

# Transcendental Logic

## Second Part

### Transcendental Dialectic<sup>i</sup>

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#### Introduction<sup>a</sup>

##### I

Transcendental illusion.

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Above we have called dialectic in general a **logic of illusion**.<sup>b</sup> That does not mean that it is a doctrine of **probability**;<sup>c</sup> for that is truth, but cognized through insufficient grounds, so that the cognition of it is defective, but not therefore deceptive, and so it need not be separated from the analytical part of logic.<sup>d</sup> Still less may we take **appearance**<sup>d</sup> and **illusion** for one and the same. For **truth and illusion are not in the object, insofar as it is intuited, but in the judgment about it insofar as it is thought**. Thus it is correctly said that the senses do not err; yet not because they always judge correctly, but because they do not judge at all. Hence truth, as much as error, and thus also illusion as leading to the latter, are to be found only in judgments, i.e., only in the relation<sup>e</sup> of the object to our understanding. In a cognition that thoroughly agrees with the laws of the understanding there is also no error. In a representation of sense (because it contains no judgment at all) there is no error. **No force of nature can of itself depart from its own laws. Hence neither the understanding by itself (without the influence of another cause), nor the senses by themselves, can err; the first cannot, because while it acts merely according to its own laws, its effect (the judgment) must necessarily agree with these laws.**<sup>3</sup> But the formal aspect of all truth consists in agreement with the laws of the understanding. In the senses there is no judgment at all, neither a true nor a false one. Now because we have

<sup>a</sup> "We have previously proved that we can think only through categories and the concepts derived from them, but that our cognition (*a priori*) with them can reach no farther than to objects of possible experience. Now sciences come forward – psychology, cosmology, theology – that promise this." (E CLII, p. 46; 23:38)

<sup>b</sup> *Schein*

<sup>c</sup> *Wahrscheinlichkeit*

<sup>d</sup> *Erscheinung*

<sup>e</sup> *Verhältnis*

## Introduction

no other sources of cognition besides these two, it follows that error is effected only through the unnoticed influence of sensibility on understanding, through which it happens that the subjective grounds<sup>a</sup> of the judgment join with the objective ones, and make the latter deviate from their destination<sup>\*,b</sup> just as a moved body would of itself always stay in a straight line in the same direction, but starts off on a curved line if at the same time another force influences it in another direction. In order to distinguish the proper action of the understanding from the force that meddles in, it will thus be necessary to regard the erroneous judgment of the understanding as a diagonal between two forces that determine the judgment in two different directions, enclosing an angle, so to speak, and to resolve the composite effect into the simple effects of the understanding and of sensibility; in pure judgments *a priori* this must happen through transcendental reflection, through which (as already shown) every representation is assigned its place in the faculty of cognition proper to it, and hence also the influence of the latter is distinguished from it.

Our concern here is not to treat of empirical (e.g. optical) illusion, which occurs in the empirical use of otherwise correct rules of the understanding, and through which the faculty of judgment is misled through the influence of the imagination; rather, we have to do only with **transcendental illusion**, which influences principles whose use is not ever meant for experience, since in that case we would at least have a touchstone for their correctness, but which instead, contrary to all the warnings of criticism, carries us away beyond the empirical use of the categories, and holds out to us the semblance of extending the **pure understanding**. We will call the principles whose application stays wholly and completely within the limits of possible experience **immanent**, but those that would fly beyond these boundaries **transcendent** principles. But by the latter I do not understand the **transcendental** use or misuse of categories, which is a mere mistake of the faculty of judgment when it is not properly checked by criticism, and thus does not attend enough to the boundaries of the territory in which alone the pure understanding is allowed its play; rather, I mean principles that actually incite us to tear down all those boundary posts and to lay claim to a wholly new territory

\* Sensibility, subordinated to understanding, as the object<sup>c</sup> to which the latter applies its function, is the source of real cognitions. But this same sensibility, insofar as it influences the action of the understanding and determines it to judgments, is the ground of error.

<sup>a</sup> In the first edition: "that subjective grounds."

<sup>b</sup> Bestimmung

<sup>c</sup> Object

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that recognizes no demarcations anywhere. Hence **transcendental** and **transcendent** are not the same. The principles of pure understanding we presented above should be only of empirical and not of transcendental use, i.e., of a use that reaches out beyond the boundaries of experience. But a principle that takes away these limits, which indeed bids us to overstep them, is called **transcendent**. If our critique can succeed in discovering the illusion in these supposed principles, then those principles that are of merely empirical use can be called, in opposition to them, **immanent** principles of pure understanding.

**Logical illusion**, which consists in the mere imitation of the form of reason (the illusion of fallacious inferences) arises solely from a failure of attentiveness to the logical rule. Hence as soon as this attentiveness is focused on the case before us, logical illusion entirely disappears.

**Transcendental illusion**, on the other hand, does not cease even though it is uncovered and its nullity is clearly seen into by transcendental criticism (e.g. the illusion in the proposition: "The world must have a beginning in time"). The cause of this is that in our reason (considered subjectively as a human faculty of cognition) there lie fundamental rules and maxims for its use, which look entirely like objective principles, and through them it comes about that the subjective necessity of a certain connection of our concepts on behalf of the understanding is taken for an objective necessity, the determination of things in themselves. [This is] an **illusion** that cannot be avoided at all, just as little as we can avoid it that the sea appears higher in the middle than at the shores, since we see the former through higher rays of light than the latter, or even better, just as little as the astronomer can prevent the rising moon from appearing larger to him, even when he is not deceived by this illusion.<sup>4</sup>

The transcendental dialectic will therefore content itself with uncovering the illusion in transcendental judgments, while at the same time protecting us from being deceived by it; but it can never bring it about that transcendental illusion (like logical illusion) should even disappear and cease to be an illusion. For what we have to do with here is a **natural** and unavoidable **illusion<sup>a</sup>** which itself rests on subjective principles and passes them off as objective, whereas logical dialectic in its dissolution of fallacious inferences has to do only with an error in following principles or with an artificial illusion that imitates them.<sup>5</sup> Hence there is a natural and unavoidable dialectic of pure reason, not one in which a bungler might be entangled through lack of acquaintance, or one that some sophist has artfully invented in order to confuse rational people, but one that irremediably attaches to human reason, so that even after we have exposed the mirage<sup>b</sup> it will still not cease to lead

<sup>a</sup> Illusion

<sup>b</sup> Blendwerk

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The cause of  
transcendental illusion

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## Introduction

our reason on with false hopes, continually propelling it into momentary aberrations that always need to be removed. B 355

## II

### On pure reason as the seat of transcendental illusion

#### A.

##### On reason in general.

All our cognition starts from the senses, goes from there to the understanding, and ends with reason, beyond which there is nothing higher to be found in us to work on the matter of intuition and bring it under the highest unity of thinking. Since I am now to give a definition<sup>a</sup> of this supreme faculty of cognition, I find myself in some embarrassment.

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As in the case of the understanding, there is in the case of reason a merely formal, i.e., logical use, where reason abstracts from all content of cognition, but there is also a real use, since reason itself contains the origin of certain concepts and principles, which it derives neither from the senses nor from the understanding. The first faculty has obviously long since been defined by the logicians as that of drawing inferences meditately (as distinct from immediate inferences, *consequentis immediatis*); but from this we get no insight into the second faculty, which itself generates concepts.<sup>6</sup> Now since a division of reason into a logical and a transcendental faculty occurs here, a higher concept of this source of cognition must be sought that comprehends both concepts under itself, while from the analogy with concepts of the understanding, we can expect both that the logical concept will put in our hands the key to the transcendental one and that the table of functions of the former will give us the family tree of the concepts of reason.

logical and real use  
of reason

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a metaphysical  
deduction of reason's  
ideas

In the first part of our transcendental logic we defined the understanding as the faculty of rules; here we will distinguish reason from understanding by calling reason the **faculty of principles**.<sup>b</sup>

Principles

A 300

The term "a principle" is ambiguous, and commonly signifies only a cognition that can be used as a principle even if in itself and as to its own origin it is not a principle.<sup>c</sup> Every universal proposition, even if it is

<sup>a</sup> Erklärung

<sup>b</sup> *Prinzipien*; in section II of this introduction, "principle" always translates *Princip* unless otherwise noted. In addition to the German term *Grundsatz*, Kant employs not only the Latin derivative *Princip*, but also occasionally the even more Latinate *Principium*, whose occurrence will be noted; the plural of both terms, however, is *Prinzipien*, which will therefore be translated as "principles" with no note. Outside the present section, "principle" (without a note) always translates *Grundsatz*, and the Latin terms are always noted.

<sup>c</sup> *Principium*

taken from experience (by induction) can serve as the major premise in a syllogism;<sup>a</sup> but it is not therefore itself a principle.<sup>b</sup> The mathematical axioms (e.g., that there can be only one straight line between any two points) are even universal cognitions *a priori*, and thus they are correctly called principles relative to the cases that can be subsumed under them. But I cannot therefore say that in general and in itself I cognize this proposition about straight lines from principles, but only that I cognize it in pure intuition.

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cognition from principles

I would therefore call a “cognition from principles” that cognition in which I cognize the particular in the universal through concepts. Thus every syllogism is a form of derivation of a cognition from a principle. For the major premise always gives a concept such that everything subsumed under its condition can be cognized from it according to a principle. Now since every universal cognition can serve as the major premise in a syllogism, and since the understanding yields such universal propositions *a priori*, these propositions can, in respect of their possible use, be called principles.

A 301

But if we consider these principles<sup>c</sup> of pure understanding in themselves as to their origin, then they are anything but cognitions from concepts. For they would not even be possible *a priori* if we did not bring in pure intuition (in mathematics) or the conditions of a possible experience in general. That everything that happens has a cause cannot at all be inferred from the concept of what happens in general; rather, it is this principle<sup>d</sup> that shows how one can first get a determinate experiential concept of what happens.

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absolute vs  
comparative cognition  
from principles

Thus the understanding cannot yield synthetic cognitions from concepts at all, and it is properly these that I call principles absolutely; nevertheless, all universal propositions in general can be called principles comparatively.

A 302

It is an ancient wish – who knows how long it will take until perhaps it is fulfilled – that in place of the endless manifold of civil laws, their principles may be sought out; for in this alone can consist the secret, as one says, of simplifying legislation. But here the laws are only limitations of our freedom to conditions under which it agrees thoroughly with itself; hence they apply to something that is wholly our own work, and of which we can be the cause through that concept. But that objects in themselves, as well as the nature of things, should stand under principles and be determined according to mere concepts is something

<sup>a</sup> *Vernunftschluß* might equally be translated “inference of reason”; and occasionally it will be so translated below.

<sup>b</sup> *Principium*

<sup>c</sup> *Grundsätze*

<sup>d</sup> *Grundatz*

## Introduction

that, if not impossible, is at least very paradoxical<sup>a</sup> in what it demands. But however that may be (for the investigation of this still lies before us), this much at least is clear; cognition from principles (in themselves) is something entirely different from mere cognition of the understanding, which can of course precede other cognitions in the form of a principle, but in itself (insofar as it is synthetic) still neither rests on mere thought nor contains in itself a universal according to concepts.

If the understanding may be a faculty of unity of appearances by means of rules, then reason is the faculty of the unity of the rules of understanding under principles.<sup>7</sup> Thus it<sup>b</sup> never applies directly to experience or to any object, but instead applies to the understanding, in order to give unity *a priori* through concepts to the understanding's manifold cognitions, which may be called "the unity of reason," and is of an altogether different kind than any unity that can be achieved by the understanding.

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a different kind of unity

This is the universal concept of the faculty of reason, as far as that concept can be made comprehensible wholly in the absence of examples (such as those that are to be given only in what follows).

### B. On the logical use of reason.

A303

We draw a distinction between what is cognized immediately and what is only inferred. That there are three angles in a figure enclosed by three straight lines is immediately cognized, but that these angles together equal two right angles is only inferred. Because we constantly need inferences and so in the end become wholly accustomed to them, it happens at last that we no longer even take notice of this distinction, and often, as in so-called deceptions of sense, we take as immediate what we have only inferred. In every inference there is a proposition that serves as a ground, and<sup>c</sup> another, namely the conclusion, that is drawn from the former, and<sup>d</sup> finally the inference (consequence) according to which the truth of the conclusion is connected unfailingly with the truth of the first proposition. If the inferred judgment already lies in the first one, so that it can be derived from it without the mediation of a third representation, then this is called an "immediate inference" (*consequentia immediata*); I would rather call it an inference of the understanding.<sup>8</sup> But if, in addition to the cognition that serves as a ground, yet another judgment is necessary to effect the conclusion,

B360  
inference as such

immediate vs  
mediate inference

<sup>a</sup> *Widersinniges*

<sup>b</sup> I.e., reason. In the first edition: "It"; in the second edition: "Thus it . . ."

<sup>c</sup> The word "and" added in the second edition.

<sup>d</sup> The word "and" added in the second edition.

syllogism

A 304

then the inference is called a "syllogism."<sup>a</sup> In the proposition **All humans are mortal** there lie already the propositions "Some humans are mortal," "Some<sup>b</sup> mortal beings are human beings," "Nothing<sup>c</sup> immortal is a human being," and these propositions are thus immediate conclusions from the first one. On the other hand, the proposition "All scholars are mortal" does not lie in the underlying judgment (for the concept "scholar" does not occur in it at all), and can be concluded from it only by means of an intermediate judgment.

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three forms  
of syllogism

In every syllogism I think first a **rule** (the *major*) through the understanding. Second, I **subsume** a cognition under the condition of the rule (the *minor*) by means of the **power of judgment**. Finally, I determine my cognition through the predicate of the rule (the *conclusio*),<sup>d</sup> hence *a priori* through **reason**. Thus the relation<sup>e</sup> between a cognition and its condition, which the major premise represents as the rule, constitutes the different kinds of syllogisms. They are therefore threefold – just as are all judgments in general – insofar as they are distinguished by the way they express the relation<sup>f</sup> of cognition to the understanding: namely, **categorical** or **hypothetical** or **disjunctive** syllogisms.<sup>9</sup>

A 305

If, as happens for the most part, the conclusion is a judgment given as the problem,<sup>g</sup> in order to see whether it flows from already given judgments, through which, namely, a wholly different object is thought, then I seek whether the assertion of this conclusion is not to be found in the understanding under certain conditions according to a universal rule. Now if I find such a condition and if the object<sup>b</sup> of the conclusion can be subsumed under the given condition, then this conclusion is derived from the rule that **is also valid for other objects of cognition**. From this we see that **reason, in inferring, seeks to bring the greatest manifold of cognition of the understanding to the smallest number of principles (universal conditions)**, and thereby to effect the highest unity of that manifold.

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### C. On the pure use of reason.

Can we isolate reason, and is it then a genuine<sup>i</sup> source of concepts and judgments that arise solely from it and thereby refer it to objects; or is

<sup>a</sup> *Vernunftschluß* (literally, an "inference of reason")

<sup>b</sup> In the first edition: "or some."

<sup>c</sup> In the first edition: "or nothing."

<sup>d</sup> *conclusion*

<sup>e</sup> *Verhältnis*

<sup>f</sup> *Verhältnis*

<sup>g</sup> *aufgegeben*

<sup>h</sup> *Object*

<sup>i</sup> *eigener*

reason only a merely subordinate<sup>a</sup> faculty that gives to given cognitions a certain form, called "logical" form, through which cognitions of the understanding are subordinated to one another, and lower rules are subordinated to higher ones (whose condition includes the condition of the lower rules in its sphere), as far as this can be effected through comparing them? This is the question with which we will now concern ourselves, though only provisionally. In fact the manifold of rules and the unity of principles is a demand of reason, in order to bring the understanding into thoroughgoing connection with itself, just as the understanding brings the manifold of intuition under concepts and through them into connection.<sup>10</sup> Yet such a principle<sup>b</sup> does not prescribe any law to objects,<sup>c</sup> and does not contain the ground of the possibility of cognizing and determining them as such in general, but rather is merely a subjective law of economy for the provision of our understanding, so that through comparison of its concepts it may bring their universal use to the smallest number, without justifying us in demanding of objects themselves any such unanimity as might make things easier for our understanding or help it extend itself, and so give objective validity to its maxims as well. In a word, the question is: Does reason in itself, i.e., pure reason, contain *a priori* synthetic principles<sup>d</sup> and rules, and in what might such principles consist?

The formal and logical procedure of reason in syllogisms already gives us sufficient guidance as to where the ground of its transcendental principle<sup>e</sup> will rest in synthetic cognition through pure reason.

First, the syllogism does not deal with intuitions, in order to bring them under rules (as does the understanding with its categories), but rather deals with concepts and judgments. If, therefore, pure reason also deals with objects, yet it has no immediate reference to them and their intuition, but deals only with the understanding and its judgments, which apply directly to the senses and their intuition, in order to determine their object. The unity of reason is therefore not the unity of a possible experience, but is essentially different from that, which is the unity of understanding. That everything which happens must have a cause is not a principle<sup>f</sup> cognized and prescribed through reason at all. It makes the unity of experience possible and borrows nothing from reason, which could not have imposed any such synthetic unity from mere concepts without this reference to possible experience.

Second, reason in its logical use seeks the universal condition of its

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<sup>a</sup> subalterne<sup>b</sup> Grundsatz<sup>c</sup> Objete<sup>d</sup> Grundsätze<sup>e</sup> Principium<sup>f</sup> Grundsatz

judgment (its conclusion), and the syllogism is nothing but a judgment mediated by the subsumption of its condition under a universal rule (the major premise). Now since this rule is once again exposed to this same attempt of reason, and the condition of its condition thereby has to be sought (by means of a prosyllogism) as far as we may, we see very well that the proper principle<sup>a</sup> of reason in general (in its logical use) is to find the unconditioned for conditioned cognitions of the understanding, with which its unity will be completed.

the principle of reason  
in general

the logical maxim

But this logical maxim cannot become a principle<sup>b</sup> of pure reason unless we assume that when the conditioned is given, then so is the whole series of conditions subordinated one to the other, which is itself unconditioned, also given (i.e., contained in the object and its connection).

the transition  
passage

Such a principle<sup>c</sup> of pure reason, however, is obviously synthetic; for the conditioned is analytically related to some condition, but not to the unconditioned. Different synthetic propositions must arise from it, of which the pure understanding knows nothing, since it has to do only with objects of a possible experience, whose cognition and synthesis are always conditioned. But the unconditioned, if it actually occurs, is<sup>d</sup> particularly to be considered according to all the determinations that distinguish it from everything conditioned, and must thereby give us material for many synthetic propositions *a priori*.

The principles<sup>e</sup> arising from this supreme principle of pure reason will, however, be transcendent in respect of all appearances, i.e., no adequate empirical use can ever be made of that principle. It will therefore be entirely distinct from all principles<sup>f</sup> of the understanding (whose use is completely immanent, insofar as it has only the possibility of experience as its theme). But whether the principle<sup>g</sup> that the series of conditions (in the synthesis of appearances, or even in the thinking of things in general) reaches to the unconditioned, has objective correctness or not; what consequences flow from it for the empirical use of the understanding, or whether it rather yields no such objectively valid propositions of at all, but is only a logical prescription in the ascent to ever higher conditions to approach completeness in them and thus to bring the highest possible unity of reason into our cognition; whether, I say, this need of reason has, through a misunderstanding, been taken for a transcendental principle<sup>b</sup> of reason, which overhastily

<sup>a</sup> Grundsatz

<sup>b</sup> Prinzipium

<sup>c</sup> Grundsatz

<sup>d</sup> Reading with the fourth edition, wird for kann.

<sup>e</sup> Grundsätze

<sup>f</sup> Grundsätze

<sup>g</sup> Grundsatz

<sup>h</sup> Grundsatz

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postulates such an unlimited completeness in the series of conditions in the objects themselves; but in this case what other kinds of misinterpretations and delusions<sup>a</sup> may have crept into the inferences of reason whose major premise (and that perhaps more a petition than a postulate) is taken from pure reason and ascends from experience to its conditions: All this will be our concern in the transcendental dialectic, which we will now develop from its sources hidden deep in human reason. We will divide it into two main parts, the **first** of which will treat of the **transcendent concepts** of pure reason, and the **second** of reason's transcendent and dialectical inferences of reason.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *Verblendungen*

<sup>b</sup> *dialektischen Vermutungsschlüßen*, which (once again) could also be translated "dialectical syllogisms."

*Transcendental Dialectic*  
*First Book*  
*On the concepts of pure reason.*

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B 367 However it may be with the possibility of concepts from pure reason, they are not merely reflected concepts but inferred concepts. Concepts of the understanding are also thought *a priori* before experience and on behalf of it; but they contain nothing beyond the unity of reflection on appearances, insofar as these appearances are supposed to belong necessarily to a possible empirical consciousness. Through them alone is cognition, and determination of an object, possible. They also first give material for inferring, and no *a priori* concepts of objects precede them, from which they could be inferred. On the contrary, their objective reality is founded solely on the fact that because they constitute the intellectual form of all experience, it must always be possible to show their application in experience.

A 311 The term "a concept of reason," however, already shows in a provisional way that such a concept will not let itself be limited to experience, because it deals with a cognition (perhaps the whole of possible experience or its empirical synthesis) of which the empirical is only one part; no actual experience is fully sufficient for it, but every experience belongs to it. Concepts of reason serve for **comprehension**, just as concepts of the understanding serve for **understanding** (of perceptions). If they contain the unconditioned, then they deal with something under which all experience belongs, but that is never itself an object of experience; something to which reason leads through its inferences, and by which reason estimates and measures the degree of its empirical use, but that never constitutes a member of the empirical synthesis. If despite this such concepts have objective validity, then they can be called *conceptus ratiocinati*<sup>a</sup> (correctly inferred concepts); but if not, they have at least been obtained by a surreptitious illusion of inference, and so might be called *conceptus ratiocinantes*<sup>b</sup> (sophistical concepts). Since, however, this can be made out only in the chapter on dialectical infer-

<sup>a</sup> reasoned concepts

<sup>b</sup> ratiocinated concepts

## Section I. On the ideas in general

ences, we will not take account of it yet, but just as we called the concepts of understanding “categories,” we will ascribe a new name to the concepts of pure reason and call them “transcendental ideas,” which term we now elucidate and justify.

### First book of the transcendental dialectic

A 312

#### First section

##### On the ideas in general.

In the great wealth of our languages, the thinking mind nevertheless often finds itself at a loss for an expression that exactly suits its concept, and lacking this it is able to make itself rightly intelligible neither to others nor even to itself. Coining new words is a presumption to legislate in language that rarely succeeds, and before we have recourse to this dubious means it is advisable to look around in a dead and learned language to see if an expression occurs in it that is suitable to this concept; and even if the ancient use of this expression has become somewhat unsteady owing to the inattentiveness of its authors, it is better to fix on the meaning<sup>a</sup> that is proper to it (even if it is doubtful whether it always had exactly this sense) than to ruin our enterprise by making ourselves unintelligible.

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For this reason, if there perhaps occurs only one single word for a certain concept that, in one meaning already introduced, exactly suits this concept, and if it is of great importance to distinguish it from other related concepts, then it is advisable not to be prodigal with that word or use it merely as a synonym or an alternative in place of other words, but rather to preserve it carefully in its proper meaning; for it may otherwise easily happen that when the expression does not particularly occupy our attention but is lost in a heap of others having very divergent meaning, the thought which it alone can preserve may get lost as well.

A 313

Plato made use of the expression **idea** in such a way that we can readily see that he understood by it something that not only could never be borrowed from the senses, but that even goes far beyond the concepts of the understanding (with which Aristotle occupied himself), since nothing encountered in experience could ever be congruent to it.<sup>11</sup> Ideas for him are archetypes of things themselves, and not, like the categories, merely the key to possible experiences. In his opinion they flowed from the highest reason, through which human reason partakes in them; our reason, however, now no longer finds itself in its original state, but must call back with toil the old, now very obscure ideas through a recollection (which is called philosophy).<sup>12</sup> I do not wish to

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<sup>a</sup> *Bedeutung*; for the remainder of Book I of the “Dialectic,” “meaning” will translate this word; *bedeuten*, however, will continue to be translated “signify.”

A 314 go into any literary investigation here, in order to make out the sense which the sublime philosopher combined with his word. I note only that when we compare the thoughts that an author expresses about a subject, in ordinary speech as well as in writings, it is not at all unusual to find that we understand him even better than he understood himself, since he may not have determined his concept sufficiently and hence sometimes spoke, or even thought, contrary to his own intention.

B 371 Plato noted very well that our power of cognition feels a far higher need than that of merely spelling out appearances according to a synthetic unity in order to be able to read them as experience, and that our reason naturally exalts itself to cognitions that go much too far for any object that experience can give ever to be congruent, but that nonetheless have their reality and are by no means merely figments of the brain.

A 315 Plato found his ideas preeminently in everything that is practical,\* i.e. in what rests on freedom, which for its part stands under cognitions that are a proper product of reason. Whoever would draw the concepts of virtue from experience, whoever would make what can at best serve as an example for imperfect illustration into a model for a source of cognition (as many have actually done), would make of virtue an ambiguous non-entity, changeable with time and circumstances, useless for any sort of rule. On the contrary, we are all aware that when someone is represented as a model of virtue, we always have the true original in our own mind alone, with which we compare this alleged model and according to which alone we estimate it. But it is this that is the idea of virtue, in regard to which all possible objects of experience do service as examples (proofs of the feasibility, to a certain degree, of what the concept of reason requires), but never as archetypes. That no human being will ever act adequately to what the pure idea of virtue contains does not prove in the least that there is something chimerical in this thought. For it is only by means of this idea that any judgment of moral worth or unworth is possible; and so it necessarily lies at the ground of every approach to moral perfection, even though the obstacles in human nature, as yet to be determined as to their degree, may hold us at a distance from it.

A 314 / B 371 \* Of course he also extended his concept to speculative cognitions, whenever they were pure and given wholly *a priori*, and even to mathematics, even though mathematical cognitions have their object nowhere except in **possible** experience. Now I cannot follow him in this, just as little as I can in the mystical deduction of these ideas or in the exaggerated way in which he hypostatized them, as it were; although the lofty language that served him in this field is surely quite susceptible of a milder interpretation, and one that accords better with the nature of things.

## Section I. On the ideas in general

The **Platonic republic** has become proverbial as a supposedly striking example of a dream of perfection that can have its place only in the idle thinker's brain; and Brucker<sup>13</sup> finds it ridiculous for the philosopher to assert that a prince will never govern well unless he participates in the ideas. But we would do better to pursue this thought further, and (at those points where the excellent man leaves us without help) to shed light on it through new endeavors, rather than setting it aside as useless under the very wretched and harmful pretext of its impracticability. A constitution providing for the **greatest human freedom** according to laws that permit **the freedom of each to exist together with that of others** (not one providing for the greatest happiness, since that would follow of itself) is at least a necessary idea, which one must make the ground not merely of the primary plan of a state's constitution but of all the laws too; and in it we must initially abstract from the present obstacles, which may perhaps arise not so much from what is unavoidable in human nature as rather from neglect of the true ideas in the giving of laws. For nothing is more harmful or less worthy of a philosopher than the vulgar appeal to allegedly contrary experience, which would not have existed at all if institutions had been established at the right time according to the ideas, instead of frustrating all good intentions by using crude concepts in place of ideas, just because these concepts were drawn from experience. The more legislation and government agree with this idea, the less frequent punishment will become, and hence it is quite rational to assert (as Plato does) that in perfect institutional arrangements nothing of the sort would be necessary at all.<sup>14</sup> Even though this may never come to pass, the idea of this maximum is nevertheless wholly correct when it is set forth as an archetype, in order to bring the legislative constitution of human beings ever nearer to a possible greatest perfection. For whatever might be the highest degree of perfection at which humanity must stop, and however great a gulf must remain between the idea and its execution, no one can or should try to determine this, just because it is freedom that can go beyond every proposed boundary.

But Plato was right to see clear proofs of an origin in ideas not only where human reason shows true causality, and where ideas become efficient causes (of actions and their objects), namely in morality, but also in regard to nature itself.<sup>15</sup> A plant, an animal, the regular arrangement of the world's structure (presumably thus also the whole order of nature) – these show clearly that they are possible only according to ideas; although no individual creature, under the individual conditions of its existence, is congruent with the idea of what is most perfect of its species (as little as a human being is congruent with the idea of humanity that he bears in his soul as the archetype of his actions), nevertheless these ideas are in the highest understanding individual, unalterable,

A 316

B 373

A 317

B 374

true causality  
of reason

A 318

B 375

thoroughly determined, and the original causes of things, and only the whole its combination in the totality of a world is fully adequate to its idea. If we abstract from its exaggerated expression, then the philosopher's spiritual flight, which considers the physical copies<sup>a</sup> in the world order, and then ascends to their architectonic connection according to ends, i.e., ideas, is an endeavor that deserves respect and imitation; but in respect of that which pertains to principles<sup>b</sup> of morality, legislation and religion where the ideas first make the experience (of the good) itself possible, even if they can never be fully expressed in experience, perform a wholly unique service, which goes unrecognized precisely because it is judged according to empirical rules, whose validity as principles<sup>c</sup> should be cancelled by those very ideas. For when we consider nature, experience provides us with the rule and is the source of truth; but with respect to moral laws, experience is (alas!) the mother of illusion, and it is most reprehensible to derive the laws concerning what I **ought to do** from what is **done**, or to want to limit it to that.

A 319

B 376

But instead of these matters, the prosecution of which in fact makes up the proper dignity of philosophy, we now concern ourselves with a labor less spectacular but nevertheless not unrewarding: that of making the terrain for these majestic moral edifices level and firm enough to be built upon; for under this ground there are all sorts of passageways, such as moles might have dug, left over from reason's vain but confident treasure hunting, that make every building insecure. It is the transcendental use of pure reason, of its principles<sup>d</sup> and ideas, whose closer acquaintance we are now obligated to make, in order properly to determine and evaluate the influence and the worth of pure reason. Yet before I conclude this provisional introduction, I entreat those who take philosophy to heart (which means more than is commonly supposed), if they find themselves convinced by this and the following discussion, to take care to preserve the expression **idea** in its original meaning, so that it will not henceforth fall among the other expressions by which all sorts of representations are denoted in careless disorder, to the detriment of science. We are not so lacking in terms properly suited to each species of representation that we have need for one to encroach on the property of another. Here is their progression:<sup>e</sup> The genus is **representation** in general (*repraesentatio*). Under it stands the representation with consciousness (*perceptio*). A **perception**<sup>f</sup> that refers to the subject as a modification of its state is a **sensation** (*sensatio*); an objective percep-

The  
Stufenleiter

A 320

<sup>a</sup> von der copeilichen Betrachtung des Physischen

<sup>b</sup> Principiën

<sup>c</sup> Principiën

<sup>d</sup> Principiën

<sup>e</sup> Stufenleiter

<sup>f</sup> Perception

tion<sup>a</sup> is a **cognition** (*cognitio*). The latter is either an **intuition** or a **concept** (*intuitus vel conceptus*). The former is immediately related to the object and is singular; the latter is mediate, by means of a mark, which can be common to several things. A concept is either an **empirical** or a **pure concept**, and the pure concept, insofar as it has its origin solely in the understanding (not in a pure image of sensibility), is called *notio*.<sup>b</sup> A concept made up of notions, which goes beyond the possibility of experience, is an **idea** or a concept of reason. Anyone who has become accustomed to this distinction must find it unbearable to hear a representation of the color red called an idea. It is not even to be called a notion (a concept of the understanding).<sup>c</sup>

## First book of the transcendental dialectic

## Second section

On the transcendental ideas.<sup>c</sup>

The transcendental analytic gave us an example of how the mere logical form of our cognition can contain the origin of pure concepts *a priori*, which represent objects prior to all experience, or rather which indicate the synthetic unity that alone makes possible an empirical cognition of objects. The form of judgments (transformed into a concept of the synthesis of intuitions) brought forth categories that direct all use of the understanding in experience. In the same way, we can expect that the form of the syllogisms, if applied to the synthetic unity of intuitions under the authority of the categories, will contain the origin of special concepts *a priori* that we may call pure concepts of reason or **transcendental ideas**, and they will determine the use of the understanding according to principles<sup>d</sup> in the whole of an entire experience.

The function of reason in its inferences consisted in the universality of cognition according to concepts, and the syllogism is itself a judgment determined *a priori* in the whole domain of its condition. I can draw the proposition "Caius is mortal" from experience merely through the understanding. But I seek a concept containing the condition under which the predicate (the assertion in general) of this judgment is given (i.e., here, the concept "human"), and after I have subsumed [the predicate] under this condition, taken in its whole domain ("all humans are

<sup>a</sup> Perception<sup>b</sup> notion<sup>c</sup> In his copy of the first edition, Kant inserted these comments:

"In experience we can [encounter] no concepts of reason, e.g., of the simple, which cannot exhibit any experience, the [absolutely] unconditioned of every kind."

"The cosmological ideas, to be sure, pertain to objects [*Objecte*] of the sensible world, but . . ." (the end of the manuscript is missing) (E CLII, p. 46; 23:38)<sup>d</sup> *Principien*

mortal"), I determine the cognition of my object according to it ("Caius is mortal").

Accordingly, in the conclusion of a syllogism we restrict a predicate to a certain object, after we have thought it in the major premise in its whole domain under a certain condition. This complete magnitude of the domain, in relation to such a condition, is called **universality** (*universalitas*). In the synthesis of intuition this corresponds to **allness** (*universalitas*), or the **totality** of conditions. So the transcendental concept of reason is none other than that of the **totality of conditions** to a given conditioned thing. Now since the **unconditioned** alone makes possible the totality of conditions, and conversely the totality of conditions is always itself unconditioned, a pure concept of reason in general can be explained<sup>a</sup> through the concept of the unconditioned, insofar as it contains a ground of synthesis for what is conditioned.<sup>17</sup>

**A323** There will be as many concepts of reason as there are species of relation<sup>b</sup> represented by the understanding by means of the categories; and so we must seek an **unconditioned**, first, for the **categorical** synthesis in a **subject**, second for the **hypothetical** synthesis of the members of a **series**, and third for the **disjunctive** synthesis of the parts in a **system**.<sup>18</sup>

**B380** There are, therefore, just as many species of syllogism, and in each of them prosyllogisms proceed to the unconditioned: one, to a subject that is no longer a predicate, another to a presupposition that presupposes nothing further, and the third to an aggregate of members of a division such that nothing further is required for it to complete the division of a concept. Hence the pure rational concepts of the totality in a synthesis of conditions are necessary at least as problems of extending the unity of the understanding, if possible, to the unconditioned, and they are grounded in the nature of human reason, even if these transcendental concepts lack a suitable use *in concreto* and have no other utility than to point the understanding in the right direction so that it may be thoroughly consistent with itself when it extends itself to its uttermost extremes.

**A324** However, while we are speaking here about the totality of conditions and the unconditioned, as the common title of all concepts of reason, we once again run up against an expression with which we cannot dispense and at the same time cannot safely use because of an ambiguity it has acquired through long misuse. The term **absolute** is one of the few words that in its original meaning was suited to one concept that by and large no other word in the same language precisely suits, and so its loss, or what is the same thing, its vacillating use, must carry with it the loss of the concept itself, but this is indeed a concept with which we cannot dis-

<sup>a</sup> erklärt

<sup>b</sup> Verhältnis

## Section II. On the transcendental ideas

pense except at great disadvantage to all transcendental estimations.<sup>a</sup> The word **absolute** is now more often used merely to indicate that something is valid of a thing<sup>b</sup> considered in itself and thus internally. In this meaning, "absolutely possible" would signify what is possible in itself (internally), which is in fact the least one can say of an object. On the contrary, however, it is also sometimes used to indicate that something is valid in every relation (unlimitedly) (e.g., absolute dominion); and in this meaning **absolutely possible** would signify what is possible in all respects in every relation, which is again the most that I can say about the possibility of a thing. Now sometimes, to be sure, these two meanings coincide. So, for example, what is internally impossible is also impossible in every relation, and hence absolutely impossible. But in most cases they are infinitely far apart from each other, and so I can by no means infer that because something is possible in itself it is therefore also possible in every relation, hence absolutely possible. Indeed, in what follows I will show about absolute necessity that it by no means depends in all cases on what is internal, and so must not be regarded as signifying the same as what is internal. That whose opposite is internally impossible, that whose opposite is clearly also impossible in all respects, is therefore itself absolutely necessary; but I cannot infer conversely that what is absolutely necessary is something whose opposite is internally impossible, i.e., that the **absolute** necessity of a thing is an **internal** necessity; for this "internal necessity" is in certain cases a wholly empty expression, with which we cannot connect the least concept; on the contrary, the concept of the necessity of a thing in every relation (to everything possible) carries with it very special determinations. Now because the loss of a concept that has great application in speculative philosophy can never be a matter of indifference to the philosopher, I hope he will also not be indifferent to carefully preserving the determination and the expression on which the concept depends.

It is in this extended meaning that I will make use of the word **absolute**, opposing it to what is merely comparative, or valid in some particular respect; for the latter is restricted to conditions, while the former is valid without any restriction.

Now a transcendental concept of reason always goes to the absolute totality in the synthesis of conditions, and never ends except with the absolutely unconditioned, i.e., what is unconditioned in every relation. For pure reason leaves to the understanding everything that relates directly to objects of intuition or rather to their synthesis in imagination. It reserves for itself only the absolute totality in the use of concepts, and seeks to carry the synthetic unity, which is thought in the categories, all

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<sup>a</sup> *Beurteilungen*; in the third edition, this word is in the singular.

<sup>b</sup> *Sache*

the way to the absolutely unconditioned. We can therefore call this the **unity of reason** in appearances, just as that which the category expresses can be called the **unity of understanding**. Thus reason relates itself only to the use of the understanding, not indeed insofar as the latter contains the ground of possible experience (for the absolute totality of conditions is not a concept that is usable in an experience, because no experience is unconditioned), but rather in order to prescribe the direction toward a certain unity of which the understanding has no concept, proceeding to comprehend all the actions of the understanding in respect of every object into an **absolute whole**. Hence the objective use of the pure concepts of reason is always **transcendent**, while that of the pure concepts of understanding must by its nature always be **immanent**, since it is limited solely to possible experience.

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By the idea of a necessary concept of reason, I understand one to which no congruent object can be given in the senses. Thus the pure concepts of reason we have just examined are **transcendental ideas**.

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They are concepts of pure reason; for they consider all experiential cognition as determined through an absolute totality of conditions. They are not arbitrarily invented, but given as problems<sup>a</sup> by the nature of reason itself, and hence they relate necessarily to the entire use of the understanding. Finally, they are transcendent concepts, and exceed the bounds of all experience, in which no object adequate to the transcendental idea can ever occur. When we call something an idea, we are saying a great deal about its object<sup>b</sup> (as an object of pure understanding), but just for this reason very little about the subject (i.e., in respect of its actuality under empirical conditions), since, as the concept of a maximum, nothing congruent to it can ever be given *in concreto*. Now be-

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cause in the merely speculative use of reason the latter is really the whole aim, and approaching a concept that will, however, never be reached in execution, is the same as simply lacking that concept, it is said of a concept of this sort that it is **only** an idea. Thus we might say that the absolute whole of appearances is **only** an idea, since, because we can never project it in an image, it remains a **problem**<sup>c</sup> without any solution. On the contrary, because in the practical use of understand-

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ing it is only a matter of execution according to rules, an idea of practical reason can always be actually given *in concreto*, though only in part; indeed, it is the indispensable condition of every practical use of reason. Its execution is always bounded and defective, but within bounds that cannot be determined, hence always under the influence of the concept of an absolute completeness. Accordingly, the practical idea is

<sup>a</sup> *aufgegeben*

<sup>b</sup> *Object*

<sup>c</sup> *Problem*

## Section II. On the transcendental ideas

always fruitful in the highest degree and unavoidably necessary in respect of actual actions. In it practical reason even has the causality actually to bring forth what its concept contains; and hence of such wisdom we cannot likewise say disparagingly: **It is only an idea;** rather just because it is the idea of a necessary unity of all possible ends, it must serve as a rule, the original and at least limiting condition, for everything practical.

Although we have to say of the transcendental concepts of reason: **They are only ideas,** we will by no means regard them as superfluous and nugatory. For even if no object can be determined through them, they can still, in a fundamental and unnoticed way, serve the understanding as a canon for its extended and self-consistent use, through which it cognizes no more objects than it would cognize through its concepts, yet in this cognition it will be guided better and further. Not to mention the fact that perhaps the ideas make possible a transition from concepts of nature to the practical, and themselves generate support for the moral ideas and connection with the speculative cognitions of reason. About all this we must expect to be informed in due course.

But given our present aims, we will set aside the practical ideas, and hence consider reason only in its speculative use, and in this even more narrowly, namely only in its transcendental use. Here we must strike out on the same path as we took above in the deduction of the categories; that is, we must consider the logical form of rational cognition, and see whether in this way reason will not perhaps also be a source of concepts, regarding objects<sup>a</sup> in themselves as determined synthetically *a priori* in respect of one or another function of reason.

Reason, considered as the faculty of a certain logical form of cognition, is the faculty of inferring, i.e., of judging mediately (through the subsumption of a condition of a possible judgment under the condition of something given). The given judgment is the universal rule (major premise, *major*). The subsumption of the condition of another possible judgment under the condition of the rule is the minor premise (*minor*). The actual judgment that expresses the assertion of the rule **in the subsumed case<sup>b</sup>** is the conclusion (*conclusio*). The rule says something universal under a certain condition. Now in a case that comes before us the condition of the rule obtains. Thus what is valid universally under that condition is also to be regarded as valid in the case before us (which carries this condition with it). We easily see that reason attains to a cognition through actions of the understanding that constitute a series of conditions. Thus suppose I arrive at the proposition "All bodies are alterable" only by beginning with the more remote cognition (in which

<sup>a</sup> *Objecte*

<sup>b</sup> The fourth edition reads "to the subsumed case."

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the concept of a body does not occur, but that contains the condition of this concept) that "Everything composite is **alterable**," and go from this to a closer proposition standing under the condition of the former: "Bodies are composite"; and then from this finally to a third proposition, conjoining the more distant cognition ("alterable") with the one lying before us: "Consequently, bodies are alterable"; then I arrive at a cognition (a conclusion) through a series of conditions (premises). Now every series whose exponent (whether that of the categorical or the hypothetical judgment) is given may be continued; hence the very same action of reason leads to a *ratiocinatio prosyllogistica*,<sup>a</sup> which is a series of inferences, that can be continued to an indeterminate extent either on the side of the conditions (*per prosyllogismos*)<sup>b</sup> or on the side of the conditioned (*per episyllogismos*).<sup>c</sup>

But we soon come to be aware that the chain or series of prosyllogisms, i.e., of inferred cognitions on the side of the grounds, or of the conditions of a given cognition – in other words, the **ascending series** of syllogisms – has to be related to the faculty of reason differently from the **descending series**, i.e., the progression of reason on the side of that which is conditioned through episyllogisms. For since in the first case the cognition (the *conclusio*) is given only as conditioned, we cannot reach it by means of reason except at least on the presupposition that all members of the series are given on the side of the conditions (totality in the series of premises), because only under this presupposition is the judgment before us possible *a priori*; on the contrary, on the side of that which is conditioned or of the consequences, there is thought only a series that **becomes**, and that is not already presupposed or **given** as a **whole**, and so only a potential progression. Hence if a cognition is regarded as conditioned, reason is necessitated to regard the series of conditions in an ascending line as completed and given in their totality. But if the very same cognition is at the same time regarded as a condition of

**A 332** other cognitions that constitute a series of consequences in a descending line, then reason can be entirely indifferent about how far this progression stretches *a parte posteriori*, and whether a totality of these conditions is even possible at all; for it does not need a series of the same sort for the conclusion that lies before us, since this conclusion is already sufficiently determined and secured through its grounds *a parte priori*. Now it may or may not be that on the side of the conditions, the series of premises has a **first** [member] as the supreme condition, and hence that it is without bound *a parte priori*; nevertheless it must still

<sup>a</sup> "Prosyllogistic reasoning," that is, reasoning through a series of syllogisms to arrive at a desired conclusion.

<sup>b</sup> by prosyllogisms

<sup>c</sup> by episyllogisms

### Section III. System of transcendental ideas

contain the totality of the condition, assuming that we could never succeed in grasping it; and the whole series must be unconditionally true if the conditioned, which is regarded as a consequence arising from it, is supposed to count as true. This is a demand of reason, which declares its cognition to be determined *a priori* and necessary either as it is in itself – in which case it needs no grounds – or else – if it is derived – as a member of a series of grounds that is itself unconditionally true.

#### The first book of the transcendental dialectic

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##### Third section

###### The system of the transcendental ideas.

What we have to do with here is not a logical dialectic that abstracts from every content of cognition and merely discovers false illusion in the form of syllogisms, but rather a transcendental dialectic, that, fully *a priori*, is supposed to contain both the origin of certain cognitions from pure reason and inferred concepts, whose object cannot be given empirically at all, and so lies wholly outside the faculty of the pure understanding. We have gathered from the natural relation that the transcendental use of our cognition must have in its inferences as well as in its judgments that there will be only three species of dialectical inferences, relating to the three species of inference by which reason can arrive at cognitions from principles;<sup>a</sup> and that in everything the concern of reason is to ascend from the conditioned synthesis, to which the understanding always remains bound, toward the unconditioned, which the understanding can never reach.

Now what is universal in every relation that our representations can have is 1) the relation to the subject, 2) the relation to objects,<sup>b</sup> and indeed either as<sup>c</sup> appearances, or as objects of thinking in general. If we combine this subdivision with the above division, then all the relations<sup>d</sup> of representations of which we can make either a concept or an idea are of three sorts: 1) the relation<sup>e</sup> to the subject, 2) to the manifold of the object<sup>f</sup> in appearance, and 3) to all things in general.<sup>19</sup>

Now all pure concepts have to do generally with the synthetic unity of representations, but concepts of pure reason (transcendental ideas) have to do with the unconditioned synthetic unity of all conditions in general. Consequently, all transcendental ideas will be brought under

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<sup>a</sup> *Principien*

<sup>b</sup> *Objecte*

<sup>c</sup> In the first edition: *entweder erstlich als*, which could be translated "either firstly as," or "either only as."

<sup>d</sup> *Verhältnis*

<sup>e</sup> *Verhältnis*

<sup>f</sup> *Object*

three classes, of which the first contains the absolute (unconditioned) unity of the thinking subject, the second the absolute unity of the series of conditions of appearance, the third the absolute unity of the condition of all objects of thought in general.

The thinking subject is the object of **psychology**, the sum total of all appearances (the world) is the object of **cosmology**, and the thing that contains the supreme condition of the possibility of everything that can be thought (the being of all beings) is the object of **theology**.<sup>20</sup> Thus pure reason provides the ideas for a transcendental doctrine of the soul

B 392      a *psychologia rationalis*,<sup>a</sup> a transcendental science of the world (*cosmologia rationalis*),<sup>b</sup> and finally also a transcendental cognition of God (*theologia transcendentalis*).<sup>c</sup> Even so much as the mere sketch of these sciences is not prescribed by the understanding, even if it is combined with the highest logical use of reason, i.e., with all the inferences through which we can think of progressing from an object of the understanding (appearance) to all other objects, even to the most distant members of the empirical synthesis; rather, such a project is exclusively a pure and genuine product or problem<sup>d</sup> of pure reason.

What *modi* of pure rational concepts stand under these three titles of transcendental ideas will be finally displayed in the following sections. They run along the thread of the categories. For pure reason is never related directly to objects, but instead to concepts of them given by the understanding. Likewise, it can be made clear only in the complete execution how reason, exclusively through the synthetic use of the same function it employs in the categorical syllogism, must necessarily come to the concept of the absolute unity of the thinking subject, how the logical procedure in hypothetical syllogisms<sup>e</sup> [leads to] the ideas of the absolutely unconditioned in a series of given conditions, and finally how the mere form of the disjunctive syllogism necessarily carries with it the highest rational concept of a **being of all beings**; a thought which at first glance appears extremely paradoxical.

No **objective deduction** of these transcendental ideas is really possible, such as we could provide for the categories. For just because they are ideas, they have in fact no relation to any object<sup>f</sup> that could be given congruent to them. But we can undertake a subjective introduction to<sup>g</sup>

<sup>a</sup> rational psychology

<sup>b</sup> rational cosmology

<sup>c</sup> transcendental theology

<sup>d</sup> Problem

<sup>e</sup> The text here seems garbled. It reads “*in hypothetischen Ideen die vom Schlechthinunbedingten . . .*” (in the first edition: “. . . die Idee vom . . .”). We follow Erdmann in inserting the word *Vermunftschlüssen*.

<sup>f</sup> Object

<sup>g</sup> Anleitung; Erdmann reads *Ableitung* (derivation of).

### Section III. System of transcendental ideas

them from the nature of our reason, and this is to be accomplished in the present section.

We easily see that pure reason has no other aim than the absolute totality of synthesis **on the side of conditions** (whether they are conditions of inherence, dependence, or concurrence), and that reason has nothing to do with absolute completeness **from the side of the conditioned**. For it needs only the former series in order to presuppose the whole series of conditions and thereby give it to the understanding *a priori*. But once a complete (and unconditioned) given condition exists, then a concept of reason is no longer needed in respect of the progress of the series; for the understanding by itself makes every step downwards from the condition to the **conditioned**. In this way, the transcendental ideas serve only for **ascending** in the series of conditions to the unconditioned, i.e., to the principles.<sup>a</sup> But regarding **descent** to the conditioned, there is a very extensive logical use that our reason makes of the laws of the understanding, but no transcendental use and if we make ourselves an idea of absolute totality of such a synthesis (of a progressive one), e.g., an idea of the whole series of all **future** alterations in the world, then this is just a thing of thought (*an ens rationis*),<sup>b</sup> which is thought up only arbitrarily, and not presupposed necessarily by reason. For the possibility of something conditioned presupposes the totality of its conditions, but not the totality of its consequences. Consequently such a concept is not a transcendental idea, which is what exclusively concerns us here.

Finally we also come to be aware that a certain connection and unity showing itself among the transcendental ideas themselves and that pure reason by means of it brings all its cognitions into a system. To progress from the cognition of oneself (of the soul) to cognition of the world and, by means of this, to the original being, is so natural that this progression appears similar to the logical advance of reason from premises to a conclusion.\* Whether there is actually here an affinity of the same

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\* <Metaphysics has as the proper end of its investigation only three ideas: **God, freedom, and immortality**; so that the second concept, combined with the first, should lead to the third as a necessary conclusion. Everything else with which this science is concerned serves merely as a means of attaining these ideas and their reality. It does not need them for the sake of natural science, but instead to get beyond nature. The insight into these ideas would make **theology, morals**, and, through their combination, **religion**, thus the highest ends of our existence, dependent solely on the faculty of speculative reason and on nothing else. In a systematic representation of those ideas, the suggested order,

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<sup>a</sup> *Principien*

<sup>b</sup> being of reason

<sup>c</sup> This note was added in the second edition.

kind that grounds the logical and transcendental procedures is one of the questions we must expect to answer in the course of our investigation. We have provisionally reached our end already, since we have removed from this ambiguous position the transcendental concepts of reason, which are usually mixed with other concepts in the theories of philosophers who do not distinguish them from concepts of the understanding, and thereby provided their determinate number, since there can never be any more of them, and we have been able to represent them in a systematic connection, through which a special field of pure reason has been marked out and its limits have been set.

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which is a **synthetic** one, would be the most appropriate; but in working through them, which must necessarily be done first, the **analytic** order, which inverts this one, is more suitable to the end of completing our great project, proceeding from what experience makes immediately available to us from the **doctrine of the soul**, to the **doctrine of the world** and from there all the way to the cognition of **God**.>

*Book Two**The dialectical inferences of pure reason*

It can be said that the object of a merely transcendental idea is something of which we have no concept, even though this idea is generated in an entirely necessary way by reason according to its original laws. For in fact no concept of the understanding is possible for an object that is to be adequate to the demand of reason, i.e., an object such as can be shown and made intuitive in a possible experience. But we would express ourselves better and with less danger of misunderstanding if we said that we can have no acquaintance with an object<sup>a</sup> that corresponds to an idea, even though we can have a problematic concept of it.

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Now at least the transcendental (subjective) reality of pure concepts of reason rests on the fact that we are brought to such ideas by a necessary syllogism. Thus there will be syllogisms containing no empirical premises, by means of which we can infer from something with which we are acquainted to something of which we have no concept, and yet to which we nevertheless, by an unavoidable illusion, give objective reality. In respect of their result, such inferences are thus to be called **sophistical** rather than rational inferences;<sup>b</sup> even though they might lay claim to the latter term on account of what occasions them, because they are not thought up, nor do they arise contingently, but have sprung from the nature of reason. They are sophistries<sup>c</sup> not of human beings but of pure reason itself, and even the wisest of all human beings cannot get free of them; perhaps after much effort he may guard himself from error, but he can never be wholly rid of the illusion, which ceaselessly teases and mocks him.

There are, therefore, only three species of these dialectical syllogisms, as many as there are ideas in which their conclusions result. In the **first class** of syllogisms, from the transcendental concept of a subject that contains nothing manifold I infer the absolute unity of this

A 340  
B 398<sup>a</sup> Object<sup>b</sup> vernünftelnde, als Vermunftsschlüsse, which could also be translated "rationalizing rather than rational inferences" or "sophistical inferences rather than syllogisms."<sup>c</sup> Sophistikationen

subject itself, even though in this way I have no concept at all of it. This dialectical inference I will call a transcendental **paralogism**. The **second** class of sophistical inference is applied in general to the transcendental concept of absolute totality in the series of conditions for a given appearance; and from the fact that I always have a self-contradictory concept of the unconditioned synthetic unity in the series on one side, I infer the correctness of the opposite unity, even though I also have no concept of it. I will call the condition of reason with regard to these dialectical inferences the **antinomy** of pure reason. Finally, in the **third** kind of sophistical inference, from the totality of conditions for thinking objects in general insofar as they can be given to me I infer the absolute synthetic unity of all conditions for the possibility of things in general; i.e., from things with which I am not acquainted as to their merely transcendental concept, I infer a being of all beings, with which I am even less acquainted through its transcendental<sup>a</sup> concept, and of whose unconditioned necessity I can make for myself no concept at all. This dialectical syllogism I will call the **ideal** of pure reason.

<sup>a</sup> Reading, with the fourth edition, *transcendentalen* for *transcendenten*.