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KANT'S CRITIQUE OF MYSTICISM:

(1) The Critical Dreams

Human reason was not given strong enough wings to part clouds so high above us, clouds which withhold from our eyes the secrets of the other world.¹

I. The Traditional Myth

Kant's life is traditionally portrayed as falling into two rather distinct parts. The period prior to 1770 is the "pre-Critical" period, while that from 1770 onwards is the "Critical" period. The turning-point is placed in the year 1770 because it was in this year that Kant published his Inaugural Dissertation (for his newly gained post of Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of Königsberg). In this work, entitled *On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and Intelligible World*, he proposed for the first time that space and time should be regarded as "forms of intuition", which we human subjects read into experience, rather than as self-subsisting attributes of nature, which we read off from the objects we experience. The typical "textbook"

account of Kant's life usually declares that the pre-Critical Kant was a Leibnizian dogmatist, trained in the school of Wolffian rationalism, and was as much (or more) interested in natural science as in philosophy, but that sometime around 1770 Kant was suddenly "awakened" from his dogmatic slumbers by his reflection on David Hume's philosophy.² Some commentators go so far as to say not only that "Kant and Hume aim at the very same thing", but that "all the specific doctrines of Kant's critical enterprise are intimately bound up with Hume's influence on Kant."³

Although it is difficult to determine the exact nature and date of this dramatic awakening, there is no doubt that Kant was familiar with Hume's ideas by the early 1760s, because in 1766 he published a book in which, so the story goes, he adopts

Hume's standpoint almost completely.⁴ This book, entitled *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer, Illustrated by Dreams of Metaphysics*, is typically interpreted (when it is mentioned at all in accounts of Kant's writings) as a minor work of an exceedingly sceptical nature which is of relatively little importance in understanding Kant's mature thought. It is, at best, a stage which he passed out of as quickly as he passed into it, and at worst, an embarrassment for Kant and Kant-scholars alike. The embarrassment could come not only as a result of the rather unorthodox subject-matter (visions and other mystical experiences), but because of the flippant attitude which Kant adopts from time to time throughout the book [see note 12].

This tradition, in my judgment, contains at least as much myth as truth. While it is true that Kant never mentions his mature theory of the transcendental ideality of space and time before 1770, it is not true that he owes the theory to Hume (whose theory of space and time bears little resemblance to Kant's). Nor is it legitimate to equate this doctrine (expounded in its official form in the *Aesthetic of the first Critique*) with the term "Critical", as is implied by the dating of the Critical period from 1770. On the contrary, Kant associates his "new method of thought, namely, that we can know a priori of things only what we ourselves put into them", not with the Critical method, but with his new "Copernican" insight, which he believed would enable him to revolutionize philosophy [CPR xvi-xviii]. His description and use of criticism as a philosophical method is quite distinct from its application to problems in metaphysics by means of the "Copernican hypothesis". Thus, when Kant gave instructions to the editor of his minor writings to ignore all those written before 1770,⁵ he was not defining the starting point of his Critical method, but rather that of his use of the Copernican hypothesis. If labels must be given to the periods before and after 1770, they should therefore be referred to as Kant's "pre-Copernican" and "post-Copernican" periods.

Before we proceed it is crucial to have a thorough understanding of Kant's mature

conception of "criticism" or "critique" (i.e. Kritik), as it is elaborated in CPR. In the first edition Preface, Kant describes his "age" (i.e. the Enlightenment) as "the age of criticism", during which reason accords "sincere respect...only to that which has been able to sustain the test of free and open examination" [CPR Axin]. This "habit of thought" can be trusted, however, only if it also submits to its own "tribunal" of criticism [Axi-xii]. Thus "the subject-matter of our critical enquiry" (i.e. of the entire Critical System) is reason itself [Axiv], and its "first task" is "to discover the sources and conditions of the possibility of such criticism" [Axxi]. This means that the questions addressed to reason cannot be answered by means of

a dogmatic and visionary insistence upon knowledge...that can be catered for only through magical devices, in which I am no adept. Such ways of answering them are, indeed, not within the intention of the natural constitution of our reason; and...it is the duty of philosophy to counteract their deceptive influence, no matter what prized and cherished dreams may have to be disowned.⁶

Instead, only by first examining "the very nature of knowledge itself" can we answer reason's questions in such a way that will provide solutions to the problems of metaphysics [Axiii-xiv].

In the second edition Preface Kant not only describes more fully the subject-matter of the particular type of critique he plans to engage in, but also explains more clearly the nature of the Critical method. Metaphysics will be "purified by criticism and established once for all": the purification is "merely negative, warning us that we must never venture with speculative reason beyond the limits of experience"; but the establishment is positive inasmuch as it "removes an obstacle which stands in the way of the employment of practical reason" [CPR xxiv-xxv]. In other words, the scope of reason's speculative (i.e. theoretical) employment is narrowed by tying it to sensibility, but this frees metaphysics to be established on the firmer foundation of reason's practical

employment--i.e. on morality [xxv]. The Critical method, therefore, is intended to establish limits, but to do so for both negative and positive purposes. The former can be seen when Kant refers to "our critical distinction between two modes of representation, the sensible and the intellectual" and immediately adds "and of the resulting limitation...";⁷ likewise, he argues that non-contradictory doctrines of freedom and morality are "possible only in so far as criticism...has limited all that we can theoretically know to mere appearances" [xxix]. The positive benefit of such limitations is that they enable us to avoid "dogmatism" (defined here as "the preconception that it is possible to make headway in metaphysics without a previous criticism of pure reason"), which "is the source of all that [sceptical] unbelief...which wars against morality" [xxx]. Indeed, Kant goes so far as to say that "all objections to morality and religion will be for ever silenced" [xxxii], because his critique will "sever the root of materialism, fatalism, atheism, free-thinking, fanaticism, and superstition...as well as of idealism and scepticism" [xxxiv].

Throughout the rest of CPR Kant repeats many of these same claims about the nature of criticism in its special, philosophical form. In most of their occurrences the words "critical", "criticism" and "critique" are used in close connection with some mention of the limitations of knowledge.⁸ The only interesting exception is that on several occasions he adds that criticism serves as a middle way between the opposite extremes of dogmatism and scepticism [CPR 22-23, A388-389, 784-785, 789, 797]. Indeed, this epitomizes Kant's association of the Critical method with synthesis, which he claims always takes the trichotomous form of "(1) a condition, (2) a conditioned, (3) the concept arising from the union of the conditioned with its condition".⁹ And of course, the most basic example of his use of this type of distinction is his division of the Critical System into three Critiques.

This brief analysis of Kant's understanding of his Critical method reveals that he

never associates it directly with the Copernican hypothesis, but instead, with several key distinctions. The Critical method is, for Kant, the method of striking a middle way between two extremes ("a third step", as he calls it in CPR 789 [see also 177,194,196,264, 315,760-61,794]). It operates by trying to locate limits between what can be known (and proved) and what can never be known (yet remains possible)--the boundary line being defined in terms of "the limits of all possible experience" [e.g. 121]. Thus it is closely associated with "the distinction between the transcendental and the empirical" [81], as well as with that between speculative (theoretical) and practical (moral) employments of reason, or perspectives.¹⁰ Although certain apparently sceptical claims have to be made on the way, the ultimate purpose of criticism for Kant is positive: to lead to the foundation of metaphysics upon solid (non-speculative, moral) grounds.

A careful reading of Kant's works reveals that traces of this Critical way of doing philosophy are evident throughout most of his works, from the earliest essays on metaphysics and natural philosophy to the latest essays on history, religion, and other subjects.¹¹ Indeed, it is the fact that he used this method to develop and expound the implications of his Copernican hypothesis that gives lasting value to the theories which arise out of it, and not vice versa. In this paper, however, I will not attempt to provide a thoroughgoing proof of the ubiquity of the Critical method in Kant's writings. Instead I will concentrate on what I believe is the most neglected (and/or misunderstood) book in the corpus of Kant's writings, namely the above-mentioned *Dreams*. In the next section I will sketch the contents of this book, after which (in section III) I will draw attention to its Critical character and discuss its role in Kant's discovery of the Copernican hypothesis. Finally, I will make some brief suggestions in section IV as to the relation between *Dreams* and the Critical System itself. This will lead directly to the sequel to this paper [see note 6], in which I will consider in more detail the nature of Kant's "Critical mysticism", which was envisaged first in *Dreams* and was to be brought to full

fruition in Kant's last work (known as *Opus Postumum*).

II. Kant's Criticism of Mystical Dreams

In *Dreams* Kant examines the mystical visions of a Swedish writer and scientist (sometimes regarded as the founder of crystallography) named Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) and compares the dangers of fanatical mysticism to those of speculative metaphysics. This work, as we have seen, is traditionally interpreted as evidence of a radically "empiricist" stage in Kant's development, where he is supposedly adopting a kind of Humean position. But his actual intention, as we shall see, is to encourage a Critical attitude: while he comes down hard on the misuse of reason by spirit-seers and metaphysicians when they regard their respective dreams "as a source of knowledge" [see "PIA" 146], he expresses quite clearly his own dream that a properly balanced approach to both mysticism and metaphysics would someday emerge. A detailed examination of *Dreams* can therefore provide some helpful clues as to Kant's motivations for constructing the Critical philosophy itself.

The mystical experiences considered in *Dreams* are not experiences of the presence of God (i.e. "of infinite spirit which is originator and preserver of the universe" [Dreams 321n(44n)]), but experiences of lower spiritual beings, who are supposed to be able to communicate with earthly beings in visions and apparitions. Although Kant ridicules those who have such experiences at several points in *Dreams*, he reveals his true attitude towards such experiences in two important letters. In a letter to Charlotte von Knoblock (dated 10 August, probably 1763) he admits he "always considered it to be most in agreement with sound reason to incline to the negative side..., until the report concerning Swedenborg came to my notice."¹² After recounting several impressive stories, Kant tells how Swedenborg was once able to describe in precise detail a fire which "had just broken out in Stockholm", even though he was fifty miles away in

Gottenburg ["PIA" 158]. He says this "occurrence appears to me to have the greatest weight of proof, and to place the assertion respecting Swedenborg's extraordinary gift beyond all possibility of doubt." In a subsequent letter (8 April 1766) to Mendelssohn [quoted in "PIA" 162] Kant explains that he clothed his thoughts in ridicule in *Dreams* in order to avoid being ridiculed by other philosophers for paying attention to mystical visions (hardly taken seriously by most philosophers in the Enlightenment [see *Dreams* 353-4(91-2)]). He admits that

the attitude of my own mind is inconsistent and, so far as these stories are concerned, I cannot help having a slight inclination for things of this kind, and indeed, as regards their reasonableness, I cannot help cherishing an opinion that there is some validity in these experiences in spite of all the absurdities involved in the stories about them...

Elsewhere in the same letter he draws a Critical conclusion: "Neither the possibility nor the impossibility of this kind of thing can be proved, and if someone attacked Swedenborg's dreams as impossible, I should undertake to defend them."¹³ Clearly, Kant believed something significant is happening in such experiences--significant enough to merit a comparison with the tasks of metaphysics, to which he admits to being hopelessly "in love" [*Dreams* 367(112); cf. CPR 878]. The problem this set for him was to describe "just what kind of a thing that is about which these people think they understand so much" [*Dreams* 319(41)].

In the Preface to *Dreams* Kant hints at the Critical nature of his inquiry by asking two opposing questions, but offering a "third way out": he asks (1) "Shall [the philosopher] wholly deny the truth of all the apparitions [eye-witnesses] tell about?"; or (2) "Shall he, on the other hand, admit even one of these stories?"; and he answers that (3) the philosopher should "hold on to the useful" [*Dreams* 317-8(38)]. The treatise itself consists of seven chapters, grouped in two parts: Part One contains four "dogmatic" chapters and Part Two contains three "historical" chapters. The correspondence between

these two parts and the Critical System he was soon to begin elaborating is evident by the fact that Part One ends with a chapter on "Theoretical Conclusions" and Part Two ends with a chapter on "Practical Conclusions" [348(85),368 (115)], thus foreshadowing the division between the first and second Critiques.

The theoretical part begins in Chapter One, under the heading "A complicated metaphysical knot which can be untied or cut according to choice" [Dreams 319(41)], with a discussion of what a spirit is or might be. Kant confesses in Dreams 320(42):

I do not know if there are spirits, yea, what is more, I do not even know what the word "spirit" signifies. But, as I have often used it myself, and have heard others using it, something must be understood by it, be this something mere fancy or reality.

To this rather Wittgensteinian remark he adds that "the conception of spiritual nature cannot be drawn from experience", though its "hidden sense" can be drawn "out of its obscurity through a comparison of sundry cases of application" [320n(42-3n)]. He then argues that a spirit must be conceived as a simple, immaterial being, possessing reason as an internal quality [320-1(43-5)]. After considering some of the difficulties associated with this concept, he adopts an entirely Critical position: "The possibility of the existence of immaterial beings can...be supposed without fear of its being disproved, but also without hope of proving it by reason" [323(46-7), emphasis added]. If it is assumed "that the soul of man is a spirit", even though this cannot be proved, then the problem arises as to how it is connected with the body [324-5(48-9)]. Kant rejects the Cartesian focus on a mechanism in the brain in favor of "common experience":¹⁴

Nobody...is conscious of occupying a separate place in his body, but only of that place which he occupies as a man in regard to the world around him. I would, therefore, keep to common experience, and would say, provisionally, where I sense, there I am. I am just as immediately in the tips of my fingers, as in my head. It is myself who suffers in the heel and whose heart beats in affection.

The chapter concludes with the confession "that I am very much inclined to assert the existence of immaterial natures in the world, and to put my soul into that class of beings" [327(52)]. Although he concedes that the various questions concerned with such a belief are "above my intelligence" [328(54)], he does suggest in *Dreams* 327n(52-3n) that "Whatever in the world contains a principle of life, seems to be of immaterial nature. For all life rests on the inner capacity [cf. freedom in the second Critique] to determine one's self by one's own will power."

After confirming the metaphysical possibility of (and his personal belief in) spirits, Kant presents in Chapter Two "a fragment of secret philosophy aiming to establish communion with the spirit-world" [*Dreams* 329(55)]. He begins by positing an "immaterial world" which is conceived "as a great whole, an immeasurable but unknown gradation of beings and active natures by which alone the dead matter of the corporeal world is endued with life."¹⁵ As a member of both the material and the immaterial world, a human being "forms a personal unit" [332(60)]. Kant conjectures that purely immaterial beings may "flow into the souls of men as into beings of their own nature, and...are actually at all times in mutual intercourse with them", though the results of such intercourse cannot ordinarily "be communicated to the other purely spiritual beings", nor "be transferred into the consciousness of men" [333(61)]. As evidence for such a communion of spirits, Kant examines the nature of morality. Using one of his favorite geometrical metaphors (that of intersecting lines), he says in *Dreams* 334-5(63): "The point to which the lines of direction of our impulses converge is...not only in ourselves, but...in the will of others outside of ourselves." The fact that our actions are motivated not only by selfishness, but also by duty and benevolence, reveals that "we are dependent upon the rule of the will of all" [335(64)]; and "the sensation of this dependence"--i.e. our "sense of morality"--suggests that "the community of all thinking beings" is governed by "a moral unity, and a systematic constitution according to purely spiritual laws." Thus,

"because the morality of an action concerns the inner state of the spirit", its effect can be fully realized not in the empirical world, but "only in the immediate communion of spirits" [336(65)].

In reply to the possible objection that, given this view of the spirit-world, "the scarcity of apparitions" seems "extraordinary", Kant stresses that "the conceptions of the one world are not ideas associated with those of the other world"; so even if we have a "clear and perspicuous" spiritual conception, this cannot be regarded as "an object of actual [i.e. material] sight and experience."¹⁶ However, he freely admits that a person, being both material and immaterial, can become conscious of the influences of the spirit-world even in this life. For spiritual ideas...stir up those pictures which are related to them and awake analogous ideas of our senses. These, it is true, would not be spiritual conceptions themselves, but yet their symbols.... Thus it is not improbable that spiritual sensations can pass over into consciousness if they act upon correlated ideas of the senses. [338-9(69-70)]

Even "our higher concepts of reason" need to "clothe themselves" in, "as it were, a bodily garment to make themselves clear", as when "the geometrician represents time by a line" [339(69-70)]. An actual apparition, which might "indicate a disease, because it presupposes an altered balance of the nerves", is unusual because it is based not on a simple analogy, but on "a delusion of the imagination", in which "a true spiritual influence" is perceived in imagined "pictures...which assume the appearance of sensations" [340(71)]. Kant warns that in an apparition "delusion is mingled with truth", so it tends to deceive "in spite of the fact that such chimeras may be based upon a true spiritual influence" [340(71-2), emphasis added].

In truly Critical fashion Kant now adopts the opposite perspective in Chapter Three, in which he presents an "Antikabala"--that is, "a fragment of common philosophy aiming to abolish communion with the spirit-world" [Dreams 342(74)]. Here Kant first

states the analogy between metaphysicians ("reason-dreamers") and visionaries ("sensation-dreamers"): in both cases the dreamer imagines a private world "which no other healthy man sees", yet "both are self-created pictures which nevertheless deceive the senses as if they were true objects" [342-3(75)]. In order to help such dreamers "wake up, i.e., open their eyes to such a view as does not exclude conformity with other people's common sense" [342(74)], he proposes an alternative description of what is happening in an apparition. The problem is to explain how visionaries "place the phantoms of their imagination outside of themselves, and even put them in relation to their body, which they sense through their external senses" [343-4(77)]. He suggests that in external sensation "our soul locates the perceived object at the point where the different lines, indicating the direction of the impression, meet", whereas in a vision this "focus imaginarius" is located not outside of the body but "inside of the brain" [344-5(77-9)]. The difference between the fantasy of a sane person [see 346n(81n)] and the delusions of an insane person is that only the latter "places mere objects of his imagination outside of himself, and considers them to be real and present objects" [346(80)]. So "the disease of the visionary concerns not so much the reason, as a deception of the senses" [347(82)]. Kant concludes that this simpler interpretation "renders entirely superfluous the deep conjectures of the preceding chapter... Indeed, from this perspective, there was no need of going back as far as to metaphysics".¹⁷

The fourth and final chapter of Part One presents the "theoretical conclusion from the whole of the consideration of the first part" [Dreams 348(85)]. Kant begins with a penetrating description of his own method of philosophizing (i.e. the Critical method), according to which "the partiality of the scales of reason" is always checked by letting "the merchandise and the weights exchange pans" [348-9(85)]. He uses this analogy between reason and commercial scales to make two points. First, it suggests the importance of being willing to give up all prejudices:

I now have nothing at heart; nothing is venerable to me but what enters by the path of sincerity into a quiet mind open to all reasons... Whenever I meet with something instructive, I appropriate it.... Formerly, I viewed common sense only from the standpoint of my own; now I put myself into the position of a foreign reason outside myself, and observe my judgments, together with their most secret causes, from the standpoint of others. [349(85-6)]

Kant's exposition in *Dreams* exemplifies this Critical (perspectival) shift by opposing the merchandise of his own prejudices concerning the spirit-world (Chapter Two) with the dead weight of a reductionist explanation (Chapter Three). The second point of the analogy is, however, the crucial one: we must recognize that "The scale of reason is not quite impartial" and so move the merchandise from the speculative pan to the pan "bearing the inscription 'Hope of the Future'" (i.e. from the standpoint of the first Critique to that of the third), where "even those light reasons... outweigh the speculations of greater weight on the other side" [*Dreams* 349(86)]. Here at the threshold of the Critical System, then, Kant stresses the overriding importance of what I shall call the "judicial" standpoint:¹⁸ "This is the only inaccuracy [of the scales of reason] which I cannot easily remove, and which, in fact, I never want to remove" [349-50(86)].

On this basis Kant concludes that, even though "in the scale of speculation they seem to consist of nothing but air", the dreams of spirit-seers (and metaphysicians!) "have appreciable weight only in the scale of hope" [*Dreams* 350(86-7)]. Even though he admits "that I do not understand a single thing about the whole matter" of how the immaterial can interact with the material, he claims "that this study...exhausts all philosophical knowledge about [spiritual] beings...in the negative sense, by fixing with assurance the limits of our knowledge" [349-50(88-9)]. The assumed spiritual principle of life "can never be thought of in a positive way, because for this purpose no data can be found in the whole of our sensations".¹⁹ He is therefore constrained by ignorance to

"deny the truth of the various ghost stories", yet he maintains "a certain faith in the whole of them taken together."²⁰ As I have argued elsewhere [see note 20], this subordination of speculative knowledge to practical faith is the key to the justification of Critical philosophy itself. Thus, when Kant concludes Part One by saying that "this whole matter of spirits" will "not concern me any more", because "I hope to be able to apply to better advantage my small reasoning powers upon other subjects" [352(90)], he may have been hinting that he was already beginning to formulate his plan for a Critical System.

Having promised not to philosophize on spirits any longer, Kant recounts in the first chapter of the second ("historical") part three stories concerning the spiritual powers of Swedenborg, "the truth of which the reader is recommended to investigate as he likes" [Dreams 353(91)]. He claims "absolute indifference to the kind or unkind judgment of the reader", admitting that in any case "stories of this kind will have...only secret believers, while publicly they are rejected by the prevalent fashion of disbelief" [353-4(92)].

In the second chapter of Part Two Kant provides a summary of Swedenborg's own explanation of his "ecstatic journey through the world of spirits" [Dreams 357(98)], and notes its similarity to "the adventure which, in the foregoing [i.e. in Part One], we have undertaken in the balloon of metaphysics" [360(102)]. The position Swedenborg develops "resembles so uncommonly the philosophical creation of my own brain", Kant explains, that he feels the need to "declare...that in regard to the alleged examples I mean no joke" [359(100)]. To cover up his own interest in Swedenborg's work, Kant ridicules his "hero" for writing an eight-volume work "utterly empty of the last drop of reason" [359-60(101)]--a good example of one of the occasional harsh or frivolous statements which later embarrassed him [see note 13]. The extract turns out to be so close to the views Kant had expounded in Chapter Two of Part One that he concludes his summary by reassuring the reader that "I have not substituted my own fancies for those of our

author, but have offered his views in a faithful extract to the comfortable and economic reader who does not care to sacrifice seven pounds [more like seventy these days!] for a little curiosity" [366(111)]. The chapter ends with an apology for leading the reader "by a tiresome roundabout way to the same point of ignorance from which he started", but adds that "I have wasted my time that I might gain it. I have deceived the reader so that I might be of use to him" [367-8(112-3)]. He confesses that "it is my fate to be in love" with metaphysics, but insists that metaphysics as a rational inquiry "into the hidden qualities of things" (i.e. speculative metaphysics) must be clearly distinguished from "metaphysics [as] the science of the boundaries of human reason" (i.e. Critical metaphysics):

Before...we had flown on the butterfly-wings of metaphysics, and there conversed with spiritual beings. Now...we find ourselves again on the ground of experience and common sense. Happy, if we look at it as the place allotted to us, which we can leave with impunity, and which contains everything to satisfy us as long as we hold fast to the useful. [368(114)]

Far from indicating a temporary conversion from dogmatic rationalism to sceptical empiricism, as is usually assumed about *Dreams*, this passage, interpreted in its proper context, clearly indicates that Kant already had a clear conception of the Critical method, and was nurturing the seed which was to grow into his complete philosophical System.

Any doubt about the Critical character of *Dreams* is dispelled by the "practical conclusion from the whole treatise" given in the final chapter of Part Two [368(115)]. Kant begins by distinguishing between what science can understand to achieve knowledge and what reason needs to understand to achieve wisdom--a distinction which pervades the entirety of his mature System. By determining what is impossible to know, science can establish "the limits set to human reason by nature", so that "even metaphysics will become...the companion of wisdom" [368(115-6)]. He then introduces

(what I have described as) the Principle of Perspective as the guiding principle of this new way of philosophizing: once philosophy "judges its own proceedings, and...knows not only objects, but their relation to man's reason", thus establishing the perspective from which the object is viewed, "then...the boundary stones are laid which in future never allow investigation to wander beyond its proper district" [368-9(116), emphasis added]. This is followed by a warning against the failure to distinguish between philosophical relations (i.e. those known by reflection) and "fundamental relations" (i.e. those which "must be taken from experience alone")--the distinction upon which all other Critical distinctions are based [see "KE" 170-173]. That he is here referring to immediate experience, and not to empirical knowledge, is evident when he says "I know that will and understanding move my body, but I can never reduce by analysis this phenomenon, as a simple [immediate] experience, to another experience, and can, therefore, indeed recognize it, but not understand it" [369(117)]. He reaffirms that our powers of reflection provide "good reason to conceive of an incorporeal and constant being"; but because our immediate experience as earthly beings relating to other earthly beings depends on "corporeal laws", we can never know for certain what "spiritual" laws would hold if we were "to think...without connection with a body" [370-1(117-8)]. The possibility of establishing "new fundamental relations of cause and effect"--i.e. of having an immediate experience not of corporeal nature but of spiritual nature--"can never...be ascertained"; the "creative genius or...chimera, whichever you like to call it", which invents such spiritual (later called noumenal) causality cannot establish knowledge (i.e. scientific "proof") precisely because the "pretended experiences" are not governed by corporeal (later called a priori) laws, which alone are required to be "unanimously accepted by men" [371-2(118-9)].

This final chapter of *Dreams* ends with a concise (and entirely Critical) explanation of the positive aspect of this otherwise negative conclusion. The fact that

"philosophic knowledge is impossible in the case under consideration" need cause no concern (neither for the metaphysician nor for the mystic) as long as we recognize that "such knowledge is dispensable and unnecessary", because reason does not need to know such things [372(120)]. "The vanity of science" fools us into believing that "a proof from experience of the existence of such things" is required. "But true wisdom is the companion of simplicity, and as, with the latter, the heart rules the understanding, it generally renders unnecessary the great preparations of scholars, and its aims do not need such means as can never be at the command of all men." The true philosophy, which Kant always believed would confirm common sense, and therefore would be attainable for everyone (unlike a speculative dependence on theoretical proofs or mystical apparitions, each available to only a few individuals), should be based on "immediate moral precepts"--that is, on a "moral faith" which "guides [the "righteous soul"] to his true aims" [372-3(120-1)]. Thus he concludes [373(121)] by defending the position later elaborated in his practical and religious systems, that it is more appropriate "to base the expectation of a future world upon the sentiment of a good soul, than, conversely, to base the soul's good conduct upon the hope of another world."

III. Kant's Critical Dreams and Swedenborg's Copernican Hypothesis

In the preceding section we have seen that all the main characteristics of Kant's Critical method, together with anticipations of several of his mature doctrines and distinctions, are present in Dreams. The method of choosing the middle path between two extremes is exemplified by Kant's choice in the Preface to "hold on to the useful", even though this is not exactly how Kant later described his choice to steer critically between the extremes of dogmatism and scepticism. The Critical distinction between the theoretical and the practical, whose most obvious application is to the distinction between the first two Critiques, is foreshadowed by the conclusions to the two parts of Dreams,

the first of which is theoretical and the second, practical. The attitude expressed in the first Chapter, that "spirits" are theoretically possible, but can never be proved to exist, is reminiscent of the standpoint adopted in the *Dialectic of CPR*, where all "ideas of reason" are treated similarly.²¹ Even the second Chapter, where Kant is letting his metaphysical imagination run wild, contains an interesting parallel: Kant's suggestion that the inner state of spirits is primarily important in its connection with morality is completely consistent with his later decision to regard morality as the proper foundation for metaphysics. (The same point is emphasized in the last chapter, where the true basis for belief in spirits is said to rest on morality rather than speculation.) And the scepticism Kant adopts in Chapter Three is not unlike that which he sometimes adopts in the *Dialectic of CPR* (in both cases as a temporary measure to guard against unwarranted speculation).²² The subordination of the theoretical (i.e. speculative) to the practical and the judicial, which is hinted at by Kant's expressed preference for the "useful", is forcefully emphasized by his reference to the "scales of reason" in the fourth chapter. His use of this analogy to emphasize the philosophical legitimacy of hope for the future in spite of our theoretical ignorance clearly foreshadows both the third Critique and Kant's theory of religion.²³ Throughout Part One, and again in the second chapter of Part Two, Kant describes his new view of the sole theoretical task of metaphysics in exactly the same terms as he would use some fifteen years later in *CPR*: metaphysics is to be first a negative science concerned with establishing the limits of knowledge. And in the book's final chapter we meet not only the distinction between immediate experience and reflective knowledge, which is so crucial in Kant's Critical System [see "KE" 170-173], but also the equally important notion that reason does not need to have a theoretical understanding of mystical experiences (or metaphysical propositions), as long as the common moral awareness of all human beings is taken into consideration.

If Kant was in full possession of the Critical method by 1766, why, it might be

asked, did he take fifteen more years to write CPR? This is particularly perplexing in light of the fact that after 1781 Kant published almost one major work per year until 1798. On the traditional explanation of Kant's development this problem is slightly less difficult, because the "Critical awakening" is regarded as not happening until the late 1760s or early 1770s [e.g. see note 4]. On this view Kant had a great deal of trouble formulating his ideas for CPR, yet after it was completed he suddenly realized the need for a second Critique, and after that, the need for a third. However, the fact that Kant could apply all the Critical tools in 1766 to write *Dreams* makes it very difficult to believe that he would fumble around for fifteen more years, and then suddenly turn into a prolific genius. Rather, it suggests that Kant may well have wanted to have the plan for his entire philosophical System more or less complete in his mind before even starting the long task of committing it to paper. The need for a fifteen year gap between *Dreams* and CPR, which included his long "decade of silence", becomes more understandable if we regard Kant as formulating in his mind during this time not just the first Critique, but his entire System--though obviously, all the details concerning the precise form it would take had not entirely crystallized by 1781.²⁴ The traditional view fails to take account of the fact that writers do not always say everything they know about their plans for future undertakings, and also ignores the importance of Kant's emphasis on keeping to specific architectonic patterns.²⁵

The one aspect of Kant's transcendental philosophy which is conspicuously absent in *Dreams* is the cornerstone of the whole System, the Copernican hypothesis (i.e. the assumption that objectivity is based on a priori subjectivity, rather than vice versa). And this had begun to dawn on him by the time he wrote his Inaugural Dissertation in 1770, in which time and space are regarded as "forms of intuition" not inherent in the object itself. Thus the crucial question is: if "criticism" was the original distinguishing character of Kant's life-long philosophical method, what was the source of the sudden insight which

he later called his "Copernican" hypothesis? Copleston conjectures that the new insight may have come as a result of his reading of the Clarke-Leibniz Correspondence, newly published in 1768.²⁶ Others would cite Hume as responsible for all such major changes in Kant's position [see e.g. note 3]. What has long been ignored in English Kant-scholarship is the significant extent to which some of the details of the Critical System, not the least of which is the Copernican hypothesis itself, actually correspond to the ideas developed by Swedenborg. Kant himself acknowledges this correspondence to some extent in *Dreams*, but claims that the ideas he presents as his own were developed independently of his acquaintance with Swedenborg's writings [*Dreams* 359(100), 360(102), 366(111)]. However, the extent of the parallels between his subsequent theories (especially those in his 1770 Inaugural Dissertation) and Swedenborg's is sufficient to merit the assumption that, in spite of his ridicule in *Dreams*, Kant actually adopted much of Swedenborg's "non-sense" into his own thinking [see "PIA" ix,33]!

A good example of the similarity between Kant's mature views and Swedenborg's ideas is brought out in Kant's summary of Swedenborg's position, which highlights the distinction between a thing's true or "inner" meaning and its outer manifestation. The extent to which this coincides with the position he eventually defended in his writings on religion is quite clear in *Dreams* 364(108) when he says: "This inner meaning...is the origin of all the new interpretations which [Swedenborg] would make of the Scripture. For this inner meaning, the internal sense, i.e., the symbolic relation of all things told there to the spirit-world, is, as he fancies, the kernel of its value, the rest only the shell." Kant uses precisely the same analogy in his own investigation of "pure religion" in *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, except that the "inner meaning" is derived from practical reflection (the Critical mode of dreaming?) rather than from dreams about the spirit-world.

A more detailed examination of Swedenborg's epistemological system would reveal numerous other corresponding theories. It is likely, in fact, that the Copernican assumption, which marks the main difference between Dreams and Kant's Inaugural Dissertation, has its roots, in part at least, in Swedenborg. For, as Vaihinger puts it, the relationship of Kant's "transcendental subject...to the Spiritual Ego of Swedenborg is unmistakable" [quoted in "PIA" 25]; indeed Kant may well have taken his "doctrine of two worlds from Swedenborg direct" [24; see also "PIA" 12-14]. Thus there are good grounds for regarding Swedenborg's "spiritual" perspective as the mystical equivalent of Kant's transcendental perspective in metaphysics. Such a perspectival relationship is hinted at by Sewall in "PIA" 22-23: "Neither of the two great system builders asks the support of the other.... As Kant was necessarily critical, this being the office [i.e. Perspective] of the pure reason itself, so was Swedenborg dogmatical, this being the office [i.e. Perspective] of experience."

Sewall appends to the translation of Dreams various extracts from Swedenborg's writings,²⁷ which reveal that Swedenborg's ideas often anticipate (from his own mystical perspective), and therefore may have influenced, many of the key ideas Kant develops in his transcendental philosophy. The roots of Kant's transcendental idealism can be seen in Swedenborg's spiritual idealism: "spaces and times...are in the spiritual world appearances" ["PIA" 124]; "in heaven objects similar to those which exist in our [empirical] world...are appearances" [125]; "appearances are the first things out of which the human mind forms its understanding" [126]. The roots of Kant's view of the intelligible substratum of nature are also evident: "nothing in nature exists or subsists, but from a spiritual origin, or by means of it" [131]; "nature serves as a covering for that which is spiritual" [132]; "there exists a spiritual world, which is...interior...to the natural world, therefore all that belongs to the spiritual world is cause, and all that belongs to the natural world is effect" [132]; "causes are things prior, and effects are things posterior;

and things prior cannot be seen from things posterior, but things posterior can be seen from things prior. This is order" [133]. Even views similar to Kant's "analogies of experience" in CPR are developed by Swedenborg: "Material things...are fixed, because, however the states of men change, they continue permanent" ["PIA" 125]; "The reason that nothing in nature exists but from a spiritual origin or principle is, that no effect is produced without a cause" [132]. The parallels extend beyond the theoretical to the practical and judicial standpoints as well: "the will is the very nature itself or disposition of the man" [138]; "heaven is...within man" [135]. Moreover, Kant's criticism of mystical visions as wrongly taking imagined symbols to be real sensations cannot be charged against Swedenborg, who warns: "So long as man lives in the world he knows nothing of the opening of these degrees within him, because he is then in the natural degree...; and the spiritual degree...communicates with the natural degree, not by continuity but by correspondences and communication by correspondences is not sensibly felt" [135; see also 141].

Of course, Kant's use of such ideas often differs in important respects from Swedenborg's, as when Kant argues for the importance of phenomenal causality as being the only significant causality from the standpoint of knowledge. Nevertheless, given the fact that before reading Swedenborg he did not write about such matters, whereas afterwards such "Copernican" ideas occupied a central place in his writings, it is hardly possible to doubt that Swedenborg had a significant influence on Kant's mature thinking. I am not claiming that Kant owes his recognition of the importance of the Copernican hypothesis to Swedenborg alone, but only that his influence has been much neglected, and deserves further exploration.

If Swedenborg did exercise an important influence on Kant, then why does Kant seem to give Hume all the credit, for instance, in the oft-quoted passage from the Introduction to Prolegomena [see note 2]? Swedenborg was far from being a

philosopher, so perhaps Kant did not feel constrained to acknowledge his influence (embarrassed might be a more appropriate word, since Swedenborg's reputation was hardly respectable among Enlightenment philosophers). In this case, Kant's request that his writings prior to 1770 not be included in his collected minor writings [see note 13] may reflect his desire to protect his reputation from too close an association with the likes of Swedenborg. In any case, as I have said, Kant's claim that the ideas he expresses in *Dreams* predate his reading of Swedenborg leaves open the possibility that Swedenborg stimulated him to think through his own ideas more clearly, and in the process to adopt some of Swedenborg's ideas, or at least to use them as a stimulus to focus and clarify his own.

Does the *Prolegomena* passage therefore represent a false "confession"? By no means. But in order to understand that passage properly, and so to give an accurate answer to the question of the relative influence of Hume and Swedenborg on Kant, it will be necessary to distinguish between four aspects of Kant's development which are often conflated:

- (1) The general Critical method of finding the limits which define the "middle way" between unthinking acceptance of the status quo (dogmatism) and unbelieving doubt as to the validity of the entire tradition (scepticism).
- (2) The general Copernican insight that the most fundamental aspects of human knowledge (that which makes it objective) have their source in the human subject as a priori forms, not vice versa (i.e. time, space, etc., are not absolute realities which have their roots entirely in the object, as had previously been assumed). This, of course, was the seed which (when fertilized by the Critical method) gave rise to the entire System of "transcendental philosophy".²⁸
- (3) The particular application of (1) to itself (i.e. reason's criticism of reason itself).
- (4) The particular application of (2) to the problem of the necessary connection between

a cause and its effect.

As stated in section I, we can see (1) operating in varying degrees in almost all of Kant's writings [see note 11]. Indeed, his lifelong acceptance of (1) is clearly the intellectual background against which alone his great philosophical achievements could be made (and as such, is the source of his genius). Although his ability to make conscious use of this method certainly developed gradually during his career, receiving its first full-fledged application in *Dreams*, neither Swedenborg (the dogmatist) nor Hume (the sceptic) can be given the credit for this. The Critical method is not something Kant learned from these (or any other) philosophers, but rather, is the natural Tao through which Kant read, and in reading, transformed, their ideas.²⁹ If anyone is to be thanked, it should be his parents, and in particular, his mother.³⁰

Kant's recognition of (4) as one of the crucial questions to be answered by his new philosophical System, is, by contrast, clearly traceable to Hume's influence. In fact, his discussion of Hume's impact on his development in *Prolegomena* 260(8) undoubtedly refers only to this narrow sense of "awakening": Kant is telling us nothing more than that his "recollection" of Hume helped him to recognize that causality cannot be treated as an intellectual principle, so that it must be justified (if at all) in some other way. The fact that Kant uses the term "recollection" indicates a fairly late date (probably 1772 [see note 4]) for this dramatic event. For Kant is suggesting that (4) came to him as a result of remembering the scepticism of Hume ("the first spark of light") which had begun influencing his thinking about ten years before. However, if Kant's famous "awakening" is only a dramatized account of his discovery of (4), then such references to Hume do not answer the more fundamental question, the answer to which we have been seeking here: Where did Kant get the idea of using (2) as the insight with which to solve all such philosophical problems?

Kant's discovery of (2) came in several fairly well-defined steps, mostly from

1768 to 1772. Prior to 1768 there is little (if any) trace of such an idea. Between 1768 and 1772 he applies the insight to intuitions but not to concepts. In 1772 he realizes that concepts too must be regarded from this Copernican (transcendental) perspective. As a result of this somewhat unsettling discovery (unsettling because in early 1772 he believed he was within a few months of completing the first Critique), he spent nine more years, from 1772 to 1781 working out in his mind the thoroughgoing implications of this insight for his entire philosophical System. It is plain enough to see how Hume's ideas could have caused the final (and crucial) change in the extent of Kant's application of (2) in 1772, because Hume's scepticism regarding the a priori basis of the idea of necessary connection is among his most powerful arguments. Kant's realization in 1772 of the full force of this argument prevented him from doing what he later would have regarded as a grave mistake--viz. applying (2) to only one of the two sources of human knowledge.

But where did (2) come from in the first place? It could not have come from Hume, inasmuch as nothing like it appears in Hume's doctrines of space and time (or anywhere else in Hume's works). Hume's explanation for our belief in all such "objective facts" is always to reduce them to logic and/or an empirical kind of subjectivity [see e.g. the final paragraph of his Inquiry]; he never so much as hints at the possibility of any third way, such as is given by Kant's theory of transcendental subjectivity. There are, to my knowledge, only two likely explanations, both of which probably worked together to awaken Kant to his Copernican insight sometime between 1766 and 1768. The first is his reading of Swedenborg's writings, especially his massive work, *Arcana Coelestia*, which he read in preparation for writing *Dreams* (1766) [see *Dreams* 318(39) and "PIA" 14n]; and the second is his reading of the Clarke-Leibniz Correspondence [see note 26], together with his consequent discovery of the antinomies of reason [see below].³¹ If this account of Kant's development during these crucial years is correct, then Kant's description of (4) as an awakening from dogmatic slumbers is a somewhat over-

dramatized account, whose purpose is not to emphasize a sudden break from lifelong dogmatism [see note 28], but only to explain how Hume drove him away from the one-sided form of (2) as he originally distilled it from the ideas of two thinkers whom he regarded as dogmatists. Thus, if we look at the overall picture, we see that Hume's influence has, in fact, been highly overrated, fulfilling only one particular role in Kant's long process of development.

This interpretation of Kant's development gives rise to two further questions regarding Kant's use of his sleeping/dreaming/awakening metaphor. For he uses it not only in relation to Hume's influence, but also in many other contexts. In a letter to Garve (21 September 1798), for instance, he confides that his discovery (c.1768) of "the antinomy of pure reason...is what first aroused me from my dogmatic slumber and drove me to the critique of reason itself".³² How can this account of Kant's "awakening" be made compatible with his (more well-known) references to Hume? Although interpreters have often struggled with this question, the answer seems obvious once we distinguish, as above, between the four aspects of Kant's development. Kant's comments must refer to different experiences of awakening: the awakening by Hume refers to (4), while that for which the antinomy is responsible refers to (3). Accordingly, Kant says the antinomy showed him the need for a critique of reason, whereas he says Hume gave a "new direction" [Prolegomena 260(8)] to his speculative research (thus implying he had already begun working on that critique). The traditional view that these refer to the same experience arises only because he uses the same metaphor to describe both developments.

The second question arises once we recognize the obviously close connection between Kant's metaphor of being awoken from sleep and the metaphor of dreaming which permeates the entirety of *Dreams* (even its title). If Kant's awakening really happened only in 1768 (via the antinomies) or in 1772 (via Hume's scepticism)--or even at both times--then Kant's comments would seem to imply that *Dreams* itself dates from

the period of "dogmatic slumber" from which he only later awoke. Yet even those who have failed to recognize the Critical elements in *Dreams* would agree that it is not the work of a sleeping dogmatist! So how could Kant's metaphor apply to anything which happened after he wrote this book? Although I will not presume to give the final answer to this difficult question, I will venture to offer a plausible suggestion, based on the explanation of Kant's development given above.

Criticism is the middle path between dogmatism and scepticism. It is the tool with which Kant believed he could preserve the truth and value of both methods and yet do away with the errors into which each inevitably falls. The Critical mind will therefore always allow itself to be "tempted", as it were, by the two extremes which it ultimately seeks to overcome; but in the process of becoming more and more refined, it will appear at one moment to be more dogmatic and at another to be more sceptical (just as we observed Kant's mind to be in the text of *Dreams*). In other words, the Critical method does not do away with scepticism and dogmatism, so much as use them as opposing forces to guide its insight further along the spiral path towards the central point of pure Critique. Now in order to be healthy a human being needs both sleep and waking; and in the same way, we could develop Kant's analogy one step further by saying that the healthy (Critical) philosopher needs a sufficient dose of both dogmatism and scepticism. Scepticism functions like an alarm clock to remind philosophers when it is time to stop their dogmatic dreaming and return to the normal waking life of criticism. The Critical philosopher will naturally experience many experiences of this type, just as a normal person is often surprised to wake up in the middle of a dream, yet will dream again the next night. Thus, the confusion caused by Kant's various references to his awakening from dogmatic slumbers may be best explained by regarding each as equally legitimate and equally important to his development.

We have seen that Hume's influence was never such as to convert Kant to

scepticism, but only served as "the first spark of light" [Prolegomena 260(8)] to kindle his awareness of the need to reflect on the rationality of his cherished dogmas. This limited view of the influence of Hume on Kant comes out quite clearly in almost all Kant's references to Hume or scepticism. In CPR 785, for example, Kant again uses his favorite metaphor to describe the relation between dogmatism, scepticism and criticism: "At best [scepticism] is merely a means of awakening [reason] from its dogmatic dreams, and of inducing it to enter upon a more careful examination of its own position." Kant's attempt in *Dreams* to examine mysticism and metaphysics with a Critical eye should therefore be regarded as resulting from one of his first major awakenings (perhaps largely as a result of his initial reading of Hume). Ironically, although he disagreed with the dogmatic use to which Swedenborg put his ideas, Kant seems to have recognized in them some valuable hypotheses which could be purified in the refining fire of criticism. The antinomies awoke him (in 1768) to the realization that reason's Critical method must be applied not only to objects of possible knowledge (such as mystical experiences and metaphysical theories), but also to reason itself. And just when he thought he was on the verge of perfecting this self-criticism of reason (in 1772), Hume awoke him once again to the realization that his Copernican insight must be used to limit not only intuition but also the concepts arising out of human understanding. We can conclude, therefore, that although Hume was instrumental in awakening Kant to the limits of dogmatism, Swedenborg's speculations were responsible in a more concrete way for the initial formation of his Copernican hypothesis itself.

IV. The Dream of a Critical System

A clear understanding of the influence of Swedenborg on Kant, and of the function of *Dreams* as a kind of Critical prolegomenon to Kant's mature System of transcendental Critique, makes it not so surprising to hear Sewall say that mystics "from

Jung-Stilling to Du Prel" have always "claimed Kant as being of their number" ["PIA" 16-7,32]. Indeed, Du Prel stresses Kant's positive attitude towards Swedenborg [PM 2.195-8,243, 290], and argues that in *Dreams* "Kant...declared Mysticism possible, supposing man to be 'a member at once of the visible and of the invisible world'" [2.302]. He even suggests that "Kant would confess to-day [i.e. in 1885] that hundreds of such facts [based on mystical experience and extra-sensory powers] are proved" [2.198]. This is probably going too far, but so is Vaihinger's conclusion [quoted in "PIA" 19] that "Kant's world of experience...excludes all invasion of the regular system of nature by uncontrollable 'spirits'; and the whole system of modern mysticism, so far as he holds fast to his fundamental principles, Kant is 'bound to forcibly reject.'" Kant is forced to reject mysticism only as a component of his theoretical system (i.e. CPR); the other systems nevertheless remain open to nontheoretical interpretations of mystical experiences. Sewall reflects Kant's purposes more accurately in "PIA" 20-1:

The great mission of Kant was to establish...[that reason] can neither create a knowledge of the spiritual world, nor can it deny the possibility of such a world. It can affirm indeed the rationality of such a conception, but the reality of it does not come within its domain as pure reason.

As Vaihinger himself admits elsewhere, Kant's apparent rejection of mysticism therefore "refers only to the practices (of spiritism), and to the Mysticism of the Feelings; it does not apply to the rational belief of Kant in the 'corpus mysticum of the intelligible world.'"³³

Kant therefore has two distinct, though closely related, purposes in *Dreams*. The first is to reject uncritical (speculative or fanatical) forms of mysticism, not in order to overthrow all mysticism, but in order to replace it with a Critical version which is directed towards our experience of this world and our reflection on it from various perspectives. This perspectival element in Kant's mysticism is hinted at by Vaihinger

[quoted in "PIA" 15,18] when he says:

The other world is [for Kant]...not another place, but only another view of even this world.... [It] is not a world of other things, but of the same things seen differently by us.... But the wildly fermenting must of the Swedenborgian Mysticism becomes with Kant clarified and settled into the noble, mild, and yet strong wine of criticism.

Unfortunately, the general mystical thrust of Kant's overall philosophical System has been grossly neglected by almost all Kant-scholars.³⁴ In the sequel to this article I will attempt to set right this neglect by examining the extent to which Kant's Critique of mysticism in *Dreams* paves the way for a full-blooded "Critical mysticism".

Kant's second purpose in clearing from the path of metaphysics the obstructions created by the speculative claims of mystical experiences is to prepare the way for his own attempt to provide a metaphysical System which could do for metaphysics what *Dreams* does for mysticism. For the Critical dream envisaged in *Dreams* was to serve as a seed planted in his reason, which eventually matured into the tree of the Critical System; and only when this tree finally bears fruit does the mystical seed which gave birth to the philosophical System appear once again (i.e. in the *Opus Postumum*). Accordingly, Kant's Critical labours can be regarded as an attempt to build a rational System which can preserve the true mystical dream--indeed, which thus puts mysticism in its true place, at the centre of metaphysics. In this sense, at least, Kant would agree with Du Prel [PM 1.70] when he says: "It is...dream, not waking, which is the door of metaphysic, so far as the latter deals with man."

Notes to: Kant's Critique of Mysticism (1)

1. Immanuel Kant, *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer, Illustrated by Dreams of Metaphysics*--hereafter *Dreams*--tr. E. Goerwitz (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1900). (References to Kant's works will cite the Akademie page numbering. When this number is not included in the translation, the translation's pagination will be added in brackets. The only exception is Kant's Critique of Pure Reason--hereafter CPR--tr. N. Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), references to which will cite the second (1787) edition pagination, except where material is unique to the first (1781) edition, in which case an "A" will precede the page number.)
2. The latter is based on Kant's own account of the matter in his *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, tr. L.W. Beck (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1950), p.260(8): "I openly confess my recollection of David Hume was the very thing which many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave my investigations in the field of speculative philosophy a quite new direction."
3. Manfred Kuehn, "Kant's Conception of 'Hume's Problem'", *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 21.2 (April 1983), p.191.
4. Beck suggests that "Kant had probably read Hume before 1760, but only much later (1772?) did he begin to follow 'a new direction' under Hume's influence" [*Prolegomena*, p.8n]. Beck defends his position in *Early German Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp.465-467. (See also R.P. Wolff, *Journal of the History of Ideas* XXI (1960), pp.117-123.) In his Inaugural Dissertation, and as late as his letter to Marcus Herz (February 21, 1772), Kant shows no awareness that Hume's scepticism challenges his own conception of causality as an intellectual principle. The supposed reason is that Kant was familiar only with Hume's *Enquiry* (1748), with its relatively modest scepticism, until he read Beattie's *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth* (1772), which contained translations of long passages from the more radically

sceptical text of Hume's *Treatise* (1738). In a review of G. Gawlick and L. Kreimendahl's *Hume in der deutschen Aufklärung* [in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* (1987), pp.405-408], Beck confirms his acceptance of this explanation despite more recent conjectures that Kant's friend, Hamann, who translated part of the *Treatise* in 1771, may have shown his translation to Kant as early as 1768. In any case, both these views account only for Kant's recognition of the need for a more adequate defence of the philosophical principle of causality. They say nothing positive about the source of Kant's Critical method, nor about the source of his "Copernican" assumption (which I take to be the two most fundamental aspects of his mature philosophical System). Moreover, they also fail to account for the unique (Humean?) character of *Dreams*. In section III of this paper I will propose an alternative explanation of Kant's development, which makes up for these and other inadequacies of the traditional view.

5. Frank Sewall, "Preface" (pp.vii-xi), "Introduction" (pp.1-33) and "Appendices" (pp.123-162) to *Dreams*--hereafter "PIA"--p.x.

6. CPR Axiii, emphasis added. The emphasized words indicate that Kant was still mindful of his earlier work in *Dreams*, which, as will become apparent in the following section, adopts the same point of view expressed in this quote. In fact, Kant uses terms referring to this sleeping/dreaming/awakening metaphor 27 times in CPR [see S. Palmquist, *A Complete Index to Kemp Smith's Translation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*--hereafter *Index*--(distributed privately, 1987), pp.34,109,347], most of which echo quite clearly the attitudes adopted in *Dreams*. The most significant references are CPR Axiii,503,519-21,785,792 [but see also Axin,xxxvi,1,A112,217,247,278,A376-77,A380,A390,434,452,479,652, 808]. Such texts should not, however, be taken as evidence that Kant was completely against all mysticism. Rather, they restate the same problem which is posed in *Dreams*--viz. how one's "cherished dreams" can be preserved, if not by dogma and/or magic. Kant's solution will be examined in the sequel to the

present paper [in *Philosophy & Theology* 4.1 (Fall 1989)].

7. CPR xxviii. These two modes of representation are similar, though not identical, to the distinction I make between "immediate experience" and "reflective knowledge" in "Knowledge and Experience: An Examination of the Four Reflective Perspectives" in *Kant's Critical Philosophy*--hereafter "KE"--*Kant-Studien* 78.2 (1987), pp.170-173.

8. See e.g. CPR 352,A395. Index 86 lists 168 occurrences of these three words in CPR.

9. *Critique of Judgment*--hereafter CJ--tr. J.C. Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p.197n.

10. Indeed, as I have argued on several previous occasions [see e.g. "KE" 170-200, and "The Architectonic Form of Kant's Copernican Logic", *Metaphilosophy* 17.4 (October 1986), pp.266-288], the making of such perspectival distinctions is the key task of the Critical method.

11. In the earlier works, of course, the traces are evident retrospectively even though Kant himself would not yet have been conscious of the significance of the naturally Critical tendencies of his way of thinking. In fact, becoming conscious of what was already there seems to be one of the implications of his much-used metaphor of sleeping/dreaming/awakening. Otherwise he would have chosen a metaphor such as "coming alive" or "giving birth".

12. "PIA" 155. On the dating of this letter, see "PIA" 160 and Gabriele Rabel (tr.), *Kant*--hereafter RK--(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p.74.

13. Cited in RK 74. This tendency in *Dreams* to ridicule that which in fact he wished to defend may be what led Kant to suggest that it not be included in his collected minor writings [see "PIA" x]. Nevertheless, as we shall see, *Dreams* adopts an entirely Critical method, and so first poses the problem (though somewhat obscurely) which is to be solved by the Critical System.

14. Kant notes in *Dreams* 325n(50n) that this "prevalent opinion which assigns to the soul

its seat in the brain, seems to originate mainly in the fact, that we feel distinctly how, in deep meditation, the nerves of the brain are taxed. But if this conclusion is right it would prove also other abodes of the soul. In anxiety or joy the sensation seems to have its seat in the heart. Many affections, yea most of them, manifest themselves most strongly in the diaphragm. Pity moves the intestines, and other instincts manifest their origin in other organs." Here we see a good example of Kant's awareness of and concern for the condition of his own body. Unfortunately, interpreters tend to excuse this concern as stemming merely from his eccentric ideas about how he could maintain his own health through sheer will power and self-determination [see e.g. *On the Diseases of the Head*, excerpt tr. in RK 60, and Part III of *The Conflict of the Faculties*, tr. M.J. Gregor (New York: Abaris, 1979)]. Yet it seems also to reveal the importance he placed on fostering a meditative awareness of his immediate experience: philosophy for Kant is ultimately not an abstract function of the mind or brain, but a discipline in which the whole body participates as well.

15. Dreams 330(57). "The relation [of these "incorporeal substances"] by means of things corporeal is consequently to be regarded as accidental" [330(56-7)]. Since an "undoubted characteristic of life" is "free movement" (including growth), he suggests that both plants and animals may also have an immaterial nature [330(57)]. In order to show the close connection between plants and animals Kant mentions Boerhave's view that "The animal is a plant which has its roots in the stomach (inside)." He then suggests that the converse is also true: "The plant is an animal which has its stomach in the root (outside)." But he warns that "such conjectures...have the ridicule of fashion against them, as being dusty antiquated fancies"; since "the appeal to immaterial principles is a subterfuge of bad philosophy", he will "not...use any of these considerations as evidence" [331(58)].

16. Dreams 337-8(67-9). Kant conjectures that the spiritual conceptions which arise in

the deepest, dreamless sleep "may be clearer and broader than even the clearest in the waking state. This is to be expected of such an active being as the soul when the external senses are so completely at rest. For man, at such times is not sensible of his body." When dreaming, by contrast, a person "perceives to a certain degree clearly, and weaves the actions of his spirit into the impressions of the external senses." Unfortunately, Kant did not recognize the importance of this connective function of dreams, so instead of regarding them as revealing profound symbols of spiritual conceptions (as Jung, using Kant as his philosophical springboard, has since suggested), he ridiculed them as being "only wild and absurd chimeras" [338n(68n)]. Du Prel develops an elaborate theory of "somnambulism" based explicitly on Kant's philosophy [see e.g. *The Philosophy of Mysticism*--hereafter PM--tr. C.C. Massey (London: George Redway, 1889), vol.1, pp.xxvi,5-7,62,71,etc.]. He also agrees with Kant on many specific points [see e.g. PM 1.57-8]. For example, in PM 1.44 he says: "With the deepening of sleep must diminish the confusion of the dream." In arguing for "the scientific importance of dream", he claims this clarity can be explained best by assuming that in deepest sleep the centre of control changes from the brain (the focus of consciousness) to the solar plexus (the focus of the unconscious), and that the more control exercised by the latter, the more significant will be the dream [1.27-44,68-9].

17. Dreams 347-8(82-3). The concluding paragraph of Chapter Three, which contains these comments, also contains some harsh ridicule of the perspective adopted in Chapter Two. He suggests, for instance, that although visionaries are not necessarily insane, "insanity [is] a likely consequence of such communion.... Therefore, I do not at all blame the reader, if, instead of regarding the spirit-seers as half-dwellers in another world [as Kant himself clearly prefers], he, without further ceremony, dispatches them as candidates for the hospital" [348(83)]. No doubt this is one of the bits of Dreams which embarrassed Kant in later life, and led him to suggest that it be excluded from his

collected minor works [see "PIA" x].

18. In previous publications I have referred to this third standpoint as the "empirical" standpoint, because the empirical details of nature are taken into consideration much more seriously here than in reasoning based on the theoretical or practical standpoints. This can be rather misleading, however, since (1) its use in this context is different from its use in the important transcendental-empirical distinction, (2) it could be confused with the empirical perspective within each standpoint (a similarity Kant himself recognizes in CJ 178-179(17)), and (3) Kant states explicitly in CPR 739: "There is no need of a critique of reason in its empirical employment". I have recently decided to refer to the standpoint of CJ as "judicial" (i.e. relative to judgment) in hopes of clarifying that its transcendental status is preserved, and that its scope is broader than the empirical perspective within each standpoint.

19. Dreams 351-2(89). This position has an obvious affinity with the doctrines of positive and negative noumenon developed in CPR [see my article, "Six Perspectives on the Object in Kant's Theory of Knowledge", *Dialectica* 40.2 (1986), pp.135-142].

20. Dreams 351(88). Thus, Kant notes [350n(87-8n)] that our speculative ignorance "does not at all invalidate the confidence that the conceptions thence evolved [i.e. from hope] are right." For example, the "inner perception" that death is "only a transformation" leads "to that point to which reason itself would lead us if it were more enlightened, and of a greater scope." Kant is saying, in other words, that our immediate experience can provide existential certainty for a position which cannot be proved rationally. This existential certainty is, in essence, what Kant means by "faith" [see my article "Faith as Kant's Key to the Justification of Transcendental Reflection", *The Heythrop Journal* 25.4 (October 1984), pp.442-455].

21. In the final chapter of *Dreams* a similar view is adopted concerning the possibility of a spiritual influence on the body: such influences are possible but cannot be proved

because they are not governed by corporeal laws. This is directly parallel to Kant's mature attitude towards "noumenal causality", which cannot lay claim to knowledge because it does not fall under the a priori principles of the possibility of experience.

22. Indeed, Kant even uses the analogy of awakening in the sceptical chapter of *Dreams* [342(74), quoted above in section II], thus indicating that in 1766 he was already thinking of scepticism as a useful tool for stimulating philosophers to reconsider their dogmatism. This fact, as we shall see later in this section, raises serious questions about the traditional view that Kant's "awakening" by Hume did not happen until 1768, or perhaps even 1772 [see note 4 above].

23. Moreover, Kant uses the same analogy in CPR 795, where he refers to "the assay-balance of criticism" [see also CPR 617,811]. And he uses the corresponding metaphor of "weighing" two opposing arguments in CPR A388-389,615,617,665,778 and in the second *Critique*, p.76.

24. As early as 1764 Kant recognized a special relationship between metaphysics, moral philosophy, and philosophy of religion [see *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, p.246n]. In June of 1771 Kant affirmed in a letter to Marcus Herz that his project would have to address the topics of metaphysics, morality and aesthetics. And his letter to Herz in February 1772 shows he already conceived of his task as including work on "the principles of feeling, taste, and power of judgement" in addition to its theoretical and moral aspects [Kant's *Philosophical Correspondence*, 1759-99, tr. A. Zweig (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), vol.10, p.124(71)]. Although he apparently had not yet decided to devote a separate *Critique* to each subject, he had already thought of the title "Critique of Pure Reason" [73]. For a concise summary of the importance of these two letters, see Fredrick C. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol.VI, *Wolff to Kant* (London: Burns and Oates Limited, 1960), pp.203-7.

25. I discuss the architectonic structure of Kant's System in "Architectonic Form" [see

note 10 above].

26. *A History of Philosophy*, vol. VI, p.196.

27. Sewall translates these extracts in "PIA" 123-54 (Appendix I).

28. This distinction between Kant's Critical method and the transcendental orientation of his philosophy is often ignored by Kant-scholars, who tend to conflate the terms by talking about Kant's "transcendental method"--a phrase which Kant himself never uses. This type of interpretive error lies behind Ernst Cassirer's claim that in CPR "Kant is presenting a completely novel type of thinking, one in opposition to his own past and to the philosophy of the Age of Enlightenment" [*Kant's Life and Thought*, tr. James Haden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p.141]. This notion of a complete "opposition" between Kant's past (wherein he is portrayed as being unknowingly duped by his purportedly dogmatic upbringing) and his Critical outlook (which is supposed to have sprung magically from his reading of Hume) typifies the mythical account of Kant's development against which I am arguing in this paper. In CPR Kant is not negating his past, but pressing it to its natural limit; he is separating the wheat from the chaff of his own background and of his Age [see e.g. CPR Axin] by bringing into full view the Critical method which had characterized his way of thinking from the start.

One exception to the above is J. Fang, who calls attention to the mistake of regarding Kant's method as transcendental in *Kant-Interpretationen* (MÅnster: Verlag Regensberg, 1967), pp.112-13. He also recognizes the importance of distinguishing between the Critical method and the transcendental character of Kant's mature philosophy: the "critical method" is already "partially revealed" in 1770, but "concerns itself with 'limits' alone...and not yet with 'sources'", as it does in its transcendental application [pp.118-119]. With intimations of Einstein, he then suggests that "the special critical method of 1768-69, viz. 'to determine the validity and bounds of intuitive principles', had to be generalized, and when it was finally 'broadened', the general critical

method was to discover and justify...the sources, the extent, and the limits of the human faculty of knowledge or metaphysic in general--the main task of the Critique" [p.121]. Unfortunately, Fang does not work out in any detail the significance of this distinction (which relates more to Kant's gradual application of his Copernican insight than to the Critical method as such), nor does he mention Dreams as relevant to the development of Kant's Critical method.

29. This implies that the traditional view of Dreams as a temporary excursion into Humean scepticism [see section I] is entirely unjustified, based as it is on a shallow reading of the text and a neglect of the ubiquity of the Critical method in Kant's writings. Hume's influence on Kant in the early 1760s, as we shall see, was only one of many influencing factors acting together as grist for the Critical mill.

30. Kant's biographers consistently report the strong influence he felt his mother had in his general personal and intellectual development. Her influence is discussed further in section III of the sequel to the present article.

31. In fact, the influence of Swedenborg is quite compatible with the influence of Leibniz [see note 26]. For Swedenborg himself studied Descartes, Leibniz and Wolff, much as Kant did in his early years [see Inge Jonsson, "Swedenborg, Emanuel", in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1967), vol.8, p.47]. (In sections 335.7 and 696 of *The True Christian Religion* Swedenborg even describes his visions of Aristotle, Descartes and Leibniz, together with nine of their followers, among whom was Wolff.) Thus, Kant's reading of Swedenborg probably worked together with his reading of the Clarke-Leibniz Correspondence to point Kant towards the Copernican hypothesis.

32. *Philosophical Correspondence* 12.255(252). See note 6 above for a list of references to the sleeping/dreaming/awakening metaphor in CPR.

33. Quoted in "PIA" 25. Kant affirms his belief in the notion of a "corpus mysticum" at

several points even in CPR, as when he says that "if we could intuit ourselves and things as they are, we should see ourselves in a world of spiritual natures, our sole and true community" [CPR 836; see also A393-94]. Kant's lifelong belief in a spirit-world is demonstrated by Manolesco in the Introduction to his more recent translation of *Dreams* (Montreal: Vantage Press, 1969), which was unfortunately not available to this author.

34. "PIA" x (sic; page number should read "ix") lists several works written between 1889 and 1895 which do focus on Kant's mystical tendencies. The most significant of these is Carl Du Prel's *Kant's Vorlesungen Über Psychologie* (1889), which contains an introduction entitled "Kant's mystische Weltanschauung". "PIA" 13-14n translates the following passage from pp.vii-viii of that work: "'Dreams'...has been interpreted as a daring venture of Kant's genius in making sport of superstition; the accent has been laid on Kant's negations, and his affirmative utterances have been overlooked. The 'Lectures on Psychology' now show, however, that these utterances were very seriously intended; for the affirmative portions of the 'Dreams' agree very thoroughly with the lengthier exposition of the 'Psychology', and the wavering attitude of Kant is here no longer perceptible."