KANT - First Selection

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
> 2 ingredient because· distinguishing it from the basic raw material requires skill, which requires attention, which requires long practice.

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 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 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 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.

It would be utterly *natural* for that to be what actually hap-
8 pens, 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 9
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 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 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 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.

But in a synthetic *a priori* judgment I don't have this
13 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 14
that is needed for strong and secure synthetic judgments that will constitute real additions to our knowledge.

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.

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
15 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 16
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.

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
17 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*
18 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 19
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 20
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 contains 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
21 actual.[5] 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 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?

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 23 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*,

[5] 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.

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
24 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—·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 25
a priori knowledge is acquired and made real.

[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. 26

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. ..27]

[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. 29

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 30

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·.