

The Main Transcendental Question II, §§14–39

So far, Kant has explained how synthetic *a priori* judgements are possible in mathematics. But as we have seen, since metaphysics is not mathematics, Kant takes up the second question raised in §5 (4:280), *viz.* how *pure natural science* is possible. (Think of it as moving from intuitive to discursive synthetic *a priori* judgements.) In the previous chapter, Kant has deduced (i.e. justified) space and time as pure forms of sensibility; now, he aims to deduce the pure concepts of the understanding. Hence, the sections correspond to the *Transcendental Analytic* of the *CPR*, and fall into three parts. (i) §§14–19 are preliminary and discuss nature and the possibility of its cognition in experience; (ii) §§20–26 concern the analysis of experience and are the heart of Kant’s positive or constructive epistemology; (iii) §§27–39 return to ‘Hume’s problem’ and present Kant’s solution to it.

1. Kant characterises ‘nature’ in two ways: what is the difference? (§14, 4:294; §16, 4:295–6; see also §17, 4:296–7, and §36, 4:318)
- 2.★ In §15 (4:294–5) Kant claims there already *is* a pure natural science. What is this?
- 3.★ Kant says the two questions that express his project in §17 are equivalent; yet he prefers the first formulation. Why? (4:296–7)
4. Explain the difference between judgements of experience [*Erfahrungsurteile*] and judgements of perception [*Wahrnehmungsurteile*]. (§§18–9, 4:297–9)
- 5.★ What is Kant’s point about ‘objective validity’ [*objektive Gültigkeit*] and ‘necessary universal validity’ [*notwendige Allgemeingültigkeit*]? (§19, 4:298–9)
6. In §20 (4:300–2), Kant explains how experience is possible. He also mentions ‘pure *a priori* concepts’ [*reine Verstandesbegriffe a priori*], such as *cause*. What is the role of such concepts?
- 7.★ How does Kant derive the pure concepts of the understanding in §21 (4:302–3)? Do you find this procedure plausible?
8. Try to sketch Kant’s key thought regarding the possibility of experience. (§§21–2, 4:304–5)

Note. The questions above only relate to §§14–22. The present sections correspond to some of the most difficult passages in the *CPR*, namely:

- (a) §§21–2: the so-called ‘metaphysical deduction’ (*CPR* B159; A66–83/B91–116) and some parts of the ‘transcendental deduction’ (A84–130/B116–69);
- (b) §§23, 34: the ‘schematism’ chapter (A137–47/B176–87);
- (c) §23: ‘system of principles’ (A158/B197ff.), including the table in §21 (4:303);
- (d) §24: ‘axioms’ (A162–6/B202–7) and ‘anticipations’ (A166–76/B207–18);
- (e) §§25–6: ‘analogies’ (A176–218/B218–65) and ‘postulates’ (A218–26/B265–74);
- (f) §§30, 32, 34: ‘phenomena/noumena’ (A235–60/B235–315).