

# Critique of Pure Reason up to the end of the Analytic

Immanuel Kant

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[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Each four-point ellipsis. . . indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Longer omissions are reported between square brackets in normal-sized type. This version follows (B) the second edition of the *Critique*, though it also includes the (A) first-edition version of the Preface and of one other extended passage. Numerals like vii and 27 in the margins refer to page-numbers in B; ones like A xii and A 242 refer to A, and are given only for passages that don't also occur in B; and the likes of ..68 mean that B 68 (or whatever) started during the immediately preceding passage that has been omitted. These references can help you to connect this version with other translations or with the original German. Cross-references to other parts of this work include the word 'page(s)', and refer to page-numbers at the foot of each page. When something is referred to as 'on page n' it may run over onto the next page.

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## Prefaces and Introduction

### Preface (first edition)

A vii In one of the ways of using it, human reason is burdened with questions that it •has to face up to, because the nature of reason itself insists on them. Yet these questions go beyond the limits of anything that reason can manage, which means that reason •can't answer them!

It isn't reason's fault that it is caught in this embarrassing situation. Its starting-point is with principles that it uses in the course of experience—it can't help using them there, and experience justifies them well enough. It takes these principles and does what its own nature requires it to do: it *rises* up and up, to ever more remote conditions—i.e. to ever earlier times, larger stretches of space, more general causes, smaller parts of bodies, and so on. But it becomes aware that it can't ever complete its job in this way, because there is no end to the questions that will arise. So reason sees itself as *having to* take a different tack, that will make the questions stop. What it does is to resort to principles that go so wide that they •can't possibly be used in experience, and yet •seem so innocent that even ordinary common sense is on good terms with them. But by working with those principles, reason stumbles into darkness and contradictions! When it becomes aware of these, reason may well infer that the source of the trouble must be some hidden errors that it has committed somewhere; but it can't uncover them, because the principles that it is using go beyond the limits of all possible experience and therefore can't be tested and revealed to be wrong by appeals to experience. Thinkers take opposite sides in the contradictions, which starts them quarrelling, and the battlefield of these endless controversies is what we call 'metaphysics'.

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[The word 'science', which we shall encounter often, is to be thought of as applying to every disciplined, rigorous branch of knowledge, not necessarily an empirical one; though on page 7 we'll find Kant implying that logic is not a science 'properly and objectively so-called'.] Metaphysics used to be called 'the queen of all the sciences'; and if we go by its *aims*, we'll think that it deserved this honorific title because its *topic* is so important. Current fashions, however, have poured scorn on the 'queen'; and the good lady mourns as Hecuba did: 'Greatest of all by race and birth, I am now cast out, powerless' [Kant gives this in Latin; it is from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*]. In the beginning, when the •dogmatists were in charge, the queen ruled as a despot. But her legislation still retained traces of ancient barbarism, so that her rule gradually sank down into complete anarchy (helped along by civil wars); and the •sceptics—a species of nomads who loathe the idea of settling down and raising crops—shattered civil unity from time to time. There weren't many of them, fortunately, so they couldn't prevent the dogmatists from continually trying to rebuild, though never according to a unanimously agreed plan. [We are about to meet the term 'physiology'. It means, roughly, 'empirical study'; Kant calls Locke's theory of mind a 'physiology' because he sees it as reporting empirical facts about how the mind works; this will later—at page 58—be contrasted with Kant's own 'transcendental' account of the mind, which consists in a theory about how the mind *must* work, and about what makes certain of its activities *legitimate*.] More recently it seemed as though a certain physiology of the human understanding (that of the famous Locke) would put an end to all these controversies by sorting out right from wrong among all the competing claims. But that's not how things turned out. Attempts were made by Locke and others to trace the birth of the supposed 'queen' back to the common rabble, back to common experience, casting doubt on her claims to the throne, i.e. to supremacy among intellectual endeavours;

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A x but she still asserted her claims, because in fact this family tree was a fiction. So metaphysics fell back into the same old worm-eaten dogmatism, and once more incurred the contempt from which science was to have rescued her (·by showing her descent from experience, which, though pulling her off her throne, would make her scientifically testable and thus respectable·). After every approach has been tried in vain (or so it is thought), the dominant mood now is one of weariness. And now we have complete indifferentism—the ‘common-sense’ attitude that refuses to take sides on any questions in metaphysics·. This attitude is the mother of chaos and night in the sciences; but at the same time it is the source for—or at least a herald of—the coming rebuilding and clarifying of parts of the sciences that clumsy efforts have made obscure, confused, and useless.

[The word ‘popular’, which we’ll meet here and in other places, means ‘suitable for plain ordinary not very educated people’.] It’s pointless to pretend to have an ‘I-don’t-care’ attitude regarding such inquiries ·as those of metaphysics·, whose subject-matter human nature *has to care* about. As for those so-called ‘indifferentists’:

they try hard to disguise themselves ·as something other than metaphysicians· by exchanging academic scholastic language for a popular style,

and yet

whenever they *think* at all, they inevitably slide back into metaphysical assertions of the sort they have so loudly claimed to hold in contempt ·when the scholastics assert them·.

Still, we should attend to and think about this ‘I don’t care’ attitude when it •occurs at a time when all the sciences are flourishing, and •is aimed precisely at the sciences whose results (if we could get any) we would be least willing to do without. This ·attitude· is obviously an effect not of our

age’s light-mindedness but of its ripened power of judgment,<sup>1</sup> which now refuses to be fobbed off with illusory knowledge, and makes two demands of reason:

- Take up again the hardest of all your tasks, namely, that of coming to know *yourself*;
- Institute a court of justice through which you can secure your rightful claims while dismissing all your groundless pretensions, doing this not by mere decrees A xii but according to your own eternal and unchangeable laws.

What is this ‘court’? It is *the critique of pure reason* itself.

By this I *don’t* mean a critique of books and systems, ·i.e. of how reason has been used by this or that *individual* thinker or cult·. I am talking about a critique of the faculty of reason *as such*, in regard to *every* attempt it might make to gain knowledge independently of all experience. [In that sentence, ‘knowledge’ translates *Erkenntnisse*, which is a plural noun. We can’t say ‘knowledges’; and in contexts where the singular ‘knowledge’ won’t do (as it will here), the phrase ‘items of knowledge’, or one of its

<sup>1</sup> One occasionally hears complaints about the superficiality of our age’s way of thinking, and about the decline of solid science. But I can’t see that the sciences whose grounds are well laid—mathematics, physics, and so on—in the least deserve this charge. They are •as entitled as they ever were to a reputation for solidity, and natural science is •even more entitled. This same ·critical· spirit would also have been effective in other branches of knowledge, ·including metaphysics·, if only proper attention had been paid to first principles. In the absence of this, ·there is another route to a similar end, namely· •the ‘I don’t care’ attitude, then •doubt, and finally •strict criticism; and these are proofs of a well-grounded way of thinking. Our age is the genuine age of criticism, to which everything must submit. Religion and law-giving have often tried to exempt themselves from it—one as too holy to be critically examined, the other as too majestic. But this has made them suspect, and deprived them of any claim to the sincere respect that reason grants only to things that have survived free and public examination.

kin, will be used. One translator used 'modes of knowledge' for the plural, but that is wrong: the topic is not modes=kinds of knowledge but merely items=bits=portions of knowledge. Other translators have used 'cognition' and 'cognitions'. That is better, and reminds us that this word of Kant's doesn't carry the heavy implications of 'knowledge' as used by many philosophers writing in English; for example, a Kantian item of knowledge doesn't have to be *true*. But 'cognition' sounds academic and artificial, in a way that this version is trying to avoid.] That critique will yield a decision about whether any metaphysics is possible, and will settle what its sources are and what its limits are—all this being extracted from first principles.

A xiii ·With all the others having failed·, this was the only approach left, and I took it. I flatter myself that by adopting it I have succeeded in removing all the errors that until now have set reason *against itself* when its use has lost contact with experience. I haven't dodged reason's questions by pleading that human reason can't answer them. Rather, I have •provided a principled list of all these questions, and after •locating the point where reason has misunderstood itself, I have •resolved the questions in a way that completely satisfies reason. The answer won't satisfy the craving for knowledge of fanatical dogmatists; but to satisfy *them* I'd have needed something that I lack—magical powers! Anyway, providing answers that would satisfy the dogmatists is not on our reason's natural agenda; philosophy's job is to *confront and challenge* the hocus-pocus arising from misunderstandings, however many prized and beloved delusions are annihilated in the process. In this project I have aimed above all at *completeness*, and I venture to say that there can't be a single metaphysical problem that hasn't been solved here, or for which at least the key to the solution hasn't been provided. The fact is that pure reason is such a perfect unity that if its principle were inadequate to deal with even *one* of the questions that its own nature faces it

with, then we might as well discard the principle entirely, because it couldn't be *relied on* to deal with any of the other questions either.

[In this work Kant doesn't ever address the reader directly; but in the present version he is sometimes made to do so, as a change from 'the reader' and 'he', because it makes for clarity and brevity.] AS I say this, I think I see in your face indignation mixed with contempt at claims that seem so pretentious and immodest! Yet any author of the most run-of-the-mill system in which he purports to prove that the soul is simple, or that the world must have had a beginning, makes claims that are incomparably less moderate than mine. *He* promises to extend human knowledge beyond the bounds of all possible experience, while I humbly admit that this totally exceeds my powers. My concern is only with •reason itself and its •pure [= 'non-empirical'] thinking; and to know all about them I don't have to look far beyond *myself*, because that's where I encounter •reason—in myself—and ·as for the •uses of reason·, common logic shows the way to make a complete and systematic list of all the simple acts of reason. The question to be answered is 'How much can I hope to achieve through these simple acts of reason, if I don't have experience to help me and provide me with raw material?' A xiv

So much for completeness in achieving each of our purposes, and comprehensiveness in achieving all of them together. These are not optional aims that we choose to adopt; they are laid on us by the subject-matter of our investigation, knowledge itself. A xv

When a writer embarks on something as tricky as this, it is right to demand that what he produces shall have two formal features—it must be (1) *certain* and (2) *clear*.

(1) Regarding certainty: I have instructed myself that in this kind of inquiry •opinions are absolutely not allowed, and that anything that even *looks like* an •hypothesis is

to be thrown out as condemned goods the moment it is discovered—not offered for sale even at a discounted price! Any item of knowledge that purports to be certain *a priori* [= ‘known for certain without consulting experience’] announces that it is to be regarded as *absolutely necessary*, so that there’s no room in my enquiry, which is precisely into what reason can do *without* consulting experience, for anything that is merely conjectural or hypothetical. . . . Whether I have kept my promise to myself about this is for you to judge; the author’s job is only to •present reasons, not to •comment on how they affect his judges. Still, it is all right for an author to take steps to avoid unknowingly weakening his arguments in the minds of readers—steps such as calling attention to passages that might cause reader to distrust him, trying to head off that distrust before it starts. Even if a passage is relevant only to one of the work’s lesser goals, any slight doubts that it raises in the reader’s mind could carry over to his judgment on the main goal of the work.

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[We are about to meet the unavoidable word ‘deduction’. In Kant’s sense of it, a ‘deduction’ of the concepts of a certain kind is *the production of a complete list of them*—not a jumbled list but, in a phrase he will use on page 5, ‘a systematically ordered inventory’. On page 57 we’ll find that he also takes a ‘deduction’ of some concepts to include a demonstration that they are *legitimate*.] That was all about *reason*. There is also the faculty or power that we call ‘the understanding’; and I have tried to get to the bottom of *that*, and also to identify the rules for—and the limits to—its use, in the chapter called ‘Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding’. . . . This part of the work gave me more trouble than any other, but I hope the results will reward the effort. I haven’t encountered any inquiry into the understanding that has tackled the task more seriously—more *weightily*—than I have. This inquiry, which goes pretty deep, has two sides.

•One side concerns the objects of the pure understand-

ing [= ‘the items that pure understanding thinks *about*’]. It aims to prove that its *a priori* concepts are **objectively** valid, and to make it comprehensible that they should be so.

So the results of that side of my inquiry are essential to my over-all purpose.

•The other side deals with the pure understanding itself, what makes it possible, and what cognitive powers underlie it; so it is dealing with pure understanding from the **subjective** angle.

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This subjective inquiry matters a lot for my main purpose, but it’s not an essential part of it, because the main question is always: ‘How much can understanding and reason know when they are cut loose from all experience? And *what* can they know in this way?’ The question is *not*: ‘What makes it possible for people to think?’ (An aside: Asking this latter question is rather like asking for the cause of a given effect, so that there’s a whiff of the hypothetical about it (though I’ll show later that that’s not in fact how matters stand); so that question might seem to lead to my expressing my *opinion*, leaving it to you to hold yours!) Because my subjective deduction isn’t an essential part of my main purpose, I remark in advance that if it doesn’t convince you as completely as I expect it to do, the objective deduction that is my primary concern will still have its full force. What I say about this on page 60 can stand alone.

(2) Regarding clarity: You are entitled to ask for two sorts of clarity: •logical clarity, through concepts, and also intuitive clarity, through intuitions—i.e. through examples or other concrete illustrations. [Roughly speaking, Kant uses ‘intuition’ to stand for any particular item presented in a •sensory confrontation or through •imagination. That’s enough for now; we’ll have to refine it later. •In the next paragraph, and occasionally later on, Kant will use the word ‘speculative’. It is applied to theories or systems or bodies

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of knowledge or inquiries, and all it says about such an item is that it is *not concerned with morality*; ones that *are* concerned with morality are 'practical'.]

I have thoroughly taken care of logical clarity, which is essential to my purpose; but that led to my not satisfying the demand for intuitive clarity—a less stringent demand, but still a fair one—for reasons having to do with my particular circumstances, as I'll now explain. In the course of my work I have been almost constantly unsure what to do about examples and illustrations. It always seemed to me that I needed them, and my first draft contained them, each in its proper place. But when I took in how big a task I had tackled, and how many topics I would have to deal with, I realized that it was going to take a big book just to cover all this in an unadorned, merely academic manner. Including examples and illustrations would have made it even bigger, and I thought that was a bad idea. Examples etc. would have been necessary if my aim had been to succeed with a general readership; but there was in any case no way I could have fitted my work for that kind of public. Examples etc. would be nice for expert metaphysicians too, though even with them there might be disadvantages; and anyway they don't *need* such helps in the way that general readers would; so the concern about the book's length carried the day. The

A xix Abbé Terrasson says that if a book's size is measured not only by (a) the number of pages but also by (b) the time needed to understand it, then it can be said of many a book that *it would have been much (b) shorter if it weren't so (a) short*. But on the other hand, if we are considering the intelligibility of a body of speculative knowledge that is wide-ranging yet theoretically unified in a principled manner, we might just as reasonably say of many a book that *it would be much (b) shorter if it weren't so (a) long*, i.e. that *it would have been much clearer if there hadn't been such an effort to*

*make it clear*. That's because the aids to clarity—examples, illustrations, etc.—are helpful in understanding the parts, but often interfere with the reader's grasp of the whole. They do this in two ways. They add to the sheer bulk of the thing, so that the reader can't quickly enough command an over-all view of the whole; and the bright colours of the examples and illustrations hide from the reader the articulation or structure of the system, by being plastered over them in his mind; and this is serious because when we want to judge such a system's unity and soundness, its articulations and structure are what matter most.

I should have thought it would be a considerable inducement for you to join your efforts to mine, when we have the prospect of carrying out—along the lines I have indicated—a large and important piece of work, doing it in a complete and lasting way. Metaphysics, according to the concept of it that I shall present, is the only one of all the sciences that can be made so complete that there's nothing left for our descendants to do but *teach* it for whatever purposes they have—not being able to add anything to its content. (Or at least the only one of the sciences for which this can be done in a quite short time and with not much effort—though the effort must be *concerted*.) For such a work of metaphysics is nothing but a systematically ordered inventory of everything we possess through pure reason. Nothing that ought to be included can escape us, because what reason comes up with entirely out of itself can't be hidden: reason itself brings it fully into our view as soon as we have discovered reason's common principle. The perfect unity of a body of knowledge of this sort, and the fact that it arises solely out of pure concepts (so that nothing coming from experience can broaden it or fill it in. . . .), make this absolute completeness not only achievable but also necessary. . . .

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A xxi I hope to present such a **system** of pure (speculative) reason, under the title *Metaphysics of Nature*. It won't be half as long as the present book, this **critique**, but it will be incomparably richer in content. The present work has as its first task to lay bare •what makes this sort of critique possible, and •what the conditions are under which it is possible; so it has had to take some weed-cluttered ground and make it clear and level. Here in the **critique** I look to you for the patience and impartiality of a •judge; but there •in the **system**• I'll look to you for the co-operation and support of an •assistant. •There will be plenty of work still to be done•. For however completely the present critique expounds the *principles* of the system—its *basic* truths, involving only its *basic* or *most* •elementary concepts—the system won't be properly comprehensive until *all* the •derivative concepts are dealt with in it; and we can't arrive at them *a priori*—we have to hunt them down one by one. And there is another, similar, difference between the two works: in this present one the whole *synthesis* of concepts will be carried out; in the later work we'll have to present their whole *analysis*; but that won't be hard—it will be fun rather than work. . . .

### Preface (second edition)

vii We are faced with a theoretical treatment of knowledge that is reason's business, and we want to know: *Is this securely on track as a science?* We can soon get our answer by looking at how it develops. If any of these turns out to be the case:

- After many preliminaries and preparations are made, it gets stuck just before it reaches its goal, or
- To get towards its goal it keeps having to retrace its

steps and take a different turning somewhere, or

- It turns out that the different co-workers can't agree on *how* they should pursue their common aim,

then we can be sure that this work is floundering around,, and is nowhere near to getting onto the secure path of a science. In that case, we would be doing a service to reason if we could find that path for it, even if this involved giving up as futile much of what had rather thoughtlessly been included in the goal of the project.

From the earliest times, logic has traveled this secure path—we can see this from the fact that since the time of Aristotle it has never had to retrace its steps. (Well, it has abolished a few unneeded subtleties, and sharpened some of its presentations; but those changes affect the •elegance of the science rather than its •soundness.) What's also remarkable about logic is that right up to the present day it hasn't been able to take a single step *forward*—a fact that gives it every appearance of being finished, complete, closed off. Some moderns have *thought* they could enlarge logic by inserting into it

- psychological chapters about our various cognitive powers—imagination, ingenuity, etc., or
- metaphysical chapters about the source of knowledge, or about different kinds of certainty. . . ., or
- anthropological chapters about our prejudices (their causes and cures).

But this has come wholly from their ignorance of the special nature of logic. When you allow material to slop over from one science into others, you aren't *amplifying* the former—you are *bending it out of shape*. The boundaries of logic are fixed quite precisely by its being a science whose sole topic is the formal rules of all thinking, its task being only to reveal what they are and to prove them rigorously. It doesn't need to •distinguish empirical from *a priori* thinking, or •consider



the sources and subject-matters of the thinking whose rules it gives, or •attend to any obstacles—whether built-in or accidental—that our minds set up against thinking. That’s why the slop-over chapters to which I have referred are so wrong.

Logic owes its success to its limitedness, i.e. to how much it leaves out. Because of its limited scope, it is entitled—indeed it is *obliged*—to abstract from all the subject-matters of knowledge and from the differences among them. In logic, that is, the understanding’s topic is *itself and its own form*—nothing else. So of course it is much harder for reason to get started on the secure path of a science, because it has to attend not only to itself but also to subject-matters. [In this context, ‘subject-matters’ translates Kant’s *Objecte*, usually translated as ‘objects’.] Thus, logic relates to the other sciences only as a preliminary or preparatory study; it constitutes only the outer courtyard (so to speak) of the scientific building; and when we are concerned with contentful •knowledge, although we may need a logic for assessing and evaluating •it, the *getting of* •it is the business of the *sciences*, properly and objectively so-called.

To the extent that reason enters into these sciences, they must include some *a priori* knowledge. This knowledge can relate to its object in either of two ways. (1) It may merely  
 x establish detailed facts about the object and its concept (with the concept being supplied from elsewhere); this is •theoretical knowledge by reason. (2) Or it may make the object actual; this is •practical knowledge by reason. In each of these, the pure part—the part in which reason reaches *a priori* results about its object—must be expounded all by itself, however much or little it may contain. It mustn’t get mixed up with the part that comes from other sources. . . .

Mathematics and physics are the two sciences in which reason yields theoretical knowledge, and they have to use a

*priori* methods to establish their results. Mathematics uses *only* those methods; physics uses them too, but in combination with methods appropriate to sources of knowledge other than reason.

For as far back as the history of human reason reaches, mathematics—directed by the admirable Greeks—travelled the secure •path of a science. But don’t think that this was as easy for mathematics as it was for logic. To find that royal •road (or rather: to *make* that royal road), rea- xi  
 son had to attend only to itself; whereas mathematics, I believe, was left groping about for a long time (especially among the Egyptians). What transformed it was a *revolution*, brought about by the inspiration of one man—someone whose work put mathematics unmistakably on the secure road of a science. The history of this revolution in the way of thinking. . . .has not been preserved; nor has the name of its author. But. . . .we have evidence that the memory of the alteration brought about by the discovery of the first few yards of this new path seemed exceedingly important to mathematicians, and that made it unforgettable. The person who first demonstrated •the properties of• the isosceles triangle (perhaps Thales, but it doesn’t matter) had a *light* dawn in his mind. He found that what he had to do was not xii

(1) to note what he saw in this figure •as drawn on a tablet•,

or even

(2) to attend to its bare concept, and read off the triangle’s properties •directly• from that;

but rather

(3) to let his *a priori* concept of the isosceles triangle guide him in *constructing* such a triangle •in his mind•, and then to attribute to isosceles triangles only such properties as followed necessarily from what he had put into his construct.

[We'll hear more about this later, e.g. on page 136, but now is a good time to get hold of the basic idea. One might think that the proper method in geometry must either be

- based on geometrical figures that we can see or touch, or
- based on abstract concepts, and therefore not appealing to the senses.

The right method, according to Kant, takes one element from (1) and another from (2): the geometer doesn't look at or touch empirically given geometrical figures, but works *a priori*; so he starts with the concept of the figure he is interested in; but he doesn't get his results directly from that concept; rather, he lets the concept guide him in constructing a figure in his head; then he reads off the figure's properties from *that*. Kant hasn't yet said *why* he thinks this is right. That will come.]

Natural science was much slower in finding •the highway of science. It's only about a century and a half since Francis Bacon made an ingenious proposal that helped to show the way to •it and also energized those who were already on its tracks; so the discovery of this road, too, can be explained by a sudden revolution in the way of thinking. In this discussion I'll attend only to the empirical aspects of natural science.

Consider some of the great events in the history of science (they are in chronological order, but I'm not claiming to be historically precise about them—we don't know enough for that):

- Galileo rolled balls of a weight chosen by himself down an inclined plane;
- Torricelli made the air bear a weight that he had previously calculated to be equal to that of a known column of water;
- Stahl changed metals into calx by removing •something from them, and then changed them back into metal by putting •it back again.

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With each of these events, a light dawned on all those who study Nature. They came to understand that reason has

insight only into what it itself produces, according to its own design; rather than letting Nature guide its movements by keeping it on a leash, so to speak, reason must take the initiative and. . . .compel Nature to answer its questions. Accidental observations, not made according to any previously designed plan, can never come together into a *necessary* law—which is what reason looks for and has to have. Reason must approach Nature with, in one hand,

- its principles, which allow it (as nothing else does) to count patterns among appearances as laws,

and, in the other hand,

- experiments that it has devised in the light of these principles.

That's the only way reason can learn from Nature; but •don't be misled by the phrase 'learn from'. Reason is to be instructed by Nature not •like a pupil who soaks up everything his teacher chooses to say, but rather •like a judge who makes witnesses answer the questions he puts to them. Thus even physics owes the revolution in its way of thinking to the insight that

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- anything that *unaided* reason won't be able to know—i.e. anything that reason has to learn from Nature—it must *look for in* Nature under the guidance of what reason itself *puts into* Nature. (But it is genuinely looking into Nature for something, not merely dictating something to Nature.)

That's how natural science, after many centuries of groping about, was first brought onto the secure path of a science.

Metaphysics is a completely self-contained speculative [see note on page 4] knowledge through reason; it soars above the teachings of experience; its knowledge comes through mere concepts (and not, like mathematics, through bringing concepts to bear on •mentally constructed• intuitions). It is older than all the other sciences, and would survive even

if all the others were swallowed up by an all-consuming barbarism. And yet metaphysics still hasn't had the good fortune to be able to enter on the secure course of a science. In metaphysics reason is constantly getting *stuck*, even when the laws into which it claims to have *a priori* insight are not high-flown or esoteric or suspect, but confirmed by the commonest experience. In metaphysics we keep having to retrace our steps, because we keep finding that the path doesn't lead where we want to go; and metaphysicians are so far from reaching unanimity in their views that this area is a *battlefield*, and indeed one that seems to be just right for testing one's powers in mock combat. Why 'mock'? Because on this battlefield no warrior has ever won an inch of territory, and none has been able to win in such a way as to take permanent possession of any ground. So there's really no doubt that the procedure of metaphysics, so far, has been a mere groping, and (it gets worse!) a groping among mere concepts.

Why hasn't the secure path of science been found yet for metaphysics? 'Perhaps it is impossible.' But in that case, why has Nature *afflicted* our reason with the restless search for such a path, as though this were one of reason's most important tasks? Worse still: if reason, in one of the most important parts of our pursuit of knowledge, doesn't just desert us but lures us on with delusions and in the end betrays us, why should we trust it in any area of thought? If the path—the secure path along which metaphysics can be a real science—does exist but we haven't yet found it, a less despairing question arises: what indications are there to encourage us in our hope that by renewed efforts we will have better fortune than our predecessors did?

Well, mathematics became what it now is through a single all-at-once revolution, and the same is true of natural science. These *remarkable* examples prompt in me the

thought that we should focus on the essential element in the change in the ways of thinking that has done them so much good, and try, at least as an experiment, to reproduce that essential element in the context of metaphysics, so far as their analogy with it will permit. (The basis or framework for the analogy is that all three are domains of knowledge in which reason is involved.) What follows is my attempt at that experiment, i.e. my attempt to sketch a revolution in metaphysics that will mirror the revolutions in mathematics and natural science. Until now it has been assumed that all **our knowledge must conform to the objects** that it is knowledge of; but working on that basis we have never succeeded in learning anything—never *added* anything to our stock of knowledge—in an *a priori* way through concepts. So let us now change our tack and experiment with doing metaphysics on the basis of the assumption that **the objects must conform to our knowledge**. That would fit better with the upshot that we want, namely *a priori* knowledge of the objects that will tell us something definite about them before they are given to us. [Here, 'given to us' means 'presented to us in sense-experience'. If the knowledge in question were available to us only *after* the objects were given to us, it wouldn't be *a priori*, and so it wouldn't be metaphysics.] This would be like Copernicus's basic idea: having found that he wasn't getting far with explaining the movements of the heavenly bodies while assuming that the whole flock of them was revolving around the observer, he tried making the observer revolve and leaving the stars at rest. Well, in metaphysics we can try the same idea as applied to the *intuition* of objects. [See note on 'intuition' on page 4.] If our intuition has to conform to the constitution of the objects, I don't see how we can know anything about them *a priori*; but I can easily conceive of having *a priori* knowledge of objects if they (as objects of the senses) have to conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition.

That's the first part of my proposed as-it-were-Copernican revolution; now for the second part. If the intuitions I have been talking about are to constitute knowledge of anything, there must be more here than just intuitions; I'll have to take them to be representations of something that is their object—i.e. what they are intuitions *of*—and my conclusions about what the object is like must come through those representations. Any beliefs I reach about what an object is like will involve me in using *concepts* of it—if I come to think that something is solid, say, I'll have to bring my concept of solidity to bear on it. [Kant speaks of my 'determination of the object. This word and its cognates occur about a thousand times in this book, and the present version will deal with them variously, depending on the context. In many contexts, including this one, 'belief about what x is like' is about right: a determination is centrally a *settling* or *making definite* or *fixing* or *pinning down*; so the underlying idea is that of settling on or accepting some proposition about the detailed nature of x.] Now there are two ways in which my concepts might fit the objects of my inquiries. One is this:

- My concepts, which I employ in my beliefs about what the object is like, conform to the objects.

If that is right, though, I am back in my old difficulty, namely that it seems impossible for me to know anything *a priori* about the object. The second alternative is this:

- The objects conform to my concepts, or—the same thing in different words—
- The experience in which the objects are known conforms to my concepts.

The focus on experience is legitimate, because it is *only* in experience that the objects can be known as things that are *given*. This second alternative offers a gleam of hope: experience is a kind of knowledge in which the understanding must be involved; the understanding has rules that I must presuppose in myself before any object is given to

me, meaning that I have the rules *a priori*; the rules are embodied in concepts which must also be *a priori*. Why? Well, I can't get the concepts from experience, i.e. learn from experience what the rules are, because these concepts (these rules) are essentially involved in my *having* experience in the first place. So I have these *a priori* concepts, and all objects of experience *must* conform to them—and *that* is how my concepts fit the objects of experience. As for objects considered as items that are thought through reason but... can't be given in experience at all, the attempt to *think* them... will provide a splendid test of what we are adopting as our new way of thinking, namely that all we can know of things *a priori* is what we have put into them.<sup>2</sup>

This experiment succeeds as well as we could wish, and it promises the secure course of a science to metaphysics in its

<sup>2</sup> This method, modelled on that of those who study Nature, thus consists in this: to seek the elements of pure reason in *what admits of being confirmed or refuted by an experiment*. Now, the propositions of pure reason, especially if they venture beyond the boundaries of all possible experience, can't be tested in the natural-science manner, namely by performing experiments *on their objects*. The experiment will have to be performed on *concepts and principles that we assume a priori*, and this is how it will have to be conducted: We organize our thoughts involving these concepts and principles in such a way that the same objects can be considered from two different standpoints—

- as objects of the senses and the understanding (this is the side of experience), and
- as objects that are not experienced but merely *thought* (this is the side of reason that is isolated from experience and trying to get beyond the bounds of it).

If we now find that when things are considered from this twofold standpoint all goes well with the principle of pure reason, and that if only one standpoint is adopted an unavoidable conflict breaks out between reason and itself, then the experiment decides for the correctness of this distinction between objects of the senses and objects of thought.

**first** part, where it is concerned only with *a priori* concepts to which corresponding objects can be given in experience. For after our thought-change, we can very well (1) explain how *a priori* knowledge is possible; and, what's more, we can (2) provide satisfactory proofs of the laws that are the *a priori* basis of Nature (with •Nature understood as •the sum total of all the objects of experience). Neither of these feats was possible in our earlier way of going about things.

But from this account of our capacity for *a priori* knowledge, in the first part of metaphysics, there emerges a very strange result which seems to threaten what we want to do in the **second** part of metaphysics. What the latter is essentially concerned with is *getting beyond the boundaries of possible experience*; but the revolutionary account of how *a priori* knowledge is possible seems to imply that that's precisely what we can't do! But now there's an other experiment we can perform. It will put to work, and in that way provide a cross-check on, the conclusion we reached in our first shot at explaining *a priori* knowledge, namely that such knowledge encompasses only *appearances*, leaving the *thing in itself* as something that is real in itself but unknown to us. [In what follows, Kant introduces topics that he hasn't in the least explained and, as he admits a little later, announcing results that he won't properly argue for until the Preface and Introduction are behind us and we get into the book proper. In the meantime, think of 'the unconditioned' as covering such things as (1) a cause that hasn't itself been caused, (2) an expanse of space that isn't nested in a larger space, (3) a portion of matter that doesn't have any parts, (4) a period of time that isn't part of a longer period. In this context, calling a thing 'conditioned' is saying that it is caused, or surrounded by space, or divisible into smaller parts, and so on. Kant makes all this hard to think about by discussing it all at once, using the very broad terms 'condition' and 'unconditioned'; more specific cases will be discussed in the Dialectic, hundreds of pages down the line. Still, you can get the hang of the general *shape* of what he is

saying here.] What forces us to go beyond the boundaries of experience and of all appearances is the fact that reason demands—necessarily and legitimately—that for every kind of *condition* there is (in things in themselves) something *unconditioned*. The demand for 'the unconditioned' is a demand for a completion of the series of conditions—e.g. reason is interested in a cause that wasn't caused, because it is interested in the idea of a complete list of **all the causes**. Now, suppose we find that these two things are the case:

- When we assume that our knowledge from experience conforms to the objects as things in themselves, the very thought of *the unconditioned* leads to contradiction;
- When we assume that our representation of things as they are given to us doesn't conform to these things as they are in themselves, but rather that these objects as appearances conform to our way of representing them, then the contradiction disappears.

[For Kant, 'representation' applies both to a sense-presentation or intuition and also to a concept. He uses the double-barreled word here because he is making a double-barreled point: about how objects as intuited have to conform to *our* way of intuiting, and how objects as given in experience and studied by us have to conform to *our* ways of conceptualizing.] Those two results, taken together, imply that the unconditioned can't be present in •things insofar as they are known to us, i.e. given to us through our senses, but is present in •things insofar as we don't know them in that way, i.e. things in themselves; and that definitely confirms the view that we were putting to the test here, namely that things as we experience them should be distinguished from things as they are in themselves.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This experiment of pure reason has much in common with something that chemists do. . . . The metaphysician separates pure *a priori* knowledge into two very different elements—knowledge of things

Now, after **speculative** reason [see note on 'speculative' on page 4] has been denied all progress in this field of the supersensible, there is still a question we can try to answer:

In reason's **practical** knowledge are there any data that will give us a fix on the transcendent reason-based concept of *the unconditioned*, in such a way as to reach beyond the boundaries of all possible experience?

If so, that gives metaphysics what it has wanted all along, *a priori* knowledge through reason, but only from a practical standpoint. If we are planning to work with that practical standpoint, speculative reason will still have done something for us, namely: cleared a space for reason to stretch out into, even if it couldn't put anything in it; and that leaves us free to listen to reason's demand that we fill it, if we can, through practical data of reason. . . .

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The attempt to transform the accepted procedure of metaphysics, completely revolutionizing it following the example of the geometers and natural scientists—*that* is what this critique of pure speculative reason is all about. This is a treatise on method, not a system of the science itself; but it will sketch the entire ground-plan of the science of metaphysics, showing its boundaries and its whole internal structure. It can do this because pure speculative reason has this peculiarity: it can measure its own powers according to its different ways of choosing what to think about, and also can give a complete list of all the ways it has of confronting itself with problems, which enables it to give a complete

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as appearances and knowledge of things in themselves. The dialectic brings them together again, harmonised by reason's indispensable idea of *the unconditioned*, and finds that the only way to reach that harmony is through that distinction—that separation of the two radically different kinds of knowledge—and *that* shows the distinction to be sound.

preliminary sketch of a whole system of metaphysics. It *can* do these things, and it *should*. Regarding 'it can': in *a priori* knowledge anything that can be ascribed to the objects must be something that the thinking subject derived from himself. Regarding 'it should': so far as sources of knowledge are concerned, pure speculative reason is like an organism; it is an entirely separate and self-contained unity, with each part existing for the sake of all the others and vice versa; so that we can't have absolute confidence in one employment of one of its functions unless we have investigated this function in all its relationships through the entire use of pure reason. That makes the whole project look horribly difficult, but there is something else that makes it easier again, namely: if by this critique [or Kant may mean: 'if by this *Critique*', i.e. 'this book'] metaphysics is brought onto the secure path of a science, then it can *fully* deal with the *entire* field of kinds of knowledge belonging to it, and thus can complete its work and leave it for posterity as a knowledge-source to which nothing can ever be added, because it has to do solely with principles, and with the limitations on their use that are set by the principles themselves. (This is a rare good fortune that metaphysics enjoys. It isn't shared by any other reason-driven science that has to do with objects. I'm not talking about logic here, because *it* deals not with objects but only with the form of thinking in general.) Hence, as a basic science, metaphysics is *obliged* to achieve this completeness. . . .

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[The word 'criticism', which we'll soon encounter, translates Kant's word *Kritik*. When he uses *Kritik* as a count-noun, it is translated by 'critique'—'this critique', 'a critique'. But when he uses it as a mass-noun, as here, it can't be translated by 'critique', because that has no a mass-noun use: it isn't idiomatic English to say 'Critique has purified metaphysics'. In these contexts *Kritik* is translated by 'criticism'.]

·NEGATIVE V. POSITIVE IN RELATION TO SPECULATIVE V.  
PRACTICAL·

You may want to say: 'A metaphysics that criticism has purified—but only by bringing it to a dead halt! What sort of treasure is *that* to leave to posterity?' A quick overview of this book might indeed lead you think that the only good it does is negative, teaching us *not* to venture with speculative reason beyond the boundaries of experience. Well, that is indeed its primary value; but when we look further we see that this ·negative value· is also positive. If speculative reason takes its principles beyond their proper boundaries, it isn't actually *extending* our use of reason, but rather *narrowing* it, ·so that the instruction *not* to do this is an instruction to *enlarge* our use of reason, which is a positive doctrine·. Why is that misbehaviour by speculative reason a narrowing? Because it threatens to push the boundaries of sensibility (to which these principles really belong) out so far that *everything* lies inside them, and this puts our use of pure **(practical) reason out of business**. Thus, a critique that is negative in its work of limiting the speculative use of reason also has a very important positive function, namely removing an obstacle that limits, or even threatens to wipe out, the practical use of reason. (To see this, we have only to grasp that there is an absolutely necessary •practical use of pure reason—the moral use—in which it has to stretch out beyond the boundaries of sensibility. In doing this it doesn't need help from •speculative reason, but it has to be protected from being driven into self-contradiction by interferences from •speculative reason when •it misbehaves.) To deny that this service of criticism is *positively* useful would be like denying that the police are positively useful because their main job is to cause people *not* to behave in ways that disturb the peace and safety of the community. In the analytical part of the critique [or 'in the analytical part of the *Critique*'; but the part in

question includes more than the part of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that has 'Analytic' in its title], these things are proved:

- Space and time are only forms of ·our· sensible intuition, so that the only things that exist in space and time are *things as appearances*.

- Our only concepts of the understanding. . . are ones for which there are corresponding intuitions; so that we can't have knowledge of any object as a thing in itself, but only as an. . . appearance.

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This latter thesis implies that all possible speculative knowledge through reason is confined to objects of experience. Still—and this is important—although we can't •know these objects as things in themselves, we must at least be able to •think them as things in themselves.<sup>4</sup>

For otherwise we would be landed with the absurd conclusion that there could be an *appearance* without *something that appears*. ·And something else important is at stake, as I shall now explain·. Our critique has made it necessary to distinguish •things as objects of experience from •things—the very same things!—in themselves. Now, if we didn't make this distinction (and we wouldn't be making it if we held that things in themselves can't even be *thought*), ·we would lose something very important, which I shall explain in a moment. First, though, I have to sketch a thesis that is going to be defended in this *Critique*·. [This version now alters

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<sup>4</sup> To •know an object, I must be able to prove its possibility (either showing through experience that it is actual, or proving it *a priori* through reason). But I can •think anything I like, as long as I don't contradict myself, i.e. as long as my concept is a possible thought (this is *logical* possibility), even if I can't be sure that it is possible for an object corresponding to it to exist (that would be *real* possibility, making the concept objectively valid). For a concept to be objectively valid, therefore, more is needed than mere logical possibility; but this 'more' needn't be sought in theoretical sources of knowledge; it may lie in practical ones.

the order in which Kant presents things—a re-ordering that should make his thought easier to follow.] This *Critique* will teach that any object should be taken *in a twofold sense*, as •an appearance and as •a thing in itself. It will present a justified list of the pure concepts of the understanding, one of these being the concept of *causality* whose associated principle is the principle of causality, which amounts to a statement of strict determinism. The way the list is justified will imply that the concept (and hence the principle) of causality applies only to things considered as objects of experience, and that things in themselves aren't subject to the principle of causality. If that's all correct, then we can have both of these without contradiction:

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- A person's will is thought of, in terms of its appearance in visible actions, as necessarily subject to the law of Nature, i.e. the principle of causality, i.e. determinism, and thus as not being free.
- The very same will is thought of as belonging to a thing in itself (namely, that person's soul considered as a thing in itself), as not subject to the law of Nature, and thus as being free.

Speculative reason won't (and even more clearly empirical observation won't) allow me to •know my own soul as a thing in itself. So the thought of freedom as something it has can't work its way into anything that I know, which is why attributing freedom to it as a thing in itself doesn't clash with applying determinism to it as a thing that appears. . . . Still, I can •think freedom, i.e. the representation of it is at least not self-contradictory, as long as I hold on to the critical distinction between the two ways of representing (sensible and intellectual), along with the limit it sets to the pure concepts of the understanding and hence to the principles flowing from them. Now I can explain why the failure to distinguish things as they appear from things as

they are in themselves would bring us a great loss. If we didn't have that distinction, the principle of causality would hold for all things in general; *everything* would be part of the deterministic causal mechanism of Nature. [For Kant, 'Nature' is always tied to the notion of things as they *appear*.] In that case, it would obviously be self-contradictory to say of a single human soul that its will is •free and yet at the same time •subject to natural necessity, i.e. not free; because without the great distinction we would be taking *the soul* in the same sense in both propositions. Why would this be such a big loss? Well, morality necessarily presupposes that our will is free (in the strictest sense). The case for this comes from certain *a priori* practical principles contained in our reason, principles that would be absolutely impossible except on the presupposition of freedom. Now, if speculative reason had proved that freedom can't even be *thought*, then morality's presupposition of freedom would *have to* yield to the other one—i.e. the deterministic principle of causality, as applicable to *everything*—and so •morality would have to be given up in deference to •the mechanism of Nature, because freedom is of the essence of morality. You might think that the mere *thinkability* of freedom isn't enough to rescue morality, but it is. All I need for morality is that freedom doesn't contradict itself, i.e. it should at least be thinkable that the freedom of an action creates no obstacle to that same action's belonging within the mechanism of Nature; I don't have to have any insight into *how* this might come about.—Thus, the doctrine of morality stands on its own ground, as does the doctrine of Nature; and this wouldn't be so if criticism hadn't taught us of our unavoidable ignorance in respect of the things in themselves, thus limiting our theoretical knowledge to mere appearances.

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•END OF NEGATIVE/POSITIVE IN RELATION TO SPECULATIVE/PRACTICAL•



The critical principles of pure reason can be shown to be positively useful, on the same lines as that, in connection with the concept of •God (and of the •simple nature of our soul, but for brevity's sake I shan't go into that here, except to remark that the thought of the soul as simple—i.e. having no parts—goes with the thought of it as immortal-).  
 xxx In the practical use of my reason I *have to* presuppose •God, •freedom and •immortality; and I *can't* presuppose them unless I deprive speculative reason of its pretension to extravagant insights. Why can't I? Because it can get to such 'insights' only by helping itself to principles that really apply only to objects of possible experience; when you apply such a principle to something that can't be an object of experience, you turn it into something that *can* be an object of possible experience, which is to say that you *turn it into* an appearance; and the upshot of that is to abolish things as they are in themselves, and thus to declare that pure reason can't have any practical extension. So I had to deny •knowledge in order to make room for faith [*Glaube*, religious faith]. The dogmatism of metaphysics, i.e. the preconception that there can be progress in metaphysics without reason's being subjected to criticism, is the true source of all •unbelief—always very dogmatic—that wars against morality. [For Kant, 'dogmatic' is a technical term, which he explains on page 19. A procedure is 'dogmatic' if it relies on an intellectual faculty—reason or understanding—without first considering whether that faculty is up to the job.] Back now to the challenge about what we are leaving 'to posterity'. It can't be very hard to bequeath to posterity a systematic metaphysics, constructed according to the criticism of pure reason, but still this bequest is quite valuable. To see its value, you have only (1) to compare •the culture of reason that is set on the course of a secure science with •the rootless groping  
 xxxi and empty-headed wandering that reason engages in when

it hasn't been subjected to criticism. Or (2) to think about young people who are hungry for knowledge, and consider how much better they might spend their time than in the ordinary dogmatism that encourages them, so early and so strongly, •to engage in facile hair-splitting about things that they don't understand. . . .or even •to invent new thoughts and opinions while neglecting the better-grounded sciences. Or, above all, (3) to take account of the way criticism puts an end for ever to objections against morality and religion, doing this by the Socratic method of showing clearly the ignorance of the opponent. For there always has been, and always will be, *some* kind of metaphysics, so there will always be a *dialectic of pure reason*, because dialectic is natural to reason. [In this context 'dialectic' means, roughly, 'tendency to get into bad tangles']. So the first and most important task of philosophy is to deprive dialectic of its bad influence, once and for all, by blocking off the source of the errors.

Despite this important **change** in the field of the sciences, subjecting speculative reason to the •loss of the possessions it used to *think* it had, nothing has happened to diminish the good that the doctrines of pure reason have done for general  
 xxxii human interests. The •loss touches only the monopoly of the schools [here = 'philosophy departments'], and doesn't touch the interests of humanity. Bring out your most inflexible dogmatist, so that I can question him about some proofs:

- the proof that our soul survives death, based on the simplicity of substance,
- the proof that our will is free despite universal determinism, based on the subtle though ineffective distinctions between subjective and objective practical necessity,
- the proof of the existence of God, based on the concept of a most real being (or on. . . .the necessity of a first mover).

My question to the dogmatist is this: After the schools have come up with those 'proofs', have any of them reached the public or had the slightest influence over its convictions? If •that has never happened, and can't be expected ever to happen because such subtle theorising is out of the intellectual reach of ordinary folk; if instead •the conviction that reaches the public had to be based on quite different reasons (or on none); then •these possessions—the conclusions of the above three arguments—not only remain undisturbed but will even gain in respect when the schools are instructed that when they are dealing with universal human concerns •they shouldn't aim at any insight that is too broad or too elevated to be grasped by the great multitude (who are always most worthy of our respect), and •should limit themselves to developing only grounds of proof that everyone can grasp and that are sufficient from a moral standpoint. (I spoke of the public's having 'quite different reasons' for the conclusions of the three proofs; I had better say what they are. •For survival after death: humanity's notable capacity for never being satisfied by what *this* world has to offer. . . . leading to the hope of a future life. •For freedom: merely the clear exhibition of our duties, in opposition to all claims of the inclinations, leading to the consciousness of freedom. •For the existence of God: the splendid order, beauty, and providence displayed everywhere in Nature, leading to the belief in a wise and great author of the world.) The **change** thus concerns only the arrogant claims of the schools, which would like to be taken for the sole experts and guardians of such truths (as they can rightly be taken in many other branches of knowledge), sharing with the public only the •use of such truths, keeping the •key to them for themselves. . . . But provision is made for the speculative philosopher to make a more moderate claim. He will still be the exclusive trustee of a science that is useful to the public even without

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their knowing it, namely the *critique of reason*. This can't ever be popular [see note on page 2], but it doesn't need to be: subtle objections to useful truths don't enter people's minds, any more than do fine-spun arguments *for* those truths. But the schools—like everyone who raises himself to speculation—inevitably encounter both •the arguments for and the arguments against; so the critique of reason is obliged to prevent the scandal that is bound to break out sooner or later even among •ordinary people—stopping it once and for all, by a fundamental inquiry into the rights of speculative reason. In the absence of criticism, metaphysicians are sure to get involved in the scandal (and eventually even the clergy among them will get involved), leading them to twist their own doctrines. Only through criticism can we *cut the roots* of •materialism, fatalism, atheism, agnosticism, fanaticism, and superstition, all of which can do harm to everyone; and finally also the roots of •idealism and scepticism, which are dangerous to the schools rather than to the public, to which they can't easily be transmitted. . . .

[In the remaining few pages of this Preface, Kant (1) that governments that care about academic matters should support criticism rather than its opponents; (2) explains that he is not opposing all 'dogmatic' procedures in the sciences, but only 'the way pure reason proceeds dogmatically without first criticizing its own abilities'; (3) praises the Leibnizian philosopher Wolff, 'the greatest among all dogmatic philosophers', who pioneered 'a spirit of thoroughness in Germany' and is not personally to blame for his failure to see that before reason is used it should be subjected to criticism; (4) compares and contrasts the first and second editions, and (5) offers a long footnote concerning his so-called 'Refutation of Idealism'. The main content of that footnote will be given in this version as part of the text on page 128, right after the Refutation of Idealism.]

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## Introduction

### 1. The distinction between pure and empirical knowledge

1 All our knowledge begins with experience—there’s no doubt about *that*. How else would our faculty of knowledge be stirred into activity if not by objects that stimulate our senses? (Part of what the objects do is to *produce* our representations; another part is to set our understanding to work on inter-relating them—connecting them or separating them—and thereby working up the raw material of sensible impressions into the knowledge of objects that we call ‘experience’.) None of our knowledge comes earlier than experience; all knowledge begins at the same time as experience.

But although all our knowledge begins *with* experience, that doesn’t mean that it all comes *from* experience. The situation might well be this:

Even our experiential knowledge has two ingredients:  
 •what we get through ·sense·-impressions and •what our own faculty of knowledge provides out of itself, with sensible impressions merely prompting it to do this. ·We aren’t immediately aware of the second ingredient because· distinguishing it from the basic raw material requires skill, which requires attention, which requires long practice.

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So there’s a question to be investigated here, and not immediately brushed aside, namely: Is there any such knowledge that is independent of all experience and even of all impressions of the senses? If there is, then it is what we call *a priori* knowledge, as distinct from ‘empirical’ knowledge, whose sources are *a posteriori*, namely in experience.

[Now Kant has a paragraph warning us against using ‘*a priori*’ in a certain weak sense that he says is current. He continues this theme in his next paragraph:]

In this book, therefore, I will understand by ‘*a priori*

knowledge’ not knowledge that comes independently of this 3  
 or that experience, but rather what occurs absolutely independently of all experience. Opposed to it there is empirical knowledge, i.e. knowledge that is possible only *a posteriori*, through experience. An item of *a priori* knowledge is called ‘pure’ if nothing empirical is mixed into it. The proposition ‘Every alteration has its cause’ is an *a priori* proposition, but it isn’t pure because the concept of *alteration* has to be taken from experience.

### 2. We have some items of *a priori* knowledge, and even the common understanding is never without them

What’s at issue here is a secure way of marking off pure items of knowledge from empirical ones. Experience of course teaches us that something is constituted thus and so, but not that it *couldn’t be* otherwise. First, then: if a proposition P in being thought is thought along with its necessity, it is an *a priori* judgment; and if every proposition from which P is derived is also valid as a necessary proposition, then P is absolutely *a priori*. Second: experience never gives its judgments true or strict universality, but only assumed and comparative universality through induction, enabling us to say of this or that rule ‘*We haven’t yet observed any* 4  
 exception to it’. Thus if a judgment is thought in strict universality, i.e. in such a way that no exception at all is allowed to be possible, then it is not derived from experience, but rather is valid absolutely *a priori*. You have an empirically universal proposition, therefore, when you choose to strengthen a proposition from ‘in most cases’ to ‘always’, as in the proposition ‘All bodies are heavy’. But if a proposition is strictly universal, it is *essentially* so. ·This isn’t something you just decide to give to the proposition·; knowing it requires a special source of knowledge, namely a capacity for *a priori* knowledge. Necessity and strict universality, therefore, are

secure indications that an item of knowledge is *a priori*, and they always go together. Sometimes one of them is easier to apply as a criterion, sometimes the other; so it's advisable to keep them in hand separately. We won't lose anything by relying on only one in a given case, because each of them is an infallible test of apriority.

It's easy to show that human knowledge actually does contain judgments that are necessary and in the strictest sense 'universal', i.e. pure *a priori* judgments. If you want an example from the sciences, look at all the propositions  
5 of mathematics. If you want one from the most ordinary uses of the understanding, the proposition *Every alteration must have a cause* will serve the purpose. (Hume tried to get this proposition out of the experience of a frequent association of two kinds of event, first  $K_1$  then  $K_2$ , and a habit of connecting the two event-kinds—a habit that arises from the association. This habit creates a *subjective* necessity—'When I encounter a  $K_1$  event I can't help expecting a  $K_2$  event.'—but this approach can't capture the causal proposition, because the very concept of *cause* so obviously contains the concepts of *necessary connection with an effect* and *of strict universality* of the relevant rule; this is objective, not subjective, necessity.) But we could set examples aside, and instead prove *a priori* that our knowledge includes *a priori* principles. The proof would contend that such principles are needed if experience is to be possible. If we had no such principles, where would experience get its certainty from? It would have to resort to rules with an empirical basis; but they would all be contingent, so that *they* couldn't serve as first principles, i.e. as absolutely basic starting-points. Anyway, I'll settle for having set out the fact of the pure use of our faculty of knowledge, and the criterion for recognizing it. But it's not only in *judgments* that an *a priori* origin is revealed; it

also happens with some *concepts*. Take your experiential concept of *body* and remove, piecemeal, everything empirical that it contains—colour, hardness or softness, weight, even impenetrability—and you'll find that the body has vanished but the space that was occupied by it remains, and you can't get rid of it. Or again: take your empirical concept  
6 of any kind of object you like (it doesn't have to be a body) and remove from it all the properties that experience tells you about; and you will be left with something you can't get rid of in that way, namely that through which you think of it as *substance* or as dependent on a substance, although this concept is more determinate—less abstract and undetailed—than the general concept of *object*. Thus, convinced by the necessity with which this concept forces itself on you, you must concede that it is lodged in your faculty of knowledge independently of all experience.

### **3. Philosophy needs a science to show that there can be a priori knowledge, and to establish its principles and its scope**

But those points aren't as eloquent as the fact that some of our items of knowledge. . . seem to push back the boundaries of our judgments and knowledge—beyond all the limits of experience—doing this by means of concepts to which no corresponding object can ever be given in experience.

These items of knowledge go beyond the world of the senses and so can't be guided or corrected by experience, and it is precisely in *them* that we must conduct the inquiry into  
7 our reason. I regard this inquiry as far more important, and more sublime in its goal, than anything the understanding can learn in the domain of appearances. I would rather run every risk of going wrong than be turned off from such important investigations because of worried second thoughts of my own or the contempt and indifference of

others. These unavoidable problems of pure reason are •God, •freedom and •immortality. And the science that tackles them is called metaphysics. It goes through all kinds of preparatory moves, but its final aim is just to solve those three problems.

At the outset, metaphysics proceeds in the dogmatic manner, i.e. it confidently tackles this task without first examining whether it is capable of carrying out such a great undertaking. Now, consider this scenario:

On leaving the territory of experience, we *don't* immediately build the bits of knowledge that we have into a big structure, without knowing where that knowledge comes from, and using principles whose origin one doesn't know—i.e. erecting the structure without care for its foundations. We are especially led into this caution about foundations by the fact that we raised long ago the question how the understanding could come to all this knowledge *a priori*, what its extent is, how valid it is, and what value it has.

8 It would be utterly *natural* for that to be what actually happens, if by 'natural' we mean what properly and reasonably ought to happen. But if in calling it 'natural' we mean that it's what *does* happen, then on the contrary nothing is more natural and comprehensible than that this investigation into foundations should long have been neglected. Why is it comprehensible? Well, one part of our *a priori* knowledge—namely, the mathematical—has been reliable for centuries, and that leads to optimistic expectations about others as well, although these may be of an entirely different kind. Also, once we are outside the circle of experience, we can be sure of not being *refuted* by experience; and the charm of expanding our knowledge is so great that we'll go on doing it unless we bump into a clear contradiction. And we can avoid those if we fabricate carefully—but this doesn't alter

the fact that that's what they are, *fabrications*. Mathematics gives us a fine example of how far we can go with *a priori* knowledge independently of experience. It attends to objects and items of knowledge only so far as these can be exhibited in intuition; but it is easy to overlook this, because the intuitions in question can themselves be given *a priori* [see note on page 8], which makes it hard to distinguish them from mere pure *concepts*. Captivated by this seeming proof of the power of reason, the drive for expansion sees no bounds. The light dove in free flight, cutting through the air and feeling its resistance, might get the idea that it could fly better in airless space! That's what happened to Plato: he abandoned the world of the senses because it sets such narrow limits for the understanding, and ventured out beyond it, on the wings of the platonic 'ideas', into the empty space of pure understanding. What he didn't see was that his efforts weren't getting him anywhere because he had no resistance, no support against which he could brace himself, getting traction so as to start his understanding moving. That's what human reason usually does when theorizing: it completes its edifice as soon as it can, and *then* looks into whether the ground has been adequately prepared for it! . . . What keeps us free from all worry and suspicion during the construction, and soothes us with an appearance of thoroughness, is this. Much—perhaps most—of the business of our reason consists in analyses of the concepts we already have of objects. This yields us a multitude of bits of knowledge that are treasured as if they were new insights. Really they are nothing of the kind: all they do is to bring to light and clarify things that are already thought in our concepts (though in a confused way); they don't add anything to the content of our concepts, but merely set the concepts apart from each other. [Kant said that the **form** of those items of *a priori* knowledge is what leads us to their being treasured etc., and that they don't extend the **matter** or content

etc. He presumably means to echo the form/matter distinction as it occurs in Aristotle and his followers. He very often speaks of the 'form' of inner sense and the 'form' of outer sense; he plays this off against 'matter' less often. Notable occurrences are on pages 28, 36, and 42 and 10 145.] Still, this procedure does yield real *a priori* knowledge, which grows in a secure and useful fashion; and that leads reason to advance, not knowing that it was doing so under false colours, to make assertions of a completely different sort—assertions in which reason *adds* to a given concept something that is entirely alien to it (and does this *a priori*!). It isn't known *how* it could do this; that question wasn't even raised. So I shall deal right away with the difference between these two sorts of knowledge.

#### 4. The difference between analytic and synthetic judgments

In every judgment involving the thought of the relation of the subject to the predicate, this relation is possible in two different ways. (I'll state this for affirmative judgments; it will be easy to re-apply what I say to negative judgments.) Either

- the predicate B belongs to the subject A as something that's hidden *in* this concept A, or
- B lies entirely *outside* the concept A but is *connected* to it.

In the former case I call the judgment 'analytic', in the latter I call it 'synthetic'. In each case there is a connection, but in an analytic judgment the connection of the predicate to the subject is thought through identity—A is connected with B by being identical with a part of B—while in a synthetic judgment the connection is thought without identity. An analytic judgment could be called a judgment 11 of •clarification: its predicate doesn't add anything to the concept of the subject, but only dissects the subject so as to set out its component concepts, which were already

thought in it, though confusedly. A synthetic judgment could be called a judgment of •amplification: it *adds* to the concept of the subject a predicate that wasn't thought in it at all—even confusedly—and couldn't have been extracted from it through any analysis. If I say 'All bodies are extended', this is an analytic judgment. To find that extension is connected with the concept that I link with the word 'body', I don't need to go beyond that concept; all I need do is to analyse it, i.e. become conscious of the manifold that I always think when I have a thought of *body*—and then I'll find *in* it the concept of extension.

[The noun 'manifold' occurs hundreds of times in this work, and can't always be avoided. A manifold is an item that is complex, has many parts or elements. When I have a thought about *body*, it is a thought of something that is

a substance, extended, impenetrable, non-sentient, shaped,

and perhaps other elements as well; that complex of thoughts is a manifold. Another example: the phrase 'the manifold of sensibility' refers to the complex totality of raw sensory intake—what William James called the 'blooming buzzing confusion'. But we'll see in item (b) on page 33 that a straight line is also a manifold, because although it isn't qualitatively various it does have many parts.]

If on the other hand I say 'All bodies are heavy', this is a synthetic judgment: its predicate is not a *part* of what is involved in my general thought of *body*; it is being *added* to the subject, which is what makes this a synthetic judgment.

Judgments of experience are all synthetic. It would be absurd to base an analytic judgment on experience, because I don't need to go beyond my concept of the subject in order to formulate the judgment, and I don't need the testimony of experience for that. The proposition that *a body is extended* is established *a priori*, and isn't a judgment of experience. For before I appeal to experience I already have everything I 12 need for that judgment in my concept of *body*—I draw the predicate out from *that*. In extracting *extended* from *body*

I am guided by the principle of contradiction—I find that predicate in that subject by coming to realize that *x* is an *unextended body* is self-contradictory—and this method of extraction makes me aware that the judgment is necessary, which I could never have learned from experience. On the other hand, although I don't at all include the predicate *weight* in the general concept of *body*, the concept of *body* designates an object that I find in one part of experience, and I can add to it concepts of other parts of the same experience, treating them as belonging with the concept *body*; and of course what I have in mind in the present context is the 'other part of experience' that is designated by the concept *weight*. I can first know the concept of *body* analytically, through the characters of extension, impenetrability, shape etc., which are all thought in this concept. But when I look back on the experience from which I derived this concept of *body*, I find that *weight* is also always connected in experience with the characteristics of which the concept of body is made up, so I add *weight*, synthetically, as a predicate to that concept; and this, unlike analysis, enlarges my knowledge. So it is experience that makes possible a synthesis [= 'a putting-together'] that brings together the predicate-concept *weight* with the concept of *body*. Neither concept contains the other, but they belong to one another because they are, though only contingently, parts of a single whole, namely experience, which is itself a synthetic combination of intuitions.

13 But in a synthetic *a priori* judgment I don't have this means of help. If I am to go beyond the concept A and learn that another concept B is combined with it, what am I to rely on, given that I don't have the advantage of looking around for a basis in the domain of experience? What makes my synthesis of A with B possible? [In what follows, and in many other places, Kant will use a German expression meaning 'thing

that happens'. But things that happen are *events*, and this version will use 'event' throughout.] Take the proposition 'Every event has its cause'. My concept of *event* contains such ingredients as *existence that was preceded by a time when. . .* etc., and analytic judgments can be drawn from that. But the concept of *cause* lies entirely outside the concept of *event*; it signifies something different from the general concept of *event*, and isn't in any way contained in it. So how do I come to say of *events* in general something quite different from that concept, and to learn that the concept *cause* belongs to the concept *event*—indeed belongs to it necessarily, although not by being contained in that concept? What is the unknown something-or-other that the understanding is relying on when it thinks it has found, outside the concept of A, a predicate B that it believes to be connected with it? The unknown something can't be experience, for two reasons: (1) *Every event has its cause* connects *cause* with *event* with greater generality than experience can support; (2) *Every event has a cause* connects the two concepts necessarily, and therefore *a priori*, on the basis of mere concepts (though not by the analysis of mere concepts!). It is terrifically important that we solve this problem, identify the something-or-other that makes synthetic *a priori* judgments possible. Why? Because the entire final aim of our speculative *a priori* knowledge depends on such synthetic principles, ones that amplify. Of course analytic judgments are also important and necessary, but only for giving our concepts the clarity that is needed for strong and secure synthetic judgments that will constitute real additions to our knowledge. 14

### 5. All theoretical sciences of reason contain synthetic *a priori* judgments as principles

In this section I shall illustrate that thesis in connection with each of the theoretical sciences of reason: mathematics,

natural science, and metaphysics.

(1) Mathematical judgments are all synthetic. This proposition seems to have escaped the notice of those who have worked on analysing human reason, and indeed to be directly opposed to all their conjectures; yet it is unquestionably true, and has very important consequences. It was found that the •inferences of the mathematicians all proceed in accordance with the principle of contradiction. . . .; and this led people to think that the fundamental •principles of mathematics could also be known through the principle of contradiction. But they were wrong about this. The principle of contradiction can of course lead one to grasp a synthetic proposition, but only by enabling that proposition to be deduced from another synthetic proposition; it can't ever do the job unaided.

15 First point: genuinely mathematical propositions are all *a priori* judgments, never empirical ones, because they carry necessity with them and you can't get necessity from experience. If you don't accept this, I'll •accommodate you; I'll •restrict my proposition to *pure* mathematics, •saying only that all the propositions of pure mathematics are *a priori*; and this is not just true but analytic, because •the concept of *pure* mathematics already implies that it doesn't contain anything empirical.

To be sure, you might initially think that the proposition  $7 + 5 = 12$  is a merely analytic proposition that follows, via the principle of contradiction, from the concept of *sum of 7 and 5*. But if you look at it more closely you'll find that the concept of *sum of 7 and 5* contains nothing more than *number in which 7 and 5 are united*—that is all. When I have the thought of the sum of 5 and 7, I do *not* thereby have the thought of 12; no matter how long I spend analysing my concept of such a possible sum, I won't find 12 in it. •To arrive at 12 •we have to •go beyond these concepts; we have to •get help from an intuition that corresponds to one of the

concepts (an intuition of one's five fingers, for instance. . . .) and •add the units of the intuited five, one by one, to the concept of 7. . . . So the arithmetical proposition is always synthetic; and you'll see this even more clearly if you take •a pair of •larger numbers, for with them it will be shiningly clear that without getting help from intuition you will never find the sum by means of the mere analysis of your concepts, twist and turn them as you will. 16

Just as little is any principle of pure geometry analytic. *The straight line between two points is the shortest* is a synthetic proposition. For my concept of *straight* has no quantitative content; it is purely qualitative. So the concept of *shortest* is entirely additional to it, and can't be extracted by any analysis from the concept of *straight line*. We have to get help here from intuition; that's the only way we can carry out the synthesis—i.e. can bring *straight* and *shortest* together in a judgment. •What commonly makes us think that the predicate of such necessary judgments is already contained in our concept, making the judgment analytic, is merely ambiguity in the terms that are used. We have the thought that we *should* add the predicate *shortest* to our concept of *straight*, and this necessity—this 'should'—is inherent in those two concepts. •That may seem to come very close to saying that the judgment *A straight line is the shortest between two points* is analytic after all; but you'll see that it really isn't, if you attend carefully to what *exactly* is being said. •The question wasn't

•What **should** we think **in addition to** the concept *straight*?

but rather

•What **do** we think, even if only obscurely, **in** the concept *straight*?

There's no doubt that this predicate is necessarily attached to that subject, but not through being actually thought when



we think the subject—only through an intuition that has to be added to the subject-concept.

Geometers do indeed presuppose a few fundamental propositions that *are* analytic and based on the principle of contradiction. But as identical propositions they have a role that is methodical rather than doctrinal; they are at work in chains of deductions, not as basic principles. Examples:  $a = a$  (the whole is equal to itself), and  $(a + b) > a$  (the whole is greater than its part). Yet even these, although concepts make them valid, are allowed into mathematics only because they can be *exhibited* in intuition. . . .

(2) Natural science contains within itself synthetic *a priori* judgments as principles. I'll offer only a couple of examples:

- *In all alterations of the corporeal world, the quantity of matter remains unaltered.*
- *When bodies make other bodies move, action and reaction must always be equal.*

It's clear that each of these is necessary (and thus *a priori* in its origin), and that they are synthetic propositions. For (to take just the first of the two-) when I think the concept *matter* I don't think *persistence*, but only *presence in space through the filling of space*. Thus I actually go beyond the concept of matter in order to *add* to it *a priori* something that I didn't think *in* it. So that proposition isn't analytic. It's synthetic, and yet we think it *a priori*. Similarly with all the other propositions of the pure part of natural science, i.e. the part that doesn't depend upon experience.

(3) Metaphysics ought to contain synthetic *a priori* knowledge; and I say this even for metaphysics viewed solely as a science which, though indispensable because of the nature of human reason, has until now merely been *sought* and not *found*. Its business is not merely to analyse and thus *clarify* concepts that we make of things *a priori*, but to *enlarge* our knowledge *a priori*; and for that we have to employ

principles that take concepts and *add* to them something that they don't contain. This is done in synthetic *a priori* judgments that stretch too far for experience to follow—such as *The world must have a first beginning* and its like. What metaphysics aims to be, therefore, is something that consists of purely synthetic *a priori* propositions.

## 6. The general problem of pure reason

We make a considerable advance when we formulate a single project in such a way that many of our inquiries are seen to be special cases of it. This lightens our task by defining it precisely, and also makes it easier for others to judge whether we have succeeded in our aim. So I am not apologetic about this nutshell formulation: The real problem of pure reason is now contained in the question '**How are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible?**'

Why has metaphysics remained until now in such a state of wobbling uncertainty and contradictions? Purely because until now no-one has previously thought of this problem. . . . Now that the problem *has* been thought of and highlighted, metaphysics stands or falls with its solution—either an answer to the question or an effective proof that after all there aren't any synthetic *a priori* judgments. Hume came closer to this problem than any other philosopher, but he was still a long way from getting a precise fix upon it. And far from seeing it in its full generality, he attended only to the *part* of the problem that concerns the synthetic proposition connecting effects with causes, and what he thought he had shown concerning *that* was that it can't possibly be known *a priori*. His conclusions imply that everything that we call 'metaphysics' comes down to

the mere *illusion* of an insight of reason into something that has actually been borrowed from experience, and appears to be necessary only because of

·the intellectual compulsions that *we* undergo as a result of· habits that we have formed.

He wouldn't have stumbled into this position if he had confronted our problem in its general form, because then he would have seen that according to his line of argument there couldn't be any pure mathematics either, since this certainly does contain synthetic *a priori* propositions, and Hume's good sense would surely have protected him from thinking otherwise.

Solving the general problem 'How are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible?' will also involve answering questions about whether pure reason can be used in founding and developing all the sciences that contain *a priori* knowledge of objects. That is, it will carry with it answers to the questions:

•How is pure mathematics possible?

•How is pure natural science possible?

We *have* these sciences, so it is all right to ask *how* they are possible; that they *are* possible is proved from their being actual.<sup>5</sup> As for metaphysics: everyone is entitled to wonder whether it *is* possible. That's because metaphysics has so far made such poor progress; given what the essential aim of metaphysics is, *nothing* that has been expounded up to now really counts as metaphysics.

But. . . metaphysics *is* actual, if not as a science then as a natural predisposition of ours. Human reason carries on unstoppably, driven not by the idle desire to 'know it all', but by its own need to push through to certain questions that

<sup>5</sup> Many people still have doubts about pure—i.e. non-empirical—natural science. But we have only to consider the various propositions that occur at the *start* of empirical physics. . . such as the propositions about there always being the same amount of matter, about inertia, about the equality of action and reaction, and so on, to be quickly convinced that they constitute a *pure physics*, which well deserves to be treated separately as an independent science, whether it's a small science or a large one.

can't be answered by—or on the basis of—any experiential use of reason. . . . In this way •a certain sort of metaphysics has and always will be present in all human beings as soon as their reason has become capable of speculation. So now the question arises about •this:

•How is metaphysics as a natural disposition possible? 22  
That is to ask, concerning the questions that pure reason raises and is driven by its own need to answer as well as it can, how do those questions arise from the nature of universal human reason?

But all previous attempts to answer these natural questions—e.g. 'Did the world have a beginning or has it existed from eternity?'—have always run into unavoidable contradictions. So we can't settle for the mere natural disposition for metaphysics, i.e. the pure faculty of reason itself. ·Left to itself· it *will* always produce some sort of metaphysics—*some* sort!—but ·more than that is needed·. It must be possible to •bring reason to certainty regarding the knowledge or ignorance of objects. That is, it needs to reach a *decision* either concerning (1) the objects it is asking about, or concerning (2) whether it is capable of reaching judgments about those objects. That will enable us either (1) reliably to extend our pure reason or else (2) to set definite and secure limits for it. The (2) second question, which flows from the previous general problem, can properly be stated thus:

•How is metaphysics, as a science, possible? 23  
Eventually, then, the critique of reason has to lead to •science; whereas the dogmatic use of it, without criticism, leads to groundless assertions to which other assertions, equally plausible ones, can be opposed; and so it leads to •scepticism. [For 'science' see note on page 1. For 'dogmatic' see note on page 15. Regarding 'objects': Kant has two words that are standardly translated as 'object'. In most contexts, including the above paragraph, 'object' means something like 'subject-matter'—what a science or a judgment is *about*,

what a concept or an intuition is of.]

There can't be dauntingly *much* of this science: it doesn't deal with •objects of reason, of which there's an endless variety, but merely with •reason itself—with problems that spring entirely from its own nature rather than from the nature of other things. Once it has become completely familiar with its own powers when dealing with objects that are presented to it in experience, it should easily become able to determine, completely and securely, just how far it can go beyond all bounds of experience.

So we can—we *should*—regard all previous attempts to bring about a metaphysics dogmatically as something that never happened. In any such system, the part that merely analyses concepts that reside *a priori* in our reason isn't achieving what genuine metaphysics aims at; it's merely preparing the way for it. The *aim* is to extend *a priori* synthetic knowledge; and analysis is useless for this, because all it does is to show what is contained in the analysed concepts. It doesn't show us how we get those concepts *a priori* (which would enable us to know precisely what uses of them in regard to the objects of all knowledge are valid). We don't need much self-denial to give up all these claims—  
24 ·the inflated claims of dogmatic metaphysics·—because the dogmatic procedure inevitably runs reason into undeniable contradictions that destroyed the authority of every previous metaphysics long ago. We'll need a sterner resolve if we aren't to be put off, by internal difficulties and external resistance, from taking another approach, entirely opposed to the previous ·dogmatic· one, in order to promote the productive and fruitful growth of a science that is indispensable for human reason. One might lop off every branch of this science, but nothing can pull it up by the roots.

## 7. The idea and division of a special science called 'critique of pure reason'

What emerges from all this is the idea of a special science, which can be called a 'critique of pure reason', because reason is the faculty that provides the principles of *a priori* knowledge. . . . An organon of pure reason would be a sum-  
total of all the principles in accordance with which all pure *a priori* knowledge is acquired and made real. 25

[On the next page Kant will contrast an

•'organon' of pure reason

with a

•'canon' of pure reason.

By 'organon' he means a complete account of how reason does its pure = non-empirical work: its scope, the principles it applies, the concepts it uses—the works. A 'canon' of pure reason is a part of such an organon, the part that enables us to judge—evaluate, perhaps disqualify—attempted pure uses of reason. An organon would tell you all you need to be able to employ reason in a non-empirical way, while a canon would merely tell you whether you had succeeded in an attempt to do this.]

By thoroughly applying such an organon, we would create a system of pure reason. But that would take a lot of doing; and

'Where—if *anywhere*—is such an enlargement of our knowledge possible?'

is still an open question. So we should regard the complete system of pure reason as something to be approached through a preparatory science, in which we merely examine reason, its sources and its limits. It wouldn't be a •doctrine of pure reason, merely a •critique of pure reason, and its usefulness in speculation would really be only negative: it wouldn't enlarge our reason's scope, but would purify it, keeping it free from errors—which itself is a considerable achievement. I apply the label 'transcendental' to any knowledge that isn't

about •objects but about •what makes it possible for us to know objects *a priori*. A system of the *a priori* concepts that are involved in such *a priori knowledge* would be called ‘transcendental philosophy’. But that, although it excludes all *a posteriori* knowledge, is still more than we want; a full transcendental philosophy would have to deal comprehensively with the analytic as well as the synthetic parts of our *a priori* knowledge, and that’s more than we are aiming at: our whole aim is to get a comprehensive view of the principles of *a priori* •synthesis; some •analysis may be indispensably necessary for this to be achieved, but that’s as far as our concern with analysis goes.

Our present investigation. . . aims to supply the touchstone of the worth or worthlessness of all *a priori* knowledge. Such a critique is accordingly a preparation for an •organon, failing which a preparation for a •canon, in accordance with which the complete system of the philosophy of pure reason. . . can some day be exhibited both analytically and synthetically. [Kant ends this paragraph with two points: (1) He says again that the task shouldn’t be too big for us to complete, because its topic is not the ‘inexhaustible nature of things’ but only our own performance in pursuing *a priori* knowledge. (2) He says that he won’t be offering a ‘critique of books and systems of pure reason’; he will approach his subject-matter directly, not through what others have said about it.]

[There follow two paragraphs in which Kant explains why the critique of pure reason contains less than transcendental philosophy would. He has already given this reason: transcendental philosophy would be a total theory of all *a priori* knowledge, including all that is known through analysis; whereas the critique of pure reason needs only a very little of the analytic material, and sets aside many questions about the proper analysis of this or that concept, where the concept

doesn’t enter into the pure use of reason. Then:] ..28

The main thing to be watched in such a science—i.e. in transcendental philosophy—is that no concept must be allowed into it that contains anything empirical. . . . Although morality’s highest principles and basic concepts are known *a priori*, they don’t belong in transcendental philosophy because they have to bring in such empirical concepts as those of pleasure and unpleasure, of desire and inclination, and so on. A system of pure morality won’t of course use these concepts in the basis for any moral laws, but it has to contain them all the same, in order to say things about obstacles in the way of doing one’s duty, or incentives that we shouldn’t allow to move us to action. Thus: transcendental philosophy is a philosophy of pure, •speculative reason. For everything •practical, in its dealing with incentives to action, relates to *feelings*, and of those we have only empirical knowledge.

If we are to present transcendental philosophy as a structured system, then the first division in it will be into these two:

- doctrine of Elements of pure reason,
- doctrine of Method of pure reason.

[The Elements will start in a moment, and run through to the end of the Dialectic. The Method part of the work will occupy about its last 25 pages.] Each of these will be subdivided, but the bases for that will have to wait. Looking ahead to them, all I need at this stage is to make one introductory remark: There are two stems of human knowledge (which may arise from a common root that we don’t know anything about)—namely •sensibility and •understanding. Through sensibility, objects are **given to us**, while through understanding they are **thought**. You might think that because sensibility is what’s at work when we have sense-experience, it couldn’t be involved in anything *a priori*. But if sensibility contained representations that constitute the condition under which objects are given to

us, those will be *a priori* representations, and sensibility will be treated in transcendental philosophy. [Kant's point: perhaps some representations that come from sensibility are *necessary conditions* for anything to be 'given' to us. They would be *a priori* because you wouldn't have to *consult your experience* to know that whatever experience is like it is bound to involve those representations. All this will be developed in more detail very soon.] In the science of the Elements, the transcendental doctrine of the senses will have to come first, because *necessary* conditions for objects of human knowledge to be *given* come before the necessary conditions for those objects to be *thought*. And so we start with the transcendental aesthetic, and will come to the *transcendental logic* on page 41.