

however, concepts that belong to the understanding can come about, but only by means of the imagination in relation to the sensible intuition.

(We therefore have a pure imagination, as a fundamental faculty of the human soul, that grounds all cognition *a priori*. By its means we bring into combination the manifold of intuition on the one side and the condition of the necessary unity of apperception on the other. Both extremes, namely sensibility and understanding, must necessarily be connected by means of this transcendental function of the imagination, since otherwise the former would to be sure yield appearances but no objects of an empirical cognition, hence there would be no experience. Actual experience, which consists in the apprehension, the association (the reproduction), and finally the recognition of the appearances, contains in the last and highest (of the merely empirical elements of experience) concepts that make possible the formal unity of experience and with it all objective validity (truth) of empirical cognition. These grounds of the recognition of the manifold, so far as they concern **merely the form of an experience in general**, are now those **categories**. On them is grounded, therefore, all formal unity in the synthesis of the imagination, and by means of the latter also all of its empirical use (in recognition, reproduction, association, and apprehension) down to the appearances, since the latter belong to our consciousness at all and hence to ourselves only by means of these elements of cognition.

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Thus we ourselves bring into the appearances that order and regularity in them that we call **nature**,³⁷ and moreover we would not be able to find it there if we, or the nature of our mind, had not originally put it there. For this unity of nature should be a necessary, i.e., *a priori* certain unity of the connection of appearances. But how should we be able to establish a synthetic unity *a priori* if subjective grounds of such a unity were not contained *a priori* among the original sources of cognition in our mind, and if these subjective conditions were not at the same time objectively valid, being the grounds of the possibility of cognizing any object^a in experience at all?^b

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^a Object

^b Question mark added. At this point, the following note is inserted in Kant's copy of the first edition:

"That the laws of nature really have their origin in the understanding, and are just as little to be encountered outside it as space and time are, is already proved by the in any case already acknowledged assertion that we cognize them *a priori* and as necessary; for if, on the contrary, they had to be borrowed from outside, we could only cognize them as contingent. But then what sort of laws are those? No greater and no less than is necessary in order to bring appearances into a general connection with one consciousness, only in order to cognize objects as such — for that is the form of their intuition and at the same time the condition of their unity in apperception given, and given *a priori*." (E LI, pp. 26–7; 23:26–7)

Erdmann observes that this is the only substantial note in Kant's copy of the first-

We have above explained the **understanding** in various ways – through a spontaneity of cognition (in contrast to the receptivity of the sensibility), through a faculty for thinking, or a faculty of concepts, or also of judgments – which explanations, if one looks at them properly, come down to the same thing. Now we can characterize it as the **faculty of rules**. This designation is more fruitful, and comes closer to its essence. Sensibility gives us forms (of intuition), but the understanding gives us rules. It is always busy poring through the appearances with the aim of finding some sort of rule in them. Rules, so far as they are objective⁴ (and thus necessarily pertain to the cognition of objects) are called laws. Although we learn many laws through experience, these are only particular determinations of yet higher laws, the highest of which (under which all others stand) come from the understanding itself *a priori*, and are not borrowed from experience, but rather must provide the appearances with their lawfulness and by that very means make experience possible. The understanding is thus not merely a faculty for making rules through the comparison of the appearances; it is itself the legislation for nature, i.e., without understanding there would not be any nature at all, i.e., synthetic unity of the manifold of appearances in accordance with rules; for appearances, as such, cannot occur outside us, but exist only in our sensibility. The latter, however, as the object of cognition in an experience, with everything it may contain, is possible only in the unity of apperception. The unity of apperception, however, is the transcendental ground of the necessary lawfulness of all appearances in an experience. This very same unity of apperception with regard to a manifold of representations (that namely of determining it out of a single one) is the rule, and the faculty of these rules is the understanding. All appearances as possible experiences, therefore, lie *a priori* in the understanding, and receive their formal possibility from it, just as they lie in the sensibility as mere intuitions, and are only possible through the latter as far as their form is concerned.

Thus as exaggerated and contradictory as it may sound to say that the understanding is itself the source of the laws of nature, and thus of the formal unity of nature, such an assertion is nevertheless correct and appropriate to the object, namely experience. To be sure, empirical laws, as such, can by no means derive their origin from the pure understanding, just as the immeasurable manifoldness of the appearances cannot be adequately conceived through the pure form of sensible intuition.

But all empirical laws are only particular determinations of the pure

edition deduction, from which he infers that Kant in fact very early gave up hope of improving the deduction by minor changes.

⁴ Changed to "Rules, so far as they [represent] existence as necessary . . ." in Kant's copy of the first edition (E LII, p. 27; 23:46).

laws of the understanding, under which and in accordance with whose norm they are first possible, and the appearances assume a lawful form, just as, regardless of the variety of their empirical form, all appearances must nevertheless always be in accord with the pure form of sensibility.

The pure understanding is thus in the categories the law of the synthetic unity of all appearances, and thereby first and originally makes experience possible as far as its form is concerned. But we did not have to accomplish more in the transcendental deduction of the categories than to make comprehensible this relation^a of the understanding to sensibility and by means of the latter to all objects of experience, hence to make comprehensible the objective validity of its pure *a priori* concepts, and thereby determine their origin and truth.)

Summary representation
of the correctness and unique possibility of this
deduction
of the pure concepts of the understanding.

If the objects with which our cognition has to do were things in themselves, then we would not be able to have any *a priori* concepts of them at all. For whence should we obtain them? If we take them from the object^b (without even investigating here how the latter could become known to us), then our concepts would be merely empirical and not *a priori* concepts. If we take them from ourselves, then that which is merely in us cannot determine the constitution of an object distinct from our representations, i.e., be a ground why there should be a thing that corresponds to something we have in our thoughts, and why all this representation should not instead be empty. But if, on the contrary, we have to do everywhere only with appearances, then it is not only possible but also necessary that certain *a priori* concepts precede the empirical cognition of objects. For as appearances they constitute an object that is merely in us, since a mere modification of our sensibility is not to be encountered outside us at all. Now even this representation – that all these appearances and thus all objects with which we can occupy ourselves are all in me, i.e., determinations of my identical self – expresses a thoroughgoing unity of them in one and the same apprehension as necessary. The form of all cognition of objects (through which the manifold is thought as belonging to one object),^c however, also consists in this unity of possible consciousness. Thus the way in which the manifold of sensible representation (intuition) belongs to a

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^a *Verhältnis*

^b *Object*

^c *zu einem Object*