproduction in the imagination which serves as a mediation between intuition and concepts or a mediation between apprehension and apperception, the last step in the transcendental deduction is “the synthesis of recognition in a concept”. This synthesis has to do with consciousness. The consciousness of the act of thought does not prove the existence of the self because this consciousness is not given in intuition to justify the existence of the soul as a substance. This is the argument used by Kant to reject rational psychology as knowledge of the soul making immortality a problematic metaphysical assumption that cannot attain objectivity and validity as knowledge. Though consciousness of thought or self - consciousness does not prove the existence of the self, it gives synthetic unity to thought through concepts. In this way, since we are not dealing with objects themselves but with their representations, what we call knowledge will be the highest point of unity of our representations with our consciousness which Kant calls synthetic unity of apperception. Since we are dealing with representations, the representations must be united with our consciousness such that knowledge would be consciousness of the unity in the representations given in intuitions as manifold. To Kant, therefore,

[...] since we have to deal only with the manifold of our representations, and since that x (the object) which corresponds to them is nothing to us being, as it is, something that has to be distinct from all our representations the unity which the object makes necessary can be nothing else than the formal unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of representations. It is only when we have thus produced synthetic unity in the manifold of intuition that we are in a position to say that we know the object. But this unity is impossible if the intuition cannot be generated in accordance with a rule by means of such a function of synthesis as makes the reproduction of the manifold a priori necessary, and renders possible a concept in which it is united. Thus we think a triangle as an object, in that we are conscious of the combination of three straight lines according to a rule by which such an intuition can always be

*represented. This unity of rule determines all the manifold, and limits it to conditions which make unity of apperception possible.*¹⁷⁶

By apperception, we only make sense of representations by assimilating them with the concepts of the understanding that we already possess. This brings into play consciousness or awareness in thought by which we unite innate concepts of the understanding with representations to form a synthetic unity that gives rise to objective knowledge. Apperception is actually the unity of categories with representations through consciousness which is not that of the existence of the self but that of spontaneity of thought to assimilate the given manifold of representations into a united whole. The most important task in the process of cognition, to Kant, is being able, through categories, to unite and synthesize representations according to rules.

The unity of apperception is guaranteed by the unity of rules. Categories are concepts that give rules to experience. Thus the unity of rules is attained by and through the categories. To attain unity in the synthesis of the manifold of representations, our consciousness must presuppose that unity as an innate ability to unite all that is received as representations toward a point that makes the concept the determining ground of the object. James Van Cleve summarizes the transcendental deduction process into three levels corresponding to two premises and a conclusion by which we move from intuitions to concepts and from concepts back to experience because the unity of representations is attained according to an *a priori* and necessary plan of our consciousness:

1. *The experience of an object has both an intuitional and a conceptual component.*
2. *The conceptual component can occur only if categories apply to the object.*
3. *Therefore, categories apply to all objects of experience.*¹⁷⁷

Through intuition the object is given. Through concepts the object is thought. The unity of concepts with representations given in intuition is a determination of the mind. Thus the mind determines the objects. In other words, the mind determines experience; the mind gives the conditions of possibility of experience. Through the unity of consciousness in apperception, the concepts of the understanding are the *a priori* grounds of all objects of experience. Though the object has to be given in intuition, its representations are a manifold that must be united to correspond to a definite object. The formal unity of consciousness is an *a priori*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

¹⁷⁷ James Van Cleve, *Problems from Kant*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 77.

synthesis of perceptions through concepts by which experience is defined and knowledge is acquired and truth is attained.

Kant makes a distinction between empirical consciousness and transcendental consciousness. The former is that through which we are aware of objects of experience through the receptivity of intuition; the latter is that through which we synthesize representations through the spontaneity of thought to give synthetic apperception. The transcendental consciousness has a priority and primacy over empirical consciousness as its ground of possibility. In the same way that the *a priori* forms of time and space make appearances possible, transcendental consciousness makes synthesis of representations through concepts possible. Kant notes that

All representations have a necessary relation to a possible empirical consciousness. For if they did not have this, and if it were altogether impossible to become conscious of them, this would practically amount to the admission of their non-existence. But all empirical consciousness has a necessary relation to a transcendental consciousness which precedes all special experience, namely, the consciousness of myself as original apperception. It is therefore absolutely necessary that in my knowledge all consciousness should belong to a single consciousness, that of myself. Here, then, is a synthetic unity of the manifold (of consciousness), which is known a priori, and so yields the ground for synthetic a priori propositions which concern pure thought, just as do space and time for the propositions which refer to the form of pure intuition. The synthetic proposition, that all the variety of empirical consciousness must be combined in one single self-consciousness, is the absolutely first and synthetic principle of our thought in general. [...] the possibility of the logical form of all knowledge is necessarily conditioned by relation to this apperception as a faculty.¹⁷⁸

Without an empirical consciousness, we cannot be aware of objects of experience and we cannot receive them through representations in intuition. The consciousness of myself is apperception because it constitutes the ground of all unity of representations through concepts. The single consciousness of myself is that which makes unity of representations possible *a priori* through concepts. No knowledge can be attained if I am not able to have an awareness of myself as one consciousness through which all concepts can be synthesized and united to become conditions of possibility of objects. In this way, categories, through the synthetic unity of apperception or unity of consciousness, are able to serve as *a priori* grounds of all objects of experience. Therefore, all synthetic *a priori* judgments are based on the unity of consciousness or synthetic unity of apperception which is that innate ability to

¹⁷⁸ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Transcendental Deduction, note a, p. 142.

combine our ideas with representations received through intuition to give the understanding the chance to define and make experience possible by means of a rule.

3.3: On the Principles of the Understanding

To propose a solution to the difficult question of the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments, the Kantian deduction of the categories was not enough. How are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible? In other words, how can we build concepts independently of experience and yet use the concepts as rules and conditions of possibility of the experience from which they were not derived? The deduction of the categories shows the necessity for the concepts of the understanding to relate *a priori* to experience. But this requires a sort of mediation. In the deduction of the categories, we have seen three stages involving the synthesis of apprehension in intuition where objects given in a manifold have to be brought to a point of unity as representations of sensible objects, the synthesis of reproduction in imagination whereby the representations of intuitions are further represented according to a time – sequence that prepares them for the ultimate synthesis of recognition in concepts which is the synthetic unity of apperception whereby our consciousness uses an *a priori* plan to bring all representations to a level of unity that defines the object. The challenging task here is the role of the imagination which mediates between intuitions and apperception. It is to lay further emphasis on this rule that Kant coined the “schematism” and principles of the understanding to show that mediating point whereby concepts become conditions of possibility of objects. Of course we need a mediating faculty with corresponding principles to show how pure concepts can apply to spatio – temporal objects. Since time is the *a priori* form of inner sense and space the *a priori* form of outer sense, the challenge with the schematism and principles of the understanding is to show how a faculty that is not directly empirical can unite intuitions and concepts to attain the unity of apperception that gives objective and valid knowledge. Here, we are talking about the foundation of the relation of categories to objects.

The way to link *a priori* concepts to sensible objects requires not only the transcendental faculty of imagination but the basis of such a link through principles. The ‘transcendental schema’ thus emerges in this necessity for mediation between the sensible and the intelligible, and Kant is precise on the definition as follows: “There must be some third thing, which is homogeneous on the one hand with the category, and on the other hand with the appearance, and which thus makes the application of the former to the latter

possible. This mediating representation must be pure, that is, void of all empirical content, and yet at the same time, while it must in one respect be intellectual, it must in another be sensible. Such a representation is the transcendental schema.”¹⁷⁹To have the characteristic of an appearance so as to merge the appearances for synthetic unity in apperception and at the same time to have an *a priori* form so as to relate with consciousness is the nature of transcendental imagination which necessitates rules or principles giving rise to the schema. This requires that for categories to correspond to objects in time and space through representations there is need for a faculty or an activity that is midway between sensation and pure thought. The act is carried out through the schema which is a representation that reinforces the role of transcendental imagination with the special effect here of giving categories correspondences in time and space. “Thus an application of the categories to appearances becomes possible by means of the transcendental determination of time, which, as the schema of the concepts of understanding, mediates the subsumption of the appearances under the category.”¹⁸⁰Since judgment is precisely that faculty through which we subsume particular cases under general rules, the objective of the transcendental deduction is only achieved when we are able to link each and every case of objects in experience to categories.

The transcendental deduction seeks to show that concepts only become meaningful when we identify objects corresponding to them or at least when they make objects possible. The transcendental determination of time here is important because time is not a thing in itself, it is an *a priori* mode of receiving objects in intuition, and the time – sequence has to be represented according to principles that Kant calls ‘the principles of the understanding’. The schema has to present the formal conditions of sensibility by which the concept stands as a universal rule to objects. Kant thus expatiates the terms for a further mastery of the schema for the various categories:

This formal and pure condition of sensibility to which the employment of the concept of understanding is restricted, we shall entitle the schema of the concept. The procedure of understanding in these schemata we shall entitle the schematism of pure understanding. The schema is in itself always a product of imagination. Since, however, the synthesis of imagination aims at no special intuition, but only at unity in the determination of sensibility, the schema has to be distinguished from the image. If five points be set alongside one another, thus, [...] I have an image of the number five. But if, on the other hand, I think only a number in general, whether it be five or a hundred, this thought is rather the representation of a method whereby a multiplicity, for

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

¹⁸⁰ *Idem.*

instance a thousand, may be represented in an image in conformity with a certain concept, than the image itself. For with such a number as a thousand the image can hardly be surveyed and compared with the concept. This representation of a universal procedure of imagination in providing an image for a concept, I entitle the schema of this concept.¹⁸¹

The condition of sensibility is pure and formal; it has to be *a priori* and yet be able to link intuitions to concepts, or appearances to categories according to rules. The schema of the concept is a task of the imagination which does not just want to determine an image of the object in the mind but unity of the objects of sensibility. This unity helps us relate causality, for instance, to all instances of objects where one succeeds another in a time sequence through which we see the necessity to consider one as the cause and another as the effect according to concepts. If we isolate a single case of a cause and an effect like the case of lightning and thunder, the subsumption of the particular case to the general rule of causality is an image produced by the imagination. But if we get a general principle by which all cases of objects in real life can stand under a general rule of cause and effect, then we have attained the schema of the concept. Every category thus has its schema.

In the example given by Kant in the quotation given above, it is clear that a single product of the imagination is an image, but a synthesis of the imagination is a schema of a concept because it gives the ground for linking all particular cases or images under the concept that serves as a universal and apodictic rule. An image of five is a single product of the imagination. But the image of number is a synthesis of all numbers in the imagination as a schema by which the concept of number can apply to all cases or images of specific numbers like five, six, seven and others. Thus in the schema, we want a procedure whereby from a concept, we can provide an image of particular cases in a time – sequence to justify its link with intuition which makes the concept the determining rule of the objects. Yet Kant insists that strictly speaking, the schemata are representations (more or less accurate) of objects since the purity of a concept is such that it cannot be adequately represented in an object of experience. The schemata take that midpoint between concepts and objects according to rules. To Kant, the image is the product of the empirical imagination, while the schemata are the products of transcendental imagination. The latter makes the former possible. Every image of an object thus becomes possible through the schemata. The image is specific and empirical; the schemata are *a priori* and bring all possible images under a rule or according to

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

concepts. It is the transcendental and not the empirical imagination that serves as a mediator between appearances and concepts.

To every category, then, there is a schema. For instance, “The schema of substance is permanence of the real in time, that is, the representation of the real as a substance of empirical determination of time in general, and so as abiding while all else changes.”¹⁸² Substance here is the substrate that is enduring in time. Things pass away in time but time itself persists. In the same way, in the world of appearances, what persists in time is the substance. When we talk of appearances in time, we are talking about substance which cannot be wiped away with time. Thus the schema of substance will take into account the *a priori* form of inner sense which is time and those appearances that do not fade away with time. The schema of substance would not be a particular object or appearances but that rule of permanence in time which makes the concept a general rule under which all particular cases can be subsumed. The schema of causality would be the necessity for something else to follow when some other thing is given, that of community is coexistence according to general rules that make objects complements to one another, that of necessity will refer to existence in all times, and generally, “[...] the schema of each category contains and makes capable of representation only a determination of time.”¹⁸³ Time would be the determining factor by which we create the universal condition in the imagination for all the objects to be determined by the rule. Time is a form of sensible intuition by which objects are determined as appearances. From the *a priori* form of time, we are able to use the faculty of the imagination to put all appearances under the concept called the category. From the schema, then, as a representation of the imagination, and with respect to time, of all objects as appearances under rules given by categories, Kant outlined the principles of the understanding which give a thorough insight about the judgments that the understanding carries out, which means the various ways that the understanding subjects all particular cases in experience under general rules.

The transition from the schema to the principles of the understanding is logical. In the Transcendental Deduction, we have seen that either concepts determine objects or vice versa, and Kant chooses the former over the later for the necessity and the apodictic results required. Then from the schema where, through the transcendental faculty of imagination, we are able to mediate between intuitions and apperception, we move to the principles on how we

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 184.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

subsume particular cases of experience under general concepts through judgment. Andrew Ward illustrates this transition as follows:

Kant's reasoning may have been along the following lines: 'In the Analytic of Concepts, in particular in the Transcendental Deduction, I have shown that the categories must apply to the objects of an intuition in general, i.e. to the objects given in any sensible intuition whatever. This has the consequence that when the categories are applied to our particular forms of sensible intuition (by being schematized), they must be applicable to spatio-temporal objects - although the detailed proofs of their necessary application to these objects has still to be given'. On this view, the Schematism chapter provides an introduction to the Analytic of Principles, serving two chief purposes: on the one hand, of pointing out that the categories, in order to be applicable to the objects of our experience, will need to have added to them a temporal dimension; and, on the other hand, of listing what the resulting principles are',¹⁸⁴

In the search for the principles of the understanding, we are interested in the ground of all judgments. From the categories deduced to necessarily relate to objects by means of the schema, we need the basic principles that can give us logical authority to make judgments involving the categories for the sake of knowledge. Here, the principle of non – contradiction holds good only for analytic judgments in which the predicate simply breaks down the subject in a necessary and apodictic process of reasoning. Here, Kant rejects the formulation of the principle of non – contradiction as an impossibility for something to be and not be at the same time, by showing that something can be at one time and not be at another time making its ordinary formulation vague and superfluous. Kant prefers to have the principle stated in the negative as ‘No non – A is A’ thereby helping us avoid adding the idea of time which can be disproven when taken at different times.¹⁸⁵ For instance rather than say that ‘it is impossible for a man to be learned and not learned at the same time’ which is problematic because the same man at one time can be learned and at another time not learned, we should rather say ‘no unlearned person is learned’ so as to highlight the necessity and apodictic character of the principle used as the ground for analytic knowledge. But since we are dealing with synthetic knowledge, the principle of non – contradiction is not enough as ground for its justification.

The principles that serve as ground for synthetic *a priori* knowledge have to be different from the principles that serve as ground for analytic judgments because “In the analytic judgment we keep to the given concept, and seek to extract something from it. If it is

¹⁸⁴ Andrew Ward, *Kant: The Three Critiques*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006, pp. 62 – 63.

¹⁸⁵ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, pp. 191 – 192.

to be affirmative, I ascribe to it only what is already thought in it. If it is to be negative, I exclude from it only its opposite. But in synthetic judgments I have to advance beyond the given concept, viewing as in relation with the concept something altogether different from what was thought in it.”¹⁸⁶ We are looking for the foundational principles of knowledge whereby the predicate adds something new to the concept of the subject and though the construction of the concepts is *a priori*, the concepts yet have to relate to experience as the bound within which knowledge is possible. We are at the crossroads of intuitions, imagination and apperception. This means that we are at the point of linking concepts with objects through mediating general principles on which every judgment or subsumption of particular cases to general rules depends. Kant, then, states the highest principle of synthetic judgments:

*The highest principle of all synthetic judgments is therefore this: every object stands under the necessary conditions of synthetic unity of the manifold of intuition in a possible experience. Synthetic a priori judgments are thus possible when we relate the formal conditions of a priori intuition, the synthesis of imagination and the necessary unity of this synthesis in a transcendental apperception, to a possible empirical knowledge in general. We then assert that the conditions of the possibility of experience in general are likewise conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and that for this reason they have objective validity in a synthetic a priori judgment.*¹⁸⁷

From intuitions whereby objects are given to us through the *a priori* forms of time and space, to the synthesis of the imagination by which representations are united and connected according to a time sequence known as schema, to their synthesis in apperception where the representations are united with consciousness, we need principles to link the final product of the *a priori* process to possible experience.

Kant outlines four sets of principles of pure understanding in relation to quantity, quality, relation and modality corresponding to the four heads of the table of judgments and the table of categories. They are: *axioms of intuition, anticipations of perception, analogies of experience* and *postulates of empirical thought in general*. Here, Kant has to show that all intuitions have extensive magnitude (through the axioms), all reality has intensive magnitude (through the anticipations), experience as a connection of perceptions (through the analogies), the possibility, actuality and necessity of experience by intuition and concepts (through the postulates). The principles of the understanding are aimed at proving that the category alone

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

is not enough as a guarantee of knowledge but only a possibility of knowledge as long as it makes experience possible by relating concepts to objects. The principles are supposed to serve as prolegomena for all judgments that make knowledge possible through representations of objects in thought, according to an *a priori* plan. Kant outlines the principles as follows:

Table 4: Table of the Principles of Pure Understanding¹⁸⁸

	1	
	Axioms of intuition	
2		3
Anticipations of perception		Analogies of experience
	4	
	Postulates of empirical thought in general	

With regards to intuition by which objects are given to us in time and space, the principle of the *axioms of intuition* as restated in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* holds that “All intuitions are extensive magnitudes”¹⁸⁹ The same principle was stated in the first edition of the ‘first critique’ as “All appearances are, in their intuition, extensive magnitudes.”¹⁹⁰ An extensive magnitude is a quantity in which a representation of the parts serves as a prolegomena to a representation of the whole. This means that intuitions are aggregates of representations involving successive moments built progressively and gradually. When appearances are given to us as space and time, we need a synthesis of the various parts to attain a whole that eventually gives unity in apperception when all the representations are considered as part of our consciousness. Using the example of a line, Kant holds that “I cannot represent to myself a line, however small, without drawing it in thought, that is, generating from a point all its parts one after another. Only in this way can the intuition be obtained.”¹⁹¹ A line then, is actually a construction of points in thought. The aggregate of points form a quantum or magnitude which is a series of points in appearances

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Second Edition, p. 197.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, First Edition., p. 197.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Second Edition, p. 198.

brought to a point of unity progressively. That is why the manifold or multiplicity of appearances only makes sense when we start seeking in them a unity in thought. The axioms of intuition relate to the quantity of representations.

To understand the *anticipations of perception*, which correspond to the quality of representations, we need to know the difference between extensive and intensive magnitudes. The principle which anticipates all perceptions states that “In all appearances, the real that is an object of sensation has intensive magnitude, that is, a degree.”¹⁹² In understanding the degrees of appearances, we are not taking into account the aggregates or successive moments of intuition. Whereas extensive magnitude takes into account gradual or progressive moments of representations of parts used to build the whole in the imagination, intensive magnitude takes into account the instant or moment, one moment of a sensation in terms of the degree with which it affects the senses. This is a perception by which an object affects our senses in a particular way. To Kant, “Apprehension by means merely of sensation occupies only an instant, if, that is, I do not take into account the succession of different sensations.”¹⁹³ To understand the instant of sensation which has a degree or intensive magnitude, we must note that anticipation is knowledge by which we are able to understand sensation *a priori*. In anticipation, therefore, we are able to know experience independently of experience.

*A magnitude which is apprehended only as unity, and in which multiplicity can be represented only through approximation to negation = 0, I entitle an intensive magnitude. Every reality in the [field of] appearance has therefore intensive magnitude or degree [...]. It is so named for the reason that degree signifies only that magnitude the apprehension of which is not successive', but instantaneous.*¹⁹⁴

When we look at sensation in terms of a single moment and not a succession of moments, that is, when we look at sensation as unity instead of multiplicity, we understand its magnitude as intensive in terms of degrees and not extensive in terms of the aggregate of different moments. Thus a single and isolated sensation is taken in terms of degree and this moment can be anticipated or known *a priori* by abstracting thought of the manifold and focusing on the instant.

However, Kant derives unity between intensive and extensive magnitudes by showing that “Every sensation, therefore, and likewise every reality in the [field of] appearance,

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 201.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

however small it may be, has a degree, that is, an intensive magnitude which can always be diminished. Between reality and negation there is continuity of possible realities and of possible smaller perceptions.”¹⁹⁵ The continuity corresponds to the category of limitation that gives rise to infinite judgments that are midway between affirmative and negative judgments because they refer to an endless realm when the predicate of a certain subject is negated opening up a vast indefinite field of entities that are not covered by the predicate. No matter the high or low degree of redness in an object, the redness is never diminished to the point zero, the redness can only be measured in degrees that can be more or less between zero and one. This is the field of continuity in degrees that give rise to intensive magnitudes. Such degrees are noted when we view sensation as an instant like the redness in an object as a moment without considering it with other moments. We cannot have the smallest degree of redness in an object. We have infinite degrees of redness. This leads to what Kant calls *quanta continua* to refer to continuity in magnitudes.

If we consider that no part of magnitude is the smallest, then we are into continuous magnitude. In this light, space is continuous magnitude made up of spaces and time is a continuous magnitude made up of times. In this way, if space consists of spaces and time consists of times, space and time are magnitudes enclosing a continuity of instances. Each instant or limitation of space or time is understood as a degree of a point enclosed with other points in a continuous magnitude. “All appearances, then, are continuous magnitudes, alike in their intuition, as extensive, and in their mere perception (sensation, and with it reality) as intensive. [...] appearance as unity is a quantum, and as a quantum is always a continuum.”¹⁹⁶ The moment of perception is instantaneous in a degree as intensive magnitude, but the moment of intuition by which the objects are given is a manifold or multiplicity of appearances moving from one moment to another to build the whole from its parts. Appearance is a unity in perception and understood by degrees but appearance as a multiplicity is a succession of moments understood as an aggregate. In this way, the axioms of intuition and the anticipations of perception are united as different moments and different ways of grasping a continuous magnitude. The static moment, which gives rise to degrees, is part of a continuous flow of appearances in successive moments.

The *analogies of experience* are based on a principle stated by Kant as follows: “Experience is possible only through the representation of a necessary connection of

¹⁹⁵ *Idem.*

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

perceptions.”¹⁹⁷ This principle does not imply that the necessary connection is in the perceptions themselves but achieved through an *a priori* plan of the understanding in apperception that unites all perceptions with consciousness. It is the synthetic unity of all perceptions in apperception that gives rise to objective and valid knowledge. To Kant, unlike mathematical analogies which are constitutive because they deal with quantitative relationships of equality whereby from one magnitude another is given, philosophical analogies are regulative because they deal with qualitative relationships of equality whereby from one magnitude, we can have only *a priori* knowledge of a relationship with another magnitude. “An analogy of experience is, therefore, only a rule according to which a unity of experience may arise from perception. It does not tell us how mere perception or empirical intuition in general itself comes about. It is not a principle constitutive of the objects, that is, of the appearances, but only regulative.”¹⁹⁸ Mathematics gives rules by which members in a proportional relationship can be constructed whereas philosophy only gives a rule that establishes a relationship with another member of the proportion *a priori*. “[...] since existence cannot be constructed, the principles can apply only to the relations of existence, and can yield only regulative principles.”¹⁹⁹ Mathematics gives rise to a new member in a proportion while philosophy only gives a rule to a new member *a priori* in proportional relationships. The necessary connection is *a priori* and is used to explain possible relationships and not to bring about objects into existence.

The analogies of experience are based on the three modes of time which are *duration, succession and coexistence*. These three modes correspond to the three moments of the category of relation. The three analogies of experience will thus follow the *a priori* judgments relating to substance, causality and community. The first analogy is the *principle of permanence of substance* which states that “In all change of appearances substance is permanent; its quantum in nature is neither increased nor diminished.”²⁰⁰ The permanence in substance is that which persists in an object despite the passing of time. In this principle, accidents will be special modes of existence of a substance or various determinations of something permanent. Absolute annihilation of substance cannot be perceived because what is permanent in substance is that which permits us see accidents or alterations as belonging to

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Second Edition, p. 208.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Second Edition, p. 212.

one unchanging substratum. The permanent in time becomes the condition of possibility of time itself:

Only through the permanent does existence in different parts of the time-series acquire a magnitude which can be entitled duration. For in bare succession existence is always vanishing and recommencing, and never has the least magnitude. Without the permanent there is therefore no time-relation. Now time cannot be perceived in itself; the permanent in the appearances is therefore the substratum of all determination of time, and, as likewise follows, is also the condition of the possibility of all synthetic unity of perceptions, that is, of experience.²⁰¹

Time is not something in itself. Time will be represented by various determinations or various ways of existence of the permanent in substance. Since the substratum was, is and will always be there, it is through it that time is determined. Since empty time is an impossible determination, since time has to be determined by the perception of something permanent in appearances, time only becomes possible through something enduring but existing in various modes or accidents. The permanent in appearance thus determines time as duration.

The second analogy of experience is the *principle of succession* which states that “All alterations take place in conformity with the law of the connection of cause and effect.”²⁰² Since there is something permanent in appearances called substance or the substratum of appearances, all change is *alteration* or different or successive modes of existence of the same being. We cannot have non-being which would be the destruction of the permanent in appearances. If all changes are alterations or successive modes of existence of the same being, then we need a principle by which these successive determinations of the same being can be achieved. This is the principle of succession based on the law of causality: “Experience itself in other words, empirical knowledge of appearances is thus possible only in so far as we subject the succession of appearances, and therefore all alteration, to the law of causality; and, as likewise follows, the appearances, as objects of experience, are themselves possible only in conformity with the law.”²⁰³ Here, if we do not have to assume a connection through habit or custom as Hume did, then we must deduce a rule by which one perception follows from another as a matter of necessity. Since succession involves relations of time, without a rule by which we can take one event or object to be an antecedent or

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.214.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 218.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

condition for another event or object, representations would be blind and meaningless to us, the succession would remain subjective in apprehension at the low level where objects are given to us and would lack synthetic unity. With causality as a law, we are able to link appearances in a time – sequence through a concept that gives objectivity through unity and synthesis not found in apprehension.

The third analogy of experience is the *principle of coexistence* attained through the law of coexistence and community. This analogy states that “All substances, in so far as they can be perceived to coexist in space, are in thoroughgoing reciprocity.”²⁰⁴ This principle guarantees mutual interaction and complementarity in the field of experience. This analogy deals with existence of two or more objects at the same time in a mutual relationship where they exert an influence on each other. Through this conception of community of objects of experience, “[...] the appearances, so far as they stand outside one another and yet in connection, constitute a composite [...], and such composites are possible in many different ways.”²⁰⁵ We cannot just see objects as existing in a succession. We are not just moving from one mode of existence to another as is the case with permanence in substance. We are presupposing the coexistence of substances in space such that “[...] the perception of the one must as ground make possible the perception of the other, and reverse [...] in order that, on the contrary, these objects may be represented as coexisting.”²⁰⁶ The synthesis of the imagination only shows that perceptions are reciprocal which means that when one perception is present in the subject, the other is absent and vice versa. It does not show that two substances exist at the same time. Coexistence is attained only through a concept that gives an objective ground to the community of substances. In perceptions, subjectively, we can only alternate from one to the other. But simultaneous existence of objects is only obtained by a rule. This argument makes the perception of an empty space impossible because though the alternation of perceptions is subjective, the conception of coexistence is objective only through an *a priori* plan of the understanding.

The *postulates of empirical thought* concern the categories of modality, that is, possibility, existence and necessity. The postulates of experience are outlined by Kant in three statements as follows:

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

²⁰⁶ *Idem.*

1. *That which agrees, in intuition and in concepts, with the formal conditions of experience, is possible.*
2. *That which is bound up with the material conditions of experience, that is, with sensation, is actual.*
3. *That which in its connection with the actual is determined in accordance with universal conditions of experience, is (that is, exists as) necessary.*²⁰⁷

The postulate of possibility implies that the concept conditions the object. “Only through the fact that these concepts express *a priori* the relations of perceptions in every experience, do we know their objective reality, that is, their transcendental truth, and this, indeed, independently of experience [...]”²⁰⁸ When *a priori* concepts make experience possible, the concept becomes a determining factor of experience. The concept does not create the experience; the concept does not bring an object into existence, the concept merely makes the object possible as an object given to us for possible knowledge. The postulate of actuality gives primacy to perception over the concept while the modality of possibility gives primacy to the concept over the perception. “[...] that the concept precedes the perception signifies the concept's mere possibility; the perception which supplies the content to the concept is the sole mark of actuality. We can also, however, know the existence of the thing prior to its perception and, consequently, comparatively speaking, in an *a priori* manner, if only it be bound up with certain perceptions, in accordance with the principles of their empirical connection (the analogies).”²⁰⁹ Concepts make perceptions possible and perceptions make concepts actual. Perceptions give content while concepts give the form by thought which has to agree with the content. Then, finally, the postulate of necessity arises when the actuality of an object agrees with universal *a priori* rules of experience, that is, when the concept stands in a relationship of agreement with the perception for objective and necessary knowledge of the object through universal laws.

The system of the principles of the understanding seeks to establish a canon of judgment whereby categories can be applied to objects of experience in a mediate way through perceptions. Such an application of categories requires a series of principles that Kant divides into four classes: the axioms of intuition, anticipations of perceptions, analogies of experience and postulates of empirical thought in general. According to Paul Guyer:

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

At the first stage of this theory Kant assumes that we do have knowledge about the temporal relations of objects distinct from our own representations of them and directly argues only that certain principles - namely, the principles that the objectively real is ultimately composed of permanent substances of determinate magnitude, and that these all stand in relations of causation and interaction - are the necessary conditions for the possibility of such empirical knowledge, or experience in a strong sense. As the second stage of his theory, however, Kant tries to argue that such empirical knowledge, and therefore the principles which are its necessary conditions, are the necessary conditions of the possibility of experience, even in the weaker sense of determinate knowledge of the temporal relations of subjective states as such.²¹⁰

To situate the objects of our knowledge in time and space, the mediated link between concepts and objects depends on the way our representations are ordered according to principles that indirectly relate thought to experience. The permanence in substance makes accidents various determinations of an unchanging substratum whose enduring nature makes it a condition of possibility of time since we cannot perceive empty time save through an entity that does not fade away over time and that entity is the permanent in substance.

The necessary connection that establishes relationships of succession in our representations correspond to the various modes of an enduring substance taken in a time sequence whose necessity must be guaranteed through concepts as experience itself does not provide sufficient grounds for such a necessity. The existence of two or more substances at the same time implies that there is a principle of coexistence in a community through reciprocity whereby we can move from one perception to another. Yet the instantaneous moment only gives us a perception whereas the assumption of coexistence of the given perception with other perceptions is an *a priori* plan of the understanding. The postulates of empirical thought are principles of modality and are only subjectively and not objectively synthetic. They do not add anything new to the knowledge of the object through perceptions; they add something to the concept by which the objects are thought by showing how the concepts are connected to the faculty of knowledge.

Thus, though the postulates of empirical thought do not add anything to the perception, the relationship they establish between the concept and the perception determines the degree of certainty of knowledge of an object:

[...] if it is in connection only with the formal conditions of experience, and so merely in the understanding, its object is called possible. If it stands in

²¹⁰ Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Knowledge*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, Part III, p. 158.

*connection with perception, that is, with sensation as material supplied by the senses, and through perception is determined by means of the understanding, the object is actual. If it is determined through the connection of perceptions according to concepts, the object is entitled necessary.*²¹¹

If the way concepts are related to the faculty of knowledge has an impact on the truth, then the postulates of empirical thought, and the other principles of the understanding amount to a refutation of problematic and dogmatic idealism as treated in the first part of our work. By not only carrying out a deduction of the categories but also and above all showing the principles that are at the basis of the application of the categories to objects of experience, Kant shows the objectivity of synthetic *a priori* knowledge.

Synthetic knowledge is made to relate to experience as a matter of necessity which at first sight eliminates metaphysics as a discipline that deals with ideas of pure reason converting the categories to a level where they can only be employed in a regulative and not constitutive manner; and yet that only makes one aspect of metaphysics possible as a science that can build knowledge *a priori* with conditions of possibility of application in experience. The second aspect of metaphysics is in its closeness with mathematics as the foundation of natural sciences. The most important reality of metaphysics as a science is that, failing to give objective and valid knowledge in epistemology, it prepares the ground for a future system of religion and morality in the practical use of reason. In the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, Kant makes the *critique* the condition of possibility of metaphysics as a science mainly through the system of concepts and principles of the understanding setting standards for truth and that metaphysics has to respect, and yet stretch reason beyond bounds of experience to provide an ideal in religion and morality:

*[...] through critique our judgment is afforded a standard by which knowledge can be distinguished with certainty from pseudo knowledge; and, as a result of being brought fully into play in metaphysics, critique establishes a manner of thinking that subsequently extends its wholesome influence to every other use of reason, and for the first time excites the true philosophical spirit.*²¹²

In this light, metaphysics is a science of the future and a possible achievement of the transcendental deduction of concepts and principles of the understanding. As a possibility, it needs to work within the bounds of experience for the production of synthetic *a priori* judgments which though attained independently of experience nevertheless applies to the same experience.

²¹¹ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Postulates of Empirical Thought, p. 252.

²¹² Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, Appendix, p. 133 – 134.

From the transcendental deduction, Kant, using the authority of the categories and principles, can determine what can be considered truth and what can be considered falsity in his metaphysics of epistemology or a theory of knowledge based on metaphysical principles. From the transcendental deduction, whether in its closeness with mathematics at the foundation of natural sciences or in its *a priori* production of judgments some of which convert categories into ideas of pure reason, metaphysics appears as a science of the foundation of thought on objects of experience and objects beyond the bounds of experience. Even if the criteria to make it recognizable as an independent science are still, and may forever remain, problematic, the role of metaphysics in the foundation of knowledge in epistemology and natural science and in the provision of a transcendental ideal for morality and religion cannot be undermined.

CONCLUSION

The first part of our work entitled “The Conceptual Framework of the Kantian Conception of Truth” paints the philosophical picture of the Kantian conception of truth: the transition from traditional to Kantian idealism, the critique of metaphysics and the transcendental deduction. Firstly, we have shown the revolutionary nature of Kant’s approach of seeking truth. Compared with his predecessors, Kant makes a difference relating to our way of knowing objects. Henceforth, in a perfect analogy with the astronomical revolution of Nicholas Copernicus that established the heliocentric paradigm to replace the geocentric model so that the earth can move round the sun and not the reverse, Kant shows that we do not know objects by receiving everything from the objects themselves but by having our modes of knowledge impose their marks on the objects so that what we know is a combination of what our own faculties of knowledge produce and what the objects transmits to us as representations. This is the Kantian Copernican revolution in epistemology which states the theoretical framework of critical, Kantian or transcendental idealism as a new way of philosophizing on objects. This sharply contrasts the *problematic idealism* of Rene Descartes, the *dogmatic idealism* of George Berkeley and the *mystical idealism* of Plato. We have shown that by making the mind active and not passive in the process of cognition, Kant gives us a means to avoid blind intuitions and empty concepts that come when we either make experience the only source of knowledge or the mind the exclusive producer of ideas.

Consequently, the first part of our work has shown the inadequacies of the approach used by empiricists whose empirical limits for objectivity and validity of knowledge is accepted by Kant but Kant at the same time rejects the empiricists’ denial of the role of the mind in going beyond nature to seek ideas which, though epistemologically useless, are useful in morality and religion. During the “silent decade” between 1770 and 1080, Kant was nursing the seeds of critical philosophy; but the idea of the Kantian Copernican Revolution in the seed already had a place in the paragraphs of the *Inaugural Dissertation* of 1770:

[...] there is in sense representation something which may be called the matter, namely, the sensation, and in addition to this something which may be called the form, namely, the appearance of the sensible things, showing forth to what extent a natural law of the mind co-ordinates the variety of sensuous affections. [...] For by form or appearance the objects do not strike the sense, hence in order that various sense-affecting objects may coalesce into some whole of representation, there is need of an inner principle of the mind by

*which, in accordance with stable and innate laws, that variety shall take on some appearance.*²¹³

The idea of a Kantian Copernican revolution, since 1770, up to its blossom in the critical era between 1880 and 1890 became the bedrock of Kantian philosophy as a unique method of getting truth without making the mind a spectator but an actor in the process of cognition. Yet the mind itself must be kept in check and that is the role of the critique of reason using reason. If the mind controls the way we see the outside world, if the natural law of the mind dictates the rule to nature outside our minds, then it is important to know whether the mind is on a useful or useless epistemological endeavor. This leads us to metaphysics as that discipline that can likely and does likely misuse the powers of reason.

Secondly, then, the first part of our work has done a systematic critique of metaphysics according to the guidelines of Kantian philosophy. If our quest for truth has to identify and eliminate illusions, then we must clear the path of what Kant refers to as the ‘dialectical’ use of reason in metaphysics where the game of empty concepts that do not refer to any object adds nothing new to our stock of knowledge. The illusions of pure reason are termed *paralogisms* when the self – consciousness of our thoughts is taken as a proof of existence of the self and the soul and with it the idea of immortality whereby the soul is assumed to be a simple substance that cannot disintegrate into anything simpler and above all cannot undergo annihilation, an assumption not warranted by sensible intuition through which the soul could become an object of knowledge. Paralogisms make rational psychology illusory. The illusions of pure reason are called *antinomies* when reason attempts a study of the world as a totality that leads to controversies over simplicity and composite nature in the world, infinity and finitude in the world, freedom and natural laws as well as the being of necessity as the phenomenal or non – phenomenal cause of the chain of causes in the universe. These controversies put reason in a conflict with itself especially when transcendental freedom is assumed to be the causality that makes an infinite regress in the chain of causes impossible. The antinomies or conflicts of reason with itself in issues surrounding the concept of transcendental freedom make rational cosmology an illusory endeavor.

²¹³ Immanuel Kant, “Dissertation on the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World: Inaugural Dissertation” (1770), trans. William J. Eckoff, in *The Collected Works of Immanuel Kant*, United Kingdom: Delphi Classics, 2016, Section II, Paragraph 4, p. 155.

Metaphysics generally fails in its epistemological pursuits because its objects of study cannot be given in intuition. Immortality, freedom and God are metaphysical concepts that much has been written about, and yet no tangible cognitive results have been obtained from and through them. God becomes an ideal of pure reason when reason seeks synthetic unity of concepts up to the concept of an undetermined being considered to be the determination of all material things. We are moving from determinable to the undetermined source taken as an individual assumed to exist concretely yet not given in intuition. The impossibility of proving the existence of God as a concrete being and object of knowledge leads to the illusion of rational theology that Kant calls *the ideal of pure reason*. Thus, all the endeavors of metaphysics are proven futile through the dialectical illusions of rational psychology, rational cosmology and rational theology respectively treating the three metaphysical concepts of immortality in relation to the soul, freedom in relation to the world as a totality and God in relation to the supreme source of all determinable things in the universe. According to A. D. Lindsay in the book entitled *Kant*,

The Critique of Pure Reason constituted, according to Kant a revolution in philosophical thought. It claimed to show that the whole method of philosophizing which was accepted at the time was wrong. It does mark a complete break – away from what Kant called dogmatic metaphysics But it was also a revolution in his own thought—a break – away from the assumptions he had accepted and the methods he had pursued through fifteen years' teaching.²¹⁴

Kant's critique of metaphysics was not altogether destructive. He was laying the foundation for a future system of morality and religion where it would not be about theoretical reason and knowledge but about practical reason and the need for an ideal toward which the practice of virtue aims and where the ideal of pure reason coincides with the goals of religion. The critique of metaphysics is thus both destructive and constructive. It is destructive because through metaphysics we cannot obtain objective and valid knowledge. But through it we can obtain the foundation of morality and by extrapolation religion. Most especially, through metaphysics we can get a foundation of natural science where it is associated with mathematics to give *a priori* rules to nature.

Thirdly, the first part of our work has tackled the heart of the Kantian conception of truth in the transcendental deduction. The transcendental deduction is the Kantian originality by which the concepts of the understanding become concepts of objects through the

²¹⁴ A. D. Lindsay, *Kant*, Connecticut: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1970, p. 49.

schematizing role of the transcendental imagination that mediates between intuitions and concepts in such a way as to help in the unity of the manifold in intuition as representations that make us aware of objects by being aware of ourselves in transcendental consciousness and the systematic unity of apperception. What is given as representations has to be made to converge toward a point of unity in a process in which the imagination makes knowledge a quest for unity between what is given and the concepts that have to order the representations “For the regulative unity of experience is not based on the appearances themselves (on sensibility alone), but on the connection of the manifold through the understanding (in an apperception) [...]”²¹⁵ The most important achievement of the transcendental deduction is to link concepts to intuitions so that the truth should be a point of unity between what is given in intuition and what is thought through concepts. The transcendental deduction makes metaphysics a possible system of synthetic *a priori* knowledge when every human mind must have gone through a critique of reason to eliminate the dialectical illusions of metaphysics which are part and parcel of the human mind but which can be made to play a role in the practical and not the speculative use of reason.

Finally, the first part of our work has set a stage for a critical evaluation of the Kantian theory of knowledge. It must be noted that the transcendental deduction does not give us complete knowledge of the object as it is in itself, it only gives us knowledge of the object as a representation according to our innate modes of knowledge. The deduction cannot go beyond what is given and what is given is not all there is to know about the object. The un-given and thus unknowable part of the object is called the *noumenon*. The unknowable nature of the *noumenon* is consistent system with the Kantian theory of knowledge as a representation but constitutes for us a subject of critique as we try to move beyond Kant to identify internal incoherence in a theory of knowledge that does not lack limitations. It is important to go beyond Kant and identify internal incoherence in his theory of knowledge so as to best adapt his views to our contemporary era facing challenges of complexity at the level of the subject and the object of knowledge.

²¹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason, op. cit.*, Ideal of Pure Reason, p. 495.

SECOND PART:

THE *APORIA* IN KANT'S CONCEPTION OF TRUTH

INTRODUCTION

The great sub –divisions of the massive Kantian *Critique of Pure Reason* inevitably take the reader to the transcendental deduction of categories or the pure concepts of the understanding thanks to which the mind is able to give *a priori* rules to experience, rules which become laws when they give us knowledge of the object. The transcendental doctrine of elements has two sub – sections: transcendental aesthetics that deals with time and space as the *a priori* modes of intuition by which objects are given to us, and the intuition must be sensible; and transcendental logic by which the mind works with concepts, and depending on the type of concepts the mind works with, we can be involved with transcendental analytic where logic involves the use of the mind in the deduction of concepts that help us explain nature, or in transcendental dialectic which is a logic of illusions illustrated in the paralogisms, antinomies and ideal of pure reason used to reject metaphysics as we have shown in the first part of our work. It is thus in the subsection of transcendental logic called “transcendental analytic” that Kant carried out the rigorous deduction of the categories and the corresponding synthetic *a priori* judgments considered to be the novelty and at the same time the major achievement of his work in search of truth. In this inquiry, the truth aimed at cuts across epistemology, metaphysics and natural sciences. But did the transcendental deduction give us a satisfactory approach to grasp the truth? Does the Kantian use of our representational faculties to make the *noumena* unknowable not constitute an unnecessary limitation on the human powers of cognition?

The first case is to prove that beyond Kant, a vast field of options is open to researchers especially as far as the contemporary complexity of the reality is concerned. This is because if the *noumena* exist and cannot be known, then how do we even know that they exist? What if the *noumena* do not exist at all? While Kant looks for consistency in his system of philosophy, a few loopholes show that there are possibilities for *aporia*. If the *noumena* exist and cannot be known, then either our representational faculties are limited or our intuitive powers are limited. In either case, Kant seems to be conclusive on the case of the *noumena* rather than opening up possibilities for further research. The advent of synthetic *a priori* judgments may then create more epistemological problems than solutions. And since problems are more important to philosophy than solutions, the case of the *noumena* challenges us to put to question the Kantian achievement of the synthetic *a priori* judgments

when it is not clear how such judgments are to be carried out and how the judgments keep us in ignorance with regards to things as they are in themselves.

The second case, then, is that of a critique of metaphysics that does not take Kant far away from the same metaphysics that he criticizes. The critique of metaphysics which ends up in synthetic *a priori* judgements that follow a very metaphysical procedure puts to question the achievements of the Kantian theory of knowledge. According to Andrew Ward,

Even though the notion of a synthetic a priori judgment is not, on Kant's terminology, a self-contradictory one, it is far from clear how such a judgment can be established. Whereas an analytic a priori judgment can be established by analysis of the meaning of the terms involved (and thereby determining whether the denial of the judgment is self-contradictory), and a synthetic a posteriori judgment can be established by appeal to experience, both these routes are barred for a synthetic a priori judgment. Neither an analysis of the terms involved can do the trick (since the judgment is synthetic) nor an appeal to experience (since the judgment, because it claims necessity and universality, holds, if it holds at all, independent of experience). It would be no exaggeration to say that the issue of how to establish synthetic a priori judgments is the central one for Kant's whole critical philosophy.²¹⁶

The problem is that without experience, the *a priori* of our concepts and yet the possibility for the concepts to determine experience implies that the whole system of Kantian philosophy does not treat metaphysics with the kind of disdain that it seems to do at first sight. It is thus important for us to do a critique of the Kantian critique of metaphysics so as to know if such a critique is even necessary as Kant ends up in an epistemology based on metaphysics.

The third case is to prove that the architectonic itself is shaky because the transition from critical to practical reason is problematic. If speculative reason fails epistemologically for practical reason to succeed morally, we can ask questions about whether it was a case of coherence or a pre – planned theory for one to fail so that the other can make use of its failures. Is the failure of speculative reason to obtain knowledge about the ideas of pure reason a necessity for practical reason to get an object and a foundation? To Kant,

[...] not only is each system articulated in accordance with an idea, but they are one and all organically united in a system of human knowledge, as members of one whole, and so as admitting of an architectonic of all human knowledge, which, at the present time, in view of the great amount of material

²¹⁶ Andrew Ward, *Starting With Kant*, London, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2016, p. 15.

*that has been collected, or which can be obtained from the ruins of ancient systems, is not only possible, but would not indeed be difficult.*²¹⁷

Identifying loose ends in the Kantian system is of utmost importance not only because the relevance of such systems may become difficult to sustain in the long run but because such systems may contain some loose transitions that do not create a strong bond between the various elements that must stick together. The transition from speculative to practical reason is on focus for us as it symbolizes the complementarity of conflicting faculties whose ‘conflicting complementarity’ give rise to internal incoherence in the Kantian theory of knowledge.

By uniting distinct faculties to play complementary roles, does Kant not close the researcher in a rigid system that is more of a liability than an asset in the quest for truth in an era of complexity? The internal conflicts of epistemological and metaphysical elements treated by Kant give rise to contradictions that Kant battles with sometimes in an unsuccessful manner. According to Norman Kemp Smith in his translator’s preface to Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*,

*Kant's German, even when judged by German standards, makes difficult reading. The difficulties are not due merely to the abstruseness of the doctrines which Kant is endeavoring to expound, or to his frequent alternation between conflicting points of view. Many of the difficulties are due simply to his manner of writing. He crowds so much into each sentence that he is constrained to make undue use of parentheses, and, what is still more troublesome to the reader, to rely upon particles, pronouns and genders to indicate the connections between the parts of the sentence.*²¹⁸

The problem, for us, beyond the conceptual density and the language, is that of conceptual incoherence of some elements of the Kantian theory of knowledge that make the architectonic shaky. From such a critical analysis, we intend to prove that if the contemporary knowledge – seeker is to benefit from the Kantian conception of truth, a critique of the Kantian critique of reason is necessary to identify loose ends and make up for them in our contemporary theories.

It may be a case that Kant is so bent on reconciling conflicting faculties and conflicting objects that he deliberately or unintentionally ignores those loose ends that lead to questions and doubts over the relevance of his theory of knowledge in our era. In this part of our work, we start by going beyond Kant to situate the debate in the German era of idealism

²¹⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, Architectonic of Pure Reason, p. 655.

²¹⁸ Norman Kemp Smith, “Translator’s Preface” in Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1929, Translator’s Preface, pp. vi – vii.

to which Kant was the forerunner. Then we open up the debate in the problematic 'postmodern' era which looks like a 'post – truth' era which raises more controversies about the relevance of rigid systems of philosophy. From there we can proceed to do an internal evaluation of those elements of the Kantian theory of knowledge that raise *aporia* in logical form and in content such that the last part of our work that situates the relevance of the Kantian theory of knowledge to our contemporary society should not be an arbitrary and anachronistic attempt to adapt outdated theories to our contemporary problems of knowledge.

FOURTH CHAPTER

BEYOND KANT

In the seed, Kant had defined the problem of philosophical modernity in the need for complementarity in the empirical and rational approach to knowledge. The crisis of truth is a philosophical problem marked by the inevitable need to reject one – dimensional methods to get to the truth. The truth is complex and so the method to get to the truth has to acknowledge this complexity too. The multi – dimensional conception of truth creates a problem that becomes a crisis when the grounds of objectivity are shaken by multiplicity in approaches which prefigure the multiplicity of the angles from which the truth can be captured. If the crisis of truth is also a crisis of method, then we cannot fail to acknowledge the role played by Kant who is not only the precursor of German idealism but also and above all the precursor of the crisis of truth symbolized by the crisis of the method to get to the truth. The problem of the relation of the subject to the object of knowledge which takes Kant to the subject – based objectivity implies that philosophical modernity has to take a turn from the traditional conception of an object – based truth that makes the subject a receptacle of all that can be considered knowledge thereby reducing the subject to a passive and not active contributor to the construction of the truth. More than the relation of the subject to the object of knowledge, the method that keeps this relationship going is put to question in an era during which the complexity of truth implies the complexity of methods to get to the truth.

The crisis of truth is the crisis of reason and any other possible methodological tool we can use to grasp the truth. If objective truth is a matter of a crisis of method which is a crisis of methods, then the problem treated by Kant in the seed has helped to redefine modern and postmodern philosophy, science, religion and ethics. Our thought has to move from simplicity to complexity to understand the fullness of the truth from all multiple angles. Edgar Morin puts it squarely when he identifies the origin of the crisis in errors, ignorance, blindness, perils which have a common characteristic resulting from a mutilating mode of organization of knowledge, unable to recognize and grasp the complexity of reality.²¹⁹ What has made the truth too difficult to grasp with our simple modes of knowledge? How far is the post – Kantian era away from Kantian ideas in the quest for truth? From Kant to his immediate and distant contemporaries and successors, the problem of truth takes the dimension of a crisis that goes beyond Kant without completing destroying the Kantian

²¹⁹ Edgar Morin, *Introduction à la pensée complexe*, Edition du Seuil, avril 2005, p.16.

edifice. If Kant saw the problem in the seed and tackled it in the architectonic, his multi – faceted views of truth paved the way for what today has become the need for opening up of closed systems as the truth continues to be a puzzle to modern and postmodern philosophers in a complex world that has to shake traditional beliefs that no longer stand the test of time.

4.1: The Era of German Idealism

The trajectory taken by German philosophy after Kant is conditioned by the solutions proposed by Kant to the problem of the nature and source of truth but most especially by the problem he raised. The most intriguing legacy of Kantian philosophy that became a bone of contention in the theories of German idealists is the unknowable ‘*noumenon*’. What Kant saw as an achievement in the subject – based approach to truth whereby what we know depends on our inbuilt modes of knowledge became a huge challenge to German idealists who saw in Kant a problem adequately posed but not solved with the same adequacy. Setting a limit on what can be known about the object in a subject – based system of cognition is still a controversial issue among philosophers in the quest for the truth. In his distinction between the *noumena* and the phenomena, Kant makes it clear that the pure concepts of the understanding, though not derived from experience, are at the service of experience because they prescribe the rule for nature and actually become conditions of possibility of nature. This gives rise to the other vast area beyond the understanding which is the area of concepts of pure reason which are not derived from experience and do not serve to give a rule to experience.

Besides the fact that the concepts of pure reason do not relate to experience because they push the understanding beyond epistemologically fruitful limits, Kant also notes the difficulty involved in grasping the thing in itself or the *noumenon*. Since all cognition is a representation of things as they appear to our inbuilt modes of knowledge, Kant uses the analogy of an “island” to refer to the understanding surrounded by vast lands of possible illusions and unsuccessful attempts to grasp things as they are in themselves:

We have now not merely explored the territory of pure understanding, and carefully surveyed every part of it, but have also measured its extent, and assigned to everything in it its rightful place. This domain is an island, enclosed by nature itself within unalterable limits. It is the land of truth [...] surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, the native home of illusion, where many a fog bank and many a swiftly melting iceberg give the deceptive appearance of farther shores, deluding the adventurous seafarer ever anew with empty hopes, and engaging him in enterprises which he can never abandon and yet is unable to

*carry to completion. Before we venture on this sea, to explore it in all directions and to obtain assurance whether there be any ground for such hopes, it will be well to begin by casting a glance upon the map of the land which we are about to leave [...].*²²⁰

The territory of pure understanding in one way or the other relates with experience to give subject – based objectivity to knowledge. Beyond this territory, reason lands in dialectically illusions that add nothing to our stock of knowledge. Reason at this level only helps to project an ideal aimed at by the practice of virtue as a way of being pleasing to God. Yet metaphysics serves as a basis for natural science in its similarity with mathematics whereby experience alone does not and cannot provide the apodictic and universal characteristic of truth in natural science.

To avoid the vain hopes of the kind of metaphysics that does not serve as a foundation for science but rather feigns to extend our knowledge and to avoid taking the thing as it appears to us for the thing in itself, Kant had to admit that the thing in itself is unknowable. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel inherited the problem of the *noumena* and the phenomena from Kant and pushed it to the level of the Absolute which seeks to synthesize the modes of knowledge with the thing known. With Hegel, it is equally important to distinguish the thing known from the mode of knowledge so as to situate the truth with precision and accuracy. In the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, Hegel resituates the problem of the Kantian legacy of metaphysical epistemology within the framework of consciousness seeking to grasp the Absolute as a Spirit which represents the highest level of abstraction in German idealism. According to Hegel,

*[...] consciousness distinguishes from itself something to which it at the same time relates itself; or, as the expression goes, there is something for consciousness; and this determinate aspect, the relating, or the Being of something for a consciousness, is knowing. But from this Being for another we distinguish Being-in-itself; what is related to knowing is also distinguished from knowing and posited as being outside this relation as well; this aspect, the in-itself, is called truth. What is really involved in these determinations is of no further concern to us here; for as our object is knowledge as it appears, so too its determinations are initially taken up as they immediately present themselves; and they present themselves very much as we have conceived them.*²²¹

²²⁰ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Transcendental Doctrine of Jgement, p. 257.

²²¹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Michael Inwood, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, Introduction, p. 39.

If consciousness is not just conscious of itself, then it must be conscious of something outside the consciousness itself. If consciousness is also consciousness of something, then consciousness sets the standards of how we know things, or to be precise, consciousness determines the way we are conscious of things outside the consciousness itself. And this would agree with Kant on his subject – based knowledge of objects. But being conscious of a thing is different from the thing as it is. This implies that whether we end up being conscious of objects or not, the objects are there as they are irrespective of the relation they may have with our consciousness when we make them objects of knowledge.

What Hegel calls the “in – itself” is the thing as it is independently of our being conscious of it. This leads to a further distinction between our knowing a thing and the thing known. If consciousness determines our knowing of a thing, then the thing known is defined by our consciousness. But if we consider the truth to be the “in – itself” whether we are conscious of it or not, then the unknowable *noumenon* of Kant can be granted as a thing in itself that cannot be known even if we apply consciousness to it. In this case, whether we want to be conscious of it or not, the “in – itself” of an object would be inaccessible to us. But this would lead to a contradiction as knowing that we cannot know a thing is already a way of being conscious of the thing as an unknowable entity. If the truth is in the “in – itself” and then it is inaccessible to our consciousness then we would not even be aware of its existence as an unknowable reality. Hegel makes the problem clearer by noting that

Consciousness provides its standard within itself, and the investigation will therefore be a comparison of consciousness with itself; for the distinction that has just been made falls within it. In consciousness there is one thing for another, or consciousness in general has in it the determinacy of the moment of knowledge; at the same time, this other is to consciousness not merely for it, but also outside this relation or in itself: the moment of truth. Thus in what consciousness declares within itself to be the in-itself or the true we have the standard that consciousness itself sets up by which to measure its knowledge.²²²

The standard of consciousness is the same used by consciousness to declare something as “in – itself” or the thing as it is as well as the standard for judging something as it is for consciousness. The thing as it appears to consciousness and the thing as it is are all determined by consciousness. The thing as it is “in – itself” is the Hegelian moment of truth. Unlike Kant who considers the thing in itself (*noumenon*) as the unknowable reality which is not given to our intuition and thus cannot be thought through any concepts, the thing “in – itself” to Hegel

²²² *Idem.*

is the moment of truth, yet this moment of truth is determined by the same consciousness that determine other things to be as they appear to consciousness.

The thing in –itself is a declaration of consciousness according to its standards of knowledge and the same consciousness declares the thing “in – itself” as the truth according to Hegel. The thing in itself considered unknowable to Kant is actually the moment of truth to Hegel. Hegel thus goes beyond Kant’s limitation of knowledge to the phenomena to demonstrate that consciousness in itself has the act and standards to determine knowledge of things as they are in themselves. Kant had seen that which gives universality to our knowledge as the *a priori* concepts of the understanding known as the categories. But the categories only give us knowledge of the object as phenomena or as a thing as it appears to our inbuilt modes of knowing. This way of knowing runs through the “First Critique” or *Critique of Pure Reason* by Kant. The same view is restated in the “Second Critique” or *Critique of Judgment* in which Kant makes a clear distinction between the roles of the understanding and reason in cognition. In this distinction, the conception of that which gives universality and objectivity to our knowledge is elucidated:

Reason is a power of principles, and its ultimate demand [for principles] aims at the unconditioned. Understanding, on the other hand, always serves reason only under a certain condition, one that must be given [to us]. But without concepts of the understanding, to which objective reality must be given, reason cannot make objective (synthetic) judgments at all. As theoretical reason it has absolutely no constitutive principles of its own, but merely regulative ones. Two points emerge from this. First, if reason advances to where understanding cannot follow, it becomes transcendent, displaying itself not in objectively valid concepts, but instead in ideas, though these do have a basis (as regulative principles). But, second, since the understanding cannot keep pace with reason, while yet it would be needed to make [ideas] valid for objects, it restricts the validity of those ideas of reason to just the subject, yet in a universal way, i.e., [as a validity] for all subjects of our species. In other words, understanding restricts the validity of these ideas to this condition: that, given the nature of our (human) cognitive ability, or even given any concept we can form of the ability of a finite rational being as such, all thinking must be like this and cannot be otherwise - though we are not asserting that such a judgment has its basis in the object.²²³

With reason, we can have synthetic unity that does not depend on experience and is not conditioned by experience but by pure principles of internal coherence even if such coherence does not in any way have a direct relationship with experience. Reason actually

²²³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987, Critique of Teleological Judgment, pp. 283 – 284.

takes the understanding beyond the bounds of experience. Reason converts pure concepts of the understanding which are not derived from experience but used to condition experience to ideas of pure reason which are not derived from experience but used to condition the understanding in its quest for rules to define experience, rules which are never satisfactory to reason until they are taken up to the level of the unconditioned unity which itself is transcendent. In this way, the universality of reason is regulative as a guide to the understanding but such use of reason does not guarantee objectivity of knowledge.

The understanding circumscribes reason by making use only of concepts that are conditions of possibility of experience. The universality provided by understanding is achieved through apperception when the categories, through the mediation of the transcendental imagination in the schema, become rules, through concepts, by which all particular cases in experience are subsumed. In the Kantian conception of objective consciousness in apperception, the knowledge that we can obtain by subsuming particular empirical cases to general rules is only knowledge of things as they appear to us and not as they are in themselves. With Hegel, though the dialectics of being aware of things and reflecting on them puts us in a contradiction of what comes from us and what comes from the object, the truth which is in the thing in itself is still to be determined by our consciousness. Consciousness determines the truth of the thing in itself by determining the universal medium through which it is known:

At first, then, I become aware of the thing as One, and have to hold it fast in this true determination; if, in the movement of perceiving, something turns up which contradicts it, then this is to be recognized as my reflection. Now, there also occur in the perception diverse properties which seem to be properties of the thing; but the thing is One, and we are conscious that this diversity, by which it would cease to be One, falls in us. So in point of fact, this thing is white only to our eyes, also tart to our tongue, also cubical to our feeling, and so on. We get the entire diversity of these aspects, not from the thing, but from ourselves; and they fall asunder in this way for us, because the eye is quite distinct from the tongue, and so on. We are thus the universal medium in which such moments are separate and are for themselves. Through the fact, then, that we regard the determinacy of being a universal medium as our reflection, we maintain the equality-to-itself and truth of the thing, its being One.²²⁴

Consciousness becomes aware of individual things but in the course of reflection multiple qualities of the object emerge to contradict the unity of the object as it was received. Yet reflection remains the universal medium by which the thing in itself can be known. Kant's

²²⁴ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *op. cit.*, Perception: The Thing and Illusion, p. 52.

awareness of the unknowable *noumena* is already a way of determining the object which means it is not unknowable; at least it is accessible to consciousness as the medium of universal determination.

The bone of contention between Kant and Hegel on the Kantian epistemological metaphysics is the controversy over self – consciousness. Kant had associated self – consciousness with transcendental apperception by which concepts of the understanding become rules for experience. The Kantian self – consciousness attains subject – based objectivity in transcendental apperception which is different from inner sense or empirical apperception:

*This transcendental unity of apperception forms out of all possible appearances, which can stand alongside one another in one experience, a connection of all these representations according to laws. For this unity of consciousness would be impossible if the mind in knowledge of the manifold could not become conscious of the identity of function whereby it synthetically combines it in one knowledge. The original and necessary consciousness of the identity of the self is thus at the same time a consciousness of an equally necessary unity of the synthesis of all appearances according to concepts, that is, according to rules, which not only make them necessarily reproducible but also in so doing determine an object for their intuition, that is, the concept of something wherein they are necessarily interconnected.*²²⁵

The consciousness of the self involved in transcendental apperception goes beyond the contingencies of experience to provide an a priori ground for concepts to relate to objects through the mediation of transcendental imagination. To Kant, the real task of knowledge is performed in this ability to bring the manifold received through intuition to a point of unity by which they could serve as a rule to experience. Without this transcendental apperception, we would only be dealing with empirical consciousness which, being *a posteriori*, does not provide the universal and apodictic ground for knowledge attained by means of the categories when concepts become conditions of possibility of objects.

With Hegel, self – consciousness is for itself and in – itself. This entails that self – consciousness is an awareness of the self as an object which makes it self – consciousness of self – consciousness when the self, considered as consciousness, is itself a way of being consciousness. Thus the concept of self –consciousness leads to duplication because it is an awareness of awareness, or an awareness of that which is aware of other things:

²²⁵Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, Transcendental Deduction, pp. 136 – 137.

Self-consciousness is in and for itself, when, and by the fact that, it is in and for itself for another self-consciousness; that is, it is only as something recognized. The concept of this its unity in its duplication, of the infinity realizing itself in self-consciousness, is a many-sided and ambiguous interlacing, so that the moments of this unity must on the one hand be kept strictly apart, and on the other hand must in this differentiation at the same time also be taken and cognized as not distinct, or always in their opposite significance. The twofold sense of the distinct moments lies in the essence of self-consciousness, which is to be infinite, or immediately the contrary of the determinacy in which it is posited. The explication of the concept of this spiritual unity in its duplication presents to us the movement of recognition. There is for self-consciousness another self-consciousness; it has come out of itself. This has a twofold significance: first, it has lost itself, for it finds itself as another essence; secondly, in doing so it has sublated the other, for it does not see the other as an essence either, but in the other sees its own self.²²⁶

Self – consciousness to Hegel is infinite because it is being aware of what makes us aware of other things. Self – consciousness of self – consciousness does not just imply that we are aware of subjects that are aware of their own awareness of things and the self; it actually implies that being aware of our consciousness is self – consciousness being aware of itself as the ground by which standards are set for us to be aware of other things. Self – consciousness is like looking at ourselves through a mirror and by so doing we see that by which we see other things thereby making us see other things in us. It is like an inquiry into the source of the standards by which everything is judged, and by so doing we see the standard used to judge other things which is a way of seeing us in the things we judge through the standards set by consciousness. It is like losing the standard by which we see other things so as to see the standard itself. In the process that which is used as standard has to be considered through another standard which is another self – consciousness.

In the Kantian synthetic unity of apperception, the concepts have to be concepts of objects though they are conceived *a priori*. For the concepts to be concepts of objects, there is need for an inner awareness that is not empirical because if it were empirical it would be infinitely mutable and would not be able to guarantee the apodictic standards required of truth in science. The inner awareness is transcendental because it is a plan that is *a priori* or conceived prior to all forms of experience. In this way, the plan of transcendental self – consciousness is the unity of concepts with their objects whereby the unity of concepts with each other is conceived *a priori* as condition for the unity with objects. How Kantian was Hegel, then in his conception of self – consciousness? Hegel at first sight wants to go beyond

²²⁶ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *op. cit.*, Self – Consciousness, p. 76.

Kant to show that self – consciousness returns to itself in knowing the truth as things in themselves. But upon closer examination, Hegel agrees with Kant on the unity of thought with its object in synthetic apperception. The only difference is that while to Kant this unity of apperception aims at giving rules to experience, the Hegelian self – consciousness is already in itself and for itself a unity of thought with its object without any need to move out of consciousness to experience. Hegel is purely idealistic in the traditional meaning of the term in seeing objective truth as an inward journey whereby consciousness returns to itself whereas with Kant, self – consciousness has to go out there and find application in experience before it can be considered as a source of the subject – based objectivity.

The objectivity of Hegelian consciousness is the return of consciousness to itself as reason. As reason, consciousness is the world and the world is consciousness. In this way, rather than seeing the *noumena* as unknowable as is the case with Kant, Hegel sees the return of consciousness to itself as reason as the unity of thought with its object as thought and the thing in itself becomes the other side of consciousness. The quest for truth to Hegel is thus the quest for the other side of consciousness in the world which culminates in an inward journey whereby all objects of knowledge are another half of consciousness which grasp them in an inward journey like looking at a mirror so as to judge the self through the same standards used to judge other things outside of us. In such judgments, the standard or source of standard for determining what is to be considered knowledge of objects itself is viewed through other standards of the same self in opposite directions which create duplicates of opposites that are finally reconciled as the return of consciousness to itself. Reason is thus a higher level of consciousness which finally grasps the truth as an inward idealistic journey:

*Reason sets out to know the truth; to find as concept that which, for meaning and perceiving, is a thing, i.e. to have in thinghood the consciousness only of itself. Reason now has, therefore, a universal interest in the world, because it is the certainty of having presence in the world, or that the presence is rational. It seeks its other, knowing that therein it possesses nothing other than itself: it seeks only its own infinitude. [...] Reason is spirit when the certainty of being all reality is elevated to the truth, and it is conscious of itself as its own world, and of the world as itself.*²²⁷

Reason being conscious of the world as itself and itself as the world is a statement is central statement of Hegelian philosophy also stated as “What is not rational has no truth...”²²⁸ Reason in the strictest sense does not actually go out of itself; it just represents itself in the

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, Reason, p. 99 – 175.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2018.

world, it just uses the world to complete the other side of itself. Unlike the Kantian transcendental idealism that considers the inbuilt modes of knowledge as the conditions of possibility of experience, Hegelian absolute idealism sees the reality as a rational construction in which the world is a part not to be conditioned as with Kant but Hegel sees the world as part of reason in consciousness and reason as the world itself. It is in this way that Hegel, while being very Kantian in his roots, goes beyond Kant to overcome the difficulties that the Kantian subject – based epistemology encountered and had to admit that the *noumenon* was unknowable not as a concession or source of weakness but as a way of defining objective knowledge within empirical limits.

However, it should be noted, like Graham Bird does, that Hegel was not fair in his treatment of Kant's views in *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. In what Graham Bird considers as bias and prejudices and a rather shallow reading of Kant, Hegel considers the subject – based objectivity of Kant as a purely subjective approach to truth. In this way of reading Kant, Hegel tries to prove that Kant did not take the contradictions to a higher level from the synthetic apperception so as to grasp the *noumena* instead of declaring it unknowable. According to Graham Bird:

This weakness in Hegel's view reveals another, deeper, inadequacy in that 'account. It is plain [...] that it is the conceptual aspect of transcendental apperception which directly bears on the objectivity of experience. For it is the conceptual rules which are said to determine an object for intuition. But it is abundantly plain that Kant's conception of an object here has nothing to do with things-in-themselves. This notion of an object is distinguishable both from things-in-themselves and from mere subjective sense-experiences, and so already begins to cast doubt on Hegel's wider assumption that Kant is dealing solely with a division between what is empirically subjective (sense-experiences) and what is genuinely objective (things-in-themselves).²²⁹

The Kantian conception of the unknowable *noumena* does not imply that the truth is a subjective endeavor. The truth, to Kant, is objective but the objectivity is not that which results from the object. The Kantian conception of truth is subject – based and is actually objective not only because various subjects have to agree but also and above all because the a priori concepts of the understanding constitute inbuilt modes of knowledge found in all human beings and lead to apodictic and necessary truths precisely by avoiding the contingencies of experience. It is like defining experience with concepts which are objective because the concepts are not derived from experience.

²²⁹ Graham Bird, "Hegel's Account on Kant's Epistemology in the Lectures on the History of Philosophy" in Stephen Priest (ed.), *Hegel's Critique of Kant*, , Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, Chapter Two, p. 69.

In Kantian metaphysical epistemology, empirical concepts are not a source of apodictic truths because empirical consciousness or inner sense varies with person, time and place and does not give rise to absolute universality which makes knowledge objective. The objectivity of Kantian knowledge is not to be obtained from the object of knowledge itself. Knowledge to Kant is actually a combination of subjective contributions and what is derived from the object through intuition. The only nuance is that that what is obtained by intuition has to be passed through an *a priori* conceptual plan that defeats the mutability of empirical concepts and empirical consciousness. The awareness of things in inner sense is *a posteriori* is the angle of subjectivity of Kant that does not constitute truth. It is the *a priori* plan or transcendental awareness that gives rise to subject – based objectivity. The following figure is our understanding of the Kantian knowable phenomena as a product of self – consciousness in transcendental apperception:

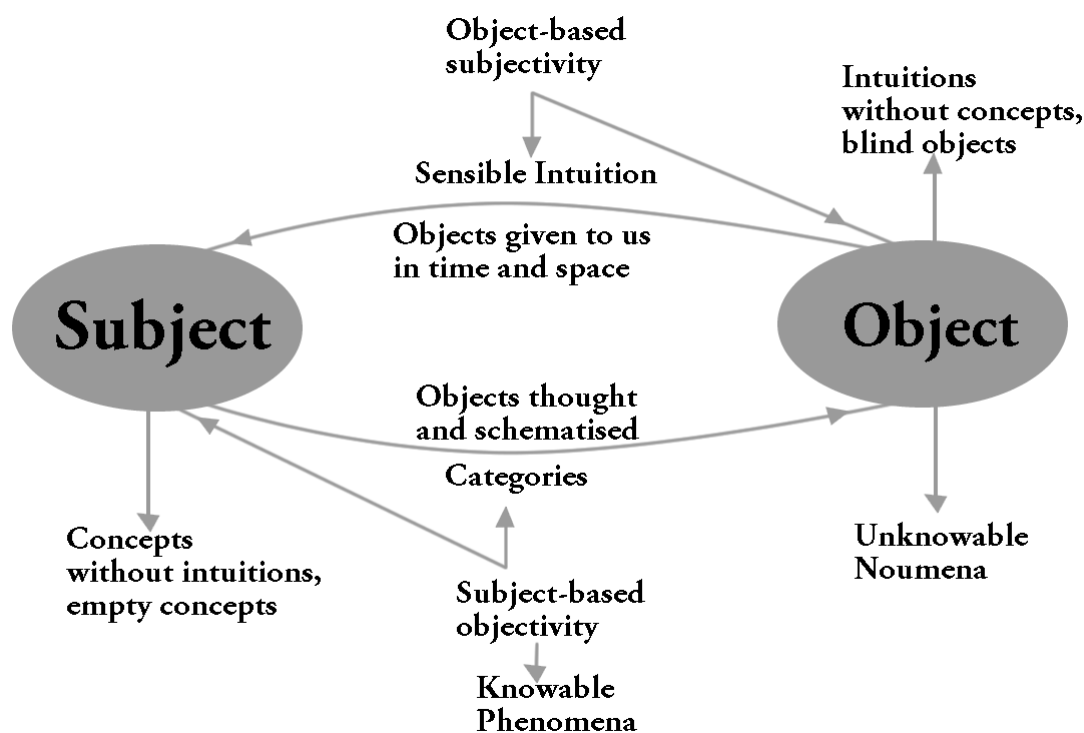
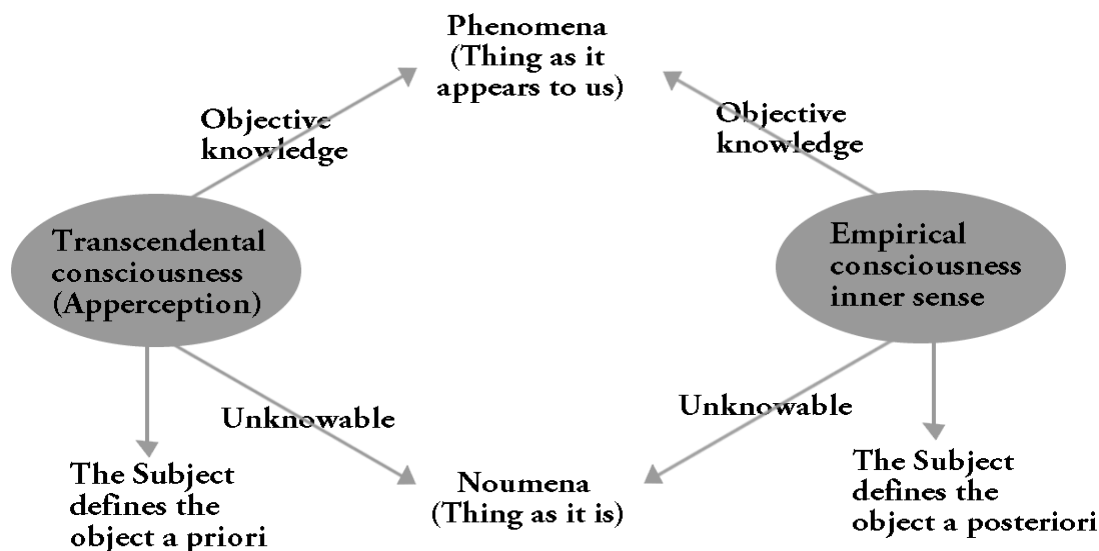


Fig 2: The Subject – Based Objectivity of the Phenomena

If Hegel ignores the subject – based objectivity of the Kantian system so as to show how it is a subjective system of knowledge that does not give room for self – consciousness to define the object, then it is not a fair charge. The Kantian unknowable *noumena* is very consistent with his system of Philosophy and Hegel goes beyond Kant to represent consciousness as that in us which makes reason the governor of the world as the world is in

reason and reason is the world when consciousness attains the level of absolute truth. The following figure represents our understanding of Kant's conception of objective knowledge of the phenomena using transcendental consciousness:

Fig3: Transcendental Apperception and Objective Knowledge



In the third volume of his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel does a review of Kantian epistemology in what he considers to be Kant's "subjective" approach to truth. Considered the way Hegel does, Kant's approach can only lead to subjective truth which is far lower than what Kant expects to be the results of his subject – based approach to objective knowledge as a conjoined product of the understanding and experience. Hegel's review of Kantian epistemology goes thus:

[...] the Kantian philosophy no doubt leads reality back to self-consciousness, but it can supply no reality to this essence of self-consciousness, or to this pure self-consciousness, nor can it demonstrate Being in the same. It apprehends simple thought as having difference in itself, but does not yet apprehend that all reality rests on this difference; it does not know how to obtain mastery over the individuality of self-consciousness, and although it describes reason very well, it does this in an unthinking empiric way which again robs it of the truth it has. Theoretically the Kantian philosophy is the illumination [...] reduced to method; it states that nothing true can be known, but only the phenomenal; it leads knowledge into consciousness and self-consciousness, but from this standpoint maintains it to be a subjective and finite knowledge. Thus although it deals with the infinite Idea, expressing its formal categories and arriving at its concrete claims, it yet again denies this

*to be the truth, making it a simple subjective, because it has once for all accepted finite knowledge as the fixed and ultimate standpoint. This philosophy made an end of the metaphysic of the understanding as an objective dogmatism, but in fact it merely transformed it into a subjective dogmatism, i.e. into a consciousness in which these same finite determinations of the understanding persist, and the question of what is true in and for itself has been abandoned.*²³⁰

The Hegelian review of Kantian epistemology implies that Kant does not consider knowledge obtained through the subject – based approach to be finite. This is problematic given that the *a priori* source of the concepts of the understanding guarantees the apodictic and universal nature of the knowledge obtained through it. Hegel also holds that Kant rejects one form of dogmatism only to end up in another. This too is controversial because the Kantian transcendental idealism is sharply distinct from the Cartesian problematic idealism and Berkeley's dogmatic idealism as demonstrated in the first part of this thesis.

Despite the apparent differences, Hegel was more Kantian than he seems to be at first sight of a reading of his books. In *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel's unfair review of Kant's metaphysical epistemology leads Hegel to write that "Its study [of Kantian philosophy] is made difficult by its diffuseness and prolixity, and by the peculiar terminology found in it. Nevertheless this diffuseness has one advantage, that inasmuch as the same thing is often repeated, the main points are kept before us, and these cannot easily be lost from view."²³¹ The same could be said of Hegel from a reading of *Phenomenology of Spirit* which is not less conceptually dense (though not as massive) than the Kantian *Critique of Pure Reason*. A reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* with Rebecca D. Harrison brings out the essential similarity and difference between Kant and Hegel on subjectivity

*For Hegel's subject here, as for Kant's subject in the Critique of Pure Reason, objects of cognition are made possible in virtue of the subject's synthetic unity of apperception, and this "unity of self-consciousness" constitutes the ultimate authority on how cognition should be done. It follows that such a subject regards the "sensuous world" as no longer possessing any independent authority itself.*²³²

²³⁰ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, & Co., Ltd., 1896, *Recent German Philosophy*, pp. 426-427.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 427.

²³² Rebecca D. Harrison, "The Failure of Desire: A Critique of Kantian Cognitive Autonomy in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*", Georgia: Georgia State University, 2013, (online) available from https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/philosophy_theses, (Retrieved 13 November 2020), p. 28.

Strictly – speaking, from the perspective of Kant’s critical philosophy, Kant admits the possibility of objective knowledge in an approach which, though subject – based, acknowledges the conjoined role of the subject and the object of knowledge. But the objectivity is guaranteed by the subject’s innate modes of knowledge which use concepts to define the object through universal and apodictic rules. On the other hand, Hegel is the radical version of idealism which, like the idealism of Berkeley, rejects the independent existence of the material world reducing truth to a mind – product.

Hegel’s ‘subjective’ use of consciousness leads him to conceive a rational objective reality through consciousness as reason which is the world synthesized as a mind – product in such a way that such a world has no independent existence; such a world is a creation of the mind. On the other hand, what Hegel considers to be Kant’s ‘subjective’ approach to truth is the subject’s use of synthetic apperception to give objective rules to experience. Whether the “objectivity” of the knowledge obtained through consciousness is situated more at the level of the subject than the object or vice versa is at the heart of German idealism after Kant putting the truth at a crisis. Johann Gottlieb Fichte, in *The Science of Knowledge*, takes up the controversy with the concept of “Ego” and uses it to tackle the Kantian problematic of the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments:

*Kant's celebrated question, which he placed at the head of his Critic of Pure Reason, How are synthetical judgments a priori possible? has now been answered in the most universal and satisfactory manner. In our third principle we have established a synthesis between the opposites. Ego and Non-Ego, by means of the posited divisibility of both, concerning the possibility of which no further question can be asked nor any further ground assigned; it is absolutely possible, and we are justified in establishing it without further ground.*²³³

Fichte holds that Ego and Non – Ego correspond to the Kantian categories of reality and negation respectively. Then Fichte considers limitation as a category that cuts across reality and negation because limitation implies affirming a certain aspect of reality and negating the other. In the category of limitation, there is both equality of some aspects of opposites and inequality of contradictory aspects of opposites. Thus with Fichte, not all aspects of opposites contradict each other. It is the invention of the thesis, antithesis and synthesis by Fichte and wrongly attributed to Hegel. Fichte actually uses the trilogy of thesis, antithesis and synthesis to establish the possibility of the Kantian synthetic *a priori* judgments.

²³³Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, trans. A. E. Kroeger, London: Trubner & Co., Ludgate Hill, 1889, Fundamental Principles of the Whole Science of Knowledge, p. 88.

How the mind can arrive at judgments that are *a priori* or independently of experience and apodictic or universal but which add something new to our stock of knowledge (unlike analytic judgments that simply elucidate concepts with predicates whose meanings are already implied in the subject) is established in the Kantian transcendental deduction by which categories not derived from experience are used to produce knowledge when they condition experience through concepts. In one of many ways used by Kant to say the same thing, the statement of the peculiarity of synthetic *a priori* judgments goes thus:

How come I then to predicate of that which happens something quite different, and to apprehend that the concept of cause, though not contained in it, yet belongs, and indeed necessarily belongs, to it? What is here the unknown = X which gives support to the understanding when it believes that it can discover outside the concept A a predicate B foreign to this concept, which it yet at the same time considers to be connected with it? It cannot be experience, because the suggested principle has connected the second representation with the first, not only with greater universality, but also with the character of necessity and therefore completely a priori and on the basis of mere concepts. Upon such synthetic, that is, ampliative principles, all our a priori speculative knowledge must ultimately rest; analytic judgments are very important, and indeed necessary, but only for obtaining that clearness in the concepts which is requisite for such a sure and wide synthesis as will lead to a genuinely new addition to all previous knowledge.²³⁴

Analytic judgments help to elucidate concepts for an appropriate synthesis. The Ego of Fichte establishes an antithetical relationship with the Non – Ego and this antithesis is synthesized in the Absolute Ego. Representing an opposite implies that the opposite is not “nothing” since we are able to represent it. The opposite is actually the other side of what is posited. The Non – Ego is the other side of Ego which completes it in Absolute Ego.

Opposites are only opposed to each other in one part and equal to each other in another part, reason for which they have only one ground of distinction and one ground of relation: “Opposites are related and equals opposed to each other in only one part. For, if they were opposed in many parts, that is, if the opposites themselves contained opposite characteristics, one of both would belong to that wherein they are equal, and hence they would not be opposites, and vice versa. Every grounded judgment has, therefore, only one ground of relation and one ground of distinction. If it has more, it is not one judgment, but many judgments.”²³⁵ A single judgment on opposites implying one ground of distinction and one ground of relation gives rise to the possibility of a synthesis because “[...]for every opposite = —A is opposed to an A, and this A is posited. Through the positing of a —A you

²³⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. 51.

²³⁵ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

both cancel and do not cancel A. Hence, you only cancel A in part ; and instead of the X in A, which is not canceled, you have posited in —A not —X, but X itself; and hence A is = —A in X.”²³⁶ This means that each opposite actually posits the part of a concept not cancelled by the negation. The negation thus brings to light that part of a concept that is not destroyed in the negation since a distinction partly establishes a relation.

The ingenuity of Fichte is in the partial equality of opposites which is the condition of possibility of a synthesis. This is because “The Ego is to be = Ego, and yet it is also to be opposed to itself. But it is self-equal in regard to consciousness; and in this consciousness the absolute Ego is posited as indivisible, and the Ego, to which the Non-Ego is opposed, as divisible. Hence, in the unity of consciousness, all the opposites are united [...]”²³⁷ In this way, the synthetic *a priori* judgments of Kant are possible since the analytic judgments clarify the meanings of concepts while the synthetic judgments build new knowledge from opposites. For instance, in the judgment ‘A is equal to A’ the concept ‘A’ is posited. In the judgment ‘A is not equal to non – A’ the part of ‘A’ that is not negated actually posits a new concept. It is from the unity of the two opposite judgments that a new synthetic judgment which adds something new to our knowledge is made possible. Fichte sums up the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments as follows:

*The act whereby, in comparing a twofold, you look up the mark wherein they are opposites, is called the antithetical proceeding, generally spoken of as analytical, which expression, however, is less proper; partly because it permits the opinion that you can develop something out of a conception which you have not previously put into it by a synthesis, and partly because the expression antithetical signifies more clearly that it is the opposite of synthetical. For the synthetical proceeding consists in this, that in opposites that characteristic is looked up wherein they are equal. In the mere logical form, judgments of the first class are called antithetical or negative, and judgments of the latter class synthetical or affirmative judgments.*²³⁸

Opposites are united in one aspect and different from each other in another aspect. When synthesizing, we seek the aspect whereby opposites are equal and build it up to new knowledge that is posed as a new thesis for further opposition and further synthesis. From his treatment of the concept of Ego, Fichte goes beyond Kant to show that through synthesis, we can obtain judgments that add something new to our knowledge in a completely *a priori* procedure respecting logical necessity and universality.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

With Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Von Schelling, greatly influenced by Fichte, transcendental philosophy returns to Kantian roots but with a deviation that objectifies consciousness, unlike Kant whose objectifying of consciousness must relate concepts to experience in apperception. Schelling insists that truth is a sort of co-existence of the subject and the object. The co-existence of subject and object, to Schelling, unlike that of Kant which gives primacy to the subject over the object, is simultaneous. Schelling does not want to talk of primacy of one over the other because it will make him take side in favor of natural science which gives primacy to object over subject, or in favor of the Kantian – inspired transcendental philosophy whose objectivity is subject – based. Schelling is in a quest for the moment where the object and the subject simultaneously give truth in strict complementarity that does not have to identify the primacy of the one over the other. In his *System of Transcendental Philosophy*, Schelling notes that “The nature of the transcendental mode of apprehension must therefore consist essentially in this, that even that which in all other thinking, knowing or acting escapes consciousness and is absolutely nonobjective, is therein brought to consciousness and becomes objective; it consists, in short, of a constant objectifying – to – itself of the subjective.”²³⁹ Consciousness is the standard of objectivity. The act of knowing or getting the truth thus consists in objectifying the world through an original state of subjectivity which gains objectivity by constantly defining the standard of judgment of objects. German idealism, through transcendental philosophy, makes the subjective state of consciousness a source of objectivity in which consciousness makes the object of knowledge part of consciousness itself. With Kant this implies permanently relating concepts to objects of experience. With Hegel, Fichte and Schelling, the consciousness itself has to provide enough grounds of objectivity to the point making the world a constituent part of consciousness and not just a relation to objects.

With Fichte, consciousness as the Ego attains objectivity by reconciling equal sides of opposites to make possible synthetic *a priori* judgments. With Schelling, transcendental philosophy must attain in consciousness a simultaneous co-existence of the subject and the object for the truth to emerge without giving primacy to one over the other. With Hegel, reason is self-consciousness which has become truth which is the thing in-itself recognized only in and through the objectification of an idealistic procedure that grasps the *noumena* hitherto considered unknowable by Kant. In strict terms, the Kantian transcendental idealism

²³⁹ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Von Schelling, *System of Transcendental Philosophy*, trans. Peter Heath, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001, Concept of Transcendental Philosophy, p. 9.

differs from traditional idealism that either makes the world a mind – product or a product possible only through the mind. With Kant, the mind – product must be made to relate to experience for truth to be attained. It becomes clear that Kant is a main precursor of German idealism that took the subjective condition of consciousness to the level of producing objective knowledge of the world in inner states that Kant had to relate to experience before considering them knowledge. With Hegel, Fichte and Schelling, there is an extension of the Kantian idealism to what they consider its logical end in moving from transcendental apperception not to the world of experience but a return to the world of consciousness that synthesizes the world as another angle of itself without need to pass through the Kantian schema. German idealism with Hegel, Fichte and Schelling sees the need to go beyond Kant and project an absolute or objective truth not as a subject defining the world but as the world in a subject. Thus consciousness is the world and the world is in consciousness making any moment of intuition a step for consciousness to objectify its subjective self.

4.2: The Hypothetico – Deductive Science

At first sight, the Kantian critique of metaphysics can be misinterpreted as an endorsement of natural science that makes use of the empirical criterion to test the truth. But unlike pure empiricists who reject metaphysics and either end in skepticism doubting the capacity of the mind to attain knowledge *a priori* like David Hume or end up in a one-dimensional approach to cognition that does not take into account the vital role played by the mind in the conception of knowledge, the Kantian approach makes use of both. In between the skeptical empiricism (which doubts the possibility of *a priori* knowledge) and dogmatic rationalism (that makes the mind the ultimate source of knowledge independently of experience and without seeking the link with experience, and thus end up with empty concepts), the Kantian critique of metaphysics is a destructive – constructive undertaking that rejects the absence of the empirical link without making the mind the ultimate source of knowledge. Natural science before Kant was object – based, and that is why Kant thinks that his subject – based approach is as new in epistemology as the Copernican hypothesis that changed the face of astronomy. Despite the ravaging Kantian critique of metaphysics, he conceded that a reformulated version of metaphysics is at the foundation of natural sciences to give natural sciences the apodictic and universal character that experience cannot give. After Kant, the critics of metaphysics did not stop the inevitable transition from inductive to hypothetico – deductive sciences.

Among the severe critics of metaphysics are the analytic philosophers that gave rise to logical positivism which, inspired by empiricism, rejected propositions of metaphysics for not standing the test of verifiability which warrants that every proposition should correspond to something out there, or something existing outside the mind of the subject that makes the statements. The trend of analytic philosophy was inspired by Ludwig Wittgenstein in *Tractatus Logico – Philosophicus* in which he opines that “Most propositions and questions that have been written about philosophical matters are not false, but senseless. We cannot, therefore, answer questions of this kind at all, but only state their senselessness. Most questions and propositions of the philosophers result from the fact that we do not understand the logic of our language.”²⁴⁰ Wittgenstein had as intention to make philosophy an analysis of language such that words could be atomic representations of things. In this way, each word gets its meaning by referring to a thing out there. The atomic analysis of statements aims at doing away with what Wittgenstein calls “nonsense” because they lack meaning. Lacking a meaning does not actually make a statement false because a statement is false when it has a meaning but does not refer to anything real or verifiable. A statement is “nonsense” when it does not have any meaning at all. In Wittgenstein, we have the foundation of what became a severe critique of metaphysics by logical positivists.

Inspired by Wittgenstein’s analytic philosophy that intended to break down language into its atomic content, the trend known as logical positivism saw in metaphysics a speculative branch of philosophy that does not have the analytic character to identify not only the falsity but also and above all the “nonsense” in the propositions it deals with. Inspired by Wittgenstein, Rudolf Carnap of the Vienna Circle continued to develop the theory of meaning which logically eliminates the propositions of metaphysics from the sphere of meaningful statements:

*The meaning of a statement lies in the fact that it expresses a (conceivable, not necessarily existing) state of affairs. If an (ostensible) statement does not express a (conceivable) state of affairs, then it has no meaning; it is only apparently a statement. If the statement expresses a state of affairs then it is in any event meaningful; it is true if this state of affairs exists, false if it does not exist. One can know that a statement is meaningful even before one knows whether it is true or false.*²⁴¹

²⁴⁰Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico – Philosophicus*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1922, p. 39.

²⁴¹ Rudolf Carnap, *The Logical Structure of the World and Pseudo Problems in Philosophy*, trans. Rolf A. George, Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 2003, The Meaning Criterion, p. 325.

This view of Carnap which is actually developing the new theory of meaning in analytic philosophy is within the framework of what he calls the “constructional theory of meaning”²⁴² which is based on empirical ascertainable realities to distinguish between fiction and real objects. The constructional theory seeks to know the essence of an object by knowing how an object is derived from basic concepts while the metaphysical essence seeks to know the thing – in – itself and this is the level at which we lose the meaning of the object and thus its truth. When a statement is meaningless because it does not correspond to the atomic construction of an object from other objects, we are not just dealing with falsity’ we are dealing with “nonsense”. The existing state of affairs is the relationship by which objects are constructed from other objects. Something can be conceivable without existing and thus keeps the meaning while lacking existence. If the state of affairs is neither conceivable nor existing, then we are dealing with both meaninglessness and falsity.

However, even the analytic philosophers who were precursors of logical positivism admitted the inevitability of metaphysics in a way similar to that of Kant. It is impossible to reject something without knowing what it is about. According to Lucas Thorpe, “Kant is denying the possibility of rationalist metaphysics and is disagreeing with Christian Wolff [...] and his followers who thought that we could discover truths about being, the soul, the world and God merely by analyzing our concepts.”²⁴³ Kant did not agree with the skeptical empiricists either; after all the skeptical empiricists reject by putting to doubt all *a priori* conceptions of truth. Rationalist metaphysics is impossible because it makes dogmatic use of reason and that is why we need a critique of reason to circumscribe the bounds within which reason could be applied. But Wittgenstein who was one of the precursors of analytic philosophy already notes that setting a limit implies accepting the other side of the limit that is rejected: “[...] in order to draw a limit to thinking we should have to be able to think both sides of this limit (we should therefore have to be able to think what cannot be thought). The limit can, therefore, only be drawn in language and what lies on the other side of the limit will be simply nonsense.”²⁴⁴ Kant’s critique of metaphysics actually ‘thought’ through what is on the other side of the limits set on reason. And as we explained in the first part of our work, the metaphysical adventure culminates in dialectical illusions that are epistemologically worthless as they only serve to project an ideal for morality and religion without adding any new stuff to

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 281.

²⁴³ Lucas Thorpe, *The Kant Dictionary*, London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2015, p. 132.

²⁴⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *op. cit.*, Preface, p. 23.

our stock of knowledge. It is very difficult to criticize metaphysics without engaging in metaphysics.

Since metaphysics is a natural disposition of the human mind, at one point or another, we must get into it even if it is to reject it. That is why despite the ravaging critique he made of metaphysics, Kant still ended up making metaphysics the *a priori* and apodictic foundation that gives universality to propositions of natural science. According to Francis Herbert Bradley,

The man who is ready to prove that metaphysical knowledge is wholly impossible has no right here to any answer. [...] He is a brother metaphysician with a rival theory of first principles. [...] To say the reality is such that our knowledge cannot reach it, is a claim to know reality; to urge that our knowledge is of a kind which must fail to transcend appearance, itself implies that transcendence. For, if we had no idea of a beyond, we should assuredly not know how to talk about failure or success. And the test, by which we distinguish them, must obviously be some acquaintance with the nature of the goal.²⁴⁵

With Kant, the enduring value of metaphysics is obvious as the foundation of natural science. With the analytic philosophers and their successors of logical positivism, there is a rejection of something they have to think about. Like Bradley, we cannot reject a reality beyond an appearance without acknowledging the existence of such a reality beyond the appearance. And with Bradley, we can say that Kant cannot admit the existence of a thing in itself as the *noumena* and still hold that it is completely unknowable. Positing it as unknowable is already knowledge of it to an extent. The project of logical positivism to reject metaphysics in favor of natural science inspired by empiricism supposes the reality of metaphysics which they intend to reject. That enduring reality of metaphysics is proven in hypothetico – deductive science.

Therefore, when logical positivism, inspired by analytic philosophy, blossomed in the works of Alfred Jules Ayer, the intention was to find a principle through which all metaphysical propositions could be proven not only to be false but ‘nonsense’. The first step for Ayer is to prove that the principle of verifiability is the criterion for determining meaningful from meaningless sentences; and this sets the goal for logical positivism: “The criterion which we use to test the genuineness of apparent statements of fact is the criterion of verifiability. We say that a statement is factually significant to any given person, if, and only if, he knows how to verify the proposition which it purports to express – that is, if he knows

²⁴⁵ Francis Herbert Bradley, *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930, Introduction, p. 1.

what observations would lead him, under certain conditions, to accept the proposition as being true, or reject it as being false.”²⁴⁶ Ayer further distinguishes between verifiability in principle which implies the presence of grounds to carry out an empirical investigation of statements to determine truth and falsity though the practical means for such verification may be unavailable at a given time; and verifiability in practice when the means is available to carry out the empirical verification to ascertain or discard a statement. Metaphysics fails both tests because it fails to communicate anything to us; we are in no position to devise a means by which the statements could be proven true or false. With Metaphysics we are not just dealing with false statements, we are dealing with meaningless statements.

In purely empirical fashion, Ayer rejects the *a priori* principles of knowledge propounded by Kant. Ayer thinks that geometrical propositions are mathematical propositions which are analytical instead of synthetic as Kant assumed. Empirically, such propositions do not refer to matter of fact in a way the empiricist would want them to serve as criterion for truth. Ayer does not see the skeptical position of an empiricist as a weakness when we consider that it is better to admit the absence of certainty than to assume the presence of certainty where there is none. The propositions of geometry as the only mathematical propositions that seem to be synthetic because they are assumed to add something new to our stock of knowledge emanate from unverified and unverifiable assumptions: “A geometry is not in itself about physical space; in itself it cannot be said to be ‘about’ anything. But we can use a geometry to reason about physical space. That is to say, once we have given the axioms a physical interpretation, we can proceed to apply the theorems to the objects which satisfy the axioms. Whether a geometry can be applied to the actual physical world or not, is an empirical question which falls outside the scope of the geometry itself.”²⁴⁷ In this sense geometrical propositions are ‘true’ because they are void of contradictions and hence become a system of logic. Such a system of analytic propositions does not add anything new to our knowledge because its application in experience does not depend on the geometry itself. Herein lies Ayer’s rejection of the Kantian conception of geometry as a system of synthetic *a priori* propositions for the empirical applicability of the system is yet to be determined and not achieved in the *a priori* conception of its theorems.

²⁴⁶ Alfred Jules Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, London: Penguin Books, 1936, Chapter 1: The Elimination of Metaphysics, p. 16.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Chapter 4: The A Priori, p. 77.

Ayer's critical analysis of sentences in the light of the verifiability criterion implies that the word "truth" does not refer to anything at all. It is the result of wrong analysis of sentences that leads philosophers to propound theories of truth as if the truth were something in itself. Ayer's analysis of truth leads to the conclusion that "[...] to say that a proposition is true is just to assert it and to say that it is false is just to assert its contradictory. And this indicates that the terms 'true' and 'false' connote nothing, but function in a sentence simply as marks of assertion and denial. And in that case there can be no sense in asking us to analyze the concept of 'truth'".²⁴⁸ A theory of truth, strictly speaking then, in the spirit of our work, and with Kant, and as Ayer highlights, is actually a theory of a kind of relationship or a mark or criterion that increases our degree of certainty about an assertion or a denial. The status of truth is the criterion that makes the object accessible to the subject as an object of knowledge. Positively, the theory of truth has to tell us how the subject relates to the object to become knowledge. With Kant, truth is defined by subject – based objectivity. Subjectively, as it relates to the subject, the contribution to truth as a relationship is the *a priori* condition under which the knowledge – seeker relates to the objects through concepts that are prolegomena to universality and necessity. Objectively, we are not just looking at the contribution of the object to which our concepts must relate to experience to become knowledge, but also and above all, objectivity becomes a condition defined by the *a priori* sources in the subject.

Negatively, respecting the requirements of Kant's critical philosophy, a critique of our faculties of knowledge, if it does not lead to something new in our stock of knowledge, it should at least provide grounds for us to avoid errors. Avoiding errors is clearing the path to truth of all illusions. If all errors are eliminated, the clarity of the truth emerges as an automatic result of a process that does not pride itself in using a tool beyond all bounds, but using it within the bounds that are epistemologically productive. Kant thus summarizes the negative achievement of his philosophical project: "The greatest and perhaps the sole use of all philosophy of pure reason is therefore only negative; since it serves not as an *organon* for the extension but as a discipline for the limitation of pure reason, and, instead of discovering truth, has only the modest merit of guarding against error."²⁴⁹ The subject – based Kantian metaphysical epistemology that defines truth through *a priori* conditions that must relate to experience makes him a precursor of the hypothetico – deductive approach used by modern science against the pretentious claims of the empiricists whose views inspired the logical

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Chapter 5: Truth and Probability, p. 86.

²⁴⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason, op. cit.*, The Canon of Pure Reason, p. 629.

positivists like A.J. Ayer. If the truth is nothing concrete in itself and just a mark or criterion of understanding the degree of certainty of a statement, and if science has to prevail against skepticism, then the enduring place of the *a priori* conditions of possibility of all experience have to redefine a new science of nature that rejects blind induction which entails the impossibility of meeting all possible cases in experience to guarantee universality. It is in this light that Karl Popper and Willard Van Orman Quine defend the case against empiricism and the blindness of the induction which follows from it.

The falsifiability criterion of truth in science as propounded by Karl Popper is not just meant to replace the verifiability criterion of the logical positivists like A. J. Ayer but also and above all to reject induction which seemed to have cemented its place as the basis or logic of scientific discovery from the time natural science was natural philosophy up to the modern era where the rejection of metaphysics inevitably leads to the assertion that empirical verifiability annuls all *a priori* grounds of truth. In his *Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Karl Popper rejects induction on the following basis:

It is usual to call an inference 'inductive' if it passes from singular statements (sometimes also called 'particular' statements), such as accounts of the results of observations or experiments, to universal statements, such as hypotheses or theories. Now it is far from obvious, from a logical point of view, that we are justified in inferring universal statements from singular ones, no matter how numerous; for any conclusion drawn in this way may always turn out to be false: no matter how many instances of white swans we may have observed, this does not justify the conclusion that all swans are white.²⁵⁰

The problem here is that it is much logical to subsume all particular cases in general rules provided by Kant's categories which condition every instance of experience than to base the validity of universal principles on particular empirical cases. We cannot be sure that in the future, all the particular cases will always justify the universal rules which depend on them. On the other hand, *a priori* universal and apodictic rules easily accommodate particular cases in experience at least as a condition of possibility or as a hypothesis that Kant likens to a revolution of 'Copernican' nature in epistemology. When this 'revolution' is contextualized within the problem of induction and the emergence of hypothetical deductive science, Kant becomes a source of inspiration to Popper and Quine.

Popper acknowledges the ingenuity of Kant in the way the author of the *Critique of Pure Reason* treats the problem of causation inherited from Hume. Yet Popper thinks that the

²⁵⁰ Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2002, The Problem of Induction, p. 4.

solution proposed by Kant is unsatisfactory: “Kant tried to force his way out of this difficulty by taking the principle of induction (which he formulated as the ‘principle of universal causation’) to be ‘*a priori valid*’. But I do not think that his ingenious attempt to provide an *a priori* justification for synthetic statements was successful.”²⁵¹ Popper actually thinks that the problems inherent in induction are insurmountable. However, Kant’s solution which Popper thinks is unsuccessful, at least paved the way for a new way of reviewing not just induction but all principles that lead to knowledge as having an *a priori* origin which gives them the universality that experience cannot give to any principles. Popper states the tenets of his own theory as follows: “The theory to be developed [...] stands directly opposed to all attempts to operate with the ideas of inductive logic. It might be described as the theory of the deductive method of testing, or as the view that a hypothesis can only be empirically tested—and only after it has been advanced.”²⁵² In the light of Albert Einstein’s understanding of scientific discovery, Popper holds that the moment of intuition is very important as it puts to light the genius of the scientist whose conception of universal laws does not have to be logical; we cannot judge what is not yet there; the creative scientist has to conceive the hypothesis before we test it empirically. In this way, blind induction is overturned by conscious deduction by means of a hypothesis.

In his conception of the way scientists understand the universe, Albert Einstein had talked of discoveries through “methodological uncertainty.”²⁵³ At the moment of discovery, the scientist is not conditioned by particular instances of experience; rather he is led by genius, spontaneity and a conscious desire to dictate laws to experience and not the case where experience dictates laws to him. To Einstein, “The supreme task of the physicist is to arrive at those universal elementary laws from which the cosmos can be built up by pure deduction. There is no logical path to these laws, only intuition, resting on sympathetic understanding of experience, can reach them.”²⁵⁴ The understanding of experience here is not for experience to be the source of laws to the scientist; the understanding of experience is to subsume all particular empirical cases to universal laws. This is the methodological uncertainty that leads the scientific genius to laws which even if *a priori* can be tested by experience. But for laws to be tested, they must first be conceived. This makes deduction the ultimate path to scientific truth as a hypothesis to be verified only after conception.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁵³ Albert Einstein, *The World as I See It*, trans. Allan Harris, London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1935, Part V, p. 125.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Popper rejects the kind of certainty that empiricists and positivists try to give to science. To Popper, such absolute certainty does not exist in science because each theory must be “falsifiable”. The idea of verification is not to confirm absolute truths but to prove that each theory must be capable of being refuted. Here, the inter – subjective tests that give rise to objectivity are not about proving positively that theories are absolutely true; it is about proving negatively that theories are capable of refutation. Hence “[...] not the verifiability but the falsifiability of a system is to be taken as a criterion of demarcation. In other words: I shall not require of a scientific system that it shall be capable of being singled out, once and for all, in a positive sense; but I shall require that its logical form shall be such that it can be singled out, by means of empirical tests, in a negative sense: it must be possible for an empirical scientific system to be refuted by experience.”²⁵⁵ Rather than using singular empirical instances to build up theories the inductive way, we rather frame hypothesis through the creative mind of discovery and then seek to ‘falsify’ the hypothesis through experience. Here, the idea is not to prove that all theories will be falsified, after all some theories have stood the test of time. But even theories which stand the test of time must be ‘falsifiable or such that they can be refuted through experience. The use of experience is not a judge or confirmation of absolute truths; the use of experience is to render all theories, even those conceived independently of experience, capable of inter – subjective tests that can lead to falsification.

Unlike the logical positivists who reject metaphysics to make room for the reign of the empirical verification test of truth, Popper turns the tables the Kantian way through the Copernican model to prove that scientific discoveries are not built from random empirical cases. Popper actually unequivocally restitutes metaphysics in his hypothetical deduction: “I am inclined to think that scientific discovery is impossible without faith in ideas which are of a purely speculative kind, and sometimes even quite hazy; a faith which is completely unwarranted from the point of view of science, and which, to that extent, is ‘metaphysical’.”²⁵⁶ The enduring value of metaphysics as the basis of empirical sciences cannot be overemphasized. Though the logical positivists overlook this reality to stay consistent with the empiricist thesis which they defend, such a thesis gives dogmatic authority to experience whereas, while admitting the importance of experience in verification, Popper makes the experience dynamic as a test of hypotheses that can be conceived *a priori*.

²⁵⁵ Karl Popper, *op. cit.*, Falsifiability as a Criterion of Demarcation, p. 18.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Problem of Demarcation, p. 16.

Like Kant then, we can say that Popper is in favor of the subject – based objectivity propounded by Kant. Popper actually refers to it as an ‘inter-subjective test’ by which hypotheses are tested deductively.

However, Popper does not mean, by the falsifiability criterion, that scientific theories are to be refuted *ad infinitum*. The possibility of an infinite regress means that science can become an ultimate game of conjectures and refutations. That is why Popper talks of the quality of a theory being ‘falsifiable’ which does not imply that all theories must actually be ‘falsified’ infinitely. It actually means that even if a theory has not yet been falsified or may not even be falsified, it must be such that it gives room for falsifiability. This defeats the verification criterion that uses experience as the ultimate test of proof or disproof once and for all. Falsification by deduction goes thus:

*[...] if we adhere to our demand that scientific statements must be objective, then those statements which belong to the empirical basis of science must also be objective, i.e. inter-subjectively testable. Yet inter-subjective testability always implies that, from the statements which are to be tested, other testable statements can be deduced. Thus if the basic statements in their turn are to be inter-subjectively testable, there can be no ultimate statements in science: there can be no statements in science which cannot be tested, and therefore none which cannot in principle be refuted, by falsifying some of the conclusions which can be deduced from them.*²⁵⁷

Popper raises here a very crucial weakness of the logical positivists who in the ambitious intentions of Wittgenstein were looking for ‘atomic’ meanings through analysis of language in a way as to make each statement stand for meaningful and not nonsensical assertions. The problem here is that even the quest for clarity entails that sentences be analyzed through other sentences. Verifying a statement empirically actually breaks it down to other verifiable statements and the procedure can lead to an infinite regress which implies that we have not actually moved out of language to the empirical world out there. Since the analysis of statements entails making other statements for verification, we cannot be very boastful of an approach that reduces sentences to other sentences with the claim that experience is the absolute judge of truth. Even if experience is important in the test of truth like Kant holds and like Popper concedes, the experience should serve as a ground for verifying to refute hypotheses and not to confirm supposedly absolute truths for us to sit on our laurels and bring science to a standstill in contentment.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Scientific Objectivity and Subjective Conviction, p. 25.

With Popper, we note not the need to protect metaphysics at all costs but the need to avoid the dogmatic attachment to experience in an analysis of language that only reduces verifiable statements to other verifiable statements. It is actually a process of deduction whereby less universal statements are derived from more universal statements or subsuming particular cases (less general cases) under more general principles. Such a procedure does not necessarily have to reject metaphysics; the same procedure does not need to reject experience completely in favor of idealism. One can criticize metaphysics for reorientation rather than rejection. That, to Saud M. S. Al Tamamy, is the essence of the Kantian project:

*Kant rejected the idealism of Descartes, Berkeley, Leibniz and Wolff for its dogmatic use of reason. On the other hand, he rejected the empiricism of Hume and Locke for its deconstructive nature. This new empirical method represented a serious threat to the validity of metaphysics as a basis for obtaining knowledge, and consequently put its traditional themes (God, freedom and immortality) under empirical deconstructive examination. Kant launched his philosophical project to protect metaphysics and its traditional themes from such a deconstruction.*²⁵⁸

In the same way that the Kantian critique of metaphysics ends up protecting metaphysics from the deconstruction of natural science and empiricism, Popper's rejection of blind induction does not reject the use of experience in the truth test; he actually orientates the use of experience as a means, not just of confirming hypotheses, but also and above all as a means of proving theories falsifiable. This makes the project of science a dynamic construction. We are not talking about an instantaneous achievement grounded on experience; we are talking about a dynamic system which uses experience as a means of avoiding stagnation.

Popper did not want to put science in a closed system that is a slave to experience. This is where blind induction puts science within the tight walls of experience which, not only blocks the creativity of the scientist who, at the moment of discovery, must not respect any methodological constraints, but also makes progress difficult as experience is used to decide the case for each theory once and for all. Popper's 'game of science' identifies two rules for science which cannot work within the tight walls of blind induction:

(1) The game of science is, in principle, without end. He who decides one day that scientific statements do not call for any further test, and that they can be regarded as finally verified, retires from the game.

²⁵⁸ Saud M. S. Al Tamamy, *Averroes, Kant and the Origins of the Enlightenment*, London, New York: I.B Tauris, 2014, p. 156.

*(2) Once a hypothesis has been proposed and tested, and has proved its mettle, it may not be allowed to drop out without 'good reason'. A 'good reason' may be, for instance: replacement of the hypothesis by another which is better testable; or the falsification of one of the consequences of the hypothesis.*²⁵⁹

The freedom of a scientist is not to be contented in stagnant theories. The freedom of a scientist is to put forward hypotheses for endless empirical tests which falsify one theory for another to emerge.

The closed system of empiricism that makes one a skeptic in matters of truth is identified in the form of “two dogmas of empiricism” by Willard Van Orman Quine: the dogma which leads to “nonsense” to Quine is the assumption that we can separate the linguistic component of language from the factual component. The factual component gives rise to synthetic propositions while the linguistic component, when language is all we have, gives rise to analytic propositions. In either case, we take the leap into dogmas conditioned by the view of Quine that experience is not traceable to the kind of atomic components that the logical positivist are looking for. Experience is always a conglomerate, what Kant calls a manifold and the task in knowledge is how to unite the manifold whereas the task of the logical positivists is to break down statements into linguistic and factual components. To Quine, such an approach fails because

*No particular experiences are linked with any particular statements in the interior of the field, except indirectly through considerations of equilibrium affecting the field as a whole. If this view is right, it is misleading to speak of the empirical content of an individual statement - especially if it is a statement at all remote from the experiential periphery of the field.*²⁶⁰

Everyone who intends to reduce statements into their ‘atomic’ content in the field of experience must take into account the ‘field’ which acts as interrelated components not easily reduced to single entities in the experience itself. Thus trying to make each statement refer to individual experience is a counter – productive task which ends up rather making us link one experience with another.

Technically, it is impossible to separate the truth from the language with which it is expressed. Even if the truth is out there in the objects of experience, if it has to be expressed in a language, the language must take into account the conjoined nature of experiences such

²⁵⁹ Karl Popper, *op. cit.*, Methodological Rules as Conventions, p. 32.

²⁶⁰ Willard Van Orman Quine, *From a Logical Point of View: Logico – Philosophical Essays*, Second Edition, Revised, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row Publishers Incorporated, 1963, Two Dogmas of Empiricism, p. 43.

that individual “atomic’ experiences cannot be isolated for independent analysis. Whether one is erroneously separating the linguistic from the factual components of statements or one is attempting to reduce every statement to its ‘atomic’ content in individual experiences, the dogma is the same:

*Modern empiricism has been conditioned in large part by two dogmas. One is a belief in some fundamental cleavage between truths which are analytic, or grounded in meanings independently of matters of fact, and truths which are synthetic, or grounded in fact. The other dogma is reductionism: the belief that each meaningful statement is equivalent to some logical construct upon terms which refer to immediate experience. Both dogmas [...] are ill-founded.*²⁶¹

There is no direct link between terms used in propositions and individual experiences. Such understanding of experience can only be attained indirectly by referring to the field by which experiences coexist with each other in a manifold. Whether we are assuming that experience is the final judge in deciding truth and falsity of statements or making the walls of experience the tight confines within which science must tread, we inevitably land in dogmatic considerations which constitute an obstacle to scientific progress.

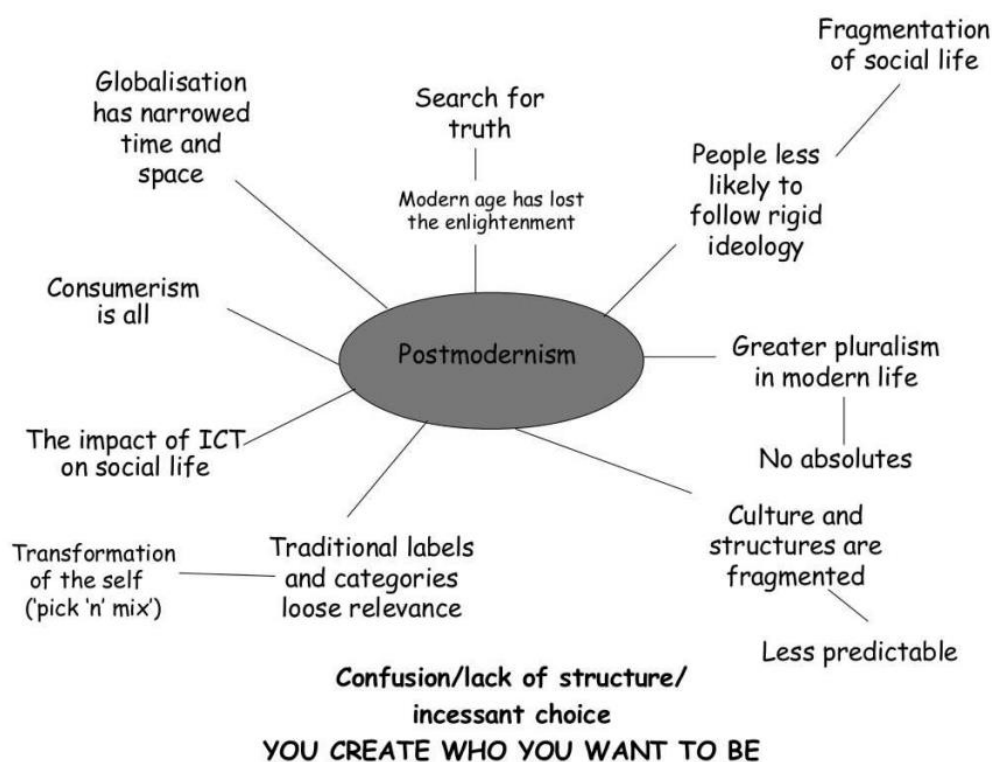
From Kant, the logical positivists inherited the critique of metaphysics but gave it a destructive twist that was never intended by Kant. Against the Kantian spirit, the logical positivists have no place for metaphysics at the foundation of natural sciences. Popper and Quine, though not particularly bent on rescuing metaphysics from the destructive critique of the logical positivists, in their identification of the errors of blind induction inspired by empiricism, ended up not minding seeing metaphysics at the centre of the deductive method they project as a more appropriate paradigm for science. The postmodern era took the problem of truth back to the level of relativity where modern philosophers thought they had evolved from. It is an eternal return to old ways when the new ways cannot give us complete mastery of the ever complex reality giving rise to a feeling of uncompleted work already anticipated in Kant’s unknowable *noumena*.

4.3: The ‘Post – Truth’ Era

As an era in the history of Philosophy, postmodernism is of the mid-20th century in Europe and America when there arose the need to review and deconstruct the ancient and modern philosophical tradition so as to adapt it to the social needs of humans. But postmodernism is more of a trend in Philosophy than a historical era. As a trend in

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

Philosophy, postmodernism is a real challenge that leads to the urgent need to go beyond traditional and modern philosophical trends. This is because of the realization that the enigmatic nature of a reality cannot be grasped through closed systems of philosophy. It is a complete deconstruction of absolute truths in philosophy to make way for relativism and partial truths that take into account the context of the subject and the object of knowledge. Here, the truth is an eternal project of discarding the methodology inherited from the past to make way for more tolerance in ideology and tolerance in methodology to accommodate all approaches in a multidisciplinary attempt to grasp the truth beyond the achievements of a philosophical modernity that have become obsolete. The following figure represents Abdulazim Ali N. Elaati's understanding of postmodernism:



*Fig 4: What is Postmodernism?*²⁶²

In what apparently is an era in a crisis and a philosophical trend that has to face the crisis, the truth becomes more and more exposed to attack by critics who want more openness in methodological systems to embrace social differences and spontaneity in social interactions. Klaus Benesch however refuses to admit that there is anything as post –truth era in a way that we will understand post – modernism as a historical era that replaces

²⁶² Abdulazim Ali N.Elaati, "Postmodernism Theory", ResearchGate: 25 May 2016, available from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303812364>, (Retrieved 6 December 2020).

modernism. His statement of the reality of postmodernism which does not imply a post – truth era goes thus:

*I argue that there is no such thing as post-truth. We are by no means in the middle of an unprecedented epistemological crisis that keeps us from telling right from wrong. Rather, what we are currently witnessing is a major breakdown of the institutions and mechanisms of democratic society, triggered by an encompassing technological transformation that affects both our public and our private lives. True, in its wake, truth claims have become increasingly contested and way more difficult to uphold.*²⁶³

From Kant's projection of the *noumenon* as the unknowable thing in itself not accessible to our faculties of representation of reality, a serious problem emerged in philosophy about whether the admission of this limit was more of an admission of a weakness or a real case of a need to avoid illusions. The postmodern condition of philosophy seems to represent an era when philosophers get fed up with tradition and almost project the irrational as a possible replacement to 'rationality' that has not demystified the complexity of the reality.

A picture of the predicament of postmodernism is painted by Jean – François Lyotard who sees a postmodern philosopher as a writer actually writing without rules so as to, through the same writing, supply rules that would have been used before to attain truth. It is surely the absence of the rules of certainty as projected by postmodernism that makes it look like an era of post – truth or an era of deconstruction of truth for a new definition of truth using new rules. To Lyotard,

*The postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. The artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done.*²⁶⁴

It is the predicament of a philosopher who has to make rules by writing without rules. It is the complete overthrow of the edifice that was considered as knowledge before this era. Developing rules while working without any rules can lead to methodological anarchy that makes the enterprise of knowledge one of disorder which is not seen as drawback by

²⁶³Klaus Benesch, "Is Truth to Post-Truth what Modernism Is to Postmodernism? Heidegger, the Humanities, and the Demise of Common-Sense", *European Journal of American Studies*, 25 June 2020, available from <http://journals.openedition.org/ejas/15619>, (Retrieved 20 May 2020), p. 2.

²⁶⁴ Jean – François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, *What is Postmodernism?*, p. 81.

postmodern thinkers who rather think that working under tight rules in closed systems is the reason for which we are where we are in the crisis of truth.

In his introduction to *The Postmodern Condition*, Lyotard already identifies metaphysics as one of the fields of philosophy in which the ‘metanarrative’ rejected by postmodernism finds a fertile ground. But postmodernism is not just a challenge of metaphysics; it is a rejection of any knowledge that is a narrative of the reality, a narrative that does not put knowledge to work at the service of man. Knowledge henceforth has a market value, knowledge is not to be acquired for the sake of knowledge itself, knowledge ceases to be an end in itself and has to serve another purpose of making human life better especially in politics, ethics and social interactions. From Lyotard’s definition of postmodernism as a rejection of metanarratives, it becomes obvious that metaphysics and all of philosophy need to be reviewed:

I define postmodern as incredulity towards metanarratives. This incredulity is undoubtedly a product of the progress in sciences [...]. To the obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimation corresponds, most notably, the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university institution which in the past relied on it. [...] we do not necessarily establish stable language combinations, and the properties of the ones we do establish are not necessarily communicable.²⁶⁵

If our language has failed us because it cannot be used to communicate in a way as to convey the reality for practical purposes of applicability and utility like in techno-science, then the review of our methods of grasping reality also implies a review of the means of communication of reality because in postmodernism, language itself becomes a problem when the complexity of the reality becomes more challenging due to obscurity in language, a problem identified by analytic philosophers whose solution discarded metaphysics from the realm of meaningful academic endeavors. With postmodernism, the whole discourse of philosophy has to change to meet the needs of the purpose to be served by knowledge.

While some postmodern thinkers hold the view that science itself needs a deconstruction alongside all of philosophy, others think that science does not embrace the errors accruing from the metanarratives of philosophy which does not report knowledge in a language that is adequate enough to be commensurate with the reality it intends to convey from one subject to another. Lyotard chooses science over narratives but admits the existence of the latter in a situation of coexistence and mutual competition with the former:

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. xxiv.

[...] scientific knowledge does not represent the totality of knowledge; it has always existed in addition to, and in competition and conflict with, another kind of knowledge, which I call narrative in the interests of simplicity [...]. I do not mean to say that narrative knowledge can prevail over science, but its model is related to ideas of internal equilibrium and conviviality next to which contemporary scientific knowledge cuts a poor figure, especially if it is to undergo exteriorization with respect to the 'knower' and an alienation from its user even greater than has previously been the case.²⁶⁶

It is clear that Lyotard rejects any narrative of truth that rather creates a huge gap between knowledge and the intended knowledge – user. Internal coherence of a system of knowledge is no guarantee of applicability when the knowledge gets to the level of the pragmatic tests where we want to know if the knowledge works in real life. If the knowledge user does not feel concerned and is not attracted to what is presented as knowledge, then he becomes an alien in a situation where he is betrayed by that which was supposed to make him safer and happier in the world of social interactions.

Kant in his writings had insisted on the need for freedom as a condition that makes man exercise his potential to the fullest, both transcendently and empirically. Empirically it gives the will autonomy to choose the practice of virtue as a duty for its own sake, and in metaphysical epistemology it projects an ideal for morality and religion when theoretical reason fails to be of any epistemological value in the dialectical use of reason. Though the kind of freedom sought by postmodern thinkers can lead to more of anarchy than the systemic unity that Kant was looking for, it is clear that Kant himself wanted to free our faculties to exercise their potential at the highest possible level while being epistemologically useful and only admitting the use of going beyond the bounds of experience as an adventure that serves a moral purpose. To Kant, “Man [...] has such a great natural instinct for freedom that he sacrifices everything for it when once he has been accustomed to it for any length of time.”²⁶⁷ A taste of freedom implies more need for freedom. A taste of anarchy and ‘the epistemological rewards’ it brings might just lead us to see anarchy as an option when all methods fail to demystify the reality for us; after all the moment of discovery in science is not tied to any specific methodology as a matter of necessity. It is in the course of testing hypotheses or verifying hypotheses that we can understand the falsifiability of every theory as we have seen with Popper. The kind of freedom that a scientist has at the moment of

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁶⁷ Immanuel Kant, “Lecture – Notes on Pedagogy”, ed. Friedrich Theodor Rink, in *The Educational Theory of Immanuel Kant*, trans. Edward Franklin Buchner, Philadelphia, London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1904, Introduction, p. 104.

discovery or invention may just give rise to results that we cannot have if the scientist were pushed to a methodological tight corner that limits his field of creativity.

Paul Feyerabend takes a more radical position which discards anything methodological in philosophy and science as obstacles to progress in the enterprise of knowledge. Rather than rejecting only metaphysics and all the other disciplines that give a metanarrative report of knowledge, Feyerabend goes right to the roots of science itself. Science could be rescued if we understand that science constructs its own language to report its theories which makes it relatively easier for truth to emerge. But when another discipline has to use language that is not constructed by science to report scientific knowledge, it gives rise to alienation and difficulties of accuracy and precision. It is because of observations of failures of fixed methods in science that Paul Feyerabend rejected all forms of methods in favor of methodological anarchy. It a book whose title is already evocative enough as *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*, Paul Feyerabend makes it clear that

*The following essay is written in the conviction that anarchism, while perhaps not the most attractive political philosophy, is certainly excellent medicine for epistemology, and for the philosophy of science. The reason is not difficult to find. 'History generally, and the history of revolution in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more many-sided, more lively and subtle than even' the best historian and the best methodologist can imagine. History is full of 'accidents and conjunctures and curious juxtapositions of events' and it demonstrates to us the 'complexity of human change and the unpredictable character of the ultimate consequences of any given act or decision of men'. Are we really to believe that the naive and simple-minded rules which methodologists take as their guide are capable of accounting for such a 'maze of interactions'? And is it not clear that successful participation in a process of this kind is possible only for a ruthless opportunist who is not tied to any particular philosophy and who adopts whatever procedure seems to fit the occasion?*²⁶⁸

The history of science does not provide the kind of perfect scenario that fanatics of methodology want to see in our theories. If the history of science is not a catalogue of perfect moments, then why should we restrict the sciences in the quest to predict future events that were not always perfectly ordered in the past? If the report of the scientist is expected to be more perfect than the nature that he sets out to explain, then science has failed to give the scientist the methodological freedom that provides the laxity to try 'imperfect' ways and means of explaining nature that is not as perfect as it seems. Postmodernity is supposed to open us up to the complexity of nature by eliminating all methods that fail because they are

²⁶⁸Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*, Third Edition, London: Verso, 1993, Introduction, p. 9.

too rigid and rather than guiding, end up putting the scientist in a tight corner from where truth cannot emerge. In the ways of Popper, Feyerabend wants the scientist to be allowed to hypothesize at will without feeling any necessity to be attached to any method.

The complexity of nature requires an open – minded approach that accepts anything as a potential means of demystifying nature. The beauty of methods is good for comparative analysis with other methods. But faced with the multifaceted nature of reality, the ‘beauty’ of a rigid methodology fades away leaving the scientist in despair especially with the realization that the beauty of prescriptions does not even match the kind of accidents he finds in nature. He may even be forced by the complexity of the reality to go for what conventional science may consider to be ‘irrational’ to grasp what is assumed to be an ordered chain of causes that has given us many instances in the past which tell us that harmony is not always the order of the day in nature. Feyerabend thus recommends that

[...] the world which we want to explore is a largely unknown entity. We must, therefore, keep our options open and we must not restrict ourselves in advance. Epistemological prescriptions may look splendid when compared with other epistemological prescriptions, or with general principles but who can guarantee that they are the best way to discover, not just a few isolated 'facts', but also some deep-lying secrets of nature?²⁶⁹

Contrary to what our naivety may make us think, there are many things in the world that are still unknown to science and philosophy. So why should we bury the unsatisfied curiosity of the minds of our scientists in prescriptions that make them stereotyped in the uphill task of demystifying nature? Besides, if our perfect and near – perfect prescriptions of methodology have not given us access to the most deeply – rooted secrets of nature, then why should we stick to such prescriptions when their failure is so obvious and so alarming? Multi – disciplinary research and multi – dimensional ‘methodology’ should be the key to studying nature. If there is to be any ‘method’ at all, then it should be the acceptance of all ‘methods’ even those which does not meet our standards of what is to be acceptable as method in science.

Kant himself had noted the tendency in human nature for reason to go beyond experience in the quest for an all – encompassing reality that defies all empirical norms. This would have been pleasing to Feyerabend if Kant had not still limited reason within the bounds of experience for epistemological results while taking it beyond the bounds of

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

experience only for the sake of morality. And since Kant himself still restituted metaphysics as the basis of natural science despite the seemingly ravaging critique of the same discipline, it is clear that Kant knows that humans do not easily accept limits in the quest for truth, and the postmodern condition just made the need for methodological openness more urgent than it was in Kant's time. To Kant, "Reason is impelled by a tendency of its nature to go out beyond the field of its empirical employment, and to venture in a pure employment, by means of ideas alone, to the utmost limits of all knowledge, and not to be satisfied save through the completion of its course in [the apprehension of] a self- subsistent systematic whole."²⁷⁰ Kant actually compels the researcher to respect the empirical bounds for the sake of knowledge. But since he rehabilitates metaphysics, he knows that it is difficult to respect such limits even in epistemology. How do we become satisfied within the bounds of experience which cannot satisfy us? Kant noted the complexity of the reality when he projected the unknowable *noumena*. Postmodern philosophy has gone beyond the projection of limits to rather deconstruct all closed systems that keep us within limits which are epistemologically fruitless. The complexity of the reality today implies that staying within the limits of experience has not yielded the epistemological fruits that Kant had envisaged. So we have to go out of our comfort zone which is experience device new ways and means of facing reality.

Jacques Derrida sees in every writing of postmodernism a deconstruction project that entails the abandonment of the canons of 'Logos' and the traditional meaning of 'rationality' becomes problematic as the postmodern thinkers seek to redefine 'rationality' within the context of openness as people are more likely to stop following rigid ideology. If metaphysical systems are built around the rational principle called 'Logos' then the deconstruction project of postmodernism is also a rejection of metaphysics:

*The "rationality" - but perhaps that word should be abandoned for reasons that will appear at the end of this sentence - which governs a writing thus enlarged and radicalized, no longer issues from a logos. Further, it inaugurates the destruction, not the demolition but the de-sedimentation, the de-construction, of all the significations that have their source in that of the logos. Particularly the signification of truth. All the metaphysical determinations of truth, and even the one beyond metaphysical ontotheology [...] are more or less immediately inseparable from the instance of the logos, or of a reason thought within the lineage of the logos, in whatever sense it is understood [...].*²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, The Canon of Pure Reason, p. 630.

²⁷¹ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997, p. 10.

The deconstruction of traditional thought implies that we should rethink the truth given the complexity of the object which makes the truth equally complex making the task of knowing difficult for the subject of knowledge. Within these difficulties the postmodern era and trend find in deconstruction of rigid systems the only way to start a real revolution in philosophy which extends to social life and literary and artistic works.

With Derrida, the problems of philosophy in the era of postmodernism can be used to judge the level of our understanding of truth and the objects of knowledge. For once, philosophy does not have to look to the objects of its reflection; philosophy has to look to itself as an auto-critique of its methods and achievements which, to Derrida, sound more like the death of philosophy than its revival. Midway between the death of philosophy and the burning need to revive philosophy, the postmodern thinkers face the dilemma of writing without rules and using the same writings to provide rules of the era. And apparently, this era sees more success in working without rules than in sticking to the rules. Working out of the norms plays a vital role in making us reflect on the chances of survival of that which apparently has failed:

[...] those who look into the possibility of philosophy, philosophy's life and death, are already engaged in, already overtaken by the dialogue of the question about itself and with itself; they always act in remembrance of philosophy, as part of the correspondence of the question with itself. Essential to the destiny of this correspondence, then, is that it comes to speculate, to reflect, and to question about itself within itself. This is where the objectification, secondary interpretation, and determination of the question's own history in the world all begin; and this is where the combat embedded in the difference between the question in general and "philosophy" as a determined—finite and mortal—moment or mode of the question itself also begins.²⁷²

The Derridan concept of 'Difference' here distinguishes philosophy as the questions on philosophy as well as philosophy as a historical moment that belongs to a certain era. Here, philosophy questions itself to create philosophy as a reflection and at the same time create philosophy as a moment in history and that is the difference faced by postmodern philosophers whose auto – critique is already a new edifice of philosophy which nevertheless marks the thought of an era.

The dualistic conception of philosophy as questioning itself and philosophy as a moment in history constitute the central preoccupation of postmodern philosophers who

²⁷² Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2001, Chapter 4: Violence and Metaphysics, p. 99.

have to write without rules to fix rules for others, philosophizing without rules to fix rules for present and future philosophy if the historical moment does not die with the questions of the time. The death of a historical moment must not kill the questions or rather the spirit of questioning which can be considered the philosophy of the era. But a genuine auto – critique sounds like reflecting on one’s life and death. Questions on the truth can imply that we are already in a post – truth era as a historical moment when the truth has lived its mortal moment and made way for something other than truth. The era of postmodernism as an era of difference challenges philosophers and scientists who make the historical moments to start separating what they do from their mortal moments so as to question what they do without necessarily using failed rules that others used to tackle other life issues. The ‘difference’ is clear:

The difference between philosophy as a power and adventure of the question itself and philosophy as a determined event or turning point within this adventure. This difference is better conceived today. That this difference has come to light, has been conceptualized as such, is doubtless an unnoticed and inessential sign for the historian of facts, techniques, and ideas. But, understood in all its implications, it is perhaps the most deeply inscribed characteristic of our age. And would not better thinking this difference be knowing that if something is still to transpire within the tradition by which philosophers always know themselves to be overtaken, then the tradition’s origin will have to be summoned forth and adhered to as rigorously as possible? Which is not to violence and metaphysics stammer and huddle lazily in the depths of childhood, but precisely the opposite.²⁷³

It is of no use longing for a glorious past of philosophy, that past was not even so glorious because the metaphysical attachments to the ‘Logos’ has not stood the test of the time full of enigmas which have concealed the truth for a long time in closed systems.

What Kant refers to as a ‘necessary rule of the speculative employment of reason’ in metaphysics fails to deliver the goods in postmodernism. Even the appeal to blind experience fails to be the rigid path to truth. Even as the basis of natural science, metaphysics and the science based on it become problematic in an era that requires more of methodological anarchy than rigidity. Yet Kant holds that “[...] it is a necessary rule of the speculative employment of reason, not to pass over natural causes, and, abandoning that in regard to which we can be instructed by experience, to deduce something which we know from something which entirely transcends all our [possible] knowledge.”²⁷⁴ The postmodern era

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 99 – 100.

²⁷⁴ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, pp. 631 – 632.

goes beyond Kantism in favour of anarchy in methodology as imposed by the uncompromising complexity of the reality. Either you use radical methods to try to demystify the reality or you grope in the dark. The discourse of philosophy has changed after Kant. Whereas Kant was trying to build a system from specific considerations that conceive the truth in an architectonic, the postmodern thinkers want to dismantle philosophical systems for the truth to emerge. The following passage from Jürgen Habermas' *Theory of Communicative Action* summarizes the philosophical spirit of postmodernism:

Philosophy can no longer refer to the whole of the world, of nature, of history, of society, in the sense of a totalizing knowledge. Theoretical surrogates for worldviews have been devalued, not only by the factual advance of empirical science but even more by the reflective consciousness accompanying it. With this consciousness philosophical thought has withdrawn self – critically behind itself; in the question of what it can accomplish with its reflective competence within the framework of scientific conventions, it has become metaphilosophy.²⁷⁵

Philosophical systems have failed and the failure is symbolized by metaphysics which has built systems over the years and yet the truth is still enigmatic. Beyond the era of systems, we have to accept difference and specificities as the basis of a near – anarchical methodology that takes the truth to the world in actions and not in theorization. If philosophy is not just a discourse on that which works in the sciences, then philosophy has to study specificities that can make it work in social life, ethics and politics.

In the third part of our work, inspired by the postmodern era taking the views of Kant and other modern and traditional authors beyond the range the authors may have envisaged, our contextualization of the truth shall not be from the faculties of the subject but from the complexity of the object that puts us out there as researchers who are ready to face the reality no matter the 'irrational' way it is given and even if the methods of the researchers do not respect the traditional norms of research which have failed us anyway. Habermas, in the strictest sense, does not even see 'postmodernism' as an era of its own. He sees it more as a new 'currency' to do away with the traditional chain that western thought has entangled us in so as to continue the process of modernization of our thought and practice:

[...] it is precisely modernization research that has contributed to the currency of the expression 'postmodern' even among social scientists. For in view of evolutionary autonomous, self – promoting modernization, social

²⁷⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of the Society, trans. Thomas McCarthy, Boston: Beacon Press, 1984, Introduction: Approaches to the Problem of Rationality, pp. 1 – 2.

*scientists can all the more easily take leave of the conceptual horizon of Western rationalism in which modernity arose. But as soon as the internal links between the concept of modernity and the self - understanding of modernity gained within the horizon of Western reason have been dissolved, we can relativize the, as it were, automatically continuing process of modernization from the distanced standpoint of a postmodern observer.*²⁷⁶

From Habermas' standpoint, we can say that 'postmodernism' is more of a conceptual revolution than a historical era. It is about creating a distance through which we can orientate the goals of modern philosophy toward goals that accept differences without necessarily seeking to universalize methods and objects and unifying a complex reality. Postmodernism is a conceptual distance from which we can reject the theoretical framework of modernity inherited from the western tradition so as to start the project of philosophical modernity afresh after deconstructing the old methods that yielded no satisfactory fruits in the past.

Rather than talking of a post – truth era as if we were already done with the truth (which will be meaningless because we are still searching for the truth or the best way of representing truth) we should talk of new ways of looking for truth, new approaches to the philosophical quest, avoiding the errors of the past while learning from the same past (because not all was a failure in the past) because Kant sparked a revolution analogous to that of Copernicus and enough to push modern and postmodern thought toward the highest heights. If questions are more important than answers in philosophy, then an eternal return to the age – old problem of truth based on the knowledge needs of each era is not an irrational endeavor at all especially given that rationality itself is put to question in the postmodern condition. Rather than giving in to despair and watching the spectacle of the world as it happens in ways that our methodological framework can no longer explain, we start all over, discard all methodological frameworks like someone who has to erect a structure without a pre –conceived plan and yet the structure is to serve as the model for other structures to come during the same era: this is the predicament of the postmodern era which is a suggestion for a shift of paradigm, it is actually a rejection of all paradigms so as to even work without a paradigm and by so doing define paradigms more adapted to the needs of our time.

Far from considering the postmodern 'post-truth' era as one of lies as dishonesty takes priority over intellectual honesty, in philosophy, it is more about the need to go beyond current failed methods of grasping truth than a method of pure intellectual dishonesty.

²⁷⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1987, Lecture 1: Modernity's Consciousness of Time and its Need for Reassurance, p. 3.

According to Ralph Keyes, the contemporary conception of post – truth as a lie may be seen from different perspectives some of which may actually be an enrichment of the truth or a completion of the truth that is not given fully, and above all an alternative way of representing the reality: “Lies [...] parallel truth, nuanced truth, imaginative truth, virtual truth, alternative reality, strategic misrepresentations, creative enhancement, nonfull disclosure, selective disclosure, augmented reality, nearly true, almost true, counterfactual statements, fact-based information [...]”²⁷⁷ It is the alternative reality angle that strikes the most given that it opens the truth up to be viewed from all angles especially from angles that do not respect the canons of the tradition of rationality inherited from ancient times. In this case, far from the intellectual dishonesty that it may presuppose, the post – truth era is a revolution in thought to start all over, a deconstruction of the legacy of rigid methods of grasping truth which have failed to provide the required results in our era.

The post – truth era is a response to the perennial need for philosophy to do an auto – critique which may not have been the case always in history but which must be admitted as a necessary step to put our methods and thoughts to question so as to start afresh the foundation of knowledge. At this level, the predicament of the post – modern era of the problematic post – truth is a follow up of the Cartesian project used by René Descartes to put all his previously acquired opinions to test, the test of the methodic doubt:

*It is now some years since I detected how many were the false beliefs that I had from my earliest youth admitted as true, and how doubtful was everything I had since constructed on this basis; and from that time I was convinced that I must once for all seriously undertake to rid myself of all the opinions which I had formerly accepted, and commence to build anew from the foundation, if I wanted to establish any firm and permanent structure in the sciences.*²⁷⁸

The need to review the foundation of our knowledge is the review of what we consider to be the truth. It is the awareness in thought of a missing link with the truth. It is a high level of determination to review the relation between the subject and the object so as to justify our true beliefs considered to be knowledge. Even if philosophers had tried to review the foundation of our knowledge, the case of the problematic postmodern era comes with a certain level of frustration with rigid methods to the point of defining a new era as a psychological consolation that an old era has been done away with. This may not necessarily be the case as the old era that gives rise to failure continues to condition our thoughts either

²⁷⁷ Ralph Keyes, *The Post – Truth Era: Dishonesty and Deception in Contemporary Life*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2004, p. 18.

²⁷⁸ René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, Meditation 1, p. 45.

as a takeoff point or as a point of rejection so that the fresh beginning can be a reality. The level of the need for a review of the instruments of our knowledge is so demanding that the truth itself seems to have been eliminated which is not true. The truth has simply been put to question for a new conception of truth to emerge. The postmodern era then sounds more like a movement of philosophical activism than an era of conceptual analysis. In any case, no matter the level of frustration that philosophers of this problematic era may find themselves in, there is still need to remain coherent in the quest for truth because logic cannot completely disappear from our theories of knowledge. Yet, a system of anarchy in the quest for knowledge sounds revolutionary as a perfect description of the need for epistemological reforms. But we must reconcile the push to anarchy with the perennial scientific need for coherence in theoretical frameworks within which the truth may emerge.

The Cartesian announcement of a new era of methodic reforms is conditioned by the deceptive nature of the senses. Hence the Cartesian ambitious reforms only raise reason to the level of unquestionable authority that makes his rationalism dogmatic and criticized by Kant for raising beings of reason to levels where they cannot correspond to any objects of intuition. More than just the debate between rationalists and empiricists and the reconciliatory attempts made by Kant for the two schools of thought, the postmodern era puts to question the rationalism, the empiricism and the reconciliation itself so as to pave the way for a completely new science of philosophy that starts as *metaphilosophy*, philosophy going beyond itself, the truth going beyond itself which are expressions used to express the need to do away with current methods of grasping truth and current conceptions of truth so as to start all over in a 'new era'. Yet, care is to be taken to avoid the confusion between the need for coherent reforms and the leap into anarchy. Going beyond Kant does not necessarily mean that we reject the Kantian theoretical framework for the truth because this framework is still relevant in our contemporary era as is proven in the third part of our work. The problem, here, is that of going beyond Kant while avoiding anarchy that can make the scientific enterprise one of chaos. Of course if the quest for orderliness has not rescued us from the complexity challenging our thought systems, one might object that anarchy may be the difference needed to reconcile our views with the complex object that does not seem to fit squarely within our systems of interpretation.

It is still important to note that the Kantian framework for the attainment of truth becomes problematic in the postmodern era because Kant wants to build an indispensable rigid system within which the truth emerges within the tight angles of the synthetic unity of

apperception. Making the source of all definitions of experience to be independent of experience is already a limit set on experience which depends on the *a priori* forms of sensibility in the case of space and time for objects to be given; and which depends on the *a priori* concepts of the understanding for objects to be thought. This theoretical framework blocks some aspects of the reality and some aspects of the human mind, to wit, the unknowable *noumenon* of the Kantian philosophy that cannot be acceptable in the modern era where anything unknowable is more of a challenge for it to be known than an acceptance of defeat in the face of a challenging reality, and the transcendental ideas made completely useless in the speculative use of reason by which knowledge only emerges as an application of concepts to experience. The postmodern era can use Kant as a takeoff point of what to reject given the circumscription of the truth within tight theoretical perspectives that may no longer meet the epistemological needs of our era. In the third part of our work, we examine the possible relevance of the Kantian tight and open angles for the unveiling of the truth.

But as far as the postmodern era of the problematic need for the post – truth to replace the old truth is concerned, we have to go beyond Kant if we want our knowledge to be an accurate representation of the kind of complexity that the reality has become. Of course we cannot say that the reality has just become complex all of a sudden. The reality is there whether we end up knowing it or not. If we have not been able to grasp it, it may be the fault of the reality itself that is not made to be given to us for free without the needed efforts by the subject to demystify the reality. If we have not been able to grasp the reality, it could be the case that our theoretical frameworks for grasping the reality have been defective and yet we have been contented with them taking them for the ultimate openings to the truth. The postmodern era puts to question those theoretical frameworks that have given an incorrect picture of a simplistic reality within the confines of rigid systems of knowledge. And seen from the tight angle of a system that gives rise to the knowable and the unknowable, the Kantian system does not tie with the requirements of openness in the postmodern era of the realization of complexity from the failure of hitherto rigid systems to make the truth a reality. The next chapter of our work examines the *aporia* in the knowable and the unknowable in a theory of knowledge where the need to know all that is knowable does not give room for contention in the unknowable.

Immanuel Kant restricts experience and reason within tight conceptual angles only to reconcile them in what seems to be a complementarity of conflicting faculties as shown in the sixth chapter of our work. According to Kant,

The first pure knowledge of understanding, then, upon which all the rest of its employment is based, and which also at the same time is completely independent of all conditions of sensible intuition, is the principle of the original synthetic unity of apperception. Thus the mere form of outer sensible intuition, space, is not yet [by itself] knowledge; it supplies only the manifold of a priori intuition for a possible knowledge.²⁷⁹

The problematic ideality of time and space is tackled in the next chapter of our work. Space and time only provide *a priori* moments through which the object is given to the subject for thought. In the postmodern era, such a conception will be simplistic as it does not give the subject the chance to view the object from all angles of complexity that are only revealed in flexible theoretical frameworks that do not close up all loose ends and which give room for angles that do not tie with the correspondence angles of truth so as to put the truth in an operational or dynamic process that does not accept any limits in advance. In the problematic postmodern era, the subject is free to create the totality of reality without any tight methodological constraints and prefigures relativism without excluding inter-subjectivity in social interactions. The postmodern era is open to all possibilities because of the contention that the rigid theories we have had served to condition the subject into abstractions that no longer reflect his reality. More than just a rejection of metaphysics, it is also a rejection of scientism without admitting unnecessary reconciliations that end up tightening the angle more than freeing it for truth to flow conceptually, intuitively, socially, morally and above all in accordance with the subjective and inter – subjective realities of the knowledge – seeker.

The postmodern condition is one of complexity and difficulties that no longer seem to find solutions in hitherto unidimensional methods of philosophy inherited from ancient times and more or less inadequate to fit squarely in the realities of our era. The postmodern era rejects the Kantian dependence on the mind for knowledge without accepting the empirical limits set by Kant as the realm beyond which we can no longer have knowledge since the objects are not given to us in intuition. The unity of what is thought with what is given is a controversial topic of the transcendental deduction that puts to question the possible or impossible knowledge of what is not given in intuition or what is given in intuition but cannot be represented in concepts. Kant insists that

To know anything in space (for instance, a line), I must draw it, and thus synthetically bring into being a determinate combination of the given manifold, so that the unity of this act is at the same time the unity of consciousness (as in the concept of a line); and it is through this unity of consciousness that an

²⁷⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, Transcendental Deduction, p. 156.

*object (a determinate space) is first known. The synthetic unity of consciousness is, therefore, an objective condition of all knowledge. It is not merely a condition that I myself require in knowing an object, but is a condition under which every intuition must stand in order to become an object for me. For otherwise, in the absence of this synthesis, the manifold would not be united in one consciousness.*²⁸⁰

The representation of a line implies the unity of consciousness with the act of the imagination by which the idea of a line is used to represent not only a particular line but to serve as a condition of possibility of such objects in experience. The imaginative mediation of intuitive representations and the concepts which are not derived from the intuitions implies that cognition is a representational act of the imagination that unites all our representations with consciousness to become knowledge and condition of possibility of all knowledge. This is the *a priori* plan of the mind to know the object. The possibility of intuitions that are not conceptualized is used in the third part of our work to show that Kant had anticipated the problem of complexity of reality that has come to light in the problematic postmodern era.

Yet it is important to note that the Kantian approach, though objective in the universality and the necessity of the knowledge obtained, is ultimately subjective in the form and the method as well as the source of the *a priori* plan which is obtained independently of experience but which must relate to experience to become knowledge. This plan is acceptable when we sacrifice the *noumena* or the angle of the object that is not given to the representational faculties of the mind. But if the *noumena* are sacrificed on the altar of a subjectivist approach then we have given up on the quest for a satisfactory mastery of reality and that is what postmodernity cannot accept as fatalism in epistemology. Beyond the skeptical attitude manifested by postmodern thinkers, there is a genuine need to go beyond what is considered to be the canons of definition of truth so as to do better than the previous eras. Though the supposed skepticism of the postmodern era can lead to epistemologically dangerous relativism that destroys the universality and necessity canons of science cherished by Kant, the postmodern approach paves the way for trials and error – elimination methods that must not respect the norms of conventional rationality and this is more of an asset than a liability in the contemporary era.

The skeptical attitude was used by Kant just to reject the dialectical illusions of metaphysics when he was unsatisfied with the endless mock combats of the schools that argued over issues that can never be settled once and for all because the arguments were

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 156 – 157.

about objects that cannot become objects of knowledge, the arguments were about beings of reason that cannot be situated within the bounds of knowledge which are determined by experience. While Kant was skeptical about the possibility of knowledge from the dogmatic metaphysical battles of the ancient tradition up to his immediate predecessors in Wolff and Leibniz, the postmodern era is also skeptical of the Kantian reconciliatory approach that is too systematic to be relevant in the era of complexity and too rigid to give room to openness in systems for the good of a researcher that wants to define the reality for himself independently of unnecessary constraints of methodological rigidity.

Skepticism, then, is the positive attitude of the postmodern researcher in a quest for truths in a 'post – truth' era in which old truths have to be replaced by new ones. This is a contradiction in terms because if what was hitherto considered as the truth respected the cherished canons of universality and necessity then there will be no need to put them to question as the conditions under which such truths were grasped could always be the same for everyone and could lead to the same truth as is expected in empirical sciences working in an era prior to revolutions that break off with the old tradition. The skepticism of the postmodern era is thus aimed at rejecting what Christopher Butler refers to as 'master narratives':

A great deal of postmodernist theory depends on the maintenance of a skeptical attitude,[...]we now live in an era in which legitimizing 'master narratives' are in crisis and in decline. These narratives are contained in or implied by major philosophies, such as Kantianism, Hegelianism, and Marxism, which argue that history is progressive, that knowledge can liberate us, and that all knowledge has a secret unity.²⁸¹

The master narratives have enclosed us within tight limits of determining the truth or seeing the world through the lenses of determinism. It is the kind of epistemological determinism rejected by postmodernism because the conceptual framework for determining reality must not be set in advance. The researcher can read the situation of his time and decide which framework to reject and which to take; he can even reject all theoretical frameworks and start the task of knowing afresh from the task of determining grounds if such grounds must be set prior to cognition.

Butler makes mention of the Kantian system as one of those master narratives that must be put to question as closed systems that contradict the requirements of complexity. Of course Kant is the precursor of German idealism and other German philosophers like Hegel

²⁸¹ Christopher Butler, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 13.

and Marx became famous for systematic unity in philosophical theories that aimed at providing once and for all the framework within which truth and falsity could be defined and in the case of Kant, such a framework provided the bounds within which truth could be obtained and the bounds beyond which nothing could be known at all. In the postmodern era, the ‘secret unity’ of knowledge is an obstacle to knowledge itself. If there were to be any unity in knowledge at all, then the unity must accommodate plurality. This means that we must not use all the time seeking for unity in diversity, we can also have diversity of that which cannot be united. Besides, the methods aimed at unveiling the secret unity of knowledge have given rise to philosophical systems that have derailed us from the complexity of the reality by burying our minds in pre – determined systems and theories that need to be revised and reviewed or discarded, to say the least.

The way Butler writes about postmodernism in a metaphorical resemblance with a political party of quarrelsome members is proof of the view that the postmodern thinkers are not out to seek unity in knowledge but to glorify diversity as a step to loosening the tight grip that the quest for systematic unity has had on our thought systems and thereby liberating knowledge from its prison of rigid theories, and the Kantian system is seen in the postmodern era as one of such rigid systems of knowledge to be rejected or only used as a takeoff point of what is no longer accepted in our quest for truth. According to Butler,

I will be writing about postmodernist artists, intellectual gurus, academic critics, philosophers, and social scientists [...], as if they were all members of a loosely constituted and quarrelsome political party. This party is by and large internationalist and ‘progressive’. It is on the left rather than the right, and it tends to see everything, from abstract painting to personal relationships, as political undertakings. It is not particularly unified in doctrine, and even those who have most significantly contributed ideas to its manifestos sometimes indignantly deny membership – and yet the postmodernist party tends to believe that its time has come. It is certain of its uncertainty, and often claims that it has seen through the sustaining illusions of others, and so has grasped the ‘real’ nature of the cultural and political institutions which surround us.²⁸²

In line with the subject – based and object – based criteria of a contemporary theory of knowledge treated in the third part of our work, the postmodern condition makes knowledge a product that can no longer be indifferent to the social condition of the knowledge – seeker. The quest for norms or standards of human behavior is inseparable from the need for knowledge that is no longer estranged from the milieu of the researcher. The mingling of politics and morality in issues of knowledge now makes the quest for knowledge an

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

individual and at the same time a social phenomenon especially as the knowledge is operational in a dynamic system that admits plurality without destroying unity when it is necessary and not when it is the norm for such a norm destroys the facets of reality that does not fit into the unidimensional angles of the rigid systems.

If the postmodern condition is likened to that of a political party with quarrelsome members, then the quarrels are the tools with which the complexity is to be understood. The quarrels are no longer to be seen in the Kantian manner of metaphysicians groping in the dark with schools of thought whose debates can never be settled once and for all. It is like a rehabilitation of endless quarrels which are no longer to be seen as epistemologically useless like Kant saw them. Above all, such quarrels are no longer to be resolved by philosophical systems laying down the canons for us to seek the secret unity of all knowledge. Such quarrels are the dynamics of an era that admits differences and refusal to abide by one system or one method; it can even be a rejection of all methods to lapse into methodological anarchy that can no longer meet the objectives of a universal science of truth. This is not a problem at all given that there may be no universality in knowledge which does not mean that we are collectively giving in to relativity. Even if there were to be universality, such universality must be made to work with relativity in knowledge so as not to use universality as a criterion to discard other methods that may help us grasp complexity.

The postmodern condition respects the uncertainty bred by an era that no longer sees certainty as a valid criterion for truth. That is why the era can be considered as a 'post – truth era' era because the philosophers of this era seem to have seen enough of illusions generated by other philosophical eras that were at a quest for certainty. If certainty is no longer the norm, then we must maintain the uncertainty and suspend our judgments on those issues of knowledge and other issues in art, morality and politics that rigid theories claim to have solved once and for all or at least to have given the ultimate conditions of possibility of solutions to the problems that are still perennial. It is about putting old wine in new bottles. Even if the problems are more or less the same, the goal is to define them in a new way without giving in to methodological fanaticism and without showing lack of courage to do a destructive – constructive undertaking like the one carried out by Kant. Even if the method of the postmodern thinkers leads to a rejection of Kantism, its form has the spirit of the Kantian kind of revolution that tries out methods hitherto considered to be out of the norm.

The kind of skeptical attitude expected in a postmodern thinker is such that it can lead to a rejection of the apparent consensus which is implicitly or explicitly held about master narratives. We need to free the angles of the reality that are hidden in the totalizing master narratives of great systems of philosophy. According to Butler,

*[...] the basic attitude of postmodernists was a scepticism about the claims of any kind of overall, totalizing explanation. Lyotard was not alone in seeing the intellectual's task as one of 'resistance', even to 'consensus', which 'has become an outmoded and suspect value'. Postmodernists responded to this view, partly for the good reason that by doing so they could side with those who didn't 'fit' into the larger stories – the subordinated and the marginalized – against those with the power to disseminate the master narratives. Many postmodernist intellectuals thus saw themselves as avant-garde and bravely dissentient. This heralded a pluralist age, in which [...] even the arguments of scientists and historians are to be seen as no more than quasi narratives which compete with all the others for acceptance. They have no unique or reliable fit to the world, no certain correspondence with reality. They are just another form of fiction.*²⁸³

The problem with master narratives is that they sideline authors who do not fit in the rigidity of the theoretical framework thereby creating a situation that leads to discrimination and intellectual marginalization of a few researchers who oppose the master narratives. The minority of researchers who do not agree with the precepts of the master narrative are no longer to be seen as outcasts but as alternatives to the truth which is no longer an exclusive property of rigid systems of thought.

As avant – garde, the postmodern philosophers are to be forerunners of a movement that intends to shake the foundations of truth in a radical and unorthodox way that is needed to start all over. They are actually supposed to be forerunners of pluralism in methods and pluralism in perspectives from which the reality is viewed. If a multiplicity of methods gives a multifaceted view of reality, then we have an asset and not a liability in an era of complexity. The postmodern thinkers are in the minority and are out to challenge the views defended by the majority. The majority has not been able to get us out of the enigmatic reality. The majority must not always be right. The views of the majority have been dictated on a minority that no longer agrees with popular opinions about how to conceive the truth. The postmodern space is one of competing theories that can be made to complement each other. But their complementarity does not have to be mechanical, it should be a result of a process by which the researcher is not afraid of maintaining contradictions and plurality. The

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

goal is not to have methodological unity at all costs; the real goal is not to miss out on any aspect of reality, and this is done by not rejecting the plurality of methods in the epistemological space which now extends to the social, artistic, moral and political space. Since our primary focus is on the epistemological space, the postmodern era of pluralism requires that we should not ignore the social, moral, political and artistic space in which the researcher has to mingle in his construction of truth.

With postmodernism, there are no more official theories; no one is a subordinate to another in the intellectual space. The scientific discourse is no longer the absolute source of truth; the scientific discourse is in a competition with other discourses. If we situate Kant in this era, we will say the Kantian reconciliatory approach has to be in competition with other approaches even those which take side with one or the other view that he tries to reconcile. In this case, the reconciliatory position of Kantism has to compete with the radical approaches of empiricism and rationalism rejected by Kant. The postmodern theorists reject simplistic conceptions of truth; it is a complete rejection of unity if such unity is to be a source of the kind of consensus that makes some theories 'official' to the detriment of others. This era would reject any metaphysical conception of an ultimate totalizing reality without accepting the exclusive reality of science based on a radical empirical approach. In the same way, the Kantian approach will be one among others trying to explain the reality some of which angles are not given for conceptualization.

There is no single reliable way of interpreting the world. Every interpretation can be reduced to fiction in the face of competing modes of interpreting the world. Gerahrd Hoffmann considers postmodernism as a complex phenomenon that borrows much from the intellectual revolution of the sixties:

Postmodernism is a complex phenomenon. It is a product of the Sixties, but not their sum. The Sixties are a composite of contradictory trends, as is postmodernism. This explosive decade may create what Susan Sontag called a new "unitary sensibility"; however, the new sensibility is not uniform but plural. Like the Sixties, postmodernism is diverse: it extends into the culture at large, it defines the theories that explain the condition of the lifeworld and the arts, and it is responsible for the innovative power of the creative arts. Each of these three areas of postmodernism has its own "rationality complex" (Habermas); each highlights different attributes of the Sixties; each extends beyond the Sixties and develops its own perspective(s).The rationalities of the

*three (or more) aspects of postmodernism connect and form a unity within multiplicity.*²⁸⁴

In creative art, postmodernism frees the imaginative powers of the artist from interpretative bounds that prevent the mind from stretching beyond limits. In the Kantian system, the limit – setting epistemology that conceives truth only within the framework of the empirical realm contradicts the goals of postmodernism, but since every contradiction is welcome and sustained, the Kantian system has to exist with its contradictory versions especially those that consider the *noumena* knowable as a contradiction of the position arrived at by Kant in his representational conception of truth.

By setting limits within which the truth is to be conceived (beyond which we land in illusions), Kant gives only one way of seeing reality which is actually a combination of rationalism and empiricism and that is not all there is to truth. The reality can still escape the Kantian framework as well as the two approaches that he struggles to reconcile so as to make his theory more flexible than others. The end result is that the Kantian theory makes the subject the real definition of reality from the *a priori* plan of the mind through which we define the world outside the mind. If this theory becomes ‘official’ because it is accepted by the majority, then that is the more reason for which it has to be rejected so that we can look at the reality from many angles not inserted in the Kantian system of cognition. However, the Kantian critique of reason using reason itself implies that Kant was not indifferent to what became the aims of the postmodern era. Kant himself was not contented with the intellectual status quo of his time and that is a fertile takeoff for every philosophical reflection. The problem is that Kant rejected the system of school metaphysics of his era only to end up in another school that may not be very different from the schools he rejected because the whole system is very dependent on a reformed version of metaphysics that is not very far from the one rejected. At least the intention of going beyond what was done at a time means that Kant took into account the possible outcomes of a theory that seeks systematic unity while admitting the possibility of loose ends that can shatter the system altogether, and that is what we set out to prove in the third part of our work.

By setting limits within which true knowledge could be obtained so as to avoid the futile debate of metaphysical schools and at the same time making use of the failures of reason in the speculative domain to erect the goals and foundation of morality, Kant was a

²⁸⁴Gerahrd Hoffmann, *From Modernism to Postmodernism: Concepts and Strategies of Postmodern American Fiction*, Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005, 13.

forerunner of German idealism and midway between Enlightenment and Postmodernism. One step backward and Kant is rejecting the tradition before him. One step forward and the post – Kantian era of postmodernism makes use of the historical turn initiated by Kant in philosophy. Stephen R.C. Hicks thus considers Kant as a decisive mediator between the eras of Enlightenment and Postmodernism:

Kant was the decisive break with the Enlightenment and the major step toward postmodernism. Contrary to the Enlightenment account of reason, Kant held that the mind was not a response mechanism but a constitutive mechanism. He held that the mind – and not the reality – sets the terms of knowledge. And he held that reality conforms to reason, not vice versa. In the history of philosophy, Kant marks a fundamental shift from objectivity as the standard to subjectivity as the standard. Wait a minute, a defender of Kant may reply. Kant was hardly opposed to reason. After all he favoured rational consistency and he believed in universal principles. So what is anti – reason about that? The answer is that more fundamental to reason than consistency and universality is the connection with reality. Any thinker who concludes that in principle reason cannot know reality is not fundamentally an advocate of reason. That Kant was in favour of consistency and universality is of derivative and ultimately inconsequential significance. Consistency with no connection to reality is a game based on subjective rules. If the rules of the game have nothing to do with reality, then why should everyone play by the same rules? These were precisely the implications the post- modernists were to draw eventually.²⁸⁵

From his subject – based approach to attain the truth, Kant is pro – reason. This is because it is from such a method that we can use the *a priori* plan of the mind of every subject to attain universality and necessity in thought which are very important ingredients of science. On the other hand, by doing a critique of reason to show that reason does not have unlimited powers, Kant is sounding a warning bell for postmodernity not to consider every theory as an absolute definition of truth. In this case the unknowable *noumena* become proofs of a complex reality that cannot be grasped instantaneously in the representational approach defined by *a priori* concepts. The unknowable *noumenon* will thus be a soft initiation into an era that assumes the reality of complexity and the complexity of the reality so as to courageously face the epistemological problems of its day. One does not really need to defend Kant before it becomes clear that he admitted the difficulties of a totalizing reality. Yet the systematic unity of the Kantian system is a subject of controversy in the postmodern era which sees such systems as outdated and inadequate in our quest for a complex reality.

²⁸⁵Stephen R.C. Hicks, *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, Tempe, New Berlin: Scholargy Publishing, 2004, pp. 39 – 40.

Kant was anti – reason because he affirmed the impossibility for reason to know all reality. This ties with the goals of postmodernism which has to seek other ways and means of knowing the reality when reason fails. To be precise, we can say that Kant was in favour of reason only when the powers of such reason have been circumscribed so that it should not work beyond bounds. Kant was both pro- and anti – reason which is not far from the goals of postmodernism that seeks to put all possible methods at work especially methods that officially contradict the hitherto official methods that were fast becoming the theoretical dictatorship of science and philosophy. If Kant is postmodern in the form of his revolutionary theory, the content of this theory is at variance with the ultimate goals of the same postmodern era. In an evocative book entitled *Goodbye, Kant*, Maurizio Ferraris identifies four fallacies committed by Kant in the theory of knowledge developed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The four fallacies are meant to show that the theory of Kant no longer meets the needs of a postmodern era that has gone way beyond the precepts of Immanuel Kant. In his uncompromising critique of the Kantian *Critique of Pure Reason*, Maurizio Ferraris focuses on the Kantian object that cannot be known or known in a way that does not tie with the realities of our era.

The first fallacy identified by Maurizio Ferraris in the Kantian theory is in the difference between knowing a thing and experiencing a thing: a difference that was overlooked by Kant:

1. The fallacy makes a thing depend on the way that it is known. Here, “knowing” means having an experience that is more or less science, though it is obviously not so given that we can perfectly well encounter a thing without knowing it, that is, without having the slightest idea of its internal properties and without being able to identify it. When the citizens of Metropolis look into the sky and exclaim, “It’s a bird! It’s a plane! It’s Superman!,” it is clear that they can see something without knowing with any precision what. If we set this sort of case aside, we would have to say that we see something only when we know it, which is plainly false, though Kant generally seems to think that this is what happens.²⁸⁶

If seeing a thing were knowing the thing, for instance, then we would have had knowledge of all the things we see or experience. Yet there are many things we see which still baffle us. If the object of our knowledge is a material thing, then that material thing is seen, it can be touched, it can be made to produce a sound, we can apply our five human senses to the object. Yet we may not know it given that knowing and experiencing are not the same. Every

²⁸⁶Maurizio Ferraris, *Goodbye, Kant! What Still Stands of the Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Richard Davies, New York: State University of New York Press, 2013, pp. 52 – 53.

object has a *noumenon* or an angle that is not represented to us and thus is unknowable according to Kant. But it is not every aspect that is experienced by us that makes the object knowable to us. When we give multiple information about the same reality we are experiencing, it means what we are experiencing is not yet knowledge of the object. For if the experience were already knowledge of the object, then the experience would not give rise to many versions of information about the same object as this destroys the cherished criteria of universality and necessity expected of a true science.

If we see an object in the sky and we are not able to say what it is in reality, then we have experienced something that we do not know. This defeats the Kantian empirical criterion of true knowledge which says that for us to know, the object must be experienced for it to be given or the concepts must be concepts of objects. In the case of an object seen and not known, we have doubts over what is given to us about the object and what is thought about it since what is given and what is thought do not permit us know the reality about the object. The experience of an object is thus not the ultimate step to knowledge. Something else has to happen after experiencing or before experiencing the object. To be more precise, there is more to knowing an object than just the mere experience of it. The first Kantian fallacy identified by Maurizio Ferraris thus puts to question the cherished experience used by Kant as the defining bounds of true knowledge. Even if we grant that we can know something after seeing it because the object is given before it is thought, the reverse direction that we know something only when we see it is obviously false for there are many things we see that we do not know thereby putting to question the transcendental deduction by which concepts become concepts of objects after the objects have been given to us.

The second fallacy has to do with the knowledge of things as they appear to us or as they appear to our representational faculties. Maurizio Ferraris identifies the ambiguity involved in such knowledge:

*2. The phrase “not how things are in themselves, but how they must be if they are to be known by us” is multiply ambiguous because “know” can mean (a) the operations carried out, unbeknownst to us in the process of knowing the external world, by our senses and our categories; (b) the form taken by our senses and our nervous system as an architecture for knowledge; or (c) what we know as experts.*²⁸⁷

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

If knowing something means the operations carried out in the mind in the process of knowing, then if such operations are unknown to us, the term ‘knowing’ will lose its meaning as we cannot prove that such processes have occurred to give rise to knowledge. If some objects of intuition can be given and not thought, and if the transcendental ideas or beings of reason can be the highest tribunal of human thought without any corresponding intuitions, then the human mind is not as simple as it seems in the Kantian approach that now sounds simplistic. The process of knowing, in this case, has to be accompanied by a theory of the human mind that has to know the objects outside the mind.

Since sensibility and understanding are faculties by which objects are given and thought respectively, it implies that for us to prove that we have knowledge, we must outline the internal processes that take place in the mind for us to attain knowledge. This is the first level of the ambiguity in the Kantian theory of knowing objects only when they are represented by our faculties. The second level has to do with the role of the senses when they work in conjunction with the nervous system to transmit information to the brain for interpretation. Such a role has to be known if knowing a thing is how things are when we know them or when they are represented by us. The focus on ‘us’ implies that we should seek within our faculties for the proof of knowledge. It could also refer to our knowledge as experts or people skilled in the art of knowing which entails further complications about whether all human beings can have access to such an art or it is only accessible to a few depending on the efforts they put in to know objects. Not realizing the ambiguity in such terms and phrases means that the Kantian approach is simplistic and does not take into account the possible interpretational directions that the theory can lead to.

The third fallacy is obvious because it puts to question the Kantian subject – based approach whose idealism was meant to achieve better goals than that of Berkeley described by Kant as ‘dogmatic’ because it leads to the affirmation of the non – existence of the material world without the mind of the subject. Kant has to prove that his idealism does not lead to the non – existence of the material world but proves that the material world is conditioned by our internal faculties for us to know it:

3. In any case, we end up with a reduction of objects to the subjects that know them. And this reduction can be read in differing ways according to how we conceive the role of subjectivity in it. In the most extreme version, the way is open to transcendental idealism, which need not be in the manner of a Berkeleyan identification of esse and percipi as much as the apparently more cautious esse est concipi, which turns out to be more pervasive and insidious:

*things exist only insofar as we consciously represent them to ourselves, with a consciousness that likewise constitutes the primary foundation of science.*²⁸⁸

There is a possibility of showing that Kant did not move an inch away from Berkeley's idealism that he sets out to criticize. The Kantian rejection of the Berkelerian idealism is treated in the first chapter of our work. Kant actually proves that the material world exists with objects that are given in intuition. But such objects are only possible when we know them through our representational faculties. This means that if our representational faculties are not able to represent any aspect of the object, then the object is unknowable like the *noumenon* though it exists. The extreme interpretation here is to claim that what is not known does not exist and which is not the claim made by Kant. With Kant, the *noumena* exist but cannot be known. The material world exists whether we end up knowing it or not. The problem with Kant is that the material world as we know it can only be possible for us as long as we know it. What exists and is not known may still be possible but we cannot prove such an existence.

If what is experienced must be known, though we experience many things that are not known, then the material world that we experience is known but there are some aspects of the material world that are not given to us in intuition and are thus unknowable to us. Kant is not far from Berkeley only when we push the interpretation to the extreme level of claiming that since the *noumenon* cannot be known then it does not exist. After all if what exists cannot be known through our representational faculties then we have no other way of proving that it exists as shown in the next chapter of our work. There is *aporia* in not being able to know what exists. There is possibility of misunderstanding and misinterpretation when we claim that what is not known actually exists. In that case we have to prove that there is a way of proving existence other than knowing the thing that exists. The Kantian theory leads to such interpretative ambiguities that can make it lapse into the Berkelerian idealism that he sets out to criticize.

The fourth fallacy has to do with the Kantian treatment of the transcendental ideas of God, the soul and the world as a totality. Whether God exists or not, whether the soul is immortal or not, and whether the world has a beginning in time or not, are issues that Kant declared could not be decided once and for all because the objects are not given to us in intuition. This means that such objects are not possible objects of knowledge and this view is problematic:

²⁸⁸ *Idem.*

4. It is primarily in the Aesthetic and the Analytic, where Kant discusses what is accessible to experience, that the fallacy comes into view, but it is nevertheless present also in the Dialectic. For Kant, the physics of his day made it obvious that questions of God, the soul, and the world could not be decided in any conclusive way, so that, for instance, whether the world had a beginning in time or not could not be decided. But in the twentieth century just this sort of question would be the subject of scientific discussion; thus, contrary to what Kant thought, the unknowability in question is not absolute but subject to history. Of course, this is not to criticize Kant for not having been a prophet, but merely to stress that, with the passage of time, what he had naturalized returned to being historicized.²⁸⁹

The error, for Kant, consists in the fatalism of the unknowability of the transcendental ideas. In the era of postmodernism, everything is possible. Since there are nonconceptual objects and non – intuited objects, it is clear that we cannot set an absolute limit to knowledge of any aspects of reality. What is not known today can be known tomorrow; what was unknowable in the Kantian era can be knowable in our era.

The claim by Kant that God, the soul, and the world were unknowable is more of a historical than a natural claim. We cannot be sure that such ideas cannot be known as objects of knowledge for all times. In the postmodern era, every epistemological failure has to be situated within its era such that other eras can have the chance to review the methods and the objects so that what was unknown can become known and what was known can be put to question for new views to be emerge about our knowledge and the objects of our knowledge. Kant fallaciously makes his claims about the unknowability of the beings of reason to be absolute without taking into account the historical eras. Even if we do not end up having knowledge of such ideas in our era, there is no proof that the ideas will remain unknowable for all times. The same can be said of the *noumena* declared to be absolutely unknowable by Kant. The postmodern era is a review of everything that we know and a new attempt to know what has been declared unknowable by ‘official’ theories of the previous era that did not see plurality as the asset we take it to be in our era. Even if Kant had the seed of the postmodern approach in the form of his revolutionary method in epistemology, the content of the Kantian approach is not in perfect agreement with the pluralistic requirements of the postmodern era. Even if the idea of ‘post – truth’ is itself problematic, the postmodern era uses the idea to go beyond the ‘official’ truths of the previous era that need to be reviewed and even rejected for a new era of pluralism that does away with epistemologically barren consensuses in philosophy.

²⁸⁹ *Idem.*

FIFTH CHAPTER

THE APORIA OF THE “KNOWABLE” AND THE “UNKNOWABLE”

Traditionally, there has been a dualism of realms of reality in philosophy: the material and the immaterial, the sensible and the intelligible, the determinable and the determination. The determination is the matter and the determination is the form. In Kantian philosophy, the object and the concept exhibit a relationship that gives rise to truth only as long as the concept makes possible the object as an appearance in experience. Kant has shown that apart from the *a priori* forms of time and space by which objects are given to us in intuition, there is no other way we can give objectivity to our concepts. In this conception of reality, Kant distinguishes between the phenomenal and the noumenal world. Since objects can only be given to us as appearances, and since appearances are representations, beyond the appearances, we can know nothing else about an object. This leads Kant to distinguish between a thing in itself and a thing as it appears to us. The thing in itself is the *noumenon* which cannot be given as a representation in appearance. The thing as it appears to us is all we can have as representations whose ultimate unity with consciousness is synthesized via the categories. Between the knowable phenomena and the unknowable *noumena*, Kant makes experience the limit of application of concepts of the understanding and the concepts of the understanding the limit of synthetic unity in apperception beyond which the concepts are converted into ideas that can no longer be made applicable to possible experience. In such division of reality, the science of transcendental aesthetics has to be the source of the insight into the immediate relationship that we can have with objects of knowledge beyond which the part of the object not given as an appearance becomes unknowable. This is the substance of the Kantian argument under critical examination in this chapter of our work.

Determining the grounds through which Kant divides realms of existence into the knowable and the unknowable partly constitutes the concern of transcendental aesthetics, a concern partly tackled by the Transcendental analytic which spells out the conditions of possibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge as determining grounds of all appearances, as well as the epistemological necessity of making the thing in itself unknowable to us through our inability to have intellectual intuition of objects. How appearances are determined *a priori* thereby making the undetermined thing in itself unknowable leads us a special kind of aesthetics that studies sensibility purely from *a priori* grounds of time and space. From the

following precise and concise definitions, our task of critical evaluation in this chapter is simplified:

The effect of an object upon the faculty of representation, so far as we are affected by it, is sensation. That intuition which is in relation to the object through sensation, is entitled empirical. The undetermined object of an empirical intuition is entitled appearance. That in the appearance which corresponds to sensation I term its matter but that which so determines the manifold of appearance that it allows of being ordered in certain relations, I term the form of appearance. That in which alone the sensations can be posited and ordered in a certain form, cannot itself be sensation; and therefore, while the matter of all appearance is given to us a posteriori only, its form must lie ready for the sensations a priori in the mind, and so must allow of being considered apart from all sensation.²⁹⁰

The distinction between the matter and form of appearance gives the logical take off point into transcendental aesthetics whereby the matter of appearance is linked to sensation and obtained through experience while the form of all appearances is *a priori* and depends on, and is determined by an *a priori* plan of the mind. How tenable is the argument of the *a priori* cognition of objects as representations leading to an unknowable substratum of all reality? Is it logically admissible that the representation of objects in intuition, glorified in the analytic, should become an epistemological obstacle to the knowledge of the *noumena* in the aesthetics? At the heart of the Kantian division of reality into the *noumena* and phenomena lies an intention to rescue natural science without destroying metaphysics but giving a limit to both, which is the intention of the critique of reason using reason itself.

The substance of the arguments of the transcendental aesthetics uses the *a priori* form of time and space to refer to sensibility as a faculty that represents objects as given in intuition. The form of the objects as given in intuition is *a priori* and that is the bone of contention because it could imply that what is not given cannot be thought. If what is not given cannot be thought then what is not given does not exist. That is why the *noumena* do not exist. But there is a problem of the status of what is given. If some aspects of the objects are given and not thought then they are not known despite the fact that they are given. If some concepts are not able to order the representations of our intuition and are yet concepts whose emptiness is not completely useless in epistemology and morality, then the Kantian system of the transcendental aesthetics needs to be reviewed for a better understanding of its merits and demerits.

²⁹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Transcendental Aesthetics, pp. 65 – 66.

The dichotomy of the empirical matter of appearance and the *a priori* form of appearance makes the task of metaphysical epistemology a destructive – constructive endeavor to know the limits of what can be known and the limits beyond which nothing else can be known which implies the limit beyond which the nature of our faculties is such as to make the object impenetrable and thus unknowable. If what we know becomes useful only when we admit that beyond what is known there is another angle of the object that is unknowable, and if what is unknowable does not in any way destroy the relevance and validity of the knowledge obtained about what is knowable, then the transcendental aesthetics becomes a complement of the analytic and the ground of the distinction of reality into the *noumena* and the phenomena becomes a fulfillment of the task of reason in its auto –critique. On the other hand, if what is unknowable is due to a limitation of our representational faculties as conceived by Kant, then we have to experiment if the representational faculties give us all there is to know or if we need to review the rigid representational faculties that may not give room for knowledge of what is given that is not thought or what is thought that is not given. If the validity of what we claim to know loses its foundation when we try to apply the tool in unprofitable areas, then the circumscription of the tool by the transcendental aesthetics providing the raw data for the analytic becomes an epistemological necessity and a new basis for a new way of conceiving time and space in our knowledge of objects and in our quest for truth. Yet the ideality of time and space is problematic.

5.1: Questioning the *A Priority* of Time and Space in the Transcendental Aesthetics

Kant defines transcendental aesthetics as “The science of all principles of *a priori* sensibility [...]”²⁹¹ to tackle his doctrine of time and space as *a priori* forms of sensibility or the innate plan of the mind to receive objects of the sense – experience. This science of the *a priori* forms of sensibility called transcendental aesthetics is distinguished from transcendental logic which deals with “[...] the principles of pure thought [...]”²⁹² Depending on whether we are dealing with the matter of appearances or the form of appearances, hence depending on whether we are in transcendental aesthetics or transcendental logic, the matter of appearance only appears to us according to the *a priori* form in the mind prior to any encounter with experience. The matter of appearance cannot take us to the object in itself because the form of the object as given in time and space is

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

constituted in the mind independently of all experience. Thus transcendental aesthetics aims at showing that the form of an appearance is *a priori* and determines the way the matter of an appearance is given to us. In this way of conceiving the matter and form of appearances, space and time would not be considered as belonging to the object in itself but *a priori* forms constituted by the mind for us to immediately have a relationship with objects as representations in intuition. If this were not the case, it would have been easy for us to depend solely on the data of experience to know objects. This is not the case because the data of experience is conditioned by the mind through the *a priori* forms of time and space such that what we receive is a representation according to a plan of the form constituted before the moment when we encounter the objects as appearances in experience.

The Kantian conception of the matter of appearance as conditioned by the *a priori* form of time and space implies that without our ability to represent time and space in the mind, objects would not be given to us. What, then, constitutes the reality of the object, the ideality of the form by which it is represented or the matter of the object that cannot be represented except in the *a priori* form? This questioning implies the hypothesis of the matter of appearance that may not be given to the *a priori* forms of sensibility, and the matter not given is the thing in itself or the *noumenon*. Why should the matter of the appearance not contain the thing in itself so that our *a priori* forms of time and space will help us represent the totality of the object as it is given to us and as it is? This means that the matter of the appearance represented by the form of sensibility is not the totality of the matter and this is problematic. If Kant has divided appearance into the matter and the form of the appearance and the matter is *a posteriori* while the form is *a priori*, there is no logical reason why the totality of the matter of appearance should not be given in intuition. Saying that it is not given means our intuitions are never complete or that our representational faculties are limited in what is given and what is thought. In such a case Kant will still have to divide the matter of appearance into what can be given in intuition and what is hidden from intuition as the *noumenon* in every object.

The relationship between the given matter of appearance and the totality of the matter of appearance is not clearly stated in the Kantian system. If the totality of the matter of appearance is given *a posteriori*, then the forms of sensibility should be able to represent them *a priori*. If only part of the matter of appearance is given *a posteriori*, then the part not given *a posteriori* has not been represented by the form of sensibility. Yet it is incoherent to talk of the matter of appearance as an aspect of the object not given because experience is

readily available to confirm such claims of *a posteriori* representations. The Kantian transcendental aesthetics should be able to make further distinctions on the matter of the appearance and why some aspects of that matter should not be represented either a posteriori or *a priori*. Their lack of representable nature can be justified though *a priori* forms which correspond to an innate plan by the mind. But if we are able to represent the matter of the appearance *a posteriori* then it becomes difficult to show how what is readily given in experience is not covered by the representational *a priori* plan of the mind. This means that Kant has to admit that either the other part of the matter of appearance is given and not represented in concepts (which Kant does admit as used in the third part of our work to show the openness in an apparently closed system of thought) or one part of the matter of appearance is not given at all (and that is what Kant makes as claim in the ideality of time and space that cannot represent the object as it is in itself). The former can be a complementary element of plurality in a system seeking synthetic unity but the latter can be used as a point against Kant because it is logically much easier to prove that the matter of appearance is given and not conceptualized than to prove that an aspect of the matter of appearance is not given at all. Is the part of the matter of appearance given and not conceptualized not the same aspect of the matter of the appearance that Kant claims cannot be represented by the *a priori* plan of the mind?

It is not easy to admit that the matter of appearance is not given to the subject of knowledge at all. The more plausible claim would have been to show that the *noumena* are actually the angles of an object given in intuition but not conceptualized after all conceptualization seems to be the framework by which the Kantian truth is conceived as there is no proof that any representations that are not conceptualized can give rise to knowledge. Concepts only relate to objects mediately through the schema by which a synthesis of the imagination provides the mediatory ground for the concept to determine the object. Intuitions relate to the objects immediately because they constitute that by which objects are given to us. The closest relationship to an object is thus established by intuition, and though concepts are further away from the objects, they condition the objects mediately through the synthetic unity of apperception whereby all representations belong to one consciousness that necessarily relates to the objects through rules established by concepts.

If intuitions are the closest representations to the objects, then the mode through which the intuitions are possible must be *a priori* because they constitute a formal and not material determination of an object. If in an *a posteriori* manner we can have a material

determination of an object, then why should the formal determination of an object miss out on some elements of the material determination of an object? If the concept of the understanding is to provide the general rule by which we subsume particular cases in experience under general rules, there is no reason for the failure of such general rules to accept the subsumption of some particular cases duly determined materially or in an *a posteriori* manner. In *Kant's Intuitionism*, Lorne Falkenstein notes that:

Now how can an outer intuition, which precedes the objects themselves, and in which the concepts of these objects can be determined a priori, attend the mind? Obviously, in no other way than insofar as it has its place merely in the subject as this subject's formal character, whereby it comes to be affected by objects and thereby acquires immediate representation (that is, intuition) of them; hence, [in no other way than insofar as the intuition has its place in the subject] only as form of outer sense in general. According to this passage, what is innate to the subject is the manner 'whereby it comes to be affected by objects.' Space, on this account, is not something the subject is innately enabled to constitute out of its most primitive sensory experiences; space is rather the manner in which the subject is innately constituted to receive its most primitive sensory experiences.²⁹³

Space here is the *a priori* form of outer sense. This means that space is the *a priori* mode by which outer objects are given to us in intuition. The subject's formal character is a defining ground which conditions objects to appear to us in a certain way. The particular way the object appears to us does not depend on the object itself but on the form of outer sense which is space. Space here cannot be in the object but in us, through it we represent objects given to us immediately. Intuition as the immediate representation of an object follows an internal plan of the mind to have outer sense or receive objects of sense – experience.

The *a priori* of space as established by Kant can easily lead to the non – existence of space independently of our innate faculties of representation. Though Kant does not directly say that space does not exist whether we end up representing it or not, it is clear that if we create a world without rational beings representing space, then the objects of experience will be unknown to us as they will not be given to us since there are no rational beings to represent it. Kant may not be far from Berkeley²⁹⁴ who thinks that things only exist as long as we perceive them and that outside our minds there is nothing. The Kantian view could be taken in radical fashion to lead to such a Berkelerian conclusion because even if space were to exist as an entity on its own, there is no way we could ever know it if we are unable to

²⁹³ Lorne Falkenstein, *Kant's Intuitionism: A Commentary on Transcendental Aesthetic*, Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1995, Introduction, p. 4.

²⁹⁴ George Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge and Three Dialogues*, *op. cit.*, Part 1, p. 25.

represent it *a priori*. Such a space would be likened to a thing in itself which is unknowable because it is not representable in the *a priori* plan of the mind. The questioning here thus consists in wondering what becomes of space without rational beings to represent the space. If rational beings do not exist in the Kantian system, there is a possibility for his idealism to lapse into the Berkelerian system in which the material world is nothing without the human mind that represents it. Immanuel Kant is thus not too far away from the Berkeley that he sets out to criticize.

What is innate in the subject, by means of which the object is determined, at its reception as a representation, is not the power to constitute our mind to receive objects in space but the way the mind has been constituted to receive objects in space. This implies that what is innate is not the ability to constitute our mind to receive objects immediately in space but the inbuilt plan itself. The ability to receive objects in time and place is not a process but an innate achievement that makes us know in advance that objects will be received through space as an *a priori* form of outer sense. If this were not the case, then our encounter with the object and the representations thus received would not be immediate but mediate. Since the representations are immediate, it follows that the innate plan was already achieved before the reception of representations. Objects are not given to be constituted as representations. Objects are given to an already constituted *a priori* formal plan of the mind called space to represent outer sense. The constitution of the subject to receive representations is not a process but an already achieved innate plan. Thus we do not need to represent an empty space before representing objects in space. Objects are innately received or given in space as outer sense. The outer sense is formal and not material.

The impossibility of empty space implies the impossibility of complete absence of objects. It is such an instantaneous act that objects are represented in space because the act follows a plan made way in advance, an *a priori* plan made to continue experience and its objects in space. In this way, we could not represent an empty space without objects because it is the presence of objects that makes the space itself possible as an *a priori* form of sensibility. To Kant a representation of any space must be filled by other spaces because the ideality of space makes it a condition for objects to be given and not an empty space to be filled by objects later. If the representation of space were ability, then rational beings could choose not to represent it or to even represent empty space. But such is not the case because the representation of space is a property that already goes with the objects as an *a priori* form

to which all objects conform. This still brings Kant very close to Berkeley to whom there is nothing in the material world as space and objects without the instrument of perception.

Representing objects in space is not ability but a property of the subject. Representing objects outside of us is an innate characteristic of the subject. The outer sense is the innate *a priori* plan to represent objects outside of us. Though the objects are representations outside of us, the human quality to represent them as such is innate and *a priori*. The only way to directly relate to an object which is called intuition depends on us and not on the objects themselves. This is because knowledge of an object depends on representations which are not things in themselves but the various ways the objects are given to us as conditioned by our own nature and not by the nature of the object itself.

Space is nothing but the form of all appearances of outer sense. It is the subjective condition of sensibility, under which alone outer intuition is possible for us. Since, then, the receptivity of the subject, its capacity to be affected by objects, must necessarily precede all intuitions of these objects, it can readily be understood how the form of all appearances can be given prior to all actual perceptions, and so exist in the mind a priori, and how, as a pure intuition, in which all objects must be determined, it can contain, prior to all Experience, principles which determine the relations of these objects. It is, therefore, solely from the human standpoint that we can speak of space, of extended things, etc. If we depart from the subjective condition under which alone we can have outer intuition, namely, liability to be affected by objects, the representation of space stands for nothing whatsoever.²⁹⁵

Space is a subjective condition by which we represent all sensible objects as existing outside of us. If it were not a subjective condition, then the object would not be represented but given in itself; if this were not the case, the objects would not be determined by us but imposed on us by an objective plan that would depend on the object and not the subject. Yet objectivity as agreement of minds depends on rules provided by the understanding and not by experience for experience cannot afford the universality and apodictic character of scientific cognition. It is because space is a subjective condition that we are not able to represent empty space; rather we can represent a space full of spaces.

Beyond the human standpoint referred to by Kant, there is no possibility to represent space which means that in such a case space would be nothing. The hypothesis of objects without space or space without objects is rejected by the *a priori* of the form of space. If objects cannot be represented without space, then where is the *noumenon* represented? The

²⁹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

answer of the Kantian system is that it is not represented at all and so it is unknowable. How, then, do we know that it is unknowable? This is a preoccupation developed further in the next subsection of our work. The human quality to be affected by objects is subjective, it is not in the objects themselves, it is in us. This is how space is a gateway for representation of things outside of us, without which we cannot prove that the objects affect us in a way as to have an immediate relationship with us, and cognition would become impossible. Space as a representation of extended objects only makes sense from a human perspective. The objects themselves cannot affect us if our mind does not have a formal plan of representing them. Thus the matter of sensation has no meaning without the form of sensation. Objects only relate directly to us when we have an inner form of representing them. The form of appearances is given before the perception by which appearances are received. The form of appearances comes before the immediate representation of the appearances when objects are given to us. The form of appearances is antecedent to the intuitions by which the objects are given to us as representations. Space precedes all intuitions by which objects are given to us as appearances and not things in themselves.

The representation of objects in space is a property of the mind and not a property of the objects. Space is not a thing; space is a mode by which all things are represented outside of us *a priori*. “By means of outer sense, a property of our mind, we represent to ourselves objects as outside us, and all without exception in space. In space their shape, magnitude, and relation to one another are determined or determinable.”²⁹⁶ Outer sense is a property of the mind and it is called space. Inner sense too is a property of the mind and it is called time. Outer sense is an innate property which makes us represent outer objects *a priori*. Independently of all outer objects, we are able to determine all objects outside of us as soon as they are given to us immediately in intuition. “Space is a necessary *a priori* representation, which underlies all outer intuitions. We can never represent to ourselves the absence of space, though we can quite well think it as empty of objects.”²⁹⁷ A space can be represented as empty of objects but such a space must contain other spaces. Anything represented outside of us must be conditioned by space as that through which an object has a direct relationship with us. Concepts have only an indirect relationship with us through the mediation of the imagination in the schema. Why, then, are all objects not represented in time and space?

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

Staying true to his empirical thesis on the concept of space, John Locke linked the idea of space to perception whereby we use the senses to note the distance between objects and end up with the idea of space as addition of the various distances between objects. This is a purely empiricist view of space as a perception or representation of the senses. To Locke, “[...] we get the idea of space, both by our sight and touch; which, I think, is so evident that it would be as needless to go to prove that men perceive, by their sight, a distance between bodies of different colors, or between the parts of the same body, as they see colors themselves, nor is it less obvious that they can do so in the dark by feeling and touch.”²⁹⁸ This makes space an *a posteriori* concept derived entirely from experience by the use of the senses. Proving the existence of space is proving perception itself which is needless because the distance between objects is obvious and it is the sum total of these distances that is perceived as space. Kant overturns the empiricists’ view of space by proving that it is an *a priori* form of our intuition of outer objects. To Kant, “[...] this intuition [of space] must be *a priori*, that is, it must be found in us prior to any perception of an object, and must therefore be pure, not empirical, intuition.”²⁹⁹ If space were merely a perception, then its empirical basis could never lead to universal and apodictic knowledge that must have an *a priori* origin. Locke’s conception of space, thus, cannot lead to the kind of apodictic knowledge in geometry which comes about only through representations whose origin though independently of experience nevertheless conditions and determines the same experience from which they do not originate. Yet Locke’s representation of space implies that the Kantian ideality of space is problematic in the empirical conception of objects of nature.

Like Locke, David Hume holds that “The idea of space is convey’d to the mind by two senses, the sight and touch; nor does anything ever appear extended, that is not either visible or tangible.”³⁰⁰ This view of Hume, like that of Locke, makes space a perception built from the perception of relationships between objects in experience. This is an alternative that is rejected by Kant. The student of nature wants to think of space as a medium out there in which we represent objects accessible to our senses. With Kant, space is *a priori* as a form of objects and not obtained from experience and does not belong to objects themselves; space belongs to the subject as an *a priori* form which conditions all objects to be intuited in a particular way. To Kant,

²⁹⁸ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, *op. cit.*, Book II, Chapter XIII, p. 133.

²⁹⁹ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

³⁰⁰ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Vol. 1, ed. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, Part 1, p. 30.

*Space is not a discursive or, as we say, general concept of relations of things in general, but a pure intuition. For, in the first place, we can represent to ourselves only one space; and if we speak of diverse spaces, we mean thereby only parts of one and the same unique space. Secondly, these parts cannot precede the one all-embracing space, as being, as it were, constituents out of which it can be composed; on the contrary, they can be thought only as in it. Space is essentially one; the manifold in it, and therefore the general concept of spaces, depends solely on [the introduction of] limitations. Hence it follows that an a priori, and not an empirical, intuition underlies all concepts of space.*³⁰¹

Unlike Hume who sees space as conglomerate of relations of objects, just like Locke who sees it as an addition of the distances between objects, to Kant, as an *a priori* representation, space is not built up from perceptions because perceptions are in space and not space in perceptions. The perceptions do not add up to constitute space. Space is given as a pure intuition in which all perceptions are given. The perceptions do not precede and give rise to space. Space is *a priori* and thus antecedent to all perceptions. We can conceive parts of a unique space but we cannot make perceptions the building blocks of space. Space is not divisible into the objects that make it up. Space is made up of other spaces only by limitation and not by division. Objects limit spaces in their manifold but do not divide space which is given *a priori* in intuition.

To Andrew Janiak, “Kant claims that although we can represent space as empty, we cannot represent to ourselves the absence of space.”³⁰² In this case, the ‘empty’ space will still be full of other spaces. This implies that space is actually an infinite number of representations which are not given in a concept for such a concept cannot be thought with such magnitude. Rather, space is an intuition of a manifold of representations all in one and in an infinite number that can only be intuited *a priori*. Space must be presupposed if anything is to be intuited or given to us directly. We can represent space without an object but we cannot represent any object without space. In fact, we cannot represent anything without a prior representation of space. If we can represent space without an object or space full of other spaces, then space must no longer be the ultimate mode of representation of objects as it is represented without objects but full of other spaces. But if we cannot represent objects without space, the question remains as to how the *noumenon* is known to be unknowable when it is not represented. With Kant, space is a reality and an ideality at various degrees:

³⁰¹ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

³⁰² Andrew Janiak, “Kant’s View on Space and Time”, (Online) Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2016, available from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-spacetime>, accessed 5 September 2020.

*Our exposition [...] establishes the reality, that is, the objective validity, of space in respect of whatever can be presented to us outwardly as object, but also at the same time the ideality of space in respect of things when they are considered in themselves through reason, that is, without regard to the constitution of our sensibility. We assert, then, the empirical reality of space, as regards all possible outer experience; and yet at the same time we assert its transcendental ideality in other words, that it is nothing at all, immediately we withdraw the above condition, namely, its limitation to possible experience, and so look upon it as something that underlies things in themselves.*³⁰³

Through the objects given to us and which are outside of us, space is a reality. On the other hand, space is an ideality or *a priori* intuition that does not belong to the object itself but to us and through which the object is given to us. Subjectively, as far as we are concerned, space is an ideality because it is in us a formal condition for representing outward objects. But as far as through it these outward objects are represented, it is real because it has a validity that can be universal for all subjects. Yet as far as it is not in the object but in us, it is ideal and through it we can attain objective representation of that which is outside of us.

The contradiction in the reality and ideality of space is obvious in the Kantian transcendental aesthetics. Kant does not want the concept of space to be misinterpreted to mean the representation of a thing in itself which will lapse into the knowledge of the *noumena* already declared to be unknowable in the Kantian system. But there is *aporia* here because the same space considered in its ideality becomes a reality in relation to the objects of experience represented in it. Kant wants to avoid the *aporia* but does not go very far away from it. Without space, I cannot represent the table on which I am working. With regards to the table, space can be considered as a reality through which empirical objects are represented by us. But with regards to the subjects that we are, space must be treated in its ideality because if we withdraw our *a priori* ability to represent objects formally in space, there is nothing as space. Kant wants to ensure that space to us remains a form though as a form it permits us represent objects which are real and thus the space in which the real objects are represented has elements of reality only to the extent that it is treated as a form by which we represent objects and not the objects themselves. The apparent reality of space with regards to the objects represented and the ideality of space with regards to the subject constitute a controversy given that the objects represented are not things as they are, they are things as represented. That is why the *noumena* are not represented in space for such representations would have given space absolute reality. Kant is trying to remain consistent with his system

³⁰³ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

of thought but not completely avoiding the contradiction of reality and ideality of space. Of course, Kant wants to leave an open room in a closed system of philosophy so as to incorporate contradictions and anticipate the critics.

The ideality of space is a conception that Kant borrowed from Leibniz who had rejected the Newtonian conception of absolute space as laid down in *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. In this book, Newton distinguishes between absolute and relative space, all of which are based on relations of the senses with the object. To Newton, relative space is part of absolute space:

Absolute space, in its own nature, without regard to anything external, remains always similar and immovable. Relative space is some movable dimension or measure of the absolute spaces; which our senses determine by its position to bodies; and which is vulgarly taken for immovable space; such is the dimension of a subterraneous, an aerial, or celestial space, determined by its position in respect of the earth. Absolute and relative space, are the same in figure and magnitude; but they do not remain always numerically the same. For if the earth, for instance, moves, a space of our air, which relatively and in respect of the earth remains always the same, will at one time be one part of the absolute space into which the air passes; at another time it will be another part of the same, and so, absolutely understood, it will be perpetually mutable.³⁰⁴

Absolute space, to Newton, does not depend on the objects of the senses whereas relative space is movable with regard to objects that move the space of air which itself constitutes absolute space. In respect to moving objects, relative space is movable, but independently of all objects, absolute space is unmovable. The absolute space of Newton has an independent existence or an existence which is not conditioned by our minds. The absolute space of Newton is *a posteriori* or given through experience and not *a priori* because Newton does not want to frame a hypothesis.

Between 1715 and 1716, Leibniz had a series of correspondences with Samuel Clarke who defended the Newtonian view of absolute space. In one of such replies to Clarke and to all Newtonians, in an extract from a compilation by Clarkson after the death of Leibniz, and in a view that makes space an ideality that does not belong to things themselves, Leibniz states that

These gentlemen maintain [...] that space is real absolute being. But this involves them in great difficulties; for such a being must needs be eternal and infinite. Hence some have believed it to be God himself, or, one of his

³⁰⁴ Isaac Newton, *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, Definitions, pp. 77 – 78.

*attributes, his immensity. But since space consists of parts, it is not a thing which can belong to God. As for my own opinion, I have said more than once, that I hold space to something merely relative, as time is; that I hold it to be an order of coexistences, as time is an order of successions. For space denotes, in terms of possibilities an order of things which exist at the same time, considered as existing together; without enquiring into their manner of existing. And when many things are seen together, one perceives that order of things among themselves.*³⁰⁵

Elements of the doctrine of the ideality of space, developed by Kant, are thus found in the works of Leibniz who, as a rationalist, saw the need to make space a property of the observer and not that of the things in themselves. Space is a subjective property for ordering things in the universe as existing together. The Leibnizian view of the relativity of space contrasts the absolute space of Newton that is given independent existence as a separate entity distinct from the subject of knowledge.

Kant's conception of space is a distance away from that of George Berkeley whose idealism is described by Kant as 'dogmatic' because it rejects the existence of space and all its material content since to be is to be perceived. For Berkeley holds that "[...] if there were external bodies, it is impossible we should ever come to know it [...]. When we do our utmost to conceive the existence of external bodies, we are all the while only contemplating our own ideas. But the mind taking no notice of itself, is deluded to think it can and doth conceive bodies existing unthought of or without the mind."³⁰⁶ As we have already shown in the first part of our work, Kant rejected the 'dogmatic' idealism of Berkeley which rejected the existence of space and material objects in space. Kant also rejects the idea of absolute space existing as a separate entity distinct from our subjective condition as established by Newton. Kant's transcendental idealism makes space a subjective condition which determines everything that we perceive outside of us in intuition. Kant insists on the ideality of space and time. But if we imagine a world without human beings who are able to represent space, the Kantian view does not reject the possibility of the existence of space in such a case where it is not even represented; and this seems to be a contradiction in terms because space is a human condition in its ideality and not a reality without the subject representing it.

³⁰⁵ Samuel Clarke, "A Collection of Papers which Passed between the Late Learned Mr Leibnitz and Dr Clarke in the years 1715 and 1716 Relating to the Principles of Natural Philosophy and Religion" in *The Leibniz - Clarke Correspondence*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956, Third Paper, pp. 25 – 26.

³⁰⁶ George Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge*, ed. Howard Robinson, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 32 – 33 – 34.

While space is the *a priori* form of outer sense, time is the *a priori* form of inner sense. Both of these forms are subjective conditions by which objects are given to us in intuition. On the ideality of time and space, Kant is categorical that we are not, through intuition, seeking knowledge of the thing in itself, but only the thing as it appears to us or is given to us immediately as a representation through perception:

In confirmation of this theory of the ideality of both outer and inner sense, and therefore of all objects of the senses, as mere appearances, it is especially relevant to observe that everything in our knowledge which belongs to intuition [...] contains nothing but mere relations; namely, of locations in an intuition (extension), of change of location (motion), and of laws according to which this change is determined (moving forces). What it is that is present in this or that location, or what it is that is operative in the things themselves apart from change of location, is not given through intuition.³⁰⁷

Like Leibniz, Kant sees the ideality of space and time as establishing relations of coexistence for the former and succession for the latter. By dealing with location, change of location and the forces of location, intuitions do not deal with the content of objects but just in the way they are related to each other. The students of nature have the tendency to assume that they are studying space as an entity giving rules to the mind through induction. But such blind induction cannot yield the apodictic and universal rules that an *a priori* representation of time and space yield in our knowledge of objects. The truth of an object as an appearance and from the time it is given to us must be presupposed to be within the framework of time and space as our own subjective conditions through which, alone, the objects can be given to us. Yet Kant does not completely abandon the students of nature when he insists that in relation to objects, space can be a reality as through it real objects are given to us. But to avoid inconsistency with the unknowable *noumena*, Kant has to return to the ideality of space which fits squarely in his system of critical philosophy.

While space permits us intuit outer objects, time permits us intuit objects in our inner states. Just as is the case with space which can be represented as empty without objects but with other spaces whereas the absence of space cannot be represented, we cannot also represent the absence of time though we can represent a time without appearances.

We cannot, in respect of appearances in general, remove time itself, though we can quite well think time as void of appearances. Time is, therefore, given a priori. In it alone is actuality of appearances possible at all. Appearances may,

³⁰⁷ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

*one and all, vanish; but time (as the universal condition of their possibility) cannot itself be removed.*³⁰⁸

Appearances cannot be represented without time, but time can be represented without appearances. Objects cannot be represented without space but space can be represented without objects but full of other spaces. When appearances vanish, space remains but it contains other spaces, and above all, time cannot be removed because it must be assumed as the determination of appearances. The form that conditions the matter must be presupposed even if the matter is absent. It is because the form makes the matter possible. This leads to controversies about the beginning of the world in time which destroys the idea of infinity. Like is the case with space, the Kantian conception of time implies that it is impossible to think of a representation of time in the absence of rational beings to represent it since time is not a thing in itself. In this case, if we think of a 'time' without rational beings, it would be difficult an idea to conceive because it is purely from the human perspective that such an idea makes sense. Hence a 'time' without rational beings to represent seems impossible though Kant does not make the matter conclusive so as not to get into contradictions. Of course, a 'time' without human beings will be 'nothing' in the Berkelerian conception of space as nothing without the human mind to perceive it.

Through intuition, what we have as external objects are appearances and not things in themselves. Through the same intuition, our internal states affect us as appearances of those states represented internally in us, which is what Kant calls time, or the *a priori* form of inner sense. James Van Cleve summarizes the ways we are affected by appearances which are representations of objects of outer sense and objects of inner sense as follows:

*External items in themselves affect us so as to produce intuitions or cognitions whose objects are not those very items, but appearances. The appearances are mind-dependent and spatial; the affecting external items not. Similarly, our own cognitive states, which are internal items in themselves, affect us so as to produce further cognitive states, whose objects are appearances "of" the original states rather than those states themselves. The appearances are mind-dependent and temporal; the internal affecting items are not.*³⁰⁹

The external objects in themselves are not mind – dependent but the appearances or their representations are mind – dependent. The internal states are not mind – dependent but their representations as appearances are mind – dependent in the form of inner sense which is time. Consequently, whether we are intuiting the objects of inner or outer sense, we are dealing

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

³⁰⁹ James Van Cleve, *Problems from Kant*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 60.

with appearances or representations which stand in an immediate relationship with the object without being the object itself and only intuited according to the mind – dependent representation of appearances.

Time is successive while space is simultaneous. This means that space can only be made up of other spaces given at the same time. Time can only be made up of other times given in succession, one time following another and one time being antecedent to another time. Experience cannot give us the apodictic and universal properties associated with time. To Kant,

The possibility of apodictic principles concerning the relations of time, or of axioms of time in general, is also grounded upon this a priori necessity. Time has only one dimension; different times are not simultaneous but successive (just as different spaces are not successive but simultaneous). These principles cannot be derived from experience, for experience would give neither strict universality nor apodictic certainty. We should only be able to say that common experience teaches us that it is so; not that it must be so. These principles are valid as rules under which alone experiences are possible; and they instruct us in regard to the experiences, not by means of them.³¹⁰

The universality of rules associated with time concerns their property to explain experience without being derived from experience. As soon as objects are given to us, we already know that they will be represented in inner sense through succession in time. And such a representation is achieved completely a priori.

Though Kant did not give geometrical formulations for his principles, the conception of time and space gives an original case of subjectivity in matters of knowledge of the object through a plan in which time and space are our windows to the world. In this light, one does not need to see time and space in objects, one rather needs to consider time and space as internal *a priori* forms through which the matter of sensation is given to us. Wolfram Schommers remarks that

According to Kant, space and time are exclusively features of our brain and the world outside is projected on it, as we worked out in connection with the projection theory. Then also, Kant's ideas lead to the fact that the material objects that occupy space and time can only be geometrical pictures.³¹¹

As properties of our brain, space and time should never be viewed as belonging to objects themselves because an object in itself or an object as it is corresponds to what Kant calls the

³¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

³¹¹ Wolfram Schommers, *Mind and Reality: The Space – Time Window*, Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 2015, p. 55.

‘noumena’ which is unknowable to us. Time and space give us geometrical pictures of objects and this is not fair to the knowledge – seeker reduced to what his representational faculties present to him as a picture of the reality. And as geometrical ‘pictures’ the knowledge we have of objects may be faulty as it does not get to the depths of the objects. The unknowable is part of the Kantian architectonic system of philosophy where every part fits perfectly in the whole such what is unknowable or that whose knowledge does not respect the empirical bounds of objective and valid knowledge can become a possible object of practical reason when we require something to look up to in our practice of morality and religion. Anything we perceive outside of us is projected on the a priori subjective features of time and space. Time and space are our windows to the world. The material objects become geometrical because their form is *a priori* in the mind and only their matter is given in intuition. But the matter is only given as it appears to our receptive organs and not as it is. This is another controversial issue in the Kantian system of philosophy.

The reality about material objects is only obtained when our concepts are concepts of objects. In this case, the reality depends on the respect of the empirical link that a concept must have to correspond to an intuition because we can only have sensible intuition of objects. But giving degrees to perceptions and linking them to empirical consciousness is a property of the mind through time and space as Hector Louis Pancheco Acosta notes:

[...] the reality corresponding to our perception of the leaf's colors and the variation of its reality rely on the experience, so that, its reality can only be cognized a posteriori. On the contrary, the property of the perceptions by which they have certain degree of reality is recognized a priori. This property corresponds to space and time which, as subjective conditions by which perceptions become real, render possible a synthesis of the appearances in relation to empirical consciousness.³¹²

The problem here is that the representational faculties are unable to represent some aspects of the ‘reality’ of the leaf in the example used by Pancheco. Through the synthetic unity of apperception, we are able to unite concepts with appearances to give rise to knowledge in a transcendental consciousness that uses an a priori procedure to put what is intuited into unity with our awareness of outward objects. Through time and space, objects are given in intuition. Through empirical consciousness, we have perceptions that lack universality and apodictic character that is only attained a priori in apperception. The mediating role of

³¹² Hector Louis Pancheco Acosta, “Theoretical Assumptions in Kant’s Theory of time”, University of Guadalajara, Mexico: Sincronia, no. 74, 2008, (online) available from <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa>, (Retrieved 14 April 2019) p. 8.

transcendental imagination links concepts to empirical objects through the schema and according to principles by which categories become laws to nature. Here, Kant seems to be reconciling two faculties that are necessarily distinct with an independent existence in the human mind as sensibility and understanding. Such reconciliation may be seen as a desire to seek the mystery in knowledge in the unity of faculties and objects. Such a conception is at variance with trends of knowledge that seek to sustain plurality instead of forcing unity of systems as is seen in the third part of our work.

From the transcendental aesthetics, we get the means by which objects are given to us in intuition respecting the a priori forms of time and space. Through transcendental logic, we have the means by which objects are known through concepts called the categories that become laws to nature through judgments according to principles by which we subsume particular cases under general rules whose unity with the categories in apperception give synthetic unity in a universal and apodictic manner. From the transcendental aesthetics, we know the subjective conditions by which objects are given to us and the impossibility of having objective conditions by which objects can be given to us. The universality of knowledge is then guaranteed by rules through which that which is received according to subjective conditions is made to respect an a priori plan that ties with consciousness in a way as to unite the subjective condition with the part of the object given to us according to our pre – prepared plan for receiving objects. Then beyond the subjective conditions for receiving objects and beyond the way things appear to our subjective conditions, there is the object as it is, and that is the object as we cannot know since everything to us in matters of knowledge has to do with a relation to the object in terms of representations. And since we have only representations to deal with, as well as subjective properties of space and time with which to receive objects, it becomes difficult for us to know a thing in a way that does not depend on subjective conditions. And far from being a success, the unknowability of the *noumena* casts doubts of the reliability of the Kantian theory of knowledge. An elucidation of the knowable and the unknowable in Kantian philosophy to circumscribe our conception of truth to that which depends largely on our internal constitution for reception and conditioning of representations in an *a priori* plan that only attains objectivity and universality through rules deserves a critical examination.

Without a means of reception, it would be difficult to imagine another way that objects can be given to us. We cannot immediately think objects and we cannot take the moment of blind intuitions or the moment objects are given to us to be accepted as

knowledge. If the process of cognition were immediate, we would not need concepts as objects would be directly given to us. But such blind intuitions would not have the universality and objectivity that only concepts accord to appearances through rules. Since our knowledge requires concepts, we need a mediate relationship with the object by which what is planned a priori can be brought back to give a rule by which we can unite all particular cases found in experience. Since we cannot unite particular cases of objects in experience without concepts and rules, intuitions need concepts for the representations to unite with our consciousness to constitute knowledge of objects. Since our concepts cannot have a direct link with the objects until the objects are given to us by empirical intuition, our concepts would lack content until they are made to be in line with those intuitions by which objects were given to us. The next sub – section of our work, through Kant’s critical philosophy, then explores the grounds of division of reality into the knowable and the unknowable. This task should be normal to any philosopher who does not consider the mind as an autonomous tool that single – handedly gives us a full dimension of reality. The task should be weird to any philosopher who believes in the ultimate powers of the mind to give us every reality or at least the conditions of possibility of mastery of every reality despite the challenges we may face. The basis of division of reality into phenomena and *noumena* depends on experience and reason itself, one checking the excesses of the other such that knowledge should be a contribution of both at different levels without any overambitious claims that can either lead to blind intuitions or empty concepts.

5.2: Conceptual Loose Ends in the Knowable *Phenomena* and the Unknowable *Noumena*

Our subjective conditions by which objects are given to us and by which objects are thought imply that beyond what these subjective conditions make us know about the object, there must be an aspect of the subject that we cannot grasp in itself because our subjective conditions limit us to appearances. If that be the case, then the subjective condition which at the same time guarantees universality and apodictic knowledge of objects does not in any way give ‘objective’ knowledge of the object as it is in itself. The appearance to which we are limited in the knowledge of the object is just the way the objects are given to us and not how they are in themselves. How they are in themselves would have been the object of a different kind of intuition than the sensible intuition through which we represent appearances. Since we are not capable of intellectual intuition through which the object in itself would have been

given to us, we are limited to the object as it appears to us, and that makes the link with experience the sole criterion of objective knowledge which is formal only as long as it expresses the possibility of appearances.

The study of the subjective condition through which objects are given to us takes us to transcendental aesthetics which receives objects according to the *a priori* forms of sensibility which are time and space. Yet, in the final synthesis of appearances in apperception, through the mediation of the transcendental imagination and the schema, the concept is made to relate to the object as a rule for the possibility of experience. But the experience in question is constituted by objects as they appear to our inbuilt modes of knowledge and not the things as they are in themselves. The knowledge of things as they are in themselves, that is, things as they are independently of our modes of knowledge, becomes problematic. In fact such knowledge is impossible according to Kant because it has to do with the aspect of the object that he calls *noumena* which are unknowable to us. Though this is consistent with the Kantian ‘Copernican revolution’ whereby knowledge is not the way the objects impose themselves on us blindly or passively, but the way we relate to objects according to our internal modes of knowledge, one easily gets the impression that the Kantian theory could do more than just leaving the researcher in an impasse that sounds like fatalism. What we know according to the tools we have is what can be known with what we have. What we cannot know with what we have is what is in the object that cannot be given to us because every perception of an object is a representation; every appearance is a way of representing the object and depends on the observer and not on the object itself. Yet the possibility of receiving intuitions from objects that cannot be conceptualized casts more doubts on the Kantian claims of the unreceptive nature of the *noumena* to our modes of knowledge.

What is in the object that depends on us is something that we have no means of knowing, it is the aspect of the object that can only be accessible to an intuition that is not sensible, an intuition that goes beyond the sensible so that non – sensible aspects of the object can be given to us directly. Yet we are not sure that all sensible aspects of the object are given in intuition because the matter of appearance is completely *a posteriori* but only *partially a priori* from the standpoint of the subject whose representational faculties become obstacles to absolute knowledge in the Kantian system. To Kant, humans are not capable of having such intuitions of objects and that is why the *noumena* have to remain unknowable. Why rational beings should not have the kind of intuitions by which objects can be given to us as they are in themselves is a mystery to Kant if we follow his theory to accept the fatalism it leads to. If

the *noumena* were knowable, we would have direct access to objects and our *a priori* modes of knowledge would not have any role in cognition. This implies that a review of our modes of representation may be a step to the knowledge of the *noumena* given that those faculties, by revealing only the side of the object that follows our innate plan, rather end up playing the negative role of hiding the real object from us and such fatalism is not acceptable in our era.

The Kantian approach actually leads us to the surface and not to the depths of the objects that we study. Since every appearance implies a substrate, we would have been better equipped if we had the means to get to the depths of our objects of study rather than the fatalism of being contented with appearances. Kant explains how appearances cannot be things in themselves:

The sensibility (and its field, that of the appearances) is itself limited by the understanding in such fashion that it does not have to do with things in themselves but only with the mode in which, owing to our subjective constitution, they appear. The Transcendental Aesthetic, in all its teaching, has led to this conclusion; and the same conclusion also, of course, follows from the concept of an appearance in general; namely, that something which is not in itself appearance must correspond to it. For appearance can be nothing by itself, outside our mode of representation. Unless, therefore, we are to move constantly in a circle, the word appearance must be recognized as already indicating a relation to something, the immediate than the sensible, and the object would thus be a noumenon in the positive sense.³¹³

Appearances limit understanding by preventing it from grasping the object as it is as we can only grasp the object as it is represented by our modes of knowledge. The idea of an appearance implies a “re – presentation” of an object or the presentation of an object in a way other than how it is in itself. A representation means presenting the thing in a way that is different from the way it is in itself. In this way, appearances suppose the *noumena* or things in themselves which are unknowable as we are limited by representations.

The Kantian system would have been very useful to us if it had given us the means with which to go beyond the limiting representations. What if the *noumena* did not exist? What if the representations were all there is to know in objects? Such contention, too, would be faulty since an appearance or a representation supposes a substrate represented by the appearance. If an appearance were not a representation of something else, then we would have been contented with appearances. But this is not the case. That is why the Kantian unknowable *noumena* put the researcher in a tight uncomfortable conceptual corner from

³¹³ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Second Edition, Phenomena and Noumena, pp. 269 – 270.

where we can neither move forward nor backward, and in which we can only accept our fate as finite researchers in the face of an overwhelming reality. The contemporary era of complexity, examined in the third part of our work, does not accept such conceptual limits in epistemology.

Kant's conception of the unknowable *noumena* implies that the objectivity of knowledge obtained through the understanding does not depend on the object. It is a special kind of objectivity whose universality and apodictic qualities are guaranteed by its apriority which avoids the contingency of experience. Objectivity to Kant does not mean that which is determined by the object for that would make impossible the Copernican revolution which makes cognition a subject – based endeavor by which the object is determined by us. If objectivity were to depend on the object then the *noumena* would have been knowable, but that is not the case. The objectivity and validity of knowledge are based on its anchorage on *a priori* concepts which nevertheless relate to the object through concepts and according to rules. This kind of objectivity, if it is not meant to give the object an upper hand over the subject, actually gives the subject the impression that he is in control of the determination of what is to be considered as reality. But upon critical examination the subject does not determine much of that reality that he sets out to determine since an overwhelming aspect of that reality remains unknown to the subject.

If all the efforts and painstaking task of the Kantian Copernican revolution was to hide aspects of reality from us with the claim of making the subject the determiner of the object, then Kant may not have given us the kind of legacy that can easily fit in the needs of our era which is no longer overwhelmed by objects but rather seeks to demystify all objects with appropriate means and with a review of all the means possible so as to adapt them to the hidden facets of reality rather than being contented in the view that some aspects of the reality cannot be known at all. According to T.K Seung,

He [Kant] reduces objectivity to epistemic apriority and necessity. In his transcendental philosophy, objectivity cannot be admitted as a primitive property of objects because all objects are subject-dependent. Nothing can be objective unless it is necessary (epistemic apriority), and nothing can be necessary unless it is a priori (genetic apriority). In Kant's transcendental account, objectivity is grounded in epistemic apriority, which is in turn grounded in genetic apriority. Hence the ultimate foundation of his

*transcendental argument is the genetic apriority of pure intuitions and the categories.*³¹⁴

The very conception of the *noumena* defeats any kind of objectivity that could depend on the object because such an object cannot in any way be given to us since we are only capable of having sensible and not intellectual intuitions. The idea of an unknowable *noumenon*, as well as the contingency of empirical intuitions, implies that we have to seek in the subject the conditions of universality and apodictic character of knowledge. What Seung calls “epistemic apriority” is the universality that true knowledge is expected to have. The “genetic apriority” is the origin of this universality in the receptivity of representations in space and time, and the *a priori* plan to think objects through concepts. The Kantian theory of knowledge is thus based on the view that pure intuitions and concepts are *a priori* and give rise to objectivity only when they constitute conditions of possibility of experience despite their genetic apriority. The “objectivity” of an object as a *noumenon* or thing in itself is unknowable to Kant. And it is the ‘objectivity’ of an object as the *noumenon* that constitutes a challenge for us today and such a challenge cannot make us contented in declarations of unknowability.

A theory of epistemology that leads to the unknowable could be as a result of the coherent flow of ideas that logically lead to a point of impossibility of knowledge. But it could also be the case that the author is afraid of inconsistency in his philosophical system and thus arbitrarily declares some entities unknowable not because such entities are unknowable in themselves but because his theory is laid out in such a way that the knowability of such entities will involve contradictions. It even happens that an author goes out of his primary thesis to follow the logical end of his ideas as is the case with John Locke. Locke’s analysis of substance is logical but may not be consistent with his empirical thesis since it ends up making substance unknowable. Like Kant, Locke thinks that there is a substratum beyond what is given to us in experience and that substratum is unknowable. Firstly, Locke defines “quality” as “[...] the power to produce any idea in our mind [...]”³¹⁵ Secondly, Locke distinguishes between primary and secondary qualities whereby the former belong to the object like bulk, figure, texture and solidity; while the latter do not belong to the object itself but are the power that primary qualities have to produce various sensations in us like color, smell, sound and taste.

³¹⁴ T.K Seung, *Kant: A Guide for the Perplexed*, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007, Preface, pp. viii – ix.

³¹⁵ John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, *op. cit.*, Book II, Chapter VIII, p. 105.

If secondary qualities which are sensations are produced in us by primary qualities which belong to the object itself, what then produces primary qualities in objects? This is the question that leads Locke to the unknowable substratum underlying the primary qualities. Locke then holds that to every researcher, substance would be ‘[...] a supposition of he knows not what support of such qualities which are capable of producing simple ideas in us [...]’.³¹⁶ To Locke, we only know substances as far as primary qualities can permit, for beyond the primary qualities there is an unknowable substratum that baffles our senses and reason. In much the same way, Kant sees the *noumenon* as the substratum of objects of which we cannot have any representations as appearances because it is not given to us in sensible intuition.

Like Locke, Kant gets to the unknowable *noumenon* as the culmination of a process of reflection that respects the consistent and coherent flow of ideas, though the conclusion is fatalistic to the enterprise of knowledge. With Kant it is a result of the nature of the representational faculties of the human mind; but it is also a limitation of his system of philosophy that is purely subject – based and so does not give room for the object to give itself to us in its fullness. Locke had defined substance in such a way as to make it inaccessible to us as matter of logical and empirical necessity: “The idea [...] we have, to which we give the general name substance, being nothing but the supposed, but unknown, support of those qualities we find existing, which we imagine cannot subsist [...] without something to support them, we call that support *substantia*.”³¹⁷ Primary qualities must have a point of support, just like the appearance of Kant which implies as a matter of necessity that the object has a point of anchorage. The inaccessible basis of appearances to Kant is what John Locke had referred to as the unknowable support of primary qualities that give rise to simple ideas in us. With Locke, the unknowable substance seems to be inconsistent with his empirical thesis because he does not want to make reason the source of the idea of substance; he would rather make it the basis of our primary qualities we find in objects. With Kant, too, due to the subject – based knowledge of the object, Kant does not see how we can move beyond appearances after all his theory of knowledge has made us absolutely dependent on appearances to the point of making some aspects of the object hidden from us. This should be a source of a worry and not a source of joy for a successful theory.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

³¹⁷ *Idem.*

However, Kant distinguishes between two types of objects, each of which leads to impossibilities in cognition: an intelligible object and an object of a non – sensible intuition:

*If by merely intelligible objects we mean those things which are thought through pure categories, without any schema of sensibility, such objects are impossible. For the condition of the objective employment of all our concepts of understanding is merely the mode of our sensible intuition, by which objects are given us [...].*³¹⁸

The schema of sensibility is that by which an object becomes possible as an object of experience. All the categories and the *a priori* forms of sensibility link up in the schema to give objectivity to our knowledge given by concepts whereby every particular case in experience respects rules conceived *a priori*. It is this link up of *a priori* concepts with experience that gives objective validity to our subject – based cognition. But if, on the other hand, our objects are of a non – sensible intuition, then we inevitably get to the *noumena* and the epistemological impossibility is the same:

*If [...] we have in mind only objects of a non-sensible intuition, in respect of which our categories are admittedly not valid, and of which therefore we can never have any knowledge whatsoever (neither intuition nor concept), noumena in this purely negative sense must indeed be admitted. For this is no more than saying that our kind of intuition does not extend to all things, but only to objects of our senses, that consequently its objective validity is limited, and that a place therefore remains open for some other kind of intuition, and so for things as its objects. But in that case the concept of a noumenon is problematic, that is, it is the representation of a thing of which we can neither say that it is possible nor that it is impossible; for we are acquainted with no kind of intuition but our own sensible kind and no kind of concepts but the categories, and neither of these is appropriate to a non-sensible object.*³¹⁹

This is a negative conception of the *noumenon* as an object that is not given to us in sensible intuition. A positive meaning of *noumenon* would be a thing in itself or a thing as it is whether our modes of knowledge have access to it or not. In other words, conceived positively, the *noumenon* is a thing in itself independently of our modes of knowledge. Negatively conceived, the *noumena* would be an object of a non – sensible intuition.

Kant is making concessions, and this is very common when he comes across a difficulty that may lead to inconsistency in his theory. Yet he is courageous enough to face the possible contradictions as is shown in the third part of our work where we prove that facing such contradictions actually makes the Kantian theory very adaptable to our

³¹⁸ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Concepts of Reflection, p. 292.

³¹⁹ *Idem.*

contemporary problems of truth. Kant is not actually saying that the *noumenon* does not exist or that it exists. He is simply saying that whether it exists or not is an issue that cannot be settled by our faculties of cognition. Of course Kant knows that affirming absolute existence of the *noumenon* which is yet unknowable gives the critic more room to put his theory to question. The worst case would be to affirm the non-existence of the *noumenon* which would destroy the idea of appearance or representation which implies a substratum about which the representation makes sense to us. There is therefore a contradiction in the existence of an unknowable entity because knowing that the entity cannot be known means that we are already aware of its existence. Yet its non –existence can also be plausible given that if we are not able to represent an object it becomes difficult to prove the existence of such an object. If the *noumenon* exists and cannot be known, then we can at least know that it exists and cannot be known which lead to contradiction in terms. If the *noumenon* does not exist, then the idea of appearances or representations loses its meaning because there would be no substrate on which it is based. Kant then takes the midpoint that whether the *noumenon* exists or not, our cognitive faculties cannot ascertain.

Since we can only have sensible intuition of objects by which things are given to us as appearances, and since we cannot have intellectual intuition by which things could be supposedly given to us as they are, the *noumenon* must be admitted to be unknowable. The representation of a thing as it is cannot be proven to exist or not to exist. All we can say is that as far as we are concerned, given the cognitive tools at our disposal which are sensible intuitions and categories, we cannot know anything about the *noumenon*. “Through mere concepts I cannot, indeed, think what is outer without thinking something that is inner; and this for the sufficient reason that concepts of relation presuppose things which are absolutely [i.e. independently] given [...]”³²⁰ Concepts are an inner representation of what is outer and through the inner relations of concepts, what is outer is determined. Thus what is outer, which means what is given, is not the thing as it is but the thing as it appears to our modes of receptivity. What is outer is the phenomenon, the thing as given only through sensible intuition, the only intuition that we can have of objects, the intuition that makes every object a representation in appearance and not the object as it is. What can we know, then? We can only know within the limits of the phenomena or things as they are represented by our inner modes of cognition. The existence of the *noumenon* is problematic because since we do not have an appropriate intuition to grasp it, we cannot prove whether it exists or not. What we

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.291.

are sure of is the object as it is given to us through our *a priori* modes of cognition and the objective knowledge that we have of such objects is guaranteed by the sensible schema through which concepts become rules and conditions of possibility of objects of experience. But the experience conditioned by such an approach is not an experience of things as they are which means that the Kantian system does not give us the path to absolute knowledge of objects.

An epistemic reading of the *noumenon* does not see it as an impossibility of knowing something; rather it sees the *noumenon* as a reminder of the Kantian bounds of knowledge that is limited to that which is given in space and time. In this way, one can interpret the *noumena* as another way of cautioning us not to go beyond the bounds of experience in the representations of our concepts. According to Nicholas F. Stang,

*[...] things in themselves are simply objects considered independently of our distinctively spatiotemporal form of intuition. [...] this very abstract thought is not the basis of any cognition, however; it is merely a reminder that space and time are epistemic conditions, without which we cannot cognize any object.*³²¹

The *noumenon* thus has a positive epistemological role to play in the Kantian system not as a failure of reason but as a means by which we define the bounds for reason which is the goal of the critique of reason using reason. Negatively, the *noumenon* would be a representation of a thing unknown to the human faculties of cognition, a thing whose existence or non – existence cannot be determined and above all, a thing inaccessible to the understanding. On another positive note, the *noumenon* is a representation of a thing which proves that an appearance is a representation of a substrate of an object such that we should seek a special kind of objectivity in the subject's representation of a phenomenon and not in the *noumenon*. The phenomenon or appearance must be distinguished from mere hallucinations that do not correspond to any object that could be given in intuition and that could be determined by the categories. All our objects of experience must be determined by the categories as their conditions of possibility. Negatively, the *noumenon* of Kant is a sign of failure of reason to give us a distinct path to know things as they are.

The epistemological implication of the Kantian conception of the phenomenon redefines the field of competence of all scientific disciplines. Without making pretentious claims that can only lead to dialectical illusions as is the case with traditional metaphysics,

³²¹ Nicholas F. Stang, "Kant's Transcendental Idealism", (online), Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016, available from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-transcendental-idealism>, accessed 22 September 2020.

science and philosophy have to accept the bound which make them useful to humanity as far as knowledge is concerned. To Garth Kemerling, “On Kant’s view, the most fundamental laws of nature, like the truths of mathematics, are knowable precisely because they make no effort to describe the world as it really is but rather prescribe the structure of the world as we experience it.”³²² This is not enough. We achieve a systematic view of the world of appearances by making use of the *a priori* forms of sensible intuition which are space and time as well as the categories of the understanding. Mathematics or science or philosophy only gives us systematic knowledge of the world as it appears to us. Kant’s conception of time and space in the transcendental aesthetic and the conception of the categories in the transcendental analytic as well as the dialectical use of reason in metaphysics are elements that serve as the foundation of a philosophical system that had as objective to change the face of metaphysics and epistemology in a metaphysical epistemology or an epistemological metaphysics that makes objective knowledge a subject – based undertaking thereby redefining the foundation of objectivity in knowledge and in truth. However, the transcendental aesthetics leaves many questions unanswered as we battle with the problems of truth in our era. Above all, we cannot be contented with the limit set by Kant on true knowledge because such a limit puts us in a fatalistic position of impossibilities of knowing things as they are and this is not acceptable in contemporary theories of knowledge.

5.3: Prolegomena to the Critique of Systematic Unity

Like the quest for systematic unity of apperception whereby the categories become the conditions of possibility of experience from which they were not derived, Kantian philosophy in itself is a quest for synthetic unity in a system of philosophy that unites thought with itself so that thought can be united with its object. Thought is actually united with itself so that it can relate to its object without being a game of empty concepts. Getting a plan to unite thought with itself is the conception of an *a priori* endeavor to get a rule of coherence and consistency independently of experience. Getting a plan to unite thought with its object is the conception of a plan by which that which is *a priori* in origin can yet become the condition of possibility of experience to give rise to a subject – based system of objectivity in a metaphysical epistemology or an epistemology which rejects the dialectical use of reason in metaphysics so as to make a reformed version of metaphysics the foundation of truth in

³²² Garth Kemerling, “Kant: Knowledge”, (online), The Philosophy Pages, 2011, available from <http://www.philosophypages.com/hy/5g.htm>, accessed 22 September 2020.

epistemology and natural science. Such is the intention of Kant to lay the foundation of truth on a systematic unity of thought with itself and with its object, an endeavor that leads Kant to meander between academic disciplines that hitherto were in conflict with each other. Uniting academic disciplines which at first sight portray conflicting objects and methods is a task that permits Kant not only to obtain the subject – based objectivity but also and above all to build a coherent and consistent system of philosophy. In this system - building approach of thought and objects of thought, the target of our work which is the truth finds systematic treatment in the Kantian critical philosophy. But such systematic treatment is not without lapses some of which can destroy the unity aimed at.

Cutting across metaphysics, epistemology and natural science, the truth is not an instantaneous achievement but a product of a process that is subject – based and that defines experience. In the theoretical use of reason, all the objectives are not attained because the natural disposition toward the kind of metaphysics that makes the use of reason dialectical is inevitable. Thus by limiting reason to the application of the categories of the understanding to the objects of experience, the transcendental inclinations of humans are not met and the leap beyond experience, though epistemological fruitless, is unavoidable in the quest for the unity of thought with itself. Unfortunately, the unity of thought beyond experience does not give any form of objectivity to objects that are not given in experience. Thus though we are looking for a subject – based objectivity of our knowledge, such objectivity is not attained if the a priori concepts of the understanding do not find application in experience. The projection of God, immortality and transcendental freedom then becomes problematic concepts in a kind of Metaphysics whose epistemological relevance is highly put to question.

Yet the epistemological failure of metaphysics in the theoretical use of reason does not discard the relevance of the metaphysics that serves as the means for the construction of an ideal object for a future system of religion based on the practice of morality. The theoretical failures of reason are made up for by its practical use in providing an object for all practices of virtue which portray an ethical commonwealth or God's moral kingdom on earth. The architectonic of Kant, then, appears as a system of thought whereby the failures of theoretical reason to achieve epistemological goals beyond the realm of experience find practical use when the goals beyond experience become that toward which all good works on earth aim. The theoretical and practical uses of reason complement each other to provide systematic unity to Kantian philosophy. And Kant was keen on using systematic unity as the criterion of a system of knowledge that can be considered as a science. If metaphysics does

not have the necessary systematic unity to become a science on its own, it can at least serve as the foundation of other sciences while at the same time projecting an ideal for the practical use of reason in morality and in a religion based on morality.

The place of the truth in the Kantian system of philosophy is not hard to find as he does not really completely discard metaphysics against which he makes a ravaging critique that is more of a call for methodic and objective reforms than a call for total destitution of all systems of speculative philosophy. The architectonic conceives knowledge as a systematic whole that must unite the manifold given in appearance and which, at the same time, must unite all our modes of knowledge toward a point where one becomes a complementary part of the whole. Kant himself gives a precise and concise definition to the architectonic:

By an architectonic I understand the art of constructing systems. As systematic unity is what first raises ordinary knowledge to the rank of science, that is, makes a system out of a mere aggregate of knowledge, architectonic is the doctrine of the scientific in our knowledge, and therefore necessarily forms part of the doctrine of method. In accordance with reason's legislative prescriptions, our diverse modes of knowledge must not be permitted to be a mere rhapsody, but must form a system. Only so can they further the essential ends of reason. By a system I understand the unity of the manifold modes of knowledge under one idea. This idea is the concept provided by reason of the form of a whole in so far as the concept determines a priori not only the scope of its manifold content, but also the positions which the parts occupy relatively to one another.³²³

What we consider as knowledge, and consequently, what we consider as truth, only becomes science when we can link one conception to another so as to attain systematic unity. Isolated conceptions of reality do not serve to unite the manifold of appearances and thought, and so the rules by which concepts define experience are general principles under which all particular cases in experience can be subsumed.

The transcendental doctrine of elements deals with the objects of knowledge, how they are given in space and time as illustrated by the transcendental aesthetics and how they are thought using the categories as illustrated in the transcendental analytic. The architectonic, on the other hand, forms part of what Kant calls 'the transcendental doctrine of method' which defines the approach used to systematize the elements of knowledge. The guiding principle for any doctrine of method, then, is to attain systematic unity by which all the elements of knowledge can be interpreted and their application in experience made

³²³ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, The Architectonic of Pure Reason, p. 653.

possible. If we have synthetic unity of concepts without any link with experience, the objective is not attained. If we have a rhapsody of experiences without any conceptual means of uniting them through rules, the objective is still not attained. Our objective comes to life when we are able to reconcile reason's need for systematic unity with the requirements of experience as the means to judging validity and objectivity of knowledge. The architectonic of Kant moves from the failures of theoretical reason to the successes of the same theoretical reason in projecting an ideal for the practice of morality as the foundation of a true religion. What is completely irrelevant in epistemology finds systematic relevance in practical reason where all our actions need a perfect object to aim at if they can be worthy of a supreme and perfect creator of the universe. That is why Kant had to suppress reason to make room for faith³²⁴ and make the architectonic a possibility when the failures of theoretical reason are used by practical reason to project a perfect goal for morality and religion.

The systematic unity is a synthesis of empirical concepts and concepts of pure reason. Empirical concepts give rise to a manifold that presupposes unity which does not have the kind of precision and accuracy that pure reason requires and gives to pure concepts when such concepts define experience *a priori*. The idea of an architectonic requires given experience. But the experience only makes sense in the synthetic unity attained by reason in its quest for unity with itself which gives rise to unity with its object. The idea of the unity in philosophical systems in the schema is thus midway between pure reason and experience:

*The idea requires for its realization a schema, that is, a constituent manifold and an order of its parts, both of which must be determined a priori from the principle defined by its end. The schema, which is not devised in accordance with an idea, that is, in terms of the ultimate aim of reason, but empirically in accordance with purposes that are contingently occasioned (the number of which cannot be foreseen) yields technical unity; whereas the schema which originates from an idea (in which reason propounds the ends a priori, and does not wait for them to be empirically given) serves as the basis of architectonic unity.*³²⁵

The order attained by the architectonic is midway between reason and experience. What Kant calls 'technical unity' is attained when empirical concepts disproportionately seek and never completely find ultimate unity whose coherence and consistency can only be attained by reason a priori. Reason does not need to wait for experience to give the rules of unity because unity is achieved through concepts but the concepts become the basis of definition of

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, Architectonic of Pure Reason, p. 654.

experience, the concepts actually become the conditions of possibility of experience altogether.

The Kantian systematic unity gives us indispensable lessons of the unity of sciences in which knowledge is never attained as isolated concepts. Knowledge is never attained as isolated experiences. Knowledge is a product of synthetic unity of concepts and experience. The truth thus appears as the outcome of this unity when the knowledge relates with the object in a way as to become justified belief based on the unity of rational and empirical unity. In the theoretical use of reason, it is impossible to give material content to transcendental concepts. But in the practical use of reason, the transcendental concepts obtained from the supra – sensible use of reason become the ultimate goal of all acts that respect the moral law as a duty and as the only way of serving God. The Kantian epistemological metaphysics then uses the architectonic to establish unity of reason in theoretical and practical spheres in a system wherein each part depends on the others in a mutual relationship of interdependence that makes the system self – subsistent. And it is obvious that such a synthetic unity in a system of philosophy that intends to solve problems across epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and religion, raises controversies that go beyond the Kantian era to find relevance and critique among his contemporaries and successors. How the Kantian epistemological metaphysics seeks truth that cuts across religion and ethics is an issue at the center of contemporary preoccupations with unresolved issues and more than ever before, the issues at stake take the dimension of a crisis of truth which becomes a crisis of science and a crisis of epistemology and metaphysics seeking to conceive a solid ideal for philosophy of religion and ethics.

However, the kind of systematic unity aimed at by Kant puts us in serious difficulties when we consider the complexity of the reality in our contemporary era. As a prelude to a critique of the Kantian systematic unity of knowledge, it is important to note that Kant never really left the metaphysics he set out to criticize which means that the goals of the critique may not have been met as Kant falls back on the same dialectical illusions he rejects. And the difference between the older metaphysics he criticizes and the new metaphysics he institutes is not very clear given that the new metaphysics is only given through conditions of possibility for it to become a science. In the analogy of William Hamilton, Kant remained within the confines of the doctrine of the absolute as if he killed only the body for the ghost to appear and haunt the schools of metaphysics till date:

*Kant had annihilated the older metaphysic, but the germ of a more visionary doctrine of the absolute, than any of those refuted, was contained in the bosom of his own philosophy. He had slain the body, but had not exorcised the spectre of the absolute; and this spectre continued to haunt the schools of Germany even to the present day.*³²⁶

Kant did not go very far away from the metaphysics that he rejected. The ‘spectre’ of metaphysics remain at the heart of the Kantian theory of epistemology and as will be seen in the last part of our work, the picture of the old school of metaphysics can hardly be completely discarded from our thought systems. The first way to do a critique of the systematic unity of Kantian philosophy is not to take the Kantian critique of metaphysics as a rejection of metaphysics because it was not a rejection and Kant did not abandon what he wanted other thinkers to abandon so as to have better epistemological results. If metaphysics was an epistemologically fruitless enterprise to Kant and he used more or less the same metaphysics in his theory of epistemology, then we can logically put to doubt the results of his own theory using the same lines of his critique of metaphysics.

An important step to the crisis of systematic unity is to do a critique of the Kantian critique of metaphysics and that is what we do in the next chapter of our work. The second step necessarily follows from the first. If the Kantian critique of metaphysics can be put to question, then the aftermath of such a critique can only give rise to ambiguities in theories of knowledge as the specific role of metaphysics in epistemology will no longer be clearly defined since there is no clear-cut boundary between what to discard and what to keep about metaphysics in a theory of epistemology. Whether Kant completely does away with the elements of the metaphysics he criticizes is a subject of controversy and complexity as Karl Ameriks states the case succinctly:

The complexity of the aftermath of Kant’s critique of metaphysics is due at least in part to the fact that his own project is fundamentally ambiguous. The very first pages of the first edition of the Critique of Pure Reason use the term ‘metaphysics’ in contrasting ways. On the one hand, as signifying ‘the older metaphysic’, it stands for a traditional ‘battlefield of endless controversies’ because it concerns questions that ‘by its very nature’ theoretical reason ‘cannot answer’. On the other hand, ‘metaphysics’ also stands for a fruitful new discipline, ‘the only one of all the sciences that may promise that little but unified effort [namely, the effort of the Critical philosophy itself] . . . will complete it’. Similarly, the Preface to the second edition explicitly separates the successful first ‘part’ of metaphysics covered in the Critique’s Transcendental Analytic of experience, which has ‘the secure course of a science’, from the troublesome

³²⁶ Sir William Hamilton, *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature*, ed. Robert Turnbull, New York: Harper, 1855, p. 25

second 'part' of metaphysics, which, according to the Transcendental Dialectic, fails in its attempt to fly 'beyond the boundaries of possible experience'.³²⁷

The Kantian critique of metaphysics is an exaltation of experience as the only realm within which we can have true knowledge. Then Kant later holds that after the critique, metaphysics can have a solid ground of a possible science devoid of all dialectical illusions and yet metaphysics has to do with knowledge that is completely a priori at least in the source of the forms of representations which means that metaphysical knowledge is not meant to relate to experience the way empirical sciences do. Yet metaphysics has to be a 'science'. Such is the legacy of ambiguity that becomes prolegomena to a review of the foundations of the systematic unity of the Kantian theory of knowledge.

The third step consists in showing that knowledge as 'representation' is problematic because not all representations are representations of concrete entities and not all of what is given in intuition is represented conceptually, an ambiguity used in the last part of our work to show the relevance of the Kantian theory in the complexity faced by contemporary theories of knowledge. Béatrice Longuenesse states the case for the possible ambiguity in the Kantian use of the term 'representation', a case that can be used as a limitation of the Kantian theory and also and above all as an asset depending on whether we read it as *aporia* or an admission of complexity when some intuitions are not conceptualized and when some ideas of reason correspond to no intuitions at all and are yet not useless in a possible theory of knowledge that takes into account complexity in the reality.

Kant's concept of 'representation' refers to any mental state, whether or not it has representational content (or what we would call 'intentional' content: something the representation is about or directed at), and whether or not the subject of representation is conscious of having the representation. Now isn't it the case that some representations, in this broad sense, are something to me (I am aware of them, I am aware of being in those states) even though the thought 'I think' does not and never will, indeed cannot, accompany them (for instance, an acute pain, fleeting feelings, or even fleeting images)? Don't we have reason moreover to suppose that non-human animals have representations (mental states) that are something to them (something that they feel, and to which they respond with specific kinds of behavior) even though we have no reason to believe they form concepts of them, much less reason to believe that the thought 'I think' can accompany them? Isn't this a point Kant himself explicitly acknowledges?³²⁸

³²⁷ Karl Ameriks, *Kant and the Historical Turn: Philosophy as Critical Interpretation*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 135.

³²⁸ Béatrice Longuenesse, *I, Me, Mine: Back to Kant, and Back Again*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 177.

The contemporary debate on the epistemological status of nonconceptual representations in the Kantian system of philosophy more or less ties with the complexity of the reality noted in our era. But it is also a point used by Kant to identify the internal contradictions within his own system of thought which is an act of humility, an act of humility which does not eliminate the contradiction in holding a view that makes use of a representational approach of cognition and yet admitting that not all is represented and that not all that is represented is conceptualized and thus may not give rise to knowledge, for it can only give rise to knowledge if there is knowledge in nonconceptual entities which contradicts the Kantian correspondence theory of truth as it would imply that not all intuitions without concepts are blind and not all concepts without intuitions are empty.

The possibility of nonconceptualised intuitions which are not blind and non – intuitional concepts that are not empty is a step to shattering the Kantian theory of systematic unity of knowledge, a step that can also be used as a point of relevance of Kant's theory depending on the sense we make of it. For us, and in the spirit of Kant, the possibility of intuitions without concepts and concepts without intuitions which are neither blind nor empty respectively can be used as a critique of the Kantian system in this part of our work which has to show the internal contradictions within the Kantian architectonic. But in the third part of our work, it is used as a point of reference from a philosophy who was humble enough to accept that his theory had loose ends that actually give us an opportunity to use his theory as foundational condition of possibility of a contemporary subject – based object – based theory of knowledge. Jean-Marie Vaysse links every representational theory to a systematic unity that bears the seeds of an epistemological crisis that inevitably has a metaphysical undertone:

The fate of modern thought is characterized by the system inasmuch as the world becomes "conceived . . . as picture," [...]. That means that any entity [...] in its totality is taken in such a way that it is an entity only insofar as man sets it in representation and production with the result of a unity of structure that unfolds out of the plan of the objectivity of the entity.³²⁹

It is normal for rigid system to be shattered if we identify loose ends that are supposed to hold the other elements of the system tightly together. The unity of structure which also means the unity of knowledge is at a peril as pluralism of structures and pluralism of knowledge become more fashionable parameters in an era of complexity battling with philosophical legacies that may no longer meet the needs of our time.

³²⁹Jean-Marie Vaysse, "Heidegger and German Idealism" in *Heidegger and German Idealism and Neo - Kantism*, New York: Humanity Books, 2000, p. 19.

The later part of modernity and what is now known problematically as “postmodernity” are actually moments of profound crises in the contemporary era in need of a new beginning for philosophy and the other sciences. The reality of the crisis in the sciences is inevitably linked to a crisis of systematic unity that should lead us to a new review of the foundations of our knowledge as Martin Weatherston notes:

*The sciences are undergoing a crisis whereby their basic concepts and presuppositions no longer seem adequate to deal with their subject matter. This tendency for the sciences to undergo a revolution in the conception of their foundations points up the need for an independent examination of those foundations themselves.*³³⁰

The sciences go through revolutions and philosophy does too if we do not doubt the status of philosophy as a science especially the metaphysics put to question and at the same time revalorized by the same Kant whose views were revolutionary in his time but which need to be revolutionized in our era to meet the needs of our time which are gradually tilting away from systematic unity to pluralism.

The logic of science is depends on an age – old foundation of universality and necessity, a tradition that Kant inherited and tries to perpetuate without failing to give us a hint of the unknowable and the unrepresentable. It is a need for plurality, or to say the least, plurality that only uses unity as a moment of critique for other moments of more plurality. The logic of science and philosophy thus have to be completely overturned if that becomes necessary and with it the Kantian apparently rigid system which traps reality in a metaphysics made to work within narrow limits as a result of a now problematic critique of reason only to make use of nearly the same aspects of reason criticized. According to Martin Weatherston,

*All sciences, including philosophy, require an examination of the logic that underlies them. This logic seeks the original grounds of science, and consequently must not be merely abstracted from the way science happens to be at present, but must be original, in that it uncovers the source of scientific thinking. Since we are seeking the basis out of which the sciences develop, this logic must be a productive logic. This examination aims at the constitution of the realm of Being that provides the foundation for the science, and in doing so goes beyond an examination of the physical world, to its meta-physical grounds.*³³¹

³³⁰ Martin Weatherston, *Heidegger's Interpretation of Kant: Categories, Imagination and Temporality*, Macmillan: Palgrave, 2002, p. 9.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

The revolution required of the sciences may not be far from Kant if it has to do with the return of metaphysics at the heart of the sciences. But the revolution has something to do with Kant as the systematic unity of truth may have left room for so many loose ends to stand the test of time. Even if the loose ends were not used to show aporia in the system, the idea of a system itself is no longer relevant in an era of plurality. To understand the crisis of systematic unity is thus to understand that the system of Kant needs to be put to question for unifying instead of diversifying knowledge.

Beyond the crisis of metaphysics, it is a crisis when metaphysics is admitted as the foundation of science. It is a crisis beyond Kant, a crisis that makes Kant obsolete in content because it is no longer about reconciling distinct methods, and it is about letting distinct methods operate with their specificities. As far as Kant is concerned, it is a need for another critique of reason so as to free reason from all the methodic limits in which it has been encroached by philosophers of the system – building paradigm of systematic unity in truth. It is a need to do a critique of the systematic use of reason by philosophers seeking to unify a reality that may only be grasped if pluralism is used as criterion of truth. The question posed by Arsenij Gulyga can then be posed with regards to the Kantian system itself:

Is reason ready to undertake a critique of itself? Kant does not doubt that his undertaking comes at the right moment. Philosophy, he says, is not philodoxy; the love of wisdom is not the love of opinion. It is time to declare war on all false teachings, all forms of dogmatism and scepticism. That cannot be done without a painstaking critique [...].³³²

Is reason ready to do another critique of systems that have not freed reason to exercise its right in plurality? Is reason ready to undertake a critique of the Kantian system? The answer is in the affirmative as the situation of our era leaves us no other choice than to reject the unnecessary reconciliation of distinct theories. The systematic unity of the Kantian system becomes a dogmatism of systematic unity whereby the need to remain consistent has primacy over the need to shatter systems as a prolegomena to the mastery of the complexity of the same reality which pushed Kant to carry out a Copernican revolution in epistemology.

The problematic unity of the Kantian system of philosophy actually puts the truth within a framework of transitions and destructive – constructive turns that seem to be tight and yet has loose ends. But it is the intention of constructing a rigid system that makes plurality impossibility within the system. The addition of a fourth question to the three

³³²Arsenij Gulyga, *Immanuel Kant, His Life and Works*, trans. Marijan Despalatovic, Boston, Basel, Stuttgart: Birkhiiuser Boston Inc., 1987, p. 89.

questions of philosophy and the reduction of the first three questions to the last question on man implies that the Kantian system tries to make room for every possible cognition but fails to take into account plurality of methods and objects and subjects as a reality that can overturn every ridged system of unity of truth:

The field of philosophy in this cosmopolitan sense can be brought down to the following questions:

1. *What can I know?*
2. *What ought I to do?*
3. *What may I hope?*
4. *What is man?*

Metaphysics answers the first question, morals the second, religion the third, and anthropology the fourth. Fundamentally, however, we could reckon all of this as anthropology, because the first three questions relate to the last one.³³³

This implies that in one system of unity of truth, we can move from metaphysics to epistemology to morality and religion and that all these transitions are united in the concerns of anthropology. In those lines of the Kantian *Lectures of Logic*, Kant now uses metaphysics as a discipline that can give rise to answers to questions relating to what we can know as an assumption that the necessary reforms have been carried out to make metaphysics a science, a science which is just posed as a possibility if some conditions are met for it to produce synthetic a priori judgments as it is not made to relate to experience, yet Kant defines experience as the realm within which we can have knowledge and beyond which we land in dialectical illusions. The aporia are evidently the conditions of possibility of the crisis of systematic unity of truth in our era.

The preoccupations of philosophy, to Kant, had much to do with what we can know and especially what we cannot know using reason. These preoccupations meant to avoid dialectical illusions make what is unknowable a source of fatalism to reason. Thus Kant says that

The philosopher must thus be able to determine

1. *the sources of human knowledge,*
2. *the extent of the possible and profitable use of all knowledge, and finally*
3. *the limits of reason.³³⁴*

³³³ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Logic*, trans. J. Michael Young, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, *The Jäsche Logic*, p. 538.

The contemporary knowledge – seeker rather sees a chance for us to explore the powers of reason that have been unexplored by system – builders of unity in truth who put the researcher in a tight corner from which diversity and plurality can no longer emerge and the reality ends up becoming an enigma to us as it was to Kant when he carried out the revolutionary transition from the object – based to a subject – based theory of knowledge. In our era the revolutionary move most adequately seems to move toward a subject – based object – based theory of truth that tries to embody plurality at the heart of unity and only use unity as a chance to obtain more pluralism for a new way of looking for truth.

A very fertile perspective to the crisis of systematic unity in truth from the Kantian system is the possibility of knowledge of the world that is given and knowledge or non – knowledge of the world not given. Is the known world part of the world that is not known? In other words, are the knowable objects a part of the world whose other aspects are unknown to us? Martin J. Scott-Taggart has the beginning of an answer to this question:

It would clearly be a mistake to view knowable objects as a sub-class of objects in the way that dolphins are a sub-class of mammals, for whereas we can know whether the class of mammalian non-dolphins is an empty class, we cannot know whether the class of non-knowable objects is an empty class. When Kant says that intuitions which we cannot bring to concepts are 'nothing to us' he is saying something which needs clarifying, for it is a claim about the important role which conceptualization plays in our experience. But there is surely neither risk nor unclarity in saying that objects of which we can have no knowledge are "nothing to us." That whereof we cannot speak, therein we have no interest.³³⁵

But there is nuance between what interests us and what is there. What is there is there whether we know it or not. We should, thus, not confuse what exists with what we know. If what we know is all that exists then there is no problem as we know all as a satisfaction of the curiosity of the mind. If what we know is not all that exists then we would rather become interested in that which we were not interested in because it was unknowable. It is a trip into what was hitherto considered unknowable; it has to do with an unveiling of the Kantian *noumena* whose epistemological status as unknowable entities is not a satisfying position to the unlimited curiosity of the human mind.

³³⁴ *Idem.*

³³⁵ Martin J. Scott-Taggart, "The Ptolemaic Counter – Revolution" in Lewis White Beck (ed.), *Kant's Theory of Knowledge: Selected Papers from the Third International Kant Congress*, Dordrecht, Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1974, p. 14.

Did Kant show proof of lack of insularity? Was Kant guilty of introversion in his metaphysical epistemology? Kant read widely the works of other authors before him and other authors of his era. But given the problematic epistemological view of a knowable world as the only possible world that we can confidently talk about, there is a chance that Kant did not want to go out of his conceptual comfort zone and had to close up his theory from erosive influences that could have given it more flexibility that would have been more accommodative of the complexity of the reality in our era. Of course was not an island of knowledge but may just have tried to talk about the world of unknowable objects as a complement to a theory that essentially draws strict borderlines in matters of knowledge. On the issue of insularity, Scott-Taggart problematically makes the knowable world coincide with the unknowable, a move that raises more questions than answers:

There are no doubts those who believe that Kant was proving his lack of insularity when he held that 'our world' was not the only possible world, but at the same time that he made a distinction between 'our world' and 'the world' he eviscerated the distinction of content, for he showed that we could possess knowledge of no world but that world which is our world. Kant's 'lack of insularity' is rather nostalgia or an unjustified retention of old habits of thought which viewed human minds as non-spatial substances. For us today 'our world' and 'the world' coincide, so that the word 'appearance' ought to be stripped of misleading ontological associations. We ignore non-knowable objects as dreadfully boring objects and say: Kant established conclusions about the world. And if we retain the word 'appearance' it is solely to draw attention to the method by which Kant established conclusions about the world.³³⁶

Even if Kant did not want to open up to theoretically contradictory views to his in his era, it is rather arbitrary to make the known world coincide with the unknowable world and to consider the use of appearance as a methodological fiction that does not diminish the epistemological status of the *noumena*. Even if the Kantian use of appearance is for us to know that there is something unknowable using our faculties of cognition, some interpreters like Scott-Taggart can still logically make the world of known objects coincide with that of unknown objects which means that what exists is what we know and what is not known cannot be proven to exist. This opens the way to the contemporary debate on Kant about the nonconceptual entities and non – intuited entities that may exist in a world of their own unknown to exist and yet real. Such preoccupations lead us to a critique of the Kantian systematic unity for a better adaptation of his theory to our contemporary needs.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 14 – 15.

SIXTH CHAPTER

THE PROBLEMATICITY OF THE ARCHITECTONIC

The unity of the Kantian system of philosophy is problematic in the light of modern epistemological challenges especially the challenge of complexity of the object of knowledge concealed by the subjective conditions of the knowledge – seeker or the objective conditions of the thing to be known which is never given in simplicity. Firstly, the Kantian critique of metaphysics in the paralogisms, antinomies and ideal of pure reason respectively in rational psychology, rational cosmology and rational theology, raises questions about the effectiveness of an endeavour that is difficult to carry out without in one way or the other engaging in what one wants to reject. Was Kant metaphysical in his critique of metaphysics? And if Kant could not avoid the natural metaphysical temptation in humans, is his critique of metaphysics not characterised by aporia? We cannot assume that the path to truth has been cleared of illusions if our method does not help us avoid what we are rejecting.

Secondly, to remain consistent with the systematic unity of his philosophy, Kant moves from the failures of theoretical reason in achieving epistemological goals to the success of practical reason in making use of the ideal of reason to project the foundation of morality that provides a foundation for a religion that works within the bounds of reason alone. This means that the truth in morality and religion depends on the failure of the theoretical use of reason to achieve epistemological goals beyond the realm of experience. Must theoretical reason encounter epistemological failures for practical reason to have an object? Will morality cease having an object if the human mind ever attains epistemological success beyond the realm of experience? In an architectonic wherein the existence of one element depends on that of another, when research is blocked within a rigid system, the system is built and closed once and for all. The relevance of such an approach can be put to question.

Finally, Kant's distinction between the complementary faculties of understanding and reason gives completeness to his system but instils in us worries about such a sharp distinction in mental activities that are in a flux. Is the distinction of understanding and reason meant to give unity to the Kantian system or is the impact of this distinction felt in thought itself? According to Jon Simons,

One of Kant's most productive moves is his analytical distinction between different mental powers, especially theoretical understanding and reason. The former relies on scientific rationality to gain understanding of the natural world of objects which can then be mastered technologically, while the latter is a version of Kant's practical reason which deliberates about the ends and purposes of instrumental action.³³⁷

From one to the other, understanding and reason are two faculties at the service of human knowledge and human action, but at the same time, these two faculties raise internal contradictions that may make us see Kant as an adept of systematic unity in distinctions that lead more to conceptual density than elucidation of concepts to unveil the truth. In this chapter of our work, we critically evaluate Kant's critique of metaphysics as well the culmination of the failure of theoretical reason with the success of practical reason as a case that can raise doubts about the distinction between understanding and reason.

6.1: Critique of Kant's Critique of Metaphysics

The Kantian critique of metaphysics poses a serious problem of credibility given that in his Philosophy, Kant makes metaphysics not only the foundation of natural science but also and above all the foundation of morality. If the critique was to establish a metaphysical science different from that of his predecessors, then the goal is more or less attained in the synthetic *a priori* judgments. But if the goal was to reject the metaphysical endeavour altogether, then it is a failed venture. Kant himself insists that metaphysics is a natural disposition of the human mind, a disposition that can lead us to dialectical illusions in endless mock combats among the schools of speculative philosophy. If Kant uses metaphysics to criticise metaphysics, then we have not moved one step in the direction of progress for the critic is using that which he criticises in other thinkers. If Kant is a metaphysician, despite the apparently severe critique that he made of metaphysics, then it was more of a call for methodological and objective reforms than a rejection of speculative philosophy. In either case, Kant's critique of metaphysics deserves a critical evaluation.

If the metaphysical tendency is natural in human nature, and yet it is epistemologically useless, and we cannot make it useful, then it is of no use for Kant to talk of metaphysics as the foundation of natural science. The attainment of synthetic *a priori* judgements, considered to be the greatest epistemological asset of Kant, is a product of a

³³⁷ Jon Simons, *From Kant to Lévi-Strauss: The Background to Contemporary Critical Theory*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002, p. 17.

reflection that is essentially metaphysical since it is carried out completely *a priori*, though the *a priori* concepts thus attained find a relation with experience as their condition of possibility. Kant does not refute the fact that metaphysical reflection cannot be brought to a halt no matter the efforts put in to prove its futility. Bradley notes that “[...] when poetry, art, and religion have ceased wholly to interest, or when they show no longer any tendency to struggle with ultimate problems and to come to an understanding of them; when the sense of mystery and enchantment no longer draws the mind to wander aimlessly and to love it knows not what; when, in short, twilight has no charm – then metaphysics will be worthless.”³³⁸ It is out of the question to hope that metaphysical reflection can be eradicated from human nature. It is also out of the question to even hope for a change of object or change of method in metaphysics because it has to do with an inquiry carried out purely *a priori* or independently of the experience considered by Kant to be the bounds within which true knowledge is possible.

At first sight, Kant’s severe critique of metaphysics resembles the extremism of David Hume who had launched a ‘book – burning campaign’ against metaphysical stuff or what he referred to as ‘abstruse philosophy’. In the last paragraph of *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume famously declared that “When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume – of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance – let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.*”³³⁹ Of course Hume is in line with all empirical theorists’ rejection of metaphysics as an annihilation of speculative philosophy that deals with ideas that are not related to any perceptions. But above all, Hume is rejecting metaphysics to lay emphasis on the empirical basis of all true knowledge, an empirical base used by Kant, too, to reject metaphysics. The Kantian critique of metaphysics uses similar terms used by Hume, terms which are derogatory or demeaning to say the least.

Though Kant does a systematic critique of the three angles of metaphysics from the objects, God, the immortality of the soul and freedom, in the Prefaces to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, mainly the preface to the first edition, Kant goes metaphorical in what was supposed to be a conceptual ‘mockery’ of metaphysics. From successive mock combats of old and of

³³⁸ F. H. Bradley, *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. 3.

³³⁹ David Hume, *op. cit.*, Of the Academical or Skeptical Philosophy, p. 173.

the present day, the gloomy picture painted by Kant of metaphysics is at variance with the later culmination of his theory in the view that metaphysics is a source of synthetic *a priori* judgments and that together with mathematics as a science of pure intuition, metaphysics is at the basis of natural science. In the Preface to the first edition of the ‘first critique’ this is what Kant says about metaphysics:

Time was when metaphysics was entitled the Queen of all the sciences; and if she will be taken for the deed, the pre-eminent importance of her accepted tasks gives her every right to this title of honour. Now, however, the changed fashion of the time brings her only scorn; a matron outcast and forsaken, she mourns like Hecuba [...]. Her government, under the administration of the dogmatists, was at first despotic. But inasmuch as the legislation still bore traces of the ancient barbarism her empire gradually through intestine wars gave way to complete anarchy; and the sceptics a species of nomads, despising all settled modes of life, broke up from time to time all civil society. Happily they were few in number, and were unable to prevent its being established ever anew, although on no uniform and self-consistent plan.³⁴⁰

Apparently, Kant wants to rescue metaphysics from the hands of the sceptics. But he does not want to do so at the expense of the canons of science especially if the science which takes the empirical outlook must have the *a priori* grounds of necessity. Though not intended to be as destructive as that of Hume, the Kantian critique of metaphysics makes it clear that there is no epistemological success to obtain from the use of the understanding beyond the realm of experience.

That Kant did not intend to do a destructive critique of metaphysics that could go to the extent of committing metaphysical books to the flames as Hume recommended is obvious when Kant talks of the need for reforms that could restore metaphysics on the path to science. The task does not look easy at all:

Metaphysics has accordingly lapsed back into the ancient time-worn dogmatism, and so again suffers that depreciation from which it was to have been rescued. And now, after all methods, so it is believed, have been tried and found wanting, the prevailing mood is that of weariness and complete indifferentism the mother, in all sciences, of chaos and night, but happily in this case the source, or at least the prelude, of their approaching reform and restoration. For it at least puts an end to that ill – applied industry which has rendered them thus dark, confused, and unserviceable.³⁴¹

Our task, here, is to prove that the Kantian critique of metaphysics itself lapses back to what it intends to correct in metaphysics. If it is not a problem of method, then it is that of the object

³⁴⁰ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Preface, pp. 7- 8.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.8.

of study. If it is that of method, then for any procedure to be metaphysical in the Kantian conception of the term, it must be entirely *a priori* or completely independent of experience. If that be the case, then it is obvious that no metaphysical inquiry can meet the empirical criterion that Kant sets for true knowledge. The achievement of the Kantian critique of metaphysics was meant to be the advent of synthetic *a priori* judgements which are obtained *a priori* and yet add something new to our stock of knowledge: that way, we proceed entirely by concepts and end up constructing concepts from other concepts in a method that is not analytical because it does not just break down concepts to their constituents, it actually builds new concepts from other concepts.

The first contradiction is that of defining metaphysics in a way as to make it epistemologically useless and later on using it for epistemological goals, though indirectly in the synthetic *a priori* judgements. If experience is the bound beyond which no knowledge can be obtained, that is, if experience is the bound within which our concepts must be applied to become knowledge of objects, then how can the attainment of synthetic *a priori* judgements, which are completely independent of experience, still be considered a procedure that adds new stock to our concepts and thus constituting knowledge? If metaphysics is defined to be an *a priori* analysis of concepts with nothing new to add to what we already know, so be it, since metaphysics does not deal with empirical concepts that could have given epistemological value to its inquiry. But if in the course of a procedure that was not supposed to produce knowledge we end up with new concepts in synthetic *a priori* judgements, then a procedure that cannot produce knowledge has produced knowledge. From Kant's definition of a 'metaphysical exposition' we note that an "[...] exposition is metaphysical when it contains that which exhibits the concept as given *a priori*."³⁴² Of course the categories are *a priori* concepts but can be made to relate to experience through schematisation using transcendental imagination in consciousness. But the problem arises when pure or *a priori* concepts have to build up knowledge through the concepts themselves without any link with experience. If metaphysics is defined to be a game of empty concepts, then it can only be analytical as its concepts will lack the synthetic character that can lead to knowledge until they relate to experience. But metaphysics in its nature is a tendency to go beyond the bounds of experience.

³⁴² *Ibid*, Space, p. 68.

Conceptually, then, the Kantian critique of metaphysics leads to a contradiction of terms given the *a priori* origin of metaphysical concepts which is such that they can only relate to experience as categories which are actually the conditions of possibility of experience. But if the *a priori* concepts do not in any way relate with experience and yet have to produce knowledge through what Kant calls ‘synthetic *a priori* judgments’ then metaphysics is not as useless as he defines it and knowledge will no longer be obtained only through concepts that must relate to experience. Either true knowledge is only obtained from concepts like the categories which relate to experience or not. In this case, if experience is the bound within which concepts relate to objects to become knowledge, then synthetic *a priori* judgements are eliminated from the realm of knowledge because they build new concepts without relating to experience. If synthetic *a priori* judgements build new concepts that lead to knowledge without relating to experience, then experience is not the exclusive bound within which concepts must relate to become knowledge. Either the definition of metaphysics has to be reviewed or Kant’s definition of true knowledge remains problematic.

Kant defines metaphysics and true knowledge in such a way as to make it logically impossible for metaphysics to be a source of true knowledge. That could be granted if his intentions were to do a completely destructive critique of metaphysics like Hume and the logical positivists did. The problem is that he intends to actually rehabilitate metaphysics as the source of synthetic *a priori* judgements. If metaphysics cannot give rise to true knowledge because the mind cannot build concepts entirely *a priori* or because doing so violates the empirical bounds of knowledge, then synthetic *a priori* judgments should not be possible at all. And this takes us to the second level of the epistemological status of synthetic *a priori* judgements considered to be the novelty of Kantian epistemology and yet a purely metaphysical procedure whose concepts are not only of *a priori* origin but also and above all the construction of new concepts from other concepts is carried out *a priori*. That is the bone of contention that has led to misunderstandings about Kantian philosophy in general and the *Critique of Pure Reason* in particular.

Kant inevitably returns to metaphysics through mathematics especially geometry by which objects are given to us *a priori*. It is the case of *a priori* intuitions that takes Kant back to metaphysics through mathematics. In simple terms, the mind can give itself a triangle as an object to correspond to the idea of three lines. Any representation can be done before any act of thinking. Thus the mind can represent to itself the idea of three lines or the idea of a triangle in inner sense as a moment antecedent to any figure or material object that takes the

shape of a triangle. The triangle, for instance, is a product of *a priori* intuition given to the mind as a mode by which the mind affects itself in relations that are internal and antecedent to thought. This is where mathematics unites with the kind of metaphysics that Kant intends to reject at first sight. The only difference is that whereas the *a priori* intuition of a triangle provides conditions of representation of the object in space, the idea of God, the immortality of the soul and freedom are neither given to the mind in *a priori* intuition nor provides conditions of possibility of the object in experience.

The nuance between metaphysics and mathematics as cases of synthetic *a priori* knowledge defeats the Kantian critique of metaphysics. Kant does not really want to admit that metaphysics of old has attained the level of necessity and certainty of mathematics but he does not want to discard metaphysics which gets closest to mathematics in *a priori* intuitions whereby the mind gives an object to itself when the said object does not yet exist in experience, when the object given in *a priori* intuition is actually a formal condition of all experience in outer sense as space and inner sense as time. The ideality of time and space is another angle from which we can show aporia in the Kantian conception of truth. But for now, we maintain the contradiction in the rejection of metaphysics to later take it close to metaphysics as the foundation of natural science. If we give to ourselves a triangle as an object without having it in experience at that moment, then we can also give to the mind an object of God. But while the *a priori* construction of a triangle in thought from the idea of three lines is possible, there is no possibility to construct the concept of God in thought from other concepts and there is no possibility to make the concept of God a condition of possibility of experience.

Thus the mind can give to itself an object. But the object can be built up from concepts that can condition experience or from concepts that, taken together, cannot condition any experience. Since inner sense and outer sense both deal with relations, the moment of conception of the relation can precede the actual experience of the object outside the mind. Even the experience of an object is an act of consciousness that is still a relation. Thus the substance of our critique of the Kantian critique of metaphysics is when he makes it clear that

[...] that which, as representation, can be antecedent to any and every act of thinking anything, is intuition; and if it contains nothing but relations, it is the form of intuition. Since this form does not represent anything save in so far as something is posited in the mind, it can be nothing but the mode in which the

*mind is affected through its own activity (namely, through this positing of its representation), and so is affected by itself [...].*³⁴³

If the mind can posit something before any act of thought thereby making the positing the act by which the activity of the mind affects the mind, then knowledge is all about relations constructed in the mind; after all the mind can give an object to itself before the object is even experienced in the material world. This transcendental idealism is not very far from the idealism of Berkeley that Kant wants to reject. The world of space and time is a product of a mind positing objects in a way as to make the mode of positing the act by which the mind affects itself in the struggle to represent objects. If the mind can give to itself an object in *a priori* intuition before having conscious experience of the object as existing in the material world, then the Kantian epistemology is based on metaphysics. We refer to it in our work as a metaphysical epistemology or an epistemology based on metaphysics.

If the Kantian epistemology is metaphysical and his metaphysics is the basis of his epistemology, then of what use is it to reject what he ends up using as the basis of his epistemology? Kant is a metaphysician at a very systematic level where we do not need to set out to use metaphysics independently of the annex disciplines that must work with metaphysics to attain the truth. The critique of metaphysics is more about making metaphysics the foundation of science and philosophy than advocating for its eradication. Positing a thing in the mind before an experience of the thing itself is the metaphysical act that leads to true knowledge. Positing God in the mind without ever experiencing God is the reason for which rational theology cannot be of any epistemological value. Positing the idea of immortality and freedom in the mind without the possibility of having them as conditions of a possible experience is the kind of metaphysics that Kant rejects. Kant simply rejects one kind of metaphysics in favour of another Kant. Kant rejects the metaphysics of empty concepts but admits that the mind can work *a priori* with concepts which at first sight seem to be 'empty' at the moment they are posited or given in *a priori* intuition but end up making the concepts the conditions of possibility of experience.

The kind of metaphysics rejected by Kant is that of rational theology, rational psychology and rational cosmology. But even this rejection of metaphysics from these three angles becomes the foundation of morality and religion, and the aporia involved in this approach will be examined in the next subsection of our work. The kind of metaphysics that finds favour in the Kantian system of philosophy is the metaphysics that is at the foundation

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, Transcendental Aesthetics, p. 87.

of other disciplines like epistemology, morality and religion. One easily has the impression that Kant is scared of having metaphysics as an independent science in his philosophical system, probably because he does not want to lapse to the errors he identified in the metaphysics of old whose existence was greatly threatened by sceptics whose views are developed from empiricism which rejects anything that does not have an origin in experience. Whether Kant did it to be consistent in his system of philosophy or to avoid the errors inherent in traditional metaphysics, the critique of metaphysics was meant to be read as a step toward something else than as a destructive endeavour to eliminate speculative philosophy from all systems of thought.

The ground of all synthetic *a priori* judgments is a metaphysical attempt by Kant to use the mind to build *a priori* knowledge which nevertheless relates to experience. But considering the time – sequence by which the synthetic knowledge built *a priori* is made to relate to experience, it is clear that the first act of knowledge is metaphysical. The metaphysical act comes first, and then the actual epistemological act follows. The metaphysical act of giving an object to the mind in *a priori* intuition is the reason for which mathematical disciplines, mainly geometry, are successful. The *a priori* act gives necessity to the knowledge obtained and the epistemological act actually makes it knowledge when the concepts relate to objects in experience:

You must therefore give yourself an object a priori in intuition, and ground upon this your synthetic proposition. If there did not exist in you a power of a priori intuition; and if that subjective condition were not also at the same time, as regards its form, the universal a priori condition under which alone the object of this outer intuition is itself possible; if the object (the triangle) were something in itself, apart from any relation to you, the subject, how could you say that what necessarily exist in you as subjective conditions for the construction of a triangle, must of necessity belong to the triangle itself? You could not then add anything new (the figure) to your concepts (of three lines) as something which must necessarily be met with in the object, since this object is [on that view] given antecedently to your knowledge, and not by means of it.³⁴⁴

If we assume that whatever object given to us will be given in time and space, which time and space are themselves *a priori* forms of sensibility, then the metaphysical step is attained in *a priori* intuition as a recognition of the role of metaphysics in intuition. Thus metaphysics is not as epistemologically useless as Kant makes us think at first sight. The metaphysical act, on its own, can be useless epistemologically if the link with experience is not finally established to give objectivity and validity to knowledge.

³⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 86.

The metaphysical act is epistemologically very useful as the condition for the *a priori* theoretical framework of knowing objects. The construction of a triangle from three lines does not actually mean that the figure exists in experience as a material object. The construction of the object is just a condition of possible experience. Mathematics does not deal with material objects per se but deals with purely *a priori* construction of concepts that make all experience possible. Mathematics only defeats one kind of metaphysics in its definition of possible experience. Metaphysics finds an honourable existence only close to mathematics as the foundation of natural science. The closeness of the Kantian metaphysics of synthetic *a priori* judgements with metaphysics implies that the Kantian critique of metaphysics is either constructive as a step toward something else or not meant to be taken as it appears at first sight.

The Kantian definition of metaphysics makes it epistemologically useless because its source of cognition does not respect the bounds of experience that gives validity and objectivity to knowledge. That which is meant to be purely *a priori* cannot give rise to ‘true’ knowledge in the Kantian system of philosophy:

[...] concerning the sources of metaphysical cognition, it already lies in the concept of metaphysics that they cannot be empirical. The principles of such cognition (which include not only its fundamental propositions or basic principles, but also its fundamental concepts) must therefore never be taken from experience; for the cognition is supposed to be not physical but metaphysical, i.e., lying beyond experience. Therefore it will be based upon neither outer experience, which constitutes the source of physics proper, nor inner, which provides the foundation of empirical psychology. It is therefore cognition a priori, or from pure understanding and pure reason.³⁴⁵

Thus constituted, metaphysical cognition is meant to give rise to problematic conceptions of truth. Yet Kant wrote the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* to clarify what he considered as misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the views in the First Critique. What Kant considered as ‘misinterpretations’ were actually the aporia in his critique of metaphysics. A profound reader of the *Critique of Pure Reason* easily notices that Kant hardly left the metaphysical realm which he set out to criticise and avoid or at least give the conditions of possibility of a different kind of metaphysics that could be considered as science.

³⁴⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, Preamble, p. 15.

Even in the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, Kant maintains the definition of metaphysics as that aspect of philosophy that hardly finds the empirical link that serves as criterion of validity of knowledge: “Metaphysical cognition must contain nothing but judgments *a priori* [...]”³⁴⁶ That which cannot lead to knowledge has to be proven to lead to a kind of knowledge called synthetic *a priori* knowledge built entirely from pure concepts. Either we can build knowledge through concepts alone and the knowledge would lack validity yet adding new ideas to our stock of knowledge or we build the knowledge from pure concepts that can serve as condition of possibility of experience. Metaphysics does the former and not the latter. Thus what makes metaphysical cognition ‘knowledge’ in the Kantian conception of the term as a relation between the subject and the object such that the subject conditions the object through innate modes of knowledge? If that which is not supposed to lead to knowledge can now lead to synthetic *a priori* knowledge, then there is a problem of contradiction in terms used in the inquiry. If synthetic *a priori* knowledge is actually ‘knowledge’ then all knowledge does not arise from experience and does not even begin with experience. It is difficult to reconcile the role of experience at the centre of knowledge in the Kantian synthetic *a priori* judgments. Either we make the discarding of experience an option so that synthetic *a priori* judgements can become knowledge or experience remains the criterion of valid knowledge and synthetic *a priori* judgments do not give rise to valid knowledge.

The bone of contention is that of *a priori* intuition. When the mind gives itself an object prior to the consciousness of the object in experience, the task can be completely entirely *a priori* like the construction of the concept of a triangle in geometry but the object makes experience possible just like the categories. If metaphysics cannot attain this objective of providing the link with experience, then Kant further fuels the aporia when he claims that metaphysics is a source of synthetic *a priori* knowledge. In the *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, Kant seems to be more explicit in his attempts to rehabilitate the metaphysics he had rejected in the First Critique while actually using it. Kant now criticises Hume for not taking the *a priori* concept of causality to the level where it could give rise to synthetic *a priori* knowledge, and here Kant brings metaphysics to its closest possible relationship with mathematics: “For had he [Hume] not done this, he would have expanded his question about the origin of our synthetic judgments far beyond his metaphysical concept of causality and extended it also to the possibility of *a priori* mathematics; for he would have had to accept

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

mathematics as synthetic as well.”³⁴⁷ Of course the students of nature who equally hold mathematics in high esteem as the foundation of natural science would not be at ease to accept the close link it has with mathematics as established by Kant. The problem is that Kant had rejected metaphysics in a way as to make it look completely useless to superficial readers of his work. But within his system of philosophy, he uses the same metaphysics relatively unchanged. So what was the real purpose of the Kantian critique of metaphysics?

Kant could not do such a ravaging critique of metaphysics only to come and make it almost inseparable from mathematics at the foundation of natural science as sources of synthetic *a priori* cognition. What the reader identifies as aporia is that which actually gives unity to the Kantian system of philosophy. The critique of metaphysics was meant to achieve moral and religious goals. But the Kantian epistemology remains very metaphysical. By making metaphysics a source of synthetic *a priori* knowledge alongside mathematics, Kant keeps metaphysics in the kind of ‘good company’ that is at variance with his original rejection of speculations that are entirely *a priori*. If Hume had actually realised that metaphysics could be a source of synthetic *a priori* judgements like mathematics, then “The good company in which metaphysics would then have come to be situated would have secured it against the danger of scornful mistreatment; for the blows that were intended for the latter would have had to strike the former as well [...]”³⁴⁸ But that is not the case. Even as Kant associates metaphysics with mathematics as the foundation of natural science, metaphysics has not had the popular acclamation that mathematics has and many students of nature are never ready to consider metaphysics as the foundation of their cherished study of nature through fixed laws. Such is the difficulty inherent in the Kantian critique of metaphysics. In as much as Kant did not want to be considered a metaphysician in the traditional meaning of the term as an endless battle of schools which he castigates, he does not want to completely abandon metaphysics for that would lead to a loss of the necessity and universality that any scientific cognition may have.

If it is actually metaphysics which gives necessity and universality to scientific cognition, then why should we find it necessary to do a critique of metaphysics in the first place? One can say that it is the critique of the metaphysics that does not respect the metaphysical link of valid knowledge. Yet such a critique leads to confusion and misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the intentions of the author. When Kant finally

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2 – 21.

admitted that metaphysics was a source of *a priori* synthetic knowledge, he thought he was putting an end to the misinterpretations of his theory of knowledge:

[...] metaphysics properly has to do with synthetic propositions a priori, and these alone constitute its aim, for which it indeed requires many analyses of its concepts (therefore many analytic judgments), in which analyses, though, the procedure is no different from that in any other type of cognition when one seeks simply to make its concepts clear through analysis. But the generation of cognition a priori in accordance with both intuition and concepts, ultimately of synthetic propositions a priori as well, and specifically in philosophical cognition, forms the essential content of metaphysics.³⁴⁹

Yet the ravaging critique and the subsequent rehabilitation of the same metaphysics at the basis of natural science alongside the prestigious mathematics rather raise other controversies about the real intention of the author in his critique of metaphysics.

Obviously, it is impossible to set limits without having an idea of what is beyond the limits. It is impossible to criticising metaphysics without, in one way or the other, engaging one's mind in metaphysical reflection. The Kantian critique of metaphysics is very metaphysical though it aimed at setting bounds on reason for epistemological purposes. As a possible source of synthetic *a priori* knowledge like mathematics, it is clear that metaphysics cannot have the epistemological emptiness that Kant gives to it at first sight. When the mind gives to itself an *a priori* object through which new knowledge can be constructed by means of concepts, even if the concepts do not end up being a foundation of possible experience, at least the construction is synthetic in terms of adding something new to what we already know. It is not just an analysis of concepts whose a priority guarantees necessity and universality but such necessity does not always imply an empirical connection. The aporia in this case is to note that if a discipline is epistemologically useful when it adds something new to what we know, then the synthetic *a priori* judgments of metaphysics add something new to our knowledge through the construction of concepts.

But if a discipline can add something new to what we know without the link with possible experience, then it has added something new to our knowledge in terms of construction of concepts and the discipline can no longer be said to be epistemologically useless. After defining metaphysics in a way as to make it epistemologically useless, Kant rehabilitated the same metaphysics to be epistemologically useful in the construction of concepts even if the empirical link is not guaranteed. This is purely inconsistent with the

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

project of the critique which intends to set the bounds for reason to meander in the quest for knowledge while avoiding illusions. Far from being a critique, then, the Kantian critique of metaphysics is a quest for a different kind of metaphysics, a quest which ends in an internal contradiction with what Kant considers true knowledge and what he considers as a process that adds something new to what we know, even if what is added is only in the form of concepts alone without the empirical link. Ultimately, if the critique of metaphysics is aimed at laying a solid ideal foundation for morality and religion, then another aporia is made possible when we do a critical reading of the Kantian conception of truth across the disciplines of epistemology, metaphysics, morality and religion.

6.2: The Problematic Transition from Theoretical Reason to Practical Reason

The Kantian move from the failures of theoretical reason in epistemology to the success of practical reason in morality and in a possible system of religion leaves many questions unanswered. Among the questions, we can readily wonder if theoretical reason must fail for practical reason to succeed. In other words, must reason fail to obtain knowledge beyond the bounds of experience before a perfect ideal can be constructed for morality and religion? If that be the case, is it a matter of temporal linkage of theories in the Kantian system where one theory follows another or is it a deliberate plan to stay consistent? If it is a deliberate plan to be consistent in the architectonic, then the foundation of morality is not, and must not, be conditioned by the failure of theoretical reason to obtain knowledge in the transcendental realm. Does theoretical reason fail epistemologically because it has to fail or to prepare an ideal for morality? If the negative achievement of theoretical reason is to prepare a solid foundation for morality, and if fanatics of metaphysics think that theoretical reason can still be a source of knowledge, then the Kantian system of truth has not yet solved the problem of the possibility or impossibility of knowledge beyond experience. Making the failure of theoretical reason the foundation of morality sounds like a case settled once and for all; and this is fatalistic for theoretical reason.

For the epistemological failure of pure theoretical reason to find employment in morality as a foundation is a Kantian approach that requires a critical examination. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant notes that

[...] the concept of freedom, insofar as its reality is proved by an apodictic law of practical reason, forms the keystone of the whole edifice of a system of pure reason, even of speculative reason. All other concepts (those of God and

*immortality) that, as mere ideas, remain unsupported in speculative reason now attach themselves to the concept of freedom and acquire, with it and through it, stability and objective reality. i.e., their possibility is proved by freedom's being actual, for this idea reveals itself through the moral law.*³⁵⁰

The concept of freedom, whose reality is problematic in the antinomies of pure reason, now has an apodictic reality in the field of practical reason where the human will needs spontaneity. This spontaneity requires freedom from all sensible conditions and yet unconditional attachment to the moral law as an order of reason that is freely respected. The reality of freedom, which is not proven theoretically, becomes actualised when it is at the foundation of the moral law and with it the other ideas of pure reason like immortality and God thus making religion possible as an endeavour that depends on morality. This approach raises the problem of rational justification of a transition from theoretical to practical reason. Is the transition mechanical or based on logical necessity in thought?

Freedom, immortality and God do not become real as objects of knowledge; they become real as foundation and objects of morality. That takes us back to the procedure that Kant uses to prove that these ideas cannot be objects of knowledge. Kant considers transcendental freedom to be unconditional causality while conditioned causality is nature. If that be the case, Kant logically proves that the concept of transcendental freedom cannot be proven to be real empirically because it is not given in intuition. Though the effects of freedom can be felt in the chain of phenomenal causes which it conditions, the reality of freedom itself cannot be proven because it is not an object of knowledge. As examined in the first part of our work, the concept of transcendental freedom is in an antinomy with nature. Either natural laws give rise to each other without any transcendental cause (in which case freedom is an illusion) or natural causes have a transcendental causality beyond experience (in which case freedom is a transcendental reality). The solution to the antinomy is for Kant to prove that transcendental freedom, which is not given in intuition, cannot be an object of knowledge. That is how he makes transcendental freedom a very important concept at the foundation of morality. And that marks the transition from theoretical to practical reason. If transcendental freedom is not an epistemological reality because it is not given in intuition, and now has to become a moral reality, then Kant has to show us the procedure that gives rise to such a transition.

³⁵⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, *op. cit.*, Preface, p. 5.

The transition from speculative to practical reason is based on an *assumption*. Kant simply supposes that, for the sake of morality, the concept of freedom must have a reality at the foundation of the moral law. Unlike the ideas of God and immortality which provide an object of a will respecting moral laws, freedom is the foundation of the moral law itself. But this freedom is unknown and unknowable as an object of knowledge in the theoretical use of reason. How that which is unknown in epistemology must now be assumed to be the foundation of morality is an assumption that cannot be justified epistemologically and Kant does not even want to justify it because he thinks such a justification is useless, baseless and unwarranted. We cannot know what we must assume to be the basis of morality. We cannot know and should not even try to know that which makes us respect the moral law as a duty without compulsion, that which makes us give the moral law to our will as a precept of reason. Kant resituates the role of freedom which to us is problematic:

[...] freedom, among all the ideas of speculative reason, is also the only one whose possibility we know a priori—though without having insight into it—because it is the condition of the moral law, which we do know. The ideas of God and immortality, on the other hand, are not conditions of the moral law, but conditions only of the necessary object of a will determined by this law, i.e., conditions of the merely practical use of our reason. Hence concerning those ideas we cannot claim to cognize and have insight into—I wish to say not merely their actuality, but even their possibility. But they are nonetheless conditions for the application of the morally determined will to its object that is given to it a priori (the highest good). Consequently their possibility can and must in this practical reference be assumed even without our theoretically cognizing and having insight into them.³⁵¹

We know the moral law but we do not know the freedom on which it is based. This is like knowing a building without knowing its foundation. How strong can a building be if we do not have an idea of its foundation?

How strong can the moral law be if the freedom on which it is based is unknowable and only assumed for practical purposes? This is the question to which Kant does not provide an answer. This not only puts to question his system of morality but also and above all his epistemological rejection of metaphysics through its inability to make freedom, God and immortality objects of true knowledge. The ideas of God and immortality, unknown to speculative reason, do not condition the moral law but condition the will towards the highest good considered as the ideal of morality. And this highest good, itself, is not determined by experience. The same experience considered as the basis for the validity and objectivity of

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

knowledge is now rejected in morality. Kant is moving from the rejection of dogmatic metaphysics to the acceptance of metaphysics as the foundation of disciplines thus putting to doubt his critique of metaphysics. We have to assume the possibility of unknown and unknowable freedom as the condition of the moral law. We have to assume the possibility of God and immortality so that the practice of the moral law based on freedom can have an ideal object. This is contradiction in a system that rejects ideas in epistemology and then restores the same ideas in morality as a possibility. If freedom is not a possible object of knowledge, how does it become a possible foundation of morality? If God and immortality are not objects of knowledge, how do they become possible conditions for a will determined by moral laws to attain its ideal goal?

Kant seems to suppress knowledge in morality so as to work with assumptions which is similar to his suppression of knowledge to make way for faith. Do we absolutely need to suppress true knowledge for morality to become a reality? The transition is not explained in Kantian philosophy and it rather makes the moral foundation shaky. One can say that if freedom has to be the foundation of such a strong system of morality constructed by Kant, then it has to be an object of knowledge. In this case, Kant has to restore the possibility of knowing freedom so as to give meaning and strength to his system of morality. This simply implies that the severe critique of metaphysics was not necessary at all. This would be a lapse of the Kantian theory of knowledge back to the dogmatic traditional metaphysics that he wants to avoid in his system. In passages of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Critique of Practical Reason* and *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant battles with the internal contradictions in his problematic transition from the failures of speculative reason in epistemology to the success of practical reason in morality. Kant anticipates the critics of his system, particularly on this transition, but writes with less consistency and less argumentative strength than his epistemology. Either Kant saw his system collapsing and wanted to rescue it so as not to base morality on that which he rejects in epistemology or he had deliberately planned the failure of speculative reason in epistemology as the prolegomena to his system of morality.

In one of such passages where Kant assumes the problematic leap from speculative to practical reason, the transition becomes a source of “admiration” in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*:

*[...] one cannot regard without admiration the way the practical faculty of judgment is so far ahead of the theoretical in the common human understanding. In the latter, if common reason ventures to depart from the laws of experience and perceptions of sense, then it falls into sheer inconceivabilities and self-contradictions, or at least into a chaos of uncertainty, obscurity, and inconstancy. But in the practical, the power of judgment first begins to show itself to advantage when the common understanding excludes from practical laws all sensuous incentives.*³⁵²

Actually the supposed ‘admiration’ is meant to cover up the inconsistency when what is not known only becomes possible as the condition of morality. We are admiring it because it does not seem to respect the logic of the speculative use of reason and Kant has to make an assumption that no longer respects the critical rigour of his philosophical system. Reason is in endless contradictions when it does not respect the bounds of experience in the quest for knowledge. We do not know how the contradictions disappear when reason needs a foundation and object of morality in the practical domain. The adventure beyond the realm of experience is no longer useless as it is in epistemology. Kant does not explain how this is possible. We just have to ‘admire’ the assumption for the sake of the glorious ideas of his system of morality. The methodical rigour of epistemology drops drastically to make way for morality. Experience, whose possibility gives content to concepts, so that the concepts should not be ‘empty’ and epistemologically useless, now becomes a source of temptation to be rejected by a will determined by moral laws. Such is the contradiction between the speculative and practical use of reason which makes the Kantian conception of truth problematic.

If we assumed that at the moment he was writing the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant had made a theoretical plan of his system to attain consistency, though the proof through passages can still be put to question as the author battles with consistency in subsequent developments of the transition in other books, it is still clear that Kant himself understands the internal theoretical difficulties that his conception of truth entails. Without arguing from the absence of proof to the presence of disproof, which is logically fallacious, Kant seems to ‘abandon’ the burden of disproof to the opponent. If we object that experience is the epistemological bound for speculative reason, then we must show that the journey beyond experience is epistemologically fruitful. Kant himself projects the possibility of metaphysics as a source of synthetic a priori knowledge which appears to disprove what he originally

³⁵² Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Allen W. Wood, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, First Section, p. 20.

stated as the epistemological fate of metaphysics. If the absence of proof is not a reason to accept disproof, then the contradiction must be sustained. If the contradiction is sustained, then Kant does not have to ascribe to practical reason the special right of not seeking proof because the search for proof is the *raison d'être* of every theory of epistemology.

If proof is what must characterise every theory of knowledge, and if Kant uses the epistemological failures of reason as a source of success to practical reason in morality, then the morality reaping the fruits of the failures of speculative reason cannot be exempted from the burden of proof. If not, then the enterprise of morality itself loses its foundation in knowledge. In an arbitrary manner and without methodical rigour of proof and demonstration Kant claims that practical reason does not need to make any proofs like those needed in the speculative use of reason to acquire knowledge. Is it because Kant does not have the proof, as a philosopher, or is it because morality does not require any proof of its foundation? In the former case, the philosopher is simply defending a pre – conceived system of philosophy to avoid inconsistency. In the latter case, the foundation of morality will not be as strong as Kant wants us to believe at first sight. The bottom line is that morality does not have to be founded on epistemological failures of reason. This may give consistency to a system but it leaves many questions unanswered. Either Kant has to review his system of epistemology so as to admit that the realm beyond experience is not as epistemologically useless as he established or Kant has to admit that the enterprise of morality loses its foundation altogether.

Even if our work was intended to stay within the confines of epistemology, Kant inevitably takes us to metaphysics and morality. But as far as the truth is concerned, whether one is in epistemology or morality, the quest for truth requires proof as a matter of necessity. Thus the following passage from the *Critique of Pure Reason* in which Kant exempts practical reason from the burden of proof is an arbitrary move:

[...] reason has, in respect of its practical employment, the right to postulate what in the field of mere speculation it can have no kind of right to assume without sufficient proof. For while all such assumptions do violence to [the principle of] completeness of speculation, that is a principle with which the practical interest is not at all concerned, in the practical sphere reason has rights of possession, of which it does not require to offer proof, and of which, in fact, it could not supply proof. The burden of proof accordingly rests upon the opponent. But since the latter knows just as little of the object under question, in trying to prove its non-existence, as does the former in maintaining its reality, it is evident that the former, who is asserting something as a practically necessary supposition, is at an advantage [...]. For he is at liberty to employ, as it were in self-defence, on behalf of his own good cause, the very same weapons that his

*opponent employs against that cause, that is, hypotheses. These are not intended to strengthen the proof of his position, but only to show that the opposing party has much too little understanding of the matter in dispute to allow of his flattering himself that he has the advantage in respect of speculative insight.*³⁵³

Is reason unable to offer proof of its foundation in the practical field or does reason not have to offer proof at all? This deliberate move to free morality of all burdens of proof is unwarranted and does not do much service to the science that Kant intends to build. Kant actually shifts the burden of proof to the opponent, and this move lapses into the logical fallacy of appeal to ignorance whereby the absence of proof is taken as the justification of disproof. In other words, it is up to the opponent to prove that foundation and objects of morality can become objects of knowledge. Since the opponent is unable to offer such proof, the Kantian position of disproof holds whereby practical reason merely assumes its foundation and object not as items of knowledge but as possibilities for the sake of practical reason.

In this case, the absence of proof of the contrary is actually taken as the proof of the assertion itself. And in a move that is epistemologically fatalistic, Kant holds that the opponent himself cannot disprove what he has not proven and so Kant's unproven assertion holds, to wit, that freedom, God and immortality are possibilities in the practical use of reason and yet unknowable in the theoretical use of reason. Since experience remains the determining ground for true knowledge, the opponent may hold that not every item of knowledge is determinable by experience. Kant lapses into the fallacy of appeal to ignorance when he insists that his view and that of the opponent are sustained by the inability to prove the contrary on either side. That is, in much the same way that the opponent thinks that everything must not be determined by experience, the opponent cannot prove that there is true knowledge outside the realm of experience.

Yet Kant is categorical when he notes that "[...] speculative reason in its transcendental employment is in itself dialectical [...]."³⁵⁴ This implies that he is sure of the failure of the opponent when the opponent tries to obtain knowledge through the transcendental use of reason. If that be the case, then it is no longer consistent for Kant to buttress his view on the failure of the opponent to prove the contrary. After all, the opponent's view is categorically rejected by Kant. If reason cannot attain knowledge from a transcendental employment of reason because the opponent cannot prove how such

³⁵³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, Discipline of Pure Reason, p. 617.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 618.

knowledge is possible, the opponent can as well claim that Kant cannot prove, once and for all, that experience is the bound beyond which knowledge is impossible to attain. In the previous chapter of this part of our work, we proved that Kant's epistemological position leads to fatalism in the conception of the unknowable noumena. Such a conception of truth condemns us to give up the search for truth in the transcendental realm because the result, which is failure, is already known in advance. Such fatalism not only limits our scope of research but also and above all puts us in a situation of arguing from ignorance with the claim that, since no one has proved that knowledge is attainable in the transcendental use of reason, such knowledge is not attainable, and the possibility of the counter claim from the opponent that Kant cannot prove for once and for all that experience will always be the bound within which knowledge is attainable. And the two views sustain each other in an argument based on ignorance or lack of proof of the contrary. This is fallacious because the absence of proof cannot be used as a justification for disproof.

Kant is not fair with his supposed opponent on the chances of speculative reason attaining epistemological goals in its transcendental employment. Rather Kant pushes the opponent to a tight corner asking for proof of the contrary without actually disproving the opponent by also proving the contrary of what the opponent holds as the chance of knowledge beyond the realm of experience. This, then, is the Kantian aporia that moves from the epistemological failures of speculative reason to the moral and religious successes of practical reason:

Our opponent falsely represents the absence of empirical conditions as itself amounting to proof of the total impossibility of our belief, and is therefore proceeding on the assumption that he has exhausted all the possibilities. What we are doing is merely to show that it is just as little possible for him to comprehend the whole field of possible things through mere laws of experience as it is for us to reach, outside experience, any conclusions justifiable for our reason.³⁵⁵

Kant thus sustains the contradiction in the absence of proofs of the contrary from two opposing camps in the quest for knowledge. This is not a good foundation for morality given that, as its foundation, the absence of epistemological truth in the transcendental domain does not make it a solid foundation for morality. We need to understand the intentions of the metaphysician which are not fulfilled or rather fulfil a goal he did not set out to attain. The

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 619 – 620.

metaphysician is out for truth or for the reality in the transcendental realm; but to Kant, such an endeavour only gives rise to an ideal foundation of morality and not knowledge.

Using metaphysics only for negative achievements as foundation of other disciplines makes it a blind search for that which cannot be found and which ends up obtaining that which can only be used to build something else. Does this, then, mean that all metaphysicians, intentionally or unintentionally, seek the ideal foundation for morality? The answer is not obvious. If the metaphysician seeks reality but only ends up founding morality and preparing an ideal for a will conditioned by moral law, then the real aim of metaphysics is never attained and the negative achievement ascribed to it by Kant as the foundation of other disciplines is rather arbitrary and not rationally justified. Like the author himself notes, it is an assumption which is necessary for morality and religion to prevail. So much effort used up only to achieve an assumption through which morality and religion come to life. If metaphysics has to be a science with an independent existence, then Kant does not have to relegate it to the level of only negative achievements used as the basis for other disciplines. Does metaphysics need to fail in the pursuit of its epistemological goals for morality to have a foundation? We cannot consciousness go into an endeavour to fail so that our failure can be used for something 'good' which is the foundation of morality. If the epistemological failure of the metaphysician used as the foundation of morality is unintentional, then there is no proof that he will never succeed in the future to obtain knowledge in the transcendental use of reason. The case is worse if the failure is intentional because we cannot deliberately set out to fail in epistemology so as to give a solid ideal foundation to morality.

The definitions that Kant gives to theoretical, speculative and practical cognition are such that one cannot logically give rise to the other since they show more of opposition than similarity with each other. In *Logic*, Kant holds that practical cognition is opposed to both speculative and theoretical cognition:

A cognition is denominated practical in contradistinction to not only the theoretical, but the speculative cognition. Practical cognitions either are,

- 1. Imperatives and in this view opposed to the theoretical cognitions; or comprise,*
- 2. the grounds to possible imperatives, and are in this view opposed to the speculative cognitions.*

By IMPERATIVE in general every proposition that expresses a possible free action, by which a certain end is to be realized, is to be understood. Every cognition, then, which contains imperatives, is PRACTICAL and to be termed so in contradistinction to the theoretical cognition. For THEORETICAL

*cognitions are such as express, not what must be and ought to be, but what is; consequently have for their object, not an acting, but a being or an existing.*³⁵⁶

Practical cognition is opposed to theoretical cognition because it gives rise to action and not just knowing for the sake of an existing object. Yet, when theoretical reason fails to know entities beyond the realm of experience, the idealistic unknown object thus constructed serves as grounds for morality in a Kantian arbitrary approach based on assumptions. If practical cognition does not lead to action itself, it, at least, then at least it should provide the ground for possible action. And this is what theoretical reason may do in the practical realm only when we fail to obtain knowledge beyond experience with speculative reason.

With theoretical reason, we have to know objects. With speculative reason, there is no possibility of having grounds for action when the aim is knowledge. How the failures of theoretical reason in epistemology give rise to the success of practical reason in morality is what the Kantian approach does not provide sufficient justification about. We have to move from impossibilities in knowledge to possibilities in morality. We have to move from that which is not possible as an object of knowledge to the same impossible object of knowledge becoming the ground of morality.

*If on the contrary we oppose the practical cognitions to the speculative ones, they may be theoretical too, provided that imperatives can be deduced from them. They are then, considered in this respect, as to the value [...] or objectively practical. By SPECULATIVE cognitions we understand those, from which no rules of conduct can be derived, or which comprise no grounds for possible imperatives.*³⁵⁷

If no rules of conduct can be derived from speculative reason, how then does the failure of speculation provide grounds for morality? Such is the aporia which make the Kantian transition from theoretical to practical reason problematic. If we consider that every form of cognition must be useful, then it is normal that metaphysical ‘cognition’, not admitted as such because it does not respect the empirical bounds of knowledge, can be used in morality without any possible contradiction. But if the system of the philosopher already supposes that the speculative use of reason cannot give rise to knowledge in one realm beyond experience, and yet the impossibility of attaining knowledge becomes the ground for morality. This is the problematicity of the Kantian transition from speculative to practical reason.

³⁵⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Logic*, trans. John Richardson, London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall Stationer’s Court, 1819, Introduction, p. 123.

³⁵⁷ *Idem.*

Therefore, morality is such an important field of philosophy and deserves a stronger foundation than one based on failures of speculative and theoretical reason in epistemology. If metaphysics is condemned to be an epistemological failure in the realm beyond experience, then its failure cannot be a solid foundation for morality. The transition from theoretical to practical reason is arbitrary as it is based on assumptions; it is based on the argument of absence of proof to presence of disproof which is not a solid ground for an epistemological position. Above all, it puts to question the Kantian critique of metaphysics altogether which in turn puts to question the solidity of the Kantian system of philosophy which rejects metaphysics as an epistemological approach only to use the same metaphysics as the foundation of nature science and now the foundation of morality and object of a will determined by moral laws. While this move is arbitrary in its internal incoherence, it may be proven to be of relevance in the contemporary society where the move from the truth in epistemology to the truth in morality and religion not only gives harmony to the Kantian system but also and above all provides the beginning to the solution of the contemporary religion that gives more priority to visible elements of divine worship than the practice of morality which makes the ideal object of practical reason possible.

6.3: The Complementarity of Faculties in Conflict

Though the *Conflict of Faculties*³⁵⁸ is the title of one of Kant's books dealing essentially with distinctions between the philosophical and theological, medical, law and other faculties, the idea of the conflict of faculties can be used as the basis of critique of the way Kant uses the faculties of reason and the understanding. This is because, in his theory of knowledge, there is an inherent contradiction between the various faculties involved in the quest for truth. At the centre of the problematic role of the faculties is the conversion of categories of the understanding to the ideas of pure reason. If the understanding is the faculty that gives rise to knowledge through concepts which, though a priori, can be schematised by means of the transcendental imagination to become concepts of objects or concepts which become the conditions of possibility of objects of experience, the other faculty of reason which goes beyond the bounds of experience to explain and give conceptual completeness to the same experience becomes problematic. The dichotomy between understanding and reason, which actually makes the failures of speculative reason the foundation of a future system of morality, is such that one can raise questions concerning the necessity to make a

³⁵⁸ Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of Faculties*, trans. Mary J. Gregor, New York: Abaris Books, Inc., 1979.

distinction between reason and understanding instead of making a distinction of the objects on which they are employed. For instance, rather than making a sharp distinction between understanding and reason so as to use the former as the condition of experience and use the latter as the source of completeness for the concepts of the former, the epistemological quest for truth may reap more fruits from a distinction of objects and not faculties which in the Kantian system seem inseparable, after all.

When reason converts the concepts of the understanding to ideas that can no longer meet the conditions of experience, it is a mere extension of the understanding toward a field in which it cannot link concepts with objects to give rise to truth. In this case, the thin line between understanding and reason is such that the distinction conceals a conflict that should not even be considered as one. Of the conversion of the concepts of the understanding to ideas of pure reason is inevitable in the quest for completeness and the unconditioned in our experience, then reason is an extension of the understanding to areas where it is epistemologically incompetent and the understanding is a limitation of reason within areas where it is epistemologically productive. Whether reason is extending the understanding to transcendental realms to seek completeness and unity in concepts or the understanding is the limitation of reason within narrow limits that can give rise to knowledge, the apparent conflict in the problematic coexistence of the two faculties raises questions of complementarity and not conflicts. But one cannot avoid noticing the conflict when Kant gives different results to each of the faculties thereby making one completely useful in the quest for knowledge and the other completely useless in the quest for knowledge only to rehabilitate it in the practical field of morality.

Yet, in terms of results, the understanding is analytical while reason is dialectical in its transcendental employment. This implies that the two faculties have contrasting results in epistemology, the former leading to truth and the latter giving rise to illusions. The thin line between the two faculties in Kantian philosophy makes this sharp distinction of results problematic because if reason does not regulate the understanding to seek conceptual completeness, and if the understanding does not limit reason in its transcendental and pretentious claims, the aim of the project of the critique of reason would not be attained. If the concepts of the understanding, useful in the quest for truth, can be so easily converted to ideas of pure reason, useless in the quest for truth, then what is the point in considering such contrasting faculties (through results) as complementary (through the procedure of the conversion of objects of one to the other)? The complementary role (in function) between the

understanding and reason does not warrant the contradiction (in results) between the two. The conversion of the concepts of the understanding to the ideas of pure reason is not done, originally, for the sake of morality as Kant later claims in his construction of a moral system that makes use of the epistemological failures of speculative reason. The conversion is aimed at attaining truth in its fullness and completeness that does not require hesitation in taking the quest for knowledge to its highest level.

If reason can aim higher than the understanding for the sake of knowledge but must be kept within narrow limits by the same understanding for the sake of the same knowledge, then the complementarity in function is at variance with the contradiction in results. And if the contradiction in the results does not prevent the two faculties from being complementary, then reason cannot be as epistemologically useless as Kant claims. In this case, the truth cannot only be a product of the understanding leaving reason with the fate of illusions as products. At least we must admit that even as a negative achievement, reason, by extending the understanding and ending up in epistemological failure, actually guides the understanding through the right path where limits are not accepted arbitrarily but as a result of a procedure. In this way too, by limiting reason within the bounds of experience for the sake of knowledge, the apparent conflict in results loses its relevance given that the two faculties work for each other, keeping each other within limits without discarding the possibility of extending the bounds of knowledge to its highest heights.

Yet, if, as Kant holds, reason does not accept the limitations of the understanding to the bounds of experience and the understanding itself does not accept reason's unfruitful extension of the bounds of knowledge beyond experience, then the conflict of the faculties is real and justifies the contrasting results for both. And the conflict becomes problematic given the necessary complementarity between the two faculties. Given the necessary complementarity of the two faculties in the quest for knowledge, and even if the results of reason's transcendental journey can only be beneficial to morality, the following passage from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, then, is fatalistic, perhaps too fatalistic, about the results of reason's transcendental journey:

The ultimate aim to which the speculation of reason in its transcendental employment is directed concerns three objects: the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God. In respect of all three the merely speculative interest of reason is very small; and for its sake alone we should hardly have undertaken the labour of transcendental investigation a labour so fatiguing in its endless wrestling with insuperable difficulties since

*whatever discoveries might be made in regard to these matters, we should not be able to make use of them in any helpful manner in concrete, that is, in the study of nature.*³⁵⁹

If the merely speculative interest of reason is not pursued in the three concepts of metaphysics, then even the moral ideal would not be constructed as a negative achievement of the transcendentally quest for completeness in the conceptual use of the understanding. If the results of pure reason cannot be used in the study of nature as they only help reason to seek completeness in concepts, then at least they can be used as the regulator of the understanding toward that which it does not want to get to but which it cannot abstain from. Actually, Kant puts the understanding in a relationship of necessary complementarity with reason such that even if the negative epistemological results are known in advance, the understanding cannot completely do away with reason because the former cannot be satisfied within the limits of experience and the latter cannot be satisfied by the transcendental journey which it cannot however get rid of.

The dialectical results of pure reason, in the illusions of metaphysics, give rise to an internal incoherence in the Kantian system where the venerated understanding as the faculty of knowledge through concepts and principles cannot have the completeness that only reason can give to its concepts. A reading of the Kantian conception of truth gives one the feeling that Kant wants to reject reason as epistemologically useless, yet Kant does not want to completely do away with reason despite its apparent epistemological failures. Thus, even for the sake of the speculative use of reason, the transcendental journey is important for the understanding to know what to avoid though it cannot completely leave without what it seeks to avoid. Even if reason does not have principles to anticipate experience as the understanding does, the same understanding cannot be aware of the kind of conceptual completeness needed in a system of knowledge without the aid of reason. If the understanding needs to be 'regulated' by reason for it to anticipate experience, then the role of reason is not directly related to experience but indirectly related to the experience as it provides rules of completeness and coherence to the understanding in the its conditioning of experience. Thus, reason does not have an immediate but a mediate link with experience through the intercession of the understanding regulated by reason to attain conceptual purity.

The real conflict in goals is that concepts attain purity when they are furthest away from experience as possible. That is why reason cannot and should not have an immediate

³⁵⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason, op. cit.*, The Canon of Pure Reason, p. 631.

relationship with experience as such a relationship would ruin the conceptual purity of reason. Reason loses its conceptual purity if it were to be close to experience the way the understanding is. To maintain this purity which gives a priori completeness and necessity, reason can only regulate the understanding without directly relating to the objects of experience. Such a relationship does not make reason epistemologically useless. If there is a tool that cannot relate with objects directly but serves to control another tool that relates with objects directly, then the tool that regulates the other tool actually conditions the tool for knowing objects. That relationship between reason and the understanding implies that reason indirectly conditions experience through the understanding that it regulates. It is this relationship of apparent conflict in complementarity that puts the faculties in a state of ‘friendly enemies’ who do not seem to like each other because they pursue contradictory goals and yet in their functioning they cannot completely do away with each other. The genius of Kant consists in maintaining this apparent conflict in complementarity which at times seems as if he is trying to please ‘both sides’ of the epistemological spectrum dominated by empiricism and rationalism.

In the field of morality, Kant reinforces the apparent conflict of complementary faculties when the moral foundation is derived from the epistemological failures of speculative reason and yet there was no need putting in efforts in a field that cannot be used to explain nature. Even the idea of transcendental freedom comes into conflict with natural laws that regulate an empirical freedom in a system of autonomy of causes. We have already highlighted the aporia in the Kantian system which venerates experience in the field of knowledge only to reject the same experience in the field of morality. Yet Kant is malicious enough to main the complementarity in conflict whereby the benefits of speculative reason are a negative achievement used in a field other than that for which it was meant. In this conception of a negative achievement whereby epistemological failure makes morality possible, the conflict of faculties is apparent in a complementarity involving the three metaphysical concepts of immortality, freedom and God:

If the will be free, this can have a bearing only on the intelligible cause of our volition. For as regards the phenomena of its outward expressions, that is, of our actions, we must account for them in accordance with a maxim which is inviolable, and which is so fundamental that without it we should not be able to employ reason in any empirical manner whatsoever in the same manner as all other appearances of nature, namely, in conformity with unchangeable laws. If, again, we should be able to obtain insight into the spiritual nature of the soul, and therewith of its immortality, we could make no use of such insight in

explaining either the appearances of this present life or the specific nature of a future state. For our concept of an incorporeal nature is merely negative, and does not in the least extend our knowledge, yielding no sufficient material for inferences, save only such as are merely fictitious and cannot be sanctioned by philosophy. If, thirdly, the existence of a supreme intelligence be proved, by its means we might indeed render what is purposive in the constitution and ordering of the world comprehensible in a general sort of way, but we should not be in the least warranted in deriving from it any particular arrangement or disposition, or in boldly inferring any such, where it is not perceived.³⁶⁰

The moral law reinforces the freedom of a will so that it can steer clear of empirical conditions, the same empirical conditions that are used by Kant to reject the reality of transcendental freedom in epistemology. If the immortality of the soul cannot be proven as an object of knowledge but only serves as the object of a will conditioned by the moral law, the conflict is highlighted in faculties used to prove each other irrelevant in results despite their working side by side with each other.

If the concept of a supreme being, not perceived anywhere in the world, but which yet serves to give conceptual orderliness to our world of material objects, the role of reason in ordering the understanding in its study of nature is obvious. Kant does not admit directly that reason's ordering of the understanding is completely useless in epistemology but focuses on the object of the understanding for which the ordering is done, and since the objects of experience have no direct link with reason, Kant uses it as a justification to reject reason as a faculty of knowledge. How can the results of such complementary faculties as reason and understanding be so contradictory to each other? Actually the epistemological results of the two faculties give the impression that they are or should be in conflict with each other. Yet, as we have shown, such contradiction in results actually contradicts their complementarity in function. The emphasis laid by Kant on the epistemological uselessness of the labour invested in the speculative use of reason beyond experience makes him stay consistent with an epistemology that respects the empirical bounds while rejecting a dogmatic metaphysics that goes beyond the bounds of experience with no intention of conditioning the same experience from which its concepts are not derived. Kant's insistence on the contradiction of the transcendent ideas of reason and the immanent concepts of the understanding only reinforces a contradiction that is not felt in the functioning of the two faculties:

For it is a necessary rule of the speculative employment of reason, not to pass over natural cause, and, abandoning that in regard to which we can be instructed by experience, to deduce something which we know from something

³⁶⁰ *Idem.*

*which entirely transcends all our [possible] knowledge. In short, these [...] propositions are for speculative reason always transcendent, and allow of no immanent employment that is, employment in reference to objects of experience, and so in some manner really of service to us but are in themselves, notwithstanding the very heavy labours which they impose upon our reason, entirely useless.*³⁶¹

If the propositions of pure reason are transcendent and those of the understanding are immanent in experience, and yet the same reason has to regulate the same understanding, then Kant himself loses consistence in trying to strike a balance between two faculties that he intends to put in a relationship of conflict with each other but cannot really put them in absolute contradiction with each other without losing consistency in other aspects of his philosophical system which he holds in high esteem, to wit, morality and religion.

This sub – section of our work proves that Kant comes into an internal contradiction with his own ideas when he has to maintain the sharp distinction between the understanding and reason though theory results which show that the former pursues the truth while the latter pursues illusions. This is the focal point of the Kantian system of knowledge which does not in any way water down the complementarity noted in the functioning of these two apparently conflicting faculties. Yet the regulative function of reason implies that it has to guide the understanding toward purity in concepts and that understanding cannot do away with this apparently intruding role of reason which is a natural disposition of the human mind. The understanding cannot be far away from reason but according to Kant, for the sake of positive results in the enterprise of knowledge, the faculty of understanding cannot go the way of reason. Despite the regulative function of reason on the understanding, Kant has to make the understanding stand out as the faculty that gives rise to subject – based truth in epistemology so that the epistemological failures of reason should be used to lay a solid foundation for morality.

When Kant insists that “[...] all principles of the pure understanding are nothing more than principles a priori of the possibility of experience, and to experience alone do all a priori synthetic propositions relate indeed, their possibility itself rests entirely on this relation”³⁶², we see, in this line, the decision of the philosopher to be consistent with his system that cannot make the realm beyond experience a source of possible objects of genuine knowledge. On the other hand, when Kant admits the reality of regulative ideas of pure reason, the role of

³⁶¹ *Idem.*

³⁶² *Ibid.*, Postulates of Empirical Thought, p. 256.

ideas which he hitherto considered as ‘epistemologically useless’ now changes to that of ideas which are important in guiding the understanding toward the highest possible and most complete goals that the human mind can attain. At this point, the ideas of pure reason are no longer as ‘useless’ as Kant makes us believe at first sight in the heart of his theory of knowledge which makes experience the bound beyond which no true knowledge can be attained. Kant’ conception of the ‘regulative ideas of pure reason’ completely leads an objective reader to put to question his rejection of the same ideas of pure reason just to make experience the defining criterion of true knowledge.

The case could not really be different given that in his epistemological theory, Kant already has in mind the future theory of morality that he intends to base on the epistemological failures of speculative reason. The following passage in which Kant highlights the role of the regulative role of the ideas of pure reason unveils the aporia of the conflict of complementary faculties:

[...] they[concepts of pure reason] have an excellent, and indeed indispensably necessary, regulative employment, namely, that of directing the understanding towards a certain goal upon which the routes marked out by all its rules converge, as upon their point of intersection. This point is indeed a mere idea, a focus imaginarius from which, since it lies quite outside the bounds of possible experience, the concepts of the understanding do not in reality proceed; none the less it serves to give to these concepts the greatest [possible] unity combined with the greatest [possible] extension.³⁶³

If we assume that what does not destroy you makes you stronger, then it is obvious that since the ideas of pure reason do not destroy the understanding in its quest for knowledge within the bounds of experience, then the two faculties are more complementary than conflicting as Kant wants us to believe at first sight. Reconciling two faculties meant to be at variance with each other is the internal contradiction not solved by Kant in his philosophy as he seeks systematic unity from one aspect of philosophy to another. Through this conflict of complementary faculties, the Kantian architectonic can be put to question from the internal contradictions that it generates. It, then, becomes clear that systematic unity in philosophy does not exclude the identification of internal incoherence overlooked by an author.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, Regulative Employment of the Ideas, p. 533.

CONCLUSION

The second part of our work is an uncompromising critical evaluation of the Kantian conception of the truth. This part of our work is made necessary by the fact that as a research work of the 21st century, we cannot arbitrarily claim that all the ideas developed by Kant in his epistemology have stood the test of time. The least we can say is that some of his ideas have stood the test of time or at least give conditions of possibility for his ideas to be relevant in our time. Hence, we cannot assume that Kant was all consistent in his views. As a meticulous system – builder, Kant left loose ends in his theory of knowledge and such loose ends make it possible for his views to fit squarely in the problems of our era. Even if the systematic unity of his theory did not have loose ends, it may still sound anachronistic to claim that a piece of work written in 18th century Germany finds application in the 21st century society we live in. Since Kant himself was cautious to state some of his innovative ideas as conditions of possibility, the second part of work takes a distance from the Kantian theory so as to view it from the angle of a critic who is not contented with the systematicity of a theory that may seek more of consistency than approximation to the reality. Kant may have sacrificed reality on the altar of logic. Even if all the elements of his theory fit coherently and consistently in a system whose conceiver is meticulous enough make the various elements fit squarely together, the difficulty of the task is made obvious by the complexity of the reality that the theory sets out to explain.

Our critical evaluation is external and internal; external through other authors who went beyond the Kantian systematic unity to note that the reality depicts more than what is depicted by a rigid theoretical framework of Kantism; internal because our own reading of the Kantian theory of knowledge leads to contradictions some of which are actually assets in our contemporary era as is proven in the third part of our work and some of which are a limitation of a theory that is reconciliatory and yet simplistic in the face of a dynamic reality. Our conceptual passage through German idealism is justified by the fact that Kant was a forerunner of many theories that took with or against his metaphysical epistemology. Our passage through postmodernism which is a problematic era as well as a methodological revolution is justified by the fact that we need to extrapolate the views of Kant to the needs of our era and the postmodern depiction of the crisis of truth today is radical enough for us to use it as a step to show how difficult it can be to adapt the views of Kant to the needs of our day. Yet the apparent call for methodological anarchy by the postmodern era does not

completely destroy the need for orderliness that makes science what it was and what it is and maybe what it will not be in the future. Since one revolution can give rise to another, the Kantian revolution in epistemology does not exclude the possibility of other revolutions to shake the foundation what looked at the time like an unshakeable theory, especially viewed from the angle of the reconciliatory intentions of the author who wanted to meander between contrasting approaches so as not to miss out on any angle of the reality but who ended up not completely avoiding the weaknesses he found in other theories.

We have proven that beyond Kant, the German the quest for the truth has not stopped; rather, the problem may be the same but the methodological needs are now more complex than in Kant's era. After all, as rightly puts it, "To claim to know something is to claim to possess the truth. But can we ever be certain that we do possess the truth? People make knowledge claims every day that turn out to be false. We often misremember and misperceive. Sometimes we make knowledge claims that are contradicted by those of others."³⁶⁴ The era of German idealism follows the footsteps of Kant but pushes the preoccupations of knowledge further to theories of the absolute where the synthetic unity of metaphysics and epistemology is consecrated. The era makes us think that Kant was afraid of the possible over-idealistic outcomes of his theory and so projected the unknowable *noumena* as a backup claim to avoid exactly the same errors of the metaphysics he sets out to criticise. Yet, we have proven that no matter how hard he tried, Kant did not go too far from the metaphysics he described as a system of dialectical illusions. A cautious reading of Kant thus requires that we should take the Kantian critique of metaphysics as a desire to avoid the illusions of the traditional schools of metaphysics so as to use metaphysics as a foundation of natural science, a foundation in which metaphysics uses apriority to give universality and apodictic character to science. In the Kantian use of the supposed reformed metaphysics, the difference between what Kant rejects in the old metaphysics and what he uses in his own metaphysics is not unquestionable.

The Kantian conception of an unknowable *noumena* comes under severe scrutiny and criticism as it supposes an unknowable base to what is knowable as appearance and yet declares appearance as all that is knowable thereby leaving the researcher in a position of curiosity that cannot be fulfilled by such fatalistic conclusions. The possible interpretations point to the fact that the *noumana* can be supposed to exist and is unknowable or not to exist

³⁶⁴ Louis P. Pojman, *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth*, Sixth Edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 164.

at all because it is unknowable, and the latter supposition is what can be used by radical Kantians to deny the existence of a world beyond the appearance merely used by Kant for methodological purposes to set the limits of reason and thus declare the only world to be the knowable world. Such ambiguity no longer ties with the contemporary revival of the debates on the problem of truth. Kant does not really solve the problem with passages such as what follows:

[...]we must bear in mind that the concept of appearances, as limited by the Transcendental Aesthetic, already of itself establishes the objective reality of noumena and justifies the division of objects into phaenomena and noumena, and so of the world into a world of the senses and a world of the understanding[...] and indeed in such manner that the distinction does not refer merely to the logical form of our knowledge of one and the same thing, according as it is indistinct or distinct, but to the difference in the manner in which the two worlds can be first given to our knowledge, and in conformity with this difference, to the manner in which they are in themselves generically distinct from one another.³⁶⁵

Kant rather reinforces the possible contradictions by making claims which imply that the noumena exist but is unknowable and that the noumena does not exist because we cannot prove it to be knowable. In any case, the epistemological damage of a limit – setting approach is that it does not give us the chance to go beyond the author’s spectrum of thought because the author himself seems to be insular. In such a situation of possible insularity, the systematic unity of truth becomes problematic as Kant wants his theoretical framework to be that out of which we land in dialectical illusions without conclusively closing research on the matter.

Such admission of difficulties without making conceptual concessions on his system of philosophy has made the Kantian noumena a bone of contention which to us gives rise to seemingly insurmountable aporia that cannot be solved without shaking the foundation of the architectonic that can no longer fit squarely in the epistemological debate of our era. Our position is that the *noumena* exist but are knowable on the condition that we adopt the subject – based object – based approach recommended for a possible contemporary theory of knowledge. This position sharply contrasts the two interpretative angles of the Kantian noumena as either non-existent because they are unknowable or existent and unknowable because they are not given in intuition. In any case the Kantian conception of the *noumena* is the most vulnerable angle of his theory that may give consistency to his system of thought but

³⁶⁵ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Phenomena and Noumena, p. 266.

inadequate as an explanation of the truth we are seeking as a relation between our cognition and the object of the cognition.

However, the Kantian conception of the *noumena*, while being a fertile angle of critical attacks, is also an opening for future research perspectives in an era of awareness of the complexity of the reality. If there is anything positive about the Kantian conception of the noumenon as unknowable, then it has to do with the realisation that our modes of knowledge can be limited or that the reality may not easily be given to us on a platter of gold. That means the quest for truth is a perpetual endeavour that cannot deliberately ignore or side line any aspects of reality. In this light, from the passages of Kant himself, we intend to show, in the next part of our work, that the Kantian conception of truth is full of lessons for our contemporary society in need of references, many of which references no longer meet the realities of our era and thus have to be shattered as we seek to give a new foundation to our knowledge. Like the Kantian critique of metaphysics which, at first sight, seems so destructive that rehabilitation seems impossible, our critical evaluation of the Kantian conception of truth, in the spirit of the author himself, is a destructive – constructive approach that aims at seeing which aspects of the author's theory are still relevant in our era.

The second part of our work has proven that the Kantian conception of truth has limitations when examined from the angle of German idealism some of whose authors took his views to their logical end in absolute idealism similar to the Berkelerian idealism that Kant wanted to avoid; then we have shown that the Kantian conception is far from meeting the needs of the problematic 'post – truth' era of postmodernity but also and above all that the Kantian conception of the *noumena*, though consistent with his theory, completely dissatisfies the curiosity of the mind of a contemporary knowledge – seeker who is more interested in exploring the unused powers of the mind than on setting limits on the mind, and thus also exploring the hidden or unknown aspects of the object than accepting to live in the fatalism of the unknowable. Some of the elements of the contemporary debate on the legacy of Kant have already been mentioned in the course of our critical evaluation. The third part of our work, then, puts the Kantian legacy to test in our contemporary era not with the aim of criticising but with the aim of showing that in one way or the other, a contemporary theory of knowledge can use Kant as a take-off point as the Kantian destination is full of contradictions some of which give us the chance to contextualise the views of Kant in our era. It is only when an uncompromising critique has been done about an author's views that we can know what to take and what to discard in our era.

THIRD PART

KANT'S THEORY OF TRUTH AND US

INTRODUCTION

Adapting a philosophical theory set in the 18th century to the epistemological needs of the 21st century may sound anachronistic. Yet, since philosophers use the ideas of other philosophers adapting them to the needs of their own era, the history of philosophy becomes a continuum of continuous and discontinuous theories that shift the paradigm towards more adequate explanations of the reality. Of course, the acquisition of knowledge does not imply that the object can be known without the mind or that the mind can exist without knowing objects. Sensibility and understanding as faculties put us in a permanent quest for truth even if such a quest is just a mere awareness of inner states and external states of objects. This means that the adequacy of a theory is judged from its proximity with the reality it sets out to explain. In this continuity and discontinuity of explanatory models, philosophers make use of the views of other philosophers before them as they seek to adapt their explanations to the reality so that the truth can emerge. The second part of our work already makes mention of some subjective and objective conditions of our contemporary era that may make Kant's theory of knowledge obsolete. In this part of our work, then, we have to prove that, despite the seemingly ravaging critique of the Kantian system of philosophy, many elements of the Kantian theory of knowledge still find application in our era at least as the beginning of the solution to those age – old problems that need new solutions.

The task of adapting an age – old theory to contemporary problems is never easy given that the truth is not an instantaneous achievement but a relation of cognition to object which is operational and dynamic and thus requires alertness to be able to meet up with the trends of explanatory models. If the trend is not just about fashionable theories, then it has to bear the marks of the problems of the time, and the trend is that of complexity and need for pluralism and openness to which a contemporary theorist of knowledge cannot be indifferent. Though the task of adapting the views of an author of the past to contemporary problems is difficult, it is absolutely necessary. According to Hans - Georg Gadamer, “The author's meaning can be divined directly from his text. The interpreter is absolutely contemporaneous with his author. This is the triumph of philological method, understanding the mind of the past as present, the strange as familiar.”³⁶⁶ To make the views of Kant contemporaneous, we need to state problems faced today and how Kant either solves the problems in his theory or at least provides the beginning of a solution to the problems stated. In this way, the third part

³⁶⁶ Hans - Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, London, New York, Nel Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 1975, p. 242.

of our work proves that we can move from the Kantian Copernican revolution to another revolution in a subject – based object – based theory of knowledge.

If Kant was not satisfied with the way the students of nature wanted the mind to conform to objects, and so came up with a revolutionary approach that had to make things conform to the mind, the contemporary problem of complexity necessitates another revolution that will put the subject and the object at the kind of relationship that can accommodate plurality without unnecessary reconciliatory attempts as the theories and approaches may be so distinct that a reconciliation would be pointless and inadaptable to the reality we seek to explain. To what extent does the subject – object – based approach, making use of Kantism, go beyond Kantism in a way as to accommodate the complexity of the reality? This preoccupation takes us to the depths of a positive interpretation of the loose ends of the Kantian theory of knowledge. Taking Kant to our century through his philosophy is a task that requires diligence to avoid arbitrariness. A reading of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is an encounter with a text that has to be familiarised with contemporary realities. As Gadamer puts it, “[...] every encounter with a text is an encounter of the spirit with itself. Every text is strange enough to present a problem, and yet familiar enough to be fundamentally intelligible even when we know nothing about it except that it is text, writing, an expression of mind.”³⁶⁷ The familiarity of the mind of Kant with ours can be through the problems which are perennial in philosophy. It is at the level of the solutions that we find a way that is midway between what Kant proposes and what contemporary complexity requires which has an undertone of anarchy that needs to be kept within the limits of an acceptable science.

Firstly, we have to prove that the Kantian transition from speculative to practical reason has lessons for our era, the lesson of restitution of the transcendental ideas as beings of reason whose epistemological value become a possibility in the contemporary era. Apart from the role of the ideas of pure reason in morality and by extrapolation in religion (whose moral foundation is not always respected in contemporary visible churches), the ideas of pure reason correspond to one loose end in the Kantian theory which ceases to be a limitation and becomes an epistemological asset when the complexity of the reality is admitted. The second task is to show that contemporary science has retained the metaphysical foundation that Kant proposed, another point used to show that the Kantian critique of metaphysics is more of a quest for a less dogmatic form of metaphysics than a desire to completely shatter the

³⁶⁷ *Idem.*

foundations of metaphysics. The third task is to, moving from the first two, lay the foundation for a subject - object - based theory of knowledge which takes into account subjective realities (relating to the subject) and objective realities (relating to the object) such that if there is any concept in the subject which corresponds to no intuition, it should not be discarded; and if there is anything in the object that is either not given or given and not conceptualised, it will not be discarded as non – knowledge. The various conceptual steps in the third part of our work are geared toward the conditions of possibility of a subject – based object – based theory of knowledge.

Is the subject - object - based theory of knowledge adapted to the realities of our era? How Kantian is such a theory? The contemporary debate on epistemology relates to Kant in such a way as to go beyond his theory through points that Kant himself identifies in the passages of his book on focus in this work. This part of our work makes use of such passages of Kant as loose ends that can be used as proof that Kant anticipated the complexity that is giving rise to the choice of plurality as an adequate approach to master the reality. The contemporary debate revolves around two conceptual axes: firstly, the angle of conceptualisation which avoids the empty concepts that lack intuition because they are given content such that what we perceive corresponds to something out there which is represented in the concept as Jonathan Cohen explains:

Many writers have thought that the best way to understand how perception justifies belief is by attributing content to perceptual states – thus, for example, my belief that there is a coffee cup on the desk would receive its justification from being appropriately related to a perceptual state with the very same content (that there is a coffee cup on the desk). But (a suitably generalized version of) this picture threatens to impose high cognitive demands on perception: it seems to require that our perceptual contents, in order to play any justificatory role, must be fully conceptualizable [...].³⁶⁸

Viewed from this angle, the Berkeleyian idealism of perception as the only proof of existence of objects and that of Kant as correspondence between concepts and objects fit squarely in one angle of the contemporary debate. From this angle of the debate, it would be difficult to prove any existence beyond perception and all our beliefs would be justified by the content given to perception as the concept finds a perfect correspondence in the object.

On the other hand, the second angle, which is more controversial, sets the ball rolling for a subject – based object – based theory of knowledge that makes use of admitted loose

³⁶⁸Jonathan Cohen, in Brian P. McLaughlin and Jonathan Cohen (ed.), *Contemporary Debates on the Philosophy of Mind*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007, Introduction, p. XV.

ends in the Kantian theory to adapt his views to contemporary needs. This is the angle of the nonconceptualized objects of intuition. If from the first angle, concepts are used as representations of real things perceived, then from the second angle, real things are given in intuition, but not conceptualised. This is the thesis of nonconceptualised content. Jonathan Cohen highlights the controversial second angle of interpretation of Kant's theory of knowledge:

Some philosophers of mind have maintained that the best response [...] is to credit perceptual states with a special kind of "non-conceptual content" – content whose tokening is both (i) suited to justify the conceptual content of beliefs, and (ii) not dependent on sophisticated conceptual capacities of the perceiver. The problem for theorists sympathetic to this move is to provide an informative characterization of this hypothesized non-conceptual content, and then to give reasons for believing there is any mental content satisfying that characterization.³⁶⁹

Proving that there is nonconceptual content is a task that may meet the needs of our era of complexity even if it is carried out as a condition of possibility of a theory that is more adequate in taking into account the multifaceted nature of reality, seeking the truth in unity only as an angle of plurality. Such is the preoccupation of our era; such is the preoccupation of the third part of our work that meanders between two conceptual loose ends: the possibility of nonconceptual content and the possibility of epistemologically useful ideas of pure reason that do not need to fail in the speculative use of reason in order to be successful as the foundation or object of morality.

³⁶⁹ *Idem.*

SEVENTH CHAPTER

FROM SPECULATIVE TO PRACTICAL REASON: LESSONS FOR THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Considered original by some and a limitation by others, the Kantian transition from speculative to practical reason has lessons for the contemporary theorist of knowledge meandering between epistemology, metaphysics, morality and religion. The purely epistemological goals of speculative reason are only met through the categories which find application in the world of experience from where they are not derived. The ideas of pure reason, also known as transcendental ideas, like God, freedom and the immortality of the soul, play a regulative role in orienting the understanding toward the highest level of unity that is unconditioned by empirical causes. But such a level of unity is no longer warranted by experience which is the criterion for its validity, a relation to an object, to give rise to knowledge. Given the contemporary realization of the complexity of reality and given that we need a subject – based object – based theory of knowledge to take into account aspects of reality that may not fall within the canons of the *a priori* plan of the mind, there is need to reconstitute the transcendental ideas not only for the goals of morality but also and above all for the goals of the contemporary knowledge – seeker who can no longer ignore approaches and aspects of reality that do not respect the *a priori* plan of the mind. It is a step to opening up to the hidden facets of reality that reason alone and experience alone have failed to demystify.

The first step is to prove that from speculative to practical reason, the contemporary society has to make use of the rehabilitated transcendental ideas to grasp those aspects of reality that fail to meet up with the requirements of intuition. The status of the nonconceptual objects of intuition is examined in the next chapter of our work. In this chapter, we have to prove that if some objects of intuition are not conceptualized, then some concepts of pure reason may not correspond to any intuition and will still maintain a useful status in a contemporary theory of knowledge. The second step is to prove that the Kantian transition from speculative to practical reason implies that we should expand the field of truth to areas where it is useful for us in what we can know and what we should do. Beyond the need for systematic unity of major branches of philosophy, Kant left for us a lesson of what we can know, how what we cannot know becomes useful in how we have to act thus expanding the realm of truth from metaphysical epistemology to other areas in dire need of attention in the contemporary area. The third step is to prove that a contemporary theory of knowledge can

no longer be indifferent to the norms of the society of the subject because such norms take him above subjective grounds to the level of a being in a community such that, even if his theory of knowledge is an individual project, it cannot deliberately ignore the social milieu of the subject that has to know the object.

Since “The sole objects of a practical reason are, therefore, those of the good and the evil. For by the first one means a necessary object of our power of desire, by the second, of our power of loathing, but both according to a principle of reason”³⁷⁰ a contemporary theory of knowledge cannot ignore the demands of the norms of the society of the knowledge – seeker. The truth, to Kant, then moves from metaphysical epistemology to other fields in which the subject must be influenced implicitly or explicitly in his conception of truth. In this way, the transcendental ideas will no longer be only the products of an idle reason in a vain game of transcendental concepts but a product of productive reason constructing the truth within the framework of the societal norms of the subject which do not destroy the universal subjective faculties that unite all knowledge – seekers in the quest for truth. Under which conditions are transcendental ideas useful in the construction of a contemporary theory of knowledge? If the ideas of pure reason are not just vain as speculative reason proves since they do not meet up with the requirements of experience, then they can be useful when the nature of reality is such that we cannot ignore any aspects of our faculties nor any aspects of the object that may not respect the *a priori* canons of our mind.

Given that the subject has to be considered beyond the universalizing innate faculties that give *a priori* rules for conditioning experience, there is need to consider those norms of the milieu of the object that participate in the construction of truth. Given the complexity and the difference in norms which do not destroy what is common in all humans as faculties that give rise to *a priori* universality, a theory of knowledge has to go for the source of those norms that cannot be ignored in any theory of knowledge in our era. Given that “the critique of practical reason as such has the obligation to keep the empirically conditioned reason from presuming to seek to provide, alone and exclusively, the determining basis of the will”³⁷¹ the complementarity of speculative and practical reason becomes a puzzling use of what does not succeed to give us knowledge to raise an ideal for what can become norms of actions in a society where the knowledge – seeker cannot be indifferent to what obtains in his community

³⁷⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, *op. cit.*, Book I, p. 78.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

as norms. Under what conditions should communal norms be influential to the contemporary knowledge – seeker in a theory of truth?

If the knowledge – seeker is an individual and lives in a community in quest of normative references, the ideal aimed at by such references participates in one way or the other in the construction of the reality especially through those concepts whose employment transcends experience but are called to regulate the understanding in the quest for truth about the same experience through unconditioned systematic unity of ideas. To what extent can transcendental ideas enrich our theory of truth? A theory of truth taking into account all facets of the object and the subject is open to such ideas whose dialectical character cannot be declared in advance in an arbitrary manner but whose relevance has to be judged in relation to the complexity of the reality that no longer requires simplistic approaches. The aim of this chapter is, thus, to prove that from the speculative to the practical employment of reason, there are lessons for the contemporary knowledge – seeker and such lessons cut across metaphysical epistemology, morality and ethics. Without losing sight of the truth in meandering through diverse methods, we intend to prove that the truth is more enriched than diminished by such methodological, conceptual, and objective meandering in a bid not to deliberately ignore any element that can contribute to elucidate the conceptual mystery of reality.

7.1: The Role of Transcendental Ideas

In the next chapter of our work, we hypothesize that a contemporary theory of knowledge that takes into account the nonconceptual objects of intuition is more enriching than one that focuses only on conceptualized objects of intuition. In this sub – section of our work, using passages from Kant’s books, we have to prove that a contemporary theory of knowledge should not ignore the ideas of pure reason or what Kant calls transcendental ideas whose application to the realm of experience is problematic in Kantian philosophy. The task here is to raise the case that even when Kant rejected transcendental ideas in the quest for knowledge because they do not relate to any objects of experience, he, nonetheless, highlighted the importance of such ideas not only as regulative principles to guide the understanding toward systematic unity but also and above all of the necessity of such ideas to exist on a world of their own in the human mind. In the reconciliatory spirit characteristic of the Kantian system of philosophy, it is not prudent to completely discard any element which may seem to have a counter – productive role to play in one aspect of the quest for the

puzzling reality. Thus, beyond the epistemological limitations of the ideas of pure reason, the contemporary theorist of knowledge has to read those intriguing passages of Kant rehabilitating the role of transcendental ideas in a possible theory of knowledge as a hypothesis whose possibility is pressing in our era of complexity.

While some authors, like Ryall, argue that the Kantian critique of metaphysics and the highlighting of experience as the criterion in relation to which concepts gain the status of knowledge is more of a tribute to science used by Kant as a step to return to his ‘idealistic’ views on which a possible theory of morality and religion take source, it is also possible to see Kant, like we do, as a thinker who seriously made appeals to science to honor mathematics and physics which he held in high esteem. Beyond the interpretative game of the intentions of Kant and the problematic primacy of the idealistic approach over the empiricist or the reverse in his theory, there is need to note that the transcendental ideas have an independent existence in the Kantian system such that, with or without the controversial link they can have with experience, they should be part of the human mind in such a way that a contemporary theory of knowledge facing the problem of complexity cannot deliberately ignore.

Ryall thinks that Kant had built up the ‘idealistic’ edifice before the ravaging critique that at first sight seems to seek to destroy the same edifice restituted afterwards in Kant’s works:

Working on the premise that man cannot live on speculation alone, it was Kant’s concern to argue the legitimacy of those religious or Supersensible interests of reason which were fatally undermined following his critical assaults on the rationalistic props that had formerly sustained them. But it is maintained here that Kant’s concern in this matter did not follow the discovery and implementation of his critical method—arrived at via an independent route perhaps—but instead preceded his discovery and contributed, from the beginning, to its ‘idealistic’ character.³⁷²

Speculative reason is limited by experience if at all it has to cognize objects as they are given in intuitions. Yet, despite the ravaging critique of metaphysics to restore the epistemological achievements of speculative reason working within the bounds of experience, Kant had to restore the transcendental ideas that are useless in the speculative use of reason to relate to objects of experience. But, as seen with Ryall, since man cannot live on speculation, the failures of transcendental ideas in the speculative use of reason does not imply that in a

³⁷²J. T. W. Ryall, *A Copernican Critique of Kantian Idealism*, Macmillan: Palgrave, 2017, Chapter 8, p. 227.

contemporary theory of epistemology they cannot acquire a status more than just that of constituting the object of a will determined by the moral law.

Even if Kant projected transcendental ideas to have only mediate objectivity as that which conditions the understanding towards unconditioned synthetic unity and the understanding conditions the objects of experience, such a mediate role may become impossible in a philosophical contemporary theory that should not treat such indirect objectivity as a liability. The challenge for us is to be able to adapt our theories to the changing fortunes of epistemological times. Such adjustments are not only necessary as an adaptation to complexity but as an anticipation of what Melissa McBay Merritt and Markos Valaris consider to be the intra – subjectivity and inter – subjectivity in coherence: “[the] capacity for reflection involves not just being able to ascribe particular judgements to oneself, but also the ability to be aware of the source of those judgements in oneself, and the readiness to adjust them in order to meet demands of intra-subjective and inter-subjective coherence.”³⁷³ Intra-subjective coherence is a test of the subject’s appropriate application of the innate modes of cognition to objects of intuition. The inter – subjective coherence has to do with the use of the modes of knowledge such that every rational being, through the categories, is able to attain the kind of objectivity that goes beyond particular subjects united by the common goal of conceptualizing the objects of intuition toward universal rules. Such adjustments necessitate a review of the place of the ideas of pure reason.

The intra – subjective coherence is required of concepts of the understanding and ideas of pure reason with different epistemological destinies, the former meant to relate to objects and the later meant to seek unity in ideas without a direct relation with objects. Our focus, here, is on the intra – subjective coherence which is required of the ideas of pure reason in ordering the understanding toward unconditioned and absolute unity. Our point is that such ideas are not epistemologically useless and a contemporary theory of epistemology must make use of them. Besides the mediate role they play in regulating the concepts of the understanding, our hypothesis for the contemporary society is that they can have an epistemological status of their own which will not have to be pushed to the background as Kant did from a first-hand reading of his theory. But we shall identify passages from Kant’s work in which, out of theoretical prudence, he does not eliminate the possibility of such ideas

³⁷³Melissa McBay Merritt and Markos Valaris, “Kant and Kantian Epistemology” in Stephen Hetherington (ed.), *Epistemology: The Key Thinkers*, New York and London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012, Chapter 7, p. 137.

playing a more important role in cognition than just that of ordering the understanding toward absolute unity.

We cannot assume that the ideas of pure reason, like God, the soul and freedom, are dialectical or involve an illusory use of reason in sophistry. That would be an aberration and a rather naïve interpretation of the Kantian theory of knowledge. The use we make of transcendental ideas can be dialectical but by themselves they are not essentially illusory:

*The ideas of pure reason can never be dialectical in themselves; any deceptive illusion to which they give occasion must be due solely to their misemployment. For they arise from the very nature of our reason; and it is impossible that this highest tribunal of all the rights and claims of speculation should itself be the source of deceptions and illusions. Presumably, therefore, the ideas have their own good and appropriate vocation as determined by the natural disposition of our reason.*³⁷⁴

Beyond the role the transcendental ideas play in the Kantian system of morality, we cannot ignore their role in epistemology. Even if they just regulate the understanding toward the kind of unity expected in the highest tribunal of human nature, that is enough to know that the understanding is not the highest human faculty. And if the understanding has to be the summit for knowledge whose objects must respect the empirical criterion of validity and objectivity, we have to seek a different kind of objectivity which is not epistemologically less important than the categories. This is to ensure that we do not interpret the views of Kant out of the context to lapse into scientism.

Even if Kant puts it as an assumption that the transcendental ideas have an important role in cognition, without making the role clear because such a role has to be overshadowed by the role of the concepts of the understanding which are applicable to experience, Kant prudently restitutes the indispensable character of these ideas in cognition even if they have to exist in a world of their own that does not relate with experience except mediately. Since the last chapter of our thesis hypothesizes on the epistemologically independent status of nonconceptual objects of intuition, we have to, here, hypothesize about the status of transcendental ideas or ideas that do not and cannot directly relate to any objects of experience. Obviously, then, reason is a faculty of the human mind considered by Kant to be the highest tribunal of human nature. Then understanding is the faculty of concepts that condition experience. We also have the faculty of sensibility whose nonconceptual representations of intuitions imply that not all objects respect the *a priori* plan of the

³⁷⁴ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Natural Dialectic of Human Reason, p. 549.

categories as will be demonstrated in the last chapter of our work. Here, we are dealing with ideas that do not relate to experience. Can we make judgment, for once and for all, about the epistemological status of such ideas? The answer cannot be in the affirmative given the prudence of Kant about their real epistemological status. Given the complexity of the reality in the contemporary era, an independent epistemological status of such ideas would not be an illogical conclusion.

With the situation of complexity in reality and complexity of the human mind, the construction of truth may just take a completely supra-sensible procedure or a completely nonconceptual procedure. We take side for the combination of both procedures. If both procedures have to complement each other, then, like empiricism and rationalism reconciled by Kant, we must first prove their independent existence which creates epistemological extremism that is counter – productive in the quest for knowledge but which, nevertheless, permits us to appreciate all the facets of the reality and all the facets of the human mind that may no longer respect conceptual plans that give us a grasp only of one aspect of the multifaceted reality. Even if ideas of pure reason do not relate to experience, they are not useless in epistemology as they regulate the understanding and make possible the goals of morality in a quest for truth that becomes inseparable from the norms of the culture of the knowledge – seeker. Without lapsing into dogmatic metaphysics and without making pretentious claims of mastery of an encompassing reality through transcendental ideas, we can hypothesize that their independent existence in the human mind, together with the lower faculty of sensibility, puts the understanding at a mid-position of meandering from one to the other in the attempt to link concepts to objects in mediate procedures that make use of the ideas of pure reason and immediate procedures that make use of intuitions.

The Kantian critique of reason gives us a very important lesson of a destructive – constructive approach to truth whereby we do not criticize to completely destroy but to reoriented toward more profitable goals while making use of what is rejected for something else. The transcendental ideas are only rejected to make a point for the indispensable role of experience in knowledge that must respect the canons of science. But as soon as the empirical link has been used to do away with illusions, we settle down to the use of reason as a regulator of the concepts that have to relate to the objects for truth to be obtained, without which the understanding itself can be in a position of random groping without references. The need for references in the use of the faculty of knowledge is important as it conditions the faculty itself toward the kind of intra – subjective coherence that becomes a condition for

future universal rules that define experience. A restituted role of the transcendental ideas in cognition gives us the lesson that truth requires a link with the objects but that some of the faculties and ideas that give rise to the appropriate relation between concept and object are not directly related to the objects themselves as they are inapplicable to the intuitions that represent objects through the *a priori* forms of time and space

What, then, becomes of the mock combats that supposed fanatics of the employment of the ideas of pure reason find themselves in? Such combats are replaced by a more collaborative exchange of ideas in an inter – subjective quest for coherence; such combats, if any, far from being vain, become platforms for an exposition of the multifaceted reality that has not been mastered through simplistic and extremist approaches that have hidden many aspects of the same reality that baffles us today. The use of the transcendental ideas, then, ceases to be a game of concepts because even if the concepts are empty because they lack a relation with corresponding intuitions that make categories rules of experience, the ideas of pure reason are a constant reminder to the understanding that the mind can be used at its highest level of conceptualization even if the conceptualization gives no room for a direct relationship with intuitions. A critique of reason will then circumscribe the empirical bounds of the understanding to respect the goals of a science without deliberately ignoring the highest tribunal of human nature that needs to be employed only by those who have understood the real goal of the critique which sets bounds for reason without ignoring the possibility of the capture of the most complex aspects of reality using the most complex faculty of the human mind.

From Kant, the contemporary knowledge – seeker needs to understand the need to set bounds within which the understanding has to work with concepts but such bounds should never imprison reason within the confines of a field which limits its possibilities. Even if reason does not have to be boundless, reason does not have to deliberately fail to take our thought toward the highest level of synthetic unconditioned unity. If the use of the understanding cannot be denied of some lower animals that seem to show signs of cognition, the use of pure reason in its highest level of unconditioned and absolute unity of ideas makes the human species unique in nature as the rational species capable of the highest level of abstraction some of which abstraction must not be epistemologically useless as it gives the understanding something to look up to as a reference for systematic unity. If the understanding cannot look up to itself for the reference of ultimate unity in concepts, then pure reason provides this reference without directly relating to intuitions in a way as to

deprive itself of the purity that makes it a reference of systematic unity to the understanding. The critique has not destroyed pure reason; the critique has given the understanding a place that could be overshadowed by reason in a dogmatic metaphysics that wrongly uses the unconditioned unity of the ideas of pure reason for cognition. After the dogmatic metaphysical illusions have been cleared away, the highest tribunal of human nature settles down to the daily business of providing a point of convergence for the concepts of the understanding toward the kind of synthesis that honors epistemology indirectly while preparing the groundwork for the object of morality.

A contemporary theory of knowledge that is against reason will likely miss out on many aspects of the reality. A contemporary theory of knowledge which does not circumscribe the bounds of reason will likely lapse into the illusions of dogmatic metaphysics that takes transcendental ideas for possible representations of intuitions. To avoid these two extremes, and respecting the prudence of Kant, it is important to avoid the sophistic illusions of either rejecting pure reason completely or using it with its ideas as the absolute truth. Kant has to rehabilitate the place of reason in its purity of ideas:

*The mob of sophists, however, raise against reason the usual cry of absurdities and contradictions, and though unable to penetrate to its innermost designs, they none the less inveigh against its prescriptions. Yet it is to the beneficent influences exercised by reason that they owe the possibility of their own self-assertiveness, and indeed that very culture which enables them to blame and to condemn what reason requires of them.*³⁷⁵

It is like a critique of the critique of pure reason to caution the reader not to take the limits of reason as an excuse to ignore the synthetic heights of pure reason that has to reign over the understanding; after all the reference point must be higher than that which depends on it for reference even if the reference point does not directly relate with the intuitions that the understanding is called to relate to through concepts.

The Kantian rehabilitation of the transcendental ideas provides lessons for us in the contemporary era where the truth is no longer necessarily found in closed systems but in open systems that do not open up to absolute anarchy. The role of the transcendental ideas in cognition puts to question the correspondence test of truth. Truth will, then, be more than just the correspondence of our cognition with the object. The Kantian correspondence test of truth will then be expanded to admit the truth which may not have the kind of correspondence

³⁷⁵ *Idem.*

expected between the concept and the object. After all there are concepts which participate in the truth without the necessary correspondence with the objects of intuition. The correspondence theory of truth defeats itself through the nonconceptual representations of intuition that will be tackled in the last chapter of our work and especially through the ideas of pure reason that have no direct correspondence with the representations of intuition but rather regulate the faculty of the understanding which deals with the representations of intuition. In this system of complex relationships of apparent conflicts and necessary complementarity, the truth is dissolved in social relations, in the norms of our society, in the intra – subjective and the inter – subjective systems of coherence that aims at all the facets of the object without admitting that any aspect of the object is unknowable at first sight.

The correspondence test of truth actually has inherent problems that put it to question as to what it corresponds to and if what it corresponds to is the same for every subject. The correspondence test of truth, by laying much emphasis on the intra-subjective faculties of representation creates problems of inter – subjectivity even if all rational beings are expected to have the same representational faculties that should give rise to universality and necessity in the correspondence of concepts to objects. According to Venturinha, with the correspondence test of truth, we may end up with as many truths as there are representational modes of correspondence:

So the problem with the correspondence thesis, from a multispecies perspective, is that one must admit as many correspondences—and consequently truths—as the existing cognitive modes. To put it in a logical notation, for all x , if x has the intellectual capacity to know (K), then x can have knowledge of things (T), not because its intellect directly agrees with those things but by virtue of x possessing an agreement structure (S) that enables it to agree with them.³⁷⁶

When the agreement structure takes priority over the intellect, we end up ignoring those concepts and those aspects of the intellect which do not agree with our agreement structure. Any faculty whose ideas cannot be applied within the framework of the correspondence of concept to object loses epistemological relevance and that, to us, is a liability in the quest for the multifaceted truth. The correspondence test of truth is self – defeating in the Kantian system because of the epistemological prudence with which Kant has to make room for nonconceptual intuitions and the ideas of pure reason that cannot be applied to any objects of intuition. That is why it is possible to criticize Kant on the basis of the subjectivist undertone

³⁷⁶Nuno Venturinha, *Description of Situations: An Essay in Contextualist Epistemology*, Switzerland: Springer, 2018, pp. 21 – 22.

of his theory of knowledge that uses innate modes of cognition to define the object. Even if all subjects have the same modes of cognition, the same subject can easily lapse into relativism if the regulating power of pure reason fails to propose an absolute or unconditioned unity of ideas to prevent the understanding from mingling with intuitions to the point of dissolving the categories in the kind of subjectivity that can only lead to relativism.

It is the possible subjectivist angle in the Kantian theory that leads Venturinha to project the Kantian system as one that does not give rise to absolute truth about the object of knowledge since we only have access to the angle of reality accessible to our representational faculties. As such, what we know is not all that can be known and the knowledge – seeker cannot be contented in such a perspectivist conception of reality:

[...] the correspondence theory leaves us in a problematic relativism since truth utterly depends on the angle through which things are contemplated. More complicated than that, the sole criterion for assessing truth in general is this very same angle and one cannot go beyond the horizon it opens. This is what the Kantian problem of the thing in itself is all about. We cannot know it for we are condemned to have appearances, phenomena of things that are supposed to exist but that are never effectively known. This is the reason why Kant says that the thing in itself is unknowable. For him, the objects surrounding us are only partially represented and we do not have full access to them. So in the end the correspondence thesis contradicts itself. Things seem to surpass our cognition of them, which is our cognition of simple aspects, not the whole.³⁷⁷

The possible problematic relativism in which we can find ourselves from the Kantian theory implies that the correspondence test of truth does not give us the means to know the absolute truth. The correspondence test of truth becomes a source of partial truths. From the Kantian angle, the correspondence is all we have yet the ideas of pure reason which do not fit in the system of correspondences can have an independent existence which defeats the correspondence test itself. The fact that the correspondence test of truth only gives us a perspectival conception of reality implies that the contemporary problem of complexity cannot be tackled within such a theoretical framework. Kant himself understood the worry and opened up the debate for posterity with the possibility of the epistemological role of transcendental ideas that may even do more than just regulating the understanding and having only a mediate relationship with the representations of intuition.

For things not to surpass our cognition in the contemporary era, that is, for our representational structures not to be rigid to make us contented in only some angles of reality,

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

we need to open up the debate on the role of the transcendental ideas and especially the place of the unknowable *Noumena* that become unknown because our representational faculties cannot represent them. Our representational faculties then condemn us to a perspectival view of reality that must be surpassed in the contemporary era through the necessary rehabilitation of the ideas of pure reason in a role that should go beyond impossibilities by exploring the mind and its possibilities as well as the object and its possibilities especially the nonconceptual objects of intuition. Since we cannot be contented in a correspondence structure that hides some aspects of reality, we have to admit that the reality is knowable but we are not able to represent it due to the limited scope of our representational faculties. Since Kant is honest enough to project the potential epistemological revalorization of the role of the transcendental ideas, it is up to us to maximize our chances by not working in conceptual representational prisons and by opening up without giving in to anarchy.

The Kantian predicament is at the same time a chance for the contemporary knowledge – seeker to go beyond the representational structure and try other possibilities on the part of the object and on the part of the mind. What Venturinha, then, considers as Kant's inability to reconcile the categorical and intuitive spheres of reality becomes an opening for the contemporary man to explore those avenues like transcendental ideas as possibilities of other epistemological revolutions that may or may not overturn the Kantian system but which refer to Kant for the projection of a possible role for transcendental ideas. That way, we can avoid the potential solipsism inherent in the Kantian approach:

*Where in fact is the point of intersection between what I, closed in myself, represent and what the object, closed in itself, possesses to be represented? This is what Kant's transcendental schematism has unsuccessfully tried to solve by attempting to link two completely different spheres, a categorical one and an intuitive one. More than a relativistic position, we face the possibility of a solipsism.*³⁷⁸

To avoid situations whereby the quest for knowledge ends more in knowledge of the self than the object other than the self, a contemporary theory of knowledge must look at the object from all possible angles: from the transcendental ideas and what they can contribute to the construction of the object in thought, and from the angle of the object not given to us in intuition or given to us in intuition and not conceptualized. It is normal for a theory of knowledge to give us a new theory of the mind as the apparatus of cognition applicable to the

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

object. But while a theory of knowledge gives us knowledge of who we are and what we have as cognitive tool, the theory should also give us more about the object than just what our knowledge of ourselves has conditioned us to know. Besides, the self too can become an object given in intuition thereby making the knowledge of the self a perspectival cognition that has the same lapses as the knowledge of the other objects out of the self.

The apparent distinctness of intuitions and categories is not a liability as their reconciliation, though difficult, proves the multidimensional nature of reality that needs multidimensional faculties without any compromise. The distinctness of these two actually prove that intuitions can exist on their own in the human mind without any conceptualization and that the transcendental ideas can and do exist in the human mind without any immediate relation with representations of intuitions. Such relationships only reinforce the contemporary contention that the nature of the reality is no longer accessible through a simplistic approach. The lesson from Kant, here, is that by themselves the transcendental ideas are not dialectical and that is enough for us to consider Kant as the takeoff point for a theory that seeks to grasp complexity:

[...] the ideas of pure reason [...] become dialectical only through heedlessness and misapprehension. Pure reason is in fact occupied with nothing but itself. It can have no other vocation. For what is given to it does not consist in objects that have to be brought to the unity of the empirical concept, but in those modes of knowledge supplied by the understanding that require to be brought to the unity of the concept of reason that is, to unity of connection in conformity with a principle. The unity of reason is the unity of system; and this systematic unity does not serve objectively as a principle that extends the application of reason to objects, but subjectively as a maxim that extends its application to all possible empirical knowledge of objects. Nevertheless, since the systematic connection which reason can give to the empirical employment of the understanding not only furthers its extension, but also guarantees its correctness, the principle of such systematic unity is so far also objective, but in an indeterminate manner [...].³⁷⁹

For the correct application of the understanding to objects of intuition, pure reason must condition the understanding through principles. Pure reason is not in conflict with the understanding though metaphysicians of the dogmatic school can make such assumptions when they want pure reason to relate to objects of intuition. Yet, pure reason and its ideas ensure that through systematic unity of principles, the concepts of the understanding can become concepts of objects or at least the concepts through which objects become possible.

³⁷⁹ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Natural Dialectic of Human Reason, p. 556.

In this way, two distinct faculties can work together without interfering in each other's fields and without destroying each other.

For us, such a conception of reason is a chance for the transcendental ideas to use what Kant calls their 'indeterminate' objectivity at the heart of our possible knowledge of the *noumena* and the any other aspects of the object that reinforce the complexity that has escaped epistemologists working with simplistic approaches. The objectivity of the concepts of pure reason must not be in a relation that makes them conditions of experience. Pure reason does not determine the objects of experience but determines the understanding which in turn determines the objects of experience. Kant is actually returning to the ideas he rejected so as to highlight the place of experience in cognition. Having established the place of experience in cognition, the transcendental ideas are not proven to be useless in epistemology but to have a distinct existence of their own which makes them objective in an indeterminate manner and a potential source of the kind of truth that does not respect the intuitional criterion as a matter of necessity.

With Kant, and with us, we should note that objects must not be given absolutely as objects. The image of an object can be representation in the imagination through schematization:

There is a great difference between something being given to my reason as an object absolutely, or merely as an object in the idea. In the former case our concepts are employed to determine the object; in the latter case there is in fact only a schema for which no object, not even a hypothetical one, is directly given, and which only enables us to represent to ourselves other objects in an indirect manner, namely in their systematic unity, by means of their relation to this idea.³⁸⁰

If the categories are used to determine the objects of intuition, then the transcendental ideas of pure reason only help us to represent other objects only mediately through the regulatory influence it has on the understanding. The contemporary society cannot ignore the transcendental ideas in any theory of knowledge that does not intend to miss out on any aspect of reality.

To highlight the role of transcendental ideas in a theory of knowledge, Granström highlights the various types of concepts: our focus is on the 'beings of reason' which cannot exist while possible beings can exist, and their existence is a possibility. Concepts of possible

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 550.

things and beings of reason are ideal because they stand for ideas of things that do not exist or may not even exist. The ideas of pure reason need not refer to things that exist or that may even exist before playing a role as beings of epistemology through which other objects can be known:

Concepts normally refer to things: thus, the first division of concepts is according to the things they refer to. Some things actually exist, such as animals and trees. Other things have only possible existence, such as a building five feet higher than the highest building in the world. Moreover, things which have been actual, such as a mammoth or Socrates, are also called possible. Such things, possible or actual, are collectively called real beings—either because they are actual, because they can become actual, or because they have been actual. Yet another kind of being is that which is called a being of reason. Beings of reason cannot correspond to anything, i.e., they cannot have any object a parte rei, but exist only in the mind: “we say that these exist in the mind because the mind busies itself with them as kinds of being while it affirms or denies something about them”. Merely possible beings and beings of reason are collectively called ideal beings. Thus, an ideal being does not exist, whereas a being of reason cannot exist.³⁸¹

The categories are supposed to refer to real beings because either they condition objects as actual entities or objects can exist. The possibility of real existence of the objects ordered and conditioned by the categories make them different from the ideas of pure reason. But the ideas of pure reason retain the place of regulator of all objects through their regulation of the modes of representation of all that exists.

Using the idea of the triangle, Granström proves that we can have formal objectivity as inter – subjectivity which does not in any way mean that their object exists in concrete terms. It is in their closeness with mathematics that the ideas of pure reason find a place in the sciences at least at their foundation. The two senses given by Granström to objectivity imply that the ideas of pure reason have a place in epistemology:

Two senses of the word objective can be distinguished: the first and primary sense of the word is on the object side of the triangle; the second and derived sense is the opposite of subjective; it is derived because real things are not subjective. The second sense of the word objective is better described by the word transsubjective, and mathematics is objective in this second sense, but not in the first sense, since its objects are formal, i.e., mathematics does not have real being at the object vertex of the triangle.³⁸²

³⁸¹ Johan G. Granström, “Perennial Intuitionism”, in Juan Redmond, Olga Pombo Martins, Ángel Nepomuceno-Fernández (ed.), *Epistemology, Knowledge and the Impact of Interaction*, Switzerland: Springer, 2016, Part 1: The Dynamics of Knowledge, p. 10

³⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

The representation of a triangle in the mind is through what Kant calls *a priori* intuition when the mind gives an object to itself in the form of another idea not derived from intuition but with the possibility of a relationship with intuition through the schema not as objects as they exist concretely but all possible objects given as an image to the mind and the image can never really be perfectly copied in an object. Through such concepts, mathematics builds a system of apodictic synthetic *a priori* knowledge which is expected of a metaphysics that intends to become a science.

The challenge for contemporary knowledge – seekers is to prove that through the ideas of pure reason we can be able to get to a kind of level of knowledge that is synthetic but not derived from experience. We have proven that such knowledge is possible in the Kantian reformed version of metaphysics that respects the empirical criterion while maintaining its own right as the production of knowledge *a priori*. Such a system of knowledge will not have to refer to, or compete with, experience but will simply appeal to pure ideas that only attain their level of purity through the very fact that they are not derived from experience and are not even meant to be used to explain experience directly. It is in such levels of abstraction that pure reason remains the highest tribunal of the human mind that we cannot do without.

To restate the place of the being of reason, Granström thinks that it is a matter for us to make the beings well defined to the point that they become objective in the second sense as inter – subjective conceptions with which all rational beings unite thought with itself thereby regulating the unity of concepts with their objects. On the side of the object, we can only have the kind of objectivity that relates to concrete realities out of our minds. But at the level of intra – subjective coherence, we can acquire inter – subjective coherence when all rational beings are united by the same modes of knowledge that link concepts to objects. In this way, the closeness of ideas of pure reason to mathematics rescue them alongside intuitionism under the objectivity referred to in the second sense as inter – subjective coherence of modes of knowledge: “[...] all well-defined beings of reason are objective in the second sense because they are firmly founded in intelligible relations between concepts, or [...] in intelligible matter. The whole of mathematics and intuitionistic type theory serve as examples of this objectivity.”³⁸³ The whole realm of transcendental ideas becomes indispensable not to the objects directly but to the understanding. As for their independent existence, the ideas of pure reason need not work with the understanding before they can exist in their own right.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

The knowledge – seeker should not use them in the immediate sense as to think that they determine the objects of our intuition. The lesson for us is to keep the transcendental ideas where they belong in the highest tribunal of human thought, so pure that they cannot link with objects directly and yet so indispensable to the understanding that the categories will lose a reference point without them, and yet so independent of the understanding to the point that in their existence in their own right, they only become dialectical when misused. And since the contemporary theory of knowledge is not expected to misuse them, we have to admit their existence as the highest level of judgment of unity of our ideas through principles.

If the epistemological status of the ideas of pure reason can be put to question given their lack of immediate relation with the representations of intuition, their role in representing an ideal for practical reason is an issue that Kant thinks cannot be put to doubt. Yet the second part of our work established the problematic transition from speculative to practical reason which seems to be more of an arbitrary step toward systematic unity in the Kantian system of philosophy than a step necessitated by the coherent flow of ideas from the failures of speculative reason to the ideal goals of a will determined by moral laws in the practical use of reason. This transition helps us answer the essential questions of Kantian philosophy as to what we can know. We have proven that even if what we can know must be in view of determining a possible experience, there is nevertheless the possibility of an independent existence of beings of reason, ideas of pure reason or transcendental ideas which are not epistemologically useless. The next chapter of our work tests the epistemological relevance of nonconceptual intuitions in a possible contemporary theory of knowledge. Concerning what we are supposed to do, we need to expand the field of reason and thus the field of truth from the speculative to the practical since a contemporary theory of knowledge cannot be completely indifferent from the quest for norms in the communal existence of the knowledge – seeker with other subjects of knowledge. In this way, we can then know what to hope for in religion which is the building erected on a moral foundation, a building that is not as important as the foundation itself since the foundation can well exist even if the edifice is not erected on it.

Without completely ignoring religion and without taking the debate completely to the moral field, for the sake of completeness in our reading of the Kantian *Critique of Pure Reason*, the transition from the speculative to the practical use of reason entails that we expand the field of truth to areas where any illusions can be removed using the theory of knowledge built by Kant, and in this precise case, using the ideas which do not directly

condition objects but which directly provide an object for a will determined by moral laws. Our intention is not to expatiate on the Kantian system of morality; we have to show that something is missing; the missing link in our contemporary society as far as what is true is concerned. It is the unity of what we can know and what we can do with what we know. The expansion of the truth to the field of morality is full of lessons for the contemporary man in need of norms, some of which norms actually condition the subject of knowledge in the construction of his theory of knowledge. The expansion of truth is to see how those norms of the society of the subject of knowledge are constructed to the point of influencing the knowledge – seeker to build the truth as a product of an epistemology in search of norms conditioned by a culture.

7.2: Expanding the Field of Truth

The field of truth expands to the practical level of morality to unite the failures of speculative reason with the goals of practical reason. The transcendental idea of freedom, rejected by Kant in the theoretical quest of knowledge, now becomes a necessity for the practical or moral use of reason in need of a ground that commands all human beings without compulsion to abide by the moral law as a duty. The transition, at this level, sounds arbitrary as Kant does not adequately show how what is useless in epistemology must be a necessity in morality. With the justifications that for the sake of an action, a concept need not be objective as relating to an object, the use of the concept should just avoid contradiction in the theoretical framework of the transition from speculative to practical reason. Granting the transition to Kant, there are lessons for the human beings of our era when we consider that if the field of truth is not expanded to that society in the quest of norms, we shall not be able to understand the communal situation of the knowledge – seeker and the norms of a culture that necessarily has a role to play in intra – subjective and inter – subjective modes of knowledge.

Our aim, here, is to show that if we follow the Kantian expansion of truth from the speculative to the practical use of reason, we end up in a conception of a moral theory based on metaphysics in the same way that the Kantian theory of knowledge is based on metaphysics and we can, then, be able to clear away the illusions and misconceptions that lead to pseudo service of God in contemporary religious denominations or faiths for visible worship of God while ignoring the moral elements that are supposed to unite all rational beings in a true service of God by respecting moral laws as if they were divine commands from God who must now exist not as an object of knowledge but an object of a will

determined by moral laws. When such a will is determined by moral laws, the service of God becomes a moral service and the happiness promised by religion coincides with morality not as its goal but as a side effect of the unconditional respect of the moral law as a duty for the sake of the action itself and not for the sake of the reward it brings.

The contemporary subject of knowledge, then, has a lesson of the proper use of freedom without letting its dialectical use in speculative reason to make its use in morality contradictory. The involvement of freedom in morality is a necessity for Kant because a morally determined will is one that prescribes the law to itself and when we prescribe laws to ourselves, freedom is assumed because as rational beings, the source of the laws is in ourselves which links morality with freedom not as an object of knowledge but an assumption of practical reason for an independent determination of the will to respect moral precepts as a duty. Such moral precepts must be taken as divine commands in a future system of religion based on morality. We have to show that the contemporary human beings have missed out on the moral foundation of truth and have thus failed to respect the Kantian expansion of truth from the speculative to the practical use of reason.

The transcendental freedom, whose role in the acquisition of knowledge leads to an antinomy or conflict of reason with itself when it is assumed to be a reality of the chain of natural causes has a causality beyond experience but at the same time a fiction if the chain of causality is autonomous and self – sufficient, now has to be assumed as an *a priori* necessity with the will for the emergence of morality:

*If we grant that morality necessarily presupposes freedom (in the strictest sense) as a property of our will; if, that is to say, we grant that it yields practical principles original principles, proper to our reason as a priori data of reason, and that this would be absolutely impossible save on the assumption of freedom; and if at the same time we grant that speculative reason has proved that such freedom does not allow of being thought, then the former supposition that made on behalf of morality would have to give way to this other contention, the opposite of which involves a palpable contradiction. For since it is only on the assumption of freedom that the negation of morality contains any contradiction, freedom, and with it morality, would have to yield to the mechanism of nature.*³⁸⁴

If freedom is possible, then morality is possible. Freedom at the basis of morality is another means used by Kant to avoid basing moral laws on empirical principles that change with person, time and place. The empirical link of concepts, cherished in the quest for knowledge,

³⁸⁴ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Preface to the Second Edition, pp. 28 – 29.

now becomes a liability to morality as any practice of morality based on empirical laws will lead to the outright pursuit of selfish interest thereby destroying the reality of the categorical imperative which commands us as a matter of necessity to remain steadfast to moral laws not for the reward they bring but for the sake of the actions themselves which make us pleasing to God. God will, then, exist for the sake of morality and not morality for the sake of God. That is why an independent system of morality that does not give rise to religion can even lead to what we call an 'atheistic' ethical community proposed as a means to curb the conflicts and illusions in the visible modes of worship in contemporary denominational drama that makes a mockery of morality.

There is no knowledge of freedom as an object given in intuition. But there is an absolute necessity for morality to be based on freedom in such a way that morality without freedom will only lead to generalized cases of the hypothetical imperative where every action would be conditioned by the goal it attains and not for the sake of the action itself and this would destroy the rational or *a priori* basis of moral laws. For the sake of morality, freedom must be assumed such that, as a transcendental causality which does not depend on the chain of phenomenal causes, rational beings are able to stand above the desires of the material world that condition us to do evil by disrespecting the moral laws. The transition from speculative to practical reason gives us a chance to take the truth to another area where illusions are easily taken for reality. The restitution of the truth of freedom for the sake of morality shows that Kant never really moved an inch away from metaphysics despite the ravaging critique which is more of a reformulation of the methods and goals of metaphysics than anything else. The assumption of the reality of freedom not as an object of thought but as a reality of the human will, makes good the goals of the unconditional respect of laws of reason.

In the quest for knowledge through the speculative use of reason, freedom can hardly be proven to be part of the mechanism of nature; in fact transcendental freedom contradicts the mechanism of nature as an autonomous chain of causes that do not depend on anything outside the chain of causes for their causality. Bringing back the same freedom to serve as the foundation of the will so that practical principles can be respected for the sake of action bases morality on the same idealistic principles rejected in the speculative use of reason. The contemporary subject of knowledge, involved in the quest for norms in a culture that can, in one way or the other condition his theory of knowledge, should understand the Kantian assumption more as a means of rescuing a system that is ultimately idealistic but which

cannot ignore the empirical criterion of science and thus as a system of philosophy that seeks unity among disciplines so that the truth should not be an isolated product of one faculty or one approach but a unity of many approaches and many faculties and objects pursued by philosophy.

Such an expansion of the field of truth is highly welcome in our era of complexity such that the knowledge – seeker should never ignore the norms of his culture and the society he lives in. Kant tries to bring back to the earth the transcendental ideas that had been lifted to the highest tribunal of the mind and so far away from the human condition that one could doubt their practicability. As of now, it is clear that such ideas are lifted to the level they belong to so that they can clear the field of the truth in morality of all impurities brought about by the empirical realm which paradoxically is cherished as the criterion of truth in the speculative use of reason. The freedom, dialectically made an object of knowledge by a metaphysics void of a critique of reason, now does not need to be made an object of knowledge but the basis of the practical use of reason. Here, the contemporary knowledge – seeker needs norms that build an ideal for a practice that puts us above all corrupting empirical grounds even if such an empirical ground remains indispensable for truth in epistemology:

*Morality does not, indeed, require that freedom should be understood, but only that it should not contradict itself, and so should at least allow of being thought, and that as thus thought it should place no obstacle in the way of a free act (viewed in another relation) likewise conforming to the mechanism of nature. The doctrine of morality and the doctrine of nature may each, therefore, make good its position. This, however, is only possible in so far as criticism has previously established our unavoidable ignorance of things in themselves, and has limited all that we can theoretically know to mere appearances.*³⁸⁵

In the spirit of Kant, we have to read the transition from speculative to practical reason not as a contradiction but as a proof of the interdependence of the various branches of philosophy and the need for an inter – disciplinary and inter – subjective approach in a subject – based – object - based theory of knowledge. Rescuing freedom means rescuing the goals of the critique not to do away with reason but to know how to use it to give rise to the truth as a multifaceted relationship of objects of knowledge and subjects of knowledge that have to move beyond naïve subjectivity without assuming objectivity about things not given in

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

intuition, to a conception of an object as a perpetual construction in the socio – cultural milieu of the knowledge – seeker.

Through morality, we attain a unity of transcendental and empirical principles. It is the unity of reason with empirical grounds that it only determines mediately through the categories that it regulates. It is system of intertwined faculties, each at its own level, complementing one another in a system of intertwined objects some of which are given in intuition while others are given and not conceptualised and others, still, not given at all. What is conceived in the highest tribunal of the human mind has to serve to construct for us an ideal that our imperfect actions should aim at when they attain the perfection worthy of beings respecting moral laws as divine commands which make us pleasing to God and tie with the goals of happiness that is achieved as a side – effect of an action that was not originally done for the sake of the happiness but for the sake of the act itself. The *a priori* precepts of morality then give us a chance to reconcile the desires and inclinations of the empirical world with supra – sensible goals that take us above all bestial temptations:

[...] although the highest principles and fundamental concepts of morality are a priori knowledge, they have no place in transcendental philosophy, because, although they do not lay at the foundation of their precepts the concepts of pleasure and pain, of the desires and inclinations, etc., all of which are of empirical origin, yet in the construction of a system of pure morality these empirical concepts must necessarily be brought into the concept of duty, as representing either a hindrance, which we have to overcome, or an allurements, which must not be made into a motive. Transcendental philosophy is therefore a philosophy of pure and merely speculative reason. All that is practical, so far as it contains motives, relates to feelings, and these belong to the empirical sources of knowledge.³⁸⁶

The relationship of inclinations with the transcendental ideas is linked to duty as hindrance. In this way, all the goals of a morally – determined will consist in making the rational being stand above all the hindrances brought about by the bodily desires and inclinations that may condition human behavior towards selfish goals that destroy the universality of the categorical imperative.

The practical use of reason aims at idealistic goals set by the speculative failures of reason in the dogmatic metaphysics that takes beings of reason for real objects thereby derailing us from the real role of these beings of reason which is to be the basis of a will determined by moral laws in the case of freedom and the object of a morally – determined

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. 61.

will in the case of God and the immortality of the soul. In the same way that metaphysics returns to the sciences as their foundation, metaphysics gets a place in morality as its foundation through freedom and as its object through God and the immortality of the soul, the latter ideas constituting the conditions of possibility of a system of religion based on the respect of moral laws as divine commands. The main lesson for the truth – seeker, then, is that experience is very important to speculative reason in the quest for knowledge but the same experience becomes a liability to practical reason in the quest for the highest good of morality. And on the highest good of morality as an ideal that stands above all empirically – determined grounds, Kant now returns to the idealism of Plato which is considered ‘mystical’ in the quest for knowledge but which now becomes indispensable in the pursuit of moral goals.

In the quest for knowledge, we cannot do away with metaphysics but we need to know the metaphysics we are using in the quest for knowledge, a metaphysics preceded by a critique of reason using reason. The Kantian rehabilitation of many aspects of the idealism that he originally sets out to criticize teaches us a lesson of method highlighted in the critique: the critique is a step toward reorienting our tools of knowledge toward more profitable goals without doing away with any elements of reason and without neglecting any aspects of the object. In this way, Plato returns to the heart of the Kantian system of philosophy for the sake of morality, and for us, for the sake of a conception of truth that reconciles philosophical theories to complement each other and grasp complexity:

If we set aside the exaggerations in Plato's methods of expression, the philosopher's spiritual flight from the ectypal mode of reflecting upon the physical world-order to the architectonic ordering of it according to ends, that is, according to ideas, is an enterprise which calls for respect and imitation. It is, however, in regard to the principles of morality, legislation, and religion, where the experience, in this case of the good, is itself made possible only by the ideas incomplete as their empirical expression must always remain that Plato's teaching exhibits its quite peculiar merits. When it fails to obtain recognition, this is due to its having been judged in accordance with precisely those empirical rules, the invalidity of which, regarded as principles, it has itself demonstrated. For whereas, so far as nature is concerned, experience supplies the rules and is the source of truth, in respect of the moral laws it is, alas, the mother of illusion! Nothing is more reprehensible than to derive the laws prescribing what ought to be done from what is done, or to impose upon them the limits by which the latter is circumscribed.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Ideas in General, p. 313.

The exaggerations of Plato refer to his complete sidelining of the empirical world as one of falsehood and the Kantian critique of reason rejects such a 'mystical' 'conception of truth. Though we can doubt if Kant is not using the same exaggerated 'mystical' insight of Plato's idealism to establish the transition from speculative to practical reason, it is clear that Kant simply wants to separate the various faculties of the mind so as to assign a specific role to each of them. This is a lesson of systematic unity for the contemporary knowledge – seeker who cannot criticize with a destructive aim in view; every criticism is aimed at reconciling philosophical positions that are most useful to us when they complement each other.

Experience is the source of truth in epistemology only as long as the *a priori* concepts of the understanding relate with intuitions. Like Plato, then, Kant has to acknowledge the corruptible and corrupting influence of experience in the practice of morality thereby returning to the age-old goal of idealism: that of founding truth on pure or *a priori* principles that would not have to change with person, time and place which are the changing fortunes of experience. We do not have to completely reject idealism to found a theory of knowledge where the truth is conditioned by whether or not the concepts can relate to experience and at the same time another system of idealism that is not far from the goals of the exaggerations that Kant intends to avoid whereby the same experience is now a source of falsehood that can mislead us to fulfill selfish desires that push us far away from the idealistic foundation and goals of morality.

The transition from speculative to practical reason thus leads us to the ultimate goals and the ultimate unity of philosophy. From the first question of the Kantian trilogy, we learn that we can only have knowledge within the bounds of experience. In this way, the realm beyond experience does not have possible objects of knowledge but beings of reason that cannot be represented in intuition. From the second question of the Kantian trilogy, we learn that we can only act by making use of freedom which is unknowable but assumed as the basis of actions that would not be conditioned by any empirical grounds. Here, we reject the empirical grounds which constitute the source of truth in speculative reason because the moral laws must have the kind of purity that put us above all hypothetical rules of egoism. And from the third question of the Kantian trilogy, we can hope for eternal happiness whereby the object of religion coincide with that of a will determined by moral laws treated as divine commands such that the happiness will not be a systematic fulfillment of sensible desires but an intelligible happiness that depends on the steadfastness to the moral law which commands without any ends in view for they are commands for us to respect duty for its own

sake and not for what we can gain from such respect of duty. The Kantian trilogy of what we can know, what we can do and what we can hope for are thus made to culminate with the synthetic unity of philosophy through systems of metaphysical epistemology, metaphysics of ethics and a religion based on the same metaphysics of ethics since the respect of moral laws as divine commands become the condition of possibility of an ethical community of rational beings who have chosen the service of God as a moral service which is not conditioned by the expectation of reward nor the fear of punishment.

Kant had never really wanted to move too far away from idealism. The glorification of experience in the speculative use of reason is as a show of respect for the empirical sciences that continue to mold our contemporary civilization through the scientific genius by which man dominates and transforms nature. The three philosophical questions of Kant, thus posed, give us an opening to make the search for truth a subjective – objective approach that uses intra-subjective and inter – subjective coherence to cut across fields that reflect the various aspects of reality:

1. *What can I know?*
2. *What ought I to do?*
3. *What may I hope?*³⁸⁸

The fourth question on the meaning of man treated in Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* considers the human being from many sensible and intelligible perspectives but the most important angle is that stated by Kant in the following words: "We cannot think of any other form that would be suitable for a rational being than that of a human being."³⁸⁹ The contemporary subject of knowledge should not read Kant from a closed or tight angle of perspectival conceptions of the reality. The contemporary subject of knowledge must situate the views of Kant within the context of his time which fit very well in the context of our time not only in the need for unity in philosophy but also and above all in the understanding of the use that Kant makes of the failures of speculative reason in practical reason to build a system of morality that is a continuation of the truth in other areas of philosophy.

In the systematic interpretation of the Kantian system of epistemology, it is important to note that what we cannot know helps us build the truth in morality and so the truth is more

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, The Canon of Pure Reason, p. 635.

³⁸⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Robert B. Loudon, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, Anthropological Didactic, p. 71.

of a process than an instantaneous achievement. After all the objects of knowledge are out there whether we end up knowing them or not. The moment we try to know them is the moment when we have to establish relationships and representations because what the objects give to us and what we represent about the object may not be the same; we can only say that the representation must be as accurate and precise as possible in the way it relates to the object. The kind of practical precepts that constitute the norms of the society of the moral agent must aim at the kind of universality that is worthy of rational beings who can reject contingent determinations of experience to give the same kind of rules to themselves. The purity of the will inevitably links it to the purity of transcendental freedom which is causality whose effects determine the phenomenal chain of causes without being affected by the chain of empirical causes:

The objective reality of a pure will or—what is the same thing—of a pure practical reason is, in the moral law, given a priori through a fact, as it were; for so we may call a determination of the will which is unavoidable, even though it does not rest on empirical principles. The concept of a will, however, already contains the concept of causality, and hence the concept of a pure will already contains the concept of a causality with freedom—i.e., a causality that is not determinable according to laws of nature and consequently not capable of any empirical intuition as proof of its reality, but that nonetheless completely justifies its objective reality a priori in the pure practical law, though [...] for the sake not of the theoretical but merely of the practical use of reason.³⁹⁰

The transcendental causality of freedom is a perfect reflection of the purity of the will. This means that the moral law makes the will autonomous in a transcendental manner because it can be the cause of the will's steadfastness to duty. In this sense, the will and freedom, in their transcendental causality are the same. The antinomy of pure reason with regards to freedom abstracts the concept of all natural laws so as to attain the kind of purity that can condition our actions without itself being conditioned by any empirical laws.

Any subject of knowledge, then, must try to reconcile contradictory systems of thought and put the truth in a dynamic and operative function whereby it becomes a perpetual construction that goes through mutations based on the moments during which hidden aspects of the objects are revealed and the moment when the schema establishes the relationship of representations in apperception such that the concept should condition the object, without forgetting the nonconceptual intuitions, and the transcendental ideas which in the speculative

³⁹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason, op. cit.*, Principles of Pure Practical Reason, p. 75.

use of reason lack objects but become possible foundation and object of morally – determined will:

[...] the concept of an empirically unconditioned causality, although theoretically empty (without an intuition that fits it), is nonetheless always possible and refers to an undetermined object; and in place of this [lacking signification] the concept is nonetheless given signification in the moral law and consequently in a practical reference. Therefore the concept, even though I do not have an intuition that would determine its objective theoretical reality for it, does nonetheless have actual application that can be exhibited in concreto in attitudes or maxims, i.e., it has practical reality that can be indicated; and this is indeed sufficient to justify it even with regard to noumena.³⁹¹

The restitution of the transcendental ideas in morality also implies that the nouemana are not as unknowable as Kant says in his speculative theory of knowledge complemented by the transition to the practical use of reason. If what is theoretically unknowable becomes possible in morality, it means the noumena, too, as an aspect of the object that is not given in intuition and so cannot be represented through concepts, or given in intuition and not represented in concepts (as we shall prove in the next subsection of our work through the nonconceptual objects) , could also be an aspect of the object that can be knowable or at least possible in morality since Kant thinks that the reality of transcendental freedom can be justified in relation to the noumena. The unknowable can become possible in practical principles for doing what we ought to do.

Our view, as developed in the next subsection of our work, is that if the reality of freedom and other transcendental ideas can become a possibility for the sake of morality, then knowledge of the noumenon can also become a possibility as the contemporary subject of knowledge battles with the Kantian concessions about the nonconceptual objects of intuition. In *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, Kant opens up the possibility of unveiling epistemological mysteries in morality with the following words: “Only that which in a practical reference one can indeed quite readily understand and gain insight into, but which from a theoretical point of view (for determining the nature of the object in itself) surpasses all our concepts, is a mystery (in one reference) and can yet (in another) be revealed.”³⁹² This is a real chance for us to reflect further on other possibilities that could result from the Kantian concessions after what seems to be a fatalistic theory of knowledge. That is why a

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

³⁹² Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 2009, Third Piece, p. 158.

contemporary theory of knowledge must take into account the position that an understanding of nature in one way or the other, Kantian and non – Kantian, opens up to a normative reflection on the society that the subjects of knowledge are called to serve through theories and principles of action. Whether we look at the debate from the angle of speculative principles determining practical principles or practical principles as a necessary consequence of an idealistic conception of theoretical principles, the knowledge – seeker can no longer close himself up within the confines of rigid systems that prevent him from grasping the bigger picture from where the complexity of the reality can best be tackled.

The ultimate lesson, from the expansion of the field of the truth, is never to take the critique as a destructive procedure. At most it be considered a destructive – constructive procedure which limits the role of transcendental ideas in cognition so as to put them in a level of purity that makes them a possible foundation and possible objects of a will determined by moral laws. The critique actually clears the conceptual ground for transcendental ideas to be freed for practical purposes and such practical purposes are part and parcel of the process of the construction of the truth:

So far, therefore, as our Critique limits speculative reason, it is indeed negative] but since it thereby removes an obstacle which stands in the way of the employment of practical reason, nay threatens to destroy it, it has in reality a positive and very important use. At least this is so, immediately we are convinced that there is an absolutely necessary practical employment of pure reason the moral in which it inevitably goes beyond the limits of sensibility. Though [practical] reason, in thus proceeding, requires no assistance from speculative reason, it must yet be assured against its opposition, that reason may not be brought into conflict with itself.³⁹³

Like in the relationship between ideas of pure reason and intuitions, practical reason, by itself does not need that speculative reason should fail before the transcendental ideas can be raised to the level of purity that makes them useful in morality. The transcendental ideas exist in an independent realm of their own and in their purity as regulators of the understanding toward systematic unity. Yet, in a negative way, the use of speculative reason in experience as the source of truth at that level implies that the failure of speculative reason gives more highlight to the transcendental position of the ideas of pure reason. And it is the purity of this transcendental position that makes them useful in morality. The contemporary subject of knowledge should consider such a relationship as coexistence of independent faculties whose activities end up making them complementary as the failure of one becomes a foundation and

³⁹³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason, op. cit.*, Preface to the Second Edition, pp. 26 – 27.

object for the other. Yet one does not need to fail before the other one can have a foundation and an object.

However, and of great importance for the contemporary society is the same kind of relationship that the expansion of truth gives rise to between morality and religion. In these two fields, the theoretical failures of reason, made use of by practical reason, become a chance for us to clear the path to truth of all illusions in the field of religion where the purity of the transcendental ideas, reflected in the moral law they give a foundation and an object to, has not always been reflected in the earthly or visible churches which should not just be buildings for exhibitions but opportunities to quicken the moral dispositions in us. It is the contemporary failure of morality in what is considered religion today that has pushed us to the conclusion that an ‘atheistic’ ethical community can help us get rid of illusions that make mockery of the moral foundation of a true religion in the Kantian conception of the term.

7.3: Constructing the Truth in the Transition from Speculative to Practical Reason

God’s kingdom on earth is a moral kingdom. This means that if earthly religious denominations prevent us from attaining the goals of an ethical community, since the moral foundation is more important than the religion it gives rise to, and that it must not give rise to, our hypothesis here is that of an ‘atheistic’ ethical community where the practice of morality takes precedence and domination over the exhibitions in earthly religion, most of which exhibitions have not helped to nurse the seed of morality in us and worse of all, most of which may even be working contrary to the demands of the moral seed that they are supposed to nurse in us. We are conditioned by the dismal observation of what today has become a theatrical show of differences in denominational modes of worship that have derailed the now seemingly impossible advent of an ethical community by trying to divide them through earthly modes of worship instead of uniting them through the elements of morality that make rational beings pleasing to God when they treat moral laws as divine commands.

The use of the term ‘atheist’ should not lead to confusion as Kant proves the existence of God through the moral laws in us that have to be treated as divine commands. An insight into the Kantian moral proof of the existence of God brings to light the point that the practice of morality, without fear of punishment and without expectation of the rewards promised by earthly religion, actually makes us pleasing to God whose service is that of morality. But when the contemporary man decides to serve God through denominational differences which

either do not quicken the moral dispositions in us or pursue goals contrary to the quickening of the moral dispositions, our 'atheist' is a contemporary man who is disappointed in the illusions and religious madness exhibited in visible churches and thus goes for the invisible church that unites all rational beings in a community of people who respect the moral law as a duty for its own sake and thus become pleasing to God without even aiming at God through their actions.

We give to 'atheism' an unusual meaning that focuses on the rejection of the kind of theism practiced today in earthly churches. It is not a decision to prove that God does not exist. It is an expression of disappointment in theism that has ignored the moral foundation of a true religion. Our contention is that, from Kant, whereas the moral foundation can subsist even if the religious edifice is not erected on it, religion cannot be possible in the absence of the moral foundation. Thus, while an atheist can be a moralist and thus pleasing to God, there is no way that a theist can be pleasing to God without the indispensable moral foundation. Our atheist, in his frustration with the contemporary manifestation of theism, chooses to be an atheist in the negative sense of the term as highlighted by Antony Flew:

The word 'atheism', however, has in this contention to be construed unusually. Whereas nowadays the usual meaning of 'atheist' in English is "someone who asserts that there is no such being as God," I want the word to be understood here much less positively. I want the originally Greek prefix "a" to be read in the same way in 'atheist' as it customarily is read in such other Greco-English words as "amoral," "atypical," and "asymmetrical." In this interpretation an atheist becomes: not someone who positively asserts the nonexistence of God; but someone who is simply not a theist.³⁹⁴

As a lesson from Kant who does not ignore any angle especially an angle of the subject or object that may put his theory in *aporia*, our conception of an atheistic ethical community is one in which people do the right thing without looking up to any rewards but the rewards become possible because doing the right thing without expecting rewards as per the precepts of morality inevitably makes us pleasing to God.

An atheist, in the sense we use it, is not someone who chooses to develop arguments for the nonexistence of God; he does not even develop arguments against the proofs of God's existence. Rather, he lives as if there were nothing like theism because his focus is to remain steadfast to the respect of moral laws as a duty. In this way the ethical community becomes a

³⁹⁴Antony Flew, "The Presumption of Atheism" in R. Douglas Geivett and Brendan Sweetman (ed.), *Contemporary Perspectives on Religious Epistemology*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 19 – 20.

group of individuals who are not expecting external rewards for their actions but are rather into what Kant calls a system of morality that rewards the moral agent in the action itself as a satisfaction of staying unconditionally respectful of the moral law despite the odds and temptations of the material world. Even if rational beings are weakened by the empirically – determined hypothetical imperatives, what experience conditions us to do, in morality, is now evil whereas what it gives to us, as representations in epistemology, leads to truth. Here, moral laws are treated with the sacredness and purity they deserve, something divine happens in us as we feel the presence of the creator of the universe. But our atheist is not concerned by that feeling because what it gives rise to in visible churches is drama of earthly worship that does not serve God the right way which is the moral way.

Morality becomes self – rewarding when the moral agent knows the truth about the transition from speculative to practical reason such that a moral will should be autonomous through the purity of the transcendental idea of freedom that conditions the will to respect the highest tribunal of human reason as the source of self – fulfilling moral laws: “[...] such a system of self-rewarding morality is only an idea, the carrying out of which rests on the condition that everyone does what he ought, that is, that all the actions of rational beings take place just as if they had proceeded from a supreme will that comprehends in itself, or under itself, all private wills.”³⁹⁵ When every rational being respects the moral law unconditionally, they feel the presence of God through the presence of the moral law. The speculative failures of speculative reason to make God an object of knowledge are made up for by the practical reason which makes God the object of a will determined by moral laws and hence moral laws are respected as if they were divine commands. With Kant, there is a perfect harmony between moral laws and divine commands for religion to emerge from morality. But our atheist is not interested in the religious edifice built on the moral foundation because contemporary faiths or denominations of divine worship have failed to fulfill the goals of the one and universal religion based on morality. The truth has not expanded from morality to religion in our contemporary era because the moral foundation that could have given religion its true meaning is lacking in all the practices considered religious today.

The contemporary religious fanatic is more interested in sensible than intelligible happiness. Sensible happiness is a product of the hypothetical imperative which conditions us to act out of selfish gains. When we act out of selfish gains so as to fulfill the desires of the

³⁹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason, op. cit.*, The Canon of Pure Reason, p. 638.

material world, we lose the real happiness which results from the steadfast respect of the moral law without any end in view. And by respecting the moral law without any end in view, the kind of happiness that results thereof is that of self – fulfilling morality that does not need anything else than the moral law to make the moral agent happy as a coincidence of respect of the moral law with the goals of religion. Yet the promise of happiness should never be the motive for any moral action. Our contemporary preachers, instead of using the pulpit as a platform to quicken the moral dispositions in us by giving moral interpretations to all scriptural passages, rather use the platform to promote differences in earthly modes of worship, many of which differences have led to intolerance and breeds religious conflicts all over the world.

The true religion, to Kant, is universal and does not breed intolerance and conflicts because everyone is united in the moral dispositions which make us pleasing to God even if we do not develop such dispositions to please God because even an atheist who rejects theism can practice morality and become pleasing to God without abiding by the earthly ritualistic modes of worship in visible churches. Happiness is thus not an achievement aimed at by moral agents at the beginning of every action; it is a level of worthiness attained only when all the moral demands have been met:

The idea of such an intelligence in which the most perfect moral will, united with supreme blessedness, is the cause of all happiness in the world so far as happiness stands in exact relation with morality, that is, with worthiness to be happy I entitle the ideal of the supreme good. It is, therefore, only in the ideal of the supreme original good that pure reason can find the ground of this connection, which is necessary from the practical point of view, between the two elements of the supreme derivative good the ground, namely, of an intelligible, that is, moral world.³⁹⁶

Our atheist does not set out to seek the kind of happiness obtained by earthly sacrifices in visible churches. He is not even considering happiness prior to any action. He is considering the right thing that needs to be done for the sake of the right thing itself. Our atheist exists in the contemporary world as an ideal of a human being so frustrated by the religious madness in visible churches that he does not want to lose the moral foundation by sticking to rites and differences in modes of worship that can make him see other rational beings as rivals in God's vineyard.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 639.

Yet, the atheist has an aim, to belong to an ethical community with other rational beings in which the practice of morality is the only duty that commands unconditionally. In the same way, the subject of knowledge cannot be indifferent to the society that defines norms of interaction for him to live and work with other individuals. Henri Bergson³⁹⁷ thinks that the “social self” defines the individual and any attempts to think about the individual away from his society are in vain. The soul of the society is in the language that the individual uses to communicate with other people. For us, this is important because it permits our atheist to distance himself from the numerous earthly churches of divine worship and still aspire to be a member of the ethical community when other human beings determined to stick to the practice of morality are united in hearts and in acts by steadfast respect of moral laws.

We can then move from subjective principles to maxims. The subjective principles determining every subject’s will become maxims when every rational being is expected to do same as a criterion of rationality. To Bergson, practical laws, in so far as they are subjective grounds of actions, that is, subjective principles, are entitled maxims. The estimation of morality, in regard to its purity and consequences, is effected in accordance with ideas, the observance of its laws in accordance with maxims.³⁹⁸ It is this purity of morality that is supposed to provide the foundation lacking in many denominations of earthly worship in our era. That is why, rather than focus on differences that lead to division and conflicts, we should return to the moral foundation which itself is based on the metaphysical idea of freedom as causality without a cause. The metaphysics of epistemology then finds a place in the Kantian division of the two fields of metaphysics such that the role that metaphysics plays in the conception of the truth should not be compromised by that of metaphysics of morality; in each case, it is the a priority of the principles that gives orderliness to concepts that condition experience and to the moral laws that command us without compulsion in a transcendental manner.

The division of metaphysics into the speculative and the practical leads Kant to admit the place of metaphysics in epistemology and morality as the culmination of ideas that unite a philosophical system in which the knowledge – seeker ceases to be an isolated being and goes out there to put speculative principles in complementarity with practical principles for the truth to be constructed in a perpetual process:

³⁹⁷ Henri Bergson, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion*, Edition numérique : Pierre Hidalgo, La Gaya Scienza, © décembre 2011, p. 12.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 640.

Metaphysics is divided into that of the speculative and that of the practical employment of pure reason, and is therefore either metaphysics of nature or metaphysics of morals. The former contains all the principles of pure reason that are derived from mere concepts [...] and employed in the theoretical knowledge of all things; the latter, the principles which in a priori fashion determine and make necessary all our actions?" Now morality is the only code of laws applying to our actions which can be derived completely a priori from principles. Accordingly, the metaphysics of morals is really pure moral philosophy, with no underlying basis of anthropology or of other empirical conditions. The term 'metaphysics', in its strict sense, is commonly reserved for the metaphysics of speculative reason. But as pure moral philosophy really forms part of this special branch of human and philosophical knowledge derived from pure reason, we shall retain for it the title Metaphysics'.³⁹⁹

Henceforth we can no longer treat the principles which permit us have theoretical knowledge of nature in isolation from principles that give rise to actions by rational beings who have to venerate experience for the sake of theoretical knowledge and shun the same experience for the sake of steadfastness to the laws of morality. Metaphysics, which in its dogmatic form is criticized as the parent of all illusions, is now used to clear away the empirical illusions that derail us from the truth in morality which is reflected in actions whose source and objects are purely idealistic and thus capable of uniting rational beings in a community that knows when to use and discard experience depending on the goal of the knowledge – seeker.

The norms of the community that the subject of knowledge cannot be indifferent to then become imperatives that command without exception and without conditions for the absolute and uncompromising respect of the moral law for its own sake, and for the sake of which it becomes a divine command due to its purity. The purity of the origin of the moral law necessarily seeks universality in all rational beings: “[...] the universal imperative of duty can also be stated as follows: So act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature.”⁴⁰⁰ In this version, the practical imperative seeks to unite all rational beings thus coinciding with the goals of an ethical community that respects morality without projection of any system of religion in sight. The humanistic version of the practical imperative puts man at the summit of all our actions as the goal and never as the means to an end. In this way, human life is preserved by the norms of our society that implicitly or explicitly reflect in our theories of knowledge: “Act so that you use humanity, as much in your own person as in the person of every other, always at the same time as end

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 660.

⁴⁰⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Allen W. Wood, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, p.38.

and never merely as means.”⁴⁰¹ Thus stated, the practical imperatives seek universality and the protection of human life without any coercion as rational nature goes with some innate and *a priori* precepts that condition us to act in a certain way as to expect the same of everyone for the sake of a harmonious society in which knowledge is part and parcel of the normative structure of the society.

The possibility of a contemporary ethical commonwealth has to free the contemporary man from the bondage of earthly modes of worship which have entangled many human beings through elements that do not respect the divine commands in them which are moral laws. If religious fanaticism that leads to illusions, religious madness and a crisis of intolerance that breeds conflicts in denominational worship, were not the order of the day in our contemporary society, then the goals of morality would easily coincide with the goals of a universal religion based on the practice of morality. But the ideal moralist of our century seems to be one who has succeeded to detach himself from the entangling influence of the visible churches that dramatize the differential rituals as a service of God, and this is actually pseudo service when the moral foundation is not respected by the faithful. The ethical community as projected by Kant then becomes more of a myth than a reality in our era and in Kant’s era:

*Morally legislative reason, apart from the laws that it prescribes to each individual, also hangs out in addition a flag of virtue as a point of union for all who love the good, that they may assemble beneath it and thus first gain the upper hand over the evil that untiringly challenges them. A linking of human beings under bare laws of virtue as prescribed by this idea may be called an ethical society and, insofar as these laws are public, an ethically civil (in contrast to a juridically civil) society, or an ethical community.*⁴⁰²

The ethical community uniting rational beings through the flag of virtue is an ideal aimed at by our atheist. The persistence of moral decadence in our society implies that the multiplicity of religious institutions in visible churches is either not preaching the moral message that is supposed to quicken the moral dispositions in us or have actually started working contrary to the moral foundation. Working to fulfill selfish gains in visible churches is the main cause of the theatrical noise in many visible churches in our neighborhoods.

The solution to the contemporary religious madness and illusions is not in atheism which proves the nonexistence of God and living as if God did not exist. It is about rejecting

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 46 – 47.

⁴⁰² Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, *op. cit.*, Third Piece, p. 103.

what is done in visible churches today so as to start all over from the moral foundation. Our visible churches seem to have moved faster than their shadows to the point of erecting the edifice without a foundation. Whereas a foundation can be laid for a building and an edifice is not erected on it, there is no way that we can have an edifice without a foundation. The moral foundation must be revisited, reconstructed and reaffirmed before the religious edifice can follow. Our atheist is thus a moralist who is on retreat from visible churches so as to construct an ethical community united in hearts and acts by the rationality of the moral law from where the religious edifice emerges automatically. Since the ethical community is not an instantaneous achievement, our atheist is striving, with others, to move toward the ideal of the religion of the heart that does not focus more attention on respecting earthly differences than on the element of rationality that brings all of us together.

From speculative to practical reason, then, the transcendental ideas that could not serve as theoretical principles through which knowledge is obtained only within the bounds of possible experience have gained the kind of deserved place in morality with the kind of purity that is used as an *a priori* goal for all rational beings striving to respect their rationality in moral laws and that consciously or unconsciously become pleasing to God. Even if our atheist knows that the service of God is the service of morality, he wants to build the ethical community without any end in view. The task is perpetual:

[...] because the duties of virtue pertain to all of humankind, the concept of an ethical community is always referred to the ideal of the whole of all human beings, and this is what distinguishes it from the concept of a political community. Hence a multitude of human beings united in that aim cannot yet be called the ethical community itself, but can be called only a particular society that strives toward agreement with all human beings [...].⁴⁰³

The contemporary man is expected to return the moral foundation after experiencing the kind of disappointing situation taken as truth in visible churches. The truth in religion is the purity of the moral foundation based on the *a priori* principles of reason that lift rational nature above the lower human beings and makes religion a consequence of the practice of morality.

From speculative reason, we can only have knowledge through concepts that are used to condition experience from where they are not derived. With the transcendental ideas, we can only regulate the understanding toward systematic unity that is unconditioned and does not have a direct link with experience. With the transcendental ideas, we do not succeed to

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

think objects directly but we succeed to make good the foundation and goals of morality which becomes a foundation for a future system of religion that avoids earthly differences in mode of worship so as to focus on the invisible elements of morality in our hearts. Given the frustration that is bred by the contemporary multiplicity of denominations, the atheist, who rejects the kind of theism manifested in theatrical rituals that do not serve God and do not even quicken the moral dispositions in us, decides to withdraw to the foundation and start all over the construction of the religious edifice as an ethical community only interested in the steadfast respect of the moral law and not in the different modes of worship which divide humans and lead to conflicts instead of peace. Until the ethical community becomes a possibility and not just a myth in our era, that is, until more and more rational beings aspire to join others to review the true foundation of religion in morality, the effects of the expansion of the truth from speculative to practical reason would not be felt.

Kant actually makes an observation that depicts the reality of evil in our time (and in all times as the case seems to have always been). This is because if the requirements of the moral law are not made good, then the goals of the transition from speculative to practical reason will not be met. Man's efforts to eradicate evil are simply not enough because the seed of morality has not been given the chance to grow to maturity in all men. We can thus think that we are still very far from God's grace. We are far from God's grace precisely because the moral foundation of a true religion has not yet taken roots in our society as many visible churches of divine worship crop up every day like mushrooms but the corresponding quickening of moral dispositions in us is a myth as moral decadence continues to cause havoc in our communities. Kant's observation goes thus: "[...] we live in the final age, with the last day and the destruction of the world at hand."⁴⁰⁴ It is the entire human species that has been plunged in evil by natural dispositions that have to be fought against. The biggest battle here is to stand against the temptations of the empirical world glorified in epistemology but rejected in morality as a source of corruption to the purity of moral laws.

The moral endeavour as a rejection of empirical corruptibility entails that we seek the ideal in human conduct that stands above all temptations of the material world. We are not naturally good only; we are also naturally evil, that means the evil disposition is also implanted in human nature. Any religion based on reason and not on empirical grounds must respect the precepts of reason or moral laws as its foundation. It is no longer about what we

⁴⁰⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793), trans. T.M. Green & H.H. Hudson, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1960, Book One, P.15.

can know. It is about what we can do with what we know. It is also about using what cannot be given in intuition as an object of possible knowledge to consecrate the defeat of the empirical realm by reason through morality: “To become morally good it is not enough to merely allow the seed of goodness implanted in our species to develop without hindrance; there is also present in us an active and opposing cause of evil to be combated.”⁴⁰⁵ In this case, the moral dispositions in us must not be quickened in visible churches; they can also be quickened in other cultural and social gatherings that do not pay allegiance to divisions and possible conflicts emerging from differences in divine modes of worship. By not necessarily making the visible church the only place for moral dispositions to be quickened, our atheistic seeker of the ideal of the ethical community has a chance to become pleasing to God through morality even if he does not accept theism.

By rejecting transcendental ideas as possible objects of knowledge only to use them as the foundation and possible object of a will determined by moral laws, Kant has not really moved away from the reason he sets out to do a critique of. If morality and religion are used to complete the Kantian system so that epistemological failures can become assets in morality, it is enough for us to draw lessons relating to our contemporary society which has failed to respect the moral foundation of religion. Our proposal is that since morality can exist as an independent foundation even if the religious edifice is not erected on it, the atheistic moralist fulfils the requirements of a true religion based on morality more than a fanatic of visible churches who loses touch of the true foundation of religion in the heart as that unending battle against the evil disposition in human nature.

By realising the ideal of morality making religion possible, we are actually making the ideals of reason possible and ‘knowable’ in a sense that Kant did not envisage as an object of knowledge. Since the truth is operational and dynamic and not static, the extension of the truth to the field of morality and by extension the field of religion implies that the contemporary knowledge seeker is not just seeking the adequate relation between our cognition and our object of knowledge, he is also seeking the norms of the society in which he has to adapt in the construction of a reality that is no longer accessible only to epistemologists: here the goals of epistemology have to meet with the goals of morality and religion, and that was the intention of Kant which is very necessary in our contemporary society of the cacophony of the multiplicity of religious denominations in complete

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Book Two, P. 50.

indifference to the moral foundation that is supposed to justify the transition from speculative to practical reason.

From the transition from speculative to practical reason, the aim is not to make the search for God the reason for which we do the right thing as a duty. It is in the course of doing the right thing for its own sake that we meet the requirements of morality and then the religious ideal coincides with moral laws now treated as divine commands and not as a doctrine of how to be happy, for we may derive happiness from the hypothetical imperative which depends on the changing fortunes of time, person and place and thus empirically bound, an empirical bound now rejected by Kant for the sake of the purity of the moral laws. To Kant, “It is not essential, and hence not necessary, for everyone to know what God does or has done for his salvation; but it is essential to know what man himself must do in order to become worthy of this assistance.”⁴⁰⁶ The religious doctrine of salvation gets a purely rational and ideal meaning in Kantian philosophy not as a promise that we work for as the motive of our actions but as an uncompromising attachment to the moral law such that God may give us the assistance of salvation that is not really needed by our contemporary atheist whose goal is the construction of an ethical community that makes men pleasing to God while the men practise only morality without any other aim in view.

As far as praying for salvation is concerned, praying does not lead to morality unless it is accompanied by the spirit of prayer. But how can prayers lead to morality when most of them are meant to replace morality? The spirit of prayer is different from the prayer itself because the spirit of prayer leads us to do what we ask for from God so that divine blessings can come as a consequence of the practice of morality and not the reverse. As practical reason, morality makes us workers and not seekers of rewards; we are workers unconditionally attached to the moral law. Hence prayer cannot replace that work that we need to do for the sake of the good itself and thus become pleasing to God as an accidental consequence of our steadfast obedience of the moral law and not the goal aimed at. And when prayers are meant to replace morality (as is often the case), we are already in idolatry.

Religion is not idolatry; but when we ask for favours verbally without doing anything morally, and thus practically, to earn them, we remain in idolatry:

When reverence for God is put first, with virtue therefore subordinated to it, this object of reverence becomes an idol, that is, he is thought of as a being

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Book One, P. 47.

*whom we may hope to please not through morally upright conduct on earth but through adoration and ingratiating; and religion is then idolatry.*⁴⁰⁷

Idolatry does not help us realise the ideal of the transition from speculative to practical reason because it rather takes us to earthly modes of worship and prayer expecting immediate and miraculous solutions to problems without actually working for such solutions.

The foundation of practical reason in freedom and the goal of practical reason in the consideration of moral laws as divine commands that make us pleasing to God thus making the transcendental idea of the immortality of the soul possible are all negative products of the epistemological failure of speculative reason in the quest for an object of knowledge given in intuition. This subsection of our work proves that if the goals of practical reason are not met, there is no risk of failure of morality. But if the foundation of morality in freedom is not met, the practical concept of morality loses its meaning. On the other hand, if the religious edifice to be raised on the moral foundation is what we have in our era as visible churches of divine worship, then we are better served by a kind of atheistic moralist who only uses atheism to avoid the religious illusions of our era so as to make possible the ideal of an ethical community of rational beings united in their hearts by the rational element that makes them steadfast to moral laws as a perpetual battle against the evil dispositions in us.

In the contemporary context of generalised moral decadence, it is obvious that the knowledge – seeker can no longer be indifferent to the quest for moral norms distorted by the wrong conception of religion that was supposed to naturally emerge from morality as an edifice that only becomes essential when the foundation is solidly laid in our lifestyle and not in the modes of worship. It is really a pity that many people still fall prey to the treacherous initiatives of adventurers in God's vineyard. Many conflicts in our society have their origin in the inessential aspects of religion which is a proof of the failure to respect the Kantian ideal of a moral religion, a moral religion which actually gives a chance to an atheist to become pleasing to God if he meets the requirements of morality without any consideration for God or immortality. Given the context of our contemporary society, it is safe to say that we need to limit the employment of practical reason only to morality for a very long period of time until the ethical community becomes a possibility such that only then can the religious edifice emerge from morality.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Book Four, P. 173.

In our era, we seem to have put the cart before the horse, a situation that is so frustrating to a Kantian moralist in a quest for an application of possible freedom as a foundation of unconditional attachment to moral laws as precepts of reason to which all rational beings are supposed to comply. Here, we need to methodologically declare religion as a failure and then revisit the moral foundation that is not yet laid solidly in our era. Sectarianism then becomes an obstacle to the establishment of the ethical community as God's moral kingdom on earth made up of rational beings who may not abide by the varied and variable rules of ecclesiastical worship. On sectarianism and the manipulation and exploitation of the faithful by self-seekers, Kant would propose the token of the true church that unites all ecclesiastical faiths through the indispensable moral substratum. The moral substratum that should be found in all faiths should lead to

[...] universality, and hence [...] numerical oneness. [...] although divided and at variance in unessential opinions, it is none the less, with respect to its fundamental intention, founded upon such basic principles as must necessarily lead to a general unification in a single church (thus, no sectarian divisions).⁴⁰⁸

Unlike in the case of the quest for truth using speculative reason about which we propose a subject – object – based theory of knowledge, the case for morality in the expansion of the field of truth is such that we must seek unity not as unity of all visible churches but unity of men in the heart respecting the moral ideal.

If it were even possible for the multiplicity of religious denominations to use their different modes of divine worship to preach the moral message in various ways, then our moral dispositions would be quickened and the moral foundation of a true religion would become possible. The contemporary reality is such that if we return to the moral foundation, then multiplicity can be acceptable if everyone understands that the real goal is not how different we worship God but how different we quicken moral dispositions in all rational being for a possible ethical community. If the goals of religion do not somehow coincide with those of an ethical community, then the transition from speculative to practical reason would not have had a positive impact in our society. The ideal of numerical oneness can only be attained through morality. Even if the numerical oneness is more of a rational achievement than a concrete achievement in visible churches, it nevertheless unites all of us toward the same goals of doing the right thing for the sake of the action itself.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Book Three, P. 93.

A contemporary epistemologist has to treat the Kantian transition from speculative to practical reason as condition of possibility of an ethical community without which the purity of transcendental ideas will be of no practical use; and if they are of no theoretical use in the quest for knowledge as Kant assumes, then morality collapses from the failure of speculative reason to become useful for practical purposes. No matter the plurality of theories of knowledge in our era, we have to seek a complex of unity in diversity when the moral foundation is laid for religion. If that foundation is not laid as we have observed in the multiplicity of visible churches today, then a possible option is for a rational being to reject all visible religions so as to return to the purity of moral laws derived from the purity of transcendental ideas.

The complex unity in diversity here is for a rational revolution to condition our action in the empirical world just like the concepts of the understanding condition our experience of objects outside the mind; but the a priori concepts of the understanding are not enough to be a foundation for morality as they are not pure enough to put us above sensibility. We can charge Kant for making his moral angle of truth too idealistic like his epistemological angle of truth. But the idealism is a logical consequence of his theory which only uses experience to limit reason without actually completely rejecting transcendental ideas. At the level of morality, we take side with Kant for an expansion of truth that is needed in our era. But as far as the limitation of the human mind to experience in the quest for knowledge, a limitation which eliminates transcendental ideas from the realm of knowable objects, we rather see plurality as an asset such that reason and experience can complement each other in a distinct way that does not give primacy to the subject over the object.

Immanuel Kant rightly thinks that sectarianism is one major cause of religious wars which result from a misinterpretation and misrepresentation of the foundation of religion and rather focus on its goals in the quest for salvation that no longer gives room for good works. If the multitude of visible churches is united by same goals achieved through different modes of quickening moral dispositions, the religious wars that are common in our society can be avoided:

The so-called religious wars which have so often shaken the world and bespattered it with blood, have never been anything but wrangles over ecclesiastical faith; and the oppressed have complained not that they were hindered from adhering to their religion (for no external

*power can do this) but that they were not permitted publicly to observe their ecclesiastical faith.*⁴⁰⁹

If transcendental ideas are not completely useless in epistemology to Kant, it has to be because of the role they play in morality which reunites reason with the goals of absolute synthetic unity that fist the moral ideal. Though such unity is rigid in our quest for knowledge, it implies that ideas of our reason are not useless because they regulate the understanding while making the quest for the moral goal one of serious work against the evil disposition in human nature.

Kant admits that we started from evil and if we do not defeat the evil disposition through good works, then the moral enterprise and with it the epistemological enterprise that creates the moral ideal through its failures loses relevance. “Whatever a man may have done in the way of adopting a good disposition, and, indeed, however steadfastly he may have persevered in conduct conformable to such a disposition, he nevertheless started from evil, and this debt he can by no possibility wipe out.”⁴¹⁰ The debt of evil and the Kantian training in pietism means that he had to conceive transcendental ideas such that they give rise to rational beings in a community that does not compromise the right thing in favour of empirical corruptibility.

Kant’s moral system that gives rise to religion has a warning for our contemporary era, never to be contented in achieved goals as the moral quest is perpetual, after all the goal is so idealistic that rational beings can only get close to it without ever really meeting the goal in direct proportions. Working to meet a goal as high as the ideal of morality in the highest good that is neither conditioned by reward nor the fear of punishment is a Kantian recommendation that fits very well with the needs of our contemporary era:

*[...] man is never more easily deceived than in what promotes his good opinion of himself. Moreover it does not even seem advisable to encourage such a state of confidence; rather is it advantageous (to morality) to “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling” (a hard saying, which, if misunderstood, is capable of driving a man to the blackest fanaticism).*⁴¹¹

The fanaticism in our era originates from this obnoxious feeling of an achievement instead of eternal work toward a goal that can hardly be met in our corruptible empirical world. Unlike in knowledge where methodological pluralism is an set, pluralism in ecclesiastical

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, P. 99.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Book Two, P. 66.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, P. 62.

denominations is an obstacle realisation of an ethical community. Our atheistic moralist rejects the current setting of multiplicity of religious denominations until the demands of morality have been met.

The 'church' of the ethical community is not a building or a visible location for divine worship; it is only an invisible community of rational beings striving to meet the moral goals:

*An ethical community under divine moral legislation is a church, which, insofar as it is not an object of possible experience, is called the invisible church (a bare idea, of the union of all righteous persons under the divine direct but moral government of the world, serving as an archetype for any such government to be founded by human beings). The visible church is the actual union of human beings to form a whole that harmonizes with that ideal.*⁴¹²

The actual union is an ideal that is a perpetual quest and not an instantaneous achievement. Thus we are not yet in an ethical community; we can hardly get there; the ideal is for us to perpetually aim at so as to make the attainment of the ideal a possibility. And such an attainment is completely impossible in our era due to sectarianism giving rise to the idea of atheistic moralists as an option to return to the moral basis of misconceived and misrepresented contemporary visible churches of divine worship.

The ethical community is different from a political community whose legislation is external to the human beings expected to abide by it. The ethical community is a union of rational beings whose legislation comes from the highest tribunal of the human mind in reason. It is like a household with an invisible moral father:

*[...] an ethical community, regarded as a church, i.e., as a mere representative of a state of God, has properly no constitution that is similar, according to its principles, to the political one. The constitution in it is neither monarchic (under a pope or patriarch), nor aristocratic (under bishops and prelates), nor democratic (as of sectarian illuminates). It could best still be compared with the constitution of a household (family) under a common-though invisible-moral father, insofar as his holy son, who knows his father's will and simultaneously stands in blood relationship with all the members of the household, takes his father's place in acquainting them more closely with his will; and the members therefore honor the father in him and thus enter with one another into a voluntary, universal, and continuing unity of heart.*⁴¹³

The ethical community has an internal legislation in each rational being without compulsion and without fear of punishment and expectation of rewards. That is why our atheist who

⁴¹² Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 2009, *op. cit.*, Third Piece, p. 111.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

sticks to moral laws is best suited for a possible contemporary ethical community as he avoids the corrupting influence of sectarianism without missing out on the necessary moral foundation of a true religion.

It is in what Kant calls “pseudo service” that a contemporary rational being loses the moral foundation of religion. That is why our ideal members of a possible ethical community have to withdraw from all entangling earthly modes of worship and start all over from morality. That way we avoid the misguided role of pseudo service that has completely shattered the moral foundation of religion in our era:

By a pseudo service [...] is meant the persuasion that one is serving someone by actions that in fact undo the latter's intention.²⁹ In a community, however, this occurs when something that has only the value of a means, so as to satisfy the will of a superior, is passed off as, and put in the place of, what is to make us pleasing to him directly; as a result, then, the intention of the latter is foiled.⁴¹⁴

In the transition from speculative to practical reason, we do not need to seek to know God absolutely; after all such a quest is doomed to fail in the Kantian system. But beyond the Kantian system, even if we have to seek God through our actions, such action should not be the contemporary drama of manifestation of religious illusions in visible churches that sing praises to God without adopting the good – life conduct that makes us pleasing to God.

Hence we have shown that, despite the uncompromising critique of the Kantian conception of systematic unity in truth, the outcome of the systematic unity is beneficial to us only when we observe that it can help us solve the problems of sectarianism which breeds hate, conflict and religious madness. In our work, this is the only area where the Kantian system and its outcome is completely relevant in our era. Elsewhere in its limitation of reason to objects of experience, we have shown that such systematic unity is only one option among other multiple options needed in an era of plurality and complexity. The system of morality stands as an expansion of truth to the practical field, even as we prove that the transcendental ideas are not as epistemologically useless as Kant takes them to be, since they give us a chance to have an angle of reality from non – intuitional concepts that deserve an existence as distinct mind entities of their own. From such a case of complete relevance of a transition from speculative to practical reason in our morally decadent society of religious madness, we

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Fourth Piece, p. 167.

can then proceed to make use of the Kantian systematic unity of truth and just one angle of pluralistic methodologies and giving one angle of a multidimensional reality.

EIGHTH CHAPTER

THE LEGACY OF THE KANTIAN “COPERNICAN REVOLUTION” IN SCIENCE

Immanuel Kant’s conception of truth was aimed at linking concepts with objects. The validity and objectivity of the knowledge aimed at by Kant must be backed by a rigorous scientific method. The deduction of the categories is an illustration of Kant’s unconditional attachment to the rigor of the method of science. And this is not a mere coincidence, for it is not an accident that Kant became a rigorous and methodic thinker. It was because of the rigorous scientific tradition of his era at the crossroad between natural science and natural philosophy whose demarcation was not distinct. From the era when the great Isaac Newton refers to his laws of motion in the universe as a theory in “Natural Philosophy” and during the Kantian era of critical philosophy, the Königsberg philosopher makes reference to ‘Natural Science’ or a science of nature that has an inevitable metaphysical foundation when the goals of the *a priori* laws of nature coincide with those of Mathematics.

Kant has transmitted to us a relevant science that can be put to test in our era to explain motion in the universe and the nature of space, the latter constituting one of two *a priori* forms of sensible intuition in the transcendental aesthetics of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The aim of this chapter of our work is then obvious: to trace the scientific method and scientific themes that Kant transmitted to us and to show their relevance in our era that seems to be moving toward the reunion of natural science and natural philosophy which should never have parted ways given the complexity of the reality. In the spirit of our work, it is safer to say that we are moving toward the realization of the necessity for natural science and philosophy (through metaphysics) to complement each other in application even if they cannot complement each other in the construction of theories by fanatics of both camps who seek to work more on distinctness than on complementarity. In the spirit of the contemporary society, such distinctness is accepted as one of two sides of a multifaceted coin of plurality whereby any method has to be in competition with other methods without necessarily seeking to unite distinct methods and distinct entities.

In this chapter of our work, we prove that the scientific tradition of Kant’s time has remained the core of contemporary science because in Kant’s time, there is already the need to reconcile the approach of the students of nature with that of the metaphysicians of the old

school rejected by Kant so as to rebuild metaphysics as the foundation of natural science. This chapter of our work meanders between the conflicts of the opposing schools of natural science and philosophy to conclude that metaphysics retains its enduring value as the basis of a science that opens up to other methods without losing its distinctness. Unlike Kant whose aim was to reconcile two distinct methods, we argue that in the contemporary society, we have to move beyond reconciliation to acceptance of distinctness so as to get the best of all methodological worlds. In this case, if reconciliation becomes necessary, it will only be an approach that does not destroy distinctness, a complex of plurality in complementarity and complementarity in plurality whereby one does not take priority over the other; any reconciliatory approach becomes only one out of many competing approaches open to a contemporary theory of knowledge that cannot be indifferent to complexity, that cannot fail to unite complementary theories, but that does not take the complementarity as an official approach but rather uses it as one of many possible approaches to grasp the truth.

We have to be very keen to note that despite the heavy criticisms that Kant levied on Metaphysics, he still found a way to make it the foundation of a natural science greatly influenced by the ideas of his time which are not irrelevant in our time. How much of the reconciliatory scientific rigour in the Kantian quest for truth is relevant in a contemporary theory of knowledge? Did Kant end up being more of a ‘metaphysician’ than the ‘scientist’ he set out to be? What is the place of a contemporary theory of knowledge in the conflict and complementarity of metaphysics and science? A reading of Kant’s work prior to the critical era of 1781 shows that he was closer to natural science than speculative philosophy at the beginning of his career; and that despite his rejection of Metaphysics in the critical era, he found metaphysics inevitable as a foundation of natural science. And he uses Mathematics to return to Metaphysics as the inevitable source of the laws of motion explaining the universe. The problem may just be that of method. In this chapter of our work, we examine how the method of natural science influences Kant in his quest for truth as well as the inevitable presence of Metaphysics at the heart of the science of truth about the world, and how such a method is still relevant in our time.

8.1: Natural Sciences and Philosophy: The Necessity of a Conflicting Complementarity

Natural philosophy, also known as philosophy of nature, dates back to the Greek Antiquity where the origin of philosophy is inseparable from science as its object is nature or the physical world. In the 18th century, then, with philosophy becoming more speculative, the

natural sciences of Biology, Chemistry and Physics became distinct in a method that originally does not accept the use of speculation at the expense of the cherished rigour of experimentation. Natural philosophy gave way to natural science for philosophy to become more speculative. Yet, that did not break the umbilical link between the two. At many levels of their work, natural scientists still resort to speculation and philosophers still focus on the natural or physical world when they want to.

The problem of the one – dimensional capture of the reality by natural science, and may have as solution ‘Metaphysics’ which can be a problem if avoided or officially avoided while being made use of in conception and application of scientific theories or a solution if admitted as the foundation of natural science; and in the contemporary era this foundation should be able to have a distinct existence just like natural sciences do or claim to do when their fanatics reject the metaphysical foundation whose object transcends experience yet can be used to explain the same experience. In the late 17th century, one of the most influential philosophers to Kant, Isaac Newton, published what is today known as ‘*Newton’s Principia*’ but the full title of the book, *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, is evocative enough of the kind of relationship that natural philosophy had with science and from where Kant was influenced to seek methodic rigour in the system of critical philosophy. From Newton’s era to Kant’s era and to our era, despite the conflicts of methodology and object of study, natural sciences and philosophy have not been the best of bedfellows but have never been very far away from each other. This, in our era, means that the Kantian foundation of natural science in metaphysics cannot be discarded with the complexity of reality whereby a capture from the empirical angle is just one among other conflicting methods to capture the reality from other angles.

In the preface to his *Principia*, Newton made a striking remark that shows the intrinsic unity of natural science and philosophy:

*Our design not respecting arts, but philosophy, and our subject not manual but natural powers, we consider chiefly those things which relate to gravity, levity, elastic force, the resistance of fluids, and the like forces, whether attractive or impulsive; and therefore we offer this work as the mathematical principles of philosophy; for all the difficulty of philosophy seems to consist in this - from the phenomena of motions to investigate the forces of nature, and then from these forces to demonstrate the other phenomena [...].*⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁵ Sir Isaac Newton, *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, trans. Andrew Motte, New York: Daniel Adee, 1846, Preface, p. IXVIII.

Note that natural philosophy is all that Newton refers to as “philosophy”. And what he considered to be the difficulty for philosophy persists: understanding the forces of nature responsible for motion in the universe, and through the inquiry to be able to explain all the natural phenomena. Nature is the focus. As long as our investigations are aimed at explaining nature, we are into objective philosophy; and the Newtonian influence on Kant is re-echoed in the latter’s insistence for experience to serve as the sole justifying ground of truth in epistemology.

From Newton’s era to our era through Kant’s era, there has been the need to make science work with metaphysics or speculative philosophy. This need is always urgent even when the scientists do not want to admit it. This was the case with Newton himself who famously refused to frame hypothesis as he was bent on making nature the source of all principles of science, a failed venture that is made use of by Kant when Newtonian science and Leibnizian metaphysics are reconciled to meet the needs of Kant’s era and to partly meet the needs of our era. For such a reconciliation to meet the needs of our era the methodological product of reconciliation must be made to compete with other methods and even with the distinct methods reconciled as natural science and metaphysics in their independent existence still give us competing angles of reality that must not be reconciled. The Kantian reconciliation of metaphysics and natural science thus plays a role in our era of complexity only when the distinct existence of each is admitted, then their reconciled methodological product is only taken as one among many other competing approaches that are equally important in the dynamic and operational nature of the truth.

Kant acknowledged the failure of other sciences like Metaphysics through their lack of principles that guarantee objectivity and validity of knowledge. The metaphysical lack of unshakable principles makes sciences which have them more secured as a path to knowledge. We can say that Kant’s critique grew from the successes of the sciences that work with secure principles and the failures of the sciences based on shaky principles. Through Newton, Kant adopted Mathematics as the science based on apodictic principles conceived completely *a priori*, yet applies accurately to experience. Mathematics and the physics granted to have a mathematical foundation is a possible methodological framework for the truth in a plurality of methods that do not adopt one and reject others. Kant’s admiration for Mathematics and Physics is a Newtonian legacy that influenced the Kantian methodic rigour:

*We often hear complaints of shallowness of thought in our age and of the consequent decline of sound science. But I do not see that the sciences which rest upon a secure foundation, such as mathematics, physics, etc., in the least deserve this reproach. On the contrary, they merit their old reputation for solidity, and in the case of physics, even surpass it. The same spirit would have become active in other kinds of knowledge, if only attention has first been directed to their determination of their principles. Till this is done, indifference, doubt, and in the final issue, severe criticism, are themselves proofs of a profound habit of thought.*⁴¹⁶

From the critique of metaphysics, we already know that Kant wanted to see the spirit of a true science therein but got disappointed by its lack of solid principles. Yet the same metaphysics becomes the foundation of a future morality and religion in need of an ideal to aim at. Kant would surely have loved to see the scientific methodic rigour of mathematics and physics in metaphysics.

The profoundness of thought then depends on its pre-established unshakeable principles. In this light, critical philosophy is a methodic review of philosophy using the model of successful sciences like mathematics and physics as inherited from Newton and his other predecessors. That is why in Transcendental Analytic of Transcendental Logic of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant spared no effort to lay down the principles for the possibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge. Such a structure of knowledge through a rigid system of categories is now obsolete as the truth is more likely to emerge through a flexible application of all distinct theories. The legacy of Newton on Kantian philosophy is portrayed by the references to the students of nature who seek in experience the laws of experience and who only go *a priori* when they go mathematical to seek the foundation of the forces of nature. Such natural philosophy assumed to have mathematical basis does not give room for the kind of metaphysics that frames hypotheses and makes *a priori* guesses that do not relate to experience. Here, mathematics defeats metaphysics because the *a priori* principles of metaphysics are verifiable in nature while those of metaphysics hardly refer to anything concrete in nature.

However, and intriguing enough, Kant's admiration for Isaac Newton does not imply that Newton completely rejected metaphysics. Here, the influence of Newton on Kant is almost like that of a master and a disciple. After doing an extensive elaboration of the laws of motion, precisely the gravitational forces that govern the universe, Newton did not exclude the role of a divine hand in the order and harmony exhibited by bodies in the universe. In the

⁴¹⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason, op cit.*, Preface to the First Edition, Note a, p. 9.

conclusion to *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* which is known as ‘General Scholium’, Newton states that

*This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and power Being. And if the fixed stars are the centres of other like systems, these, being formed by the like wise counsel, must all subject to the dominion of One; especially since the light of the fixed stars is of the same nature with the light of the sun, and from every system light passes into all the other systems: and lest the systems of the fixed stars should, by their gravity, fall on each other mutually, he hath placed those systems at immense distances one from the other.*⁴¹⁷

The law of mutual gravitational attraction of heavenly bodies implies that there is a chance that the systems close in on each other. What keeps them at such immense distances to prevent them from closing in on each other is where Newton sees the hand of a being of absolute necessity. Newton is not admitting the work of God in the universe because he is stuck and has run short of ideas to explain nature; just like the case with Kant in the antinomies and ideal of pure reason, Newton is admitting a transcendental cause of the beauty and orderliness in the universe. In the Kantian system, he is in the antinomy of the necessary being in or outside the universal chain of causes, and above all the ideal of pure reason which projects God as the supreme being whose ultimate causality gives completeness to reason’s synthesis and projects a future system of morality and religion. At this level of analysis, Kant was a perfect Newtonian philosopher.

What the Newtonian/Kantian conceptual bond in science and metaphysics means in our contemporary era is that no matter how hard we try, every natural scientist goes through the ‘metaphysical temptation’ when mathematical principles become insufficient in our quest to explain nature. This means that without metaphysics, somewhere somehow in the demonstrations, the natural scientist does not get the appropriate relation between our cognition and the objects of our cognition. From such recognition of incompleteness, the metaphysical leap which is a necessity begins as the use or assumption of principles that we originally stand against. The same predicament occurs in our era but the difference between our era and that of Kant and Newton is that there is recognition of the need for these distinct methods to be conflicting explanations of a complex reality. Hence the level of reluctance by scientists to accept the metaphysical angle of their theories has diminished with time and we are almost heading for a reunion of natural science and metaphysics. Such a reunion can only give rise to one synthetic approach among other methods of seeking the truth in our era.

⁴¹⁷ Isaac Newton, *op. cit.*, General Scholium, p. 504.

In the Kantian system, we can say that the reconciliatory task is made easier because Newton's system admits the compromise of the necessity to make metaphysical assumptions that can no longer be demonstrated experimentally by the laws of motion in the universe. But Newton is in natural philosophy which is based on mathematical principles. When Newton describes God by saying that "This being governs all things, not as the soul of the world, but as Lord over all [...]. The supreme Being is a Being eternal, infinite, absolutely perfect [...]"⁴¹⁸ he is making concessions so as not to take reason to a transcendental realm with the hope of obtaining knowledge which would be nothing other than a dialectical illusion. This is like the concession made by Kant in the preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* where he notes that "I have [...] found it necessary to deny *knowledge*, in order to make room for *faith*."⁴¹⁹ This concession does not imply that faith has replaced reason in matters of knowledge. It means, to Kant, that theoretical reason, as a faculty of knowledge cannot transcend experience, and when it does, it is no longer useful in knowledge, but, as practical reason, projects the conditions of possibility of morality and religion. In the same way, before Kant, Newton brilliantly discovered the laws of motion in the universe but at one point, still hanging on to experimentation as the basis of proof in natural philosophy, could not resist the transcendental leap to give completeness to his system, no longer as an object of knowledge, but an article of faith which explains the transcendental source of harmony in the universe beyond the empirical orderliness explained by laws. Thus whether one is a natural scientist like Newton or a philosopher like Kant, the contemporary necessity not to stick to a unique approach to truth is already of great significance.

Like Kant did after him, Newton had made God the transcendental cause of phenomenal motion. This is not meant to undermine the efforts of natural science to explain the physical world through natural laws. This is to give completeness to an analysis that will always be lacking something until reason moves beyond experience to give unity to experience. In the contemporary era, it should no longer be a case of weakness for a researcher on empirical sciences to take the necessary metaphysical leap that is no longer just about giving completeness to systems of thought but also and above all about making distinct methods work in their own worlds for the sake of a multifaceted mastery of reality through various methods. To Newton,

⁴¹⁸ *Idem.*

⁴¹⁹ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Preface to the Second Edition, p. 29.

*God is the same God, always and everywhere. He is omnipresent not virtually only, but also substantially; for virtue cannot subsist without substance. In him are all things contained and moved; yet neither affects the other: God suffers nothing from the motion of bodies; bodies find no resistance from the omnipresence of God. It is allowed by all that the supreme God exists necessarily; and by the same necessity he exists always and everywhere.*⁴²⁰

Scientifically, God's causality on nature cannot be proven. God, like the transcendental concept of freedom, is out of the chain of phenomenal causes but effects movement in the chain without being moved by the chain. God is not substantially affected by the motion He initiates in the universe. The bodies in the universe, too, cannot and do not have to resist God's causality because it does not interfere with the natural laws; the harmony in the universe is experimentally explained and the supposition of a transcendental causality does not destroy nor increase the phenomenal chain of causes. It is an assumption that gives completeness to thought without destroying the achievements and relevance of natural science. It is a regulative principle of pure reason. And when the assumption is made and associated with a scientific theory, one distinct method is born from a reconciliation of apparently conflicting methods.

The regulative principle of pure reason does not in any way destroy nor contradict natural science. It simply goes beyond natural science. To Kant,

*The regulative principle of reason [...] is [...] this, that everything in the sensible world has an empirically conditioned existence, and that in no one of its qualities can it be unconditionally necessary; that for every member in the sense of conditions we must expect, and as far as possible seek, an empirical condition in some possible experience; and that nothing justifies us in deriving an existence from a condition outside the empirical series or even in regarding it in its place within the series as absolutely independent and self-sufficient. At the same time this principle does not in any way debar us from recognizing that the whole series may rest upon some intelligible being that as free from all empirical conditions and itself contains the ground of the possibility of all appearances.*⁴²¹

Science can stand on its own as natural science explaining the chain of phenomenal causes experimentally while metaphysics stands on its own transcending experience to give completeness to reason and prepare the ground for moral and religious goals. The problem now is to know if, in the strict distinction of natural science from metaphysics, one can really do without the other. Kant thinks that we cannot completely discard the metaphysical disposition from human nature and human reason no matter how scientific we want to be. Yet

⁴²⁰ Isaac Newton, *op.cit.*, p. 505.

⁴²¹ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 481.

the distinction in methodic rigour is obvious. It is in methodic rigour that natural science is successful. Should natural science never use speculation? Can the speculations of metaphysics ever give rise to valid and objective knowledge beyond the empirical realm?

The development of the synthesis of God as the ideal of pure reason to accommodate the goals of natural science that Kant grapples with is found in Newton's work, when the natural laws are investigated and proven experimentally and the researcher still feels the need to give completeness and synthetic unity to that which has been so clearly proven by experience. Newton holds that "[...] all our notions of God are taken from the ways of mankind by a certain similitude, which, though not perfect, has some likeness, however. And thus much concerning God, to discourse of whom from the appearances of things, does certainly belong to natural philosophy."⁴²² Natural philosophy gives rise to natural science when the scientist decides to avoid the philosophical speculations of metaphysics. It is impossible for metaphysics to be experimental given the nature of its transcendent objects of study and above all, its lack of methodic rigour exhibited by other sciences. On the other hand, if the ways of God are to an extent similar to the ways of mankind, and if the ways of mankind are the ways of nature, then a discourse on God can be, to an extent, a discourse on natural philosophy to the extent whereby God participates in nature transcendently. Kant refers to freedom as a transcendental causality with physical effects on the phenomenal chain of causes. God as the ideal of pure reason gives unity to pure ideas derived from experience but converted to transcendental ideas by reason's quest for completeness. This is supposed to be a point of unity, a point of complementarity in separate co-existence between speculative philosophy and natural philosophy that gave rise to natural sciences. Yet the vain speculations of metaphysics are a source of disappointment for a philosopher like Kant seeking the methodic accuracy of science in his inquiries.

The mingling of science and philosophy lasted for centuries till 1620 when Francis Bacon published the *New Organon* that started the project of laying a foundation for natural science so that it can be a producer of knowledge as well as a vector of inventions and discoveries. In the preface to the *Novum Organon*, Bacon already castigated the state of affairs of science, describing the wisdom inherited from the Greek Antiquity as 'childish' and thus sounding the alarm bell that served as a wakeup call to give a new foundation to natural science:

⁴²² Isaac Newton, *op. cit.*, p. 506.

*One must [...] speak plainly about usefulness, and say that the wisdom which we have drawn in particular from the Greeks seems to be a kind of childish stage of science, and to have the child's characteristic of being all too ready to talk, but too weak and immature to produce anything for it is fertile in controversies, and feeble in results.[...] the sciences to which we are accustomed have certain bland and specious generalities, but when we get to particulars (which are like the generative parts), so that they bring forth fruit and works from themselves, disputes and scrappy controversies, start up, and that is where it ends, and that is all the fruit they have to show.*⁴²³

Within the context of the time, Bacon represents a transition from Greek thought mixed with metaphysical controversies to natural science as an interpretation of nature. Science is a producer of results and not a participant in vain disputes among speculative philosophers. Natural science emerged as a desire for man to investigate nature from particular cases in an inductive approach that leads to general principles. The science rejected by Bacon fits squarely in the dialectical illusions of Metaphysics that lead more to quarrels than results.

Immanuel Kant admits that it took a very long time for natural science to emancipate herself from speculative Philosophy. Kant acknowledges Francis Bacon for laying the groundwork for natural science as a plan for interpreting nature: “Natural science was very much longer in entering upon the highway of science. It is, indeed, only about a century and a half since Bacon, by his ingenious proposals, partly initiated this discovery, partly inspired fresh rigour in those who were already on the way to it. In this case also the discovery can be explained as being the sudden outcome of an intellectual revolution. [...] I am referring to natural science only in so far as it is founded on empirical principles.”⁴²⁴ Bacon was an empiricist; science later moved beyond empirical principles to *a priori* and transcendental principles but only as long as we are dealing with the categories of the understanding aimed at explaining experience. With Kant and after Kant, the inductive approach cherished by Bacon is replaced by a deductive approach whereby man conceives laws for nature; man even conceives laws for the transformation of nature in techno-science. But at that time in the early 17th century, the proposals made by Bacon were new as a foundation for empirical principles of a science of nature that could do away with vain speculations. The fresh rigour inspired by Bacon was both revolutionary and highly needed at the time for results.

In the first Aphorism of Book I of Bacon's *New Organon*, man is an interpreter and transformer of nature: “Man is Nature's agent and interpreter, he does and understands only

⁴²³ Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, edited by Lisa Jardine, Michael Silverthorne, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, Preface to the “Great Renewal”, pp. 6-7.

⁴²⁴ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Preface to the Second Edition, pp. 19 – 20.

as much as he has observed of the order of nature in fact or by inference; he does not know and cannot do more.”⁴²⁵ As an agent of nature, nature can use man to change itself or nature can use man to transform itself. Man, as a natural scientist, is a transformer of nature from an in-depth mastery of the laws of nature. To make a difference with regard to the vain disputes inherited from the Greeks, Bacon wants a new plan for science exclusively dedicated to nature without going beyond nature for anything else. The principles here have to be empirical. At this time, the Kantian transcendental concepts for interpreting nature are not yet envisaged. These are students of nature who receive everything from nature, limited to empirical principles and buried in induction for case-by-case discovery of nature and conception of general principles. The student of nature, in a bid to do away with metaphysics, makes man a slave to nature, the human mind is entirely at the service of nature with strict restrictions.

The concrete plan proposed by Bacon, and acknowledged by Kant for natural science to emancipate herself from illusions, is based on induction: moving from particular cases to general principles and using the obtained general principles to discover more particular cases. This is experimental science in its early stages. In the tenth Aphorism of the Second Book of the *New Organon*, Francis Bacon outlines the new plan for natural science as follows:

*Directions for the interpretation of nature comprehend in general terms two parts: the first for drawing axioms from experience; the second on deducing or deriving new experiments from axioms.[...] we must compile a good, adequate natural and experimental history. This is the foundation of the matter. We must not invent or imagine what nature does or suffers; we must discover it. [...] the mind, left to itself and moving of its own accord, is incompetent and unequal to the formation of axioms unless it is governed and directed. And therefore, [...] a true and proper induction must be supplied, which is the very key of interpretation. And one must begin at the end and more backward to the rest.*⁴²⁶

Natural science, as based on the inductive method, did not accept that the mind has principles of its own prior to the encounter with experience. Nature was expected to be the source of knowledge; the mind had to conform to things; things could not conform to the mind. The mind was not considered as the source of principles; all principles were to be obtained from nature through investigation. The merit of Bacon in his plan for natural science was that it left no room for vain metaphysical quarrels though such quarrels are now considered as alternative methodological assets in our era. But making the mind a slave to nature was a

⁴²⁵ Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, op. cit., Book I, Aphorism I, P.33.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid*, Book II, Aphorism X, pp. 109 – 110.

paradigm that did not last for long in relevance. Moving from effects to causes in an inductive approach was contested and replaced by Kant and other philosophers of science after him. Yet in his time, the plan made by Bacon helped to liberate science from speculations.

From Galileo to Newton and other philosophers of science that came to use induction and experimentation, and even without giving it the name Kant gave to it as a ‘Copernican revolution’ in epistemology, Kant notes that the authors were already using the method that rendered induction problematic. A scientist becoming a slave to experience could achieve very little because that is tantamount to limiting the mind’s ability by burying it in nature which does not make thought dynamic and does not give the scientist maximum chances to invent and innovate. With Kant, then, whether the natural scientist admits it or not, the mind must be made to give rules to nature such that the rules thus given can be verified by experimentation. In our era, the mind gives rules to nature and nature gives rules to the mind in a subject – object – based theory of knowledge in which all distinct methods that give priority to the subject over the object and those which do the reverse are made to compete with each other to maximize our chances of mastery of the truth.

The difficulty that led Isaac Newton to project a necessary being as the ultimate source of the dynamic forces of nature already highlights the limitation of the inductive method used by natural science. After the discovery and exposition of the laws of motion in the universe, Newton admitted that

*[...] hitherto I have not been able to discover the cause of those properties of gravity from phenomena, and I frame no hypotheses; and hypothesis, whether metaphysical or physical, whether of occult qualities or mechanical, have no place in experimental philosophy. In this philosophy particular propositions are inferred from the phenomena, and afterwards rendered general by induction.*⁴²⁷

We are at a time where the scientific method strictly began with observation before the formulation of hypotheses. Newton, at this time, refers to natural science as experimental philosophy which has no room for metaphysics. The important task was for a scientist to go out there and investigate nature. The *a priori* formulation of hypotheses was not an option in inquiry, all principles were strictly empirical. Experimental philosophy, also known as natural philosophy, was based strictly on observation of phenomena. From observation of

⁴²⁷ Isaac Newton, *op. cit.*, Book III, pp. 506 - 507.

phenomena to formulation of hypotheses, followed by experimentation and theorization was the accepted scientific method of the time.

Thus, at first sight, Newton does not want to frame a transcendental hypothesis whose verification cannot be achieved empirically. He wants to strictly stick to the method of natural science that is strictly inductive. Yet, no matter how hard he tries, and it is not just about making room for faith as a theist, it is not only about projecting a being of absolute necessity, it is also and above all about admitting that induction does not explain all, and that sticking strictly to experience is not enough. With Newton then, and in its early stages, we already see elements of the hypothetico-deductive approach that has inevitably replaced induction in modern science. From Kant, and in our era, the students of nature use *a priori* principles without admitting their use. In our era, the distinctions must be made clearly and the reconciliations accepted as another new distinct method in opposition with other methods for the same reality, a kind of methodological competition with no winner declared in advance, the actual winner is our mastery of the complex reality which is a process and not an instantaneous achievement.

It is not with much surprise when we read Newton ending the *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* by laying down the conditions of possibility of a transcendental source of the dynamic forces of the universe in the lack of completeness brought about by the inductive method. The last lines of Newton's *Principles* state that:

*[...] now we might add something concerning a certain most subtle spirit which pervades and lies hid in all gross bodies, by the force and action of which spirit the particles of bodies mutually attract one another at near distances, and cohere, if contiguous; and electric bodies operate to greater distances, as well repelling as attracting the neighboring corpuscles; and light is emitted, reflected, refracted, inflected, and heat bodies; and all sensation is excited, and the members of animal bodies move at the command of the will, namely by the vibrations of this spirit, mutually propagated along the solid filaments of the nerves, from the outward organs of sense to the brain, and from the brain into the muscles. But these are things that cannot be explained in a few words nor are we furnished with that sufficiency of experiments which is required to an accurate determination and demonstration of the laws by which this electric and elastic Spirit operates.*⁴²⁸

At first sight, and even without seeking to know exactly what Newton means by an 'electric and elastic spirit', the reality at the face is that sticking strictly to the inductive approach of natural sciences leaves something unknown, it actually leaves many things unknown upon the

⁴²⁸ Isaac Newton, *op. cit.*, p. 507.

realization that either everything we need to know in nature is not revealed by nature through induction or nature actually reveals all there is to know but the method of induction is not enough to grasp it. In the former, we will be heading toward the unknowable *noumena* of Kant or the unknowable substance of Locke and the problem may not be that of method as it is that of nature to conceal an aspect of itself. In the latter, the method may have to be reviewed, then, such that the mind should be more active than passive in the process of cognition as the method of induction entails. In this case, we would say that through Newton, Kant saw the limits of the purely empirical approach where nature gives the rule to the mind and not the reverse. Is it the ‘electric and elastic spirit’ that does not reveal itself or the method of research that does not have the rigour with which to uncover the object?

Maybe Newton was referring to electricity about which very little was known at the time. He could not implicitly be referring to God because in the previous lines of the ‘General Scholium’ he made explicit references to God in an unambiguous manner. It was surely something unknowable at the time and still unknowable today as it gives room for a vast field of speculation on the Newtonian spiritual element that could not be known experimentally. From there, we can say that the Kantian unknowable *noumenon* was projected in ambiguous terms by Newton. If the Newtonian unknown and unknowable Spirit (at least unknown experimentally) refers to a transcendental entity that is the causality of empirical causes, it is likened to the Kantian conception of transcendental freedom especially when Newton talks of the ‘command of the will’ that sounds like a forerunner idea of Kant’s conception of the employment of practical reason in the respect of moral laws based on freedom and autonomy of the will. Newton sounds biological, chemical, physical and most especially metaphysical in the conception of this mysterious substance.

Whatever the case, Newton left something ‘unknown’ because it was unknowable, just like Kant’s *noumena*. And the limit used by Newton to declare the Spirit unknowable is the lack of experimental demonstration of the objectivity and validity of knowledge of such an entity, just like the *noumenon* or thing in itself which cannot be known to Kant because our knowledge is limited to perceptions which link us up only with things as they appear to our *a priori* modes of knowledge. While the unknowable entity of Newton is as such because it is not given to experimentation, the unknowable of Kant is as such because our modes of knowledge only give us the entity as a representation and not as it is in itself. In any case, the Newtonian mysterious substance can be used in our era to reject the officialisation of a unique method as the sole path to the truth. In our era, the projection of any unknowable can

meet the need for consistency of an internal system of a theory but it will never meet the needs of an era where each system is only one angle of seeing the truth such that it is the totality of the multiplicity of methods that constitute an asset for us and not just internal coherence and limitations of a unique method that can be adopted as the path to the truth.

On the other hand, and it is important to note, Kant did not agree with Newton on everything. Newton was an adept of the inductive method that is inseparable from experimentation certified by empirical variability, while the Kantian Copernican revolution in epistemology turned things around. In strict respect of natural philosophy which Newton also referred to as ‘experimental philosophy’, Newton famously declared that he frames no hypothesis. The ‘I frame no hypothesis’ Newtonian recommendation of the ‘General Scholium’ was partly a reply to the objections by Descartes of the method used by Newton in the *Principles* as based exclusively on empirical observation. The ‘I frame no hypothesis’ caution, above all, was a veneration of the inductive method that moves from particular observable cases before the stage of hypothesis; the Newtonian hypothesis is thus not framed by the mind but derived from empirical realities. This is where Kant methodologically parted ways with his mentor, Newton. To Kant, “When Galileo caused balls, the weights of which he had himself previously determined, to roll down an inclined plane, [...] a light broke upon all students of nature.”⁴²⁹ From Galileo in 1638, the students of nature, natural philosophers or natural scientists, had realized that the practice of science was not just about being a slave to nature, the scientist had to dictate the rule to nature. Thus Kant laid down in words what others had either practiced before him without seeing the revolutionary transition or did not admit it while coming very close to it like Newton.

Unlike Newton, then, Kant thinks that the mind can frame a hypothesis; the hypothesis framed by the mind *a priori* actually is the condition of possibility of nature itself. While adopting a method of hypothesis sharply contrasting with that of Newton, Kant maintained the methodic rigour exhibited by Newton in the quest for clarity through experimentation of phenomenal data. If a hypothesis is not just guess work, then it has to be the product of an ingenious mind which does not merely depend on trial – and - error. When hypotheses are framed prior to experience and yet confirmed by experience, we are in the hypothetico-deductive method that inevitably replaced the inductive method that gave primacy to observation over the formulation of hypothesis. Are hypothesis framed by the

⁴²⁹ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

mind *a priori* or formulated by the mind *a posteriori*? Newton chooses the latter option while Kant chooses the former as the scientific paradigm that makes the mind a giver of rules to nature. In any case, even the Kantian paradigm of the mind devising hypotheses to be verified by experimentation has to be seen as one aspect of seeing reality alongside other methods whose proponents can choose to avoid the reconciliatory angle and look at reality from distinct opposing angles.

Kant makes mention of Galileo's use of balls rolling on an inclined plane as a case where the students of nature could already see how the mind gives rules to experience even if the student of nature does not admit it or is not even aware of what is happening. It is a revolutionary turn that only becomes one paradigm in our era of multiple paradigms. In the *Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences* of 1638, Galileo carried out the experiment of balls, rolling on an inclined plane which helped him to calculate gravity or that force which attracts bodies toward the earth. Beyond the discovery of the proportional relationship between time and acceleration, the ingenuity of Galileo was in his ability to conceive a hypothesis that perfectly reflected what was confirmed later on by means of experiments. Galileo implied in his hypothesis that as the object gains in time moving down an inclined plane, it also gained in speed. This is uniformly accelerated motion whereby each time – interval corresponds to increase in speed with regard to what obtained when the object was at rest. Galileo thus notes that

When [...] I observe a stone initially at rest falling from an elevated position and continually acquiring new increments of speed, why should I believe that such increases take place in a manner which is exceedingly simple and rather obvious, to everybody? [...] This we readily understand when we consider the intimate relationship between time and motion; for just as uniformity of motion is defined by and conceived through equal times and equal spaces (thus we call a motion uniform when equal distances are traversed during equal time – intervals), and so also we may, in a similar manner, through equal time intervals, conceive additions of speed [...]; thus we may picture to our mind a motion as uniformly and continuously accelerated when, during any equal intervals of time whatever, equal increments of speed are given to it. Thus if any equal intervals of time whatever have elapsed, counting from the time at which the moving body left its position of rest and began to descend, the amount of speed acquired during the first two time-intervals will be double that acquired during the first time-interval alone; so the amount added during three of these time-intervals will be treble; and that in four, quadruple that of the first time-interval.⁴³⁰

⁴³⁰ Galileo Galilei, *Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences*, trans. Henry Crew & Alfonso de Salvio, New York: William Andrew Publishing, 1914, Book III, p. 161.

It was thus just a hypothesis of course; Galileo observed the movement of bodies as they are pulled down by the force of gravity toward the earth. But what was first conceived as a supposition that the increase in speed of an object falling on an inclined plane was directly proportional to the time-intervals became the hypothesis, later proven by experimentation.

The proportion of acceleration to time-intervals was not observed in the balls, it was calculated after a hypothesis or *a priori* judgment was made about uniform accelerated motion. Galileo had actually framed a hypothesis and it was proven to be experimentally true. Galileo did not depend on experience to calculate gravity; he had to conceive the possibility *a priori* or prior to experimentation; he prescribed a law to nature; he did not want nature to reveal the law to him; his mind conceived the law before empirical demonstration. This is one of such procedures that gave rise to the transition from inductive to deductive science, from the primacy of nature to the primacy of the mind imposing itself on nature. Observing a phenomenon is one thing, but identifying the law that binds the phenomena together is a creation of the mind prior to verifiability in experimentation. Unlike Newton who thinks that the mind cannot frame a hypothesis, Kant thinks that we can frame hypotheses, as was the case with Galileo. In our era, we need both approaches and others, the mind can frame hypotheses, nature can reveal laws to the mind, we can make both to work together in the subject – object – based approach which has to compete with other approaches for the theory best adapted to lead to truth.

A student of nature blindly following experience cannot explore the fullness of the powers of the mind to dictate its mode on nature. Galileo did not just blindly follow nature. If he did, he would not have put his mind to work to discover the force that pushes down objects from elevated positions. Here, the power of the scientist is not in the interpretation of nature; it is in the ability to use the mind as the real regulator of nature. With Kant, then, the students of nature have to look at things from a different angle:

*They [students of nature] learned that reason has insight only into that which it produces after a plan of its own, and that it must not allow itself to be kept, as it were, in nature's leading-strings, but must itself show the way with principles of judgment based upon fixed laws, constraining nature to give answers to questions of reason's own determining. Accidental observations, made in obedience to no previously thought-out plan, can never be made to yield a necessary law, which alone reason is concerned to discover.*⁴³¹

⁴³¹ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

If a scientist works without *a priori* hypotheses, he ends up in accidental observations from where no laws of nature are arrived at. We need to frame a hypothesis so that scientific knowledge would be about linking our hypotheses with experience to generate laws of nature. Before going out there to observe the physical world, the student of nature must conceive a plan, an *a priori* framework to which experience is expected to conform in experimentation. Since the mind must conceive something before observing nature and carrying out experiments, the natural disposition to metaphysics can easily make its marks on *a priori* judgments made on nature. In our era, we move beyond Kant to make use of Kant as one angle of seeing reality from the vantage position of the mind without ignoring theories that see reality from other positions than that of the mind especially from the position of the object that has much to reveal.

The illustrated cases from the history of science and philosophy help us to establish as a necessity the hypothesis of subject – object – based plurality of methodological approaches to grasp the truth. We cannot frame hypotheses without experimentation and we cannot experiment without hypotheses. Even when we reconcile both approaches, each can still stand on its own as a distinct theory that is not reducible to another theory in an unnecessary reconciliation. We have shown that even if the reconciliation becomes necessary, the product of the reconciliation only becomes one among many other approaches to get the correct representation of reality. As far as our era is concerned, as far as natural science and metaphysics are concerned, there is need to work with both in their distinctness while targeting knowledge the Kantian way as a combined product of speculation and experimentation, a combined product of the mind and the object without giving priority to the mind over the object as Kant does. Our priority is given to the truth that can make use of both distinct approaches or reconcile them without destroying their distinctness, and above all, reconcile them only as one competitive approach among others.

8.2: The Scientific Analogy of Kant's Revolution in Contemporary Epistemology

That Kant carried out a revolution in epistemology is an obvious reality because the deduction of the categories that lead to synthetic *a priori* judgment implies that the quest for knowledge has to undergo a methodic turn around with regards to what obtained in the past. If epistemology is the philosophical inquiry into the sources, content and relevance of knowledge, and if scientific knowledge based on experimentation in accordance with experience is the best chance to attain validity and objectivity, then epistemology has much to

do with philosophy of sciences. The influence that natural scientists had on Kant puts him at the crossroads of epistemology, metaphysics and philosophy of sciences. Referring to his revolution in epistemology as ‘Copernican’ was neither a mistake nor a coincidence for Immanuel Kant. It is because Kant had an extensive mastery of the views of natural philosophers and natural scientists of the era before him and of his era. But given the scientific context of the time, as well as the nature of a scientific revolution, an understanding of the scientific analogy of the Kantian epistemological revolution entails a critical re-reading of the salient points on the ‘scientificity’ of the views of Kant and authors of his era so as to take the debate to our contemporary era. Is the Kantian revolution, in its scientific analogy, capable of solving problems in our era? The cross-examination of views is dominated by astronomy and thus the movement of heavenly bodies but most especially the phenomenon of motion in the universe involving physics and especially mathematics throwing the *a priori* light on the scientific theories of the time. This subsection of our work is a cross – examination of epistemological and astronomical views that take the debate on truth to our era from the prism of a scientific analogy of astronomy and epistemology.

Among the ancient thinkers of epistemology and astronomy respected by Kant, there is Aristotle, known for empiricism and nearly archaic astronomical views that conditioned some of the Kantian views that are relevant in our era. The case of Aristotle is peculiar as one of the ancients to establish the empirical link as the criterion of objectivity and validity of knowledge. In fact, according to Kant, “Aristotle may be regarded as the chief of the empiricists [...]”⁴³² He is considered as chief empiricist because despite the diversity of themes that he treated in many books, he is one of the earliest authors to take the traditional position of an empiricist asserting the primacy of experience over the mind. In Book Three of the book entitled *De Anima (On The Soul)*, Aristotle makes it clear that

*[...] since there is nothing that exists as separate apart from the perceptible magnitudes [...], it is in the perceptible forms that one finds the intelligible things - both the things said to exist in abstraction and any active dispositions and passive attributes of the perceptible things. On account of this, without perceiving one would not be able to learn or comprehend anything; and whenever one contemplates, it is necessary to contemplate some image at the same time (for images are like perceptions, except without material).*⁴³³

This means that there is nothing in the mind that is not derived from experience. Thus the mind originally is a blank slate until it receives perceptions or representations of objects of

⁴³² *Ibid.*, History of Pure Reason, p. 667.

⁴³³ Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. Mark Shiffman, Newburyport: Focus Publishing R. Pullings Co., 2011, p. 92.

sense-experience. This is the traditional bedrock of empiricism. Kant acknowledges the position of Aristotle as the central figure of empiricism and uses the view partly to show that it is successful when it makes the empirical link the criterion of truth but it is partly a failure when it goes to the dogmatic extreme of rejecting all transcendental ideas which constitute the grounding for morality and religion. In our era, we keep both extremes and even use the reconciliatory version of the two as a third option for more plurality.

However, in astronomy, Aristotle's view of the movement of heavenly bodies was very far from the reality accepted today. In the Greek Antiquity and long before the real Copernican revolution in astronomy, Aristotle had stated a view that brings to light contradictions between two schools of thought, one that holds that the earth is at the centre of the universe and another which rejects this view, and especially controversies about the then supposed movement of the earth that Aristotle rejected. In the book entitled *On The Heavens*, Aristotle notes that

Let us [...] decide the question whether the earth moves or is at rest for [...] there are some who make it one of the stars, and others who, setting it at the centre, suppose it to be rolled and in motion about the pole as axis. That both views are untenable will be clear if we take as our starting-point the fact that the earth's motion, whether the earth be at the centre or away from it, must needs be a constrained motion. It cannot be the movement of the earth itself.⁴³⁴

Aristotle had rejected the complete movement of the earth itself and did not really make it clear whether the earth was at the centre of the universe or not. Aristotle could not see the earth moving as a complete entity by itself. We are in 350 B.C, long before Copernicus turned things around in the early 16th century. Strictly, then, it is clear that, apart from the empirical criterion for truth, Aristotle's astronomy was very remote from the revolution on which the Kantian analogy is based. Aristotle, as was the case with most ancient's authors, does not see how the earth can move wholly. This is the ancient geocentric view of a stationary earth at the centre of the universe, a view developed in detail by Claudius Ptolemy.

The ancient Roman astronomer defends the geocentric model of the universe in a more systematic way. According to Ptolemy, only the geocentric model of the universe harmonizes with other events in the universe like the eclipse of the moon. In his only surviving book, *Almagest*, Ptolemy holds emphatically that

⁴³⁴ Aristotle, "On the Heavens", trans. J .L. Stocks, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, The Revised Oxford Translation, edited by Jonathan Barnes, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 1067 - 1068.

*[...] if one [...] considers the position of the earth, one will find that the phenomena associated with it could take place only if we assume that it is in the middle of heavens, like the centre of the sphere. [...] if the earth did not lie in the middle [of the universe], the whole order of the length of daylight would be fundamentally upset. Furthermore, eclipses of the moon would not be restricted to situations where the moon is diametrically opposite, but at intervals of less than a semi-circle.*⁴³⁵

His argument is that, if the earth were not the centre of the universe, it would have had more chances of coming in between the sun and the moon at a position that will not always divide the circle into two, but at an angle other than that which divides the circle into two halves.

With Nicholas Copernicus, the heliocentric view gives a more convincing model of the universe with epicycles replacing the equant circles of Ptolemy, and with the earth having daily rotation along its axes, an annual revolution along its orbits and an annual tilting of its axis. The Kantian revolution could thus neither be Aristotelian nor Ptolemaic because the ancient authors were of the geocentric view of a stationary earth and a moving sun. Was the Kantian revolution more Newtonian than Copernican or vice versa? Kant gives us an idea of the answer himself:

*[...] the fundamental laws of the motions of the heavenly bodies gave established certainty to what Copernicus had at first assumed only as an hypothesis, and at the same time yielded proof of the invisible force (the Newtonian attraction) which holds the universe together. The latter would have remained forever undiscovered if Copernicus had not dared, in a manner contradictory to the senses, but yet true, to seek the observed movements, not in the heavenly bodies, but in the spectator.*⁴³⁶

The ‘spectator’ is the earth in the geocentric model, the earth that is now proven to have forces which cause it to move in the heliocentric view where the sun becomes the new ‘spectator’. The Newtonian attraction that Kant refers to as the ‘invisible force’ is the mutual gravitational pull exerted by heavenly bodies on each other. Yet the heavenly bodies do not fall into each other because the harmonizing wisdom of God kept them at considerable distances away from each other. In this way, Copernicus gave the hypothesis and Newton demonstrated the hypothesis by observing an apple falling from a tree. Then Galileo calculated the acceleration that goes with gravity to explain how bodies falling from elevated areas gain speed directly proportional to the time-intervals from the point where the object was at rest.

⁴³⁵ Claudius Ptolemy, *Almagest*, trans. G. J. Toomer, London : Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1984, pp. 41 – 42.

⁴³⁶ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Preface to the Second Edition, note a, p. 25.

If Copernicus provided the revolutionary hypothesis and Newton proved the hypothesis experimentally, then how does the Newtonian or Copernican revolution of Kant on his epistemological revolution help us advance in the contemporary era? Robert Hahn insists that Kant would not have loved to be remembered as a mere formulator of a hypothesis, he would have preferred the role of the one who provided the rigorous deduction to the hypothesis. To Hahn,

[...] the idea of demonstration is radically transformed in Metaphysics. Rigorous deduction now claims to be justified in two directions: an inference from the premises to the conclusion, as traditionally accepted, and now by analogy with the sciences, an inference from the conclusion (observations/phenomena) back to the premises (causes/principles). It is this sort of revolution that Kant seems to have believed that he affected, on the order of Newton's demonstration. This adaptation and employment of a two directional deduction method in sharp contrast with the one directional deduction [...] is Kant's Newtonian revolution in philosophy. If anything deserves to be called revolutionary in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, as triggering a sudden and radical change in the agenda of philosophical programs, it is, I believe, just this.⁴³⁷

Hahn is making reference to Kant's demonstrations that move from the causes to the effects and from the effects back to the causes. Traditionally, for example, we move from the premises to the conclusion like the causality of transcendental freedom which gives rise to the phenomenal chain of causes in the universe, and then we take the reverse movement from the conclusion of the phenomenal chain of causes back to the premises in transcendental freedom. This is the Kantian Newtonian revolution according to Hahn. Yet, Newton rejects the idea of framing a hypothesis which is the core of Kant's philosophy. The Kantian revolution was Copernican and Newtonian, Copernican in the hypothesis and Newtonian in the rigour of the demonstration of the hypothesis. The students of nature, by themselves, understood the need to change their approach in science; and Kant simply did a similar thing in philosophy from traditional idealism to transcendental idealism. The scientists had to move from induction to deduction, two-directional deduction for that matter. In this light, the Kantian revolution in philosophy was in line with the scientific revolution of his time.

Since the natural sciences had emphatically moved away from philosophy, Kant could only make it a revolution in philosophy by analogy with regards to scientific innovations. The Kantian revolution is also Keplerian if we consider the contributions made by Kepler to

⁴³⁷ Robert Hahn, *Kant's Newtonian Revolution in Philosophy*, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988, p. 125.

astronomy. Kepler was a contemporary of Galileo and thus was overshadowed by the genius of Galileo. Yet, he read the works of Ptolemy and Copernicus and made a demonstrative synthesis in *New Astronomy*. Johannes Kepler in his astronomical masterpiece tries to put to rest the controversies involving his predecessors on the movement of heavenly bodies. This is one of his statements in support of the heliocentric model:

*That [...] the sun remains in place in the centre of the world, is most probably shown (among other things) by its being the source of motion for at least five planets. For whether you follow Copernicus or Brahe, the source of the motion for five of the planets is in the sun, and in Copernicus, for a sixth as well, namely, the earth. And it is more likely that the source of all motion should remain in place rather than move. [...] Now let us consider the bodies of the sun and the earth, and decide which is better suited to being the source of motion for the other body. Does the sun, which moves the rest of the planets, move the earth, or does the earth move the sun, which moves the rest, and which is so many times greater? Unless we are to be forced to admit the absurd conclusion that the sun is moved by the earth, we must allow the sun to be fixed and the earth to move.*⁴³⁸

The sun, as the mover of other heavenly bodies, must be at the centre of the universe and at rest. That which moves others cannot itself be moved by others. The sun is the unmoved mover of heavenly bodies and is at the centre of universe. Copernicus had shown that the sun moves the earth and Kepler confirmed the heliocentric theory. Since Kepler also provided proof for a hypothesis formulated by Copernicus, we can say that the Kantian revolution in epistemology was also Keplerian at the level of the scientific analogy extended from astronomy to epistemology.

Beginning with Galileo, Kant saw predecessors that he refers to as ‘Students of nature’ who started learning how not to depend entirely on nature in order to understand nature, the students learnt to use their minds to give the rule to nature. Here, knowledge is not just the content but the method, for, no matter the intensity of the observations on nature, no knowledge will emerge except the mind is made to dictate its own rules to nature. Like Newton, Galileo did not like to frame hypothesis at first sight like metaphysicians would do and ended up in assumptions that cannot be proven. When what was supposed to be a hypothesis for scientific experimentation ends up as a mere assumption without proof, we are in metaphysics rejected by Newton and Galileo. At their time, Newton and Galileo were into

⁴³⁸ Johannes Kepler, *New Astronomy*, trans. William H. Donahue, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, Introduction, pp. 52-53.

Mathematical Physics or using *a priori* mathematical principles to explain nature, yet they did not want to frame hypotheses that could not be demonstrated in nature.

Thus when Galileo calculated the speed of a ball falling down an inclined plane, known as acceleration due to gravity, the intention was to explain a natural phenomenon and not just to make vain assumptions as is the case with metaphysics. The hypotheses of nature proven using mathematical principles is the difference between science and metaphysics because metaphysical assumptions, though *a priori* like those of mathematics, lack the clarity, accuracy, validity and objectivity of mathematics rendering them epistemologically useless as vain assumptions. The line between Metaphysics and Science is Mathematics, and it is the mathematics that was used by the students of nature to distance themselves from the metaphysical game of sterile assumptions. Metaphysics can thus become a science if and only if its principles acquire mathematical clarity and can be used to explain nature.

From Galileo to Newton, Kant obtained the love for mathematical physics and used it to deduce the categories which are to serve as *a priori* principles for explaining experience without going beyond experience for epistemological objectives or theoretical use of reason. The Kantian critique of metaphysics is based on the mathematical physics of Galileo and Newton. Joseph C. Pitt in *Galileo, Human Knowledge and the Book of Nature* states that

*[...] proper method is, for Galileo, the key knowledge, where knowledge is a measure of our ability to achieve stated objectives and goals on the basis of methods and assumptions presently accepted in the public domain. This is essentially the claim that the mark of knowledge is successful action; the deliberate bringing about of a specific state of affairs using specific means. The focus then is on method, not the world, nor on what we say about the world. In this view the most important feature of knowledge is success in achieving our objectives, not a metaphysical assumption about the way the world must be. This was, very roughly, Galileo's view. He rejected metaphysics in favour of a secure method of generating knowledge. Or as stillman Drake put it, 'The substitution of methodology for metaphysics is the key to the open system which Galileo offered as a rival to the closed systems of the ancient philosophers.'*⁴³⁹

Knowledge is method, and methods put knowledge at the service of action for specific goals. Knowledge is method because it produces results. Metaphysical assumptions lack methods and goals and do not lead to any action and cannot produce results. Metaphysical assumptions lack methods and goals and do not lead to any action and cannot produce results.

⁴³⁹ Joseph C. Pitt, *Galileo, Human Knowledge and the Book of Nature, Method Replaces Metaphysics*, The University of Western Ontario Series, Ontario: Springer Science + Business Media, 1992, p. 4.

Assuming things about the world does not give rise to knowledge because assumptions do not follow a specific method for specific goals. The knowledge referred to by Galileo has the methodological guarantee of mathematical physics which uses accurate *a priori* principles to experimentally demonstrate the laws of nature. The metaphysics of ancient philosophers puts the researcher within closed systems that do not give room for innovations and revolutions in methodology to attain new goals. The methodological openness of Galileo permits the researcher to abandon assumptions that lack orderliness and conceive and demonstrate laws vigorously.

One of the cherished methods of Galileo, respected by Kant, is the need to move from the effects back to the causes, and Kant even moved from the causes to the effects in the two-directional deduction. Galileo took up the approach which eliminates metaphysics. In the *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems-Ptolemaic and Copernican*, Galileo notes that

*In questions of natural science [...], knowledge of the effects is what leads to an investigation and discovery of the causes. Without this, ours would be a blind journey or one even more uncertain than that; for we should not know where we wanted to come out, whereas the blind know where we wanted to come out, whereas the blind know where they wish to arrive. Hence, before all else, it is necessary to have a knowledge of the effects whose causes are seeking.*⁴⁴⁰

At least a blind man knows where he wants to go to even if he may not know where he is coming from. If we do not move from the effects to the causes, we would neither know where we are coming from nor where we are going to. The causes are the causes of some things or some events; the causes are the things or events or principles which give rise to something else. The effect is that which proves to us there is a cause in the first place. We cannot have *a priori* knowledge of a cause without having knowledge of the effect. But causality as a category that links an event or object to another can be conceived as an *a priori* principle used to explain phenomena. Unlike Hume who could not establish the empirical necessity to link a cause to an effect and referred to the phenomenon as custom or habit, Kant thinks that causality is an *a priori* principle thanks to which we explain empirical phenomena, as will be examined in the second part of our work. Empirically, no one can investigate an event or principle considered a cause without moving from those events or objects considered as the

⁴⁴⁰ Galileo Galilei, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems-Ptolemaic & Copernican*, trans. Stillman Drake, Second Edition, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967, The fourth Day, p. 417.

effect. Where Kant disagrees with the student of nature is when the latter are buried in nature which is blind until the mind gives a rule to it *a priori* and yet a coherent and consistent justification of the occurrence of events in nature. Empirically then, a study of causes begins with an understanding of the effects that the causes give rise to.

Kant, too, investigates causes from the effects in phenomena. Though the Kantian study of causes from phenomena leads reason into antinomies when reason oversteps the bounds of experience to project a transcendental causality in freedom which in turn makes the phenomenal chain effects of freedom through the two-directional deduction, Kant accepts the empirical limit to the chain of causes for epistemological reasons and only projects the transcendental causality of freedom for the sake of morality and religion. Like Galileo, then, Kant admits that a genuine investigation of causes must start with the effects; but Kant adds that

*The non-sensible cause of [...] representations is completely unknown to us, and cannot therefore be intuited by us as objects. For such an object would have to be represented as neither in space nor in time (these being merely conditions of sensible representation), and apart from such conditions we cannot think any intuition.*⁴⁴¹

For the sake of knowledge, the study of causes from the prior study of effects must respect the empirical limit where the objects are given to intuition in time and space. But the ultimate cause of the phenomenal chain of causes, if taken out of time and space, becomes non-sensible and thus unknowable. The investigation of causes, if taken out of time and space, becomes non-sensible and thus unknowable. The investigation on causes for the sake of knowledge ends where experience ends. Beyond experience, the non-sensible cause is unknowable and serves a practical purpose in religion and morality. In the modern era, the phenomenal and transcendental conception of causality have to exist as two distinct explanations of the world whose results can be complementary and thus useful in a contemporary theory of knowledge that takes into account the complexity of the reality.

Kant understands the fear of the student of nature sticking to experience without trying to frame any hypotheses. Science has to maintain the accuracy of mathematics which gives an accurate reading of nature. The fear that may be associated with the Kantian revolution is to prevent science from going the way of metaphysics to make assumptions that are not suited explanations of any possible experience. Yet, reason has to give the rule to

⁴⁴¹ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Antinomy of Pure Reason, p. 441.

nature and the metaphysical venture will become useful in morality and religion and not in epistemology. Kant knows the apprehensive attitude of natural scientists, just like Copernicus understood the fears in his predecessors who thought that a moving earth could be characterized by violence, enough violence that could lead to a disintegration of the universe:

[...] if anyone believes that the earth rotates surely he will hold that its motion is natural, not violent. But what is in accordance with nature produces effects contrary to those resulting from violence, since things to which force or violence is applied must disintegrate and cannot long endure. On the other hand, that which is brought into existence by nature is well-ordered and preserved in its best. Ptolemy has no cause, then, to fear that the earth and everything earthly will be disrupted by a rotation created through nature's handiwork, which is quite different from what art or human intelligence can accomplish.⁴⁴²

Since Copernicus holds that Ptolemy had no reason to be afraid that the movement of the earth could lead to the disintegration of the universe because nature works in harmony and not violence, we can push the analogy further to say that the natural scientists do not have to be afraid that the Kantian system of categories or *a priori* concepts for giving rules to nature could reduce science to vain metaphysical speculations framing assumptions as hypothesis.

The power to conceive categories to give rules to experience is also a natural property of human reason, and the understanding which is a natural faculty cannot be used to destroy nature. The only problem is that reason can go beyond the bounds of experience with obvious epistemological failures. As far as understanding is concerned, the categories, conceived *a priori*, nonetheless find applicability in nature making deductive science a product of the human mind working actively (and not passively) with experience. At this level too, the scientific understanding of the analogy fits perfectly into the Kantian system of philosophy. The scientific analogy of the Kantian revolution is understood in the contemporary society as paradigm shifts, many of which shifts have not accommodated the distinct existence of 'non – scientific' approaches making science an obstacle to the attainment of truth in complexity when scientists do not think that other researchers can go beyond the scientific method to seek the truth that will still not be less useful simply because it does not respect the canons of the science.

The Kantian revolution, in its critique of metaphysics, sticks to some elements of the metaphysics of Gottfried Leibniz. This is when the reconciliatory approach emerges. But the

⁴⁴² Nicolas Copernicus, *On The Revolutions*, ed. Ferzy Dobrzycki, Edward Rosen, Poland: Polish scientific publishers, 1978, Book I, Chapter 8, p. 15.

role of Leibniz is very important as he insists on the distinctness of metaphysics and the necessity for its possible coexistence with natural science, natural coexistence in pluralism which is very important for our era in a crisis of truth. In his *Discourse on Metaphysics*, Leibniz rejects the views of scientists who reject the final cause from physics. This cause has to do with finality or ultimate end for which things happen in the universe.

Natural science, in its intention to interpret nature, and stay within nature without looking for any causes of nature beyond the nature itself, deliberately ignores or sidelines the supreme impact of the intelligent author of the universe. Leibniz wants to rehabilitate metaphysics against the claims of students of physics and mathematics making the universe an autonomous existence of forces giving rise to various forms of motion in a mechanics and dynamics that make no reference to final cause and to God. To such fanatics of nature, Leibniz has this to say:

All those who see the admirable structure of animals find themselves led to recognize the wisdom of the author of things and I advise those who have any sentiments of piety and indeed of true philosophy to hold aloof from the expressions of certain pretensions minds who instead of saying that eyes were made for seeing, say that we see because we find ourselves having eyes. When one seriously holds such opinions which hand everything over to material necessity or to a kind of chance [...] it is difficult to recognize an intelligent author of nature.⁴⁴³

On the one hand, Leibniz is trying to restore the lost glory of metaphysics. Secondly, he is restoring the glory of religion and morality by making God the author of man and of the universe. We actually see because God gave us eyes to see and not just because we accidentally have eyes, as if there were another human nature in comparison with which we can say that we could still have been better off without eyes. The eyes have a finality implanted in them by the creator of man and the universe. The natural scientists focus on the efficient cause of man and ignore the final cause of the creator, just to make the universe an autonomous entity functioning through laws that have no transcendental origin. The influence of Leibniz on Kant on this point is obvious in the antinomies of pure reason solved by Kant through the projection of transcendental freedom as the causality of all phenomenal causes and God as the ideal of pure reason to serve as the ultimate goal of morality and religion in the practical use of reason.

⁴⁴³ Gottfried Wilhelm Freiherr Von Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, trans. George Montgomery, Albert R. Chandler, New York: Doubleday, 1960, p. 432.

Leibniz inevitably treats the metaphysical problems inherent in the conception of motion in the universe and especially those forces responsible for motion in the universe. The Kantian attempts to reconcile the views of Newton and those of Leibniz is a reconciliation of natural science and metaphysics, with the former meant for epistemological purposes and the latter meant for moral and religious purposes. Though Newton admits the existence of God, he does not want framing a hypothesis to be part of his scientific methodology. On the other hand, Leibniz appreciates the mechanical and mathematical explanation of the forces of nature but insists that the place of God is primordial in our understanding of the universe. Kant would not go to the extreme of a natural scientist that completely rejects the framing of hypothesis, but Kant would not also accept the views of a metaphysician who thinks that transcendental entities can be objects of objective and valid knowledge. Leibniz sees God as an object of knowledge and as the source of all human knowledge but Kant sees God as an object of morality and religion. Kant sees natural science as a useful methodological tool for philosophy because it makes experience the bounds within which our ideas must apply to give rise to knowledge, but Kant rejects the extremism of natural science when it declares metaphysics completely useless without even leaving room for it to serve as the foundation of a future system of religion and morality. Leibniz himself attempted a reconciliation of his views with those of natural scientists, a reconciliation that did not take the angle given to it by Kant because Leibniz was seeing metaphysics as a genuine approach for attaining the truth.

In his attempts to reconcile efficient causes with final causes, Leibniz shows that though natural science seems to have banished the metaphysical forces of nature, the forces persist. This is very important for us in this era. The crux of the matter lies in Leibniz's distinction between the 'force of motion' and the 'quantity of motion'. Physics as mechanics and mathematics as geometry give perfect demonstrations and principles for understanding the 'quantity of motion' when something moves from one place to another, for example. Leibniz insists that if we look at motion formally as change of place, the quantities of motion can make it impossible for us to see the motion as absolute especially if two or more objects mutually change places. In this case, the mutual displacement of objects makes it difficult for us to see something in the bodies that exchange places; the case becomes different when we consider the "force" of the motion:

[...] the force or the approximate cause of these changes is something more real and there are sufficient grounds for attributing it to one body rather than to another, and it is only through this latter investigation that we can determine to which one the movement must appertain. Now this force is

*something different from size, from form or from motion, and it can be seen from this consideration that the whole meaning of a body is not exhausted in its extension together with its modifications as our moderns persuade themselves.*⁴⁴⁴

The force is metaphysical; it is not physical. Leibniz thinks that this force is real and a genuine object of knowledge, genuine object of metaphysical knowledge to be more perceive. When objects move or change positions reciprocally, we cannot really situate the body in which the motion reposes, we cannot attribute it with certainty to one over the other of two or more bodies.

However, when we consider the force of motion, we go deeper than what natural scientists tell us about the qualities related to extension of bodies like size, shape or even the motion itself. Here, the actual motion observed is different from the force of motion. The force of motion is not directly visible as natural scientists think, the cause of the motion goes beyond the motion itself. No matter how strange it may sound to the natural scientists, the force of the motion is metaphysical. Thus the force of motion is not seen in the motion; it cannot be seen in the sizes, shapes or positions of the moving bodies. It is a force that geometry and physics cannot explain with the empirical necessity that is required by their method. It is a metaphysical force, and this is similar to the force or elastic and electric Spirit identified but not empirically proven by Newton in the ‘General Scholium’ of his *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. We can say that Newton identified the force but refused to take the metaphysical step to investigate it, after all he did not want to investigate a ‘framed hypothesis.’

Leibniz thus found the need to restate the place of metaphysics sidelined by modern philosophers working on the fashionable method of natural science and regarding metaphysics as an obsolete and irrelevant relic of the Greco - Roman Antiquity. From Newton, Kant had the scientific model to follow while looking for other means to rescue morality and religion. From Leibniz, Kant had the metaphysical approach with which to seek the ultimate causality of experience beyond the experience itself but not for the sake of knowledge or theoretical reason. From Kant, making use of these authors, we have one way of mastering reality that needs to complement other methods or exist separately from other methods. In striking lines of his *Discourse on Metaphysics*, Leibniz makes it clear that

It appears more and more clear that although all the particular phenomena of nature can be explained mathematically or mechanically by those who

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 430 - 431.

*understand them, yet nevertheless, the general principles of corporeal nature and even of mechanics are metaphysical rather than geometric, and belong rather to certain indivisible forms or natures, as the causes of the appearances, than to the corporeal mass or to extension. In this way, we are able to reconcile the mechanical philosophy of the moderns with the circumspection of those intelligent and well-meaning persons who, with a certain justice, fear that we are becoming too far removed from immaterial beings and that we are thus prejudicing piety.*⁴⁴⁵

These lines are striking as an alternative to the fashionable empirical criterion of natural sciences respected by Kant, but not at the expense of metaphysics needed in religion and morality.

We cannot completely discard immaterial beings from the realms of existence. While studying the material entities applying physics and geometry to nature, honesty and what Leibniz calls ‘piety’ which is some sort of philosophical honesty requires that we take the metaphysical step to immaterial entities whenever we come across those forces that cannot be explained by the extension of bodies involved in the motion. Leibniz sounds very respectful of the natural sciences though a subtle mind may read in him implicit sarcasm which is in no way up to the level of the despicable sarcasm used by natural scientists in their statements making outright mockery of metaphysics. Leibniz is surely disappointed in the way metaphysics is sidelined by natural sciences and yet, he does not see the natural sciences sincerely giving a complete and accurate explanation of nature in all piety using induction based on the respect of the empirical boundaries of scientific truth.

Can natural science do completely without metaphysics in our era? Has the reign of natural sciences completely destroyed metaphysics in the quest for truth? Leibniz thinks that a reconciliation of these two camps is a difficult task. That is why the two camps can exist as distinct methods of grasping angles of truth in our era. He admits the necessity to reconcile the two but is honest enough to see it almost as an impossible mission given the extremism and exchange of sarcastic statements despising each other. This is the state of affairs that Kant inherited from Newton and Leibniz and others who took side with one against the other. That state of affairs did not change up to the problematic postmodern era when the philosophers decided to put all the methodological approaches to question especially those which had the kind of systematic unity now considered detrimental to the quest for truth. The glory that can come with a reconciliation of the two camps does not stop Leibniz from accepting the gloomy situation faced by writers from both camps. In the words of Leibniz,

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 431.

*Both explanations are good; both are useful not only for the admiring of the work of a great artificer, but also for the discovery of useful facts in physics and medicine. And writers who take these diverse roots should not speak ill of each other. For I see that those who attempt to explain beauty by the divine anatomy ridicule those who imagine that the apparently fortuitous flow of certain liquids has been able to produce such a beautiful variety and that they regard them as overbold and irrelevant. These others on the contrary treat the former as simple and superstitions, and compare them to those ancients who regarded the physics as impious when they maintained that not Jupiter thundered but some material which is found in the clouds. The best plan would be to join the two ways of thinking.*⁴⁴⁶

The extremism of natural science and metaphysics is deeper than just a matter of ideological and methodological differences. It is about a philosophical legacy from the antiquity that Leibniz did not want to see dissolved in natural sciences.

Beyond the preservation of a philosophical legacy, the problematic reconciliation referred to by Leibniz can be a methodological asset to grasp the ever complex reality from all possible angles. Both ways of explaining reality are acceptable at their levels because they help us focus on both final and efficient causes. Leibniz does not really say how the supposed reconciliation can be carried out. Kant achieves the reconciliation by making metaphysical entities the basis of morality and religion. But from all indications, Leibniz wants an epistemological reconciliation as two ways of mastering the truth from different angles. With an undertone of disappointment, Leibniz pleads with researchers on both sides to stop ridiculing each other.

Kant himself uses the ridiculing vocabulary to talk about the ‘mock combats’ of metaphysicians. Yet, Kant has the key to the beginning of the reconciliation, or at least the conditions of possibility of reconciliation between metaphysics and the natural sciences. But the reconciliation achieved by Kant only helps us grasp a fraction of the reality from that angle given that the rigidity of the methodological product of reconciliation does not help us go beyond Kant. We have to go beyond Kant in an approach that accepts plurality as an asset. Yet the challenge is for the fashionable method of science to accommodate metaphysics without reducing one to the other and without unnecessary reconciliations of distinct methods. Restoring the enduring value of metaphysics at the heart of science is an important step to the embrace of plurality so that we can have alternatives to the fashionable method of the empirical sciences that have also shown their limits.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

8.3: Toward a Contemporary Metaphysical Foundation of Natural Science

Despite the merciless Kantian attack of metaphysics in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and at the heart of what is known as the critical era between 1781 and 1790 when he wrote the “three critiques” to wit, the *Critique of Pure Reason* of 1781, the *Critique of Practical Reason* of 1788 and the *Critique of Judgment* of 1790, the era in Kant’s life when Kantian philosophy was at its best level of methodical rigour and profound development of ideas, Kant still found a way to state the conditions of possibility for metaphysics to have a role in the prestigious and fashionable natural sciences. In 1783, after remarks on the conceptual density of the massive *Critique of Pure Reason* by readers, Kant wrote a more readable and conceptually less dense *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* of 1783 showing that synthetic *a priori* judgments could become metaphysical cognition, but most especially in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* of 1786 in which, despite the severe critique, metaphysics, through the *a priori* accuracy of mathematics, could serve as a foundation for natural sciences.

Obviously, Kant did not want the reader to see his work as a complete destruction of metaphysics; neither did he want his work to be read as dogmatic idealism where the material world would be a creation of the mind as a shallow reader may regard the categories. The success of mathematics, in its principles used in natural sciences, was to be as source of hope for metaphysics. What kind of metaphysics can serve as a foundation for natural sciences in our era? To what extent can it be asserted that the Kantian epistemologically destructive-constructive critique of metaphysics beneficial to natural science in our era? This subsection of our work is an attempt to prove that if metaphysics should have a place as the foundation of natural sciences, such metaphysics has to be Kantian in form and content. In its form, it must admit the critique of reason as a step to eliminate illusions. In its content it has to provide those apodictic and universal rules that are still indispensable to science despite the threats of methodological anarchy in the postmodern era.

Firstly, in the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, Kant is not only looking for conditions of possibility for metaphysics to become a science but also and above all for the distinctive feature of metaphysics that will make it different from other sciences. Generally, the term “science” refers to a body of systematic knowledge no matter the basis or principles of the systematization and the sources of the knowledge. But natural science has nature or the phenomenal world as object and the experimentation as criterion of verification of hypotheses

that are not framed by the mind but derived from the same phenomenal world. The study of laws of motion in physics shows that natural science has a mathematical foundation through its principles. Thus if metaphysics were to become a science it must not necessarily have the distinctive features of natural sciences because despite the unity in method, natural sciences like physics, biology, chemistry still have their distinctive features. On the source and distinctive feature of metaphysics as a possible science, Kant holds that

[...] concerning the sources of metaphysical cognition, it already lies in the concept of metaphysics that they cannot be empirical. The principles of such cognition (which include not only its fundamental propositions or basic principles, but also its fundamental concepts) must therefore never be taken from experience; for the cognition is supposed to be not physical but metaphysical, i.e., lying beyond experience. Therefore it will be based upon neither outer experience, which constitutes the source of physics proper, nor inner, which provides the foundation of empirical psychology. It is therefore cognition a priori, or from pure understanding and pure reason.⁴⁴⁷

If it is cognition *a priori* from pure understanding then it deals with categories that can give rise to “knowledge” in the natural scientist’s meaning of the term since mathematics also uses *a priori* concepts which yet serve as foundation for natural science because its concepts accurately provide rules for experience like the mathematical principles applied in physics to explain the phenomenon of motion in the universe.

If metaphysics is cognition *a priori* from pure reason, then it uses ideas which are actually categories converted to transcend all realms of possible experience to seek unity of reason with understanding and with itself. In this sense, what metaphysics can do is not to link concepts with experience like the categories do, but to take concepts beyond the bounds of experience to project abstract entities as the ultimate causality of empirical causes without the kind of experimental proof that natural scientists use as criterion of truth. Kant insists that metaphysical principles must go beyond experience to seek the foundations of all things and unity of ideas in a synthetic totality. Transcending both inner and outer experiences, metaphysical judgments are necessarily *a priori*. But in the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics that Will be Able to Come Forward as Science* and as a response to the misinterpretations and misunderstandings of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant had to make it clear that metaphysical judgments are synthetic *a priori* judgments which constitute the most important epistemological aspect of his philosophy.

⁴⁴⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science*, *op. cit.*, Preamble on the Distinguishing Feature of All Metaphysical Cognition, p.15.

While analytic judgments refer to statements in which the concept in the predicate is already contained and understood in the concept in the subject, the case is different with synthetic judgments in which the concept of the predicate adds something new or something foreign to the concept in the subject. For metaphysical judgments to be synthetic *a priori* implies that they are independent of experience and yet add something new to our stock of knowledge. To Kant,

[...] Metaphysics properly has to do with synthetic propositions a priori, and these alone constitute its aim, for which it indeed requires many analyses of its concepts (therefore many analytic judgments), in which analyses, though, the procedure is no different from that in any other type of cognition when one seeks simply to make its concepts clear through analysis. But the generation of cognition a priori in accordance with both intuition and concepts, ultimately of synthetic propositions a priori as well, and specifically in philosophical cognition, forms the essential content of metaphysics.⁴⁴⁸

The task now is to show that such synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible to constitute the content of metaphysics that can serve as a science because, though dealing with concepts independently of experience, it still adds something new to the stock of our knowledge. Thus metaphysics cannot and should not be viewed as a science that derives concepts from nature; it has to be a science of pure thought increasing our knowledge in thought and not necessarily in any empirical application.

As an analytic science breaking down concepts, there is nothing epistemological valuable about metaphysics because the explanation of concepts in itself does not add anything new to our knowledge. But if the analysis of concepts is a step to acquiring new concepts, that is, if the analysis of concepts is a stage that leads us to build new concepts, then the preliminary analytic task of metaphysics is not useless. Here, in a bid to rehabilitate metaphysics, and based on the objections of Leibniz with regards to the fashionable natural science rejecting the immaterial realities, Kant now admits the chance of building knowledge purely on concepts that must not have any corresponding intuitions. How then are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible? Mathematics is a glaring example of such knowledge; and in its formal *a priori* closeness with mathematics, such cognition is possible in metaphysics by means of the categories examined in the transcendental deduction of the second part of our work.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

Secondly, and most importantly, Kant has to show how metaphysics is the foundation of natural science. In the book whose title is evocative enough as *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, Kant makes a series of concessions that bring back metaphysics to the realm of sciences or at least make it possible for metaphysics to exist with the sciences. Natural sciences cannot have apodictic or necessary principles derived from experience. The absolute necessity of principles implies that the principles must be derived from pure reason independently of all sorts of experience. All apodictic principles are thus rational and not empirical in their nature and origin. It is an asset to natural science that its principles are purely rational to guarantee absolute necessity and yet relate to experience in such a way as to be the source of laws for nature. But then, to take reason to its highest level of production of principles of absolute necessity, natural science has to admit the presence of metaphysics somewhere in the conception of its principles because metaphysics represents the highest use of reason in the production of *a priori* necessary principles. Here we need to go beyond mathematics. Though mathematical concepts are *a priori*, they imply intuition because their objects have to be represented in the mind such that the principles constructed will apply in experience though their construction did not directly regard experience. Thus pushed to its highest level of construction of principles, and since reason does not set any limit to itself, metaphysics stretches the search for principles to the highest level of purity.

We are moving from the dissatisfaction of Physics and Chemistry and Biology with empirical principals that lack apodictic or absolute necessity to mathematics whose *a priori* principles find application in experience and finally to the highest level of use of reason in search of principles which is the level of metaphysics. The level of metaphysics must be supposed by natural sciences. Here, even if metaphysical principles do not find direct application in nature, they must be presupposed as the highest rational foundation of any explanation of nature:

All proper natural science therefore requires a pure part, on which the apodictic certainty that reason seeks therein can be based. And because this pure part is wholly different, in regard to its principles, from those that are merely empirical, it is also of the greatest utility to expound this part as far as possible in its entirety, separated and wholly unmixed with the other part; indeed, in accordance with the nature of the case it is an unavoidable duty with respect to method. This is necessary in order that one may precisely determine what reason can accomplish for itself, and where its power begins to require the assistance of principles of experience. Pure rational cognition from mere concepts is called pure philosophy or metaphysics; by contrast, that which grounds its cognition only on the construction of concepts, by means of

*the presentation of the object in an a priori intuition, is called mathematics. Properly so-called natural science presupposes, in the first place, metaphysics of nature.*⁴⁴⁹

The pure part of natural science is the rational foundation of the science. The pure part of a science cannot be empirical because empirical principles lack absolute necessity that can only be guaranteed by reason in its pure use for its own unity and completeness. The pure part of a science cannot accept any limits because that will limit the height of the search for principles. One cannot deliberately limit reason when looking for principles.

Of course, Kant is coming back to the limits he sets on reason so that its principles can have epistemological value when applicable to experience so that they can provide validity and objectivity to knowledge. The case is different with metaphysics at the foundation natural science. We cannot admit limits here. Even before searching the limit for epistemological reasons, we must allow reason stretch itself to its highest possibilities in the metaphysics of nature. In other words, we are here working on the assumption that nature has to be explained by the highest principles of the most fundamental aspect of philosophy. Kant insists that stretching reason to this level is for the sake of methodological completeness. In the quest for knowledge we can set limits to justify validity and objectivity. But in the search for principles reason must get to its highest level without looking at how far away it is from experience because rational principles have that character that, not based on experience, they must move as far away from experience as possible to justify their status as principles of pure reason.

Metaphysics is above mathematics because it represents reason in the fullness of its capacity. While mathematics deals with possible objects of intuition, metaphysics seeks unity of reason with itself and with the understanding and must be presupposed as a foundation of a science of nature. Mathematics builds concepts through *a priori* intuition where concepts are used as objects or concepts are given as objects for the development of other concepts in thought. With much respect for mathematics, Kant holds that we can only have knowledge in any science through the mathematics in the science, and the possibility of *a priori* knowledge of nature implies the building up of concepts like in the process of addition in mathematics. Those concepts are given in *a priori* intuition but can be made to apply to experience as we apply numbers to count real objects that exist in nature. In this way mathematics becomes the bedrock of our *a priori* knowledge of nature;

⁴⁴⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, *op. cit.*, Preface, p. 5.

But in order to make possible the application of mathematics to the doctrine of body, which only through this can become natural science, principles for the construction of the concepts that belong to the possibility of matter in general must be introduced first. Therefore, a complete analysis of the concept of a matter in general will have to be taken as the basis, and this is a task for pure philosophy – which, for this purpose, makes use of no particular experiences, but only that which it finds in the isolated (although intrinsically empirical) concept itself, in relation to the pure intuitions in space and time, and in accordance with laws that already essentially attach to the concept of nature in general, and is therefore a genuine metaphysics of corporeal nature.⁴⁵⁰

Mathematics is not applicable to entities of inner sense like the soul. But mathematics can be made to apply to a doctrine of the body. The doctrine of the body is understood within the framework of the conception of matter in general which entails a detailed analysis of the conditions of possibility of matter. This is a task for metaphysics because the study of nature in general or nature as a totality implies an analysis of concepts which, even if isolated, must be synthesized toward a totality of which matter and specific bodies are only a part.

It is about going beyond mathematics. We must move from particular bodies to laws that bind all of nature together. This is a task that requires the use of reason in its highest unifying principles which are metaphysical. The highest unifying principles of nature are not empirical but metaphysical because the concept of nature implies a unity in principles that mathematics alone cannot provide. Here, mathematics lies between Physics, Chemistry as sciences whose principles are empirical until they get a mathematical basis that makes them a science through *a priori* necessity and Metaphysics whose principles must be presupposed as the highest for unifying nature. Mathematics is above physics and chemistry because mathematics is their apodictic base and metaphysics is above mathematics as the source of the most unifying principles of nature.

The thin line between mathematical and metaphysical principles implies that any science based on mathematics, if not explicitly, at least implicitly, supposes a metaphysical foundation since nature only becomes possible as an apodictic necessity when we take *a priori* principles to their highest level in the realm of pure reason. But whenever the natural scientists got to the level of employment of mathematics that required that they should investigate the metaphysical foundation of all principles of nature, for fear of framing hypotheses and losing out on the much cherished empirical limits they set to valid and objective knowledge, preferred to take a step back as they considered a forward step into

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

metaphysics either as a useless venture or as one that would undermine the prestige of their science. And this is where natural scientists start ridiculing metaphysicians and the game of ridiculing became mutual with little or no chances of reconciliation.

The limit set by natural scientists on reason is one that they inevitably go beyond but cannot admit it; we can say they suppose or assume it in their principles unwillingly or at least with much disappointment to suppose what they set out to disprove:

Hence all natural philosophers who have wished to proceed mathematically in their occupation have always, and must have always, made use of metaphysical principles (albeit unconsciously), even if they themselves solemnly guarded against all claims of metaphysics upon their science. [...] All true metaphysics is drawn from the essence of the faculty of thinking itself, and is in no way fictitiously invented on account of not being borrowed from experience. Rather, it contains the pure actions of thought, and thus a priori concepts and principles, which first bring the manifold of empirical representations into the law-governed connection through which it can become empirical cognition, that is, experience. Thus these mathematical physicists could in no way avoid metaphysical principles, and, among them, also not those that make the concept of their proper object, namely, matter, a priori suitable for application to outer experience, such as the concept of motion, the filling of space, inertia, and so on. But they rightly held that to let merely empirical principles govern these concepts would in no way be appropriate to the apodictic certainty they wished their laws of nature to possess, so they preferred to postulate such [principles], without investigating them with regard to their a priori sources.⁴⁵¹

Trying to avoid metaphysics while using mathematics will take the researcher to the level of *a priori* principles where reason can no longer accept limits and must stretch toward a metaphysical foundation that gives unity and completeness. This is when metaphysics becomes the foundation of natural science when nature has to be taken as an object from a totality that becomes an *a priori* whole at least as a supposition even if the supposition of the metaphysical *a priori* whole can no longer be the object of experience, yet source of the principles of absolute necessity that natural science looks for and cannot be contented with empirical principles that lack such necessity.

We are moving from the essence of everything to the essence of thought itself, we are moving from *a priori* principles of nature to the unity of all *a priori* principles of nature. Mathematical principles here would just be one step lower than the metaphysical source of the unity of all principles and one step higher than empirical principles which are never

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8 -9.

enough for reason to explain nature with completeness. Mathematical principles are like a mediator between empirical and metaphysical principles, and as mediator between the two, anybody using mathematics to get the necessity that empirical principles do not provide will inevitably get to the highest level of all necessity of principles which is metaphysics.

How does a natural scientist study matter in the complete absence of metaphysics? This is an impossible mission in the Kantian system for that would imply being contented with empirical principles or using mathematical principles while pretending to avoid the metaphysical source of unity of all principles, and in both cases, it is an impossible mission. In the mathematical principles used by physicists, there is the phenomenon of motion that characterizes matter in the universe. In the investigation of the principles of motion, the physicist uses mathematical principles while ignoring their *a priori* source thereby doing an incomplete job.

When Galileo calculated the speed of a ball descending a sliding slope for instance, it was an *a priori* principle that he coined when he projected the speed to be directly proportional to the time –intervals. It became a mathematical principle. But where did the principle come from to have such an apodictic quality? The natural scientist who wants to avoid metaphysics will end there so as not to make assumptions that cannot be proven empirically. Yet no matter how hard he tries to avoid it, reason forces him to at least suppose the metaphysical foundation that gives apodictic necessity and unity to such principles. What are the *a priori* sources of the mathematical principles at the foundation of natural sciences? This is the question that reunites metaphysics with mathematics at the foundation of natural sciences in a coexistence that natural scientists do not have to be ashamed of, after all no one can be proud of principles without ever thinking of their sources.

In the ‘General Remark to Dynamics’ on the second chapter of *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* dubbed ‘Metaphysical Foundation of Dynamics’ dealing with motion as a force or motion as quality to identify the source of the force that leads to motion in matter, Kant sums up the relationship between natural science, mathematics and metaphysics. Here we need to move from a variety of forces in the universe to few fundamental forces that mathematics can justify as the basis of motion in the universe. But metaphysics seeks the grounds of the dynamism of forces in the universe:

[...] all natural philosophy consists [...] in the reduction of given, apparently different forces to a smaller number of forces and powers that explain the

*actions of the former, although this reduction proceeds only up to fundamental forces, beyond which our reason cannot go. And so metaphysical investigation behind that which lies at the basis of the empirical concept of matter is useful only for the purpose of guiding natural philosophy, so far as this is ever possible, to explore dynamical grounds of explanation. For these alone permit the hope of determinate laws, and thus a true rational coherence of explanations. This is now all that metaphysics can ever achieve towards the construction of the concept of matter, and thus to promote the application of mathematics to natural science, with respect to those properties whereby matter fills a space in a determinate measure – namely, to view these properties as dynamical, and not as unconditioned original positings, as a merely mathematical treatment might postulate them.*⁴⁵²

Like the case with pure reason that has to guide the understanding toward completeness so that the mind can get to the highest level of synthetic unity with itself and with its objects, metaphysics guides natural science to the highest level of logical coherence of ideas.

The reduction of a multitude of forces to few fundamental forces reminds us of a similar exercise carried out by the understanding to synthesize the manifold of appearances and reason guiding it to take the synthesis to the highest level of logical completeness. In the same way as the ideas of pure reason do not directly relate to objects except indirectly by guiding the understanding toward the highest logical heights, the metaphysical principles which underlie matter guide natural philosophy to seek unity with reason as the highest source of coherence and consistency that lead to apodictic principles. And contrary to what moderns think, metaphysics is actually out to consolidate the role of mathematics in its application to nature whereby principles have to be identified with pure *a priori* sources where metaphysics and mathematics find a point of unity for collaboration and not rivalry.

As part of the achievements of the Kantian epistemological project in the quest for truth, we restate the intricate link between metaphysics and mathematics that makes modern science a hypothetico – deductive endeavor and not a procedure of blind induction. It is precisely in its subtle cohabitation with mathematics that metaphysics finds a place as the foundation of natural science. Yet the successes of mathematics and the apparent epistemological failures of metaphysics may not show the coexistence in terms of results. But both deal with *a priori* concepts. And Kant insists that the task for the mathematician is the construction of concepts in such a way that even without directly linking its concepts to experience, the mathematician has the latitude to do so when he wants to. The concepts of mathematics are constructed such that without referring to any particular objects of

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, Second Chapter: General Remark to Dynamics, p. 74.

experience, the concept of number or figure adequately finds application in experience whenever the mathematician wants them to.

This is how Kant sees mathematics:

*[...] the determination of an intuition a priori in space (figure), the division of time (duration), or even just the knowledge of the universal element in the synthesis of one and the same thing in time and space, and the magnitude of an intuition that is thereby generated (number), all this is the work of reason through construction of concepts, and is called mathematical.*⁴⁵³

The figures, numbers, durations, and magnitudes are concepts constructed *a priori* but applicable in experience anytime the mathematician wants to use them. Here, while the metaphysician analyses concepts, the mathematician builds concepts. The two are reunited only when the mathematician starts thinking about the origin of the concepts he is using to construct other concepts that fits perfectly in intuition. Actually mathematicians hardly care about the transcendental source of their concepts because that is where they will link up with metaphysicians and the coexistence may not be glorious given the achievements of one against the failures of the other.

Yet, despite the differences in results, metaphysics is meant to be a promoter of mathematics as the source of principles and the source of concepts built with perfection by mathematicians for application in experience. Kant talks of *a priori* intuition used by mathematics which implies that mathematics can have *a priori* intuitions of its objects. The representation of a triangle and the construction of other concepts from there, the representation of a number and the construction of other concepts from numbers are *a priori* concepts like those of metaphysics but these *a priori* concepts of mathematics can be represented in *a priori* intuitions in the mind or imagination of the mathematician such that whenever he wants to, he can related them to objects in sensible intuition.

It is in the possibility for mathematics to make use of *a priori* intuition by which a non – sensible object is given to the imagination that mathematics defeats speculative philosophy. And this is where Kant thinks mathematics is the master of nature as the only science capable of using *a priori* intuitions to achieve the apodictic character of universal laws and yet related them to sensible intuitions giving rules to nature. Yet in terms of the source of the concepts so well constructed by mathematics, metaphysics must be assumed as the ultimate foundation of natural science. If there is any way to rescue metaphysics as a

⁴⁵³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason, op. cit.*, The Discipline of Pure Reason, p. 584.

science after the ravaging critique by Kant, then it has to do with conditions of possibility of having metaphysics in a relationship of coexistence with mathematics. As a source of principles used perfectly by mathematics in *a priori* intuition (though we can question why metaphysics is not able to use its principles to have the kind of success that mathematics has), metaphysics remains the foundation of natural science in the contemporary era that still needs orderliness or a minimum level of organization in the myriad of methods in the pluralistic era of postmodernity.

NINETH CHAPTER

TOWARD THE POSSIBILITY OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE *NOUMENA* IN THE CONTEMPORARY COMPLEXITY OF REALITY

The Kantian conception of truth overturns the traditional conception of subjectivism as an individual point of view that varies with person, time and space. Rather than making every subject's view different from the views of other subjects, the Kantian conception of truth unites all subjects through innate faculties that condition every object to respect *a priori* rules set by the mind prior to any encounter with the object. This is a revalorization of subjectivism which hitherto could be considered an inferior attempt to get the truth as it is void of all criteria of universality. Rather, with Kant, it is the subject's conditions which are common in all subjects that give the criteria of necessity and universality to cognition. Can subjective universal conditions make Kant a precursor of a modern theory of truth that can unravel the mystery of complexity? If the mind cannot be a slave to nature, does it imply that the objects of nature are always slaves to the mind? Is there a chance for the contemporary knowledge - seeker, through Kant, to attain a synthesis of subjective and objective conditions of truth?

If the object is not a slave to the mind, at least the object is conditioned by the mind through universal rules. If that be the case, do objective differences or differences in objects not open up to possibilities of a subject - object - based theory of truth? The universal object of knowledge, considered as a thing in itself, is unknowable to us according to Kant. The universal object of knowledge becomes the knowable thing as it appears to our faculties of representation and as defined by the *a priori* conditions of the subject. If the faculties of representation are the same and lead to universality, should a modern theory of truth not incorporate specificities in objects into the universal faculties of representation to attain a subject - object - based theory of truth? The aim of this chapter of our work is to show that the Kantian theory of knowledge is the prolegomena to any modern theory of knowledge that intends to have the truth about the object as a representation and in its specificities which do not destroy universality. If subjective specificities do not destroy the universal subjective faculties of knowledge, can the specificities of objects not be subsumed in the universal object that is not just unknowable but potentially putting the subject and the object at a synthetic position for generation of truth?

A reader of the *Critique of Pure Reason* conditions us to be intellectually prudent without exploring all possibilities of reason to unmask the truth about the objects of our knowledge. We have a choice to be contented with what we can have as knowledge of objects or to live in illusions of transcending experience to cognize things in ways that are not warranted by experience. However, Kant does not completely make the transcendental quest one of fatalism. This means there is a chance to openings in the future through which we harness differences toward complementarity in subjective and objective differences. Subjective differences are not meant to give a relativistic perspective to truth. The subjective conditions are meant to unite all rational beings in inter – subjective rules that guarantee universality. The openness that is aimed at in the contemporary society is already envisaged by Kant as a need to seek the truth without leaving any stone unturned and yet without feeling that turning every stone settles the matter once and for all:

I shall therefore assume that I have readers who do not wish to see a righteous cause defended in an unrighteous manner; and that they will consequently take it as agreed, that, according to our principles of criticism, and having regard not to what commonly happens, but to what ought to happen, there can, properly speaking, be no polemic of pure reason. For how can two persons carry on a dispute about a thing the reality of which neither of them can present in actual or even in possible experience a dispute in which they brood over the mere idea of the thing, in order to extract from it something more than the idea, namely, the reality of the object itself?⁴⁵⁴

If beyond the appearance of a thing to our faculties of cognition there is nothing else except an unknowable realm of the *noumenon*, there is an option to synthesize the knowable and the unknowable in a relationship that does not accept fatalism but does not want to accept pretentious claims that cannot lead to agreement of consciences. Is the contemporary knowledge – seeker inevitably Kantian in this openness?

If philosophy is a perpetual quest for truth, without putting an abrupt and an unnecessary end to the problem of the truth in the relation of the subject to the object, we have to envisage a way forward in openness. Though Kant was working to obtain a system of method by which the truth could be set in a theoretical framework through a critique of the internal faculties of our mind, Kant also made room for necessary collaboration between the understanding and reason such that though experience is not enough to reason, ideas of pure reason are not sufficiently close to the object to be conditions of possibility of truth. In this coexistence of apparently conflicting faculties as established in the preceding section of our

⁴⁵⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, The Discipline of Pure Reason, pp. 600 – 601.

work, there is a chance to put the subject and the object at a relationship of mutual coexistence that leads to truth as a conjoined product of reason and experience without ignoring the difficulties of the seemingly fatalistic conception of the *noumena*. Such is the justification of what we envisage as a subject – object – based theory of truth within the framework of a Kantian philosophical system that admits difficulties and gives room to perpetual trials of reason to grasp that which seems unknowable without destroying the apodictic and universal criteria of science.

This chapter of our work, then, is not intended to put an end to the polemics of reason with regards to the quest for truth. It is an attempt to get a midpoint that does not reject subjective faculties that give rise to universality but which does not consider the object as it is to be a completely unknowable entity in epistemological fatalism. We intend to prove that, even if our internal innate faculties are all we have to grasp objects as representations, there is a lot in the representations that can involve aspects of the *noumena* already declared to be unknowable by Kant. Without making our position one of conflicts of schools in metaphysics where it is difficult to obtain the conditions of possibility of truth, we cannot avoid metaphysics. Kant himself remains a metaphysician in his epistemology. But like Kant himself notes, we do not have the means to put an end to the conflicts of pure reason:

What means have they of ending the dispute, since neither of them can make his thesis genuinely comprehensible and certain, but only attack and refute that of his opponent? For this is the fate of all assertions of pure reason: that since they transcend the conditions of all possible experience, outside which the authentication of truth is in no wise possible, while at the same time they have to make use of the laws of the understanding laws which are adapted only for empirical employment, but without which no step can be taken in synthetic thought neither side can avoid exposing its weakness, and each can therefore take advantage of the weakness of the other.⁴⁵⁵

The least we can do is to meander between Kant and his supposed metaphysical opponents involved in endless quarrels of schools that avoid the empirical link that can provide the conditions of possibility of an end to the conflicts of reason with itself.

From the supposed crisis of truth in the contemporary era, the redefinition of the object of knowledge in the midst of differences conditions us to review the Kantian approach in what it envisages as openness despite the apparent rigidity of his system of philosophy. If the object as it is becomes unknowable to our faculties of cognition, either we review the

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, The Discipline of Pure Reason, p. 601.

faculties or the object of our knowledge to admit differences and specificities which do not in any way counteract the universality cherished by any science. This chapter of our work puts the Kantian closed – open system of philosophy in a possible contemporary theory of knowledge that does not deviate from the tradition of science and yet does not close the object in an eternally unknowable position.

9.1: The Relevance of Kant's Nonconceptualism in Contemporary Epistemology

A preliminary review of concepts inevitably leads us to the Kantian conception of subjectivity as the subject's use of innate universal faculties to condition the object through concepts. The objectivity of Kant is not defined by the object but it is the universal faculties of every subject that unite to give objectivity to truth. As per the moment of intuition when objects are given to us, all the subjects are united by the *a priori* forms of space and time which make objects possible as objects for us or as objects that can have a place in the chain of our representational faculties. If there is objectivity at this level, then it has to do with the unity of all subjects through the objectifying *a priori* forms of time and space by which objects are given. Thus the first level of objectivity is the moment when objects are given to us and how subjective universality becomes possible. The second moment is the chain of representations by which objects are thought mediately through concepts. Through the schema, the transcendental imagination in the unity of apperception makes it possible for the *a priori* concepts to condition all objects through rules that permit us subsume all particular cases in general rules. The universalising role of concepts, here, highlights another level of universalism which leads to unity in our representation of concepts as concepts of objects. Whether considered from intuitive or conceptual levels, the subject of knowledge is a source of universal principles by which the objects are given and by which the objects are known. This is subjective universalism which should not be confused with traditional subjectivity that makes knowledge relative as varying from one subject to another.

At the level of the object, we have what is given to us in intuition according to our *a priori* forms of time and space. If all objects are given in time and space, then there is objectivity in specificity since all specific objects have the same formal framework by which they are given to us in time and space. Thus, if objectivity is the agreement of subjects, the source of such agreement is the universal faculties of representation of objects. If objectivity is about the thing as it is, then every object cannot be known as it is. In the course of knowing objects as they are given, every intuition will be singular and immediate for every object and

the unity will be attained by concepts in thought. The part of the object that is not given to us in intuition is the object in itself. Whether the object in itself has specificities is unknown to our faculties of representation. Even if we assume that objective specificities are hidden in the *noumenon*, in which case our universal faculties of representation are inapplicable to them, it is clear, with Kant, that what is given to us is capable of universal representation only as long as our *a priori* faculties unite what is given to us according to rules that condition experience. Our aim, here, is to prove that, what is given and what is thought about the object constitute grounds for a subject – object – based theory of knowledge in our contemporary era.

The ‘postmodern’ conception of a crisis of truth in ‘differences’ and social relations does not in any way destroy the grounds for the Kantian kind of subjectivity that should never be misinterpreted to mean every subject defines the object through innate faculties and thus various subjects have different conceptions of objects. If what is thought is what is given and what is not given cannot be thought, at least what is not given cannot be discarded as inexistent simply because it is unknowable. The formal conditions of possibility of an object imply that the formal conditions can lead to actuality. To Kant, “All appearances, as possible experiences, thus lie *a priori* in the understanding, and receive from it their formal possibility, just as, in so far as they are mere intuitions, they lie in the sensibility, and are, as regards their form, only possible through it.”⁴⁵⁶ Since there is a difference between possible experience and actual experience, an *a priori* intuition is not a dog in actual experience but an image of the transcendental imagination through which all actual dogs become possible in experience. In the synthetic unity of apperception, the transcendental representation of the dog in the schema permits us to have the possibility of actual dogs in experience as real objects. But the knowledge is in the representation itself which gives rise to the possibility of all dogs in experience. In this way, a distinction between object – dependent intuition and object – independent intuition makes room for a subject – object – based contemporary theory of truth.

If intuitions are object – dependent, then there is no intuition without an object. If intuitions are object – independent, then every intuition must not be linked to an actual object in experience. It could be the intuition of a possible object in experience as we noted in the previous sections of our work with the case of *a priori* intuitions in mathematics. According

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Transcendental Deduction, p. 148.

to Anil Gomes and Andrew Stephenson, “On the view that intuitions are object-dependent, cognition must be thought of as a form of object-directed representation, whereas the view that intuitions are not object-dependent goes together most naturally with, and plausibly entails, the view that cognitions are representations with mere objective purport.”⁴⁵⁷ Is knowledge object – dependent or object – independent? Depending on the type of intuition involved, knowledge can be object – dependent and object – independent with each view having merits and demerits. The contemporary debate on the issues raised by Kant leads us to the view midpoint between an object – dependent and an object – independent theory of knowledge.

The contemporary knowledge – seeker, cognizant of the view raised by Kant that *a priori* intuitions are possible in mathematics as the case when the mind gives to itself an *a priori* object like the triangle, cognizant of the view implied in the Kantian theory of knowledge, that intuitions give us objects in the *a priori* forms of time and space through which our concepts get content and become representations in cognition, real cognition as a representation is actually a representation of a possibility of relating concepts to objects. Thus at the moment of cognition itself, the object itself, as a thing outside the mind, is represented in a way as to make the thing possible through the concept. But the possibility is not actuality in itself. The possibility is actually what Anil Gomes and Andrew Stephenson⁴⁵⁸ call “representations with mere objective purport.” If there is objectivity in every representation that purports the possibility of an object, and yet, every concept must be a concept of an object to give rise to cognition, then a contemporary theory of knowledge based on the Kantian approach must revive the possibility of conceptual and nonconceptual cognition midway between object – dependent intuitions and object – independent intuitions. Object-independent intuitions give thought a possible object of knowledge as a purported representation. Object – dependent intuitions give to thought objects that are actually a reality in experience.

This could not really be otherwise because in many passages of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant insists on the *a priority* of concepts which give rise to universality and objectivity without discarding experience which alone is the condition for representations to link concepts with objects. But as we have noted, such experience can also be a possibility

⁴⁵⁷ Anil Gomes and Andrew Stephenson, “On the Relation of Intuition to Cognition” in Dennis Schulting (ed.), *Kantian Nonconceptualism*, Macmillan: Palgrave, 2016, pp. 66 – 67.

⁴⁵⁸ *Idem*.

that makes the representation a purported statement of objectivity. If there is objectivity when objects are actually given and when objects are purported as a possibility, then a theory of knowledge is subject- and object – based. The subject represents the object as given in intuition as a sensible object or in *a priori* intuition as an act of the transcendental imagination in apperception whereby the schema is an image of all possible objects of a kind in experience. With Kant, and in line with contemporary debates, the object given by experience in intuition gets universal necessity through concepts:

Experience tells us, indeed, what is, but not that it must necessarily be so, and not otherwise. It therefore gives us no true universality; and reason, which is so insistent upon this kind of knowledge, is therefore more stimulated by it than satisfied. Such universal modes of knowledge, which at the same time possess the character of inner necessity, must in themselves, independently of experience, be clear and certain. They are therefore entitled knowledge a priori whereas, on the other hand, that which is borrowed solely from experience is, as we say, known only a posteriori, or empirically.⁴⁵⁹

The view of Kant implies that concepts can be empty if not linked to any intuitions by which they become concepts of objects. But mathematics gives thought an object in *a priori* intuition giving rise to objectivity without actual objects except as possibilities. If that be the case, then every object in the material world can never actually be adequately represented in the concept. This is because objects as they are in experience lack the necessity given by concepts.

A theory of knowledge should not actually seek to accurately represent the objects as they are but in their possibility. The possibility of an object makes a concept best suited to define experience in a way as not to expect the kind of representations which fit concepts to objects like gloves. The Kantian conception of the schema puts the dilemma more clearly with the example of a triangle in mathematics that can never be adequately found in experience with the accuracy and precision that the concept represents:

Indeed it is schemata, not images of objects, which underlie our pure sensible concepts. No image could ever be adequate to the concept of a triangle in general. It would never attain that universality of the concept which renders it valid of all triangles, whether right-angled, obtuse-angled, or acute angled; it would always be limited to a part only of this sphere. The schema of the triangle can exist nowhere but in thought. It is a rule of synthesis of the imagination, in respect to pure figures in space.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁹ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. 42.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Schematism, p. 182.

The rule of the imagination given in the schema conditions all possible representations of triangles in experience to a general concept that is too universal to be adequately represented in experience. When the object is not given in intuition through time and space, the mind gives the object to itself in *a priori* intuition as a rule that defines all possible experience of the object. More precisely, if the object is not given, the mind uses the schema in *a priori* intuition to give a rule to all possible objects, even if the object is not given, and even if the object cannot accurately correspond to the accuracy and universality defined by the concept, but at least the concept makes the object and other objects of the same kind possible.

On the other hand, whether or not an object can be given and not thought is the preoccupation that this subsection of our work has to tackle to make a subject – based object – based theory of knowledge possible in the contemporary era. The passages containing the central ideas of Kant's theory of knowledge make it clear that the objects of experience, whose possibility is the criterion of objectivity in relation to concepts, must not be blindly assumed to fit squarely in our concepts. While the concept is above the object in accuracy and universality, the object in its sensible existence is always lower in accuracy than the concept:

Still less is an object of experience or its image ever adequate to the empirical concept; for this latter always stands in immediate relation to the schema of imagination, as a rule for the determination of our intuition, in accordance with some specific universal concept. The concept 'dog' signifies a rule according to which my imagination can delineate the figure of a four-footed animal in a general manner, without limitation to any single determinate figure such as experience, or any possible image that I can represent in concrete, actually presents.⁴⁶¹

If the dog is a concept of the imagination by which all four – legged hairy organisms can be represented, the concept is not the animal itself and the animal can never squarely correspond to the concept, after all the animal exists in the material world and the concept exists in the mind. But the concept can be linked to the object only disproportionally as a universal representation of animals to be found in experience as a possibility. The concept does not actually correspond to a specific dog but makes possible all experience of dogs as animals with four legs and hair and other qualities that belong to them.

A contemporary theory of knowledge should not misinterpret the Kantian approach to be based on the subject alone but above all, the approach should not be misinterpreted to be based on the object. In terms of levels of accuracy and universality, the concept stands above

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 182 – 183.

the object because the rule which conditions all possible objects must have a level of universality not found in individual objects themselves. In Kantian terms, the rule is *a priori* while the object *a posteriori*. Still in Kantian terms, the rule is a conditioning through concepts and such a conditioning occurs at such a high level of spirituality in the human mind that we can hardly comprehend. It is the schematism of the understanding to which a contemporary theory of knowledge should refer to have a universally subject – based and object – based theory of knowledge:

This schematism of our understanding, in its application to appearances and their mere form, is an art concealed in the depths of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze. This much only we can assert: the image is a product of the empirical faculty of reproductive imagination; the schema of sensible concepts, such as of figures in space, is a product and, as it were, a monogram, of pure a priori imagination, through which, and in accordance with which, images themselves first become possible. These images can be connected with the concept only by means of the schema to which they belong. In themselves they are never completely at one with the concept.⁴⁶²

The images of the concept are never at the same level of accuracy as the concepts. The schema of sensible imagination, however, must be distinguished from the schema of the pure concept of the understanding.

The schema of the pure concept of the imagination is a product of synthetic unity that cannot be met in any image. Here, we are at the highest level of synthesis of all representations:

On the other hand, the schema of a pure concept of understanding can never be reduced to any image whatsoever. It is simply the pure synthesis, determined by a rule of that unity, in accordance with concepts, to which the category gives expression. It is a transcendental product of imagination, a product which concerns the determination of inner sense in general according to conditions of its form (time), in respect of all representations, so far as these representations are to be connected a priori in one concept in conformity with the unity of apperception.⁴⁶³

Far from making Kant a traditional idealist, any theory of knowledge based on the Kantian approach must admit the role of the mind in this highest level of synthesis of representations without failing to note that the representations synthesised must be representations of objects. Such representations of objects make the synthetic unity the ultimate level of cognition in a

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁴⁶³ *Idem.*

priori concepts that unite all representations at the level that is metaphysical but does not lose touch of the object. The problem now arises at the level of the object. If a contemporary theory of knowledge has to make use of the metaphysical role played by the mind in the synthesis of representations, and if the representations are actually representations of objects, then is the object completely passive in cognition? If the Kantian approach aimed at not making the mind a passive receptor of perceptions, did it aim at making the object a blind entity to be defined? The contemporary debate on this turn of Kantian philosophy implies that we revisit the implication of the Kantian conception of intuition to prove its relevance in our contemporary theories of knowledge

So far we have painted a one – sided picture of a possible contemporary theory of knowledge based on the Kantian model: one that takes Kant to be a conceptualist or a proponent of conceptualism. This is the view that cognition is essentially a product of thought, an act of the mind working with concepts. That is why, whether the concept is given in sensible intuition or the mind gives the object to itself in *a priori* intuition, the synthesis in apperception that unites all representations into cognition is a mind act. This mind act makes cognition subject – based and all subjects are united by the same *a priori* faculties of representation. On the other hand, and to complete the subject – based object – based theory of truth, there is a revolutionary aspect of the Kantian theory of knowledge which supposes that Kant does not exclude the possibility of a purely sensible aspect of the human mind that does not deal with concepts and which more or less plays a role in cognition. This is an interpretative revolution within the Kantian theory of knowledge. Must all that is given in intuition be conceptualised? Is there a nonconceptual aspect of the human mind, which implies that through intuitions objects are received but not necessary thought through concepts? Is sensibility more than just a means by which objects are given? If objects are given and are not thought, does it imply that intuitions without thoughts are not as blind as we note at first sight from a reading of Kant's theory of knowledge?

If by intuitions objects are given and by concepts the objects are thought, we need to know what the Kantian theory implies when it has to deal with intuitions received without thought. And to push the debate further is the Kantian unknowable *noumenon* not an aspect of nonconceptual objects? If we cannot just discard objects because of our inability to think them even if they are given, then there is a possibility to envisage nonconceptual objects of knowledge. At the level of the object, then, we intend to show, here, that a nonconceptual interpretation of the Kantian theory of knowledge makes possible a subject – object – based

theory of knowledge. The idea is to prove that since Kant envisaged nonconceptual objects in his theory of knowledge, there is an opening for the *noumenon* to be more of a nonconceptual than an unknowable entity. If the object is given and cannot be thought because not all of what is given can be conceptualised, and if there are intuitions that are object – independent, there is a need to move from the subject – based conception of truth embedded in the Kantian transcendental idealism of the understanding to a complementary object – based conception of truth from the Kantian transcendental idealism of sensibility. While it is easy to interpret Kant’s theory of knowledge to mean that obviously empirical objects are the criterion in relation to which concepts become concepts of objects thus establishing a potential relationship of knowledge to the object, it is challenging to envisage the Kantian theory from the angle of an empirical object that may not even be given in intuition, and even more challenging of an empirical object given in intuition but which cannot be thought because it is a nonconceptual entity.

In the contemporary era, the Kantian theory of knowledge has taken twists and turns toward a non-intellectual interpretation of objects which are no longer given to thought and so intellectualism is no longer the criterion of rating the truth in Kantian epistemology. This is a rehabilitation of the object that was reduced to the position of passivity in being given in intuition for concepts to unite the representations in a synthesis that constitutes the focal point of the Kantian originality. Now we have to think of those objects which are not given (like the *noumena*) and the objects given and not thought as the complementary element of an approach that seems to be subjectivist at first sight. According to Robert Hanna, one of the contemporary writers on the nonconceptualist and non-intellectualist angle of the Kantian theory of knowledge,

*[...] the nonintellectualist thesis of Kantian (essentialist content) nonconceptualism states that for Kant at least some of the representational contents of human cognition are not essentially conceptual, and not necessarily determined by the understanding, and also that these contents, on the contrary, are essentially nonconceptual and necessarily determined by our sensibility.*⁴⁶⁴

This interpretative angle of the Kantian theory of knowledge requires that we review sensibility as not just a source of intuitions given in time and space for conceptualisation, but as a source of intuitions that cannot be conceptualised or that are not even meant to be conceptualised. If we maintain strict conceptualisation as the source of universality and

⁴⁶⁴ Robert Hanna, “Directions in Space, Nonconceptual Form and the Foundations of Transcendental Idealism”, in *Kantian Nonconceptualism*, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

necessity in knowledge, then this angle of the interpretation is rejected as a matter of logical necessity. But if we maintain the nonconceptual view that some of what is given and some of what is represented about the object cannot be conceptualised, then it is not only a new angle of the Kantian theory but a new theory of the mind. This implies that sensibility will be a faculty of the human mind dealing with objects that cannot be conceptualised or that are not meant to be conceptualised. Where do we situate these objects in the Kantian theory of knowledge?

Far from considering the nonconceptual angle as aporia, a contemporary theory of knowledge should situate the contemporary theory of complexity in truth within the framework of a Kantian system that envisages a nonconceptual angle of cognition. Away from the canons of universality and logical necessity, the human mind has a substratum to deal purely with sensibility without trying to condition objects to any *a priori* concepts as conditions of the possibility of these objects. In this case, the objects will be possible on their own as elements of an independent faculty of sensibility that must not be subjected to the dictates of universalising concepts of necessity. In this way, we are able to rehabilitate the *noumenon* as a reality of the object that is nonconceptual even if it is unknowable as Kant thinks. The *noumenon* would then be unknowable because of the possibility of object – independent intuition as it cannot be given as an object in intuition or even if it is given it cannot be thought because it is a pure object of sensibility that is not meant to respect the universal canons of conceptual thought. This means that Kant himself had in the seed the solution to the problem of the unknowable in the *noumena* through passages that make it clear that nonconceptual and nonconceptualised objects are a reality in his theory of knowledge. The debate has to be prolonged by contemporary Kantian thinkers battling with the complexity of the reality that is even more baffling than in the Kantian era.

Restating the contemporary debate on the Kantian theory of knowledge from the conceptual and nonconceptual angles, Lucy Allais thinks that though intuitions are mental entities, their difference from concepts inevitably leads us to envisage nonconceptual entities in Kantian epistemology:

The fact that Kant holds that intuitions are mental representations that are essentially distinct from concepts might seem to support attributing to him nonconceptual content. But, on the other hand, the fact that intuitions and

*concepts are together necessary for us to have cognition might seem to support denying that Kant has an account of nonconceptual content.*⁴⁶⁵

The inseparability of Kantian epistemology from his metaphysics entails that the unknowable is used as a projection of something else on another interpretative angle of a philosophical system that seems to be very rigid but deeply flexible enough to accommodate complementarity between apparently conflicting faculties as we proved in the preceding section of our work. Here, once again, sensibility, though distinct from understanding, intuitions, though distinct from concepts, must not only be complementary but as seen through the nonconceptual entities, these faculties and entities can actually be conceived to have independent existence. That means one must not be at the service of the other, one can actually exist with its own entities in the human mind without any necessity to conform to the dictates of the other.

Of course the Kantian theory envisages a complementarity between the categories of the understanding and the intuitions of sensibility. But this complementarity must not always be realised as sensibility and the understanding also have the possibility, in the Kantian flexibility, of separate existence. The independence of one from the other implies that the categories and the intuitions must not relate with each other, though they need to relate for knowledge to be obtained. So when they do not relate with each other, that is, when they take up an independent existence at their various levels, what becomes of the categories and the intuitions? A normal Kantian answer would be that in such cases the categories become empty concepts and the intuitions become blind. This, to us, is the core of the complexity of the reality that gave rise to the problematic ‘post – modern’ and ‘post – truth’ era. To us, this means that a modern theory of knowledge must take into consideration the view that not all reality is conceptual or capable of conceptualisation and not all concepts must relate to objects. Without going as far as using this interpretation to justify the reality of ‘irrational phenomena’ we can at least use it to understand the reality of the *noumena* which is now considered to be more of nonconceptual than unknowable entities. Can there be knowledge, then, without concepts? To be more precise, can the nonconceptual objects of sensibility give rise to knowledge? The contemporary debate opens up new perspectives for further research on the Kantian theory of truth. Kant does not intend to use the nonconceptual entities as aporia in his theory of knowledge.

⁴⁶⁵ Lucy Allais, “Conceptualism and Nonconceptualism in Kant: A Survey of the Recent Debate”, in *Kantian Nonconceptualism*, ed. Dennis Schulting, Macmillan: Palgrave, 2016, p. 3.

Kant considers the nonconceptual objects of sensibility as a normal occurrence in the apparent conflict of complementary faculties at the quest for knowledge. Kant thus makes it clear that

*The categories of understanding [...] do not represent the conditions under which objects are given in intuition. Objects may, therefore, appear to us without their being under the necessity of being related to the functions of understanding; and understanding need not, therefore, contain their a priori conditions. [...] For appearances can certainly be given in intuition independently of functions of the understanding.*⁴⁶⁶

If the conceptualisation of objects that appear to us is not a necessity, though when such objects are conceptualised cognition follows, what becomes of the nonconceptualised objects? They are lodged in other areas of the human mind whose complexity does not give room for all objects to be brought under general rules by means of concepts. The independent existence of what Kant calls the ideas of pure reason is the substance of his critique of rational psychology, rational cosmology and rational theology, an inquiry at the end of which the theoretical failure of reason finds practical application in morality and a future system of religion. The independent existence of the concepts of the understanding (the categories) is understood as *a priori* plans for the mind to provide rules to condition any possible experience. It is the independent existence of objects of sensible intuition that baffles the researcher into a realm that is an interpretive revolution in the Kantian theory of knowledge.

Even the empiricists will obviously have a problem admitting that nonconceptual entities are real because at least once given, the data of sense – experience is available and accessible to mind acts. The empiricists would rather prefer to have such entities lodged in sceptical theoretical frameworks where the capacity of the human mind to think *a priori* are put to doubt without rejecting the possibility for the human mind to think the objects that have already been given in intuition. But that there are objects given which cannot be thought or which are not thought and yet maintain an independent existence from concepts is a novelty that surely baffles even the empiricist. And the rationalists, in their dogmatic fanaticism over the unlimited powers of the human mind, will even be more baffled to admit the existence of nonconceptual entities in theoretical frameworks in which the reality must be rationalised with the possibility of having a reality that is purely rational without any relation to the concept. Lucy Allais thinks that the debate on nonconceptualism hangs more on intuitions than concepts: “[...] the debate about whether Kant has some kind of

⁴⁶⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason, op. cit.*, Transcendental Deduction, pp. 123 – 124.

nonconceptualism really turns on what I have called conceptualism about intuition: whether Kant holds that intuitions are mental representations that could be presented to us whether or not we had the capacity to apply concepts”.⁴⁶⁷ Thus stated, the debate is a revolutionary turn in epistemology. The problematic nature of what Allais calls ‘conceptualism about intuition’ raises issues of the role of the mind in cognition and requires that we resituate the debate on the human faculty that gives rise to true knowledge. The conventional application of the mind to objects of knowledge is now put to question through the claims made by Kant himself in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

If appearances are such that the concepts of the understanding are inapplicable to them, then the *noumenon* is not unknowable, the *noumenon* is simply incapable of conceptualisation. If appearances can exist without conceptualisation, then the *noumenon* itself exists but cannot be conceptualised. By extrapolation, the interpretative implication of Kant’s view implies that not all that is real is conceptualised and above all, not all that is known is regulated by means of concepts. If there are representations that are not conceptualised, they cannot be discarded as not constituting knowledge, rather they should be considered as knowledge of a kind that cannot be conceptualised, it is subject – object – based cognition. It is a midpoint between the subject’s ability to regulate representations by means of *a priori* concepts and the subject’s inability to regulate other representations that are meant to remain as objects of sensibility without any possible application of concepts to them. Such objects are actual and are not made possible by the categories.

Though, in some passages Kant makes the nonconceptualised objects only a possibility and not an actuality, the possibility of empty concepts when the concepts fail to apply to some objects of sensibility opens up new avenues of research on Kantian epistemology. For us, this means that the *noumena* may not be as unknowable as Kant makes us think at first sight. It actually means that conceptualisation, while being a criterion of universality and necessity, is not the only criterion of truth in cognition. In the second part of our work, we doubt whether Kant deliberately constructed his theory of knowledge for speculative reason to register epistemological failures so that practical reason can make use of the failures in morality and religion. Our reading of the first critique makes us think that Kant had the architectonic planned out in advance so that every element should fall in place

⁴⁶⁷ Lucy Allais, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

perfectly in what seems at first sight to be a rigid system that leaves no room for dynamism and flexibility.

However a deeper reading of Kant shows that even if he planned everything in advance to make his system rigid enough to encompass all the aspects of philosophy that he wanted to develop, he was flexible enough to highlight difficulties himself especially the possibility of nonconceptual and nonconceptualised intuitions. If the debate is open whether Kant conceived speculative reason to fail so that practical reason can use the failure in morality and religion, the debate is equally open as to whether Kant conceived nonconceptual objects of intuition to provide checks and balances to the regulative powers of reason whose concepts are responsible for the universality and necessity of our knowledge of objects of experience. The nonconceptualised intuitions also seem to comfort the traditional empiricist in his position that experience, even if it is not the only step, should be the first step to any valid cognition.

Kant gives credit to experience to eliminate the pretentious claims of dogmatic metaphysics. Kant gives credit to categories to eliminate the sceptical claims of the empiricists so as to strike a balance between two traditional epistemological camps. The nonconceptual objects of sensibility constitute the novelty in interpretation that should lead the contemporary knowledge – seeker to project a new level of what may be considered to be a limitation of the human mind that is not able to conceptualise all objects of sensibility or a new level of the human mind that actually accommodates sensibility as an aspect of the mind on its own and in its own right to contain representations that cannot and do not need to go through any form of conceptualisation. In the following passage, Kant, careful enough to strike a balance between conceptualisation and nonconceptualisation, states the case of nonconceptualisation as a possibility that gives rise to a new theory of the mind:

Appearances might very well be so constituted that the understanding should not find them to be in accordance with the conditions of its unity. Everything might be in such confusion that, for instance, in the series of appearances nothing presented itself which might yield a rule of synthesis and so answer to the concept of cause and effect. This concept would then be altogether empty, null, and meaningless. But since intuition stands in no need whatsoever of the functions of thought, appearances would none the less present objects to our intuition.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁸ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

In the particular example used by Kant, it is clear that some representations derived from objects of intuition may fail to respect the *a priori* regulating influence of concepts especially the category of causality by which some events condition other events according to a rule that is not derived from the events themselves as they occur in experience but derived from the innate faculty of the mind to give a rule to experience. The problem, now, is that, since some representations may not respect the *a priori* rule of the category of causality, that category becomes an empty concept in relation to the objects of intuition and representations that are constituted not to follow the universalising and necessary rules provided by concepts.

Though intuitions without concepts are blind, what is new in nonconceptualisation is that the intuitions stand in no need of concepts because not all intuitions are meant to be conceptualised. If intuitions that do not accept conceptualisation are meant to be ‘blind’ then it is clear that nonconceptualised objects of knowledge will never give rise to any ‘knowledge’. If the concepts of the understanding like the category of causality are inapplicable to some representations in which case they remain empty concepts, no knowledge can emerge from such concepts. Without taking side with one conceptual camp against another, and in the spirit of Kant himself, a contemporary theory of knowledge has to avoid epistemological extremism because both extremes of nonconceptualisation and conceptualisation, at one point or another, will need each other for a more convincing and a more encompassing theory of truth that is best adapted to the crisis of complexity in our era. If the reality cannot offer itself to the subject on a platter of gold, and as we have seen, if the reality as an object can even be given to the subject in a way as to make it impossible for the subject to conceptualise the object given, then any theory of knowledge cannot deliberately take one extreme or the other. The reconciliatory spirit of Kant conditions us to think that the reality becomes an enigma to the subject when the subject does not open up to the reality in ways that at first sight may even seem unthinkable to the subject’s innate faculties of conception.

What, then, if the *noumena* were actually objects of an object – independent intuition? In that case we may have been representing the *noumena* through intuitions that do not depend on the objects to become intuitions. After all object – independent intuitions are a proof that what is given must not correspond to an accessible object in experience. What is given can be an image that is not even meant to correspond to any defined object like the objects we find in experience. In this case, the problematic of the truth will be more complex than just assuming that through intuitions objects are given to us and through concepts the given objects are thought. Through object – independent intuitions, the intuitions must not be intuitions of

defined objects to be considered as intuitions. The representation of a triangle in mathematics is one of such intuitions that do not depend on any specific object of experience because it is what Kant calls an *a priori* intuition. What, then, if the *noumena* were an aspect of an *a priori* intuition or an aspect of an object – independent intuition? In this case, the *noumena* would not be given as a specific object in experience.

What if the *noumena* were nonconceptual objects of sensibility? In such a case, the *noumena* would not be given at all or only given in such a way that they cannot be thought through concepts. Logically, the nonconceptual assumptions made by Kant himself in his theory of knowledge imply that we should rethink the *noumena* in our contemporary theories of knowledge. The idea is not to destroy the Kantian edifice of knowledge but to show that through the nonconceptual lines of the Kantian theory, the *noumena* acquire a new place as objects of sensibility that cannot be conceptualised even if they are given. Kant makes it a possibility because the best way to know that an object has been given in intuition is when it is thought by concepts. But now it is clear that not all of what is given is thought and that some objects are given in a way as to make them impossible to become objects of thought. The mind has to create a special place for such representations, it can be called sensibility that no longer looks up to the understanding to provide rules through categories, and they are just meant to remain at the level of sensibility.

A conceptualist interpretation of Kant's theory of knowledge entails that lower animals that are not capable of high levels of conceptualisation cannot become subjects of knowledge. The knowledge – seeker of conceptualism is one who believes that all intuitions must come to bear on concepts or that concepts must condition intuitions for any representation to become cognition, after all intuitions without concepts would be blind. Dennis Schulting restates the case for conceptualism which disqualifies lower animals from the realm of subjects of knowledge:

Conceptualism can be defined as the thesis that (1) any conscious, representational content, intuition or appearance is determined by our conceptual capacity and that conscious, representational content, or an intuition or appearance can only refer to objects if and when it is subsumed under concepts, and that (2) non-human (lower animal) beings do not possess such conceptual capacities, by means of which they perceive [...].⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁹ Dennis Schulting, *Kant's Radical Subjectivism: Perspectives on the Transcendental Deduction*, Macmillan: Palgrave, 2017, p. 196.

We have no problem with human beings considered to be the only possible subjects of knowledge by conceptualism. After all the human mind possesses such high faculties as to make man not only a servant of nature but also and above all a transformer of nature through innate faculties that give rules to nature in the conceptualist interpretation of the Kantian theory of knowledge.

Strong conceptualism makes intellectualism the actual source of all experience. This means that the categories do not only determine the way we read experience but make all of experience possible. This view implies that without our innate faculties experience will not make sense to us and may not even exist because we will not be able to represent it:

*Conceptualism can be differentiated into strong and weak conceptualism, whereby, if we translate this to the strictly Kantian context, strong conceptualism holds that the understanding, i.e. our conceptual capacity, is not only the determining ground of any cognitive judgement, but also of sensibility itself. Weak conceptualism means that, whereas the understanding determines all cognitive empirical judgements, which are based on empirical intuitions, sensibility itself is independent of the capacity of the understanding, and not all conceptual activity (e.g. demonstrative reference) need take place exclusively in the context of explicit cognitive judgements.*⁴⁷⁰

Soft conceptualism makes the concession of admitting the existence of experience as an independent realm whether we know it or not. But for us to know it or represent it to fit in any theory of knowledge, we need conceptual faculties. The soft version does not make conceptualisation the condition of possibility of experience altogether but only the condition of possibility of knowledge of experience.

On the other hand, nonconceptualism makes sensibility not just the means by which objects are given to us in intuition in space and time but also and above all an independent realm in the human mind for representations that cannot be conceptualised because the objects from which they are derived are not meant to respect any rule of conceptualisation. The nonconceptualist interpretation of the Kantian theory of knowledge implies that some lower animals to humans can have a certain level of knowledge even if it is just a sort of ‘awareness’ as Schulting puts it:

[...] Kantian nonconceptualists want to argue that Kant does leave open the possibility of intuitions or perceptions that are not subsumed or even subsumable under the categories. Nonconceptualism is roughly the thesis that (1) not every conscious, objective representational content is merely or at all

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

*determined by our conceptual capacity, and that intuitions immediately and independently of concepts perceptually “present” objects or particulars to us; that (2) at least some human, objective conscious content occurs independently of our conceptual capacity and is not determined by it; and that (3) at least some non-human beings (i.e. animals) have an awareness of some sort of, and are not merely responding mechanically to, their surroundings.*⁴⁷¹

If the representation of objects given in intuition does not depend on concepts, sensibility demoted in the subject – based approach is rehabilitated in a new object – based approach that does not even need conceptualisation. The midpoint for us is the subject – based object – based approach that makes use of both without subordinating one to the other. The consequence, here, is that the contemporary debate seems to reverse the Kantian Copernican revolution to give back to the object a place other than that of passivity, the same passivity that Kant rejects in the use of the mind. Thus the mind no longer conforms to objects; objects conform to the mind as the Kantian Copernican revolution holds. On the other hand, in the nonconceptual approach, still derived from the Kantian theory, not everything conforms to the mind; some things do not conform to the mind at all, some things actually have an independent existence in the human mind as representations which do not respect the *a priori* plan made by the plan to think objects.

Our reconciliatory view in the contemporary debate between conceptualist and nonconceptualist interpretations of the Kantian theory of knowledge is that the subject conforms to the object and the object conforms to the subject in a subject – based object – based theory of knowledge that opens up the Kantian Copernican revolution to give room to other revolutions to master the ever complex reality baffling contemporary knowledge – seekers. Even if concepts must work with intuitions for knowledge to be produced and intuitions must succumb to the *a priori* conceptual plan before real knowledge is attained, the representations of objects of intuition can have an independent existence from the *a priori* plan of concepts of the understanding, and the concepts of the understanding can have an independent existence too from the intuitions. Concepts actually have this separate existence because their *a priori* origin makes them distinct from the representations given by intuitions. Yet, there is a chance that, in the same way that the ideas of pure reason are epistemologically useless and only find application in morality, the nonconceptual representations of intuition may be epistemologically useless and we need to find the field in which they are applicable for the good of man. If their role is not just to show a limitation of the conceptual part of the

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

human mind, then they must contribute to the demystification of the reality that cannot be tackled by conceptualisation alone and which cannot also be tackled by intuitionisation alone.

The subject – object – based theory of knowledge shows that conceptualisation alone will be useless given the existence of representations not conceptualised and that intuitions alone will be useless given the existence of concepts of the *a priori* plan of the mind to think objects. A theory of knowledge that has to consider the implications of the relationship of the subject and the object has to, in the spirit of the Kantian critical philosophy, proceed from a theory of the mind so that we should not adopt a simplistic approach that does not conform to the complexity of the objects of our knowledge and the complexity of the human mind that has to know them. Robert Hanna notes that the nonconceptual lines of the Kantian theory of knowledge results from the unbreakable bond between epistemology and metaphysics in the Kantian theory of knowledge from the pre – critical to the critical era of his philosophy and, for us, the debate and difficulties open up new areas of research in the post – critical era:

*Kant's nonconceptualism is foundational for any philosophically defensible version of his transcendental idealism, namely, transcendental idealism for sensibility. Hence it is impossible to put forward a philosophically defensible but also recognisably Critical period Kantian metaphysics or theory of cognition without also being a Kantian nonconceptualist and thereby necessarily relying on some arguments from Kant's proto-Critical period. This in turn implies [...] the philosophically important claims that Kant's non-intellectualism about the human mind goes all the way down into his metaphysics; that the apparent world fundamentally conforms to human sensibility even if it does not fundamentally conform to the human understanding; and that the basic source of all this is Kant's (proto-Critical but later also Critical) theory of space and how we represent it.*⁴⁷²

The new transcendental idealism of sensibility or transcendental idealism of intuition or better still transcendental idealism that deals with nonconceptualism of intuitions results from an epistemological theory that is highly metaphysical. Such a theory does not only base our knowledge on representations but has to examine the source of the representations so that we can construct a theory of reality or being that takes into account complexity as an element that reflects the objects given to us and the tool used to think the objects which is the mind.

If any theory of knowledge does not take into account the metaphysical implications of the conclusions arrived at, it is possible to take aporia for the truth. The reality does not

⁴⁷² Robert Hanna, "Directions in Space, Nonconceptual Form and the Foundations of Transcendental Idealism", in *Kantian Nonconceptualism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 114 – 115.

seem to respect the canons of logic that our theories of knowledge set for the understanding and for reason. We are in an era where we may have to review all the *a priori* plans set to conceive the truth so that the truth can emerge as a system – independent reality that goes beyond our expectations of simplicity. Complexity, however, does not mean that we should accept any anarchist proposals that take the truth out of any theoretical framework. Complexity entails that we, like Kant, make our theories flexible to accommodate contrary and even contradictory possibilities whose complementarity contribute to the global mastery of the object which is never a simplistic object and does not require a rigid simplistic approach to grasp it. With Kant, given the nonconceptual objects of sensibility, our contemporary theories of knowledge cannot deliberately ignore the metaphysical foundation of any theory that intends to grasp complexity without any destructive rigid *a priori* plan.

9.2: Toward a Metaphysical Epistemology in the Contemporary Era

As a legacy of the Kantian theory of knowledge, every attempt to grasp the truth cannot ignore metaphysics. The problem is the kind of metaphysics that one takes as a foundation of an approach that aims at the truth. Disappointed with traditional metaphysics which he considers to be dogmatic, and given that he could not really do without metaphysics in his theories, Kant proceeded from an in-depth critique of metaphysics as a prolegomena to his theory of knowledge and his theories in other aspects of philosophy especially morality and religion. This makes Kant the precursor of contemporary metaphysics that is supposed to be used in all aspects of philosophy to lay solid foundations for theories that respect logic without ignoring the seemingly ‘illogical’ circumstances in which the reality can be given to us without any means for conceptualisation as we proved in the previous subsection of our work on nonconceptual objects of the Kantian theory of knowledge. Since we already know the kind of metaphysics that Kant uses as the foundation of his theories, to wit, the metaphysics of synthetic *a priori* judgements, even if such a system of metaphysics may end up lapsing into the same kind of dogmatic metaphysics that it sets out to reject, such doubts are dissipated when we use metaphysics as the foundation and not the edifice of knowledge itself.

How is it possible for a modern contemporary theory of knowledge, in the spirit of Kant, to be based on a metaphysical foundation? If we maintain the definition that Kant gives to metaphysics as the advent of knowledge that is *a priori* which seems impossible especially as such knowledge has to be synthetic, and the Kantian system establishes the possibility of

synthetic *a priori* knowledge as we noted in the first part of our work, the metaphysical foundation of every theory of knowledge implies that we should not expect that, since the contemporary society is governed by science or what has come to be known as ‘technoscience’ a theory of knowledge would have to follow the dictates of empirical sciences that actually depend on metaphysics to produce the results in discoveries and inventions that have moulded our contemporary civilisation. The metaphysical foundation has to do with the *a priori* ground for justification of cognition. Even if intuitions give rise to nonconceptual representations, knowledge cannot be obtained without that *a priori* foundation that gives rise to universality and necessity in the relations established between the subject and the object. The advent of nonconceptual representations does not destroy the *a priori* ground of objectivity to be sought in every theory. Here, even students of nature or fanatics of empirical science who are into scientism will not be able to ignore the enduring metaphysical foundation of every theory of knowledge.

In the Kantian seemingly rigid but open system of philosophy and in his theory of knowledge to be more precise, there is need for every researcher to know that even if one were to reject metaphysics, one has to actually use metaphysics, consciously or unconsciously, in any cognition that is to be carried out entirely *a priori* or which at least requires an *a priori* foundation to have universality and validity. Even if they do not apply to nonconceptual intuitions, the categories will occupy an inevitable foundational position in our contemporary theories of knowledge:

*The concepts which thus contain a priori the pure thought involved in every experience, we find in the categories. If we can prove that by their means alone an object can be thought, this will be a sufficient deduction of them, and will justify their objective validity. But since in such a thought more than simply the faculty of thought, the understanding, is brought into play, and since this faculty itself, as a faculty of knowledge that is meant to relate to objects, calls for explanation in regard to the possibility of such relation, we must first of all consider, not in their empirical but in their transcendental constitution, the subjective sources which form the a priori foundation of the possibility of experience.*⁴⁷³

Even if some aspects of experience escape the conceptual ordering of the categories, we cannot make it the norm of our knowledge – seeking methodology. Such aspects of experience only prove that the human mind is not as unlimited as we may think, and that is the real goal of the critique of reason using reason itself. The critique does not aim at

⁴⁷³ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Transcendental Deduction, p. 130.

destroying the rational foundation of knowledge; neither does it aim at destroying the empirical criterion that proves that concepts are actually concepts of objects. The *a priori* foundation of experience must be assumed even if some elements of experience are proven to be beyond the explicative reach of these *a priori* faculties if we do not want to end up in an anarchist theory of knowledge in which anything goes. We intend to prove here that contemporary seeker of knowledge should not feel demoted by the necessary metaphysical foundation they must assume.

If a theorist of knowledge does not depend only on other theories to get the substratum to his thought, then we return to the original tools of cognition, to wit, sensibility and the understanding. If the knowledge – seeker has to assume something at the beginning of the quest for knowledge, the assumption is inevitably metaphysical. With Kant it is the *a priori* plan of the mind to condition experience. No matter the name given to the *a priori* plan by contemporary theorists of knowledge, we only avoid metaphysics by getting close to it. Is metaphysics not becoming a theoretical necessity for every subject of knowledge? Thomas Kuhn thinks that every knowledge – seeker must have at least a preliminary ‘belief’ from which he can proceed to formulate his theory:

*No natural history can be interpreted in the absence of at least some implicit body of intertwined theoretical and methodological belief that permits selection, evaluation and criticism. If the body of beliefs is not already implicit in the collection of facts – in which case more than ‘mere facts’ are at hand – it must be extremely supplied, perhaps by current metaphysics, by another science, or by personal and historical accident.*⁴⁷⁴

Whether the belief is implicit or explicit, the belief is a kind of metaphysical foundation on which the edifice of knowledge is to be built. If we trace the belief to other theories, then we go on a finite regress to the first theory whose ‘belief’ is actually a metaphysical foundation assumed to be an *a priori* substratum on which the theoretical framework is constructed. Facts are not enough. Facts themselves depend on an *a priori* basis. Here, new facts of knowledge cannot just be based on other facts; new facts take us back to the first assumptions which are *a priori* and thus metaphysical in the Kantian conception of the term.

The methodological and theoretical beliefs of the subject of knowledge actually provide a test of solidity for the foundation of his knowledge. The science that Kant admires is one which takes time to solidify this *a priori* foundation that justifies the strengths of the

⁴⁷⁴ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Second Edition, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970, pp. 16 – 17.

theories developed from such a foundation. Like the foundation of a building which determines the strength of the edifice, the *a priori* foundation of a theory of knowledge determines the validity of the theory in the realm of epistemological theories. In the history of philosophy intertwined with that of natural sciences, there was a time when philosophy was made to be on its own, when philosophy was isolated so that natural sciences and other sciences could take up a position of independent sciences that explain nature from laws accessible to the human mind only through the empirical connection of events and objects and not situations where the human mind has to invent hypotheses and force them on nature. More than ever before, in the modern era, and especially in our contemporary era, philosophy, through its speculative branch of metaphysics, has returned to science as a foundation for science. Henceforth, it is no longer a weakness for any theory of knowledge to proudly brandish its implicit and explicit metaphysical foundations. What used to be a source of shame to researchers centuries ago when philosophy and natural science parted ways is now proudly brandished by theorists of knowledge working implicitly or explicitly on the Kantian paradigm. This is a Kantian legacy.

Many contemporary thinkers now see science as empty if it were to do away with its metaphysical foundation that makes it universal and valid to subjects of knowledge all over the globe. Natural laws, as discovered by scientists, will become arbitrary if they are not anchored on an *a priori* foundation that does not depend on nature itself. Alfred North Whitehead notes the ‘bluff’ in theories of science that parade arbitrary laws without indicating the foundation which makes the laws unshakeable as they claim. To Whitehead, it is the return of philosophy to the realm of science not just as part of the edifice but as a foundation:

The three centuries, which form the epoch of modern science, have revolved round the ideas of God, mind, matter, and also of space and time in their characters of expressing simple location for matter. Philosophy has on the whole emphasised mind, and has thus been out of touch with science during the two latter centuries. But it is creeping back into its old importance owing to the rise of psychology and its alliance with physiology. Also, this rehabilitation of philosophy has been facilitated by the recent breakdown of the seventeenth century settlement of the principles of physical science. But, until that collapse, science seated itself securely upon the concepts of matter, space, time, and latterly, of energy. Also there were arbitrary laws of nature determining locomotion. They were empirically observed, but for some obscure reason were known to be universal. Anyone who in practice or theory disregarded them was denounced with unsparing vigour. This position on the part of scientists was pure bluff, if one may credit them with believing their own statements. For their

*current philosophy completely failed to justify the assumption that the immediate knowledge inherent in any present occasion throws any light either on its past, or its future.*⁴⁷⁵

What is empirically observed becomes ‘mysterious, when the plain language of science does not explain it especially if such a language of science is in desperate need to avoid the language of metaphysics. Is it the beginning of a new era of flourishing for metaphysics? The destructive – constructive revolution is Kantian in form and content. In form it is the Copernican revolution that reverses the order of priority between the subject and object of knowledge and the nonconceptual entities do not destroy the order but rather enforces the need for complementarity in what we consider as a subject – based object – based theory of knowledge.

The scientists were actually using the mind to explain experience but refusing to give to the mind in their theories the role the mind is already playing in their application of theories. It is about using a tool that one treats with disdain which is not only counter – productive but leads to a kind of intellectual dishonesty that has kept metaphysics in the dark for a long period of time. The return of philosophy, through metaphysics, implies that even if everything is not to be known through conceptualisation, there must be a certain level of organisation and orderliness before we can consider our cognition to be the truth. Either the scientist continues to hide the element of ‘mystery’ in his theories or he exposes it to be a metaphysical element, more precisely a metaphysical foundation which, far from weakening the theory, actually strengthens it to an apodictic level that experience cannot provide. The human being is at the centre of the interpretative scale of knowledge even if some objects may not fit in the scale of interpretation pre – prepared by the mind prior to the object being given in intuition.

The scientific mind is active in the process of cognition. But this does not imply that the object is blind even if the concepts do not give rules to it. Taking his preliminary step of reflection from the Copernican revolution in astronomy, Gaston Bachelard thinks that the quest for knowledge constantly challenges human beings to adjust their modes of cognition so as to do an appropriate discursive digestion of that which is received immediately in intuition:

⁴⁷⁵ Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, New York: The New American Library, 1925, Chapter XIII, pp. 192 – 193.

[...] the Copernican revolution meant that humans were faced with a new world scale. The same problem arose throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but from the other end of the scale, with microscopic discoveries. Today, breaks in scale are increasingly frequent. Yet the philosophical problem has always remained the same: human beings must be made to disregard the ordinary, everyday scale of things, that is to say their own scale; they must also be made to think the scale or size of things relative to the method of measurement; in short, they must be obliged to take what comes to them in the most immediate of intuitions and make it clearly discursive.⁴⁷⁶

In such scales of measurements which can also be likened to the modes of cognition in humans, the reality will avoid the subjective weaknesses of immediate objectivity as given in intuition or as received by the subject so as to go discursive in order to adapt what is received to the mind's instruments of measurement. Knowledge, in this case will be a subject – based and object – based product. What Bachelard calls 'breaks in scales' implies in the Kantian terms that we must perpetually do a critique of our capacity of cognition, a critique of reason using reason so as to get the best means with which to put what is received to mediate processes that get rid of personal fantasies in what is accepted as knowledge.

Without lapsing into subjectivism or naïve objectivism, the metaphysical foundation of our knowledge makes us conciliators of the immediate data of intuition with the discursive faculties of the mind. If the metaphysical foundation should not be misinterpreted to mean a purely subjective and probably relativistic conception of the foundation of knowledge, it should not also be misinterpreted to mean a purely objective conception of knowledge independently of the 'object' itself. It is an adaptation of what we have to what we receive so that cognition should not be a one – way product of the subject or the object but a combined product of the complementary and collaborative works of both. The Copernican revolution in astronomy and the Kantian 'Copernican revolution' in metaphysical epistemology entails that we give room for trial and error including trial of what at first sight may look like a very absurd way of conceiving reality or conceiving the approach that we can use to get to the reality that is never given on a platter of gold. What is given in intuition cannot be all there is to reality but what is conceived by the mind alone cannot on its own be all it takes to master the reality. If some objects are nonconceptualised then it is a proof that we must constantly adapt our modes of cognition to the objects of our knowledge. Some objects of our knowledge could just find a means to escape from our innate faculties of cognition forever. It

⁴⁷⁶ Gaston Bachelard, *The Formation of the Scientific Mind: A Contribution to a Psychoanalysis of Objective Knowledge*, trans. Mary MacAllester Jones, Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2002, p. 212.

is about adapting the knowledge – seeker’s tools to any eventualities from the ever complex object.

Metaphysical epistemology, as inspired by Kant, helps us avoid the double embarrassment of extremism: naïve objectivism and excessive subjectivism. Naïve objectivism is the belief that the object, as given immediately in intuition, has given us all there is to know about the object itself. By contrast, excessive subjectivism is the belief that the subject has the *a priori* conceptual plan to know all objects, which entails the risk of missing out on nonconceptual objects. The reason for which every theory of epistemology must accept, at least even partly, elements of a metaphysical foundation is from the argument of conceptual content of experience which is plausible but which does not discard the possibility of nonconceptual content received through intuition. According to Bill Brewer, there is enough reason to believe that we can give conceptual content to objects of experience because

(1) Sense experiential states provide reasons for empirical beliefs.

(2) Sense experiential states provide reasons for empirical beliefs only if they have conceptual content.

*[Therefore] Sense experiential states have conceptual content.*⁴⁷⁷

All our beliefs about any objects of experience only make sense if they are conceptualised or have a conceptual content according to Bill Brewer. Such content becomes metaphysical if it is assumed prior to the objects of experience being given to us. It is not just about having a conceptual content; it is about preparing the conceptual content in advance to suit all relations between empirical objects. This is the metaphysical basis of an epistemological theory.

If it is granted that we have beliefs about the things that happen in the empirical world outside of our minds, then it follows that such beliefs must be anchored on some justification, after all knowledge requires a perpetual justification of our beliefs. Yet, if such beliefs are to be justified at all, then we must explain relations between events and objects. Such explanation of relations is no longer empirical but conceptual because the empirical events have the kind of contingency that only finds orderliness in concepts and as far as metaphysics is concerned, in *a priori* concepts. Brewer thus insists that

⁴⁷⁷ Bill Brewer, “Does Perceptual Experience Have Conceptual Content? Perceptual Experience Has Conceptual Content”, in Mathias Steup and Ernest Sosa (ed.), *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*, Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005, Chapter Eight, p. 218.

*[...] giving reasons involves identifying certain relevant propositions – those contents which figure as the premises and conclusions of inferences explicitly articulating the reasoning involved. In particular, sense experiential states provide reasons for empirical beliefs only in virtue of their appropriate relations with propositions suitably inferentially related to the contents of the beliefs in question.*⁴⁷⁸

If justifying beliefs means working with propositions where one or some are premises and another is a conclusion, the relationship established by propositions are logical and deal with concepts which prove that our awareness of relations in experience entails concepts by which such events make sense to us in logic. But beyond that, in its purity, logic makes abstraction of the content of propositions to focus on the form of the judgment. This in turn necessitates an *a priori* plan for every judgement on empirical relations between objects. This takes us to the metaphysical foundation of those judgements we make about experience. But to us, such a foundation requires complementarity between the subject and the object and not just a relationship that subordinates all sense experiential states to concepts.

While the *a priori* foundation of every theory of knowledge does not eliminate the need for empirical verification of our theories, it secures universal grounds that make a theory scientific without eliminating all the weaknesses but still has experience as that about which the *a priori* ground was meant to give a solid explanation. Contemporary theories of knowledge do not use the *a priori* foundation to discard the verification role played by experience when the theories so conceived will still have to be able to relate to experience to be held as true. According to Laurence Bonjour,

*[...] a priori justification is justification that does not depend (a) on sensory or introspective or memory experience in a way that (b) makes that experience an essential part of the very justification or reason for the claim in question. But a priori justification may depend on experience as an essential precondition for understanding the concepts involved in the claim in question, as long as that experience does not also function as part of the justification or reason.*⁴⁷⁹

The achievement of Kant is to show that even if *a priori* foundations do not depend on experience, they, nonetheless, need to be made to relate to experience for us to be sure that even if not derived from experience, the justifications are true because they help us explain the relations of objects in experience from which the *a priori* concepts are not derived.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

⁴⁷⁹ Laurence Bonjour, *Epistemology: Classic Problems and Contemporary Responses*, Second Edition, Maryland, Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010, Chapter Five, p. 74.

It should be noted that in the previous subsection of our work, we did not make any claim that nonconceptual intuitions are to be considered as truth. Their status of truth is still an object of controversy and raw material for further research in our contemporary era. Their existence in the sensibility independently of concepts is only used to highlight the complex nature of the reality which also implies the complexity of the human mind with which the reality is to be grasped. When it has to do with the necessary metaphysical foundation that a theory of epistemology should have as a condition of possibility of universality, validity and objectivity, the existence of common sense intuitions implies that the *a priori* justification should exist such that if the truth can be justified by direct observation in common sense intuition, then the truth about any object should also be conceptually ordered in an *a priori* manner that does not depend on the object itself. That is why Laurence Bonjour holds that

*[...] if there is no a priori justification, then no trans-observational claim of any sort is justified, so that justified belief and knowledge would be limited to what can be justified by direct observation alone. [...] if common-sense intuition is even approximately correct about the scope of our knowledge, it follows that a priori justification must exist.*⁴⁸⁰

Direct observation will never be enough as justification for our beliefs though some evidences are revealed by common sense intuition as the evidence that the reader is on this document reading about the controversies surrounding the metaphysical foundation of knowledge in *a priori* concepts. Apart from the fact that not all justifications can be given through common sense intuition, it is clear that even when such observations are done, the concept of time can make them contingent as we need rules to distinguish vain assumptions from reality. I can as well assume that the reader is on this document reading about the controversies about *a priori* justification when the reader is no longer reading but meditating about the controversies far away from the document that was read.

The bottom line is that, even if common sense intuition gives self – evident truths, and even if some intuitions cannot be conceptualised, it is still true that a true science can never be founded on such shaky grounds as those provided by contingent experience. In the subject – based object – based theory of knowledge proposed as a midpoint for the contemporary era, the intuitions are supposed to follow the *a priori* plan of categories which does not exclude the Kantian possibility of nonconceptualised intuitions that make the *noumena* more of nonconceptual than unknowable entities. Using the case the problematic ideality of the

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

Kantian space and time, Robert Hanna summarise the view that he calls ‘weak transcendental idealism’ as follows:

Weak transcendental idealism says that by their very nature actual space and actual time properly satisfy, or are correctly represented by, our pure or formal intuitions of them. Therefore the actual or possible existence of material things and natural kinds in actual objectively real spacetime directly entails the necessary possibility of rational human minds. In other words, according to weak transcendental idealism, actual space and time can exist in a possible world (including of course the actual world) even if no rational human minds actually exist in that world—or do not actually exist at some times in that world, say, prior to the evolutionary appearance of Homo sapiens—provided that if there were rational human minds in that world, then they could correctly represent space and time.⁴⁸¹

If space and time are idealistic entities used by the subject to receive objects in intuitions, then there is at least the possibility for space and time to exist on their own even if human beings do not fulfil the conditions to receive objects through them in intuition. The hypothesis of Hanna is that if there were a time when human beings do not exist in the world, it would still be possible for space and time to exist such that if rational beings were to exist, then the rational beings would be able to represent space and time. Thus the soft interpretation of the Kantian idealism is that the ideality of space and time is proven by the human ability to represent them as *a priori* forms of sensibility, the reality of space and time is still possible even if human minds did not exist to represent space and time. This means there is the possibility of reality in ideality, the possibility of objectivity in subjectivity: the subjective – objective- approach in the quest for knowledge that opens up the possibility of other ‘revolutions’.

9.3: Perspectives for Other “Copernican Revolutions”

The possibility of other ‘Copernican revolutions’ in epistemology in our contemporary era implies that we have to be dynamic, in the spirit of Kant, such that even if our theories are rigid, they should make room for possibilities envisaged as difficulties or hypotheses in our current theories. That is why Kant envisaged the nonconceptual entities as a possibility or hypotheses that can actually be interpreted to fit within the framework of the *noumena* that will no longer be unknowable but nonconceptualised and take up an independent existence as entities of sensibility in the human mind that has to be viewed in its complexity beyond conceptualisation. It is within this theoretical framework of the possibility

⁴⁸¹ Robert Hanna, *Kant, Science and Human Nature*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 169.

of nonconceptualised entities and the problematic epistemological status of the *noumena* that a contemporary theory of epistemology should accommodate other possible revolutions which, even if they do not overturn the Kantian approach, take it towards directions that Kant may not have envisaged. The idea, here, is to prove that contemporary revolutions in epistemology may not be Kantian in form or content or both but can at least admit the difficulties that Kant foresaw in the *noumena* and nonconceptualised objects of intuition. In one way or the other, implicitly or explicitly, such a revolution to resituate the *noumena* and the nonconceptualised objects of intuition is necessarily Kantian at least at the take-off point. Without destroying the systematic unity of philosophical theories, we cannot deliberately fail to review systems in the quest for precision.

The hitherto weakness of lack of precision in philosophical theories, as highlighted by Henri Bergson in his *Creative Mind*, can be made up for if we reconcile rigid systems with the need for adaptation to the complexity of the reality that may not be accommodated in rigid systems. To Henri Bergson, then, the problem of philosophy is the proximity of theory to reality which has not always given rise to the desired precision. The same thing could be said of the kind of precision expected in the relationship between the subject and the object of knowledge from where truth is expected to emerge. It is in this lack of accuracy in the relationship of subject to object that Kant conceived his epistemological revolution that should inspire other revolutions in our era. The problem that Bergson has with philosophy and reality can then be analogous to the problem of the relation of the subject to the object in any theory of knowledge:

*What philosophy has lacked most of all is precision. Philosophical systems are not cut to the measure of the reality in which we live; they are too wide for reality. Examine any one of them, chosen as you see fit, and you will see that it could apply equally well to a world in which neither plants nor animals have existence, only men, and in which men would quite possibly do without eating and drinking, where they would neither sleep nor dream nor let their minds wander; where, born decrepit, they would end as babes-in-arms; where energy would return up the slope of its dispersion, and where everything might just as easily go backwards and be upside down.*⁴⁸²

The reality, to Kant, is the subject's innate faculties giving rules to the representations received in intuitions. The problematic nonconceptual objects of intuition, then, provide chances of other epistemological revolutions to researchers who have to find out if the

⁴⁸² Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison, New York: The Philosophical Library, 1946, Introduction, p. 8.

nonconceptual entities can have the kind of epistemological status to be described as truth or at least a step toward the truth in the era of complexity in the object of knowledge.

Given the complexity in our era, the epistemological revolution has to be cultural and societal because the construction of truth can no longer be indifferent to the elements that can, in one way or the other, condition the innate faculties of the subject to read the reality in a way as to ignore canons of truth set elsewhere. The truth thus requires an instrument of expression in language. Even if the truth is out there in the object, it has to be expressed by the subject for other subjects to understand the truth as described in the relations of the subject to the object. How to establish the right relationship between the subject and the object so that the subject can communicate it to other subjects so that they can seek to establish the same relationship or at least to make the established relationship comprehensible and convincing to others is the bone of contention. If we have to lift the Kantian *noumena* to the level of knowable concepts that are simply not conceptualised, then intuitions without concepts are not as blind as we may think from a first sight reading of Kant. Yet we need concepts for the sake of apodictic and universal criteria cherished by science. The Kantian *noumena* and the nonconceptualised objects of intuition can be used to explain the complexity of the reality today as enough reason to open up closed systems without destroying the basic elements of systematic unity needed in science. Opening up our systems of thought means accommodating elements not hitherto accommodated in ancient systems. The new elements to be accommodated may be cultural or at least societal so that the truth should no longer be an estranged entity from the milieu of the knowledge – seeker. Hence, even if the revolution is not Kantian in content, it can be Kantian in form or in its radical nature that may make it look illogical at first sight, but which, in the long run, becomes a plausible hypothesis redefining the ever problematic relation that the subject should have with the object for knowledge to emerge.

Henri Bergson insists on the ‘tight’ relationship that our explanation should have with the object for truth to be possible. This is to avoid unnecessary extrapolations that derail us from the truth in a quest for systematic unity that takes us too far away from the object of study. The complexity of the reality does not require that we should be very far away from the object but it does not also require that we should seek the kind of ‘tight’ relation with the object that ends up giving the object the chance to escape from our conceptual grip like the nonconceptual entities of intuition. While systems must not be too abstract, they should not be pretentiously too close to the object in a problematic manner:

*The fact is that a self-contained (vrai) system is an assemblage of conceptions so abstract, and consequently so vast, that it might contain, aside from the real, all that is possible and even impossible. The only explanation we should accept as satisfactory is one which fits tightly to its object, with no space between them, no crevice in which any other explanation might equally well be lodged; one which fits the object only and to which alone the object lends itself. Scientific explanation can be of such a kind; it involves absolute precision and complete or mounting evidence. Can one say as much for philosophical theories?*⁴⁸³

The kind of absolute precision that Bergson talks about sounds like the kind of language used by Kant to reject dogmatic metaphysics in his glorification of mathematics only to come back to another kind of metaphysics at the foundation of epistemology and science itself. While avoiding fanaticism for science in scientism, a modern theory of knowledge has to avoid the dogmatic pretensions of traditional metaphysics that may not have failed as a system on its own but is more useful as the foundation of other disciplines in search of apodictic bases.

The possibility of a contemporary epistemological revolution is on both ways: the dogmatic version of metaphysics rejected by Kant and the science that blindly depends on nature. It is actually the return of philosophy at the heart of the science especially at the heart of the foundation of science. The contemporary revolution in science and philosophy should actually reunite the two bedfellows which are philosophy and science that seem to have parted ways through authors who chose conceptual extremism instead of the necessary complementarity that make the two better than each existing on its own and that is the achievement of the Kantian theory of knowledge that can condition our contemporary theories of knowledge towards epistemological revolutions that are more profitable in the search for truth than each working on its own. To Kant, even Physics will suffer the same fate as dogmatic metaphysics if it does not adapt to revolutionary changes imposed on us by the complexity of the reality.

The existence of mathematics in its closest relationship with a reformed version of metaphysics implies that the path toward science is possible for metaphysics. The case would have been same for physics if it did not adapt to changes in the object that require changes in the method used by the subject to grasp the object. Physics has already adopted the path that reason has an *a priori* plan for the study of nature and that makes it a science that is no longer ashamed of its necessary metaphysical foundation:

⁴⁸³ Henri Bergson, *op. cit.*, pp. 8 – 9.

*Even physics [...] owes the beneficent revolution in its point of view entirely to the happy thought, that while reason must seek in nature, not fictitiously ascribe to it, whatever as not being knowable through reason's own resources has to be learnt, if learnt at all, only from nature, it must adopt as its guide, in so seeking, that which it has itself put into nature. It is thus that the study of nature has entered on the secure path of a science, after having for so many centuries been nothing but a process of merely random groping.*⁴⁸⁴

If Physics, like metaphysics, has been through an unproductive age of ‘random groping’ and the Kantian revolution has brought the two back together in a relationship that should never have been broken, then every contemporary revolution in epistemology should seek to consolidate the new found relationship between philosophy and science, a relationship that constitutes the major condition of possibility for demystifying the reality whose complexity necessitates openness without destroying the *a priori* criteria of truth.

Our systems of concepts are only useful as long as they serve to explain experience. On their own, such systems of ideas are useless. Yet such concepts do not apply to all aspects of experience especially the nonconceptual objects of intuition. This means that Albeit Einstein is right when he says that concepts are only useful in explaining experience to the point where all aspects of experience are open to conceptualisation. In the contemporary debate, the case is not yet closed in favour of conceptualisation. Hence, the avenues in the future also involve revisiting the epistemological status of concepts that do not actually conceptualise any objects of intuition but which constitute what Kant calls ideas of pure reason. Since nonconceptual objects of intuition exist in sensibility while ideas of pure ideas exist in reason, each of which are two faculties of the human mind, there is need to be cautious with Einstein’s severe criticism of the ‘harmful’ influence that philosophy has on science:

*The only justification for our concepts and system of concepts is that they serve to represent the complex of our experiences; beyond this they have no legitimacy. I am convinced that the philosophers have had a harmful effect upon the progress of scientific thinking in removing certain fundamental concepts from the domain of empiricism, where they are under our control, to the intangible heights of the *a priori*. For even if it should appear that the universe of ideas cannot be deduced from experience by logical means, but is, in a sense, a creation of the human mind, without which no science is possible, nevertheless this universe of ideas is just as little independent of the nature of our experiences as clothes are of the form of the human body.*⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, Preface to the Second Edition, pp. 20 – 21.

⁴⁸⁵ Albert Einstein, *The Meaning of Relativity*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1923, pp. 2 – 3.

The analogy is striking enough. If clothes cannot be independent of the form of the human body, concepts cannot be independent of at least the form of experience from where they can be derived in the case of empirical concepts or from where they are not derived in the case of *a priori* concepts according to Einstein. The contemporary debate on epistemology will have to move from the status of the *a priori* in cognition to the possibility of complementarity between the *a priori* concepts and the experience from where they are not derived but about which they are called to explain. This is the bone of contention that should take us away from the conflicts of conceptual camps toward reconciling the conflicts that are age old in philosophy but which have not been useful in demystifying the complex reality whose real chance of mastery is in the complementarity of systems of thought.

If one aspect of the subject cannot be ignored in the search for truth, then no aspect of the object should be ignored too. Sensibility and understanding, intuitions and concepts, nonconceptual entities and ideas of pure reason are all part and parcel of the construction of the truth that we are looking for and we cannot deliberately ignore any of these. The only way not to ignore any of them is to be methodologically open without accepting absolute anarchy as a path to truth. In this way, the search for the truth should take us to all aspects of life especially aspects of life ignored by the conceptual extremism of schools of thought that has rather helped to conceal the reality we are trying to uncover. Concepts no longer help only to explain experience. Some concepts are such that they cannot apply to experience yet they participate in the search for truth by regulating the concepts related to experience. Some aspects of objects are such that they cannot be conceptualised, yet they participate in the search for truth in a theory of the human mind that has to accept complexity through the presence of representations that escape the conceptual plan of the same mind.

The truth is thus in us and out there, in us and in the objects, in our relations with other human beings, in our social norms that regulate life among human beings. The truth becomes humanistic as making it an abstract entity only takes it away from our realities in a problematic conception that does not give proximity between the concepts and the objects. As in *Truth and Method* by Hans Georg Gadamer, the norms of our society as well as the language and customs of the truth – seekers already help us move above constraining subjective conditions towards objectivity such that the truth should become a product of what he calls ‘operative knowledge’:

If life itself is ordered towards reflection, then the pure expression of experience in great art has a special value. But this is not to deny that knowledge is already operative and hence truth can be recognized in every expression of life. For the forms of expression that dominate human life are all forms of objective mind. In language, customs, and legal forms the individual has always already risen above his particularity. The great shared moral world in which he lives represents a fixed point through which he can understand himself in the face of the fluid contingency of his subjective emotions. In being devoted to common aims, in being absorbed in activity for the community, a person is “freed from particularity and transience.”⁴⁸⁶

The subject in the quest for truth is not alone; he lives in a society in which he has to stand above subjective conditions even if some of such subjective conditions are innate as faculties with which all rational beings give apodictic and universal rules to experience. Nevertheless the subject is out there with other subjects, he adapts his emotions to the norms of the society in which he lives. The subject has to stand above those aspects of subjectivity that makes him an alien in the quest for knowledge. Even in conceptualisations of reality, we must explicitly or implicitly construct our concepts without a decision to be as far away from our societal norms as possible. It is not the distance that we create with our society that makes our conceptions precise and accurate explanations of the reality.

The subject is not just united with other subjects through innate faculties that hold whether we interact with each other or not; the subject is a being in a life of shared experiences with other beings. The subject is in a community such that even he makes the quest for truth an individualised affair that unites all of us only through the same faculties, the subject should not deliberately fight against those aspects of communal life that raise us above the particularism for inter- subjectivity to be possible. Above all, we should not reject anything as ‘foreign’ because such a rejection reduces our chances of constructing the truth beyond geographical and conceptual boundaries. Jacques Chatué⁴⁸⁷ thinks that the growth of science is inseparable from the dynamism of culture in a quest for normative values illustrated by the notions of epistemology and transcultural transmission of norms. If it becomes an obsession for us to separate science from culture, the end result can only be the annulation of the heuristic potential of accepting elements of foreign origin. Here, we have to free the dynamism from colonial conflicts and euro centrism. Even as a geographical notion, elements of foreign origin are extra-territorial thereby resisting all sorts of colonial historicity. A subject – object – based theory of truth is a unity of differences, a unity that does not

⁴⁸⁶ Hans - Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, London, New York, Nel Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 1975, p. 238.

⁴⁸⁷ Jacques Chatué, *Epistemologie et Transculturalité*, Tome 2, Paris : Harmattan, 2009, pp. 159 – 160.

exclude the possibility of review of all the parts that hold the system together in order to permanently do a destructive – constructive evaluation of our apparatus of judgment of truth, in the Kantian spirit, so as to open up more avenues of mastery of a reality that is never given with simplicity and cannot be grasped through simplistic approaches.

CONCLUSION

The third part of our work has proved that, though set in the 18th century, the Kantian theory of knowledge is full of lessons for our contemporary era. If such lessons are appropriated, then a contemporary theory of knowledge that can grasp complexity is possible when we take into account the loose ends of the seemingly rigid Kantian system of metaphysical epistemology. We have not proven that all the ideas of the Kantian theory of knowledge are relevant in our contemporary era; in fact our view that we need a subject – object – based theory of knowledge actually makes use of one angle of the Kantian theory but goes beyond this angle to incorporate other elements that can make room for plurality instead of rigidity, rigidity that may safeguard the criteria of universality and necessity required in science but which does not go beyond science to accommodate modes of knowledge that can be of equal relevance in a theory of knowledge but which do not respect the hitherto fashionable criteria of universality and necessity. We have not proven that all the ideas of the Kantian theory of knowledge are completely irrelevant to us in this era, for if such were the case we would not have found it necessary to do research work on a theme treated in his books. We have merely shown that, given the situation of complexity in our era, even if Kant's theory of knowledge is not the complete solution, it can provide part of the solution if read in a way as to readapt it to our era by making it accommodate plurality even if it must not lose the rigour of universality and necessity. In the spirit of Kant, we have tried to be reconciliatory where possible and where necessary without arbitrarily discarding the unity of knowledge challenged by our era.

We have basically proven that another revolution has to be superimposed on the Kantian revolution in epistemology such that the subject and the object can be out in a dynamic relation whereby the truth can emerge as an operational reality and not a fixation. In an era where meticulous system – building in philosophical theories is now one approach in competition with others, without giving in to anarchy, the Kantian system is no longer the only relevant paradigm for the attainment of truth, it is just one among many others. And so we have tried to harness the other methods that are based on objectivity (relating to the object) to be one of the competing options with the subject – based approach of Kant so that plurality can give rise to other necessary revolutions cherished by the era of complexity. This could not be otherwise given that the contemporary debate on Kant has shifted focus from the traditional position of giving a representational picture of truth toward those loose ends in the

Kantian system which supposes that there are elements that may not respect the Kantian canons of truth and yet are not irrelevant in the quest for truth. Such is the case with transcendental ideas and the nonconceptualised intuitions which find systematic treatment in this part of our work.

The transcendental ideas, also known as the ideas of pure reason, are no longer useless. Kant did not really find them completely useless. He just seemed to have found them more useful in morality than in epistemology. With us, the ideas of pure reason should have a place of choice in a contemporary theory of knowledge not for the sake of morality but for the role that Kant admits they can play in ordering the understanding toward ultimate goals of the systematic unity of reason with itself as the highest tribunal of human thought. This merely regulative role becomes more significant when there are nonconceptual entities which are no longer useless. As such, non – intuitional concepts can have a place of their own in the mind and such a place, by ordering the understanding, actually participates or has to participate in the complex nature of reality that reflects the complexity of the human mind which is at variance with simplistic approaches to the truth. After admitting the ambiguities that the Kantian position entails when he tries to reconcile faculties and objects that are clearly distinct in the second part of our work, this third part of the work has proven that transcendental ideas are not just useful for the sake of morality. Even if we focus on their role in morality in a bid to expand the realm of truth as Kant does in the transition from speculative to practical reason, it is clear that the extrapolation of practical reason from morality to religion has not had successful outcomes in our era. We thus propose an atheistic ethical community as a means a necessary step to realising the goals of the transition from speculative to practical reason.

Besides, when Kant talks about transcendental ideas, it is clear that he does not want their possible role in epistemology to overshadow their reserved role in morality. This part of our work has revisited in order to restate the indispensable role of such ideas in a contemporary theory of knowledge whose use of the mind cannot be biased against that which regulates all knowledge towards the highest level of coherence, now seen as a point of plurality given the treatment that Kant gives to them as impossible objects of knowledge. To Kant,

I understand by idea a necessary concept of reason to which no corresponding object can be given in sense-experience. Thus the pure concepts of reason, now under consideration, are transcendental ideas. They are concepts of pure reason,

in that they view all knowledge gained in experience as being determined through an absolute totality of conditions. They are not arbitrarily invented; they are imposed by the very nature of reason itself, and therefore stand in necessary relation to the whole employment of understanding.⁴⁸⁸

To us, as Kant says despite diminishing their epistemological role in many other passages, the ideas of pure reason are epistemologically important in a possible contemporary theory of knowledge given that the complexity of the object of knowledge is not expected to be grasped by a simplistic structure of the human mind. As such, the highest tribunal of human thought which is reason may be made to work within narrow limits so as to control the excesses of dogmatic metaphysics. But as soon as the requirements of the critique have been fulfilled, reason must be freed to expand the spectre of reality to the highest possible level. This is one way out of the complexity of our era caught in between the insufficient grips of scientism.

The third part of our work has consecrated the enduring role of metaphysics at the foundation of natural science not only as a continuation of the Kantian project but as an attempt to open up to plurality from the angle of science that has to reunite with metaphysics despite their apparent distinctness. Even if the unity does not occur in the strict sense as to merge them into one discipline, their distinct roles complement each other; metaphysics for the apodictic foundation that gives rise to universality, and science for the necessary use of concepts only to explain and understand experience. The unity in diversity here is more of a call for acceptance of metaphysics and empirical sciences as distinct approaches to knowledge which can compete with each other but whose results complement each other. This is one case where complementary unity is recommended as a solution to the predicaments of our era. Gaston Bachelard sees nothing wrong with the incorporation of abstractions as a necessary component of a scientific mind:

[...] since the concrete already accepts geometrical form and is correctly analyzed by the abstract, why should we not agree to make abstraction the normal and productive approach of the scientific mind? In point of fact, if we reflect on the development of the scientific mind, we very soon detect a momentum going from the more or less visual geometrical to complete abstraction. As soon as we accede to a geometrical law we effect a highly surprising mental inversion, as keen and sweet as an engendering act: curiosity gives place to the hope of creating. The first geometrical representation of phenomena being essentially an ordering, this first ordering opens before us

⁴⁸⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *op. cit.*, The Transcendental Ideas, pp. 318 – 319.

*perspectives of an abstraction which, alert and conquering, should lead us to organize phenomenology rationally as a theory of pure order.*⁴⁸⁹

Through its necessary unity with mathematics in *a priori*, we have shown that metaphysics is now an asset and no longer a liability to science as was falsely assumed to be the case in many scientific theories of the past. Even if methodological extremism and radicalism do not allow the fanatics of these two approaches to reality to come to a compromise, the compromise itself is more of conceptual acceptance and application than a call for an official reunion. In the modern era, what matters is not the official union or reunion of disciplines but their conflicting complementarity and complementary conflicts which do not necessarily seek to reduce one discipline or one approach to another and which above all do not seek to annihilate some approaches in favour of others. It is a complex unity in diversity and diversity in apparent unity of purpose and objectives, the main objective being to grasp the complex reality.

The third part of our work, finally, proves that the loose ends of the Kantian theory of knowledge can and should become building blocks for a contemporary theory of knowledge that avoids the limitations of unsatisfactory subjectivity and naive objectivity. Unsatisfactory subjectivity is the representational theory which respects the canons of universality and necessity but only ends up in the appearance and not the object as it is. This time around, we want to know objects as they are. That is why the objectivity is naïve if we do not give the mind the chance to order what we receive in intuition. That is the subject – object – based approach that goes beyond the Kantian revolutionary subject – based approach which did not ignore the object but could only represent the object as it appears to our faculties and not as it is. This proposal is made necessary by a contemporary reading of those lines in the Kantian *Critique of Pure Reason* which state the limitations of blind intuitions and empty concepts without denying their independent existence:

Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. It is, therefore, 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. These two powers or capacities cannot exchange their functions. The understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise. But that is no reason for confounding the contribution of either with that of the other; rather is it a

⁴⁸⁹ Gaston Bachelard, *The Formation of the Scientific Mind: A Contribution to a Psychoanalysis of Objective Knowledge*, *op. cit.*, pp. 17 – 18.

*strong reason for carefully separating and distinguishing the one from the other.*⁴⁹⁰

We have proven that empty concepts are not always blind as they help to regulate the understanding toward synthetic goals that are very useful for knowledge that has to order the manifold of intuitions. We have proven that not all intuitions without concepts are blind as many nonconceptual representations are lodged in sensibility to have a distinct and independent existence that does not follow the *a priori* plan of the mind in conceptualisation.

Giving content to nonconceptual representations is the bone of contention which does not do any harm to the subject – object – based theory of knowledge as it rather provides perspectives for future research. For us, the fate of such entities is a Kantian realisation of the complexity of the reality in the 18th century which makes his view relevant to us in the 21st century as knowledge – seekers can neither discard transcendental ideas nor nonconceptual intuitions. If thoughts using the ideas of pure reason are not empty as they regulate the understanding in its immediate ordering of representations, then the nonconceptual representations opens the way for knowledge of the *noumena* as the matter of appearance which is given and not conceptualised and so looks like it is not even given; after all it is when an object is thought that we can be very sure that it is given. If we may have thought that the Kantian theory implied that only what is thought is to be considered real and existent, then it is time to turn the table using passages from the same Kantian theory of knowledge that we have examined to show that even if what is given is not thought, we cannot conclude that it cannot be known or that it does not exist. These contemporary nuances and controversies fit squarely in the complexity of the reality and the complexity of the human mind that has to grasp the reality, and the complexity of a possible subject – object – based theory of knowledge has to accommodate elements that are nonconceptual, non – intuitional, non – universal and even non – apodictic as requirements of complexity, when an important way of knowing the reality consists in an apparent system of organised methodological anarchy.

⁴⁹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, Transcendental Logic, p. 93.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Our work entitled “The Question of Truth in Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*” is an analytic, critical and adaptive piece that seeks to critically analyse and adapt the Kantian contributions to our theories of knowledge. We had to choose Kant as the author for our research project because apart from the fertile approach of systematic unity that he seeks in his philosophy and which is controversial in the contemporary era in need of new epistemological references, Kant is a profound thinker whose ideas cut across generations of thinkers and a thinker of our era cannot be indifferent to the Kantian system of philosophy in general and his theory of knowledge in particular. On the problem of truth, we have to look for new ways of solving a very old problem in philosophy. Beyond the problem of the meaning and nature of truth is the operational or dynamic relation that brings the truth to light. It is not so obvious that the relation between the subject and the object of knowledge can give rise to the truth. This is because if the object is wrongly represented by the subject or the object is not completely given to the subject or both, the truth becomes problematic. Posing the case for truth as a problem means it may be impossible to get the truth if the right conditions are not met and those conditions are a call for concern to us in this work. Given that illusions can stand for truth or the truth can be taken as an illusion, our quest for truth involves a quest to eliminate the illusions that can take the place of the truth if the right relation between our knowledge and the object is not established.

The general problem of our work has to do with the relevance of Immanuel Kant’s Copernican Revolution in our contemporary era. In other words does Kant’s Copernican Revolution in epistemology help us eliminate illusions to construct the truth in our era? We have worked with the premise that since the truth is more of dynamism than an instantaneous or fixed entity, the relation of the subject to the object, the relation of the cognition to the object must be made to be a process and not a thing. Hence, the nature of truth is a problem of the relevance of the methods used to get to the truth. In three levels, the analytic part of our work has shown how our cognitive faculties receive representations, regulate them and combine them with consciousness to become knowledge in Kantian epistemology.

At the first level, the data of experience is considered as a manifold and has to be received as intuitions. This is the receptive stage that makes use of the faculty of sensibility which, as Ali Teymoori and Rose Trappes rightly put it should make our cognition more subjective than it may seem to be at first sight:

determined by *a priori* concepts. At this level, judgement makes use of transcendental imagination in the schema to mediate between the manifold of intuition and the concepts in the unity of consciousness. At this stage the sense of self unites all faculties of representation to knowledge in the synthetic unity of apperception treated in the analytic part of our work and restated by Ali Teymoori and Rose Trappes in the following words:

[...] receiving and structuring information from the outside world isn't all our minds can do. Adding to his complex descriptions of intuition and understanding, Kant describes some other mental faculties that contribute to forming our experience. For instance, judgement acts as a guide to the faculty of understanding, and the imagination provides information to the understanding in the absence of immediate sensation. Finally, according to Kant this diverse set of cognitive faculties are united by a sense of self, which Kant terms the unity of apperception and which we might call an ego. It is this unified state of mind that allows us to make sense of the manifold of sensory data through understanding and judgement, making our very experience of the world possible.⁴⁹³

Our experience of the world only becomes possible in this synthetic unity of apperception. This means that the process of cognition, to Kant, is not just to know the object but also and above all to make the object possible as an object of experience. Whether the world exists without these faculties of representation is a controversial issue that cannot be settled by our faculties of cognition. The least we can say with Kant is that beyond the representational faculties, there is an object as it is in itself called the *noumenon* the existence or non – existence of which we cannot ascertain precisely because it is not accessible to our cognitive faculties; it is unknowable.

The critical part of our work, then, in an uncompromising manner, shows the epistemological loopholes in the Kantian theory of knowledge. If the appearance that gives rise to representations has a substrate or base that our representational faculties cannot penetrate, then we cannot know all there is to know about the object with the Kantian subject – based theory of knowledge. We can only know the phenomena or things as they appear to our faculties. A series of unresolved aporia result from the Kantian theory of knowledge especially at the controversial level of the *noumena*. We have shown that if the *noumena* exist and cannot be known then the Kantian theory of knowledge is not enough to meet the needs of our contemporary era in need of truth from all angles of the object. On the other hand, if Kant uses the idea of appearance to imply that the phenomena are all we can know and all that exist as far as we are concerned, then the idea of ‘appearance’ loses its meaning in

⁴⁹³ *Idem.*

contradictions as appearance supposes a substrate. Here, we prove that more than just a limitation of the powers of reason for epistemological purposes, the Kantian critique seriously damages the chances of reason in the quest for truth which can no longer admit limits especially when such limits are set to condition the researcher to be contented with a fatalistic one – dimensional capture of reality. Whether we take it from the angle of a non-existent entity since it cannot be known or an existent entity that cannot be known, the Kantian *noumenon* no longer has a place in contemporary theories of knowledge except considered to be a known or at least a knowable entity.

The second critical level is actually a critique of the Kantian critique of metaphysics. At this level, we have proven that the metaphysics used by Kant in his epistemology is more or less identical to the metaphysics he ferociously criticises as a source of dialectical illusions. This is because as a source of knowledge that is *a priori*, it is difficult to show how the Kantian metaphysics that is supposed to give rise to synthetic *a priori* judgments is different from the metaphysics he rejects. We opine that the Kantian reformulated version of metaphysics is more of an on-going project of conditions of possibility of a science than an established science. This casts serious doubts on the kind of metaphysics used by Kant as the foundation of natural science and as the basis of his subject – based approach and by extension, his systems of morality and religion. Before, during and after his critique of metaphysics, Kant has never ceased to be a metaphysician.

The case of the critique of the Kantian critique of metaphysics is because Kant was not epistemologically comfortable with the metaphysical quest for the unconditioned and absolute which lies beyond all phenomenal entities and is taken as the uncaused causality, the absolute necessity, the unconditioned source of all empirical entities. Such an unconditioned absolute cannot be given in intuition and so the synthetic unconditioned unity aimed at by metaphysics is not a possible object of knowledge. Yet Kant moves from there to conceive a theory of knowledge based on the kind of unity of truth that formally is not very different from the metaphysically unconditioned which he rejects in the realm of possible knowledge. Edward Caird highlights the case of the metaphysical quest for an absolute unconditioned necessity of unity in concepts which to us formally reflects the rigidity of the Kantian theoretical framework of categories:

To estimate the value of the Ideas of Reason was the primary object of the Critique. For, as to the a priori Principles of the Understanding, Kant held that, in the first instance, and for themselves, they need no deduction; and that

it never would have occurred to us to ask for one, if they had not been carried beyond their proper sphere. As principles of experience, they are validated by their fruitfulness, by the continual advance of scientific knowledge which has been made possible by means of them. But there is that in us which leads us to apply them beyond the sphere of experience. [...] we are haunted by the thought of a unity beneath all the diversity of the knowable world, of a completed whole in which all that diversity is exhausted, and finally of the unity of the intelligence and the intelligible world.⁴⁹⁴

We have shown how Kant moves from a rejection of unconditioned unity in metaphysics to a similar kind of unity in truth which is conditioned by the empirical realm beyond which any theory of truth lands in dialectical illusions. Yet the ideas of pure reason are not completely useless as Kant still exalts their role in guiding the understanding toward ultimate goals of synthetic unity in concepts, a role which mediately relates to the objects through its ordering of the understanding whose concepts condition objects. We have shown that as far as the Kantian metaphysical conception of epistemology is concerned, Kant is not far from the metaphysics he criticises.

The final and most important critical level is that which opens up to perspectives for the future, our future, our era. It is a critique of the rigidity of a theory of knowledge that does not give room for contradictory and complementary approaches that could contribute to demystify the reality. In its form, the systematic unity at the level of the absolute unconditioned used by Kant to reject metaphysics because such an object cannot be given in intuition is not far from the kind of systematic unity in truth that Kant conceives. In its content, the Kantian categories constitute a rigid trapping of reality kept within such narrow limits that cannot give room to expansion of knowledge and thus is obsolete in the contemporary era. Harold N. Lee states the case of the need to get rid of the Kantian rigid system of categories which can no longer serve as the logical framework for truth in our era:

[...] along with the idea of self-evident truths or necessary axioms, the whole idea of the rigidity of the logical structure of the mind must be surrendered. There is still logical necessity, but it is the restricted necessity of relations between premises and conclusions. It is hypothetical: if such and such premises are adopted, then so and so conclusions necessarily follow. The analysis of pure logic yields no categories, least of all rigid categories such as are those of Kant's system.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁴Edward Caird, *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, Volume II, New York: Macmillan and Co., 1889, Book I, pp. 1 - 2.

⁴⁹⁵Harold N. Lee, "The Rigidity of Kant's Categories", in *Tulane Studies in Philosophy, Volume III: A Symposium on Kant*, New Orleans: Tulane University, 1954, p. 116.

The critical part of our work refutes the rigidity of the Kantian system and its conceptual consequence in the unknowability of the *noumena* in favour of a derivative from the Kantian system which we have called the nonconceptual angle to serve as a consistent alternative with and to conceptualism for Kant's theory to be more adapted to the needs of our era. This is based on the innovative premise that intuitions without concepts are blind but not meaningless as they constitute a proto – rational level of cognition.

The adaptive part of our work, then, has shown the relevance of the Kantian theory of knowledge to our contemporary society. The first level of relevance is the restitution of what seems to be the lost glory of metaphysics, glory lost in the Kantian system and restored in the same system as the foundation of science. We have shown that from the Kantian era, there is need for the unity of philosophy and science not as one system swallowing another and the philosophy here is especially referring to metaphysics. It is the acceptance of coexistence in distinctness as the complementarity of conflicting approaches or the necessary conflict of complementary approaches which is in line with the requirements of our era of complexity. Gaston Bachelard, in this light, rightly affirms the necessity of the coexistence of rational generalism with scientific particularism:

So, only too often, the philosophy of science remains corraled in the two extremes of knowledge: in the study by philosophers of principles which are too general and in the study by scientists of results which are too particular. It exhausts itself against these two epistemological obstacles which restrict all thought: the general and the immediate. It stresses first the a priori then the a posteriori, and fails to recognize the transmutation of epistemological values which contemporary scientific thought constantly executes between a priori and a posteriori, between experimental values and rational values.⁴⁹⁶

As a legacy of Kant, more than ever before, our work has proven that metaphysics has continued to have, and needs to continue to have a place in science as its foundation such that the *a priori* necessity and universality of metaphysical principles can accommodate the particularism of the sciences such that particular cases would be subsumed under general rules. At the scientific level in its coexistence with metaphysics, even if such coexistence is not conflict – free, the subject – object – based theory of knowledge becomes possible in the philosophy of science as a Kantian synthesis of Newtonian science with Leibnizian metaphysics used in our work as illustrations of how empirical sciences and metaphysics cannot really be far away from each other in our era and in the Kantian era.

⁴⁹⁶ Gaston Bachelard, *The Philosophy of No: A Philosophy of the New Scientific Spirit*, trans. G. C. Waterston, New York: The Orion Press, 1968, *Philosophic Thought and the Scientific Mind*, p. 5.

The second adaptive level of our work follows the footsteps of Kant to expand the field of truth from speculative to practical reason. We note, with regret, that this transition, which we consider useful in morality and religion, has not had the expected impact in our contemporary society. If concepts of pure reason are not as fruitful in epistemology as they are supposed to be in morality and religion, then we can say that the goal of the transition from speculative to practical reason can only be met if we return to the Kantian conception of religion as one based on morality. The transition, in truth, from epistemology to morality, can only have an impact if our contemporary religious denominations return to nursing the seed of morality that gives religion a rational angle which unites all human beings into an ethical community that can only become pleasing to God by respecting the moral laws in us as if they were divine commands. The contemporary multiplicity of religious denominations, which are neutral to morality or, worse still, contradict morality, is used as proof that the contemporary knowledge – seeker, in carrying out the transition from speculative to practical reason, must fight against the drama of divine worship which has made visible churches theatre houses with little or no consideration for morality. From Kant, we come to terms with the view that we can be morally upright without belonging to any earthly or visible church. The converse is not true because we cannot be religious without the moral foundation. Our proposal is for the contemporary man to avoid the religious servitude in visible churches and go for the moral seed in us which can be nursed to make us pleasing to God without necessarily partaking in the drama of divine worship. We have gone to the extreme of an atheistic ethical community so as to be sure of the necessary moral foundation on which any religious edifice must be erected to be worthy of the name. This will give us the chance to construct the truth in our era as a transition from speculative to practical reason.

The most important adaptive level of our work is that which identifies the loose ends in the Kantian theory of knowledge that are used as concessions made by Kant for possibilities which may sound contradictory to his theory but which are consistent with the conceptual angle of his theory and important to us in the quest for a mastery of complexity in our era. Whenever Kant talks about the unknowable, the possibility of intuitions without concepts (which are blind but not meaningless) and the possibility of concepts without intuitions (which are empty but not useless as they are regulative), such openings are concessions of conceptual lines that may do not distort his theory but make conceptualism complementary and consistent with nonconceptualism which are used as conditions of possibility of a return to the object to discover the *noumenon* as a knowable entity. Such

Kantian concessions are made with ambiguities and conceptual density of impossibilities and possibilities providing fertile grounds for a theory that does not admit the fatalism of the unknowable. To Kant,

*When [...] we say that the senses represent objects as they appear, and the understanding objects as they are, the latter statement is to be taken, not in the transcendental, but in the merely empirical meaning of the terms, namely as meaning that the objects must be represented as objects of experience, that is, as appearances in thoroughgoing inter-connection with one another, and not as they may be apart from their relation to possible experience (and consequently to any senses), as objects of the pure understanding. Such objects of pure understanding will always remain unknown to us; we can never even know whether such a transcendental or exceptional knowledge is possible under any conditions at least not if it is to be the same kind of knowledge as that which stands under our ordinary categories. Understanding and sensibility, with us, can determine objects only when they are employed in conjunction. When we separate them, we have intuitions without concepts, or concepts without intuitions in both cases, representations which we are not in a position to apply to any determinate object.*⁴⁹⁷

The concessions made by Kant are those of nonconceptual intuitions and non – intuitional concepts. We have shown that contrary to what one angle of the Kantian theory of knowledge holds and still complementary and consistent with this angle, intuitions without concepts give rise to proto – rational cognition which is simply nonconceptual and perhaps nonconceptualisable. This means that the respect of the conceptual intuition and intuitional concept criteria only constitutes one paradigm in the modern era among other competing paradigms in the quest for an adequate explanation of complexity. The other side of the coin admitted as a compromise is the possibility of nonconceptual intuitions that constitute an alternative interpretative revolutionary reading to the Kantian revolution in epistemology.

The contemporary debate that gives rise to the possibility of a return to the *noumenon* revolves around two axes: a complex unity in diversity of internalism and externalism. The case for internalism is very close to the Kantian subject – based paradigm and is stated by Robert Audi as follows:

Apart from self-knowledge, knowledge is at least true belief about the external world (or external matters, such as those of logic). Insofar as it is true belief about the external world, one might expect its grounds to be essentially in that

⁴⁹⁷ Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.*, *Phenomena and Noumena*, p. 274.

*world. The justifiedness of a belief, by contrast, does not entail its truth and seems to many philosophers to rest on a source “inside” the mind.*⁴⁹⁸

Between the source of justification of beliefs inside the mind and the source outside the mind, there is need to seek reconciliation while respecting distinctness of the two approaches so that one should not be reduced to the other, a reduction which is a liability in the contemporary quest for a truth as complexity. The subject – based approach seeks the justifying ground for the knowledge we claim to have of the object inside the mind.

On the other hand, we need that our cognition should be knowledge of something which means that there must be an object outside the mind to provide the grounds of knowledge as corresponding to something outside the mind. This view is known as externalism and contrasts the view known as internalism described by Robert Audi as follows: “Some of our examples suggest that what justifies a belief—the ground of its justification—is something internal to the subject. The internal, in the relevant sense, is what we might call the (internally) accessible: that to which one has access by introspection or reflection.”⁴⁹⁹ In between internalism and externalism, there is a need today to give the two the chance to coexist so that we use each to go beyond the other without forcing a fusion of the two approaches like Kant did, the fusion can be in the complementarity of application and not in a new approach that synthesises the two. Nonconceptualism then opens up the possibility of knowledge of the object in a proto – rational manner which would be an alternative consistent with the conceptual knowledge of the object.

Our work has envisaged the possibility of the *noumena*’s status so as to make the *noumenon* an aspect of the object given in intuition but not conceptualised so that we can return to the object with alternative methods that no longer depend exclusively on conceptualisation. Given the realisation of the complexity of the reality in our era, what Audi calls *internalism about justification* and *externalism about knowledge* are two sides of a multifaceted contemporaneous complexity that requires complexity in the mind to grasp complexity in the object:

Call the view that justification is grounded in accessible elements internalism about justification. By contrast, some of the same examples, such as those of the predictor and the calculator, suggest that knowledge may be grounded entirely in what is external to the mind, in a sense of ‘external’ implying that

⁴⁹⁸Robert Audi, *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, Third Edition, New York, London: Routledge, 2011, p. 272.

⁴⁹⁹*Idem.*

*the grounds are not internally accessible to the subject. Call the view that the grounds of knowledge are at least in part external to the mind externalism about knowledge.*⁵⁰⁰

The grounds of justification meet with the ground of knowledge in the application of two distinct approaches to master the complexity of reality and not in the fusion of two distinct approaches. The conceptual approach as well as the angle of nonconceptualisation, are now alternative methods among many others used by the contemporary knowledge – seeker whose primary goal is no longer to reconcile distinct methods but to use them all in an acceptable pluralism which constitutes a condition of possibility of grasping complexity from all possible angles.

Our work has used the nonconceptual angle not as a rejection of the popular interpretative conceptual angle of the Kantian theory but as a means of going beyond the conceptual angle to take into account the need for plurality in our era and to grasp the *noumena* when conceptualisation is no longer the only criterion of rationality. We have, thus, shown that with the subject – based approach of Kant, we lose touch of the *noumena* which to us is a knowable aspect of reality. With the object – based approach, we lose touch of those concepts that do not refer to representations and yet are important in regulating the understanding toward higher goals of knowledge which no longer respect the empirical bounds set by Kant. The new nonconceptual interpretative reading of Kantian epistemology to go with conceptualism is the hypothesis of an approach that makes use of internalism, externalism and all other contradictory approaches made to compete with each other without destroying each other thus making knowledge of the *noumena* possible beyond conceptualisation. For it is in such an organised methodological pluralism that intuitions without concepts are blind but not meaningless; they are considered as alternative angles of the construction of the truth about a multidimensional reality making the truth a multifaceted product of intuitions and concepts in a relation that must not be top – bottom from concepts to intuitions but also bottom – up from intuitions to concepts such that intuitions without concepts become a proto – rational and not an irrational level of cognition.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

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