

Section 2. On the distinction between sensible things and intelligible things in general

§ 3

*Sensibility*⁸ is the *receptivity* of a subject in virtue of which it is possible for the subject's own representative state to be affected in a definite way by the presence of some object.¹¹ *Intelligence*^h (rationality) is the *faculty* of a subject in virtue of which it has the power to represent things which cannot by their own quality come before the senses of that subject. The object of sensibility is the sensible; that which contains nothing but what is to be cognised through the intelligence is intelligible. In the schools of the ancients, the former was called a *phenomenon* and the latter a *noumenon*. Cognition, in so far as it is subject to the laws of sensibility, is *sensitive*, and, in so far as it is subject to the laws of intelligence, it is *intellectual* or rational.¹²

§ 4

In this way, whatever in cognition is sensitive is dependent upon the special character of the subject in so far as the subject is capable of this or that modification by the presence of objects: these modifications may differ in different cases, according to the variations in the subjects. But whatever cognition is exempt from such subjective conditions relates only to the object. It is thus clear that things which are thought sensitively are representations of things *as they appear*, while things which are intellectual are representations of things *as they are*. In a representation of sense there is, first of all, something which you might call the *matter*, namely, the *sensation*, and there is also something which may be called the *form*, the *aspect*ⁱ namely of sensible things which arises according as the various things which affect the senses are co-ordinated by a certain natural law of the mind.¹³ Moreover, just as the sensation which constitutes the *matter* of a sensible representation is, indeed, evidence for the presence of some-

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⁸ *Sensualitas* / A: *Sensibilité* / B: *Sensibility* / C: *Sensorialità* / H: *Sinnlichkeit* / K: *Sensuality*.

^h *intelligentia* / (alt: power of the understanding).

ⁱ *species* / A: *configuration* / B: *general configuration* / C: *specie* / E: *appearance* / H: *Gestalt* / Ha: *general characteristic* / K: *specificity*.

thing sensible, though in respect of its quality it is dependent upon the nature of the subject in so far as the latter is capable of modification by the object in question, so also the *form* of the same representation is undoubtedly evidence of a certain reference or relation in what is sensed, though properly speaking it is not an outline or any kind of schema^j of the object, but only a certain law, which is inherent in the mind and by means of which it co-ordinates for itself that which is sensed^k from the presence of the object. For objects do not strike the senses in virtue of their form or aspect. Accordingly, if the various factors in an object which affect the sense are to coalesce into some representational whole there is needed an internal principle in the mind, in virtue of which those various factors may be clothed with a certain *aspect*, in accordance with stable and innate laws.

§ 5

There thus belong to sensory cognition^l both matter, which is sensation and in virtue of which cognitions are called *sensory*,^m and form, in virtue of which, even if it were to be found free from all sensation, representations are called *sensitive*.ⁿ On the other hand, in so far as that which belongs to the understanding^o is concerned, it must above all be carefully noted that the use of the understanding, or the superior faculty of the soul, is two-fold. By the first of these uses, the concepts themselves, whether of things or relations, *are given*, and this is the REAL USE. By the second use, the concepts, no matter whence they are given, are merely subordinated to each other, the lower, namely, to the higher (common characteristic marks), and compared with one another in accordance with the principle of contradiction, and this use is called the LOGICAL USE.¹⁴ Now, the logical use of the understanding is common to all the sciences, but not so the real use. For when a cognition has been given, no matter how, it is regarded either as contained under or as opposed to a characteristic mark common to several cognitions, and that either immediately and directly, as is the case in *judgements*, which lead to a distinct cognition,¹⁵ or mediately, as is the case in *ratiocinations*, which lead to a complete^p cognition.¹⁶ If, therefore, sensitive cognitions are given, sensitive cognitions are subordinated by the logical use of the understanding to other sensitive cognitions, as to common concepts, and phenomena are subordinated to more general laws of phenomena. But it is of the greatest importance here to have noticed that cognitions must always be treated as sensitive cognitions, no matter how extensive the logical use of the understanding may have been in relation to them. For they are called sensitive *on account of their genesis* and not on account of their *comparison* in respect of identity or opposition.

^j *adumbratio aut schema.* ^k *sensa.* ^l *sensualem . . . cognitionem.* ^m *sensuales.* ⁿ *sensitivae.*
^o *intellectualia.* ^p *adaequatam.*

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Hence, even the most general empirical laws are nonetheless sensory; and the principles of sensitive form which are found in geometry (determinate relations in space), no matter how much the understanding may operate upon them by reasoning according to the rules of logic from what is sensitively given (by pure intuition), nonetheless do not cease to belong to the class of what is sensitive. But in the case of sensible^a things and phenomena, that which precedes the logical use of the understanding is called *appearance*,^r while the reflective cognition,¹⁷ which arises when several appearances are compared by the understanding, is called *experience*. Thus, there is no way from appearance to experience except by reflection in accordance with the logical use of the understanding. The common concepts of experience are called *empirical*, and the objects of experience are called *phenomena*, while the laws both of experience and generally of all sensitive cognition are called the laws of phenomena. Thus empirical concepts do not, in virtue of being raised to greater universality, become intellectual in the *real sense*, nor do they pass beyond the species of sensitive cognition; no matter how high they ascend by abstracting, they always remain sensitive.

§ 6

As for that which belongs strictly to the understanding,^r and in the case of which the *use of the understanding is real*: such concepts, whether of objects or of relations, are given by the very nature of the understanding: they contain no form of sensitive cognition and they have been abstracted^t from no use of the senses. It is, however, necessary to notice here the extreme ambiguity of the word '*abstract*',^u and I think that it would be better to eliminate this ambiguity beforehand lest it spoil our investigation into that which belongs to the understanding.^v Properly speaking, we ought, namely, to say: *to abstract from some things*, but not: *to abstract something*.¹⁸ The former expression indicates that in a certain concept we should not attend to the other things which are connected with it in some way or other, while the latter expression indicates that it would be given only concretely, and only in such a way that it is separated from the things which are joined to it. Hence, a concept of the understanding *abstracts* from everything sensitive, but it is *not abstracted* from what is sensitive. Perhaps a concept of the understanding would more rightly be called *abstracting*^w rather than *abstracted*.^x For this reason, it is more advisable to

^a in sensualibus / A: les données propres à la connaissance sensible / B: in things of sense / C: Nei fatti sensoriali / E: sense-percepts / H: Bei den Sinneserkenntnissen / Ha: in things sensual / K: in sensual things.

^r apparentia. ^s intellectualia strictae talia. ^t abstracti. ^u abstracti. ^v de intellectualibus.

^w abstrahens. ^x abstractus (alt: abstracted).

call concepts of the understanding '*pure ideas*', and concepts which are only given empirically '*abstract*' concepts'.

§ 7

From this one can see that the sensitive is poorly defined as that which is *more confusedly* cognised, and that which belongs to the understanding as that of which there is a *distinct* cognition. For these are only logical distinctions which *do not touch* at all the things *given*, which underlie every logical comparison. Thus, sensitive representations^s can be very distinct and representations which belong to the understanding^a can be extremely confused.¹⁹ We notice the first case in that paradigm of sensitive cognition, *geometry*, and the second case in the organon of everything which belongs to the understanding, *metaphysics*. And it is obvious how much effort is devoted by metaphysics to dispelling the clouds of confusion which darken the common understanding, although it is not always so happily successful as geometry is. Nonetheless, each and every one of these cognitions preserves the sign of its ancestry, so that those belonging to the first group, however distinct they be, are called sensitive because of their origin, while those belonging to the second group continue to belong to the understanding, even though they are confused. Such, for example, is the case with *moral* concepts, which are cognised not by experiencing them but by the pure understanding itself. But I am afraid it may be that the illustrious WOLFF has, by this distinction between what is sensitive and what belongs to the understanding, a distinction which for him is only logical, completely abolished, to the great detriment of philosophy, the noblest of the enterprises of antiquity, the discussion of the *character of phenomena and noumena*, and has turned men's minds away from that enquiry to things which are often only logical minutiae.²⁰

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§ 8

Now, the philosophy which contains the *first principles* of the use of the *pure understanding* is METAPHYSICS. But its propaedeutic science is that science which teaches the distinction between sensitive cognition and the cognition which derives from the understanding; it is of this science that I am offering a specimen in my present dissertation. Since, then, empirical principles are not found in metaphysics, the concepts met with in metaphysics are not to be sought in the senses but in the very nature of the pure understanding, and that not as *innate* concepts but as concepts abstracted from the laws inherent in the mind (by attending to its actions on

^s *abstractos* (alt: abstracted). ^s *sensitiva*. ^a *intellectualia*.

the occasion of an experience), and therefore as *acquired* concepts. To this genus belong possibility, existence, necessity, substance, cause *etc.*, together with their opposites or correlates. Such concepts never enter into any sensory representations as parts, and thus they could not be abstracted from such a representation in any way at all.

§ 9

2:396 The concepts of the understanding^b have, in particular, two ends. The first is *elenctic*, in virtue of which they have a negative use, where, namely, they keep what is sensitively conceived distinct from noumena, and, although they do not advance science by the breadth of a fingernail, they nonetheless preserve it from the contagion of errors. The second end is *dogmatic*, and in accordance with it the general principles of the pure understanding, such as are displayed in ontology or in rational psychology, lead to some paradigm,^c which can only be conceived by the pure understanding and which is a common measure for all other things in so far as they are realities. This paradigm is NOUMENAL PERFECTION. This, however, is perfection either in the theoretical sense* or in the practical sense. In the former sense, it is the Supreme Being, GOD; in the latter sense, it is MORAL PERFECTION. *Moral philosophy*, therefore, in so far as it furnishes the first *principles of judgement*,^d is only cognised by the pure understanding and itself belongs to pure philosophy. Epicurus, who reduced its criteria to the sense of pleasure or pain,²¹ is very rightly blamed, together with certain moderns, who have followed him to a certain extent from afar, such as Shaftesbury²² and his supporters. In any genus of things, the quantity of which is variable, the *maximum* is the common measure and principle of cognising. The *maximum of perfection* is nowadays called the ideal, while for Plato it was called the idea (as in the case of his idea of the state). It is the principle of all things which are contained under the general concept of some perfection, in as much as the lesser degree, it is held, can only be determined by limiting the maximum. But, although God, as the ideal of perfection, is the principle of cognising, He is also, at the same time, in so far as He really exists, the principle of the coming into being of all perfection whatsoever.

* We consider something theoretically in so far as we attend only to those things which belong to being, whereas we consider it practically if we look at those things which ought to be in it in virtue of freedom.

^b *intellectualium* / A: *Les notions intellectuelles* / B & E: intellectual concepts / C: *concetti intellectualium* / H: *die Verstandeserkenntnisse* / Ha: concepts of the understanding / K: Things intellectual.

^c *exemplar*. ^d *diuuducandi*.

§ I O

There is (for man) no *intuition* of what belongs to the understanding,^e but only a *symbolic cognition*; and thinking^f is only possible for us by means of universal concepts in the abstract, not by means of a singular concept in the concrete. For all our intuition is bound to a certain principle of form, and it is only under this form that anything can be *apprehended* by the mind immediately or as *singular*, and not merely conceived discursively by means of general concepts.²³ But this formal principle of our intuition (space and time) is the condition under which something can be the object of our senses.²⁴ Accordingly, this formal principle, as the condition of sensitive cognition, is not a means to intellectual intuition. Moreover, since it is only through the senses that all the matter of our cognition is given, the noumenon as such cannot be conceived by means of representations drawn from sensations. Thus, the concept of the intelligible as such is devoid of all that is *given* in human intuition. The *intuition*, namely, of our mind is always *passive*. It is, accordingly, only possible in so far as it is possible for something to affect our sense. Divine intuition, however, which is the principle of objects, and not something governed by a principle, since it is independent, is an archetype and for that reason perfectly intellectual.

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§ I I

Now, although phenomena, properly speaking, are aspects^g of things and not ideas, and although they do not express the internal and absolute quality of objects, nonetheless cognition of them is in the highest degree true. For, first of all, in so far as they are sensory concepts or apprehensions, they are, as things caused, witnesses to the presence of an object, and this is opposed to idealism.²⁵ Consider, however, judgements about things which are sensitively cognised. Truth in judging consists in the agreement of a predicate with a given subject. But the concept of a subject, in so far as it is a phenomenon, would only be given through its relation to the sensitive faculty of cognising, and it is in accordance with the same relation that predicates would be given which were sensitively observable. It is, accordingly, clear that representations of a subject and a predicate arise according to common laws; and they thus furnish a foothold^h for cognition which is in the highest degree true.

^e *intellectualium*. ^f *intellectio*.

^g *species* / A: *apparences* / B: *semblances* / C: *apparenze* / H: *Abbilder* / K: *species*.

^h *anseam praedere* / (lit.: provide a handle).

§ 12

2:398 Whatever, as object, relates to our senses is a phenomenon. But things which, since they do not touch the senses, contain only the singular form of sensibility, belong to pure intuition (that is to say, an intuition devoid of sensation but not for that reason deriving from the understanding). Phenomena are reviewed and set out, *first*, in the case of the phenomena of external sense, in PHYSICS, and *secondly*, in the case of the phenomena of inner sense, in empirical PSYCHOLOGY. But pure (human) intuition is not a universal or logical concept *under which*, but a singular concept *in which*, all sensible things whatever are thought, and thus it contains the concepts of space and time. These concepts, since they determine nothing as to the *quality* of sensible things, are not objects of science, except in respect of *quantity*. Hence, PURE MATHEMATICS deals with *space* in GEOMETRY, and *time* in pure MECHANICS. In addition to these concepts, there is a certain concept which in itself, indeed, belongs to the understanding but of which the actualisation¹ in the concrete requires the auxiliary notions of time and space (by successively adding a number of things and setting them simultaneously side by side). This is the concept of *number*, which is the concept treated in ARITHMETIC. Thus, pure mathematics, which explains the form of all our sensitive cognition, is the organon of each and every intuitive and distinct cognition. And since its objects themselves are not only the formal principles of every intuition, but are *originary intuitions*, it provides us with a cognition which is in the highest degree true, and, at the same time, it provides us with a paradigm of the highest kind of evidence² in other cases. *Thus there is a science of sensory things*,³ although, since they are phenomena, the use of the understanding is not real but only logical. It is, hence, clear in what sense we are to suppose that science was denied in the case of phenomena by those who drew their inspiration from the Eleatic School.²⁶

¹ *actuatio.* ² *summae evidentiae.* ³ *sensualium.*