ABSTRACT. Kant's claim that the justification of transcendental philosophy is a priori is puzzling because it should be consistent with (1) his general restriction on the justification of knowledge, that intuitions must play a role in the justification of all nondegenerate knowledge, with (2) the implausibility of a priori intuitions being the only ones on which transcendental philosophy is founded, and with (3) his professed view that transcendental philosophy is not analytic. I argue that this puzzle can be solved, that according to Kant transcendental philosophy is justified a priori in the sense that the only empirical information required for its justification can be derived from any possible human experience. Transcendental justification does not rely on any more particular or special observations or experiments. Philip Kitcher's general account of apriority in Kant captures this aspect of a priori knowledge. Nevertheless, I argue that Kitcher's account goes wrong in the link it specifies between apriority and certainty.

Since Kant wrote the *Critique of Pure Reason*, philosophers have been intensely self-conscious about the way the claims within their discipline are justified. The dominant view until recently has been that philosophical claims are justified a priori in some strict sense. Although there is a surprisingly strong tendency to read strict apriorism about philosophy into Kant, the texts themselves do not comply. One of Kant's primary aims in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to lay to rest the strict apriorist claims made for philosophy by his rationalist predecessors and contemporaries. Consequently, the temptation to attribute to Kant a strict apriorism about the justification of philosophical claims should be resisted. Nevertheless, Kant clearly believes that his transcendental philosophy is a priori in some sense. I shall attempt to explain the sense in which Kant's transcendental philosophy is a priori, and to resolve the apparent conflict with his rejection of rationalism.¹

The view that philosophy is a priori in a strict sense finds its clearest twentieth-century expression among the logical positivists. In their tradition, philosophical claims are understood to be a priori in virtue of their analyticity. Perhaps it is not surprising then that several contemporary commentators who wish to attribute to Kant a strict a priorism

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about philosophy should maintain that he also conceives philosophy to be a body of analytic truths. However, Kant believes that analytic knowledge is degenerate and not genuine knowledge, and, as I shall argue, he rejects the view that transcendental philosophy is analytic for this very reason.

One of Kant’s most deeply held philosophical positions is that the justification of all genuine, nondegenerate knowledge (Erkenntnis) requires intuitions, immediate and singular mental representations. We have intuitions of two types, a priori and empirical. Given Kant’s actual transcendental arguments, it is highly implausible that a priori intuitions alone are sufficient to justify the claims of transcendental philosophy. His general account of knowledge thus raises a problem for the apriority of transcendental philosophy: if philosophical claims cannot be a priori in virtue of being analytic, and if they cannot be justified on the basis of a priori intuitions, in what sense can it be a priori at all?

According to one solution, the claims transcendental philosophy are a priori only in a genetic, and not in any justificatory sense. On one genetic conception of a priori knowledge, a proposition is a priori just in case it is true solely in virtue of the contributions the mind makes to experience. For Kant, these contributions are the a priori concepts and the a priori intuitions, and the organization that the mind effects by means of them. That a proposition is a priori in this genetic sense is consistent with its being justified on the basis of empirical intuitions.

Much support can be found in the *Critique* for a genetic interpretation of the a priori. Indeed, when Kant calls concepts a priori, it is difficult to see how he could fail to have a genetic notion in mind. The categories must be a priori in virtue of having their source in the understanding, and not sensory experience. Moreover, when Kant characterizes a priori knowledge at the beginning of the second edition of the *Critique* (B1–3), he uses genetic language: “It may well be that even our empirical knowledge is made up of what we receive through impressions and of what our faculty of knowledge . . . supplies from itself”. (B1)³

But Kant is not solely interested in a genetic notion of a priori knowledge. I shall argue that Kant advocates a weaker sense in which transcendental philosophy is justified a priori. In addition, I shall attempt to explain how the genetic notion of a priori knowledge plays a role in explaining how transcendental philosophy can be a priori in a justificatory sense, and how the Kantian connection between these two