

Kant Study Guide III

The Categories of Thought

Reading: Transcendental Logic of Concepts: A50/B74-A52/B78, A64/B89-A83/B109 (pp. 39-50)

The Transcendental Analytic of Concepts

Notes:

- in this section, Kant describes the role of certain basic concepts, the Categories, in making experience possible.
- the pure/impure distinction is a distinction between non/experienced. I.e., a pure concept is one without particular experiential content; an impure concept contains such content.
- 'presentation' is Kant's generic term for a mental representation.
- spontaneity characterizes conceptual thought inasmuch as we are able to produce it at will; intuition, on the other hand, is not at our command - we are only receivers of it, so to speak.
- Much of what Kant is concerned with here is *synthesis* or *unity* – he uses the terms interchangeably. This refers to the mind's ability to *combine* multiple elements into a single thought. E.g., I can combine *brown* and *cow* to think *the cow is brown*. That's a single, "synthesized" thought.
- don't concern yourself overly with the role of the imagination, here; it will take us too far afield.
- don't concern yourself overly with the meaning of each specific Category; try to understand their general role.

Central Question: What is the "transcendental" role in experience of the Categories of pure reason?

Subsidiary Questions:

1. What, according to Kant, is a science of the rules of understanding? (A52/B76)
2. What does Kant mean by an 'Analytic of Concepts'? (A65/B90)
3. What sort of faculty is the faculty of understanding, according to Kant? (A68/B93)
4. What does Kant mean by calling judgment "indirect cognition of an object"? (A68/B93)
5. What does Kant mean by saying that judgment involves a unification of presentations? (A69/B94)
6. And what, then, does it mean to say that understanding is the power of judgment? (A69/B94)
7. What is the significance of Kant's Table of Judgments? (A70/B95)
8. What is *pure synthesis*, as Kant uses that term? (A77/B103)
9. What concepts are they, according to Kant, that give unity to the pure synthesis of the manifold of pure intuition? (A78-9/B104-5)
10. Why are there as many Categories as forms of Judgment? (A79-80/B105-6)