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Artículos

The Principle of the Transcendental Deduction. The *First Section of the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding*

RUDOLF MEER¹

Abstract

This paper considers the transcendental deduction of the categories from a specific point of view: the *First Section of the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding*. In this passage, Kant not only explores the task and the method of the transcendental deduction in form of the principle of the transcendental deduction but also implements it. The subsequent section(s) of the deduction proceed(s) to build on the argument, and do(es) so in different ways in the A- and the B-deduction. Accordingly, the principle of the transcendental deduction has a crucial function for the entire deduction because it builds a transition between the first and the following section(s) in which Kant constantly refers to it.

Keywords: *First Section of the Deduction*, transcendental deduction, principle of the transcendental deduction, objective deduction, subjective deduction

El principio de la deducción transcendental. La *Primera sección de la deducción de los conceptos puros del entendimiento*

Resumen

Este trabajo trata sobre la deducción transcendental de las categorías desde un punto de vista específico: el de la *Primera sección de la Deducción de los conceptos puros del entendimiento*. En este pasaje, Kant no solo explora función y el método de la deducción transcendental, en la forma del principio de la deducción transcendental, sino que además lo pone en práctica. La(s) siguiente(s) sección(es) de la deducción proceden a desarrollar el argumento y lo hace(n) de maneras diferentes en la deducción A y en la B. De acuerdo con lo anterior, el principio de la deducción transcendental tiene una función crucial con respecto a la propia deducción en sí misma porque construye una transición entre la primera sección y la(s) siguiente(s) en la(s) que Kant hace referencia constantemente a él.

Palabras clave: *Primera sección de la deducción*, deducción transcendental, principio de la deducción transcendental, deducción objetiva, deducción subjetiva

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If you miss the first button-hole,
you will not succeed in buttoning up your coat.
(Goethe 1906: 138)

The *First Section* of the *Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding*,² taken in its whole range and significance, offers new insights and allows the understanding and reconstruction of the entire proof. In his maxim, Goethe points out metaphorically the utmost importance of the beginning, which is the principle of the transcendental deduction in §14.³

The thesis of the paper is that the *First Section* constitutes the central argument of the deduction; therein Kant not only explores the task and the method of the transcendental deduction in form of the principle of the transcendental deduction but also implements it. The subsequent section(s) of the deduction proceed(s) to build on the argument, and do(es) so in different ways in the A- and the B-deduction.⁴ In order to prove this thesis, I will argue in four steps.

First, I will demonstrate in the form of a text-immanent analysis of § 14 that Kant introduces the principle as a syllogism. Although Kant's crucial point in developing the principle is merely a disambiguation of the term *experience*, it has particular significance because it brings together the *Transcendental Aesthetic* and the *Clue to the Discovery*.⁵

² The *Critique of Pure Reason* is quoted according to the edition by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood with the usual A/B pagination. References to other translations are emphasized explicitly. For all references to the *Akademie Edition*, the usual German abbreviations are used.

³ The numbering of the text sections is a renewal in the edition of 1787. However, in the following discussion, I will refer to it to facilitate the orientation in the text.

⁴ In contrast to this position, Klemme regards the *First Section* only as exposure to the principle of the deduction (1996: 149). From Allison's point of view, the *First Section* is just an "introductory section" that is "intended to explain to the reader the nature and purpose of a transcendental deduction in general" (2015: 165). Furthermore, Carl detects therein merely a methodological introduction (1992: 111, 43-44). With regard to the *First Section* Guyer claims that it would be "redundant if that is all that it [the transcendental deduction] is supposed to show" (2010: 121). These authors stand in an interpretational tradition with philosophers like Riehl who speaks of a "critical hypothesis" (1876: 373; German: "kritischen Hypothese"), Grayeff who says that it is just a "reader-friendly exposition" (1951: 69, 114; German: "leserfreundliche Exposition"), and Paton (1936: 313-356).

⁵ This is in contrast to theories which claim that the entire deduction is based on the *principle of the apperception* (Caimi 2017: 378-400), the *identity of self-consciousness* (Henrich 1988: 39-70; Ritzel 1981: 147-149), or the *original synthetic unity of apperception* (Hoffmann 2004: 60; in a different way Thöle 1981: 312). Even if the deduction is not unfolded from this *highest point* of the transcendental philosophy, this does not mean that the argumentation does not follow a unified structure, as, for example, Allison (2015: 388) argues.

Second, I will highlight that Kant introduces the principle of the transcendental deduction at the end of §14. This means that Kant implements the principle right after pages 92-93 of the edition from Johann Friedrich Hartknoch (1781), that is, directly following the so-called objective deduction, as Kant characterizes this passage in the *Preface (KrV AXVII)*.⁶ Even though the principle summarizes the argument from pages 92-93, it can be regarded as a transition between the first and the following section(s) and builds, therefore, a transition between the objective and the subjective deduction.

Third, I will pay particular attention to the term *principle*. In this specific case, Kant borrows the concept from a tradition in rhetoric in which a *principium* is namely an introduction to a speech but outlining the entire talk subject matter. In this sense, the principle of the transcendental deduction in the *First Section* also anticipates the entire deduction and solves the question of the deduction that is raised.⁷

Fourth, I will show exemplarily that Kant repeats in the *Second* and *Third Section* of the A-deduction, and in the *Second Section* of the B-deduction, the principle of the transcendental deduction. In doing so, he firstly repeats the objective deduction, and secondly executes it in the form of a subjective deduction. However, the considerations of the subjective deduction outline the *how* of the previously developed objective deduction,⁸ and always depend on the chief question which already demonstrated the validity of the concepts a priori. Thus, *both sides* of the deduction executed

⁶ That the *First Section* includes the objective deduction of the concepts of the understanding is a point of view which is shared with Allison (2015: 193), Baum (1986: 12, 64), Baumanns (1997: 399), and Hossenfelder (1978: 9-10).

⁷ This interpretation appears to contradict Allison, who sees in the principle of the deduction merely a rhetorical question (2015: 193; see also Guyer 2010: 121). Carl and Baum argue that the objective deduction requires objective experience whereas the subjective one justifies it without this condition (Baum 1986: 73; 1995: 373-392; Carl 1992: 51-52).

⁸ Schematically sketched, two basic positions can be distinguished (Moledo 2015: 418-420): the *thesis of difference* and the *thesis of method*. Within the scope of the first, it is asserted that both deductions have different tasks. Thereby, the objective deduction justifies *that* the categories have objective validity, and the subjective deduction shows the *how* of the relation between the categories and the objects (Henrich 1969: 640-659; Förster 1998: 44). Within the scope of the thesis of method, it is asserted that the differentiation between both deductions concerns only the way in which they justify the objective validity of the categories. Thereby, the objective deduction is based on experience and justifies the objective validity regressively; whereas the subjective deduction justifies the objective validity with regard to the *I* or rather the *unity of apperception* (Carl 1992: 51-52; Baum 1986: 73-74).

in the passages following the *First Section* relate to the principle of the transcendental deduction.⁹

1. The Principle of the Transcendental Deduction

In the title *Transition to the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories*, Kant already indicates the claim of this section, which he numbers in the second edition as paragraph 14. *Transition*, or in German *Übergang*, connotes an overlap area as well as an intersection. As this term suggests, the proof in this argument brings together different results of the *Critique of Pure Reason*—that is, the *Transcendental Aesthetic* and the *Clue to the Discovery of all Pure Concepts of the Understanding*. On this basis, Kant presents the principle of the transcendental deduction for the following analysis. With this principle, he clarifies what is “not so easily seen” (*KrV* A90/B123), namely “how subjective conditions of thinking should have objective validity” (*KrV* A89/B122). In this way, the principle forms the beginning—the origin, or the basis of—the transcendental deduction in both editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. It introduces a schema “toward which the entire investigation must be directed” (*KrV* A94/B126).

In paragraph 14, Kant argues in the form of a logical corollary in which he assumes a correspondence-theory of truth. The corresponding relationship of the synthetic representation (A) and the object (B) can be twofold: “Either if the object alone makes the representation possible, or if the representation alone makes the object possible” (*KrV* A 92/B 124-5; *Prol.*, 4: 319; *Briefe*, 10: 130).

If the object makes the representation possible ($B \rightarrow A$), as is the case with sensations (*KrV* A92/B125, A19-20/B34), the representation is merely passive and receptive. It arises only through the affection of the senses (*KrV* A20/B34), and therefore the representation has merely empirical but never a priori character. For such an empirical concept, there is no need for a transcendental deduction but rather an empirical one “which shows how a

⁹ This is in contrast to Baum, who considers the entire *Second Section* in the B-deduction to be a subjective deduction, but also in contrast to positions that identify the first step of the deduction (from §15 to §20) as an objective deduction, and the second step (from §21 to §27) as a subjective deduction (Henrich 1973: 93; Paton 1936: 241, 501, 527). Furthermore, this is argued against Carl who sees in the *Second* and *Third Section* of the A-deduction merely a subjective deduction, and in the *Second Section* of the B-deduction just an objective deduction (1992: 42-54). But it is also no solution to dismiss the subjective deduction as Strawson (1966: 88) and other interpreters (Hartnack 1967: 47) have done.

concept is acquired through experience and reflection on it” (*KrV* A85/B117). But if the representation is the cause of the object ($A \rightarrow B$), it precedes any empirical knowledge. In this way, the representation can be *a priori* determined in respect of the object. The conformity of the object with the representation understood as cause makes it possible, as Kant emphasizes, “to **cognize something as an object**” (*KrV* A92/B125). For such a representation, however, a transcendental deduction is necessary, because proofs from experience are not sufficient for its *lawfulness*. For this reason, the “way in which concepts can relate to objects a priori” (*KrV* A85/B117) must be explained separately (*KrV* B167).

Regarding the disjunction of representation (A) and object (B), it has to be pointed out that (A) does not produce (B) “as far as its existence is concerned” (*KrV* A92/B125). Accordingly, the representation is not the cause of things (*Refl* 20: 130) but forms the conditions “to **cognize something as an object**” (*KrV* A92/B125, A95), which Kant highlights in boldface type.¹⁰ For this reason, there are two conditions which make a cognition of an object possible: “first, intuition, through which it is given, but only as appearance; second, concept, through which an object is thought that corresponds to this intuition” (*KrV* A 92/B 125, A19/B33, A50/B74). Even before the actual execution of the *quid juris* question, Kant assumes that a representation—as a condition of the possibility of all objects—includes two sides: intuition and concept. Thus, he presumes, like the jurists, that the *quid facti* question has already been clarified before answering the *quid juris* question. He introduces this assumption by referring in paragraph 13 to the *Transcendental Aesthetic* and the *Clue to the Discovery of all Pure Concepts of the Understanding* (*KrV* A85/B118). It is therefore clear that the categories, complementary to the forms of intuition, are part of the possibility of objects, and that the following explication of the two conditions questions only their lawfulness, or in other words, the reason for the certainty of the truth of our cognition (Baum 1986: 65).

The first conditions are the forms of intuition—space and time—which “lie in the mind a priori as the ground of the form of objects” (*KrV* A93/B125) and determine the form of the appearances. Thus, it can be

¹⁰ Kant distinguishes precisely between a case in which a representation makes an object possible by virtue of being a cause of the object, and a case in which it makes an object possible by virtue of making it possible for it to be thought (Longuenesse 1998: 20-26).

conceptualized “with little effort” (*KrV* A89/B121) that all appearances must necessarily agree with these formal conditions of sensibility in order to appear at all and “be empirically intuited and given” (*KrV* A93/B125). For this reason, there is no need for deduction, because geometry “follows its secure course through strictly a priori cognitions without having to beg philosophy for any certification of the pure and lawful pedigree of its fundamental concept of space” (*KrV* A87/B119, A24/B38). Solely on the basis of the specific nature of the concepts of the understanding—whose objective validity cannot be proved by an object of experience because of the distinction between form and matter (*KrV* A89/B122)—“arises the unavoidable need to search for the transcendental deduction not only of them [the categories] but also of space” (*KrV* A88/B120).

In a self-reflective passage, which Kant introduces with the formulation “[t]he question now is whether” (*KrV* A93/B125),¹¹ he develops, based on the first condition, an analogous argument for the second condition: in this self-inquiry Kant deals with the question of whether, in addition to the forms of intuition, there are also a priori concepts which form conditions “under which alone something can be, if not intuited, nevertheless thought as object in general” (*KrV* A93/B125). This question has far-reaching consequences following Kant’s characterization of its status because a positive answer means that all empirical conditions of the objects must stand under such concepts.

A central focus of the argument turns on two preliminary conceptual decisions by Kant: on the one hand, he differentiates between empirical intuition and cognition—a distinction which has already been introduced—by referring to the concept of *experience*: experience is introduced as a combination of intuitions and concepts. It forms a cognition because it contains, in addition to given intuitions, “a concept of an object” (*KrV* A93/B126).¹² On the other hand, Kant deals specifically with the concept of the transcendental deduction (*KrV* A85/B117): if the “objective validity of the categories, as a priori concepts” (*KrV* A93/B126), should be

¹¹ See also the letter to M. Herz: “ich frug mich nämlich selbst: auf welchem Grunde beruht die Beziehung desjenigen, was man in uns Vorstellung nennt, auf den Gegenstand?” (*Briefe*, 10: 130) With this question Kant detected the necessity of a “*Critick der reinen Vernunft*” (*Briefe*, 10: 130) and abandoned his project from “*Grentzen der Sinnlichkeit und der Vernunft*” (*Briefe*, 10: 130; see also Longuenesse 1998: 18-28; Pollok 2009: 326).

¹² “Thinking is the action of relating given intuitions to an object” (*KrV* B304).

proved, it “rests on the fact that through them alone is experience possible (as far as the form of thinking is concerned)” (*KrV* A93/B126). Thus, the transcendental deduction is defined as an explanation of the possibility that the categories refer a priori to objects. Hence, the *quid juris* question is developed and answered if the categories are recognized as conditions of the possibility of experience. They are conditions of the possibility of experience, if “only by means of them can any object of experience be thought at all” (*KrV* A93/B126).

On the basis of these preliminary considerations and the nominal definition of experience, Kant develops the proof as follows: because all experience, in addition to intuition of the senses, requires a concept of an object, “hence concepts of objects in general lie at the ground of all experiential cognition as a priori conditions” (*KrV* A93/B126). For this reason, experience not only depends on the formal conditions of sensibility but also on the formal conditions a priori, which are valid for the thinking of objects. Thus, the above-mentioned second condition is proved.

Kant’s argument can, therefore, be reconstructed as follows:

Major premise: If A, then B.

Minor premise: It is the case that A.

Conclusion: It is the case that B.

Although Kant does not formulate the first premise explicitly, it can be derived from the question formulated in the self-reflection. Thus, the argument can thus be formalized as follows:

Major premise: If all experience contains, in addition to the forms of intuition, concepts a priori of an object, then the concepts of objects in general lie at the ground of all experiential cognition as a priori conditions.

Minor premise: “Now, however, all experience contains in addition to the intuition of the senses [...] a concept of an object” (*KrV* A93/B126).

Conclusion: “[H]ence concepts of objects in general lie at the ground of all experiential cognition as a priori conditions” (*KrV* A93/B126).

On the basis of this conclusion, Kant gains in the following passage of the *Transition to the Transcendental Deduction* the principle of the transcendental deduction of all a priori concepts. Thus, the principle of the deduction gives an answer to the question *how subjective conditions can have objective validity*. The explained answer is as simple as possible but as secure as necessary: this principle states that the concepts a priori “must be recognized as a priori conditions of the possibility of experiences (whether of the intuition that is encountered in them, or of the thinking)” (*KrV* A94/B126). As conditions of the possibility of experience, these concepts have objective validity and they are necessary. The proof of their objective validity correlates with the objective validity of the intuitions, indicated by Kant’s formulation in brackets in the course of the explication of the principle. Thus, Kant refers once more to the passage A88/B121, in which the deduction of the forms of intuition was linked with the deduction of the concepts of the understanding.

2. Objective and Subjective Deduction

Because of Kant’s claim in the *Preface* of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the objective deduction of the categories has been effected in the above-reconstructed *Transition to the Transcendental Deduction*, special attention should be paid to this passage. He notes in the form of a *reminder to the reader*, that even if the “subjective deduction does not produce the complete conviction that I expect the objective deduction that is my primary concern would come into its full strength, on which what is said at pages 92-93 should even be sufficient by itself” (*KrV* AXVII). The reference to pages 92-93 indicates the first two paragraphs in the *Transition to the Transcendental Deduction*.

Therefore, with regard to “the investigations” (*KrV* AXVI), which he has undertaken “under the title **Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding**” (*KrV* AXVII), Kant distinguishes *two sides* in the *Preface* of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, that is, the inquiry which “goes rather deep” (*KrV* A XVII), consists of an objective and a subjective deduction.

The objective deduction asks “[w]hat and how much can understanding and reason cognize free of all experience?” (*KrV* AXVII).

Thus, it has to “demonstrate and make comprehensible” (*KrV* AXVI) the objective validity of the concepts a priori. It is *demonstrated* if the validity of the concepts becomes evident, but it is only *comprehensible* if it is proved. The principle of the deduction, as explored in paragraph 14, achieves both of these. It shows that experience is just possible with regard to the categories.

A subjective deduction, however, asks, “[h]ow is the faculty of thinking itself possible?” (*KrV* AXVII), and focuses on the “pure understanding itself” (*KrV* AXVII), on its “possibilities and the powers of cognition” (*KrV* AXVII). The context, which must be given if the categories claim objective validity, is thus investigated. However, the subjective deduction is a declaration to explore the already proven relation. It shows the subjective possibility of the relation of categories with reference to the recognizing subject. Thus, the objective deduction is adjudged to clarify the question *if* (or *that*), and the subjective deduction was adjudged to clarify *how*, the categories relate to the manifoldness in time and space.

Based on this distinction,¹³ as Kant emphasizes, the objective deduction builds the so-called “chief question” (*KrV* AXVII) of the *Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding*, although such an objective deduction always requires a subjective one.

Since the latter question [How is the faculty of thinking itself possible?] is something like the search for the cause of a given effect, and is therefore something like a hypothesis (although, as I will elsewhere take the opportunity to show, this is not in fact how matters stand), it appears as if I am taking the liberty in this case of expressing an opinion, and that the reader might therefore be free to hold another opinion (*KrV* AXVII).

In this quotation from the *Preface*, Kant explores why the subjective deduction is subordinated under the objective one.¹⁴ The primary reason is that, in the context of the subjective deduction, he uses the psychological

¹³ This passage of the *Preface* of the A-edition contradicts the so-called thesis of method concerning the distinction between the subjective and the objective deduction (see footnote 4). For this reason, the text follows the so-called thesis of difference. Based on this decision, the central question in the current research debate treats the relevance of the subjective deduction as a psychological investigation of the activity of our capacity. The fourth part of this paper will develop how the subjective deduction depends on the objective one.

¹⁴ Of course, the *Preface* is a preface for the whole *Critique* and not only for the transcendental deduction (Allison 2015: 199) but that does not soften the judgment.

terms of *two famous men*, John Locke and David Hume, which becomes especially evident in the revised and extended version of paragraph 14. However, he decisively rejects the claims of both predecessors, the one leading to “**enthusiasm**” (*KrV* B128) and the other to “**skepticism**” (*KrV* B128). Kant attempts rather to “steer human reason between these two cliffs” (B128). By prefixing the principle from the *Transition to the Transcendental Deduction* to such psychological examinations, Kant aligns the investigation to the subjective sources. In this sense, the subjective deduction is just a search for the cause of a solution already given in the objective deduction of the *First Section*. It is the principle of the *Transition to the Transcendental Deduction* which allows Kant to develop the subjective sources “like a hypothesis” (*KrV* AXVII). It is the great importance attached to the objective deduction which allows him to promise that he will show *elsewhere* that “this is not in fact how matters stand” (*KrV* AXVII) with the subjective deduction. What is not clear is if he really does do this anywhere else.¹⁵

Regarding this exposition, however, it must be emphasized that the *Preface* of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* only arose after Kant had put the three sections of the A-deduction on paper (Erdmann 1878: 24; Düsing 2000: 139-140). In addition, Kant dropped this distinction in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Consequently, it is not clear that the distinction between subjective and objective deduction introduced in the *Preface* of the A-edition was the basis for the execution of the deduction. These issues raise an enormously complex research question with regard to the differentiation within the framework of the *Transcendental Analytic*.

However, the same distinction is also found in the *Second Section* of the A-deduction. Here Kant suggests that “it is already a sufficient deduction” (*KrV* A96) of the categories and a “justification of their objective validity if we can prove that by means of them alone an object can be thought” (*KrV* A96-7). In addition to such a method of proof, the “subjective sources that comprise the a priori foundations for the possibility of experience” (*KrV* A97) have to be assessed. With this investigation of objective validity and subjective sources, not only is the distinction of the transcendental

¹⁵ It is an open question where this argument appears: perhaps in the passage A336/B393 (Moledo 2015: 418-429; Mösenbacher 2016: 85-89).

deduction into a subjective and an objective part repeated with almost the same terms in the *Second Section* of the A-deduction, but so too is their significance in the examination. In the passage A111, Kant again emphasizes the importance of the “objective validity, which was just what we really wanted to know” (*KrV* A111).

In the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*,¹⁶ and with regard to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant returns to this distinction, even if he no longer uses the terms objective and subjective deduction in 1786. In an enormous footnote to the *Preface*, Kant responds to a review by Prof. Ulrich, who had declared that the “principal basis” (*MAN*, 4: 474) of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, i.e., the deduction of the categories, is actually *obscure*. Without “an entirely clear and sufficient deduction of the categories” (*MAN*, 4: 474), Kant’s critic says, “the system of the *Critique of Pure Reason* totters on its foundation” (*MAN*, 4: 474). Kant replies to this attack by countering it as follows. The categories are forms of thought that we must use in intellectually dealing with whatever we have to think about. This gives him the core thesis that the categories represent the limits to what thoughts it is possible to have and thus

the question how the categories make such experience possible is important enough for *completing* the deduction where possible, with respect to the principal end of the system, namely, the determination of the limits of pure reason, it is in no way *compulsory*, but merely *meritorious* (*MAN*, 4: 474).

Thus, Kant again distinguishes between a proof of *that* or *if*, as already given in paragraph 14 of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and a proof of *how* the categories make experience possible. Moreover, in the considerations of 1786, he returns once more to the almost equal significance of both examinations.

These arguments in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* are formulated in relation to a rewriting of the transcendental deduction. In this sense, Kant returns in the *Preface* of the B-edition again to the reproach of the “obscurity in the Deduction of the Concepts of the Understanding”

¹⁶ The *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* is quoted according to the edition by Michael Friedman.

(*KrV* BXXXVIII) and says that he will make “improvements” (*KrV* BXXXVIII) in the “presentation” (*KrV* BXXXVIII) of the deduction in this new edition. Even though it concerns far more than mere external modifications of the proof, Kant also refers back, in paragraph 15, to the argumentation of the *First Section* where he states that the categories already presuppose the connection to the manifold in the sensibility. “The category therefore already presupposes combination” (*KrV* B131). Accordingly, the combination is already proven and Kant merely considers the “ground of the unity of different concepts” (*KrV* B131), which must be found in a fundamental unity—that is, in the unity of the subject. The task for the subsequent section, however, is to search for the “possibility of the understanding” (*KrV* B131).

To sum up, in both the *Preface* and in the *Second Section* of the transcendental deduction (of both editions), Kant highlights the argument of the objective deduction. It is characterized first as “already [...] sufficient” (*KrV* AXVII) and the second time as “sufficient by itself” (*KrV* A96). Even though the B-deduction does not refer to this distinction, Kant also uses the distinction in paragraph 15 and classifies its significance in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* in the same way as in the A-deduction. Thus, the objective deduction is sufficient because it necessarily implies the legality, and hence the objective validity, of the categories. With this characterization of the objective deduction, Kant puts the argument in the *Transition to the Transcendental Deduction* not solely in the *Preface* but also in both editions of the main text at the core of his deliberations.

3. The Meaning of Principle

Based on the investigation in the *First Section* of the deduction and the distinction between the subjective and objective deduction, it is again possible to ask what Kant means by the term *principle*.

The term has a wide range of meanings (*KrV* A300/B356) in the Kantian philosophy. He uses the concept equivalently with the Latin *princip* or *principium* and the German *Grundsatz*. Thus, the term stands for *beginning* (*KrV* A652/B680), *universal condition* (*KrV* A305/B361), *unconditioned* (*KrV* A336/B394), and is applied as an empirical, a heuristic, a comparative, a constitutive, a formal, and a logical principle (Meer 2019: 215-221). The

common feature of all these definitions is that a principle is the cause of something else not in a temporal (*initium*) but in a systematic way. In this sense, principles are crucial in Kant's system to guarantee the completeness of the system: for example, the completeness of the categories (*KrV* A80-81/B106-107), or the cosmological ideas (*KrV* A408/B435). The principle of the transcendental deduction, in particular, must be distinguished from Kant's *supreme principle of all synthetic judgments* (*KrV* A154/B193), and the *principles of reason* (*KrV* A658/B686; see also Longuenesse 1998: 84, 243-245; Rescher 2000: 64-70).

Kant uses the term *principium* in the *First Section* of the deduction specifically in its Latin sense of introduction (lat. *prooemium, principium, exordium*). In the German rhetoric of the Modern Era, the *exordium* is translated mostly as *Eingang* (initiation). The aim of such initiation is as an aid to the audience, and a way of casting the speech in a favorable light for the intentions of the speaker (Cicero 1890: 325; Gottsched 1737: 89-90). Following Aristotle (1958: 1415b), the *exordium* is mostly directed to the affecting of the audience and is not geared objectively. In the Early Modern period, the thematic and argumentative function of the initiation is strengthened by supplementation or replacement of the *exordium* with the *propositio* (Kositzke 1994: 980). As Weise (1642-1708) declares, the *propositio* forms the "essence and [the] core of the speech" ["*Wesen und den Kern von der Rede*"] (1683: 169) wherein "one says what one wants in the speech" ["*man sagt, was man in der Rede haben will*"] (1683: 169). Lindner (1729-1776), a professor of poetry in Königsberg and well known to Kant (Kühn 2003: 190-193), extends this characterization from Weise by assigning the initiation a logical function in the concept of a speech. The content of the initiation, which precedes the main part (German: *Hauptsatz*), stands in "relation of the general to the particular" ["*Verhältnis des allgemeinen zum besonderen*"] (Lindner 1755: 157). With reference to Gottsched, Lindner also emphasizes that the initiation may even consist of a short essay, whose subject "has some affinity with the main part" ["*einige Verwandtschaft mit dem Hauptsatze*"] (Lindner 1755: 157).¹⁷

We should read the *First Section* of the deduction as an initiation (see footnote 4), solely in this specific sense of a *propositio*, as in the rhetoric of

¹⁷ In this sense, Sulzer writes: "*Es ist also kaum ein Theil der Rede, an dem man die Größe des Redners besser erkennen kann, als der Eingang*" (1771: 24).

the Modern Era. Accordingly, Kant gives in such a *propositio*, in addition to the content, scope, and methodology, an overview of the central concepts and of the system. Thereby, the principle summarizes the objective deduction in the pages 92-93 and introduces a schema for the following analysis. As Kant writes: the principle of the deduction introduces a schema “toward which the entire investigation must be directed” (KrV A94/B126).

In summary, the *First Section* constitutes, as the term *principle* already expresses, a paradigmatic initiation in the procedure of taking evidence. On this understanding, it can clearly be seen how Kant develops the argument beyond the *First Section*.

4. Reflection of the Structure of the Deduction

Kant understands the transcendental deduction in the *Critique of Pure Reason* as an investigation into the objective validity of the concepts of the understanding, and also as an investigation into their subjective sources. The objective deduction, which Kant explicitly identifies with the *Transition to the Transcendental Deduction*, forms the chief question within the framework of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Based on this fact, the principle of the deduction summarizes this argument and builds a transition to the following analysis, in which it anticipates the entire deduction. In this way, the objective deduction can adequately prove the objective validity of the categories, and the subjective deduction, which clarifies the question how the categories have objective validity, is therefore subordinated.

According to the *First Section* and, in particular, to the principle of the deduction, Kant has already developed a solution to his transcendental deduction, and the following passages in the A- and B-deduction are supposed to execute it. Kant further develops the argument by way of an investigation into the subjective sources, which is executed with regard to the objective validity of the categories. Hence, the entire *Second* and *Third Section* of the A-deduction, as well as the *Second Section* of the B-deduction, cannot merely be regarded as a subjective deduction. Rather, and with reference to the principle of the deduction, these passages deal with the objective and subjective deduction. For this reason, the two strategies of the argument do not constitute two different proofs, but rather are always connected as “two sides” (KrV AXVI) of one proof.

Despite the prior objective deduction in the *First Section*, the text does not show a strict separation of the two sides of the deduction. The passages following the *First Section* outline an investigation of the subjective sources, but one based on a repetition of the already developed objective validity of the concepts of understanding.¹⁸ Kant returns to the objective deduction in the *Second* and *Third Section* of the A-deduction, especially in the passages A98, A104-106, A111, A119, A124-125, and A130. In the *Second Section* of the B-deduction, he refers to the objective deduction, especially in the passages B130-131, B136-137, B143, B150-151, and B160-161.

5. Conclusion

This paper considers the transcendental deduction of the categories from a specific point of view: the *First Section* of the *Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding*. Kant develops the principle of the transcendental deduction in this passage of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that remains unchanged between the first and second edition. In the *Preface* of the first edition, he identifies the first two paragraphs of this passage with the objective deduction. The principle summarizes this objective deduction and builds a transition to the following section(s). For this reason, the principle has a fundamental significance for the entire argument in both editions, because already in this passage Kant has achieved the required results of the transcendental deduction, i.e., the objective validity of the concepts of understanding. In subsequent section(s), Kant constantly refers to this principle of the transcendental deduction, referring to it in the context of his consideration of the subjective sources—which should clarify the already proven possibility of this validity in the subjective deduction. For this reason, the present argument points out that it is only possible to understand and reconstruct the entire proof if the principle of the deduction is reconsidered in light of its full importance and scope.

¹⁸ Based on the schematic differentiation between the distinction of subjective and objective deduction (see footnote 4), the interpretation follows the thesis of difference. Furthermore, it becomes evident that the subjective deduction is solely possible in the context of the objective one. That means, both deductions answer different questions but the subjective depends on the objective one.

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