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Kant-I

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Introduction

Immanuel Kant, through his philosophical enterprise known as critical idealism or transcendental idealism, has made an attempt to resolve the issues emerging from the conflict between rationalistic and empiricist approaches by proposing a system that was fundamentally *a priori* but without sacrificing the value of the phenomenal reality. According to his approach, the reality that human beings know is basically the reality constituted or constructed by human beings themselves. In a nutshell, with the help of a set of *a priori* forms and the phenomenal data, the world – all sciences and all forms of knowledge – is shaped. The same is the case with regard to the practical sphere: the autonomous individual, through the proper exercise of the will, constructs the moral world. So, the Kantian approach to theoretical as well as practical knowledge is centred on the individual agent.

Kant's definitive insistence that we can have *a priori* knowledge, which is necessary and universal, however, does not blind him to the contributions of the senses. He holds that all our knowledge is ultimately rooted in sense intuitions as well as in concepts; all the same, he categorically denies that we could have theoretical knowledge about anything that lies beyond the bounds of *possible experience*. Thus, in the *Prolegomena*, Kant

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claims that "the word 'transcendental' ... does not signify something passing beyond all experience but something that indeed precedes it *a priori*, but that is intended to make cognition of experience possible" (*Prolegomena*, Appendix, Ak. 4:373n). It is in this sense that he calls his philosophy transcendental.

An inquiry into the nature of knowledge is, therefore, an inquiry into the cognitive constitution of the subject, and not into the nature of the objects, but concerns only what makes it possible. Hence, he defines his philosophy as "a science of the mere examination of reason, its sources and limits" (CPR A11/B25). Understood negatively, according to Beck, it highlights the 'police' function of the *Critique* "in preventing or exposing the dialectical illusions of speculative metaphysics" (Beck, 44), while, understood positively, it secures to reason the "sure path of science" in the wake of the challenges from rationalism and empiricism. Thus, practically speaking, the *Critique* becomes the final court of appeal for Kant, even to the extent of becoming a limiting factor in his further philosophical endeavour.

The unifying thought that runs through the whole of the *Critique* is his self-proclaimed novel question "How is synthetic *a priori* knowledge possible?" (CPR B19). To begin with, Kant assumes that synthetic *a priori* propositions exist both in pure mathematics and physics, and his conviction about the success of these branches of knowledge impels him to invest himself in critical inquiry with a view to justify the possibility of such propositions in the realms of knowledge and morality. Thus, the critical problem, which he formulates against the backdrop of dogmatic and empiricist philosophies, unravels in the first *Critique* by posing the problem of whether and to what extent can we find *a priori* principles of knowledge in the respective faculties of reason,

understanding, and judgment. As for the claims of the *Critique* itself, the apparent transcendent nature of *a priori* knowledge is rectified, and its concreteness safeguarded by Kant, by his incessant insistence that "we come to know of *a priori* ideas, like all other ideas, only through experience ... [and] that this *a priori* knowledge nevertheless must apply to object of experience..." (Paton, 1:563-64). This is possible, he claims, not as a result of the independent nature of the things, but due to the nature of the intellectual faculties. This step, according to Kant, ensures both the purity and validity of transcendental knowledge, which "entitles him to develop the entire system of pure speculative reason without reference to anything other than the abstract principles" and "without reference to any specific empirical object" (Van De Pitte, 1024).

The Structure of the *Critique of Pure Reason*

The centrality of the first *Critique* for Kant is achieved in the architectonic plan of his work where the triad of the Aesthetic-Analytic-Dialectic attempts to unveil the nature and function of different faculties in acquiring knowledge, each, in turn, addressing the contributions of sensibility, understanding, and reason, respectively. Stated in general, while the Aesthetic answers the question "How are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible in mathematics?" the Analytic takes up the question "How are these judgments possible in natural science?" Finally, the Dialectic addresses the issue of the impossibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments in metaphysics.

The Transcendental Aesthetic, as concerned with sensibility or intuition, and identified by Kant as the faculty of sensing objects, provides the primary data for knowledge. In this section he addresses the issue of the determination of space and time, the only *a priori*

intuitions we possess, which provide the sensible form of experience. Space and time are the pure forms of sensibility, which are imposed by the human mind on to the world of experience, as the elements of our subjective cognitive constitution. The nature of space and time, for Kant, is very much Euclidean. In the Aesthetic Kant assumes that Euclidean geometry is a body of *a priori* knowledge, although the regressive method that he has adopted in this section does not attempt to prove its validity.

In the second section, Transcendental Analytic, Kant goes one step further by showing that any meaningful claim to theoretical knowledge requires not only sensibility, but the spontaneous faculty of understanding too. In order to show that synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible, it is necessary that apart from the contribution of intuition, there must be the element of conception, whereby the mind contributes its vital share. Kant asserts that there are three subjective sources of knowledge, such as sense, imagination, and apperception, on which the process of synthesis is grounded. Hence, Kant undertakes an explication of the generation of the categories in the knowing process, and attempts to deduce their validity. The finding that the categories of the understanding are *a priori* implies that they do not depend on the nature of the things, but on the nature of our thought, though, at the same time, they are meaningless and empty apart from their application to spatial and temporal things given in intuition.

Proceeding further, and applying the results of the Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic, Kant identifies in the Transcendental Dialectic the excesses in the employment of reason, which tends to apply its own ideas in the realms that lie beyond the reach of sensibility and understanding. The intellectual capacities, namely,

the capacity of referring to objects by experiencing them within a spatio-temporal framework, and the capacity of bringing objects under general concepts set the limits of our valid knowledge. When these limits are transgressed, it results in transcendental illusion, and the basic source of this illusion is reason's illegitimate pursuit for completeness and unity, i.e., advancing "towards completeness by an ascent to ever higher conditions and so to give our knowledge the greatest possible unity of reason" (CPR A309/B365). Thus, in the Dialectic, he establishes that purely rational knowledge is impossible, which explicitly denies that the aim of the rationalist philosophy, and the content of dogmatic metaphysics are attainable. However, it must be borne in mind that Kant does not prove that the dogmas of the rationalist metaphysics are false, but only that they cannot be known to be true in the mental framework adopted in the Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic. In short, according to the Transcendental Dialectic, although reason can conceive of the unconditioned and employ it (only as an ideal) for some of its own purposes, it can have no theoretical knowledge of it.

Thus, the perspective of the critical philosophy, which shapes the argument of the *Critique*, holds that the ideas of reason are necessary, though they have only a regulative purpose. Their constitutive function is rejected outright, saying that they cannot be given in objective experience according to the yardsticks of the Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic. Later, in the critical endeavour, we find Kant taking this conclusion to new heights both in the second and third *Critique*s, i.e., in the moral, and aesthetic and teleological realms, through which he attempts to pave the way for an integrated philosophy of the theoretical and the practical.

Challenge to Metaphysics

Kant proposes a "change in point of view" (CPR Bxxii note) to reform metaphysics from the shackles of dogmatism and scepticism. While dogmatism, according to Kant, trusts in the principles of metaphysics "without a previous critique of the faculty of reason itself, merely with a view to their success," scepticism holds a "general mistrust in pure reason," again, "without a previous critique, merely with a view to the failure of its assertions" (Kant, *On a Discovery*, 159 [Ak VIII, 226-27]). In the second edition Preface of the first *Critique*, he holds that "metaphysics is a completely isolated speculative science of reason, which soars far above the teachings of experience, and in which reason is indeed meant to be its own pupil. Metaphysics has hitherto been a merely random groping ..., a groping among mere concepts" (CPR Bxv).

In spite of his strictures on the traditional metaphysics, he is ready to admit that "the idea of [metaphysics] is as old as speculative human reason," and is "what rational being does not speculate either in scholastic or in popular fashion?" (CPR A842/B871). Interestingly, Kant opens the first *Critique* with a statement of the inevitability of metaphysics, indicating that it is "prescribed by the very nature of reason itself" (CPR Avii). Articulating this problem further, later in the *Critique*, he compares it to a constantly repeated act of ever returning "to a beloved one with whom we have had a quarrel" (CPR A850/ B878), and in the *Prolegomena* to a "favourite child" (*Prolegomena* §57, Ak. IV, 353). He considers the human tendency towards metaphysics as quite natural or inherent to the faculty of reason, and holds that it is impossible to conceive of reason to be devoid of the same, despite the illusion resulting from it.

Dogmatic metaphysics attempts to have *a priori* knowledge of reality independent of sensibility and experience. The pure intellectual method through which metaphysicians arrive at indisputable knowledge of the ultimate nature of objects, however, is radically mistaken and empty, as Kant shows in the *Critique*. This, as Kemp Smith puts it, "transgresses the limits of possible experience, and contains only pretended knowledge" (Smith, 70), and Kant refutes it in the Transcendental Aesthetic, Analytic, and Dialectic of the *Critique*.

The new metaphysics, which, for Kant, is only worthy of the name, is metaphysics as a science, "a system of *a priori* knowledge from mere concepts" (*Metaphysic of Morals*, Ak. VI, 216), "the inventory of all our possessions through pure reason, systematically arranged" (CPR Axx). This science adopts a constructive procedure, or Schematism, and fuses the empirical and the formal. As it is impossible to give any of the ideas of reason in sensible intuition to which no application of categories is admissible, Kant rejects the possibility of having any knowledge of them, whereby, from the perspective of theoretical reason, also rejecting their reality altogether. However, he has been able to show that "one kind of metaphysics is possible, which is enough to save the conception of cognition as a rational phenomenon, and of ourselves, correlatively, as rational beings" (Gardner, 307). Though the thrust of Kant is more about the limits of our knowledge, he positively maintains that the *Critique* lays the foundation for the metaphysics of nature and morality – of physics with respect to the material order (phenomenal realm), and of morality with respect to the intelligible order (noumenal realm).

Assuming that the quest of human reason for metaphysics is inherent to human nature ('natural disposition'), he looks for a justification of its ideas in the practical realm. Metaphysics of morals is indirectly

a concession Kant gives to fulfil the natural quest of human reason for the realization of its ultimate ideals, which he rejects as untenable on the basis of the principles enshrined in the *Critique* itself. The primacy of the practical, which is the hallmark of transcendental philosophy, however, indicates that this move is not only justifiable, but warranted for developing the complete system of critical philosophy. Kant tailors human natural disposition for metaphysics into the new metaphysics.

Faculties and Nature of Knowledge

It is at the foundation of Kant's transcendental programme to identify and examine the nature of the powers of human knowing; only then can we be equipped to determine the extent of our knowledge "that is absolutely objective" (CPR A249). His philosophical thrust to limit the extent of the application of the intellectual faculties is central to his metaphysical thesis, and accordingly, he holds that the human intellect lacks the power of intellectual intuition. This limitation leads Kant to conclude that knowledge of objects is possible only if they are given through a faculty distinct from the intellect itself. Assigning a legitimate role to sensibility, he identifies three closely interrelated faculties of the human mind. They are (i) sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*) which conforms our perceptions to human forms of intuition, viz., space and time; (ii) understanding (*Verstand*) which conforms our individual judgments regarding objects to the categories of thought; and (iii) reason (*Vernunft*) which conforms the collective totality of our judgments regarding objects to certain structural requirements of systematic unity, by regulating the use of the concepts and rules of the understanding, and thus organizing coherent experiences. At the initial level, sensibility is equipped with receptivity and the understanding with spontaneity. Or, it can be expressed in terms of *givenness* and the

consciousness of the given: "the aspect of having something given to one, and the aspect of making the given intelligible to oneself" (Cassirer, 53). Kant holds that all order and system in nature are due to the mind, and they are classified into two types of concepts. The first kind, space and time, originate in sensibility, and, the other, the categories originate in the understanding. Throughout the *Critique* Kant insists that these concepts are not derived from experience, but experience to be experience at all, it presupposes them: objects must be spatial and temporal, and must possess categorial features. This leads Kant to show that these concepts are pure in nature and *a priori* in origin.

In the case of sensibility and understanding we find them balancing the operation and validation of each other: experience validating categories, and, in their turn, the categories making experience possible. However, in the case of reason, although it acts on the results of the understanding, it creates no objects, but only postulates theoretical unities. This is an unacceptable procedure according to the Aesthetic and the Analytic. If applied, it is difficult to find anything 'objective' within these ideas of reason, which makes Buchdahl claim that the autonomy of reason "is purchased at a price" (Buchdahl, 171). The stress on the spontaneity and autonomy of reason (and also of understanding, in this case), and the source of the ideas being the same reason indicate that nature is constrained by reason's own determining operation, which is restricted to the parameters of reason itself. The claim that reason has insight only into what it produces can also be looked at from a different, but an *a posteriori* perspective, where it may be said that, perhaps, we gradually learn by postulation and hypotheses to tune our reason according to the inherent structure of nature that is not obvious at all, but is being progressively revealed to us.

The unity of apperception which is so central to the *Critique* is not a unity for its own sake, but a unity that leads to a synthesis of representations, and thus to a unity in experience. All faculties work together with a goal of producing synthetic knowledge, which, for Kant, is *a priori* in origin. He shows that the content of sensible intuition by itself is individual in nature, and the formation of any combination cannot ensue from sensibility itself, but from the activity of the intellect. In transcendental logic, he names this process synthesis, which is so central to give rise to any valid knowledge *a priori*. The spontaneous process of this synthesis is characterized by Kant as one of literally laying hold of, or grasping or gripping together (*begreifen*) all elementary representations of our experience.

Kant's dictum, "thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (CPR A51/B75), indicates that left to each of them, they cannot give rise to coherent experience or knowledge. Synthesis is the central and fundamental process that is operative in the activities of experiencing and knowing, starting with perception in which appearances are combined together. Kant chiefly speaks in terms of two different kinds of synthesis: empirical synthesis and transcendental synthesis. Transcendental synthesis is performed by productive imagination through a manifold of pure intuition, while empirical synthesis is performed through perception or representations by reproductive imagination, where the activity of imagination is identified as understanding: the former results in the objective phenomenal world through the application of categories, and the latter in our knowledge of this phenomenal world.

The upward moving synthesis of various components of knowledge reaches a new level of cohesion and systematic unity in the synthetic activity of the final and ultimate

intellectual faculty called reason (*Vernunft*). Armed with transcendental ideas, and the quest for the completion of the systematic knowledge, reason aims at the ultimate level of knowledge possible for us as human beings. Moreover, this positive approach of explicating the nature and functions of reason is overshadowed by the major task of the Dialectic to analyse the transcendental illusions to which reason naturally leads.

Lack of absolute unity in understanding paves the way for necessity of the ideas of pure reason, which are "not arbitrarily invented," but "are imposed by the very nature of reason itself" (CPR A327/B384). Pure reason operates with its pure concepts, which are otherwise known as "transcendental ideas." These are derived "from the nature of our reason" (CPR A336/B393); they are "not merely reflected but inferred concepts." Concepts of the understanding result from a 'reflection' on the manifold of appearances, leading to conceptualisation; they are pure or *a priori* because "they contain nothing more than the unity of reflection upon appearances, insofar as these appearances must necessarily belong to a possible empirical consciousness" (CPR A310/B367). Reason, on the other hand, through its pure concepts or ideas, does not merely reflect on the given, rather extends beyond anything that could be given in an act of assembling or *inferring* on which it has to operate. This obviates the fundamental nature of these concepts: their origin itself is in aloofness, and indirectness (through the lack of mediation with intuition) exists in their relation to objects of experience. The concepts of reason, according to Kant, "have, in fact, no relation to any object that could be given as coinciding with them" (CPR A336/B393), whereby Kant brings to the fore their transcendental nature, and calls them "*transcendental ideas*" (CPR A321/ B378).

The transcendental ideas of reason are regulative because they direct or regulate the operation of the understanding by leading it to systematic and absolute unity which it cannot achieve by employing its own categories. Three characteristics of regulative principles, which are integral to Kantian employment, are as follows: (i) they lack *constitutive* force; (ii) they have only a *methodological* function; and, finally, (iii) they possess a *transcendental* status. Kant considers the regulative employment of reason to be transcendentally valid because it leads both the receptive and spontaneous faculties to their completion in postulating the ideas of totality and the unconditioned unity.

The system of thought developed in the *Critique* is known as transcendental philosophy, and it deals with the system of necessary conditions of experience. For Kant, those conditions constitute knowledge of what is logically prior to experience, or of "what goes before all experience," i.e., *a priori*. The characteristic transcendental twist, is reflected in his crucial move from the question "What *is* something?" to "What *do we know* about something without primarily appealing to experience?" Or, in other words, instead of bringing reality into consideration, the purpose of the *Critique* is to explain how knowledge about reality is possible. In his attempt to initiate a transcendental inquiry, Kant's first concern is "to investigate the possibility of concepts *a priori*" (CPR A65-66/B90-91), by way of determining the sources of knowledge, and their valid application. With regard to these sources, the *a priori* concepts and ideas, it may be said that their transcendental use is possible as long as they are employed as regulative principles in the pursuit of knowledge, while a constitutive application of the same in pursuit of representing absolute realities is transcendent, and, hence, dialectical in nature.

When an inference is made "from transcendental concept of the subject, which contains nothing manifold, to the absolute unity of this subject itself..." (CPR A340/B397-98) it gives rise to transcendental paralogism. In formal logic paralogism is used to designate a formally fallacious syllogism with which one deceives oneself. Along this line Kant defines transcendental syllogism as "one in which there is a transcendental ground, constraining us to draw a formally invalid conclusion" (CPR A341/B399). It is an inevitable illusion, or a self-deception transcendentally motivated having its ground in the nature of human reason itself. A paralogism arises when the regulative idea of the self is illegitimately treated as constituting a self-subsistent entity. The indirect, but primary motive involved in the move of rational psychology is to prove the immortality of the soul, by misapplying the categories to the 'I' that is given only in inner intuition. Transcendental analysis of the paralogism shows that the fundamental aim of rational psychology cannot be achieved as the pure concept of the self – being completely indeterminate (in apperception) – onto which the categories are applied is empty of content, and, hence, beyond the application of schematised categories. This calls for a disciplining of the theoretical application of reason in the realms which are beyond the access of our human intellectual capabilities.

Further, an antinomy is a pair of mutually contradictory statements, both of which can be supported by formally valid, though transcendentally inconsistent, arguments. The lack of absolute synthetic unity in the operations of sensibility and understanding motivates reason to demand a totality of all conditions. On the part of the understanding, however, it is impossible to go beyond the phenomenal series as it is intrinsically bound to the data of sensibility and its own forms in the categories;

hence, in its search for absolute unity reason speculates beyond any possible experience, and finds the unconditioned by negating its categorial restrictions. This standpoint of reason, which may be equated to "God's point of view" with regard to the phenomenal world, acts in such a way that the complete series of conditions for every conditioned is at hand in the unconditioned. This is termed as a cosmological idea in the *Critique*, in which the totality of the phenomenally given is assumed and accepted by reason to press forward to the absolute unity of the phenomenal world. Such a conflict is caused by the fact that reason seeks a unity which transcends the understanding, and which nevertheless is meant to conform to the conditions of the understanding. In this process reason attempts to employ its ideas which transcend understanding, i.e., beyond the legitimate reaches of categories, which, in turn, results in the generation of the antinomies of reason. Kant identifies four categories the employment of which generates cosmological ideas, and with them antinomies. They are quantity, reality, causality, and necessity. These antinomies express the underlying conflict of reason with itself, the ideas of which are generated by an illicit extension of the categories.

Kant attempts in the *Critique* to solve this – to grant reason its legitimate rule over understanding, by appealing to the transcendental perspective of distinguishing appearance and the thing-in-itself. Taking all the four antinomies together, what Kant has in mind in their resolution is to show the role of transcendental philosophy in attaining the final synthesis of the conflicting positions of rationalism and empiricism in pure reason. Strictly speaking, the principles of the Aesthetic and Analytic are transcended in the Dialectic by introducing the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself, although the resolution of the antinomies

is made possible only by maintaining this distinction. This also indicates the importance of the ideas of reason in critical philosophy, and paves the way for introducing the primacy of practical reason in it. Although antinomies result from the speculative flights of theoretical reason and its conflict with itself and the understanding, their resolution in transcendental philosophy guarantees a continued mutual criticism, which should constantly aid us in furthering our knowledge of the world.

Transcendental Freedom

Reason being the autonomous faculty, it "admits of no conditions antecedent to itself" (CPR A554/B582) whereby the conceivability of an intelligible causality of freedom opens its avenues for "the absolute spontaneity of an action" (CPR A448/B476). Theoretical philosophy as enshrined in the Aesthetic and the Analytic considers man as part of the phenomenal world, subjected to the causal sequence of events in space and time. Yet, as an intelligible being, whose self-consciousness makes him aware of his noumenal existence, he can intervene in the causal system of natural events by an act of freedom and begin an original new series, thus initiating a new causality through freedom. It features a spontaneous and intelligent causality of freedom as opposed to receptivity.

This facilitates belief in the freedom of the will, laying the foundation of morality, establishing the subject's independence (i.e., freedom *from*) and power to legislate for itself (i.e., freedom *to*). However, it must be borne in mind that Kant's intention "has not been to establish the *reality* of freedom" (CPR A558/B586), but only to show that there involves no contradiction in thinking about freedom in the case of man who is a noumenal agent. Owing to his conviction that yielding to

transcendental realism would save "neither nature nor freedom" (CPR A543/B571), Kant's resolution of the conflict between freedom and determinism is to see the entire domain of natural events as determined by efficient causes, but the *formal* presupposition of free acts as determined by intelligent causes. In this sense we are able to conceive the intelligible character as an explanation of the empirical, but ourselves being unable to conceive an explanation for the same, that is, how does this intelligible operate in relation to the empirical. Our intelligible faculties are such that we can conceive only spatial and temporal relations, and any determinate concept of a non-temporal agency, as called for here by Kant's explanation, is beyond us, or, in other words, at least, we have no understanding as to how noumenal causality operates with its transcendental freedom.

The Transcendental Ideal for Systematic Unity

Reason's search for the unconditioned, the dialectical inference from contingent existence to the existence of a necessary being is an effective drive to advance beyond experience to the transcendental ideal. Reason does not suppose that the ideal, *ens realissimum*, actually exists, but only posits it as the archetype for the complete determination of all other beings. This may be appropriately called the primordial being (*Urwesen*) or *ens originarium*, and having nothing above or beyond it may also be called the highest being, *ens summum*. It is also the *ens entium*, the being of all beings, or the ground of all beings, which in the transcendental sense is God, and the ideal of pure reason. Being the highest and the most perfect being of beings, its nature is further posited: "[This Divine Being] must be omnipotent, in order that the whole of nature and its relation to morality … may be subject to his will; omniscient, that he may know our innermost sentiments and their moral worth;

omnipresent, that he may be immediately present for the satisfying of every need which the highest good demands; eternal, that this harmony of nature and freedom may never fail, etc." (CPR A815/B843). Here it must be borne in mind that what is being considered by Kant is the objective reality of the concept of God, and not the objective reality of God, as it is beyond the critical philosophy to consider it, as God cannot be given in intuition. It is also not necessary to presuppose the existence of a being to correspond to the ideal, but requires only the idea of such a being, so that at one stroke both the limits of reason and the purpose of ultimate unity can be achieved.

Kant insists that the transcendental ideal, or the concept of God can have the valid employment only as a regulative principle of reason; any attempt to employ the same to be constitutive of the existence of God would be dialectical and detrimental to the nature of human reason itself. The only possible proof for the existence of God, for Kant, must use moral premises; his insistence to rule out speculative theology gives way to the possibility of moral theology, and an initial attempt is made in this regard in the "Canon of Pure Reason" (CPR A795/B823ff), which is elaborated in his later ethical works. Kant's analysis of speculative theology, seen positively, consistently protests against a metaphysic which claims to determine the necessary characteristics of the ultimate reality only by the exercise of pure reason, while at the same time, it must be said that his attempt to deny any reality beyond the employment of categories, and a synthesizing activity of sensibility and understanding, is intrinsically questionable.

The schema of God is only a human way of conceiving the ground of nature, for the purpose of employing our cognitive faculties, in order to arrive at the unified

understanding of the world of sensibility and understanding. Therefore, theoretical philosophy, in fact, does not address the question of the belief in the existence of God (it being set apart for moral theology), but deals only about thinking of the world *as if* it were created by God, with a view to purposive unity of nature. Thus, for Kant, God seems to be a mere *device* to superimpose transcendental unity on nature and, thus, to make it systematic, purposive, and intelligible.

Phenomenon vs. Noumenon

Transcendental philosophy is said to have at its basis a perspective on reality that, by necessity, has to oscillate between phenomena and noumena. In his fight against rationalism and empiricism, Kant does squarely meet their fundamental opposition and formulates the transcendental vision of reality in his famous statement "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (CPR A51/B75). The articulation and application of this vision to the varied realms of experience makes it necessary for Kant to distinguish between approaching reality from two fundamentally different viewpoints of phenomena and noumena. The world of experience or the object of experience given through sensibility and understanding is phenomena, i.e., objects of actual and possible sense experience, the knowledge of which is made possible through the application of the categories. Although Kant denies throughout the *Critique* any knowledge beyond the application of the categories, i.e., any metaphysical knowledge in the dogmatic sense, he does hold that that which appears has something beyond appearance, which he calls noumenon.

Synthetic *A Priori* Character Of Knowledge

Assuming that empirical experience is contingent and non-pure in nature, Kant concludes that pure *a priori* principles are indispensable in the process of knowing. If, for example, causality is a concept that we use, not because our experience has a certain character, but because it makes objects of a certain sort, and their relations possible for us, then it has necessity for us; it is what we use to constitute an objective world, and so necessarily relative to our standpoint. It is this necessity and universality, and the objective sufficiency ensuing from them that constitute the certainty associated with *a priori* in the *Critique*. All synthetic *a priori* propositions for Kant rest on the structure of the human mind, which, as he *believes*, has the basic function of synthesising what is given in sense experience; this is a process of ordering the given according to the forms of perception (space and time) and the categories of thinking, both of them being the contributions of the mind. Given this structure of the mind, it can formulate concepts and statements, which are synthetic (ampliative) and *a priori* (in advance to sense experience) in relation to the forms of thought. Kant's thrust on the synthetic *a priori* is motivated by his ultimate aim of transcendental philosophy, namely, establishing the *a priori* and unchanging elements of morality.

Conclusion

Thus, Kant's search for absolute certainty, in terms of necessity and universality of the *a priori* knowledge that the *Critique* aims at achieving, results from a perspective which is ultimately possible only for God, the reality of which itself is an unknowable according to the critical philosophy. It is, then, either contradictory, or simply impossible. In spite of the validating reference to possible

experience, it is a perspective of gaining unbounded knowledge of reality, which is beyond the prowess of human beings. Transcendental claim of having *a priori* principles in order to make experience possible is to put the cart before the horse; the claim of purity and certainty being necessarily and universally part of the synthetic *a priori* is to begin philosophising upon something that which is not present at all. Finally, to quote from the *Critique* itself, "transcendental … is … necessarily unknown to me" (CPR A496/B524). Hence, there is a need to look further among the Kantian *Critiques*, especially in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, how the critical philosophy conceives an answer to its unresolved issues from the perspective of practical philosophy and into the *Critique of Judgment* to see how the most fundamental process of synthesis is effected in the human processes of knowing.

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