

**KANT'S THEORY OF  
KNOWLEDGE.  
[1909]**

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Kant's Theory of Knowledge. [1909] by H. A. Prichard

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# KANT'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

BY

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## PREFACE

THIS book is an attempt to think out the nature and tenability of Kant's Transcendental Idealism, an attempt animated by the conviction that even the elucidation of Kant's meaning, apart from any criticism, is impossible without a discussion on their own merits of the main issues which he raises.

My obligations are many and great: to Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant* and to the translations of Meiklejohn, Max Müller, and Professor Mahaffy; to Mr. J. A. Smith, Fellow of Balliol College, and to Mr. H. W. B. Joseph, Fellow of New College, for what I have learned from them in discussion; to Mr. A. J. Jenkinson, Fellow of Brasenose College, for reading and commenting on the first half of the MS.; to Mr. H. H. Joachim, Fellow of Merton College, for making many important suggestions, especially with regard to matters of translation; to Mr. Joseph, for reading the whole of the proofs and for making many valuable corrections; and, above all, to my wife for constant and unfailing help throughout, and to Professor Cook Wilson, to have been whose pupil I count the greatest of philosophical good fortunes. Some years ago it was my privilege to be a member of a class with which Professor Cook Wilson read a portion of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, and subsequently I have had the advantage of discussing with him several of the more important passages. I am especially

indebted to him in my discussion of the following topics: the distinction between the Sensibility and the Understanding (pp. 27-31, 146-9, 162-6), the term 'form of perception' (pp. 37, 40, 133 fin.-135), the *Metaphysical Exposition of Space* (pp. 41-8), Inner Sense (Ch. V, and pp. 138-9), the *Metaphysical Deduction of the Categories* (pp. 149-53), Kant's account of 'the reference of representations to an object' (pp. 178-86), an implication of perspective (p. 90), the impossibility of a 'theory' of knowledge (p. 245), and the points considered, pp. 200 med.-202 med., 214 med.-215 med., and 218. The views expressed in the pages referred to originated from Professor Cook Wilson, though it must not be assumed that he would accept them in the form in which they are there stated.



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
THE PROBLEM OF THE <i>Critique</i> . . . . .	1
CHAPTER II	
THE SENSIBILITY AND THE UNDERSTANDING . . . . .	27
CHAPTER III	
SPACE . . . . .	36
CHAPTER IV	
PHENOMENA AND THINGS IN THEMSELVES . . . . .	71
NOTE	
THE FIRST ANTINOMY . . . . .	101
CHAPTER V	
TIME AND INNER SENSE . . . . .	103
CHAPTER VI	
KNOWLEDGE AND REALITY . . . . .	115
CHAPTER VII	
THE METAPHYSICAL DEDUCTION OF THE CATEGORIES . . . . .	140
CHAPTER VIII	
THE TRANSCENDENTAL DEDUCTION OF THE CATEGORIES . . . . .	161
CHAPTER IX	
GENERAL CRITICISM OF THE TRANSCENDENTAL DEDUCTION OF THE CATEGORIES . . . . .	214

	PAGE
CHAPTER X	
THE SCHEMATISM OF THE CATEGORIES . . . . .	246
CHAPTER XI	
THE MATHEMATICAL PRINCIPLES . . . . .	260
CHAPTER XII	
THE ANALOGIES OF EXPERIENCE . . . . .	268
CHAPTER XIII	
THE POSTULATES OF EMPIRICAL THOUGHT . . . . .	308
NOTE	
THE REFUTATION OF IDEALISM . . . . .	319

## REFERENCES

- A = First edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.  
 B = Second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.  
*Prolog.* = Kant's *Prolegomena to any future Metaphysic*.  
 M = Meiklejohn's Translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.  
 Mah. = Mahaffy, Translation of Kant's *Prolegomena to any future Metaphysic*. (The pages referred to are those of the first edition; these are also to be found in the text of the second edition.)  
 Caird = Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*.

## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM OF THE *CRITIQUE*

THE problem of the *Critique* may be stated in outline and approximately in Kant's own words as follows.

Human reason is called upon to consider certain questions, which it cannot decline, as they are presented by its own nature, but which it cannot answer. These questions relate to God, freedom of the will, and immortality. And the name for the subject which has to deal with these questions is metaphysics. At one time metaphysics was regarded as the queen of all the sciences, and the importance of its aim justified the title. At first the subject, propounding as it did a dogmatic system, exercised a despotic sway. But its subsequent failure brought it into disrepute. It has constantly been compelled to retrace its steps; there has been fundamental disagreement among philosophers, and no philosopher has successfully refuted his critics. Consequently the current attitude to the subject is one of weariness and indifference. Yet humanity cannot really be indifferent to such problems; even those who profess indifference inevitably make metaphysical assertions; and the current attitude is a sign not of levity but of a refusal to put up with the illusory knowledge offered by contemporary philosophy. Now the objects of metaphysics, God, freedom, and immortality, are not objects of experience in the sense in which a tree or a stone is an object of experience. Hence our views about them