

our reason on with false hopes, continually propelling it into momentary aberrations that always need to be removed. B 355

II

On pure reason as the seat of transcendental illusion

A.

On reason in general.

All our cognition starts from the senses, goes from there to the understanding, and ends with reason, beyond which there is nothing higher to be found in us to work on the matter of intuition and bring it under the highest unity of thinking. Since I am now to give a definition^a of this supreme faculty of cognition, I find myself in some embarrassment. A 299

As in the case of the understanding, there is in the case of reason a merely formal, i.e., logical use, where reason abstracts from all content of cognition, but there is also a real use, since reason itself contains the origin of certain concepts and principles, which it derives neither from the senses nor from the understanding. The first faculty has obviously long since been defined by the logicians as that of drawing inferences mediately (as distinct from immediate inferences, *consequentis immediatis*); but from this we get no insight into the second faculty, which itself generates concepts.^b Now since a division of reason into a logical and a transcendental faculty occurs here, a higher concept of this source of cognition must be sought that comprehends both concepts under itself, while from the analogy with concepts of the understanding, we can expect both that the logical concept will put in our hands the key to the transcendental one and that the table of functions of the former will give us the family tree of the concepts of reason. logical and real use of reason B 356

In the first part of our transcendental logic we defined the understanding as the faculty of rules; here we will distinguish reason from understanding by calling reason the **faculty of principles**.^b Principles

The term “a principle” is ambiguous, and commonly signifies only a cognition that can be used as a principle even if in itself and as to its own origin it is not a principle.^c Every universal proposition, even if it is A 300

^a *Erklärung*

^b *Principien*; in section II of this introduction, “principle” always translates *Princip* unless otherwise noted. In addition to the German term *Grundsatz*, Kant employs not only the Latin derivative *Princip*, but also occasionally the even more Latinate *Principium*, whose occurrence will be noted; the plural of both terms, however, is *Principien*, which will therefore be translated as “principles” with no note. Outside the present section, “principle” (without a note) always translates *Grundsatz*, and the Latin terms are always noted.

^c *Principium*

taken from experience (by induction) can serve as the major premise in a syllogism;^a but it is not therefore itself a principle.^b The mathematical axioms (e.g., that there can be only one straight line between any two points) are even universal cognitions *a priori*, and thus they are correctly called principles relative to the cases that can be subsumed under them. But I cannot therefore say that in general and in itself I cognize this proposition about straight lines from principles, but only that I cognize it in pure intuition.

B 357

cognition from principles

I would therefore call a “cognition from principles” that cognition in which I cognize the particular in the universal through concepts. Thus every syllogism is a form of derivation of a cognition from a principle. For the major premise always gives a concept such that everything subsumed under its condition can be cognized from it according to a principle. Now since every universal cognition can serve as the major premise in a syllogism, and since the understanding yields such universal propositions *a priori*, these propositions can, in respect of their possible use, be called principles.

A 301

But if we consider these principles^c of pure understanding in themselves as to their origin, then they are anything but cognitions from concepts. For they would not even be possible *a priori* if we did not bring in pure intuition (in mathematics) or the conditions of a possible experience in general. That everything that happens has a cause cannot at all be inferred from the concept of what happens in general; rather, it is this principle^d that shows how one can first get a determinate experiential concept of what happens.

B 358

absolute vs comparative cognition from principles

Thus the understanding cannot yield synthetic cognitions from concepts at all, and it is properly these that I call principles absolutely; nevertheless, all universal propositions in general can be called principles comparatively.

A 302

It is an ancient wish – who knows how long it will take until perhaps it is fulfilled – that in place of the endless manifold of civil laws, their principles may be sought out; for in this alone can consist the secret, as one says, of simplifying legislation. But here the laws are only limitations of our freedom to conditions under which it agrees thoroughly with itself; hence they apply to something that is wholly our own work, and of which we can be the cause through that concept. But that objects in themselves, as well as the nature of things, should stand under principles and be determined according to mere concepts is something

^a *Vernunftschluß* might equally be translated “inference of reason”; and occasionally it will be so translated below.

^b *Principium*

^c *Grundsätze*

^d *Grundsatz*

that, if not impossible, is at least very paradoxical^a in what it demands. But however that may be (for the investigation of this still lies before us), this much at least is clear; cognition from principles (in themselves) is something entirely different from mere cognition of the understanding, which can of course precede other cognitions in the form of a principle, but in itself (insofar as it is synthetic) still neither rests on mere thought nor contains in itself a universal according to concepts.

If the understanding may be a faculty of unity of appearances by means of rules, then reason is the faculty of the unity of the rules of understanding under principles.⁷ Thus it^b never applies directly to experience or to any object, but instead applies to the understanding, in order to give unity *a priori* through concepts to the understanding's manifold cognitions, which may be called "the unity of reason," and is of an altogether different kind than any unity that can be achieved by the understanding.

B 359

a different kind of unity

This is the universal concept of the faculty of reason, as far as that concept can be made comprehensible wholly in the absence of examples (such as those that are to be given only in what follows).

B.

A 303

On the logical use of reason.

We draw a distinction between what is cognized immediately and what is only inferred. That there are three angles in a figure enclosed by three straight lines is immediately cognized, but that these angles together equal two right angles is only inferred. Because we constantly need inferences and so in the end become wholly accustomed to them, it happens at last that we no longer even take notice of this distinction, and often, as in so-called deceptions of sense, we take as immediate what we have only inferred. In every inference there is a proposition that serves as a ground, and^c another, namely the conclusion, that is drawn from the former, and^d finally the inference (consequence) according to which the truth of the conclusion is connected unfailingly with the truth of the first proposition. If the inferred judgment already lies in the first one, so that it can be derived from it without the mediation of a third representation, then this is called an "immediate inference" (*consequentia immediata*); I would rather call it an inference of the understanding.⁸ But if, in addition to the cognition that serves as a ground, yet another judgment is necessary to effect the conclusion,

B 360

inference as such

immediate vs
mediate inference

^a *Widersinniges*

^b I.e., reason. In the first edition: "It"; in the second edition: "Thus it . . ."

^c The word "and" added in the second edition.

^d The word "and" added in the second edition.

sylogism

A 304

then the inference is called a “syllogism.”^a In the proposition **All humans are mortal** there lie already the propositions “Some humans are mortal,” “Some^b mortal beings are human beings,” “Nothing^c immortal is a human being,” and these propositions are thus immediate conclusions from the first one. On the other hand, the proposition “All scholars are mortal” does not lie in the underlying judgment (for the concept “scholar” does not occur in it at all), and can be concluded from it only by means of an intermediate judgment.

B 361

three forms
of syllogism

In every syllogism I think first a **rule** (the *major*) through the understanding. Second, I **subsume** a cognition under the condition of the rule (the *minor*) by means of the **power of judgment**. Finally, I determine my cognition through the predicate of the rule (the *conclusio*),^d hence *a priori* through **reason**. Thus **the relation^e between a cognition and its condition, which the major premise represents as the rule, constitutes the different kinds of syllogisms**. They are therefore threefold – just as are all judgments in general – insofar as they are distinguished by the way they express the relation^f of cognition to the understanding: namely, **categorical or hypothetical or disjunctive syllogisms**.^g

A 305

If, as happens for the most part, the conclusion is a judgment given as the problem,^g in order to see whether it flows from already given judgments, through which, namely, a wholly different object is thought, then I seek whether the assertion of this conclusion is not to be found in the understanding under certain conditions according to a universal rule. Now if I find such a condition and if the object^b of the conclusion can be subsumed under the given condition, then this conclusion is derived from the rule that **is also valid for other objects of cognition**. From this we see that **reason, in inferring, seeks to bring the greatest manifold of cognition of the understanding to the smallest number of principles (universal conditions), and thereby to effect the highest unity of that manifold**.

B 362

C.

On the pure use of reason.

Can we isolate reason, and is it then a genuineⁱ source of concepts and judgments that arise solely from it and thereby refer it to objects; or is

^a *Vernunftschluß* (literally, an “inference of reason”)

^b In the first edition: “or some.”

^c In the first edition: “or nothing.”

^d conclusion

^e *Verhältnis*

^f *Verhältnis*

^g *aufgegeben*

^h *Object*

ⁱ *eigener*

reason only a merely subordinate^a faculty that gives to given cognitions a certain form, called "logical" form, through which cognitions of the understanding are subordinated to one another, and lower rules are subordinated to higher ones (whose condition includes the condition of the lower rules in its sphere), as far as this can be effected through comparing them? This is the question with which we will now concern ourselves, though only provisionally. **In fact the manifold of rules and the unity of principles is a demand of reason, in order to bring the understanding into thoroughgoing connection with itself, just as the understanding brings the manifold of intuition under concepts and through them into connection.**¹⁰ Yet such a principle^b does not prescribe any law to objects,^c and does not contain the ground of the possibility of cognizing and determining them as such in general, but rather is merely a subjective law of economy for the provision of our understanding, so that through comparison of its concepts it may bring their universal use to the smallest number, without justifying us in demanding of objects themselves any such unanimity as might make things easier for our understanding or help it extend itself, and so give objective validity to its maxims as well. In a word, the question is: Does reason in itself, i.e., pure reason, contain *a priori* synthetic principles^d and rules, and in what might such principles consist?

A 306

B 363

The formal and logical procedure of reason in syllogisms already gives us sufficient guidance as to where the ground of its transcendental principle^e will rest in synthetic cognition through pure reason.

First, the syllogism does not deal with intuitions, in order to bring them under rules (as does the understanding with its categories), but rather deals with concepts and judgments. If, therefore, pure reason also deals with objects, yet it has no immediate reference to them and their intuition, but deals only with the understanding and its judgments, which apply directly to the senses and their intuition, in order to determine their object. The unity of reason is therefore not the unity of a possible experience, but is essentially different from that, which is the unity of understanding. That everything which happens must have a cause is not a principle^f cognized and prescribed through reason at all. It makes the unity of experience possible and borrows nothing from reason, which could not have imposed any such synthetic unity from mere concepts without this reference to possible experience.

A 307

B 364

Second, reason in its logical use seeks the universal condition of its

^a *subalternes*

^b *Grundsatz*

^c *Objecte*

^d *Grundsätze*

^e *Principium*

^f *Grundsatz*

judgment (its conclusion), and the syllogism is nothing but a judgment mediated by the subsumption of its condition under a universal rule (the major premise). Now since this rule is once again exposed to this same attempt of reason, and the condition of its condition thereby has to be sought (by means of a prosyllogism) as far as we may, we see very well that **the proper principle^a of reason in general (in its logical use) is to find the unconditioned for conditioned cognitions of the understanding, with which its unity will be completed.**

But this logical maxim cannot become a principle^b of **pure reason** unless we assume that when the conditioned is given, then so is the whole series of conditions subordinated one to the other, which is itself unconditioned, also given (i.e., contained in the object and its connection).

Such a principle^c of pure reason, however, is obviously **synthetic**; for **the conditioned is analytically related to some condition, but not to the unconditioned.** Different synthetic propositions must arise from it, of which the pure understanding knows nothing, since it has to do only with objects of a possible experience, whose cognition and synthesis are always conditioned. But the unconditioned, if it actually occurs, is^d particularly to be considered according to all the determinations that distinguish it from everything conditioned, and must thereby give us material for many synthetic propositions *a priori*.

The principles^e arising from **this supreme principle of pure reason** will, however, be **transcendent** in respect of all appearances, i.e., no adequate empirical use can ever be made of that principle. It will therefore be entirely distinct from all principles^f of the understanding (whose use is completely **immanent**, insofar as it has only the possibility of experience as its theme). But whether the principle^g that the series of conditions (in the synthesis of appearances, or even in the thinking of things in general) reaches to the unconditioned, has objective correctness or not; what consequences flow from it for the empirical use of the understanding, or whether it rather yields no such objectively valid propositions of at all, but is only a logical prescription in the ascent to ever higher conditions to approach completeness in them and thus to bring the highest possible unity of reason into our cognition; whether, I say, this need of reason has, through a misunderstanding, been taken for a transcendental principle^h of reason, which overhastily

^a Grundsatz

^b Principium

^c Grundsatz

^d Reading with the fourth edition, *wird* for *kann*.

^e Grundsätze

^f Grundsätze

^g Grundsatz

^h Grundsatz

Introduction

postulates such an unlimited completeness in the series of conditions in the objects themselves; but in this case what other kinds of misinterpretations and delusions^a may have crept into the inferences of reason whose major premise (and that perhaps more a petition than a postulate) is taken from pure reason and ascends from experience to its conditions: All this will be our concern in the transcendental dialectic, which we will now develop from its sources hidden deep in human reason. We will divide it into two main parts, the **first** of which will treat of the **transcendent concepts** of pure reason, and the **second** of reason's transcendent and **dialectical inferences of reason.**^b

^a *Verblendungen*

^b *dialektischen Vernunftschlüssen*, which (once again) could also be translated "dialectical syllogisms."