

# Lecture Notes on Kant by D.H.Th. Vollenhoven

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## Monism

Character: Position of psyche with regard to soma is otherwise than with dualism. It is not that of inner to outer, but of higher to lower. Meanwhile, neither one or the other says anything concerning the place of psyche and soma with respect to the origin. On this point there are a number of differences to ascertain.

Division: contradictory, priority thinking, w.w.th., parallelism.

## Priority thinking

Character: The higher busies itself with the lower. The lower has no influence on the higher. In the objectivistic outworking the higher appears as exclusively subject, the lower as subject with qualities, thus object. The pythagorean variant of the outlook has metrical limits exclusively in the lower.

The soma always falls under the lower. Moreover it possesses – otherwise that with anthropological dualism – no powers of its own. It owes its movement then exclusively to the push, impetus of the psyche. Thus priority thinking is always coupled with impetus theory.

Problematic: The question could arise whether the psyche is the higher eidos of the primary divergence.

Division: If yes, then priority thinking with primary impetus. If no, then priority thinking with secondary impetus.

## Priority thinking with primary impetus theory.

Character: The origin of all diverges into Psyche (subject) and Soma (object). . Psyche sets soma in movement.

Problem: This does not concern the level of the origin--as it does in the cases of w.w.th. and priority thinking with secondary impetus--but exclusively the question of whether there is room for further distinction in the relation of the lower to the higher.

Division: Instrumentism, which considers all the lower organic, as appears from the theory of the. “all-seed”, says “no” here. The opposition round-straight has a relation to that between M.K. and m.k. But Vitalism does distinguish in the lower between the bodily in animals and men from the bodily in plants and physical things. In the first two (animals and men) the primary impetus is internal and direct; in the last two external and indirect.

## Priority thinking without primary impetus

Character: The lower of the primary divergence possesses its own movement, but it owes this movement to a psyche. Thus the psyche also falls, at least in part, under the lower. Does the higher still possess a movement? Occasionalism says “yes”, ennoëtism “no”.

Occasionalism: This conception knows two kinds of psyche, one in the lower which sets the body in motion and one in the higher to which the movement of the lower offers opportunity to govern the lower (rider and horse). According to the leading idea of priority thinking the higher psyche possesses no qualities and limits, the lower does. Subjective and objective psychology are thus here not opposite trends of psychology of which one must discard the one, but are subdivisions of psychology, which both have a task, the subjective on behalf of the higher, the objective on behalf of the lower psyche.

### Ennoëtism

This trend distinguishes primarily between the lower and intellect (*vous*) (*denkgeist*). The first becomes ‘phenomenon’ for the mind. This lower diverges into body and soul. Both have qualities (soma: warm, cold, etc.; psyche: rates of speed) and limits (soma: spatial; psyche: arithmetic). N.B.: arithmetic is higher than spatial: It is not the substrate but the contrast. The psyche always falls under the object. Because the intellect is one (*een*) combination, with evolutionism is excluded.

Chief Question: Is the thinking spirit ethical or aesthetic.

Division: Aesthetic and Ethical types (of Ennoëtism).

### Aesthetic type

The mind here has pleasure in the beautiful which is seen as close to the good.

### Ethical type

The intellect wills the good. In ethics, only duty; inclination plays no role (*geenneiging*).

**Kant:** was always an anti-synthetical thinker in the old rationalistic spirit as well as a partial universalist. Within this framework are two main periods:

#### I. *Aufklärung* (until 1777)

A) Until 1764 he was by no means an ennoëtist but was a critical follower of Leibniz in the spirit of the enlightenment. The critique rested on an attempt to combine this conception with that of Euler who joined Cartesianism with *Aufklärung*.

At first enthusiastic about scientific questions, Kant also showed interest since 1759 in other aspects of philosophy. In 1759 he wrote concerning optimism. In 1762 against the logic of Aristotle; 1763 on aesthetics and in 1764 on ethics. All this is non-enthusiastic.

B) In 1765 the first turn toward enthusiasm is to be noticed. In *Traume eines Geistensehers* (against Swedenborg) he distinguished the intelligible and the sensible. In 1768 he posited the existence of absolute space, not only on mechanical

grounds as Euler (1748) had done, but on geometric grounds and he already conceived this space as a form of intuition.

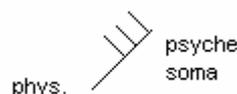
II. Idealism. three chief works: *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*  
*Kritik der raktischen Vernunft*  
*Kritik der Urteilstkraft* (1790)

followed by *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloszen Vernunft* (1793)

The idealism of Kant is early rationalism. It treats not the activity but the content of theoretical reason, practical reason and of that reason which binds the two, correlate with the three-some: the true, the good and the beautiful--while the method is neither dogmatic, nor sceptical but critical. Because of that all three main works are called Kritik.

I. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (= philosophy of science, i.e. *wetenskapsleer*). Only this work treats human knowledge and exclusively that. Therefore he does not speak of Transcendent but of Transcendental. Concerning judgements, there are two kinds: about that which is known in it' and about the inherent relation within the judgement of predicate to subject-word. With respect to the first point, there are empirical judgements about isolated facts without necessity; as opposed to *a priori* judgements which (as laws) are general and necessary. In connection with the second point, one can distinguish between analytic and synthetic judgements: with analytical judgements the predicate is hidden in the subject. Through the latter, knowledge is merely elucidated (*verduidelijkt*). With synthetic judgements, however, the predicate contains something that does not lie in the subject. Through this knowledge is extended. If one combines the two divisions, then one finds: empirical judgements are always synthetic, analytic judgements are always *a priori*. Thus an empirical judgement cannot be analytic at the same time. But is this all? Hume answered this question in the affirmative, Kant negatively. In his opinion, there are *a priori* synthetic judgements.

(All of this here is ennoetism:



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These (*a priori* synthetic) judgements are naturally very important. They hold not only generally and necessarily, but enrich knowledge as well. Where are such judgements to be found? Three sciences claim to possess them: mathematics, natural science, metaphysics. Of this trio the first two can boast of general consensus, the third cannot. Thus with respect to mathematics and natural science, we are faced with the question of "how" (are these judgements possible), with metaphysics we are faced with the question "whether" (these judgements. are possible).

A. Transcendental doctrine of elements.

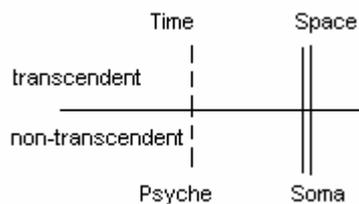
1. Mathematics and natural science. In these two sciences, knowledge is a combination of *a priori* and *a posteriori* elements which Kant calls form and matter respectively. Observation: these terms have nothing to do with those of hylemorphism, which is of course by nature ontological and furthermore sees the form as actualizing and the material as potential. The forms are partly intuitive,

partly conceptual. The difference between the two is not, as with Leibniz c.s., gradual but contrasting (ennoetism): intuitions have reference to individual representations and are immediate, concepts have reference to general representations and are mediate. (The individual concept is thus overlooked.) In mathematics as in natural science, knowledge is only possible with the combination of these two forms. “*Anschauungen ohne Begriffe sind blind, Begriffe ohne Anschauungen sind leer.*” Matter (*de stof*) is accordingly given in the intuition and is thought in the concept.

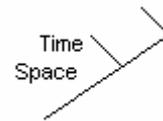
- a. Mathematics. (a) The matter is the spatial and the arithmetic --thought of as contrasting vertically--whereby the spatial is the lower and the arithmetic the higher. (b) The form of intuition is space or time.

**Observation:** Space and Time here are to be distinguished, just as with Schopenhauer c.s., from the spatial and the temporal which in them are restricted to the somatic and the psychic respectively. But here their mutual connection is otherwise than with Schopenhauer c.s.: while the latter think of inner-outer in the sense of old dualism and admit both (Space and Time) into the transcendent, Kant here employs monistically the scheme lower-higher and ennoetistically restricts both (Space and Time) to the lower species of the primary divergence. (One should think here of the difference regarding the limit (*de hora* (?) between Plato’s *Timaios* and his *Philebos*). Nevertheless Kant speaks here, obscurely (*onduidelijk*), of outward and/or inward sense. (“Old” dualism = pre-Hippocratic. Here the psyche is within the soma.).

Schopenhauer:



Ennoetism:



In mathematics the forms of judgements are those of quantity and quality. With respect to quantity, the threefold classification of judgements—individual, particular and general—are derived from the concept-forms or categories unity, plurality and totality; while in quality those judgements of affirmation, negation and infinity are derived from the categories of reality, negation and limitation.

- b. Natural science. (Here restricted to the science of the inanimate sub-organic). (a) Here matter is the dynamic. (b) The forms of intuition are here again Time and Space. The forms of judgement are the dynamic forms of relation and modality. In the case of relation the three-fold division into categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive judgements are derived from the concept forms or categories of substance-accident, cause-effect and interaction (community); in the case of modality, the problematical, assertoric and apodictic judgements are derived from the categories of possibility-impossibility, existence-nonbeing and necessity-contingency.

**Remark:** The derivation of the categories from the table of judgements is artificial (*gekunsteld*). In both sciences the understanding is the law-giver by virtue of the theme of apriority.

2. Metaphysics. With respect to its categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive conclusions concerning its three “ideas” –soul, world and God–metaphysics lacks a basis in intuition. For that reason, these ideas possess not a constitutive but only a regulative sense. Therefore the conclusions of metaphysics also lead to contradictions which Kant, in the doctrine concerning the soul, called paralogisms, and in that concerning the world called antinomies, while he, critically removed (*wegkritisceert*) the proofs for the existence of God out of hand. Therefore the reality of the ideas can not be shown (*valt niet te bewijzen*) and metaphysics is impossible.

B. Transcendental doctrine of method.

It consists of the *discipline* of pure reason which admonishes and is negative, and a *cannon* of pure reason which is positive an *Architektonik* of pure reason concerning knowledge from concepts (philosophy) and knowledge from the construction of concepts (mathematics) and a *History* of pure reason which distinguishes on the one side sensual and intellectual philosophers, on the other side empiricists and noölogists and concerning method he puts that of the dogmatists, skeptics and critical ways over against each other.

**Observation:** In the preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, 2nd edition (1787), thus after the publication of *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785) and shortly before that of the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1787/88), Kant remarked that in his first *Kritik* he had restricted knowledge in order to make room for faith. However, *The Critique of Practical Reason* teaches what remains, in terms. of content, on the basis of the term “faith” (*geloof*).

II. Practical philosophy.

A. In a 1783 book review, on ennoetistic grounds, Kant discarded a psychology and an ethics (worked out) in the spirit of Leibitz (unlimited parallelism) as deterministic and fatalistic. He demanded a freedom for man which set him “ganzlich ausserhalb der Natur”.

B. *Idee zu einer allg. Geschichte in weltbiürgerl. Absicht*, 1784, shows (?) that herewith culture is considered. The use of reason plays a role in the natural disposition of man only. In man, the lower part of his disposition ought to be developed into humanity (*mensheid*). Nature has decided that man should produce out of himself everything that transcends (*gaat boven uit*) the mechanical order: of his animal life and that no other happiness or completeness should be partaken of than that which he has acquired through his own reason, free from instinct. Nature’s means moreover is the development of disposition in men. Out of the antagonism arising through the latter, there comes to be in the course of time a lawful order with a civil life and international relations.

C. *Was ist Aufklärung* (1784). “*Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit.*” Nonage (*onmondigheid*) is the inability to make use of his own understanding without the leading of another. Man has himself to blame for it (haar: i.e., for his nonage) inasmuch as it is brought about by a lack, not in understanding, but by the lack of a decisiveness and the courage to make use of his own understanding without the leading of someone else. We live in the time of the Enlightenment but not in an enlightened age.

D. *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 1785, aims through gradual analysis of the popular, moral consciousness to arrive at principles which can make a claim for universal validity. The way leads from the common moral knowledge of reason to the philosophical; then from the popular moral philosophy to the metaphysics of morals and finally from this to the *Critique of Practical Reason*.

E. *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788) follows the critical method.

(1) The moral law. Will signifies the faculty of bringing forth objects which answer to representations or to attempt to do them. (The “will” is made very independent. This is no substance since monism does not have that). Moreover the will gives or receives practical principles. These are either *maxims*, only valid for an individual, or universally valid *imperatives*. These latter are hypothetical or categorical rules of prudence (*Klugheitsregeln*). As a synthetic *a priori* judgement, the categorical imperative is purely formal. It may not contain anything that is empirical. The concept of duty however has content. (a) Things have a price, persons have a value. Thus: never treat persons as things. (b) Further: one can only promote perfection in himself, therefore further as energetically as you can the perfection of yourself and the happiness of others.

(2) The postulates of practical reason. Practical reason is autonomous. From it follow three postulates: the existence of freedom, of God and of immortality. As far as freedom is concerned, Kant posits: *du kannst, denn du sollst*. Concerning the existence of God, the moral proof possesses exclusive force and because the human will is not capable during its earthly life of satisfying the demand of absolute moral perfection, there must be a life after death in order to reach this never fully attainable goal in infinite progression. The basis for this belief is thus not regard out of grace or wrath, but holiness. The reality of these ideas, however, can only be believed, not known. This holds also for the existence of God; also moral theology is founded exclusively on the need for practical reason.

**Observation:** Because Kant ignores the Word Revelation, the distinction between belief in God and believing Him on His Word plays no role in his thought.

(3) The ethical motive is--this also against the aesthetic type of ennoetism--not inclination (*neiging*), but duty. The question for us is not happiness, but the worthiness to be happy.

(4) The freedom of the individual is restricted through law, state and history.

### III. *Kritik der Urteilskraft*.

There exist two legislations, namely that of the mathematical, mechanical science of nature, and that of the ethics of pure inclination. These two do not contend with one another, for the one determines nothing with respect to the other. Yet there remains a difficulty, because there are not merely two points of view (*gezichtopuntch*) in question here but two worlds, namely the sensorially perceivable and the intelligible which of course do not stand detached (*los*) from one another but gear into each other in action (*handeling*). Also, the fact that the concept of freedom can realize the

goal established through its laws in the sensorially perceivable world is inconceivable (*valt niet in to zien*) because here of course everything is determined by causality. The union of the two worlds is only thinkable when the lower can be thought in such a way that the lawfulness of its (the lower's) form is in keeping at the very least with the possibility of the purposes to be realized in her according to the laws of freedom, that is when the lower can be thought teleologically. However, is this possible? Yes, because while the law put to nature by the understanding is necessary (*de noodzakelijke*), it is not sufficient (*de toereikende*). Besides the general there is of course the individual which, over and against the general law, is contingent. I.e., the specification which cannot be known by way of (*valt niet te kennen uit*) the laws of the understanding permits and requires still another manner of viewing (*beschouwingswijze*) than that treated thus far. The arrangement of the lower as well as the causally determined occurring in it can thus be thought (of) as produced through her last ground in such a way that they serve the realization of the moral law and that according to the moral law such a ground is certain, though this certainty is only moral. Consequently a teleological manner of viewing is possible and necessary. At the same time one ought to realize that it explains nothing, because explanation belongs with science and this manner of viewing bears only a reflective character. For this reason the *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, which distinguishes a determining (subsuming), and a reflective judgement, restricts itself to the latter. Under the province of this critique falls on the one hand the beautiful analogous with the psychic, and on the other hand the goal-oriented (*doelmatige*), analogous with the organic. The critique discusses the first under the head "Aesthetic" and the second under "Teleology".

**A. Aesthetik.** In the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Kant had already involved the psychic in man with the doctrine of science: one need think only of his doctrine of the forms of intuition of inner and outer sense. There the psychic, however, played only a knowing role, which is why Kant had spoken of transcendental Aesthetic. In the K.d.pr.V., next to the psychic was sensual desire without concepts, i.e. inclination correlate with sensual pleasure. The K.d.V., however, treats neither knowledge nor the will. For that reason the psychic emerges here in a third sense, namely as delight and repugnance. Thus one recognizes in Kant's psychology the three late-platonic kinds perception, desire and feeling. Just as in the two critiques, the psychic in man, in this instance repugnance, must be referred to the higher. The higher here is the beautiful. Kant then also engages the doctrine of the beautiful and of the sublime.

1. The beautiful, just as the true and the morally good, is universal and necessary, in itself, but by virtue of its tie with the lower, it is without concepts. However, it does not, like the gratifying (*het aangename*) arouse pleasure (*genoegen*): it delights (*behaagt*) pleases (*bevalt*) and that--otherwise than the useful--in a disinterested way. Further it is subjective, that is *formal*--unlike the perfect (*het volkomene*) (about which later): it brings to our intuition and thought the subjective suitability of harmonic activity purely through the form of the object. (This is the influence of Shaftesbury). Having reached this point, Kant distinguishes further between free and inherent beauty. The first concerns exclusively shape, the second the relation of shape to the purpose of the object. As examples of the first, he takes: arabesque and flowers, of the second: temple and man.

**Remark:** the distinction between nature and artistic beauty deserves attention which is here subordinated to that of free and inherent, and moreover, it deserves

attention that artistic beauty is mentioned before the natural in both cases. Correlate with beauty is taste which is founded on the indeterminate concept of the faculty of imagination. Accordingly, during the preparation of the third Critique, Kant occasionally spoke about a *Grundlage der Kritik des Geschmacks*.

2. The sublime pleases (*behaagt*) us because it subjects the imagination to the reason. The mathematically sublime (starry heaven and sea) surpasses (*gaat to boven*) our sensual intuitions by means of its unlimited extension, the dynamically sublime (earthquake and flood) surpasses our resistance by means of its power. In both cases the lower in us is humbled, but our reason exalted. The utterly infinite (ennoetism) cannot, it is true, be intuited, but can be thought. The exaltation of mood will then, through inevitable completion (!) (*suppletie*), be transferred from us to the thing which called it up. Correlate with the sublime is genius, which produces aesthetic ideas without the help of rules, i.e. which grants to the mind (*het gemoed*) escape from the representations of the faculty of imagination, and which gives occasion to think something inexpressible by way of a concept, without a concept being completely adequate to these representations.

**B. Teleology.** This part concerns the judgement of the organic. The prepositions “everything in nature must be explained according to purely mechanical laws” and “some natural phenomena, namely the organic, cannot be explained mechanically but must be approached in terms of final causes” are mutually contradictory yet both true. Naturally not as constitutive principles or dogmatic assertions, but as subjective rules of the inquiry. In order to completely grasp the structure and origin of the organic, we shall have to start from the whole and deduce from that the existence and arrangement of the parts. But we cannot otherwise make this understandable to ourselves than by substituting “the whole” with the representation of the whole by another subject, that is with the envisaged goal (*de doelgedachte*) of a non-human intelligence. But we are not capable of indicating the subject that set and realized this goal. One does commonly say “nature follows and attains fixed purposes in the structure of the organic creature”, but this is only a way of speaking which achieves nothing for knowledge. And also the concept of the transcendental Godhead may not be considered within the science of nature as a ground of explanation. Thus one comes no further than a teleological view (*beschouwing*). However, only the knowability, not the possibility, of a mechanical explanation of organisms may be denied: the teleological view even renders a helpful service to the mechanical explanation by putting the question “what is the goal of the heart.” The hypothesis that a genetic line runs between specifically distinct creatures, e.g. that land animals descend from swamp animals and the later from water animals, Kant called *ein gewagtes Abenteuer der Vernunft*. Thus Kant was not an enthusiastic advocate of transformism in the progressive sense--Buffon, an ennoetist of the Enlightenment, even tended to think in terms of degeneration--and there is absolutely no place in the course of his thought for evolutionism. Meanwhile, this does not say that he saw sharply the boundaries in the lower between the plant and animal kingdoms; he speaks of the *gemeinsamen Mutter aller die ser Organismen*; the main thing here for him is the contrast mechanical/organic. This contrast is only one in the lower and moreover is not absolute: for an intuitive (divine) understanding or an intellectual intuition for whom all that which is thought is at the same time a representable given, neither possibility and reality nor mechanism and teleology would constitute a contrast. Meanwhile one should not say that man is the final goal of nature; first, nature is not more friendly toward man than toward the other

creatures; second, according to the ethical theology man is the highest qua moral creature.

IV. Just how serious Kant was concerning this moralism appears from his *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (1793). Religion, in his opinion, contains only (*houdt slechts in*) the moral law and the moral postulates (see II above). The historical religions yet add to it (i.e. to the moral law) a series of positive propositions, which are considered (*daargaan voor*) revealed. Kant wants to put also these propositions to the test as to their positive content.

1. **Radical evil**, which remains inscrutable, but appears given in the consciousness of our existence, is the predisposition in man to place inclination above the will. In order to become moral (*voor het zedelijk-worden*), in which case it is not a matter of the ever faulty deed but of the will, a radical treatment is necessary. However, this rebirth consists only in the subordination of the inclination to the will, and concerning works of grace it cannot be shown whether they are real or impossible.

2. By the **Son of God**, Jesus is not to be understood, but rather the acceptance of the ideal of moral perfection into our will. In this sense regenerate man bears the sorrows which the old Adam incurred. This is the meaning of substitutionary suffering.

3. Also as far as the church and her fetishistic sacraments are concerned, one ought to replace historical faith (*geschiedenisgeloof*) by rational faith (*redegeloof*). Thus apriority in its ennoetistic sense is the final word in this idealism. (The first paragraphs are expressions of scientialism and Enlightenment).

**Observation:** In the preface to the second edition of the *Kr.d.r.V.*, Kant esteemed his thesis that the understanding prescribes the natural law comparable to the turn of Copernicus. However, this is hardly defensible. The mentioned turn signified, namely, the break with the then dominant Ptolemaic world picture by means of a return to Hicetas c.s. With this one finds the attempt, however, not to prescribe nature its law, but to lose the doctrine of the epicycles. Perhaps here already was the motif "to purify of a stain" (Plato) a world picture. The result was a conception which required verifying and acquired this in the course of time. It was negative with respect to the central fire and positive with respect to the double turning of the earth. However, the theme of apriority is not capable of verification, because of course it precedes all experience. (Underlying reason is always a *belief* in reason) (*Aan de rede ligt altijd het redegeloof ten grondslag*).