

The Third Antinomy **from the Transcendental Dialectic of Kant's** ***Critique of Pure Reason***

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Summary by Translator	ii
The Antinomy in General.	ii
The Third Antinomy.	iii
Conceivable Solution of Third Antinomy.	iv
Dual Causality as a Solution.	v
Transcendental Idealism.	v
The Two Characters.	vii
The Empirical Character.	vii
The Intelligible Character.	viii
Solution to the Third Antinomy.	ix
Transcendental Reflection.	ix
Practical versus Transcendental Freedom.	x
Comments on the Translation	xiii
The Antinomy of Pure Reason	1
Third Conflict of the Transcendental Ideas	1
III. Solution of the Cosmological Ideas of the Totality of the Derivation of the World Events from their Causes	6
Possibility of the Combination of Causality through Freedom with Universal Laws of the Necessity of Nature	12
Discussion Of The Cosmological Idea Of A Freedom In Conjunction With Universal Necessity In Nature	17

Summary by Translator

The Antinomy in General.

The antinomy arises by the juxtaposition of two contradictory assertions and where it is clear that one must be true and the other false. For example the following could constitute an antinomy (albeit quite contrived):

Judy smells better than Bill *versus* Bill smells better than Judy.

It is obvious (at first glance) that there is a contradiction and both assertions cannot be true. The proofs could proceed as follows: For the thesis, i.e., if Bill smelled better than Judy then people would not be holding their noses when around Bill but not around Judy; but they do precisely this and so Judy must smell better than Bill. And as far as the antithesis is concerned we can say, i.e., that if Judy smells better than Bill, then Judy would discern the slight odors that Bill does, but tests prove that she cannot, and so it is clear that Bill must smell better than Judy.

The solution to this conflict is, of course, very simple: the term “smell” is taken into two different senses, once as an unpleasant odor, and secondly as a capacity for discerning odors.

We should note that this example does not capture the full sense of the antinomy indicated by Kant. In the first place if I had stated the matter as: Judy smells better than Bill *does*, versus: Bill smells better than Judy *can*, then it would be clear that we were speaking of two different uses of the term “smell”, and there would be no illusion.¹ Furthermore with an antinomy proper, there is no appeal to experience directly, for the argument is based on reasoning alone, i.e., out beyond any possible experience.² But the example still gives us the feel of the antinomy and how there can be an illusion involved which is based on a different use and meaning of the same terms. It is also clear that in such an argument as an antinomy, whoever presents the last argument wins, for since each is able to prove his point by refuting the premise of the other, it follows that whoever argues last would prove his point by refuting his opponent.

Now while in the case of some of the four antinomies that Kant examines, the solution arises that both arguments are false and due to the relevant terms having no objective meaning, the case

¹ There is still another alternative, namely: both could be false, and this would be the case if neither person smelled better than the other in that both were without smell or both lacked any capacity for smelling odors. Another example of a both-correct antinomy (where driving is on the right side of the road, as in England): to drive on the left side is to drive on the right side, and to drive on the right side is to drive on the wrong side. Following the logic: therefore to drive on the left side is to drive on the wrong side. But that is false. Here both statements are true, for the left is spatial (opposed to right) and the “right” in the second part means proper or correct (and opposed to wrong). Right is understood here in two different ways. And so there is no contradiction at all and both statements are true.

² The reasoning begins with experience, but then goes out beyond any experience in pursuit of the unconditioned.

with others, as with our example here (the third antinomy), is that both sides can be true and where the illusion arises in the use of the same term in a different meaning.

The Third Antinomy.

Here the thesis has it that not all causality in the world is natural and that there must be some freedom. And the antithesis asserts that all causality in the world is that of the laws of nature, and so there is no freedom. We now look at the summaries of these arguments in the style of Kant who wanted to present them side by side, and where we can clearly see that neither can be proven on its own and directly, but only by a proof that the opposing argument must be false.

Since, as we warned, the argument for each side is based solely on proving the opposite side false, and since both sides can do this, and yet since the arguments are mutually contradictory, the question must now arise as to whether reason itself is irrational? Unless a solution can be found for this, such a conclusion will be obvious. We now turn to a investigation of a solution to this antinomy.

The Thesis

The causality according to laws of nature is not the only one from which the appearances of the world can all together be derived. For there is a causality through freedom to be assumed necessarily for their explanation

The Antithesis

There is no freedom, but rather everything in the world happens solely in accordance with the laws of nature.

Thesis Proof

Without freedom every cause must itself be previously caused and thus the chain of causation would go on forever. But in this way there could never be a first link to the chain and so the whole idea is preposterous. Therefore there must have been an original spontaneous causality in order to account for the necessary first link in the chain of causes, and thus of the entire chain.

Antithesis Proof

Such an alleged spontaneity must itself be caused. But this assumes a preceding, and as yet inactive, causation. But with a spontaneous action there is no causal cohesion at all with anything preceding (for it is spontaneous). Therefore in this way there can be no unity of experience and so this alleged spontaneity ends up simply as a figment of imagination. And even though such a spontaneity relieves the difficulties of comprehending an endless chain of causality, it also removes all necessary connection and in that way then also removes the coherence of experience.

Then Kant makes some remarks to each of these “proven” assertions.

Remarks to Thesis Proof

We don't have to know how a spontaneity is possible, for we don't even understand how laws of nature are possible. Having now proven a spontaneous origin of the world, we can also assume freedom now and then in the course of the sequences of that (and not be constrained solely by an original freedom). We are not concerned about the sequence in time, but only of causality, and so while a free action may follow upon a previous state, it does not arise from that state. And we can easily see why all ancient philosophies (except that of Epicurus) called for a prime, original mover.

Remarks to Antithesis Proof

There is no more reason to assert a dynamical first with respect to causality than there is to assert a beginning in time. And while it is true that we cannot comprehend an unending chain of causes and effects, it is equally true that we cannot comprehend any causation chain and relationship in general, and so this is no argument. In order to conceive of such a spontaneity we would have to position it entirely apart of the world. And we certainly cannot assume any such spontaneous causality regarding the substances of the world, for then the cohesion of experience would vanish and with it also then experience itself.

Conceivable Solution of Third Antinomy.

As we have seen from the previous consideration of experience³ we are not allowed to break the chain of causation we find for nature and so this must extend backwards without reference to any spontaneous action. Thus the antithesis must be asserted a priori, namely that every event is caused and that cause itself is an event which has arisen and so which must have been caused, and so on. Accordingly the only possible solution would arise if one and the same event could be the effects of two different causalities, one of nature and the other of freedom. This would show that both sides can be right.⁴

³ This is based on the Second Analogy of the Transcendental Analytic where we see that the principle of universal causation is necessary for the recognition of an event and thus of experience itself, i.e., to recognize that something has happened. Without this there is no way of distinguishing an objective event from a subjective event, e.g., that the table has been moved to the window versus noticing that a table is in front of the window. In the first case we become aware that earlier the table was not in front of the window and in the second case we only notice the relationship of the table to the window, but not that it has come about, for it could be that we simply did not notice a continuing relationship earlier, i.e., the table was always in front of the window and we had not paid any attention.

⁴ This solution will not prove any fact of freedom, but only that freedom is compatible with the necessity of nature by speaking of two different causalities, i.e., nature and freedom.

Dual Causality as a Solution.

One aspect that will be helpful is to recognize Kant's point in the remarks to the thesis where we understand that we can look at freedom more generally, and not consider just an *original* spontaneous action, but to allow such spontaneous actions to arise at any time in the march of time.⁵ Accordingly we will conceive of a current natural reaction to circumstances and conditions of the past and consider the possibility that what passes here as a *natural reaction* could also at the same time be a *free action* by considering a different, albeit simultaneous, causality. In anticipation of such a solution we need first to understand what we mean regarding the object.

Transcendental Idealism.

We first need to grasp what we mean with the objects that we see here and there and now and then. According to common and scientific understanding light waves from the sun strike a tree before us in the yard, to use as an example, and some light is absorbed by the tree and that the light that we call the color of the tree is reflected and some of it enters into the eye through the lens and is projected upside down and with left and right reversed on the retina. Then optical nerves relay this information electrically to the brain and there, after adjustments are made for the distortion by the lens of the eye, a *visa* unfolds which we call the tree, and more precisely the appearance of the tree or an image of the tree. This appearance of the tree along with the sky and ground and everything else appearing to us would have its existence *as an appearance* in what we might call the brainarium. This would be on the order of a planetarium, and would exist only within the confines of our skulls.

Now there are two ways of considering this appearance. We could conceive of it to be a real thing just as it appears to us and which, for example, would physically get larger and smaller depending on the distance from us. And if this were the case then our connective understanding would have no basis for any sort of judgments about this appearance. The most we could do would be to get used to this difference in size relative to distance and come to expect it à la David Hume.

On the other hand we can also consider the appearance to be just what it is, namely an appearance and not a real thing at all. In this case the tree we spy would be only the *representation* of a tree and we would not think that the tree, which this appearance represents to us, were changing shape or size.

We come to this second understanding by considering a priori and in advance of all experience that all appearances are connected in a single object which call nature. With this suggestion of

⁵ Thus if freedom could exemplify itself even once, then why not twice, etc.? Kant gives an example of such a sudden spontaneous action of suddenly rising from his chair without any reason, and thus which is independent of the laws of nature and which then also starts a new series on its own.

connection, which is a manifestation of our connective understanding (connecting diverse representations by means of certain categories), we are on the lookout for hints of this connection and are especially taken by coincidences and undertake experiments to discover and recognize the connections. This routine enables us ultimately to conceive of a real thing, which we call the object of experience (a technical term), i.e., the tree in our example, which we think of as existing in a real space and time⁶ and independently of us and in accordance with certain laws of nature.⁷ And is by virtue of this conceived real tree that we are able to realize and recognize that what we actual see is an appearance within our brainarium, which indeed is the beginning of all experience. David Hume knew this but could not figure out how he could have known it, and so resorted to “academic skepticism” where he doubted even his own system.⁸

So and as a recap: for the sake of experience it is necessary that we posit this thing on its own (and which assumption is then validated by the fact of experience itself, for only in this way can experience ever arise in the human being). But since we are dependent upon our looking and our thinking (via the connective understanding) the thing that we actually see is the object of experience, i.e., how this thing appears in time and space and how it is subject to laws of nature (conceived of by our understanding). This is a limitation of our knowledge and a very important point and bears repeating: we conceive of the thing on its own, but we can only recognize the object of experience. From a common and scientific standpoint we say that the object of experience *is* the thing on its own. But in a transcendental setting we see that the object of experience is merely a conceptual device for combining the appearances and making them perspectives of this object, and fundamentally nothing more is actually available or give to us than the appearances. Hence from a transcendental perspective, this object of experience is merely itself an appearance, how the thing on its own appears within a brainarium, and not how it is on its own independently from any looking.

⁶ It is needful to realize that this “real” space and time in which we position the tree as an object of experience is itself a projection of the space and time of the brainarium. For it is one thing to notice the tree, and another thing to notice it now to the left of the bush where earlier it was in front of the bush (per our looking). And so space and time are the way that we look at things within the brainarium; they are the forms of our looking; they are what we can notice when we look at things, but which are not in the objects looked at at all, but solely and entirely within us, within our brainarium. Time and space seem real enough independently of us, but this is the illusion of the refrigerator light: every time we open the refrigerator door we see that the interior is illuminated, and so it seems like it is always illuminated. Likewise space and time seem omnipresent, but that’s because anytime we want to look at anything we are looking in terms of space and time.

⁷ These laws are suggested by our connective understanding and are discerned in particular experiments to be laws of this nature, e.g., action and reaction are equal or cooled air causes some liquids to solidify.

⁸ According to Hume’s system we are dealing with things on their own and so where we could never come to any necessity and so where what is causation is merely a customary occurrence, e.g., on a certain road I always spy a dog sitting by the road, and when I reach the end of the road I see that the dog has morphed into a mailbox. Hume knew this was incorrect, but was never able to account for the recognition we have that the dog was not a thing, but only the appearance of a something. He knew it was an appearance but was unable to explain how it is that we could realize that it was only an appearance.

The Two Characters.

Now when we consider the thing on its own transcendently we can know that it can never appear to us as a thing on its own, but only as looked at and thought about as the object of experience. In other words there can be other properties of this thing besides what is attributed to the object of experience, properties which cannot appear within a brainarium. Such properties might be called intelligible, to indicate a reality which cannot appear within a brainarium. Such a property of the human, for example, *might* be the capacity of freedom, transcendental freedom, i.e., a capacity for a spontaneous action which is not caused by the laws of nature, even if that free event might also be expected in the course of the things of a lawful nature. Such a property, like the thoughts and motives of another person, cannot appear to us within a brainarium, and must be inferred, if at all, from the appearances, from that person's actions and speech.

The solution to the third antinomy then can lie in the hypothesis of a transcendental freedom, the capacity to start a series any time in time but independently of the determinations of time, and as a property of the thing on its own, an intelligible property which can be expressed in the brainarium in terms of its actions, but which can no more be sensed than the blind can sense color or the deaf sound.⁹ All that is available to the eye of science will be the empirical character which can be completely explained in terms of experience and the laws of nature.

The Empirical Character.

Now we turn to the human and consider his condition. He reasons about things and this is reflected in what we might call the empirical character, i.e., the object of experience in sociology and psychology. And he uses his reasoning to fashion rules of conduct, even though this formulation may be accomplished subconsciously. And the goals for the rules of accomplishing something will be a function of his background and upbringing and various (and often conflicting) desires. And so his use of reason will be a function of his makeup and mentality. So then we infer a person's motives and temperament from his actions and speech and even gestures and then we can trace this empirical character back to his childhood and upbringing and other conditions and understand how he could come to possess such a characteristic way of behavior, and finally then we can utilize this character to predict with accuracy all of the future actions of the individual, given the circumstances and occasions that arise in time.

Let us take the example that Kant suggests in the solution to this antinomy, namely a person who voluntarily lies and produces in that way a certain confusion into society. This person will have a certain background and makeup and a temperament which arouses resentments against people whom he perceives to treat him in a disparaging way. As a result of these elements he will tend to

⁹ Perhaps an analogy arises in modern theoretical physics in the form of dark matter which cannot be seen or sensed, but the effects of which (or at least of something) are noted in the otherwise inexplicable movements of visible bodies.

respond to perceived slights in a way designed for retribution. All this is understandable and expected and this routine represents a characteristic of his personality. Thus when the appropriate circumstances arise, he reacts according to his character and seeks his revenge by telling lies about the person who has offended him. And he utilizes his own reason to assist him how best to express himself, and this becomes part and parcel of his empirical character.

Another example might be the case of St. Paul of Christian fame. He started off as a young man with a determination to keep his Jewish culture free of the influences of the new Christian movement and sought to persecute and to deter the early Christians who were Jews. Later he changed his mind and obtained a new understanding and orientation, and started working on behalf of the Christian faith. What remain constant was his zeal and dedication for what he understood to be the will of God, be it for the Jews against the Christians, or be it, as later, on behalf of the Christians. He exemplified an empirical character which was constant as expected, and which will have been a product of his mentality and temperament and upbringing, etc. His behavior was remained consistent with his empirical character although it was affected by his particular understanding.

So the empirical character constitutes a customary behavior which comes into play when the opportunities arise. In this way everything is explained and there is no question as to how it is that the individual developed the rules that he did. And in this way the use of reason also becomes one of the laws of nature, and certain effects, e.g., a malicious lie, arise by means of that.¹⁰

The Intelligible Character.

Now at the same time (and drawing on the notion of the thing on its own versus the object of experience as indicated above in the section on the Transcendental Idealism) we can look upon the human being as an intelligible being with an intelligible character and (here posited only as a fiction, to prove the point of compatibility) as a transcendently free agent who can act independently of the laws of nature, and so to which we ascribe responsibility of the empirical character. In that case all of the faults of the person (the malicious liar cited above) we can ascribe to the person and declare that he did not have to choose as he did, and that he could have chosen different rules and different actions, and the reason is that he himself knows that he *ought* to have chosen differently. And so what he did he chose to do and chose to do so freely and without the compulsions of any laws of nature. And so in the case just described we can hold the individual responsible for his actions in telling the lie, i.e., we can consider him as free in a transcendental way and thus where the empirical character is a freely chosen appearance of his intelligible character.

¹⁰ Then, as Hume asserted, reason is considered as the “slave to passion” and is utilized to further the interest of the individual in terms of his empirical character.

We might look at a rather silly example for emphasis, and consider a tree to have an empirical character and an intelligible one. On the intelligible basis, the tree actually decides freely to put out leaves in the spring and to discard them in fall, and it just looks like it is the work of nature. It is a spontaneous action on the part of the tree and it could have decked itself out in the middle of the winter if it had so chosen. The empirical character, in contrast, is putting out leaves in spring and discarding in fall, and this is a work of nature and there is no basis for any consideration of something called freedom. And so we can simply assert as an arbitrary fiction that the tree is free and is deliberately and unilaterally putting forth and discarding leaves, and that it is only a coincidence that this occurs when the weather changes. Such an assertion is of no use at all to science, of course, but it can be arbitrarily maintained without contradiction (which is all that Kant wants to accomplish at this stage in his thinking).¹¹

Solution to the Third Antinomy.

In this wise then we have the solution to this antinomy: we can look at a single event (the lie in the case of our example) and declare it to be both a necessary effect of some natural cause (the background and temperament, etc.) and still also the effect of a free action (being a product of reason), depending upon whether we are considering the empirical character as the object of experience (which is the way of science) or merely as an appearance of the intelligible character, i.e., a freely chosen action, and which would be considering the human as a thing on its own independently from all appearances of the brainarium.

Transcendental Reflection.

It is worthwhile to compare the thing on its own with the object of experience, which is essentially merely an abbreviation for some connected appearances, e.g., the tree in winter and the tree in summer. As a thing on its own the tree is conceived of as given in its totally and all of its conditions. But this does not hold of the tree as an appearance. As an appearance none of the conditions are given, but only what is discernible in the appearance. With a tree at first all that is given is the external appearance. When we dig into the tree and find pulp and further that the pulp consists of cells. And so far all that is given in the appearance are these cells. Next we can look and dig closer and find molecules and then atoms and finally (so far in our looking) we find particles which *appear* to bounce around and in and out of existence, and, so it appears, at random.

In the case of this Third Antinomy the world as a thing on its own is conceived of given with all of its conditions. But this is not the case of the world as an appearance, and all that is ever given

¹¹ We do accept this freedom concerning the human because he has reasoning and he understands what "ought" means and he knows (or believes to know) that for any reasoned action he could have acted differently than he did.

in the appearance is what has actually appeared to us in one way or another, and nothing else is given.

Practical versus Transcendental Freedom.

Now we want to focus on the critical element in the Third Antinomy, that of freedom, and specifically practical and transcendental freedom. Here are excerpts from several of Kant's writings on this subject:

Critique of Pure Reason - Antinomy - 9th Section

- 3.1 It is worth noting that the practical concept of freedom depends upon this transcendental idea of freedom, and it is the latter which constitutes the particular difficulties which questions about the possibility of the former have always entailed.
- 3.2 From a practical standpoint freedom denotes an independence of the discretionary choice (*Willkür*) from any necessity through the drives of sensitivity.
- 3.3 For discretionary choice is sensitive to the extent it is affected pathologically (through motivational causes of the sensitivity). It is termed animal (*arbitrium brutum*) if it can be pathologically necessitated.
- 3.4 Human discretionary choice is indeed an *arbitrium sensitivum*, though not *brutum*, but rather *liberum*, because sensitivity does not make human actions necessary, for there is a capacity in the human whereby one is determined of oneself independently of necessitation through sensitive drives.
- 4.1 It is easy to see that if all causality in the world of sense were merely nature, then every event would be determined through another event in time and in accordance with necessary laws, and hence, since appearances, to the extent they determine the volition, would have to necessitate every action as their natural consequence, it follows that the elimination of transcendental freedom would simultaneously eradicate all practical freedom.
- 4.2 For the latter presupposes that even though something did not happen, it still should have happened, and so its cause in the appearance was not so determining that a causality could not exist in our volition to produce something which were completely independent of that natural cause and even in opposition to its power and influence, and hence (there is the assumption that) it could begin a series of events completely of itself.

Critique of Pure Reason, Canon - Ultimate Purpose

- 8.4 Practical freedom can be proven through experience.
- 8.5 For not merely that which excites, i.e., immediately affects the senses, determines human choice. Rather we have a capacity for overcoming the impressions on our sensitive desire capacity through representations of what is itself useful or injurious in a more remote manner. But these deliberations of what is desirable, i.e., good and useful with respect to our entire state, depend on reason.
- 8.6 Accordingly this also renders the laws which are imperatives, i.e., objective laws of freedom, and which say what is supposed to happen, even if perhaps it never does happen. And in that regard these laws are distinguished from natural laws which deal only with what happens. It is then also for this reason that they are called practical laws.
- 9.1 But it could be that reason itself in these actions, through which it prescribes laws, is in turn determined through other further influences, and what is called freedom with respect to sensitive drives might in turn be nature through higher and more remotely effecting causes. But then that does not concern us regarding the practical, since at this point we only ask reason about the precepts of conduct. Besides that notion of other further influences is a merely speculative question which, as long as our intention is directed to doing and refraining, we can set aside.¹²
- 9.2 Through experience, therefore, we recognize practical freedom as one of the natural causes, namely a causality of reason in the determination of the will. Transcendental freedom, on the other hand, requires an independence of this reasoning itself (with respect to its causality in starting a series of appearances) from all determining causes of the sense world. And to this extent it seems to be contrary to the natural law, hence to all possible experience, and therefore remains a problem.

Critique of Practical Reason Critical Illumination

- 7.1 But instead of the deduction of the supreme principle of pure practical reason, i.e., the explanation of the possibility of such a recognition a priori, nothing further could be introduced except this: if we penetrated the possibility of the freedom of an effective cause, we could penetrate not only merely the possibility, but rather even the necessity, of the moral law as the supreme practical law of rational beings, to whom one attributes freedom to the causality of their will. The reason for this is that both concepts are so inseparably con-

¹² Here we are concerned with the consciousness of actually determining laws for conduct, and so where it does not matter as to hidden and unconscious causes.

nected, that one could also define practical freedom as independence of the will from any law except the moral law alone.

It would seem then that practical freedom indicates a causality of reason in determining the will, i.e., an independence of action from the excitements of the senses, and where the goals of the individual are represented rationally and where this rationality is one of the natural causes. But the implication might remain that it is in pursuit of personal goals that reason is utilized in this practical sense.¹³ In that case then the distinguishing mark of transcendental freedom means a determination of the will via pure reason and which is independent of all personal goals arising in the world of sense, i.e., which is absolutely spontaneous and not subject to prior condition. And so when we speak about practical freedom of the human we are thinking specifically of that quality which is denoted by transcendental freedom, i.e., the capacity to determine the will independently of all desires of the individual, and indeed in opposition to them.

In the quotation below, the first case is obviously practical freedom in the sense of ignoring the immediate excitement of the senses for the sake of a longer ranged goal, but one which is a natural inclination, i.e., for life. In the second case we are speaking of a transcendental freedom where we are able to disregard all concern for individual goals of the sensitivity and have pure reason itself determine the will, and indeed even in opposition to all the desires of sensitivity.

Critique of Practical Reason - 2nd Task

- 3.10 Suppose that some one were to aver of his most passionate desire that it were irresistible if the alluring object and the opportunity to it were at hand; ask him whether he might not be able to master this desire if a gallows were erected before the house where he is to avail himself of this opportunity, in order that he might be hanged there immediately after his savored passion . . . it won't take long to guess his answer.
- 3.11 But inquire of him further: suppose his sovereign, threatening him with the same inexorable death penalty, should require him to bear false witness against an upright man whom the king very much wishes to ruin through trumped up charges, and given how much his love for life might be, ask him whether he would consider it possible that he might overcome this love of life?

¹³ We can then also say that the human considers himself free if he can do what he *feels* like doing or wants to do (which would be the psychological definition of freedom). But of course then his feelings and his wants will be a function of his makeup, etc., and so this freedom is really an illusion and he is thoroughly determined in all regards. And this is the understanding of the human on the part of science. In this wise we see that the actions and thinking and rule-making are all totally conceived by reason but always in conformity with the background and upbringing, etc., and thus where there is no freedom at all. Accordingly the individual does not *act* so much as rather *reacts* to his circumstances in accordance with his temperament and traits and reasoning based on them.

- 3.12 Whether he would do it or not, he may not be able to say; but that it be possible for him to do so, this he will admit without hesitation.
- 3.13 Therefore he judges that he can do something for the simple reason that he is aware that he ought to do so, and recognizes within himself the freedom which otherwise, without the moral law, would have remained unknown to him.

Note: we need to keep in mind that this selection from *The Critique of Practical Reason* goes to the *fact* of transcendental freedom which is not yet of concern in this Third Antinomy. For in this present work we are not concerned at all with the reality of freedom, or even with its possibility, but solely with the question as to whether freedom is compatible with the universal necessitation according to laws of nature.

Comments on the Translation

I have chosen to number each of Kant's sentences and paragraphs in a format such as 4.2, which would indicate the fourth paragraph and then the second sentence of that paragraph. I may break up Kant's sentences into several, but they will be included all together under that single number. For example, sentence 2.2 of one of the sections reads:

- 2.2 In it no action would commence or cease. Hence then also it would not be subject to laws of the time determination of everything that is alterable, i.e., where everything which happens encounters its cause in the appearance (of the preceding state).

And here I have divided the original German sentence into two English sentences, but still under the indicator of sentence 2.2.

My comments are given as footnotes to the text. Kant's own footnotes I have shown as paragraph notes, following the relevant paragraph, and I have used a smaller font.

The reader is invited to consider [Kant in a Nutshell](#) for a cursory review of Kant's effort in the *Critique of Pure Reason (CPR)*, the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Moral (GMM)*, the *Critique of Practical Reason (CPrR)* and *Religion Within The Bounds Of Sheer Reason (Religion)*. This may help in establishing the context of this present work as well as a short summary.

And I cordially invite the reader who spies any errors or has any suggestions to contact me at pmr#&kantwesley.com where #& are replaced by @.

Third Antinomy of the Dialectic of *The Critique of Pure Reason*

Now we turn to the text of Kant's Third Conflict and begin with the formal presentation of the Third Antinomy concerning natural causes versus freedom. Following that we will find the solution that Kant proposes.¹⁴

¹⁴ Between the formal presentation and the presentation of the solution there are several sections in the text which I have not included here. These pertain to the antinomies in general and not just specifically to the third antinomy. I hope eventually to be able to include a summary of all of the sections of the Antinomies.

The Antinomy of Pure Reason

Third Conflict of the Transcendental Ideas

Thesis

- 1.1 The causality according to laws of nature is not the only one from which the appearances of the world can all together be derived.
- 1.2 For there is a causality through freedom to be assumed necessarily for their explanation.

Proof

- 2.1 Suppose there were no other causality than according to laws of nature. In that case everything which happens presupposes a preceding state, upon which it unavoidably follows according to a rule.
- 2.2 But now the preceding state itself must be something which has happened (has arisen in time, since it previously did not exist), because if it had always been, its sequel would not ever have first originated, but rather would always have been.
- 2.3 Therefore the causality of the cause through which something happens is itself some occurrence which, according to the laws of nature, presupposes in turn an earlier state and its causality, but precisely this also yet an older one, etc.
- 2.4 Therefore if everything happens according to mere laws of nature, there

Antithesis

- 1.1 There is no freedom, but rather everything in the world happens solely in accordance with the laws of nature.

Proof

- 2.1 Suppose there were a freedom in the transcendental understanding as a particular sort of causality, according to which the events of the world could follow, namely a capacity for utterly beginning a state, hence also a series of sequels from that state. In that case not only will a series begin through this spontaneity, but even the determination of this spontaneity itself for the production of the series, i.e., the causality, will begin utterly, so that nothing precedes according to which this occurring action were determined according to enduring laws.
- 2.2 But every beginning of an action presupposes a state of inactivity of the cause of that action. And a dynamic first beginning of the action presupposes a state which has no connection of causality at all with the preceding state of that cause, i.e., in no way follows from it.

- is always only a subaltern, but never a first beginning, and therefore in general no completion of the series on the side of the causes descending from one another.
- 2.5 But now it is precisely in that that the laws of nature consists, i.e., that nothing happens without a sufficient, a priori determined cause.
- 2.6 Therefore the proposition that all causality is only possible according to laws of nature is self contradictory in its unrestricted universality, and therefore this cannot be assumed as the only causality.
- 3.1 Accordingly then a causality must be assumed through which something happens without the cause of that being determined yet further through another preceding cause according to necessary laws, i.e., an absolute spontaneity of the causes, to begin a series of appearances of itself which proceeds according to laws of nature, thus transcendental freedom, without which the serial sequence of the appearances is never complete on the side of the causes, even in the course of nature
- 2.3 Therefore transcendental freedom is opposed to causality. Hence such a combination of the successive states of effecting causes according to which no unity of experience is possible, which therefore is also encountered in no experience, is an empty figment of thought.
- 3.1 Therefore we have nothing except nature in which we must seek the cohesion and order of the events of the world.
- 3.2 Freedom (independence) from laws of nature is indeed a release from compulsion, but also from the guides of all rules.
- 3.3 For we cannot say that instead of the laws of nature, laws of freedom enter into the causality of the course of the world, because if these were determined according to laws, it would not be freedom but rather itself nothing other than nature.
- 3.4 Therefore nature and transcendental freedom distinguish themselves as lawfulness and anarchy. The former indeed burdens the understanding with the difficulty of seeking the derivation of the events in the series of the higher causes, because the causality is conditioned upon them each time. But in recompense nature promises thorough and lawful unity of the experience, since on the other hand the illusion of freedom indeed pledges rest to an investigative understanding in the chain of causes by leading to an unconditioned causality

which commences acting of itself, but, which, since it is itself blind, demolishes the guides of the rules on which alone a thoroughly cohering experience is possible.

Remarks to the Third Antinomy

I. To the Thesis

- 4.1 The transcendental idea of freedom does not by any means make up the entire content of the psychological concept of this name--which is empirical for the most part--but rather only that of the absolute spontaneity of the action as the actual basis for the imputation of that freedom. But it is still the actual stumbling block for philosophy, which finds insurmountable difficulties in admitting this type of unconditioned causality.
- 4.2 That in the question about the freedom of will, therefore, which has placed speculative reason in such great embarrassment for who knows how long, is actually only transcendental and is concerned solely about whether a capacity would have to be assumed for beginning a series of successive things or states of itself.
- 4.3 It is not so necessary to answer how this be possible, since with that we must be equally content with the causality according to natural laws in recognizing a priori that such would have to be presupposed, even though we can in no way comprehend the possibility of how through a certain existence the existence of something

II. To the Antithesis

- 4.1 The defender of the all-capacitating nature (transcendental physiocracy), in opposition to the promoter of freedom, would assert his proposition against the latter's rationally contrived inferences in the following manner.
- 4.2 If you don't assume any mathematical first with respect to time in the world, then you would also not need to seek a dynamic first with respect to causality. to seek a dynamic first with respect to causality.
- 4.3 Who has called you to dream up an utterly first state of the world, and thus an absolute beginning of the gradually unfolding series of the appearances, so that you might procure a resting point for your imagination, to set limits to an unrestricted nature?
- 4.4 Since the substances in the world have always been, at least the unity of experience makes such a presupposition necessary, there is no difficulty likewise in assuming that the alternation of its states, i.e., a series of alterations, has always been. Thus there would be no need to seek out

- else is given and must hold ourselves in this case to experience.
- 4.4 Indeed we have now actually established the necessity of a first beginning of a series of appearances from freedom only to the extent as is requisite for the comprehensibility of an origin of the world, and we can take all succeeding states as a succession according to mere laws of nature.
- 4.5 But nevertheless since the capacity for beginning a series in time entirely of itself is proven in this way (although not penetrated), from this point on we are allowed to have diverse series begin of themselves midway in the course of the world, with respect to the causality, and to attribute to the substances of the world a capacity for acting out of freedom.
- 4.6 But let us not be detained here by a misunderstanding that since a successive series in the world can have only a comparative first beginning, in that still a state of things always precedes in the world, perhaps no absolute first beginning of the series during the course of the world be possible.
- 4.7 For we are not speaking here of the absolute first beginning according to time, but rather according to causality.
- 4.8 Let me now (for example) stand up from my chair completely free and without the necessarily determining influence of natural causes. In this
- any first beginning, neither mathematic nor dynamic.
- 4.5 The possibility of such an infinite derivation without a first member with respect to which every remaining member is merely subsequence, cannot be made comprehensible with respect to its possibility.
- 4.6 But if for that reason you wanted to discard this riddle of nature, then you will see yourself necessitated to discard many synthetic base constitutions (base forces), which you could comprehend just as little, and even the possibility of an alteration in general must become offensive to you.
- 4.7 For if you did not find through experience that it actually is, then you would never be able a priori to think how such an unceasing sequence of being and not-being were possible.
- 5.1 And in any case if a transcendental capacity of freedom were conceded in order to begin the alterations in the world, this capacity would have to be at least only outside of the world (though it always remains a bold presumption to assume yet an object outside of the sum-total of all possible viewings, which therefore can be given in no possible perception).
- 5.2 However to impute such a capacity to the substances in the world itself can never be allowed because then the cohesion according to universal

III. Solution of the Cosmological Ideas of the Totality of the Derivation of the World Events from their Causes

incident then a new series is utterly begun along with its natural sequels into infinity. However with respect to time this incident is only the continuation of a preceding series.

4.9 For this resolution and deed does not at all lie in the sequence of merely natural effects, and is not just a continuation of those. Instead the determining natural causes cease entirely here, with respect to this event, which indeed follows upon those natural effects but does not arise from them. Hence it must be termed an utterly first beginning of a series of appearances; not according to time, of course, but still with respect to causality.

5.1 The certification of the need of reason to appeal in the series of the natural causes to a first beginning out of freedom, makes quite clear that all philosophies of ancient times (the school of Epicurus excepted) saw themselves compelled to assume a first mover for the explanation of the movements of the world, i.e., a freely acting cause which first began this series of states and of itself.

5.2 For from nature alone they did not presume to make a first beginning comprehensible.

laws of appearances determining one another necessarily, which we term nature, would for the most part disappear and with it the mark of empirical truth which distinguishes experience from a dream.

5.3 For next to such a lawless capacity of freedom, nature would lose all meaning, for through the influence of that freedom the laws of nature would be unceasingly transformed and the play of the appearances, which are regular and uniform according to a nature, would be made confused and without cohesion.

III.
Solution of the Cosmological Ideas
of the
Totality of the Derivation of the World Events from their Causes

- 1.1 Only two types of causality can be conceived with respect to something which occurs, namely: nature or freedom.
- 1.2 The first of these involves the connection, in the sense world alone, of one state with a preceding one, upon the occurrence of which the subsequent one takes place in accordance with a rule.
- 1.3 Now since the causality of appearances depends upon conditions of time, and since the precedent state, if it had always existed, would not have suddenly produced an effect commencing in time, it follows that the causality of anything which occurs or comes into being has itself come into being and therefore, according to principles of understanding, also has need of a cause.¹⁵
- 2.1 With freedom in a cosmological sense, on the other hand, I think of a capacity for initiating a state of itself, the causality of which, therefore, is not in turn subordinated by the laws of nature to another cause by means of which it would be determined with respect to time.¹⁶
- 2.2 In this sense freedom is a purely transcendental idea which, in the first place, contains nothing borrowed from experience and, secondly, the object of which cannot be given in a determined manner in any experience. For according to the universal law of even the possibility of an experience, where everything that happens would also have to have a cause, the causality of a cause would also have to happen or arise, and in which way then

¹⁵ And reason (in the antithesis) will have it that this chain of causes and effects extends back in time without end.

¹⁶ Here then we are speaking of a capacity of initiating a thoroughly spontaneous action which is therefore entirely independent of any natural cause, which is the case of the thesis. This is contrary to the laws of natural causality where every event is an effect of a cause which arises in the previous time. And so according to the antithesis this spontaneous action would have to have a cause, and thus be part of the chain of causes in nature.

III. Solution of the Cosmological Ideas of the
Totality of the Derivation of the World Events from their Causes

the entire field of experience, reaching out as far as it may, is transformed into a complex of sheer nature.¹⁷

- 2.3 But since in this way no absolute totality of the conditions is to be obtained in the causal relationship, reason conceives the idea of a spontaneity which could begin action on its own without first needing another cause to determine it with respect to the law of the causal connection to action.¹⁸
- 3.1 It is worth noting that the practical concept of freedom depends upon this transcendental idea of freedom, and it is the latter which constitutes the particular difficulties which questions about the possibility of the former have always entailed.¹⁹
- 3.2 From a practical standpoint freedom denotes an independence of the discretionary choice (*Willkür*) from any necessity through the drives of sensitivity.
- 3.3 For discretionary choice is sensitive to the extent it is affected pathologically (through motivational causes of the sensitivity). It is termed animal (*arbitrium brutum*) if it can be pathologically necessitated.
- 3.4 Human discretionary choice is indeed an *arbitrium sensitivum*, though not *brutum*, but rather *liberum*, because sensitivity does not make human actions necessary, for there is a capacity in the human whereby one is determined of oneself independently of necessitation through sensitive drives.²⁰

¹⁷ This is based on the rule of association with regard to causes where we must seek a cause for every event in order even to recognize and express an event. And which cause itself had to come into being in order for it to be that difference to which the event can be associated and can have arisen. If the cause of the freezing of water, for example, is the cold air, then this coldness must have arisen, for if it had always been, then the water would always have been frozen and would not suddenly have arisen. And since the recognition of any event depends upon this rule of association, it is impossible to find any suggestion of freedom. Accordingly then this idea of freedom is a pure invention of reason.

¹⁸ Without this spontaneous and free causality, the chain of causal conditions would regress into infinity. And according to the thesis of this third antinomy there must be a limit to any such chain, and accordingly there must be an original, spontaneous event which is a cause but which itself has no cause with respect to time in accordance with laws of nature. This then denotes a condition which itself is unconditioned.

¹⁹ This will be made clear in this and the subsequent paragraph.

²⁰ Practical freedom is the capacity of being directed by reason as opposed to the immediate excitement of the senses. For example while I may be hungry and food is available, unlike the animals I am able to restrain my appetite for a longer range goal, e.g., waiting for a more desirable food later or in order to reduce my weight. Thus reasoning is utilized here to provide a choice between different desires. Transcendental freedom is the capacity of reason to determine the will which excludes all personal desires. It is a function of pure reason, and thus is independent from all empirical considerations.

- 4.1 It is easy to see that if all causality in the world of sense were merely nature, then every event would be determined through another event in time and in accordance with necessary laws. In this case then, since appearances, to the extent they determine the discretionary choice, would have to necessitate every action as their natural consequence, it follows that the elimination of transcendental freedom would simultaneously eradicate all practical freedom.²¹
- 4.2 For the latter presupposes that even though something did not happen, it still should have happened, and so its cause in the appearance was not so determining that a causality could not exist in our discretionary choice to produce something which were completely independent of that natural cause and even in opposition to its power and influence and hence (there is the assumption that) it could begin a series of events completely of itself.²²
- 5.1 Therefore something occurs here which is encountered generally in the internal conflict of a rationality which dares to go out beyond the limits of possible experience, i.e., the task is not actually physiological, but rather transcendental.²³
- 5.2 Hence while the question about the possibility of freedom is indeed at odds with psychology, its solution is under the purview of the transcendental philosophy alone because such a question is based upon dialectic arguments of a pure reason alone.²⁴
- 5.3 Now in order to properly orient the transcendental philosophy (which cannot decline a satisfactory answer with regard to this matter), I must first try to determine more closely its procedure with regard to the task by means of a remark.
- 6.1 If appearances were things on their own, and thus if space and time were forms of the existence of things on their own, then the conditions would always belong with the conditioned as members of one and the same series, and from that situation the antinomy

²¹ If transcendental freedom were impossible, then every event would follow naturally from a preceding cause in the appearances; but then practical freedom would be impossible, for it implies a capacity to disregard the natural causes in the appearances, which is an expression of transcendental freedom.

²² If we did not have the capacity to act with absolute spontaneity, i.e., transcendental freedom, then it would hardly be expected that we could act not only independently of the sensitive drives, but even in opposition to them. And so if there is no transcendental freedom? there is no practical freedom.

²³ So the question is whether it is possible for an action to occur as an event which were spontaneous and thus independent of the laws of nature and of the sequence of the appearances.

²⁴ The question being whether a person might ignore all the causation of nature and act entirely independently of them and even in opposition to them, i.e., spontaneously.

III. Solution of the Cosmological Ideas of the Totality of the Derivation of the World Events from their Causes

common to all transcendental ideas would also arise in the present case, namely that this series would inevitably be too large or too small for the understanding.²⁵

- 6.2 The dynamic concepts of reason, however, with which we are occupied in this and the following section, are peculiar to the extent that since they are not concerned with an object considered as a quantity, but rather only with its existence, we can also abstract from the size of the series of the conditions and be concerned solely with the dynamic relationship of the condition to the conditioned. In this way the question about nature and freedom addresses the difficulty of whether freedom in general is even possible and if so, whether it could coexist with the universality of the causal law of nature. Hence the question is whether it is a proper, disjunctive proposition that every effect in the world would have to arise either from nature *or* from freedom; or whether both might not take place simultaneously in quite different referrals to the same event.²⁶
- 6.3 Since the correctness of the basic principle of the thorough cohesion of all events of the sense world according to invariable laws of nature is already firmly established as a principle of the transcendental analytic and admits of no exception,
- 6.4 the only question remaining is whether in spite of that, freedom might also occur with regard to an effect which is already determined according to nature, or whether this freedom is totally excluded by that inviolable rule.²⁷
- 6.5 And here the very common, but illusory, assumption of the absolute reality of appearances demonstrates its disadvantageous influence in confusing our reason,
- 6.6 for if appearances were things on their own, then freedom could not be salvaged;

²⁵ It is the general assumption of science that appearances (as objects) are subject to conditions of time (as well as to space), and it is for that reason that science will not be able to brook any freedom whatsoever. And this is the very reason that the dialectic exists, for appearances (summarized and unified in the concept of an object of experience) are thought to be things on their own and therefore subject to conditions of time. And if the series of causal events were without beginning (antithesis), this would be too large for our understanding; but then if the series of these events had a beginning (thesis), this would be too small for the understanding (for we wonder how this beginning suddenly arose).

²⁶ So we don't have to be concerned with the formal argument, i.e., whether a series of causes is limited or unlimited, but instead can take up the question more generally, i.e., whether any action whatsoever and at any time is possible which is free and independent of the laws of nature. And since experience requires natural causes, we will wonder if a single event can arise via both natural cause and also freedom.

²⁷ We know from the conditions of experience that every event has a cause. Therefore the question is not either nature or freedom, but only whether freedom could *also* exist with regard to any event in time, i.e., is it possible that an effect of natural causation could *at the same time* also be an effect of freedom? At first glance this seems contradictory, and it is to a consideration of this that Kant now turns his attention.

- 6.7 for in that case nature would be the complete and all-sufficient determining cause of every event, and the condition of each event would always be contained solely in the series of the appearances which, along with their effects, would necessarily be subject to the laws of nature.²⁸
- 6.8 If, on the other hand, appearances were not thought to be anything other than what they in fact are, i.e., not things on their own, but rather sheer representations which cohere together according to empirical laws, then they would require foundations which would not be appearances.²⁹
- 6.9 But such an intelligible cause would not be determined through appearances with respect to its causality, even though its effects would be visible and therefore could be determined by means of other appearances.³⁰
- 6.10 Hence such an intelligible cause, along with its causality, would be apart from the series of empirical conditions, even though its effects would still be encountered in the series.³¹

²⁸ When Kant speaks of appearances as though they were things on their own, he is referring to the object of experience, which is recognized via a concept by means of which various appearances are unified. This means that the object of experience is itself only a summary of these various appearances, e.g., the tree seen close up and then also far away, and with leaf and also bare, are unified as appearances of one and the same object (the tree). Essentially then he is saying that if what is revealed in the brainarium, i.e., via the various senses, e.g., touch, sight, smell, warmth, etc., is all there is to reality then indeed the laws of nature would encompass and include all things and there would be no place for anything else, e.g., freedom. See also: Discussion Of The Cosmological Idea Of A Freedom In Conjunction With Universal Necessity In Nature, 3.2, which follows in the text below.

²⁹ All we know of the thing from the appearances is what can appear within our brainarium and in terms of our senses, e.g., color, warmth. In order to recognize an appearance as such and to distinguish it from real and enduring things, we must conceive of a something which would be the foundation and cause of the appearances, something with which we can contrast the appearances, e.g., [Hume's real table](#) which did not change size and shape as did its image in his eye.

³⁰ This intelligible cause would act according to its own principles and could be only occasioned by relevant circumstances. And thus it would be independent of appearances. These principles would be timeless, e.g., lie if and only if it is advantageous, thus not now and then, but at anytime. The effects of this intelligible cause would arise then according to the appearances of the circumstance, e.g., an opportunity to lie with profit, and so as would events in the appearances such that they would be attributed to the circumstances by the sciences. A consideration of the "dark matter" of contemporary physics might be helpful. We cannot discern this dark matter in any way, but we can discern its effects in the world. And it might likewise be that what is seen as a natural event might also be the effect of a capacity, e.g., freedom, which we are not able to discern at all in the brainarium world of sense.

³¹ Here we might consider the earlier example of a tree which acted with spontaneity and only seemed to be a product of nature; it was a coincidence. (This is closely akin to the [Leibnizian hypothesis of pre-established harmony](#) amongst freely acting monads.) Suppose the tree just decided, based on some principle or even just "out of the blue", to put forth leaves in the spring and then to reject them in the fall. Still from the standpoint of nature we would be certain that the tree had to conform to laws of natural causality. And so with one and the same event we would be considering two different causes, one intelligible and the other empirical; the one free and the other natural.

III. Solution of the Cosmological Ideas of the
Totality of the Derivation of the World Events from their Causes

- 6.11 The effect, therefore, with respect to its intelligible cause, could be considered as free and yet simultaneously, with respect to the appearances, it would be considered as a consequence of the appearances and as adhering to the necessity of nature; a distinction which, if presented generally and abstractly, must seem extremely subtle and obtuse, but which will become clear in the application.³²
- 6.12 All I wanted to do here was to note that since the thorough cohesion of all appearances in a context of nature is an inviolable law, this would necessarily have to topple all freedom if we wanted to hold unyieldingly to the reality of the appearances.³³
- 6.13 And this is the reason why those holding that opinion have never succeeded in reconciling nature and freedom.³⁴

³² How can a single event be the effect of two different causes, e.g., natural necessity and also freedom?

³³ This echoes the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories, A version, [Part 2. Sec. 4. Par 6](#), where a transcendental affinity among all appearances is necessarily assumed for the sake of having experience, and so where all appearances are considered as connected, directly or indirectly, via laws of nature. Accordingly if the object of experience (which is a summation and cohesion of the relevant appearances via the concept of the object) were a thing on its own, then it would be impossible to think in terms of two diverse causalities, and in which case natural necessity would always exclude freedom. But since we realize that the appearances are not things on their own, there is a possibility for freedom along with natural necessity.

³⁴ If the object of experience were not simply a summation of the appearances of that object, but were rather a thing on its own, then there would be no place for any intelligible character as a causation of freedom and accordingly no place for any freedom. Or if we want to have freedom, we could not assume any universal system of laws of nature, but only occasional laws. The solution here will only be possible by considering the objects of experience as appearances (which is also the fact) and not things on their own, which as things on their own is the traditional (and non-transcendental) consideration, and for which reason it has been previously impossible to reconcile freedom and nature.

Possibility of the Combination of Causality through Freedom with Universal Laws of the Necessity of Nature

- 1.1 Any aspect of an object of the senses which is not appearance, I call intelligible.³⁵
- 1.2 Accordingly if that which must be viewed in the sense world as appearance should also have a capacity of its own which were not an object of sensitive viewing [*Anschauung*³⁶] but which could still be the cause of appearances, we could consider the causality of this being in two ways.³⁷ On the one hand, with respect to its action as a thing on its own, it would be intelligible; and on the other hand, with respect to the effects of that being as an appearance in the sense world, it would be sensitive.³⁸
- 1.3 In so doing, we would be making two concepts of the causality of this being, one empirical and one intellectual, both of which would be occurring with the identical effect.³⁹
- 1.4 Conceiving the capacity of an object of the senses in this dual way does not contradict any of the concepts which we must make about appearances and a possible experience;
- 1.5 for since appearances are not things on their own, and hence since a transcendental object which determines them (the appearances being mere representations) must undergird them as a foundation, nothing keeps us from attributing to this transcendental object not

³⁵ The color and shape of an object can be sensed and looked at and so are appearance. If there were such a property as freedom, which cannot be sensed or sighted, that would be counted as intelligible. So I can spy the location and shape and color of an object, but not its freedom (assuming there were such a property). And so even if a being were free, I could look at that person forever and still not sense such a property in that being. In a like manner I might assume a property of reading the thoughts of others, but there would be no way for me as a human to sense that, but only to infer it from some appearances.

³⁶ For more on this see [Anschauung](#).

³⁷ As mentioned in an earlier note, we might take the “dark matter” of current theoretical physics as an analogy of sorts. This dark matter is something which cannot be seen or sensed, but the effects of which are discernible in the appearances, i.e., in the gravitational effect on the visible stars. The difference here is that the effects of freedom, if there be such, would fit in with the effects of natural causes and so would not be prominent as the effects of dark matter.

³⁸ And so far in this treatment this intelligible property is merely something that Kant is dreaming up to see if freedom might at least be compatible with natural necessity. Assuming there were such a property as freedom, a causality which could not appear in any human looking/viewing, the task before us is to determine how such a property could exist simultaneously with those properties of an object which can be sensed and which are always elements of a nature and subject always to the laws of that nature.

³⁹ To use the earlier example, a tree might have the property of freedom and would spontaneously decide to produce leaves and then to discard them, and from that standpoint it would only look like it were a function of nature. So far such an assertion would be senseless with regard to trees. But it shows that two causalities could be in play with one and the same event as an effect, and it could be meaningful with regard to rational creatures.

Possibility of the Combination of Causality through Freedom
with Universal Laws of the Necessity of Nature

only the property whereby it appears, but also a causality which is not appearance, even though its effect is still encountered in the appearance.⁴⁰

- 1.6 Now every effecting cause must have a character, i.e., a law of its causality, without which it would not be a cause.
- 1.7 In the first place an empirical character would have to be assigned to some subject of the sense world so that its actions as appearances would be thoroughly integrated with other appearances in accordance with enduring laws of nature and where these other appearances would be the conditions of these actions such that they (the actions) could be derived from them and which, in connection with them, would make up members of a single series of the natural order.⁴¹
- 1.8 Secondly, we would still have to grant this subject an intelligible character whereby it would be the cause of those actions as appearances, but which did not stand under any condition of sensitivity and would not itself be appearance.⁴²
- 1.9 The former of these two might also be called the character of such an object in the appearance, and the latter the character of the thing on its own.⁴³

⁴⁰ We must assume a something, the TO=X, in order to derive our sightings (the appearances) from it so that the appearances are considered as representations and not as things on their own and existing as they appear to us, e.g., getting smaller at a distance. And when we ascribe these properties of our sight and other senses to the object of experience (which is a composite of appearances), that does not mean that we can deny other properties to the thing on its own which simply don't appear to our senses, e.g., freedom. Again, we are merely fantasizing at this point regarding a property which cannot be discerned through our organs of sense.

⁴¹ We look at the actions as effects and from them we are able to discern the empirical character as the natural causality of the object of experience. In the case of some animal, e.g., a dog, we would understand and recognize its empirical character in its desire for food when hungry and of exerting itself to acquire food by killing some smaller prey. With the human we can take account also of rationality as the human would use rationality in determining his will and ensuing actions.

⁴² We can think of the human as having an intelligible character and endowed with freedom such that the actions as appearances were a free effect and not subject to any preceding appearances. Or thinking of the dog in the previous note, we could just arbitrarily assert that the dog were free (intelligible character) and were not driven to react to its hunger as indicated by its empirical character, and instead followed some principle in eating and so could have refused to eat when hungry, i.e., it acted freely.

⁴³ In the first case we are speaking of the object of experience which is subject to laws of nature, and is looked at in the time and space of the brainarium. In the second case we are speaking of the thing on its own with its (alleged) freedom, whereof the object of experience (itself summarizing the various appearances of that object) is an appearance and only represents the thing on its own in the realm of experience, i.e., one and the same event as effects of two different causalities, one freedom of the thing on its own and the other natural of the object of experience (as the appearance of the thing on its own).

- 2.1 Now with respect to its intelligible character, this active subject would not be subject to conditions of time, for time is the condition of appearances alone and not of things on their own.⁴⁴
- 2.2 In it no action would commence or cease. Hence then also it would not be subject to laws of the time determination of everything that is alterable, i.e., where everything which happens encounters its cause in the appearance (of the preceding state).⁴⁵
- 2.3 In brief then, to the extent this subject were intellectual, its causality would have no place at all in the series of empirical conditions which necessitates events in the sense world.⁴⁶
- 2.4 Now this intelligible character could not of course be known immediately (because we can perceive nothing except to the extent it appears), but it would still have to be thought in conformity with the empirical character in just the same way that we must universally ascribe a transcendental object to the appearances in thought, even though, of course, we know nothing at all about what that object might be on its own.⁴⁷
- 3.1 According to its empirical character, therefore, this subject, as appearance, would be subject to the causal connection with respect to all laws of determination, and to this extent would be nothing other than a part of the sense world, and its effects would arise without exception from nature just like every other appearance.

⁴⁴ If I have a principle of helping people in need, then that is a principle which is independent of the conditions of time. Now I spy someone in need and act in accordance with my principle. It would seem that the need of that person were the cause of my action; but it is not, rather I am already determined to my actions and utilize the need merely as the opportunity for the application of my predetermined will. A free tree might devise a rational principle for action, or just act with absolute spontaneity, in both case independently of the conditions of the appearances. And so the effect of putting forth leaves would arise in time, but would not be caused by the appearances, but only occasioned by them. Thus the effect would not be conditioned by time.

⁴⁵ The most that would take place would be merely the sighting of a situation to which the principle of action of the intelligible character is applicable. I might have a principle to help someone in trouble, and then go to rescue a drowning person. But the state of drowning would not cause the action, but merely its occasion in time, occasion it as calling the free principle into play. And so the occasion would arise in time, and would be a function of the appearance, and so the appearance would seem to be the cause in terms of natural laws, but the act would remain free for it is a determination of the will which is independent of time.

⁴⁶ While the use of our understanding and reason may be prompted by appearances, their determination and functioning of them are free and not in any way dependent upon them and so there is no conditioning by time.

⁴⁷ In a word, while this intelligible character would be free, the effects would still be the same as expected by the empirical character in accordance with laws of nature. We do the same thing in spying the appearances of a tree, e.g., winter and summer, and unify them via the object of experience based on the assumption of the thing on its own.

Possibility of the Combination of Causality through Freedom
with Universal Laws of the Necessity of Nature

- 3.2 Just as external appearances would influence this subject according to the way its empirical character, i.e., the law of its causality, were recognized through experience, even so all of its actions would have to permit of explanation by means of laws of nature, and all requirements for their complete and necessary determination would have to be encountered in a possible experience.⁴⁸
- 4.1 But according to the intelligible character of this subject, however (and even though we are able to know nothing more about it, of course, than its general concept), this very same subject would still have to be free of all influences of sensitivity and of every determination by appearances, and since nothing can happen in it to the extent it is noumenon (i.e., no alteration will be encountered, hence no dynamic determination of time, and therefore no connection with appearances as causes), it follows that in its actions this acting being would be independent and free of all necessity of nature (which is solely encountered in the world of sense).⁴⁹
- 4.2 Hence we would say quite properly of this subject that it initiated its effects in the sense world of itself without the action having begun within itself. Furthermore this assertion would be valid without us having to say that the effects had to begin of themselves in the sense world, because there they are always previously determined through empirical conditions of the preceding time, but still only by means of the empirical character (which

⁴⁸ Let us say that my supreme principle of action is to pursue my own self interest. Then when the safe opportunity to steal is perceived, that principle becomes the cause of my action, in the same way that the cooled air is the cause of the freezing of water. From an empirical standpoint we would say that the theft and the freezing would both be caused by the preceding opportunity to steal and the conditions of the weather, respectively.

⁴⁹ An example would be that of a person who follows a certain principle, and therefore, while his actions are prompted by perceived opportunities for implementation of this principle, these actions, intelligibly speaking, are not caused by the appearances, but solely by the idea itself, e.g., helping people, or taking advantage of safe opportunities to steal, etc. Here then the principle is ruling and the appearances provide merely the opportunity for implementation of the principle. We need to remember that we are merely conceiving of this intelligible character and defining it in ways that cannot be contradicted, e.g., that it is free of all empirical influence and so no cause arises in it in time, but can only exist timelessly much as a principle of action would be constant and not itself subject to the appearances. And very importantly its decisions never contradict the effects of natural causality.

would be merely the appearance of the intelligible character⁵⁰), and are possible only as a continuation of the series of natural causes.

- 4.3 So then freedom and nature both, and each in its actual meaning, would be encountered simultaneously and without conflict with regard to precisely the same actions, and accordingly as we might consider them with reference to their intelligible cause or their sensible cause.⁵¹

⁵⁰ So we have the empirical character such that from it we can derived all the actions as appearances. But then we have the intelligible character which we would hold as totally and transcendently free, and so the empirical character would be seen as the appearance of this intelligible character, the way this intelligible character has chosen to reveal itself. With the empirical character everything fits in with the laws of nature, and so by introducing the intelligible character we are asserting freedom and this means that whatever appearance arose as an effect by virtue of the empirical character was actually a free effect of the intelligible character. We have no basis for asserting this intelligible character, for experience would give us only appearances and the assumption in experience is that these appearances arise necessarily from the empirical character. In a word, everything is determined by the empirical character according to laws of nature, and at the same time this empirical character is merely the appearance of the intelligible character, and so is an act of a free choosing.

⁵¹ Let's not forget (and Kant reminds us of this) that we are merely dreaming up the intelligible character via speculation and have no basis whatsoever to recognize such a character as actual. We have defined it as something which remains with the transcendental object = X after all that belongs to appearance has been removed, i.e., we must think that something remains and we are then free to think about this something whatever we wish as long as we do not contradict science and the laws of nature (or our own thinking). Again: the empirical character is the object of experience and encompasses all the appearances (actions) of the subject. And then considering the subject as a thing on its own, we conceive of an intelligible character such that the empirical character (the object of experience) is merely the appearance of this subject as a thing on its own, and which is beyond the purview of our sensitivity.

Discussion Of The Cosmological Idea Of A Freedom In Conjunction With Universal Necessity In Nature

- 1.1 I have thought it advantageous first merely to sketch the solution to our transcendental problem in order to better convey an overview of the procedure of reason with respect to its solution.⁵²
- 1.2 Now we shall separate the moments of its conclusion, on which it actually depends, and consider the problem in its particulars.

- 2.1 The law of nature that everything which happens has a cause, that the causality of this cause, i.e., the action, since it precedes in time and in consideration of an effect which arose there, cannot always have been, but rather must have arisen, also has its causes among the appearances by which it is determined, and that consequently all events are empirically determined in a natural order; this law, I say, through which appearances can originally make up a nature and render objects of an experience, is a law of the understanding which brooks no exception whatsoever, nor exempts any appearance (because otherwise we would place them outside of every possible experience and, in so doing, would differentiate them from all objects of a possible experience and convert them into sheer thought things and phantoms of the brain).⁵³

- 3.1 But even though we have in mind here solely a chain of causes which renders no absolute total at all with respect to the conditions in their regression, we are not at all inhibited by this consideration; for it has been already lifted in the general evaluation of the antinomy of reason if in the series of appearances reason goes out to the unconditioned.⁵⁴

⁵² We have tried to set the framework for a solution and have considered some terms, especially the empirical and intelligible characters. Now we are ready to solve the antinomy and show its illusion.

⁵³ This is based on the Second Analogy of the Transcendental Analytic where we see that every event has a cause and further that that cause must itself be an event of an earlier cause, and so on back in the chain of causes without any exception.

⁵⁴ We need to keep in mind that we are not dealing with things on their own, but only with the appearances of things. Accordingly we are required to continue to look for a cause for every event and to treat every cause itself also as an event, i.e., calling for a cause. If we were dealing with things on their own, then the entire series would be considered as given; but since we are dealing with only appearances we cannot assume the entire series to be given and thus we must continually look for the elements of the series.

- 3.2 (For if we wished to yield to the illusion of transcendental realism, then neither nature nor freedom would remain.)⁵⁵
- 3.3 It is here that the question now arises: if only natural necessity is recognized in the entire series of all events, is it still possible to consider what is a merely natural effect from one standpoint, as an effect of freedom from another standpoint, or do these two sorts of causality directly contract one another?⁵⁶
- 4.1 Among the causes in the appearance there certainly can be nothing which could begin a series utterly and of itself.
- 4.2 Every action as appearance, to the extent it produces an event, is itself an event or occurrence which presupposes another state wherein its cause is encountered. Hence everything which happens is only a continuation of the series and in it no beginning initiated of itself is possible.
- 4.3 All actions of natural causes in the temporal series, therefore, are in turn effects which presuppose their own causes in the time series.
- 4.4 An original action, through which something occurs which did not exist previously, is not to be expected from the causal connection of the appearances.⁵⁷
- 5.1 But even if the effects are appearances, is it necessary that the causality of their causes (which are also appearances) would have to be solely empirical? Is it not rather possible that, even though a connection with its cause is unquestionably required for every effect in the appearance, this empirical causality itself, without interrupting its cohesion with the causes of nature in the least, might still itself be an effect of a non-empirical, intelligi-

⁵⁵ This illusion means that the object of experience (which is merely a concept by means of which we unify the relevant appearances) would be a thing on its own. For no law could be applicable to something considered as a thing on its own. If the table I spy gets smaller physically at a distance, then there is nothing which could be said definitively about such a thing. It might instead suddenly get larger or remain the same or even go out of existence or turn into a head of lettuce. And this would have nothing to do with freedom either, and just be a “monster” reality, i.e., totally inexplicable something which just appears.

⁵⁶ We know that all the appearances must be connected through time according to laws of natural necessity. And so the question concerns merely whether there could also be a freedom which coincides with this necessity of nature, or would it be totally excluded.

⁵⁷ Things don't just happen on their own and are not to be considered as things on their own but only as appearances of things. Accordingly they are always functions of the laws of nature which we must assume in order first to have the object of experience and then to have experience with that object. There is no place for any freedom or spontaneity in the natural series of causes. Such a notion would be absurd in experience and would destroy the necessity of nature.

ble causality. In other words, with respect to the appearances might there be an original action of a cause which therefore is to this extent not an appearance but rather, with regard to this capacity, intelligible, even though, as a link in the chain of nature, it must still be counted entirely with the world of sense?⁵⁸

- 6.1 We have need of the proposition of the causality of the appearances among one another in order to seek and be able to infer natural conditions from natural events, i.e., causes in the appearances.⁵⁹
- 6.2 If this is admitted and asserted without exception, then the understanding, which in its empirical usage looks for nothing except nature in all occurrences and is also justified in doing so, has everything that it can require, and the physical explanation continues without interruption.⁶⁰
- 6.3 In such a case there would be no disruption at all, given also that it were a mere fiction,⁶¹ if someone were to assume that among the natural causes there were some that had a capacity which were only intelligible in the sense that the determination of that capacity would never be a function of empirical conditions, but rather merely of foundations of the

⁵⁸ We can imagine someone with such a temperament that he would want to take advantage of all safe opportunities for personal gain. Then when such opportunities were perceived by him he would act accordingly. This would be an aspect of his empirical character. But then at the same time, thinking of him as a thing on its own and not as an appearance, we can conceive of him as freely formulating this maxim independently of his temperament such that the empirical character is just a freely chosen appearance of his intelligible character. And thus there would be two causalities with regard to the same event, one empirical and one intelligible, the former necessary according to laws of nature and with the latter entirely free.

⁵⁹ Without the presupposition of causation (which is presented in the Second Analogy of the Analytic of the *CPR*) it would not occur to us to look for a cause for any given condition or state among the appearances. It is one thing to recognize a given state; and it is a different thing entirely to look for the *beginning* of that state, and that beginning can only be expressed in terms of the cause of that state, such that that state is an event and not just a condition. The only way to express the beginning of an event is in terms of its cause, e.g., state B occurred because its cause, A, arose first.

⁶⁰ For example, the human is assumed by science to seek his own advantage above all else. Now his background and temperament go into the make up of the empirical character. When an action is undertaken, the occasion for expression of this character is said to be in the perceived opportunity, and without that the action would not have taken place, which is correct from the scientific standpoint. And thus we are dealing with a chain of appearances as causes regarding the empirical character.

⁶¹ Here again Kant points out that we are merely playing with our speculations. For our purposes here we can consider this notion of freedom as a fiction devised even as a plaything. The objective of this will not be to establish the fact or even the possibility of freedom, but solely to show that natural causality and freedom can be compatible with each other, and therefore there is no actual antinomy at all, but only the semblance of such. This fiction is expressed as such by our reference above to the freely acting tree.

understanding, but still such that the action by this cause were conformable to all laws of empirical causality in the appearance.⁶²

- 6.4 For in this way, the acting subject, as *causa phaenomenon*, would be linked to nature in inseparable dependence with regard to all its actions, and only the phenomenon of this subject (with all causality of that subject in the appearance) would contain certain determinations which, if one wanted to ascend from the empirical object to the transcendental, would have to be viewed as merely intelligible.⁶³
- 6.5 For if we follow the rule of nature regarding what may be the cause among the appearances, then we can be unconcerned about what sort of foundation and cohesion is thought to these appearances in the transcendental subject which is empirically unknown to us.⁶⁴
- 6.6 This intelligible foundation does not conflict at all with the empirical questions, for it actually only touches the thinking in the pure understanding, and even though the effects of this thinking and action of the pure understanding are encountered in the appearances, these effects must still be completely explicable by their causes in the appearance according to laws of nature⁶⁵ by adherence to the empirical character alone as the supreme, explanatory basis, and by completely ignoring the intelligible character which is the transcendental cause of that empirical character, except to the extent that this intelligible character can be specified only through the empirical as its sensitive indicator.⁶⁶
- 6.7 Let's now apply this thinking to experience.

⁶² If all of my actions are explicable by the empirical character (which is a function of my upbringing and temperament) then we can say anything else in addition to that that we might want to, and it would have no bearing or meaning to science. Regarding the same event we might speak of a *reaction* on the part of the empirical character and an *action* on the part of the intelligible character.

⁶³ The empirical character can explain all of a person's actions. And yet at the same time we are able to conceive of this empirical character as merely the appearance of a free, intelligible character, if we choose to do so. It would like asserting that the earth is not bound to the sun by gravity but rather because the earth has freely chosen to maintain that relationship we call gravitational.

⁶⁴ Once we have expressed the empirical character, then we have what science needs for the predication of all actions of the subject. And any intelligible character is extraneous, gratis and useless for science.

⁶⁵ And so it really does not matter whether the human were actually free or not, for all his behavior is explicable via laws of nature (given merely that he is a representational being, i.e., is able to function and behave in accordance with a mental world of representations, e.g., seek satisfaction of his desires). Science might express this freedom in this wise: he thinks that he is free, but actually everything about him is determined according to laws of nature.

⁶⁶ Even though the intelligible character can be free, still it can only be signified through the empirical character and which is always taken as a function of the make up, temperament and background of the subject, and so always as determined according to laws of nature. There is no place in the equations of science for such speculative properties as something called freedom.

- 6.8 The human is one of the appearances of the sense world and to this extent also one of the natural causes, whose causality must stand under empirical laws.
- 6.9 Accordingly he must have an empirical character even as all other things of nature.
- 6.10 We observe this through powers and capacities which he expresses in his effects.⁶⁷
- 6.11 With inanimate things or with things which are motivated in an animal-like way, we find no reason for thinking of any capacity other than the merely sensitive.
- 6.12 But the human, who knows all nature solely through his senses, nevertheless recognizes himself also through sheer apperception⁶⁸ and indeed in actions and internal determinations which he cannot in any way count as impressions of the senses, and is himself indeed partly phenomenon and partly, with regard to certain capacities, a merely intelligible object, because the action of these capacities can in no way be counted to the receptivity of the sensitivity.⁶⁹
- 6.13 This capacity we call understanding and reason, where especially the latter is particularly and preeminently distinguished from all empirically conditioned powers, for it ponders its objects merely according to ideas and determines the understanding regarding them, which then makes an empirical usage of its (indeed still pure) concepts.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Which is exactly the way Hume put it in his Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding in the section [\(VIII\) Of Liberty and Necessity](#). We notice a person's actions and gestures and speech and can infer the empirical character and then confidently predict all his actions, past and future.

⁶⁸ The pure apperception is the capacity for paying attention to something, i.e., apprehending some manifold with the intention and expectation of coming to a recognition. See [Circles in the Air](#).

⁶⁹ Thinking does not arise by virtue of sensation, but is a spontaneous undertaking of the mind. Kant touches on this in the *GMM*.III where we come to the idea of something which could be free by reference to our ability to think and to reason.

⁷⁰ So then, for example, I can dream up a world in my idea which is called the kingdom of God and then seek to live as a citizen of that kingdom and am able to judge of things in light of that idea, e.g., that this is wrong and this is right; and then make an application of this in the empirical world. For example: I see that it is wrong to lie (against the principles of this kingdom), and so in that way I am able to understand that lying is prohibited even when it is clear that it is favorable to me; and accordingly refuse to lie. Nonetheless this ability to act in accordance with ideas is merely part of the empirical character, like acting in accordance with the idea of the existence of a country called America or Germany, etc., which are only ideas. Essential it is a fact that we can reason and use reason to determine our actions.

- 7.1 That this reason is causal, or that we can at least imagine it to be so,⁷¹ is clear from the imperatives which we proclaim in every practical situation as rules for actual implementation.
- 7.2 The "ought" expresses a type of necessity and connection with grounds which do not otherwise arise in all of nature.
- 7.3 From nature the understanding can only recognize what is, or was, or will be.
- 7.4 It is impossible that anything in nature be supposed to be in any other way than what actually is in these relationships of times. Indeed if we have the course of nature in mind, the "ought" does not even make any sense.⁷²
- 7.5 We cannot at all ask what ought to take place in nature, any more than we can ask what sort of properties a circle ought to have, but rather only what actually does take place, and what the properties actually are.⁷³
- 8.1 Now this "ought" expresses a possible action, the basis of which is nothing other than a mere concept. In contrast the basis of a merely natural action must always be an appearance.
- 8.2 Now the action must, of course, be possible under conditions of nature if it is directed to the "ought."⁷⁴ But these conditions of nature do not affect the determination of the discretionary choice itself, but rather merely the effect and result of the determination in the appearance.
- 8.3 There may be ever so many natural reasons driving me toward a wanting, ever so many stimuli, still they cannot produce the "ought," and never a necessary, but always only a conditioned, wanting in contrast to which the "ought", which reason pronounces, provides the measure and goal, even command and esteem in opposition to all that.

⁷¹ We are still speculating concerning the compatibility of freedom and nature, and have not established the factual existence of freedom at all, nor will we in this treatment of the Third Antinomy.

⁷² Conceivably a being might exist who could understand and reason about things, but for whom the moral law and the "is supposed to be" would be as meaningless as the "uhh" sound with which we so liberally sprinkle our speech. Hitler, possibly, considered Jews and gypsies to be such, and who merely aped moral conduct in order to impress the gullible Germans in order then more safely to fleece them.

⁷³ There could then be no basis for extracting the "ought" from any presentation of the appearances whatsoever. Thus the expression is a sheer idea of human reasoning.

⁷⁴ I cannot believe that I ought to walk on air and reach out and seize the moon. But I can believe that I ought to tell the truth, or that I ought to work and save while young in order to be prepared for old age.

- 8.4 That wanting may be an object of the sheer sensitivity (the pleasurable) or even of pure reason (the good). This does not matter, for reason does not surrender to any empirically given foundation nor does it follow the order of things as they are presented in the appearance, but rather in complete spontaneity and in accordance with ideas, makes its own order, into which it positions the empirical conditions, and according to which it even declares actions to be necessary which have not occurred and perhaps will not occur. Instead reason presupposes of all these actions without distinction that it can have causality with respect to them; for without that, reason would not expect effects from its ideas in experience.⁷⁵
- 9.1 Let us pause here for a moment and assume it to be at least possible that reason were actually causal with respect to the appearances.⁷⁶ Now in that case, regardless of the fact that it is reason, it would still have to manifest an empirical character because every cause presupposes a rule according to which certain appearances ensue as effects. And such a rule requires uniformity of effects as the basis of the concept of cause (as a capacity), which we, to the extent it must appear from sheer appearances, can call its empirical character and which is also enduring, while the effects occur diversely, depending, as they do, upon the diversity of the attendant and partially limiting conditions.⁷⁷
- 10.1 In this way there is an empirical character to the discretionary choice of every human, which is nothing other than a certain causality of his reason to the extent this indicates a rule with the effects in the appearance. And according to this rule we can derive the rational foundations and the actions from those according to their type and degree, and assess the subjective principles of his discretionary choice.⁷⁸
- 10.2 Because this empirical character must itself be derived from the appearances considered as its effect and from their rule which experience renders, it follows that all actions of the human in the appearance are determined from his empirical character along with other,

⁷⁵ This presupposition of freedom is reflected in the *GMM*.III.2. The “ought” can only arise by reason (since it is not expressed in any appearance) and it is an imperative for action.

⁷⁶ We are assuming here that we could be ruled by reason to the extent of determining our actions which would be appearances, i.e., actions as events.

⁷⁷ So even if reason can have an effect in the appearances, it would have to express this via an empirical character which would call for uniformity in experience. Here the assumption is that reasoning is used in the empirical character for the procurement of desired effects. Here Hume would assert that reason is used solely for the achievement of desires.

⁷⁸ Thus is the typical behavior of someone, his characteristic behavior, and where we will find a rule which holds, given the circumstances. Such a rule would be a principle of acting, e.g., take advantage of safe enrichment.

participatory causes according to the order of nature.⁷⁹ Hence if we could examine all appearances of his discretionary choice down to their foundation, there would not be a single action which we could not have predicated with certainty and recognized as necessary from its preceding conditions.

- 10.3 With respect to this empirical character, therefore, there is no freedom and it is in accordance with this alone that we consider the human when we simply observe him and, as in anthropology, want to examine the motivating causes of his actions physiologically.⁸⁰
- 11.1 But if we consider the same actions with respect to reason, and indeed not to speculative reason in order to explain them with regard to their origin, but rather entirely to the extent that reason is the cause in generating them; in other words: if we compare them with reason from a practical standpoint, we find an entirely different rule and order than that of nature.
- 11.2 For perhaps not everything which happened according to the course of nature should have happened nor inevitably had to happen according to its empirical foundations.
- 11.3 But occasionally we find, or at least believe to find,⁸¹ that the ideas of reason have actually proven causality with regard to the actions of the human as appearances, and that these [actions] have by no means occurred because they were determined through empirical causes, but rather because they were determined through foundations of reason.⁸²

⁷⁹ From someone's behavior we infer the empirical character and then find the basis for this particular character in the past and are able to predict all future behavior in conformity to this character, given the particular empirical circumstance and conditions.

⁸⁰ This is the way that science will consider the human, i.e., as necessitated by his empirical character such that all his actions would be expected based merely on contingent and occasioning circumstances. And so even though reason is ruling, it expresses itself in the empirical character which denotes uniformity and consistency. This means reason is determined (utilized) by the make up and background and temperament. As Hume would put it: reason is the slave of passion.

⁸¹ Another reminder that we are in a hypothetical mode of thinking here, and are not asserting any reality to freedom at all.

⁸² If a person can be guided by pure reason, i.e., independently of his desires, then we can understand how that person can be free of the laws of nature and able to act with spontaneity and according to principles of reason.

- 12.1 Suppose now that we could say of reason that it were causal with respect to the appearance. In that case its action could be called free even though entirely determined and necessary in its empirical character (the way of disposition).⁸³
- 12.2 This latter in turn is determined by the intelligible character (the way of thinking).
- 12.3 But the intelligible character we do not know, but rather infer through appearances which actually immediately reveal only the disposition (the empirical character).^{*84}
- 12.4 But the action, to the extent it is to be ascribed to the thinking mode as the cause of the action, still does not at all ensue from that [mode] according to empirical laws, i.e., not such that the conditions, but rather only that the effects, of pure reason precede in the appearance of the inner sense.⁸⁵
- 12.5 Pure reason, as a merely intelligible capacity, is not subject to the time form and hence also not to the conditions of the temporal series.⁸⁶
- 12.6 The causality of reason in the intelligible character does not arise nor commence per chance at a particular time in order to produce an effect in that way.⁸⁷
- 12.7 For otherwise it would itself be subject to the natural laws of the appearances to the extent it determines the causal series according to time, and then the causality would be nature and not freedom.

⁸³ if reason were free, it would be functioning according to principles, and these principles then would determine the actions in accordance with the occasioning appearances and these actions in turn could be considered as being caused by these appearances rather than by the principle. We might say regarding some person's action, "oh! that's his temperament" and mean with that "his empirical character".

⁸⁴ There is a jump here, for we guess the intelligible character through the appearances, but these really give us only the empirical character. We will eventually come to assert that the empirical character is actually a function of the intelligible character. And so while all actions can be explained by natural laws we are able to see these actions has having arisen by choice by the intelligible character.

⁸⁵ Thus pure reason is assumed to always be ruling, and only to be awakened and called into play upon some occasion. Accordingly only its effect arises in time, but not its condition or its presence and existence in reason. And in this vein we can see that no matter how necessarily the person's conduct is according to laws of nature, the person is conscious of his own freedom at the time of determining the will.

⁸⁶ Pure reason deals with principles and conclusions and is entirely independent of the conditions of time.

⁸⁷ Far rather it is always present (after a certain age) and merely commences its effects upon some appearance, but not that it itself arises upon some appearance, which would make it subject to the empirical laws of nature, just as Kant says next.

- 12.8 We can say, therefore: if reason can have causality with respect to the appearances, then it is a capacity, by means of which the sensitive condition of an empirical series of effects first begins.⁸⁸
- 12.9 For the condition which lies in reason is not sensitive and therefore does not itself commence.
- 12.10 Accordingly then something takes place which was missing in all empirical series, i.e., the condition of a successive series of events could itself be empirically unconditioned.
- 12.11 For here the condition is apart from the series of appearances (in the intelligible) and hence not subject to any sensitive condition nor to any determination of time through preceding causes.⁸⁹

[* Kant's footnote.

- 1.1 Hence the actual morality of actions (merit and guilt), even that of our own conduct, remains entirely hidden from us.
- 1.2 Our accountability can be attributed only to the empirical character.
- 1.3 But how much of that is to be attributed to the pure effect of freedom, and how much to our nature and the blameless fault of temperament, or its advantageous constitution (*merito fortunae*), no one can fathom nor hence also evaluate with complete justice.]
- 13.1 Nonetheless this very same cause in another referral still belongs to the series of appearances.
- 13.2 The human is himself an appearance.
- 13.3 His discretionary choosing has an empirical character which is the (empirical) cause of all his actions.
- 13.4 There are no conditions determining him relative to this character which would not be contained in the series of the effects of nature or which would not comply with its laws,

⁸⁸ For while the effects follow in a natural way from the preceding appearances, we would be looking at them as dependent upon an independent reason. I may decide never to tell a lie, and when the occasion arises where a lie would be profitable, my behavior in not telling a lie would be a result of the principles I have established via reasoning, and the opportunity is then merely the occasion for the exemplification of this principle.

⁸⁹ An occasion for advantageous lying can arise in the series of the appearances, but if reason rules, then a principle will be at hand to determine the specific action without any regard to these appearances. The appearances would merely present the occasion for the execution of the principle (and which is a product of reason alone).

according to which no empirically conditioned causality whatsoever of anything occurring in time were encountered.

- 13.5 Hence no given action (because it can be perceived only as appearance) can begin utterly of itself.⁹⁰
- 13.6 But we cannot say of reason that before the state wherein it determines the discretionary choice another one preceded wherein this state itself was determined.⁹¹
- 13.7 For since reason itself is neither appearance nor in any way subject to conditions in the sensitivity, no temporal succession takes place in it, not even with regard to its causality, and therefore the dynamic law of nature determining temporal succession according to rules cannot be applied to it.⁹²
- 14.1 Reason, therefore, is the enduring condition of all voluntary actions under which the human appears.
- 14.2 Each of these actions is previously determined in the empirical character of the human before it occurs.⁹³
- 14.3 With respect to the intelligible character, whereof the empirical is only the sensitive schema, no previous and no subsequent is valid, and every action, regardless of the relationship of time in which it stands with other appearances, is the immediate effect of the intelligible character of pure reason which, therefore, acts freely without being determined dynamically in the chain of the causes of nature through temporally preceding

⁹⁰ I think this is usually the way those who are against pure practical reason would make the case. It is true that no action can begin utterly of itself (but this does not mean that pure reason could not utterly begin a series per 12 above). Reason is free, even if it is utilized for some personal interest.

⁹¹ Let me try this: I am in a situation and think of the moral law and realize that this law requires me to act in mode A. Now the fact is that this law was prompted to me by some mental association. But be that as it may, since I freely assented to eliminate all considerations of happiness and inclination by virtue of this law, I cannot say that my decision was caused by the mental association and its prompt. For I am conscious, in that moment of decisioning, of making a free decision in light of the law, and regardless of how this law happened to come to mind. And yet the scientist would say: "Oh yes! the association brought the law to mind and then the individual applied his utility weights to it and to his other inclinations and came to the conclusion that he did.":

⁹² Temporal conditions may occasion the use of reasoning, but reason itself is not conditioned in any way. I may decide to use my reasoning for some personal and immoral purpose, but that is not to say that reason itself called for this purpose. I may know that something is wrong and decide to do it anyway, and even base my decision on a reasoning that suggests that this wrong would be profitable and safe.

⁹³ Given the empirical character we can predict with certitude all actions that will ensue, given the diversity of circumstances.

grounds, either internally or externally. This freedom may not only be viewed negatively as independence from empirical conditions (for otherwise the rational capacity for being a cause of appearances would cease), but may also be characterized positively as a capacity for beginning a series of events of itself such that in it nothing begins, but rather it, as the unconditioned condition of every voluntary action, allows no temporally preceding condition to be superior to it, while still its effect begins in the series of the appearances but can never constitute an utterly first beginning in it.⁹⁴

- 14.4 In order to discourse on the regulative principle of reason by means of an example from empirical usage, though not to confirm it (for such proofs are unsuited for transcendental assertions), we take a voluntary action, e.g., a malevolent lie, by means of which a person introduces a certain confusion into society, and where the motivations whereby it arose are examined and afterwards a judgment made as to whether it might be chargeable to him together with all its consequences.
- 14.5 In the first regard, the man's empirical character is probed down to its sources and is ascribed to his bad upbringing and evil company, and partly also to the malevolence of a nature which is insensitive to shame, and partly to thoughtlessness and recklessness; and then consideration is also given to the occasioning causes of the opportunity.⁹⁵
- 14.6 The procedure here is generally the same as with the investigation of the series of determining causes to a given effect in nature.
- 14.7 Now even though the action is thought to have been determined in this way, the culprit is still blamed; not however because of his unfortunate nature, nor because of the circumstances overwhelming him, and certainly not because of the course of his life up to that point, for it is assumed that these could all be entirely set aside as they are constituted, and the transpired series of conditions could be considered as not having occurred. Accordingly this act is viewed as entirely unconditioned with respect to the previous state as though the perpetrator commenced a series of effects entirely of himself.

⁹⁴ Regardless of the make up and thrust of the empirical character, since we are dealing with reason we know that we are able to act with complete spontaneity and to forgo what the empirical character calls for. Hence when we act in accordance with the empirical character we are acting freely and could have chosen differently.

⁹⁵ This, we might say, were the tendency of the man to take advantage of a situation for his own benefit. This tendency would abide, and would be merely manifested in the effects which would then be "caused" by the appearances as circumstances, as when we say that the opportunity caused him to act the way he did, much as we say that the cold caused the water to freeze. The circumstances were the occasioning causes for the empirical character to manifest itself. Thus it is entirely understandable that the person will have acted the way he did in telling this lie.

- 14.8 This blame is based upon a law of reason whereby reason is seen as a cause which could and should have determined the conduct of the human otherwise and regardless of all of these empirical conditions.⁹⁶
- 14.9 And indeed the causality of reason is not seen merely in competition, but rather as complete of itself, even if the sensitive motives do not at all promote it, or indeed even if they are all arrayed against it. The action is attributed to his intelligible character, and in the moment in which he lied, he bears the entire guilt. Hence reason, regardless of all empirical conditions of the deed, was completely free and all this is attributed entirely to his neglect.⁹⁷
- 15.1 With this determination of responsibility, it is easy to see that we are cognizant that reason is not affected in any way through all this sensitivity, that it does not alter (even if its appearances change, i.e., the way in which it manifests itself in its effects), that in it no state precedes which would determine the subsequent state, hence that it does not belong at all in the series of the sensitive conditions which necessitate the appearances according to laws of nature.⁹⁸
- 15.2 Reason is present and identical regarding all actions of the human in all temporal circumstances, but is itself not in time and does not stumble, as it were, into a new state in which it was previously absent. It determines, but is not determinable by, that state.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Reason was able to determine the action based on universal principles, even though it was used merely to accomplish safely and rationally some personal goal. But this means that the person could have acted differently and therefore would have been conscious then, and conscious now, that he acted wrongly.

⁹⁷ Thus we are back to the transcendental consideration of being able to spontaneously ignore the empirical character as constituted and instead to act in accordance with principles of right conduct. And so the liar acted freely and is responsible for his lie and all of its evil effects.

⁹⁸ This says as much that the perpetrator of the lie was fully aware that it was wrong, but decided to commit it anyway; and so reason is not under any control of influence of sensitive factors, but worked independently of conditions of time, i.e., purely. Thus the liar was conscious of the wrongness of the lie at the time and could have acted differently just as he knows that he ought to have done.

⁹⁹ Reason is independent of the sensitivity and desires, and while it may be utilized for personal desires, it itself is free of all conditions of sensitivity and even time.

- 15.3 Hence we cannot ask why reason was not determined differently¹⁰⁰; but rather only why it did not determine the appearances differently through its causality?¹⁰¹
- 15.4 But to this no answer is possible.
- 15.5 For another intelligible character would have rendered another empirical one, and to say that regardless of the entire course of his life up to that point the perpetrator of the lie could still have exercised restraint, only means that it is subject to no conditions of the appearance nor of the course of time, and while the distinction of time can constitute a fundamental distinction of the appearances among one another, still, since on their own they are not things and hence not even causes, the differentiation of time can constitute no distinction of actions with reference to reason.
- 16.1 Regarding the estimation of free actions with respect to their causality, therefore we can go up to, but not out beyond, the intelligible cause. We can recognize that it freely **de-termines**, i.e., independently of the sensitivity, and, in this way, can be the sensitively unconditioned condition of the appearances.
- 16.2 But why the intelligible character renders just these appearances and this empirical character, given existing circumstances, this question transcends every capacity of our reason to answer, indeed even its very authority to ask; as though we wanted to know why the transcendental object of our external, sensitive viewing rendered only a viewing in space and not in some other way.¹⁰²
- 16.3 The task which was ours to solve, however, did not obligate us in this regard at all, for it was merely whether there is a conflict between freedom and the necessity of nature in one and the same action. And this we have sufficiently answered by showing that since a referral is possible with each of these two which is based on entirely different types of conditions, the law of nature does not affect freedom, and so both can take place independently of the other, and without either disturbing the other.

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¹⁰⁰ Reason is free of the compulsion of the empirical and sensitive needs, and always speaks independently of these needs and conditions.

¹⁰¹ This will be a reference to the intelligible character and transcendental freedom via reason, pointing out again that reason is free of empirical and temporal conditions. And so the liar could have acted differently.

¹⁰² It is impossible to explain why it is that someone freely chose to utilize his reasoning capacity as he did.

- 17.1 It is important to note here that we have not tried to establish the actuality of freedom as a capacity containing the cause of appearances of our world of sense.
- 17.2 For, quite aside from the fact that such is not at all a transcendental consideration (which has to do with concepts), it could not have succeeded anyway since we would have had to infer something which is not at all to be thought according to laws of experience.
- 17.3 Indeed we have not even proven the possibility of freedom; for this also would not have succeeded. And the reason for this is because we cannot in general recognize the possibility of any real foundation nor causality from sheer concepts a priori.
- 17.4 Freedom here is treated only as a transcendental idea by means of which reason thinks to commence utterly a series of conditions in the appearance through the sensitively unconditioned, but whereby it becomes involved in an antinomy with its own laws which it prescribes for the empirical usage of the understanding.¹⁰³
- 17.5 That this antinomy is based on a mere semblance and that nature at least does not conflict with a causality of freedom, was all that we were able to accomplish, but also all that concerned us here.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Reason considers itself free, and yet this comes into conflict with the empirical laws of nature necessity. Hence the antinomy.

¹⁰⁴ The solution is based on this: the thesis speaks of the intelligible character, the thing on its own; while the antithesis speaks of the empirical character, the object of experience. So the solution is transcendental and we see that there is no conflict because we are using the same term, we are speaking of two different things.