

**KANT'S INTRODUCTION TO  
LOGIC AND HIS ESSAY ON  
THE MISTAKEN SUBTILTY  
OF THE FOUR FIGURES**

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Kant's Introduction to Logic and His Essay on the Mistaken Subtilty of the Four Figures by  
Immanuel Kant

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**IMMANUEL KANT**

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KANT'S  
INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC,

AND HIS

ESSAY ON THE MISTAKEN SUBLTLY OF  
THE FOUR FIGURES:

TRANSLATED BY

THOMAS KINGSMILL ABBOTT, B. D.,  
FELLOW AND TUTOR OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN:

WITH

*A FEW NOTES BY COLERIDGE.*



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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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KANT'S "LOGIC" was published in 1800. With the exception of the "Introduction" here translated, it consists of a Compendium of the ordinary School Logic, with occasional remarks. In fact, Kant in his Lectures used as a text-book a Compendium published by Meier (a disciple of the Wolffian school) in 1752. This he interleaved and annotated for his own use, and from these materials the "Logic" was, at Kant's instance, compiled by his pupil, Jäsche, afterwards professor at Dorpat. Although containing much that is valuable to a teacher, the treatise, as a whole, would hardly repay translation.

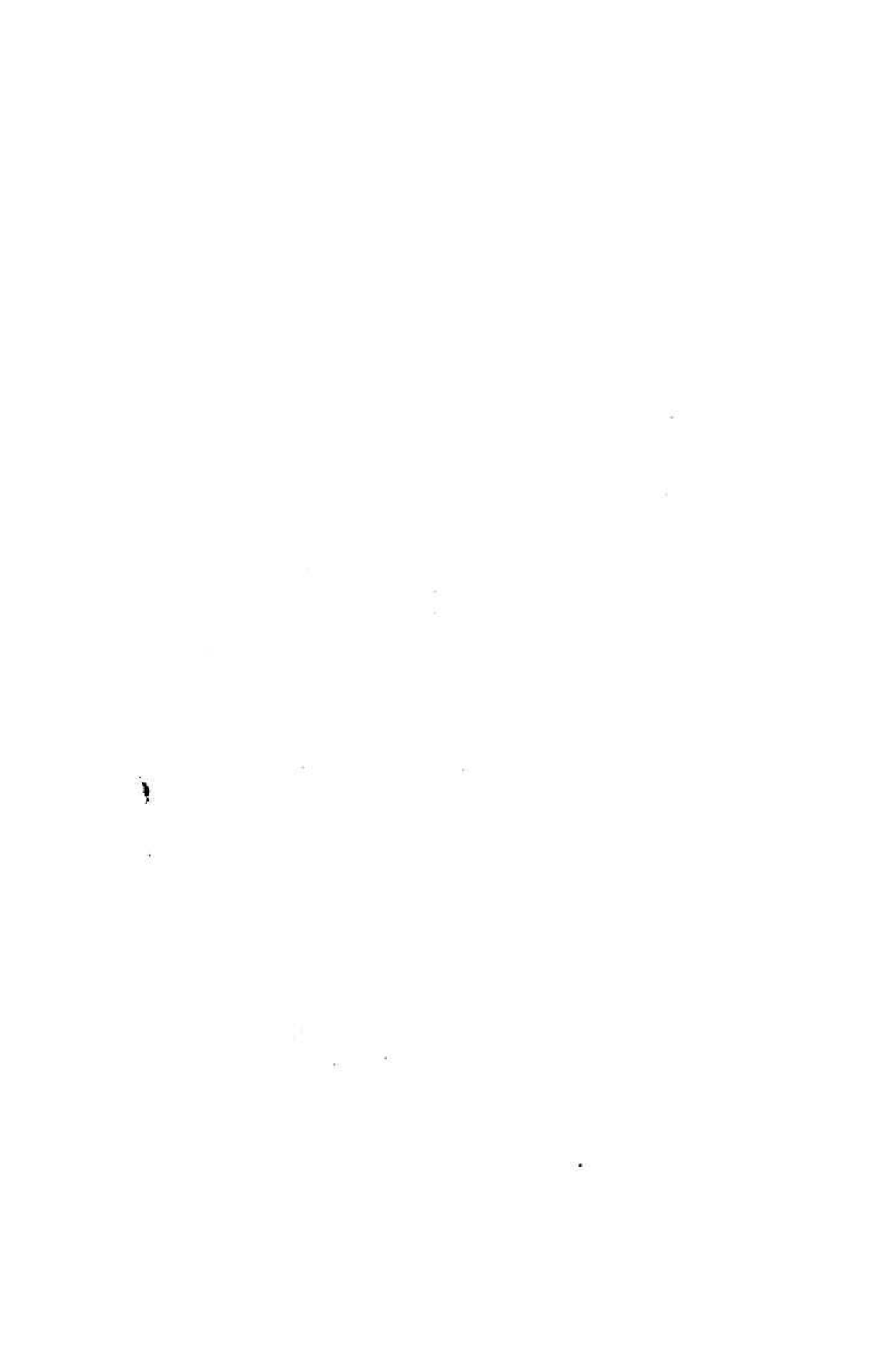
The paging in the text is that of Rosenkranz (*Sämmtliche Werke*, Thl. 3).

The essay "On the Mistaken Subtily of the Four Figures," was published in 1762 (*Werke*, Thl. 1).

The notes by COLERIDGE are extracted from his copy of Kant's "Logik" in the British Museum.

I have again to thank Professor SELSS for much kind help.

T. K. ABBOTT.







## KANT'S INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC.

## I.

## CONCEPTION OF LOGIC.

**E**VERYTHING in nature, whether in the animate or inanimate world, takes place *according to rules*, although we do not always know these rules. Water falls according to laws of gravity, and in animals locomotion also takes place according to rules. The fish in the water, the bird in the air, moves according to rules. All nature, indeed, is nothing but a combination of phenomena which follow rules; and nowhere is there any irregularity. When we think we find any such, we can only say that the rules are unknown.

The exercise of our own faculties takes place also according to certain rules, which we follow at first *unconsciously*, until by a long-continued use of our faculties we attain the knowledge of them, and at last make them so familiar, that it costs us much trouble to think of them *in abstracto*. Thus, *ex. gr.* general grammar is the form of language in general. One may speak, however, without knowing grammar, and he who speaks without knowing it has really a grammar, and speaks according to rules of which, however, he is not aware.

[170] Now, like all our faculties, the *understanding*, in particular, is governed in its actions by rules which we can investigate. Nay, the understanding is to be regarded as the source and faculty of conceiving rules in general. For just as the sensibility is the faculty of intuitions, so the understanding is the faculty of thinking, that is, of bringing the ideas of sense

under rules. It desires, therefore, to seek for rules, and is satisfied when it has found them. We ask, then, since the understanding is the source of rules, What rules does it follow itself? For there can be no doubt that we cannot think or use our understanding otherwise than according to certain rules. Now these rules, again, we may make a separate object of thought, that is, we can conceive them, *without their application*, or *in abstracto*. What now are these rules?

All rules which the understanding follows, are either *necessary* or *contingent*. The former are those without which no exercise of the understanding would be possible at all; the latter are those without which some certain definite exercise of the understanding could not take place. The contingent rules which depend on a definite object of knowledge are as manifold as those objects themselves. For example, there is an exercise of the understanding in mathematics, metaphysics, morals, &c. The rules of this special definite exercise of the understanding in these sciences are contingent, because it is contingent that I think of this or that object to which these special rules have reference.

If, however, we set aside all knowledge that we can only borrow from *objects*, and reflect simply on the exercise of the understanding in general, then we discover those rules which are absolutely necessary, independently of any particular objects of thought, because without them we cannot think at all. [171] These rules, accordingly, can be discerned *a priori*, that is, *independently of all experience*, because they contain merely the conditions of the use of the understanding in general, whether pure or empirical, without distinction of its objects. Hence, also, it follows that the universal and necessary laws of thought can only be concerned with its *form*, not in anywise with its *matter*. The science, therefore, which contains these universal and necessary laws is simply a science of the form of thought. And we can form a conception of the possibility of such a science, just as of a *universal grammar* which contains nothing beyond the mere form of language, without words, which belong to the matter of language.

This science of the necessary laws of the understanding and the reason generally, or, which is the same thing, of the mere form of thought generally, we call *Logic*.

Since *Logic* is a science which refers to all thought, without regard to objects which are the matter of thought, it must therefore be viewed—

1. as the *basis* of all other sciences, and the <sup>preliminary</sup> *propædeutic* of all employment of the understanding. But just because it abstracts altogether from objects—

2. it cannot be an *organon* of the sciences.

By an *organon* we mean an instruction how some particular branch of knowledge is to be attained. This requires that I already know the object of this knowledge which is to be produced by certain rules. An *organon* of the sciences is therefore not a mere logic, since it presupposes the accurate knowledge of the objects and sources of the sciences. [172] For example, mathematics is an excellent *organon*, being a science which contains the principles of extension of our knowledge in respect of a special use of reason. *Logic*, on the contrary, being the general propædeutic of every use of the understanding and of the reason, cannot meddle with the sciences, and anticipate their matter, and is therefore only a *universal Art of Reason* (*Canonica Epicuri*), the *Art* of making any branch of knowledge accord with the form of the understanding. Only so far can it be called an *organon*, one which serves not for the *enlargement*, but only for the *criticism and correction* of our knowledge.

3. Since *Logic* is a science of the necessary laws of thought, without which no employment of the understanding and the reason takes place, which consequently are the conditions under which alone the understanding can and should be consistent with itself—the necessary laws and conditions of its right use—*Logic* is therefore a *Canon*. And being a canon of the understanding and the reason, it cannot borrow any principles either from any science or from any experience; it must contain nothing but *a priori* laws, which are necessary, and apply to the understanding universally.