

A man to his astonishment all at once becomes conscious of existing after having been in a state of non-existence for many thousands of years, when, presently again, he returns to a state of non-existence for an equally long time. This cannot possibly be true, says the heart; and even the crude mind, after giving the matter its consideration, must have some sort of presentiment of the ideality of time. This ideality of time, together with that of space, is the key to every true system of metaphysics, because it finds room for quite another order of things than is to be found in nature. This is why Kant is so great.

Of every event in our life it is only for a moment that we can say that it is; after that we must say for ever that it was. Every evening makes us poorer by a day. It would probably make us angry to see this short space of time slipping away, if we were not secretly conscious in the furthest depths of our being that the spring of eternity belongs to us, and that in it we are always able to have life renewed.

Reflections of the nature of those above may, indeed, establish the belief that to enjoy the present, and to make this the purpose of one's life, is the greatest wisdom; since it is the present alone that is real, everything else being only the play of thought. But such a purpose might just as well be called the greatest folly, for that which in the next moment exists no more, and vanishes as completely as a dream, can never be worth a serious effort.