

## ***8- Transcendental doctrine of method***

I shall not at present indicate the periods of time at which the greatest changes in metaphysics took place, but shall merely give a hasty sketch of the different ideas which occasioned the most important revolutions in this sphere of thought. There are three different ends, in relation to which these revolutions have taken place.

1. In relation to the object of the cognition of reason, philosophers may be divided into sensualists and intellectualists. Epicurus may be regarded as the head of the former, Plato of the latter. The distinction which is signalized, subtle as it is, dates from the earliest times, and was long maintained. The former asserted that reality resides in sensuous objects alone, and that everything else is merely imaginary; the latter, that the senses are the parents of illusion and that truth is to be found in the understanding alone. The former did not deny to the conceptions of the understanding a certain kind of reality; but with them it was merely logical, with the others it was mystical. The former admitted intellectual conceptions, but declared that sensuous objects alone possessed real existence. The latter maintained that all real objects were intelligible, and believed that the pure understanding possessed a faculty of intuition apart from sense, which, in their opinion, served only to confuse the ideas of the understanding.

2. In relation to the origin of the pure cognitions of reason, we find one school maintaining that they are derived entirely from experience, and another that they have their origin in reason alone. Aristotle may be regarded as the head of the empiricists, and Plato of the noologists. Locke, the follower of Aristotle in modern times, and Leibnitz of Plato (although he cannot be said to have imitated him in his mysticism), have not been able to bring this question to a settled conclusion. The procedure of Epicurus in his sensual system, in which he always

restricted his conclusions to the sphere of experience, was much more consequent than that of Aristotle and Locke. The latter especially, after having derived all the conceptions and principles of the mind from experience, goes so far, in the employment of these conceptions and principles, as to maintain that we can prove the existence of God and the existence of God and the immortality of them objects lying beyond the soul—both of them of possible experience—with the same force of demonstration as any mathematical proposition.

3. In relation to method. Method is procedure according to principles. We may divide the methods at present employed in the field of inquiry into the naturalistic and the scientific. The naturalist of pure reason lays it down as his principle that common reason, without the aid of science—which he calls sound reason, or common sense—can give a more satisfactory answer to the most important questions of metaphysics than speculation is able to do. He must maintain, therefore, that we can determine the content and circumference of the moon more certainly by the naked eye, than by the aid of mathematical reasoning. But this system is mere misology reduced to principles; and, what is the most absurd thing in this doctrine, the neglect of all scientific means is paraded as a peculiar method of extending our cognition. As regards those who are naturalists because they know no better, they are certainly not to be blamed. They follow common sense, without parading their ignorance as a method which is to teach us the wonderful secret, how we are to find the truth which lies at the bottom of the well of Democritus.

*Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804)*

*The History of Pure Reason.*

*Biography*

Emmanuel Kant was born April 22, 1724 in Königsberg, capital of East Prussia, and died in the same city on February 12, 1804, is a German philosopher, founder of criticism and doctrine called "transcendental idealism".

A great thinker of Aufklärung (German Enlightenment), Kant has had a considerable influence on German idealism, analytic philosophy, phenomenology, modern philosophy, and critical thought in general. His work, considerable and diverse in its interests, but centered around the three Critiques - namely, the Critique of Pure Reason, the Critique of Practical Reason, and the Critique of the Faculty of Judgment - is thus the subject of appropriation and successive and divergent interpretations.

The two big questions posed by Emmanuel Kant's books are "What can I know? And what should I do? They represent theoretical philosophy and practical philosophy. His two axes are notably developed in the trilogy dedicated to his Critiques. Based on criticism, Kant's philosophy advocates the reflection of each individual. Thinking for oneself is one of the major axes of the work of the German philosopher.

### ***Problematic***

Knowledge in general especially scientific needs a method that will end with the invention of theories. What is the most appropriate for knowledge closer to the truth?

### ***Position of the author***

Transcendental Philosophy is a philosophical Doctrine that seeks what humans bring from them in the knowledge of objects; her method is critical, she examines. It deals with the subject while the transcendent philosophy deals with the object, ie. Of all knowledge that can be obtained without experience.

Transcendental philosophy tends to reduce the subject of knowledge to itself, the sciences to one of their essential terms, the subject, to question nature and God, and finally to draw them from self, as we see in Fichte.

Kant is the author of this philosophy, of which he has set forth the principles in his Critique of Pure Reason. This work contains the theory of pure sensibility, that of pure understanding, that of pure reason. On them rests all transcendental philosophy.

The first deals with the mode of generation of sensitive objects, space, and time; these are the two forms of sensibility, subjective, whose understanding takes on beings and facts, which are only phenomena.

The second is transcendental logic, divided into two parts: one deals with the mode of generation of universal laws that regulate sensitive objects, categories or forms of thought, based on the four forms of our judgments: quantity, quality, relationship, modality; Kant names this part of his Analytic logic because it consists in an analysis of the functions of the understanding.

The other, named Transcendental Dialectic, deals with the mode of generation of intelligible objects, transcendental ideas, paralogisms, antinomies, and the ideal of pure reason, the speculative proofs of the existence of God, proofs'. He is led to reject. Kant joins with the above a transcendental Methodology, which aims to determine the formal conditions of a complete system of pure reason. The general conclusion of transcendental philosophy, for Kant, is that we can not affirm the objective reality of anything. It ends in skepticism.

### ***Comment of the text***

This doctrine of Kant lacked rigor; Fichte, his disciple, pushed transcendental philosophy to its final consequences, in its Theory of Science. For him, no more

objective element; everything is deduced from a single term of knowledge, of the subject. Nature and God are only developments of the ego; the self is the only principle, it creates everything, it creates itself. Transcendental philosophy thus became absolute subjective idealism; but the consequences showed all the weaknesses contained in the principle.

The successors of Kant and Fichte modified it and then transformed it. Schelling, who at first seemed to accept it in his first writing: From the ego as a principle of philosophy, soon gave it up, and from Kant's skepticism came to the dogmatism of Schelling and Hegel. The philosophy inaugurated by Kant, in spite of his defects, impressed on Germany an immense philosophical and literary movement; it was the mother thought of the great works which signaled in this country the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth.