KANT’S NOTION OF SYNTHETIC A PRIORI JUDGEMENT
AND SOME LATER DEVELOPMENTS ON IT

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Smt. Nabanita Bhowal has written her thesis entitled "KANT’S NOTION OF SYNTHETIC A PRIORI JUDGEMENT AND SOME LATER DEVELOPMENTS ON IT" under my supervision. This work has been done in partial fulfilment of her Ph. D. programme. So far as my knowledge goes she has not submitted this thesis to any other institute for Ph. D. degree or any other degree.

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DECLARATION

It is hereby declared that the thesis entitled “KANT’S NOTION OF SYNTHETIC A PRIORI JUDGEMENT AND SOME LATER DEVELOPMENTS ON IT” has been written by me under the supervision of Prof. Jyotish Chandra Basak of the Department of Philosophy, University of North Bengal. I would also further like to state that no part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship of any other institute previously.

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ABSTRACT

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), an eighteenth century German philosopher, is known in the history of philosophy for his many epoch-making views. Usually we come to know that his significant philosophical thought began with the publication of his *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781. This well-known book is also considered by many as his most important writing and views articulated there directed his future views enunciated in almost two-decade-long other written works. This view may seem right from one standpoint. It is right in the sense that he enunciated and outlined significant number of views in this work and later works may be considered as extensions of this spadework. It is in this book that he couched the general problem of the *Critique* which is popularly expressed in a question: How are synthetic *a priori* judgements possible? The question that he raised, the solution that he gave, the terminologies that he used in his solution, the distinctions that he made in order to convey his views to his readers became very popular in philosophical discourse. But like many other issues in philosophy his question, his solution, his terminologies, his distinctions have been subjected to further scrutiny at the subsequent stage by other philosophers. Some agreed with him, some disagreed with him, some, again, found his view completely otiose as well as unacceptable. While doing this these philosophers generated huge literature on this issue which I found worth revisiting, meditating on and re-examining in the new light with newer insight. The present work is an endeavour towards this direction. It might appear that the issue is a quite old one and what is the necessity of such a study. But scrutiny of certain literature in this area made me believe firmly that newer insights have brought further scope to extricate issues that were not possible over two hundred years back or even after that. It is this conviction which impelled me to undertake this work and choose this topic.

We in the preceding passage mentioned that there are scholars who consider that 1781 is the dividing line when Kant began to give his critical
philosophy. During my study I have come across evidences which made me feel that though there is substance in this claim, but there is no reason to think that the philosophy that he espoused before the aforesaid important juncture (i. e., the year 1781) and after that juncture or since that time there was any sharp difference as we find in Ludwig Wittgenstein’s philosophy (for which he is known as early and later Wittgenstein). Rather a study of his pre-critical philosophy persuades me to hold that in his progression of philosophical thinking there is a continuity. This is not to claim that he was aware about the general problem of the Critique of Pure Reason right from the time he began to express his views either in philosophy or in other branches of knowledge in pre-critical span.

When I first set to work on this topic, i. e. about formulation of the general problem of the Critique, his protracted effort to demonstrate clearly the presence of this particular sort of judgement (synthetic as well as a priori), which his predecessors failed to notice in various fields of knowledge, I first collected books written by Kant himself. However, the problem I faced was that Kant wrote in German language about which I had little knowledge. Hence I had to bank on English translations of his books. I tried to collect translations made by various writes and commentaries written by them. For example, Critique of Pure Reason itself has been translated or commented by a number of scholars. I have come across translations of Norman Kemp Smith, Maxmuller, H. J. Paton, A. C. Ewing and so on. Again N. K. Smith has produced a voluminous commentary on this monograph. I began with a study of these great scholars’ writings. About Kant’s other writings also I followed the same method. Having got knowledge of these I concentrated on secondary sources, critics’ views, their rejoinders and so on. Letters written by Kant to many scholars, I found, were an important source of exposition of his own stand on a number of issues. This approach coupled with own contemplation has gone hand in hand throughout the time I remain engaged with work. I consulted several libraries out of which I must mention ICPR’s
library located in Lucknow and North Bengal University’s library. In these two libraries I found maximum materials and were helpful for my current work.

Though my work focuses Kant’s philosophy of critical phase and even only one core issue of this stage it occurred to me that any systematic study of his philosophy must begin with a survey of his pre-critical philosophy as well. It is because there is a long antecedent of this critical phase and ignoring this fact will take us away from reality. Hence, as I planned to divide my work in five chapters and decided to devote some portion of the first chapter about his pre-critical stage’s philosophy. It is interesting to note that the nature of work of this phase was so diverse. It is so as he was not writing on issues of philosophy only but also of other areas. I found it a difficult task to grasp his views of this span as it contains a lot of jargons of subjects he dealt with. However, after several studies of some of his writings of that span revealed it to me that the view he gave in his a number of significant writings contain uniformity in his view. He in that spell of his philosophy mainly focused on understanding natural phenomena, their underlying principles and of course some metaphysical issues. Conceptual solutions that he offered of some phenomena soon caught attention of prominent scientists of that time and even in some cases, e. g. his evolutionary theory of the universe, they were considered as model in their respective field.

His effort to understand the power of nature is visible in his number of writings. Another interesting feature that I noticed in his this part’s writing is secular interpretation that he gave of natural phenomena. During the time we are taking about it was a remarkable event. He even in certain cases disagreed with Newton who gave non-secular interpretations by way of holding that cosmic operations require the divine intervention. Countering Newton’s view Kant held that the purpose that we find in nature is not divine imposition, rather it is inherent in its own fabric. Even in his interpretation of Leibniz he again exhibited this secular trend. From this we can easily guess that his view on religion that he articulated in 1790s will be utterly different from the then prevalent view. Even he
expressed some views on aesthetics in this span which hints at his matured view on the same subject in critical spate. Thus these pre-critical writings clearly signal what he is going to enunciate in his critical philosophy. It is for this reason that I have been given the impression that these two stages though named differently are actually continuation of the same trend of philosophy.

After a couple of years of lull the Critique of Pure Reason was published in 1781. It is here that Kant outlined his future plan by way of advocating a philosophy which was in fact revolutionary. Other important writings of critical phase are Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals, Critique of Practical Reason and Critique of Judgement, Religion within the bounds of Reason Alone, etc. In the Critique of Pure Reason he formulated his main problem and then he decided to address this in different spheres of knowledge for which he authored separate treatise. Formulation of this problem was not a very easy job. In order to state the problem and its solution he had to spend considerable time by way of preparation of its groundwork which ultimately resulted in a voluminous monograph. We discussed all these issues in the first chapter under the title ‘Introduction’. We also made effort to show why he thought he could give a befitting response to Hume.

The second chapter deals with his discovery of synthetic a priori knowledge in mathematics, natural sciences and in metaphysics. But I did not plunge straightway to this issue. First, I devoted certain pages for distinction that Kant made between a priori and a posteriori knowledge and their distinctive features. Though Kant gave us two features of a priori knowledge he did not elaborate the nature of these traits. We on the basis of reading of his treaties tried to give an analysis of these attributes. Some critics held that marks of a priori judgements are not as clear as Kant thought them to be. Particularly the notion of necessity has been a matter of debate in philosophy since ancient period and the debate does not seem to end. We took up such a debate about the Kantian notion of necessity and sever criticism that it has been subjected to by Richard Robinson.
We found that Robinson’s criticism can be rebutted if we clearly analyse Kant’s view. The *a priori* notion that Kant explained and gave prominence were a matter of intense discussion in post-Kantian era. What is the exact nature of *a priori* and its extent were the center-points of discussions. In spite of this argumentation, philosophers by and large accepted that there is a type of knowledge which Kant called *a priori*. Hence a number of scholars tried to give a workable minimalist interpretation of this notion pending a clear picture of it. We tried to show what constitutes this minimalist interpretation.

Next we took up his distinction done between analytic and synthetic judgements. I tried, following Kant, to analytically explain them. Interestingly, I found some letters written by Kant where he further explained his view about this distinction and also answered criticisms made against his view. Having explained the distinction we created room for entering into core of the discussion—synthetic *a priori* knowledge. We also showed other combinations such as analytic *a priori* knowledge, analytic *a posteriori* knowledge etc. and elucidated them and explained Kant’s view about them. In the province of synthetic *a priori* we gave maximum attention. We did so as it is Kant’s center of deliberation and also original contribution. Reading of Kant gave me the impression that he did not have iota of doubt about the possibility and existence of this sort of knowledge. Rather his prime concern was to show how they are possible. That is why he traversed from one field to another and tirelessly argued and demonstrated their possibilities. In the prefaces of his 1st *Critique* he showed that in the history of knowledge Mathematics has made tremendous progress whereas metaphysics, which was once considered as queen of all knowledge, could not make any significant headway. In demonstrating the existence of synthetic *a priori* cognition he first took recourse to mathematical knowledge. While we discussed his views we also elaborately showed why Kant considers them to be synthetic besides being *a priori*. It is the syntheticity that was in dispute as *a prioricity* of mathematical knowledge was not questioned by anybody during Kant or before him. He took
examples from arithmetic, geometry and algebra to prove his points. We have discussed them in the current chapter as thoroughly as possible.

Then Kant moves to natural sciences. Taking instances from principles of physical sciences Kant illustrates how synthetic *a priori* knowledge do exists there. His arguments have far-reaching implications because if these arguments hold good, they will be a befitting response to Hume’s misgiving about cause effect relations. When it comes to the arena of metaphysics he bisects the question. As metaphysics as natural disposition already exists in some form or other, he now raises question how is it possible as science. He was under the impression that scientific certainty can be achieved in metaphysics also if worked out scrupulously. Kant made attempt towards this direction and relegating speculative metaphysics to the background he now brought to the forefront another type of metaphysics what P. F. Strawson called descriptive metaphysics. Kant is of the opinion that his discovery of the *a priori* forms of intuition and *a priori* forms of understanding or what he termed categories of understanding accomplishes this task. It also ushered a revolution in philosophy which he compared with revolution brought in astronomy by Copernicus.

In the next chapter, i.e. **third chapter** we focused our attention to the second *Critique*. However, be began our discussion from the previous *Critique*. It is here where we find clues what he intends to do in the realm of moral philosophy. Kant was least interested with commonsense ideas of morality rather his quest centers around foundational principles of morality. When he searches synthetic *a priori* elements in morality what he wants to show is that it is these principles which are synthetic as well as *a priori*. In a sense such principles are derived from his notion of reason. He here talks about reason’s capacity to legislate. This capacity is not constitutive (like the 1st *Critique*) rather Kant calls them regulative or to put it more succinctly it is regulative use of reason. Instead of providing us conditions of the possibility of experience it furnishes us conditions of the determination what should not be done.
Kant’s task was to show two things—the supreme principle of morality is synthetic and also he had to show it is *a priori*. Kant gave a technical meaning to syntheticity and *a prioricity* when he called the categorical imperative synthetic and *a priori*. Kant takes enough guard against the temptation of terming our ordinary moral judgements synthetic and *a priori*. His establishment of connection between rational element in human being and his moral behavior is indeed a splendid one. We in this chapter tried to show his arguments in favour of his view that presence of elements of rationality demands conformity to some moral requirements. This demand necessitates presumption of a supreme principle which hold within its womb *a prioricity* and syntheticity.

We in our critical estimate of his duty-based ethics also attempted a comparative study of his philosophy with Indian counterpart. Taking instances from classical Indian sources as well as from some contemporary Indian philosophers we showed similarities and dissimilarities between these two types of philosophies and some shortcomings of Kant’s view as pointed out by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.

In the **fourth chapter** we moved to the sphere of aesthetics which Kant gave mainly in his 3rd *Critique*. We began with his letter written to K. L. Reinhold and the hints that he gave in his letter. We here tried to show what he meant by judgement and what he meant by faculty of judgement. We discussed, following him, whether the power or the faculty of judgement confers on us any capacity to construct an *a priori* principle. We have seen what synthetic *a priori* judgements meant in the two previous *Critique(s)*. In 1st *Critique* it made knowledge of objects possible (in other words they uncovered those conditions which make our experience possible). In the 2nd *Critique* it was regulative (it laid down conditions for determining what should not be done). In the 3rd *Critique* now by synthetic *a priori* Kant imparts a new sense. Aesthetic judgments or also what he called reflective judgements do not subsume any particular under the universal. Here
once particulars are given then power of judgement decode a universal rule. Herein lies the difference. In the present case the movement is from particular to the universal. In holding that faculty of Judgement classifies natural experiences in a logical system Kant hints at the power of judgement. He argues that reflective judgement is under an obligation to advance from a known empirical domain to an unknown realm and of course which can be accomplished. We have discussed this view of Kant in a bit detail.

Kant talks about four classes of aesthetic judgements—judgements of the agreeable, judgements of the beautiful, judgements of the sublime and judgements of the good. Out of these four types of reflective judgements he discusses at length about judgements of the beautiful and judgements of the sublime. Hence we also at length discussed about these two sorts of judgement. Kant talks about four moments of the reflective judgement of the beautiful and narrated the nature of this type of reflective judgement under these moments. We discussed these four moments concisely however not losing their spirits. Then we showed how judgements of beauty become possible. He does not accept either empiricist interpretation or rationalist interpretation of aesthetic judgements. He shows how judgements of beauty are the result of free play of the faculties of understanding and imagination.

Having discussed the above view of Kant we moved to his view about judgement of sublime. He discussed his view under ‘Analytic of the Sublime’ at length. The notion of sublime was center of attention in aesthetic judgment even long before Kant. Hence it is not astonishing that Kant will deal with this issue in detail. We explained his view on sublime and its difference from beauty.

After discussing all the three Critiques and Kant’s new-found synthetic a priori knowledge we got down to views given by his Critics. Kant’s philosophy left indelible impression in the mind of his contemporaries and in post-Kantian period. His distinction between analytic and synthetic judgements, cleavage
between \textit{a priori} and \textit{a posteriori} judgements and combinations between judgements that he made remained very dominant. Particularly it was thought that he did a yeomen service in philosophy by so clearly distinguishing these types of knowledge and also clearly showing that a combination between synthetic and \textit{a priori} judgement is a reality which was considered before him impossible. It is indeed an uphill task to prove this point and almost for a decade he made intense effort under strict regimentation in life to prove his point. By and large Kant’s effort was acknowledged in philosophy and will perhaps his seminal contribution will influence philosophical thinking in the centuries to come.

However, raising questions in philosophy constitutes its essence. Kantian views had met with similar fate. With the passage of time philosophers, circles began to find flaws with his views and his views had been subjected to scrutiny. Some criticized him, some came forward to defend him. However, in this cudgels of their brains the center of attention was our Konigsberg philosopher. We hold so because it was he who had been criticized, again it was he who had been defended. It only shows that he did something significant that cannot be contemptuously or summarily rejected. It amounts to saying that whether other philosophers agreed with him or not his significant contributions they must take note of. In the concluding chapter, i. e. \textbf{chapter five} we set to do that.

Out of the philosopher I chose to bring under the ambit of discussion were logical positivists, W. V. O. Quine, Rudolf Carnap (one prominent logical positivist) Hillary Putnam, and Saul A. Kripke. We knew that the canvas was huge and hence I had to delimit the area. Out of these critics it is Quine who went berserk. It was so devastating that some prominent scholars came forward in defense of Kant. Let us begin with logical positivists.

Logical positivists gave their view over hundred years later of Kant’s passing away. Within this long span of time and fast changes that world witnessed in the world of ideas and in physical world armed them with new instruments of
thought. Equipped with these they criticized Kant but not dismissed him. It is true that they disagreed with Kant about the feasibility of synthetic *a priori* knowledge as Moritz Schlick, a prominent member of the circle, clearly said it is a logical impossibility. As philosophy of language was in rise at that time and Ludwig Wittgenstein being there main source of inspiration, we find echo of these in positivists’ view. They argued that what are called necessary statements are in fact reports of linguistic usage which represent our conventions. Furthermore, they are analytic (and here they go contrary to Kant’s view) and do not contain any factual content. A. J. Ayer held in his *Language, Truth and Logic* that only analytic propositions can be necessary. Necessary propositions express relations between our ideas and meanings and not relations between things. Even mathematical propositions they held to be analytic. By and large we can say that the positivist circle did not accept Kant’s newly discovered combination and thought in a way which was quite different from Kant.

W. V. O. Quine, another influential contemporary philosopher, not only refused to accept the combination (synthetic *a priori*) of Kant. He rather made a scathing attack of Kant’s analytic-synthetic contrast and showed the impossibility of analytic judgement. His analysis and substantiation are lengthy but penetrative. We discussed his arguments at length. Though Quine did not directly criticize Kant’s synthetic *a priori* combination his view about analyticity actually demolished this structure. It is so as impossibility of analyticity does not allow us to distinguish between analytic and synthetic knowledge and if it is so the question of combining synthetic with *a priori* judgement becomes unnecessary and irrelevant. We have also discussed about Quine’s own scheme of sentence holism and his espousal of behaviouristic theory of meaning.

Reading of Quine’s ‘Two Dogmas of empiricism’ and some other writings of him shook my many beliefs. I began to think what were the core points where these two stalwarts of philosophy were at loggerheads and what led them to such a bizarre tangle. In a section soon after discussion of Qine’s view I tried to excavate
that. I made an attempt to show that new methodology, i.e., analytical method, with which Quine was equipped helped him to analyse Kant’s view in a way that conveyed something that Kant did not intend. In other words, it took away the spirit of Kantian distinction.

Then I moved to Paul Grice and P. F. Strawson’s defense of Kant’s view. They showed that there might be scope for further improvement of Kantian distinction but this does not warrant rejection of distinction. Even they went to the extent of showing that there is scope to show that the distinction fit well within the scheme of Quine’s own philosophy.

Rudlof Carnap, one close associate of Quine, could not agree with Quine in his view about analyticity. I have been given to understand that Carnap realized that analyticity when defined in natural language might run into rough weather. Hence he made attempt to define it (i.e., analyticity) in the framework of artificial language. From this endeavour of Carnap we can deduce that Carnap could fathom the necessity of analytic-synthetic distinction and he was determined to save the notion of analyticity.

Hillary Putnam, another major figure in analytic philosophy, strived to show that Quine’s target was not only the notion of analyticity. In addition to that he targeted a prioricity also. He also held that Quine’s argument was not sound. Though Putnam expressed his misgivings about the notion of a prioricity still he thinks that contextual a prioricity does indeed exist. Thus the difference between two Harvard philosophers come to the foreground.

Saul Kripke 1970’s monograph Naming and Necessity is another important work where Kant’s notion and his association of certain characteristics with a prioricity and a posterioricity has been subjected to hair-splitting scrutiny. In his work he showed that Kant’s view that a prioricity, and not a posterioricity, without exception is the seat of necessity. Showing this view as mistaken he took examples from daily life and attempted to exhibit how a posteriori knowledge can
also contain necessity. These counterexamples of course shattered the equation that Kant made between necessity and *a prioricity*. Again he sowed the seeds of distinction between metaphysical necessity and epistemological necessity. Kripke’s rigorous analysis actually untwined so many threads that his predecessors merged into one. Extrication of these strands was a spectacular achievement in philosophy. We have discussed the points that Kripke elaborated in his aforesaid work.

In the final portion I have given some impression of mine under the heading ‘concluding remarks’. I felt during the entire course of discussion that Kant strove to prove in his long arduous journey how synthetic *a priori* knowledge significantly contribute or make our knowledge possible. It is true that it can be subjected to further scrutiny and which of course we must appreciate. But using new tool if any scholar tries to show that Kant’s effort was inefficacious, it is hardly acceptable. Needless to say new efforts will bring further clarity and new results. But newer efforts and newer results are founded on older one. If we undermine that edifice, it will be a sheer tragedy.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The completion of the present work brings to an end my long and arduous journey. It is quite long as various issues slowed down my pace of work. Out of these one is remoteness of my workplace. For a couple of years I worked in a college which was quite far away from my home and I had to commute everyday spending considerable time on my way. On account of this I could not give enough time for my research work. Second, during this span I was blessed with motherhood. Owing to this I had to remain away from regular research work for considerable time as I remained busy with my mothering role. Then my joining to a new college again took its tool; I needed some time to acclimatize myself in this new environment.

Though initially I thought the topic of my research work will not be so tough, as it seems a bit common, with passage of time and progress of work my expectation was falsified. Gradually I started to realize the vastness of issue and its spread in different fields and other ramifications. Writings and rewritings when checked by my supervisor brought many more questions and asked me to give more clarifications on a number of points. At one point I found that the work is becoming endless and disappointment set in my mind. Then I was told to delimit the work as it is not possible to cover the entire gamut of the issue in one work. This advice finally showed me a ray of hope and I could figure out how to wrap up the work.

A research work needs help from many quarters. It is an opportune moment to record and appreciate my sense gratitude to them who came to my help in various ways during this work. First I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Jyotish Ch. Basak, of the Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal, for his valuable and judicious guidance throughout the tenure of my Ph. D. research work. At times when my spirit of work flagged for various reasons, he unflinchingly helped to overcome that. His consoling
words, giving encouragement in every possible way can never be forgotten. Mountainous patience of him and characteristic supportive nature provided me opportunity to complete the work.

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Friendship is a relation that brings various benefits in life and of course a good source of pleasure. I also garnered this benefit from my friends while I was engaged with this work. As the list of friends is long and keeping in mind paucity of space I am refraining from mentioning their names. However colleagues in the Department of my college need special mention. They are Dr. Ashis Tarafdar, Dr. Krishna Paswan, and Sri Suman Das.

Family is a great support in our education and other facets of life. When I come to record my indebtedness to them I need to mention my parents name first who taught me to have a dream. In all humility I bow down my head to to their feet and humbly dedicate this work to them. My workload sometimes forced me not to give due attention to my son, Shreyan, but he silently accepted it. Hence I owe to him for the patience that he showed. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the encouragement and blessings of my better half SomSubhra Dutta for encouragement and understanding during my work.

(Nabanita Bhowal)
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was a German philosopher and best known in Philosophy as a system builder. He gave his philosophy at a time when era of Enlightenment was receding and Romanticism was gaining its foothold. The then Europe was a fertile land for philosophical thinking. Prominent philosophers of modern times in Europe prior to him were Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley and Hume. These philosophers while giving their philosophies argued either asserting that reason is the primary source of our knowledge or sense experience is the main source of knowledge. Hence they came to be known either as rationalist or as empiricist philosophers. Kant though initially had inclined to rationalist side but did not continue with that proclivity. He considered both these trend of thought one-sided and hence decided not to veer around either of these sides. He, therefore, espoused a new way of enquiry which popularly came to be known as critical philosophy.

Introducing our Konigsberg philosopher

Among the nine children of Johann George Cant and Anna Regina Cant, Immanuel Kant was fourth. Though he was born in harness maker’s family, his early education revealed his promising sign. Seeing this sign, a minister of a local Christian church made arrangement for young Kant’s education. There he got attracted to Latin classics. Later at the University of Konigsberg he enrolled as a theology student though later on his interest in mathematics and physics diverted him from his curiosity in theology.
Kant’s family had affiliation to Lutheran Protestant faith. The family was Pietist and hence stressed on religious devotion, literal interpretation of Biblical doctrine and so on. Brought up in such an ambience Kant adhered to Christian ideals for some time though it did not last long. As he gained knowledge in contemporary science he wrestled with his religious faith in order to dovetail them with modern science. Gradually he came to realize that arguments given for defending theism are not invincible. He held this as he became convinced that human knowledge is limited and unable to attain knowledge of God or soul. The extreme rigour of his theoretical philosophy did not allow him to make room for these though later on he accommodated them in the *Critique of Practical Reason*.

We often hear about Kant’s strict and inflexibly-organized life. All his activities had a set routine and on account of its strict maintenance, it is sometimes said that his neighbors could even set their clock by seeing his daily routine work. After completion of his study he engaged himself in private tutorship. He had a close circle with whom he used to interact. Even before he announced his arrival in philosophical scene and the advent of critical philosophy with his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he authored several papers and books which provide us with his pre-critical flavour of thinking.

After a couple of years, in 1755, we find this would-be philosopher’s return to the University of Konigsberg to continue his pursuit of knowledge which resulted in his award of doctorate in philosophy. Since then till 1770, when he became a professor in that University, he worked as a tutor and delivered lectures which were well-attended. His teaching career as professor of philosophy at the University of Konigsberg began with teaching of metaphysics and logic.
Kant’s philosophical development

In Kant’s philosophical development we find different phases out of which four stages are distinct. These are

- **the pre-critical period**: It ranges roughly from 1745 to 1770. During this time Kant worked largely within the tradition of Leibniz and Wolff. Most of his works during this span were explanations of natural phenomena;

- **the silent decade**: Between 1770 and 1781, Kant did not publish anything significant. It is understandable that he was busy with his *magnum opus*. It was in 1770 that he was appointed as professor in Konigsberg University and hence we can presume that he was also busy with academic workload of his work-place in addition to his engagement with revolutionary work that came out in 1781 under the rubric *Critique of Pure Reason*;

- **the critical period**: Usually the span between 1781 and 1790 is regarded as his critical philosophy period. It is the most fertile time in his life and his trilogy of critique shook philosophical community. Other important works of this stretch were *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785), *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* (1786), ‘Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?’ (1784).

- **the post-critical period**: From 1791 onward till his passing away (1804), is often shown as works of old age. Important works of this spell were *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793) and *Metaphysic of Morals* (1797), and *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795).

In the present venture our discussion will cover mainly critical phase of Kant’s philosophy, still a glimpse of his pre-critical stretch’s thinking will pave way for understanding his critical phase. Critical philosophy was actually unfolding of some thinking that Kant was harbouring and espousing right from pre-critical tenure. We shall also show that there was a continuity of thought and not an abrupt shift as one might think of.
Pre-critical philosophy

The publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781 marked the watershed of a new kind of philosophy—critical philosophy which is well-known to the philosophical world. Not only that sometimes it is also said that it marked the decline of modern period and dawn of a new sort of philosophy hitherto unknown. But before this there was another Kant about whom and contributions of whosere mained largely undiscussed or less discussed.

A cursory look of some of the major writings of Kant during this stage make us feel that in this duration he was mainly preoccupied with interpretation of natural phenomena, their principles and some metaphysical ideas. His writings on natural sciences and of metaphysical ideas are also remarkable in many respects. In a number of writings he gave conceptual solutions through his realistic insights of many underlying principles of nature. His evolutionary theory of the universe is nowadays regarded as models in cosmology.

Some scholars are of the opinion that even though Kant’s philosophy is divided into distinct stages, still his intellectual tack was not a fractured or arbitrary one. His philosophical development was by far a unified attempt and hence there was a underlying continuity. His earliest works were continuous with his later claims. Kant right from the beginning was pressing for a unique agenda. He began from natural philosophy, ontology and cosmology and pursued with these issues even at later period. Among some ventures of this period, i. e. pre-critical period, following are important.

He was keen on understanding the power of nature. One early initiative about this was to solve the puzzle of force. On the
question—what is force and how can it be measured, there was a controversy between Descartes and Leibniz. For Descartes, force is the product of mass and velocity. It is merely a ‘quantity of motion’ or ‘dead pressure’. It has no dynamic essence. Leibniz rejected this Cartesian view. For Leibniz, force is the product of mass and velocity squared. He called this new quantity a living force. It is presently called kinetic energy. Thus Leibniz turned physics to dynamics. Kant in his Living Forces tried to resolve this controversy taking clues from another philosopher and mathematician, George Bernhard Bilfinger. There he used a method, admittedly inspired by Bilfinger, known as heuristic method. The method tells us to identify an intermediate place when different experts advance contrary views. We can trace the use of this method in his critical period also.

Another important work during this phase was Universal Natural History. In this work he replaced Newtonian Christian view of natural design with a secular dynamic cosmology. During that time it was not easy to give such a secular interpretation and hence the work was published anonymously. Rejecting Newton’s view that cosmic operation required the intervention of the divine, Kant eliminated the need of divine intervention. He also failed to find any compelling metaphysical reason for such divine appeal. He there says that force is goal-oriented and its energy evolves the cosmos. He explains how nature out-wraps from primal force to complex structure. This ‘out-wrapping’ involves process and purpose and added that this purpose is not imposed by God rather is woven into nature’s fabric. He seems to admit teleology in the development of forces. But this teleology is not extrinsic rather it is latent in nature itself. By holding this view Kant gives us a hint toward his view that he will unfold at later period of his philosophizing. Kant here compares universe to a chain of nature and in this chain humans are
merely a link. He outrightly rejects the claim that this universe was created for human purposes. Among the different sorts of life, it is intelligent life that continues to exist. Human beings are intelligent though they occupy a middle rung in the hierarchy of creatures. They occupy middle rung as they are ‘halfway between wisdom and irrationality’. The view that Kant held in this pre-critical stage—that human beings are part of nature—continues to find echo in post-pre-critical stage.

In a thesis entitled *On Fire*, written as part of master’s, he held that all bodies—solid, liquid and gaseous— are made up of dynamic particles. Here also we find his engagement with discovering principles of nature or natural substances.

His doctoral dissertation *New Elucidation of the First Principles of Metaphysical Cognition*, written in 1755, was a deviation from his previous work. Here he tries to unearth the principle of ontology and in particular conceptual tools for metaphysical enquiry. In this work we notice a move in Kant that instead of concentrating on matters of nature he is focusing on rational life. This shift from natural process characterized by mechanicality to human being which is non-mechanical and free being is a watershed in his philosophy. Here Kant argues in favour of the view that there is compatibility in these two opposing characteristics. Nothing in nature happens arbitrarily and hence every incident in nature takes place for a prior reason. This rule applies to free actions of human beings as well as to natural events. By way of interpreting free will he says that it is ‘determining power’. This power helps human being not to become subject of impulses. In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, written during critical phase, Kant distinguishes between things and persons—the former comes to being through natural means whereas the latter as rational ends.
Not only in the above dissertation, even in his writing entitled *The Employment in Natural Philosophy of Metaphysics Combined with Geometry, of Which Sample I Contains the Physical Monadology* written as part of his position of *Privatdozent*, or lecturer, in 1756 he again returns to explanation of material things and made efforts to explain Leibniz’s view on monadology. Explaining physical monads as energy spheres and how do they radiate extension he goes on to argue how the union of metaphysics and geometry can produce a better philosophy.

In 1764 in the *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* he gave a twist to his experience of nature. Nature to Kant was an encounter having aesthetic character. Here he initiated a phenomenology of beauty which ultimately culminated in his 3rd *Critique*. In that *Critique* he also argues for aesthetic notions such as design and unity.

In all the above writings and also some other writings of this phase which we have not mentioned, Kant relentlessly tried to give secular interpretations of events and opposed all interpretations which have been derived from divine power or interference.

In 1761 the Prussian Academy had announced a public competition on ‘whether metaphysical principles, specifically the principles of natural theology and morals, could be proven with the same clarity and precision as the truths of geometry’ in which many prominent thinkers participated. Kant in this essay popularly known as the *Prize Essay* examined whether such a quest is at all feasible. There are scholars who hold that the issue that Kant deals with in this essay actually became a prime concern in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the Essay Kant answers how, not whether, metaphysics is possible. As Kant was certain about the possibility of metaphysics, he thought that the task in hand is only determining right method for doing so. In the *Critique of Pure
Reason Kant’s obsession was to demonstrate the possibility of metaphysics as a system of *a priori* judgements which are at the same time synthetic. In 1781’s *Critique* this quest was his main concern, of course with moderation now by his critical vigilance.

Dawn of the Critical Phase

1781 was the year when his first revolutionary work *Critique of Pure Reason* was published. It is regarded, and of course undoubtedly, as one of the most magnificent works in western thought. Though this voluminous (its first German edition contains 856 pages) work was not initially well-received by the intellectuals of that time and had to be revised and rewritten in 1783 under the rubric *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics which will be able to Present itself as Science*, soon it got readers and since then had been translated in many languages. His views about individual minds contribution to knowledge process have been found to be extremely original and startling. By his elaborate explanation of knowledge mechanism he showed, and thought to give due, to our capacity of reason and sense-experiences. He there claimed to bring a revolution in philosophy which was similar to Copernican revolution in astronomy. Kant found out a new sort of knowledge hitherto unrecognized in philosophy and he called this sort of knowledge synthetic *a priori* knowledge. Before demonstrating the possibility of this newly found knowledge he gave adequate explanation of possible sorts of knowledge recognized before him and untraced till then.

Soon after that in 1785 came his second important work *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, a treatise known for its rigidity in laying down the foundations of moral philosophy. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, an Irish scholar who devoted considerable time to disseminate Kantian philosophy to educated circle, translated this comparatively small
treatise into English and is widely regarded as a standard transliteration. Though this was the first exposition of his moral philosophy, it still now remains as a very influential discourse in the field. He called his ethics pure ethics, introduced the concept of ‘good will’ and clearly stated his view that action/duty is categorical imperative. This book laid the foundation of ethics, explained core concepts and principles of morality for a rational agent. His cutting edge argument—that rightness of an action is governed by the character of belief that a rational agent chooses to act upon—drew away attention of thinkers from teleological moral standard that was in vogue at that time. His firm declaration that we must act only on that principle which we would will to become a universal law, popularly known as categorical imperative, was landmark in moral philosophy. It is sometimes said that in spite of enunciations of forceful principles, the book was unclear in many respects. It is this thing that prompted him to write another critique—*Critique of Practical Reason*—which came out in 1788.

This second *Critique*, i. e. *Critique of Practical Reason*, though comparatively small, in T. K. Abbott’s translation it is about 182 pages, made a decisive influence in moral philosophy. The 1st *Critique* deals with theoretical reason but the 2nd *Critique* focuses on practical reason. Practical reason guides us to employ reason in order to decide how to act and theoretical reason, in contrast, is application of reason for deciding what to follow. In the 1st *Critique* he was eager to show capacities as well as limits of theoretical reason. He cautioned us to restrain theoretical reason as application of it outside its appropriate area will produce bewilderment. It is to be noticed that the 2nd *Critique* is not a critique of ‘Pure’ practical reason, rather a critique of pretensions of applied practical reason and also a defense of its capability. Pure practical reason, says
Kant, is not to be restrained, but be cultivated. In this employment of pure practical reason he made room for freedom, God and immortality of soul.

Next comes his *Critique of Judgement* which completes his critical project. This 1790’s book primarily deals with aesthetics and teleology. Former part, i. e. Critique of Aesthetic Judgement, deals with four possible moments of aesthetic reflective judgements (agreeable, beautiful, sublime and the good) and links them to the table of judgements that he gave in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Contrasting reflecting judgements with determinative judgements (with which he dealt in the previous two *Critiques*) Kant tries to show that in aesthetic judgements we attempt to find unknown universals for given particulars whereas in determinative judgements we do the reverse—only subsume given particulars under universals. In the part of teleology he shows how things are judged in agreement with their ends.

About religion we previously said that he was brought up under strict religious discipline of Pietism, but his philosophical vision did not go hand in hand with his upbringing. He was under constraint to apply his philosophical findings in the realm of religion and this desire culminated in his work *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. In this 1793 book which contains about 464 pages he espoused a religion what Allan W. Wood called moral religion. The four sections of the book previously appeared as articles in journals. Criticising biblical theology there, he tried to make room for moral theology. He made scathing criticism of dictatorial attitude of church, was also critical of rituals and so on. This non-familiar view was taken seriously by the then Prussian government as it went against state’s proclaimed view. Kant has been warned to refrain from writing any such view which may go against traditional interpretation of Christianity.
Essay of 1784 “Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment?” (the peculiarity of title is due to the fact that the essay was written in reference to a question raised by Reverend Johann Friedrich Zollner which also has an interesting background) is another much-discussed writing of Kant. Here he held that lack of enlightenment means people’s ineptitude to think for them. It mainly happens not on account of dearth of intellect rather for lacking courage. He further delineated reasons for such deficiency and enumerated prerequisites imperative for making people enlightened. “Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch”, a 1795 essay, is another important contribution of this German philosopher. His proposed roadmap for a world which will be founded not only on cessation of hostility, but on solid peace has influenced many international organizations and also constitutions of many countries.

The *Metaphysics of Morals* was the last important work of Kant. It came out in 1797 and was a treatise mainly of political and moral philosophy. Here he gives his doctrine of rights—rights that people have or can acquire—and the doctrine of virtue—the virtues that people ought to acquire.

**Formulation of the main problem of the *Critique of Pure Reason***

In his philosophical and other views given in the pre-critical stage one can easily discern that Kant had leanings toward rationalist line of thinking in general and Descartes, Leibniz, Christian Wolff in particular. He did not take empiricist philosophers’ view very seriously. But it is Hume’s philosophy that agitated his mind and forced to break his previous line of thinking. Unlike many critics of David Hume who dismissed his view as not that important, Kant found substance in Hume’s arguments. For him, it merits our attention on the one hand and on the other we need to find out where Hume had gone wrong which led him to
such a strange view. Let us see the arguments advanced by Hume mainly in his *A Treatise of Human Nature* and in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*.

In the above treatises Hume blew a jolt to traditional undogmatic thinking about our acquisition of knowledge. He showed that many of our beliefs/ideas are neither founded on pure reason nor experience can give them a firm foundation. The idea of causality is one such idea. Hume’s view is that knowledge of causality is of course useful, but the question is how do we arrive at such an idea which is regarded as a necessary idea. The justification of such a necessary idea is in question. About metaphysical ideas also Hume held a stand that was quite different from Kantian way of thinking. Let us explain the curious view of Hume that woke up Kant, as he admitted in the *Prolegomena*, form his deep dogmatic slumber.

This problem is sometimes also called the problem of induction. It is primarily an epistemological problem and questions the credibility of our inductive reasoning. We inductively reason about some principles. Taking the instance of causation he showed the lack of justification for jumping from observed behavior of objects to their future unobserved behavior. While taking such a leap we tend to believe that objects will behave in a similar manner in future also. It is this expectation of uniformity that Hume questions. His point is that form where (i.e. from what source) we get justification for holding such an expectation of uniformity which contains in its womb the concept of necessity. He repudiates any rational justification of such a claim. In philosophy two types of reasoning were popular—demonstrative reasoning and probable reasoning. Hume showed that both these tools were insufficient in justifying the claim. About uniformity belief Hume says that it cannot be demonstrated as we can easily conceive that nature might cease from
being regular. About probable reasoning Hume shows the lack of justification to hold that nature will continue to behave in a similar fashion only because it acted in this way in the past. Thus Hume shows why inductive inferences cannot have rational defense.

Thus shattering this popular way of thinking Hume put forward his own interpretation in consonance with his empiricism. He argued that it is not reason rather natural instinct of human being which accounts for our action of inductive inferences. Nature, writes Hume, by an absolute and uncontrollable necessity condition us to think and judge in that way. About our belief in causation Hume says that it is nothing more than link of constantly conjoined events. On account of constant relationship of two events we mentally link the two. Reading anything more than this in this connection cannot be justified in any other way. From where do we get the assurance that future events will occur in the same way as it happened in the past, asks Hume. As he did not find any certitude in usually held view that every event has a specific course, he offered his own explanation. While doing so he divided human enquiry into two kinds: relations of ideas and matters of fact. In the last chapter and concluding paragraph of An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding he writes: “If we take in our hand any volume…let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it contains nothing but sophistry and illusion”\(^2\). Relations of ideas are \textit{a priori} truth (e. g. statements of mathematics) whereas matters of facts are discovered by individual experience. Causal relationship in such experiences is uncovered by experience and not through ratiocination. After a lot of explanation he wonders how human beings can predict future with certainty from his past experiences. In his explanation of the process of causal inference he develops his theory of
belief. It is our ‘habit’ or ‘custom’ that plays an important role in associating two successive events that we found to occur in nature repeatedly. In the *Enquiry* he writes that habit ‘makes us expect for the future, a similar train of events with those which have appeared in the past.’ Notwithstanding this, Hume is not in a position to credit this association any moderate amount of certainty. Still from this habit there arises in human mind an expectation that future events will follow the past experienced course of action. This view of human behaviour is known as his theory of belief. Thus except our reliance on belief that future events will unfold like our past experience, in other words uniformity of nature, we have no ground to hold such a view.

The above view of Hume has become a major topic of discussion in later period of the history of philosophy. Even if we set aside those interpretations, its influence on Kant went down in history very firmly and reverberates still now. Unlike Thomas Reid, Kant was not ready to dismiss Hume’s view as of no consequence. He considered it as a challenge thrown to the foundation of causal and other metaphysical knowledge. For Hume, these were merely habit of mind produced through repetition of events. Hence Kant considered Hume’s view a challenge and he took up this gauntlet to give a fitting reply which ultimately resulted in his critical project. Instead of taking recourse to common sense for meeting Hume’s doubt, as he thought this is not a fit instrument to respond to Hume, he tried to show where Hume had gone wrong. For Kant, belief in constant conjunction though arise from habit or custom but we need to examine source of utterance of such belief, i.e., judgement issued out of such belief. In making such judgement the speaker does not simply record his psychological state, rather asserts something to be true. Hence this assertion is not simply a subjective matter; on the contrary there is an objective claim. In this claim of objectivity in the assertion lies
the insistence of universality of its application. This claim is not to be ignored rather demands an examination.

Further, Kant held that human beings do not come across events as loose and separate rather experience them in relation to something else including the person who experiences. This relation or connection cannot be satisfactorily explained only in terms of habit. Rather its source lies somewhere else. Habit comes at a later stage of our experience. If in the beginning we did not experience things as related, it is not possible to make a habit. In order to recognize the second and all other following occurrence of events, we need to experience first successive occurrences as related. Wherefrom does it come is a moot question.

Moreover, if we did not experience occurrences as unity, we shall face an insurmountable problem in explaining consciousness. Hume also faced this problem and his explanation of ‘I’ has been reduced to succession of ideas.

The aforesaid problems set Kant’s agenda for further enquiry. In the Critique of Pure Reason he initiates his critical inquiry and through it examines the power (capacity as well as limit) of reason. In his venture he also excavated the source of a priori necessity of causality and other metaphysical principles. In his transcendental idealism he hunted down a priori forms of intuition and pure concepts of the understanding. This discovery took him back to a problem which was not problematic to his predecessors.
The Synthetic A Priori

It is usually claimed that Kant got the clue from Leibniz to begin his search for a solution of the problem posed by Humean contention. Leibniz in his philosophy made the distinction between truths of reason and truths of fact. The distinction is about the foundation of a theory of knowledge. Though a lot of questions has been raised and addressed on this distinction still it is regarded as important one in the history of philosophy. It is also called necessary and contingent truths’ distinction. In truths of reasoning the truth value of the statement can be discovered only be analyzing the notions or concepts it contains. For Leibniz, it was method to reduce or break down the notions into simpler ideas and simpler truths until we arrive at non-breakable or primitive part. In order to understand this we may invoke his principle of contradiction, principle of sufficient reason and predicate-in-notion principle. Principle of contradiction states that a proposition cannot be true and false at the same time and hence A is A and cannot be non-A. His predicate-in-notion principle asserts that except primitive truths all other remaining truths are reducible to primary truths with the help of definitions or in other words through the resolution of notions. If we combine these two principles, i.e. principle of contradiction and predicate-in-notion principle, it amounts to saying that in any true proposition the predicate is contained, either implicitly or explicitly, in the subject. In *A Calculus of Consequences* Leibniz writes: “In every proposition, the predicate is said to be in the subject, that is, the notion of the predicate is contained in the notion of the subject.” He reiterated this view in a letter written to Arnauld where he stated that every true affirmative proposition—necessary as well as contingent, universal as well as particular—possess a characteristic in the sense that in such propositions the notion of predicate in some way or other is contained in the notion of subject. His principle of sufficient
reason says that ‘nothing is without a reason’ which in effect means every event has a cause whether we know it or not. On the basis of these principles Leibniz gave a foundation to his metaphysical views about the nature of substance, modality, etc.

After Leibniz, Hume also distinguished between relations of ideas and matters of fact. While enquiring about justification of beliefs in cause and effect relationships, he investigated our sources of knowledge and said that he found two sources as we stated above (i.e., relations of ideas and matters of fact). Relations of ideas are knowledge that can be justified *a priori*. In other words, they are independent of experience and contain necessity. Denial of *a priori* knowledge involves contradiction. Knowledge of matters of fact is *a posteriori*. This sort of knowledge is grounded in experience, e.g. knowledge of substance and causal relations. Denial of such judgement does not involve contradiction. Sources of knowledge of matters of fact are impressions and ideas (grown out of impression). Again they have several possible sources: sense perceptions, emotions, desires, or acts of will.

In order to meet Humean challenge Kant questions the presumptions that lied behind the old way of distinguishing judgements or propositions. Leibniz, Hume and some other philosophers while talking about judgements forked them in such a way that there are possibilities of only two types of judgements—relations of ideas and matters of fact. The former are judgements which are devoid of any factual content and can be known to be as true or false by mere conceptual analysis or by way of application of principle of contradiction. Judgements relating to matters of fact cannot be known in this way. Their truth or falsity is determined or known by experience. The former are analytic judgements and latter are synthetic judgements. Till the time of Hume it was thought that this distinction is collateral to the division of things known *a priori* and those
known *a posteriori*. It is exactly in this simplification or parallelism between judgements where something went wrong and Kant is eager to show that knowledge demands further scrutiny. He searches out a third alternative, i.e. synthetic *a priori* judgements, the possibility of which were either ignored or went unnoticed. This type of knowledge is unrefutable by experience as it contains *a priori* necessity and at the same time not based on pure reason, i.e. not analytic. He had the conviction that mathematics, natural science contain this class of judgement. Not only that metaphysical principles, e.g. causal principle as a condition of experience, principles of morality, e.g. freedom of will as a postulate of morality, fall in this kind of judgement. Thus Kant sets his main aim of critical project.

Hume’s philosophy ultimately culminated in a sort of skepticism what he termed mitigated skepticism. Kant, after a long arduous enquiry, shows us that the abstract principle of causality and other metaphysical principles are only conditions of our experience and hence cannot be spurned scornfully. Any effort to find them in the world by means of our experience is bound to be a failure as they exist only as categories of our understanding. Reason is also of no help in search of this principle. Reason only applies these as rules in our experience process. Once we forget this, we tend to apply reason beyond its legitimate scope which, for Kant, are antinomies of pure reason.

Kant also introduced a new way of thinking by way of distinguishing between phenomena and noumena. Then he goes on to say that we can have only knowledge of phenomena or appearances, noumena or things-in-themselves are only posited to exist. Things-in-themselves cannot be experienced even by pure reason.

Thus Kant sets his goal. His goal is provide an answer to the challenge posed by Hume. In order to do this he now holds steadfastly
that previous thinkers could not grasp the possibility of a new sort of knowledge, i. e. synthetic \textit{a priori} knowledge. He is keen to show that they play an important role in our knowledge process and are found in different fields of enquiry. Whether Kant succeeded in his attempt is a debatable issue, but there is no gainsaying of the fact that undertaking such an enquiry is indeed an uphill task.

\textbf{References}

CHAPTER - II

Tracing the Road Map of Discovery of Synthetic A Priori Knowledge

In the previous chapter we have seen how Kant had encountered a problem in his rational way of thinking and how and what had awakened him from his much talked-of slumber. In order to respond to Humean challenge he set his task which is also regarded as the main problem of his critical project. He grappled with this problem and offered solution which ranged around two decades. He found that the problem arose for not admitting the possibility of another type of knowledge—synthetic a priori knowledge. In order to discuss Kant’s theory of synthetic a priori knowledge it is imperative to have a clear idea of the distinctions he made between a priori and a posteriori knowledge and also between analytic and synthetic knowledge. Let us begin with the former one.

Tracing the origin of a priori and a posteriori distinction

The distinction between the empirical (a posteriori) and the a priori is primarily an epistemological one. To put it simply an a posteriori knowledge is that knowledge which depends on sense-experience and an a priori knowledge is that type of knowledge which does not depend on sense experience. Since the time of Critique of Pure Reason where Kant first articulated the nature, characteristics, etc. of a priori knowledge, a lot of discussion has taken place about the essential attributes of this knowledge, about its possibility and so on. On account of this, a huge literature has come into existence on this type of experience. When it is said that a priori knowledge is independent of experience, as we have seen, what it actually means is that in terms of the validation of the proposition it is independent of experience. Thus we can define an a priori judgement as a judgement the truth of which we can determine without any reference to sense experience.
Since the first *Critique* and throughout all the later *Critiques*, in some way or other, Kant was preoccupied to show the role of *a priori* knowledge in our experience. This endeavour of him illustrates the emphasis laid by him on *a priori* knowledge. An effort to track down the history of the concept of *a priori* gives us the impression that the concept was there in philosophy much before Kant. Let us get a quick look-through how its use became popular in philosophy.

The phrases ‘*a priori*’ and ‘*a posteriori*’ are basically Latin which literally mean ‘from what comes before’ (or before experience) and ‘from what comes later’ (or after experience). We can trace its early philosophical use, though without using exactly these terms, in Plato’s theory of recollection found in the dialogue *Meno* (380 B. C.). In pre-Kantian philosophy the notions of *a priori* and *a posteriori* were used to distinguish between modes of logical demonstration. When the mind reasoned from causes to effects, the demonstration was called *a priori* and when reasoned from effects to causes, the demonstration was called *a posteriori*. The terms *a priori* and *a posteriori* literally mean ‘from what is prior’ and ‘from what is posterior’. Aristotle in his *Posterior Analytics* holds that A will be called prior to B in knowledge if we can show that, we cannot know B without knowing A. To put it in a different way, if to know B we need at first to know A, then A will be called prior to B in knowledge. If the above view is accepted, then it will follow that if we know something from what is prior then we know its cause. For Aristotle, a causal relationship can be demonstrated by a syllogism in which the term for the cause is the middle term. Hence, if we know something in terms of what is prior, then we have to know it in terms of a causal relationship. On the other hand, there is no such demonstration by means of which we can know something from what is posterior since in that case the knowledge will be of an inductive nature. In the opinion of Leibniz, when we know reality *a posteriori*, we know it by the effects of reality in experience. However, on the other hand, when we know reality *a priori* we know it by exposing the cause or the possible generation of the definite thing. As a consequence of this, Leibniz was able to make a
distinction between truths *a priori* — truths of reason — and truths *a posteriori* — truths of fact.

**Kant’s contrast between *a priori* and *a posteriori* judgement**

Hume in his *Treatise* criticized this distinction. However, Kant’s contribution was that he brought the concept to the forefront of discussion and gave prominence and imparted clarity to it. In the Introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason* he introduces the concept and clarified it. In order to perform this task Kant contrasted it with the *a posteriori*. While the two terms referred traditionally two forms of demonstrations, as we have seen, and also to the kind of knowledge gained in those demonstrations, Kant extended their range beyond kinds of knowledge first to judgements and then to the very elements of knowledge. The distinction drawn between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge is primarily epistemological as it contrasts two kinds of knowledge. Again, the distinction is sometimes regarded as referring to two kinds of epistemic justification. Thus we can say that an instance of knowledge is *a priori* if its justification condition is *a priori*. It is *a priori* in the sense that it does not depend on evidence from sensory experience. Another distinction introduced by him there is between analytic and synthetic distinction. However, we shall discuss this distinction later on.

For Kant, *a posteriori* knowledge did not pose any particular problem in philosophy. He pondered over Hume’s objection and after a long cogitation he thought that Hume’s sceptical attitude can be sufficiently countered if it can be proved that we need to show boldness to admit a kind of knowledge that was before unheard of, i.e. a kind of contra thinking. In order to do that he needed to prepare ground for that and this hard taskmaster made efforts to defend the validity of *a priori* knowledge and its elements. Most of Kant’s analysis of the distinction between *a posteriori* and *a priori* knowledge focuses on the character of the *a priori* knowledge. The choice of this focus was motivated by the desire, as we have mentioned above, to defend his main thesis/intention — to show the possibility of the synthetic *a*
priori character of the judgements which in turn accounts for possibility of metaphysics.

In the Introduction to the 1st Critique, Kant asserts that all our knowledge begins with experience, but does not arise necessarily out of it. A close reading makes it evident that, for Kant, all knowledge begins with experience. It happens so since, thinks this German philosopher, unless the senses stimulate the faculty of knowledge into action, knowledge in the sense of knowledge of objects cannot arise. Thus we can say that experience is the occasioning cause of our knowledge. A question often raised by the commentators: when we talk about a priori knowledge in what sense they are prior — are they prior temporally or logically. Some commentators are eager to show that they are temporally prior whereas some other lay emphasis on logical priority. The later view seems more plausible as in order of time no knowledge is prior to experience. When it is said that it is logically prior what it actually means is that it provides the principle of possibility of all our knowledge and also its principle of possibility is not dependent on experience.

In order make crystal clear the concept of a priori, Kant distinguishes between relatively a priori knowledge and absolutely a priori knowledge. For Kant, relatively a priori knowledge is not a priori proper. It is not so as it ultimately depends, directly or indirectly, on experience. He gives an instance to prove his point: ‘This house will fall down if its support is withdrawn’. This is a relatively a priori judgement as though it is not based on the observation of the actual fall of the house, still it is deducible from an empirical general rule ‘All material bodies fall down when their supports are withdrawn’ in conjunction with the statement that this house is a material body. A priori knowledge is absolutely independent of experience in the sense that it is neither immediately based on sense observations nor also mediatelty grounded on experience by way of being either an empirical generalization or deducible conclusion from an empirical generalization.

Another sort of distinction of a priori knowledge Kant makes is between pure and non-pure a priori knowledge. An a priori knowledge is
pure if it does not contain an element of empirical knowledge. To put it otherwise, an *a priori* knowledge is pure if the judgement as a whole is *a priori* and all its constituent concepts are *a priori*. It may happen that a judgement as a whole is *a priori* but at least one of its constituent concepts is empirical. Such judgement has been given the rubric non-pure *a priori* judgement, e.g., ‘Every event has a cause’, the concept of ‘event’ being empirical. Some commentators, however, (e.g. Korner) are of the opinion that an *a priori* judgement consists of *a priori* concepts and an *a posteriori* judgement consists of *a posteriori* concepts. However, this interpretation can easily be rebutted. In *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant’s intent was to show that a judgement consisting of *a posteriori* concepts may yet be *a priori*, though, of course, such a judgement was non-pure *a priori*. To clarify this point let us take an example ‘All red flowers are red’. This is an instance of *a priori* judgement, being analytic, although both its subject and its predicate concepts are *a posteriori*. Thus, we can say that whether a judgement is *a priori* or *a posteriori* cannot be said in judging the nature of its constituent concepts. Kant argues in various ways that they (*a priori* knowledge) are not only independent of experience, but also that they are even independent of the conditions of experience.

**Marks of *a priori* knowledge**

In order to pinpoint an *a priori* knowledge Kant gives us two criteria: i) necessity and ii) strict universality. In the ultimate analysis it appears that both the criteria are different sides of the same coin. By necessity Kant means the impossibility of the opposite. He distinguishes between two senses of impossibility—logical and transcendental. A proposition is logically impossible if it is self-contradictory, i.e. one which either involves or can be shown by analysis to involve an explicit contradiction. A logically possible proposition is transcendentally impossible if the state of affairs projected by it is unconstructible, i.e. incapable of exhibition in intuition (in space and time). For example, the proposition ‘All bodies are extended’ is necessary, because its opposite (contradiction)—viz, ‘Some bodies are not
extendedʼ—is self-contradictory, being reducible to the contradiction ‘Some extended substances are not extended’. However, the proposition ‘Two straight lines cannot enclose a space’ is necessary, as its opposite—Two straight lines can sometimes enclose a space—is, though logically possible, yet transcendentally impossible, in so far as the two-sided figures projected by it is not constructible, i.e., not in principle capable of exhibition in the intuition of space. Thus it can safely be said that, for Kant, a necessary proposition is one of whose the opposite (contradictory) is either self-contradictory or unconstructible (i.e. counter-intuitive). Further deliberation will make it clear that a proposition which is necessary in the first sense is analytic, while a proposition which is necessary in the second sense is synthetically necessary. In this connection it will not be out of place to state that, for Kant, a priori proposition is necessary in a wider sense than the one in which a merely analytic proposition is necessary.

Another important identification mark of an a priori judgement is the universality. By ‘universality’ Kant meant universal validity—i.e. validity under all possible circumstances. A true universal proposition in this sense does not admit of the possibility of an exception. For example, we cannot conceive of the possibility of an exception to the truth expressed by the proposition ‘7+5=12’ (which is a universal proposition). Universality in this sense should not be confused with universal quantification. These two should not be confused as not all universally quantified propositions are universal in Kant’s intended sense. For example, ‘All swans are white’ is universally quantified, but is not universal in this sense as it admits of the possibility of an exception. Not only that even a universal proposition, in the Kantian sense, may or may not contain a universal quantifier, e.g. ‘7+5=12’.

It can be argued that universality need not be a sign of a priority because it can also be explained empirically through induction. In order to ward off this confusion Kant distinguishes between comparative and strict universality⁴. Inductive universality is only comparative, and not a strict one. An inductive generalization expresses a rule to which no exception has been found so far, but to which an exception is nevertheless allowed as possible.
There is a conceivable circumstance in which it is possibly false. Hence it is not strictly universal. Strict universality consists in excluding the possibility of an exception and it is this feature which cannot be explained by induction. It is this sort of universality that Kant ascribes to a priori knowledge. It is interesting to note that strict universality by virtue of its strictness already assumes a form of necessity.

A close scrutiny reveals that the purity of a priori knowledge is known by way of abstraction. For example, a priori forms of intuition, that Kant explores—i. e. space and time—are discovered by abstracting from experience everything which the understanding thinks through its concepts. In doing so it isolates sensibility and then separate off everything which belongs to sensation. In this process nothing remains except pure intuition and the mere form of appearances—which is all that sensibility can supply a priori. The same is equally true for the a priori concepts, i. e. categories, which are the conditions upon which the possibility of experience rests. These remain as underlying grounds when everything empirical is abstracted from appearances. Establishing the purity of a priori principles, however, itself requires a criterion as otherwise it will be impossible to ascertain when the process of abstraction has reached its terminus in the a priori. The criteria of universality and necessity are used to register the arrival of an a priori judgement or element. If this intuition or concept necessarily holds for every experience then it is a priori. Kant uses this argument on several occasions.

Having analysed the notion of a priori knowledge, Kant concentrates his efforts to demonstrate the existence of a priori principles and their necessary role in experience. In the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason Kant argues that pure a priori principles are essential for the possibility of experience. If it were not the case, i. e. if all the rules of experience were derived from empirical sources and were, therefore, contingent, how could we derive certainty, he asks. This was indeed Kant’s main concern that he desired to respond in the Critique. For Kant, it is the
purity of the *a priori* knowledge that imparted universality and necessity in our cognition.

Kant’s *a priori* knowledge, what he considers as transcendental conditions, has its seat in one’s cognitive faculties. Concepts such as time and space are counted among the list of pure *a priori* forms of intuitions. He explores pure *a priori* forms, of intuition and sensibility, in his transcendental aesthetic and transcendental logic. He reasoned that the human subject would not have experienced in the way as it experiences now if these *a priori* forms were not integral or in-built structure of human subject. For example, argues Kant, we would not have experienced the world as an orderly, rule-governed place unless time and cause were operative in our cognitive faculties.

This sort of claim has popularly come to be known as Kant’s transcendental deduction. It needs to be borne in mind that the transcendental deduction does not rule out objectivity of *a priori* forms. However, in its discussion of a possible logic of the *a priori*, Kant strives to make the case for the fact of subjectivity and what sort of relation it holds with objectivity and the empirical.

The notion of *a priority* explicitly formulated, explained and made use widely in his philosophy by Kant did not remain standstill in post-Kantian era. With the onslaught launched by Quine an intensive search has begun to dig deep into the notion. On account of this intensive research many more facets of the notion has been unearthed. Let us try to have a bird’s eye view of these facets.

**Digging deep into the nature of *a priori* knowledge**

While elucidating *a priori* knowledge Kant explicitly stated that experience is a precondition for having comprehension of *a priori* knowledge. He also held that in spite of this precondition, *a priori* capacity has a justification which is independent of experience. What it implies is that some experience may be required for becoming aware of this capability or to
have access to this capability. Still, conditions of this awareness are distinct from its nature.

There are writes who opined that there are several variant notions of the *a priori*. These different forms have differing degrees of strength. Each differing notion is caused by a different interpretation of ‘experience’ as it occurs in the characterization of the *a priori*.

Different variations of the notion of the *a priori* are important for different theoretical purposes. Tyler Burge⁵, in his article ‘Frege on Apriority’ says that, for Kant, the conscious states of pure intuition are states which entitle a subject to make judgements of, e.g., geometrical principles, and furnishes us a justification which is independent of perceptual experience. He further contrasts the role played by Kantian intuitions with Frege’s philosophical explication of the *a priori* in his *The Foundations of Arithmetic*.

Moreover, being *a priori* is to be differentiated from being necessary. In other words we need to cognize the difference from being true purely in virtue of meaning from being knowable infallibly. American philosopher Saul Aaron Kripke in his *Naming and Necessity* broke the myth that all necessary truths are *a priori* and forcefully argued that the presumption that all necessary truths are *a priori* is mistaken. In order to substantiate his claim he gives the example of empirical identity statements such as ‘Hesperus is Phosphorus’, statements of material origin, such as ‘This lectern was originally made of (a particular piece of) wood’ and statements of kind essence and identity, such as ‘Gold has atomic number 79’. He argues that since these are not *a priori*, they cannot simply be true by convention. Conventionalism was already declining. Kripke’s arguments and similar ones from Putnam seemed to destroy it decisively. In spite of this claim a little reflection on Kripke’s argument make it clear that necessary truths that Kripke talked about are truths which are not logically necessary, but are still necessary absolutely. They have been called ‘metaphysically necessary’ by some thinkers. Kantian necessity, on the other hand, contains in its nucleus seed of logical necessity.
The above view and other modern elaborations make it clear that we need to draw a distinction between being *a priori* from being necessary i.e. from being true purely in virtue of meaning and from being knowable infallibly. The claim that a proposition is known to be true *a priori* in the actual world requires merely that it must have some non-empirical route for its justification. This claim is very different from claiming necessity. Some contemporary writers claim that necessary propositions can also be *a posteriori*. This claim only strengthens that necessity of a proposition does not ensure its a *priority*.

Assertion of a proposition as *a priori* also is not a commitment to the view that it is true purely by virtue of meaning. W. V. O. Quine showed that the idea that anything could be true purely in virtue of its meaning is a myth. In brief, we can say that *a priori* justification is not infallible justification. As one may be justified in believing an ordinary empirical proposition that might subsequently be revealed on empirical grounds to be false, likewise one may be justified in believing an *a priori* proposition that might subsequently turn out on *a priori* grounds to be false.

Another important point that merits our attention is that anyone who believes in *a priori* truth should not be categorized as a rationalist. There are empiricists, e.g. A. J. Ayer, who believed in the existence of *a priori* truths. Some writers suggest that in order to obtain a better understanding of the distinction between rationalist and empiricist positions we need to reckon not to the question of whether there exists *a priori* truths, but rather to the differing accounts which those respective positions tender for the existence of such truths.

Thus we may say that philosophical questions about *a priori* knowledge loaded with a number of subtle distinctions. Out of these three important distinctions are: the epistemological distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge, the metaphysical distinction between necessity and contingency, and the semantical distinction between analytic and synthetic truth. Some of the pertinent questions asked relating to these are: What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for one’s having *a priori*
knowledge? Can we humans satisfy those conditions? Must every proposition knowable a priori be analytically as well as necessarily true? Or, can there be a priori knowledge of some synthetically true propositions or of some contingently true propositions? A more recent issue, emerges from the epistemological writings of Quine, is that whether the very notion of a priori knowledge is philosophically misleading or not.

A significant number of contemporary philosophers are devoting a lot of time to settle the relationship between a priori knowledge and necessity. More discussion will only help to delve deep into the problem and it is expected that by way of discussion a concept of minimal notion of a priori will emerge.

**Debate about the notion of necessity**

Necessity, as we have seen, for Kant is one of the two criteria of a priori knowledge. We have already explained the Kantian notion of necessity. However, some critics opine that the Kantian notion of necessity is far from clear. Thus Richard Robinson⁶ points out that expressions such as ‘necessary truth’ and ‘necessary propositions’ do not have any ‘single inevitable meaning’ and is open to an indefinite number of meanings. Then he separates what he takes to be the four clear senses of necessity, and goes on to argue that the Kantian sense is not precisely identical with anyone of them. In fact the notion of necessity, which can be traced back to the philosophy of early Greek atomist philosopher Leucippus, has been a matter of debate in the arena of philosophy time and again. In common parlance necessity is contrasted with chance. Leucippus in his philosophy held that nothing occurs by chance rather everything happens for a reason and by necessity. Later on we find in Aristotle’s philosophy the notion of logical necessity. The discussion thus started is still going on and with the advent of analytic philosophy the exploration has entered into a deeper level. Robinson’s attempt is a venture towards this direction.

The following four senses are distinguished by Robinson:
(a) **The compulsory-belief sense**: These are propositions which it is necessary for us or for some of us to believe. It is so as no occasion has arisen to doubt it or it appeared to us to be patently true or there were some convincing reason for us to believe it. A proposition is necessary to a person who, for some reason or other is compelled to believe it. Obviously, a proposition which is necessary to a person in this sense may not be necessary to another.

(b) **The Aristotelian or apodictic sense**: According to the Aristotelian logicians, a necessary proposition is a modal proposition of the apodictic variety. It is one which contains in its linguistics formulation such an apodictic sign as ‘necessary’ or ‘must’ or ‘cannot’ or the like. For Aristotle, a necessary proposition says that A ‘necessarily’ belongs (or does not belong) to B. The form of such propositions is something like ‘S must be P’, or ‘S cannot be P’ or ‘S is necessarily P’. Robinson shows that a proposition like ‘A father is a parent’ is not necessary in the present sense.  

(c) **The Leibnizian or the analytic sense**: According to Leibniz, a (true) proposition is necessary if its denial leads to a contradiction. Since Leibniz holds that the self-contradictoriness of the opposite of the necessary proposition can be brought to light by analysis of concepts, the Leibnizian sense may well be characterized as the analytic sense. It is analytic kind of necessary proposition as Leibniz maintained in his *Monadology* that when a truth is necessary, its reason can be uncovered by analysis by means of resolving it into more simpler ideas and truths up to the time of arriving to those positions which are primary. Its meaning can be better understood if it is contrasted with contingent.

(d) **The universal sense**: A necessary proposition in this sense is one which is unrestrictedly universal or which asserts a universal connection. Thus if absolutely every S is P, then it is necessary that anything which is S is P. For Robinson, the contradictory of a necessary proposition, in this sense, is not a necessary proposition.

Robinson, who considers the above four senses to be quite clear and of course distinct from one another argues next that the Kantian sense of
necessity is not precisely identical with any one of these. Thus in the first place, the Kantian sense of necessity is not the same as the compulsory belief sense. For, according to Kant, if a proposition is necessary then one is compelled to believe it. This shows that compulsory believability is for Kant a consequence of necessity, and not its meaning. In the second place, a Kantian sense is not the same as the apodictic sense. For although some of Kant’s necessary propositions (e.g. Two straight lines cannot enclose a space) are apodictically expressed some are not (e.g. Every event has a cause). In the third place, the Kantian sense is not the same as the analytic sense. For although, for Kant, all analytic propositions are necessary, the converse is not true. Kant admits synthetic necessary propositions also. In the fourth place, the Kantian sense must not be equated with the universal sense. For Kant at least intends to distinguish necessity from universality.

Robinson concludes that the Kantian sense of necessity is not a clear sense at all, but is rather a confusion of the above four clear senses of necessity. It is so as some of Kant’s necessary propositions are psychologically compelling, some are apodictic, some are analytic and some are just universal. Finding no similarity with any particular sense he says that “the concept of necessary proposition is now a muddle, and that this muddle began with Kant.”

If we juxtapose Robinson’s view vis-à-vis Kant’s view it is difficult to think that Robinson has done justice to Kant. Kant has indeed a fairly clear sense of necessity which we may expound in the following way. Necessity, for Kant, consists in the impossibility of the opposite. He distinguishes two senses of impossibility: Logical and transcendental. A proposition is logically impossible if it is self-contradictory, i.e. one which either involves or can be shown by analysis to involve an explicit contradiction. Now a logically possible proposition is transcendently impossible if the state of affairs projected by it is unconstructible i.e. incapable of exhibition in intuition (in space and time). For example, the proposition ‘All bodies are extended’ is necessary, because its opposition (i.e. contradictory)—namely, ‘Some bodies are not extended’—the self-
contradictory, being reducible to the contradiction ‘Some extended substances are not extended.’ Again, the proposition ‘Two straight lines cannot enclose a space is necessary, because, its opposite—Two straight lines can sometimes enclose a space — is though logically possible yet transcendentally impossible, in so far as the two-sided figure projected by it is not constructible, i.e. not in principle capable of exhibition in the intuition of space.

We may say, therefore, that for Kant a necessary proposition is one of which the opposite (contradictory) is either self-contradictory or unconstructible (i.e. counter-intuitive). We may say that a proposition which is necessary in the first sense is analytic, while a proposition which is necessary in the second sense is synthetically necessary. Incidentally, it is clear that for Kant a priori proposition is necessary in a wider sense than the one in which a merely analytic proposition is necessary. Thus, the extension of both the concepts (i. e. a priori and analytic) are not same.

The Analytic/Synthetic Distinction

Distinction between a priori and a posteriori judgments has been drawn by reference to the origin of our knowledge of them. This distinction also marks the difference traditionally noted in logic between contingent and necessary truths. However, the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments has been done according to the information conveyed as their content. In the Critique of Pure Reason Kant writes: “Either the predicate B belongs to the subject A, as something which is (covertly) contained in this concept A; or B lies outside the concept A, although it does indeed stand in connection with it. In the one case I entitle the judgement analytic, in the other synthetic.” Soon after that he states some of the characters of analytic and synthetic judgements. From the characters and definitions he offered of these two sorts of judgements it appears that the distinction holds only between categorical propositions having subject-predicate form. Analytic judgments are those judgements whose predicates are wholly contained in their subjects. They add nothing new to our concept of the subject, such
judgments are purely explicative and can be deduced from the principle of non-contradiction. Synthetic judgments, on the other hand, are those whose predicates are wholly distinct from their subjects. However, in spite of their recognizable difference there exists a connection between the two. Hence, synthetic judgments are genuinely informative but require justification by reference to some outside principle.

Philosophers before Kant had failed to differentiate properly between these two distinctions. Though Leibniz and Hume had made just one distinction, between ‘matters of fact’ based on sensory experience and the truths of pure reason, Kant held that the two distinctions are not entirely coextensive.

‘Analytic’ sentences, such as “Ophthalmologists are doctors,” are those whose truths are knowable by knowing the meanings of the constituent words alone. This is not the case in case of synthetic propositions, such as “Ophthalmologists are rich,” whose truth is knowable by knowing the meaning of the words and also acquiring some information about the world. Right from the time of Frege, many philosophers tried to show that knowledge of logic and mathematics and other seemingly a priori knowledge of philosophy and the foundations of science could be exhibited to be analytic by their careful ‘conceptual analysis.’ This effort however encountered a stiff opposition and led by Quine they aired their doubt the reality of the distinction. For example, Quine doubted about the existence of analytic judgements and argued elaborately that any attempt to define analyticity ultimately fail as it invokes notions in its definitions which belong to its family circle. He says that any proper definition must shun this practice. As analyticity cannot be defined and existence of such judgements is questionable the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgements becomes otiose. Thus the Kantian attempt to make this cleavage faces stiff resistance. We intend to discuss this in a later chapter.
SYNTHETIC A PRIORI KNOWLEDGE

In previous sections we have discussed at length two landmark distinctions (distinctions between *a priori* and *a posteriori* and analytic and synthetic judgements) as made by Kant. We have also seen that the distinctions he made did not remain standstill in post Kantian period; rather it has unleashed an intensive search about the nature of these distinctions and also about validity of these distinctions.

Having discussed the above distinctions we need to consider their logically possible combinations. Such four possible combinations are:

- **Analytic *a priori* judgement,**
- **Analytic *a posteriori* judgment,**
- **Synthetic *a posteriori* judgment,** and
- **Synthetic *a priori* judgment**

Let us take a quick look at the nature of these combinations and their possibility in brief.

**Analytic *a priori***: About the analytic *a priori* judgments it is usually agreed upon that they cover only logical truths and uncomplicated matters of definition. They are necessarily true. The possibility of such combination is not in question. Analytic truths can be known *a priori* because

- they make no claims about the world,
- they are only conventions that we follow to guide our language, and
- as soon as we learn our language, we know them.

So, there is no possibility of confirming or denying them in experience. Again, they are necessary because they guide our language. To violate them is to be guided by them and also to break them. Furthermore, it involves contradiction. Hence, they are necessary.

**Analytic *a posteriori***: About Analytic *a posteriori* judgments it is usually agreed that such sort of judgement is not possible. Analytic *a posteriori* judgments is not possible as there is no need to appeal to experience in case of a purely explicative assertion. In order to express this impossibility sometimes it is said that they are contradiction in terms. However, there are
contemporary thinkers, e. g. Stephen R. Palmquist, who argues that Kant’s view that this classification is empty or has no instance is challengable. He considers this blending of analytic *a posteriori* not only as a valid epistemological combination, but also as the important grouping of the four combinations\(^{10}\). We find same echo in the writing of Andrew Curtofello also. However, this is a comparatively new analysis and was unknown at the time of Kant. Kant held that mathematical knowledge is synthetic *a priori* par excellence. For Palmquist, it is so from one perspective. From another perspective and which he thinks equally valid perspective it can be shown that they are, in some occurrences, analytic *a posteriori*. After a long analysis Palmquist contends that “synthetic *a priori* and analytic *a posteriori* are therefore similar classes of knowledge insofar as both are concerned with conditions imposed on the world by the subject..., but they differ by virtue of the fact that one imposes general conditions (*a priori*) with intuitive (synthetic) content, whereas the other imposes particular conditions (*a posteriori*) with conceptual (analytic) content.”\(^{11}\)

**Synthetic *a posteriori***: Synthetic *a posteriori* judgments are the relatively uncontroversial. It did not generate controversy as we customarily think that matters of fact we usually come to know by means of our sensory experience. Kant and his predecessors were not at all at loggerheads about the possible combination of the above.

**Synthetic *a priori***: The possibility of this combination or, if we state it differently, the feasibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments, is the crucial case. The determination of this possibility is compelling as it is the main bone of contention and it is at this point that Kant is in disagreement with his predecessors. Whereas Leibniz and Hume are of the view that such sort of combination is not possible, Kant is confident about the possibility of such judgements and he directs his attention to show how are they possible in different fields of knowledge. For Kant, only this sort of knowledge could provide new information that is necessarily true. In other words, admission of the possibility of this combination and demonstration of this possibility
can provide a befitting reply to Hume’s view that no necessary connection exists between cause and effect.

For Kant, synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible. Not only are they possible but they actually provide the basis for significant portions of human knowledge. They play a pivotal role in our knowledge possibility which still now went unrecognized. For Kant, arithmetic and geometry consists of such judgments. Natural science also depends on them as a means to explain and predict events. What is more important, metaphysics — if it is to be possible at all — must rest upon synthetic *a priori* judgments. If it is denied, Metaphysics will be either uninformative or unjustifiable. The recognition of these reorganisation of combination (i.e. synthetic with *a priori* judgments) refutes the claims of sceptics, e.g. of Hume, that knowledge of metaphysics is impossible. It also paves way for getting rid of dogmatism. Thus conceding practicability of synthetic *a priori* cognition Kant could show that we can validly reason about the nature of the universe and can also establish the relationship between the real and the perceivable worlds. Not only that Kant also attempted to show that metaphysics also contains synthetic *a priori* judgments.

But how are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible at all? This is the central question Kant sought to answer. He calls it ‘general problem of pure reason’. We can call it general problem of his critical enterprise. He says ‘the proper problem of pure reason is contained in the question: How are *a priori* synthetic judgements possible?’ Kant was confident about the possibility synthetic *a priori* knowledge, e.g. in pure mathematics. On account of this conviction, he limits his task to show how this knowledge becomes possible. He begins his arguments with mathematics.

**Synthetic *a priori* judgments in Mathematics**

Kant is of the view that all mathematical judgements without exception are synthetic, besides being *a priori*. He writes: “All mathematical judgements, without exception, are synthetic.” Soon after that he adds that though “it was found that all mathematical inferences proceed in accordance
with the principle of contradiction ..., it was supposed that the fundamental
propositions of the science can themselves be known to be true through that
principle."\(^{14}\) By saying this he refers to analytic principles and hold that this
sort of thinking is mistaken. He reasons that “though a synthetic proposition
can indeed be discerned in accordance with the principle of contradiction,
this can only be if another synthetic proposition is presupposed, and if it can
then be apprehended as following from this other proposition; it can never be
so discerned in and by itself.”\(^{15}\) About the point of a prioricity of
mathematical propositions, apprehending objections from his critics, Kant
limits his view to pure mathematics. Thus we find a crucial deviation of Kant
from his predecessors and also of contemporaries. It is here that he claims a
breakthrough of his philosophical thinking.

Leibniz and Hume admit in their own ways the a priori status of
mathematical judgements, but they treat such judgements as analytic
(however, without using the expression analytic). For they maintained that
such judgements are certifiable by mere conceptual analysis in accordance
with the law of contradiction. Kant differs from them on this point, holding
that the synthesis asserted in mathematical judgements is grounded not upon
conceptual analysis but upon intuition. Hence, the peculiarity of the Kantian
position concerns the syntheticty, not the a prioricity, of mathematical
judgements, since the a prioricity of such judgements is not questioned by
anybody.

The a prioricity of mathematical judgements is vouchsafed by their
strict universality and necessity. The question of particular interest is why
Kant thinks then to be synthetic and not analytic. Kant begins by
investigating arithmetical propositions. The judgements ‘7+5=12’ is a typical
arithmetical judgement, and Kant conducts his arguments with regard to it.
He argues that the idea of 12 is not already contained in that of the union of
the two numbers, 7 and 5. Logical analysis of the concept of 7+5 yields the
simpler concepts of 7, 5, and of addition; and, surely, Kant seems to claim,
the concept of 12 is not identical with anyone of these simpler concepts.
‘7+5’ represents a problem to which the solution is 12. If the solution, holds
Kant, were already conceptually contained in the problem, the problem would no longer be a problem. As the idea of 12 is not already logically contained in that of 7+5, the judgement is not analytic, and if it is not analytic, it must be synthetic. Kant argues further that the judgement can be established (certified) only by having recourse to intuition. We may take 7 and 5 dots which are respectively the intuitions corresponding to the concepts of 7 and 5; and it is by counting the dots that we arrive at the result, i.e., at the number 12. Counting is a synthetic operation of adding unit to unit. This recourse to intuitions and to a synthetic operation shows clearly that the judgement in question is synthetic.

Kant argues further that the synthetic character of an arithmetical judgement will be more evident if we take larger numbers. For than it will be clear that however much we may turn and twist the numbers, we cannot, merely by such manipulation or conceptual exercise, arrive at the results. Writes Kant: “This is still more evident if we take larger numbers. For it is then obvious that, however we might turn and twist our concepts, we could never, by the mere analysis of them, and without the aid of intuition, discover what ... is the sum.”16 In this argument Kant is subtly suggesting an important distinction to be made: namely, that between psychological association and logical implication. Owing to our familiarity with the judgements 7+5=12, the idea of 7+5 and that of 12 are psychologically associated with each other so intimately that we cannot entertain the one idea without calling up the other. This psychological association, however, is not itself evidence of logical implication.

An important objection to Kant’s view, raised by Johann Schultz17, is that the judgements 7+5=12, or any other such judgements, is a equation and so is an identical judgement. An identical judgement must be analytic.

Kant replies to this objection in his letter to Johann Schultz (November 25, 1788), a professor of Mathematics at the University of Konigsberg, along the following line18. The concept of 7+5 and that of 12 are “objectively” identical, but “subjectively” different. “Objectively” here means denotatively or extensionally, and “subjectively” means connotatively or intensionally.
The two concepts denote the same number, but they do not have the same connotation. (In the Fregean terminology, the two concepts have the same reference, but different senses.) Now, since the concepts are intensionally different, the judgement considered from the intensional point of view is not an identical or analytical judgement. The analytic–synthetic distinction is an intensional distinction: whether a judgement is analytic or synthetic is to be determined by considering whether or not the predicate concept is intensionally involved in the subject concept.

Incidentally we may point out that if we appreciate the intensional standpoint of Kant’s analytic-synthetic distinction, we can see the irrelevance of some contemporary criticism to the effect that arithmetical propositions are analytic. Such criticisms are made from the extensional point of view, which is foreign to Kant.

**Syntheticity and a prioricity of geometrical propositions**

Like arithmetical propositions, geometrical propositions are synthetic. They are, of course, *a priori* because of their necessity. The judgement, e.g. “A straight line is the shortest distance between any two points”⁹ cannot be regarded intelligible by any analysis of concepts. Here the predicate concept of the ‘shortest distance’ is quantitative and is not therefore logically involved in the subject concept of ‘a straight line’ which is qualitative. As the two concepts are of quite different nature, one is not analytically explicative of the other. A geometrical proposition is established not by the analysis of a concept, but by the construction of a concept. The technical term “construction of a concept” means the exhibition, in intuition, of an object or objects denoted by the concept. For example, the judgement “The angle-sum of a triangle is equal to 180°” cannot be established by any analysis of the concept of a triangle. The geometrician actually establishes this judgement by constructing the concept of a triangle i.e. by exhibiting the object denoted by the concept (namely, a triangular figure) in the intuition of space. The judgement is demonstrated with the help of the intuition of the
constructed (exhibited) figure supplemented by certain other auxiliary constructions. This appeal to intuition shows that the judgement is synthetic.

Let us state the matter in a more simplified form. Let us consider our knowledge that two plus three is equal to five and that the interior angles of any triangle add up to a straight line. These (and similar) truths of mathematics are synthetic judgments, Kant held, since they contribute significantly to our knowledge of the world. The sum of the interior angles is not contained in the concept of a triangle. Yet, clearly, such truths are known *a priori*, since they apply with strict and universal necessity to all of the objects of our experience, without having been derived from that experience itself. In these instances, Kant supposed, no one will ask whether or not we have synthetic *a priori* knowledge. The matter is so obvious that we do have this sort of knowledge. The question to settle is, how do we come to have such knowledge? If experience does not supply the required connection between the concepts involved in this knowledge, how does it come? is the moot question.

Kant's response to the above question is that we do it on our own. *Descartes* said in the *Fifth Meditation* that the essence of bodies is exhibited in Euclidean solid geometry and that determines the *a priori* structure of the spatial nature of objects we experience. To perceive any object they must be thought of as being uniquely located in space and time. Thus it is the spatio-temporal framework that accounts for the missing connection between the concept of the triangle and that of the sum of the angles of the triangle. Kant in the portion entitled "Transcendental Aesthetic" argues in detail that space and time are the pure forms of sensible intuition. It is only through these forms that we perceive whatever we perceive.

Before Kant, Leibniz also held that space and time are not constitutional features of the world. They are merely products of our minds. Newton, however, asserted that space and time are absolute and they are not merely a set of spatial and temporal relations. By holding that space and time are *a priori* forms of intuition, Kant seems to have accommodated views of Leibniz as well as Newton.
While discussing about synthetic \textit{a priori} characteristics of geometrical judgements in the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} Kant has made a remark which may take us by surprise. It is this: “Some few fundamental propositions, presupposed by the geometrician, are, indeed, really analytic, and rest on the principle of contradiction.”\textsuperscript{20} Examples of such propositions are: “\(a = a\)” (i.e. “the whole is equal to itself”), \((a+b) > a\) (i.e. the whole is greater than the part). This remark seems to contradict Kant’s initial assertion: “All mathematical judgements, without exception, are synthetic.” Kant’s own comments on the analytic judgements cited above are as follows:

\begin{itemize}
  \item They ‘serve only as links in the chain of method and not as principles.’
  \item They ‘are only admitted in mathematics because they can be exhibited in intuition.’\textsuperscript{21}
\end{itemize}

Thus the judgement “The whole is greater than the part can be exhibited \textit{in concreto} by drawing a line AB and dividing it at a point C:

\begin{center}
A------------------------C-----------------------------B
\end{center}

It is here intuitively clear that AB is greater than AC which is a part of AB.

These analytic judgements are not, strictly speaking, geometrical “principles”, since they are neither axioms nor definitions nor theorems. They are only “presupposed by the geometricians” as intuitive tools useable for purposes of demonstration.

\section*{Syntheticity of algebraic formulae}

Another important component of mathematics is algebra. Kant does not consider algebraic formulae in the Introduction to the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}. He considers them in the Transcendental Doctrine of Method\textsuperscript{22}. He says that algebra chooses a certain notion for all constructions of magnitude as such — i.e. for addition, subtraction, extraction of roots, etc. After choosing the notions, it exhibits in intuition, according to certain universal rules, all the various operations by which magnitudes are produced and
modified. For example, when one magnitude is to be divided by another, their symbols are placed together, according to the sign of division. Thus in algebra by means of an ostensive construction, we come to arrive at results which cannot be discursively reached by mere conceptual analysis. It is, then, clear that the algebraic formulae are not analytic but synthetic.

**Synthetic a priori judgements in natural science**

Kant also reasons that pure natural science, or physics, also contains synthetic *a priori* judgements. We know that pure science exists because there are universal laws, such as “substance is permanent” and “every event is determined by a cause according to constant laws.” These laws must not be *a posteriori*, because experience can only teach us what exists and how it exists, but not that it must exist. Neither are they *a priori*, for we must make our deductions from observations. However, the conformity of experience to constant laws must be an *a priori* understanding.

This understanding is the result of both judgments of experience, which are always valid and are based on *a priori* concepts of the understanding, and judgments of perception, which are subjectively valid and are based on simple observation. When a judgment of perception, or an intuition, is subsumed under this *a priori* pure understanding, it becomes a judgment of experience that is then objectively true and universal. This pure understanding consists of twelve concepts of understanding, called categories, which are *a priori* concepts derived from logical judgments. Thus, through our awareness we have perceptions. Then our sensibility, using the concepts of pure understanding, structures these perceptions into experiences which we use to form science. This process is called the schematism of pure understanding. Here schemata are notions of objects categorized and structured in time. The categories can only subsume schemata, and not awareness.

This system of natural science solves Hume’s problem of cause and effect. Instead of universal concepts being derived from experience using the innate human tendency to classify according to cause and effect, experience is derived from perceptions as they are subsumed under the pure universal
concepts, such as cause and effect. We still do not know, however, if these principles chronicle the actual world, or only our perceived world. However, as our experience is derived from pure universal concepts, which are only valid when applied to perceptions, the principles of science belong to the phenomenal world of appearances. Thus Kant has shown that through the pure concepts of understanding, we can derive principles of natural science concerning the phenomenal world.

To put it simply, in natural science, Kant held, synthetic \textit{a priori} judgments provide the requisite foundations for human knowledge. The most general laws of nature, like mathematical truths, though cannot be justified by experience, yet their application is without exception, i.e. universal. David Hume’s viewpoint that in case of matters of fact we base our view on an unfounded belief of a necessary connection between causes and effects was plausibly right. As Kant was not a die-hard empiricist it became easier for Kant to enter deeper into the issue and hence offered a transcendental argument. Taking recourse to a different way he candidly says that it is indeed a fact that we do have knowledge of the natural world. The acknowledgement of this truth takes us to the actuality of synthetic \textit{a priori} propositions about the structure of our experience of it.

**Synthetic \textit{a priori} propositions in metaphysics**

Having shown that principles of natural sciences contain judgements which are synthetic as well as \textit{a priori}, Kant attempted to show that even metaphysics also contain ‘at least in intention’ propositions which are \textit{a priori} besides being synthetic. In the ‘Preface to the First Edition’ (of the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}) he in detail analysed the cause of current dismal state of metaphysics which was once regarded as ‘the Queen of all the sciences’. Now it has become the battle-field of endless controversies. Kant claims to have identified the cause of this and writes that it “finds itself compelled to resort to principles which overstep all possible empirical employment, and which yet seem so unobjectionable that even ordinary consciousness readily accepts them. But by this procedure human reason
precipitates itself into darkness and contradictions...”23 This has caused it to fall from the grace and time has earned her only scorn, ‘a matron outcast and forsaken’. Kant’s Critique is an attempt to free her from dogmatist and despotic administrators. In his words it is “a call to reason to undertake anew the most difficult of all its tasks, namely, that of self-knowledge, and to institute a tribunal which will assure to reason its lawful claims, and dismiss all groundless pretensions, not by despotic decrees, but in accordance with its own eternal and unalterable laws. This tribunal is no other than the Critique of Pure Reason.”24

In the ‘Introduction’ of the 1st Critique Kant calls metaphysics an ‘indispensable science’. This crucial science ‘ought to contain’ judgements which possess characteristics of both syntheticty and a prioricity. Kant makes it clear that the task of ‘the Queen of all the sciences’ is not only to anatomize concepts ‘which we make for ourselves a priori of things’ which has the overtone of analytical examination or investigation. Rather our aim in this branch of knowledge should be to expand arena of our a priori knowledge. It is with this aim we need to “employ principles which add to the given concept something that was not contained in it...”25

Kant discerned that one key reason for current state of metaphysics (i.e. its uncertainty and contradictory opinions) was that thinkers before him failed to make clear distinction between analytic and synthetic judgements. He cites the instance of Hume who though came closer to foreseeing the problem could not achieve success as he also could not envision the aforesaid distinction and remained preoccupied with synthetic judgements only. It led him to hold the view “When we run over libraries ... what havoc we must make? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.”26 This statement of Hume makes it amply clear that for him only worthy propositions were synthetic propositions and a priori propositions. Hence to
him metaphysics was a matter of mere delusion. On account of this way of thinking, writes Kant, “we fancy ourselves to have rational insights into what, in actual fact, is borrowed solely from experience, and under the influence of custom has taken the illusory semblance of necessity.”

The nature of enquiry of synthetic *a priori* principles in pure mathematics and natural sciences on the one hand and metaphysics on the other are diametrically different. As the former group does actually exist the question that needs to be addressed is how they are possible. Their existence and progress are proven fact. However, this is not the case with our ‘Queen’. It is so on account of its poor progress which prompted to doubt its feasibility.

But our German philosopher says emphatically that metaphysics actually exist and reign supreme. Its nature is not similar to science, but nonetheless it exists as natural disposition of human being. Whether we like it or not, we want it or not, it will continue to be there. The adventure of human mind cannot remain content only within a realm which is present in front of our sense-experience. It is its inherent nature that drives us beyond this. Writes Kant: “For human reason, without being moved merely by the ideal desire for extent and variety of knowledge, proceeds impetuously, driven on by an inward need, to questions such as cannot be answered by any empirical employment of reason, or by principles thence derived.” Hence Kant formulates his first question

How is metaphysics, as natural disposition, possible?

It is an enquiry into the nature of human reason. The peculiarity of human reason is that it gives rise to such questions which it cannot adequately answer. Previous record of metaphysical discourse amply proved that. And this failure or non-substantial progress of previous attempts makes us self-reflect. It forces us not to remain smug and limit our enquiry into metaphysical knowledge merely as natural disposition. It is exactly here that Kant pins his ultimate question of the 1st *Critique* down. He goes ahead and formulates his final question by way of saying: “It must be possible for reason to attain to certainty whether we know or do not know the objects of
metaphysics, that is, to come to a decision either in regard to the objects of its enquiries or in regard to the capacity or incapacity of reason to pass any judgement upon them, so that we may either with confidence extend our pure reason or set to it sure and determine limits.”

Having said this he states the question of enquiry in the following way

How is metaphysics, as science, possible?

We now find that Kant is in search of metaphysical knowledge which will have scientific certainty. It does not delve with objects of reason rather with itself, i.e. to know the capacity and limit of it. When we can fathom the power of reason “in respect of objects which can be presented to it in experience, it should easily be able to determine, with completeness and certainty, the extent and limits of its attempted employment beyond the bounds of all experience.”

Kant is confident that a successful investigation of this will put metaphysics into a pedestal equal to science. He calls it ‘metaphysics proper’. This metaphysics proper is the expansion of synthetic a priori knowledge. The paramount difference between two types of metaphysics, i.e. metaphysics prior to him and metaphysics that he intend to give, is that the former one attempted to pointless analysis of concepts (it is ineffectual because it took recourse to futile analysis of concepts and did not pay attention to discovery to the track ‘how we arrive at them a priori) whereas the latter one strived to answer the question how do we arrive at them a priori. This is an uphill task that our master set to accomplish. This finding will have far reaching implication as valid employment of these newfound concepts will determine the validity claim of other many branches of knowledge too. He now discovers these concepts under two heads: intuition and understanding.

Space and time, or forms of intuition, are sine qua non for any perception. But this is not enough for our knowledge. Knowledge, however, is an intricate process. Hence knowledge process requires that in addition to sensation, thought is also required for completion of the process. Sensations gathered through space and time need to be arranged and organized. Otherwise there will only be a chaos of sensory images. This prompted Kant
to say that sensations without concept are blind. Kant thus has begun his hunt for searching out these principles which perform this ordering and organizing task. This search for synthetic unity (that unites sensory diversities) was an arduous task for Kant. He was confident that a subject, i.e. a knower, has the inherent capacity to execute this task of systematization by unearthing the links amongst perceived impressions (to use a Humean term). Kant’s theory of transcendental unity of apperception shows how this function is accomplished. The fact that we obtain knowledge entails that there is some rhythm in what is known and also there is knower in whose knowledge geography this can be presented.

As Kant was preoccupied to respond to Hume or Hume’s view — that we gain only impressions of individual images having no necessary links between them — Kant painstakingly found that connections between them can be mapped only by knowing the structure of the subject. These connections are the principles of linkage that dovetail perfectly. Instances of synthetic *a priori* judgement discussed before from mathematics and natural sciences have been derived from the make-up or very constitution of the understanding itself.

In his search for the aforesaid principles Kant takes clue from logicians. He showed how our judgements contain in some way or other forms of quantity, quality, relation or modality. Now he says that any comprehensible experience can be and as we have no choice other than these and hence must be expressed in these forms of thought. These are inevitable patterns of any possible experience.

In the ‘Transcendental Logic” Kant systematized the table of the aforesaid patterns and he call them categories of understanding.31

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Of Quantity</th>
<th>Of Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>Reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plurality</td>
<td>Negation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totality</td>
<td>Limitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axioms of Intuition</td>
<td>Anticipations of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Having schematized our forms of thought now Kant says that our convictions about the natural world are obtained from these concepts and hence they contain elements of necessity that Hume was unable to uncover. Kant emphatically declares that principles of natural sciences are not derivation from empirical generalization, rather they are synthetic *a priori* understanding and in this awareness we find crucial connective concepts.

After a long arduous journey now Kant establishes that synthetic *a priori* proposition indeed exist in different realm of our knowledge. Thus his exercise shattered the myth that this combination of judgements, i.e. synthetic and at the same time *a priori*, is impossible.

However, Kant did not rest quite with his discovery of new sort of knowledge. He was quite confident that such knowledge existed in other fields of human enquiry. Hence he set his task to unfold that and present to his readers. He could trace its existence in the field of morality and in the field of aesthetic experience. Though their nature may have slight variation still they are synthetic *a priori* knowledge.

We shall discuss these two types of synthetic *a priori* comprehension in a greater detail in next two successive chapters. However, what is important to mention here that Kant’s view given in the *Critique of Pure Reason* brought a revolution, and Kant himself, claimed it in the world of philosophical thinking. He called this Copernican revolution on account of its similitude with the revolution in astronomy brought about by the Polish astronomer Nicholas Copernicus. It is revolutionary as he placed human
capacity at the center stage and took away object of knowledge from the position that empiricists love to see.

1 Leibniz, G. *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, Book III., Chapter 3
3 Ibid., p.44
4 Ibid., p. 44
7 Ibid., p. 290.
8 Ibid. 293.
9 Ibid. p. 48.
10 In "Knowledge and Experience – An Examination of the Four Reflective ‘Perspectives’ in Kant's Critical Philosophy", *Kant-Studien* 78:2 (1987), pp.170-200.
13 Ibid., p. 52.
14 Loc cit.
15 Loc cit.
16 Ibid., p. 53.
18 We come to know that correspondence between these two professors took place at least on 15 occasions.
20 Ibid, p. 54
21 Ibid., p. 54.
22 Ibid., p. 590.
23 Ibid., p. 7.
24 Ibid. p. 9.
25 Ibid., p. 54.
27 Ibid., p. 55.
28 Ibid. p. 56.
29 Ibid., p. 57.
30 Loc. cit.
31 Ibid., p. 113.
The Critique of Pure Reason has two primary segmentations: Transcendental Doctrine of Elements and Transcendental Doctrine of Method. The letter section is comparatively smaller and in Norman Kemp Smith’s translation it comes to some 96 pages. This segment is divided into four chapters. Out of these four chapters first and second chapters have four and three sections respectively. The last two chapters, i.e. third and fourth, do not have sub-divisions. In the second chapter (entitled ‘The Canon of Pure Reason’), Section 2 (under the rubric ‘The Ideal of the Highest Good, as a Determining Ground of the Ultimate End of Pure Reason’), Kant sums up his interest in reason in three brief questions:

1. What can I know?
2. What I ought to do?
3. What may I hope?

Out of these three questions, the second one introduces his task in the field of moral philosophy. The first question, as Kant himself said, is purely speculative, the second one is purely practical and the third one is a combination of speculative and practical. Though the second question falls within the purview of pure reason still it is not a transcendental question, rather a moral issue. In view of this Kant did not discuss the issue in the 1st Critique and which in turn implied that he had in mind another Critique to deal with this issue. In the 1st Critique he was certain that there were ‘pure moral laws which determine completely a priori...what is and is not to be done.’ In saying this Kant talked about laws and not about our empirical motives which usually desire to achieve happiness. As moral laws ‘command
in an absolute manner’ they are ‘therefore in every respect necessary.’ After that Kant justifies his assumption in various ways.

**Building the foundation of *a priori* moral law**

From the preceding paragraph it becomes evident that Kant did not have iota of doubt about the existence of *a priori* moral laws which contains necessity and other characteristics of this sort of knowledge within its womb. In the trilogy of Kant’s ethical philosophy he demonstrated this. *The Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785), *The Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) and *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) constituted the triad. The agenda for his enquiry in this trinity have been formulated in the 1st *Critique* in section 2 under the heading ‘The Canon of Pure Reason’. A study of this section makes us feel that Kant is deriving his conclusion from the mere assumption that as a rational being his/her moral behaviour must conform to these *a priori* moral laws. The concept of reason which is at the core has been set vis-à-vis the Humean view of moral philosophy as ‘slave of passion’.

Before Kant and also at the time of Kant (i.e. when he was philosophizing) European philosophy had predominance of utilitarianism. It began with Greek philosopher Epicurus and gained maximum prominence in the hand of Jeremy Bentham who was Kant’s contemporaneous. Epicurus though emphasized on happiness he was cautious about the nature of happiness and it seems that he advocated qualitative pleasure when he talked about happiness. He defines pleasure very succinctly by saying that it is ‘the absence of pain in body and of trouble in the soul.’ Explaining it further he says that for leading a life of pleasure we need to lead a life of prudence, honour and justice. From this definition and subsequent explanation given by him it becomes evident that Epicurus denigrates gross hedonism and espouses a refined hedonism. It is not the physical pleasure rather a philosophical pursuit of wisdom which brings meaning to life. Bentham, on the other hand, took a turnaround and advocated quantitative pleasure. In order to quantify pleasure he gave certain criteria. John Stuart Mill, who was
born some two years later of passing away of Kant, took utilitarianism to its pinnacle though of course with a moderation in the sense that he unequivocally championed qualitative pleasure. Whether it is qualitative or quantitative pleasure, the fact is that all of these philosophers before Kant, during Kant and even after Kant remained steadfast to consequentialism. Even in such a time of heyday of consequentialism Kant recorded his discordant note. The foundation that he laid in his 1st *Critique* impelled him to deviate from this line of thinking and advocate a deontological theory. Actually only pursuit of pleasure, consideration of utility, question of prudence do not fit with his scheme. Let us see why it is so.

Heinrich Heine, a German-Jewish poet, found in Kant the shadow of Robespierre, a key figure for bringing down the French Monarchy. Like Robespierre he razed to the ground the then prevalent European philosophy. In this battle the *Critique of Pure Reason* acted like a sword. But the philosophy that he advocated in the *Critique of Pure Reason* seemed to have separated “self from world, freedom from nature, and acting from knowing.” But human being as free agents not only a piece of the natural phenomenal universe but also of a noumenal world. In the 1st *Critique* he showed that this world is not accessible to theoretical reason, that reigned supreme there. But his theoretical standpoint which treats human life under complete control of natural law and causal enquiry cannot satisfy human being. He relentlessly searches for some other thing and one such aspect is addressed by the Konigsberg philosopher in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. He finds in this arena (i.e., practical standpoint) the scope for human freedom. For having this freedom he can act as an intermediary though of course in a limited way in the natural order. This standpoint is as indispensable as the standpoint of theoretical reason. If human being is not free, we cannot make sense of our activities like judging and understanding. In other words our lives become impossible.
Rationality is the turf of *a priori* moral principle

Right from the time of *Groundwork* Kant’s main aim was to find out the foundational principles of morality. He was not interested in determining rightness or wrongness of a particular action or what might be called commonsense ideas concerning morality. Rather he eyed for finding out inevitable demand of a rational being and thought that only *a priori* principles can fulfill that demand. He calls these principles ‘pure’⁸ and hence his moral philosophy is therefore known as pure ethics. Pure philosophy, when it is purely formal becomes logic but ‘when limited to determinate objects of the understanding’⁹ is metaphysics. Metaphysics, again, has two divisions: metaphysics of nature (e. g. physics, which has a rational aspect in addition to its empirical aspect) and metaphysics of morals. Ethics also has empirical as well as rational strands. The empirical ingredient has been called by Kant ‘practical anthropology’, while the rational part he termed morals.¹⁰ Unlike science, which usually refrain from separating empirical part from rational part, Kant insists that they be separated as it will facilitate us to know ‘how much pure reason can accomplish in each case and from what sources it draws it’s *a priori* teaching, whether such teaching be conducted by all moralists…or only by some who feel a calling thereto.’¹¹ He painstakingly tried to show us that such a metaphysic of moral is indispensably necessary.

When Kant speaks of *a priori* principles in the present case he actually has in mind reason’s capacity to legislate for desires. These *a priori* principles are different from the *a priori* judgements of the 1st *Critique*. The latter sort of *a priori* knowledge makes our knowledge of object possible or they furnish us conditions of the possibility of knowledge. Kant calls them constitutive whereas the former sort of *a priori* principles (i. e. given in the 2nd *Critique*) are ‘regulative’. These *a priori* principles do not indicate conditions of the possibility of experience rather they represent those judgements which provide us conditions of the determination what should not be done. Kant calls this ‘regulative’ use of reason. He writes: “When…the conditions of exercises of our free will are empirical, reason can
have no other than a regulative employment in regard to it, and can serve only to effect unity in empirical laws.” Thus it becomes clear that these principles are determinant.

Another important point we need to note is that both the 1st and 2nd Critiques contain one common expression in their title. It is ‘reason’. In spite of this resemblance we find that Kant actually critiques two different sides of the same faculty—reason. The 1st Critique excavates theoretical function of reason whereas the 2nd Critique explicates practical function of reason. In theoretical function of reason, it organizes the objects given in intuition. Copleston in his A History of Philosophy writes: “It applied itself...to a datum given from another source than reason itself. In its practical function, however, reason is the source of its object; it is concerned with moral choice, not with applying categories to the data of sense intuition.”

By now it has become clear that Kant is in search of an a priori principle in the realm of ethics. However, one question that strikes us is that how this a priori principle becomes synthetic. Kant’s objective is to demonstrate this. Synthetic judgements are of a specific character that we saw in second chapter. Here also in affirming the presence of synthetic a priori character of moral principles Kant broke the tradition of thinking that our knowledge will always fit into scheme that his predecessors set, i.e. knowledge will always be either ‘analytic a priori’ or ‘synthetic a posteriori’ in nature. He shows the synthetic a priori character of moral judgement. From this it will be wrong to infer that, for Kant, every single moral judgement is synthetic and a priori. Rather, Kant’s claim is that only principles in accordance with which we make moral judgements are synthetic as well as a priori. However, the moot question is that whether with the change of context the term ‘synthetic’ changes its meaning while qualifying judgements. To put it in a different way: Do we have synthetic a priori judgement in moral experience in the same sense that we have in the context of theoretical experience?

In the 1st Critique Kant considered a judgement to be ‘synthetic’ if its negation does not involve a contradiction. It is ‘a priori’ if it is not
dependent of sense-experience in any way. Now it is plausible to think that a rational agent’s will, what Kant calls categorical imperative, can be denied without involving contradiction. Moreover, such imperative/imperatives is not in any way logically dependent on sense-experience. If this explication of moral principle is accepted, we may presume that we have synthetic a priori judgements in both the Critiques, by and large, in the same sense.

But there are writers who consider this sort of construal as too simplistic. The meaning of an expression made out of combining some words may not always be logical product of the meanings of words so combined. It may mean something more. The combination ‘synthetic a priori’ exemplifies this. We have seen previously that by this combination in the 1st Critique Kant meant principles which form the conditions of the possibility of our knowledge— theoretical knowledge. It is not in this sense that Kant admits synthetic a priori knowledge in the 2nd Critique.

Let us consider the issue from a different angle. We have seen that one of the characteristics of a priori judgement is necessity. We have also seen that the notion of ‘necessity’ is susceptible to various interpretations. For example, in one sense a proposition is considered to be necessary if denial of it is embroiled in self-contradiction. Analytical propositions are considered to be necessary in this sense. A little ponderance over the issue makes it clear that this sort of necessity is actually a logical necessity. Kantian discovery of synthetic a priori judgement in theoretical framework, i. e. of the 1st Critique, is not necessary in the aforesaid sense. There necessity consists in being conditions of our experience. Its conditionality is like hypothetical imperative—if something is to be known, then they be known in accordance with some forms of intuition and categories of understanding. This sort of necessity has been designated as ‘transcendental necessity.’ The general truth ‘Every event has a cause’ is synthetic a priori and hence contains necessity within it only if human being is there, it wants to come into contact with events and also reason has its ‘logical use.’ William Henry Walsh, a British Philosopher of later half of the last century, thinks that Kant discerned a distinction between a ‘logical use’ and ‘real use’
of reason. He writes in his *Reason and Experience*: “In its ‘logical’ use the function of the intellect is to intellectualize the data of sense.... It is not...a source of knowledge on its own account.... By contrast the ‘real’ use of the intellect is one in which that faculty acts independently of any other. The function of the intellect in this aspect is not the mere conceptualization of the given, but the production of knowledge on its own account”\(^{14}\) Logical use has a number of steps that Walsh recounts and consider them to be indispensible. Not only Kant claims that intellect has a real use, many other theorists of intellectual intuition talks about this use, according to Walsh.

Kant’s discovery of foundational principle of morality, what he called ‘categorical imperative’, is not necessary in this sense. There is no compelling reason to presume the necessity of moral principle for thinking about matters of fact. Our acquaintance with the world of objects is not affected by our endorsing or championing any particular moral principle rather than another one. This clarification, however, may give rise to interpretation that foundational principle of morality is subjective. Kant definitely did not mean this rather he remained steadfast to the view that Categorical imperative is objective. Though objective, by and large, there is an agreement among scholars that the ‘objectivity’ of moral principles is different from the nature of synthetic *a priori* knowledge of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Stephan Korner who authored an introductory book on Kant, entitled *Kant*, also holds this and says ‘categorical imperative does not, whatever else its function may be, confer objeectivity on perceptual judgements. The apprehension of it and the ‘feeling’ of respect for the law which accompanies it may conflict with desires which can be described by perceptual judgements. But it modifies neither these desires nor their description.’\(^{15}\)

By now two things have become clear: One, foundational laws of morality are synthetic and *a priori* and Kant is firm on this point; second, these *a priori* principles (categorical imperative) cannot be subjective. As it is not subjective, it will be objective though the objectivity here is different from objectivity of the 1\(^{st}\) *Critique*. These principles furnishes necessary
precondition for the determination of our obligation or duty. It is this principle that gave turn to Kant’s ethics to deontological ethics. Actually it provides a rule or standard for judging moral actions. Moral judgements are distinct from theoretical judgements in that it (i.e. latter one) only declares what is the case whereas the former judgements’ province is what ought to be done (in other words, it is not occupied with dealing how do men actually behave).

In spite of above difference there are similarities too in moral and theoretical judgements. None of them is a matter of our whims. In both the cases whether we declare something to be the case or determine whether an action to be moral or not we come to the conclusion on the premise of some specific objective laws or principles. It is at this point that Kant’s view is at variance with empiricist philosophers. Disagreeing with them Kant says that we cannot consider theoretical judgments merely as association of ideas. This sort of subjective explanation failed to account for much knowledge of ours. Hence knowledge-process needs to follow certain specific objective criterion. Similarly, in the domain of morality our judgement cannot be regarded as mere voicing of our subjective feeling. Morality of action rests on maxims. It is the maxim that determines our action’s moral value. Kant deliberately used the words ‘command’, ‘imperative’ etc. in order to drive this point home that we are under obligation to act according to the supreme principle of morality. As James W. Ellington writes in his Introduction to Kant’s *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*: “An imperative is...a directive to act in a certain way—it is not a statement of fact.” This obligation or necessitation compels us to do actions for its own sake or merely as a duty. This maxim is necessary for all rational being. The question of achieving end or scope of prudence is irrelevant here. They might have relevance in hypothetical imperatives which are conditional and for Kant they are not appropriate maxims for any rational agent. Form this and the formulations of categorical imperative that Kant gave, it becomes clear that there is an element of universality in this law. Writes Kant: “Pure
reason is practical of itself alone and gives (to the human being) a universal law which we call moral law.”

Besides the above point we also need to bear in mind that ordinary moral judgments made by us in our day to day life have not been considered by Kant as synthetic and a priori. An action is endowed with moral worth when as a free being we choose our action and that choice is done on the basis of a maxim. All beings are not capable of following these steps. Only rational beings can do this as it can discover and follow the maxim. Thus we find in Kant’s philosophy the ultimate principle of morality is linked to rationality. It is an important point as it is a sharp deviation from empiricist point of view. It is indeed interesting to find that like German idealist Hegel, for whom all real is rational, our German philosopher, i.e. Kant, almost after five decades, appears to be propagating the view that to be moral is to be rational.

**Implications of Kant's view**

Kant’s view as we stated above (i.e. to be moral is to be rational) has a number of implications and Kant also mentioned some of these. His formulation of the maxim or different formulations of the maxim (the categorical imperative) hinted at these associations and we intend to discuss briefly some of these below.

Kant affirms a relation between moral behaviour and rational being. This is a landmark view in the history of philosophy. By holding this view Kant advances the argument that moral worth could not be contingent on any chance factor or could not be determined by any contingent fact of individual human being. The essence of rationality demands some universalizable formulae. This demand of free being is bound to be characteristically absolute and unconditional. It is this compulsion that made Kant to hold a relation between moral behaviour and rationality. Morality must spring from reason and not from any other source like sentiment, passion, feeling and so on.
Kant’s hint about the relation between rationality and moral behaviour is vivid in his 2nd *Critique*. There he shows how supreme principle of morality contains universality and necessity in its womb. It is sometimes said that his moral law is a negative test though Kant stated it in positive manner (His formulation is: “Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law”). A negative interpretation of his maxim also contains within it universality.

In order to discover foundational principle of morality Kant proceeds by analysing and explaining commonsense ideas about morality. He, as we have seen in preceding paragraphs, is actually hunting for principle/principles on which our ordinary moral perception is founded. A study of his moral philosophy as a whole gives us the impression that it is not the moral sceptics who were his purbapaksa. Principles he is searching for will be acceptable to all normal adult human being. Such principle is the demand of rational agents’ rational will. This in turn hinges on a claim that rational agent possess autonomy of will. In the *Groundwork* explaining the autonomy of will he writes: “Autonomy of the will is the property that the will has of being a law to itself...”\(^1\) This shows how the autonomy of the will is inextricably related with the supreme principle of morality. Soon after that he defines the autonomy of will and distinguishes it from the heteronomy of the will.

In the beginning of this chapter we stated three questions that he attempted to answer in his philosophy in general. There we saw that his second question was: What I ought to do? To give a complete answer to this question Kant could not rest on discovering only fundamental or foundational principle of morality. He also had to provide us an account of the nature and scope of our ethical obligations. He did this and in the *Critique of Practical Reason* categorized our elementary moral obligations to ourselves as well as to others.\(^2\) We can trace the effort to answer the above question in the *Metaphysics of Morals* also.

He also delineates the ultimate end of human striving. For example, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* he talks about the Highest Good\(^3\) and
how is it related to our moral life. He argues there that highest good is complete moral virtue coupled with complete happiness. He also shows that they are not incompatible, rather complete virtue is the condition for deserving complete happiness. Going further he says that virtuous acts do not guarantee wellbeing of the agent and for explanation of moral perfection we need to admit afterlife. This also accounts for his admittance of immortality of soul.

A reading of the *Groundwork* makes it evident that Kant was not interested in popular morality. His title of the chapters of this book also significantly conveys this message. For example, his nomenclatures such as “Transition from the Ordinary Knowledge of Morality to the Philosophical”, “Transition from Popular Moral Philosophy to a Metaphysics of Morals” make it evident that he shifted his attention from observation of human behaviour and than making generalization from this to an ethical theory which will provide us fundamental principle of morality. This principle will be *a priori* as a non- *a priori* principle will fall short of need. We shall see in the next passage why Kant considered that it must be *a priori*.

Once this fundamental or what Kant called ‘Supreme Principle’ is established then we can judge any particular act drawn from experience and determine whether it conforms to the supreme principle or not.

**Rationale for considering the supreme principle of morality as *a priori***

Now let us see why Kant considers the aforesaid principle must be *a priori*. As we have seen in a preceding passage that the title of a section of the *Groundwork* is “Transition from Popular Moral Philosophy to a Metaphysics of Morals”

Now a ‘metaphysics of morals’ that Kant intends to decipher is expected to give an account of the nature and structure of moral reality. This master plan also requires addressing some other basic questions out of which some outstanding questions are: What is duty? What sorts of duties are there? What is the good? What types of goods are there?, and so on. These kinds of questions seem to be metaphysical questions. Now any principle that we employ to produce answers of this type of questions
look to be a principle of metaphysics. And any principle of metaphysics is discovered through *a priori* methods.

Kant like some of his predecessors analysed some of the basic moral concepts. Even in doing so he significantly departed from ordinary line of thinking and talked about some cardinal concepts which were either hitherto unknown and in some cases even if known he interpreted them in such a way that were unknown before. For example, his introduction and interpretation of the concept of ‘good will’, ‘duty’, ‘obligation’ etc. are noteworthy. His interpretation of concept of ‘good will’, ‘duty’ etc. shows that only *a priori* method can be useful for digging out these principles. Apprehension of these concepts in Kantian stipulated sense justifies our use of these concepts.

Furthermore, Kant considered human beings as rational agents. This element of rationality calls for conformity to some moral requirements. This demand we do not get from observable world, rather they are command of our rationality. This conformity with the categorical imperative is synthetic and *a priori*. Talking about the autonomy of will (how are they synthetic) Kant says in the *Groundwork*: “That this practical rule is an imperative...cannot be proved by merely analyzing the concepts contained in it, since it is a synthetic proposition. For proof one would have to go beyond cognition of objects to a critical examination of the subject, i. e. go to a critique of pure practical reason...”²² Kant underscores time and again that rational beings’ moral requirements demand that fundamental principles of moral philosophy be discovered *a priori*. As these principles are absolutely necessary they cannot be uncovered empirically. In the Preface of the *Groundwork* Kat says “…if a law is to be morally valid, i. e. is to be valid as a ground of obligation, then it must carry with it absolute necessity.”²³ He also shows why empirical method is ill-suited for deciphering what we must do (not what we actually do). He shows how is empirical method can only tell us about the relative benefit of a moral act in a particular circumstance. However, compliance of this requirement is not absolutely necessary in Kantian sense of duty of abidance. It might be a matter of prudence if additional considerations find it fitting for achieving a particular purpose.
Thus Kant defends his view that if moral philosophy is determined to protect its absolute necessity, and he considered it *sine qua non*, its principles must be tracked down entirely *a priori*. In a sense Kant’s claim is not merely ‘how rational beings must think, but rather...how rational beings must (ex hypothesi, in virtue of their stipulated rationality) be thought to think.”

No other means is available to it.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant discovered the jurisdiction of reason. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant seems to remain satisfied with a minimalist interpretation of reason. Onora O’Neill is of the opinion that nonderivative and lawlikeness, which she considers as characteristics of reason, have “considerable implications for the organization of thought and action: in the domain of theory it amounts to the demand that reasons be intelligible to others; in the domain of action it amounts to the requirement that reasons for action be ones that others too could follow.”

Without accepting the minimalist interpretation of reason, it is difficult to make room for many requirements of morality. O’Neill clearly expounding the chief features of reason (which, for her are at least three—negative, nonderivative and lawlike) shows how it is linked to Kant’s highest principle of morality, i.e. Categorical Imperative—which calls for action only on dictum ‘that can at the same time be willed as universal laws. Here, writes O’Neill, “the supreme principle of practical reason is presented as a *negative* (formal) requirement that is *underivative* because it appeals to no other spurious “authorities” (that would be heteronomy) and demands adherence to *lawlike* maxims (i.e. to maxims that could be adopted by all).” ‘By all’ means all rational beings and this lawlikeness imparts it a necessity and universality which makes Kant’s principal principle *a priori*. There is a very little chance that this minimalist conception of reason will provide proofs of human freedom, immortality of soul or God’s existence. But it will not be a very challenge for Kant. It is so as our interest in soul and God are basically practical and “reason may not supply us from the standpoint of its practical interest what it altogether refuses to supply in respect of its speculative interest.”
In spite of vast difference between speculative and moral orders, it is held by scholars that some sort of coordination between these two orders is advocated by Kant. On account of the possibility of this coordination moral intention can fit into the natural world. Kant in the 2nd Critique holds that free agents need to work for complete coordination of ‘natural and moral good, of happiness and virtue.’ We can do so if we admit “endless progress toward the complete conformity”, conformity between aforesaid two orders. Principles of pure practical reason demand us to assume ‘such a practical progress as the real object of our will.’ This endless progress is possible, for Kant, only on supposition of our continuance of existence, i. e. immortality of soul.

The division of Critique of Practical Reason seems to have been done closely following the division of Critique of Pure Reason. It becomes evident from the titles of chapters and divisions of chapter. For example, ‘Doctrine of the elements of pure practical reason’ and ‘Doctrine of the method of pure practical reason’ these very titles are reminiscent of divisions of Critique of Pure Reason. In spite of a lot of similarities there we a find a difference in two Critiques. The 1st Critique is discourse and anatomization which pinpoint that many pompous claims of theoretical reasons are really spurious whereas in the 2nd Critique we observe Kant’s effort to defend pure practical reason. Here his criticism is directed towards revealing fictitiousness of applied practical reason and showing the capability of a rational being which forms the bedrock of our behaviour which is in higher-level than desire-based practical reasoning. He firmly affirms there that we must cultivate, instead of restraining (and what he thought needed of the theoretical reason in the Critique of Pure Reason), pure practical reason.

Kant informs us that while the first Critique suggested that God, freedom, and immortality are unknowable, the second Critique will mitigate this claim. Freedom is indeed knowable because it is revealed by God. God and immortality are also knowable, but practical reason now requires belief in these postulates of reason.
Though *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* and *Critique of Practical Reason* were written within almost three years span of time, Kant considered *Critique* as independent treaties. Here we find an attempt of him to respond to some of the criticisms made against the *Groundwork*. Part I of the *Critique* like previous *Critique* is split into two sections under the caption ‘Analytic’ (the full title being ‘The analytic of pure practical reason’) and ‘Dialectic’ (the full title being ‘Dialectic of pure practical reason’). In the former segment he explores the operations of the faculty of practical reason and in the latter he shows how the faculty may falls into error.

Previously we saw Kant’s view about the supreme principle of morality. He now tries to show that how his predecessors, and mainly those who espoused moral empiricism or those who advocated moral mysticism, were mistaken in their moral epistemology. They went off the right track as they attempted to define morality or define moral terms of the good and on account of this they confounded pleasure or happiness with morality. However, for Kant, the right approach is just exactly the reverse and having identified this he accomplished this task. Anything that is agent-based, that is bound to be contingent and can never be necessary. Hence, this agent/interest-based approach cannot be the foundation of a universal moral law that Kant was searching for. Teleological ethics decided law on the basis of greatest good, greatest number and so on. But as Kant was decoding a nomological law, he was least interested with this approach. He directed his effort to decipher the format of the universal moral law which he called categorical imperative. It is a will (practical will) which acts on the idea of the form of law. It has nothing to do with the sensual world or agent’s contingent desires and hence is entirely derived from the idea of reason. Categorical imperative’s form is important, not its content. Kant also sometimes claims that in this case content is identical to its form.

About the following of this law Kant says that the agent is autonomous whereas about following hypothetical imperatives, which are of course conditional, Kant says that it is up to the agent’s desire or what he calls ‘heteronomus’. In saying the former as autonomous Kant wants to say
that the diktat of reason asks us to follow this. Moral goodness, which for him means to tread on the heels of rules of categorical imperative, is more important than good consequences. Thus he shows that it is our obligation to duty that be given primacy. He also argues that a rational being is aware about the operation of this universal moral law on him and it is this awareness that make us mindful of our freedom of will. This awareness about the moral principle is *a priori*.

In the 1st *Critique* Kant shows the quandaries of pure reason which ultimately creates antinomies. In the Dialectic portion of 2nd *Critique* he again exposed the pitfalls of practical reason. In the realm of experience, i.e. in phenomenal domain, things usually are conditional though the demand of reason is otherwise. This demand can be met only in the noumenal realm. The irony, however, is that when pure reason attempts to step outside its limit, i.e. in the realm of unconditional (or noumenal), it ultimately ends in creation of antinomies of reason. In the Dialectic’s sub-division Kant explores such an antinomy of pure practical reason.

Pure reason, in both its theoretical and practical forms, faces a fundamental problem. Most things in the phenomenal realm of experience are conditional (i.e. they depend on something else) but pure reason always seeks for the unconditional. The problem is that the unconditional, according to Kant, is only to be found in the noumenal world. Pure reason, when it attempts to reach beyond its limits into the unconditional realm of the noumenon is bound to fail and the result is the creation of antinomies of reason. Antinomy of pure practical reason has been outlined by Kant in the following way.

The object of pure practical reason is the ‘highest good’ which, Kant says, “is *a priori* (morally) necessary to produce the highest good through the freedom of the will....”¹³⁰ Moreover, virtue and happiness belong inextricably in this highest good. “Now this combination” i.e. highest good, virtue and happiness, “is either *analytic* or *synthetic*.”³¹ Herein lies the antinomy. For Kant this combination cannot be analytic as happiness and morality are two altogether distinct elements of the highest good. On account
of this it cannot be cognized analytically. Now the only opening before us is to cognize it synthetically. But this option is not also workable. As Kant writes: it “is also impossible because any practical connection of causes and effects in the world, as a result of the determination of the will, does not depend upon the moral dispositions of the will but upon knowledge of the laws of nature and the physical ability to use them for one’s purpose; consequently, no necessary connection of happiness with virtue in the world, adequate to the highest good, can be expected from the most meticulous observance of moral laws.”32 For Kant, the promotion of the highest good is an a priori necessary object of our will and is inextricably related with the moral law. Now, if “the highest good is impossible in accordance with practical rules, then the moral law, which commands us to promote it, must be fantastic and directed to empty imaginary ends....”33 Thus Kant shows that expectation of existence of a highest good open a route to paradox and denying the existence of highest good also leads to conflict.

In the 1st Critique Kant resolved the antinomies of pure speculative reason by showing that events and the world where they seem to happen are merely world of appearances. He offers a solution of the antinomy of the pure practical reason. Kant shows that the claim that our attempt for happiness generates a ground for a virtuous disposition is absolutely false whereas the remaining alternative that a virtuous dispositions necessarily engender happiness is though false but not absolutely false. It is conditionally false “only if I assume existence in the sensible world to be the only kind of existence of a rational being”34, writes Kant. Kant’s point is that virtuous dispositions does not necessarily escort us to happiness in this world. He seems to dissociate happiness and this world as we not only exist phenomenally, but we also exist noumenally. If this is admitted, then even if we are not recompensed with happiness for our virtuous act in this world, we will be rewarded in an afterlife. In saying this Kant seems to hypothesize our existence in the noumenal world. Pure practical reason (which is distinct from desire-based practical reason) calls for existence of such postulates as afterlife (i.e. immortality of souls), unification with God, etc. These
affirmations must be necessary not contingent, as not derived from sense-experience. For Kant, the only way to a fallible human will to approximate holy will is to posit a perpetuity or life after death to attain perfection. If we are not ready to assent to this command of pure practical reason we will be forced to dilute the demands of morality. In the 2nd Critique he writes “despite the seeming conflict of a practical reason with itself, the highest good is the necessary highest end of a morally determined will and is a true object of that will; for it is practically possible, and the maxims of such a will, which refer to it as regards their matter, have objective reality, which ... threatened by that antinomy in the combination of morality with happiness in accordance with a universal law, but only from a misinterpretation, because the relation between appearances was held to be a relation of things in themselves to those appearances.”

In the section titled “The Existence of God as a Postulate of Pure Practical Reason” Kant says that highest good, objective of moral law, warrants for the highest level of happiness as a reward commensurate with its highest level of virtue. Hence, like immortality of soul we need to posit the existence of God who can organize the cosmos justly by dispensing reward for our virtue. As he says “it must lead to the supposition of the existence of a cause adequate to this effect....” In the same section Kant asserts that it is the duty of a rational agent like us to promote the highest good. He shows the moral necessity of presuming the existence of God. The logic for this presumption is this: as it is duty to further the highest good, then there “is in us not merely the warrant but also the necessity, as need is connected with duty, to presuppose the possibility of the highest good, which, since it is possible only under the condition of the existence of God inseparably with duty...” Thus Kant finds a moral necessity to presume the existence of God. He further clarifies that this necessity is subjective (a need), not objective (not a duty). For Kant, there cannot be any duty to presume the existence of anything which task is performed by theoretical use of reason.
Having said the above Kant goes to the next part of his 2nd *Critique* which is about nine pages. In this section Kant’s discussion centers around to show how the principles of pure practical reason can have bearing on our real lives. This in a sense is moral education which can edify us the ways of acting and living morally. It also is a response to cynics who doubt possibility of this sort of moral life, i.e. acting merely out of an obligation to duty.

**A comparison with Indian philosophy**

Kant’s emphasis on duty-based ethics prompts many contemporary writers to compare his view with the ethics found in the ancient Indian scripture, the *Gīta*. Usually the similarity aspects of these two views, i.e. of our Konigsberg philosopher and of the ethics of the Indian scripture, are often cited. We do not know whether Kant was aware of the duty-rest ancient Indian ethics, though we find him making sporadic references of Hinduism in some of his writings. A reading of both these philosophies makes us feel that similarities between them are overemphasized and difference in them is often overlooked. The term ‘duty’ of course hold sway in these two works, but overlooking important differences between them might take away the spirit of these two philosophies. We find support of our view in the writings of a number of Indian philosophers. One such stalwart is Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. However, our above view does not intend to show that there are no similarities at all in these two ethical systems. Some such agreements are in holding the view that desires of senses should not be regarded as supreme and has little value in judging ethicality of actions. The *Katha Upaniṣada* teaches us that we should not draw a parallel between the good or the ethical ideal with pleasure. Similarly, Kant also broke the chain of pleasure-seeking ideal and forcefully advocated duty-based ethics. They are also at one in holding that moral law calls for duty which ultimately is derived from something higher and termed reason. It is this thing what is popularly called in philosophy ‘duty for duty’s sake’. The Indian system Nyāya also tells us not to remain under the control of *pravṛttis* or
tendencies. There is a proneness to, or to use a Kantian term, temptation, act in harmony with this tendency. We need to bring these tendencies under our control and not to submit ourselves to the senses.

Moreover, both the systems admit that to one sphere and seen from one perspective man has freedom and seen from another perspective he is under determinism. Radhakrishnan is of the view Kant’s freedom is only a pretence, not real. He says: “Moral relations exist in the phenomenal realm; and there, according to Kant, it is a necessity that rules....Kant’s solution seems only another form of determinism. If the empirical chain of antecedents and consequents is but the phenomenon of the noumenal self, it is plain that it cannot be other than it is. On such a theory, moral regeneration and moral progress seem out of place....The freedom which Kant offers us is thus empty and unreal. The solution offered by the Vedanta theory gives us real freedom, freedom even in the phenomenal realm, where we are powerful enough to check our impulses, to resist our passions, and lead a life of satisfied selfhood in which the lower passions are regulated by reason.”

Again both the systems agree that the question of morality arises when there is clash between reason and sense, between duty and inclination. In such a struggle we need to subdue our sense and inclination and educate ourselves the truth that ‘morality consists in doing one’s duty.’ In spite of this commonness, points out Dr. Radhakrishnan, “Kant excludes from moral actions, actions which are consistent with duty, but yet are done from inclination.” Such actions, for Kant, has no intrinsic moral worth and therefore it amounts to disregarding human impulses, inclinations etc. The Gīṭa, on the other hand is not so rigid. It does not tell us to crush our impulses rather it urges us to control them, “to keep them in their proper order, to see that they are always subordinated to and regulated by reason. By a life of reason the Gīṭa ethics does not mean a passionless life, but one in which passion is transcended.” Thus we find a fundamental difference between the two systems.

Another point of distinction seems to be that the Indian scripture may not agree with Kant about the demand of human reason. For Kant, morality,
as stipulated by him, is an essential condition for all rational beings. It is an inherent demand of rationality. However, it is doubtful whether the Gīta holds such a view. Prima facie ethics of the Gīta is for him who aspires to lead an ethical life or rather a spiritual life with a spiritual aim. If this aim is obliterated, is there any compulsion to follow the ethics espoused in the Gīta is a moot point.

1 Kant, I.: *Critique of Pure Reason* (Norman Kemp Smith’s translation), Palgrave macmillan, 2007.
2 Ibid, p. 635.
3 Ibid, p. 636.
4 Ibid. p. 636

6 Epicurus: ‘In Waking or in Dream’ (available in *Journey into Philosophy: An Introduction with Classic and Contemporary Readings*; (pp. 645-647), Routledge, pp. 645-647.
7 O’Neill, Onora: ‘Kant on Reason and Religion’ (The Tanner Lecture on Human Values, delivered at Harvard University in 1996) (available in [https://tannerlectures.utah.edu/documents/a-to-z/0/oneill97.pdf](https://tannerlectures.utah.edu/documents/a-to-z/0/oneill97.pdf), accessed on 02-02-2019)
9 Ibid. p. 1.
10 Ibid., p. 2.
11 Loc cit.

12 *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 632.

18 Ibid., p.44.
19 Ibid., pp. 57-58.
20 Ibid., p. 92.
21 Ibid., second section, p. 19.
22 Ibid., pp. 44-45.
23 Ibid., p.2.
25 Ibid., p. 276.
26 Ibid., p. 277.
27 *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 634.
28 Ibid., p. 635.
30 Ibid., p. 95.
31 Ibid., 95.
32 Ibid., 95.
33 Ibid., p. 95.
34 Ibid., p. 96.
35 Ibid., p. 96.
36 Ibid., p. 104.
37 Ibid., p. 105.
39 Ibid., pp. 469-470.
40 Ibid., p. 474.
41 Loc. cit.
CHAPTER IV

Synthetic \textit{a priori} and the Third \textit{Critique}

Kant in a letter written to K. L. Reinhold, an Austrian philosopher who attempted to popularise Kant’s philosophy, in 1787 wrote “I am now at work on the critique of taste, and I have discovered a kind of \textit{a priori} principle different from those heretofore observed.”\textsuperscript{1} This statement of Kant sums up his view very succinctly—that he could trace the presence of \textit{a priori} principle in aesthetic sphere (in the yet-to-publish \textit{Critique of Judgement}) and the nature of \textit{a priori} principle here is different from those of previous two \textit{Critiques}. In the same letter he talks about three faculties of the mind—the faculty of cognition, the faculty of feeling pleasure and displeasure, and the faculty of desire. Thus he recognized three compartments of philosophy. Each of these compartments has its \textit{a priori} principles.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Kant is widely known in the philosophical arena for his epoch-making writings and original contributions in metaphysics, in the field of epistemology and discovering what he claims to be the first principle of ethics, but in addition to that he has also developed an influential and much talked-of theory of aesthetics which made seminal contribution in that field. This theory is presented in his \textit{Critique of Judgment} first published in 1790. It is a two-part work: the nomenclature of the first section is given by him ‘Critique of Aesthetic Judgement’ and the title of the second part is ‘Critique of Teleological Judgement’. Thus we find that the letter written in 1787 and addressed to K. L. Reinhold fructified in 1790 and the \textit{Critique of Judgement} embodied his thoughts in aesthetics and in teleology.
A reading of the *Critique of Judgment* gives us the impression that the intent of Kant in this work is to explore whether the ‘power’ or ‘faculty’ of judgment bestows us to produce an *a priori* principle. Prior to this in his various writings Kant held that judgment was integrated operation of basic mental faculties. In the 3rd *Critique* Kant comes to hold that the action of judgment might be organized and managed by a basic *a priori* principle and it is typical to it. Then he sets out to explore the cogency and ramifications of such a hypothesis.

The *Critique of Judgment* has two segments, as we mentioned before—‘The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement’ and ‘The Critique of Teleological Judgement’. An inquisitive mind tries to explore philosophical connection between Kant's idea on aesthetics and his views on teleology as espoused in the present *Critique*. A study of the 3rd *Critique* gives us the impression that the relationship between the two themes lies in the faculty or power of judgment. Though the *Critique of Judgment* is the finest expression of his view on aesthetics and teleology we should not lose sight of the fact that Kant’s writings on aesthetics and teleology are spread over his entire philosophical career, Hence this is not the only writing of the German philosopher in this area.

We also need to point out that the 3rd *Critique* is part and parcel of Kant’s critical project and hence it should not be considered as an add-on work. In the previous chapter we stated that Kant in the 1st *Critique* exhibited that faculty of understanding has *a priori* principles. 2nd *Critique* explicated that pure practical reason also has *a priori* principles which codifies laws for desire. The 3rd *Critique* affirms that faculty of judgement provides for *a priori* regulations to feeling in the province of reflective judgement. Hence, our point of enquiry is: how in this realm the given laws of the faculty of judgement become synthetic as well as *a priori*?

In the beginning the statement taken from Kant’s letter gives us some inkling that the nature of synthetictiy and *a prioricity* will be different here (i.e. in the 3rd *Critique*) than of its two previous lineage. Synthetic *a priori* judgements of the 1st *Critique* made knowledge of objects possible. In other
words, they reveal conditions which make our experience possible and also articulate them. The 2nd Critique’s synthetic a priori principle was regulative—they furnish us conditions for determining what should not be done. The 3rd Critique’s synthetic a priori conveys a different sense. Putting the thing in a different way we can also club two previous Critiques into one in the sense that they talk about principles which are determinant. But reflective judgement about which Kant talks in the 3rd Critique involves no subsumption of particulars under the universal. Says Kant: “Judgement in general is the faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the Universal.”\(^2\) Kant then goes to talk about divisions of judgement which, for him, are determinant and reflective. If the universal principle is specified, then “the judgement which subsumes the particular under it is determinant.”\(^3\) On the other hand, if merely particular is given and we need to search out the universal principle, the judgement in this case is reflective. From this view of Kant it becomes clear that in reflective judgement the task is not subsumption, rather it has to decode or discover a universal rule. Thus the logical traits of synthetic a priori judgement of 3rd Critique are different from the first two Critiques.

In order to justify the need of such a principle Kant says “... reflective judgement which is compelled to ascend from the particular in nature to the universal, stands...in need of a principle.”\(^4\) This requirement of principle cannot be got from understanding which supplies, as we saw in a previous chapter, only common a priori principles to which objects must conform in order to become part of our knowledge. These concepts are of no help in deducing special empirical laws of nature. For Kant, this principle has to “establish just the unity of all empirical principles under higher...principles, and thence the possibility of the systematic subordination of higher and lower. Such a transcendental principle, therefore, the reflective judgement can only give as a law from and to itself.”\(^5\) What Kant wants to show is that there is no other way open to us for deriving such a principle. If he admits other possibility it has the pitfalls of turning out to be determinant judgement which it is not actually the case. For unearthing special empirical laws and
also organizing them under a more general law, reflective judgement is dependent on realization that nature, behind its numerous diversities, actually holds a systematic unitary principle. It is this transcendental principle that reflective judgment provides as a law. This principle is tacitly present in other investigations, e. g. scientific investigations, also. As it is a not a principle of understanding, its validity will also vary. That is why any expectation that this principle will be validated in the same way like the principle of understanding will be frustrating. He justifies the variation or difference in two different sorts of \textit{a priori} principles (i. e., principles of the understanding and Reason and principle of judgement) in the following way.

As faculty of judgement does not generate any objective concepts (Kant considered categories of the understanding and Ideas of reason as objective) it is out of question that the relation between particulars and universals will be akin also in case of judgement. Principle of judgement is subjective. Judgement does not make use of universal concepts of its own produce like two previous \textit{Critiques}, but still it furnishes us “with a principle which made us look for universal concepts, which are not yet given, within the sphere of particulars.”\footnote{6} Hence we need to posit the existence of a principle of judgement which makes us reason that

- the domain of particulars itself lay open to some uniformity, and
- the rules for this consistency are not given to us but we must visualize them.

Thus this principle of judgement will be different from principles like ‘every occurrence has a cause’.

Cassirer in his commentary says that this \textit{a priori} principle warrants us “to treat nature as a system even as regards its merely empirical laws without leaving the sphere of experience. This principle of systematic unity is a principle which is applied by empirical science ... faculty of Judgement demands this systematic unity of nature merely on subjective grounds. ... (it) presupposes that it will succeed in connecting the particular laws of nature with each other so as to be able to arrange them in a system.”\footnote{7}
From the above it becomes clear that for Kant there is no rationale for presuming the objective existence of a priori laws of judgement. Hence we need to search for this law in experience. Once we discover them in that realm, it seems “as if nature had adapted itself to the faculty of judgement and its subjective principle.” Thus now we can say that the principle of judgement is subjective and not only that this principle is in application in scientific exploration also. As this forms the basis of scientific enquiry there might have a proneness to consider it as objective principle and Kant cautions us about this so that we do not fall into this invisible trap.

Cassirer is of the opinion that though Kant considered this principle as subjective, it can also be reckoned as objective. For him, this principle is a mere maxim which guides us in our inquiry—as we must make use of it while enquiring into nature. This being so we need to attribute to it a special type of objective validity as we cannot presume that nature will adjust with our faculty of judgement. We can also consider it subjective on account of its unique character and which differentiates it from the objective principles given by the understanding.

Having stated his reasons for existence of such a subjective principle, Kant now attempts to show its character of syntheticity and a prioricity. We have seen the nature of the synthetic judgement in the chapter where we discussed his 1st Critique. Invoking that line of argument he says that the principle of judgement is synthetic as the denial of it does not involve a contradiction. Its a prioricity is based on the fact that the source of this knowledge is not sense observation. This principle is a rule that we tacitly assume before any empirical investigation of objects of nature. If this is not admitted our empirical observations will be loose and discreet thus lacking any unity. Cassirer writes: “...we must presuppose that nature is a system in accordance with particular laws which it contains.”

Kant’s intent is to show that without a systematic connection of empirical laws our faculty of judgement cannot classify the particulars under a universal which ultimately culminates in finding the highest laws and the forms of nature. All these laws are empirical laws. In other words, in order to explain empirical unity “we
must be capable of regarding the aggregate of particular experiences as a
system.” By holding this opinion Kant conveys that there need to be an a
priori principle, which is distinct from a priori principles of the 1st Critique
(there the idea of systematic unity was a pure concept of reason), which
empowers us to consider nature as a system in the domain of experience. The
same principle is in use in other empirical sciences too. The difference
between this a priori principle and a priori principles discovered in previous
two Critiques is regarding their validity. Validity in the present case is
subjective whereas validity in the previous cases was objective.

The purpose of reflective judgement is, therefore, completely
different. It does not merely “subsumes particulars under given universal
rules” which is actually done in case of determinant judgement. In those
cases judgements’ task is to apply universal concepts furnished by the
understanding on data got through intuitions. However, reflective judgement
is focused on empirical laws and concepts. An enquiry into why Kant does
not talk about universal objective concepts of the reflective judgement gives
us the impression that for Kant Judgement on its own does not generate rules
like other faculties though it fancies that ‘it will find determinate empirical
concepts for all understanding.’

It might be asked whether can such a principle have transcendental a
prioricity. Cassirer in answering this question writes that “we should be
unable to arrive at empirical concepts of actual objects, to arrange them in a
logical system and to divide them into classes, if nature contained nothing
but an endless multiplicity of totally different objects.” In other words, only
if the presupposition that nature contains within it a systematic unity is taken
for granted, then the apparent endless diversities can only be organized, by
way of application of principles (of judgement) logically for systematizing
them and only then among the chaos we can discern a system of empirical
thoughts.

However, this is not all. There is an element of transcendental a
priori principle in the faculty of judgement also. Let us see this.
Notwithstanding the fact that the principle of Judgement is only a technique
for systematizing our concepts of empirical objects, it ultimately hinges upon a transcendental *a priori* principle. It is a principle which is not only attentive to our concepts of natural objects, equally importantly is its concern about objects themselves. It is due to unique feature of natural objects that we can come along empirical concepts and also order them following a system on the basis of the concepts, albeit empirical. Difference between this principle and principles of understanding is that in the former case it merely provides us a guiding principle whereas in the latter case principles or rules are definitive. Though we can never gain these concepts through *a priori* means, it is also a fact that experience of the world would have been impossible, had we not have stumbled on such particular laws of nature. For Kant, the principle which gives authority to search for the laws of nature must be thought of as a genuine *a priori* principle.

We also need to remember that this *a priori* principle does not furnish us objective concepts and hence therein lies the difference between this *a priori* principle with other *a priori* principles. It is not known before our actual experience what are the system of laws of nature or relations between them. “The faculty of Judgement presupposes that we shall find a certain regularity in nature, that natural objects will be of such a kind as to make possible for us to form concepts of them and to discover empirical laws, that nature has observed certain economy, that there is not an unlimited number of totally different laws but a limited number of laws which are related to each other.”¹⁰ For Kant, this argument justifies the subjectivity of the reflective principle and this principle has relevance merely in the interest of our knowledge.

It is the logical application of the principle of Judgement that classifies natural object in a logical system. Without such an assumption it is not possible for human mind to have information about nature. Kant here actually hints at some sort of power of Judgement. He showed before that laws that pure understanding supplies are *a priori* and they make nature, or knowledge of nature, possible. But when we want to tame the manifold forms of nature, systematize them—ascend from the particulars to a
universal—we find a compelling reason for admitting laws of these forms. Apparently they might be thought to be empirical or contingent, as natural laws are empirical, i.e. known through *a posteriori* means, “still, if they are to be called laws (as the concept of nature does require), then they must be regarded as necessary by virtue of some principle of the unity of what is diverse, even though we do not know this principle.”¹¹

Kant seems to say that reflective judgement is under an obligation to move from the known or empirical realm to an empirically unknown realm and this necessity demands a principle for accomplishment of this. He gives reason to show that this principle we cannot have from experience as it forms the foundation of arraying empirical natural laws. As this is not empirical principle, this must be a transcendental principle that reflective judgement gives to itself as a law. The uniqueness of this principle is that neither it can be borrowed from elsewhere nor we can enjoin it to nature. It is because our reflection on “the laws of nature is governed by nature” and not the other way round. Stating this principle, which assemble natural laws, Kant writes: “... since universal natural laws have their basis in our understanding, which prescribes them to nature (though only according to the universal concept of it as a nature), the particular empirical laws must, as regards what the universal laws have left undetermined in them, be viewed in terms of such a unity as [they would have] if they too had been given by an understanding (even though not ours) so as to assist our cognitive powers by making possible a system of experience in terms of particular natural laws. That does not mean that we must actually assume such an understanding (for it is only reflective judgment that uses this idea as a principle, for reflection rather than determination); rather, in using this principle judgment gives a law only to itself, not to nature.”¹²

Cassirer is of the opinion that Kant was well aware that the issue that he was addressing was a specific difficulty of transcendental philosophy. In dealing with this difficulty he finds in nature a logical purposiveness. In spite of the abstract character of this purposiveness transcendental philosopher, says Kant, has enough reason to ‘admire’ it.
We have seen a specific sort of task — viz. classification of natural objects and natural laws following an order and grouping them into genera and species — performed by the Faculty of Judgement. Kant also opines that reflective judgement also accounts for aesthetic judgement and teleological judgement. The former sort of judgement deals with the beautiful and the sublime and the latter sort with that which assigns ends or purpose to natural items. What it means is that purposiveness permeates in every level in natural items and laws. The above two issues he elaborated in the 3rd *Critique* under two sections, with a number of subsections under each heading, entitled “Critique of Aesthetic Judgement” and ‘Critique of Teleological Judgement.’

**Types of aesthetic judgements**

Kant explains the employment of reflective judgement in both aesthetic and teleological field. Having said that he further asserts that it is more pronounced in its employment in aesthetic judgements. Then he goes on to pinpoint its role in judgement of beauty when it is set against sublime. Even in the arena of beauty he discusses about the beauty of nature and beauty of art. He puts a premium on former type.

An aesthetic judgement, holds Kant, is issued from feeling—specifically from feeling of pleasure. He admits four possible kinds of aesthetic judgements: judgements of the agreeable, judgments of beautiful (or what he calls judgments of taste), judgements of the sublime and judgements of the good. These are four possible sorts of reflective judgements. These are four as it has a correlation with the Table of Judgements that he stated in the 1st *Critique* under the heading ‘The Logical Function of the Understanding in Judgements’. There he writes: “... we find that the function of thought in judgement can be brought under four heads ...” In spite of saying this and talking about four sorts of aesthetic judgements, he uses the expression “aesthetic judgment” in a constricted sense. In this restricted sense Kant seems to deny access to judgments of the agreeable and the good, that is first one and the last one, in the arena of the
judgement of taste. Thus only the remaining two—beautiful and sublime—qualify to be called aesthetic judgements. In the 3rd *Critique* Kant appears to be addressing aesthetic judgement in this narrow sense.

A cursory look of the four sorts of aesthetic judgements will be in order here. The agreeable judgements are entirely sensory judgements such as ‘This book is hard’. Such judgements are subjective and are grounded on mere inclination. The beautiful and sublime judgements are different in nature and are seemingly oxymoronic, i. e. subjectively universal. Kant calls them ‘subjective’ as they are not moored to any determinate (or absolute) concept. He considers them universal as such judgements are issued with the belief that other people ought to go along with these judgements. This power of ‘ought’ has its source in a community of taste. The last type of aesthetic judgement (i. e. good) is fundamentally judgement that is ethical. This sort of judgements is contrary to agreeable as these are completely objective (we have seen that agreeable judgements are wholly subjective). Judgements of good are similar to moral law and have connection with reason.

**Moments of Aesthetic judgements**

The “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” primarily addresses judgments of the beautiful and the sublime, two middle types that we mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Kant’s exposition of judgements of beauty is found under the rubric of “Analytic of the Beautiful.” There he brings out features of judgments of beauty by placing them under four heading or what he calls “moments.” These four moments match or agrees almost similarly with four logical forms that Kant outlined in his enumeration of categories in the 1st *Critique*. Abstracting only forms of understanding Kant there showed that the function of thought in judgement can be arranged under four caption—quality, quantity, relation and modality. His discussion of the Analytic of the Beautiful also corresponds to these forms and he calls them moment. In short, under four different moments Kant will exhibit essential features of the judgements of taste. For him, such judgements are
disinterested, demand universal concord, purposive and demand a kind of necessity. Let us give a brief outline of these moments.

First Moment

It is the moment of quality. From the very first heading Kant makes it clear that judgements of taste are aesthetic. They spring from feeling—feeling of pleasure and displeasure—and arise on account of what Kant calls ‘free play’ between the cognitive powers of imagination and understanding. Writes Kant: “If we wish to discern anything is beautiful or not, we do not refer the representation of it to the Object by means of understanding ..., but by means of the imagination (acting perhaps in conjunction with understanding)...”\(^{14}\) These sorts of judgements (i.e. judgements of taste) are performance of the ‘Subject’. Kant goes on to add that they are rooted on feeling—feeling of Subject’s pleasure and displeasure. This feeling has nothing to do with the object. This is entirely due to Subject and the way ‘Subject is affected by the representation.’

What is noteworthy here is that when we judge the beauty of an object we are not determining whether the representation of the object makes us aware anything true about the object or gives us any empirical or scientific facts about it. Thus the pertinent point in judgements of taste is not to acquire any factual data about the object. In such judgements our concern is subjectively centered by which Kant means that its focal point is how the object’s appearance makes the viewer feel. In such a process we separate off our interest from the cognitive contents of the object. Here only we deal with feelings, feelings of pleasure or displeasure, that object’s presentation creates in our judging. Thus Kant is clearly drawing a line between cognition of an object, where we objectively comprehend an object, and aesthetic apprehension where we purely experience how the objects make us to feel.

The pleasure of an aesthetic judgement is distinct from ordinary pleasure in that it is disinterested. Kant defined interest as: “The delight which we connect with the representation of the real existence of an object is called interest.”\(^{15}\) One characteristic of such ‘delight’ is that it has a reference to the faculty of desire. Whereas judgement of taste does not depend on
Subject’s having a desire for the object. This feeling also does not occasion such a desire. Having said that judgements of beauty are grounded on feeling rather than objective sensation Kant differentiates them from cognitive judgements grounded on perception. Moreover, Kant elaborately shows that it is the disinterested character of feeling that draws a distinction between judgements of taste on the one hand and judgements of the agreeable and judgements of the good on the other. The latter types of judgements are also judgements of feeling, but they are not disinterested. Delight in the judgements of the agreeable or judgements of sensory gratification and of the judgements of the good or moral judgement is associated with interest and has ‘reference to the faculty of desire.’

In order to accentuate their difference Kant distinguishes between sensation and feeling. He earmarks sensation especially for pleasure and displeasure which are given rise by five senses. On the other hand the term ‘feeling’ has been used to refer to that feature of experience that covers non-sensory satisfaction. All sensory satisfactions are desire-based and hence concerned with interest in the thing that is objectively associated to the sensation.

We can summarize the above by saying that if we have an interest in something, the representation of that thing’s actuality creates a liking in us. It also propels us to desire that the object will be a reality. This is not a disinterested desire. Judgements of taste are independent of such an expectation. Hence it requires an attitude which is dissimilar to an inclination that is found in case of judgements of interest. That is why Kant calls this unique attitude disinterested on the part of person who makes the judgement.

**Second Moment**

Another distinguishing feature of judgements of beauty is its universality or what has sometimes been called universal validity. In claiming that judgements of beauty have the characteristic of universal validity Kant asserts something which is different from our expectation. From reading of the previous two *Critiques* naturally we are prone to think that if judgements of taste contain validity, then they be founded on
concepts—concepts that he explored in the 1st *Critique* and showed their universal characters. But Kant does not do this and reason for this deviation is that we cannot move from concepts to feeling of pleasure or displeasure. Hence the act of subsumption of the given object under a concept that we find in the 1st *Critique* is not in application in the 3rd *Critique*. But in the 3rd *Critique* in claiming that judgements of taste carry universality Kant says that in making a claim about such judgements one assumes that every person who view the object ought to judge it alike, i.e. as beautiful and also share pleasure in it. On account of its difference in nature from the first *Critique*, judgements of taste, though possess the character of universality, cannot be demonstrated by evidence. What Kant intends to show is that in spite of its universal validity we do not possess any canon by which we can convince others to judge the thing as beautiful like ours. In holding that a judgement of taste ‘delight in the object is connected in the mere estimate of its form’, Kant wants to show that beauty is not concept of objects.

The question is if beauty is not a concept of the object and also not inclination of the Subject what is their exact status. Kant holds that Subject freely ascribes this liking to the object. As in such beauty and its delight there are no personal conditions of knower’s subjective self alone, it makes room for supposition that other persons should have similar delight. As a result of this, writes Kant, “he will speak of the beautiful as if beauty were a quality of the object and the judgement logical ... although it is only aesthetic, and contains merely a reference of the representation of the object to the Subject ....” On account of its similarity to the logical judgement, it is presumed to be valid for everyone. This universality is not fastened with objects rather it is an affirmation of subjective universality. Kant defines the notion ‘beautiful’ drawing from the second moment thus: “The beautiful is that which, apart from a concept, pleases universally.”

Actually the nature of universality of the judgements of taste is a sequel of its first moment or its disinterestedness. On account of such judgements’ disinterested character there arises a feeling that these judgements are independent of one’s own personal desires and interests.
Owing to this it can reasonably be expected that other will also similarly experience that feeling in regard to that object of course if they judge it disinterestedly. Thus a universal feeling of approval creeps into judgements of the beautiful. This universal feeling actually emits from sharing of the similar cognitive faculties.

**Third Moment**

In his explanation of the third moment of judgements of taste Kant shows its unique relation with end or purpose. He gives us a definition of end in transcendental terms: “An end is the object of a concept so far as this concept is regarded as the cause of the object (the real ground of its possibility); and the causality of a concept in respect of its Object is finality ....”18 Explaining further he says that if it is not the mere cognition of the object but the cognition of the ‘object itself’, i. e. by which he means ‘its form or real existence’ which is considered to be made possible only via a concept of it, there we visualize an end. In judgements of taste our judgements do not presume an end or purpose which the object is desired to meet or fulfill. However, in case of the judgements of the good there is such a presupposition.

In spite of above difference Kant finds a sort of representation in the judgements of beauty what he terms ‘purposiveness’. Distinguishing this representation of purposiveness with ordinary purposiveness which involves attribution of a purpose Kant says that judgements of beauty contain only formal purposiveness or ‘the form of purposiveness’. It appears from his explanation that this formal purposiveness is discerned both in the object itself and also in the venture of imagination and understanding in their cognition of the object. Thus Kant espouses a kind of formalism in his aesthetic judgements.

Unlike judgments of the good, judgments of the beautiful do not presuppose an end or purpose which the object is taken to satisfy. However, they nonetheless involve the representation of what Kant calls “purposiveness”. Because this representation of purposiveness does not
involve the ascription of an end, Kant calls the purposiveness which is represented “merely formal purposiveness” or “the form of purposiveness.” He describes it as perceived both in the object itself and in the activity of imagination and understanding in their engagement with the object.

**Fourth Moment**

This moment addresses the moment of the modality of ‘the Delight of the Object’. Out of the modal ideas of possibility, actuality and necessity Kant concentrates on the specific sort of necessity that is attendant to feeling of approval found in the judgements of taste. He clearly states that the necessity he ascribes to judgements of the beautiful is a distinct kind. “It is not a theoretical objective necessity—such as would let us cognize a priori that everyone will feel this delight in the object that is called beautiful by me. Nor yet is it a practical necessity ... it is a necessity of the assent of all to a judgement regarded as exemplifying a universal rule incapable of formulation,”¹⁹ writes Kant. Thus we are certain that the necessity of aesthetic judgement is unique. But the moot question is how this necessity is generated in aesthetic judgements.

The response of the above question we find in Kant. He is of the view that it is the commonalities of the faculties of understanding and imagination and the free play of them in anybody, if he is to experience any object disinterestedly, that furnishes us the notion. Kant calls this necessity ‘exemplary’. He finds a necessity in the assent of all in aesthetic judgements as it represents a universal rule. We saw before that aesthetic judgements are not objective or cognitive judgements. And it precludes us to derive necessity from definite concepts. It is not also derivable from universality of experience. It is so as experience can neither give us evidence which is adequate for the purpose nor empirical judgements furnishes us any “foundation for a concept of the necessity of these judgements.”

Realizing that no definite rules for the comprehension of object in the aforesaid free play are found, Kant falls back upon ‘common sense’ to explain the disinterested feeling of approval. Asserts Kant, “… they must
have a subjective principle, and one which determines what pleases or displeases, by means of feeling only and not through concepts, but yet with universal validity. Such a principle ... could only be regarded as a common sense."\(^{20}\) He draws our attention not to confuse common sense with common understanding as the judgement of the latter one is not made out of feeling, but of concepts. We have seen before that aesthetic judgements are essentially judgements of feeling.

Kant’s notion of common sense makes us think that he is alluding to some capacity of human being. By qualifying the term ‘sense’ with the adjective ‘common’ he seems to convey that all of us has the capacity for experiencing the feeling in a similar way. This common sense, where sense means a sort of feeling, is shared by all human beings alike. This is due to constitution of cognition and its distinct type of interplay between the understanding and imagination. This in turn implies that Kant’s view about necessity and universality that he ascribes to judgements of taste are derived from shared cognitive structure or common capacity to experience. As this capacity standardizes the experience of beauty, it is expected there will be a point where everybody’s view will merge and this accounts for Kant’s claim that everybody’s feeling will be the same in judgements of taste if the object is perceived disinterestedly. It now makes sense for one to hope for others to have the same feeling. Previously we saw that the character of disinterestedness eliminates components of sense-gratification and conceptualization.

**How are Judgments of Beauty Possible?**

Reading of Kant’s 3\(^{rd}\) *Critique* gives us the impression that judgements of beauty have two apparently contrary features. Kant repeatedly says that they are judgements which spring from feeling and also hold that they do not involve desire for the object. Moreover, he claims that in such judgements there is agreement in everybody’s view. The latter claim sometimes prompt us to think that they be considered as objective cognitive judgements. There are scholars who find an effort in Kant’s view about
judgements of beauty to overcome the problem of empiricists and rationalists' view. Empiricists thinkers such as Hume and others held that judgements of taste are actually an expression of feeling and devoid of any cognitive significance. Rationalists group of thinkers contended that aesthetic judgements involve cognition of an object and its objective property. Kant by holding that these judgements are issued from feeling and also have universal validity furnishes us an unconventional view and can be considered as replacement of the above two views.

Kant's claim of universal validity of aesthetic judgements and substantiation of this claim was an arduous task. We saw before that deriving pleasure in aesthetic judgements is the outcome of free play of the faculties of imagination and understanding. How does it work is a moot point. In the 1st Critique Kant gives an account of imagination by saying that it synthesizes the manifold of intuition. This task is executed under the guidance of principles supplied by the understanding. This is indeed a complex task. There are certain rules imposed by the understanding and dovetailed with concept. These are now put in application on objects with all its empirical features. But in the 3rd Critique Kant seems to hint at a different type of relationship between imagination and understanding. Here we find an explanation where imagination's pursuit is synchronized with that of understanding without imposing any checks or rules by understanding. In doing this imagination and understanding practically do the same thing what is required for brining objects under concepts. But the difference lies in the fact that in aesthetic judgements it is done without subsuming the object under any particular concept. Hence it is non-conceptual and a feeling which Kant terms disinterested.

Kant fell back upon this version of pleasure in order to make room for its universal validity. A person who considers such an object to be beautiful and thus derive pleasure can justly claim that other people's feeling also match his own and their judgements get along with him.

This view of Kant generated a lot of debate in post-Kantian scholars. The generation of disinterested pleasure and the uniqueness of judgements of
taste, i. e. aesthetic judgments and their claim of necessity and universality were questioned by many. It indeed seems a complex mechanism and there are blurred area which demands further clarification. Acceptance of his view revolves on clarification of this grey area. We do not want to enter into detail elaboration of this fuzzy zone as it falls outside the purview of our venture. Still statement of some outstanding questions that has been raised by a number of scholars will be pertinent here.

It is pointed out that there is no basis for accepting the argument of free play that Kant thought of taking place between faculties, imagination and understanding. How can we hold that this free play is in work in one case and not in function in other cases, i. e. in other cognitive perceptual experiences? Had it been in work, we would have perceived all object as beautiful, which is not actually the case. Moreover, it does not seem to be clear how can one demand an agreement of others for an attitude where perceivers faculties were in play. This experiencing of free play is a phenomenon which is not easily understandable as it is not mere cognition but contains something more.

Another debatable point is determination of the relation between pleasure, which is sensed in an object of beautiful, and with aesthetic judgement. When Kant says that aesthetic judgements are issued from feeling of pleasure, there is an implicit claim that pleasure is recognizably different from the act of judging. If it is so, how are they related? Another question that agitated minds of Kantian scholars that in the judgement of tastes which one precedes—pleasure or judging the object? On account of some conflicting statements found sporadically in the Critique of Judgement scholars are unsure about Kant’s exact stand on the issue.

Another pivotal point that demands further explanation is Kant’s notion of ‘free play’. He assumed ‘free play’ between faculties of imagination and understanding. It is from this play that aesthetic judgements originates. But the arguable point is that what is it for the two faculties to be in such a play. Kant gives an explanation of this play by saying it as ‘harmonious accord’ in cognitive faculties. For him it contains the ground of
pleasure. At another place he says judgements of beauty ‘must be one of a feeling of the free play of the powers of representation in a given representation for a cognition in general.’ The uniqueness of this free play is that it satisfies the broad conditions for the application of the concepts to objects perceived by a viewer but without applying any specific concept. Thus Kant takes the opportunity to use the advantage of free play. The advantage is that in this free play imagination, on the one hand, complies with the conditions of understanding, on the other, it is free from any restriction of a particular concept. From this view it appears that what Kant intends to convey us is that imagination is in work following certain principles but without being regulated by any one principle in particular. It is what Kant calls ‘lawfulness without law’ and also at some places ‘free conformity to law of the imagination’. Though there is no gainsaying the fact that this explanation of Kant contains novelty, yet some questions remain unanswered. Some questions that haunt a reader’s mind are: how such an activity becomes comprehensible to us? Why does it give rise to a feeling that Kant calls feeling of pleasure? Scholars are grappling with these problems.

Kant held that judgements of taste demand an agreement. In the Introduction to the Critique of Judgement he shows that this demand of agreement is made in the similar way as it happens in the objective cognitive judgement. As we demand an agreement in case of an empirical cognition, likewise we demand an agreement in an aesthetic judgement. He elaborately explains this point in the Introduction. But the nature of this demand is hardly intelligible. There is certainly difference in the nature of aesthetic feeling and objective or empirical cognition. Given this difference it is not understandable how do both of them possess the claim of agreement.

The Sublime

We saw in the beginning that within the fold of aesthetic judgements fall another type of judgement. It is judgement of sublime. Kant stated his view about estimation of the sublime in a lengthy section entitled ‘Analytic of the Sublime’ which runs over hundred pages. Before coming to the
discussion of Kant’s notion of sublime a few lines, which will serve as rudimentary, will be in order.

In the history of thought the notion of sublime first appeared, or at least we could trace its systematic study, in the 1st century. Cassius Longinus, a known rhetorician and philosophic critic, of that time in his On the Sublime mainly talks about writing style and applying the concept of sublime there traces five sources this concept. He also traces some of its effects which are usually aroused in his audience. The discussion thus initiated continued and received more attention in the eighteenth century. Among these figures Edmund Burke, a British philosopher and politician, is a notable figure. In his A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful argued to show that sublimity and beauty are different and also mutually exclusive. He also dwelt upon psychological effects of sublimity. Kant as early as 1764 addressed the issue of beautiful and sublime but it got its fuller expression in his Critique of Judgement. The notions of beautiful and sublime, as we saw before, are at the center of his aesthetic philosophy. For him, sublime is absolutely great and also beyond any comparison. He then talks about two sorts of sublime: mathematical sublime which are great in terms of enormity of magnitude and dynamic sublime which is great in terms of limitless power. It has been used to name natural objects that create a kind of wonder merely through its immensity.

Kant in the beginning of the discussion of the sublime shows its similarity with beautiful, e. g. he says that both of them are pleasurable ‘on their own account’. Then he goes on to show their differences. He underscores two important differences. One is about form—the judgements of beauty have form whereas judgments of sublime lack form. He writes: “The beautiful in nature is a question of the form of the object, and this consists in limitation, whereas the sublime is to be found in an object even devoid of form, so far as it immediately involves, or else by its presence provokes, a representation of limitlessness, yet with a super-added thought of totality.”23 Thus connection with the form of the object in one case (in case of judgements of the beautiful) and lacking this connection in another (in
case of judgement of the sublime) is a remarkable feature of these two types of aesthetic judgements. Kant further added that in judgements of the beautiful there is a ‘presentation of an indeterminate concept of the understanding’ whereas in judgements of the sublime it is a ‘presentation of an indeterminate concept of reason’. Furthermore, the delight that such judgements accompany is representation of quality in judgments of the beauty and it is representation of quantity in judgements of the sublime.

Another distinction between two categories of judgements delineated by Kant is that judgements of the sublime are confined to the ‘Objects of nature’. These objects carry with it a finality in its form. Second, it creates a feeling in us which is outrageous to our imagination.

The chief feature of sublime is its greatness. It is absolutely great in comparison to all other things. It also contains within it an aura of mystery and ineffability. Its greatness is so vast that it overwhelms imagination’s capacity to apprehend it. As imagination singly is unable to comprehend it, it struggles to fathom the object as per demand of reason and it led Kant to hold that sublimity of an object resides not in sublime objects but instead in reason. Writes Kant: “... the sublime is not to be looked for in the things of nature, but only in our ideas.”

Previously we talked about mathematically sublime and dynamically sublime. For Kant, objects of nature are apt instances for the former kind. Though he cites instances of St. Peter’s in Rome and Pyramids of Egypt, there are scholars who say that most appropriate instances of mathematically sublime are of objects of nature. Such phenomenon of nature shows the inadequacy of imagination ‘for presenting the idea of a whole’ and in ‘so doing succumbs to an emotional delight.’ In case of dynamically sublime the struggle between reason’s capacity and that of nature itself becomes more evident. Here we regard reason’s superiority over nature and it creates an awe in mind. Thus we can say that sublime is a sort of feeling of pleasure or displeasure (for Kant, displeasure arises from the recognition of the deficiency of our imagination (in case of mathematically sublime) and also from our knowledge of our physical incapability vis-a-vis nature’s impressive might (in case of the
dynamically sublime)). Pleasure arises from apprehension of reason’s superiority over nature. Pleasure and displeasure in the sublime are movement of the mind. The feeling in the sublime oscillates between repulsion and attraction to the same object. Kant claims in judgements of the sublime, like judgements of beauty, universal validity of pleasure. It is this claim that assumes significance in our current investigation. His claim of this universal validity is presumed to involve necessity. It is so as in such an experience there is claim that every person who experiences it ought to share the same sort of feeling. We need to remember that the claim of universal validity that just now we have discussed in case of the judgements of the sublime is grounded not on universal validity that Kant found in the conditions of cognition in the 1st Critique. It is rather founded on universal validity of feeling which sometime Kant calls moral feeling.

It is also important to note that though judgments of the beautiful and judgements of the sublime both are aesthetic judgment we must bear in mind that the seat of the latter feeling is mind and not the object as it is the case in judgments of the beauty. To put it simply we call objects beautiful but we cannot aptly call objects sublime. Sublimity, as Kant says, does not reside in nature but in our mind. Another fundamental difference between two sorts of aesthetic judgements that are in question is that judgements of beauty arises from free play of the faculties of imagination and understanding but the play in case of judgements of the sublime are between imagination and reason. We have attempted a simple explanation of the sublime and its difference from beauty. But there are scholars, e. g. Paul Guyer, who attempts to show ‘phenomenological difference between the feelings of beauty and sublimity’.25 He shows inadequacies of only logical and epistemological explanations of their nature and difference but that we shall not attempt to discuss here as it does not have much relevance with our current work.

References

3 Ibid., p. 18.
4 Ibid., p. 18.
5 Ibid., p. 19.
7 Ibid., p.111.
8 Ibid., 110.
9 Ibid., 117.
10 Ibid., 118.
12 Ibid., pp. 19-20. (Werner S. Pluhar’s translation).
15 Ibid, p. 42.
16 Ibid., p. 51.
17 Ibid., p.60.
18 Ibid., p. 61.
19 Ibid., p. 81.
20 Ibid., p. 82.
21 Ibid., p. 39.
22 Ibid., p. 58.
23 Ibid. p. 90.
24 Ibid., p. 97.

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CHAPTER- V

Challenges to the Kantian Notions

Kant’s strong espousal for knowledge where there is a combination of characteristics of synthetic and a priori awareness brought a revolution in philosophy. Successful completion of his critical project was like an insurrection in the field of philosophy which agitated many philosophers’, his contemporaries and of later period, minds. There were philosophers who thought that Kant’s view had ushered a remarkable breakthrough in the arena of philosophy. On the other end, there were philosophers who were determined to show the impossibility of this newfound knowledge. A survey of this is a worth exercise and indeed also difficult as the terrain is huge. As it is not possible to traverse the entire domain, I intend to concentrate on the views given by logical positivists, W. V. O. Quine and Saul Kripke.

A scrutiny of Kant’s claim makes us aware that a number of concepts are involved in it. Usually concepts combined here were combined previously, i. e., before Kant, with some other judgement or to put it another way their shuffling were different. If we want to recount the concept involved in Kant’s account we find that following concepts are encompassed here:

1. Analyticity,
2. Syntheticity,
3. A prioricity,
4. Necessity, and
5. Universality.

Scholars before Kant arranged them in the following way:

- Analyticity with a prioricity
•  

A prioricity with necessity and universality

Pre-Kantian thinkers held that the first combination is extensionally equivalent. In the second conjunct the first sort of knowledge essentially contains the two marks mentioned in this combination. Kant gives up this traditional type of thinking and holds that two characteristics contained in a priori knowledge (i.e. necessity and universality) are not co-extensive with analyticity. These traits can extend even in some synthetic judgements when they are not a posteriori. This is a possibility that his predecessors could not think of and perhaps it is for this reason Hume could not explain necessity that we are habituated to think in causal relations. It sounds like this: Kant was reminding Hume and like-minded philosophers that they were searching at wrong place what they have been looking for. As he could find the thing and at a different setting, Kant’s now wants to show what is that location and also roadway to that location.

Logical positivists who propounded their philosophy almost over a century later of Kant disagreed with him and made effort to show the impossibility of Kant’s view. Quine, an American philosopher, a few decades later in 1951 in his ‘Two Dogmas of Empiricism’, gave another dissenting view and in a more radical way. His view was radical in the sense that he did not admit Kant’s distinction between analytic-synthetic as tenable as he showed, or at least he thought so, there can be no analytic proposition. And the impossibility of analytic proposition entails that such distinction (i.e. between analytic and synthetic judgement) is otiose. First let us see the standpoint of logical positivists.

The advent of logical positivism in the arena of philosophy was at a juncture which witnessed the triumph of scientific temperament and logical analysis on the one hand and declining trend of idealism on the other. Thinkers of this group also imbibed this spirit. And this spirit is reflected in their arguments given against Kant’s view. Among their views two important
points are: their effort to show nonsensicality of metaphysics and their advocacy of the principle of verifiability to decide meaning of a statement. These two points are actually two sides of the same coin. The latter point, i.e., the principle of verifiability, holds that a statement is meaningful if we know the method of its verification. This principle has undergone several changes. In spite of these changes by and large it assumed the aforesaid form. They got a support of their view in early Wittgenstein’s work in the *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*. In this book Wittgenstein held that to understand the meaning of a proposition means to know what the case is, if the proposition is true. He, by holding this, espoused a theory of meaning known as picture theory of meaning. This view of Wittgenstein, coupled with their (of logical positivists) steadfastness to only extensional logic, forced the logical positivists to admit only analytic and empirical propositions.

Adherence to the above views gives us a hint that they cannot admit synthetic *a priori* combination that Kant so emphatically advocated. Positivists challenge the view of Kant and not only that they also are eager to show that this combination does not logically hold good. Pushing their argument forward Moritz Schlick, a prominent member of the group, writes: “...as a matter of principle, all propositions are either synthetic *a posteriori* or tautologus; synthetic *a priori* propositions seem to be a logical impossibility.”¹ This idea of logical positivists actually is a sequel of number of other views that they uphold. A. J. Ayer, considered as spokesperson of the group, delineates these views mainly in the 4th chapter of his *Language, Truth and Logic*.² The contentions that form the core of their views are: necessary statements are actually reports of linguistic usage, they portray conventions, these statements are analytic and they are devoid of factual content. These contentions, scrutiny reveals, are interlinked.

Ayer argues with a number of illustrations that in analytic proposition we simply call “attention to the implications of a certain linguistic
As they regard, and we saw it in the immediate preceding paragraph, that only analytic propositions can be necessary, and also that necessity can be found only in analytic propositions, it is not astonishing that for them necessity is merely a report of linguistic usage. Not only that, going a step further they hold that necessary propositions do not vouchsafe relations between things. They only unfold relations between our own ideas and meanings. Let us take an instance of analytic proposition “All bachelors are unmarried”. For positivists, this proposition merely states that two expressions—subject and predicate—have the same reference. Beyond this any assertion about relation between the traits of two expressions—’bachelor’ and ‘unmarried’—cannot validly be claimed to hold. Ayer shows that the proposition ‘Either some ants are parasitic or none are’ does not give us any information about the behavioural pattern of ants, i. e. about any matter of fact. Treating this as an analytic statement he argues that as the proposition lacks factual content, no experience can rebut it.

Ayer further argues that though analytic proposition does not lend us any data about an empirical circumstance, “they do enlighten us by illustrating the way in which we use certain symbols.” For example, ‘Nothing can be coloured in different ways at the same time with respect to the same part of itself’ (Ayer’s example), though this statement does not say anything about the feature of an actual thing, the statement is not also nonsensical. In this analytic statement we are “simply calling attention to the implications of a certain linguistic usage.” It points to a ‘convention’—a convention that guides our usage of words. These propositions assert relationship between symbols and not between characteristics or attributes of things that symbols actually denote. This view ultimately boils down to the view that necessary propositions actually affirm about the way of employment of linguistic expressions.
Positivists’ contention that necessary propositions are linguistic convention has deeper significance. In the preceding passage we have seen that for Ayer linguistic expressions are symbols. Interpreting Kant’s definition of analytic judgement Ayer writes: “... a proposition is analytic when its validity depends solely on the definitions of symbols it contains,...” We need to take note of his usage of the word ‘symbol’. Ordinarily symbols do not possess any meaning intrinsic to it and therefore relationship between symbols is not anything permanent or fixed. Hence their associations remain valid till we remain committed to our current usage. Once we decide to alter our convention pattern, what we now think contradictory (e. g. the denial of the proposition “All bachelors are unmarried”), will no longer be thought of as contradictory. In this way positivists tried to show that necessary propositions owe their necessity to convention. Writes Ayer: “... it is necessary only because we happen to use the relevant words in a particular way. There is no logical reason why we should not so alter our definitions that the sentence ‘A thing cannot be in two places at once’ comes to express a self-contradiction instead of a necessary truth.” He then goes to extend this argument to the principles of logic and mathematics by saying that they are universal purely because we never let them to be something else.

It is interesting to note that in the second edition of his book A. J. Ayer emended many of his views he espoused in the first edition of the same. In the section “The ‘A Priori’” he brings an emendation of his view that necessary propositions are only a matter of convention. His improvement was prompted by C. D Broad’s criticism, as Ayer himself admits, made in his article ‘Are there Synthetic a priori Truths?’. Broad in his article pointed out that Ayer’s analysis of a priori propositions actually pruned them into a sub category of empirical propositions. Susceptibility of this interpretation was engendered by Ayer’s view that usage of symbols is a matter of convention. If it is the case, ‘it is undoubtedly an empirical fact that people use symbols in the ways that
they do." Having understood the pitfalls of this view now Ayer says that though “the validity of a priori proposition depends upon certain facts about verbal usage ... this is not equivalent to saying that they describe these facts in the sense in which empirical propositions may describe the facts that verify them ...”\(^8\) Now Ayer argues elaborately to elucidate the import of his view. His arguments seem to be of two tiers. First he shows that the usefulness of \emph{a priori} knowledge is established on ‘the empirical fact that certain symbols are used in the way that they are and on the empirical fact that the symbols in question are successfully applied to our experience.’ Positivists’ view that necessary propositions are upshots of linguistic rules coupled with their view that they are actually matter of convention pose a challenge to the Kantian view that some \emph{a priori} propositions are synthetic. This in turn implies that necessary propositions are necessarily analytic as it cannot be otherwise (i.e. synthetic)

By saying that necessary propositions can only be analytic, the novelty feature of such propositions has been stripped away. In other words these propositions do not state anything novel, new, or extra. According to Moritz Schlick, the novelty here indicates of logical novelty. For positivists, a proposition is analytic if its meaning can be derived solely from the terms it contains. They are independent of the external world as well as our mind. They also hold that denial of such a proposition gives rise to self-contradiction. Moreover, positivists also draw a parallel between analytic and tautologous propositions. However, the way they explain analytic propositions and tautologous propositions and the instance they cite for these propositions seem to be of different in intent from Kant’s. Hence, their view about co-extensiveness of these expressions can be questioned. As they (i.e. positivists) equate analyticity with \emph{a prioricity} (of course with a claim that \emph{apriori} propositions are necessary in a specified way), they reject the Kantian view that some necessary truths can be synthetic.
Even propositions of mathematics, which is quite contrary of Kant’s view, they show to be analytic. Arguing this Ayer says “... propositions of pure geometry are analytic. And this leads us to reject Kant’s hypothesis that geometry deals with the form of intuition of our outer sense. For the ground for this hypothesis was that it alone explained how the propositions of geometry could be both true a priori and synthetic...” He argued in detail to show that these propositions are not synthetic. Soon after that he also advanced arguments to show that arithmetical propositions are also not synthetic. He proclaims that there is nothing mysterious in the claim of apodictic certainty of logic and mathematics. Positivists are not ready to admit of any exception of their thesis. Thus they dismissed the view of Kant that a prioricity is not a monopoly of analyticity.

**W. V. O Quine’s View**

Perhaps the severest shocks to Kant’s view came from American philosopher W. V. O Quine. Quine in his widely acclaimed article ‘Two Dogmas of Empiricism’, published in 1951 held that Kant’s distinction between analytic and synthetic judgement is not defensible and on account of this he rejected the distinction. Not only that in the end of the section 4 he says: “That there is such a distinction to be drawn at all is an unempirical dogma of empiricists, a metaphysical article of faith.” Such a radical opinion about this distinction trembled the philosophical world which for almost one and half century centered around the distinction in the sense that philosophical theory began assuming this distinction as an accepted one or sometime criticizing it showing its inadequacy. Out of the dogmas that Quine criticizes the first one is aimed at showing indefensibility of analytic-synthetic distinction and the second one is reductionist principle of logical positivists which believed that each meaningful statement in ultimate analysis is equivalent to logical construct upon terms which refers to our immediate sense-experience. Having criticized these two dogmas Quine paves the way
for his own theory of meaning where, on the one hand, he talks about indeterminacy of translation and, on the other, espouses meaning holism. Let us now see his main points of criticism directed against the first dogma—analytic-synthetic distinction.

Quine’s interpretation of the distinction, its analysis and criticism is divided into four sections. He held that Kant’s distinction had forerunner in Leibniz’s and Hume’s philosophy. Former philosopher distinguished this truth by using expressions ‘truths of reason’ and ‘truths of fact’ and the latter philosopher distinguished the same truth by other expression—‘relations of ideas’ and ‘matters of fact’. However, while criticizing the distinction he mostly uses the term ‘analytic’ which gives us enough hint that his target is mainly Kant. Initially he defines analytic statements as “statements whose denials are self-contradictory” and then goes on to hold that this definition has no explanatory worth as the term ‘self-contradictoriness’ is equally blurred and demands elucidation just like ‘analyticity’. In view of this he does not consider this explanation of the concept in question as at all worthy.

He then shows two shortcomings of the Kantian distinction. As the Kant in his definition of analytic judgements used the ‘subject’ and ‘predicate’ terms Quine holds that such a distinction is then only confined to judgments having subject-predicate form. This is a limitation of Kant’s distinction as it excluded from its purview a significant number of judgments which are not of subject-predicate form. Second, in Kant’s distinction he used the term ‘contain’. For Quine, the notion of ‘containment’ is not clear and actually Kant used it metaphorically. Having shown these two flaws of the distinction he redefines analytic judgment, allegedly taking clue from Kant’s ‘intent’ as ‘a statement is analytic when it is true by virtue of meanings and independently of fact.” In this definition the term ‘meaning’ is important and most of the arguments advanced by Quine hinge on the concept of meaning. He refuses to link meaning with naming like many of his predecessors whether it is at the
level of concrete or at the level of abstract terms or singular or general terms. Taking the instance of general terms he shows that meaning should not be treated as equal to its extension as the general terms, e. g. ‘creature with heart’ and ‘creature with kidneys’ have identical extension but do not have similar meaning. Differing from Aristotelian view he also declares that essence is not meaning as essence belongs to objects and meaning is the property of linguistic forms. He says: “Meaning is what essence becomes when it is divorced from the object of reference and wedded to the word.” Coupled with this view he held that the key task of the theory of meaning is to supply synonym of linguistic forms which he found equally obscure as the term ‘synonym’ demands clarification.

Quine shows that by and large analytic statements falls into two categories. One group of analytic statement may be called logically true and is exemplified by statement like ‘No unmarried man is married’. This sort of analytic statements is logical truth and they remain true under all interpretations. Rest of the analytic statements though not logical truth, e. g. ‘No bachelor is married’ still they can be transformed into logical truth by replacing them, using Leibniz’ principle *salva veritate*, with synonymous words. For example, in the aforesaid instance (i. e. ‘No bachelor is married’) we can replace the word ‘bachelor, with the expression ‘unmarried man’ and the statement that we get as a result of this is ‘No unmarried man is married’. This reveals that we can easily turn second category statement into first category (i. e. logical truth) by putting synonymous words. However, Quine is of the opinion that this effort cannot become successful as the notion of synonym is recondite and needs to be clarified. On account of this the notion of analyticity remains abstruse. Even Rudolf Carnap’s attempt to explain analyticity in terms of state-descriptions (an attempt to assign truth-value to all non-compound sentences so that truth-value of each compound sentence becomes fixed by these atomic sentences and logical devices required for this)
serves only limited purpose. As Quine says ‘state-descriptions is a reconstruction at best of logical truth, not of analyticity.’

Thus Quine shows that the second type of analytic statements are problematic and any effort to solve them by the assumption of synonym or showing sameness of meaning is bound to fail and this notion also begs the question. A section of thinkers attempt to reduce second category of analytic statements into the first category (i.e. logical truths) by means of definition. But to Quine this attempt is repugnant as he shows after a lengthy discussion that no sort of definition—whether descriptive or stipulative—can serve our purpose. In former sort of definition whether it is lexicographical or explicative it is usually presumed that the concept of synonym is crystal clear to us. Further explanation goes on presuming this. For example, the term ‘bachelor’ is defined as ‘unmarried male that never has been married’. Such a definition ordinarily attests an association of ‘synonym antecedent to the exposition in hand.’ What Quine intends to underscore is that such a definition rests on usage and hence in dictionary when we find synonymous words what we find are not definitions rather reports based upon usage. Apart from attempting to define words by supplementing with synonymous words there is another way to define and this has been called by Carnap ‘explication’. This is an attempt to give contextual definition. It aims to better the definiendum by ‘refining and supplementing its meaning’. Quine is of the view that though in such cases it is not merely reporting previous usage, it still counts on ‘other preexisting synonymies.’ Therefore, explicative mode of definition has two-pronged use— it protects the usage of these favoured contexts and on other hand it intends to fine-tune the usage of other context. Thus it seems that whatever route we pursue, definition ultimately rests on the notion of synonym and hence we cannot make any headway in understanding the notion of analytic as defining the latter in terms of the former involves circularity. He further goes on to show that even attempt of use of stipulative definition does
not improve the prospect. For example, if we attempt to define logical operators in terms of primitives (e. g. if ‘if p then q’ is defined as ‘not-p or q’), such effort though free from previous flaws still depend on formulation of artificial languages and is language specific. Hence all our efforts to transform the second type of analytic statements into first type by appeal to definition ultimately come to a naught.

Some scholars propose that another alternative to show the cogency of synonyms of two linguistic forms suffices if it can be shown that they are interchangeable in all contexts without alteration of their truth value. Though this proposal is free of some imperfections of previous proposal, still not satisfactory enough and hence does not deserve acceptance. For instance, can we make out synonym as intersubstitutivity, salva veritate, so that (invoking our previous example) ‘bachelor’ and ‘unmarried male’ are synonymous and we can substitute ‘unmarried male’ in any sentence wherever the term ‘bachelor’ occurs. About this proposal Quine says nevertheless the moot question is whether “interchangeability salva veritate … is a strong enough condition for synonym” or whether some non-synonymous expressions can also become interchangeable in this sense. In holding this Quine is not concerned with synonyms in the sense of complete identity rather he focuses on what he calls ‘cognitive synonym’. Thus the question at hand is can we have an account of cognitive synonym without presupposing analyticity. Quine tries to show that the condition of interchangeability salva veritate loses its vitatility if not relativized to a language in the sense that its workability is conditioned by the richness of a language. He shows that a logically rich language can be adequate to classical mathematics, though it is not extensional. Hence we face a dilemma: on the one hand in purely extensional language even non-synonymous expressions are interchangeable salva veritate on the other a language is rich enough to block this possibility, i. e.
interchangeability of non-synonymous terms presupposes our knowledge of analyticity.

Quine is quick to show that extensional equivalence is not sufficiently capable to express the notion of synonym. Taking the instance of factual occurrence he shows that though all and only creatures with hearts are creature with kidneys, yet these two expression — ‘creatures with hearts’ and ‘creatures with kidneys’— are not cognitively synonymous. This can be made evident from the following statements

X believes that fish are creatures with hearts, and

X believes that fish are creatures with kidneys.

Out of these two statements the former can be true whereas the latter can be false. Hence Quine says that these general terms are interchangeable in terms of extension though they are dissimilar in meaning.

In order to examine whether interchangeability is a sufficient condition for cognitive synonym Quine invokes the notion of necessity and examines whether it can be of any help in the present case. After discussion he shows that the notion of necessity is of no help as when we say ‘Necessarily all and only Xs are Ys’ we only convey that ‘All and only Xs are Ys’ is analytic. Let us explain this point with the help of an example. When we say ‘Necessarily all and only bachelors are unmarried men’ and then we try to convert this sentence by turn and twist, i. e. using cognitive synonym and other logical apparatus, ‘All and only bachelors are bachelors’ then the adverb ‘necessarily’ is ‘so construed as to yield truth when and only when applied to analytic statement.’ But if we recall that it is analyticity that we have been trying to explain, then an account of analyticity in terms of necessity involves circularity (as we saw that fixing ‘necessarily’ in front of a sentence just posits that the statement was analytic). After all these wriggles Quine comes to the
conclusion that the option of interchangeability will not work to clarify the notion of synonym which in turn will define analyticity.

At last he examines whether semantical rules can help us to clarify the notion of synonym. It mainly addresses Rudolf Carnap’s approach to define meaning. Quine tries to show that the problem with analyticity is not established in the vagueness of ordinary languages. Semantical rules are also problematic for artificial language. Quine’s concern is that appeal to semantical rules of a particular language, say L, for explaining analyticity only explains ‘analyticity-for-L’. The limitation of such an endeavour is that it is language-specific, i.e., it does not have scope to explain analyticity for any other language and second, it does not explain the notion ‘analyticity’ per se.

Hence, Quine holds that no boundary between analytic and synthetic has actually been drawn. It becomes evident from the fact that we are not clear what analyticity is. If it is the case, how can we say that such a cleavage indeed exists?

The second dogma, which is about verification theory and espouses a reductionist approach, says that the meaning of a statement is the method of its verification. By verifying we empirically confirm it or declare it as unsound or invalid. Not only that, verifications go to the extent of saying that every meaningful statement is convertible into a statement about immediate experience or some logical construct which ultimately refer to immediate experience. By holding this, verificationists hold that the notion of synonym (or cognitive synonym) is applicable to statements. Given this concept of synonym analyticity could be defined ‘in terms of just synonym of statements together with logical truth.’ The irony then is that if the verificationists’ theory is accepted, i.e., if it is thought that their account of statement synonym is satisfactory, the notion of analyticity can be protected from the onslaughts that we saw before. It is so as analytic statements are confirmed irrespective of
any circumstance. However, Quine is not in a position to accept this. The verification theory and their process of reduction, of whose one foremost champion was Carnap as he arduously worked it out in detail in his The Logical Structure of the World and the Pseudoproblems in Philosophy, Quine shows, that it is not a new one. Even before them a number of writers, and mainly empiricists, made attempt to reductionism. But reductionism is unproven and also very difficult to prove. He shows that the two dogmas have identical root. Says Quine, “… one dogma clearly supports the other … as long as it is taken to be significant in general to speak of the confirmation and information of a statement, it seems significant to speak also of a limiting kind of statement which is vacuously confirmed … come what may; and such a statement is analytic.”

Having shown the flaws of the two dogmas and thereby the notion of analyticity Quine introduces his theory of meaning holism. He advances the view that our utterances about external world ‘face the tribunal of sense experience’ not singly but as interconnected body. Moreover, Quine also denies any steadfast distinction between a linguistic and factual element of the truth of any lone statement. His intention is to show that it is not an isolated statement taken out from the whole interconnected body, rather it is the entire intricate and interwoven body that are verified. In this cobweb of interrelated statements we depend on language as well as experience for their verification. Thus no statement can be exclusively linguistic. Empirical significance holds the key for the entire arena of science. In this complexity of belief in logical laws, scientific theories and empirical claims all have share and importance of any one of them cannot be ignored. Once we understand this labyrinth, it is a small step to show that any attempt to treat the empirical content of a single statement is fallacious. And this takes us to show that distinction between synthetic and analytic statements are unsustainable as former statements are dependent on experience whereas the latter are true no matter what happens in
the empirical world. Quine discussing at length shows that no statements, including logical laws, are immune to revision. This view of Quine that even logical laws are not immune to revision in the given light of empirical evidence generated a fierce debate.

“Two Dogmas of Empiricism” came out 1951. Quine’s attack to analytic-synthetic cleavage did not remain confined to this essay only. Even after that in 1961 in his “Carnap on Logical Truth” and in his *Word and Object* (1960) he continued the attack unabated and even sharpened his arguments. Looks at his all the three writings mentioned above make us feel that his criticism of the split in question centers on mainly four points. First, Kant’s and his successors’ endeavours to prove that a group of sentences (they term analytic) are true solely by virtue of their meanings either involves circularity or are vacuously true. Second, he rejects sentence atomism and espouses sentence holism. This espousal led him to hold that sentences are not understood in isolation; rather they are only part of a corporate body. This has deeper implications. For example, if it is the case we cannot fix verification condition by taking recourse to reductionist approach for a sentence individually. This in turn implies that we cannot identify some sentences as analytic which do not require any verification condition to be treated as true. Holism does not allow us to single out sentences and separate them off from the complex web. Third, the so-called analytic statements are not immune to revision. This radical claim holds that all sentences are revisionable taking into account new data available. Quine shows how the definition of the notion of momentum has been revised in the new light of fact and even revision of logical laws (law of the excluded middle) was also proposed for simplifying quantum mechanics. Finally, the idea of meaning lacks clarity and has no explanatory value. This view of Quine is actually an integral part of his another theory known as indeterminacy of translation. It is his behaviouistic theory of meaning that led Quine to hold such a view.
What is at issue: some reflections

The attack of Quine against analytic-synthetic distinction generated a heated debate in the philosophical circle. It was not any ordinary sort of criticism, rather it questioned some fundamental issues that became an integral part of philosophical discourse in philosophy and hence Quine’s criticism shook the foundation of many philosophical views. Actually the distinction was central to many philosophical schools and plenty of philosophical theories. The fierce debate that Quine’s attack ensued generated many new interpretations and explanations.

Quine further developed his positions in his *Word and Object* in 1960. From various sources we also get inklings that in developing his view on analytic-synthetic distinction he was in contact with (i. e. interacted with) prominent scholars of that time such as Rudolf Carnap, Nelson Goodman, Alfred Tarski and so on. In his essay “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” he made reference of Carnap several times. When I went through the aforesaid essay first I felt that in interpreting analyticity Quine has adopted a doctrinaire attitude and the extreme rigidity of explanation adopted by him could not retain the spirit of Kant’s distinction. His (Quine’s) insistence on clarification I found unreasonable and hardly beneficial for philosophical discussion. To put it in another way, ordinary language cannot cater the demand that Quine is making. Moreover, I started pondering over the issue how the Kantian distinction can be saved, if it can at all be saved without any prejudice, from this onslaught. Quine appears to consider the notion of analyticity as illusory and this made the entire critical project or topic in question on the edge of a precipice. In other words now the general problem of the *Critique* i. e. How are synthetic *a priori* judgements possible? becomes a non-issue. While deeply thinking over the issue it appeared to me that these two stalwarts of philosophy were actually emphasizing different facets of the analytic-synthetic distinction—whereas our German philosopher were obsessed in
epistemological side of the issue, the American philosopher remain engrossed with the metaphysical side. In order to suit his purpose, Quine interpreted the notion in his own way and then began to show the untenability of the notion.

The distinction, as Quine interpreted, seems to be based on the fact that some statements (say, analytic) are true by virtue of meaning alone and some statements (i.e., synthetic) become true or false by virtue of fact. But study of the first *Critique* did not give me this impression. When Kant defines analytic and synthetic judgements (“Either the predicate B belongs to the subject A, as something which is (covertly) contained in this concept A; or B lies outside the concept A, although it does indeed stand in connection with it”) and also subsequently states some of their characteristics perhaps the foremost thing that was in Kant’s mind was to accentuate the cleavage for his readers. Before that in the previous sections of the Introduction he in similar fashion distinguished between *a priori* and *a posteriori*. If Kant could not distinctly made these two contrasts, he hardly could have been successful in his principal aim, i.e., to take his reader of the critical project to argue in favour of the possibility synthetic *a priori* knowledge in different fields. Hence, perhaps Kant was obsessed to do so. But if the distinction does not exist at all, as Quine thinks it to be, the entire edifice of Kant’s philosophy seems to have been brought down. Can almost one hundred seventy years’ philosophy that developed in between, i.e., pronunciation of this distinction in 1781 and demolition of it in 1951, can bear such a shocking burn. As I was thinking agape all these things I decided to reread the distinction of Kant. During this rereading I found certain terms that Quine capitalized in his elucidation of the notion of analyticity. Quine was a doyen of philosophy of the last century and lived almost 92 years. He gave wide variety of philosophy though mainly remained in the analytical tradition. Kant also lived a quite long life of almost eighty years and is known for rigor of his thinking. Of course he was not philosophizing in analytical tradition. Analytical tradition came into being
almost after a century of his death. So he could not utilize this tool or methodology for philosophizing. As he ushered in the era of critical philosophy, Kant had in mind two prominent schools or traditions of his time—empirical and rationalistic traditions. He might have thought that bickering between these two schools might lose the spirit of philosophy. This is somewhat dogmatic to adhere to any school without a critical look. Hence critical outlook can retain the truth of both the schools and shed off things that are otiose and dogmatic. It is this belief that might have propelled to develop a philosophy of his type and also had to bear the burn of authorities—state authority as well as religious authority.

Kant in his definition and subsequent statement of traits of analytic and synthetic knowledge (in Kemp Smith’s translation), as we said in the preceding passage, used certain words which are susceptible to various interpretations if we belong to a different tradition and Quine exploited this opportunity to its fullest extent as he philosophized at a time which can be called heyday of analytical tradition. In asserting one characteristic of analytic judgement, soon after giving a typical example, Kant says that in analytic judgement we “do not require to go beyond the concept” (subject concept) to find that the predicate concept is bound up with the subject concept. Kant further says to “meet with this predicate, I have merely to analyse the concept, that is, to become conscious to myself of the manifold which I always think in that concept.”¹⁶ Though in the second edition of the 1st Critique Kant made slight changes, by and large he stuck to this view. This statement of Kant, his use of the expressions like ‘analyse’, ‘concept’ made room for further discussion by the analytic philosopher. As they are now equipped with new tool (tool of analysis), they used it, explained the notion (analyticity) it in their own way and found it easy to refute it. Among other writings of Quine “Two Dogmas” got widespread publicity as it demolished a well known distinction that has been used by philosophers for a long time to base many of
their views. In subsequent writings Quine sharpened his arguments and developed his other theses such as holism, indeterminacy of translation, behaviourism and so on. But a close scrutiny of his writings makes us think that germs of these contentions lie in his aforesaid essay. Being a logician and analytic philosopher he was justified to subject Kantian distinction to a scrutiny of logic and analytical method. But the jolt he gave wake up many philosophers and they came forward sometime to defend Kantian view and sometime to re-examine the views of both sides and sometime to rehabilitate the distinction by giving it more teeth. Actually Quine’s view posed a threat to any meaningful discourse. It is indeed a fact that day to day interaction is based on concepts like synonym, meaning etc. that Quine rejects and silence on these issues means to accept the impossibility of everyday discourse. Thus philosophers came forward in defense of long-established notion and distinction. Out of these thinkers mention must be made of Rudlof Carnap, P. F. Strawson and H. P. Grice and of Hilary Putnam. Let us get a glace of their views.

**Paul Grice and P. F. Strawson’s standpoint**

Chronologically Paul Grice and P. F. Strawson reacted to Quine’s rejection of the notion of analyticity earlier than other philosophers of analytic tradition. In 1956 they articulated their view in famous article “In Defense of a Dogma”. In that paper they argue that Quine’s argument may demonstrate some of the shortcomings of the distinction, but that does not warrant its rejection. If statements have meaning, and indeed they have meaning, then it definitely makes sense to ask “What does it mean?” They raised questions about Quine’s sceptical approach to meaning. They further attempted to show that Quine’s rejection of the notion of analyticity is based on his adherence to a notion of reduction which itself is a dogma. Let us see their arguments in a greater detail.
Grice and Strawson hold that even if there is plausibility in Quine’s criticism, it does not justify the rejection of the distinction. Stating various grounds for criticizing a distinction (e.g., uselessness of it, inadequately clarified, etc.) they welcome these sorts of criticism as that paves way for further discussion and bringing clarification. But they find a fundamental deviation in Quine’s criticism as he considers the distinction as totally illusory. His use of phraseology such as ‘unempirical dogma of the empiricists’, ‘metaphysical article of faith’ exhibits extreme illusoriness of the distinction. Grice and Strawson opine that there are many accepted distinctions in philosophy which also lack clarity though they have not been declared illusory. In the end of his essay he gave a positive account of his view which does not fit in with the distinction in question. Moreover, the rejection of analytic-synthetic distinction does not remain confined in this distinction alone. A close reading of his article, and this point is also corroborated by Grice and Strawson, that it is in conflict with a number of other distinctions, which are quite long-lasting and not dubious in philosophical tradition—such as *a priori* and *a posteriori*, necessary and contingent, etc. These Oxford philosophers show that the distinction has workable or functional utility and hence rejection of it is ‘absurd’ and ‘senseless’. They write: “…if a pair of contrasting expressions are habitually and generally used in application to the same cases, *where these cases do not form a closed list*, this is a sufficient condition for saying that there are kinds of cases to which the expressions apply; and nothing more is needed for them to mark a distinction.”

Another interpretation of Quine’s viewpoint may be that, as Grice and Strawson say, he is not actually denying that some sort of difference indeed exist between analytic and synthetic statements, rather the user of these expressions misunderstand the nature of and reason for the difference.

In showing that the notion of cognitive synonym lacks adequate clarity, Quine held that if this is the case, we cannot use ‘X means the same as
Y’. This ultimately brought him to reject the notion of analyticity and then analytic-synthetic distinction. Grice and Strawson arguing against this view say that it is too stringent to consider it unacceptable such as ‘X and Y have the same meaning’. In our everyday language we very often use such expressions. Hence it is a sort of absurdity to hold that co-extensional terms are not synonymous. Even renunciation of this view has greater implication. It will inevitably take us to the view of giving up the notion of meaning, a task that analytic philosophers so dearly try to explore. Let us see how Quine’s view will drift us towards such an unacceptable consequence.

Denying synonymous character of co-extensional and such other terms commonly known as synonymous will lead us to hold that translation of sentences of one language into sentences of another language is meaningless and that has little believability. Write Grice and Strawson: “If talk of sentence-synonym is meaningless, then it seems that talk of sentences having a meaning at all must be meaningless too. For if it is made sense to talk of a sentence having a meaning, or meaning something, then presumably it would make sense to ask “What does it mean?” These ordinary language philosophers try to define sentence synonym as two sentences are synonymous iff “any true answer to the question “What does it mean?” asked of one of them, is a true answer to the same question, asked of the other.” They argue that if our discourse about sentence-synonym is unintelligible, then our talk about sentence meaning becomes nonsensical. And if our talk about sentences having meaning is pointless, we are led to the unacceptable view that the notion of meaning is incomprehensible and therefore be given up. This consequence is contrary to reason as in our common parlance talk about meaning make sense and life revolves on this. There is no gainsaying the fact that in our everyday discourse we understand whether two sentences have the same meaning or not. If we go by Quine’s argument, the moot question that arises here is: why should we stop here? If we follow the same rigour we need
to give up other obvious and frequently used other notions such as sense, etc., and if it is done we involve ourselves in what Grice and Strawson say ‘philosopher’s paradox’. Hence they are of the view that rather then “examining the actual use that we make of the notion of meaning the same, the philosopher measures it by some perhaps inappropriate standard (…standard of clarifiability)“20, and as it fails to meet this inoperable standard, Quine declares it illusory.

Talking about clarity of a notion Quine uses an expression which seems to be a new one. It is ‘family-circle’. In latter Wittgenstein we have heard about family-resemblance. Almost in similar tone he clubs a number of expressions into one group which are in some way or other related and then call them family-circle, e. g. necessary, analyticity, synonymous, self-contradictory etc. If one expression of the group can be shown to have been satisfactorily explained, with the help of this expression, we can spell out other expressions of the group. Till here his claim seems to be plausible one. But going still further ahead he claims that in order to clarify one expression of the group, two conditions must be met. First, in such an explanation the explanator must not include or take help of other expressions from the family-circle. Second, this account must have the general form as an explanation e. g. in the case analyticity it requires to provide a catalogue of necessary and sufficient conditions, say, we need to state that a statement is analytic if and only if…. Grice and Strawson find these requirements insupportable. It is so as such an account is hardly achievable. Again, it cannot be ‘a necessary condition of an expression’s making sense’. In most of the cases such exposition is not realizable. This led Grice and Strawson to hold that not many “people would want to say that expressions belonging to either of these groups were senseless on the ground that they have not been formally defined … except in terms of members of the same group.”21 The pitfalls of Quine’s view are that his draconian requirements are too demanding which are scarcely
attainable. Not only that his choice of expressions in the so-called family-circle of analyticity has been done without good reasons. What is more important thing, and that has been pointed by these British philosophers, is that if an expression cannot be explained in Quinean stipulated way that does not mean that they cannot be explained in other ways.

Espousing his view of holism Quine holds that it is an erroneous view to think, following reductionist approach, that individual statements — statements considered segregated from its fellows — can be confirmed or disconfirmed. He firmly declares that a particular experience or a collection of experiences cannot be decided definitively as true or false without placing them in the network of our overall attitude. Grice and Strawson go on to show that there is no apparent conflict between Quine’s holisitic principle of confirmation/disconfirmation and still retain the notion of sentence synonym as valid. For them, Quine’s view is in harmony with and even an enhanced account of statement-synonym which follow the same spirit. They say it is enough to show “that two statements are synonymous if and only if any experiences which, on certain assumptions about the truth-values of other statements, confirm or disconfirm one of the pair, also, on the same assumptions, confirm or disconfirm the other to the same degree.”

Moreover, let us recall the view of Quine where he held that no statements are immune to revision. Pointing out our misconception to the view that some statements remain true irrespective of new light gained or new discovery Quine opined that it is in principle possible to maintain that any particular statement, whatsoever category it might belong, is open to revision. About this Grice and Strawson point out they are at on with Quine. However, revision of synthetic and analytic statements take different routes — in the former case they can be amended by confessing falsity of former view and in the latter case they could be corrected by ‘changing or dropping a concept or set of concepts.’ This proves that distinction between these two sorts of
statement—analytic and synthetic—has not been unreal or illusory as Quine wanted to prove. We can well say that even after admitting review we can differentiate between those statements where revision occurs as a shift of opinion only regarding matters of fact and the statements where this is ensued following a shift in the sense of the words. Thus the distinction is retained and has been accommodated within Quinean orbit. Summarizing their viewpoint, these philosophers say that conceptual revision (which they reformulate as “the same form of words, taken in one way (or bearing one sense), may express something true, and taken in another way (or bearing another sense), may express something false”) can come to aid to save the distinction between analytic statement and synthetic statement notwithstanding somebody’s adherence to revisibility-in-principle.

Thus we find from the penetrative analysis and stout defence put up these two British philosophers quite reasonable. The long article of Quine and his variegated approach was not successful to dismiss the distinction that has been accepted in philosophy for a long time. What is more interesting it appears that the distinction contains sufficient adaptability or flexibility to fit in views which are not typically Kantian rather anti-Kantian. If we consider Quine as a member of the latter group, Grice’s argument that the distinction in question and constant revisibility can also dovetail amply proves our claim. The discussion that was triggered off by Quine’s view about the distinction actually paved way for bringing more clarity to the distinction and the amazing resilience it had shown in almost last near about six decades is indeed spectacular.

**Carnap’s stance**

Quine had close contact with members of the logical positivists and reading of his essay “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” gives us the impression that he drew heavily from Rudolf Carnap’s view. But Carnap could not agree
with Quine’s view on analyticity and he prepared a reply of it though it was published after a lapse of considerable time (in 1990). In the section 4 of his essay Quine examines the statement “Everything Green is extended” and after examination he concludes that we cannot decide whether the statement is analytic or not. This indecision is not due to our incomplete understanding of the terms ‘green’ and ‘extended’. The uncertainty is due to vagueness in the notion of ‘analyticity’. Refuting this argument Carnap says that “the difficulty here lies in the unclarity of the word ‘green’, namely in an indecision over whether one should use the word for something unextended, i. e. for a single space-time point. In daily life it is never so used, and one scarcely ever speaks of space-time points.”23 Having understood that most of the Quine’s argument obtains plausibility when attempts are made to define analyticity in natural language, Carnap attempts to define analyticity in artificial language framework. In such an artificial language we need to simplify the issue by defining ‘green’ (or some synonymous term of it). Once it is accomplished, the difficulty no longer exists. This argument and also other arguments advanced by Carnap make me feel that Carnap is determined to retain the notion of analyticity in the realm of artificial language and Quine is intent on refuting it in the domain of ordinary language. Moreover, we get the impression that these two contemporary philosophers were at loggerheads about the very need of this notion (i. e. analyticity) in philosophical discourse. Whereas this prominent member of the Vienna Circle, being empiricist, held that though all knowledge in the ultimate analysis is founded on experience, he was not ready to hold that logical and mathematical propositions were also of the same type. They had a different footing. Quine, on the other hand, espoused an extreme empirical position by holding that all knowledge, including propositions of logic and mathematics, are empirical. Hence he could claim that no statement was immune to revision.
Hillary Putnam’s position

Hillary Putnam, who is regarded as a major figure of analytic philosophy of United States of America of the second half of the last century, analysing Quine’s argument in his “Two Dogmas” Revisited’ attempts to show that Quine is actually attacking two separate notions in his essay. These two notions are: analyticity and apriority. Attack of one notion entails an attack on other notion. We have seen before that Quine’s criticism of the notion of analyticity centered around the view that it involves circularity and vagueness. These become evident when we try to understand the concept analytically. About the former problem Putnam holds that the argument of Quine is not sound. About invoking the notion of synonym for understanding analyticity Putnam argues that it is linguistically useful notwithstanding the fact that we may not have clear definition of it. Quine also held that fallibilism spreads over every branch of knowledge without exception (as he says nothing is immune to revision). This view has the implication that even the laws of logic which have so far thought to be a priori are not a priori. Hence we need to remain prepared to consider new ideas such as revising logical laws if it is called for in scientific pursuit. On this point Putnam seems to deny there is a priori truth in the sense held before, but he also admits that contextual apriority can be proven to exist. Even holding this view implies that there is distinction between a priori and a posteriori which he seems to deny. Contextual a priority means that there is a category of statements which possess a type of a priority before the invention of the new theory which supersedes them. Logical laws enjoy this status. Thus the view Putnam advances criss-crosses with Quine’s view. Though he (i. e. Putnam) does not accept the notion of traditional a priority (as he accepts only contextual apriority), nevertheless he says that there are analytic truths. Interestingly, he hypothesizes that these analytic truths are revisable. He justifies this empiricist view by holding that ‘the logic of the world may be different from what we
suppose it to be.’ Putnam’s analytic truths are not standard or long-established \textit{a priori} truths. Thus he agrees with Quine that nothing is true only by dint of meaning. About revisibility also these two Harvard philosophers were at one.

\textbf{Saul Kripke’s scrutiny}

Saul Kripke, well-known for his exceptional brilliance and flair in philosophy, gave some view on the above issue which analysed and separated some threads of the concept of analytic, \textit{a priori}, \textit{a posteriori} and necessity which are very illuminating. His view is mainly found in his celebrated work \textit{Naming and Necessity}, a compilation of three lectures delivered at Princeton University in 1970. Whereas Kant combined certain concepts such as \textit{a priori} and necessity, \textit{a posteriority} and contingency, analyticity and apriority, Kripke seems to have separated them and showed that they can be recombined in a different way. In addition to that this book contains critique of descriptivists’ theory of naming and espousal of rigid designator theory. He makes a plea for non-linguistic and non-epistemic idea of necessity. He also advances the notion of \textit{de re} necessity which posed a shield against Quine’s onslaught to the necessity and analyticity (the way these notions have been explained by the positivist group of philosophers). Kripkean necessity is not necessarily \textit{a priori}. He showed that necessity can be conferred on \textit{a posteriori} knowledge as well. Once this argument is successfully carried through, it is an easy step to show that this view is compatible with Quine’s holism. At the same time it can also be shown that therein lies an important difference between contingent and necessary truth.

We have seen that Kripke advanced a view of proper name which he called ‘rigid designator’. Of course his notion of proper name is not Russell’s logically proper name, it is his ordinary proper name which is susceptible to descriptions. In calling a proper name rigid designator he wanted to show that proper names refer to the same object in all possible worlds. About the origin
and dissemination of a name he gave another theory which is known as causal historical theory. This theory expounds the process of origin of a name right from baptism and ways of its circulation. But his theory does not end here. It has greater implications. One such implication is that the notion of necessity which was inseparably related with *a priori* has been disentangled and thus now Kripke shows that necessary *a posteriori* knowledge is possible. Before him usually philosophers considered this category of knowledge is an empty category. But Kripke could show that as proper name contains necessity (as necessarily they designate same object in all possible worlds) and also its knowledge we obtain through *a posteriori* means, the combination of necessary *a posteriori* knowledge is clearly possible. Hence he refuses to use ‘*a priori*’ and ‘necessity’ interchangeably as it would then apply that there is a relation of identity between them. For him, the idea of ‘*a prioricity*’ is an epistemic idea and hence Kant defined it as that knowledge which is not dependent on sense-experience. With this Kripke traces a modal notion latent in the characterization of *a priori* knowledge. It is ‘can’ as *a priori* is sometimes interpreted as something that *can* be known independently of sense-experience. This ‘can’ in turn imply that it is *possible* to have this knowledge in the aforesaid way. And some “philosophers somehow change the modality in this characterization from *can* to *must*. They think that if something belongs to the realm of *a priori* knowledge, it could not possibly be known empirically”\(^24\). And it is here that Kripke records his dissent. Citing an example of knowledge gained through computing machine he shows that it is an obvious mistake to jump from ‘*can be known a priori*’ to ‘*must be known a priori*’\(^24\). Many philosophers fell prey to this conviction.

Analyzing the notion of necessity Kripke shows that it has been used in epistemological way as well as physical way (which includes physical and logical necessity). Kripke’s interest in necessity is in metaphysical sense. This sort of necessity has nothing to do with ‘anyone’s knowledge of anything’.
Even if it can be shown that both these concepts are vague, still in taking about these two concepts we answer to two different domains—one is epistemological and the other one is metaphysical. Again arguing against co-extensionality of these two terms (necessity and *a prioricity*) Kripke shows that there are necessary *a posteriori* truths. He writes: “The terms ‘necessary’ and ‘*a priori*’ … as applied to statements are not obvious synonyms. There may be a philosophical argument connecting them, perhaps even identifying them; but an argument is required, not simply the observation that the two terms are clearly interchangeable.”

In short Kripke teased apart these two conflated concepts—*a priori* and necessity—as they apply to unassociated things. In saying *a priori* an epistemic adverb he meant that it tells us a way of knowing something and works as a kind of justification that the knower has and can put forward. On the other hand necessity of a proposition does not depend upon the knower. Taking the example of mathematical fact Kripke shows that one could know it because it has been shown to be true by a computer. This mathematical fact would not be *a priori* even though it is a mathematical knowledge. But this mathematical truth, like other mathematical truth, will be necessary. Kripke is not denying any connection between two concepts in question. His intent is to show that they are different notions and we need to adduce arguments in order to prove their connection, if they have any tie.

Invoking the distinction between *de dicto* (‘about what is said’) and *de re* (‘about the thing’) necessity Kripke showed that the latter is a belief in modality whereas the former is a sheer advocacy of necessity. Then he said it is ‘a statement or a *state of affairs* that can be either necessary or contingent! Whether a *particular* necessarily or contingently has a certain property depends on the way it’s described.”
Another important idea he advanced in his book is that if something can be known *a priori* it does not imply that it cannot be known *a posteriori*. He goes on to argue, contrary to traditional belief, that some necessary propositions can be known *a posteriori*. This is another effort to extricate necessity from *a prioricity*. In the traditional view that necessary propositions are *a priori* he finds a fusion of the concepts of necessity and analyticity. Digging deep into the issue he showed that without much reflection philosophers have presumed that all necessary propositions are *a priori* as they considered analytic propositions as both *a priori* and necessary. Kripke considered this presumption as mistaken. Citing instances of identity statements he holds that whereas statement such as “Venus is Venus” is knowable *a priori* but the statement “The Morning Star is the Evening Star” is not so knowable. Mere reflection cannot tell us about the veracity of the latter statements. In actuality before its discovery by astronomical observation long ago by the Babylonians, it was not known. It only demonstrates that this source of this knowledge is *a posteriori*, not *a priori*. In spite of this it contains necessity as it is impossible to imagine the opposite. In order to show that we have necessary *a posteriori* statements which are of material origin he gives the instances such as “This table is made of (a particular piece of) wood” and “Water is H₂O” which is an instance of natural-kind essence. In order to show the viability of contingent *a priori* he defines the meter bar as ‘stick S at time t₀’. Metaphysical status of this statement is obviously contingent as we can conceive a counterfactual situation where stick could have been longer or smaller than the present ‘meter’. Moreover, it need not be same in all other alternative worlds. But looked from epistemic angle ‘meter’ is a rigid designator which by way of certain descriptors rigidly designate ‘stick S at time t₀’. It is known *a priori* as we do not learn it but only introduce it and hence known without investigation.
Kripke’s view seems to have disentangled different threads that his predecessors conflated into one. For example, he showed that modal status and epistemic status of a claim are distinct. The notion of necessity has also been extricated from *a prioricity*. Introduction of contingent *a priori* and necessary *a posteriori* was definitely an achievement in the arena of thought. Extrication of threads and determination of metaphysical status (of necessary and contingent truths), semantical status (such as determining truth value of analytic and synthetic statements by virtue of meaning) and epistemological status (i.e. knowability of *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge by reflection and observation) were definitely an improvement in the domain of analysis. With ingenuity Kripke asserted that sheer fact of learning something from experience does not establish that what we have learnt that cannot be necessarily true. With arguments he showed that a claim can be empirical as well as necessary at the same time. This sort of necessity is metaphysical and not logical. Hence he claims the possibility of necessary *a posteriori* truths. As we have seen he took the help of Frege’s puzzle of morning star and evening star in order to showcase his view. Similarly contingent *a priori* propositions could turn out to be false though its truth is knowable *a priori*.

Åsa Maria WIKFORSS in her “An a Posteriori Conception of Analyticity” holds that this new notion of necessity (i.e. Kripke’s *a posteriori* necessity) has suppleness as it can fit within Quine’s framework of philosophy. She writes that this notion of necessity does not “seem to be at odds with Quine’s holistic picture of belief revision and his skepticism about the *a priori*… it suddenly appeared possible to agree with everything Quine says about the positivists conception of analyticity, and yet hold on to the idea that there is an important distinction between contingent and necessary truths.”

But this attempt invites a further question. Now that necessity has been extricated from its epistemic bond which in turn led to the conclusion that necessary truths are not necessarily *a priori*, can it steer us to the view that
that all analytic statements are not *a priori*. WIKFORSS, taking a clue from Hillary Putnam who argued that Quine confused analyticity with *a prioricity* on account of positivists’ interpretations, maintained that the notion of analyticity *per se* is not epistemic. There might have a long history of the association of these two ideas—analyticity and *a prioricity*—but this connection may be an ‘historical accident’. Paul Boghossian says that even if analyticity can be construed as an epistemic notion yet this construal is neutral to it’s *a prioricity*, i. e. it does not guarantee that it is knowable *a priori*. He shows the views of externalist’s in support of this view.28 Tyler Burge, a distinguished contemporary philosopher of America, argued that even supporting the Quine’s rejection of the notion of analyticity and his (i.e. Quine’s) epistemic holism we can accommodate the idea that there are truths which are true by virtue of meaning and that they perform an important role in the realm of philosophy. This compatibility he shows by exhibiting that truths of meaning are contingent on facts of the external world and hence are *a posteriori*.

**Concluding remarks**

Thus we find that the concept of analyticity or distinction between analytic and synthetic statements that Kant formulated in his *Critique of Pure Reason* was a landmark distinction in the history of philosophy. Subsequent philosophers took this distinction as valid and no major challenge was thrown to Kant’s view for a long time. It is Quine who posed a real challenge to this notion as well to this distinction. The discussion that Quine’s view sparked off is still going on. It is sometimes held that Quine’s main target was logical positivists in general and Rudolf Carnap in particular. But a dipper analysis can show that Kant was also aimed in his attack as Quine’s view (negative as well as positive) was really a challenge to an idea of philosophy as an *a priori* discipline that Kant advocated in his long journey of philosophical enterprise. In spite of this Quine did a historic task by articulating his view with so much
rigour that it resulted in thorough scrutiny of the notion. During this scrutiny many more new concepts came to forefront, discussed and examined. It is indeed a momentous task that subsequent philosophers have performed. It is expected that the clarity that we have achieved out of this sustained discussion will go a long way to come out of traditional bonds/associations. Kant actually was harbinger of such efforts. He did this task by not conforming to his predecessors view and admitting a new combination that \textit{a priori} judgements can also be validly combined with their synthetic counterpart. Who is right—Kant or Quine? Time has not arrived to give a conclusive answer to this question (and Quine himself said no belief is immune to revision), but we cannot deny Kant’s contribution, as whether we refute him or strive to defend him, it is he (i. e. Kant) who is at the centerstage of discussion.

Right from the beginning our focal point was to show how Kant made it known to his readers, in his all the three \textit{Critiques}, the possibility of blending of synthetic judgements with \textit{a priori} knowledge. We have discussed in separate chapters his efforts made towards this direction in different spheres of knowledge. One moot question about his efforts is that whether synthetic \textit{a priori} knowledge, the existence of which he spotted, in his three \textit{Critiques} are of the same nature or is their variation in nature? Kant though explicitly did not address this issue, a minute study of his \textit{Critiques} gives us some clue to provide an answer to this debate. There are arguments which can apparently show that nature of synthetic \textit{a priori} judgements in different \textit{Critiques} is different. Arguments to the contrary can also be given. Let us take a look of this issue.

In the immediate previous passage we talked about different spheres of knowledge where Kant claimed to have noticed the presence of synthetic \textit{a priori} knowledge. In the first \textit{Critique} where the German philosopher is preoccupied with theoretical knowledge, his newfound variety of judgement (i. e. synthetic \textit{a priori} judgement) is a class apart from their usual previous
combinations— analytic *a priori* judgements and synthetic *a posteriori* judgements. In this new synthesis we find two distinct labels (‘synthetic’ and ‘*a priori*’) that Kant has given to this new sort of experience. His definition of these expressions are primarily negative (as when he says that a judgement is synthetic when its negation does not involve contradiction and it is *a priori* when it is not logically dependent on sense-experience). At the same time we may need to bear it in mind that the meaning of two combined expression may not always be summation of expressions combined. Kant’s ‘synthetic *a priori*’ knowledge instantiates our claim. Out of the combination of these two expressions Kant imparted it a sense which we may call its technical sense. In the 1st *Critique* its technical sense is: canons that articulate the conditions of the possibility of theoretical experience. For Kant, if human experience is to take place, and it is a matter of fact that it does take place, it must comply with certain conditions. If these conditions are not accepted then we are led to a conclusion akin to Hume’s philosophy or, to be more precise, his type of skepticism. Kant’s predecessors failed to discern this. Citing the instance of principle of causation—every event must have a cause—Kant shows that without presuming it to be true we cannot obtain any theoretical experience. In this sense Kant’s synthetic *a priori* knowledge of the 1st *Critique* acquires a technical sense. They state certain prerequisites for making possibility of our experience in spatio-temporal world. Recognition of this truth was a breakthrough in knowledge acquisition process.

Synthetic *a priori* knowledge of the 2nd *Critique* deals with supreme principle of morality what Kant called Categorical Imperative. Calling his ethics pure ethics Kant seems to say that his supreme principle has no spatio-temporal concern. If it is so, then the synthetic *a priori* principle of the 2nd *Critique* does not seem to stipulate conditions for the possibility of moral experience. But this is only one side of the issue. Kant does not claim that here synthetic *a priori* principle is constitutive. He clearly says that it plays a
regulative role. Hence, synthetic \textit{a priori} principle here provides conditions for the determination of ‘what we ought to do’. Therefore, it furnishes a necessary requirement for the determination of our obligation/duty.

The above view cannot be sustained when we find that Kant’s supreme principle instead of expressing conditions for determining what we ought to do actually says what we not to do: e. g. we should not do those actions whose maxims cannot be universalized. This negative formulation does not tell us (positively) what we should do. If it is so, i. e. if it fails to provide us a positive criterion, can then we say that Kant’s supreme principle furnishes us with conditions for determining what we ought to do. This forces us to opine that Kant’s synthetic \textit{a priori} judgement in the realm of moral experience is a test to determine what is impermissible and herein lies a difference with synthetic \textit{a priori} knowledge of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Critique.

The 3\textsuperscript{rd} Critique deals with synthetic \textit{a priori} knowledge in the realm of reflective judgement. Prima facie we get the impression that sense in which Kant employ the expression ‘synthetic \textit{a priori}’ in the third Critique is different from the senses of the previous two Critiques. A judgement of test is neither a theoretical or practical cognitive judgement. In this reflective realm the evaluator is not using any determinate concept. Aesthetic judgement being subjective experience cannot state something as objective condition. This gives us a feeling that sense of synthetic \textit{a priori} in the realm of test is different from other two domains.

In spite of above minute differences in natures of synthetic \textit{a priori} knowledge in three Critiques, there are some similarities too. Otherwise Kant’s critical project will fall apart. All these judgements (i.e. judgements of different domains as discussed in three separate Critiques) share certain common characteristics: they are necessary, contains universality and synthetic (synthetic in the sense defined in 1\textsuperscript{st} Critique). In spite of having
necessity and universality as their characteristics, they can be denied without involving contradiction. Again we find some crisscrossing relations in these three domains’ judgements. Universality and necessity found in the synthetic a priori judgement of the 1st Critique have objective validity. Interestingly though synthetic a priori knowledge of the 2nd Critique has objective validity though this objective validity here differs from the 1st Critique’s objective validity. Judgements of test is not claimed by Kant as objectively valid. The universality and necessity of the 1st and 2nd Critique have logical overtone, but aesthetic judgements’ universality and necessity do not have this logical undercurrent. It is universal and necessary as it extends this predicate ‘over the whole sphere of judging subject.’ Thus synthetic a priori knowledge somewhere is constitutive (say in the 1st Critique), somewhere regulative (say, in later two Critiques) (though in the 2nd Critique it is in the form of determination of what is impermissible, in the 3rd Critique it is in the sense of systematic investigation of our aesthetic experiences).

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Our Contributors
Notes to the Contributors
Our Publications
A PRIORI KNOWLEDGE*
NABANITA BHOWAL

Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason was historic in many important respects. It has made seminal contributions in the post-Kantian era. The critical philosophy that he espoused there, has been influencing philosophical discourse since 1781 onwards. In the Introduction of that book Kant asserts that we are in possession of certain modes of a priori knowledge. Actually there he talks about four sorts of judgements or knowledge: a priori, a posterior, analytic and synthetic. In order to clarify the nature of these judgements he contrasted a priori with a posterior knowledge and analytic judgement with synthetic one. The necessity of explanations of these judgements was caused by his indomitable desire to show the possibility of a particular combination of judgements which his predecessors mostly considered impossible. The combination was between synthetic judgements and a priori judgements. In brief Kant wanted to demonstrate how synthetic a priori judgements are possible. The detailed explanation of various sorts of judgements in the Introduction paved the way for his demonstration.

However, we should not presume that Kant was the first philosopher to talk about a priori knowledge in philosophy. The concept of a priori was, of course, in philosophy even before Kant. In a number of philosophers’ writings before Kant the notions of a priori and a posteriori was used, though of course without mentioning these terms. Like many issues in philosophy we can trace the mention of these sorts of knowledge in ancient Greek philosophy. For example, in the dialogue Meno (380 B. C.) where Plato talks about theory of recollection we find the hint of a knowledge which is akin to a priori knowledge. Again Aristotle in his Posterior Analytics draws our attention to this sort of knowledge. Leibniz also drew our attention by distinguishing between truths of reason and truths of fact. And Hume, who woke up Kant

* This paper is a subsection of my doctoral dissertation for which I am grateful to my supervisor Prof. Jyotish Chandra Basak.
from his dogmatic slumber, as Kant said, distinguished between relations of ideas and matters of fact. All these may be regarded as precursors of the aforesaid Kantian distinction. However, this should not give us impression that Kant was merely harping on the points that his predecessors spoke of by using different expressions. Kant’s contribution was that he brought the concept to the forefront of discussion and gave prominence and clarity to it. Introducing the concept (i.e. the concept of a priori) in the Introduction he contrasted it with the a posterior knowledge. While the two terms referred traditionally to forms of demonstration and also to the kind of knowledge gained in those demonstration, Kant extended their range beyond kinds of knowledge first to judgements and then to the very elements of knowledge.

There are writers who opine that the distinction drawn between a priori and a posteriori knowledge is epistemological as it contrasts two kinds of knowledge. Some even go to the extent of saying that the distinction connotes two kinds of epistemic justification, the sort of justification appropriate to knowledge.

II

The expressions a priori and a posteriori are basically of Latin origin. These literally mean ‘from what comes before’ and ‘from what comes later’. In the Introduction of the First Critique we find that Kant does not discuss at length the nature of a posterior knowledge. This shows that a posterior knowledge did not pose any big problem to Kant. Discussion at length the nature of a priori knowledge makes us thinks that it was his focal point. He defined a priori knowledge thus

Knowledge that is... independent of experience and even of all impressions of the senses... is entitled a priori, and distinguished from the empirical, which has its sources a posterior, that is, in experience.

The term ‘independent’ figured in the above definition is important. In saying that something is known independently of experience, it was not intended that we could have known it even if we had never had any experience. In fact, experience is a prerequisite for any sort of knowledge including a priori
knowledge. First of all, if we do not have any experience, our cognitive faculties would never have developed to the point that we could entertain any proposition at all. The intent is that once our faculties are ready to take part in the process of cognition and are functioning properly, there are some propositions that we can know to be true without any further need of experience. Again, some of component concepts in a given proposition are concepts that can only be acquired through experience, e.g., the concept of 'event', 'red', etc. In such cases experience would be necessary for us to grasp the proposition. But once we have framed it in our consciousness, we may be able to ascertain that it is true without any further aid from experience. This point can further be explained by taking the help of recent analysis of knowledge. It has been claimed that someone knows a proposition only if:

- He believes it,
- It is true, and
- He is adequately justified in believing it.

Experience may be necessary for the obtaining of belief condition, i.e. condition (i) of knowledge. But experience is not necessary in a given case for the obtaining of justification condition, i.e. condition (iii). Without this the knowledge will still qualify as a priori. Frege, in his Foundations of Arithmetic, also explain the concept of a priori in the same way. He there writes that a priori judgement is not a judgement about the conditions, psychological, physiological, and physical, which have made it possible for us to form the content of the proposition in our consciousness, nor is it a judgement about the way in which some other man has come... to believe it to be true;...it is a judgement about the ultimate ground upon which rests the justification for holding it to be true.¹

In the Introduction Kant asserts that all our knowledge begins with experience, but does not arise necessarily out of it. A close reading makes it

evident that, for Kant, all knowledge begins with experience since unless the senses stimulate the faculty of knowledge into action, knowledge in the sense of knowledge of objects cannot arise. Thus we can say that experience is the occasioning cause of our knowledge, as we have shown in a previous paragraph. When it is said that *a priori* knowledge is prior it actually means that it provides the principle of possibility of all our knowledge and also its principle of possibility is not dependent on experience.

In order make crystal clear the concept of *a priori*, Kant distinguishes between relatively *a priori* knowledge and absolutely *a priori* knowledge. For Kant relatively *a priori* knowledge is not *a priori* proper. It is not so as it ultimately depends, directly or indirectly, on experience. He gives an instance to prove his point: ‘This house will fall down if its support is withdrawn’. This is a relatively *a priori* judgement because though it is not based on the observation of the actual fall of the house, still it is deductible from an empirical general rule ‘All material bodies fall down when their supports are withdrawn’ along with the statement that this house is a material body. *A priori* knowledge is absolutely independent of experience in the sense that it is neither immediately based on sense observations nor mediatly based on experience by way of being either an empirical generalization or deductible conclusion from an empirical generalization.

Kant also makes distinction between pure and non-pure *a priori* knowledge. An *a priori* knowledge is pure if it does not contain an element of empirical knowledge. To put it otherwise, an *a priori* knowledge is pure if the judgement as a whole is *a priori* and all its constituent concepts are *a priori*. It may happen that a judgement as a whole is *a priori* but at least one of its concepts is empirical. Such judgement has been given the name non-pure *a priori* judgement, e.g., ‘Every event has a cause’, the concept of ‘event’ being empirical. Some commentators, however, (e.g. Korner) are of the opinion that an *a priori* judgement consists of *a priori* concepts and an *a posteriori* judgement consists of *a posteriori* concepts. However, this interpretation is not
defensible. For Kant, a judgement consisting of a posteriori concepts may yet be a priori, though, of course, non-pure a priori. To prove this point we can give the example ‘All red flowers are red’ is a priori, being analytic, although both its subject and its predicate concepts are a priori. Thus, we can say that whether a judgement is a priori or a posteriori does not depend on the nature of its constituent concept. Kant argues in various ways that they (a priori knowledge) are not only independent of experience, but also even the conditions of experience.

Kant gives us two criteria of a priori knowledge: necessity and strict universality. In the ultimate analysis it appears that both the criteria are different sides of the same coin. By necessity Kant means the impossibility of the opposite. Kant distinguishes between two senses of impossibility - logical and transcendental. A proposition is logically impossible if it is self-contradictory, i.e. one which either involves or can be shown by analysis to involve an explicit concept of contradiction. A logically possible proposition is transcendently impossible if the state of affairs projected by it is unconstructible, i.e. incapable of exhibition in intuition (in space and time).

For example, the proposition ‘All bodies are extended’ is necessary, because its opposition (contradiction) - viz, ‘some bodies are not extended’ - is the self-contradictory, being reducible to the contradiction ‘Some extended substances are not extended’. However, the proposition ‘Two straight lines cannot enclose a space’ is necessary, as its opposite - Two straight lines can sometimes enclose a space - is, though logically possible, yet transcendently impossible, in so far as the two-sided figures projected by it is not constructible, i.e., not in principle capable of exhibition in the intuition of space. Thus it can safely be said that for Kant a necessary proposition is one of which the opposite (contradictory) is either self-contradictory or unconstructible (i.e. counter-intuitive). Further deliberation will make it clear that a proposition which is necessary in the first sense is analytic, while a proposition which is necessary in the second sense is synthetically necessary. In this connection it will not be
out of place to state that, for Kant, a *priori* proposition is necessary in a wider sense than the one in which a merely analytic proposition is necessary.

Another important criterion is the universality. By universality is meant universal validity - validity under all possible circumstances. A true universal proposition in this sense does not admit of the possibility of an exception. For example, we cannot conceive of the possibility of an exception to the truth expressed by the proposition ‘7+5=12’. Universality in this sense should not be confused with universal quantification. These two should not be confused as same as not all universally quantified propositions are universal in this sense. For example, ‘All swans are white’ is universally quantified, but is not universal in this sense as it admits of the possibility of an exception. Moreover, a universal proposition in the Kantian sense may or may not contain a universal quantifier, e.g. ‘7+5=12’.

It may well be said that universality need not be a sign of *a priori* because it can well be explained empirically through induction. In order to ward off this confusion Kant distinguishes between comparative and strict universality. Inductive universality is only comparative, and not a strict one. An inductive generalization expresses a rule to which no exception has been found so far, but to which an exception is nevertheless allowed as possible. There is a conceivable circumstance in which it is possibly false. Hence it is not strictly universal. Strict universality consists in excluding the possibility of an exception and it is this feature which cannot be explained by induction. It is this sort of universality that Kant ascribes to *a priori* knowledge. Strict universality by virtue of its strictness is already a form of necessity.

A close study reveals that the purity of *a priori* knowledge is known by way of abstraction. For example, *a priori* forms of intuition - space and time- are discovered by abstracting from experience everything which the understanding thinks through its concepts thus isolating sensibility and then separating off everything which belongs to sensation, so that nothing may remain except pure intuition and the mere form of appearances, which is all
that sensibility can supply a priori. The same is equally true for the a priori concepts, categories, which are the a priori conditions upon which the possibility of experience rests. These remain as underlying grounds when everything empirical is abstracted from appearances. Establishing the purity of a priori principles, however, itself requires a criterion as otherwise it will be impossible to ascertain when the process of abstraction has reached its terminus in the a priori. The criteria of universality and necessity are used to registrar the arrival at an a priori judgement or element. If this intuition or concept necessarily holds for every experience then it is a priori. Kant uses this argument on several occasions. From the analysis of a priori knowledge and judgements Kant moves quickly into the proofs for the existence of a priori principles. The first proof appeals to their necessary role in experience. In the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason Kant asserts that it is possible to show that pure a priori principles are indespensible for the possibility of experience, and so prove their existence a priori. Otherwise how could experience derive its certainty, if all the rules, according to which it proceeds, were always themselves empirical, and therefore contingent, asks Kant. Here the purity of the a priori is used to support its universality and necessity.

III

Since the publication of the first Critique it was a common practice for philosophical circles to think that the notions - such as a priori -necessity, a posterior-contingency - coincide though they are not exactly synonymous. It was also believed that pairs such as - a priori - contingent and a posterior- necessary are not compatible or cannot go together. This common belief got a shock from the American philosopher Saul Kripke. Kripke in his Naming and Necessity tries to show that there is no reason to interlink these concepts. It is this issue that will be discussed in this section.

Kantian exposition of the concept of a priori judgement did not remain static. Rather it has raised several vital philosophical questions which were
addressed by his successors. From our preceding discussion of *a priori* knowledge it can be seen that this concept revolves around a three crucial distinctions: first, the epistemological distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge, second, the metaphysical distinction between necessity and contingency, and finally, the semantical distinction between analytic and synthetic truth. Moreover, some of the pertinent questions asked about *a priori* knowledge are: What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for one’s having *a priori* knowledge? Can we humans satisfy those conditions? Are every proposition knowable *a priori* are analytically as well as necessarily true? Can there be *a priori* knowledge of some synthetically true propositions or of some contingently true propositions? W. V. O. Quine’s attack in his ‘Two Dogmas of Empiricism’ has made the notion a bit more complicated and what is being asked now is whether the very notion of *a priori* knowledge is philosophically misguided.

In order to give clarity to the concept of *a priori* and to pave the ways for proving his overriding aim (how synthetic *a priori* judgements are possible?) Kant takes recourse to semantical, epistemological and metaphysical explanations: semantical distinction between analytic and synthetic truths, epistemological between *a priori* and *a posteriori* truths, and a metaphysical distinction between necessary and contingent truths. Since then it has become almost customary to equate *a priority* with necessity and *a posteriority* with contingency. This was taken for granted by philosophers. However, in the second half of the twentieth century Saul Kripke made an effort to break this myth. Contrary to Kant’s claim Kripke shows that there are necessities which are very much *a posteriori* and also there are *a priori* contingent truths. Kripke argues the above mainly in his *Naming and Necessity* and in his essay ‘Identity and necessity’. *Naming and Necessity* was a transcript of three lectures that Kripke delivered at Princeton University, U S A. It is mainly a critique of descriptivist theories of proper names which are
attributed to Frege, Russell and Wittgenstein. Descriptivist holds that proper names are cognized by virtue of their association with a description or cluster of descriptions. However, Kripke considered this view as a flawed one and advocated an alternative theory what he called causal theory of reference. Taking recourse to modal logic he tried to substantiate his claim that proper names are rigid designators. It is mainly in the third chapter of the book that he cracked the usually held association between necessity and a priority and contingency and a posteriority. Hilary Putnam in his "The Meaning of 'Meaning" comments that since Kant there has been a split between philosophers who thought that all necessary truths were analytic whereas another group thought that some necessary truths were synthetic a priori. But none of these philosophers thought that a metaphysically necessary truth could fail to be a priori. It is exactly here wherein the importance of Kripke's argument lies. In order to prove his points Kripke takes the help of Descriptivist theory of names, causal theory of reference, the notion of rigid designator, and modality. In the notion of modality we find the concept of possible worlds. Possible worlds are imagined worlds where we could think of ways how things could have been. It is understood and compared with actual world. Actual world is the world the way things actually are. The concept of possible worlds is used to explain modal notions like logical possibility, necessity and contingency.

Kripke's main aim was to remind that three notions - necessity, analyticity, and a priority - are conceptually distinct and that we should not use these three labels interchangeably. Kant has claimed that sense experience does not teach us that something could not have been otherwise. For Kripke this claim would have been plausible if it would have meant that sense experience by itself is not sufficient to teach us that something is necessary,

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that some additional a priori element is required. While classifying knowledge
of necessity as a priori, Kant in fact has assumed that experience is never
required, apart from any a priori element, to teach us that something is
necessary. It is here that Kripke disagrees with Kant. Kripke in his Naming and
Necessity gives a number of examples of such a posteriori necessities.
Moreover, he is of the opinion that in addition to a posteriori truths that are
necessary, there are also a priori truths that are contingent. The connection that
Kripke accepts is that whatever is analytic is also a priori and necessary. On
the other hand, a posteriori necessity or an a priori contingency will be
synthetic. Let us see how Kripke shows this.

One of the examples given by Kripke about contingent a priority is

case of ‘meter’. Meter is held to designate rigidly a certain length, the
reference-fixing specification being that it is to be the length of a certain bar
that it had at a certain time t. For Kripke, it is a priori that the bar was one
meter long at a particular time and at the same time it is also contingent on
account of the fact that the temperature and hence the length of the bar could
have been different what they were actually at that specified time. By this
example Kripke underscores the conceptual distinctness between the
categories of necessity and a priority.

In addition to above points Kripke shows in Naming and Necessity that
there are a posteriori judgements. We need to keep in mind that Kripke’s
main concern in that book about naming. It is with reference to the above that
he brings the issue of a posteriori necessity. He shows what is essential and
what is accidental for individuals such as Hesperus or Aristotle. Next he takes
examples of natural substances such as gold/water, then objects of natural
kinds such as tigers or cats and ultimately instances of natural phenomena
such as heat or light. In the 3rd lecture Kripke tries with a number of examples
to prove that there are certain facts that are necessary though they are
knowable only a posterior. It is a known fact that Aristotle taught Alexander.
We can imagine, he says, a counterfactual situation or a possible world where
Aristotle need not have taught Alexander. Again, ‘Hydrogen is made of atoms containing on electron’ is an example of a posteriori necessity. This is a necessary proposition as hydrogen could not have a different atomic structure. Anything with a different atomic structure would not be hydrogen. And this fact is definitely known a posteriori. Physicists discovered this truth after a great number of detailed experiments and observations. Thus Kripke claims that the above statement is necessary as well as a posteriori. Another obvious example of a posteriori necessity is identity involving proper names; e. g. Marilyn Monroe is Norma Jeane Baker. This is also necessary as Marilyn Monroe could not have been Norma Jean Baker. This would require her somehow not to have been herself, which would be absurd. Again, the statement is not a priori. Somebody could understand this statement perfectly well and yet not know it is true. It is easily understandable in an imaginary situation where someone who grew up with Norma Jean but lost touch with her, and had heard of Marilyn Monroe but not seen any of the films.

In ‘Identity and Necessity’ also Kripke is engrossed with the question of necessity, contingency etc. He raises the question how are contingent identity statements possible as whatever exists is necessarily self-identical? He answers by saying that contingent identity is not possible though contingent identity statements are possible. It is possible because referring expressions in some identity statements pick out different objects at different possible worlds.

Edmund Husserl in his Logical Investigations talks about a priori knowledge. He is at one with Kant in saying that it has two features that we discussed in detail. However, Husserl thinks that the notion of a priori needs closer examination. He writes that this sort of knowledge (a priori) is obvious and even trivial but ‘its systematic demonstration, theoretical pursuit and phenomenological clarification remains of supreme scientific and philosophical interest, and by no means easy.’ There he talks about formal a priori and pits it against material a priori. Pure logic including mathematics

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covers the whole domain of the formal *a priori* knowledge. In addition to that, Husserl opines, all domains of knowledge contain an *a priori* part. This rest of the portion he calls material *a priori*. This formal and material *a priori* is another way of characterizing* analytic *a priori* and synthetic *a priori*, says Dermot Moran. The expression *a priori* undergoes a considerable change in Husserl’s philosophy. He talks about objective *a priori*. He explains objectivity as the place where the *a priori* is exercised.

Kripke’s examples of empirical identity statements such as ‘Hesperus is Phosphorus’, statements of material origin, such as ‘This lectern was originally made of (a particular piece of) wood’ and statements of kind essence and identity, such as ‘Gold has atomic number 79’ have some special significance. Since these are not *a priori*, they cannot simply be true by convention. If conventionalism was already on the wane, Kripke’s examples, and similar ones from Putnam seemed to kill it decisively. As these truths are not logically necessary, but are still necessary absolutely, they have sometimes been called ‘metaphysically necessary’. However, it needs to be noted that even if these necessary truths were not true by convention, they might still owe their necessity to convention. The arguments for proposed necessary *a posteriori* truths each involve commitment to some general principle, for instance, that if a material object originates in bit of matter M, then it essentially originates in M. These principles are plausibly *a priori*, for the arguments rest on the familiar appeals to what we can imagine, or would be willing to say. The conventionalist proposal, then, is that these principles are analytic, and that while these conventions do not determine which modal statements are true (what bit of matter something did originate in), they are responsible for these truths being necessary (the principle determines that nothing with a different origin can count as this object). So conventionalism

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does not require that all necessary truths are true by convention, but only why they are necessary.

The above view and other modern elaborations make it clear that being *a priori* is to be sharply distinguished from being necessary, from being true purely in virtue of meaning, and from being knowable infallibly. Examples and reflection on the nature of the properties both show that there are *a priori* propositions which are not necessary. If a proposition is to be knowably true *a priori* in the actual world, it requires only that there is some non-empirical route to its justifiability; but that is very different from necessary. Conversely, in the presence of examples of the necessary *a posteriori*, it is clear that a proposition’s being necessary does not ensure that it is *a priori*.

The above remarks, however, do not conflict with the classical rationalists’ view which has received further elaboration in recent work, that all necessity can be traced back ultimately to the *a priori*. The non-coincidence of the *a priori* and the necessary serves just to emphasize how much work any contemporary development of that rationalist view has to do in explaining its notion of the source of necessity.

To say that a proposition is *a priori* is also not to be committed to the view that it is true purely in virtue of meaning. Something can be both knowable in a way which is justificationally independent of experience, whilst also being true in virtue of its truth condition holding, just like any other truth. Quine decisively refuted the idea that anything could be true purely in virtue of its meaning.

A priori justification is not infallible justification. Just as one may be justified in believing an ordinary empirical proposition that is subsequently revealed on empirical grounds to be false, so one may be justified in believing an *a priori* proposition that is subsequently revealed on *a priori* grounds to be false. It seems that *a priori* propositions cannot be defeated by wholly empirical information, i.e. that they may still be experientially indefeasible.
In addition to proper names, says Kripke, a posterior nouns are found in certain simple terms which designate natural substances (such as water), some simple terms which designate natural kind objects and also to certain simple terms which designate natural phenomena (e.g. heat). Citing examples of all these three sorts - 'Water is H2O' for natural substances, 'Whale are mammals for natural kind object and 'Heat is random molecular motion' - Kripke argues that all these are a posterior and is proved by the fact that they are scientific conclusions. We know that scientific conclusions are arrived at only taking recourse to a posterior means or appeal to sense experience. Moreover, all these facts could not have been otherwise and hence they are necessary. His reason for saying this is that a substance having a composition other than H2O would not be called water also a non-mammal could not be whale and so on. Examples taken by Kripke are both from proper nouns and mass or common nouns.