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*Prolegomena to Any
Future Metaphysics*

That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science
with Selections from the *Critique of Pure Reason*

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Revised Edition



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magnitude of something extended, all parts must be homogeneous among themselves and with the whole; in contrast, in the connection of cause and effect homogeneity can indeed be found, but is not necessary; for the concept of causality (whereby through one thing, something completely different from it is posited) at least does not require it.

If the objects of the sensible world were taken for things in themselves, and the previously stated natural laws for laws of things in themselves, contradiction would be inevitable. In the same way, if the subject of freedom were represented, like the other objects, as a mere appearance, contradiction could again not be avoided, for the same thing would be simultaneously affirmed and denied of the same object in the same sense. But if natural necessity is referred only to appearances and freedom only to things in themselves, then no contradiction arises if both kinds of causality are assumed or conceded equally, however difficult or impossible it may be to make causality of the latter kind conceivable.

Within appearance, every effect is an event, or something that happens in time; the effect must, in accordance with the universal law of nature, be preceded by a determination of the causality of its cause (a state of the cause), from which the effect follows in accordance with a constant law. But this determination of the cause to causality must also be something *that occurs or takes place*; the cause must have *begun to act*, for otherwise no sequence in time could be thought between it and the effect. Both [4:344] the effect and the causality of the cause would have always existed. Therefore the *determination* of the cause *to act* must also have arisen among the appearances, and so it must, like its effect, be an event, which again must have its cause, and so on, and hence natural necessity must be the condition in accordance with which efficient causes are determined. Should, by contrast, freedom be a property of certain causes of appearances, then that freedom must, in relation to the appearances as events, be a faculty of starting those events *from itself (sponte)*,⁹ i.e., without the causality of the cause itself having to begin, and hence without need for any other ground to determine its beginning. But then *the cause*, as to its causality, would not have to be subject to temporal determinations of its state, i.e., would *not* have to be *appearance* at all, i.e., would have to be taken for

⁹ “spontaneously”

a thing in itself, and only the *effects* would have to be taken for *appearances*.* If this sort of influence of intelligible beings on appearances can be thought without contradiction, then natural necessity will indeed attach to every connection of cause and effect in the sensible world, and yet that cause which is itself not an appearance (though it underlies appearance) will still be entitled to freedom, and therefore nature and freedom will be attributable without contradiction to the very same thing, but in different respects, in the one case as appearance, in the other as a thing in itself.

[4:345] We have in us a faculty that not only stands in connection with its subjectively determining grounds, which are the natural causes of its actions – and thus far is the faculty of a being which itself belongs to appearances – but that also is related to objective grounds that are mere ideas, insofar as these ideas can determine this faculty, a connection that is expressed by *ought*.ⁱ This faculty is called *reason*, and insofar as we are considering a being (the human being) solely as regards this objectively determinable reason, this being cannot be considered as a being of the senses; rather, the aforesaid property is the property of a thing in itself, and the possibility of that property – namely, how the *ought*, which has never yet happened, can determine the activity of this being and can be the cause of actions whose effect is an appearance in the sensible world – we cannot comprehend at all. Yet the causality of reason with respect to effects in the sensible world would nonetheless be freedom, insofar as *objective grounds*, which are themselves ideas, are taken to be determining with respect to that causality. For the action of that causality would in that case not depend on any subjective, hence also not on any temporal

* The idea of freedom has its place solely in the relation of the *intellectual*,ⁱ as cause, to the *appearance*, as effect. Therefore we cannot bestow freedom upon matter, in consideration of the unceasing activity by which it fills its space, even though this activity occurs through an inner principle. We can just as little find any concept of freedom to fit a purely intelligible being, e.g., God, insofar as his action is immanent. For his action, although independent of causes determining it from outside, nevertheless is determined in his eternal reason, hence in the divine *nature*. Only if *something* should *begin* through an action, hence the effect be found in the time series, and so in the sensible world (e.g., the beginning of the world), does the question arise of whether the causality of the cause must itself also have a beginning, or whether the cause can originate an effect without its causality itself having a beginning. In the first case the concept of this causality is a concept of natural necessity, in the second of freedom. From this the reader will see that, since I have explained freedom as the faculty to begin an event by oneself, I have exactly hit that concept which is the problem of metaphysics.

ⁱ *des Intellektuellen* j *Sollen*