

alterations that are equidistant consequences [*rationata*] of a common ground.

On page 23 [*Werke*, II, 406], I don't think the condition *eadem tempore* [at the same time] is so necessary in the law of contradiction. In so far as something is the same subject, it is not possible to predicate the A and non-A of it at different times. The concept of impossibility demands no more than that the *same* subject cannot have two predicates, A and non-A. Alternatively, one could say it is impossible that non-A be a predicate of the subject A.

I would not have been so bold as to criticize your book with such abandon had not Mr. Herz made known to me your true philosophical spirit and assured me that you would never take offense at such frankness. This attitude is so rare, among imitators, it frequently serves as a distinguishing mark of men who think for themselves. He who has himself experienced the difficulty of finding the truth, and of convincing himself that he has found it, is always more inclined to be tolerant of those who differ from him. I have the honor of being, noble sir and revered professor, most respectfully,

Your most devoted servant,

MOSES MENDELSSOHN

To Marcus Herz, February 21, 1772

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Noble sir,
Esteemed friend,

You do me no injustice if you become indignant at the total absence of my replies; but lest you draw any disagreeable conclusions from it, let me appeal to your understanding of the way I think. Instead of excuses, I shall give you a brief account of the kind of things that have occupied my thoughts and that cause me to put off letter-writing in my idle hours. After your departure from Königsberg I examined once more, in the intervals between my professional duties and my sorely needed relaxation, the project that we had debated, in order to adapt it to the whole of philosophy and other knowledge and in order to understand its extent

and limits. I had already previously made considerable progress in the effort to distinguish the sensible from the intellectual in the field of morals and the principles that spring therefrom. I had also long ago outlined, to my tolerable satisfaction, the principles of feeling, taste, and power of judgment, with their effects—the pleasant, the beautiful, and the good—and was then making plans for a work that might perhaps have the title, “The Limits of Sense and Reason.” I planned to have it consist of two parts, a theoretical and a practical. The first part would have two sections, (1) general phenomenology and (2) metaphysics, but this only with regard to its nature and method. The second part likewise would have two sections, (1) the universal principles of feeling, taste, and sensuous desire and (2) the basic principles of morality. As I thought through the theoretical part, considering its whole scope and the reciprocal relations of all its parts, I noticed that I still lacked something essential, something that in my long metaphysical studies I, as well as others, had failed to pay attention to and that, in fact, constitutes the key to the whole secret of hitherto still obscure metaphysics. I asked myself: What is the ground of the relation of that in us which we call “representation” to the object? If a representation is only a way in which the subject is affected by the object, then it is easy to see how the representation is in conformity with this object, namely, as an effect in accord with its cause, and it is easy to see how this modification [*Bestimmung*] of our mind can *represent* something, that is, have an object. Thus the passive or sensuous representations have an understandable relationship to objects, and the principles that are derived from the nature of our soul have an understandable validity for all things insofar as those things are supposed to be objects of the senses. In the same way, if that in us which we call “representation” were active with regard to the object, that is, if the object itself were created by the representation (as when divine cognitions are conceived as the archetypes of all things), the conformity of these representations to their objects could be understood. Thus the possibility of both an *intellectus archetypi* (on whose intuition the things themselves would be grounded) and an *intellectus ectypi* (which would derive the data for its logical procedure from the sensuous intuition of things) is at least intelligible. However, our understanding, through its representations, is not the cause of the object (save in the case of moral ends), nor is the object [*Gegenstand*] the cause of the intellectual representations in the mind (*in sensu*

reali). Therefore the pure concepts of the understanding must not be abstracted from sense perceptions, nor must they express the reception of representations through the senses; but though they must have their origin in the nature of the soul, they are neither caused by the object [*Object*] nor bring the object itself into being. In my dissertation I was content to explain the nature of intellectual representations in a merely negative way, namely, to state that they were not modifications of the soul brought about by the object. However, I silently passed over the further question of how a representation that refers to an object without being in any way affected by it can be possible. I had said: The sensuous representations present things as they appear, the intellectual representations present them as they are. But by what means are these things given to us, if not by the way in which they affect us? And if such intellectual representations depend on our inner activity, whence comes the agreement that they are supposed to have with objects—objects that are nevertheless not possibly produced thereby? And the axioms of pure reason concerning these objects—how do they agree with these objects, since the agreement has not been reached with the aid of experience? In mathematics this is possible, because the objects before us are quantities and can be represented as quantities only because it is possible for us to produce their mathematical representations (by taking numerical units a given number of times). Hence the concepts of the quantities can be spontaneous and their principles can be determined a priori. But in the case of relationships involving qualities—as to how my understanding may form for itself concepts of things completely a priori, with which concepts the things must necessarily agree, and as to how my understanding may formulate *real* principles concerning the possibility of such concepts, with which principles experience must be in exact agreement and which nevertheless are independent of experience—this question, of how the faculty of the understanding achieves this conformity with the things themselves, is still left in a state of obscurity.

Plato assumed a previous intuition of divinity as the primary source of the pure concepts of the understanding and of first principles. Mallebranche [*sic*] believed in a still-continuing perennial intuition of this primary being. Various moralists have accepted precisely this view with respect to basic moral laws. Crusius believed in certain implanted rules for the purpose of forming judgments and ready-made concepts that God implanted in the

human soul just as they had to be in order to harmonize with things. Of these systems, one may call the former the *influxus hyperphysicus* and the latter the *harmonia praestabilita intellectualis*. But the *deus ex machina* is the greatest absurdity one could hit upon in the determination of the origin and validity of our knowledge. It has—besides its deceptive circle in the conclusion concerning our cognitions—also this additional disadvantage: it encourages all sorts of wild notions and every pious and speculative brainstorm.

While I was searching in such ways for the sources of intellectual knowledge, without which one cannot determine the nature and limits of metaphysics, I divided this science into its naturally distinct parts, and I sought to reduce the transcendental philosophy (that is to say, all concepts belonging to completely pure reason) to a certain number of categories, but not like Aristotle, who, in his ten predicaments, placed them side by side as he found them in a purely chance juxtaposition. On the contrary, I arranged them according to the way they classify themselves by their own nature, following a few fundamental laws of the understanding. Without going into details here about the whole series of investigations that has continued right down to this last goal, I can say that, so far as my essential purpose is concerned, I have succeeded and that now I am in a position to bring out a “Critique of Pure Reason” that will deal with the nature of theoretical as well as practical knowledge—insofar as the latter is purely intellectual. Of this, I will first work out the first part, which will deal with the sources of metaphysics, its methods and limits. After that I will work out the pure principles of morality. With respect to the first part, I should be in a position to publish it within three months.

In mental preoccupation of such delicate nature, nothing is more of a hindrance than to be occupied with thoughts that lie outside the scope of the field. Even though the mind is not always exerting itself, it must still, both in its relaxed and happy moments, remain uninterruptedly open to any chance suggestion that may present itself. Encouragements and diversions must serve to maintain the mind's powers of flexibility and mobility, whereby it is kept in readiness to view the subject matter from other sides all the time and to widen its horizon from a microscopic observation to a universal outlook in order that it may adopt all conceivable positions and that views from one may verify those from another. There has been no other reason than this, my worthy friend, for

my delay in answering your pleasant letters—for you certainly don't want me to write you empty words.

With respect to your discerning and deeply thoughtful little work, several parts have exceeded my expectations.¹ However, for reasons already mentioned, I cannot let myself go in discussing details. But, my friend, the effect that an undertaking of this kind has on the status of the sciences among the educated public is such that when, because of the indisposition that threatens to interrupt its execution, I begin to feel anxious about my project (which I regard as my most important work, the greater part of which I have ready before me)—then I am frequently comforted by the thought that my work would be just as useless to the public if it is published as it would be if it remains forever unknown. For it takes a literary man with more reputation and eloquence than I have to stimulate his readers in such a way that they exert themselves to meditate on his writing.

I have found your essay reviewed in the Breslau paper and, just recently, in the Göttingen paper. If the public judges the spirit and principal intent of an essay in such a fashion, all effort is in vain. If the reviewer has taken pains to grasp the essential points of the effort, his criticism is more welcome to the author than all the excessive praise resulting from a superficial evaluation. The Göttingen reviewer dwells on several applications of the system that in themselves are trivial and with respect to which I myself have since changed my views—with the result, however, that my major purpose has only gained thereby. A single letter from Mendelssohn or Lambert means more to an author in terms of making him re-examine his theories than do ten such opinions from superficial pens. Honest Pastor Schultz, the best philosophical brain I know in this neighborhood, has grasped the points of the system very well; I wish that he might get busy on your little essay, too. There are two mistaken interpretations in his evaluation of the system that he is examining. The first one is the criticism that space, instead of being the pure form of sensuous appearance, might very well be a true intellectual intuition and thus might be objective. The obvious answer is that there is a reason why space is not given in advance as objective or as intellectual, namely, if we analyze fully the representation of space, we have in it neither a repre-

¹ Herz's *Betrachtungen aus der spekulativen Weltweisheit* (1771).

sentation of things (as capable of existing only in space) nor a real connection (which cannot occur without things); that is to say, we have no effects, no relationships to regard as grounds, consequently no real representation of an object or anything real, nothing of what inheres in the thing, and therefore we must conclude that space is nothing objective.

The second misunderstanding leads him to an objection that has made me reflect considerably, because it seems to be the most serious objection that can be raised against the system, an objection that seems to occur naturally to everybody, and one that Mr. Lambert has raised.² It runs like this: Changes are something real (according to the testimony of inner sense). Now, they are possible only on the assumption of time; therefore time is something real that is involved in the determination of the things in themselves.

Then I asked myself: Why does one not accept the following parallel argument? Bodies are real (according to the testimony of outer sense). Now, bodies are possible only under the condition of space; therefore space is something objective and real that inheres in the things themselves. The reason lies in the fact that it is obvious, in regard to outer things, that one cannot infer the reality of the object from the reality of the representation, though in the case of inner sense the thinking or the existence of thought and the existence of my own self are one and the same. The key to this problem lies herein. There is no doubt that I must think my own state under the form of time and that therefore the form of the inner sensibility does give me the appearance of changes. I do not deny that changes are real, any more than I deny that bodies are real, even though by *real* I only mean that something real corresponds to the appearance. I can't even say that the inner appearance changes, for how would I observe this change if it doesn't appear to my inner sense? If one should say that it follows from this that everything in the world is objectively and in itself unchangeable, then I would reply: Things are neither changeable nor unchangeable. Just as Baumgarten states in his *Metaphysics*, paragraph 18: "The absolutely impossible is neither hypothetically possible nor impossible, for it cannot be considered under any condition," so also here, the things of the world are objectively or

² See Lambert's letter of October 13, 1770 [61].

in themselves neither in one and the same state at different times nor in different states, for thus understood they are not in time at all.

But enough about this. It appears that one doesn't obtain a hearing by stating only negative propositions. One must rebuild on the plot where one has torn down, or at least, if one has cleared away the brainstorms, one must make the pure insights of the understanding dogmatically intelligible and delineate their limits. With this I am now occupied, and this is the reason why, often contrary to my own intent of answering friendly letters, I withhold from such tasks what free time my very frail constitution allows me for contemplation and give myself over to the net of my thoughts. And so long as you find me so negligent in replying, you should also give up the idea of repaying me and suffer me to go without your letters. Even so, I would count on your constant affection and friendship for me just as you may always remain assured of mine. If you will be satisfied with short answers then you shall have them in the future. Between us the assurance of the honest concern that we have for each other must take the place of formalities.

I await your next delightful letter as a token of your sincere reconciliation. And please fill it up with such accounts as you must have aplenty, living as you do at the very seat of the sciences, and please excuse my taking the liberty of asking for this. Greet Mr. Mendelssohn and Mr. Lambert, likewise Mr. Sultzer, and convey my apologies to these gentlemen for similar reasons.

Do remain forever my friend, just as I am yours!

I. KANT

Königsberg

To Marcus Herz [toward the end of 1773]

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Noble sir,
Esteemed friend,

It pleases me to receive news of the good progress of your endeavors, but even more to see the signs of kind remembrance