

# The Metaphysical Deduction

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## 1 Two Kinds of Logic

*Pure General Logic:* the science of the norms or rules constitutive of thinking (or judging) in general, which abstracts from any relation to an object whatsoever (A55/B79)<sup>1</sup>

- Abstracts from all *content* (relation to an object) of thought<sup>2</sup>
- Purely *formal*

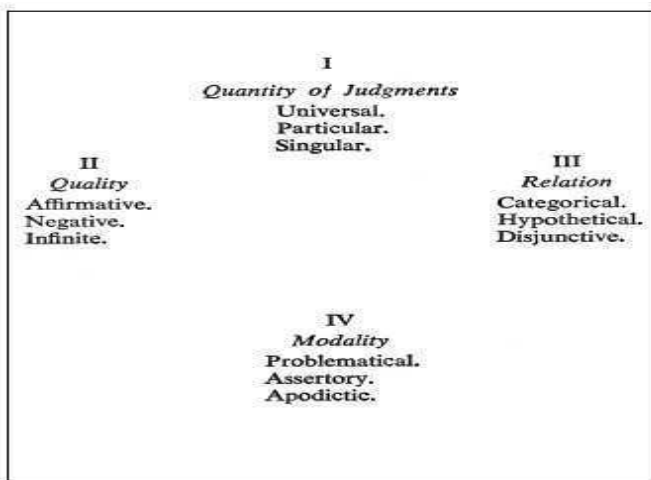
*Transcendental Logic:* the science of the norms or rules constitutive of thinking of an object in general, in whatever way it might be given in intuition

- *Not* purely formal; articulates the conditions on employing the concept <object> in thinking of anything whatsoever<sup>3</sup>
- Articulates the most general conditions for objective thought

## 2 The Metaphysical Deduction<sup>4</sup> (§§9-12)

*Function:* mental activity by which different representations are ordered under a common one<sup>5</sup>

### 2.1 The Forms of Judgment<sup>6</sup>



<sup>1</sup> [Pure logic] contains the absolutely necessary rules of thinking, without which no use of the understanding takes place, and it therefore concerns these rules without regard to the difference of the objects to which it may be directed...A **general** but textbfpure logic therefore has to do with strictly *a priori* principles and is a **canon of the understanding** and reason, but only in regard to what is formal in their use, be the content what it may (empirical or transcendental). (A52-3/B76-7)

<sup>2</sup> As general logic it abstracts from all contents of the cognition of the understanding and of the difference of its objects, and has to do with nothing but the mere form of thinking. (A54/B78)

<sup>3</sup> since every division presupposes a concept that is to be divided, a still higher one must be given, and this is the concept of an object in general (taken problematically, leaving undecided whether it is something or nothing). (A290/B346)

<sup>4</sup> In the **metaphysical deduction** the origin of the *a priori* categories in general was established through their complete coincidence with the universal logical functions of thinking, in the **transcendental deduction**, however, their possibility as *a priori* cognitions of objects of an intuition in general was exhibited. (B159)

<sup>5</sup> By a function, however, I understand the unity of the action of ordering different representations under a common one...Now the understanding can make no other use of these concepts than that of judging by means of them... In every judgment there is a concept that holds of many, and that among this many also comprehends a given representation, which is then related immediately to the object...All judgments are accordingly functions of unity among our representations, since instead of an immediate representation [viz., an intuition] a higher one, which comprehends this and other representations under itself, is used for the cognition of the object, and many possible cognitions are thereby drawn together into one. (A68-9/B93-4)

<sup>6</sup> If we abstract from all content of a judgment in general, and attend only to the mere form of the understanding in it, we find that the function of thinking in that can be brought under four titles, each of which contains under itself three moments" (A70/B95).

- Every judgment yields a “unity” (i.e. a propositional form) corresponding to the moments of the four types of judgment
  - Every judgment takes one moment from each group
    - \* Universal, affirmative, categorical and assertoric (“all crows are black”)
    - \* Singular, negative, disjunctive and problematic (“that bird might be neither a crow nor a raven”)
- Kant thinks that the 12 forms constitute all logically coherent cognitive acts which the understanding might engage in
- Kant also assumes that the only possible employment of concepts is in judgment<sup>7</sup>
  - This is how the forms of judgment provide a “clue” to nature of the categories
  - They only provide a “clue” however, because the forms of judgment are *formal* and thus lack any relation to an object—they thus cannot by themselves determine the content of the categories insofar as these are supposed to be concepts of *objects*

<sup>7</sup> “the understanding can make no other use of...concepts than that of judging by means of them. (A68/B93)

2.2 *The Forms of Thought – The “Categories”*

- The categories provide a dual role — they organize both intuition and concepts<sup>8</sup>
  - The dual role of the categories plus their connection to the forms of judgment yields (according to Kant) a determinate content—viz. the precise list of categories Kant provides

<sup>8</sup> The same function that gives unity to the different representations **in a judgment** also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations **in an intuition**, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of understanding. The same understanding, therefore, and indeed by means of the very same actions through which it brings the logical form of a judgment into concepts by means of the analytical unity, also brings a transcendental content into its representations by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general, on account of which they are called pure concepts of the understanding that pertain to objects *a priori*; this can never be accomplished by universal logic. (A79/B105)

TABLE OF CATEGORIES	
<b>I</b>	
<i>Of Quantity</i>	
Unity.	
Plurality.	
Totality.	
<b>II</b>	<b>III</b>
<i>Of Quality</i>	<i>Of Relation</i>
Reality.	Of Inherence and Subsistence
Negation.	( <i>substantia et accidentia</i> ).
Limitation.	Of Causality and Dependence
	(cause and effect).
	Of Community (reciprocity
	between the active and the
	passive).
<b>IV</b>	
<i>Of Modality</i>	
Possibility.	Impossibility.
Existence.	Non-existence.
Necessity.	Contingency.

### 2.3 Problems

- Completeness: Kant presents his table of judgment as if it were complete, but it seems ad hoc or arbitrary<sup>9</sup>
- Derivation: Kant claims that the all and only the categories may be completely derived from the table of judgment but fails to give an precise derivation
  - Are the categories just *identical* with the forms of judgment?<sup>10</sup>

### 3 On Synthesis (§10)

- Synthesis is a form of mental *activity*; it is something the thinker *does*, not something that merely *happens* to the thinker
  - Kant sometimes discusses synthesis as an “act” (*Handlung*) but this is mildly misleading, as it may suggest that synthesis is a form of intentional action rather than an (at least sometimes involuntary) activity of the mind of which the subject may or may not be aware; we shouldn’t confuse *acts* of a thinker with *voluntary acts* of a thinker<sup>11</sup>
- Synthesis works on representations by “running through” and “gathering together” discrete representations into one combined and connected whole (A99)
  - Is synthesis a causal process?
    - \* No? — would seem to be incompatible with deterministic world
    - \* Yes? — realism about intentional states suggests that they have causal powers, and that the causal features and interactions between such states are what provide them with representational content and allow them to track logical relationships<sup>12</sup>
- All cognition demands a synthesis of representation<sup>13</sup>
- Synthesis is carried out by the unitary subject of representation on representations that are either given to it in sensibility (i.e. intuition) or produced by it in thought (e.g. stipulative conceptual definition)
  - What Kant will attempt to show in the Deduction is that “experience” (in some sense of that term) depends on synthesis via application of the categories
- Two kinds of synthesized representations
  - Concepts
    1. Combination of concepts in one judgment
    2. Combination of simpler concepts into a more complex concept (cf. A729/B757; Logik Pölitz 24:568)
  - The “manifold” of intuition (either in one intuition or many)

<sup>9</sup> This division is systematically generated from a common principle, namely the faculty for judging (which is the same as the faculty for thinking), and has not arisen rhapsodically from a haphazard search for pure concepts, of the completeness of which one could never be certain, since one would only infer it through induction, without reflecting that in this way one would never see why just these and not other concepts should inhabit the pure understanding. (A80-1/B106-7)

<sup>10</sup> That action of the understanding...through which the manifold of given representations (whether they be intuitions or concepts) is brought under an apperception in general, is the logical function of judgments. ... But now the categories are nothing other than these very functions for judging, insofar as the manifold of a given intuition is determined with regard to them (TD §20, B143; cf. TD §26, B159; Pr §39, 4:324)

<sup>11</sup> [synthesis] is a mere effect of the of the imagination, a blind though indispensable function of the soul...of which we are only seldom even conscious (A78/B103)

<sup>12</sup> It’s not just that, in a psychology of propositional attitudes, content and causal powers are attributed to the same things. It’s also that causal relations among propositional attitudes somehow typically contrive to respect their relations of content, and belief/desire explanations often turn on this. Hamlet believed that somebody had killed his father because he believed that Claudius had killed his father. His having the second belief explains his having the first. How? Well, presumably via some such causal generalization as ‘if someone believes Fa, then ceteris paribus he believes  $\exists x(Fx)$ .’ This generalization specifies a causal relation between two kinds of mental states picked out by reference to (the logical form of) the propositions they express...(Fodor 1987, 12)

<sup>13</sup> By synthesis in the most general sense, however, I understand the action of putting different representations together with each other and comprehending their manifoldness in one cognition. Such a synthesis is pure if the manifold is given not empirically but a priori (as is that in space and time)...The synthesis of a manifold, however, (whether it be given empirically or a prior) first brings forth a cognition, which to be sure may initially still be raw and confused, and thus in need of analysis; yet the synthesis alone is that which properly collects the elements for cognitions and unifies them into a certain content; it is therefore the first thing to which we have to attend if we wish to judge about the first origin of our cognition. (A77-8/B103)

1. Combination of sensations in one intuition (?)
  - \* This claim is controversial, as it suggests that intuition is constructed via synthesis
2. Combination of intuitions into a complex intuition

### *References & Further Reading*

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