

*The Pure Concepts of the Understanding and Synthetic A Priori Cognition: the Problem of Metaphysics in the Critique of Pure Reason and a Solution*

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**Abstract**

Kant, though asserting that the transcendental concept of reason is only ideas, tries to make an utmost effort to ground the transcendental concept of reason in the world of sense through the understanding, while he cannot or is not allowed to ground them in a world of sense on account of the issue of ethics. The antinomy, which induces Kant to think that the validity of empirical rules as principles should be cancelled by the ideas, keeps tormenting him forever. Whether there are any measures to rescue Kant's transcendental philosophy from the abyss of emptiness is a crucial issue which should be addressed.

**Keywords:** Logic, Categories, Law of Nature, Cognition, Pure Reason

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## Introduction

Immanuel Kant explicitly states that the aim of his metaphysical exploration in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to carry out an experiment which examines whether the assumption that the objects must conform to our cognition is viable, thereby establishing something about the objects before they are given to us (Bxvi). What urges Kant to make this experiment is the issue of ethics. Kant, who firmly believes that the universal principles of ethics have to flow merely from his concepts of reason (CPR, A480/B508), is compelled to launch an experiment, which is expected to prove the system of all principles of pure reason: that absolutely no concepts must enter into the complete estimation of synthetic *a priori* cognition that contain anything empirical, or that the *a priori* cognition be entirely pure (A14/B28). In performing this experiment, Kant had to acknowledge that 1) the existence of appearance cannot be cognized *a priori*, that is, we cannot anticipate that through which empirical intuition is differentiated from others (B221), 2) a pure category, in which abstraction is made from any condition of sensible intuition, is the only one that is possible for him (B304), 3) through a pure category, no object is determined, rather only the thought of an object in general is expressed in accordance with different *modi* (B304), 4) a transcendental concept of reason, in regard to the absolute totality in the synthesis of conditions, is not a concept that is usable in experience (A326-B383), 5) the concepts of pure reason, given as problems by the nature of reason, exceed the bounds of all experience, in which no object adequate to the transcendental idea can ever occur (B384). Since Kant is afraid of being accused that the concepts of pure reason are arbitrarily invented (B384), he, while asserting that the pure concepts of reason are only ideas and that the existence of appearances is a mere possibility (B221), tries to make an utmost effort to ground the transcendental concept of reason, and a pure category, in a world of sense, through the understanding. At the same time he is prohibited to ground them in the world of sense on account of the issue of ethics, whose universal principles should flow merely from his concepts of reason. The antinomy, which keeps tormenting Kant forever, induced him to probe a possible loophole. Kant, being trapped in this dilemma, has inadvertently divulged a direction of a possible footpath to get out of this impasse through the understanding, saying “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 through the concept of the unconditioned, insofar as it contains a ground of synthesis for what is conditioned” (B379). From our viewpoint, it seems tantamount to saying that a pure concept of reason, namely the concept of the unconditioned, is to be understood through cognition of the totality of conditions.

In addition, when Kant says “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 experience, because no experience is unconditioned),...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” (B383-A327), we take it as a hint, thinking that if our use of the understanding contains the ground of possible experience that is unconditioned, and if the absolute totality of conditions is a concept that is usable in possible experience, then our use of the pure concepts of the understanding and reason which are limited solely to possible

experience is transcendental and by its nature immanent, thereby being an objective use. However, Kant, who ignores himself a possibility of the metaphysical solution for the dilemma, explicates his difficulty, saying “If I can say *a priori*: all outer appearances are in space and determined *a priori* according to the relations of space, so from the principle of inner sense I can say entirely generally: all appearances in general, i.e., all objects of the senses, are in time, and necessarily stand in relations of time” (B51). Kant cannot say so, because his problem of space in respect of magnitudes, which looms in the antinomy of pure reason, prohibits it. The fact that Kant cannot comprehensively solve the antinomy is the reason why he has to propose the separation of the transcendental aesthetics into time and space, which should have attributes different from one other. Accordingly, time, which is regarded as *a priori* form of inner sense (A155), is merely a subjective condition of human intuition, while this is the real condition under which time belongs to the representation of object (A35-B52), indicating that time is a subjective condition of the human mind, which is to be linked with object in possible experience.

On the other hand, space, which is regarded as the condition of the possibility of appearances (B39), is merely the form of all appearances of outer sense, i.e., the subjective condition of sensibility, under which alone outer intuition is possible for us (A26/B42), signifying the subjective representation related to something external that could be called *a priori* objective (A28). Hence, time is supposed to have a potential linkage with object itself, while space is to have a potential linkage with something external that could be *a priori* objective. Where does this potential linkage abide? It is thought to abide exclusively in the representation ‘I think.’ Though the linkage between something external and object itself is supposed to take place in the representation ‘I think,’ this topos, in Kant’s metaphysics, has a perennial defect on account of the deletion of space in respect to the real condition (YAMAMOTO 2015: 317-334). How about time? Is time the real condition of this topos? In Kant’s metaphysics, it may be or may not be. Another difficulty emerges in regard to time, looming in the antinomy of pure reason again in connection with the synthesis of a series on the side of the conditions (B436-A410-B437). Therefore, when Kant has to think that time is the *a priori* formal condition of all appearances in general, and that space, as the pure form of all outer intuitions, is limited as an *a priori* condition merely to outer intuition (A34), the world of sense including the representation ‘I think’ may never cease to be empty, provided that the representation ‘I think’ does not pertain to object itself. We, humans, would intuit the entire manifold of appearances in the world of sense, which is ordered in certain relations called the form of appearances (A20). Even if the existence of appearances is not grounded in the least within itself but always conditioned from Kant’s viewpoint (A566/B594), it never ceases to be the object of sensibility. Why does Kant never stop saying that time is nothing other than the form of inner sense (A33), or the formal condition of inner intuition (A34), or the formal condition of inner sense (A99), instead of saying that time is nothing other than the condition of inner sense? When he refers to time as an *a priori* condition of all appearance in general or the immediate condition of the inner intuition, he hastily adds that it is also the mediate condition of outer appearances (A34-B51). We think that there are two reasons: one reason is that Kant does not seek, in inner sense, *a priori* condition which is to be the determination of time, though he regards time as the formal condition of the manifold of inner sense (A138/B177), and the other reason is related to the issue of ethics (YAMAMOTO 2015: 317-334), which commands him to absolutely separate appearances in the world of sense, and thing in

itself, namely the pure concept of reason with each other. In association with the former reason, Kant, who thinks the representation 'I think' to be the topos for the connection of all representations, namely the unit of the combination of the manifold of a given intuition in general in an original consciousness (B160-B161), but not the condition of it, has to say that time contains an *a priori* manifold in pure intuition (A138/B177). What does the *a priori* manifold in pure intuition mean? It means nothing or nullity. Thus, Kant succeeds in making time and space nugatory and empty, thereby completely cleansing it of everything that may be only empirical and that belongs to anthropology (Groundwork 4:389). This is the ultimate aim of transcendental philosophy (A468/B496). Here, we have to ask Kant. Why can a thing never come before him except in appearance (B333)? What is the thing that comes before him only in appearance?

When Kant fails to reach the ground on which the validity of the empirical rules rests, he concludes, on account of his failure, that it is the empirical rules that the validity of the empirical rules as principles should be cancelled by the ideas (B375). And this conclusion is in conformity with Kant's whole idea on ethics, which says "with respect to moral laws, experience is 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" (B375-A319). We think that his failure is grounded on his success in cleansing everything that may be only empirical. This failure, under the presupposition that what Kant says comes out true with respect to the moral laws, indicates that if Kant's attempt to prescribe laws to nature fails, it may result in a total disaster for humans, who have no moral law which is to rest on the idea of the purposive causality of the supreme cause of the world, which is analogous to the highest intelligence, i.e., the cause of everything according to the wisest aim (A688/B716). It is urgently requested to find a measure to rescue transcendental philosophy from the abyss of emptiness. A part of the measure will be made clear in our following discourse.

### **Logic, Law of Nature and Pure Concepts of the Understanding**

Kant, in an attempt to perform an experiment in the metaphysical exploration, first shows us the methods of the exploration: the Table of Logical Functions (A70/B95) and the Table of Categories (B106), saying "The headings already exist; it is merely necessary to fill them out,..." (B109). Kant elaborates on the former, saying "If we abstract from all content of a judgment in general, and attend only to the mere form of the understanding in it, we find that the function of thinking in that can be brought under four titles, each of which contains under itself three moments" (A70/B95). The function of thinking is different from the general logic in such a way that in the use of judgments in syllogisms, singular judgments can be treated like universal ones, since in general logic, singular judgments have no domain at all: the predicate therefore holds of the concept without exception, just as if the latter were a generally valid concept with a domain with the predicate applying to the whole of what is signified (A71). If, on the contrary, a singular judgment is to be performed in conjunction with a domain with the predicate applying not to the whole of what is signified, the predicate does not hold of the concept without exception, because the judgment is to be grounded on the cognition in regard to the whole of what is signified. Kant thinks that in this situation, a singular judgment (*judicium singulare*), which rests on the cognition of the whole of what is signified, will be at issue with respect to the quantity

(A71). The function of thinking, which is different from general logic that is limited only to the use of judgments with respect to each other (*judicia communia*), deserves a special place in a complete table of moments of thinking, in general (A71-B97). According to Kant, the general validity of this transcendental logic, namely the principle of pure reason, should rest on whether “unity,” which is indicated in the Table of Categories, relates to “infinity,” which is indicated in the Table of Logical Functions, or not. If a singular judgment is understood through cognition with respect to quantity, as unity relates to infinity, the singular judgment is deemed equivalent to the generally valid judgments (*judicia communia*) (A71). Thus, in regard to logical domain, an infinite judgment is merely limiting with regard to the content of cognition in general, thereby being included in the transcendental table of all moments of thinking in judgments (A73). Kant thinks that since the infinite judgment belongs to the field of its pure *a priori* cognition, in order to attain it, it is important to exercise the function of understanding as the moments of thinking in judgments (A73), under the condition that objects are given to us in intuition, to which it can be applied (B87).

According to Kant, general logic, which abstracts from all content of cognition, expects that representations will be given to it from elsewhere, in order for it to transform them into concepts analytically (B102). And it is the business treated by general logic that analytically brings different representations under one concept (B104). General logic happens to be merely a thought without content, which might be completely empty, provided representations are not given from elsewhere. In contrast, transcendental logic has a manifold of sensibility that lies before it *a priori*, which the transcendental aesthetic has offered to it, in order to provide the pure concepts of the understanding with a matter (B102-A77). Here, it is important to notice that representations treated by transcendental logic are not the same as those treated by general logic. The former is supposed to bring the pure synthesis of representations under concepts, through cognizing a manifold of sensibility that lies before it *a priori*, while the latter is to analytically bring different representations, which are given elsewhere, under one concept (B104). First the procedure of general logic is followed since it seems to be associated with the law of nature. General logic enables us to bring different representations under one concept analytically if the representations are given from elsewhere, where the law of nature prevails. What is the law of nature? The law of nature is that humans appear in a world of sense and then disappear. Kant calls appearances *phaenomena*, to the extent that, as objects, they are thought in accordance with the unity of categories (B305-A249). Here, disappearances are referred to as *phaenomena*, to the extent that, as objects, they are thought in accordance with the unity of categories, which is limited by the law of nature. Appearances and disappearances are, as *phaenomena*, supposed to be things, since they are objects of the understanding and can be given to an intuition (A249). The standing and lasting I of pure apperception constitutes the correlate of all of its representations; so far as it is merely possible to become conscious of them, and all consciousness belongs to an all-embracing pure apperception, just as all sensible intuition as representation belongs to a pure inner intuition, namely that of time (A123-A124). In the process of disappearing, it becomes impossible for the standing and lasting I of pure apperception to be conscious of all of its representations. As a result, it has to forsake the correlation of all of its representations while the other standing and lasting I, in appearance, is to constitute the correlation of representations, as far as it is possible to be conscious of representations of the *a priori* manifold, namely disappearance. The representations of disappearances are analytically brought

by general logic under one concept, which is to be equivalent to the pure concept of the understanding, i.e., death itself. Since the principles of pure understanding can be related to objects of the senses only in relation to the general conditions of a possible experience, but never to things in general (B303), the pure concepts of the understanding are equivalent to “death,” which humans are destined to come across in possible experience according to the law of nature. In regard to this issue, Kant explicitly says “Time, as the formal condition of the manifold of inner sense, thus of the connection of all representations, contains an *a priori* manifold in pure intuition. Now a transcendental time-determination is homogeneous with the category (which constitutes its unity) insofar as it is universal and rests on a rule *a priori*. But it is on the other hand homogeneous with the appearance insofar as time is contained in every empirical representation of the manifold. Hence an application of the category to appearances becomes possible by means of the transcendental time-determination which, as the schema of the concept of the understanding, mediates the subsumption of the latter under the former” (A138/B177-A178-A139). From our viewpoint, what he says is tantamount to saying that time, as the condition of the manifold of inner sense, thus of the connection of all representations, contains an *a priori* manifold, namely death, in pure intuition as nullity. The transcendental time-determination is homogeneous with the category, namely death, insofar as it is universal and rests on the law of nature. It is on the other hand homogeneous with the appearance insofar as time is contained in every empirical representation of the manifold. Hence, an application of the category, death, to appearances becomes possible by means of the transcendental time-determination, which, as the schema of the pure concepts of the understanding, mediates the subsumption of the latter under the former.

Following what Kant says concerning the use of the pure concepts of the understanding (A139), we say, in an opposite manner, that the pure concept of the understanding, namely death, as a category, is of empirical use, since it relates *a priori* solely to appearances as conditions of a possible experience, and of transcendental use, since it can be extended to objects in themselves as conditions of the possibility of things in general. This category, death, pertains merely to possible experience on account of the fact that no human can experience it before he or she dies, and when he or she experiences it, the experience simultaneously evaporates into nullity. Our use of the pure concepts of the understanding is objective, since it is immanent by its nature, and is limited solely to possible experience (A327). At the same time, this category will pertain to the possibility of things since it is expected that general logic would analytically transform representations of the manifold into pure concepts, if they are given to it from elsewhere (B102). From elsewhere? Where is it? It is from the transcendental unity of apperception (B139). This transcendental unity of apperception is objective on account of the fact that 1) it pertains to the function which enables it to unite all of the manifold given in an intuition in a concept of the object (B139), 2) the subjective unity of consciousness, which is a determination of inner sense as appearance in time (B156), through which that manifold of intuition is empirically given for a combination (B139), should be the constituent of the transcendental unity of apperception. It is clear that the manifold of intuition is empirically given through this subjective unity of consciousness, i.e., the empirical unity of consciousness, on behalf of transcendental unity of apperception. While the empirical unity of consciousness, which concerns an appearance through association of the representations, is entirely contingent (B139-B140), it ceases to be contingent

when it concerns a disappearance through dissolution of the representations, which is prescribed by the law of nature. Upon disappearance, i.e., death, the appearance in time is nullified. Consequently, the subjective unity of consciousness, which is figuratively analogous to the empirical unity of consciousness, loses a determination of inner sense, resulting in the dissolution of the representations. Kant's view, which says "The pure form of intuition in time, on the contrary, merely as intuition in general, which contains a given manifold, stands under the original unity of consciousness, solely by means of the necessary relation of the manifold of intuition to the one I think" (B140), indicates that another I think should be thought to stand under the original unity of consciousness, solely by means of the necessary relation of the manifold of intuition to the one I think, provided that the necessary relation of the manifold of intuition among the I thinks is found. Since the representation of time is itself an intuition (B50), on account of the fact that intuition is nullified in conjunction with the dissolution of inner sense, namely death, we must think that another I think, which is to disappear, also stands under the original unity of consciousness by means of the necessary relation of the manifold of intuition to the nullified I think. When another I think disappears under the law of nature, we understand, in conformity with our cognition, that another appearance in time is nullified. Since we can only perceive time-determination through the change in outer relations (motion) relative to that which persists in space (B277), namely through appearance and disappearance, we do not have anything persistent on which we could base the concept of a substance, as intuition, except merely matter (B278). When this persistence is drawn from outer experience corresponding to appearance and disappearance, it should be the *a priori* necessary condition of all time-determination, thus also be the determination of inner sense in regard to our own existence through the existence of outer things (B278). What is this persistence? It is empty space-nullified time, in just the same way as nullity. We say that only in this way there arises from this relation a judgment, i.e., a relation that is objectively valid (B142), and that is not distinguished from the relation of these same representations in which there would be only subjective validity, e.g., in accordance with laws of association (B142). Following what Kant says (A123), we say that the objective unity of all empirical consciousnesses in the original unity of consciousness, which is the necessary condition of all possible perception, is attained in conjunction with the fact that the affinity of all appearances and disappearances is a necessity for the synthesis in the imagination of all possible perception, which is grounded *a priori* on the law of nature.

Kant says "concepts are entirely impossible, and cannot have any significance, where an object is not given either for them themselves or at least for the elements of which they consist, consequently they cannot pertain to things in themselves (without regard to how and whether they may be given to us) at all" (A139). Proceeding in conformity with this view, we think that the pure concepts of the understanding are possible and have significance on account of the law of nature, which does give the one I think itself an object, namely a nullified itself, or at least let it know the elements of which an object consists. What are the elements? They should be the elements of both a thing outside me (appearances themselves) and the representation of a thing outside me since the one I think, which is conscious of its existence as determined in time, perceives something persistent (B275), i.e., the determination of time, through experience or possible experience. Since appearances themselves are nothing but

sensible representations (A104), the elements of which an object consists should be the sensible representations, which are equivalent to pure synthesis of representations. What are the elements? They are nullity, in just the same way as empty space-nullified time. Kant explicates them, saying “Transcendental logic, however, teaches how to bring under concepts not representations but the pure synthesis of representations. The first thing that must be given to us *a priori* for the cognition of all objects is the manifold of pure intuition; the synthesis of this manifold by means of the imagination is the second thing, but it still does not yield cognition. The concepts that give this pure synthesis unity, and that consist solely in the representation of this necessary synthetic unity, are the third thing necessary for cognition of an object that comes before us, and they depend on the understanding” (B104-A79). Apparently, Kant’s explication shows us the way to proceed to an object in itself. The manifold of pure intuition, i.e., death, is given to us *a priori* for the cognition of all objects according to the law of nature. When Kant says that empirical intuition is possible only through the pure intuition (of space and time), whose attributes are supposed to be identical with geometry (B206), we think that since the pure intuition of space and time is already abstracted from all forms of sensible intuition on account of the analogy with geometry, the pure intuition of space and time is tantamount to the intuition of empty space-nullified time. If the synthesis of this manifold of pure intuition is possible by means of the imagination, this synthesis would be achieved through the synthesis of the manifold of space and time which are abstracted from all forms of sensible intuition, in other words, empty space-nullified time. We think that this is the pure synthesis of representations, which is to take place with the unity necessary for pure synthesis, which consists solely in the representation of this necessary synthetic unity. What does the representation of this necessary synthetic unity mean in this tautology? The meaning depends on the understanding. On what does the understanding rest? Though Kant does not elaborate on it, he seems to believe in a pure understanding (B185-A146). On the contrary, when it becomes clear that we can understand, through the revelation of the manifold of pure intuition, that time, as an indispensable element of the unity of all the manifold of intuition in inner sense (B185), is related to the necessary synthetic unity, which consists solely in the representation of this synthetic necessary unity, it is possible for us to say that the understanding depends on our cognition of the manifold of pure intuition as possible experience which we are to come across in our death. In this regard, our schematism of the understanding through the transcendental synthesis of imagination is the representation in general (*repraesentatio*), namely the genus (A320). In contrast to Kant’s transcendental schema (A138/B177), the schema stands in homogeneity with the category as a thing in itself, i.e., empty space-nullified time on one hand and appearance, i.e., filled space-elapsing time on the other.

Kant explicitly says that every transcendental illusion of pure reason rests on dialectical inferences, whose schema is provided in general by logic in the three formal species of syllogisms, as shown in the Table of Logical Functions (A70/B95), just as the categories find their logical schema in the four functions of all judgments (A405/B432-A406). The first species of these sophisticated inferences, which have to do with the unconditioned unity of the subjective conditions of all representations in general (of the subject or the soul) correspond to the categorical syllogisms, whose major premise, as a principle, states the relation of a predicate to a subject (A406-B433). Kant’s categorical syllogisms seem to correspond to the general logic which abstract from all contents of the predicate (A72), on account of our finding that

the unconditioned unity of the subjective conditions of all representations, in general, is nullity. Our findings indicate that 1) manifold of pure intuition which is already abstracted from content appears nugatory, 2) the synthesis of this manifold, which is possible by means of imagination, has nothing to do with empirical intuition, thereby its appearing nugatory, 3) the unity necessary for synthesis consists solely in the representation of the necessary unity, which depends on the understanding, whose schematism rests on the inner sense, whose representation is time, which is already abstracted, thereby its appearing nugatory. This is a perfect example of stating the relation of a predicate to a subject, which is Kant's categorical syllogism. How about the second species of dialectical argument? This dialectical argument, by analogy with hypothetical syllogisms, will make the unconditioned unity of objective conditions in appearances its content (B433). Our dialectical argument is grounded on the law of nature, which enjoins: Humans which appear in space and time are to disappear in space and time. Our transcendental logic, which has a manifold of sensibility that lies before it *a priori*, i.e., disappearance (death), is considered to provide the pure concepts of the understanding with a matter, on account of the fact that the pure concept of the understanding, namely death, is objective and immanent by its nature. Here, the most important and critical issue pertains to what the matter is. The matter should be homogeneous with the correlate of the representation of appearances and the correlate of the representation of disappearances. The correlate of the representation of appearances is provided by the transcendental aesthetics, namely space-time, in such a way that space is filled and time is elapsing. The correlate of the representations of disappearances is also provided by space-time in such a way that space is empty and time is nullified. In this regard, the matter is equivalent to the manifold of pure intuition, namely empty space-nullified time. Appearances and disappearances are *phaenomena*, to the extent that as objects they are thought in accordance with the unity of categories (B305-A249). Since the division of objects into *phaenomena* and *noumena*, and of the world into a world of sense and a world of understanding, cannot be permitted at all in a positive sense (B311), the category of space in a world of sense is to be combined with that in a world of understanding merely as space being filled or empty as deduced from the law of nature, and the category of time in a world of sense is to be combined with that in a world of understanding, merely time elapsing or being nullified as deduced from the law of nature. The law of nature enables us to empirically deduce (A85) that appearances signify the representation as filled space-elapsing time. Disappearance, which is determinable through the manifold of appearances (A251), signifies the representation as empty space-nullified time. Thus, appearance itself, i.e., the correlate of the representation of appearances agrees with the form of sensible intuition *a priori* (B164), i.e., space and time. This is our transcendental deduction, in which the possibility as *a priori* cognitions of objects of an intuition in general is exhibited, spawning the possibility of cognizing *a priori* through categories of whatever objects may come before our senses (B159). So far, we discussed the issue of appearance and disappearance, exclusively focusing on humans and living things. Here, a serious concern arises, as Kant implies in his saying: "Every universal proposition, even if it is taken from experience (by deduction) can serve as the major premise in a syllogism; but it is not therefore itself a principle...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"

(A300-B357). Therefore, we need a metaphysical deduction in which the origin of the *a priori* categories in general is established through their complete coincidence with the universal logical functions of thinking (B159). Another concern is how to perceive empty space-nullified time, which Kant believes to be an entire absence of everything real in appearance (B241), through the synthesis of apprehension, i.e., empirical synthesis, which depends on the transcendental synthesis, thus on the categories (B164). These crucial issues will be discussed in our next discourse.

Kant never ceases to insist that things are merely objects of the understanding and that, nevertheless, can be given to an intuition, although not to sensible intuition (as *coram intuitu intellectuali*) (A249). Kant, who, thinking that the understanding cannot yield synthetic cognitions from concepts at all, calls the synthetic cognitions from concept principles absolutely (A301-B358), distinguishes reason from understanding by calling it the faculty of principles (B356). Kant's reason, as the faculty of principles, creates *noumena* as principle on which all his principles rest. In view of Kant's assertion that all principles of the pure understanding are nothing further than *a priori* principles of the possibility of experience (B294), we think that our understanding in regard to the pure concepts of the understanding is grounded on the *a priori* principles of the possibility of experience, namely death itself, since the possibility of experience rests entirely on the relation of appearance with disappearance (B294). In this regard, our proposition on the synthesis of manifold of appearance, namely empty space-nullified time, with manifold of disappearance, namely filled space-elapsing time is deemed to belong to all synthetic *a priori* propositions. Thus, our principles of the pure understanding are of empirical since they have ground in the synthesis of the manifolds of appearance and disappearance, and go nowhere beyond the field of possible experience, thereby being the synthetic *a priori* principles (A248-B305). It should be emphasized that our cognitions of the pure understanding are, in general, nothing more than principles of the exposition of appearances that do not go *a priori* beyond the possibility of experience (A250). Kant's cognition from principles in themselves is something entirely different from our cognition of the pure understanding which, in itself, does not rest on mere thought insofar as it is synthetic, but contains in itself a universe according to concepts (A302). We think that our cognition of the pure understanding is a universal concept of the faculty of reason, as far as that concept can be made comprehensible wholly in the absence of examples (B359), which are to be cognized through possible experience. Though understanding cannot yield synthetic cognitions from concepts at all (A301-B358), it can yield them from the comprehension of the law of nature, namely death itself, as possible experience. Thus, we clarified the part of transcendental logic, namely the transcendental analytic, expounding the elements of the pure cognition of the understanding and the principles without which no object can be thought at all (B87). This is a logic of truth since no cognition can contradict it without at the same time losing all content, i.e., all relation to any object, hence all truth (B87-A63).

### **Empirical Cognition, Magnitudes and Pure Concept of Reason**

Kant says "Things in space and time, however, are only given insofar as they are perceptions (representations accompanied with sensation), hence through empirical representation. The pure concepts of the understanding, consequently, even if they are applied to *a priori* intuitions (as in mathematics), provide cognition only insofar as these *a priori* intuitions, and by means of them also the concepts of the understanding,

can be applied to empirical intuitions” (B147). What do these bizarre, enigmatic sayings mean? They seem to indicate that 1) cognition comes through the pure concepts of the understanding, and *a priori* intuitions which are the pure concepts of the understanding, 2) empirical intuitions come through *a priori* intuitions and the pure concepts of the understanding, 3) things in space and time are given through empirical representation, which is given through empirical intuitions. From Kant’s viewpoint, *a priori* intuition is analogous to a non-sensible intuition or another kind of intuition than the sensible kind, which is an assumption or an intellectual intuition (B149, A249, A252, A254, A256-B312, B307). However, since this assumption rests on no foundation but is a problem itself (A287-B344), it might be a sheer illusion. When we take account of this, it comes out that cognition and empirical intuitions rest on an illusion, resulting in things in time and space and empirical representation being empty. Kant, in an attempt to rescue his metaphysics from the abyss of emptiness, brings up various concepts and principles, such as transcendental unity of apperception (A108, A118, B139, A156-B196), transcendental synthesis of the imagination (A119, B152, B153, B185), transcendental faculty of the imagination (A102), transcendental function of the imagination (A123, A124, B154), pure imagination (A124), transcendental unity of self-consciousness (B132) and transcendental schema (A138/B177), transcendental concept of reason (B379, A326), pure understanding (A119), pure concept of reason and transcendental ideas (B378), since he believes that reason itself contains the origin of certain concepts and principles, which it derives neither from the senses nor from the understanding (A299). This whole scheme is considered to rest on this principle: insofar as the imagination is spontaneity, it is the productive imagination (B152). Kant seems to think that this principle, i.e. the form of thinking, is the way of determining an object for the manifold of a possible intuition (A254). On the contrary, we think that any imagination, even if it is spontaneous, should not be productive. Otherwise, it would cause a disaster, in which sheer illusions will be thought to be productive. Only when an imagination arises, spontaneously, in conjunction with what happens in accordance with the law of nature, it is to be productive. When such *phaenomena* that what appears never fails to disappear, is repeatedly witnessed by the standing and lasting I of pure apperception, it could precipitate a productive imagination in it, thereby enabling it to arise as the representation ‘I think.’ So far, we found that the pure concepts of the understanding could be given through empirical intuition when it is applicable to the manifold of pure intuition, namely empty space-nullified time. This manifold, which appears according to the law of nature, is to be intuited by the standing and lasting I through possible experience, and is understood as empty space-nullified time in conformity with experiencing the disappearance of the standing and lasting another I. Kant explicitly states that the categories, which do not afford us cognition of things by means of intuition except through their possible application to empirical intuition, serve only for the possibility of empirical cognition, and this is called “experience” (B147). We say, in an opposite manner, that if we can cognize a thing through possible empirical intuition, things which can be cognized through “experience,” i.e., the possibility of empirical cognition pertains to category. Here, we understand the pure concepts of the understanding, namely “death,” through cognizing the manifold of pure intuition, i.e., empty space-nullified time, by means of pure intuition, which is possibly applied to empirical intuition. Is empirical intuition different from pure intuition? No. They are the same in themselves but appear different from each other on account of the fact that what appears is to disappear. Filled space-elapsing time is a category taken as objects of experience, while empty

space-nullified time is a category taken as objects of possible experience (B147-B148).

Kant thinks that if the objects with which our cognition has to do were things in themselves, we would not be able to have any *a priori* concepts of them at all (A128). He seems to be embarrassed in regard to whence he should obtain them (A128). On the contrary, we say: since we take them from the object in itself, by investigating how the latter could become known to us, our concept of object in itself would be empirical, and thought to be an *a priori* concept, which is to be cognized and understood through possible experience. In addition, we take them from ourselves on account of the fact that that which is merely in us can “determine the constitution of an object distinct from our representations, i.e., be a ground why there should be a thing that corresponds to something we have in our thought, and why all this representation should not instead be empty” (A129). This is tantamount to saying that 1) empty space-nullified time, which is merely in us, determines the constitution of death itself, i.e., empty space-nullified time, which is distinct from our representation, i.e., filled space-elapsing time, 2) therefore, empty space-nullified time, which we have in our thought, corresponds to a thing in itself, i.e., empty space-nullified time, 3) therefore, all this representation, i.e., filled space-elapsing time, is not nugatory and empty. We understand that this scheme signifies the synthetic *a priori* cognition. Furthermore, following what Kant says (A129-B130), we say: when we have to do everywhere only with appearances, then it is not only possible but also necessary that certain *a priori* conditions precede the empirical cognition of objects. Now the representation ‘I think’ – that all these appearances and all objects with which we can occupy ourselves are all in me, i.e., determinations of my identical self – expresses a thoroughgoing unity of them in one and the same apperception as necessary. The form of all cognition of objects also consists in this unity of possible consciousness. Thus, the way in which the manifold of sensible representation (intuition) belongs to a consciousness does precede all cognition of the object itself, not as its intellectual form, and but itself constitutes an *a priori* cognition of all objects themselves, insofar as they are intuited in possible experience. Following what Kant says (A130), we say: the manifold of pure intuition is not only possible, but indeed necessary *a priori* in relation to experience, only because our cognition has to do with nothing but thing in itself, whose possibility lies in ourselves, whose connection and unity in the representation of an object is encountered in us, and thus must precede all experience and first make it possible as far as the object itself is concerned. From this ground, as the only possible one among all, our deduction of the categories, i.e., empty space-nullified time, has been conducted (A130). Furthermore, we say: we now have one of the required pieces for the solution of the general problem of transcendental philosophy – how are synthetic *a priori* proposition possible? – namely pure *a priori* intuitions, space and time, in which, if we want to go beyond the given concept in an *a priori* judgment, we encounter that which is to be discovered *a priori* and synthetically connected with it (B73), in the concept and in the intuition that corresponds to it; and on this ground, such a judgment extends beyond the objects of the senses and can hold only for objects of possible experience as well. We comprehend dismemberment of a human, namely death, as nullity of the representations of appearances through the reception of the representations of disappearances, i.e., empty space-nullified time (the receptivity of impressions), and understand it as thing in itself, through the faculty for cognizing an object by means of these representations (spontaneity of concepts) (A50/B74). Thus, we think, Kant’s

object “the understanding, which judges about the nature of things, and this in turn only in regard to its *a priori* cognition” (A13), has been provisionally achieved.

Here, a very serious and intractable problem in regard to this kind of metaphysics arises. Because of this problem, Kant has to conclude that the absolute whole of magnitude (the whole-world), of division, of descent, of the conditions of existence in general, together with all the questions about whether these are to come about through a finite or an endlessly continuing synthesis, has nothing to do with any possible experience (A483), being pressed to think of a thing in itself (A515/B534-A516/B544), which is merely intelligible (A567/B595). Since pure reason has no other aim than the absolute totality of synthesis on the side of conditions, and that reason has nothing to do with absolute completeness from the side of the conditioned (A336), we have to take the next step in order to solve this difficult problem.

## References

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