

An Overlooked Argument for the Categories: Kant's Interlude of Justification in the *Prolegomena* Um Argumento Negligenciado para as Categorias: O Interlúdio Kantiano de Justificação nos Prolegômenos

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Abstract: The deduction of the categories lies undoubtedly at the very heart of Kant's theoretical philosophy and, for this reason, it is one of items in the philosophical canon that is greatly discussed and least agreed upon. In the modern and contemporary Western philosophical tradition as well as in Kant's literature, the *loci classici* for its consideration are the 1781 and 1787 editions of the *Critique of pure reason*. In this paper, I aim at presenting and discussing an argument that Kant advances in the *Prolegomena* and which is virtually ignored in the approach of the deduction of the categories. At first, an inquiry into the distinction between analytic and synthetic methods is carried out. After that, the difference between judgments of perception and judgments of experience is taken into account. Finally, the *Prolegomena*'s argument for the categories is brought into discussion.

Keywords: Analytic Method. Synthetic Method. Judgments of Perception. Judgments of Experience. Deduction of the Categories.

Resumo: É indiscutível que a dedução das categorias compreende o núcleo da filosofia teórica kantiana. Por esse motivo, tal empreendimento figura entre os elementos do cânone filosófico que recebem maior discussão e menos consenso. Os *loci classici* para a sua consideração, tanto na tradição filosófica ocidental moderna e contemporânea quanto na literatura kantiana, são as edições de 1781 e 1787 da *Crítica da razão pura*. Neste trabalho, objetivo apresentar e discutir um argumento que Kant desenvolve nos *Prolegômenos* e que é praticamente ignorado na abordagem da dedução das categorias. Inicialmente, empreende-se uma investigação sobre a distinção entre os métodos analítico e sintético. Na sequência, considera-se a distinção entre juízos de percepção e juízos de experiência. Por último, discute-se o argumento para as categorias que é dado nos *Prolegômenos*.

Palavras-chave: Método Analítico. Método Sintético. Juízos de Percepção. Juízos de Experiência. Dedução das Categorias.

1. On the Difference between Analytic and Synthetic Methods

It is true that the discovery of a two-way procedure of argumentation is not Kant's own making. As to the modern search for the ground of the distinctive nature of judgments and the (necessary) relation

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of the terms held in them, one may catch sight of two Kant's immediate predecessors, i.e., Wolff and Lambert.

Christian Wolff not only conceived the distinction between the analytic and the synthetic methods, but also sought a procedure of argumentation which would correlate their characteristics. He named this procedure *ars inveniendi* and described it as the “[...] greatest perfection of the intellect”.² Its accomplishment, however, would never come off.

Johann Heinrich Lambert set forth this distinction in a way that would call for Kant's continuously postponed solution and finally provide his critical answer, namely, the justification of a relationship between the material and formal elements of human knowledge or of the sensible and intellectual faculties which ground its constitution.³ In spite of his indications, Lambert would not grasp this relationship.

Although Wolff and Lambert provide important insights into the distinction between the analytic and the synthetic methods and, therefore, present fundamental contributions to the critical answer; Kant's position within this answer does not accede to their proposals. This is due to the fact that both Wolff and Lambert revolve around equating the methods of mathematics and philosophy. For, Wolff argues that “[...] philosophical knowledge acquires complete certitude from mathematics”.⁴ Lambert likewise asserts that “[...] philosophical knowledge cannot acquire the designation of scientific knowledge unless it is at the same time thoroughly mathematical”.⁵

From the critical view, this intent to follow the method of mathematics in philosophy has two consequences: Wolff does not find an authentic method in the middle way between analysis and synthesis;⁶ Lambert mistakenly endorses the method of analysis as the only one in charge of establishing fundamental concepts in philosophy and their relation to the acquisition of knowledge.⁷

² Wolff (2003, p. 254); quoted by Tonelli (1976, p. 200).

³ See Br, AA 10: 105. In his letter from October 13, 1770, Lambert puts to Kant this question: “[...] to what extent these two ways of knowing [from the senses and from the understanding] are so *separated* that they *never* come together. If this is to be shown *a priori*, it must be deduced from the nature of the senses and of the understanding”.

⁴ Wolff (1963, p. 15).

⁵ Lambert (1965, p. 304).

⁶ See Tonelli (1976, p. 200): “[...] elaborating an art of invention [...]: an old plan which Wolff never was to actualize”.

⁷ See (i) Lambert (1990, p. 474): “[...] marks of concepts and things are strictly scientific not only if they represent in general both these [conceptual and ontological] instances, but also if they indicate their relations, so that a theory

Already in the 1770s, Kant had in mind Wolff's and Lambert's misguided outcomes.⁸ Kant's insight into the necessity of a synthetic method in philosophy can be ascribed to this awareness. As, in the end of the 1770s, he puts it: "[...] while I thereby certainly became careful, I was still not instructed. For that there really are *a priori* cognitions that are not merely analytic but extend our cognition. I was still lacking a critique of pure reason".⁹

Now, the following questions are worth raising: (i.) What would be Kant's "instruction" about the method to be followed in philosophy? (ii.) How would he deal with *a priori* and extended cognitions? (iii.) What method, if only one, would be appropriate for this task? In the following, a consideration of the critical distinction between the analytic and the synthetic methods may give us a clue to answer these questions.

In a passage from the *Hechsel Logik*, which provides the transcriptions of Kant's lectures on logic in the beginning of the 1780s, one reads that

[s]cientific method is divided into synthetic and analytic method. With synthetic method, one begins with principles and reason and proceeds toward things that rest on principles; with analytic method, one proceeds toward principles from things that rest on principles.¹⁰

In spite of the vague approach of the terms "principle" and "thing", what is noteworthy in this description is that the methods of analysis and synthesis follow, so as to say, the same path with different routes. Synthetic method starts with the establishment of principles and then considers things which are grounded upon them. Alternatively, Analytic method admits, at the start, things grounded upon principles and proceeds to the presentation of the necessity of these principles.

of things and a theory of their marks can be interchanged with each other"; (ii.) Lambert (1965, p. 73): "denominations of things in the intellectual world [Intellektualwelt] come from things in the corporeal world [Körperwelt]"; (iii.) Lambert (1918, p. 3): "[t]he possibility of the connection of two concepts gives the composition of a thing itself". In a word, Lambert attend to the problem of the relation of the logical realm of concepts with the ontological realm of things counting on the possibility of analyzing one realm and, with that, presenting the structure of the other.

⁸ See, for instance, Refl 4866. AA 18: 14: "Wolff was a [...] Dogmatic, not critical. [...] Lambert analyzed reason, but critique was still lacking".

⁹ Refl 5116. AA 18: 95-96.

¹⁰ V-Lo, AA 26: 115.

In another passage from the *Jäsche Logik*, which was published in 1800 assembling transcriptions of Kant's latter lectures, one finds a specification of the above-mentioned distinction. Kant states that

[a]nalytic is opposed to *synthetic* method. The former begins with the conditioned and grounded and proceeds to principles (*a principiatis ad principia*), while the latter goes from principles to consequences or from the simple to the composite. The former could also be called *regressive*, as the latter could *progressive*.¹¹

The specification holds Kant's account of the analytic method as *regressive* and of the synthetic method as *progressive*. Now, if the path between principles and things grounded upon them is the same, the outcome of each route taken in it is quite different. According to the analytic method, on the one hand, regression has only the role of asserting that something is grounded upon principles. Due to the synthetic method, on the other hand, progression must attend to the proper justification of what is set as principle.

Yet, in order to arrive at a full set of this account, one must deal with Kant's key exposition of the analytic and the synthetic methods in the *Prolegomena*. We shall see why this exposition will lead us to the treatment of the deduction of the categories according to the analytic method and, with it, to the justification of thesis advanced in this paper, i.e., that in the *Prolegomena* Kant offers a peculiar argument for the categories that seems to be virtually ignored in the literature.

The natural starting point is the specification of the task of the deduction. If there is something less unequivocal about the deduction of the categories is that it aims at securing the distinctiveness of sensibility and understanding as well as at providing a necessary relation between the domains of these faculties.¹² Whether, how and where in his corpus Kant achieves this task is, however, a matter of great dispute.

¹¹ V-Lo, AA 09: 149.

¹² Allison (2015, p. 9) states that, "[s]imply put, the problem is that Kant not only distinguishes sharply between these two faculties, but also insists that cognition requires their cooperation". Allison (1986, p.1) also claims that, "[c]uriously enough, these radically different approaches to the text [i.e., of Kant's idealist tradition and contemporary analytical philosophy] have more in common than one might at first assume. Specifically, they share the view that the crucial theme in the Deduction is the correlation between self-consciousness or the capacity to say 'I' (apperception) and the consciousness or experience of an objective, spatio-temporal world. Indeed, the root idea

In the *Prolegomena*, as to the difference between the analytic and the synthetic methods, Kant argues that

[t]he analytic method, insofar as it is opposed to the synthetic, is something completely different from a collection of analytic propositions; it signifies only that one proceeds from that which is sought as if it were given, and ascends to the conditions under which alone it is possible. In this method one often uses nothing but synthetic propositions, as mathematical analysis exemplifies, and it might better be called the *regressive* method to distinguish it from the synthetic or *progressive* method.¹³

In analyzing the possibility of approaching the task of the deduction following the analytic method, one must bear in mind that the “route” of argumentation according to this method starts with the presentation of elements that require accepting this task as if it were fulfilled and proceeds to the necessity of its fulfillment. As Kant claimed above, in it, “regression” means that “one proceeds from that which is sought as if it were given, and ascends to the conditions under which alone it is possible”.

This is the methodological background offered in the *Prolegomena* for the justification of the categories. That is, while the *Critique of pure reason* proceeded “[...] by inquiring within pure reason itself, and seeking to determine within this source both the elements and the laws of its pure use, according to principles”; the *Prolegomena* is said to “[...] rely on something already known to be dependable, from which we can go forward with confidence and ascend to the sources, which are not yet known”.¹⁴

What must be emphasized is the distinction between inquiring into the sources of reason and its principles and the act of going backward to these sources from something that is “already known to be dependable”. Kant says that the former is carried out in the *Critique* and describes it as proceeding synthetically, “[...] so that the science might present all of its articulations, as the structural organization of a quite peculiar faculty of cognition, in their natural connection”. The latter is attended to in the

that these somehow mutually condition one another is the nerve center of the Transcendental Deduction in virtually every interpretation from the most metaphysical to the most analytic”.

¹³ Prol, AA 04: 277 – footnote.

¹⁴ Both fragments in Prol, AA 04: 274-275.

Prolegomena and presented as following an analytic method, so that “[...] one will thereby be put in the position to survey the whole, to test one by one the main points at issue in this science”.¹⁵ In a word, while the *Critique* deals with the “articulation” and the “natural relation” of the elements of human knowledge, the *Prolegomena* is presented as a backward “survey” of these elements.

At this point, we are in a position to answer the questions raised above on the nature of cognitions in philosophy and the proper method to deal with them. If these cognitions are described, already in the 1770s, as *a priori* but extended; then, the method determining its “articulation” (i.e., something *given* in sensibility and *thought* by the understanding) and its “natural relation” (something conceptually determined as *cognized* by means of the activity of the understanding on sensibility) is the one to present the nature of cognitions in philosophy.

This does not mean that the analytic method is useless in philosophical investigation. It just means that, if philosophy deals with *a priori* and extended cognitions, then it must follow a synthetic method at the very first ground of their justification.¹⁶

It will be worth considering, in the following two sections, why and how Kant attempted at fulfilling the task of the deduction of the categories within the analytic method of the *Prolegomena*. This will lead us to the presentation and discussion of an argument for the deduction of the categories which seems to be unnoticed in its approach.

2. The Analysis of the Domain of Sensible Representation: Judgments of Perception and Judgments of Experience

The analytic-regressive methodology according to which Kant composes the *Prolegomena* draws up the guideline for the justification of

¹⁵ Both fragments in Prolog, AA 04: 263.

¹⁶ Indeed, in many moments in his corpus, Kant uses the analytic method as a backward procure that leads his argumentation to what is (to be) set as a very first ground of justification. It is worth mentioning these examples: (i.) In the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, the exposition of the concepts of space and time; (ii.) In the *A-deduction*, the exposition of the threefold synthesis; (iii.) In the *B-deduction*, the presentation of the transcendental unity of apperception and the capacity to judge as elements that characterize the activity of synthesis by the categories (§§ 15-20); (iv.) In the *Prolegomena*, the description of pure mathematics and pure natural science as endowed with “[...] *uncontested* synthetic cognition *a priori*” (Prolog, AA 04: 275); (v.) In the first two sections of the *Groundwork*, the elucidation of the categorical imperative as a principle within “[...] the generally received concept of morality” and upon which “[...] an autonomy of the will unavoidably depends” (GMS, AA 04: 444-445).

the categories: Kant begins with the presentation of sensible representation consisting of judgments of perception and judgments of experience; then advances to the consideration that categories are necessary if the nature of the latter is to be attended to; and, finally, retraces the justification of the categories. The first two steps are taken into account in this section of the paper. The third step will be a task for the final section, which is devoted to presenting and discussing the *Prolegomena's* argument for the justification of the categories.

Kant's starting point is an account of what is immediately represented in sensibility, with regard to judgments constituting its representations:

[w]e must therefore first of all note: that, although all judgments of experience are empirical, i.e., have their basis in the immediate perception of the senses, nonetheless the reverse is not the case, that all empirical judgments are therefore judgments of experience; rather, beyond the empirical and in general beyond what is given in sensory intuition, special concepts must yet be added, which have their origin completely *a priori* in the pure understanding, and under which every perception can first be subsumed and then, by means of the same concepts, transformed into experience.¹⁷

The consideration of what has its “basis in the immediate perception of the senses” (i.e., what is thought as sensible representation in general) allows for its division into two kinds of representation: what is mere perception and what is experience (knowledge). Accordingly, while attending to these two kinds of representations, one can judge (*urteilen*) in two different ways: with or without *a priori* concepts. Only in the first case there would be experience in strict sense (knowledge), resulting from the submission of what is sensibly given to concepts.

As Kant regressively puts it:

[e]mpirical judgments, insofar as they have objective validity, are judgments of experience; those, however, that are only subjectively valid I call mere judgments of perception. The latter do not require a pure concept of the understanding, but only the logical connection of perceptions in a thinking subject. But the former always demand, in addition to the representations of sensory intuition, special concepts

¹⁷ Prol, AA 04: 297-298.

originally generated in the understanding, which are precisely what make the judgment of experience objectively valid.¹⁸

With regard to judgments of experience, Kant is assuming, properly according to the analytical way of proceeding, that “*they have objective validity*” or that they subscribe to knowledge due to the fact that they “require [...] *special concepts originally generated in the understanding*”. In other words, Kant is here positing that, in being based upon a “[...] pure concept of the understanding”, a judgment of experience is “[...] expressing [...] a property of an object”.¹⁹

As to judgments of perception, Kant also proceeds analytically so as to assume that mere “[...] representations accompanied with sensation”²⁰ are at stake. According to his view, in that one is still judging, but only to the extent that “[...] the logical connection of perceptions in a thinking subject”²¹ is thought about. To put in another way, a judgment is here “[...] expressing [...] merely a relation of a perception to a subject”.²²

Now, the only objective way of justifying this distinction (and, as to justification, the only possible way) is to move backward to the presupposed relation between judgments of experience and what is posited as their ground, namely, the categories. That is to say, one faces the necessity of providing a justification for the assumption that this kind

¹⁸ Prol, AA 04: 298. In this respect, see what Kant wrote down in his Nachlass: “[a] judgment of perception is merely subjective; an objective judgment from perceptions is a judgment of experience” (Ref 3146, AA 16: 679). See also, in the very same words, a passage from the Jäsche Logik: “[a] judgment of perception is merely subjective; an objective judgment from perceptions is a judgment of experience” (V-Lo, AA 09: 113). On the genesis of Kant’s distinction, see Allison (2015, p. 292): “[i]t seems that Kant was led to this distinction by Georg Friedrich Meier’s distinction between intuitive and discursive judgments. [...] Meier characterized an intuitive judgment consisting merely of empirical concepts as an immediate experience, and as singular. [...] By discursive empirical judgments, Meier understood those involving concepts that are not taken directly from sensation and which therefore lack the immediate certainty of intuitive judgments”.

¹⁹ Both fragments in Prol, AA 04: 298. It is worth taking into account that, in such a characterization, judgments of experience “[...] always demand, in addition to the representations of sensory intuition, *special concepts originally generated in the understanding*, which are precisely what make the judgment of experience *objectively valid*” (Prol, AA 04: 298). Allison (2001, p. 31) overlooks what Kant is stressing in this passage. He states that, “[a]lthough Kant never says so explicitly, it seems clear from a consideration of his account of judgments of experience in the *Prolegomena* that in order to qualify as such, a judgment must either be itself a statement of empirical law or be derivable from such a law”.

²⁰ This definition of “perceptions” is given at KrV, B 147.

²¹ This sentence is from the passage in Prol, AA 04: 298 quoted above.

²² Prol, AA 04: 298.

of judgment “[...] never rests on empirical or indeed sensory conditions at all, but on a pure concept of the understanding”.²³

In § 20 of the *Prolegomena*, Kant takes into account the relation between empirical judgments assumed as objective (i.e., judgments of experience) and the supposed ground legitimizing their characterization as such: “[w]e will therefore have to analyze experience in general, in order to see what is contained in this product of the senses and the understanding, and how the judgment of experience is itself possible”.²⁴

In such an analysis, it is warranted that “[a]t bottom lies the intuition of which I am conscious, i.e., perception (*perceptio*), which belongs solely to the senses. But, secondly, judging (which pertains solely to the understanding) also belongs here”.²⁵

Accordingly, arriving at the justification of “how the judgment of experience is itself possible”, implies accounting for the relation of that “which belongs solely to the senses” with that “which pertains solely to the understanding”. Hence, one must address the task of demonstrating that the latter, defined as judgment, changes the status of the former, namely, perception. In a word, the determination of the sensible status of perception by the discursive status of judgment stands in need of justification.

At this point, the analysis or regression, which is set as the method of argumentation to be followed in the *Prolegomena*, reaches the requirement of a demonstration that “[a] completely different judgment therefore occurs before experience can arise from perception”.²⁶ This implying that, “[...] before a judgment of experience can arise from a judgment of perception, it is first required that the perception be subsumed under a concept of the understanding”.²⁷ To put it bluntly, Kant’s argumentation reaches the task of justifying the categories.

²³ Prol, AA 04: 299. One can find the need of this “justification” drafted in Kant’s Nachlass: “I can no doubt be immediately certain of my perception, but not of experience, i.e., of the objective validity of judgments from perception; to experience belongs frequent comparison in order to distinguish what the understanding does from what is sensible” (Refl 2743, AA 16: 494-495).

²⁴ Prol, AA 04: 300.

²⁵ Prol, AA 04: 300.

²⁶ Prol, AA 04: 300.

²⁷ Prol, AA 04: 300-301.

3. The Argument for the Justification of the Categories According to the Analytic Method

The task of the deduction of the categories is stated in § 20 and attended to in an argument advanced in § 22 of the *Prolegomena*. With regard to its statement, one reads that

[t]he given intuition must be subsumed under a concept that determines the form of judging in general with respect to the intuition, connects the empirical consciousness of the latter in a consciousness in general, and thereby furnishes empirical judgments with universal validity.²⁸

On the basis of this account, the legitimacy of judgments of experience must be assured by “a concept that determines the form of judging in general with respect to the intuition”. Making sense of this formulation of the transcendental deduction, however, requires that one provides the mediation between these instances: (i.) given intuition and pure concept; (ii.) empirical consciousness and consciousness in general; (iii.) empirical judgment and universal validity.

A thorough discussion of this issue requires addressing the following two questions: (i.) Are these mediations accepted in an argumentation, such as the one advanced in the *Prolegomena*, following the analytic method?; (ii.) What is the relation of this approach with the one advocated in the Transcendental Analytic of the *Critique*?

Now, answering these questions implies taking into account the argument that Kant put forward in § 22 of the *Prolegomena* as an answer to the task of the deduction of the categories.

Kant’s argument can be broken down in the following propositional form:

- I. The business of the senses is to intuit; that of the understanding, to think.
- II. To think is to unify representations in a consciousness.
- III. The unification of representations either arises merely relative to the subject and is contingent and subjective, or it occurs without condition and is necessary or objective. (from (ii.)).
- IV. The unification of representations in a consciousness is judgment.

²⁸ Prol, AA 04: 300.

- V. Therefore, thinking is the same as judging or as relating representations to judgments in general. (from (ii.) and (iv.).)
- VI. Judgments are therefore either merely subjective, if representations are related to one consciousness in one subject alone and are united in it, or they are objective, if they are united in a consciousness in general, i.e., are united necessarily therein. (from (iii.) and (v.).)
- VII. The logical moments of all judgments are so many possible ways of uniting representations in a consciousness. (from (vi.).)
- VIII. If, however, the very same moments serve as concepts, they are concepts of the *necessary* unification of these representations in a consciousness, and so are principles of objectively valid judgments. (from (vii.).)
- IX. This unification in a consciousness is either analytic, through identity, or synthetic, through combination and addition of various representations with one another. (from (viii.).)
- X. Experience consists in the synthetic connection of appearances (perceptions) in a consciousness, insofar as this connection is necessary.
- XI. Therefore pure concepts of the understanding are those under which all perceptions must first be subsumed before they can serve in judgments of experience, in which the synthetic unity of perceptions is represented as necessary and universally valid. (THESES, from (ix.) and (x.).)²⁹

Two features of this argument call for comment. The first is methodological and concerns its puzzling nature. On the one hand, the description of the *Prolegomena* as a work in which argumentation is “[...] laid out according to the *analytic method*”³⁰ puts a difficulty in assuming the § 22 argument as advanced according to the synthetic method. On the other hand, one also finds it difficult to argue that, after moving backward with analysis and reaching the set of premises presented above, Kant is advancing a justification in an analytical-regressive way.

This paradoxical nature can be rooted out if one attends to an important passage dedicated to explaining the relation of the

²⁹ Prol, AA 04: 304-305. Translation is my own. The structure of this argument seems to be completely neglected in the secondary literature. Allison, who devotes almost a whole chapter of his *Kant's transcendental deduction* (2015, p. 287-306) to considering the *Prolegomena*, simply ignores what Kant states in § 22. He maintains that, “[i]n the case of the Deduction, this [examination] means essentially §18-§20” (Allison, 2015, 292). Paton (1931, p. 321), in turn, finds in § 22 “[...] a summary of the deduction”. It is worth noting that what Paton takes to be a “summary” cannot be assigned either to the 1781 argument (in it, Kant does not take into account judgment) or to the 1787 argument (in it, Kant develops a systematic consideration of intuition). Guyer (1987, p. 71), at last, limits himself to a brief commentary that aims at disqualification. In his view, “[w]e must conclude that the argument of the *Prolegomena* is a disaster”.

³⁰ Prol, AA 04: 263.

argumentation in the 1781 edition of the *Critique of pure reason* with that which is now mounted in the *Prolegomena*. Thus, Kant writes:

I propose these *Prolegomena* as the plan and guide for the investigation, and not the work [the *Critique*] itself, because, with respect to the latter, though I am even now quite satisfied as regards the content, order, and method, and the care that was taken to weigh and test each proposition accurately before setting it down (for it took years for me to be fully satisfied not only with the whole, but sometimes also with only a single proposition, as regards its sources), I am not fully satisfied with my presentation in some chapters of the Doctrine of Elements, e.g., the Deduction of the Concepts of the Understanding or the chapter on the Paralogisms of Pure Reason, since in them a certain prolixity obstructs the clarity, and in their stead one can take as the ground of examination [zum Grunde der Prüfung] what the *Prolegomena* here say with respect to these chapters.³¹

According to what is pointed out in this passage, the justification of categories, as an exception, may disregard the principle that the *Critique*, “[...] which presents the faculty of pure reason in its entire extent and boundaries, thereby always remains the foundation [die Grundlage] to which the *Prolegomena* refer only as preparatory exercises”.³² In Kant’s words in the above-cited passage, concerning the deduction, “[...] one can take as the ground of examination [zum Grunde der Prüfung] what the *Prolegomena* here say”.

This means that the analytic-regressive way of proceeding, which decomposes the domain of sensible representation and posits certain judgments as objectively valid on the ground of pure concepts, is allowed to move backward to the justification of these concepts. Admittedly, this is due to the fact that, to the 1783 author of the *Prolegomena*, the foundation (*Grundlage*) at which one arrives in the course of analysis (i.e., the justification of the categories) seems to be still lacking.

The second relevant feature of the argument outline above concerns its outcome. The thesis presented in “(xi.)” ensures that all objective perceptions are subsumed under pure concepts of the understanding, and, therefore, that judgments of experience are legitimate

³¹ Prol, AA 04: 381. Translation is my own.

³² Prol, AA 04: 261.

since they express what characterizes these concepts, i.e., necessity and universal validity in the connection of perceptions. This thesis has as its ground of proof what is stated in premises “(ix.)” and “(x.)”.

Premise “(ix.)” states the possibility of a synthetic combination of representations in consciousness. It relies on: the correlation between “to think” and “to unify representations in consciousness” (premises “(i.)” and “(ii.)”); the assurance that such an activity is objective and necessary due to its foundation in the “logical moments of judgment” (premises “(iii.)” to “(vii.)”); the correlation between “logical moments of judgment” and “pure concepts of the understanding” (premise “(viii.)”).

At this point, one may draw attention to a problem that concerns the mere “presentation” and, in it, the lack of “clarity”. Hence, one can call upon the fact that, in his argumentative route from premise “(i.)” to premise “(viii.)”, Kant is proceeding analytically while subscribing to premises which are grounded in the *Critique*. Conversely, the very need for the argument (and hence for the formulation of its premises) can be attributed to the lack of a ground for the deduction argument in *Critique*. This is not, however, a problem that, *per se*, would dismiss the argument on account of its outcome. We shall see whether this is the case in addressing the other ground of the proof, i.e., premise “(x.)”.

Premise “(x.)” states the possibility of a “synthetic connection of appearances (perceptions)” in consciousness. In analyzing this statement, it is noteworthy that Kant is not just assuming, but taking up in a positive way an element from the 1781 edition of the *Critique* which led to the difficulty carrying out the task of the deduction. Namely, the characterization of “appearances” as belonging only to the domain of the sensible faculty. In the A-deduction argument Kant claimed that “[...] appearances themselves are nothing but sensible representations”.³³ In the *Prolegomena*, correlatively, we can read their characterization as “[...] perception (*perceptio*), which belongs solely to the senses”.³⁴ The equivalence in premise “(x.)” at hand makes this quite clear: “appearances (perceptions)”.

It is difficult to avoid concluding from this characterization that appearances could still be given without any role played by the

³³ KrV, A 104.

³⁴ Prolog, AA 04: 300.

understanding. To put in Kant's own words, the possibility that "[...] appearances could after all be so constituted that the understanding would not find them in accord with the conditions of its unity" would be opened up.³⁵

The restriction of the concept of "appearance" to the domain of sensibility seems to be main reason behind the weakness of the argument offered in the *Prolegomena* for the justification of the categories. If the task of the deduction implies achieving the relation of the faculties of sensibility and understanding, then its fulfillment would not find any help in this restriction. In short, by taking precedence over an analytical consideration of perception as empirically given in the sensible domain, so as to find objectivity in its consideration (i.e., the legitimacy of judgments of experience), Kant would run into the difficulty of matching the "business" of intuiting with the "business" of thinking.

4. Concluding Remarks

The transcendental deduction of the categories can be described as Kant's effort to ensure the distinctiveness of sensibility and understanding and to provide a necessary relation between these faculties. While this effort sets the singularity of Kant's theoretical philosophy, it also presides over a great deal of difficulty within this philosophy. As Kant puts it, "[...] this deduction, I say, was the most difficult thing that could ever be undertaken on behalf of metaphysics" (Prol, AA 04: 260). The difficulty in question is not just assumed by Kant and attested by his presentation of two versions of the deduction argument in the *Critique of pure reason*, but also experienced by anyone devoted to grasping how his effort is actually undertaken.

I have argued that in the *Prolegomena* Kant advances an argument for the justification of the categories as well as offered a systematic presentation and a detailed discussion of this argument. In attending to the distinction between the analytic and synthetic methods drawn in the *Prolegomena*, it was possible to determine that the analytic method alone is not suitable for an effort approaching the two essentially different domains of human knowledge. Moreover, in addressing the difference

³⁵ KrV, A 90 / B 123.

between judgments of perception and judgments of experience, it came out that the sensible domain of perception is not the accurate starting point for undertaking the deduction effort. In the 1787 argument of the *Critique*, Kant would choose an element pertaining to both domains of human knowledge, i.e., the unity of representations held in intuition in general. Finally, in presenting and discussing the *Prolegomena's* argument, it was possible to elucidate that its weakness relies upon Kant's restriction of the concept of appearance to the sensible domain of human knowledge; a feature that also pertained to the 1781 argument of the *Critique*.

Though mounted in the interlude of the two editions of the *Critique of pure reason*, the *Prolegomena's* argument for the categories is overlooked in the discussion of their justification. If the approach offered in this essay is convincing, it has important implications for the insight into Kant's theoretical philosophy and his effort in the transcendental deduction. With it, one may understand why Kant gave up a consideration that counted on the description of appearance as pertaining solely to sensibility and advanced an argument establishing its characterization from both understanding's function of unity and sensibility's spatio-temporal givenness.

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