

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*

Reading Guide

Kant is difficult to read. As you read, try to focus on key ideas and arguments, and don't get discouraged. You will not understand every nuance of Kant's position; you will likely understand less of what he is getting at than most of the other philosophers we have read this semester (or that you have ever read). That's all right. But try to get the main points of his text.

A few terminological warnings:

1. Kant uses the terms **perception**, **appearance**, **object**, **thing**, and **thing in itself** throughout this book. Many of the most common misinterpretations of Kant arise from mistakenly reading the term "appearance" to mean something like "mere appearance," that is, an illusion of a thing, or just an idea of a thing, or a perception of a thing. For Kant, the term "appearance" is synonymous with the term "object," and means "a thing that can appear." Thus, for example, Kant emphasizes that appearances are "*real* (i.e. objectively valid)" (A28/B44) that calling something an "appearance in space" is a way of referring to "external objects" in space (A30/B45). What is complicated about all of this is that Kant emphasizes that these appearances/objects are *not* "things in themselves." Thus Kant sets up a trichotomy between (to use his example from p. 733a):
 - a. Merely subjective properties such as the color of the rose, which are "not...properties of things, but merely...changes in ourselves as subjects".
 - b. The objectively real objects/appearances/things that have those properties (the objectively real rose)
 - c. The "thing in itself," that is, what would be left of the rose were one to abstract from it everything that makes it possible for it to be an object of possible experience.
2. Kant uses the term "**experience**" as a synonym for "empirical cognition," that is, anything that we can know from experience. Thus we can "experience" subatomic particles or dinosaurs, since we can have empirical cognition of them. But a mere flurry of sensations passing over one (as when very dizzy, for instance) isn't a real "experience," since it involves no cognitions of objects.
3. Kant uses the term "**transcendental**" in a variety of ways throughout this book. Don't assume that you know what the word means, and don't assume that it means the same thing as "transcendent."

Ok, so now we're "ready" to jump into the text . . .

Preface(s) (pp. 717-724) – The Prefaces, especially the second edition preface (pp. 718-724) will be our main focus in studying Kant in this course, so you will need to reread it after each day’s reading. On your first read-through of these preface before having read anything else, though, just try to identify what seem like the most important passages, and to get a general sense for what Kant is going to do in this book as a whole.

Introduction (pp. 724-729, and addendum¹). READ THE ADDENDUM IN THE ENDNOTE OF THIS READING GUIDE BEFORE READING THE REST OF THE INTRODUCTION.

As you read the introduction, your main task should be to understand (though not necessarily to answer) the question, “How are synthetic judgments possible a priori?” (727a).

- To do this, first get clear on what Kant means by “a priori” (vs. empirical) judgments, and by “synthetic” (vs. analytic) judgments. Give examples of each kind of judgment in the following table:

	A priori	A posteriori (empirical)
Analytic		
Synthetic		

- What are the criteria by which one could determine whether a judgment is analytic or synthetic? A priori or empirical?
- Now let’s answer the easy questions:
 - How (if at all) are analytic a priori judgments possible?
 - How (if at all) are analytic empirical judgments possible?
 - How (if at all) are synthetic empirical judgments possible?
- Why is Kant’s question – How are synthetic judgments possible a priori? – more difficult than these?
- And why doesn’t Kant add the “if at all” caveat? Does he have a good reason to think that synthetic judgments *are* possible a priori? What?
- Finally, what are the *stakes* of answering this question? In particular, why is it important for *metaphysics*?

The Transcendental Aesthetic (pp. 729-737). The transcendental aesthetic is where Kant begins to answer his question of how synthetic judgments are possible a priori, and it's also where we begin to see his "Copernican turn" (described in the Preface on p. 721a). As you read this section, keep turning back to p. 721a and rereading this key paragraph (especially the lines just below Bxvii relating to "our *intuition* of object). Note too that this section discusses both Space (pp. 729-733) and Time (733-737). For our purposes, we will not be focusing on any important differences between these treatments. Other than knowing *that* Kant makes similar arguments for both forms of intuition, you needn't particularly attend to the details of the arguments in the case of Time. That is, focus your reading on pp. 729-733. Both space and time, for Kant, are going to be a priori "intuitions," so pay some attention to Kant's definition of an intuition as "that by which a cognition refers to objects" (729b). Put briefly, when I have an empirical cognition of a dog, what makes that empirical cognition a cognition of a *dog* is the concept "dog." What makes the cognition a cognition of *a* dog – that is, a cognition of real object rather than a mere playing with a concept – is that the concept dog is applied to an *intuition* of an *object*.

Kant's discussions of Space and Time offer five arguments with respect to each intuition, four "metaphysical" and one "transcendental."

- In his metaphysical exposition, Kant aims to show that Space is both *a priori* (rather than empirical) and an *intuition* (rather than a concept), and he offers two arguments for each aspect of his claim. Lay out these arguments. Do they show what Kant wants them to show? What are the stakes of showing that Space is a priori? That it's an intuition?
- In his transcendental exposition, Kant aims to show that understanding Space as an a priori intuition provides an answer to at least one version of his key question, that is, explain how at least some sorts of a priori synthetic judgments are possible. Does he succeed here? What are the implications of this transcendental exposition for the legitimacy of his account of Space? Is this transcendental exposition an argument for his claim that Space is an a priori intuition? (If so, what sort of argument? If not, what's the point of it?)
- Finally, in his "Conclusions," Kant introduces and defends his view that space is "empirically real" but "transcendentally ideal" (732b). What is "empirical realism"? What is "transcendental idealism"? Has Kant proven both, at least with respect to space?

The Analogies of Experience, Second Analogy (pp. 768, 772-779) Between the transcendental aesthetic and the second analogy of experience, Kant does a lot of philosophical work that we are skipping. In particular, we are skipping four important background steps on the way to his arguments here.

1. The Transcendental Analytic of Transcendental Logic (pp. 737-42). The Transcendental Logic is correlate to the transcendental aesthetic. In the aesthetic, Kant laid out our a priori *intuitions*, while in the logic he lays out a priori *concepts*, which he calls “categories.” (For his preview of this, see the Preface, right at Bxviii.) The Analytic part of this Transcendental Logic is where Kant simply says *what* the categories are, without proving that they are necessary a priori. To see Kant’s list of categories (grouped into four sets of three), see the Table on p. 740-41, which he gets from the table of logical relations on p. 739.
2. The Transcendental Deduction (pp. 742-756). This is the densest, most difficult, and most studied part of the first *Critique*, and the one that underwent the most significant revisions between Kant’s first and second editions of the book. In brief, though, the purpose of this argument is to show that the a priori concepts laid out in the previous section really are necessary conditions of the possibility of having any cognition of any objects at all. I’ve put some explanation of this argument in an endnote,ⁱⁱ for those who are interested.
3. The Schematism (pp. 756-759). In the Schematism, Kant explains that in order for a cognition to arise from the unification of intuitions and concepts, our (a priori) concepts need to be made into the sorts of concepts that can be applied to objects of experience. Thus we need a “transcendental schema,” a way of understanding a priori concepts such that they can be applied to spatial and temporal intuitions. This general schematism thus paves the way for Kant’s “System of All Principles of Pure Understanding,” which is his explanation of the various ways that a priori concepts, when schematized to be applied to possible objects, give rise to principles that must hold for any of those possible objects. The second analogy lays out one of those principles. (To see how it fits in, see the table on p. 762.)
4. The First Analogy of Experience (pp. 769-772). The results of this first principle are summarized in the first paragraph of the second (772a-b, “The previous principle...”). Briefly, Kant just proved (or tried to prove) that there are unchanging substances that underlie all changes in objects. (This is part of your reading, but not a part we’ll focus on in class.)

The Analogies of Experience, Second Analogy (pp. 768, 772-779)

Before reading this section of the Kant, review the following quotations from Hume. Note what Hume says we *do* experience and what he denies we experience.

“Suppose a person, though endowed with the strongest faculties of reason and reflection, to be brought on a sudden into this world; he would, indeed, immediately observe a continual succession of objects, and one event following another; but he would not be able to discover anything farther. He would not, at first, by any reasoning, be able to reach the idea of cause and effect; since the particular powers, by which all natural operations are performed, never appear to the senses; nor is it reasonable to conclude, merely because one event, in one instance, precedes another, that therefore the one is the cause, the other the effect. Their conjunction may be arbitrary and casual. There may be no reason to infer the existence of one from the appearance of the other. And in a word, such a person, without more experience, could never employ his conjecture or reasoning concerning any matter of fact, or be assured of anything beyond what was immediately present to his memory and senses.” (549a)

“When we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able, in a single instance, to discover any power or necessary connexion; any quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. We only find, that the one does actually, in fact, follow the other. The impulse of one billiard-ball is attended with motion in the second. This is the whole that appears to the outward senses. The mind feels no sentiment or inward impression from this succession of objects: consequently, there is not, in any single, particular instance of cause and effect, any thing which can suggest the idea of power or necessary connexion.”(557-8)

“It appears that, in single instances of the operation of bodies, we never can, by our utmost scrutiny, discover any thing but one event following another, without being able to comprehend any force or power by which the cause operates, or any connexion between it and its supposed effect. The same difficulty occurs in contemplating the operations of mind on body--where we observe the motion of the latter to follow upon the volition of the former, but are not able to observe or conceive the tie which binds together the motion and volition, or the energy by which the mind produces this effect. The authority of the will over its own faculties and ideas is not a whit more comprehensible: so that, upon the whole, there appears not, throughout all nature, any one instance of connexion which is conceivable by us. All events seem entirely loose and separate. One event follows another; but we never can observe any tie between them. They seem conjoined, but never connected.” (562b)

1. So what, for Hume, *do* we experience?
2. And what do we not experience?

Now let's turn to Kant. We'll focus on the Second Analogy. Look closely at what the claim of this analogy is (italicized on 772a). Think about this claim in relation to Hume. What is Kant saying to Hume?

The Analogies of Experience, Second Analogy (pp. 768, 772-779), continued.

Much of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is a series of arguments for "conditions of the possibility" of various forms of empirical knowledge. Thus Kant's transcendental aesthetic argues, among other things, that an a priori intuition of space is a necessary condition of the possibility of geometry. In order to know geometrical truths, we need to impose an a priori spatial structure on the world. This analogy, likewise, is an argument about the "conditions of possibility" of alteration.

The argument depends upon Kant's claims (in the transcendental deduction) that in order to cognize an object as an object, we need to have a manifold of different perceptions (ideas about the thing) that we unify into a cognition of a single object in accordance with categories provided by the understanding. Kant now is trying to figure out how that works in the case of objective rather than subjective *succession*, that is, in the case where one thing happens after another.

Throughout this discussion, it's important to remember that appearances/objects are distinct from mere perceptions. Kant is interested in figuring out how a merely subjective series of perceptions becomes a genuine cognition of an *object* independent of us. (These "objects" are not the same as things in themselves, but for now, try to ignore things in themselves and focus on the difference between perceptions and objects.)

Kant offers an overview of his basic argument in the long paragraph on p. 772b. Spend at least 15 minutes with this paragraph, breaking down how the argument goes. You won't be able to get everything here, but try to get a sense for

1. What the problem of objective succession is (see especially the two sentences starting "I am, therefore, conscious only" and ending with "leaves indeterminate the objective relation of the appearances following one another.")
2. How would *you* solve this problem?
3. How does *Kant* think this problem gets solved?

After spending some time with this paragraph, read through the section as a whole. Much of Kant's later discussion fleshes out key aspects of his argument here, so use it to help you understand what the problem of objective succession is and how a law of necessary connection (cause and effect) solves that problem.

After reading through the section as a whole, take some time to look at Kant's two examples of the house and the boat (p. 773).

1. What does our experience of the house have in common with our experience of the boat?
2. What is different?
3. How does Kant explain the possibility of this difference?
4. How might Hume?

Overall, then, what is Kant's argument against Hume's claims about our experiences? What do Hume and Kant agree about? What do they disagree about? Who is correct?

The Third Antinomy (and its Solution), pp. 798-800, 811-19.

First, go back to the B-Preface and read p. 722 carefully. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* has two main parts, an "Analytic" in which Kant puts "metaphysics on the secure path of a science...where it deals with those *a priori* concepts for which corresponding objects...can be given in experience" (722a), and a "Dialectic" in which Kant shows that "with this faculty to cognize a priori we will never be able to go beyond the limits of possible experience" (722a). The Antinomies are part of that second part of the *Critique*. So look closely at the rest of p. 722 to get a sense for how Kant aims to establish this latter claim.

Now go to pp. 798-800. Note that these pages are formatted in such a way that there are really two parallel arguments in the right and left columns of each page. Thus, at the top of 798a, there is a thesis, which is defended and commented on in the "A" columns of pp. 798-800. At the top of 798b, there is an antithesis, which is defended and commented on in the "B" columns of pp. 798-800.

1. What is the thesis proving?
2. What is the antithesis proving?
3. How does each prove its claim? (Lay out as clearly as possible – ideally, with numbered propositions in a valid argument form – the argument for each claim. Note that the antithesis appeals back to an earlier part of Kant's text...luckily to a part that you've read!)
4. Why does Kant set up these two arguments side by side here? What is his point? What does he really think about this issue?

And now, let's look for the "Solution" to this Antinomy. Here, finally, "things in themselves" play an important role in Kant's philosophy.

1. What is Kant's "Solution"?
2. What kind of solution is this?
3. What role does the distinction between appearances/objects and things in themselves play in Kant's solution?
4. What is the distinction between empirical and intelligible character (813b)? What is the relationship between them?
5. Be sure to read the very last paragraph on p. 819b . . . what does Kant think he has actually shown here? Why doesn't he think he's shown more than this?

Now go back (again) and reread the B-Preface, pp. 722-724. Has Kant successfully "den[ied] knowledge in order to make room for faith" (724b)?

Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, selections.ⁱⁱⁱ

Read the short selection in endnote iii.

1. What are the two "problems" aiming to prove?
2. What does this portion of text altogether aim to prove?
3. In the end, does Kant believe that human beings are free? What is his argument for his claim?
4. What kind of "faith" did the *Critique of Pure Reason* make room for?
5. What objections might one raise to Kant's view about human freedom?

INTRODUCTION

I. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PURE AND EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE

THERE can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience. For how should our faculty of knowledge be awakened into action did not objects affecting our senses partly of themselves produce representations, partly arouse the activity of our understanding to compare these representations, and, by combining or separating them, work up the raw material of the sensible impressions into that knowledge of objects which is entitled experience? In the order of time, therefore, we have no knowledge antecedent to experience, and with experience all our knowledge begins. But though all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it all arises out of experience. For it may well be that even our empirical knowledge is made up of what we receive through impressions and of what our own faculty of knowledge (sensible impressions serving merely as the occasion) supplies from itself. If our faculty of knowledge makes any such addition, it may be that we are not in a position to distinguish it from the raw material, until with long practice of attention we have become skilled in separating it.

This, then, is a question which at least calls for closer examination, and does not allow of any off-hand answer: -- whether there is any knowledge that is thus independent of experience and even of all impressions of the senses. Such knowledge is entitled *a priori*, and distinguished from the *empirical*, which has its sources *a posteriori*, that is, in experience.

The expression '*a priori*' does not, however, indicate with sufficient precision the full meaning of our question. For it has been customary to say, even of much knowledge that is derived from empirical sources, that we have it or are capable of having it *a priori*, meaning thereby that we do not derive it immediately from experience, but from a universal rule -- a rule which is itself, however, borrowed by us from experience. Thus we would say of a man who undermined the foundations of his house, that he might have known *a priori* that it would fall, that is, that he need not have waited for the experience of its actual falling. But still he could not know this completely *a priori*. For he had first to learn through experience that bodies are heavy, and therefore fall when their supports are withdrawn.

In what follows, therefore, we shall understand by *a priori* knowledge, not knowledge independent of this or that experience, but knowledge absolutely independent of all experience. Opposed to it is empirical knowledge, which is knowledge possible only *a posteriori*, that is, through experience. *A priori* modes of knowledge are entitled pure when there is no admixture of anything empirical. Thus, for instance, the proposition, 'every alteration has its cause', while an *a priori* proposition, is not a pure proposition, because alteration is a concept which can be derived only from experience.

II. WE ARE IN POSSESSION OF CERTAIN MODES OF A PRIORI KNOWLEDGE, AND EVEN THE COMMON UNDERSTANDING IS NEVER WITHOUT THEM

What we here require is a criterion by which to distinguish with certainty between pure and empirical knowledge. Experience teaches us that a thing is so and so, but not that it cannot be otherwise. First, then, if we have a proposition which in being thought is thought as *necessary*, it is an *a priori* judgment; and if, besides, it is not derived from any proposition except one which also has the validity of a necessary judgment, it is an absolutely *a priori* judgment. Secondly, experience never confers on its judgments true or strict but only assumed and comparative *universality*, through induction. We can properly only say, therefore, that so far as we have hitherto observed, there is no exception to this or that rule. If, then, a judgment is thought with strict universality, that is, in such manner that no exception is allowed as possible, it is not derived from experience, but is valid absolutely *a priori*. Empirical universality is only an arbitrary extension of a validity holding in most cases to one which holds in all, for instance, in the proposition, 'all bodies are heavy'. When, on the other hand, strict universality is essential to a judgment, this indicates a special source of knowledge, namely, a faculty of *a priori* knowledge. Necessity and strict universality are thus sure criteria of *a priori* knowledge, and are inseparable from one another. But since in the employment of these criteria the contingency of judgments is sometimes more easily shown than their empirical limitation, or, as sometimes also happens, their unlimited universality can be more convincingly proved than their necessity, it is advisable to use the two criteria separately, each by itself being infallible.

Now it is easy to show that there actually are in human knowledge judgments which are necessary and in the strictest sense universal, and which are therefore pure *a priori* judgments. If an example from the sciences be desired, we have only to look to any of the propositions of mathematics; if we seek an example from the understanding in its quite

ordinary employment, the proposition, 'every alteration must have a cause', will serve our purpose. In the latter case, indeed, the very concept of a cause so manifestly contains the concept of a necessity of connection with an effect and of the strict universality of the rule, that the concept would be altogether lost if we attempted to derive it, as Hume has done, from a repeated association of that which happens with that which precedes, and from a custom of connecting representations, a custom originating in this repeated association, and constituting therefore a merely subjective necessity. Even without appealing to such examples, it is possible to show that pure *a priori* principles are indispensable for the possibility of experience, and so to prove their existence *a priori*. For whence could experience derive its certainty, if all the rules, according to which it proceeds, were always themselves empirical, and therefore contingent? Such rules could hardly be regarded as first principles. At present, however, we may be content to have established the fact that our faculty of knowledge does have a pure employment, and to have shown what are the criteria of such an employment.

Such *a priori* origin is manifest in certain concepts, no less than in judgments. If we remove from our empirical concept of a body, one by one, every feature in it which is [merely] empirical, the colour, the hardness or softness, the weight, even the impenetrability, there still remains the space which the body (now entirely vanished) occupied, and this cannot be removed. Again, if we remove from our empirical concept of any object, corporeal or incorporeal, all properties which experience has taught us, we yet cannot take away that property through which the object is thought as substance or as inhering in a substance (although this concept of substance is more determinate than that of an object in general). Owing, therefore, to the necessity with which this concept of substance forces itself upon us, we have no option save to admit that it has its seat in our faculty of *a priori* knowledge.

ⁱⁱ The key move in this argument is Kant's claim that experience is possible only by virtue of a twofold "unity," on the side of both the "object" and the "apperception" of that object. For Kant, "apperception" refers to "the 'I think' [that] must be able to accompany all of my representations, for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all" (B131-2). Kant's basic idea in this section of the *Critique* is to connect experience of unified objects with a unified "I think" and thereby with the categories, as the principles of any such unity. First, Kant argues that in order for one to unite different representations together into consciousness of a single object, those different representations must be held together in a single consciousness. To have a cognition of a purple cow, it will not do for one person to have a representation of the color purple and another to have a representation of a cow. These different representations, to be united into a cognition of a single object, must be united by a single consciousness.

[C]ognitions . . . consist in the determinate relation of a given representation to an object. But an object is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is *united*. Now, however, all unification of representations requires unity of consciousness. Consequently the unity of consciousness is that which alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object. (B 137)

The relevant unity of consciousness here is not that "subjective unity of consciousness which is a determination of inner sense" (B139), that is, it is not an introspective awareness of oneself as united throughout time. Rather, the relevant unity is the from-within unity by virtue of which one becomes conscious of and makes justifiable claims about objects in the world.

Now just as the table of judgment provided Kant's "clue" to discovering a set of *a priori* categories, so he argues that we see, in the form of judgment itself, a necessary appeal to this transcendental unity: "a judgment is nothing other than the way to bring given cognitions to the objective unity of apperception. That is the aim of the copula *is* in them . . . For this word designates the relation of the representations to the original apperception and its [apperception's] *necessary unity*, even if the judgment itself is empirical" (B 141-2). In other words, in making a judgment such as "mangos are delicious," one not only makes an empirical claim about the world but implicitly asserts the necessary unity of the I that holds together "mangos" and "delicious" in a single "I think." And now Kant comes to his punchline:

Therefore the manifold [of different representations], insofar as it is given in *one* empirical intuition, is *determined* in regard to one of the logical functions for judgment, by means of which . . . it is brought to a consciousness in general. But . . . the categories are nothing other than these very functions for judging, insofar as the manifold of a given intuition is determined with regard to them. Thus the manifold in a given intuition also necessarily stands under categories. (B 143)

Thus if, e.g., I make the empirical intuition of a house into perception through apperception of its manifold, my ground is the *necessary unity* of space . . . This same synthetic unity, however, if I abstract from the form of space, has its seat in the understanding, . . . in the category of *quantity*. (B162)

Our “apperception” of objects is unified through organizing various representations together by means of a priori concepts of the understanding such as unity, reality, or causation. Even spatial and temporal properties of an object only become *properties* of an *object* when subsumed together by the understanding, under concepts such as “property (of a substance).” These a priori concepts, or categories, provide a from-within structure by means of which a human knower can connect representations in such a way that those representations remain part of a single “I think,” and they provide the framework according to which a mere “manifold” can become a coherent *object* of experience.

At this point, one clarificatory warning is needed lest one think that Kant’s transcendental anthropology does (or claims) more than it really does. Rene Descartes, too, emphasizes the importance of the “I think,” claiming that he could be absolutely certain of the claim, “I think therefore I am” and reasoning, even further, that the nature of the “I think” implies the simplicity, unity, and ultimately immortality of the human soul. For Kant, however, such inferences mistakenly treat the transcendental unity of apperception that makes (empirical) cognition possible as itself a possible *object* of (such) cognition. In his transcendental deduction, Kant emphasizes that while the “transcendental synthesis of the manifold” makes me conscious “*that I am*,” it reveals neither what “I am in myself” nor how “I appear to myself” (B157). Kant criticizes attempts to get from the formal requirements of the “I think” to substantive claims about such an I, calling such attempts “Paralogisms,” or invalid arguments (see A341/B399-A404/B431). For example, the inference from the necessity of a unified “subject” of thought to a unified thinking “substance” erroneously takes the formal category of “subject” to have objective meaning, when “pure categories (and among them also the category of substance) have in themselves no objective significance . . . unless an intuition is subsumed under them” (A348-9). Because one can have no intuition of the “I think” that unifies all intuitions, the only possible *objective* cognition of oneself is of “our own subject only as appearance,” and this is available “through inner sense” (B156). And Kant argues in a “Refutation of [Cartesian] Idealism” (B274-9) that knowledge of this empirical self is secondary to knowledge of external objections, since “the determination of my existence in time is possible only by means of . . . actual [persisting] things that I perceive outside myself” (B 275). Kant’s appeal to the transcendental unity of apperception is an explanation of cognition from-within, one that shows that objective empirical cognition requires unifying one’s representations by means of a priori categories. It thereby shows that the objective world must be unified in that way, but it makes no objective claims about the apperception that unified that world.

ⁱⁱⁱ Selection from Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Thomas Abbott, available at <http://philosophy.eserver.org/kant/critique-of-practical-reaso.txt>

V. PROBLEM I.

Supposing that the mere legislative form of maxims is alone the sufficient determining principle of a will, to find the nature of the will which can be determined by it alone.

Since the bare form of the law can only be conceived by reason, and is, therefore, not an object of the senses, and consequently does not belong to the class of phenomena, it follows that the idea of it, which determines the will, is distinct from all the principles that determine events in nature according to the law of causality, because in their case the determining principles must themselves be phenomena. Now, if no other determining principle can serve as a law for the will except that universal legislative form, such a will must be conceived as quite independent of the natural law of phenomena in their mutual relation, namely, the law of causality; such independence is called freedom in the strictest, that is, in the transcendental, sense; consequently, a will which can have its law in nothing but the mere legislative form of the maxim is a free will.

VI. PROBLEM II.

Supposing that a will is free, to find the law which alone is competent to determine it necessarily.

Since the matter of the practical law, i.e., an object of the maxim, can never be given otherwise than empirically, and the free will is independent on empirical conditions (that is, conditions belonging to the world of sense) and yet is determinable, consequently a free will must find its principle of determination in the law, and yet independently of the matter of the law. But, besides the matter of the law, nothing is contained in it except the legislative form. It is the legislative form, then, contained in the maxim, which can alone constitute a principle of determination of the [free] will.

REMARK.

Thus freedom and an unconditional practical law reciprocally imply each other. Now I do not ask here whether they are in fact distinct, or whether an unconditioned law is not rather merely the consciousness of a pure practical reason and the latter identical with the positive concept of freedom; I only ask, whence begins our knowledge of the unconditionally practical, whether it is from freedom or from the practical law? Now it cannot begin from freedom, for of this we cannot be immediately conscious, since the first concept of it is negative; nor can we infer it from experience, for experience gives us the knowledge only of the law of phenomena, and hence of the mechanism of nature, the direct opposite of freedom. It is therefore the moral law, of which we become directly conscious (as soon as we trace for ourselves maxims of the will), that first presents itself to us, and leads directly to the concept of freedom, inasmuch as reason presents it as a principle of determination not to be outweighed by any sensible conditions, nay, wholly independent of them. But how is the consciousness, of that moral law possible? We can become conscious of pure practical laws just as we are conscious of pure theoretical principles, by attending to the necessity with which reason prescribes them and to the elimination of all empirical conditions, which it directs. The concept of a pure will arises out of the former, as that of a pure understanding arises out of the latter. That this is the true subordination of our concepts, and that it is morality that first discovers to us the notion of freedom, hence that it is practical reason which, with this concept, first proposes to speculative reason the most insoluble problem, thereby placing it in the greatest perplexity, is evident from the following consideration: Since nothing in phenomena can be explained by the concept of freedom, but the mechanism of nature must constitute the only clue; moreover, when pure reason tries to ascend in the series of causes to the unconditioned, it falls into an antinomy which is entangled in incomprehensibilities on the one side as much as the other; whilst the latter (namely, mechanism) is at least useful in the explanation of phenomena, therefore no one would ever have been so rash as to introduce freedom into science, had not the moral law, and with it practical reason, come in and forced this notion upon us. Experience, however, confirms this order of notions. Suppose some one asserts of his lustful appetite that, when the desired object and the opportunity are present, it is quite irresistible. [Ask him]- if a gallows were erected before the house where he finds this

opportunity, in order that he should be hanged thereon immediately after the gratification of his lust, whether he could not then control his passion; we need not be long in doubt what he would reply. Ask him, however- if his sovereign ordered him, on pain of the same immediate execution, to bear false witness against an honourable man, whom the prince might wish to destroy under a plausible pretext, would he consider it possible in that case to overcome his love of life, however great it may be. He would perhaps not venture to affirm whether he would do so or not, but he must unhesitatingly admit that it is possible to do so. He judges, therefore, that he can do a certain thing because he is conscious that he ought, and he recognizes that he is free- a fact which but for the moral law he would never have known.