

postriori only in this state.

Endnotes

- ¹ Obviously, Kant's employment of the *a priori* is not devoted to the theory of knowledge; he has extended his formal a priorism to moral as well as aesthetic domains; however, we confine ourselves here to his *Critique of Pure Reason*.
- ² For Husserl discussion of formal and material *a priori* see: *Ideas*, par. 10; also see Sheler, *op.cit.*, chapter on "*a priorism*".

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returning to the pre-predicative, it is clear that the *a priori* is given in experience. (Farber, 1943, 506)

But if the *a priori* is given in this way, it does not mean that every given is *a priori* and there is nothing that is *a posteriori*. The *a priori* always takes place in relation to a given; meanwhile, we can reconsider the distinction between it and the *a posteriori* from the standpoint of the given and the subject. In other words, if the *a priori* is given, it is given as immanent in the given: the *a posteriori* is sensory which calls for and immediately finds meaning. Yet in a sense it already possesses meaning beforehand; it is as if it had always already found it. This is why the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* are indiscernible in the act of perception itself. On the basis of reflection, however, we can begin to distinguish between them. The *a posteriori* is what I can learn, the given which instructs me. In sum, all things that I have to discover and learn on the basis of their presence are *a posteriori*.

This is why we can say that in a certain sense everything is *a posteriori*: everything that the *a posteriori* points out to me is irreplaceable and new, and the exploration of the world is infinite. For the character of the *a posteriori* is to be always both complete and incomplete. It is complete because a meaning appears immediately, even if this meaning involves the ambiguity of a certain form or even a lack of meaning; it is complete because it thrusts me into the world immediately. It is incomplete because imagination may incite understanding and because I always undertake active syntheses on the basis of the given, testing the *a posteriori* taken as *a posteriori* by forcing the given to offer itself more explicitly. The *a posteriori* is therefore the content; hidden by the indeterminable totality of things, it renders the world inexhaustible.

5. Conclusion

As the above analysis shows, the *a priori* is always immanent and given in the *a posteriori*. The subject, indeed, directs itself to the object, the object whose form and content are revealed simultaneously. This immanence of the *a priori* in the *a posteriori* establishes that the *a priori*--characterized by its essentiality to the subject and to the object--is itself given: that is, it is experienced and resides in the given. This means that the *a priori* in its original state --i. e., its latency--is thus given, before reflection makes it explicit. And it is in this state that the *a priori* justifies its name by performing its function and by being essential to the object and necessarily attached to it. This state of the latency is fundamental for the *a priori*, because the *a priori* appears as *a priori* and as discerned from the *a*

this case may be that the categorical intuition apprehending them is independent of all sensory intuition. (Farber, 1943, 326)

Therefore, when it is a question of material essences, Husserl seems to say that eidetic intuition must be founded on sensory intuition. The *a posteriori* would thus be reabsorbed into the *a priori*, and would then be coextensive with it. All material essences would be *a priori*, and there would be no need to distinguish them from the general ideas derived from empirical intuition: through the intermediary of essences, the object itself would be immanent in the subject. This result, at least, implies that the *a priori*, insofar as it is immanent to *a posteriori*, risks losing its formal purity. It is true that Husserl strives to show that the formal is constituted in the material (Husserl, 1983, § 10)² and the purity is constituted in experience. The *a priori* first of all signifies objectivity, and objectivity implies intersubjectivity: the object for me is an object for all, but it is for me that it is for all. This assumption does not guarantee the radical exteriority of the object to the subject. It does not justify defining truth as adequation rather than by formal criteria. To assure these things, we must return to the intentionality of the subject as revealed in the privileged and incomparable experience of perception. It is what Husserl does in returning to the pre-predicative. Moreover, it is not only a realist presupposition that requires this recourse to experience, but also the decision to proceed to a genealogy of logic. The origin is not the immediate, for what we are tempted to consider as immediate is the result of laborious mediations, and our perception is very often a science unaware of itself. But it is true conversely that logic can be perception lacking self-awareness.

If the formal must be understood, from the static point of view, only in terms of formalisation and without recourse to concrete examples, then, from the genetic standpoint, the meaning of the formal is rooted in the material. One could say that the ultimate meaning is to have meaning and that experience is always the possibility of meaning. If it pays respect to the idealizing activity of science, phenomenology makes clear the primordial character of experience and the irreducibility of sensory to logical evidence. This is indicated by the transition from the formal to the *a priori*; the latter does not make a new form of the formal appear, but proposes a return of the formal toward the material. It would be seen that *a priori* phenomenology is not a philosophy of the subject in its relation to the world. The subject is founded on the authority of the real at the very moment that it seems in turn to found this authority. Thus, in

presented as analogous. But, actually, the eidetic intuition presupposes empirical intuition, in which the *a priori* first given --insofar as it is essential to the object. In brief, eidetic intuition cannot be a criterion for the *a priori*; its evidence is not primarily logical, but sensory. It will be clear if we note, at least in this point, two results of phenomenology: (a) As intentional analysis, it strives to discern the types of evidence or presence corresponding both to the nature of the correlates and to the mode of intentionality; here it distinguishes between sensory intuition, which intends and discovers the real object, and eidetic intuition, which intends and discovers the ideal object. (B) As "genetic," it returns to the pre-predicative and encloses the immanence of the ideal object in the real object, of eidetic intuition in empirical intuition.

Now, these two results seems to be valid and equally applicable to the *a priori* for both of them are possible with respect to the *a priori*. On the one hand, reflection can be Kantian (consciously or not) by isolating the *a priori* as formal and making it explicit in apodictic propositions. In principle this kind of reflection involves an eidetic intuition of the *a priori* although in fact this eidetic intuition is perhaps never free from some compromise with empirical intuition. On the other hand, pre-reflective thought experiences the *a priori* in the *a posteriori*: the *a priori* is given to it implicitly in experience; it is totally immanent in the *a posteriori*. In other words, the *a priori* can be given in two very different ways: First, though it occurs only if sought for, is through an eidetic intuition. Second, the *a priori* is given, though without being sought and without being identified, is by an empirical intuition. Therefore, the *a priori* is given as evident when there is logical evidence, and as immediate in the case of sensory evidence. It can be given in the former sense only on the condition of being given first of all in the latter.

Therefore, these kinds of intuition are original; each furnishes its object "in its person selfhood" (Husserl, 1983, §9) and independently of the other. But they are also bound together: the *a posteriori* intuition of the individual can be converted into an intuition of its essence, and conversely; there is no intuition of an essence if we do not have the free possibility of turning toward a corresponding individual, and if we cannot become conscious of an example to illustrate this essence. (§ 10)

Yet, when he affirms that what is given in eidetic intuition is a pure essence, (§9) Husserl does not add that this essence is given in the object taken as an example. There may be cases where an essence cannot be manifested in an example: when it is a question of the primitive concepts belonging to a pure grammar and defining the form of a proposition; in

case, this form is *a priori* because it is the condition for the possibility of the pure knowledge. Presupposed its reality and grounded by the *a priori*, this possibility is an intentional possibility and not a merely logical one; it is a "possibility of" or a "possibility for". The categories do not possess a purely logical value; they are not limited to expressing the form of thought analytically. They "refer to the possibility, actuality, or necessity of things." (239, B267) In other words,

"Only through the fact that these concepts express *the* relations of perceptions in every experience, do we know their objective reality, that is, their *a priori* truth." (241, B269)

Consequently, if the *a priori* grounds the *a posteriori*, it always appears as given in experience. It is in this sense that the *a priori* is implanted in the *a posteriori*--an implantation that Kant has never allowed.

4. De-formalization of the A priori

To this view of implantation I would now supply a support from Husserl whose idea of *a priori* seems to help de-formalizing the *a priori* and extending its meaning. As Husserl wanted to pass from a formal logic to an *a priori* logic in order to found the first on the second, his logical studies "finally make possible the understanding of the phenomenal foundation of logic. It presents much needed material for his analysis of experience, and adds still more support to the claim to concrete investigations and results that had already been made with so much justification. This applies particularly to the analysis of 'the pre-predicative experience' and the 'origin-analyses' of logical concepts and forms." (Farber, 1943, 21).

In doing this, Husserl contributes in his own way to de-formalize the *a priori*: According to Husserl, the transcendental logic, in which the *a priori* is formulated, is a genetic logic which strives to reveal the secret of the constitutive power residing in the life of the subject. But perhaps this quest ends by dismissing the idea itself of constitution, and by making appear at the origin a given which is not a product, an act of seeing which is not an act of creating.

Given a genetic logic, Husserl presents his theory of pre-predicative. It is in this point that we can find that the *a priori* is given in experience: in returning to the pre-predicative and to the solidarity of eidetic intuition and the empirical intuition. These two kinds of intuition are first

To ground is to render possible, not in the order of fact, but in the order of reasons. It is not to cause or provoke, but to justify or authorize. If an object is grounded, the acting subject is too: we say that we have sufficient grounds for believing that. In this sense, a "ground" or "fundament" differs from a merely objective 'foundation': it can be employed in reference to a subject. To ground is to make something valuable for a subject. (Heidegger, 1962, 207-9) Since Kant defines the subject principally in terms of reason, to ground is for him to elevate to intellectuality. To render experience possible is to confer meaning on it: the possibility of being meaningful for a subject, in the sense in which Husserl says that the world as correlate is "meaningful" for *a priori* subjectivity. Here the presuppositions of Kant's thought come together: this meaning cannot directly belong to experience, which only furnishes a manifold. It must come from the subject who determines objects as phenomena by structuring this manifold:

"The intellectualist philosopher could not endure to think of the form as preceding the things themselves and determining their possibility. . . , so far is the matter (or the things themselves which appear) from serving as the [ground] . . . that on the contrary its own possibility presupposes a formal intuition (time and space) as antecedently given." (Kant, 1995, 280, A267-B323)

But sensibility is not the only source of the *a priori*. The fundament must also be intellectual: for experience to have a meaning it is not enough that a manifold be simply given in accordance with the subjective structure of sensibility. It must also be unified. Included in the principle of meaning, that is, the principle of the objectivity of the object--is the unity required by the "I think": "the necessary unity of consciousness, and therefore also of the synthesis of the manifold." (137, A109) The norms of intellectuality under which the manifold must be subsumed to render experience possible express the modes of unification of the manifold. Moreover, so close is the link between intuition and concept (ibid) that these modes of articulating the manifold also structure temporality, as indicated by Kant in his chapter on the schematism of the pure concepts of understanding. The form that grounds experience, which Kant sometimes calls "the objective form of experience in general," (239, A220) is therefore both sensible and intellectual as a result of the finitude of a knowledge selected to sensible intuition. In every

the understanding and can in fact be given in the apprehension of a phenomenon: if I do not objectify the arbitrary succession of my views of a house I apprehend; at the same time, I do objectify my successive apprehensions of a boat floating past me on a river. In fact it is experience which determines my thinking in causal terms in the latter case and in non-causal terms in the former case. It is experience that always tells me under which concept I must subsume an intuition, because it gives me the concept in the intuition. As an *a priori*, causality is experienced in the event; I can judge that a stone is warmed by the sun because I experience the sun as capable of radiation and as generating heat and life. We recognize in the sun the causality of the cause, the dignity of the substance which, as Kant says, is manifested "wherever there is action--and therefore activity and force." (Kant, 1995, 229, B250) Kant adds:

"When we seek to explain what is to be understood by substance, and in so doing are careful to avoid the fallacy of reasoning in a circle, the discovery of an answer is no easy task." (229, B250)

But experience shows us the object as the subject of causality, producing the effect by itself. Kant says:

"If the reader back to our proof of the principle of causality . . . he will observe that we were able to prove it only of objects of possible experience." (253, B289)

It indicates that the *a priori* has as much need of experience as experience has need of the *a priori*. The *a priori* is enacted and realized by the *a posteriori*. Even the *a priori* is prior to the *a posteriori*--because it is valid in relation to it--one can say that it is discerned in it. Though he cannot dismiss this question, Kant does not accept this idea. Because by accepting it we should give the *a posteriori* and the experience the main role in the genesis--if at all-- of the *a priori*. This implies to say about the *a priori* what Kant says about the intuition, in its special sense for him. Experience in general implies a possibility of knowing a given in the *a posteriori* intuition and not to be acquired by the simple concepts. Then it can be said that knowledge is achieved by experience. The *a priori* needs experience because the former grounds the latter; the *a priori* is given in the *a posteriori* because it is the *a posteriori* that appears it.

experience is experience of an *a posteriori* given in empirical intuition. Pure intuition invokes a given only because it is already, if not *a posteriori*, at least sensible, and because sensibility is radically distinct from understanding. As a result, the kind of intuition that would furnish the *a priori* in the manner of a Cartesian *intuitus* or a Husserlian *Wesenshaft* does not occur in Kant. The *a priori* does not present itself as an item of knowledge. We are not forbidden to recognize it, but we recognize it as something proceeding from us which could not be given at the level of intuition. In this sense, the *a priori* is always prior to experience; and this priority has above all a logical meaning: Prior to experience means independent of experience and not compromised by it. Thus while empirical propositions concerning the matter of phenomena are particular and contingent, propositions concerning their form are necessary and universal. It is contingent that cinnabar is red; but it is necessary that any one thing have a causal relation of existence to some other thing. Necessity has a primarily logical meaning; it is defined as that whose contrary is contradictory: the impossible is the unthinkable.

Influenced by Hume, Kant thinks that experience does not present us with an incoherent series of appearances. He substitutes the synthesis affected by the *a priori* imagination for the principle of association ruling the empirical imagination: when

"I perceive that appearances follow one another . . . I am conscious only that my imagination sets the one state before and the other after, not that the one state precedes the other in the object. In other words, the objective relation of appearances that follows upon one another is not to be determined through mere perception." (218-19, B223)

Furthermore, if causality (as a condition of objectivity) does not introduce an order into the course of time as subjectively apprehended, there is, strictly speaking, no object for me:

"Appearances, as objects of experience, are themselves possible only in conformity with the law of causality." (219, B234)

It presupposes that cosmological necessity (i.e., factual necessity) can only be apprehended as logical necessity. Actually, Kant's examples suggest that the idea of a necessary relation need not be introduced by

the subject is attuned before all experience; yet the mind does not know that it is linked with this meaning until experience presents it. It is obvious that such proximity of the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* in experience does not allow distinguishing them from each other. For if the *a priori* is immanent in the *a posteriori* and can be isolated only in experience (unlike Kant), then there are no logical or formal criteria to define it. If the *a priori* is indeed a meaningful objective structure given in experience, we are not constrained to restrict it to the formal conditions of objectivity.

To take such a view of the *a priori*, we need, first of all, give up presupposing a Kantian distinction between intuition and concept, and as well as consideration of the concept as prior to the experience, as if introduced into experience by the *a priori* activity of the subject at the point of the subject's origin. Yet in affirming that the *a priori* is given in the experience, we are not returning to Hume. For one can grant the *a priori* the privilege of always being already known-- thus the privilege of always being related to subjectivity and of appearing as an immediately comprehensible meaning. This priority is a primary indication of the *a priori* nature. Experience is our relation to phenomena, with sensibility as an intermediary. Its source lies in *a posteriori* intuition; for, as Kant puts it,

"the only intuition that is given *a priori* is that of the mere form of appearances, space and time.... But the matter of appearances, by which things are given, is in space and time, can only be represented in perception, and therefore *a posteriori*." (581, A720-B748)

Hence experience always involves acknowledging a given which must be received by sensibility and which cannot be justified by reason. This given is the material element that Kant opposes to the formal element by assigning the latter to the *a priori* knowledge. On this basis, he identifies the following two propositions: the material element is given, and the given is the material element. He does this because he substitutes the question 'What can be given?' for the question: 'What is given?' And he borrows the theme of his answer from Hume: only a sensible content, an *a posteriori* manifold, can be given. (Scheler, 1954, 76-7) The *a priori*, on the other hand, can only be formal and hence cannot be given. It belongs to the constituting activity of mind, never presenting itself as something constituted. Pure intuition is given, but, given as the form of intuition, it prefers nothing material. The objects one can construct in it are only possible objects. Therefore, we do not experience the real *a priori*, for real

"The unity of apperception in relation to the synthesis of imagination is the understanding; and this same unity, with reference to the transcendental synthesis of the imagination [is] the pure understanding." (143, A119)

The categories reside in this pure understanding. If Kant does not explicitly oppose an *a posteriori* understanding to it, this is because the understanding as such is always the unity of apperception. But when the understanding is related to the *a posteriori* synthesis of the reproductive imagination, and therefore to a sensible matter, it may be termed *a posteriori*:

"The empirical activity of knowledge in man must therefore contain an understanding which relates to all objects of the senses." (ibid.)

Hence the *a priori* element in man acts as a "formal principle," (ibid.) Kant tries to present the *a priori* in such a role and to delineate its limits. All that the understanding draws from itself without borrowing from experience is useful only when finally employed in experience. Experience is the field in which the *a priori* fulfils; even one cannot make an *a priori* use of the *a priori*, and in this sense it remains pure. But in considering the *a priori* in its activity it ceases to be isolated as pure knowledge since it aims at or intends the *a posteriori*.

3. The *A priori* as Immanent

This last conclusion evokes this idea that the *a priori* has its principle in the *a posteriori* just because the *a priori* is given in the experience; Instead of being a formal condition of objectivity, it is immanent in the *a posteriori*. In fact the subject comes to be parallel with the object. This parallelism is not only a power of the subject over the object or of the object over the subject. Rather it is consubstantiality of the subject and the object. For, knowledge is possible if the object is open to the subject and vice versa. What makes this reciprocity possible is the *a priori* as implanted in the *a posteriori* domain. The *a priori* is present and given in both object and subject, and it assures their communication while maintaining their difference. In this sense, the *a priori* is given in experience, rather than imposed by the subject on experience. The subject's activity is limited to recognizing the *a priori*, to assuming and enlarging this meaning to which

the "I think" to the rules of objectivity. Kant strives to seize existence in the very act of thought; the 'I think' contains within itself the proposition "I exist". Although the self referred to here is still only a purely intellectual representation, "I think" is an *a posteriori* proposition because it expresses 'an indeterminate empirical intuition,' (378, note a) which Kant calls elsewhere the "feeling of an existence"--that is, an intuition occurring before the moment when the categories determine it. Here existence is not yet a category. Thus nothing can be known in such a manner. The *sum* does not in any way constitute an internal, thematizable experience. The form of apperception inherent in all experience does not by itself constitute an experience. It remains the case, however, that the "I think" is assured of its existence, even in the face of other existences. For, in order to apply its activity, the "I think" needs a matter; it is equivalent to "I think something," as Kant's theorem of the refutation of idealism shows. Every exercise of apperception, since it is linked to an external intuition for the sake of determination, is therefore consciousness of my existence as mine; and the "I" of "I exist" acquires its meaning and its existence simultaneously. Nevertheless, Kant refuses to naturalize the subject as energetically as, for example, Sartre, who makes a psychological reality out of self-consciousness.

Kant always maintains the distinction of the *a priori* from the psychological. Although he does not explicitly situate *Gemut*, he certainly does not authorize its identification with the objective self of psychology, and the functions or faculties he discerns in it are strictly *a priori*. For him, the *a priori* duplicates the psychological without ever mingling in it. This is the case with imagination:

"Insofar as imagination is spontaneity, I sometimes also entitle it the productive imagination, whose synthesis is entirely subject to empirical laws, the laws namely of association." (165, B152)

Similarly, there is a pure sensibility whose object is pure intuition, and which is merely sensibility viewed formally; for this formal sensibility, affection is self-affection and intuition being here "nothing but the mode in which the mind is affected through its own activity". And there is an *a posteriori* sensibility that has "sensation in general [for] its matter." (82, A42) Finally, the same duality is found in the understanding. Thus Kant speaks of a pure understanding:

It is, however, objected that the movement from the categories to the principles is illusory, because the categories imply a subjective and psychological interpretation of consciousness: so, the bearers of the *a priori* in the Kantian system--space; time, and the categories-- must be conceived as methods, not as norms of the mind. (Cohen, 1954, 584) The *a priori* belongs to the subject's nature, and both are given before experience and orders experience.

But independently of the orientation the *a priori* carries on, such an implicitly analysis of the constitution of objectivity forces Kant into a dilemma that will reappear in post-Kantian thought. This dilemma stems from the necessity of distinguishing the *a priori* from the psychological factor in the subject. With Kant, the difficulty assumes a precise form. (Kant, 1995, 328-83) If the mind whose acts constitute experience as objective represents a subject already concrete in the sense that it already has a structure manifested by the *a priori* activity it possesses, what will be the status of this subject? Kant has posed the problem in such way that it ends in an insurmountable impasse.

The subject of Kant's reflective analysis is in no way constituted: apperception is only a transcendental power, capable of exercising the function of unity. The self is only a "simple representation" concerning which "there is no even a question of reality": the "I" of the "I think" is not yet the first person of the verb. A great part of Kant's analysis is conducted as if the "I think" were only formal and impersonal, and even non temporal, for "the subject, in which the representation of time has its original ground, cannot thereby determine its own existence in time." (377, B422) In brief, it is as if the *cogito* were a *cogitatum est*. The transcendental consciousness can only be self-consciousness, not self-knowledge, as Kant expressly says:

"The consciousness of self is thus far from being a knowledge of self" (169, B158).

The knower cannot be known because that which is known is immediately reduced to the status of object. But consciousness is at least self-consciousness, that is, consciousness of a self. Here lies the obvious origin of the misunderstanding that troubles any rational psychology. If it is necessary to say that "I exist as an intelligence conscious merely of my power of synthesis," at least there is an "I" who exists--*i.e.*, possesses something more than the being of a mere logical condition. Existence could not serve here as the model category which would again submit

contains a structure and can operate concretely. Thus knowledge is the product of the mind, the three sources of knowledge are its organs, and the three syntheses by which the objectivity of the object is elaborated are its operations. Through these structures, the subject takes on shape. No longer is the opposition only between a form and a matter; it is between the subject and the object. The forms of objectivity such as "the objective forms of our mode of intuition"--are also the structures of our "subjective constitution." Subjectivity is not only determining, but determined; it is a human subjectivity, or at least, assignable to "all finite, thinking beings." (90) Therefore, the *a priori* seems to designate both a formal condition of experience and a condition issuing from the subjective nature of the mind, a law which the mind imposes on nature because it is assigned to its own nature. It expresses the nature of the subject. For example, if there is a principle which "holds *a priori* and may be called the transcendental principle of the unity of all that is manifold in our representations," (142) this is because there is "a common function of the mind which combines that manifold in one representation." (137, A109) The mind "is conscious of the identity of this function" by which it conceives "its identity in the manifoldness of its representations." (137, A108) Therefore, the *a priori* rooted in a function of the mind. Similarly, time may appear as an *a priori* form of sensibility because "the mind distinguishes . . . time in the sequence of one impression upon another" (131, A 99) and because the mind has a certain fashion of arranging its representations, being "affected through its own activity (namely, through the positing of its representation) and so is affected by itself." (87, B67) Thus it is as if receptivity were a result of activity, as if time were engendered by consciousness. Similarly, space may be referred to the activity of the mind; space is the very movement of consciousness towards something; it is thus the possibility of displaying, discriminating, pluralizing any impression whatsoever. Then, the *a priori* which is seen by Kant as pure knowledge conditions *a posteriori* knowledge, but it is the knowledge of a rule, and this rule is the expression of a method--i.e., of an activity manifested by the mind through its structure.

The *a priori* is, therefore, a character impressed on what is known by the action of knowledge, the reflection in the object of the *a priori* acts of the subject. Kant is justified in deducing to categories from the logical form of judgements, since judgements are already "acts of the understanding" whose logical functions "yield an exhaustive inventory of its powers." (113, A79)

"The principle of the necessary unity of pure (productive) synthesis of imagination is the ground of the possibility of all knowledge, especially of experience." (143)

Referring to this, Heidegger comments that in the first edition

"Kant, in characteristic fashion, hesitates to determine with precision the structural relations which link [this] unity to the unifying synthesis.... But he confidently asserts that transcendental apperception presupposes the synthesis." (Heidegger, 1962, 84)

By contrast, the second edition, in refusing to dismember the 'I think' or to emasculate formal knowledge, reduces imagination to understanding:

"The understanding, under the title of a transcendental synthesis of imagination, performs this act upon the passive subject, whose faculty it is, and we are therefore justified in saying that inner sense is affected thereby." (Kant, 1995, 166)

At the same time, the second edition subordinates sensibility to understanding--the understanding determining the inner sense which "contains the mere form of intuition, but without combination of the manifold in it." (B154) This hesitancy regarding the primacy of the imagination is rich with meaning (as Heidegger has also seen). For our present purpose, it signifies that the 'I think' appears both as a principle and as an agent. Meanwhile, this hesitation results from the ambiguity of the *a priori* element, for it can be understood both as the result of a formal analysis of the conditions of possibility and as the instrument of a real activity. In the first case, the *cogito* is a supreme requirement; in the second case, it serves as the locus for a constitutive activity.

However, if the *a priori* is a condition of knowledge, it is essential to apply the condition and in this context, subsumption is inevitably constitution in the non-ontological sense to which Kant limits himself. This is why Kant must juxtapose the reflective analysis which discovers apperception as an inescapable requirement and phenomenological—more precisely, noetic—and an analysis which describes the *a priori* activity as putting the *a priori* into operation. The site for this activity, the seat of the "*a priori* acts" is *das Gemut*, that is, the mind insofar as it

consciousness "namely, the consciousness of my self as original apperception." (142) For, we are conscious "of the complete identity of the self in respect of all representations which can ever belong to our knowledge." (141) It is therefore an absolutely primary principle, that the various empirical consciousnesses must be linked to one unique consciousness of self. This consciousness is the simple representation: "I." Kant adds:

"Whether this representation is clear (empirical consciousness) or obscure, or even whether it ever actually occurs, does not here concern us. But the possibility of the logical form of all knowledge is necessarily conditioned by relation to this apperception *as a faculty*."(142)

Nevertheless, this "faculty" does further enlighten us concerning the nature of *a priori* characteristic of subjectivity. Above all, it permits us to discern in the "I think," "this spontaneity" by means of which I can "entitle myself an intelligence" (169), the act of understanding: "the unity of apperception in relation to the synthesis of imagination is the understanding." (143) From this point, the understanding will become an element in a system, one faculty among others, and the idea of structure of subjectivity will thus be introduced. For if the "I think," insofar as it is an "I can," is active, its activity must be described; and this activity is precisely the exercise of the *a priori's* function. Yet such an enterprise cannot be easily accomplished. For the unity of apperception has been found to be a formal and non-constitutive principle. Kant seems to identify possibility and capability, formal unity of representations and spontaneity of intelligence, by saying that "the possibility of the logical form of all knowledge is necessarily conditioned by its relation to this apperception as faculty." The difficulty appears to be that apperception is sometimes invoked as an absolutely primary principle and sometimes as one of the "three subjective sources of knowledge" (141) along with the senses and imagination, the latter being identifiable with the understanding. The same difficulty viewed from another angle culminates in the analysis of the relation of imagination to apperception--an analysis in which the two editions of *Critique* disagree as to the exact relation of the productive synthesis of imagination to synthetic unity as such. Kant writes:

knowledge is characterized by the *a priori* and this indicates that Kant has regarded the *a priori* as the basic characteristic of knowledge. (Kant, 1995, 42-3) Formalizing the *a priori*, Kant himself appears to distinguish the *a priori* from the *a posteriori* and affirms its purity. He insists that the *a priori* is prior to the *a posteriori* and stays independently from it. The term *a priori*, however, does not in any way characterize pure knowledge, but describes instead the knowledge of the pure character of reflection on the nature, that is, the origin, the function and the role of the pure knowledge. (96) This seems to indicate that the *a priori*, even prior, can be defined by its relation to experience. (87, 129-30, 181-21, 211-12, 239-44) The overall objective of this paper is to present and to support this idea; if the *a priori* is prior to the *a posteriori*, and if its validity is not depended on the *a posteriori*, it is still not without any relation with it. The main thesis I will follow here is that the *a posteriori* could be called the root of the *a priori*: the *a priori* has its principle in the *a posteriori* just because it is given to it. The *a priori* is given in the experience. Instead of conceiving the *a priori* as a formal or logical condition of objectivity, it would be considered as immanent in the object and apprehended during the very act of experience, although known implicitly before experience occurs. If the *a priori* is indeed given in experience, we are not constrained to restrict it to the formal conditions of objectivity. However, before proceeding to substantiate this thesis, it would be useful to review Kant's analysis of the *a priori* quickly. Then, I will present the main thesis and its proof to deformalize the *a priori* and implant it in the *a posteriori* domain.

2. Kant's Analysis

In order to establish simultaneously the nature and function of the *a priori*, Kant prefers a reflective analysis which makes the *a priori* appear. This reflective analysis, basing itself on synthetic judgements, shows that "the highest principle of all synthetic judgements is therefore this: every object stands under the necessary conditions of the synthetic unity of the manifold intuition in a possible experience." (194) These conditions make the *a priori* appear. The medium of synthetic judgements is the "whole in which all our representations contained," that is, inner sense, whose *a priori* form is time. And the unity required in judgement rests on the unity of apperception. This unity, which tends to emphasis the "I" of the "I think," is, at least in the second edition of *Critique of Pure Reason*, the keystone of the Kantian system. But we find even in its first edition that all empirical consciousness has a necessary relation to transcendental

Kant on the "A priori" Toward an Interpretation

Mahmoud Khatami*

Abstract

The a priori is the basic characteristic of Kant's theory of knowledge. Formalizing the a priori, Kant appears to distinguish the a priori from the a posteriori and affirms its purity. He insists that the a priori is prior to the a posteriori and stays independently from it. The overall objective of this paper is, however, to present and to support this idea that the a priori, even prior, can be defined by its relation to experience; if the a priori is prior to the a posteriori, and if its validity is not depended on the a posteriori, it is still not without any relation with it. The main thesis I will follow here is that the a posteriori could be called the root of the a priori: the a priori has its principle in the a posteriori just because it is given to it. The a priori is given in the experience. Instead of conceiving the a priori as a formal or logical condition of objectivity, it would be considered as immanent in the object and apprehended during the very act of experience, although known implicitly before experience occurs. If the a priori is indeed given in experience, we are not constrained to restrict it to the formal conditions of objectivity. However, before proceeding to substantiate this thesis, I will review Kant's analysis of the a priori quickly. Then, I will present the main thesis and its proof to deformalize the a priori and implant it in the a posteriori domain.

Keywords: *a priori, a posteriori, Kant, Husserl, theory of knowledge*

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1. Introduction

Kant himself has not provided a systematic theory of the *a priori*. He has employed this term as adjective and adverb. However, one may extract such a theory from within his philosophical system.¹ Kant's theory of

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