

## Preamble, §§1–3

The *Preamble* covers roughly the same ground as the *Introduction* to the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A-Introduction to the *CPR*). In quick succession, Kant introduces some key ideas and distinctions.

1. The source of metaphysical cognition cannot be empirical. Why not? (§1)
2. Briefly explain the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgements, and give an example each. (§2a)
3. Why are analytical judgements *a priori*? (§2b)
- 4.★ Explain why the proposition ‘ $7 + 5 = 12$ ’ is synthetic. (§2c)
5. How does Kant characterise statements of metaphysics? (§2c)

*Background Information.* (a) For Kant, ‘science’ is a systematic body of knowledge that contains indubitable truths and is thus apodictically (demonstratively) certain: *scientia* (or *ἐπιστήμη*, *episteme*). Thus, Descartes: “Concerning objects proposed for study, we ought to investigate what we can clearly and evidently intuit or deduce with certainty, and not what other people have thought or what we ourselves conjecture. For knowledge [*scientia*] can be attained in no other way.”<sup>1</sup> (b) The distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* is an *epistemic* one: the question is how something *x* is known. If we know *x a priori*, then we know *x* independently of experience, and thus, in a sense, ‘prior’ to, or before, experience. And if we know *x a posteriori*, we know *x* by means, or in virtue, of experience. In contrast, the analytic/synthetic distinction is a *semantic* one: the question is what makes a statement true. If a proposition *p* is analytic, *p* is true in virtue of the meaning of its constituent terms. And if *p* is synthetic, then *p* is made true by the world, so to speak. (There is a further *modal* distinction between necessary and contingent statements.) (c) The *principle of sufficient reason* (§3) states that every fact has an explanation; there are no brute (inexplicable) facts. Alternatively, there is a reason (or cause) for everything. Leibniz: “Our reasonings are based on *two great principles, that of contradiction*, in virtue of which we judge that which involves a contradiction to be false, and that which is opposed or contrary to the false to be true. And *that of sufficient reason*, by virtue of which we consider that we can find no true or existent fact, no true assertion, without there being a sufficient reason why it is thus and not otherwise, although most of the time these reasons cannot be known to us.”<sup>2</sup> (d) The allusion to Locke (§3, 4:270): he discusses how ‘very short’ or limited our knowledge of *substances* is. We know that certain qualities systematically go together (sweet, round and red in an apple, say), but we do not know why these qualities must go together.

1 Rules for the Direction of the Mind, Rule Three, AT X 366. In Cottingham, J., Stoothoff, R. & Murdoch, D. (1984) (eds.), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Vol. I (p. 13). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2 Leibniz, *Monadology*, §§31–2.