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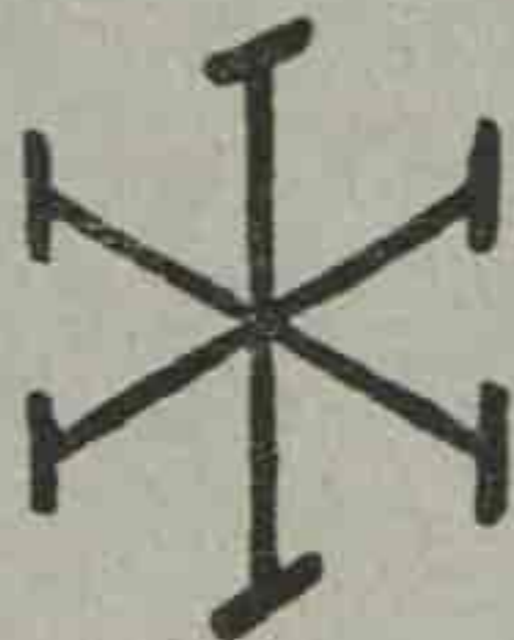
THE NECESSARY

REVOLUTION IN MAN'S THINKING

AFTER

IMMANUEL KANT

ELEVENTH
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THE NECESSARY REVOLUTION IN MAN'S THINKING AFTER IMMANUEL KANT

KANT WAS BORN in 1724 at Koenigsberg in East Prussia, into a modest middle-class family, of Scottish origin, that had emigrated there a few generations back. In his early youth Kant was principally concerned with theological questions, these being at that time of far more interest to him than philosophy. After a while, however, he became an adherent of the Leibnizian brand of philosophical rationalism, or rather Wolff's version of it. That is to say, during the first phase of his development as a thinker he adopted a form of dogmatism. But between 1755 and 1769, which was the crucial period in his advance towards maturity as a scientist, he came in contact with other currents of thought. One of these was a counterblast to the over-facile optimism of Leibniz, namely Voltaire's *Candide*, which ridiculed it, in the garb of Dr. Pangloss; the other was Hume's philosophy, which influenced Kant decisively by bringing the dogmatic principles which were the very basis of all contemporary science under the searchlight of sceptical criticism.

Thus was planted in Kant's fertile mind the seed of that great fundamental problem which exercised him so powerfully to the end of his days and which provides the clue to any real understanding of his philosophy, since this was, in fact, a sustained

Note:- Reference to the diagram printed at the end will make the lecture easier to follow.

effort to clear up these doubts of his, to find an answer to that problem in all its ramifications. The problem was: how the system of basic assumptions on which the science of that era rested was to be reconciled with his growing conviction that every one of these assumptions was questionable. In other words Kant felt that the science of which Galileo and Newton were the pillars and in which he too had already distinguished himself—sharing with Laplace the credit for the famous nebular theory—imperatively needed rescuing from the corrosive effects of Hume's critical empiricism.

While, therefore, as a scientist he seemed willing to go on accepting the dogmatic assumptions on which the natural sciences of the day were based, he was on the other hand alive to the cogency of Hume's more up-to-date empiricism, which took the form of a critical scepticism.

This contradictory pair of basic positions, the dogmatic and the sceptical, rested on a corresponding pair of metaphysical premises which have now to be clearly stated.

The underlying premise of the dogmatic position was the conception of an absolutely objective world of external reality, rational in its inner structure and existing quite independently of any finite mind: moreover such a mind, or subject, could at most apprehend it, not contribute anything of his own to it. This is the external world of Newton and Galileo, a world looked at from a mental standpoint that we may call objectivist. The sceptical position, on the other hand, is based on the opposite assumption, that is, on the acceptance of a subjective consciousness that creates its own cognitive experience, and makes itself into a completely independent metaphysical entity. Here the private, individual consciousness is represented as being the only source of the ideas we have concerning an external reality, but as to what that real world actually is in itself and how it is constituted we can have nothing whatever to say, because any indications that may reach us concerning it come to us through sensations aroused in us, and all these are purely subjective and personal. This way of regarding the external world, then, presupposes a subjectivist standpoint.

The dogmatists are faced with the obligation, firstly, to justify this assertion, and secondly, to explain how our subjective experience can correspond with this external reality in such a

way as would justify us in calling it knowledge. But as the sceptics are also subjectivists they are no better able than their opponents to explain how any knowledge of the external world is possible. For when once a person has, hypothetically at least, shut himself up in solitary confinement within his own ego, he is no longer in a position to show convincingly how he can possibly get out and, somehow or other, make contact with the outside world again, so as to survive in it.

Here, then, we have a situation of complete deadlock, and a pretty pair of failures, contrasting rather comically with the everyday experience of ordinary commonsense man, who proves quite conclusively that we *are* solving this problem, in practice, every moment of our lives, without bothering in the least about these difficulties that the philosophers have got themselves into. They, poor fellows, as the history of philosophy consistently shows, can only manage to get over their difficulties and confusions by calling in some principle of transcendence, ideal or divine, in the role of a *deus ex machina*, to ensure that the necessary relations between subjective knower and objective thing known are conveniently patched up.

So Kant found himself in a self-contradictory situation, which was borne in upon him as an intimate personal experience; and to work out a solution to that fundamental contradiction became the problem which occupied him for the rest of his life. He found that, precisely formulated, the problem was this: how is it possible to explain the cognitive activity without resorting to some transcendent entity as an expedient? He saw that modern science had to be accepted, for *there* were its results to prove its validity; but he also saw that the metaphysical premises on which research was based were flimsy and illusory. What he set himself to do, therefore, was to prove the absolute validity of the scientific way of thinking, without having to seek refuge in dogmatically assuming the existence of an external world rational in itself; and in this way to render scientific thought impregnable to the attacks of sceptical criticism. But in order to do this, he had to find a new point of view from which to regard the act of cognition, on which science depends—some point of view other than the two traditional ones: the dogmatic position, that was wide open to the attacks of the sceptics, and the sceptical, which leads

nowhere. Kant's creative genius enabled him to discover this new point of view and he coined a new word to name it—'transcendental'—which was to mean something quite different from 'transcendent'. Transcendent means 'beyond experience', transcendental means something in experience without which experience would not be possible.

What did Kant mean to convey by this word 'transcendental'? Well, it was the adjective he used to characterise any concept which is, firstly, not bound up with our private, subjective experience as persons but universally valid for all human beings, and secondly, not an idea in Plato's sense, as having objective existence outside of us and independently of us, whether in the mind of God or in a transcendent world of pure ideas. 'Transcendental' was his word for those *a priori* forms that make knowledge possible, that is to say, those particular procedures which the human mind has to go through if cognition is to take place. These forms, according to Kant, are absolutely valid for everyone, so that cognition takes place only through these forms and never apart from them; nevertheless, they have no independent existence, as abstract metaphysical entities and apart from anyone's thinking, but are only valid and only exist in this strictly limited sense, as forms of the concrete activity of thinking; in fact they are identical with the activity of thinking and are filled with those sensory contents without which thought becomes empty and dissolves into an illusory abstraction.

In other words, so Kant said, if we really want to understand what cognition is, we must start out from the act of cognition itself, from our actual experience, and observe how it comes about and what factors we must assume if we are to explain it.

This way of viewing things was, for those times, revolutionary—so much so that Kant himself referred to it as a Copernican revolution in philosophy. For whereas, according to traditional philosophy, the object in cognition took its origin either from the activity of a subject's mind, or from the impact of an objective reality on a passive subject, Kant proposed to show that the object in cognition has its source in an operation that is carried out in accordance with certain conceptual forms which have no independent existence of their own, outside our consciousness. They are not private characteristics of this or that individual, neither

are they rational forms regulating the objective world from within.

At this point Kant found that the next step was to show how this was possible, that is, how the process of cognition really takes place in the way that he was trying to describe. His first attempt to expound his theory—a brief dissertation ‘concerning the form and principles of the sensible and intelligible universe’, dated 1770—was his inaugural lecture delivered on the occasion of taking up his appointment to the Chair of Philosophy at Koenigsberg, at the age of 46. But the complete formulation of the Kantian theory of cognition was not published till 1781, in a work entitled ‘The Critique of Pure Reason’.

In this work Kant gives his description of the way cognition operates. He doesn’t deny the existence of a reality-in-itself, but says that for us it is unknowable, because the direct impact which we receive from outside ourselves is merely an abundance of sensory stimuli, which in themselves do not amount to knowledge. If they are to become an object of possible cognition, Kant says, these sensory data have first of all to be transformed in an act or process of ‘intuitional synthesis’, as he called it, whereby this confused welter of sensory stimuli takes on a new form, as a mental image. This image originates in our minds through stimulation by the senses and then adapts itself to the framework provided by two *a priori* forms which give it a precise consistency; these forms are those of space and time, and they serve to consolidate the baffling confusion of sensory data into a coherent intuition. In this way the raw material of cognition is created from the synthesis of the transcendental *a priori* forms, space and time, with the crude data of the senses. Thus it is that sensory stimuli acquire the form of an intuition, that is to say, some definite mental pattern—a symbol, as Cassirer would call it—which is precisely what distinguishes human thought from the instinctive activity of the animal psyche.

Such is the initial stage of Kant’s cognitive process, and before we pass on to the second stage we should consider more closely the *a priori* forms which make it possible, namely space and time. These have no independent existence apart from the intuition, of which they are a constituent part, serving as its necessary structure. Kant calls them transcendental, because they are not forms of a self-existent subject, nor are they present in a self-consistent real

world, as pure forms devoid of content, nor are they independently self-existent, but are present and active only in this preliminary cognitive operation, the one that Kant calls intuition. Since this is their particular mode of being—and we cannot deny that, because it is part of our own experience at every moment—these forms do not present themselves to us as dogmatic assumptions, and are therefore proof against sceptical criticism. Kant accordingly proposed to make these *a priori* forms the foundation for the sciences of mathematics and geometry, this being precisely the foundation they need.

The first part of Kant's project, which was that of providing science with a proper foundation, impregnable against sceptical criticism, has thus been successfully completed, the sciences of mathematics and geometry having been given the firm foundation they need. These sciences, however, as he pointed out, are not by themselves adequate to yield cognition in the full and proper sense of the word, because they are purely formal. In order to give rise to cognition they have to be applied to an intuitive content which has at some time or other originated from sensory experience. Here Kant was establishing a fundamental principle of his philosophy: that human cognition is based on sensory experience, on the stimuli which give rise to the intuitional synthesis. A cognition furnishing its own content entirely from within itself would have to be a purely intellectual intuition and is imaginable only as an attribute of the Deity.

This first phase in the process of cognition—described in the section of Kant's work headed *Transcendental Aesthetics*—is followed by a second phase, in which the process of cognition is brought to completion in a fully determinate experience. This phase he goes on to describe in the section of 'The Critique of Pure Reason' headed *Transcendental Analytics*. An intuition, he tells us there, is not in itself cognition because, simply as such, it is a 'blind' image, that is to say not conscious of itself. If it is to yield cognition fully completed, it has to be transformed, by undergoing a second synthesis. This consists in fitting the intuition into categories which give it content and so make it conscious of its rational meaning. These categories are such notions as number, causality, necessity and so on, which he summarised under four main heads. Kant's name for the first of these processes is the

intuitional synthesis, and this second one he calls the 'intellectual synthesis'. In the first the sense stimuli are given symbolic form in the mind, becoming a spatio-temporal image; in the second, what has resulted from the first process comes to have explicit, rational content; it becomes conscious of itself and takes on the form of an experience. The final product of this two-phase process is our actual experience, or what Kant calls 'phenomenon'. The German, *die Erscheinung*, means what appears to a human being.

On the lines I have been indicating, Kant rigorously fixed the limits of any possible human knowledge. Human thought, he says, cannot legitimately go outside the realm of phenomena, that is, of experience manifested through the synthesis of an intuition based on the senses with a category that reveals its rational meaning. In other words, we human beings can exercise our cognitive faculties only in the world in which an intuition is possible, that is to say, in the world which has originated through the senses. Every attempt of thought to escape outside the limits of this domain Kant declared to be arbitrary and unjustifiable.

These categories, through which the intellectual synthesis is effected, are transcendental in the same way as the two *a priori* forms, space and time. According to Kant, these categories must not be understood as forming part of the subject, nor as structures of reality-in-itself, both these being unknowable; nor are they, like Plato's ideas, entities, not even purely conceptual entities. We must recognise them to be forms through which the experience or phenomenon acquires consistence, forms that are therefore strictly bound up with experience and constitute its rational structure, apart from which they cannot in any sense exist. The experience or phenomenon, on the other hand, is the world itself, as it appears to us human beings; and for this reason we can say that the system of categories has its place in this world of experience as the logical structure which upholds it. On this fact Kant bases his conclusion concerning the validity of the sciences. The natural sciences, he says, have as their foundation the system of categories just as the sciences of geometry and mathematics have as *their* foundation the *a priori* forms, space and time. Both of these foundations are impregnable to the attacks of sceptical



criticism, because at every instant we have direct and incontrovertible experience of their value through the mere fact that we think, and sceptical criticism itself could not even be brought into play without making use of them. Thus Kant had now formulated an answer to the problem which had been tormenting him; how to find a basis for the sciences, that would be impregnable to sceptical criticism such as Hume's, and thereby to provide a valid philosophical foundation for the system of Galileo and Newton.

In this way Kant satisfied that imperatively felt requirement which had been the inspiration of his researches. In the course of them he had discovered a fundamental organon for the orientation of thought and research, the transcendental method. The corner-stone of this was that the factors which combine to make up knowledge should be recognised as being present only in the concreteness of the act of cognition. They could no longer be torn away from their synthesis in man's actual experience and located either in the empirical ego, or in the external world, or else in a remote Heaven above. He sees cognition, therefore, as resulting from a *synthetic a priori* principle, without which it would not be possible; and this he referred to in various ways but most frequently as the creative, *synthetic unity of apperception*. Although it is true that every judgement based on first-hand experience implies the statement 'I think . . .', this principle is essentially an operation, and therefore not to be confused with the subject as self-existent. It is equally not to be confused with an object as self-existent, for the object is a resultant of the operation. This principle is therefore an autonomous principle, and identifiable with the subject in cognition only in the sense that, in the act of experiencing, the subject constitutes itself as the knower. It is identifiable with the object only in the sense that it is, through the same act, constituted as thing known, in other words phenomenon. In short, both the subject in cognition, and the object of cognition, are the products, not the causes, of the cognitive process.

Kant had thus found the way of escape from the blind alley into which he had been driven by the traditional philosophy, which persistently maintained that knowledge has its source either in the subject treated as absolute, or in the object treated as absolute, or else in a realm of ideas treated as absolute. Kant's success was due

to his discovery that we create it, through a mental operation that every one of us necessarily carries out at every moment of our lives, and the working principles of which he attempted to describe.

We shall be going on shortly to see, in conclusion, how far these Kantian principles have been found applicable in recent anthropological researches. Meanwhile there is just one further question on which something must be said. By limiting the scope of possible knowledge to the world of phenomena, Kant ruled out the possibility of our knowing anything at all about certain principles which in traditional philosophy were basic: namely, the soul, as an entity having substance; Nature, as consisting of matter external to us and existing independently of us; and God—for each of these transcends the realm of experience. The problems that arise concerning these three traditional ideas are dealt with in the last part of 'The Critique of Pure Reason', the Transcendental Dialectics. In this part Kant severely criticises the pretensions of traditional philosophy to reaching any knowledge of these ideal principles as existent realities; and he exposes the contradictions inherent in the traditional thought processes aimed at achieving such knowledge. Yet his criticism, as we shall see, is not purely destructive. Even if these 'ideas of pure reason', he says, cannot be known through the means and modes proper to knowledge concerning phenomena, they still have to be accepted—as norms regulating the use we make of our intellectual concepts, which constitute scientific knowledge. Only by accepting the validity of these regulative ideas—the soul, Nature and God—is it possible for man to interpret the natural order teleologically, that is, as expressing an order or realm of ends, through which alone an ethical view of life is possible. And since an ethical view of life is indisputably a reality in some sense, a reality that we necessarily experience, this shows that those ideas, although not defensible on the plane of theory, have to be accepted on the plane of practice. As norms of the human understanding, the soul, Nature and God cease to be logically self-contradictory and become indispensable factors contributing to the moral life.

The fact that there is such a thing as the moral life with its own characteristic form—and this is an unquestionable fact of our experience—proves conclusively that the ideas of pure reason are

not illusory imaginings but incontrovertible realities, even though not susceptible to verification by experience. Just as the efficacy and achievements of scientific research provide conclusive evidence for the validity of the categories, so, too, the moral and religious life, as concretely embodied in the lives of persons who are its shining examples, demonstrates as conclusively as could be the validity of those regulative ideas of pure reason—the soul, Nature, and God.

The proof that these characteristic expression-forms of human life are true to facts is to be found, therefore, not so much in the mythological or metaphysical imagery used by religions and by dogmatic science, but rather in the deepest need that man feels, a need that is satisfied, according to time and place, by these expressional forms, which present themselves to us as unquestionably real and true. Historical events supply the clearest proof we have that these norms, these regulative ideas of pure reason, are secretly at work all the time and in the last analysis, provide confirmation, indirect perhaps, but detectable, that these ideas are necessary to our reason.

Thus the true basis of ethics is to be found, not in any dogmatic ethical formulas, to which we owe a superstitious reverence, but in this reality which testifies to the human significance of ethics. That is to say, ethics rests firmly on our genuine first-hand experience of its essence—on those attitudes of the soul which Kant, in 'The Critique of Practical Reason', calls the categorical imperatives of the moral life. These imperatives constitute pure forms of universal law that we can verify within ourselves. They would be impossible without that principle of freedom which operates within us, not as an abstract principle but as a living truth for man. In short, we may say that the only genuine necessity man experiences is his need to feel himself free: man is inescapably free. Thus Kant destroyed the whole speculative realm of absolute realities outside experience, but laid the foundation for a new world of human dignity and valuation within man's experience.

Such, then is the kernel of Kant's philosophy outlined in a few broad strokes. Even so, it is not an easy philosophy to grasp all in a hurry, considering that Bertrand Russell has declared he could never understand it fully, nor make out why it should have been rated so highly. Kant's writings, of course, cover a far wider

range than the theme we have just sketched here. When he had done justice to this basic insight of his, he worked out its implications rigorously in every field of thought, reaching important conclusions, particularly with reference to ethics, art, scientific methodology and religion; and he concluded his long series of illuminating works with one entitled *Pragmatic Anthropology*. Confronted by this monumental output of philosophical thought, we must now ask: How much of this still remains vital and not out of date? How much of his thinking can still be of use to us?

Such answer as I give will be confined to my own special field of studies, as a cultural anthropologist. It is my opinion, then, that without the acceptance of certain Kantian premises the discipline in which my professional work lies could not possibly exist.

The necessary revolution in Man's thinking which Kant brought about is the critical as opposed to the naive approach to every aspect of life. The naive approach is to accept things and ideas, as they appear to us, as being an absolute reality outside ourselves. The critical approach is to realise that reality is in our own experience: that different factors contribute to our cognition, and that it is necessary to assess these factors, to put them under a critical control. Kant was concerned only with the categories which are necessarily present in all human cognition—although not always formulated exactly in the same way—but he gave us the clue to extend this realisation to the many presuppositions and tendencies arising from our culture, religion, upbringing, social class, etc. which come right into our judgement and perception as part of them, without our realising it, and which we quite naturally refer to the object of our perception or judgement as if they were part of some real thing outside ourselves.

Cultural anthropology consists precisely in the attempt to bring into critical consciousness all these cultural premises, these ruling ideas to which we can give the name of cultural categories, or cultural patterns, which serve to orientate our thinking and regulate our behaviour in the life of the particular society in which we live; and this aim and focus of anthropology is directed towards two fundamental objectives. The first is: to be able to judge whether these patterns of thought and behaviour are still valid today and fully a match for our changing life-problems; the second is, by elucidating these problems, to discover a common



basis, an all-inclusive problematic situation involving the whole of mankind, that will serve as common denominator for verbal intercourse with mutual understanding. For if different universes of discourse divide us, our common problems can unite us. How, then, could cultural anthropology even begin its investigations without the help of those tools for research that Kant brought to such precision in his Critique?

He taught us above all, not to make our selves our starting point, as if we were absolutes, not to treat our empirical ego as the standard for all truth, because that makes us dogmatic and intolerant; and not even to accept the so-called objective world as unchangeable and rational in itself, and therefore essentially incapable of improvement. He taught us, instead, to watch our mental processes, and to discover how, guided by the pattern we have learned, we can organise the confusion which meets us into a coherent situation, a situation which we can identify and master. Think of a new-born baby. All its sensations are quite vague; it can see no object around it, and therefore it is unable to master the situation which it is living in; it sees nothing but light that hurts its eyes; cannot think because it hasn't the symbols which are the necessary instruments for doing so; suffers, exults, gets excited, but doesn't 'take in' anything, not even what has to do with its joys and sufferings. Slowly, gradually, it learns, first from its mother and later from others around it, those first experiences through which it builds for itself a system, a more and more complex and complete system of patterns for 'taking in' the 'world' around it, making sense of it, and consequently being able to manipulate it and gain more and more control of it. This controlling system of experience, which is not transmitted hereditarily through the genes but acquired through education, is organised in the ganglia of our central and our peripheral nervous system, incarnated in the synapses of our brain cells (where it is recorded as if on magnetic tape) and eventually develops into a particular cultural apparatus, biologically built-in to enable us to live humanly among human beings. This structure which controls our stream of consciousness and the actions resulting from it, can be compared with Kant's notion 'transcendental' because it is not just our own private system but is shared with all the other members of our particular society. This structure is not in things

but enables us to see things, is not somewhere outside us, but becomes a living part of us and yet is peculiar to our structures of brain and nerves, having been incarnated in each of us individually, and is manifested only in our acts of applying our consciousness to concrete situations.

If our acceptance of this system of patterns of culture, as Ruth Benedict calls them, imprinted upon us by the society we live in, is a blind, passive acceptance without critical awareness, this turns us into fanatical, intolerant, dogmatising individuals and makes it impossible for us to understand other people—which here means simply those whose way of thinking and acting is not identical with our own. This, as it works out in terms of individual lives, of societies, and of the relations between peoples of widely differing cultural traditions, is the prime source from which flow the majority of the troubles and disasters of mankind in our time. Misunderstandings, pathological isolation, imperialism, destructive fanaticism are all symptoms of one single failing: lack of critical sense concerning ourselves and our ways of thinking and behaving.

If, instead, we take pains to make ourselves critically aware of the different factors which go to make up our own thinking, we are more likely to understand why those other people think differently. We can do this if we learn to see the patterns of culture we use in our thinking as solutions—socially codified and verified—of life problems, solutions to the problems typical of our particular society and our particular cultural tradition, and as guiding principles of behaviour that are valid only insofar as they correspond to the realities of these problems. And if we thus succeed in understanding other people's life problems, we shall then be able to understand why they think in a way that is different from ours. And in the end, when we have discovered that there are some crucial problems in which we are all equally involved, we may even be able to achieve close co-operation. There are indeed some human problems that are universal: survival, reproduction, the education of the young, social co-operation, personal and creative self-expression in art, in science, in politics, in religion; all these are universal problems bound up with our human condition itself. But as historical conditions change, so the solutions found for these problems keep changing with the times;

which means that the patterns of our thinking also change correspondingly.

And, I may say, we find very clear corroboration of this in history. We have only to recall the Cold War atmosphere of some fifteen years ago, when two different worlds were facing each other uncomprehendingly without hope of fruitful discussion. This was a sure sign of insufficient critical sense on both sides: Stalin's Russia, and the America of McCarthy and Foster Dulles. Another ten years, and people on both sides had begun to realise that they were 'all in the same boat', threatened with sudden mutual extermination in a nuclear war. But in that realisation, there was at least a hope, fanned by peace moves and demonstrations for nuclear disarmament—and, lo and behold, thanks to the personal qualities of Kennedy and Khrushchev, in whom that consciousness found concrete expression, there did arise the possibility of face-to-face talks and understanding which had till then been thought impossible. May I repeat: even if our different universes of discourse divide us, our common problems can unite us. And the patterns of our thinking, as they become adjusted to the real issues which constitute our life problems, enable us to discover a new and common language.

From Kant's philosophy anthropologists have been able to draw yet another fundamental lesson which has a direct bearing on human personality. Granted that we get our knowledge of the world through special patterns, if these patterns of knowledge are simply those that our culture has imprinted upon our minds, so that they form an integral and a stable part of our empirical ego, we don't really get our knowledge of this surrounding world at first hand, we recognise it by carrying out a mental operation that, adapting Kant's terminology, we may call a synthetic *a posteriori* judgement. That is to say, by learning these patterns of knowledge and what they mean in practice, we become familiar with the problems of behaviour that are typical in our society, and consequently we behave in accordance with knowledge that has been given to us and that we have accepted more or less passively. But what happens if we find ourselves up against a new problem, for the solution of which no ready-made pattern of knowledge and action, or none quite suitable and adequate for dealing with it, has yet appeared in our culture? In that case there isn't any

pattern for us to recognise. We have to trust to our own resources, that is, to our creative powers of understanding: we have to devise a new pattern for the solution of that problem, which implies a new course of action. And that, adapting Kant's terminology, we may call a synthetic *a priori* judgement.

What has just been said with regard to personal responsibility has its direct applications in practical ethics. If the conduct of our lives is regulated entirely by the traditional answers to traditional problems, we are unconsciously reasoning like this: 'If I want to live on good terms with the people I am surrounded by, and they think in such and such a way, I have got to behave accordingly, that is, to do what the rest of them do, without asking any questions.' This is what Kant would have called a hypothetical moral imperative, because it bases the morality of an action on its effectiveness in achieving some further end. And we can see for ourselves even today some of the tragic consequences of accepting uncritically certain hypothetical imperatives—from the gas chambers to the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The truth is that there is nothing genuinely moral about this passive attitude of merely choosing to avoid the risks of standing out against the majority of those around us, or of bringing ourselves into conflict with society. But suppose that we were to see a fresh problem with fresh eyes, to create a new pattern for the solution of some new problem whose implications had not yet been properly thought out? That would be a very different matter; and would have the quality of a synthetic *a priori* judgement. Discoveries of such a character as this may compel us to stand out against the majority of the people in our society when they have not yet the eyes to see what to us seems quite clear; again, we may be obliged to go against some opinion current among those whose interest is not to see how things really stand. If so, we shall not be able to adopt that line of unconscious reasoning that we were speaking about just now; we shall not be able to act according to expediency, as opportunists do and people concerned only to avoid risks, but shall have to act in such a way as to be faithful to this new truth that we have discovered for ourselves. In this way we shall be faithful indeed to ourselves, in so far as we are genuine, authentic persons, and act in a manner that Kant called categorically imperative, which means in accordance with an obligation that

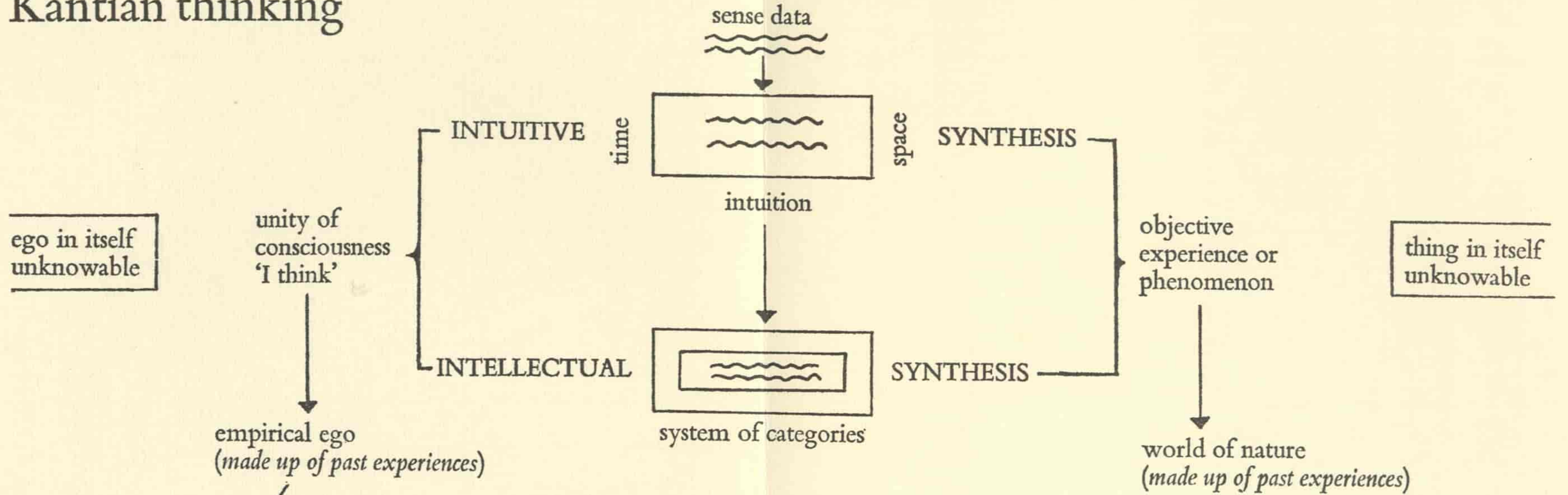
we ourselves hold to be unconditional. This is the true, the courageous and unprejudiced kind of moral action.

Kant's philosophy has had incalculable effects in every field. With the transcendental critique he has pioneered the way toward a new critical method, of which modern thought must assuredly take good heed if it is to call itself modern. But in my estimation—though perhaps this may be due to professional bias—it is, above all, in the human sciences, and especially in anthropology, that Kant's teaching needs to be acclaimed and applied, albeit in the revised form which takes into account the vital problems of today. Unless we follow where he has led the way, and apply his penetrating methods to the difficulties and perplexities of our time, there seems to be no possibility of finding a way out from the situation of profound crisis in which the whole human race is now involved.

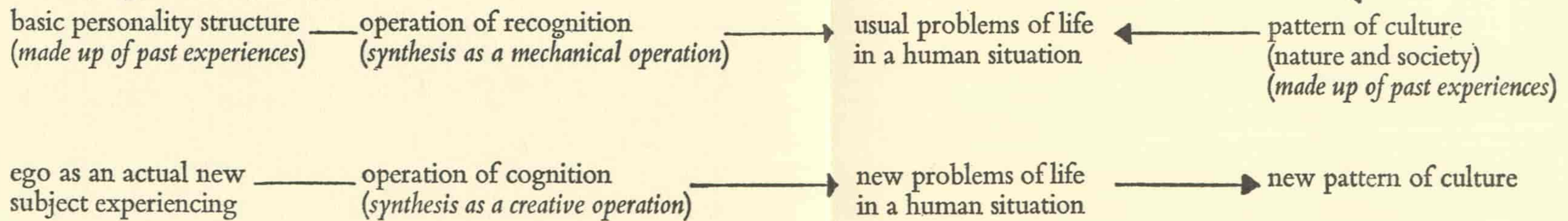


This diagram is an imaginative scheme only to help the reader in following Kant's thought. It is not intended to portray successive stages in a process of cognition. It is not suggested, for instance, that sense data ever exist apart from experience or that the intellectual synthesis follows the intuitive synthesis in time. Nor is it affirmed that the unknowable Ego in itself or Thing in itself are actual realities.

Kantian thinking



Modern anthropological applications of it



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