

Solution and Appendix

In the *Solution*, Kant concludes the exploration into the main question of the *Prolegomena*, viz. how metaphysics is possible as a science. In the *Appendix*, he addresses the *Göttingen* (Garve/Feder) and the *Gotha* (Ewald) reviews of 1782. Both reviews are included in the Hatfield edition (pp. 201ff.).

1. How is metaphysics as a science possible after all? (*Sol.* ¶¶1–3, 4:365–6)
2. But why is this question in effect irrelevant? (*Sol.* ¶2, 4:365)
3. Why will there always be metaphysics? (*Sol.* ¶¶6–7, 4:367)
- 4.★ What is the problem with probability and common sense? (*Sol.* ¶¶10–3, 4:369–71)
5. Kant draws a succinct contrast between ‘genuine idealism’ and his ‘sort of idealism’. Do you think the catchy slogans are apt? (*App.* ¶¶8–9, 4:374)
- 6.★ Sketch what you regard as the main features of Kant’s critical idealism. (*App.* ¶¶8–12, 4:374–5)
- 7.★ In the final paragraph Kant points out the merits of critical philosophy. He includes an allusion to theology. What is the point? (*App.* ¶25, 4:382–3)
8. Kant regards the *Prolegomena* as a synopsis or basis for comparison with the *CPR* (4:380), or as a plan and guide that is not itself an investigation (4:381). Looking back over the book, do you agree?

Background Information. (a) ‘Critique’ or *critical philosophy* (*Sol.* ¶3 4:366) is Kant’s project to find a middle way between dogmatism (rationalism) and scepticism (empiricism). It is ‘critical’ in that it concerns the necessary foundation or ultimate sources of our cognition, which is done by an examination of reason with regard to its pure *a priori* knowledge (cf. *CPR* A841/B870, see also A758/B786). Another term for the same project is *transcendental philosophy*, concerned with the conditions of the possibility of cognition: “I call all cognition transcendental that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible *a priori*. A **system** of such concepts would be called **transcendental philosophy**” (*CPR* B25). Kant’s note at 4:373 (Hatfield p. 125) explains the term well. (b) A *science* (see *Sol.* ¶¶8–9, 4:368) is a systematic and unified body of principles: in §60 (4:362), Kant remarks that the central aim of science and critique is to ‘discipline’ reason, i.e. to control it. (c) When Kant says that the ‘world is tired of metaphysical assertions’ (4:377), he hints at the danger of indifference (cf. 4:367), which is the consequence of equally plausible but inconsistent dogmatic claims. Indifference towards metaphysics may lead to its isolation, yet it may also be pivotal for a critical renewal.