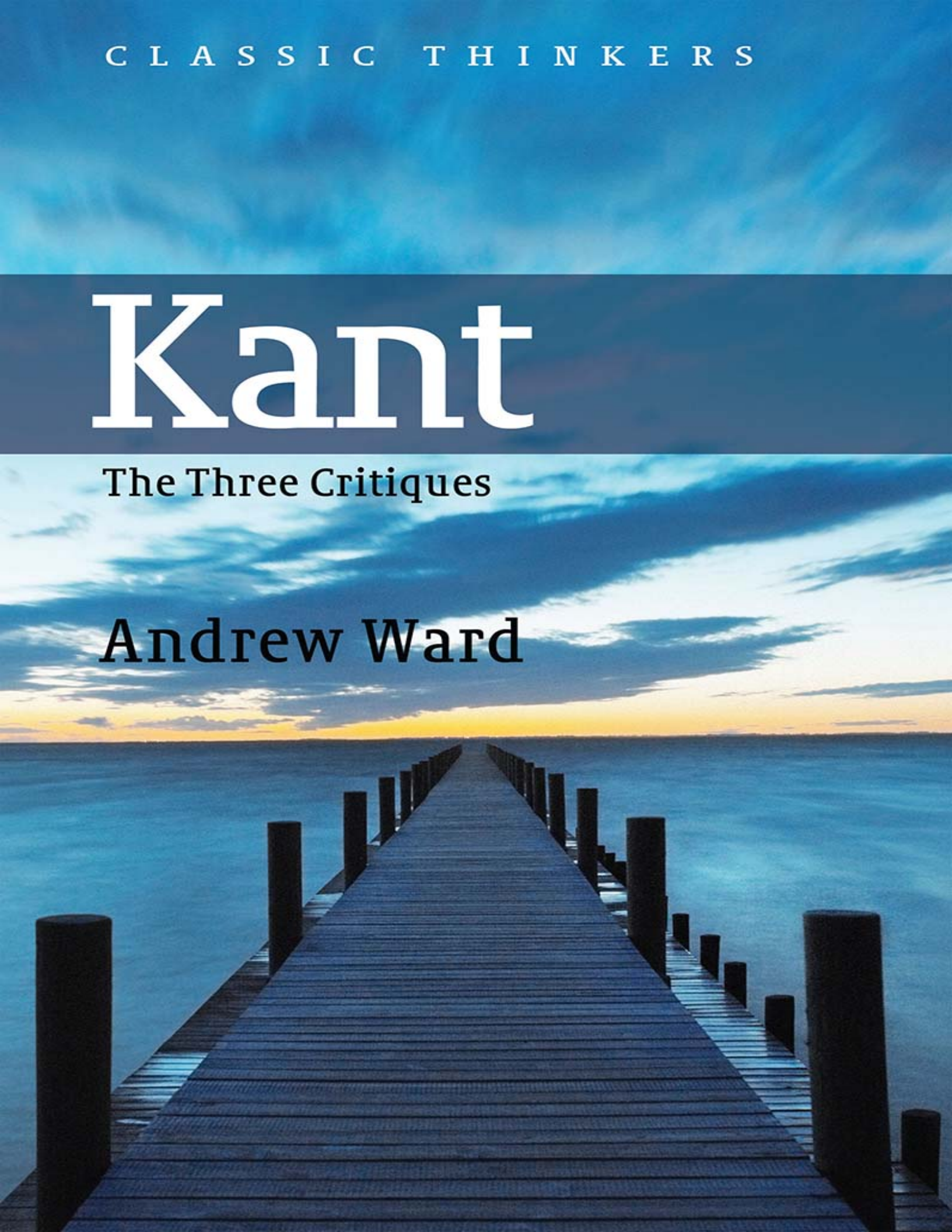
CLASSIC THINKERS

# Kant

## The Three Critiques

Andrew Ward



# CONTENTS

# List of Tables

# KANT

## The Three Critiques

Andrew Ward

polity

First published in 2006 by Polity Press

Polity Press
65 Bridge Street
Cambridge CB2 1UR, UK

Polity Press
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148, USA



ISBN-13: 978-15095-5112-5

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.



For further information on Polity, visit our website: politybooks.com

# Preface

Over the last fifty years, there has been a widespread tendency among English-speaking philosophers to downplay Kant's idealism. This seems to me to have been a mistake – so far, at least, as gaining an understanding of Kant's own ideas is concerned. In this study, I offer an interpretation of the main themes in his three *Critiques* which places his mature thought squarely within the tradition of idealism: a tradition which includes the theories of Bishop Berkeley and of David Hume (however much Kant himself might have been surprised to learn that Hume falls into this tradition, and however much he would have disliked being compared with Berkeley).

Going along with the emphasis on idealism, I attempt to explain a number of Kant's central views – those concerning our knowledge of objects in space and time, the ground of our moral obligations and our judgments of beauty – as, in part, reactions to the scepticism and empiricism of Hume. The latter's views and, more to the point, the arguments that he provides for them are generally both clear and invigorating. While Kant's views are nearly always invigorating, his reasons for holding them are seldom clear, at least when considered out of context. By placing some of his key philosophical ideas alongside those of Hume, the aim is to elucidate Kant's arguments and, thereby, to offer an assessment of his conclusions.

A. W.

*London, January 2006*

# Abbreviations and Conventions

***CJ***
: *Critique of Judgment* (1790)

***CPractR***
: *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788)

***CPR***
: *Critique of Pure Reason* (1st edition 1781, 2nd edition 1787)

***Prol***
: *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783)

Quotations from Kant's works are referred to by volume and page number in the German Akademie edition, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1900– ), with the exception of quotations from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which are referred to by the pagination from the 1st edition of 1781 (cited as A) and/or the 2nd edition of 1787 (cited as B).

# Acknowledgments

I should like to express my thanks to Palgrave Macmillan for permission to quote from *Critique of Pure Reason* by Kant/Kemp-Smith (second edition) and to Cambridge University Press for permission to quote from *Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason* edited by Mary J. Gregor and with an introduction by Andrews Reath, 1997.

# Part I
# Critique of Pure Reason

# 1
# A General Introduction to Kant’s Copernican Revolution in Philosophy, and its Relation to Scientific Knowledge and Transcendent Metaphysics

I want to introduce Kant’s philosophical approach in the *Critique of Pure Reason* – also known as the *First Critique* – by looking at what he took to be Hume’s sceptical stance on causation, and how, in general terms, he sought to overcome it. When Kant himself set out the main threads of his argument in his own introductory essay on the *First Critique*, unappealingly entitled *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics that will be able to Present itself as a Science,* it was his reaction to Hume’s scepticism about causation that he particularly singled out. He did so not only because Hume’s scepticism awoke him from his dogmatic slumbers, but, more crucially, because it gave him the hint of the *correct* approach to philosophical problems:

> Since Locke's and Leibniz's Essays, or rather since the beginning of Metaphysics as far as the history of it reaches, no event has occurred which could have been more decisive in respect of the fate of this science than the attack that David Hume made on it. He brought no light into this kind of knowledge, but he struck a spark at which a light could well have been kindled, if it had found a receptive tinder and if the glow had been carefully kept up and increased. (*Prol*, Preface; 4:257).

Hume's attack on causation was aimed at the principle that every event, or change of state, in nature must have a cause. He did not deny that we believed the principle to be true. What he denied was that we were justified in our belief. For the principle claims necessity as well as universality: it states that every event in nature must have a cause. How, asks Hume, could such a connection, a universal and necessary connection, possibly be proved? Not by experience; that is, not by perceiving how particular events in the spatio-temporal world behaved. For no amount of experience could prove that *every* event has a cause. The universal judgment is here taken to be entirely unrestricted, applying to all past, present and future events in nature, actual and possible. Evidently too, no experience could prove that it is *necessary* that any event has a cause. Experience can only tell us that such-and-such is or is not the case; it can never tells us that it must or must not be so.

But if experience will not do the trick, how could the causal principle be proved? The only alternative, Hume contended, is to show that it is true *in virtue of the meaning of the terms involved*. If the meaning of 'event' includes in it 'having a cause', then, indeed, we can justifiably assert that every event must have a cause. (Just as we can justifiably assert that every bachelor must be unmarried. In this latter case, the mere analysis of the

subject term ‘bachelor’ and the predicate term ‘unmarried’ reveals that to deny the judgment would be self-contradictory.) But, as Hume argued, there simply is no such connection of meaning between the subject and the predicate terms in the principle ‘Every event must have a cause.’ To deny it is not self-contradictory. In Kantian terminology, the principle is not analytically true.

Since the principle is not analytically true, and, as Hume contended, this is the *only* acceptable way to prove that a judgment holds with strict universality and necessity, he concluded that our belief in the principle is unjustified.

Why, then, do we believe it? Here, Hume gives a psychological answer. It is the constant occurrence, throughout our past experience, of similar changes of state, under the same circumstances, that has led to our belief that the principle is justified. Far from the belief arising from, or being provable by, our rational faculties, it is merely the product of our enlivened imagination. In particular, the necessity that we ascribe to the principle is merely a ‘subjective necessity’ or *feeling* of inevitability (arising from our experience of past constant conjunctions), and not an objective necessity (not a requirement, discernible in the objects or in our judgment about the objects, that nature is uniform). Accordingly, so far as reason or understanding is concerned, our experience of nature could have been entirely chaotic. Moreover, there is absolutely no rational ground for supposing that our experience – even granting that it has, *in fact*, been as regular as clockwork up to now – might not turn random, acausal, at any moment in the future. The supposition that the future course of events will resemble the past cannot even be shown to be probable, let alone necessary.

It is important to grasp the extent to which Kant agreed with Hume’s position. First, he accepted that the causal

principle cannot be proved by experience (since it claims necessity and universality). Second, he accepted that the necessity and universality attaching to the principle do not derive merely from the meaning of the terms involved. That is, he agreed with Hume that the principle is not analytically true. Third, he accepted that there is no way in which we could determine with certainty the truth of any *specific* causal claim in nature. That any particular *kind* of event actually occurs (e.g. that water in the liquid state does, under certain circumstances, turn to ice), and *why* it occurs (what its cause is), have to be left to experience to discover. We cannot prove that particular kinds of changes of states must occur, or what specifically their causes in nature must be.

But he disagreed with Hume about the status of the general principle that every event, or change of state, in nature must have a cause. Although he thought that Hume was correct to maintain that this principle is not analytically true, he rejected what he took to be Hume's conclusion from this observation: namely, that the principle cannot be justified.

How, though, can the causal principle *legitimately* carry necessity and universality, if not in virtue of the meaning of the terms involved?

To understand Kant's answer to this question is to be well on the way to understanding many of the central ideas in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. He was not exaggerating when he claimed that Hume had struck a spark which, if carefully kindled, would produce a new light on metaphysics. For Kant thought that the *status* of the causal principle could be generalized to take in not only all the leading judgments in metaphysics, but also all the fundamental judgments in two areas of what he saw as unquestionably *genuine* repositories of knowledge of

objects: namely, pure mathematics and pure natural science (pure natural science forms the non-empirical basis of Newtonian physics). And this thought, in turn, led him to conclude that there must be something wrong with Hume's scepticism. Since, as he affirmed, there certainly *are* two areas where we can find examples of judgments which, while not analytically true, hold with necessity and universality, viz. in pure mathematics and pure natural science, what is required is not a wholesale *dismissal* of all such knowledge claims, but an investigation of *how* such judgments can be true, in those two areas where they clearly exist.

In brief, Hume's scepticism alerted Kant to the fact, or to what he took to be the fact, that lying at the basis of three central areas of knowledge or alleged knowledge of objects – mathematics and natural science, on the one hand, and metaphysics, on the other – are a host of judgments or principles of exactly the same status as the causal principle. As he saw it, the fundamental judgments in all three areas claim to hold with necessity and universality, and yet none of them can be proved in virtue of the meaning of the terms involved. Accordingly, if the only way of seeking to establish such a judgment were through an analysis of the terms involved, it would follow that *none* of these areas could contain informative instances of knowledge that hold with necessity and universality.At least in the cases of mathematics and natural science, Kant regarded this conclusion as absurd. Accordingly, he maintained that Hume must have been mistaken in dismissing the causal principle merely on the ground that, though the principle claims necessity and universality, it cannot be established in virtue of the meaning of the terms involved. The correct conclusion, Kant held, is that there must be some *other* way to establish (at least some) judgments of this kind. The strategy of the *Critique of Pure*

*Reason* may essentially be seen as proceeding in two stages: in the first stage, it investigates *how* it is possible to establish these judgments in mathematics and natural science (where, as Kant sees it, they quite evidently exist); and on the basis of this investigation, it proceeds, in the second stage, to enquire *whether* the leading judgments of metaphysics can also be established.

## Kant's Copernican revolution

Kant's attempt to refute Hume's causal scepticism and so, too, his investigating how pure mathematics and pure natural science can exist are both intimately connected with his so-called Copernican revolution in philosophy. They are intimately connected, because he came to the conclusion that the only way to explain how mathematics and natural science can exist is by effecting a major *turnabout* in the way that we conceive the relationship between ourselves (the knowing mind) and the objects of our sense experience (the objects in space and time). His Copernican revolution equally has major repercussions for metaphysics and for morality. This second stage of his revolution will be touched on after I have said something about the first stage: his investigation of the possibility of mathematics and natural science.

The traditional way of conceiving the relationship between ourselves and the world that we are seeking to know by means of our senses – the world of objects existing in space and time – is to conceive of this world as existing entirely independently of the knowing mind. We, by means of our senses (in co-operation, perhaps, with our understanding), set out to discover how this mind-independent world is, both with respect to the rules governing the possible *structural* configurations of its objects and with respect to the laws governing their *behaviour*.As Kant sees it,

mathematics as a science is the study of the former (the structure or form of objects), and natural science, that of the latter (the dynamical connections of objects). On the traditional way of taking the relationship between the mind and objects in space and time, it is up to our faculties of knowledge – our senses and understanding – to attune themselves, if they can, to the objects of our attempted knowledge.

Unfortunately, if this traditional picture is accepted as the correct conception of the relationship between ourselves and the objects of our hoped-for mathematical and natural scientific knowledge, then, as Kant realized, there would be no possibility of our acquiring *any* informative universal or necessary knowledge of these objects. *At best*, what we could hope to acquire would be empirical, hence only probable, knowledge. On the other hand, if we adopt the revolutionary point of view that the objects that we are seeking to learn about by means of our faculties of knowledge must themselves conform to those very faculties in order to *become* objects of the senses, then we might well be able to acquire some genuinely necessary and universal knowledge of objects *as possible objects of the senses*.For, independently of our acquiring any experience of these objects, we might be able to discover, by investigating our *own* faculties of knowledge, what conditions these faculties impose on the possibility of our experience and its objects.

In effect, the first major task that Kant sets himself, in the main body of the *First Critique*, is to show that his revolutionary way of conceiving the relationship between ourselves and the objects of our sensible knowledge – viz. that these objects must accord with our faculties of knowledge, rather than the traditional picture of trusting that our faculties of knowledge will be in accord with its sought-for objects – is, indeed, the correct one. This he

seeks to accomplish by establishing two claims: first, that the dimensions in which the objects of our senses are located – namely, in space and in time – are dependent on us (are, in fact, properties of our mind); and second, that the fundamental laws governing the behaviour of the objects of our senses are dependent on concepts existing innately in us. If both of these conditions can be made out, it can be said that the whole *framework* by means of which objects of the senses can be known – the sensuous *forms* in which they are given (space and time) and the basic dynamical *laws* governing them – will be contributed by us. Clearly, such a picture of our relationship with the objects of our sought-after sensible knowledge is a far cry from the traditional one.

The revolutionary point of view according to which the objects of our senses should be taken to conform to our faculties for acquiring knowledge, Kant likens to Copernicus's revolutionary hypothesis concerning the spectator of the heavens and the heavenly bodies. On the traditional conception of the latter relationship, the spectator is at rest, and the observed behaviour of the heavenly bodies is dependent on their movement alone. On the Copernican hypothesis, the observed behaviour of the heavenly bodies depends, in part, upon the movement of the spectator. This hypothesis, Kant wishes to say, was firmly established on two grounds. First, it enabled Kepler to discover the three laws governing the motion of the planets. Second, it enabled a proof to be given of Newton's gravitational force of attraction (binding all objects together). Neither of these advances would have been possible on the pre-Copernican model.

How, though, does Kant propose to establish *his* Copernican revolution? It can be established, he thinks, in ways analogous to those that established Copernicus's own hypothesis. First, on Kant's revolutionary model of the

relationship between our experience and its objects, he believes that we can explain how mathematics and natural science have provided us with universal and necessary knowledge of these objects. Second, he believes that it will enable us to provide proofs of the principles lying at the basis of natural science. Neither of these achievements is possible on the traditional model. Accordingly, just as Copernicus's own hypothesis was established because it, and it alone, enabled us to discover the laws of planetary motion and, at the same time, to provide a proof of Newton's force of attraction, so Kant's Copernican revolution is to be established because it, and it alone, can explain how we are in possession of universal and necessary objective principles in mathematics and natural science, and at the same time provide proofs of the first principles of natural science. The theory that Kant constructs, on the basis of his Copernican revolution, he calls 'transcendental idealism'.

In fact, as he sees it, there is a further ground for accepting his Copernican revolution. He argues that, on the traditional conception of the relationship between the mind and its hoped-for objects, we are bound to involve ourselves in inextricable contradictions when we attempt to prove certain judgments which entirely transcend experience (for instance, a judgment concerning freedom of the will); whereas, on his opposing, Copernican-style conception, we can show that no such contradictions arise. Now a theory can only be justified if it does not lead to contradiction. Accordingly (on the assumption that there really are only these two theories), Kant regards the consistency of his own, revolutionary theory, compared with the unavoidable inconsistencies of the traditional theory, as a further proof of the correctness of his Copernican project, and hence of transcendental idealism. Moreover (as emerges in the later *Critique of Practical Reason* and *Critique of Judgment*),

there are, on the alternative theory, *further* contradictions in our thought – our thought about morality and beauty – which, he will argue, can be resolved only by embracing his revolution.

## Hume’s scepticism about causation and Kant’s Copernican revolution

In order to illustrate how the Kantian Copernican revolution bears on central issues in philosophy, let us return to Hume’s scepticism about causation. Hume – at least as Kant reads him – sees nothing inconceivable in the behaviour of objects in the spatio-temporal world always having been, or suddenly becoming, totally chaotic. Since a state of lawlessness in nature implies no contradiction, it is by Hume’s lights entirely conceivable. Moreover, although chaos in nature would obviously preclude us from connecting together objects, or their states, according to universal or necessary laws, Hume allows – again as Kant reads him – that we should still be able to *experience* objects and their changing states.

Now although this scepticism is diametrically opposed to the position that Kant adopts as a result of his Copernican revolution, there is a sense in which he accepts it. He accepts that if the *traditional* picture of the relationship between objects in the spatio-temporal world and ourselves is correct, then Hume’s story of a nature in chaos cannot be dismissed. But now consider Kant’s alternative, revolutionary picture. In particular, consider his claim that the laws by which the objects of nature can alone be experienced derive from certain fundamental concepts in us. If one of these fundamental concepts is the concept of *cause*, and the corresponding law is the causal principle (viz. every change of state must have a cause), then it would follow that we can only experience a change of state

in so far as it is subject to causal law. Remarkable though such a conclusion would be if it could be shown, it can hardly be said fully to meet Hume's scepticism. Even granting that we cannot experience a nature which is non-causal in respect of any change of state, that would seem to put constraints only on our ability to perceive such a spatio-temporal world. But Hume's scepticism chiefly concerns the conceivability of a non-causal *nature*, not our capacity or incapacity to *experience* it.At this point, we need to bring in the other part of the Kantian Copernican revolution: that space and time are merely properties of our mind, and hence, that everything appearing therein must in reality be mind-dependent. If the objects of our senses (the objects in space and time) are, in reality, mind-dependent, then any condition on our being conscious of, and so of our experiencing, these objects must equally be a condition on the possible objects of our experience. For example, if we cannot think, and so experience, a change in the objects of our senses, except under the condition that the data apprehended by us be subject to the law of causality, then it follows – given the mind-dependency of this data – that there can be no acausal change in spatio-temporal objects. If everything that can appear in space and/or time is mind-dependent, then any restriction on our ability to *experience* spatio-temporal objects must equally be a restriction on the possible *objects* that can exist in space and time.

In sum, Kant accuses Hume of putting the cart before the horse. As Kant sees it, Hume assumes that spatio-temporal objects exist independently of our possible experience. On this traditional picture, it has to be admitted that we cannot see why these objects must conform to any of the concepts that may exist in us for connecting together the given sensuous data under laws. In particular, therefore, it is impossible to see why spatio-temporal objects must, in

respect of their changes, be subject to the law of causality. On the other hand, if Kant's Copernican picture is correct, it would have the following consequences. First, we can have no experience of spatio-temporal objects changing their states except in so far as the apprehended manifold can be thought by us as subject to the law of causality. Second, all these changing objects are dependent for their existence on our capacity to think the given manifold by means of that law. Accordingly, not only must Hume have been wrong to suppose that we might be able to experience spatio-temporal objects changing randomly; more significantly, he must have been wrong to hold that there could exist any acausal changes in these objects.

Before turning to the second stage of Kant's Copernican project, I must stress that in this introduction I am aiming only to provide an overview of some of the main themes of the *First Critique*.In particular, what I have attempted in the last few paragraphs is nothing more than an outline of the *strategy* by which Kant hopes to answer Hume. Clearly, it is one thing to outline a strategy and another thing to show how it can be filled in to provide a convincing reply to scepticism. Most conspicuously, there are two issues that need to be addressed. First, we need to understand why space and time are held to have a mind-dependent status. Second, we need to understand why our capacity to have any experience of objects requires that the data apprehended through the senses must be subject to laws that derive from concepts existing in our mind. Without a proper appreciation of Kant's responses to these issues, there is simply insufficient detail to decide whether he has given a plausible, let alone a correct, response to Hume. In fact, both issues are discussed at length in the *First Critique*. Kant's treatment of them forms the backbone of his Copernican project.

# Metaphysics

So far, we have concentrated on the first stage of Kant's Copernican revolution: the investigation of *how* the judgments in pure mathematics and natural science can exist (as they actually do). But we saw that he also maintains that metaphysics is essentially made up of judgments which have the same status as those in mathematics and natural science. With metaphysics, however, it is by no means clear that its central claims can be known to be true: the protracted and indecisive debates about every one of them strongly suggests that they cannot. In the section of the *First Critique* entitled 'Transcendental Dialectic', he turns to the second stage of his Copernican revolution: the investigation of *whether* the central claims of metaphysics can be substantiated. He concludes that our theoretical reason is unable to show any of them to be true *or* false.

His ground for reaching this conclusion is closely connected with the first stage of his Copernican project. For Kant's explanation of how judgments in pure mathematics and natural science can hold with necessity and universality, while yet not being analytically true, is that they make our experience, our empirical knowledge of spatio-temporal objects, possible. (I have tried to illustrate this with the particular case of the law of causality: this law is held to make possible our experience of *change of states* among spatio-temporal objects.) But the central (positive) claims of metaphysics – that the soul is immortal, that we possess free will, and that God exists – have *no* relationship to sense experience. They entirely *transcend* it: they can neither be shown to make sense experience possible nor, given their status, be confirmed or disconfirmed through sense experience. Since, as he argues, these are the only ways by which theoretical reason can establish any non-

analytic judgment, he concludes that we cannot prove or disprove the central claims of metaphysics by theoretical means.

It is vital, however, to appreciate that Kant does not maintain that the impossibility of verification – either directly by sense experience or indirectly by showing that they make sense experience possible – renders the central claims of metaphysics to be effectively unthinkable. He allows that we can consistently *think* a judgment like the soul is immortal, even though we cannot confirm or disconfirm it by theoretical means. Certainly, a judgment can only be established – or even given any *determinate* meaning – by showing that it has a relation, direct or indirect, to experience. But Kant denies that it is necessary for thinking any of the propositions of metaphysics in an *indeterminate* way that we should be able to relate them to sense experience.

In actual fact (though here we need to go outside the *First Critique*), he holds that the central claims of metaphysics *can* be established.And he holds that they can be established by showing that they *make experience possible*. But, with the central claims of metaphysics, the experience is not sense experience, but *moral* experience, our recognition of duty and of the need to pursue the highest good. This recognition, however, is made known to us not by theoretical but by *practical* reason.

One way of understanding Kant's moral philosophy is to see it as attempting to prove the key judgments of metaphysics by showing that they make our moral experience possible. His idea is that we can only explain the existence of our moral experience – the demands of which we cannot doubt – by acknowledging the truth of the central claims of metaphysics (just as, in the *First Critique*,he argues that we can only explain the existence of mathematics and natural

science – the reality of which we cannot doubt – by acknowledging that space and time are properties of our mind, and that the fundamental laws of nature derive from concepts in our understanding).We shall obviously need to consider Kant's proof of these metaphysical claims when we examine his Copernican revolution in relation to morality.

Returning to the Copernican revolution as this is exemplified in the *First Critique*, Kant's main negative point is that the *traditional* methods of the metaphysician must be given up.The central claims of metaphysics cannot be established by employing theoretical reason: they are not true solely in virtue of the meaning of the terms involved, and it is useless to seek to employ mathematics or any of the principles of natural science *outside* possible sense experience. Any attempt to establish the key judgments of metaphysics by employing mathematics or natural science is bound, Kant argues, to be dialectical (i.e. to be fallacious). Yet with respect to theoretical reason, it is only the employment of mathematics and natural science that can possibly yield informative judgments having the same status as the central claims of metaphysics. Accordingly, so far as our search for knowledge is concerned, the message of the *First Critique* is that this search is defensible where it is based on sense experience, or where it bears upon the possibility of our having sense experience, but indefensible with respect to the central claims of metaphysics. In their case, we should admit our necessary ignorance, and renounce our quest for theoretical enlightenment. We should concentrate solely on the quest for knowledge in those areas that are related to sense experience. Here, indeed, we can establish the existence of informative necessary and universal principles or axioms, in addition to an unlimited amount of empirical, and so probable, knowledge.

The Dialectic is frequently represented in a wholly negative way: as Kant's *criticism* of the use of theoretical reason outside the spheres of mathematics and natural science (as well as everyday sense experience). Certainly, the Dialectic does have this important negative side. But if we are to understand the place of the *First Critique* in Kant's overall critical system, it is imperative also to grasp a more positive side to his attack on metaphysics, as traditionally conceived.

We saw that, in the course of this attack, he maintains that it must be impossible theoretically to prove or disprove freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, or the existence of God. But this impossibility, it transpires, is fortunate: fortunate for morality quite as much as for our positive beliefs in freedom, immortality and God. Since, as he points out in the Preface to the second edition of the *First Critique*, if we do not embrace his Copernican revolution, we shall have to renounce these metaphysical beliefs; and this, in turn, will mean our acknowledging that the demands of morality are delusory (B xxvii–xxx).

But why does Kant suppose that his Copernican revolution is necessary for holding on to our central metaphysical beliefs? The answer is that he thinks that if we do not distinguish the world of our senses (the spatio-temporal world) from the world as it is in itself (the world that exists independently of our possible sense experience), then the deterministic laws that provably obtain in the sensible world must apply to us as moral agents. It would, in short, be impossible for us even to *assume* freedom of the will (see the Antithesis and Observation of the Third Antinomy). Equally, we should have to renounce our belief in a necessary Being who has created and sustains the universe; since, without the distinction, it is provably impossible that such a Being could exist (see the Antithesis and Observation of the Fourth Antinomy). Lastly, the belief

that the soul is simple – and, therewith, the possibility of believing in the continuation of the soul after the death of the body – must be rejected, unless the world of the senses is distinguished from the world as it is in itself (see the Antithesis and Observation of the Second Antinomy).

Moreover, if it is impossible even to *assume* the existence of free will, God and the immortality of the soul, without embracing Kant's Copernican revolution, then since – as he himself argues – these are necessary presuppositions of morality, it follows that the demands of morality must themselves be delusory.That is why Kant asserts:'I have therefore found it necessary to deny *knowledge* in order to make room for *faith*' (*CPR*,B xxx; italics original).

This famous assertion should not be taken merely as showing that, in order to save scientific knowledge, Kant accepted that we would have to deny ourselves any knowledge of the central claims of metaphysics (while leaving open the possibility of our believing in them). It implies something far stronger. It implies that if the traditional picture of our relationship with the world of the senses is correct, then we should actually be *precluded* from even believing in the existence of free will, God and immortality – since we would then be in possession of proofs of the impossibility of each of these beliefs. Only if we embrace Kant's Copernican picture can we deny the force of the proofs, and thereby make room for the beliefs that are necessary for morality. So the metaphysical discussions in the Dialectic secure our belief in God, freedom and immortality – and thereby in morality also – against inevitable *scepticism.*

The *First Critique*, then, not only seeks to explain how there can be universal and necessary knowledge of objects in mathematics and in natural science, it also seeks to leave a space open for morality.As Kant sees it, *neither* the

theoretical *nor* the practical side to our lives can be sustained on the traditional picture. On his Copernican picture, on the other hand, we can – in fact do – have both. The positive contribution of the Dialectic is to show how it is possible for the moral life to exist – and therewith to lay the ground for the *practical* proofs of just those central metaphysical claims (concerning freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God) that, as he had argued earlier, our *theoretical* reason is, in reality, powerless to prove or disprove.

# 2
# The Division of Judgments, and the Status of Mathematics and Natural Science

Before embarking on a more detailed look at Kant's system, we need to do two things. First, we need to understand some of his terminology, especially with regard to his division of judgments into three types. Second, we need to understand more fully the status that he accords to judgments in mathematics and natural science.

## The division of judgments

Kant identifies three possible types of judgment:

1. Analytic a priori judgments;
2. Synthetic a posteriori judgments;
3. Synthetic a priori judgments.

In order to explain this threefold division, he further distinguishes between analytic and synthetic judgments, on the one hand, and a priori and a posteriori judgments, on the other. These further distinctions can be explained as follows.

An *analytic* judgment is one in which the meaning of the predicate term is included in the meaning of the subject

term. Example: ‘All bachelors are unmarried (men).’ Kant notes that the denial of an analytic judgment is self-contradictory (as in ‘It is not the case that all bachelors are unmarried’).

A *synthetic* judgment is one in which the meaning of the predicate term is *not* contained in the meaning of the subject term. Example: ‘All men are mortal.’ Accordingly, the denial of a synthetic judgment is not self-contradictory. (The judgment ‘It is not the case that all men are mortal’ is doubtless false; but it is not self-contradictory, given the meaning of ‘men’ and ‘mortal’, etc.)

An *a priori* judgment is a judgment that is thought of as holding independently of experience. Kant says that there are two ‘sure criteria’ of, two infallible ways of identifying, an a priori judgment. If a judgment claims to hold either with necessity or strict universality, then it must be an a priori judgment. For no judgment that depends on experience can be thought of as holding either necessarily or with strict universality. Experience can show that some judgment *is* or *is not* the case, but not that it *necessarily* is or is not the case (or *must* or *must not* be the case). Similarly, while experience can show that all instances *so far examined* of a particular unrestricted class are such-and-such, it cannot show that all past, present and future instances of that class are such-and-such. The most that our evidence to date can entitle us to claim, assuming it is wide-ranging and that no counter-examples have been encountered, is what Kant calls ‘comparative universality’. That is, we may employ an inductive argument on the basis of our experiential evidence to date, and claim that all instances are *probably* such-and-such. But cases of comparative universality are not cases of strict universality (where ‘no exception is allowed as possible’ (B 4)). Throughout his critical works, whenever Kant discusses